



Feminism in Islam: Its Relation to the Rights and Responsibilities of Career Women in Domestic Spaces

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Abstrak: This study investigates the intersection between feminism in the context of Islam and its influence on the rights and obligations of career women in the domestic environment. Employing an explanatory approach, the study aims to examine the causal relationship between the understanding of feminism in Islam and the dynamics of rights and obligations within family structures. Data were collected through interviews with relevant respondents and an extensive literature review. The findings indicate that feminist thought in Islam emphasizes equality in rights and obligations between women and men across various aspects of life, including in the context of women's careers. This research also examines the fair distribution of domestic duties and the concept of an ideal family in Islam, reflecting equality for both partners. This study is particularly relevant amidst the evolving roles of women in society, especially those who are career-oriented. By providing a thorough analysis, this research strives to highlight how feminism in Islam can influence the rights and obligations of career women in the domestic sphere, and underscores the need for a harmonious balance between religious teachings and aspirations for gender equality. The contribution of this research lies in developing an inclusive perspective on the role of women in Islamic society.

Keywords: *Feminism in Islam; Career Women; Rights and Obligations.*

Introduction

In the modern era, major cities around the world are experiencing a significant increase in divorce rates. Among the various contributing factors, an imbalance in domestic roles between husband and wife, particularly in families where the wife's income exceeds that of the husband, has emerged as a primary cause. This phenomenon is especially evident in corporate environments where women play key roles. The dual role of women as both homemakers and professionals often lead to pressure that can result in familial conflicts. In this context, Islamic feminism has arisen as an analytical framework to address these gender role disparities.

The feminist movement has shown significant development over the past few decades. Within the context of Islam, feminism focuses not only on gender equality but also on the reinterpretation of religious teachings to support women's empowerment. Thinkers and activists such as Kalis Mardiasih, Dr. Rofiah, KH Husain Muhammad, and KH Faqih have made substantial contributions to shaping this thought. Together with women's communities, they strive to establish fairer and more equitable relations between women and men, based on the principle that differences in the sight of God are determined by the level of piety, not gender (Rofiah, 2021). This concept, defined by Siti Muslikatin as

a historical and contextual movement (Henri, 2016), underscores the importance of addressing the current issues faced by women, including gender injustice and inequality.

The changing economic role within the family, especially where the wife contributes more financially, has altered traditional family dynamics. This often leads to tension and conflicts that affect not only the relationship between husband and wife but also the overall stability of the family. This study explores how these dynamics are influenced by social expectations and prevailing gender norms, and how Islamic feminism can provide an alternative perspective to address this imbalance.

Islamic feminism offers a different approach in tackling these issues. By advocating for the reinterpretation of Islamic teachings to support women's empowerment and gender equality, this movement provides solutions for modern women striving to balance household responsibilities and careers. This study will examine how the principles of Islamic feminism can be applied in everyday family life to reduce conflicts and enhance harmony.

Literature Reviews

The existing body of research offers a wide array of perspectives and contexts. Anton et al. (2020) explored the career dynamics of women within the Islamic framework, as analyzed by Rahma Pramudya Nawang Sari. Ariaseli (2021) delved into the theme of feminism in the literary works of Asma Nadia, highlighting the evolving narrative of women's roles. Dewi (2021) provided insights into gender relations as portrayed in advertising, offering a critical analysis of the media's influence on societal gender norms. Setyagama (2014) discussed the cultural and religious perspectives on women's emancipation, a pivotal aspect of the evolving status of women in society.

Muthmainnah (2021) focused on the domestic roles and child-rearing responsibilities, an often-under-represented area in gender studies. Qudsiyah et al. (2017) examined the role of career women from the perspective of the Shafi'i Islamic school, contributing to a broader understanding of religious influences on career choices. Wibisono (2013) explored the concept of gender equality in Islam, adding to the discourse on religious teachings and gender rights. Mellinia et al. (2022) highlighted feminism in the film industry, a medium that reflects and influences societal perceptions of gender roles. Faizin (2012) investigated feminism and the women's movement, providing a historical and sociological perspective on the evolution of women's rights. Lastly, Ningrum et al. (2023) analyzed feminist thought within the Islamic viewpoint, offering a nuanced understanding of the intersection of religion and gender equality.

