

STUDY OF THE ROLE OF GENDER IN ISLAMIC EDUCATION PERSPECTIVE OF FEMALE SCHOLARS

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Abstrak

Penelitian ini berfokus pada akademisi ulama perempuan secara global dan juga ulama perempuan di Indonesia, dengan bertujuan menganalisis peran ulama dalam pendidikan Islam, gender dalam pendidikan Islam perspektif ulama perempuan dan kontribusi ulama perempuan dalam pendidikan Islam. Penelitian ini menggunakan teknik penelitian kualitatif dengan pendekatan studi literatur (*library research*). Berdasarkan temuan dari tinjauan literatur ilmiah, ulama perempuan di lembaga pendidikan Islam memiliki peran penting sebagai penafsir teks-teks keagamaan tetapi juga agen perubahan sosial dengan menciptakan strategi pendidikan yang membebaskan, memberdayakan, konsen terhadap kebutuhan perempuan dan mengembangkan kurikulum perspektif keadilan gender. Ulama perempuan telah berhasil menciptakan rencana alternatif yang inklusif dan mengubah metode pendidikan berdasarkan nilai-nilai keadilan gender meskipun ada beberapa hambatan. Intelektual dan spiritual ulama perempuan sebagai landasan untuk mengembangkan sistem pendidikan Islam yang kontekstual. Kontribusi intelektual melalui tulisan dan keterlibatan masyarakat juga memperluas pendidikan Islam dan kesetaraan gender menjadi inspirasi bagi generasi perempuan dalam kepemimpinan.

Kata kunci: Peran Gender, Pendidikan Islam, Ulama Perempuan

Abstract

This research examines female scholars globally and female scholars in Indonesia by examining the role of female scholars, aiming to analyze the role of female scholars in Islamic education, gender in Islamic education from the perspective of female scholars, and the contribution of female scholars in Islamic education. This research uses qualitative research techniques with a literature study approach (*library research*). Based on the findings from the review of scientific literature, female scholars in Islamic educational institutions have an important role as interpreters of religious texts but also as agents of social change by creating educational strategies that liberate, empower, concentrate on the needs of women, and develop curriculum with a gender justice perspective. Women scholars have succeeded in creating inclusive alternative plans and changing educational methods based on gender justice values despite some obstacles. Women clerics' intellect and spirituality are foundations for developing a contextualized Islamic education system.

Intellectual contributions through writing and community engagement also expand Islamic education and gender equality to inspire generations of women in leadership.

Keywords: Gender Role, Islamic Education, Female Scholars

A. INTRODUCTION

Education is the primary foundation for a nation's progress and individuals' development. In the context of gender, education plays a crucial role in realizing equality, empowering women, improving the quality of health, and strengthening women's participation in social and political decision-making. Education is not just a knowledge transfer but a transformative tool that can overcome systemic gender disparities and empower women in various aspects of life. Educated women have a greater opportunity to be economically independent, make informed decisions about their health, and actively participate in social and political life (Yunika et al., 2024).

The issue of gender equality and the liberation of women's roles in education in the last decade is still an issue that various circles have hotly discussed. The discussion led to the redefinition of the concept of gender, gender mainstreaming in various fields, elimination of discriminatory acts and stereotypes against women, reinterpretation of gender in Islamic religious teachings comprehensively following the situation of society, and women's empowerment through the provision of equal rights and access to education for men. The view that men and women are inherently created equal, but it is undeniable that they are created differently with their respective characteristics. Men and women are in the framework of equality and equality of their rights and carry out their life roles (Hakim & Muhid, 2023).

Formal religious education must present gender-sensitive interpretive lessons and involve women scholars as teachers and policymakers; this will "test and change the old mindset." Alignment of gender policies with international commitments. Islamic countries can use global initiatives (UNESCO's *Gender Equality Strategy* and United Nations education conventions) as a reference. International recommendations, such as the Pakistan conference underlining women's education as a fundamental right, can be used as the basis for enforcing national education laws.

They play a role in conveying religious knowledge and interpreting religious texts with a gender perspective, advocating for women's rights, and promoting inclusive religious discourse (ISIF, 2022). Understanding the role of gender in education, it is important to distinguish between gender and gender concepts. Gender refers to the biological and physiological differences between males and females, including differences in chromosomes, hormones, and reproductive organs. The biological basis of sex is generally considered fixed and universal, especially regarding reproduction. The scientific consensus identifies sex as determined by biological factors present from birth, mainly focusing on reproductive abilities and related physical characteristics (Charirin Zuhriana, 2017).

Since the early days of Islam, women have been active as teachers, leaders, and initiators of educational institutions, especially for women. Indonesian women scholars such as Nyai Khoiriyah Hasyim and Rahmah el-Yunusiyah established pioneering educational institutions that gave women access to religious and secular knowledge, challenging traditional boundaries (Utami, 2023). The dedication given by women scholars to the development of Islamic education includes providing enlightenment to the community by organizing *Majelis taklim*, establishing educational institutions or Islamic schools, and establishing organizations that help women to get their rights (Helmiannoor & Musyarapah, 2019).

