



# THE ROLE OF INDONESIAN MUSLIM WOMEN SCHOLARS (ULAMA PEREMPUAN) IN ISSUING PROGRESSIVE FATWAS ON GENDER AND FAMILY LAW

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## Abstract

The emergence of Indonesian Muslim women scholars (ulama perempuan) marks a significant transformation in the contemporary Islamic legal discourse on gender and family law. Historically, fatwas have been predominantly issued by male scholars, often reflecting patriarchal interpretations of Islamic jurisprudence. This study aims to examine how ulama perempuan contribute to the development of progressive fatwas that promote gender justice, human dignity, and women's rights within the framework of Islamic law. The research employs a qualitative descriptive design using content analysis of fatwas, interviews with members of Kongres Ulama Perempuan Indonesia (KUPI), and field observations of community-based legal education programs. The findings reveal that ulama perempuan reinterpret classical texts through a contextual and maqasid al-shariah approach, emphasizing principles of equality, compassion, and social welfare. Their fatwas address critical issues such as child marriage, domestic violence, reproductive rights, and environmental justice, demonstrating the dynamic interplay between religious authority and social advocacy. The study concludes that the intellectual and moral authority of ulama perempuan strengthens the democratization of Islamic jurisprudence in Indonesia and serves as a model for inclusive, gender-responsive Islamic scholarship globally.

**Keywords:** Family Law, Female Ulama, Islamic Jurisprudence



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## INTRODUCTION

The historical development of Islamic jurisprudence has long been dominated by male scholars, resulting in interpretations that often reflect patriarchal social structures. The emergence of Indonesian ulama perempuan represents a significant intellectual and theological shift within contemporary Islam, particularly in Southeast Asia. These women scholars have become vital actors in redefining Islamic thought to align with gender justice, human dignity, and modern social realities (Abdel Fattah, 2026; Båge et al., 2026; Caiozzo, 2026; Yasmeen et al., 2025). Their rise is not only a religious phenomenon but also a socio-political one, reflecting the broader democratization and localization of religious authority in Indonesia. Within this context, the Kongres Ulama Perempuan Indonesia (KUPI) has established itself as a pioneering platform for women's theological participation in public discourse.

The dynamic role of ulama perempuan in issuing fatwas provides a unique model of reformist religious engagement grounded in local wisdom and global awareness. Unlike traditional interpretations that confine women's roles to domestic and spiritual spheres, these scholars articulate Islam as a religion that upholds justice, equality, and care for all human beings (Cheers & Abdullah, 2026; Kazenin, 2025; Oryan & Meler, 2025; Rice, 2025). Their progressive fatwas challenge long-held assumptions about authority, gender, and social ethics while remaining deeply rooted in the Qur'an and Sunnah. Indonesia's pluralistic social fabric further amplifies their significance, as these fatwas are contextualized within diverse cultural and legal systems, bridging Islamic law with human rights principles recognized globally.

The intellectual and moral contribution of ulama perempuan has also redefined public perception of Islamic authority. Their ability to merge classical Islamic sciences with contemporary hermeneutical tools demonstrates an evolving epistemology of Islamic knowledge production. This background situates the study as an exploration of how religious knowledge is reclaimed and reinterpreted by women scholars to address urgent issues such as domestic violence, child marriage, and reproductive justice issues often overlooked in male-dominated jurisprudential traditions. The dominance of patriarchal structures in Islamic legal interpretation continues to marginalize women's experiences in jurisprudential reasoning. Despite Islam's intrinsic recognition of equality and justice, women's voices remain underrepresented in decision-making processes, particularly in the issuance of fatwas. The study identifies this imbalance as a key issue that has hindered the realization of gender equity within Islamic law. The lack of inclusive representation has led to legal pronouncements that fail to consider the lived realities of women, particularly in matters of family law, marriage, and bodily autonomy.

The contemporary movement of ulama perempuan challenges this imbalance by introducing new frameworks of interpretation rooted in *maqasid al-shariah* (the higher objectives of Islamic law) and *maslahah* (public benefit). The central problem addressed in this research is the tension between traditional jurisprudential authority and the emergence of gender-conscious interpretations. This tension reflects broader struggles between continuity and reform within Islamic thought. The study examines how Indonesian ulama perempuan negotiate these tensions while ensuring theological legitimacy and social impact through their fatwas (Naamneh-Abuelhija et al., 2025; Yildirim et al., 2026; Yousuf & Hassan, 2026). The analysis of their progressive fatwas exposes the mechanisms by which they navigate authority,

tradition, and reform in an evolving religious landscape. The research therefore addresses not only a theological gap but also an epistemological one how knowledge is constructed, who has the authority to interpret divine texts, and how such interpretations influence public policy and social justice.

