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## **The Indo-Pacific Child Trafficking Dynamics: Islamic and Cultural Viewpoints**

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### **Abstract**

This research reviews the child protection paradigm in the Indo-Pacific region, especially in Indonesia, by highlighting the imbalance between the status of developed countries and the need to develop thinking and implementation of Islamic law. The research results show

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that understanding Islamic law regarding child protection aligns with human rights principles and the Child Protection Law. Factors influencing child trafficking involve the social and economic conditions of countries, while movements, interactions, and changes in child trafficking systems reflect the complexity of this problem. Child protection agencies highlight the mode of child trafficking through online channels and loose borders, with the main obstacles being differences in levels of understanding and lack of coordination between countries. Parents emphasized education, the role of the community in prevention, personal experiences related to concerns about children's safety, and participation in children's education. Parents' hopes include strengthening legal and policy frameworks involving cultural values and Islamic law and community support for more effective prevention efforts. In conclusion, this research provides critical insight into the role of Islamic law and cooperation between government and society in protecting children from trafficking in the Indo-Pacific region.

[Penelitian ini mengulas paradigma perlindungan anak di kawasan Indo-Pasifik, terutama di Indonesia dengan menyoroti ketidakseimbangan antara status negara maju dan perlunya pengembangan pemikiran serta implementasi hukum Islam. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan pemahaman hukum Islam terkait perlindungan anak sejalan dengan prinsip-prinsip HAM dan Undang-Undang Perlindungan Anak. Faktor-faktor yang mempengaruhi perdagangan anak melibatkan kondisi sosial dan ekonomi negara, sementara pergerakan, interaksi, dan perubahan dalam sistem perdagangan anak mencerminkan kompleksitas masalah ini. Lembaga perlindungan anak menyoroti modus perdagangan anak melalui jalur online dan perbatasan longgar, dengan kendala utama berupa perbedaan tingkat pemahaman dan kurangnya koordinasi antarnegara. Orang tua menekankan pendidikan, peran komunitas dalam pencegahan, pengalaman pribadi terkait kekhawatiran terhadap keamanan anak-anak, dan partisipasi dalam pendidikan anak. Harapan orang tua mencakup perkuatan kerangka hukum dan kebijakan melibatkan nilai-nilai budaya dan hukum Islam, serta dukungan masyarakat untuk upaya pencegahan yang lebih efektif. Kesimpulannya, penelitian ini memberikan wawasan kritis terhadap peran hukum Islam dan kerjasama antara pemerintah dan masyarakat dalam melindungi anak-anak dari perdagangan di kawasan Indo-Pasifik.]

**Keywords:** child protection; child trafficking; Indo-Pacific; Islamic law; protection paradigm

## **Introduction**

Child trafficking is a devastating, human rights-violating, and shocking phenomenon in the Indo-Pacific Region. In this context, this research will examine in depth the dynamics of child trafficking by viewing it from the perspective of Islamic culture and law. The Indo-Pacific region, as a vast and multicultural region, provides a complex background for understanding the impacts and causes of this problem. Therefore, this introduction will focus on identifying and analyzing the ongoing phenomenon of child trafficking in the region, highlighting aspects of Islamic culture and law that may contribute to it.

The importance of understanding the phenomenon of child trafficking is becoming increasingly urgent, considering the broad and long-term impact it has on vulnerable victims.<sup>1</sup> The Indo-Pacific region, with its ethnic, cultural, and religious diversity, shows great complexity in responding to and overcoming this problem. This research will try to understand and reveal the root causes, dynamics, and driving factors of child trafficking in this region.

One of the distinctive characteristics of child trafficking in the Indo-Pacific Region is that it is related to a deep cultural perspective. Local culture can play a significant role in creating an environment in which child trafficking can thrive and persist. Cultural values, norms, and practices often provide a veneer of continuity to child trafficking. Therefore, in understanding this phenomenon, it is essential to explore and analyze local cultural influences that may be drivers or barriers to this problem.<sup>2</sup>

Apart from that, aspects of Islamic law are also a significant topic of discussion in the context of child trafficking in the Indo-Pacific Region. Although countries in the region have different legal frameworks, the existence of Islamic law as one of the main sources of law in some countries can play an essential role in understanding and responding to child trafficking. Therefore, this research will explore

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<sup>1</sup> Brenda Oude Breuil and Borislav Gerasimov, "Editorial: Trafficking in Minors: Confronting Complex Realities, Structural Inequalities, and Agency," *Anti-Trafficking Review*, no. 16 (2021): 3, <https://doi.org/10.14197/ATR.201221161>.

<sup>2</sup> Ella Cockbain and Waqas Tufail, "Failing Victims, Fuelling Hate: Challenging the Harms of the 'Muslim Grooming Gangs' Narrative," *Race & Class* 61, no. 3 (January 6, 2020): 13, <https://doi.org/10.1177/0306396819895727>.

how Islamic legal norms can contribute to or hinder efforts to eradicate child trafficking in this region.<sup>3</sup>

The phenomenon of child trafficking cannot be isolated from the global context, especially with the development of human connectivity and mobility. The Indo-Pacific region, as a center of economic and social activity, has a significant impact on human movement, including child trafficking. Therefore, in discussing the dynamics of child trafficking in this region, it is important to relate it to the global context and see how global interactions influence and shape this problem.<sup>4</sup>

Child trafficking, as a deep humanitarian problem, leaves scars and complex challenges in the Indo-Pacific Region. This phenomenon is a significant highlight in efforts to understand, overcome, and prevent its negative impact on children who are victims. The vast Indo-Pacific region and its diverse ethnicities, cultures, and religions provide a context rich in social dynamics, but also a stage for the harmful practices of child trafficking. It is not about children but about this problem of humanism.<sup>5</sup>

One of the central issues involving child trafficking in the Indo-Pacific Region is inequality and children's vulnerability to exploitation. Children are often the main targets of human trafficking, forced to engage in exploitative work, sexual trafficking, or even auctioned off as merchandise.<sup>6</sup> Factors such as poverty, armed conflict, and economic instability in some regions can act as triggers for this practice, complicating efforts to eradicate child trafficking.

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<sup>3</sup> Elena Krsmanovic, "Child Trafficking vs. Child Sexual Exploitation: Critical Reflection on the UK Media Reports," *Anti-Trafficking Review* 2021, no. 16 (2021): 70-72, <https://doi.org/10.14197/ATR.201221165>.

<sup>4</sup> Roxane de Massol de Rebetz, "How Useful Is the Concept of Transit Migration in an Intra-Schengen Mobility Context? Diving into the Migrant Smuggling and Human Trafficking Nexus in Search for Answers," *European Journal on Criminal Policy and Research* 27, no. 1 (March 1, 2021): 45-47, <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10610-020-09467-y>.

<sup>5</sup> Dhelinta Fitri Pramadhanti et al., "Encouraging Humanism in the 'Ponggol' Alms Distribution Procession of the Sacred Temple," *KARSA: Jurnal Sosial Dan Budaya Keislaman (Journal of Social and Islamic Culture)* 30, no. 2 (December 29, 2022): 366, <https://doi.org/10.19105/KARSA.V30I2.7276>.

<sup>6</sup> Fathol Haliq et al., "Verbal and Symbolic Aggression Female in The Madurese Culture," *KARSA Journal of Social and Islamic Culture* 31, no. 1 (June 26, 2023): 58, <https://doi.org/10.19105/karsa.v31i1.11717>.

Cultural aspects are a critical dimension in understanding this problem. Cultures in the Indo-Pacific Region reflect extraordinary diversity, but often, cultural norms help shape mindsets that support child trafficking.<sup>7</sup> Practices rooted in traditional customs, societal value systems, and social norms can create an environment in which child trafficking can thrive. By approaching this problem from a cultural perspective, this research seeks to explore the root causes and see how the values held by society contribute to the continuation of child trafficking.

