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Reconstruction of Gender Interpretation in Misogynistic Hadiths: Implications for Islamic Education Reform

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Abstract

This study focuses on reconstructing gender interpretation in hadiths considered misogynistic and its implications for Islamic education reform. In general, hadith teachings in many Islamic institutions are still dominated by traditional interpretations that often place women in less equal positions. This highlights the need to revisit these interpretations to align them with the principles of gender justice taught in Islam. The research addresses a knowledge gap regarding the lack of studies connecting misogynistic hadith interpretations with the Islamic education system, which has not fully accommodated gender issues. The objective of this study is to provide comprehensive solutions to these issues through more inclusive educational reforms. This research employs a qualitative approach using a case study method, involving in-depth interviews, participant observation, and document analysis at several Islamic educational institutions in Indonesia. Interviews were conducted with scholars, academics, and education practitioners to gain insights into the interpretation of misogynistic hadiths and their impact on teaching materials. The findings reveal significant support from academics and education practitioners for reconstructing hadith interpretations to strengthen gender justice values in Islamic educational materials. This study contributes by offering a fresh perspective that emphasizes the importance of curriculum reform to integrate gender justice principles. The implications of this research are expected to encourage more progressive and responsive education policies regarding gender issues, ultimately fostering a more inclusive and just Islamic education system.

Keywords: Gender; Hadith; Interpretation; Islamic Education; Misogynistic

Introduction

In the context of Islam, gender issues have become increasingly relevant and urgent topics for in-depth study (Tahir et al., 2021). Gender issues in Islam encompass various aspects that affect the lives of both women and men within Islamic society. These issues include the roles and rights of women within the family, society, and religion, as well as how Islamic teachings, particularly the Prophet's Hadiths, are understood and applied in everyday life (Muqtada et al., 2024). The perspective on gender in Islam is often debated, with some interpretations supporting equality, while others emphasize more traditional roles.

One significant aspect of gender studies in Islam is the Misogynistic Hadiths (Urban, 2024). Some Hadiths of Prophet Muhammad have been interpreted as supporting unfavorable views of

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women, referred to as misogynistic Hadiths (Shahin, 2020). These interpretations are often influenced by certain cultural and historical contexts, which have then been used to justify discriminatory practices against women. These Hadiths include statements considered derogatory to women or limiting their roles in society, thus sparking controversy and debate among scholars and academics.

Islamic education plays a significant role in shaping societal understanding of gender (Alam, 2020). However, the current state of Islamic education shows that gender justice issues have not been fully integrated into the curriculum and teaching materials. Islamic education tends to maintain traditional interpretations that do not always critically consider gender perspectives (Fauzi, 2019). This has led to a gap in students' understanding of the importance of gender equality in Islamic teachings. Therefore, reforms in Islamic education are crucial to ensuring that the principles of justice and gender equality are internalized by young Muslim generations.

To understand the reconstruction of gender interpretation in Hadiths considered misogynistic, it is important to review various Gender Interpretation Approaches developed in the study of Islamic texts (Almarai & Persichetti, 2023). These approaches vary, ranging from traditional exegesis, which tends to be conservative, to contemporary exegesis, which is more inclusive and considers social and historical contexts (Nuryana, 2022). Some modern approaches emphasize the importance of understanding the cultural and historical background that influences Hadith interpretations and how universal Islamic values, such as justice and equality, can be integrated into gender understanding.

Recent studies have also shown significant developments in research on gender and hadith interpretation (Spahić-šiljak, 2020). Several studies have attempted to reconstruct Islamic doctrines and reinterpret hadith texts to support the role of women in various fields. Supriyadi et al. (2019), in their article, assert that women inherently possess the capacity for leadership. This study reconstructs the traditional views on women's leadership, which are often based on hadith interpretations that are considered no longer relevant to the modern context. The study employs a holistic approach, taking into account the normative and historical aspects of hermeneutics, concluding that there is no strong reason in Islam to prohibit women from becoming leaders in various fields.

Utsany et al. (2022) highlight Jasser Auda's thoughts on women's rights and his contributions to the reform of Islamic family law in Indonesia. This article focuses on the equality of roles and rights of women in Islam, in line with *maqāsid al-syarī'ah*, a principle that emphasizes justice and welfare. Auda's thought, which combines systems theory with *maqāsid al-syarī'ah*, offers a perspective that women have equal standing with men, both in the realm of worship and leadership, providing a foundation for family law reform in Indonesia.