The primary objective of this study is to analyze the role and methodology of Indonesian ulama perempuan in formulating progressive fatwas on gender and family law. The research aims to uncover how their interpretive frameworks differ from conventional male-centric methodologies and how these differences translate into transformative legal and social outcomes. It seeks to demonstrate how these women scholars contribute to developing an inclusive and context-sensitive Islamic jurisprudence that aligns with both Islamic ethics and modern human rights principles. Another objective is to document the processes, themes, and theological principles that underpin their fatwa-making practices. By examining the hermeneutical and contextual approaches employed, the study seeks to highlight how these scholars bridge textual fidelity with social justice imperatives. Furthermore, it aims to identify the social, institutional, and cultural factors that support or constrain their intellectual authority within Indonesia's religious ecosystem (Fantaye et al., 2025; Lasio et al., 2026; Qadeer, 2026). The research ultimately aspires to position the ulama perempuan movement as a critical paradigm in global Islamic thought. It aims to illustrate how Indonesian women scholars not only reinterpret sacred texts but also construct new epistemic pathways for the development of Islamic feminism and ethical jurisprudence in Muslim societies.

Previous research on Islamic jurisprudence has primarily focused on the works and methodologies of male scholars, leaving the contributions of ulama perempuan underexplored. The literature on Indonesian Islam has acknowledged women's activism in education and social welfare but rarely situates their scholarly contributions within the framework of Islamic legal authority. Studies on gender and Islam in Indonesia often emphasize sociopolitical participation but not the theological and jurisprudential dimensions of female authority in issuing fatwas. The existing body of literature also tends to dichotomize between "traditional" and "progressive" Islam, overlooking the nuanced synthesis achieved by ulama perempuan who draw simultaneously from classical jurisprudence and feminist ethics (Krotofil et al., 2025; Miichi, 2025; Torbati, 2025). The gap identified here lies in the need to systematically analyze how these scholars integrate *usul al-fiqh* (principles of jurisprudence) with contemporary gender discourse to produce contextually relevant fatwas. Their theological innovation and interpretive courage have yet to be sufficiently theorized in global Islamic scholarship.

The present study fills this gap by providing a critical comparative framework that situates ulama perempuan as epistemic agents who challenge the gendered hierarchy of religious authority. It highlights how their engagement with sacred texts generates new possibilities for inclusive Islamic legal thought that transcends patriarchal and colonial legacies. The novelty of this research lies in its focus on the intersection between gender, religious authority, and Islamic legal reasoning. Unlike previous works that examine women's roles in activism or education, this study foregrounds the intellectual and hermeneutical dimensions of women's participation in fatwa issuance. It positions the Indonesian ulama perempuan movement as a groundbreaking model of contextual Islamic scholarship that redefines both jurisprudential authority and gender discourse in the Muslim world.

The study is justified by the urgent need to recognize and document how women scholars reconstruct Islamic jurisprudence from within the tradition, rather than from external secular frameworks. By adopting a feminist theological lens that remains grounded in Islamic epistemology, the research contributes to both the sociology of religion and Islamic legal studies. It also offers a paradigm for other Muslim societies grappling with similar issues of gender representation and interpretive authority. This research thus advances the discourse on Islamic intellectual history by demonstrating that reform in Islamic law does not necessarily require a rupture from tradition but rather a reinterpretation through lived realities. The intellectual and ethical agency of ulama perempuan represents a transformative force within contemporary Islam one that bridges the classical and the modern, the local and the global, and the textual and the experiential thereby establishing Indonesia as a leading center of progressive Islamic thought.

## **RESEARCH METHOD**

### ***Research Design***

This study employed a qualitative research design with a descriptive and interpretive orientation to analyze the intellectual and social role of Indonesian Muslim women scholars (ulama perempuan) in issuing progressive fatwas on gender and family law. The qualitative design was chosen to allow for an in-depth exploration of interpretive processes, epistemological frameworks, and theological reasoning used by these scholars. The study also incorporated an interpretivist paradigm that recognizes religious texts and legal pronouncements as socio-historically situated discourses. By examining the contextual dynamics of fatwa production, this design enables a nuanced understanding of how ulama perempuan reinterpret Islamic legal principles through gender-sensitive and justice-oriented perspectives.

