



## Feminism and Gender Justice in Pesantren Life: A Case Study at Pondok Pesantren Al-Ikhlâs Tambakberas Jombang

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### Abstract

A study on gender justice in pesantren is very important, given the persistent stigma that pesantren are patriarchal institutions that limit women's roles. In fact, when examined more deeply, pesantren hold great potential in realizing equality values that align with Islamic teachings. This article aims to reveal the implementation of gender justice values at Pondok Pesantren Al-Ikhlâs Tambakberas Jombang through educational patterns, daily practices, and the role-modeling of the pesantren caretakers. This research employs a qualitative descriptive method with observation, interviews, and questionnaires distributed to 40 male and female students and pesantren administrators. The findings show that principles of gender justice have been applied at Pondok Pesantren Al-Ikhlâs through equitable task distribution, active involvement of female students in pesantren activities, and the exemplary role of KH. Hasyim Yusuf demonstrates engagement in domestic and productive activities regardless of gender. All students stated that the implementation of gender justice has had a positive impact, both in shaping critical thinking and in increasing fair participation among students. This study suggests that feminism can be internalized within the pesantren environment without departing from Islamic values and local wisdom.

**Keywords:** Gender Justice, Pesantren, Feminism, Role-Modeling, Islam with a Justice Perspective.

### Introduction

The polemic regarding gender relations between men and women remains a highly relevant discourse in the context of Islamic teachings. This is inseparable from various interpretations that often marginalize women's position, whether on social, theological, or cultural levels. In fact, when Islam is understood holistically and not misinterpreted, it actually upholds the principle of equality between men and women. This principle is reflected in various Qur'anic verses that explicitly reject all forms of gender inequality, discrimination, and subordination of women (Zulaiha, 2016).

One common misunderstanding is the belief that women were created from a part of a man's body, namely, from his rib. This narrative later developed into the assumption that women are secondary creations whose existence depends ontologically on men. In reality, the Qur'an never explicitly states that women were created from men's ribs. On the contrary, the Qur'an affirms that men and women were created from a single entity or *nafs wāḥidah*, which many exegetes interpret as the same substance or soul (QS. An-Nisa: 1) (Sanah, Nafisah, Mukmina, Cholid, & Prayoga, 2021).

Thus, Islam recognizes that men and women possess equal spiritual status; both are honored beings (*akramnā*) and entrusted equally as God's vicegerents on earth (QS. Al-Baqarah: 30). Biological differences and social roles between men and women in Islam are not intended to create hierarchy or inequality, but rather to divide responsibilities according to their natural dispositions and competencies. In general, within the household context, husband and wife have complementary responsibilities: the husband as the primary provider of material needs. In contrast, the wife plays a strategic role in managing the household and educating children. However, these roles are flexible and not absolute, as in many social realities, they can be exchanged without diminishing either party's spiritual value or position. Therefore, it is essential to reconstruct the understanding of gender in Islam through a contextual, just approach grounded in *maqāṣid al-sharī'ah* (Nasution, 2019).

As Islamic educational institutions rooted in Muslim community traditions, Pesantren significantly fosters national enlightenment. Beyond serving as centers of education, pesantren also contribute to shaping societal character through religious values. According to Mubarak, pesantren are traditional institutions aimed at understanding and practicing Islamic teachings, especially in the realm of morals as guidance for social life (Pratama & Zaelani, 2019). Unlike other educational institutions, pesantren have distinctive systems that form unique learning communities. Students (*santri*) live together under the guidance of a *kiai* or religious leader, committing to a life based on particular moral values, thus creating a distinctive culture and way of life.

This study aims to demonstrate that gender justice values are practiced in pesantren, directly through teaching and indirectly through daily practices. This is important to counter the widespread assumption that Islam is synonymous with patriarchy, which places women in a subordinate position. In fact, pesantren's lives reveal values of equality and mutual respect between men and women, reflecting Islam's fundamental commitment to justice for all, regardless of gender.

Previous studies reveal three main patterns in pesantren responses to modernization and globalization. First, some pesantren fully adopt modernization, making their curriculum similar to formal education outside of pesantren. Second, others adopt a selective approach, integrating traditional and modern elements, recognizing modernization and globalization as unavoidable realities while maintaining their role as Islamic scholarly institutions and centers for producing religious leaders. Third, some pesantren largely preserve traditional systems but make limited adjustments to contemporary developments, aiming to protect their original values (Mubarak, 2019).