Methods

This research uses qualitative research methods with a phenomenological approach. In this study using two data sources. First, primary data was obtained from document studies, field observations and participant observation (Bachtar, 1985), in-depth interviews and reinforced by focus group discussions (FGD) conducted with experts. In-depth interviews with 15 people consisting of shamans (medicine practitioners), namely 2 shamans and 1 cleric. While the rest are patients who do traditional medicine. FGD was conducted on 3 traditional healers, this was done to validate the data obtained by the authors. The selection of respondents/informants used the Purposes Sampling method with the snowballing method. Secondary data is supporting data obtained from books, journals, and magazines

(Nasrudin, 2019) To analyze the relationship between religion and traditional medicine systems in rural communities.

As for the procedure steps of this research are as follows:

Choose a research topic, namely religious reflection in the system of medicine in rural communities, Selection of participants: at this stage the researcher selects participants who will be used as research objects. The participant selection technique used the Purposes Sampling method with the snowballing method so that 15 patient participants and 4 traditional healers were obtained.

Data collection: at this stage the researcher visited the 4 participants to make observations in the treatment of 15 patients who had been made participants by the researchers. Then conduct in-depth interviews with all participants. In order to obtain the data that will be examined then journal entries are made. This is done to gain an in-depth understanding of the participants' life experiences.

Transcription and analysis of data: Transcribe all data that has been collected from interviews or observation notes. Next, perform data analysis by reading and checking the transcriptions repeatedly to identify emerging themes and patterns.

Identification of themes: identify themes that emerge from the data. These themes reflect the subjective meanings that participants attach to their experiences.

Narrative writing: at this stage it is done to create a narrative that presents research findings. Here, participants' life experiences will be told by paying attention to the themes that the researcher has identified.

Verification and validation: discussing the results of this study with participants or other phenomenological experts to ensure that the researcher's interpretation is in accordance with their experience. This is important to ensure the validity of the researcher's findings and compilation of a research report which is the final result of this research and then it can be published.

Result and Discussion

Feminism in Islam

The turbulence of feminist thought within Islam has been pioneered by notable figures such as Fatima Mernissi, Riffat Hassan, and Asghar Ali Engineer. These scholars have championed what Riffat Hassan termed 'Post-patriarchal Islam,' which is essentially, in Hassan's analysis, a 'Qur'anic Islam' that pays keen attention to human beings, both women and men, freeing them from the constraints of traditionalism, authoritarianism (whether religious, political, economic, or otherwise), tribalism, racism, sexism, and any other forms of bondage that hinder the actualization of the Qur'anic vision (Djoeffan, 2001).

Feminism is a doctrine advocating for women's freedom from exploitation, marginalization, and being subjected to male violence. It is regarded as a social, political, and ideological movement with the common goal of establishing and achieving gender equality in various societal, political, and other spaces. Islamic feminism is viewed as an effort to ensure fairness and equal treatment for both men and women as creations of Allah (Husna, 2021).

To me, feminism within Islam is entirely valid. There is no need for debate since one of the revolutions brought by Prophet Muhammad was the elevation of women's dignity

and status. Women, who were undervalued in the pre-Islamic era, gained an honorable position in both Sharia law and social life with the advent of Islam (Niswah, 2021).

Islam positions women according to their rights and natural disposition. Firstly, it upholds women's natural traits, like their appreciation for beauty and adornment, permitting them things like gold and silk, which are forbidden for men, as reported by Ibn Majah in his Sunan. Secondly, it maintains women's moral character and modesty, advising them to lower their gaze around non-mahram men and dress modestly. Thirdly, it grants women the right to education in mosques, schools, and other learning environments while safeguarding against illicit interactions. Fourthly, it encourages prospective mothers to acquire knowledge related to upbringing, aiming to nurture emotionally and physically healthy generations. Fifthly, it provides women with socio-political rights, including participation in consultations and legal matters related to them. Lastly, it affords women the right to own property and work, provided their dignity and freedom from exploitation are maintained, as indicated by the Prophet's interactions with women traders like Qilat Ummi Bani Anmae (Shihab, 2007).