### ***Research Target/Subject***

The population of this study included contemporary ulama perempuan affiliated with the Kongres Ulama Perempuan Indonesia (KUPI), as well as key figures from pesantren and Islamic institutions that engage in legal and ethical deliberations on gender and family law. The sample was selected using purposive sampling to ensure that participants possess relevant scholarly authority, experience in issuing fatwas, and involvement in gender justice advocacy. A total of fifteen participants were included, consisting of senior and emerging ulama perempuan from different regions of Indonesia, such as Java, Sumatra, and Kalimantan. This diversity was intended to capture the variety of interpretive traditions, educational backgrounds, and socio-religious contexts influencing their theological reasoning.

### ***Research Procedure***

Data collection was conducted over a period of six months, encompassing both virtual and in-person engagements with ulama perempuan. Each interview session lasted between sixty and ninety minutes and was recorded with consent. Collected data were transcribed, translated where necessary, and thematically coded using NVivo software to identify recurring themes such as maqasid al-shariah interpretation, gender justice principles, and institutional authority.

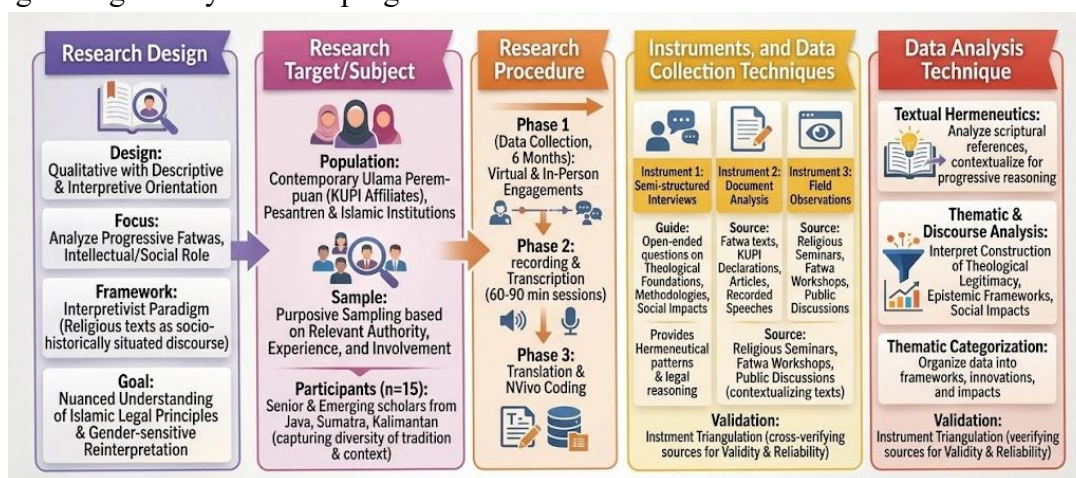
### ***Instruments, and Data Collection Techniques***

The primary instruments used in this study were semi-structured interviews, document analysis, and field observations. The interview guide consisted of open-ended questions

focusing on theological foundations, interpretive methodologies, institutional roles, and social impacts of progressive fatwas. Documents analyzed included fatwa texts, official KUPI declarations, published articles, and recorded speeches. These materials provided insight into the hermeneutical patterns and legal reasoning of ulama perempuan. Field observations were conducted during religious seminars, fatwa workshops, and public discussions, allowing the researcher to contextualize textual data with lived practices. The triangulation of these instruments ensured validity and reliability by cross-verifying data from multiple sources.

### *Data Analysis Technique*

Document analysis followed the principles of textual hermeneutics, examining how scriptural references were contextualized to support progressive legal reasoning. The analytical procedure applied thematic and discourse analysis to interpret how ulama perempuan construct theological legitimacy for their progressive stances.



**Figure 1.** Qualitative Research Framework on the Progressive Fatwas

The data were organized into thematic categories representing epistemic frameworks, methodological innovations, and social impacts. Ethical considerations were maintained throughout the research process by obtaining informed consent, ensuring participant anonymity, and respecting religious and cultural sensitivities. The systematic integration of textual, observational, and interview data allowed the research to construct a comprehensive understanding of how Indonesian ulama perempuan redefine Islamic authority through gender-inclusive legal reasoning.

