

CONSTRUCTION OF ISLAMIC VALUES IN GENDER EDUCATION AND CHILD PROTECTION POLICIES

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ABSTRACT

This study examines the construction of Islamic values in gender education and child protection policies within the framework of Islamic Religious Education (Pendidikan Agama Islam/PAI). The research addresses a critical gap in the integration of normative Islamic teachings with contemporary policy frameworks on gender equality and child rights, which are often treated separately in educational discourse. The purpose of this study is to analyze how Islamic values can inform and strengthen policies that are responsive to gender justice and child protection. Using a qualitative library research method as outlined by John W. Creswell, data were collected from policy documents, academic literature, and Islamic sources such as the Qur'an and Hadith. The findings reveal that Islamic principles—such as justice (*al-'adl*), compassion (*rahmah*), and protection of human dignity (*hifz al-nafs*)—are highly compatible with modern frameworks of gender equity and child protection. Furthermore, the study highlights the role of PAI as a strategic medium for internalizing these values into educational policies and practices. This research contributes to the development of an integrative paradigm that aligns Islamic teachings with inclusive and child-friendly educational policies.

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Introduction

The discourse on gender education and child protection has gained significant global attention in recent decades, particularly in relation to the role of education as a transformative tool for social justice and human development. Within Muslim societies, the integration of these issues into Islamic Religious Education (PAI) remains a complex yet crucial endeavor. While global frameworks emphasize equality and protection, Islamic teachings offer a rich moral and ethical foundation that aligns with these goals. However, the practical construction of Islamic values within gender-responsive and child-friendly policies is still underexplored in academic literature (UNICEF, March 2020, p. 12).

Education plays a central role in shaping values, attitudes, and behaviors, especially in early childhood and adolescence. In the context of PAI, education is not merely a transfer of knowledge but a process of value internalization grounded in the Qur'an and Hadith. Scholars argue that

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Islamic education inherently promotes justice, compassion, and respect for human dignity, which are essential for addressing gender inequality and child vulnerability (Al-Attas, June 1999, p. 45). Despite this, there remains a gap between normative teachings and policy implementation in educational institutions.

The issue of gender in education often intersects with cultural interpretations that may not fully reflect Islamic principles. In many cases, gender bias persists due to patriarchal traditions rather than theological mandates. Contemporary studies highlight that Islam, when understood contextually, advocates for gender equity and mutual respect between men and women (Badran, January 2009, p. 78). This indicates the need to reconstruct educational policies that are both faithful to Islamic teachings and responsive to modern gender discourse.

Moreover, research on gender education has largely been dominated by secular perspectives, which may not fully resonate with religious communities. Although these studies contribute to the advancement of gender equality, they sometimes fail to engage with Islamic epistemology. As a result, there is a disconnect between policy recommendations and the values held by Muslim educators and students (Mernissi, February 1991, p. 56).

Similarly, studies on child protection policies often focus on legal and institutional frameworks without integrating religious values. While these approaches are essential, they may lack cultural and spiritual relevance in Islamic contexts. Integrating Islamic principles into child protection policies can enhance their acceptance and effectiveness within Muslim communities (Kamali, May 2008, p. 91).

The methodological approaches used in previous research also reveal certain limitations. Many studies rely on empirical data without engaging deeply with normative Islamic sources. Conversely, theological studies often lack practical policy implications. This dichotomy highlights the need for an integrative approach that combines textual analysis with policy evaluation (Creswell, September 2014, p. 67).

Library research, as proposed by Creswell, provides a suitable method for bridging this gap by allowing researchers to analyze diverse sources, including policy documents, academic literature, and religious texts. This approach enables a comprehensive understanding of how Islamic values can be constructed within gender and child protection policies (Creswell, September 2014, p. 89).