In Islam, the concept of feminism, while not explicitly outlined in the Quran and Hadith, is inherently respected. The principle of benefiting humanity in Islam does not differentiate between men and women; the best of people are those who are most beneficial to others, regardless of gender (Elisa, 2021).

In essence, the spirit of equality in rights and obligations between men and women in feminist thought aligns with the Islamic concept of equality (Hasyim, 2012).

The goal of Qur'anic Islam is to establish peace, the fundamental essence of Islam. Without eliminating disparities, injustices, and inequalities affecting human life, both individually and collectively, it is impossible to discuss peace in the sense desired by the Quran.

Feminism as a movement aims for equality between men and women. In Islam, justice means placing everything in its rightful place and giving rights to those who deserve them. If this definition is followed, Islam is already just and logical, having established equality between men and women. If these principles are applied in society, I am confident that societal life will be well maintained (Arisni, 2021)."

In the societal fabric of pre-Islamic Arabia, commonly referred to as the era of Jahiliyyah, the status of women was markedly diminished, often relegated to the margins of societal structures and legal rights. The advent of Islam heralded a transformative era that upended these entrenched norms. Women were not only afforded rights and protections but were also elevated to a position of high respect within the Islamic community. This was not a subtle shift but a revolutionary realignment during the time of the Prophet Muhammad, which redefined gender dynamics, creating an ideal relationship where men and women were acknowledged as equals in the sight of God.

The contributions of these women were diverse and far-reaching. They were not silent spectators but active participants in the fabric of Medina's society, contributing to its development and the enrichment of its cultural and spiritual life. Ibn Sa'ad's accounts provide us with a window into this era, recording the presence of approximately 600 women whose roles were instrumental in the functioning and prosperity of Medina. These women were educators, entrepreneurs, and leaders in their own rights, indicating a society that valued and leveraged the talents and abilities of all its members, regardless of gender.

Table 1. Feminism in Islam

Feminism in Islam						
Source			Aim			
Notable scholars such as Fatimah Mernissi, Riffat Hassan, and Asghar Ali Engineer have been instrumental in propelling the feminist movement within Islam	Understanding of the Qur'an: Riffat Hassan's interpretation of 'Post-patriarchal Islam' draws from a profound comprehension of the Qur'an and aims to overcome any form of inequality and discrimination	Theological Text Analysis: A critical examination of religious texts, including the exegesis of the Qur'an and Hadith, is vital to challenge and rectify existing inequalities	Gender Equality: The realization of equal rights and responsibilities between men and women in Islam is a central goal	Elimination of Injustice: Advocating for the eradication of all forms of injustice, including authoritarianism, tribalism, racism, sexism, and slavery, is essential to actualize the vision of the Qur'an	Empowerment of Women: Empowering women in various domains, including education, employment, and socio-political participation, is a priority	Fulfillment of Domestic Duties: While advocating for broader roles for women, the importance of fulfilling domestic responsibilities continues to be acknowledged

The Rights and Responsibilities of Career Women in the Domestic Sphere

According to the Kamus Besar Bahasa Indonesia, the term 'right' implies ownership, whereas 'obligation' signifies a necessary action that must be fulfilled. In this context, rights are benefits received by an individual from others, while obligations are duties that an individual should perform towards others (Syarifuddin, 2006).

The concept of rights is fundamentally equivalent between men and women. Women possess the same rights as men, as well as similar obligations. However, it is acknowledged that men have been granted a degree of precedence as leaders, a role determined by natural disposition. This does not imply a departure from the mutual parity of rights and obligations since any additional rights are balanced with corresponding responsibilities (Albar, 1998).

In family life, the rights and obligations of both husband and wife are intertwined, forming a reciprocal relationship. Fulfillment of obligations is a prerequisite to claiming rights. When obligations are neglected, rights may no longer be considered personal entitlements. This applies equally to both spouses.