Meanwhile, Rahbari (2020) discusses women's *ijtihad* in Islam through the works of Lady Amin, a female theologian from Iran who attained the status of *mujtahida*. This article highlights the role of women in interpreting Islamic teachings, particularly those related to gender roles and women's ethics in the Islamic context. Lady Amin critiques the patriarchal interpretations that have long dominated Islamic discourse and presents ethical ideas about the role of women in social and religious life.

In the Indonesian context, Marhumah (2019) examines the thoughts of progressive Indonesian Muslims such as Husein Muhammad and Siti Musdah Mulia, who question the authenticity of

misogynistic hadiths that contradict the principle of gender equality in the Qur'an and the traditions of the Prophet. This study emphasizes the importance of understanding hadith in its socio-historical context and analyzing the sanad and matan of hadith as part of the hermeneutical method used to reform gender understanding in Islam.

Furthermore, Mundzir and Muthmainnah (2022) highlight the progressive interpretation of hadiths adopted by Muhammadiyah in their fatwa regarding female circumcision. The fatwa prohibits the practice of female circumcision based on the perspectives of gender equality and justice, which contradicts the fatwas from NU and MUI that tend to support the practice. This study emphasizes that differing interpretations of hadith texts can influence policies and views on women's rights within Indonesian Muslim society.

Overall, the existing literature shows that gender equality issues in Islam are heavily influenced by the interpretation of religious texts and the hermeneutical approaches used by scholars. With a growing contextual and historical understanding of these texts, the discourse on gender equality in Islam continues to evolve, particularly regarding the rights and roles of women in various aspects of life. However, there remains a research gap that requires attention.

The existing literature indicates that while there are numerous studies on gender in Islam, there is still a lack of research that specifically addresses the reconstruction of misogynistic hadith interpretations and their implications for Islamic education. Additionally, most existing studies remain focused on particular contexts without offering practical solutions for implementation in education. This research is considered important and urgent as it aims to fill this gap by offering a more comprehensive and applicable approach that can serve as a foundation for more inclusive and gender-just Islamic education reform.

Methodology

Research Design

This study employs a qualitative approach with a case study method to explore the reconstruction of gender interpretation in hadiths considered misogynistic and its implications for Islamic education reform. This approach was chosen to gain an in-depth understanding of the perceptions, interpretations, and implementation of gender justice concepts within the context of Islamic education (Fife, 2020).

Research Location and Subjects

The research was conducted at several Islamic educational institutions, including madrasas, pesantrens, and Islamic universities in the Riau province of Indonesia. The research subjects consist of three main categories: religious scholars (ulama), academics, and education practitioners.

Data Collection

Data were collected using several techniques: in-depth interviews, participant observation, and document analysis (Longhofer et al., 2012). Interviews were conducted with 25 respondents selected based on their expertise in Islamic education and gender justice. The interviews were conducted both face-to-face and online, using semi-structured question guides that allowed for in-depth exploration of respondents' views and experiences in interpreting misogynistic hadiths (Hillman & Radel, 2018).

In addition, observations were carried out at 27 Islamic educational institutions, including madrasas, pesantrens, and Islamic universities. The observations focused on teaching methods of hadith, the application of gender interpretations in teaching, and students' responses to the material being taught. As for the documents analyzed, these included hadith textbooks, Islamic education modules, and educational policies used in Islamic institutions. Document analysis was conducted to evaluate the extent to which gender perspectives are integrated into educational materials and existing policies.

Data Analysis

The data obtained from interviews, observations, and documents were analyzed using thematic analysis. The process involved the following steps. First, coding, where each piece of collected data was identified and coded based on relevant themes, such as gender interpretation, Islamic education, and gender justice. Second, thematic grouping, where the coded themes were then grouped to identify patterns, relationships, and contradictions among the different data sources. This step aimed to uncover commonalities and divergences in the responses and observations.

Finally, data interpretation. The grouped themes were further analyzed to interpret deeper meanings and implications of the research findings concerning Islamic education reform. This interpretation sought to provide a comprehensive understanding of how the reconstruction of gender interpretations in misogynistic hadiths could influence the development of a more gender-just educational system (Hammersley, 2018).