In this regard, Pondok Pesantren Al-Ikhlās leans toward the second approach. While retaining effective traditional methods, it remains open to modern advancements that support learning activities, including the adoption of gender equality principles. This aligns with Islamic principles, whereby men and women are equally God's servants with the potential to achieve excellence, serve as God's vicegerents on earth, and share in the primordial covenant. Islam does not discriminate based on gender; rather, it encourages both men and women to grow and develop (Hasan, 2015).

From the Islamic perspective, gender justice is emphasized in Qur'anic verses such as QS. An-Nisa: 32, An-Nahl: 97, and Al-Mu'minun: 40, which affirm that men and women have equal rights in education and service (Moleong, 2004). Women's empowerment begins with individual awareness and environmental influence. As Islamic educational institutions, Pesantren play a crucial role in shaping independent and resilient women. To achieve this goal, steps are needed, such as developing gender-responsive curricula, adopting teaching methods that promote critical thinking, and enhancing the professionalism of educators (Ratnasari, 2016).

Pondok Pesantren Al-Ikhlash Tambakberas Jombang strives to implement these three aspects to realize the principles of gender equality and justice, whether in education, management, or the daily lives of its students. While many previous studies have highlighted the importance of gender justice, this study focuses on examining and describing how gender values are implemented in daily life at Pondok Pesantren Al-Ikhlash Tambakberas Jombang.

### **Research method**

This study employed a qualitative approach to understanding social phenomena in natural settings, distinct from experimental methods. In this method, the researcher serves as the primary instrument. The qualitative approach aims to explore data in depth and is rich with meaning. Through this method, the researcher seeks to understand, interpret, and comprehensively describe the social realities occurring within the community. Qualitative methods were chosen because they are considered capable of addressing the complexity of social issues, facilitating direct interaction between the researcher and respondents, and providing flexibility in capturing field dynamics (Yusanto, 2020).

In this research, a qualitative descriptive approach was applied to provide a detailed account of the phenomenon related to the implementation of gender equality within Pondok Pesantren Al-Ikhlash Tambakberas, Jombang, under the auspices of the Bahrul Ulum Foundation. This pesantren not only oversees traditional pesantren-based education but also manages formal schools.

Pondok Pesantren Al-Ikhlash Tambakberas was selected as the research site for several strategic reasons, making it a unique case. First, this pesantren has a tradition of progressive kiai leadership known for integrating Islamic values with gender equality practices in daily life. Second, the pesantren operates a dual education system—traditional and formal schools—which allows researchers to observe the implementation of gender justice in a more complex and diverse educational context. Third, the reputation of the Bahrul Ulum Foundation, long recognized as an Islamic educational institution open to progressive thinking, makes this pesantren a potential model for other pesantren in implementing Islamic feminist values. Fourth, based on preliminary observations, there were indications of active kiai involvement in domestic and managerial activities reflecting gender equality practices, a phenomenon still rarely found in many traditional pesantren.

This study employs Islamic feminism theory as its analytical framework. Islamic feminism was chosen due to its relevance to the pesantren context, which is based on Islamic values. Unlike liberal feminism, which emphasizes individual rights and opportunities within a secular framework, Islamic feminism attempts to reconcile Islamic teachings with gender equality principles by reinterpreting religious texts from a more inclusive and gender-just

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perspective. Key concepts in Islamic feminism used in this study include: (1) gender justice (*'adalah*) as a fundamental principle in Islam that respects the dignity of men and women equally; (2) reinterpretation of gender roles not solely based on patriarchal social constructions but on contextual understanding of Islamic teachings; and (3) just complementarity, where men and women have roles that can mutually support each other without oppressive hierarchy (Wadud, 2021).

This Islamic feminism theory is used as a "lens" to analyze research data, particularly in understanding how gender equality values are applied within the pesantren context, which is steeped in Islamic tradition, both in administrative aspects, scholarly activities, and social interactions among students.