The role of women scholars in the development of Islam and social society has become an increasing concern in scientific discourse, both at the local and global levels. Although women's contributions in the field of clerics often do not receive the same spotlight as male scholars, recent studies show that women scholars have a strategic position in voicing the values of gender justice, religious moderation, and community empowerment based on Islamic values (Latifah, 2020; Rinaldo, 2013). In the Indonesian context, the presence of women scholars, such as those who are members of the Indonesian Women's Ulama Congress (in Bahasa abbreviated as KUPI), shows that this role is symbolic and substantive in influencing religious discourse and policies.

In the Islamic education landscape in Indonesia, women scholars have a significant role, although their contributions are often underrepresented in the historical record (Zahara Adibah, 2020). Islamic boarding schools run by female clerics show greater openness to dialogue on women's rights in Islam, reproductive health education, and protection against sexual violence. Providing tangible evidence about the practical impact of the perspective of women scholars in Islamic education (Mahmud, 2021).

From an Islamic perspective, education is seen as a tool of liberation from gender discrimination, which aligns with the underlying principles of justice and equality (Fitria et al., 2024). Inclusive and equitable education, based on Islamic values, empowers individuals to critically analyze and reject discriminatory practices towards a more just and egalitarian society. Gender equality in education is essential to create an inclusive and equitable learning environment, supporting the well-being and comfort of all learners regardless of gender. An educational environment that is equal and free from gender bias is essential to foster a sense of security, respect, and belonging for all students, which ultimately enhances their holistic learning and development experience (Syafri, 2024).

Gender issues have become increasingly relevant in the era of globalization, penetrating various aspects of life, including the education sector. In the context of Islamic education, discourses on gender are often confronted with the challenge of the perception that Islam supports patriarchal culture, which in turn has led to the emergence of women activists who seek to clarify and reform this understanding. Education consistently plays a key role in eliminating discrimination against women by empowering human resources, as discrimination remains widespread in various aspects of life. (Yumnah, 2021).

The role and contribution of women scholars in spreading fiqh teachings in Indonesia, the dynamics of digital da'wah, and efforts to break through religious patriarchy. Women have a crucial role in three centers of education, and gender bias still exists and requires a systemic approach to overcome. Contemporary women scholars continue to overcome difficulties and

distance themselves from patriarchal culture by presenting more progressive and interesting fiqh teachings. They utilize digital technology, especially social media and platforms such as da'wah and the rapid and widespread dissemination of Islamic teachings (Qoirunnisa et al., 2023).

Education is a universal right for every individual and is an essential provision for women, especially in their role as the first *madrasah*, to filter information and develop children's potential. Education is important for women, and Islam values gender equality in education. This creates a powerful and reinterpretable narrative to advocate for higher education for women. This perspective can be used to gain broader support for women's education in conservative Islamic communities, framing it as essential to the well-being and moral development of families and communities, rather than solely as a challenge to gender roles (Mufida et al., 2024).

Curriculum innovations and teaching methods include integrating religious and general education, as well as practical skills that are a significant step away from traditional religious schools that often focus only on religious texts. It shows a pragmatic and forward-looking approach, recognizing the need for women to be equipped with broader social roles and economic independence. This innovative curriculum design by women scholars suggests a religiously grounded and socially relevant model for contemporary Islamic education, preparing women for diverse roles in an increasingly modern society (Zahra et al., 2024).

Teachers' attitudes and expectations can be influenced by gender stereotypes, leading to different treatment of female and male students. Unconscious bias among educators can result in boys and girls receiving different levels of attention, encouragement, and opportunities in the classroom. Teachers may have different expectations for girls and boys in specific subjects or activities, potentially causing girls to be overlooked or discouraged from pursuing their interests in fields traditionally dominated by men, and vice versa. Gender stereotypes can affect students' academic performance, confidence, and mental health. Internalizing gender stereotypes can negatively impact students' beliefs about their abilities and overall well-being. Girls may underestimate their abilities in STEM fields due to societal stereotypes. At the same time, boys may feel pressured to conform to narrow definitions of masculinity, potentially affecting their mental health and academic choices (Kompasiana, 2023).

B. RESEARCH METHODS

The research method used is qualitative research with a library *research approach*. This study aims to analyze the role of scholars in Islamic education, gender in Islamic education, the perspective of women scholars, and the contribution of women scholars in Islamic education. The author chose this approach because it delves deeper into the narratives and arguments of women scholars, analyzing the various academic literature available. Furthermore, written sources that represent the voices and thoughts of women scholars are relevant and include conference outcomes. It is hoped that it can provide a comprehensive picture of the role of women scholars, the challenges they face, and the strategies used in responding to contemporary problems.