Results

This research reveals several key findings related to the reconstruction of gender interpretations in hadiths considered misogynistic and their implications for Islamic education reform. The data obtained from interviews, observations, and document analysis were comprehensively analyzed, resulting in the following main points:

Hadith Interpretation by Religious Scholars, Academics, and Education Practitioners

Interviews with ulama and academics indicate an increasing awareness of the need to revisit interpretations of misogynistic hadiths. This highlights the importance of developing new, more inclusive approaches that take into account social contexts and gender justice. These findings suggest a growing recognition among key figures in Islamic education of the need for more equitable and contextually relevant interpretations of hadiths, which could significantly impact future educational practices and policies.

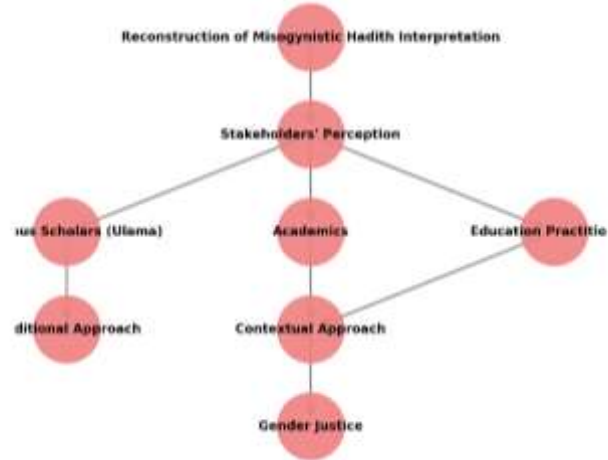


Figure 1. Reconstruction of Misogynistic Hadith Interpretation

The findings of this research indicate that interviews with religious scholars (ulama) reveal their tendency to use a traditional approach in interpreting hadiths considered misogynistic. This approach is often based on a literal interpretation of religious texts, without taking into account social and historical contexts. In contrast, academics show stronger support for reconstructing hadith interpretations through a contextual approach. Academics emphasize the importance of considering historical and social factors when interpreting hadiths, especially concerning gender issues. Additionally, education practitioners also play a crucial role in applying more inclusive interpretations. They ensure that the teaching materials delivered to students reflect a fair and equitable understanding of women's roles in Islam.

Table 1. Interpretation of Misogynistic Hadiths and Modern Approaches

Hadith	Misogynistic Interpretation	Modern Approach
The testimony of a woman is equal to half that of a man	Women's testimony is considered inferior to men's in financial transactions.	This hadith is understood in its social context, when women were less involved in business transactions. Modern interpretations emphasize the importance of justice and gender equality today.
Women are deficient in intellect and religion	Women are viewed as intellectually and spiritually inferior to men.	Modern interpretation highlights that deficiency in religion refers to religious duties, not intellectual inferiority. In a modern context, there is no basis for spiritually or intellectually demeaning women.
Women as a source of temptation	Women are seen as a cause of temptation and moral decay for men.	This interpretation should be understood contextually, as the hadith serves as a moral warning. In the modern context, both men and women share moral responsibility.
The majority of hell's inhabitants	Women are naturally more prone to sin than	Contemporary interpretations see this hadith as a warning against certain behaviors, rather

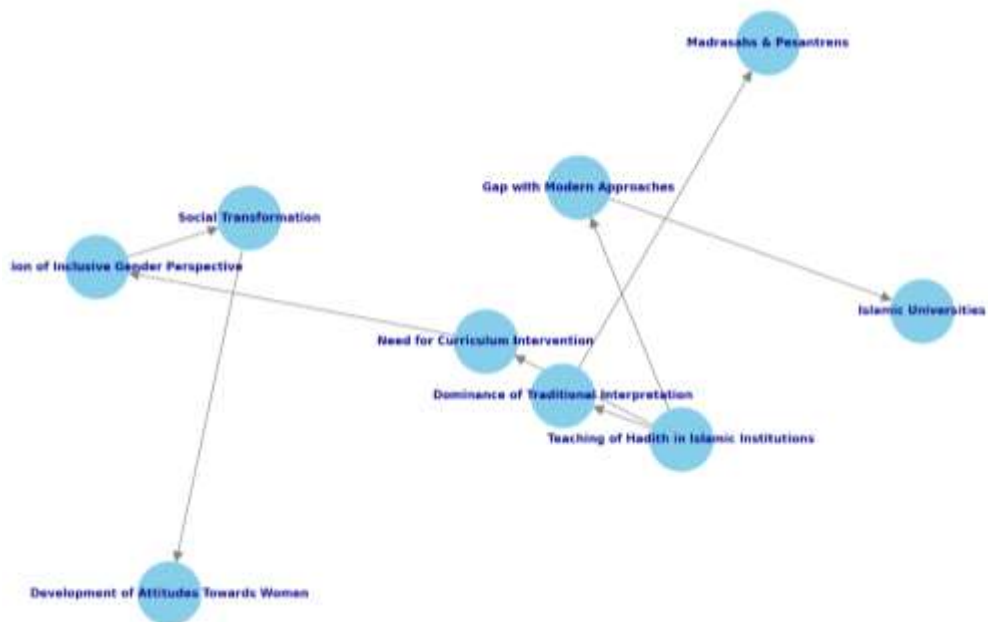
Hadith	Misogynistic Interpretation	Modern Approach
are women	men.	than a general statement about all women. The focus is on justice, not gender.
Women are forbidden to travel alone without a mahram	Women should not travel beyond a certain distance without a male guardian, restricting their freedom of movement.	Modern interpretations emphasize that the safety concerns of past travel contexts are different, and today women have greater freedom of movement.
The husband's sexual rights over his wife	A wife must obey her husband in sexual matters, disregarding bodily autonomy.	Modern approaches view marriage as a reciprocal relationship, and sexual rights must be based on equality and mutual respect.