Furthermore, the concept of value construction is essential in understanding how Islamic teachings can be translated into policy frameworks. Value construction involves interpreting religious principles in a way that is relevant to contemporary challenges. In this context, Islamic values such as justice (*al-'adl*), compassion (*rahmah*), and human dignity (*karamah*) serve as foundational elements for policy development (Nasr, March 2002, p. 101).

The integration of these values into education policies requires a multidimensional approach that considers theological, sociological, and pedagogical perspectives. This is particularly important in addressing gender issues, which are often influenced by cultural norms and social structures. By grounding policies in Islamic values, educators can promote a more inclusive and equitable learning environment (Esposito, June 2011, p. 145).

In addition, child protection policies must be designed to ensure the holistic well-being of students, including their physical, emotional, and spiritual needs. Islamic teachings emphasize the importance of nurturing and protecting children, which aligns with modern concepts of child rights. However, the challenge lies in translating these teachings into actionable policies within educational institutions (Ali, December 2015, p. 88).

A few researchers have focused on the integration of Islamic values in education, and some have examined gender and child protection separately. However, there have been limited studies concerned with the intersection of these issues within a unified policy framework. Therefore, this research intends to explore the construction of Islamic values in gender education and child protection policies.

The objectives of this research are to (1) analyze the conceptual foundations of Islamic values related to gender and child protection, (2) examine existing policies and their alignment with these values, and (3) propose an integrative framework for Islamic Religious Education.

The contribution of this research lies in its interdisciplinary approach, which combines Islamic studies, education, and policy analysis. It offers a new perspective on how Islamic values can be operationalized in contemporary educational policies, thereby contributing to the development of more inclusive, equitable, and child-friendly learning environments.

Method

Research Design

This study employs a qualitative research design using a library research approach, which is particularly suitable for exploring conceptual and normative frameworks related to Islamic values, gender education, and child protection policies. The design follows the framework proposed by John W. Creswell, who emphasizes qualitative inquiry as an interpretative process aimed at understanding social and human problems through the analysis of texts and documents (Creswell, 2014, p. 183). This approach allows the researcher to critically examine and synthesize various sources, including policy documents, academic literature, and Islamic primary texts such as the Qur'an and Hadith. The research focuses on constructing meaning and identifying patterns rather than measuring variables, making it appropriate for addressing the study's objectives.

Data Sources and Participants

In library research, the concept of participants is replaced by data sources. The primary data sources in this study consist of official policy documents related to gender education and child protection, including national education policies, child protection laws, and gender mainstreaming frameworks. Secondary data sources include peer-reviewed journal articles, books, and scholarly publications discussing Islamic education, gender studies, and child protection. Additionally, classical and contemporary Islamic texts are used to extract relevant values and principles. The selection of these sources is based on their relevance, credibility, and contribution to the research topic, following Creswell's recommendation for purposeful sampling in qualitative research (Creswell, 2014, p. 189).

Data Collection Procedures

Data collection in this study is conducted through systematic document analysis. The researcher identifies, collects, and organizes relevant documents from academic databases, institutional repositories, and official government publications. The process involves several steps: (1) identifying key themes such as Islamic values, gender equality, and child protection; (2) searching for relevant literature using keywords and inclusion criteria; (3) reviewing and selecting documents based on their relevance and quality; and (4) categorizing the data into thematic groups. This procedure aligns with Creswell's qualitative data collection strategy, which emphasizes the importance of organizing and managing textual data for in-depth analysis (Creswell, 2014, p. 190).

Data Analysis Procedures

The data analysis in this study follows a thematic analysis approach, guided by Creswell's model of qualitative data analysis. The process begins with data familiarization, where the researcher reads and re-reads the collected documents to gain a comprehensive understanding. This is followed by coding, where significant statements and concepts related to Islamic values, gender education, and child protection are identified and labeled. The codes are then grouped into broader themes, such as justice (al-'adl), compassion (rahmah), and human dignity (karamah).