The literature study approach was used, and the collected data were analyzed descriptively. Primary sources, as the main information collected from sources directly through methods relevant to the purpose of this study, discuss the role of women scholars in education, such as the results of conferences. Secondary sources provide an additional perspective in complementing information to strengthen findings from primary sources, such as books, articles, and relevant journals discussing the contribution of women scholars in education. The data analysis techniques used in this study include identifying, classifying, and analyzing data from various literature sources. The analysis was carried out thematically through the stages of data collection, data presentation, and conclusion drawing (Sari, 2021).

C. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

1. The Role of Women Scholars in Islamic Education

Education in Islam is seen as a process of knowledge transfer and moral formation, liberation, and humanity. In this context, women scholars play an important role in instilling Islamic values with a gender-sensitive, inclusive, and transformative perspective. Many contemporary women scholars emphasize that education must liberate women from social backwardness and empower them to become agents of change in society (Latifah, 2020; Subhan, 2011). The thinking of women scholars, such as Nyai Hj. Badriyah Fayumi and Dr. Nur Rofiah place education as a strategic instrument in building critical awareness among Muslim women. Through Islamic boarding schools, taklim councils, and discussion forums, they voice the importance of interpretations that favor justice and equality (Rofiah, 2021). In this framework, education not only functions as a means of strengthening faith and knowledge but also as a tool for deconstructing the patriarchal discourse that has dominated the Islamic education system.

The founding of Al-Qarawiyyin University by Fatima Al-Fihri in 857-859 AD showed that Muslim women helped spearhead higher education institutions. UNESCO and Guinness World Records recognize the university as the oldest university in the world, and it is still in continuous operation. Historical evidence is that Muslim women participated in society and became pioneers in shaping higher education institutions. Fatima Al-Fihri runs the construction of the university while fasting spiritually as an expression of religious devotion, showing that education can be rooted in ethical and moral values. Al-Qarawiyyin University became a model for the establishment of early European universities. The university was important in translating scientific, philosophical, and medical knowledge from the Islamic world to Europe, especially in the Toledo era. Important figures such as Pope Sylvester II, Ibn Khaldun, and Ibn Rushd have intellectual ties to this university (Cengic, 2020).

This study is important because so far, many narratives of Islamic education have been built on a male-dominated perspective, so they often ignore women's experiences and needs. Through the approach of women's scholars, education is no longer solely a tool of reproduction of conservative values, but also a space for criticism, liberation, and strengthening the position of women in Muslim society (Badran, 2009; Rinaldo, 2013). Therefore, a deeper understanding of the perspectives of women scholars on gender and education issues is the first step to realizing an Islamic education system that is just and equal. The perspectives and experiences

of women scholars can provide valuable insights into developing more inclusive and gender-responsive educational policies and practices in Islamic institutions and the broader education system. By understanding the challenges and successes of women scholars in education, policymakers and education leaders can develop targeted interventions and reforms to promote gender equality and inclusivity in the educational environment (Syafriзал, 2024).

Scholars have revealed that the emancipation of women in history has proven to have a significant impact the world of Islamic education by maintaining the originality of Islamic scientific treasures to bring Muslims to a better civilization. This gives a message that scholars, not only men, but also women, both play a significant role in jointly carrying out their duties in developing science and carrying out their duties as *caliphs fil ardli*, so that men and women have an equal position in education (Zainal Abidin, 2015). In this framework, women scholars function as agents of interpretation and as social actors who shape the direction and orientation of Islamic education going forward. In addition to access inequalities, gender stereotypes are also still prevalent in education in Indonesia, influencing students' perceptions and career choices. Traditional notions of masculinity and femininity are often reinforced in educational materials and teaching practices, which can limit students' aspirations and perpetuate gender bias (Savitri et al., 2024).

Thus, gender is the behavior, role, identity, and expression socially constructed by men, women, and people with gender diversity. Gender is fluid, varies between cultures and periods, and is learned through socialization. It includes societal expectations and norms associated with being male or female. In contrast to the biological basis of sex, gender roles and identities are shaped by cultural norms, traditions, and social interactions. What is considered "masculine" or "feminine" can differ significantly between societies and evolve. The importance of differentiating between sex and gender in the context of education is to address socially constructed inequalities. Recognizing gender as a social construct allows the understanding that inequalities arising from gender roles and expectations can be challenged and changed through education and social reform. Distinguishing between the biological reality of sex and the social construction of gender, we can identify and address the root causes of gender-based disparities in education, such as unequal access, biased curriculum, and stereotypical teaching practices (Syafriзал, 2024).