The research was conducted in 2025, primarily focusing on examining the role of pesantren in supporting the application of feminist values and gender justice. Data was collected through in-depth interviews based on interview guides distributed to 20 male and 20 female students, ranging from senior high school (*alimah*) level to university students and senior pesantren administrators. Respondents were selected purposively, considering their active involvement in pesantren life and administration, to ensure relevant information for the study's focus.

The interview guide contained open-ended questions designed to explore students' and administrators' perceptions, experiences, and perspectives regarding the implementation of gender justice in the pesantren in depth. This open interview approach allowed respondents to explain their experiences in their own words, provide concrete examples, and reveal nuances that closed-ended questions cannot capture. Some of the key guiding questions asked included:

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**KUISIONER PENELITIAN**

Kuisisioner ini disusun dalam rangka penelitian mengenai implementasi kesetaraan gender di Pondok Pesantren Al-Ikhlash Bahrul Ulum Jombang.

**Seluruh data dan jawaban Anda akan dijaga kerahasiaannya.**

Informasi yang Anda berikan hanya akan digunakan untuk kepentingan penelitian akademik dan **tidak akan dipublikasikan secara pribadi** atau digunakan di luar keperluan riset ini.

**Biodata Responden (Silakan diisi)**

1. **Nama** (boleh nama lengkap atau singkatan): \_\_\_\_\_
2. **Jenis Kelamin:**
  - ☐ Laki-laki
  - ☐ Perempuan
3. **Usia:** \_\_\_\_\_ tahun
4. **Tingkat Kelas / Madrasah** (misal: kelas 3 MA, kelas 2 Tsanawiyah, dll): \_\_\_\_\_
5. **Lama mondok di Al-Ikhlash:** \_\_\_\_\_ tahun
6. **Asal daerah/kota:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Topik:** Implementasi Kesetaraan Gender di Pondok Pesantren Al-Ikhlash Bahrul Ulum Jombang

**Petunjuk:** Isilah pertanyaan berikut dengan jujur sesuai pengalaman dan pengamatan Anda di pondok.

1. Apakah Anda melihat adanya pembagian tugas yang seimbang antara santri laki-laki dan santri perempuan dalam kegiatan pondok (misalnya kerja bakti, memasak, bersih-bersih)? Jelaskan pendapat Anda!
2. Sejauh yang Anda tahu, apakah Kyai atau pengasuh pondok secara langsung mencontohkan perilaku yang mendukung kesetaraan gender? Jika ya, contoh apa yang paling Anda ingat?

Figure 1. Questionnaire page 1

3. Menurut Anda, apakah santri laki-laki dan perempuan mendapatkan hak dan peluang yang sama dalam hal:
- Mengikuti kegiatan keilmuan?
  - Menjadi pengurus atau memimpin kegiatan?
  - Mengakses fasilitas pondok?
- (Beri tanda centang ☒ pada yang sesuai dan jelaskan jika perlu)
4. Bagaimana perasaan Anda ketika melihat Kyai melakukan kegiatan domestik seperti memasak, membersihkan lingkungan, atau ikut kerja bakti bersama santri?
- Sangat terinspirasi
  - Biasa saja
  - Tidak terlalu peduli
  - Lainnya: \_\_\_\_\_
- (Beri alasan jawaban Anda)
5. Menurut Anda, seberapa penting keteladanan Kyai dalam membentuk pandangan santri terhadap peran laki-laki dan perempuan yang adil dan setara?
- Sangat penting
  - Penting
  - Kurang penting
  - Tidak penting sama sekali
- (Beri alasan jawaban Anda)
6. Apakah Anda pernah berdiskusi atau diajarkan secara langsung tentang konsep kesetaraan gender dalam pengajian, ceramah, atau kegiatan keilmuan pondok?
- Sering
  - Kadang-kadang
  - Pernah sekali
  - Tidak pernah
- (Jelaskan isi atau momen yang Anda ingat jika pernah)

Figure 2. Questionnaire page 2

- Is there an equitable division of tasks between male and female students in pesantren activities such as communal work, cooking, or cleaning?
- Have the *kiai* or pesantren caretakers ever provided concrete behavior examples reflecting gender equality? If yes, please mention them.
- What are the respondents' perceptions regarding equal rights and opportunities for male and female students in academic activities, administration, and access to pesantren facilities?
- What is the respondents' response when seeing the *kiai* involved in domestic activities such as cooking, cleaning the environment, or participating in communal work with the students?
- How important is the *kiai's* role-modeling in shaping students' views on equal roles between men and women?
- Have respondents ever received direct teaching or engaged in discussions about gender equality in study forums, sermons, or scholarly activities at the pesantren?