Historically, Aisha, the wife of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH), participated in battles; thus, in modern times, why should women not pursue careers, provided their domestic roles are fulfilled? Responsibilities such as cooking, cleaning, and caring for children and spouse should be completed, and work hours should not extend into late-night hours. A career does not exempt women from their spousal duties nor deprives them of their rights since income is utilized for family needs. Women's earnings from their career can be

reserved for needs not met by the husband, especially in circumstances where the husband's income is reduced due to illness or other reasons (Azizah, 2021).

The Human Rights Law No. 39 of 1999 of the Republic of Indonesia outlines the equality of rights and responsibilities between husband and wife. It states that within marriage, a wife has the same rights and obligations as her husband in all matters pertaining to marital life, including the education of children and the management of communal property (Republic of Indonesia, 1999).

Article 47 provides that a woman married to a foreign national does not automatically adopt her husband's citizenship status but retains the right to maintain, change, or regain her own citizenship. Article 48 affirms a woman's right to access education at all types, levels, and pathways, in accordance with the stipulated requirements. Article 49(3) guarantees and protects the specific rights inherent to women due to their reproductive role. Article 50 states that an adult woman, married or not, has the right to conduct her own legal actions unless her religion stipulates otherwise.

While a wife is entitled to financial and emotional support, there may be instances where her husband cannot fulfill one or both of these needs, necessitating the wife to do so to maintain the marriage, provided it does not conflict with Islamic Sharia.

The primary duty of a woman is to preserve her dignity and honor. Domestic chores such as cooking, cleaning, laundry, and accompanying children can be shared with the husband through mutual agreement. Fundamentally, husbands also have rights and responsibilities to maintain a safe and peaceful household. Mutual trust, patience, assistance, unity, and transparency in all matters are crucial (Elisa, 2021).

"In the Quranic perspective, the concept of a career woman is encapsulated by the term 'amal', which signifies work or endeavor. This term, often conjoined with 'iman' (faith), repeatedly underscores the unity of belief and righteous action in verses such as "those who believe and do righteous deeds" (Al-Qur'an, 2:25), highlighting the existential significance of human life.

The societal viewpoint on working women in Muslim communities often carries a dichotomy where perceptions of right and wrong, honesty and suspicion intermingle, leading to potential excesses and deviations. A segment of society argues for confining women to domestic spaces, prohibiting them from work that could benefit the community, based on the belief that such activities deviate from the natural and divine disposition created for women by Allah (SWT), potentially leading to neglect of domestic responsibilities and family disruption.

This perspective suggests that a woman's piety is demonstrated only by her exit from her father's house to her husband's and eventually to her grave. However, the Quran reserves confinement to the home as a punishment solely for those proven guilty of adultery by the testimony of four witnesses. This was prescribed before the establishment of the known penal code for adultery (Al-Qur'an, 4:15) (Fatimah, 2015).

A righteous wife is described as one obedient to her husband, safeguarding her chastity, her husband's wealth, secrets, and household, in his absence. Such is because Allah (SWT) bestows success upon the righteous wives as mentioned in (Al-Qur'an, 2:228) (Al-Bantani, 2020).

In contemporary society, women's involvement in the workforce has become inescapable. Despite varied opinions, numerous professional fields necessitate women's contributions. Today, women are prepared to fill these roles, equipped with academic

qualifications, skills, and experience. Women's motivations for career involvement stem not only from economic factors but also individual aspirations for self-development and social engagement. This drive leads many women to find dissatisfaction in the exclusive role of homemakers.

From my perspective, a wife's duty is to follow her husband and parents, within the bounds of righteousness. She is entitled to material and emotional support from her husband. However, the duties, rights, and responsibilities within a marriage are based on either expressed or unspoken agreements between spouses, fostering peace, love, and mercy within the union, without ulterior motives beyond the marriage for Allah's sake.

The boundaries for women's employment are conditional, depending on the household's circumstances and the couple's mutual consent. Personally, while career is not a priority since I work not merely for employment but to apply knowledge and thought constructively, as long as it does not disrupt family life and my husband consents, it is acceptable. Essential is the cooperative partnership between husband and wife (Maskhurin, 2021).