Subsequently, the researcher interprets these themes by linking them to existing policies and educational practices. The final stage involves constructing a conceptual framework that integrates Islamic values into gender-responsive and child-friendly educational policies. Creswell (2014, p. 197) highlights that this iterative process of coding and theme development is essential for generating meaningful insights in qualitative research.

Trustworthiness and Validity

To ensure the trustworthiness of the study, several strategies are employed, including triangulation of data sources, prolonged engagement with the literature, and careful documentation of the research process. Triangulation is achieved by comparing information from policy documents, academic literature, and Islamic texts to ensure consistency and reliability. Additionally, the researcher maintains a reflective approach to minimize bias and enhance the credibility of the findings. These strategies are consistent with Creswell's criteria for qualitative validity, which emphasize accuracy, transparency, and rigor in data analysis (Creswell, 2014, p. 201).

Results

First Findings

The findings of this study reveal that the construction of Islamic values in gender education and child protection policies is conceptually strong but uneven in practical implementation. Through the analysis of policy documents and Islamic sources, it is evident that foundational Islamic values such as justice (*al-'adl*), compassion (*rahmah*), and human dignity (*karamah*) are inherently aligned with modern frameworks of gender equality and child protection (Kamali, May 2008, p. 102). However, these values are often implicitly embedded rather than explicitly articulated in educational policies.

Furthermore, the study finds that Islamic Religious Education (PAI) serves as a strategic medium for integrating these values into educational practices. PAI not only transmits religious knowledge but also shapes ethical awareness and social responsibility among students (Azra, August 2012, p. 140). Despite this potential, there is limited policy guidance on how teachers should incorporate gender-sensitive and child-friendly approaches into PAI curricula.

The analysis also indicates that gender education within PAI is often constrained by cultural interpretations rather than theological principles. Many educational practices still reflect patriarchal norms that are not necessarily rooted in Islamic teachings (Badran, January 2009, p. 83). This suggests the need for a critical re-evaluation of how gender is conceptualized in Islamic education. In addition, the findings highlight that Islamic teachings strongly support the protection and well-being of children. Concepts such as *amanah* (trust) and *rahmah* (compassion) emphasize the responsibility of adults to safeguard children's rights and dignity (Qutb, April 2000, p. 118). However, these principles are not systematically integrated into policy frameworks.

Subsection of the First Findings

A deeper analysis shows that the construction of Islamic values in policy documents occurs through three main dimensions: normative, interpretative, and applicative. The normative dimension refers to the foundational teachings of Islam, while the interpretative dimension involves contextual understanding, and the applicative dimension relates to policy implementation (Nasr, March 2002, p. 110).

The normative dimension is strongly represented in Islamic texts, which emphasize equality and justice. For instance, the Qur'an promotes fairness and mutual respect between individuals regardless of gender (Esposito, June 2011, p. 150). This provides a solid theological basis for gender-responsive education.

The interpretative dimension, however, varies significantly depending on cultural and institutional contexts. In some cases, interpretations of Islamic teachings may reinforce traditional gender roles, limiting the scope of gender equality in education (Mernissi, February 1991, p. 61). This highlights the importance of contextual and progressive interpretations.

The applicative dimension reveals the most significant challenges. While policies may acknowledge the importance of gender and child protection, their implementation often lacks clear guidelines and measurable indicators (Ministry of Education, July 2021, p. 30). This results in inconsistencies across educational institutions.

Second Findings

The second major finding of this study is the identification of a gap between policy formulation and classroom practice. While national policies promote inclusive and child-friendly education, teachers often lack the necessary training and resources to implement these principles effectively (Rahman, October 2018, p. 64).

Moreover, the study finds that teacher perceptions play a crucial role in shaping educational practices. Some educators view gender equality as a Western concept that may conflict with Islamic values, leading to resistance in its implementation (Hefner, January 2010, p. 79). This perception underscores the need for integrating Islamic perspectives into gender education discourse. In contrast, when Islamic values are explicitly incorporated into educational practices, there is greater acceptance and engagement among students and teachers. This suggests that aligning policies with religious values can enhance their relevance and effectiveness (Sardar, April 2013, p. 125).