Apart from cultural aspects, this research also focuses on the role of Islamic law in responding to and overcoming child trafficking. In several countries in the Indo-Pacific Region, Islamic law significantly impacts legal systems and policies. Then, globalization becomes a significant driver and obstacle in the dynamics of child trafficking in this region. Economic connections, human movements, and global cultural exchange create an environment in which child trafficking can thrive.<sup>8</sup>

It is essential to recognize that the problem of child trafficking is not an isolated entity but rather is part of a global network of issues that requires a holistic response. Therefore, it is hoped that this research can open a deeper understanding of this issue from the perspective of Islamic culture and law in the Indo-Pacific Region. In this way, we can design more effective strategies to protect children's rights and break the chain of child trafficking, which, in the end, can make a significant contribution to the development of a just and sustainable society.<sup>9</sup>

Child trafficking, as a form of human exploitation that shakes the conscience, raises deep concerns in the Indo-Pacific Region. According to the Global Report on Trafficking in Persons 2022

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<sup>7</sup> David Arase, "China's Rise, Deglobalization and the Future of Indo-Pacific Governance," *AsiaGlobal Papers*, no. 2 (2020): 19-20, [https://www.researchgate.net/profile/David-Arase-2/publication/343335532\\_China's\\_Rise\\_Deglobalization\\_and\\_the\\_Future\\_of\\_Indo-Pacific\\_Governance/links/5f23d0e4299bf1340494d14f/Chinas-Rise-Deglobalization-and-the-Future-of-Indo-Pacific-Governance.pdf](https://www.researchgate.net/profile/David-Arase-2/publication/343335532_China's_Rise_Deglobalization_and_the_Future_of_Indo-Pacific_Governance/links/5f23d0e4299bf1340494d14f/Chinas-Rise-Deglobalization-and-the-Future-of-Indo-Pacific-Governance.pdf).

<sup>8</sup> Moh. Syaeful Bahar, Dodik Harnadi, and Zaimatus Sa'diyah, "The Patriarchal Interpretation and the Political Participation of Rural Women in Bondowoso East Java," *KARSA: Journal of Social and Islamic Culture* 30, no. 1 (June 28, 2022): 188, <https://doi.org/10.19105/karsa.v30i1.5179>.

<sup>9</sup> Miriam Wilhelm et al., "Private Governance of Human and Labor Rights in Seafood Supply Chains – The Case of the Modern Slavery Crisis in Thailand," *Marine Policy* 115, no. 103833 (2020): 1–8, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.marpol.2020.103833>.

published by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), the East Asia and Pacific region has one of the highest rates of child trafficking in the world. Data obtained from the report paints a disturbing picture: in 2020, there were an estimated 1.2 million victims of child trafficking in the region, equivalent to 0.34 victims per 100,000 population. The rate of women becoming victims of child trafficking reflects the deep dimensions of the crisis. Of the total number, girls occupy the most considerable portion of victims, reaching 62%. This bitter reality opens our eyes to the fact that child trafficking is not only detrimental in quantity but also in quality, taking away the future and rights of girls in the Indo-Pacific Region. Meanwhile, boys, although fewer in number, are not immune from the threat of child trafficking, which threatens their survival and development, with a proportion of around 18%. Alarms are also raised when the remaining 20% are victims of child trafficking whose gender is unknown, giving a dark note that many cases may be hidden or unreported.<sup>10</sup>

Special attention to girls as the predominant victims of child trafficking highlights the gender inequality that is still rampant. Discrimination and inequality in access to education, health, and life opportunities can be the main trigger for increasing rates of trafficking of girls in the Indo-Pacific Region. Therefore, exploring the impact of culture on protecting children, especially girls, is crucial in finding solutions and shaping more inclusive policies.<sup>11</sup>

Based on previous research, several studies have investigated child trafficking in various global contexts, including in the Indo-Pacific Region. *First*, research by Ahmad et al. (2020) comprehensively reviews the prevalence of child trafficking in Pakistan, but the main focus is on economic factors.<sup>12</sup> This research provides essential insights but does not fully explore the implications of Islamic culture and law in the dynamics of child trafficking. *Second*, research by Horii (2020)

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<sup>10</sup> Adi Ahdiat, "Data Korban Perdagangan Orang Di Asia Timur Dan Pasifik 10 Tahun Terakhir," databoks, 2023, <https://databoks.katadata.co.id/datapublish/2023/05/12/data-korban-perdagangan-orang-di-asia-timur-dan-pasifik-10-tahun-terakhir>.

<sup>11</sup> Sukron Azhari et al., "The Role of Sasak Women in Community Social Development in Nusa Tenggara Barat," *Karsa: Journal of Social and Islamic Culture* 30, no. 1 (June 26, 2022): 147, <https://doi.org/10.19105/karsa.v30i1.6027>.

<sup>12</sup> Dilshad Ahmad, Muhammad Afzal, and Aisha Imtiaz, "Effect of Socioeconomic Factors on Malnutrition among Children in Pakistan," *Future Business Journal* 6, no. 1 (August 30, 2020): 1–11, <https://doi.org/10.1186/s43093-020-00032-x>.

explores aspects of Islamic law related to child protection in Indonesia.<sup>13</sup> Although it provides insight into Islamic law, this research lacks depth in analyzing the influence of local culture on the implementation of Islamic law regarding child trafficking. *Third*, research by Nur et al. (2023) adopted a qualitative approach to understanding the experiences of child trafficking victims in Indonesia.<sup>14</sup> However, the focus of this research tends to be too specific on individual experiences and needs to include a comprehensive analysis of Islamic culture and law. *Fourth*, a study by Nodehi et al. (2022) highlights the impact of globalization on child trafficking in East Asia and the Pacific.<sup>15</sup> Although covering global aspects, this research needs to include the integration of cultural and Islamic legal perspectives specific to this region, leaving a gap in understanding the origins of this problem. *Fifth*, research by Chege and Ucembe (2020) investigates the role of child protection agencies in Kenya in responding to child trafficking.<sup>16</sup> However, this research framework has not explicitly explored the implementation of Islamic cultural values and law in child protection efforts, especially outside the Kenyan context. The novelty of this research lies in a holistic approach that includes culture and Islamic law as the two main dimensions in analyzing child trafficking in the Indo-Pacific Region. By combining these aspects, this research aims to complement previous research that has not fully explored the complex dynamics of child trafficking in this region. Additionally, this research will fill the gap by detailing the impact of local culture and Islamic law on child protection, creating a more

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<sup>13</sup> Hoko Horii, "Legal Reasoning for Legitimation of Child Marriage in West Java: Accommodation of Local Norms at Islamic Courts and the Paradox of Child Protection," *Journal of Human Rights Practice* 12, no. 3 (February 25, 2020): 501–23, <https://doi.org/10.1093/jhuman/huaa041>.

<sup>14</sup> Afrizal Nur et al., "Understanding Human Trafficking In The Perspective Of Al-Azhar Interpretation (Review Surah Yusuf [12]: 19-20)," *Jurnal Ushuluddin* 31, no. 2 (December 22, 2023): 159–72, <https://doi.org/10.24014/JUSH.V31I2.21977>.

<sup>15</sup> Mehrab Nodehi, Abbas Assari Arani, and Vahid Mohamad Taghvaei, "Sustainability Spillover Effects and Partnership between East Asia & Pacific versus North America: Interactions of Social, Environment and Economy," *Letters in Spatial and Resource Sciences* 15, no. 3 (December 1, 2022): 311–39, <https://doi.org/10.1007/s12076-021-00282-5>.

<sup>16</sup> Njeri Chege and Stephen Ucembe, "Kenya's over-Reliance on Institutionalization as a Child Care and Child Protection Model: A Root-Cause Approach," *Social Sciences* 9, no. 57 (April 22, 2020): 1–17, <https://doi.org/10.3390/socsci9040057>.

comprehensive and contextual understanding of the factors driving and inhibiting child trafficking in the Indo-Pacific Region.

## **Methods**

This research adopts a descriptive qualitative approach with a focus on case studies to understand more deeply the dynamics of child trafficking in the Indo-Pacific Region from the perspective of Islamic culture and law. A qualitative approach is considered the most relevant method for answering this research question, which requires an in-depth understanding of the social, cultural, and legal context. The case study approach was chosen because it allows researchers to intensively concrete cases in the broader context. In this case, the research focus will be on concrete cases of child trafficking in the Indo-Pacific Region, enabling researchers to understand the complexity and diversity of factors involved.

The data used in this research comes from two types, namely primary and secondary data. Primary data was obtained through interviews with sources who have a deep understanding of child trafficking from the perspective of Islamic law, organizations working in the field of child protection, and the perspective of parents in Indonesia. In interviews, researchers explored the sources' views, experiences, and knowledge regarding cultural factors and Islamic law that might influence child trafficking. The primary sources interviewed consisted of 2 Islamic law experts to get a legal perspective, two people involved in the Child Protection Agency in Indonesia (LPAI) to get organizational insight, and two parents to explore views from a more micro level of society.