These questions were designed to explore students' understanding of the concept of gender justice in practical terms, both through direct experiences and through the role-modeling demonstrated by the *kiai* and pesantren administrators. The researcher deliberately included questions related to the *kiai's* involvement in domestic activities, as this serves as a concrete indicator of the application of gender justice values in pesantren, which have often been understood only theoretically (Raharjo, 2010).

In addition to interviews, participant observation complemented data collection to obtain a real picture of social interactions and the implementation of gender justice principles in the pesantren. Observations were carried out before, during, and after the interview process to ensure that the data collected were factual and consistent with the actual conditions in the field. The researcher observed various pesantren activities such as communal work, teaching-learning activities, student deliberations, and daily interactions between kiai, administrators, and students. Field notes were made systematically to document these observations.

Data analysis in this study was conducted thematically through three main stages referring to the Miles and Huberman model: data reduction, data display, and verification. The analysis process began with data reduction, where interview transcripts and observation notes were read repeatedly and in depth to understand emerging patterns. A coding or data categorization process was then conducted, where narrative responses from respondents were grouped based on main themes relevant to the research questions (Rijali, 2019).

In this coding process, the researcher identified response categories that emerged from the data. For example, for questions about task division, respondents' answers explaining that "male and female students both clean the mosque," "there is no difference in tasks based on gender," or "all students take turns cooking" were categorized as "Agree/Balanced" responses. Meanwhile, answers indicating imbalance or injustice would be categorized as "Disagree."

This categorization process was conducted systematically using the constant comparative method, where each answer was compared with others to ensure consistency in coding. Information irrelevant to the research focus was filtered out, while significant data related to division of labor based on gender, the kiai's role as a gender equality role model, and students' perceptions of equality were grouped and summarized.

The reduced and categorized data were presented in two forms. First, data were presented in frequency and percentage tables to provide a quantitative overview of the distribution of respondents' responses to each main theme. These tables are not results from closed-ended questionnaires but representations of categorized narrative responses conducted during the data reduction stage. A table-based presentation makes it easier for readers to see general patterns and response trends at a glance.

Second, data were presented as qualitative descriptive narratives that explain contexts, concrete examples, and respondents' quotations to enrich the findings' understanding. This narrative also integrates field observation results to demonstrate triangulation and provide a more comprehensive picture. Data display was organized based on the main themes identified in the coding process, and each theme was analyzed using the Islamic feminism framework.

The identified themes were then interpreted using the Islamic feminism framework to understand how gender equality values are practiced within the pesantren context based on Islamic teachings. Verification was conducted through method triangulation by comparing interview findings with field observation results to ensure data consistency. Member checking was also performed by confirming the researcher's interpretation with several key respondents to ensure that the researcher's understanding aligns with respondents' intentions. Additionally, peer debriefing was carried out through discussions of findings and interpretations with fellow

researchers or experts to test the credibility of the analysis. This verification process ensures the accuracy and credibility of data before concluding (Alfansyur, 2020).

To maintain data validity and reliability, this study implemented several strategies. Method triangulation was employed by combining in-depth interviews with participant observation to verify information obtained from one source with another. This enhances the credibility and reliability of research findings. Source triangulation was conducted by involving various levels of respondents, including aliyah students, university students, senior administrators, and male and female students, to obtain diverse and comprehensive perspectives, thereby minimizing bias in data interpretation. (Afiyanti, 2008).

Prolonged engagement was practiced as the researcher spent sufficient time in the field, before, during, and after interviews, to build trust with respondents and understand the pesantren context in depth. An audit trail was maintained by systematically documenting the entire research process, from data collection, interview transcripts, field notes, coding process, to analysis, so others can trace and examine it if necessary. Finally, reflexivity was practiced as the researcher critically reflected on their position and potential personal biases that might influence data collection and interpretation, and strived to maintain objectivity in analysis (Alfansyur, 2020).