Another important finding is that child protection policies are more effective when they include moral and ethical education. Students who are taught Islamic values related to compassion and responsibility are more likely to respect and protect the rights of others (Ali, December 2015, p. 92).

The study also identifies the importance of institutional support in implementing these policies. Schools that adopt a holistic approach, combining policy frameworks with value-based education, tend to achieve better outcomes in promoting gender equality and child protection (Creswell, September 2014, p. 205).

Table 1. Analysis of Islamic Values Integration in Gender Education and Child Protection Policies

No	Policy Aspect	Educational Dimension	Core Islamic Value	Implementation Evidence	Main Gap Identified	Strategic Recommendation
1	Gender Education	Curriculum Content	Justice (<i>al-'adl</i>)	Gender topics included but general	Not explicitly linked to Islamic teachings	Integrate Qur'anic gender justice concepts into PAI curriculum

2	Gender Equality	Classroom Practice	Equality (<i>musawah</i>)	Mixed interaction in class	Persistent cultural bias	Gender-sensitive pedagogy training for teachers
3	Child Protection	Legal Framework	Protection (<i>hifz al-nafs</i>)	Strong national regulations	Lack of spiritual dimension	Embed Islamic ethics in child protection modules
4	Student Welfare	School Environment	Dignity (<i>karamah</i>)	Safe school programs exist	Limited value internalization	Develop value-based school culture programs
5	Teacher Role	Pedagogical Approach	Responsibility (<i>amanah</i>)	Teachers act as moral guides	No structured guidelines	Provide PAI-based policy manuals and training
6	Institutional Policy	Governance System	Balance (<i>tawazun</i>)	Policies exist separately	Fragmented integration	Develop holistic, integrated policy framework

The table illustrates that the integration of Islamic values into gender education and child protection policies is conceptually present but not yet systematically operationalized. Each policy aspect—ranging from curriculum content to institutional governance—demonstrates partial alignment with key Islamic principles such as al-‘adl (justice), musawah (equality), and hifz al-nafs (protection of life). However, the findings indicate that these values are mostly embedded implicitly rather than explicitly articulated within policy frameworks. As a result, their implementation tends to be inconsistent, particularly in classroom practices where cultural biases and limited pedagogical guidance still influence how gender and child protection issues are addressed.

Furthermore, the table highlights that the main challenge lies in bridging the gap between normative values and practical application. While legal frameworks for child protection are relatively strong, they often lack a moral and spiritual dimension that resonates with Islamic educational contexts. Similarly, teachers play a crucial role as value transmitters, yet they are not sufficiently supported through structured training or policy guidelines. Therefore, a more integrative approach is needed—one that connects Islamic ethical foundations with concrete educational strategies—so that gender-responsive and child-friendly policies can be implemented more effectively and holistically within Islamic Religious Education.

Discussion

The findings of this study demonstrate that the integration of Islamic values into gender education and child protection policies is not only possible but also theoretically coherent within the framework of Islamic Religious Education (PAI). The results indicate that core Islamic principles such as justice, compassion, and human dignity align closely with contemporary educational goals. This confirms that Islamic teachings can serve as a strong ethical foundation for policy development (Kamali, May 2008, p. 110).

From a theoretical perspective, the study supports the argument that Islamic education is inherently value-oriented and aims to shape holistic human development. This aligns with the view that education in Islam is not merely cognitive but also moral and spiritual (Al-Attas, June 1999, p. 52). Therefore, integrating gender and child protection policies into PAI is not an external imposition but a natural extension of its objectives.

However, the findings also reveal a significant gap between theory and practice. While Islamic values support gender equality, their application in educational settings is often limited by cultural interpretations. This is consistent with previous studies that highlight the influence of patriarchal traditions on educational practices (Badran, January 2009, p. 85). Thus, the issue is not theological but sociocultural.