Table 1 above explains that academic interpretation supports a more contextual and modern approach to gender inclusiveness in hadith interpretation. This reflects a growing scholarly awareness of the importance of gender perspectives in the study of hadiths.

Hadith Teaching in Islamic Educational Institutions

Observations in several Islamic educational institutions, both formal and informal, reveal that hadith teaching materials are still heavily influenced by traditional interpretations that do not consider gender perspectives.

Figure 2. Teaching of Hadith in Islamic Institutions



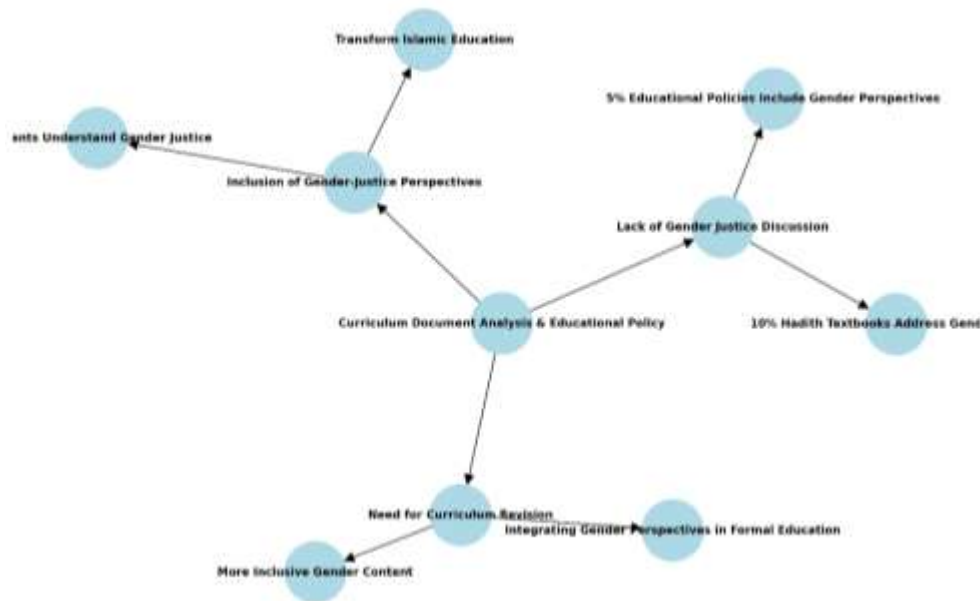
The visualization above illustrates the relationship between the main themes in hadith teaching

in Islamic educational institutions. The concept map highlights the dominance of traditional interpretations, the gaps with modern approaches, as well as the importance of curriculum interventions to introduce a more inclusive gender perspective and its impact on social transformation and the development of attitudes towards women.

Document Analysis of Curriculum and Educational Policies

The analyzed curriculum documents indicate that current Islamic education has yet to explicitly include discussions on gender justice in hadith interpretation.