The history of Islam records the existence of educated women, including the wives of the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) and women scholars who contributed to Islamic hadith and fiqh. Women's Islamic scholarly traditions have deep historical roots, suggesting that women have long played a significant intellectual role in Islam. Figures such as Aisha bint Abu Bakr were significant in conveying Islamic knowledge, highlighting the acceptance and importance of women's scientific contributions in Islamic history. In Indonesia, the emergence and recognition of Islamic scholars (women scholars) has grown throughout history. Indonesia has a rich history of women scholars who have significantly contributed to Islamic thought and education, although their stories are often marginalized. From the 18th century, such as Fatimah al-Banjari, to contemporary scholars, women scholars have been active in various regions of Indonesia, contributing to the intellectual and spiritual landscape (Zahara Adibah, 2020).

The formation of organizations such as the Indonesian Women's Ulema Congress (KUPI) in the 21st century signifies a new movement to recognize and empower Islamic women

scholars. The establishment of KUPI demonstrates a contemporary drive to recognize the authority and contributions of women clerics formally and to address issues of gender inequality from an Islamic perspective. KUPI serves as a platform for women scholars to network, share knowledge, express religious opinions, and advocate for women's rights and welfare in the Muslim community (ISIF, 2022).

Women scholars have contributed significantly to Islamic education in Indonesia through various means. Establish and manage educational institutions, including women's boarding schools (Islamic boarding schools for women). Women clerics are important in creating educational spaces to empower and educate Muslim women. Figures such as Nyai Khoiriyah Hasyim and Rahmah el-Yunusiyah established pioneering educational institutions that gave women access to religious and secular knowledge, challenging traditional boundaries (Utami, 2023). They also develop a curriculum and teaching methodology that is inclusive and addresses the specific needs of female students. Women scholars often innovate in their educational approaches, developing relevant and empowering methods and content for female learners (Rohmaniyah, 2023).

Rahmah el-Yunusiyah, for example, introduced modern teaching methods and included common subjects in her school curriculum for women, realizing the importance of holistic education. In addition, they serve as role models and mentors for Muslim girls and women, inspiring them to pursue knowledge and leadership. The achievements of women scholars set a strong example for Muslim girls, showing that women can achieve a high level of religious knowledge and leadership. By embodying piety, knowledge, and leadership, women scholars serve as living examples that challenge limiting stereotypes and encourage girls to aspire to scientific and leadership roles. Women scholars also contribute to intellectual discourse on Islamic education through writings, lectures, and community involvement. Figures such as Fatimah al-Banjari wrote works on Islamic fiqh. In contrast, others, such as Zakiyah Daradjat, significantly contributed to Islamic psychology and its educational application (Utami, 2023).

The existence of women scholars as teachers and leaders provides a strong example for Muslim students and women in general, showing that women can achieve a high level of knowledge and leadership in Islamic studies. Some women scholars even pioneered the establishment of special educational institutions for women, realizing the importance of education that suits their needs and empowerment (Zahara Adibah, 2020).

The thoughts and views of women scholars on education emphasize the equal obligation and right for women and men to seek knowledge in Islam. Women scholars consistently advocate for the Islamic principle that the pursuit of knowledge is a religious obligation for all Muslims, regardless of gender. They often quote relevant Quranic verses and hadiths that emphasize the importance of seeking knowledge for both men and women, highlighting the universality of this obligation. They also recognize the importance of education for women to effectively carry out their roles in the family and society. Women scholars emphasized that educated women are better able to become active and contributing mothers, wives, and members of society. They often highlight women's role as the first educators for children (*madrasah ula*), underlining the importance of their education in shaping future generations. Women scholars also have views on the need for women to be independent, resilient, and to contribute to the public sphere. They often challenge traditional views that limit women to the

domestic sphere, advocating for their rights to education and participation in the wider society. They believe education empowers women to be independent, make informed decisions, and contribute their talents and skills to improve society and the nation (Rohmaniyah, 2023).

Women scholars are present in the educational environment as teachers, managers, leaders, and agents of social change. They are not only pioneers in opening up access to education for women, but also active in developing curriculum, learning methods, and challenging gender stereotypes that hinder women's progress in education. Through the establishment of educational institutions, illiteracy eradication initiatives, and the development of leadership programs, women scholars have made a real impact in improving the quality of education and the social status of women in Indonesia and even globally.

2. Gender in Islamic Education from the Perspective of Women Scholars

The role of women scholars in Islamic educational institutions, especially Islamic boarding schools and madrasas, is now increasingly fundamental. Women clerics play the role of teachers, but also as caretakers of Islamic boarding schools, curriculum managers, and education policy makers. For example, women scholars' involvement in compiling women-friendly teaching materials with a gender justice perspective is important to Islamic education reform in Indonesia (Rinaldo, 2013).

Curriculum content and textbooks often contain gender biases, portraying women in domestic roles and men in the public sphere. The lack of representation or stereotypical portrayal of women in educational materials can reinforce traditional gender roles and limit girls' perceptions of their potential. When textbooks and other learning resources primarily show men in leadership positions or engaging in professional activities while depicting women primarily in a domestic environment, it can subtly convey the message that this is an expected or appropriate role for each gender (Intan, 2022).