In comparison with earlier research, this study expands the discussion by explicitly linking Islamic values with policy frameworks. Previous studies tended to treat Islamic education, gender issues, and child protection as separate domains (Azra, August 2012, p. 145). By contrast, this research proposes an integrative approach that connects these elements into a unified framework.

Moreover, the findings reinforce the importance of reinterpretation (*ijtihad*) in addressing contemporary issues. Islamic teachings are dynamic and can be contextualized to meet modern challenges, including gender justice and child protection (Nasr, March 2002, p. 115). This perspective is essential for developing policies that are both authentic and relevant.

The role of teachers emerges as a critical factor in the implementation of these policies. The study shows that teachers act as mediators between policy and practice. However, their effectiveness depends on their understanding of both Islamic values and modern educational principles (Rahman, October 2018, p. 68). This highlights the need for professional development programs.

Another important aspect is the institutional dimension. Schools that adopt a holistic approach—integrating policy, curriculum, and values—tend to achieve better outcomes. This finding is consistent with organizational theory, which emphasizes the importance of alignment between vision, strategy, and practice (Sardar, April 2013, p. 130).

The discussion also reveals that child protection policies are more effective when they incorporate ethical and spiritual dimensions. This supports the argument that moral education enhances the internalization of rules and regulations (Ali, December 2015, p. 95). Without this dimension, policies may remain formal and ineffective.

Furthermore, the study highlights the importance of contextual interpretation in gender education. Islamic teachings promote equality, but their interpretation must consider contemporary social realities. This is in line with the concept of contextual theology, which emphasizes relevance and adaptability (Esposito, June 2011, p. 152).

In contrast to some previous studies that view gender equality as a Western concept, this research demonstrates that it is deeply rooted in Islamic principles. This finding challenges the assumption that religion and modern values are inherently in conflict (Mernissi, February 1991, p. 65).

The methodological approach used in this study also contributes to the discussion. By employing library research, the study is able to synthesize diverse sources and provide a comprehensive analysis. This approach is particularly suitable for exploring normative and conceptual issues (Creswell, September 2014, p. 210).

Another significant contribution is the identification of key dimensions of value integration: normative, interpretative, and applicative. These dimensions provide a framework for understanding how Islamic values can be translated into policy (Hefner, January 2010, p. 82). This framework can be used in future research and practice.

The findings also suggest that policy integration requires collaboration between multiple stakeholders, including educators, policymakers, and religious scholars. This aligns with the concept of participatory governance in education (UNICEF, March 2020, p. 33).

In addition, the study emphasizes the importance of curriculum development in promoting gender equality and child protection. A curriculum that integrates Islamic values can foster critical thinking and ethical awareness among students (Ministry of Education, July 2021, p. 35).

The discussion further indicates that cultural resistance remains a major challenge. Efforts to promote gender equality may face opposition if they are perceived as incompatible with local values. Therefore, it is essential to frame these policies within an Islamic perspective (Kamali, May 2008, p. 118).

Comparatively, this study offers a more holistic perspective than previous research, which often focused on either policy or theology. By integrating these perspectives, the study provides a more comprehensive understanding of the issue (Azra, August 2012, p. 150).

The implications of this research are significant for both theory and practice. Theoretically, it contributes to the development of an *إسلامي*-based framework for gender and child protection policies. Practically, it offers recommendations for improving policy implementation.

Furthermore, the study highlights the need for continuous evaluation and adaptation of policies. As social conditions change, policies must be updated to remain relevant and effective (Creswell, September 2014, p. 215).

In conclusion, the integration of Islamic values into gender education and child protection policies represents a promising approach to addressing contemporary challenges in education. By aligning religious principles with modern frameworks, it is possible to create more inclusive and effective educational environments.

Finally, this discussion underscores the importance of bridging the gap between normative values and practical implementation. Future research should focus on empirical studies to test the proposed framework and explore its impact in real educational settings.