The rights acquired from a husband are commensurate with the rights he receives from his wife. This equality pertains to obligations and entitlements, not implying identical roles, as referenced in the Hadith (Al-Nasai, No. 3231; Ahmad, Vol. 2, p. 251). The term "with good" aligns with the Sharia, denoting behavior and attitudes that repel harm from both wives and husbands. Ibn Abbas ra indicated that it involves mutual care in appearance between spouses. The phrase "men have a degree over them" refers to the priority in receiving obedience from wives, in return for providing maintenance and dowry for their benefit (Albantani, 2020).

A wife's domestic responsibilities include child-rearing and obedience to her husband. In my view, as long as a woman's career does not impede her household duties, it is permissible. Family remains paramount, with career following. Understanding and communication within the family are key, and women must recognize their roles accordingly, whether in a professional setting or at home as a wife and mother (Niswah, 2021).

Generally, the positions of husband and wife within the household are equal, yet they carry different rights and responsibilities. Some scholars interpret that within the family, a wife's position is subordinate to her husband, as indicated in traditional jurisprudence, which emphasizes upholding the husband's honor and dignity. Islam teaches that the rights and obligations of both husbands and wives are balanced (Bastiar, 2018). In Indonesian law, spousal rights and responsibilities are categorized as joint, those specific to husbands, and those specific to wives. Joint obligations include establishing a peaceful household, which is a foundational concept for societal order (Zulmustakim, 2023).

In the marital context, provision is a critical aspect. According to the husband's earnings, he is responsible for the maintenance, clothing, and housing of his wife. This encompasses household expenses, medical care for the wife and children, and their education. The dowry is a crucial understanding in the rights and obligations between husband and wife, including the wife's right to suitable living arrangements (Viana, 2023).

Women no longer perceive themselves as secondary to men. This is evidenced by the increasing number of women pursuing higher education and careers aligned with their interests and expertise. Women's engagement in the workforce significantly impacts

personal and family life, as well as the broader community, especially from an economic perspective. Career women are vital within families, alleviating financial burdens on husbands, particularly given the complexities of modern economic demands.

The Rights and Obligations of Career Women in Domestic Spaces					
Source		Aim			
Islamic Foundations: The Quran supports the endeavors of career women through the twin concepts of faith and action ('iman' and 'amal'), advocating for their participation in the workforce	<i>Legislative Support:</i> The Human Rights Law No. 39 of 1999 in Indonesia endorses the equality of rights and obligations between husband and wife, reinforcing this balance within the domestic sphere.	Equality: The goal is to achieve parity in rights and obligations between spouses within the domestic realm.	Enhancement of Life Quality: Offering opportunities for women to pursue careers is seen as a pathway to improving the overall quality of family life	Personal Development: Women are encouraged to engage in personal growth and contribute positively to society	Fulfillment of Domestic Responsibilities: Ensuring that women can continue to fulfill their household duties while also pursuing professional careers is a key objective

As a wife choosing a career, support and motivation from a husband are essential. A career woman must work professionally, within the scope permitted by her husband. Constraints on a woman's career may arise not necessarily due to her husband's permission but due to situational and conditional factors (Ratih, 2021).

Contemporary women are characterized by four distinct profiles: First, those who successfully manage both household and career. Second, those proficient in domestic duties but less capable in career pursuits. Third, those excelling in careers but neglecting household responsibilities, thereby being perceived as selfish. Fourth, those failing in both domains are viewed as not fulfilling their esteemed position (Latifah, 2008)."

Table 2. The Rights and Obligations of Career Women in Domestic Spaces

Feminism in Islam and Its Relationship with the Rights and Obligations of Career Women in the Domestic Sphere

The discourse of feminism within Islam, led by scholars such as Fatimah Mernissi, Riffat Hassan, and Asghar Ali Engineer, has ignited significant debate on the roles and rights of women in Islam. Hassan's concept of "Post-patriarchal Islam" accentuates the importance of gender equality within the faith. Nonetheless, women frequently confront the dual role of being career-oriented and domestic caretakers. Questions arise about how the understanding of Islamic feminism might influence the rights and obligations of career women in the domestic sphere.