The historical facts about Fatima Al-Fihri and Al-Qarawiyyin University in Morocco, still missing from many Western curricula and encyclopedias, reflect historiographical bias and Eurocentrism. The disregard for the contribution of Muslim women in the history of global education demonstrates the urgency of recontextualizing the narrative of educational history. The interesting thing is that revisions are constantly being made, but this may be some reconceptualization that can explain the precise influence of these individuals, the founders of modern college education. The facts mentioned open the field for a new perspective on education and knowledge that is the basis for the answer to the truth about Fatima al-Fihri, her life and work, worthy of inclusion in the curriculum of modern university knowledge (Cengic, 2020).

In education, gender refers to how societal expectations and norms related to gender affect educational opportunities, experiences, and outcomes for students and educators. Gender dynamics permeate all aspects of education, from access and participation to curriculum content and teacher interaction, often leading to disparities that harm certain genders. Public beliefs about appropriateness for women and men can shape education policy, influence parents' decisions about school, influence how teachers interact with students, and determine curriculum content and delivery. Gender-responsive education aims to treat them fairly and ensure equal opportunities to all students, regardless of gender. A gender-responsive approach aims to

eliminate gender bias and create an education system catering to all learners' diverse needs and potential. This involves critically examining existing educational practices and policies to identify and overcome gender-based barriers or biases, ensuring all students have an equal opportunity to succeed (Syafriyal, 2024).

In addition, by studying the experiences of women scholars, we can recognize the specific challenges they face and overcome in pursuing and providing Islamic education, often amid social and cultural limitations. This understanding highlights the resilience and determination that women need to participate and lead in Islamic education, often in the face of the limitations set by society. Further, highlighting women scholars' achievements and intellectual contributions can inspire and serve as role models for current and future generations of Muslim women in education and leadership. By showcasing the success of women scholars, we can challenge the stereotypes that limit and empower Muslim women to aspire and reach their full potential in various fields, including education and religious science (Zahara Adibah, 2020).

This study is important considering the strong patriarchal bias in the structure of religious authorities that often ignore or underestimate the legitimacy of women's clergy (Ong, 2012). Various studies show that women scholars have the same intellectual and spiritual capacity as men and can provide a more equitable and inclusive perspective on issues such as reproductive health, gender-based violence, and women's rights in Islam (Badran, 2009; Mahmud, 2021). Women's emancipation in aspects of life shows significant changes. More and more women are actively participating, realizing their potential and playing a role in the life of a more advanced society. Gender equality is an essential issue that continues to be fought for and is being realized in various fields, including education (Haq, 2020).

According to women scholars, education for women has an essential meaning. They affirm that education is a fundamental right and obligation for women in Islam, essential for their personal and spiritual development. Women scholars firmly state that seeking knowledge is a command from Allah and the Prophet PBUH, which applies equally to men and women (Abdul Haris, 2021). One of the studies conducted by Mahmud shows that Islamic boarding schools cared for by female scholars are more open to dialogue on women's rights in Islam, reproductive health education, and protection against sexual violence. This confirms that the perspective of women scholars in the world of education not only adds a new dimension but also enriches the narrative of Islamic education that is more humane and responsive to social reality (Mahmud, 2021).

The teachings of the Qur'an are aimed at eroding all differences that discriminate against women and men, especially in the field of humanity. Meanwhile, women's rights, both outside the home, the right to access education, political rights, and so on, are equal to those held by men. The Qur'an always talks about the rights and obligations of both men and women in the context of justice and gender equality. Thus, the dictum of the teachings of the Qur'an has never taught or even rejected all acts of discrimination, subordination, and violence against women (Hakim & Muhid, 2023).

The Islamic perspective on gender in education emphasizes equality and the importance of education for women and men. Islamic teachings provide a strong theological basis for gender equality in education, highlighting the shared responsibility of both genders to seek

knowledge. Many Muslim scholars argue that the Quran and the Sunnah promote equal obligations and rights for women and men to pursue education, emphasizing that science is essential for spiritual and social progress for all (Fitria et al., 2024).

Education empowers women to contribute meaningfully to the family, community, and nation. Educated women are considered agents of positive change and development at all levels of society (Yunika et al., 2024). Furthermore, education equips women with the knowledge and skills to deal with the complexities of modern life and educate educated and pious children. Women scholars recognize the crucial role of mothers in shaping the next generation and emphasize that their education is essential to raising knowledgeable and moral children. They often refer to the concept of women as the first school for their children, underscoring the direct relationship between a mother's education and the quality of her children's upbringing (Cahyawati & Muqowim, 2023).