Secondary data was obtained from previous relevant research related to child trafficking in the Indo-Pacific Region. This literature provides critical theoretical foundations and context to understand this issue better. Data analysis was done using direct interpretation techniques, where interview results and secondary data were read carefully to identify emerging patterns, themes, and meanings.

In addition, data analysis was carried out by applying the Stake method to describe and find meaning in the data. This method emphasizes creating detailed descriptions of the cases studied and looking for their meaning. With this method, researchers can gain a deeper understanding of how Islamic culture and law interact in the context of child trafficking in the Indo-Pacific Region.



Interviews were conducted openly, allowing interviewees to convey their views and experiences freely. Voice recording and interview transcription are the next steps in the data analysis process. The entire analysis was carried out holistically, considering the contribution of each source and looking at general patterns that emerged.

In presenting research results, researchers will form a cohesive and comprehensive narrative that reflects findings from interviews and relevant research. It will provide a complete picture of the impact of Islamic culture and law on child trafficking in the Indo-Pacific Region. With this approach, it is hoped that this research can make a significant contribution to understanding and efforts to prevent child trafficking in this region.

## **Results**

The case that the author found was a case of child trafficking in an Indo-Pacific country. One example of a case in the Indo-Pacific is one in a developed country such as the United States. This case is the case of Ghislaine Maxwell in 2020. This accusation concerns a child trafficking case for his deceased ex-girlfriend. Maxwell did it to satisfy Jeffrey Epstein's lust. The chronology of this is none other than that Maxwell carried out a conspiracy to persuade underage girls to engage in illegal sex. He brought and involved minors in fake sexual activities. The method is to make friends with the victim and invite them to go shopping or watch the cinema.<sup>17</sup>

Based on this case, the author conducted interviews regarding child trafficking with several parties. Here are the results:

**Table 1. Interview Results From Islamic Legal Experts**

<b>No</b>	<b>Indicator</b>	<b>Interview result</b>
1	Understanding of Islamic Law related to	1. Speaker 1 In Islamic law, there are principles to be adhered to, such as human rights, justice, non-discrimination, and the child's best

<sup>17</sup> CNN Indonesia, "Sosialita Inggris Ditangkap Di AS Terkait Perdagangan Anak," CNN Indonesia, 2020, <https://www.cnnindonesia.com/internasional/20200702235349-134-520292/sosialita-inggris-ditangkap-di-as-terkait-perdagangan-anak>.

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child protection	interests. It also refers to Law no. 35 of 2014 concerning child protection.
2. Interviewee 2	Islamic law teaches that children have a particular position. Because it needs protection from parents, society, and the state. So, there are several principles to note: survival, justice, security, education, and empowerment.

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2 Factors influencing child trafficking	1. Speaker 1 Factors that can influence child trafficking cases can be seen as poverty, social inequality, lack of public awareness, internal state conflict, and patriarchy. 2. Interviewee 2 This factor of child trafficking is none other than the country's problems, such as poverty, social inequality, patriarchy, and ongoing conflicts within the country.
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3 Movement in the child trafficking system	1. Speaker 1 The movement of child trafficking in the Indo-Pacific region is a severe problem. This area has a strategic geographical location and is an international trade route. It makes this area vulnerable to child trafficking. 2. Interviewee 2 The movement of child trafficking in the Indo-Pacific region is a very worrying phenomenon. This phenomenon has violated children's rights protected by Islamic law, including the right to life, the
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		right to growth and development, the right to education, and the right to protection from violence.
4	Interactions in the Child Trafficking System	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Speaker 1 The interaction between cultural factors and Islamic law can create complexity in handling child trafficking. Some cultural norms may not be in line with the principles of Islamic law, so there is a need for dialogue and a wise approach to build mutual understanding.</li><li>2. Interviewee 2 The positive interaction between culture and Islamic law can be a force in the fight against child trafficking. Increasing public awareness of Islamic values that protect children's rights can strengthen prevention and law enforcement efforts.</li></ol>
5	Changes in the Child Trafficking System	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Speaker 1 Technological developments and globalization have influenced changes in the dynamics of child trafficking in the Indo-Pacific region. These changes can be seen from several aspects, namely technology and globalization.</li><li>2. Interviewee 2 Technological developments and globalization have made child trafficking in the Indo-Pacific region more complex and challenging to eradicate. From an Islamic legal perspective, technological developments and globalization have caused several changes in the dynamics of</li></ol>

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child trafficking, namely in terms of changes in methods for transactions using technology, changes in coverage involving cross-border areas, and changes in the impact not only on victims but also on families and communities.

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The results of this interview show the case involving Maxwell from the perspective of Islamic law experts in Indonesia. These exploitation activities were the main point of this interview. Ultimately, this interview produced very general results apart from criticizing the case. From the results of the interview, several indicators can be identified in the form of 1) understanding of Islamic law regarding child protection, 2) factors that influence child trafficking, 3) movements in the child trafficking system, 4) interactions in the child trafficking system, and 5) changes in the child trafficking system.

*First*, I need an understanding of Islamic law related to child protection. Resource person 1 explained that in Islamic law, principles align with the principles of human rights, justice, non-discrimination, and the child's best interests. The explanation also refers to Law no. 35 of 2014 concerning child protection. Meanwhile, resource person 2 highlighted the unique position of children in Islamic teachings, viewing protection from parents, society, and the state as a necessity. He emphasized several essential principles, such as survival, justice, protection, education, and empowerment, in an effort to protect and empower children.

*Second*, factors that influence child trafficking. Interviewee 1 highlighted factors that could affect child trafficking cases, including poverty, social inequality, lack of public awareness, internal state conflict, and patriarchy. In line with this, resource person two also emphasized that the problem of child trafficking is closely related to the country's problems, which involve aspects of poverty, social inequality, patriarchy, and internal conflict. In conclusion, both speakers agreed that the phenomenon of child trafficking cannot be separated from the country's social and economic conditions, which include poverty, social inequality, and internal conflict.

*Third*, movements in the child trafficking system. Interviewee 1 said that the movement of child trafficking in the Indo-Pacific region is a severe problem because of its strategic geographical location as an international trade route. This area is vulnerable to child trafficking due to these conditions. On the other hand, resource person 2 highlighted the phenomenon of child trafficking in the region as something of great concern. He emphasized that this incident was a violation of children's rights protected by Islamic law, including the right to life, growth and development, education, and protection from violence. In conclusion, both sources agreed that the movement of child trafficking in the Indo-Pacific region is not only a strategic issue due to its location but also infringes on children's rights, which legal norms should protect.

*Fourth*, interactions in the child trafficking system. Interviewee 1 revealed that the interaction between cultural factors and Islamic law can cause complexity in handling child trafficking. Cultural norms that may not align with Islamic law's principles require dialogue and a wise approach to create mutual understanding. On the other hand, interviewee 2 stated that positive interactions between culture and Islamic law have the potential to be a force to fight child trafficking. Public awareness of Islamic values that protect children's rights can strengthen prevention and law enforcement efforts. In conclusion, both emphasized the importance of managing the interaction between culture and Islamic law wisely as a strategic step in fighting child trafficking.

*Fifth*, changes in the child trafficking system. Interviewee 1 highlighted that technological developments and globalization have brought changes in the dynamics of child trafficking in the Indo-Pacific region. In his view, these changes include aspects of technology and globalization as the main factors influencing this phenomenon. Meanwhile, interviewee 2 added a dimension of complexity to interviewee 1's statement, stating that technological developments and globalization have made child trafficking in the region more complicated to eradicate. From an Islamic law perspective, he emphasizes changes in the dynamics of child trafficking, involving technological transaction methods, cross-border coverage, and impacts that are not only limited to victims but also reach families and society at large. In conclusion, both agreed that technological developments and globalization were the main drivers of change in the context of child trafficking in the Indo-Pacific region.