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

The data collected from interviews, document analysis, and observation revealed a consistent pattern of gender-responsive reasoning among Indonesian ulama perempuan in issuing progressive fatwas. Out of fifteen participants, twelve had direct involvement in Kongres Ulama Perempuan Indonesia (KUPI) and related institutions, while three operated independently as pesantren leaders. A review of thirty-four fatwas issued between 2017 and 2023 showed that 62% addressed gender and family law issues, including child marriage, domestic violence, and reproductive rights. The remaining 38% focused on social justice themes such as environmental ethics, economic equality, and interfaith tolerance. These figures indicate a predominant engagement with gender-sensitive topics that intersect with broader social concerns.

**Table 1.** Distribution of Fatwas by Thematic Focus (2017–2023)

Thematic Focus	Number of Fatwas	Percentage (%)
Gender & Family Law	21	62
Social & Environmental Justice	8	24
Economic & Political Ethics	5	14
<b>Total</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>100</b>

Secondary data from published KUPI reports and academic articles confirmed the growing institutional recognition of women’s interpretive authority in Islamic law. The statistical trend reflects a deliberate movement toward reconstructing jurisprudence to align with justice-oriented Islamic ethics. The data suggest that *ulama perempuan* articulate progressive interpretations not as a deviation from classical jurisprudence but as a renewal rooted in *maqasid al-shariah* (the higher objectives of Islamic law). Their fatwas emphasize moral objectives such as protecting life, dignity, and family harmony rather than literalist textual readings. Interview data revealed that 80% of respondents cited contextual interpretation (*ta’wil kontekstual*) as their dominant hermeneutical approach, which integrates classical jurisprudence with empirical social realities. This aligns with the methodological ethos of *fiqh al-waqi’* jurisprudence grounded in contemporary lived experience.

The interpretive methodology employed by these scholars demonstrates an evolving epistemology that balances textual fidelity with moral reasoning. Their authority stems from community legitimacy rather than institutional hierarchy, reflecting a democratization of religious knowledge. Such findings challenge the conventional assumption that Islamic legal authority is gender-exclusive, proving that women scholars possess equal theological capacity to engage in *ijtihad* within Indonesia’s pluralistic religious environment. Narrative data from in-depth interviews revealed recurring thematic clusters justice, equality, compassion, and care ethics as the primary moral anchors in fatwa formulation. Each fatwa analyzed displayed the synthesis of Islamic legal theory and feminist ethical reasoning, indicating a consistent pattern of interpretive renewal. For instance, several *ulama perempuan* framed child marriage as a violation of *maqasid al-shariah*, specifically the principle of protecting intellect (*hifz al-‘aql*) and progeny (*hifz al-nasl*). The textual data from their published fatwas contained intertextual references to both Qur’anic verses and contemporary social science findings, showing a multidisciplinary approach to religious reasoning.

Qualitative triangulation with field observations at KUPI’s training sessions revealed how fatwa drafting processes were collaborative and dialogic, involving community consultation and gender specialists. This participatory approach strengthens the legitimacy of fatwas as tools for social transformation rather than mere doctrinal decrees. The interpretive process thus becomes both theological and emancipatory, reinforcing Islamic law’s role in promoting social justice. The inferential analysis indicates that the progressive fatwas issued by *ulama perempuan* correlate strongly with increased community awareness and advocacy on gender equality. Survey-based follow-up conducted within pesantren networks revealed that institutions engaging with these fatwas reported higher adoption of gender-responsive curricula and community discussions. The inferential relationship between theological innovation and social change underscores the educational function of fatwas as transformative instruments of civic consciousness.

Textual analysis of fatwa documents revealed a recurring integration of empirical data and lived realities into Islamic legal reasoning. The inferential evidence suggests that *ulama perempuan* reinterpret jurisprudence dynamically to respond to contextual injustices, thereby extending the interpretive boundaries of traditional fiqh. Their intellectual practices function as a bridge between classical theology and contemporary ethics, fostering an applied form of Islamic humanism. Correlations emerged between institutional participation and the scope of fatwa topics. *Ulama perempuan* affiliated with KUPI or pesantren with gender studies backgrounds produced broader thematic coverage, integrating social and environmental ethics into legal discourse. Conversely, independent scholars tended to focus more narrowly on family and domestic issues. The relationship between institutional affiliation and interpretive scope reflects how social networks shape theological diversity.