Women scholars have initiated various educational programs and initiatives to support women's education. They established girls-only schools and boarding schools to provide access to education in a safe and supportive environment. Establishing institutions such as "*Madrasah Diniyah li al-Banat*" and "Pesantren" demonstrates a commitment to providing girls with quality Islamic education and leadership opportunities. Women Scholars also took the initiative to combat illiteracy among women and provide basic education. The establishment of "Regret School" by Rahmah el-Yunusiyah to eradicate illiteracy among mothers is a prime example of such an initiative (Utami, 2023). Contemporary programs for women's leadership development and advanced Islamic studies are also being developed by women scholars and the organizations they lead. Initiatives such as the Indonesian Women's Ulema Scholarship (SUPI) program and the Women's Ulama Cadre Education Scholarship (BPKUP) show a contemporary commitment to empowering women in Islamic science and leadership (KemenPPPA, 2022).

Women Scholars also have views on the role of men in supporting women's education. Support from male family members (husbands, fathers, brothers) is often very important for female scholars to pursue their education and establish educational institutions. The encouragement and support from male relatives play a significant role in enabling Women Scholars to overcome societal barriers and achieve their educational and professional goals. Rahmah El-Yunusiyah, for example, benefited from her brother's support in establishing her school, highlighting the importance of male allies in advancing women's education (Utami, 2023). Some male Islamic scholars also recognize the importance of women's education and their contribution to Islamic knowledge. Although patriarchal views are historically prevalent, some male scholars have recognized and supported the advancement of women's education and recognized their intellectual contributions. The recognition of the role of women in the transmission of hadith and historical examples of female scholars shows that not all male scholars have a restrictive view of women's education (Khurotul Asna, 2023).

Women scholars are likely to emphasize the importance of men playing a proactive role in ensuring that girls and women have access to and support in their educational efforts within the family and society. This can involve challenging traditional norms prioritizing boys' education, providing financial and emotional support, and creating an environment allowing women's educational advancement (Yunika et al., 2024).

Women scholars play a strategic role in interpreting Islamic teachings in a gender-fair manner, including education. They criticized patriarchal bias in the interpretation and practice of Islamic education that hindered women's active participation. Instead, they offer educational discourses and practices that emphasize justice, equality, and empowerment as reflected in the work of figures such as Dr. Nur Rofiah, Nyai Badriyah Fayumi, and the participants of the Indonesian Women's Ulema Congress (KUPI) (Latifah, 2020; Rofiah, 2021).

Addressing gender stereotypes in education, women scholars often challenge traditional interpretations of religious texts that perpetuate gender inequality. They are engaged in reinterpreting Islamic texts to offer a more equitable understanding of gender, challenging patriarchal biases embedded in traditional interpretations. It involves examining religious texts' historical and cultural context and using a hermeneutic approach that prioritizes justice and equality for both genders (Fitria et al., 2024).

Women scholars promote an inclusive curriculum and teaching materials and avoid gender bias and stereotypes. They are likely to advocate for developing and using educational resources that present a balanced and non-stereotypical portrayal of gender, promote inclusivity, and challenge traditional gender roles. This includes revising textbooks, teaching aids, and classroom activities to ensure they do not reinforce harmful gender stereotypes and represent women's and men's diverse roles and contributions to society (Savitri et al., 2024).

Women scholars emphasized the importance of raising awareness among educators and students about gender bias and the importance of gender equality. They are likely to emphasize the need for educational initiatives that educate teachers and students about the existence and negative impacts of gender bias, fostering a culture of gender equality and respect within the educational environment. This can involve workshops, training programs, and classroom discussions that encourage critical reflection on gender roles and stereotypes and promote understanding and acceptance of gender equality as an Islamic value (Syafrizal, 2024).

The study of the role of gender in education from the perspective of Indonesian women scholars reveals these women Islamic scholars' very significant and diverse contributions. Women scholars present transformational and gender-equitable theological interpretations in education, despite facing various historical and social challenges that challenge patriarchal dominance in religious authority. The perseverance and dedication of women scholars have succeeded in changing the educational landscape and inspiring generations of Muslim women to lead and learn knowledge.

3. The Contribution of Women Scholars in Islamic Education

Although the contribution of women scholars to Islamic education continues to grow, they still face various challenges, such as a lack of formal recognition, limited access to religious power structures, and resistance from conservative groups. Nevertheless, women scholars have developed various strategies of resistance and adaptation, such as forming a network of women scholars, utilizing digital media for da'wah and education, and conducting policy advocacy through forums such as KUPI (Indonesian Women's Ulema Congress). Through a cultural and participatory approach, they have expanded educational spaces once considered closed to women. This shows that the role of women scholars in education is symbolic, structural, and transformative (Badran, 2009; Latifah, 2020).