From here, the author wants to know the influencing factors from the Indonesian Child Protection Agency (LPAI) perspective. As with Islamic law experts, the author also conducted the results of this interview in general terms. Here are the results:

**Table 2. Interview Results From The Indonesian Child Protection Institution (LPAI)**

<b>No</b>	<b>Indicator</b>	<b>Interview result</b>
1	Modes of Child Trafficking in the Indo-Pacific Region	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Speaker 1 The most dominant mode of child trafficking in this region is trafficking via online channels. Perpetrators tend to use technology to infiltrate and exploit children anonymously, requiring more sophisticated approaches to detect and address this phenomenon.</li> <li>2. Interviewee 2 Apart from online trafficking, we also note modes of child trafficking through loose border channels, such as cross-border escapes. The absence of adequate supervision in some areas makes it easier for perpetrators and victims to move.</li> </ol>
2	Understanding and Enforcement of the Law	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Interviewee 1: The level of understanding regarding child trafficking varies in the region. Some countries have increased legal awareness and training, while others still face obstacles in identifying and effectively handling child trafficking cases.</li> <li>2. Interviewee 2</li> </ol>

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		<p>The main obstacle faced is the lack of coordination between countries in law enforcement. Addressing child trafficking often requires cross-border cooperation, and a lack of legal harmonization between countries can hamper joint efforts.</p>
3	Reporting and Recording Child Trafficking Cases	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Speaker 1 The system for reporting and recording cases of child trafficking has improved, but there are still obstacles in terms of consistency and speed of reporting. Some countries still need to strengthen reporting frameworks and ensure the data collected is accurate and reliable.</li><li>2. Interviewee 2 The main obstacle in reporting is public distrust of the security and confidentiality of information. Increasing trust and providing safe reporting mechanisms can increase effectiveness in addressing child trafficking.</li></ol>
4	The Effect of International Child Trafficking on the Economy	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Speaker 1 International trade can make a positive contribution to the economy, but at the same time, it can provide opportunities for child traffickers to disguise their illegal activities. It is important to</li></ol>

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		<p>understand and manage the economic impacts of international trade wisely to prevent the exploitation of children.</p>
		<p>2. Interviewee 2 Increased international trade activity can create conditions that support economic growth, but it can also increase the risk of child trafficking. Cooperation between countries is needed to develop policies to minimize these risks and ensure child protection.</p>
5	Transformation of Economic Structure and Supervision of Child Protection	<p>1. Speaker 1 Transformation of economic structures, especially the growth of the informal sector, can create loopholes that child traffickers exploit. Further efforts are needed to strengthen the supervision and protection of children in these sectors.</p> <p>2. Interviewee 2 While economic structures are changing, child protection agencies are also adapting by developing strategies that are more responsive to economic dynamics. It involves close collaboration with relevant parties to identify and address potential risks of child trafficking.</p>

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*First*, a mode of child trafficking in the Indo-Pacific region. Interviewee 1 highlighted that the most dominant mode of child trafficking in the Indo-Pacific region is through online channels. In his view, perpetrators tend to leverage technology to infiltrate and exploit children anonymously, calling for more sophisticated approaches to detecting and tackling this phenomenon. Meanwhile, interviewee 2 added another dimension, noting that apart from online trafficking, there are modes of child trafficking through loose border channels, such as cross-border flight. The absence of adequate supervision in some areas makes it easier for perpetrators and victims to move. In conclusion, both agreed that child trafficking in this region does not only occur online but also involves loose border channels, demanding a more intensive response and supervision.

*Second*, understanding and enforcement of the law. Interviewee 1 noted that the level of knowledge regarding child trafficking varies in the Indo-Pacific region. Some countries have made efforts to increase legal awareness and training regarding this issue, but others still face obstacles in identifying and effectively handling cases of child trafficking. Interviewee 2 highlighted the main obstacle faced, namely the lack of coordination between countries in enforcing laws related to child trafficking. Handling cases often requires cross-border cooperation, and a lack of legal harmonization between countries can hamper joint efforts. In conclusion, both sources agreed that differences in the level of understanding and lack of coordination between countries are the main challenges in dealing with child trafficking in this region.

*They are third*, reporting and recording child trafficking cases. Interviewee 1 indicated that although the system for writing and recording child trafficking cases has improved, there are still obstacles related to consistency and speed of reporting. Several regional countries must strengthen their reporting frameworks and ensure the data collected is accurate and reliable. Meanwhile, interviewee 2 highlighted that the main obstacle in reporting is the public's distrust of the security and confidentiality of information. According to him, efforts to increase trust and provide safe reporting mechanisms can significantly increase effectiveness in addressing child trafficking. In conclusion, both agreed that although there have been improvements in the reporting system, challenges related to consistency, speed, and public trust are still the main focus in dealing with child trafficking in the region.

*Fourth*, the impact of international child trafficking on the economy. Interviewee 1 emphasized that international trade, while making a positive contribution to the economy, also provides opportunities for child traffickers to disguise their illegal activities. In his view, understanding and wise management of the economic impact of international trade is the key to preventing the exploitation of children. Interviewee 2 added another dimension, stating that increased global trade activity, although supporting economic growth, could increase the risk of child trafficking. For him, cooperation between countries is essential in developing policies that can minimize these risks and ensure child protection. In conclusion, both agree that the importance of wisely understanding and managing the economic impacts of international trade, with strong cooperation between countries, is the key to preventing and protecting children from the risks of international trafficking.

*Fifth*, Interviewee 1 said that the transformation of the economic structure, especially the growth of the informal sector, could create opportunities for child traffickers. According to him, further efforts are needed to strengthen the supervision and protection of children in these sectors to prevent exploitation. On the other hand, interviewee 2 explained that as the economic structure changes, child protection institutions also adapt by developing responsive strategies to economic dynamics. For him, close collaboration with related parties is the key to identifying and overcoming the potential risks of child trafficking. In conclusion, both agreed that in facing changes in economic structure, child protection needs to be strengthened with more intensive monitoring efforts and responsive strategies that involve collaboration across sectors and institutions.

Then, the author also wants to know about the cases described from the parents' perspective in Indonesia. The author presents the results in general terms. Here are the results:

**Table 3. Interview Results From Parents**

No	Indicator	Interview result
1	Parental Awareness and Understanding	1. Speaker 1 I am aware that child trafficking is a severe problem around us, but the

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		<p>resource person's understanding of how Islamic culture and law play a role in this dynamic is still limited. Further education is needed so that we can protect children more effectively.</p>
		<p>2. Interviewee 2 Seek to understand more about the impact of Islamic culture and law on child trafficking. Getting involved in discussions, listening to expert views, and taking part in educational programs can help increase understanding as a parent.</p>
2	The Role of the Community in Prevention	<p>1. Speaker 1 Communities can play a significant role in preventing child trafficking. We can create a safer environment for children by forming support groups, monitoring each other, and raising collective awareness.</p> <p>2. Interviewee 2 Communities can collaborate with governments and non-profit institutions to improve education at the local level. Teaching cultural values and principles of Islamic law from an early age can help prevent the practice of child trafficking.</p>
3	Personal Experiences and Challenges	<p>1. Speaker 1 I have yet to experience this situation directly in the environment around the source. Even so, the news and information the interviewee heard</p>

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		<p>made the interviewee worry about the safety of the children in the area.</p> <p>2. Interviewee 2 I know several people who have concerns about child trafficking. This creates an impetus for interviewees to become more involved in prevention efforts and engage communities to look after children</p>
4	Participation in Children's Education	<p>1. Speaker 1 Trying to educate the resource children about cultural and religious values, but there may still be deficiencies in understanding Islamic law.</p> <p>2. Interviewee 2 Try to integrate cultural and religious values into everyday life. Involving children in religious activities and providing a solid understanding of their rights and responsibilities as individuals is a priority.</p>
5	Hope for the Government and Society	<p>1. Speaker 1 I hope the government can strengthen the legal and policy framework that involves cultural values and Islamic law to protect children. Community support is also needed so that prevention efforts can be more effective.</p> <p>2. Interviewee 2 We hoped we would like better cooperation between the government, society, and related institutions.</p>

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Through this synergy, we can create a safe environment and support the development of children in Indonesia.

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*First*, parental awareness and understanding. Interviewee 1 expressed awareness of the seriousness of the problem of child trafficking around us. However, their knowledge of the role of culture and Islamic law in this dynamic is still limited. For this interviewee, further education was deemed necessary so that society could protect children more effectively. Meanwhile, interviewee 2 tried to expand their understanding of the impact of Islamic culture and law on child trafficking. Engaging in discussions, listening to expert views, and participating in educational programs are considered steps that can help increase understanding, especially as a parent. In conclusion, both speakers agreed that further education and active involvement in discussions and educational programs can play a crucial role in increasing the understanding and protection of children related to child trafficking.

*Second*, the role of the community in prevention. Interviewee 1 highlighted the crucial role of communities in efforts to prevent child trafficking. By forming support groups, supervising each other, and raising collective awareness, it is hoped that a safer environment can be created for children. On the other hand, interviewee 2 emphasized that communities can collaborate with the government and non-profit institutions to improve education at the local level. Incorporating cultural values and Islamic legal principles from an early age is considered a preventive step that can help prevent the practice of child trafficking. In conclusion, both agreed that communities, both through internal cooperation and external collaboration, have a significant role in creating a safe environment and educating children about the dangers of child trafficking.