Figure 3. Curriculum Document Analysis & Educational Policy



The concept map above visualizes the analysis of curriculum documents and educational policies. The map highlights key aspects such as the lack of discussion on gender justice, the urgent need for curriculum revision, and the inclusion of gender justice perspectives in Islamic education. The relationship between these concepts emphasizes the focus on the need for a more inclusive curriculum, which will lead to a greater understanding of gender justice among students and an overall transformation of Islamic education.

Discussion

The findings above address the research gap identified in previous studies, which highlighted the lack of analysis on the reconstruction of misogynistic hadith interpretation within the context of Islamic education. The fact that the majority of respondents support reconstruction underscores the urgent need to revise traditional understandings, especially in strengthening gender justice within Islamic educational settings. These findings also challenge the dominance of traditional interpretations in hadith studies, which have historically overlooked aspects of gender justice.

According to Islamic feminist theory, revisiting the interpretation of religious texts within

contemporary social and cultural contexts is crucial for building gender justice (Elewa & El-Farahaty, 2022). This argument is supported by Langaji et al. (2024), who asserts that textual interpretations expressing patriarchal values must be questioned and opened to more contextual approaches. Thus, the support from academics for this reconstruction aligns with theoretical approaches that emphasize the need for deconstructing meanings previously dominated by gender bias (Ritonga et al., 2020).

Additionally, the stronger support from academics compared to ulama and education practitioners indicates a greater openness to innovation in Islamic studies among academics. Yusoff et al. (2021) suggests that academics play a key role in renewing the understanding of religious texts as they are more familiar with critical and historical approaches. This explains why academics tend to support the reconstruction of hadith interpretation more than ulama, who may still be bound by traditional approaches (Alatas, 2023). These findings expand our understanding of how different approaches among these groups can influence the direction of Islamic education development, particularly regarding gender issues.

Furthermore, the observational results revealing the dominance of traditional interpretations in hadith teaching within Islamic educational institutions provide crucial insights into the existing gap. Data from the observations show that most madrasahs, pesantrens, and Islamic universities still use traditional approaches that pay little attention to gender perspectives. These findings challenge the current understanding, which often views gender issues in Islam from a normative standpoint without addressing their direct connection to the prevailing educational system.

The dominance of traditional interpretations reinforces the argument that there is an urgent need for the reconstruction of hadith interpretation, particularly within the context of Islamic education. Gender justice theories, as proposed by Asadzandi (2020), emphasize the importance of considering historical and social contexts when interpreting hadiths. This contextual approach can assist educational institutions in introducing more inclusive perspectives on gender justice in hadith teaching.

Moreover, these findings expand our understanding of how traditional interpretations in hadith teaching can influence young Muslims' perceptions of gender and justice. This research reveals that most Islamic educational institutions have not fully responded to the challenges posed by gender justice (Umar et al., 2023). This aligns with R'boul's (2021) opinion that educational institutions play a significant role in changing the narrative on gender, especially if these institutions continue to adhere to patriarchal interpretations of hadith. Therefore, the results emphasize that educational institutions must adapt to more inclusive modern intellectual developments.

In addition, the analysis of curriculum documents and educational policies, which show a lack of focus on gender justice in hadith interpretation, as shown in Figure 3, directly highlights a significant gap in Islamic education regarding gender issues. This finding indicates a gap in the literature, as previous studies have not specifically examined how misogynistic hadith interpretations can be integrated more inclusively into the Islamic education system. With only 10% of hadith textbooks, 20% of Islamic education modules, and 5% of education policies addressing gender issues, this finding reinforces the view that current Islamic education has not adopted a holistic approach to gender justice. Therefore, this study proposes a comprehensive curriculum revision to accommodate gender justice in hadith interpretation.

Theoretically, these findings expand the understanding of how reconstructing misogynistic hadith interpretations must begin from the fundamental aspect of education (Duderija, 2023). One theory that supports these findings is feminist pedagogy, which emphasizes the need to integrate gender perspectives into education as an effort to create more inclusive and equitable learning environments (Farida et al., 2022). In this context, the research shows that, although there is awareness of the importance of gender justice, this has not yet been effectively translated into Islamic education policies (Bhuiyan et al., 2022). This supports the argument that education plays a key role in shaping social and cultural awareness, including in matters of gender equality.