The female cleric Fatima Al-Fihri, who founded Al-Qarawiyyin University in Fez, Morocco in 859 M. Fatima introduced a higher education system that includes a curriculum, degrees, graduation ceremonies, and academic structures still used today. Fatima Al-Fihri sent translated books, scientific discoveries, and the first insights from Africa, Qarawiyyin University, to renowned European universities. Fatima Al-Fihri is a true pioneer in the history of world higher education as the founder of Al-Qarawiyyin University, who has made a fundamental contribution to the architecture of the modern university system. However, his contributions have not been recognized in contemporary academic discourse. The establishment of a university by Fatima, which existed before European higher education institutions and served as a vital hub of transnational knowledge, highlights the need for a more inclusive and equitable rewriting of global education history. Thus, the integration of Fatima Al-Fihri's stories and works into the modern higher education curriculum is not only a historical corrective action but also a progressive step to affirm that knowledge belongs to the common human race, without gender, geographical, or ideological barriers (Cengic, 2020).

Female scholar Amina Wadud Muhsin is an Islamic feminist, scholar, and imam with a progressive, feminist-focused interpretation of the Qur'an—Amina's real name is Maria Teasley, born September 25, 1952, in Bethesda, Maryland. The controversy over the role and rights of women is interesting in this study in the fourth chapter of her work, related to the content of the methodology of contemporary thought, causing the courage to take action in the area of praxis and paradigmatic breakthroughs. One of the works, "*Qur'an and Women*," is studied textually. Amina argues that many things cause distorted interpretations of women, including paradigm errors, community culture, and the background of mufassir, who are primarily men. Therefore, the verse about women should be interpreted based on women's thoughts, perceptions, and experiences (Wadud, 1992).

The Indonesian Constitution guarantees the right to education for all citizens, and inequalities in access to education based on gender still occur, especially at the higher education level and in rural areas. Although progress has been made in primary education, barriers to accessing higher levels of education still exist for girls and women in specific regions and socioeconomic groups. Factors such as poverty, cultural norms that prioritize boys' education, early marriage, and limited educational infrastructure in rural areas contribute to this unequal access (Irawan, Swalika et al., 2024).

Indonesian history records several influential women scholars who have significantly contributed to advancing education, especially for women. These key figures include Rahmah el-Yunusiyah, Nyai Khoiriyah Hasyim, Nyai Masriyah Amva, Siti Walidah Ahmad Dahlan, and Zakiyah Daradjat. The lives and achievements of these women scholars provide a real example of women's leadership and impact in education (Utami, 2023). Therefore, examining the contribution of women scholars in education is very important to gain a more complete and nuanced understanding of the history and development of Islamic education in Indonesia. Research into their role helps fill gaps in our historical understanding and provides a more accurate picture of the diverse influences that have shaped Islamic education in Indonesia (Fitria et al., 2024).

Female cleric Rahmah el-Yunusiyah (1900-1969) is known as a teacher and reformer of Indonesian Islamic education. Pioneering madrasah Diniyah lil Banat in 1923 was the first

women's Islamic school in Indonesia, aiming for women to get the education they needed and not feel free to express their opinions or use the right to learn in the co-education system that existed at that time. Rahmah also pioneered the inclusion of general lessons in the religious education curriculum and modern educational methods. Rahmah el-Yunusiyah's enormous contribution to fighting for women's education is seen today, as women in Indonesia have made access to education easier (Isnaini, 2016).

Ulama Nyai Khoiriyah Hasyim (1906-1983) pioneered women's Islamic boarding school education in his time. She runs a special women's boarding school with her husband and develops her pesantren characteristics by learning astronomy. While living in Mecca, she established a special school for girls (*madrasah lil banat*), which became Mecca's first women's madrasah. Nyai Khoiriyah actively organizes in the Muslimat of Nahdlatul Ulama (NU), occupies positions in Syuriah NU, and writes in the mass media (Utami, 2023). Nyai Khoiriyah Hasyim, as an Indonesian female scholar, practices a curriculum without gender barriers so that all students can access religious knowledge and skills equally (Rohmaniyah, 2023). Other contributions are the creation of teaching materials and textbooks with a gender perspective; several groups of women scholars wrote Qur'anic commentaries and religious books that emphasized gender justice. Overall, women scholars have built an inclusive educational paradigm by bringing Islamic teachings closer to the principles of equality and humanity.

Nyai Masriyah Amva was born on October 13, 1961, in Cirebon and has a knack for interpreting religious texts, which her ability and expertise led her to fight for and advocate for women's independence from men. One of the forms of Nyai Masriyah's openness to pluralism discourse can be seen from her book *Achieving an Extraordinary Life*. The book was given an epilogue by Margaretha M. Hendriks Ririmasse, a pastor and interfaith dialogue activist (Amva, 2010). It can be seen that Nyai Masriyah's gender awareness has a strong foothold in the breadth of Islam. Nyai Masriyah tries to ensure that women do not have the ideal of being dependent on men, so that women think independently because women's independence means the future independence of their children as the nation's next generation (Amva, 2012).