As previously mentioned, feminism strives for the liberation of women, aiming to achieve parity with men. In the workplace, the struggle is universal, irrespective of gender,

as long as women are capable of fulfilling the roles. In this context, my husband and I, both career professionals, equally understand and enact this equality, unburdened by unattainable or misunderstood expectations. As a woman, despite professional achievements, the intrinsic roles of motherhood and partnership persist, with the highest position of a wife still as a follower to her husband. Mutual understanding, motivation, and respect are paramount, provided they remain within the boundaries of faith and dignified character. The ultimate key to a woman's success lies in the support of a husband who provides prayers, motivation, and love (Husna, 2021).

The contemplation of feminism within Islam, emphasizing the equality of rights and obligations between men and women, logically extends to the rights and obligations of career women in domestic settings. Firstly, Equality of Rights: Islamic feminist thought asserts that women have the right to pursue careers and contribute to society on an equal footing with men (Esposito, 2001). Consequently, women are entitled to follow their professional paths without discrimination or barriers. Secondly, Acknowledgment of Obligations: This philosophy also recognizes that while domestic obligations persist, they should not hinder women's career aspirations. These duties remain crucial but ought to be shared equitably between husband and wife (Ahmed, 2021). Thirdly, The Ideal Family Concept: From the perspective of feminism within Islam, an ideal family is one that provides equal rights and responsibilities. This means that both spouses should support each other in fulfilling domestic and career obligations (Hosseini, 2006).

Career women are not a novel phenomenon in Islamic history. During the Prophet's time, women were involved in public work, such as Ummu Salim binti Malham as a bridal beautician, Siti Khadijah as a trader, and Raithah as a scribe. Having a career is not forbidden for women, but there are certain Sharia stipulations that must be met to ensure that their careers do not deviate from Islamic teachings.

In the context of general feminism, some strands may reject religious views, considering them instruments of female oppression. In contrast, Islamic feminism seeks to articulate women's rights based on critical interpretations of Islamic teachings themselves. Figures in Islamic feminism, like Fatimah Mernissi, illustrate that the Quran actually speaks of equality and dignity for women, which is often misunderstood (Barlas, 2019).

However, it is important to note that there is a spectrum of views within Islamic feminism. Some lean towards a more progressive stance, emphasizing total equality, while others seek a middle ground between Islamic traditions and the demands for equality. This reflects the complexity of feminist thought within Islam.

In terms of the impact on the rights and obligations of career women in the domestic sphere, the Islamic feminist approach generates internal debate about the extent to which women can perform domestic duties while maintaining their right to have a career. It also raises questions about how feminist interpretations of Islam might alter domestic practices in more conservative societies (Lamprey, 2018).

Conclusion

This research investigates the interplay between the concept of feminism within Islam and the rights and obligations of women pursuing careers in the domestic realm. The findings illustrate that within the discourse of Islamic feminism, there is a strong emphasis on the principle of equality in rights and responsibilities among female and male individuals, encompassing the right of women to pursue careers without facing discrimination, as well

as the need for the fair execution of domestic obligations. The motif of an ideal family, in line with Islamic feminist concepts, reflects the parity of rights and responsibilities within it. This study is particularly pertinent to the shifting roles of women in the current social dynamics, especially for those involved in professional fields. However, it is crucial to acknowledge that the diversity of views within Islamic feminist discourse reflects the complexity of feminist thought in the context of this religion. Consequently, this research provides a comprehensive perspective in the quest to find a balance between religious values and the demands for gender equality in a diverse society.

The author recognizes the limitations present in this article and suggests that future researchers undertake a more in-depth, interdisciplinary approach, focusing on the viewpoints of Muslim women from various societal strata. A range of methodologies, including literature reviews, interviews, and surveys, should be utilized to explore their perspectives and experiences. Research should also consider the changing social, economic, and cultural contexts and compare perspectives with feminist views from different religions and cultures. Collaborating with local Muslim communities and focusing on tangible solutions to enhance gender equality can be a significant aspect of this research, aiming to understand, support, and advance the rights of Muslim women in their careers.

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