## **Results and Discussion**

Pondok Pesantren Al-Ikhlās, located on KH. Abdul Wahab Hasbullah Street, Gang 3, Tambakberas, Jombang, operates under the auspices of the Bahrul Ulum Foundation. The pesantren oversees not only traditional Islamic boarding education but also formal schools. It is led by KH. Hasyim Yusuf, the son-in-law of the prominent scholar KH. Jamaluddin Ahmad. Within the pesantren, a variety of programs are available to enhance students' religious knowledge and skills, including classical Islamic text study (*pengajian kitab kuning*), Qur'an memorization sessions (*setoran hafalan Al-Qur'an*), Qur'an review (*murojaah*), and *Madrasah Diniyyah* learning. In addition, extracurricular activities such as Qur'anic recitation training (*tilawatil Qur'an*), *bahtsul masail* (religious problem-solving discussions), advanced classical text reading, and intensive Qur'an recitation programs are open to both male and female students.

Beyond these activities, Pondok Pesantren Al-Ikhlās also organizes non-formal education such as Qur'anic Learning Centers (*Taman Pendidikan Al-Qur'an* or TPQ), which are managed and run by the pesantren's male and female students. Through these various initiatives, the pesantren consistently seeks to implement principles of gender justice within formal and non-formal education and its organizational structure. Based on research conducted in 2025, efforts to implement gender justice in this pesantren are evident in male and female students' views on gender and feminism, as well as the equal opportunities granted to female teachers (*ustadzah*) to participate in the pesantren's leadership and administration actively. The following section presents the research findings.

### **a. Male Students' Perspectives on Feminism and Gender Justice**

The findings from Pondok Pesantren Al-Ikhlās Tambakberas Jombang indicate that male students demonstrate a relatively good understanding of the concepts of feminism and gender justice. For them, feminism is not merely a foreign term. Still, it is an effort or

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movement to create equality between men and women in various aspects of life, including within the pesantren environment. Some students view feminism as a form of resistance against patriarchal culture, which has long been perceived as restricting women's roles in the public sphere.

Male students also recognize that gender equality is aligned with Islamic values, emphasizing justice, balance of roles, and mutual respect. Within the pesantren, these values have begun to be realized through student organizations that are open to all, without gender distinction.

The researcher's observations further show that the implementation of gender justice is reflected in the students' daily activities. One indicator is the more balanced coordination between male and female students in Pesantren programs. Whereas student organizations used to function separately, they now show greater synergy that strengthens collaboration without diminishing the principles of etiquette and propriety upheld in the Pesantren environment.

The application of gender justice values is also evident in discussion forums (*musyawarah*) and everyday interactions, where male students display respectful attitudes toward female students, including acknowledging their opinions, granting them equal space, and showing courtesy such as yielding the way when passing. This awareness has been shaped not only through theoretical instruction but also through the exemplary conduct of KH. Hasyim Yusuf, the pesantren caretaker, is known for actively participating in various activities without confining himself to specific roles.

To reinforce these findings, the researcher also distributed questionnaires to 20 male students to further explore their perceptions of gender justice implementation in the pesantren. The results of this questionnaire are presented in Table 1.

**Table 1.** Male Students' Responses Regarding Feminism and Gender Justice at Pondok Pesantren Al-Ikhlash

No	Question	Response Options	Number of Respondents	Percentage (%)
1	Is the division of tasks between male and female students in the pesantren balanced (e.g., communal work, cleaning, cooking)?	Agree	20	100%
		Disagree	0	0%
2	Do the <i>kiai</i> or pesantren caretakers provide concrete examples of behavior that support gender equality?	Yes	16	80%
		No	3	15%
		Do not Know	1	5%
3	Do male and female students receive equal rights and opportunities in scholarly activities, administration, and access to pesantren facilities?	Yes	20	100%
		No	0	0%
4	How do you feel when seeing the <i>kiai</i> involved in domestic activities such as	Inspired	20	100%



	cooking, cleaning, or teaching life skills?			
		Indifferent	0	0%
5	How important is the <i>kiai's</i> role-modeling in shaping students' views on equal roles between men and women?	Important	20	100%
		Not Important	0	0%
6	Have you ever been taught or directly discussed the concept of gender equality in pesantren study forums or sermons?	Yes	10	50%
		No	10	50%

Table 1 reinforces the finding that male students at Pondok Pesantren Al-Ikhlas already possess a collective awareness of the importance of gender justice within the pesantren environment. All respondents agreed that the division of tasks between male and female students is balanced. This indicates that they no longer view certain tasks as the monopoly of one gender, but rather as shared responsibilities carried out according to each individual's capacity. (Taufik, 2022).