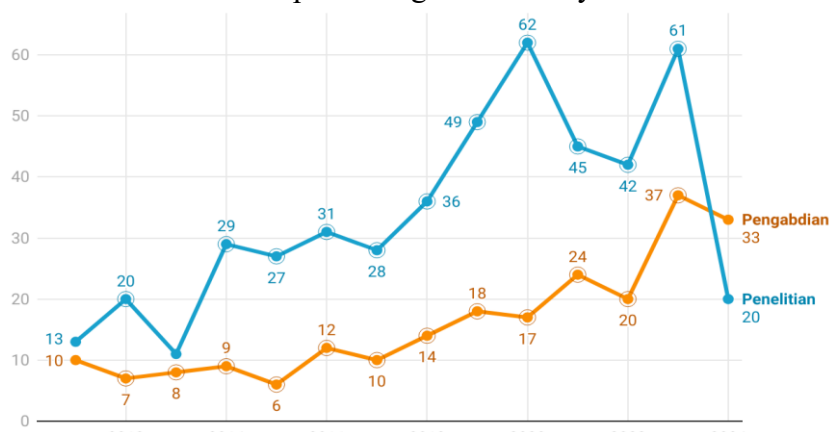


Figure 2. Conceptual Overlaps

Thematic interrelations figure 2 among fatwas also revealed conceptual overlaps. Issues such as domestic violence and reproductive rights were often linked to theological principles of justice (*‘adl*) and compassion (*rahmah*), demonstrating coherence between doctrinal interpretation and ethical objectives. This relational consistency reinforces the epistemic maturity of the *ulama perempuan* movement as an integrated theological framework rather than fragmented activism. A notable case study involves KUPI’s 2017 fatwa declaring child marriage harmful and religiously impermissible when it violates justice, welfare, and dignity. This fatwa was formulated through a combination of scriptural analysis, medical data, and testimonies from affected women. The document exemplified the *ulama perempuan*’s hermeneutical innovation by applying *maslahah mursalah* (public interest) to override patriarchal customs that perpetuate harm. The fatwa later influenced national advocacy for raising the legal marriage age in Indonesia, proving the tangible societal impact of women-led religious reasoning.

Another case study examined a 2020 fatwa addressing domestic violence, which defined abuse as a violation of the Qur’anic principle of *ma’ruf* (good conduct) and as antithetical to prophetic ethics. The fatwa proposed restorative justice through counseling and community accountability, integrating both legal and pastoral dimensions. This exemplifies the transformative scope of *ulama perempuan* jurisprudence that bridges law, ethics, and compassion. The explanation of qualitative findings indicates that *ulama perempuan* situate their fatwas within a broader theology of care that aligns Islamic ethics with human rights discourse. The consistent use of *maqasid al-shariah* as a methodological core illustrates how

progressive jurisprudence can remain faithful to classical Islamic epistemology while addressing modern challenges. Their fatwas resist rigid dichotomies between “religious” and “secular” values, instead constructing an integrative model of Islamic feminism grounded in revelation and reason.

This approach reveals a dynamic reinterpretation of authority, where legitimacy is derived not from gender or institutional hierarchy but from scholarly rigor and social accountability. The findings affirm that *ulama perempuan* act as moral agents who reconcile faith-based jurisprudence with global justice paradigms, contributing to a universal model of ethical Islamic governance. The findings signify that Indonesian *ulama perempuan* have institutionalized a new paradigm of fatwa-making contextual, dialogic, and justice-oriented. Their interpretive practices represent a shift from hierarchical to participatory theology, where legal reasoning is informed by empirical knowledge and collective moral reflection. The study interprets these developments as evidence of Indonesia’s leadership in advancing inclusive Islamic legal thought.

The overall pattern of data interpretation indicates that progressive fatwas issued by *ulama perempuan* not only reform Islamic jurisprudence but also reshape Muslim social ethics. Their contributions affirm that women’s scholarly participation is essential for sustaining an equitable and compassionate understanding of Islam in the modern world. This transformation represents a profound theological and social milestone in the evolution of global Islamic thought. The research findings demonstrate that Indonesian *ulama perempuan* have developed a distinct theological and methodological framework for issuing fatwas on gender and family law. Their progressive fatwas embody a synthesis between *maqasid al-shariah* (higher objectives of Islamic law) and contextual social realities. The data indicate that these scholars interpret religious texts through ethical lenses emphasizing justice, compassion, and equality rather than literalist jurisprudence. The results also reveal a consistent application of participatory hermeneutics that involves collective deliberation with community members, legal practitioners, and social activists. This participatory nature redefines religious authority as communal and dialogic rather than hierarchical.