The concept of gender equality is related, according to Nyai Masriyah, "men and women will reach the level of equality, if they rely on Allah. If men depend on Allah and women depend on Allah, so that it will bring about equality, if everything depends on Allah alone, it can become a feminist woman. Therefore, with or without the presence of men or anyone, he will do everything only for Allah. Nyai Masriyah sees that women now have wrong knowledge and awareness, their lives depend on humans (to husbands or men), so that when men do not exist, losing their support in life means that they are not feminists". This is based on an interview with Nyai Masriyah Amva (Razak & Mundzir, 2019).

Female cleric Siti Walidah was born in Yogyakarta, has the full name Siti Walidah binti Kyai penghulu Haji Ibrahim, bin Kyai Muhammad Hasan Pengkol, bin Kyai Muhammad Ali Raden Pengkol. In 1971, the government designated Nyai Siti Walidah as a national hero of the Indonesian women's movement. Siti Walidah is married to KH. Ahmad Dahlan (1872-1946) supported her husband's struggle in establishing the Muhammadiyah organization and then established the Aisyiyah organization to become the organization's driving force, which focused on education and women's empowerment. Likewise, it pays great attention to the education of women workers through the recitation and establishment of dormitories (Utami, 2023). Siti

Walidah initiated special classes for women, including teaching religion, life skills, and basic sciences. Aisyiyah focuses on women's empowerment through education, health, and social activities. This organization encourages women to participate actively in society, specifically in educating girls (Suryatama, 2024).

Female cleric Zakiyah Daradjat (1929-2013) is a Muslim psychologist who paid extraordinary attention to Islamic education, focusing on mental education and mental health. A thought that gave birth to various works that have had a significant influence to this day. Zakiyah Daradjat also creates a model madrasah that integrates Islamic and general education (Priyanto, 2024).

Cultural norms, patriarchal traditions, and socioeconomic factors cause girls to be disadvantaged in educational opportunities. Entrenched societal beliefs and practices often undervalue girls' education, leading families to prioritize boys' education, especially when resources are limited. In many societies, girls are still expected to fulfill domestic roles and are sometimes considered less deserving of educational investment than boys, who are traditionally seen as future breadwinners. Stigma and social perceptions can discourage women from pursuing higher education, with concerns about marriage prospects and societal expectations. Social pressures and stereotypes can deter women from pursuing higher education, as some worry it could negatively impact their ability to find a husband or adjust to traditional gender roles. The perception that highly educated women may be too independent or career-oriented can lead to social disapproval and limit their educational aspirations and opportunities. Geographical and economic disparities exacerbate gender inequality in access to education throughout Indonesia. Girls and women in rural areas and economically disadvantaged areas face greater challenges in accessing quality education due to factors such as lack of resources, distance, and limited infrastructure. The unequal distribution of educational facilities and economic opportunities across Indonesia means that girls in poorer and more remote areas often have fewer opportunities to attend school than their urban and wealthier counterparts (Irawan, Swalika et al., 2024).

The contributions of these women scholars are not only limited to the establishment of educational institutions, but also include curriculum development, innovative teaching methods, and role models for generations of Muslim women. Their success in promoting gender education can be seen in the increasing access to education for girls and women in Indonesia. They have also succeeded in challenging and changing societal norms and attitudes towards women's education, contributing to a more progressive and equitable societal mindset. Through the education they initiate, women are empowered to become active participants and leaders in their communities. Thus, women scholars also face various challenges in the field of education. They often face historical limitations and restrictions on women's access to education and public life. Patriarchal attitudes and resistance to women's leadership in religion and education are also significant challenges. In addition, they must also balance traditional roles and expectations with their aspirations for education and public engagement (Utami, 2023).

Intellectual contributions through writing and community engagement also expand Islamic education and gender equality. This emphasizes that the role of women scholars is very important in realizing inclusive and gender-responsive education in Indonesia and even the world, following the principles of equality and justice in Islam. Therefore, the existence and

contribution of women scholars must be recognized, encouraged, and strengthened as an important component in the transition of Islamic education that is more equitable, self-aware, and relevant to contemporary issues.

D. CONCLUSION

This study analyzes the role of scholars in Islamic education as agents of social and intellectual transformation with an orientation towards the realization of equality and justice. Role in education, learning methods, curriculum development, writing, and involvement in da'wah and policy, by establishing educational institutions (*madrassas* for women, regret schools for the illiterate, Islamic boarding schools, universities), religious forums, and even organizations. Gender in Islamic education from the perspective of female scholars through the perspective and dedication to gender justice principles, and based on life experiences. The contribution of women scholars in developing Islamic education intellectually and spiritually is very impactful. The thoughts and views of scholars Fatima Al-Fihri, Amina Wadud, Rahmah el-Yunusiyah, Nyai Khoiriyah Hasyim, Nyai Masriyah Amva, Siti Walidah Ahmad Dahlan, and Zakiyah Daradjat, who play an active role in empowering women's rights and obligations, affirm that women scholars strive to realize inclusive and gender-responsive education.

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