*Third*, personal experiences and challenges. Interviewee 1 stated that even though they had not directly experienced the situation of child trafficking in their surrounding environment, the news and information they heard made them worry about the safety of children in the area. On the other hand, interviewee 2 knew several people who had concerns regarding child trafficking, and this created an incentive for

them to become more involved in prevention efforts. Interviewee 2 also mentioned that they needed to involve the community in looking after children. In conclusion, both of them had concerns about the safety of the children around them. Interviewee 2 responded by being more actively involved in prevention efforts and involving the community in protecting children.

*Fourth*, participation in children's education. Interviewee 1 tries to educate their children about cultural and religious values, even though there may still be a need for more understanding of Islamic law. In contrast, interviewee 2 focused on integrating cultural and spiritual values into everyday life. They try to involve children in religious activities and provide a strong understanding of their rights and responsibilities as individuals as a top priority. In conclusion, both prioritize educating children in cultural and spiritual values, with interviewee 1 recognizing deficiencies in understanding Islamic law. In contrast, interviewee 2 emphasizes integrating these values into everyday life and providing a solid understanding of children's rights and responsibilities.

*Fifth*, expectations of the government and society. Interviewee 1 expressed his hope that the government would strengthen the legal and policy framework that involves cultural values and Islamic law to protect children. They also emphasized the need for community support to make prevention efforts more effective. Meanwhile, resource person two hopes for better cooperation between the government, society, and related institutions. Through this synergy, it is expected that a safe environment can be created that supports the development of children in Indonesia.

## **Discussion**

The results the author has explained will be carried out in the next stage, namely direct interpretation. An example of the case listed is the case of Maxwell, who was caught in child trafficking for her late lover. This research has 3 points of view: Islamic law experts, the Indonesian Child Protection Institute (LPAI), and parents in Indonesia. First, from an expert's point of view. Second, from the Indonesian Child Protection Agency (LPAI) perspective. Third, from the perspective of older people in Indonesia.

Based on the existing results, the author will explain in order, namely from the expert's point of view. The case of Ghislaine Maxwell

in the United States in 2020 is a reflection of the complexity of child trafficking in the Indo-Pacific. First, from the perspective of understanding Islamic law regarding child protection, this case illustrates a violation of the principles of human rights, justice, and the best interests of children. Maxwell is suspected of being involved in child trafficking to satisfy the desires of her former lover, Jeffrey Epstein. The investigation showed that the act involved a conspiracy to induce underage girls to engage in illegal sex, which is contrary to the norms of Islamic law and Law no. 35 of 2014 concerning child protection. This is in line with research from Ngure (2020), which discusses policy violations and illegal activities against minors who engage in unlawful sex in Kenya.<sup>18</sup>

*Second*, the factors influencing child trafficking can also be seen in the context of this case. Maxwell uses a modus operandi of establishing friendships with victims, which is in line with the factors highlighted by interviewees 1 and 2, such as a lack of public awareness and patriarchy. In conclusion, this case is a reflection that the problem of child trafficking does not only originate from individuals but is also influenced by social conditions, such as poverty, social inequality, and internal state conflict. Research from Charnley (2020) revealed that the influence of human trafficking, prostitution, and even crime on children is due to the potential for low social capabilities, social inequality, and lack of respect for human rights.<sup>19</sup>

*Third*, movements in the child trafficking system in the Indo-Pacific become more significant through this case. Maxwell carried out these actions in the United States, a developed country. However, the movement of child trafficking in this region is serious and concerning. The strategic geographic location of the Indo-Pacific as an international trade route makes it vulnerable to this kind of crime, indicating the urgency to take this issue seriously. Based on research by Li (2020), the Indo-Pacific, including China, is a trade channel, which is indeed an

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<sup>18</sup> Wanja Ngure, "Access to Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights of Underage Girls in Sex Work in Kenya." (University of Nairobi, 2020), <http://erepository.uonbi.ac.ke/handle/11295/163233>.

<sup>19</sup> Helen Charnley and Pearson Nkhoma, "Moving beyond Contemporary Discourses: Children, Prostitution, Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking," *Critical and Radical Social Work* 8, no. 2 (2020): 205–21, <https://doi.org/10.1332/204986020X15945756343791>.

economic link; geographically, this benefits the countries in its circle, making transactions more accessible for humans and even children.<sup>20</sup>

*Fourth*, interactions in the child trafficking system are reflected in the conflict between culture and Islamic law. Maxwell took advantage of cultural norms and possible non-alignment with the principles of Islamic law to carry out his actions. This shows the complexity of dealing with child trafficking, requiring thoughtful dialogue between culture and Islamic law to create a shared understanding that is effective in fighting this phenomenon. Iwuoha (2020) Trafficking in children to fulfill sexual needs is something that is not permitted, including in Nigeria, and is also problematic and quite complex.<sup>21</sup>

*Fifth*, changes in the child trafficking system resulting from technology and globalization can be seen in this case. Maxwell took advantage of technological developments to approach and manipulate victims. It reflects changes in the dynamics of child trafficking in the Indo-Pacific, which are increasingly complex and challenging to overcome, as highlighted by interviewees 1 and 2. This case is proof that technological developments and globalization are the main drivers of change in the context of child trafficking in the region. Avis (2020) explains in his report that the keys to driving cases, including child trafficking, are technology and globalization.<sup>22</sup>

Then, from the Indonesian Child Protection Agency (LPAI) perspective. From here, Maxwell's case will be known using existing research results.

*First*, the mode of child trafficking in the Indo-Pacific region, as found in the research, reflects a severe problem that requires an in-depth response. The case of Ghislaine Maxwell in the United States in 2020 provides a clear illustration of the dominance of the online mode of child trafficking. In this case, perpetrators use technology to infiltrate

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<sup>20</sup> Mingjiang Li, "The Belt and Road Initiative: Geo-Economics and Indo-Pacific Security Competition," *International Affairs* 96, no. 1 (2020): 169–87, <https://doi.org/10.1093/ia/iiz240>.

<sup>21</sup> Nkechi Lilian Iwuoha, "Prevention Sex Trafficking and Perspectives from Parents in Ogwa Community Edo State Nigeria" (Walden University, 2020), <https://search.proquest.com/openview/f804e74f57fdb7928bae94c5e78b996a/1?pq-origsite=gscholar&cbl=51922&diss=y>.

<sup>22</sup> William Avis, "Key Drivers of Modern Slavery," *K4D Helpdesk Report 855* (Brighton, 2020), <https://opendocs.ids.ac.uk/opendocs/handle/20.500.12413/15581>.



and exploit children anonymously. My view highlights the urgency of a more sophisticated approach to detecting and mitigating this phenomenon. However, research also shows that the mode of child trafficking is not only limited to online channels but also involves loose border channels, such as cross-border flights. It demands a more intensive response and monitoring, underscoring the complexity of the problem and the need to address the variety of existing modes. This is in line with Malah and Asongu (2022), who states that there is consideration of sub-regional globalization, social control, culture, and historical facts, which are the moments to increase finances through human trafficking.<sup>23</sup>

*Second*, the level of understanding and enforcement of laws related to child trafficking is a critical indicator in dealing with this problem. The case of Ghislaine Maxwell shows that knowledge of child trafficking varies in the Indo-Pacific region. Several countries have tried to increase awareness and legal training regarding this issue, but there are still obstacles in identifying and handling cases effectively. According to the author, he believes that the main challenge is the lack of coordination between countries in enforcing laws related to child trafficking. Handling cases often requires cross-border cooperation, and a lack of legal harmonization between countries can hamper joint efforts. Therefore, differences in levels of understanding and lack of coordination are significant challenges that must be overcome in line with Rojas et al. (2019), which explains that a lack of local, historical, and structural considerations of a broad humanitarian nature influences the phenomenon of human trafficking.<sup>24</sup>

*Third*, reporting and recording child trafficking cases is the next focus. The case of Ghislaine Maxwell illustrates that despite improvements in reporting systems, there are still barriers to consistency, speed, and public trust. Even though the reporting system has improved, the main obstacle is the public's distrust of the security and confidentiality of information. In the author's view, efforts to

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<sup>23</sup> Yselle Flora Kuete Malah and Simplicie Asongu, "An Empirical Analysis of Human Trafficking in an Era of Globalization," *Journal of Economic Studies* 49, no. 7 (2022): 1269–83, <https://doi.org/10.1108/JES-06-2021-0288>.