As many as 16 students (80%) also stated that the pesantren caretaker actively provides examples of behavior supporting gender equality, such as participation in domestic activities, teaching farming and livestock skills, and even coconut oil production. However, three students (15%) reported not seeing such role-modeling, and one (5%) claimed not to know, suggesting that some students may not fully recognize these leadership examples.

All students agreed that equal opportunities exist for participation in scholarly activities, administration, and access to pesantren facilities. This fact reflects the pesantren's commitment to implementing gender justice in its structural aspects (Ratnasari, 2016).

Interestingly, all students reported feeling inspired by seeing the *kiai* involved in domestic activities. This proves that direct role-modeling is more effective in shaping students' views on gender relations than theoretical instruction alone.

Furthermore, all respondents considered the *kiai's* role-modeling crucial in instilling gender justice values. KH. Hasyim Yusuf successfully demonstrates that men's roles are not limited to the public sphere but also encompass domestic responsibilities, teaching valuable life skills.

Nevertheless, the questionnaire results also highlight the need to strengthen the formal delivery of gender equality material. Half of the students (50%) reported receiving specific discussions or teaching on gender equality in study forums or sermons, while the other 50% had not. This indicates that gender awareness is fostered more through daily practices and role-modeling than through structured formal instruction.

In conclusion, male students at Pondok Pesantren Al-Ikhlas hold positive views toward feminism and gender justice. Real practices within the pesantren largely shape their awareness, increasingly equitable social interactions, and direct role-modeling from the *kiai*. However, formal teaching of gender equality in official forums still needs to be strengthened to ensure a more comprehensive understanding, both practically and theoretically (Putra, 2018).

## **b. Female Students' Perspectives on Feminism and Gender Justice**

Female students and administrators at Pondok Pesantren Al-Ikhlash Tambakberas Jombang also demonstrate well-aligned perspectives on feminism and gender justice. For them, feminism is understood as the idea that women have equal rights, opportunities, and status with men, while still acknowledging natural roles and individual capacities. This concept of equality is not only grasped theoretically but is also applied in the daily lives of students within the pesantren (Nurfai, 2022).

The implementation of gender justice in Pondok Pesantren Al-Ikhlash is clearly reflected in the involvement of female students in various activities, including within the pesantren's organizational structure and other internal bodies. Female students have their own independent organizational structure, not subordinated to the male students' structure, and are given equal space to participate in scholarly and social activities within the pesantren (Choiron, 2017).

Both female students and administrators agree that the pesantren has consistently sought to implement gender justice principles, without differentiating treatment between male and female students in formal or informal activities. Awareness of the importance of gender justice does not emerge instantly through formal teaching. However, it is gradually shaped through lived experiences, pesantren activities, and the role-modeling of the caretaker, KH. Hasyim Yusuf (Agus, 2017).

The *Kiai's* role-modeling is vital in shaping gender awareness among female students. KH. Hasyim Yusuf is known for providing concrete examples that all types of work can be performed by anyone, regardless of gender, as long as it matches their capacity. This is evident in female students' experiences of being involved in various pesantren activities such as construction work (*ro'an* for cement casting), joining the food division during major pesantren events, and even being invited by the *kiai* to help with the demolition of buildings. Although such activities are demanding, female students were still included, with adjustments made according to their abilities. For many female students, this experience proves that the *kiai* views tasks not through the lens of gender but based on individual capability.

To support these findings, the researcher distributed questionnaires to 20 female students to explore their perceptions regarding implementing gender justice within the pesantren. The results of this questionnaire are presented in the Table 2.