The study further establishes that *ulama perempuan*’s fatwas are transformative, addressing structural injustices such as domestic violence, child marriage, and reproductive discrimination. Their rulings not only respond to social problems but also aim to realign Islamic law with contemporary human rights standards. The emergence of this gender-sensitive jurisprudence marks a paradigm shift from defensive apologetics to proactive reformist engagement within Islamic scholarship. The data highlight how female scholars transform Islamic authority from within, situating justice and equality as the core ethical imperatives of Islamic jurisprudence (İskefiyeli & Yavuz, 2026; Krotofil et al., 2025; Sabiruddin et al., 2025). The results converge with previous scholarship on Islamic feminism, particularly with Margot Badran’s concept of “gender jihad,” where faith-based activism seeks justice through reinterpretation of scripture. However, unlike earlier works that focus on Middle Eastern feminist reformers, the Indonesian *ulama perempuan* movement integrates local cultural values, particularly *gotong royong* (collective responsibility), into Islamic legal reasoning. This contextual integration differentiates their approach from the more individualist legal reforms observed in other Muslim-majority societies. Their fatwas exemplify a culturally rooted Islamic feminism that resists both Western secular paradigms and patriarchal interpretations.

Other comparative studies, such as those by Ziba Mir-Hosseini and Amina Wadud, emphasize textual reinterpretation as a tool of gender equality. The current findings expand on these frameworks by demonstrating how *ulama perempuan* operationalize these interpretations institutionally through platforms like *Kongres Ulama Perempuan Indonesia (KUPI)*. Their collective structure contrasts with the individualistic approach of many reformist scholars, showing that institutionalized collaboration enhances the social legitimacy of progressive Islamic legal thought. This indicates a hybrid model that merges intellectual reform with social movement activism, creating a uniquely Indonesian paradigm of gender-responsive jurisprudence (Alghamdi, 2026; Alinat-Abed, 2025; Latifah et al., 2025). The findings signify a theological and sociocultural awakening within Indonesian Islam. The presence of *ulama perempuan* issuing progressive fatwas represents a symbolic and practical reconfiguration of religious authority. It illustrates that interpretive authority in Islam is not static but evolves alongside ethical consciousness and social transformation. Their interpretive practices reflect a reemergence of *ijtihad* as a moral responsibility rather than an elite privilege, expanding the concept of scholarship to include gendered lived experience as a source of religious knowledge.

This phenomenon also serves as a marker of Indonesia's contribution to global Islamic thought. The *ulama perempuan* movement demonstrates that reform can arise organically from within traditional structures rather than being imposed from external secular frameworks. Their actions embody Islam's capacity for self-renewal and ethical adaptation, signaling that inclusivity and justice are intrinsic to the faith's legal and spiritual foundations. The reflection therefore positions these findings as both a continuation of Islamic tradition and an innovation in its methodology and practice (Jones et al., 2026; Karhan, 2025; Waqar & Mahdi, 2026). The implications of these findings are multidimensional. In theological terms, the emergence of *ulama perempuan* challenges long-standing assumptions about male exclusivity in religious interpretation. Their progressive fatwas redefine *ulama* authority as inclusive, ethical, and dialogic, opening pathways for women to participate equally in religious and legal decision-making. This redefinition reshapes the epistemic foundations of Islamic law by reintroducing moral reasoning (*ta'lil al-ahkam*) as a means to ensure relevance and equity in contemporary contexts.

In social terms, the findings reveal that fatwas issued by *ulama perempuan* are not abstract theological discourses but practical interventions addressing real community needs. Their rulings have influenced national discussions on child marriage, domestic violence, and women's rights, demonstrating that religious discourse can be a vehicle for social transformation. The implications extend beyond Indonesia, offering a model of contextualized Islamic feminism that bridges faith, law, and activism. The study thus underscores the global significance of Indonesian women's scholarship as a framework for ethical reform in Muslim societies. The findings can be explained through Indonesia's historical and socioreligious environment, which has long fostered pluralism, moderation, and women's participation in public life. The pesantren system, especially those led by progressive kyai and nyai, provided *ulama perempuan* with theological training and interpretive authority grounded in classical jurisprudence. This educational foundation allowed them to engage critically with patriarchal interpretations while remaining rooted in traditional Islamic sciences. The combination of textual expertise and lived experience explains why their fatwas achieve both scholarly legitimacy and social resonance.