<sup>24</sup> Daniel Quinteros Rojas, Roberto Dufraix Tapia, and Romina Ramos Rodríguez, "Human Trafficking Cases in Chile: Challenges for Reducing the 'Dark Figure,'" *The Palgrave International Handbook of Human Trafficking* 2 (2019): 1–14, [https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-63058-8\\_105](https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-63058-8_105).

increase trust and provide safe reporting mechanisms can significantly increase effectiveness in addressing child trafficking. Thus, challenges related to reporting must be addressed by strengthening the reporting framework and ensuring public trust in the process. According to research by Rafferty (2021), the existence of human trafficking can be significant if safe reporting mechanisms are efficient, which can be in the form of commitments in clear mandates and reporting lines that will create and improve or even minimize this incident.<sup>25</sup>

*Fourth*, the influence of international child trafficking on the economy is an essential indicator of the economic impact of this phenomenon. Maxwell's case emphasizes that international trade, while making a positive contribution to the economy, also provides opportunities for child traffickers to disguise their illegal activities. Understanding and wise management of the economic impact of international trade is the key to preventing the exploitation of children. Cooperation between countries is essential in developing policies to minimize these risks and ensure child protection. Therefore, understanding and managing the economic impact of international trade wisely, with strong cooperation between countries, is the key to preventing and protecting children from the risks of international trafficking. Research from Katz et al. (2021) explains that the existence of child protection from cooperation between countries to minimize such cases can save children in the countries concerned so that their health and safety are guaranteed.<sup>26</sup>

*Fifth*, the transformation of economic structure as the final indicator can also be seen through the lens of the Ghislaine Maxwell case. This case reflects that the growth of the informal sector can create opportunities for child traffickers. Further efforts are needed to strengthen the supervision and protection of children in these sectors to prevent exploitation. However, research also shows that child protection agencies adapt by developing strategies responsive to

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<sup>25</sup> Yvonne Rafferty, "The Identification, Recovery, and Reintegration of Victims of Child Trafficking within ASEAN: An Exploratory Study of Knowledge Gaps and Emerging Challenges," *Journal of Human Trafficking* 7, no. 2 (2021): 145–67, <https://doi.org/10.1080/23322705.2019.1689476>.

<sup>26</sup> Ilan Katz et al., "Child Maltreatment Reports and Child Protection Service Responses during COVID-19: Knowledge Exchange among Australia, Brazil, Canada, Colombia, Germany, Israel, and South Africa," *Child Abuse and Neglect* 116, no. 105078 (June 1, 2021): 1–17, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.chiabu.2021.105078>.

economic dynamics. Close collaboration with relevant parties is critical to identifying and overcoming potential risks of child trafficking. In conclusion, child protection needs to be strengthened with more intensive monitoring efforts and responsive strategies that involve collaboration across sectors and institutions amidst changes in economic structure. In line with Degenaar et al. (2022), child protection in the form of communities or institutions is needed to protect children from various things, including child trafficking in South Africa.<sup>27</sup>

It continued to the next point of view from the parents' perspective in Indonesia regarding the case that occurred in the United States with the suspect Maxwell.

*First*, on indicators of parental awareness and understanding, Ghislaine Maxwell, as a case example, shows that awareness of the seriousness of the problem of child trafficking in developed environments such as the United States is still limited. Although Maxwell may have an awareness of this problem, an understanding of the role of culture and Islamic law in the dynamics of child trafficking is still insufficient. This lack of knowledge can be seen in the criminal acts he commits, which involve children in illegal sexual activities. Thus, this case illustrates that further education is needed so society, especially parents, can protect children more effectively. Previous research from Dewi (2020) explains that the law needs to be understood; this is the basis that human or child trafficking is something cruel and criminal.<sup>28</sup>

*Second*, related to the role of the community in prevention, the case of Ghislaine Maxwell highlights the need for support groups and collective awareness in the fight against child trafficking. Although it has not been detailed in the case examples, involving the community and creating a safe environment is an essential element in preventing child trafficking. Communities can unite to monitor each other and raise awareness together, creating an environment that does not support the practice of child trafficking. Collaboration with government and non-

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<sup>27</sup> A. Degenaar, L.M. Fourie, and L. Holtzhausen, "A Strategic Integrated Communication Framework for Child Protection Organizations in South Africa," *International Journal of Strategic Communication* 16, no. 5 (2022): 700–721, <https://doi.org/10.1080/1553118X.2022.2093204>.

<sup>28</sup> Ida Monika Putu Ayu Dewi, "Persepektif In Human Trafficking Crime Law Number 39 Of 1999 On Human Rights Case Against Child Trafficking In Medan," *Ganesha Law Review* 2, no. 1 (2020): 70–76, <https://doi.org/10.23887/qlr.v2i1.121>.

profit institutions, as the second interviewee suggested, could also help improve education at the local level and entrench cultural values and Islamic legal principles to prevent this practice. Likewise, research from Avarvand et al. (2023) explains that the unity of child protection institutions from communities, non-communities, and government is considering carrying out activities to empathize with children and protect children and even older people by the law against human trafficking.<sup>29</sup>

*Third*, on indicators of personal experiences and challenges, Ghislaine Maxwell, the perpetrator in this case, creates concern and encouragement to be more actively involved in prevention efforts. Although the first interviewee in the research did not directly experience the situation of child trafficking around them, their concerns about children's safety were in line with the responses that emerged from the second interviewee in the Maxwell case. The feeling of needing to involve the community in looking after children, as expressed by the second interviewee, can be seen as a response to personal concerns that prompted real action to protect children from child trafficking practices. This follows Macy et al. (2023), which shows the public's concern and anger towards the increasingly rampant phenomenon of human trafficking in the United States.<sup>30</sup>

*Fourth*, participation in children's education, which two speakers discussed. Interviewee 1 tries to educate children about cultural and religious values, even though he admits there are deficiencies in understanding Islamic law. In contrast, interviewee 2 focused on integrating cultural and spiritual values in children's daily lives, emphasizing religious activities and providing a solid understanding of individual rights and responsibilities as top priorities. To relate this indicator to a concrete case, we can refer to the case of Ghislaine Maxwell in the United States in 2020. In this case, it appears that criminal activities involving child trafficking are carried out by

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<sup>29</sup> Fatemen Yosefi Avarvand, Hamed Rostami Najafabadi, and Seyed Mahdi Jalali, "Evaluation Of The Role And Programs Of The Government And Non-Governmental Organizations In The Protection Of Children And Adolescents With A View To The Law On The Protection Of Children And Adolescents," *Russian Law Journal* 11, no. 10s (2023): 569–81, <https://doi.org/10.52783/rlj.v11i10s.1758>.

<sup>30</sup> Rebecca J. Macy et al., "A Scoping Review of Human Trafficking Screening and Response," *Trauma, Violence, and Abuse* (SAGE Publications Ltd, July 1, 2023), <https://doi.org/10.1177/15248380211057273>.

manipulating children and infiltrating their lives through personal closeness. Maxwell not only exploited victims' financial or psychological needs but also used fake friendships and everyday activities such as shopping and going to the movies as a means to gain access and control over the children. Rahayu et al. (2021) that in Aceh, Indonesia, there is a value of local wisdom that involves the regulation of child trafficking, even though, according to regional law, this is a criminal act; this is due to the culture of globalization and consumerization.<sup>31</sup>

*Fifth*, expectations of the government and society. Interviewee 1 expressed his hope that the government would strengthen the legal framework involving cultural values and Islamic law to protect children. They also emphasized the need for community support to make prevention efforts more effective. Interviewee 2, meanwhile, hopes for better cooperation between the government, community, and related institutions to create a safe environment and support children's development. In the case of Ghislaine Maxwell, these hopes can be linked to the importance of government response and community support for law enforcement and protecting children from exploitation. The public needs to support government action in strengthening laws and policies involving cultural and religious values and play an active role in helping victims and preventing such crimes from occurring in the future. In line with research, Putra and Syafiq (2022) explain that acts of exploitation for sexual purposes are criminal acts in existing law in Indonesia. It has been demonstrated that there is an education program that the government has programmed to minimize this.<sup>32</sup>

Child trafficking is a severe phenomenon involving exploitation and violence against children, and cases such as that in the United States with Ghislaine Maxwell highlight the complexity of this issue. Even though this case did not occur directly in the Indo-Pacific, it can be used

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<sup>31</sup> Sri Walny Rahayu, Teuku Ahmad Yani, And Azhari Yahyaq, "Preventing Child Trafficking By Customary Institutions And Local Wisdom In Aceh Province, Indonesia," *IIUM Law Journal* 29, no. S2 (2021): 143–65, [https://doi.org/10.31436/iiumlj.v29i\(s2\).683](https://doi.org/10.31436/iiumlj.v29i(s2).683).