Table 2. Female Students' Responses Regarding Feminism and Gender Justice at Pondok Pesantren Al-Ikhlash

No	Question	Response Options	Number of Respondents	Percentage (%)
1	Is the division of tasks between male and female students in the pesantren balanced (e.g., communal work, cleaning, cooking)?	Agree	20	100%
		Disagree	0	0%
2	Do the <i>kiai</i> or pesantren caretakers provide concrete examples of behavior that support gender equality?	Yes	19	95%

		No	1	5%
3	Do male and female students receive equal rights and opportunities in scholarly activities, administration, and access to pesantren facilities?	Yes	19	95%
		No	1	5%
4	How do you feel when seeing the <i>kiai</i> involved in domestic activities such as cooking, cleaning, or teaching life skills?	Inspired	20	100%
		Indifferent	0	0%
5	How important is the <i>kiai</i> 's role-modeling in shaping students' views on equal roles between men and women?	Important	20	100%
		Not Important	0	0%
6	Have you ever been taught or directly discussed the concept of gender equality in pesantren study forums or sermons?	Yes	15	75%
		No	5	25%

Table 2 indicates that all female students (100%) agreed that the division of tasks between male and female students at the pesantren has been balanced, while still considering individual abilities. Female students felt included in pesantren activities without discrimination, whether in domestic responsibilities or physically demanding tasks, with reasonable adjustments.

Nineteen female students (95%) stated that the *kiai* or pesantren caretakers provided concrete examples of behaviors supporting gender justice, while one student (5%) stated otherwise. The majority acknowledged the *kiai*'s direct role modeling, such as participating in construction work (*ro'an*), taking part in food preparation for major events, and even helping demolish old buildings alongside male students, albeit with appropriate adjustments for female students' capacities.

Regarding equal opportunities in scholarly activities, administration, and access to Pesantren facilities, 19 female students (95%) affirmed that they received the same rights as male students, while only one student (5%) felt otherwise. This reflects Pesantren's commitment to gender justice, though individual perceptions remain varied.

All female students reported feeling inspired when observing the *kiai*'s involvement in domestic tasks such as cooking, cleaning, or teaching life skills. This suggests that the *kiai*'s direct role modeling not only raises awareness of gender justice but also demonstrates in practice that rigid social constructs of gender roles should not limit tasks.

Furthermore, all respondents considered the *kiai*'s role modeling important in shaping their views on equal roles between men and women, highlighting the pesantren leader's strong influence in internalizing gender justice values.

Regarding formal education on gender equality, 15 female students (75%) admitted to receiving teachings or discussions on the concept in formal forums such as study circles or sermons. In comparison, five students (25%) reported not having such experiences. This

finding shows that gender education has begun integrating into academic activities, though its delivery has not been evenly distributed.

Overall, it can be concluded that female students at Pondok Pesantren Al-Ikhlash hold a positive view of feminism and gender justice. Their awareness is primarily shaped through direct experiences, pesantren activities, the *kiai*'s role modeling, and the reinforcement of Islamic values that promote justice (Abidin, Ahmadi, & Imamah, 2020). Nonetheless, formal education on gender equality needs to be enhanced so that students' understanding is shaped by practice and underpinned by strong and structured theory.

### **c. Analysis of the Implementation of Gender Justice and Feminist Values in the Socio-Religious Life of Pondok Pesantren Al-Ikhlash**

Feminism historically emerged as a response to social injustice arising from unequal gender relations. The movement developed as an effort to eliminate oppression against women and to advocate for equal status between men and women in patriarchal societies (Sutanto, 2017). At its inception, feminism focused on resisting the subordination of women, who were often stereotyped as weak, emotional, and irrational.

The development of feminism can be divided into several waves. The first wave was marked by Mary Wollstonecraft's *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman* (1792), which demanded equal access to education for women. The second wave was characterized by Betty Friedan's *The Feminine Mystique* (1963) and the establishment of the National Organization for Women (NOW) in 1966, which fought for women's rights in domestic, educational, and reproductive spheres. The third wave, often described as post-feminism, responded to the complexity of women's identities in the modern era (Suwastini, 2013).

In Pondok Pesantren Al-Ikhlash Tambakberas Jombang, feminism is understood more simply as implementing gender justice within the pesantren's socio-religious life. For both male and female students, gender justice is not merely a slogan of equality. However, it is reflected in daily interactions, the educational system, and the pesantren's administrative structures, which provide equal space for men and women (Lubis & Triadi, 2024).

Questionnaire data revealed that all male and female students agreed that the division of labor in the pesantren has been balanced according to individual capacities. Female students even acknowledged their involvement in physically demanding tasks such as construction work (*ro'an*) or logistical support for large pesantren events, adjusted to their abilities. This demonstrates that work in the pesantren is not viewed through a gender-biased lens (Gillis, Howie, & Munford, 2004).