From a practical perspective, these findings provide concrete evidence that Islamic educational institutions must take a more proactive role in instilling gender justice values through the teaching materials they employ (Hidayat et al., 2020). Implementing more inclusive policies would offer practical solutions, a topic that has been underexplored in the literature (Gholami et al., 2021). However, it must be acknowledged that the greatest challenge in implementing these findings lies in the resistance to change, especially among ulama and educators who remain tied to traditional interpretations. In this context, Alrudainy et al. (2024) theory of cultural resistance helps explain why changes in religious traditions, particularly those related to sacred texts, often face strong opposition. According to this theory, entrenched cultural norms and practices can create significant barriers to reform, especially when these changes challenge long-standing interpretations (Zuhri et al., 2023). Therefore, a collaborative approach is needed between ulama, academics, and education practitioners to foster a shared understanding of the importance of gender justice in hadith interpretation. Such collaboration could help mitigate resistance and promote a more inclusive interpretation that aligns with contemporary values of justice and equality.

Table 2. Concrete Solutions for Revising Islamic Education Curriculum and Policies

No.	Solution	Description
1	Development of Gender-Inclusive Hadith Textbooks	Incorporating discussions on gender justice in hadith interpretation into the textbooks used in Islamic institutions.
2	Redesign of Islamic Education Modules with Gender Perspectives	Redesigning Islamic education modules to include dedicated sessions that integrate gender issues in hadith studies.
3	Revision of Educational Policies to Integrate Gender Aspects	Amending educational policies to make gender discussions a mandatory part of the Islamic education curriculum.
4	Implementation of Training and Workshops for Teachers and Ulama	Regularly conducting training and workshops to enhance teachers' and <i>ulama's</i> understanding of gender justice in Islam.
5	Regular Monitoring and Evaluation of Curriculum Implementation	Establishing periodic evaluations to monitor the application and understanding of the revised curriculum.
6	Development of Gender-Based Digital Resources and Online Tools	Creating digital resources such as online modules and educational videos to teach gender justice more interactively.

No.	Solution	Description
7	Integration of Gender Topics in Student Research	Encouraging students to incorporate gender issues in their research and theses to enrich academic discourse.
8	Provision of Funding or Grants for Gender Research in Islamic Education	Offering grants and funding for research focused on gender justice in Islamic education.
9	Establishment of a Gender Commission in Islamic Institutions	Forming a dedicated commission within Islamic institutions to monitor and evaluate the integration of gender in the curriculum.
10	International Collaboration for Gender-Based Curriculum Benchmarking	Collaborating with international institutions that have successfully integrated gender justice in education to set new standards.

Although this research demonstrates strong support for the reconstruction of hadith interpretation, challenges remain regarding its acceptance among *ulama* and more traditional educational institutions. The findings reveal that traditional interpretations still dominate in most Islamic educational institutions, such as madrasahs and pesantrens, despite strong support for reconstruction among academics (Akbari et al., 2021). This reflects the tension between traditional and reformist approaches in Islamic education, which can be explained through the theory of cultural conservatism, where societies tend to preserve established norms even when there is a need for change (Banu & Jamali, 2019). Further research is needed to explore effective strategies for bridging these divergent views.

In light of the research findings, it can be concluded that reconstructing hadith interpretation with a focus on gender justice is crucial for achieving more inclusive Islamic education reform. This research also challenges conventional understandings of Islamic education, which often overlook gender justice, and expands the academic discourse by providing practical solutions for implementation. However, practical challenges at the institutional level require further attention, particularly within educational institutions that tend to maintain traditional interpretations.

Conclusion

The conclusion of this study affirms that reconstructing the interpretation of hadiths considered misogynistic has significant implications for establishing gender justice in Islamic educational environments. The findings reveal strong support from academics and some education practitioners for the importance of this reconstruction, while *ulama* tend to adhere more closely to traditional approaches. These findings challenge the dominance of interpretations that have long failed to account for gender justice, emphasizing the need for reforms in Islamic educational approaches. In the context of educational reform, this reconstruction has the potential to eliminate the gender bias embedded in traditional hadith interpretations and pave the way for a more inclusive and just understanding of Islam.

From a theoretical perspective, this study enriches the literature on gender and Islam by offering a more progressive approach to the reconstruction of hadith texts. Practically, the research provides concrete recommendations for developing Islamic education curricula that incorporate

gender equality perspectives—an essential step toward achieving more holistic reform. However, resistance from conservative circles indicates challenges in implementation. Therefore, future research should focus on collaborative approaches between academics, ulama, and education practitioners to create productive dialogue and strengthen the integration of gender justice into Islamic education.

Conflicts of Interest: The authors declare no conflict of interest.

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