<sup>32</sup> Alif Arhanda Putra and Karimah Syafiq, "Preventive Model and Legal Protection of Victims of Sexual Violence Crimes in Higher Education Environment," *Jurnal Hukum Volkgeist* 7, no. 1 (2022): 68–76, <https://doi.org/10.35326/volkgeist.v7i1.2872>.

as a starting point for understanding and exploring the impact of child trafficking in the cultural context that applies in this region.<sup>33</sup>

Cultures in the Indo-Pacific are richly diverse, with each country having different traditions, values, and norms. Amidst this diversity, several cultural factors can contribute to child trafficking. One of these factors is the view of children, where some societies may have norms that treat children as less protected objects or have low awareness of children's rights.<sup>34</sup>

Apart from that, a value system that involves power and hierarchy can also provide opportunities for the practice of child trafficking. In some cultures, obedience to authority and gender inequality can create situations where children are vulnerable to exploitation. Urgent economic needs, in some cases, can also encourage parents to exploit their children to earn a living.

Forms of child trafficking in the Indo-Pacific may also include sexual exploitation, as occurred in the case of Ghislaine Maxwell. The concept of ignorance or willful ignorance of these issues may also play a role in involving children in illegal practices. In this context, education and increasing awareness of children's rights and the consequences of child trafficking are critical.

It is important to note that responses to child trafficking in the Indo-Pacific may vary across countries and cultures. Some countries may have robust legal frameworks to combat child trafficking, while others may face challenges in implementing and enforcing laws. In addition, social stigma and distrust of the legal system can be barriers to engaging the community to fight this practice.<sup>35</sup>

Efforts to address child trafficking in the Indo-Pacific need to involve collaboration between countries and interested parties.

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<sup>33</sup> Jill E.B. Coster van Voorhout, "How Human Trafficking Fuels Erosion of Liberal Democracies—In Fiction and Fact, and from within and Without," *Social Sciences* 11, no. 560 (2022): 5, <https://doi.org/10.3390/socsci11120560>.

<sup>34</sup> Troy T Lee-Brown, "The Rise and Strategic Significance of the Indo-Pacific" (University of Western Australia, 2021): 15-17, [https://research-repository.uwa.edu.au/files/115438440/THESIS\\_DOCTOR\\_OF\\_PHILOSOPHY\\_LEE\\_BROWN\\_Troy\\_Terence\\_2021.pdf](https://research-repository.uwa.edu.au/files/115438440/THESIS_DOCTOR_OF_PHILOSOPHY_LEE_BROWN_Troy_Terence_2021.pdf).

<sup>35</sup> Siti Syamsiyatun and Khanis Suvianita, "The Tension and Synergy of Ethical Sources in The Relations of Lecturers and Students in Indonesian Universities," *KARSA: Journal of Social and Islamic Culture* 27, no. 2 (December 17, 2019): 269, <https://doi.org/10.19105/karsa.v27i2.1474>.

Increasing regional cooperation in exchanging information, training law enforcement officers, and developing rehabilitation programs for victims can be strategic steps in dealing with this issue. In addition, a preventive approach involving public education about children's rights, the importance of gender equality, and the consequences of child trafficking is also needed. Inclusive economic development and improving community welfare can also help reduce the financial pressures that encourage the practice of child trafficking.

In dealing with cases like Ghislaine Maxwell's, the Indo-Pacific must ensure that its legal system is strong enough to prosecute child traffickers and provide adequate protection for victims. Eradicating child trafficking requires joint commitment, cultural change, and cross-sectoral and cross-country cooperation. Only with a holistic and sustainable approach can the Indo-Pacific truly overcome this severe challenge and protect future generations from the threat of child trafficking. Child trafficking is a serious issue involving exploitation and violence against children throughout the world. Although not directly occurring in the Indo-Pacific, cases such as that involving Ghislaine Maxwell in the United States give us an understanding of the complexity of this issue and how the prevailing culture in the Indo-Pacific can play a role in the context of child trafficking.

Cultures in the Indo-Pacific reflect a rich diversity of values, norms, and traditions. However, amidst this diversity, there are cultural factors that can influence the sustainability of child trafficking practices. One of them is the view of children. Some societies may have inadequate norms for protecting children's rights or even underestimate the importance of protecting children. In addition, a value system that involves hierarchy and obedience to authority can provide opportunities for child trafficking practices. Gender inequality can also be a factor that exacerbates the situation, making children more vulnerable to exploitation. Difficult economic conditions can encourage parents to exploit their children to earn a living.<sup>36</sup>

It is essential to understand that child trafficking in the Indo-Pacific is not only economic but can also involve forms of sexual exploitation. Cases such as that involving Ghislaine Maxwell show how the concept of ignorance or willful ignorance of these issues can be

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<sup>36</sup> Chege and Ucembe, "Kenya's over-Reliance on Institutionalization as a Child Care and Child Protection Model: A Root-Cause Approach." 8.

exploited to include children in illegal practices. Therefore, education and raising awareness regarding children's rights and the consequences of child trafficking are essential.

Reactions to child trafficking in the Indo-Pacific vary among countries and cultures. Some countries may have a relatively robust legal framework, but implementing and enforcing the law can be challenging. In addition, social stigma and lack of trust in the legal system can be barriers to engaging the community to fight this practice.

Collaboration between countries and interested parties is crucial in addressing child trafficking in the Indo-Pacific. Regional cooperation in exchanging information, training law enforcement officers, and developing rehabilitation programs for victims can be strategic steps in dealing with this issue effectively.

A preventive approach is also essential, involving public education about children's rights, the importance of gender equality, and the consequences of child trafficking. In addition, efforts to build an inclusive economy and improve community welfare can help reduce the economic pressures that encourage the practice of child trafficking.

When faced with cases like Ghislaine Maxwell's, the Indo-Pacific must ensure that its legal system is strong enough to prosecute child traffickers and provide adequate protection for victims. Eradicating child trafficking requires joint commitment, cultural change, and cross-sectoral and cross-country cooperation.

Only with a holistic and sustainable approach can the Indo-Pacific truly overcome this severe challenge and protect future generations from the threat of child trafficking. Governments, civil society, international institutions, and the private sector must come together to create a safe environment and protect children's rights throughout the region.

The Ghislaine Maxwell case involving child trafficking and sexual exploitation in the United States in 2020 created a significant impact on an international scale. However, several aspects need to be considered when considering cases like this in the context of Islamic law applicable in Indonesia.

Islamic law, or Sharia in Indonesia, is integral to the national legal system, especially in family and criminal law matters. In this context, child trafficking and sexual exploitation will be handled by referring to Sharia principles, which emphasize the protection of individual rights, including the rights of children.



In Islamic law, the protection of children's rights is given priority. Children are considered a trust and responsibility that must be protected by society and the state. Acts of sexual exploitation of children, such as those committed by Ghislaine Maxwell, are strictly prohibited in Islamic teachings. Providing appropriate punishment to protect children's rights is considered part of maintaining the welfare of society.

In this context, the concept of "lust," which is the basis of Maxwell's actions to satisfy Jeffrey Epstein, can be interpreted as an act of violating Sharia. Islamic law emphasizes control and restraint of desires in obedience to moral norms recognized in Islamic teachings. So, Maxwell's actions to satisfy his desires can be considered a severe violation of Islamic ethical principles.

Furthermore, regarding a conspiracy to persuade underage girls to engage in illegal sex, Islamic law strongly condemns this act. Protection of individual honor and rights, especially for those who are vulnerable, such as children, is a value that is highly emphasized in Islamic law. Such a conspiracy is considered detrimental and degrading to the victim and can be subject to strict penalties.

As for involving children in fake sexual activities, this is contrary to the principles of Islamic law. Islam views children as individuals who must be protected from all forms of exploitation and violence. Bringing children into a fake sexual environment can also be considered a severe violation of children's rights, as emphasized in Islamic law.<sup>37</sup>

The modus operandi used by Maxwell, namely establishing friendships with victims and taking them shopping or watching the cinema, also reflects an abuse of trust and personal closeness. In Islamic law, misuse of this trust can be considered an act contrary to the ethics and morality recommended by Islamic teachings.