The majority of students also recognized the role modeling of KH. Hasyim Yusuf, Pondok Pesantren Al-Ikhlash's caretaker, frequently engaged in domestic and productive activities while granting male and female students wide opportunities to develop. His example is considered highly influential in shaping students' perspectives on equal roles between men and women, as evidenced by the fact that all respondents felt inspired by his behavior.

In Islam, gender justice has strong foundations, as expressed in Qur'an Surah Al-Hujurat (49:13), which emphasizes equality among humans, and Surah Al-Ahzab (33:35), which assures women of equal reward for their righteous deeds regardless of gender. Islam

views human dignity not based on gender but on piety. Prominent scholars such as Hamka also reinforced the principles of gender justice in Islam, including four aspects: the exalted status of women as mothers (Q.S. Luqman:14), the role of women in both domestic and public spheres (Q.S. An-Nisa:34–35), freedom in education (Q.S. An-Nisa:19), and equal dignity between men and women. These principles form the basis of Pondok Pesantren Al-Ikhlâs in instilling gender awareness among its students (Umam, Bustomi, & Maulana, 2024).

Social norms, religion, and pesantren traditions are key instruments in shaping perceptions of gender justice among students. At Pondok Pesantren Al-Ikhlâs, gender justice is not understood in the extreme sense of Western feminism but is harmonized with Islamic values and pesantren wisdom. Both male and female students are taught to respect one another, uphold women's dignity, and avoid dominance or subordination. The pesantren's strong Islamic foundation ensures that gender justice is rooted in Qur'anic and Hadith references (Kurniawati & Muafiah, 2023).

Through implementing gender justice, the pesantren fosters a balanced distribution of roles between male and female students in socio-religious life. Although the pesantren retains religious characteristics and remains framed by cultural masculinity, gender-based domination or oppression is not prominent. Instead, both male and female students are encouraged to contribute according to their capacities, respect one another, and collectively build an inclusive pesantren civilization (Al-Hakim, 2013).

Thus, feminism from the perspective of Pondok Pesantren Al-Ikhlâs is not limited to demanding formal equality but emphasizes fair role distribution, respect for biological differences, and women's empowerment within the framework of Islamic values. This aligns with the feminist spirit of enhancing women's roles without neglecting the essence of religious teachings and pesantren culture. In this way, gender justice at Pondok Pesantren Al-Ikhlâs becomes a crucial foundation for shaping students into critical, cultured, and socially responsible individuals, both male and female, in building a just, religious, and dignified society (Puspitawati, 2012).

## **Conclusion**

This study aimed to examine and describe the implementation of gender justice values in the socio-religious context of Pondok Pesantren Al-Ikhlâs Tambakberas Jombang. The findings indicate that the pesantren has successfully implemented gender justice principles in educational activities and administrative structures. This is reflected in the positive perceptions of male and female students toward gender justice and feminism and in the equal opportunities provided to all students in various pesantren activities.

The division of labor, whether in domestic tasks or physical participation such as *ro'an* construction, has been carried out fairly according to individual capacities, free from gender bias. Students' collective awareness of gender justice has been primarily shaped through real-life practices in the pesantren environment, increasingly equitable social interactions, and most importantly, the direct role modeling of the caretaker, KH. Hasyim Yusuf. His involvement in domestic and productive activities, along with his granting of equal opportunities for students regardless of gender, serves as concrete evidence that rigid social constructs should not restrict work.

However, the findings also suggest that the formal teaching of gender equality still needs to be strengthened to ensure that students' understanding is comprehensive, covering both practical and theoretical aspects.

In conclusion, implementing gender justice at Pondok Pesantren Al-Ikhlash demonstrates that feminism in the pesantren context is not understood in an extreme sense but is harmonized with Islamic values and local wisdom. It represents an effort to elevate women's roles and positions while respecting biological differences, empowering women within the framework of Islam, and promoting fair role distribution and respect for every individual's dignity without domination. Through this approach, Pondok Pesantren Al-Ikhlash has shaped students into critical, cultured, and socially aware individuals, ready to build a just and dignified society.

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