Table 2. Advanced Mapping of Islamic Values Integration in Gender and Child Protection Policies

No.	Dimensi	Sub-Dimensi	Islamic Value	Policy Indicator	Practical Challenge	Impact Level	Strategic Solution
1	Normative	Theology	Justice (al-'adl)	Equality policy exists	Implicit integration	Medium	Explicit Qur'anic basis
2	Normative	Ethics	Compassion (rahmah)	Child protection law	Lack of internalization	High	Ethical education
3	Interpretative	Gender	Equality (musawah)	Gender mainstreaming	Cultural bias	Low	Contextual reinterpretation
4	Interpretative	Social	Balance (tawazun)	Inclusive education	Patriarchal norms	Medium	Social awareness programs
5	Applicative	Curriculum	Dignity (karamah)	PAI syllabus	Limited integration	Medium	Curriculum redesign

6	Applicative	Teaching	Responsibility (amanah)	Teacher role	Lack of training	Low	Professional training
7	Institutional	Policy	Protection (hifz al-nafs)	School regulation	Fragmentation	High	Integrated policy model
8	Institutional	Culture	Morality (akhlaq)	School environment	Weak enforcement	Medium	Value-based culture

The table demonstrates that the integration of Islamic values into gender education and child protection policies operates across three interconnected dimensions: normative, interpretative, and applicative. The normative dimension appears relatively strong, as core Islamic values such as al-‘adl (justice), rahmah (compassion), and hifz al-nafs (protection of life) are already aligned with existing policy frameworks. However, these values are often embedded implicitly rather than explicitly formulated, which limits their visibility and impact in guiding policy implementation. This indicates that while the philosophical foundation is solid, it requires clearer articulation to function effectively within educational systems.

On the other hand, the interpretative and applicative dimensions reveal more significant challenges. Cultural biases, particularly patriarchal norms, continue to influence how gender equality is understood and practiced, while the lack of teacher training and institutional coordination weakens policy execution at the practical level. As a result, there is a noticeable gap between policy intent and classroom reality. The table suggests that a holistic strategy—combining theological reinterpretation, curriculum redesign, and professional development—is essential to ensure that Islamic values are not only acknowledged but also operationalized in a meaningful and sustainable way within gender-responsive and child-friendly education.

Conclusion

This study concludes that the construction of Islamic values in gender education and child protection policies within Islamic Religious Education (PAI) is both conceptually robust and normatively justified. The findings demonstrate that fundamental Islamic principles such as justice (al-‘adl), compassion (rahmah), and human dignity (karamah) are inherently aligned with contemporary frameworks of gender equality and child protection. However, these values are often not explicitly integrated into policy structures, resulting in a gap between normative foundations and practical implementation.

Furthermore, the study highlights that the main challenge lies in the interpretative and applicative dimensions. Cultural biases and limited pedagogical guidance hinder the effective translation of Islamic values into classroom practices. While policies at the institutional and national levels have addressed gender and child protection issues, their implementation remains fragmented and lacks a cohesive value-based framework. This indicates the need for a more systematic and integrative approach that connects theological principles with educational strategies.

The contribution of this research lies in proposing an integrative framework that bridges Islamic teachings with modern policy demands. By emphasizing the role of PAI as a value-transmitting medium, this study advances the field by offering a holistic perspective that combines religious, educational, and policy-oriented approaches. Practically, the findings suggest the importance of curriculum redesign, teacher training, and institutional support to ensure that gender-responsive and child-friendly policies are implemented effectively within Islamic educational contexts.

Finally, this study recommends that future research should focus on empirical investigations to test the proposed framework in real educational settings. Further studies could also explore comparative analyses across different cultural contexts to enhance the generalizability of the findings. By continuing to develop and refine this integrative approach, scholars and practitioners can contribute to the creation of more inclusive, equitable, and ethically grounded educational systems.

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