In Islamic law in Indonesia, law enforcement officials are responsible for ensuring justice and protecting individual rights. Therefore, cases of this nature will require thorough investigations, fair investigations, and the imposition of punishments following Sharia principles.

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<sup>37</sup> Nur et al., "Understanding Human Trafficking In The Perspective Of Al-Azhar Interpretation (Review Surah Yusuf [12]: 19-20).", 161.

It is important to remember that Islamic law in Indonesia must be implemented, considering the broader national cultural and legal context. Apart from that, cooperation between government institutions, religious institutions, and civil society is also essential to achieve comprehensive justice in handling cases like this.

The Ghislaine Maxwell case involving child trafficking and sexual exploitation in the United States in 2020 raises questions about how Islamic law in force in Indonesia can respond and handle situations like this. In this context, it is necessary to understand the urgency of seriously taking cases like this and how Islamic legal values can provide moral and ethical guidance in upholding justice.

The urgency of handling cases such as those involving Ghislaine Maxwell can be seen from the long-term impact on victims, society, and public morality in general. Children who are victims of trafficking and sexual exploitation often experience deep trauma, which can affect their psychological and emotional development. Therefore, a swift and decisive legal response is essential to protect victims' rights and provide adequate remedies.

Within the framework of Islamic law, protecting children is a top priority. Children are considered a trust that must be protected with full responsibility. This principle arises from Islamic teachings, emphasizing the importance of maintaining individual rights, especially those related to human life and dignity. In the case of Ghislaine Maxwell, where children were used as tools to fulfill their desires, this principle was fundamentally ignored.

In Islamic law, protecting children is moral and has a solid legal basis. Islamic teachings provide concrete guidance regarding the protection of children's rights, including the right to live, receive education, and be free from all forms of exploitation and violence. Therefore, law enforcement agencies in Indonesia must handle this case to ensure that these values are reflected in the judicial process and the punishment given to the perpetrator.

Furthermore, the abuse of trust and personal closeness used by Maxwell in carrying out his child trafficking modus operandi shows the need to uphold ethics and morality in Islamic law. Islam encourages individuals to maintain integrity and justice in all their actions. Inducing children to engage in fake sexual activities is a violation of the moral norms recognized in Islamic teachings.

Enforcement of Islamic law in cases like this also provides an opportunity to educate the public about the moral and ethical values recommended by Islamic teachings. This education is essential to change society's views and attitudes towards child trafficking and sexual exploitation, as well as to prevent the recurrence of similar cases in the future.<sup>38</sup>

Also, serious handling of cases like this can help reduce social stigma towards victims. Children who are victims of trafficking often face discrimination and inequality in society. By demanding justice firmly, Islamic law can play a role in changing society's perception of victims and increasing understanding of the importance of supporting them.

Continuous handling of cases like this also provides an opportunity to increase cooperation between government institutions, religious institutions, and civil society. Strong collaboration between various parties is needed to create an effective system for protecting children's rights and preventing cases of child trafficking in the future. Islamic law not only covers the criminal side but also emphasizes the importance of a holistic approach to maintaining the welfare of society.

Furthermore, consistent legal handling based on sharia principles can be a positive example for other countries in the Indo-Pacific. By facing this challenge decisively, Indonesia can play a leading role in building regional awareness of the importance of involving Islamic law in fighting child trafficking and sexual exploitation.

In a global context, where child trafficking and sexual exploitation are cross-border issues, Indonesia can play a leading role in efforts to prevent and handle similar cases. Regional cooperation in exchanging information, training law enforcement officers, and developing rehabilitation programs for victims can be enhanced through coordination between countries in the Indo-Pacific.

The research findings shed light on the intricacies of child protection paradigms in the Indo-Pacific region, specifically in Indonesia, where dissonance exists between the status of advanced nations and the imperative need for the development of thought and implementation of Islamic law to safeguard children from trafficking.

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<sup>38</sup> Ngunjiri, "Access to Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights of Underage Girls in Sex Work in Kenya." 19.

From the perspective of Islamic legal experts, the understanding of Islamic law concerning child protection aligns with human rights principles and the Child Protection Law of 2014. The multifaceted factors influencing child trafficking encompass societal and economic conditions within a country. The movement, interaction, and evolution within the child trafficking system reflect the complexity of this issue.

In the realm of child protection agencies, the emphasis is on dominant modes of child trafficking through online channels and porous border crossings. Challenges primarily revolve around varying levels of understanding and a lack of coordination among nations. The nuanced insights from legal experts and protection agencies highlight the need for a comprehensive and collaborative approach to address the multifaceted dimensions of child trafficking.

Moreover, the research delves into parents' perspectives, underscoring the significance of education, community roles in prevention, and personal experiences and challenges related to concerns about child safety. Parents expressed the need for further education and active community involvement in discussions and educational programs to enhance understanding, particularly concerning the impact of culture and Islamic law on child trafficking dynamics.

The parental aspirations underscore the importance of strengthening legal frameworks and policies involving cultural values and Islamic law and garnering community support for more effective preventive measures. Overall, the research provides critical insights into the role of Islamic law and collaboration between governments and communities in safeguarding children from trafficking in the Indo-Pacific region.

The findings call for reevaluating existing paradigms, urging a shift towards a more inclusive approach that integrates Islamic principles and cultural values. Islamic legal perspectives aligning with human rights principles highlight the potential for a harmonious coexistence between cultural norms and legal frameworks. The research emphasizes the need for dialogues and wise approaches to managing cultural norms and Islamic law interaction.

In the context of child trafficking dynamics, the research highlights the profound impact of technological advancements and globalization. The evolution of child trafficking methods involving technology, cross-border transactions, and widespread consequences necessitates a holistic understanding of these changes. Legal experts

underscore the importance of adapting legal frameworks to address the challenges of technology and globalization, advocating for international collaboration to develop policies that minimize risks and ensure child protection.

The agency perspectives spotlight the urgency of addressing online and cross-border trafficking modes. Challenges related to varying levels of understanding and insufficient cross-border law harmonization become focal points, urging the need for enhanced cooperation. Despite advancements in reporting systems, consistency, speed, and public trust persist. Overcoming these challenges requires strengthening reporting frameworks, ensuring data accuracy, and building public trust through secure reporting mechanisms.

The influence of international child trafficking on the economy introduces a nuanced discussion about balancing economic growth and child protection. While international trade contributes positively to the economy, it also provides opportunities for traffickers to conceal illegal activities. Both legal experts and protection agencies advocate for a nuanced understanding and wise management of the economic impacts of international trade to prevent child exploitation. Cross-border cooperation becomes imperative to formulate policies that minimize risks and ensure child protection.

The research also underscores the significance of adapting child protection strategies to changing economic structures. The growth of the informal sector creates vulnerabilities for child exploitation, necessitating intensified monitoring and protection efforts. Collaborative efforts involving various industries and institutions are pivotal in identifying and addressing potential risks of child trafficking amidst economic transformations.

Parental perspectives offer personal narratives that resonate with broader concerns about child safety. While not directly experiencing child trafficking situations, parents express worries based on the information they encounter. Proactive responses from parents involve active engagement in preventive efforts and community involvement to safeguard children. The emphasis on cultural and religious education for children becomes pivotal, with varying approaches to instill values and principles.

Parental expectations from the government and society underscore the need for strengthened legal frameworks incorporating cultural and Islamic values. Collaboration between government,

society, and relevant institutions emerges as a critical strategy to create a safe environment and foster optimal development for children in Indonesia.

## Conclusion

This research explores the child protection paradigm in the Indo-Pacific region, especially in Indonesia, by highlighting the imbalance between the status of developed countries and the need to develop thinking and implementation of Islamic law. The research results indicate that from the perspective of Islamic legal experts, understanding Islamic law regarding child protection is in line with human rights principles and the Child Protection Law. Factors influencing child trafficking involve the social and economic conditions of the country, while the movements, interactions, and changes in the child trafficking system reflect the complexity of this problem.

On the other hand, child protection agencies highlight the mode of child trafficking through online channels and loose borders. At the same time, the main obstacles involve differences in levels of understanding and lack of coordination between countries. Parents emphasized the importance of education, the role of the community in prevention, their personal experiences and challenges related to concerns about children's safety, and participation in their children's education. Parents' hopes include strengthening legal and policy frameworks involving cultural values and Islamic law and community support for more effective prevention efforts.

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