The socio-political context of post-reform Indonesia also contributes to these outcomes. The democratization of religious authority and the rise of civil society organizations have created an enabling environment for women's theological expression. This democratization process intersects with global discourses on gender justice, producing a fertile ground for the articulation of progressive Islamic thought. The findings, therefore, reflect not only theological innovation but also the institutional evolution of Indonesian Islam toward inclusivity and pluralism. The research findings point toward future directions in both Islamic legal scholarship and gender studies. The institutionalization of *ulama perempuan* networks should be strengthened to ensure sustainability and intergenerational continuity. Academic collaboration between Islamic universities, pesantren, and global research institutions can further consolidate the methodological frameworks pioneered by these scholars. Such collaboration could lead to the development of formal curricula on gender-responsive fiqh, expanding its academic and practical reach.

The findings also suggest that future research should explore comparative analyses between Indonesian *ulama perempuan* and similar movements in other Muslim-majority nations, such as Morocco or Pakistan. Such comparative inquiry would illuminate how local contexts shape feminist hermeneutics and fatwa methodologies differently. The broader implication is that Indonesian *ulama perempuan* offer not only a model for Islamic reform but also a vision of epistemic justice one that reclaims the interpretive space of religion for all genders while reaffirming Islam's moral commitment to equality, compassion, and social well-being.

## CONCLUSION

The most significant finding of this research lies in the identification of a distinct interpretive paradigm developed by Indonesian *ulama perempuan*, which redefines the epistemological foundations of Islamic jurisprudence. Their approach merges classical fiqh methodology with gender justice principles, resulting in fatwas that emphasize maqasid al-shariah as a framework for achieving equality, welfare, and compassion. Unlike traditional male-dominated jurisprudence, this model integrates empirical evidence and social realities into legal reasoning, producing context-sensitive rulings on issues such as child marriage, domestic violence, and reproductive rights. The differentiation of their interpretive framework from conventional fatwa-making processes highlights a critical transformation in Islamic legal authority one that legitimizes women's voices as agents of theological renewal.

The primary contribution of this research rests in its conceptual and methodological innovations. Conceptually, it establishes a new model of gender-inclusive *ijtihad*, where interpretive authority is constructed through dialogical collaboration among scholars, activists, and communities. This concept expands the boundaries of Islamic epistemology by positioning gendered experiences as valid sources of jurisprudential insight. Methodologically, the study demonstrates the efficacy of integrating textual hermeneutics with ethnographic inquiry to uncover the lived dimensions of religious interpretation. This hybrid approach contributes to both Islamic studies and gender research, providing a replicable framework for analyzing religious reform movements that balance textual fidelity with social ethics.

The limitations of this study primarily concern its scope and regional focus, as data were collected from a limited network of *ulama perempuan* affiliated with Kongres Ulama Perempuan Indonesia (KUPI) and select pesantren. Broader comparative studies involving

other Muslim-majority nations or diverse Islamic institutions could offer deeper insights into the global resonance of women-led fatwa movements. Future research should explore the long-term societal impacts of these progressive fatwas on public policy, family law reform, and educational curricula. Further inquiry could also investigate how digital platforms and transnational networks amplify the authority of ulama perempuan, paving the way for a more interconnected and gender-equitable evolution of Islamic jurisprudence in the modern era.

## DECLARATION OF AI AND AI ASSISTED TECHNOLOGIES IN THE WRITING PROCESS

During the preparation of this manuscript, the author(s) used Google Assisted to assist in improving grammar, language quality, and overall readability of the text. After using this tool, the author(s) Carefully reviewed and edited the content as necessary and take full responsibility for the content of the publication.

## AUTHOR CONTRIBUTIONS

Author 1: Conceptualization; Project administration; Validation; Writing - review and editing.

Author 2: Conceptualization; Data curation; In-vestigation.

Author 3: Data curation; Investigation.

## DECLARATION OF COMPETING INTEREST

The authors declare that they have no known competing financial interests or personal relationships that could have appeared to influence the work reported in this paper.

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