



Unvieling Media Narratives in Promoting Gender Equity in Islamic PERSIS Education

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Abstract

In the modern world, communication through media and digital channels has become increasingly prevalent. It is imperative to consider how these channels influence social perceptions and constructs. Gender equity is a critical topic in educational contexts. A comprehensive study was conducted to analyze the portrayal of gender constructs in media narratives and their impact on gender equity in Islamic PERSIS educational environments. The study utilized qualitative research, including content analysis of media narratives and interviews with members of Islamic PERSIS organizations. The study brings to light the positive and negative roles of media narratives in shaping attitudes and perceptions about gender roles. Therefore, the study emphasizes the need to examine media representations to promote gender equity critically. The research has significant implications for contemporary media and digital communication in advancing gender equity in educational settings related to Islamic PERSIS organizations. It encourages a more responsible approach to media content creation by acknowledging the power of media narratives to shape perceptions. This contributes to a broader conversation about gender equity and the role of contemporary media in promoting social change and inclusivity.

Keywords: gender constructs, media narratives, gender equity

Paper type: Research paper

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Received: 9 March 2024; Received in revised form 27 April 2024; Accepted: 27 April 2024; Available online: 28 April 2024

Cite this document: Komariah, Siti. et al. (2024). Examining Media Narratives in Promoting Gender Equity in Islamic PERSIS Education. *The Journal of Society and Media*, 8(1), 24-40. DOI: 10.26740/jsm.v8n1.p24-40.



INTRODUCTION

Gender equality is a fundamental principle in sustainable social and educational development. In recent decades, this issue has become a major focus worldwide, sparking debates and significant changes in societal life. In the context of education, gender equality is not just a matter of human rights but also a key to optimizing human potential (Mustofa et al., 2021a). Fair and equal education provides the same opportunities for all individuals, regardless of gender, to develop the skills, insights, and knowledge necessary to achieve success in their lives (Elena-Bucea et al., 2021). The importance of gender equality in education is particularly relevant in the context of Islamic education. Islamic education plays a crucial role in shaping individuals' worldviews and actions in Muslim society. Islam teaches values that encompass justice, equality, and respect for all individuals, regardless of gender (Ikhwan et al., 2020). However, in some cases, especially in traditional educational settings, gender inequality may still persist (Suroso STMIK Bani Saleh et al., 2021). Education in Islam plays a very important role in developing individual character, promoting religious values, and creating a better society. In the Quran, education is emphasized as an obligation, and Prophet Muhammad also greatly emphasized the importance of knowledge and education (Fandy, 2007) (Hefner, 2019). Therefore, education in the Islamic context becomes a source of critical knowledge and understanding of religion, as well as a tool for achieving religious goals. However, the importance of education in Islam is not limited to religious aspects. Education also plays a role in providing the skills and knowledge needed to thrive in a continuously evolving modern society (Thorjussen & Sisjord, 2020). Therefore, the development of an effective and inclusive Islamic education system is a necessity. Although Islam advocates gender equality, the reality is that, in some cases, Islamic education may still be marked by gender inequality (Tambak et al., 2022). This can be reflected in various aspects, including curricula, access, and involvement in education. Uneven curricula may reflect gender stereotypes and existing social norms. Some curricula may emphasize traditional gender roles, neglecting the contributions of women in history and religion or even limiting women's access to certain subjects (Ali, 2010). This not only disadvantages women in their personal

achievements but also sends the wrong message to society about gender roles in Islam.

Access to education can also be an issue. Some communities may have policies that restrict women's access to higher education or face cultural barriers that prevent women from pursuing education to the fullest extent (Baten et al., 2021). Women's involvement in the world of education can be influenced by external factors such as early marriage, family responsibilities, or social norms that require them to focus on domestic roles (Bilgiler et al., n.d.). To address these issues, it is important to understand the role of the media in influencing society's perceptions of gender issues in the context of Islamic education (Duffy & Hund, 2021). Media, including television, the internet, and literature, play a key role in shaping public views (Friesen et al., 2021). Media narratives can either reinforce or change social norms, which is why this research aims to uncover the construction of gender in the media that influence Islamic education. Media plays a central role in shaping society's perceptions of social issues, including gender equality. Through the narratives presented on various media platforms, the public can construct their understanding of what is considered "normal" in terms of gender roles, rights, and responsibilities (Krijnen, 2020). In this regard, media not only reflects culture but actively shapes it. Media has a significant influence in determining gender roles in society. When media depicts women and men in traditional roles, it can reinforce existing social norms and hinder progress toward gender equality (Nau, 2021). However, if the media provides examples of women and men as equals in rights, responsibilities, and aspirations, it can help replace existing social norms with more inclusive ones. Previous studies on the role of media in shaping gender constructions have primarily focused on Western society, and there is still a lack of adequate research on gender construction in the context of Islamic education (Duffy & Hund, 2021). Therefore, this research aims to fill this knowledge gap and reveal how the media influences gender perceptions in Islamic education.

This research is expected to make a significant contribution to understanding gender issues in Islamic education and how media plays a role in shaping public views on this matter. With a deeper understanding of the role of media in shaping gender constructions, we can identify areas where media may reinforce unequal norms and work to change them. Additionally, the results of this

research can provide a foundation for policy changes in the Islamic education system. With a more profound understanding of how media influences education, we can develop more effective strategies to promote gender equality in this context. In this way, this research can contribute to global efforts to achieve gender equality. Gender equality is a fundamental principle in sustainable social and educational development and is highly relevant in the context of Islamic education (Friesen et al., 2021). Islamic education plays a crucial role in shaping individual character and creating a better society. However, in some cases, gender inequality may still exist in Islamic education. Media plays a key role in shaping society's views on gender issues, and this research aims to uncover the gender construction in the media that influences Islamic education. With a deeper understanding of the role of media in shaping gender constructions, we can identify areas where media may reinforce unequal norms and work to change them. This research is expected to make a significant contribution to understanding gender issues in Islamic education and contribute to global efforts to achieve gender equality.

METHODS

This research employs a qualitative approach to gain a deeper understanding of gender construction in the media and its impact on gender equality in the Islamic PERSIS educational setting. This approach allows researchers to obtain a more comprehensive understanding of how media shapes public views on gender issues and how this influences reality in the PERSIS educational environment. Qualitative data is obtained through media content analysis, involving the collection and examination of various types of media, such as articles, videos, and online materials related to Islamic PERSIS education.

Researchers scrutinize the content to identify how gender is portrayed in media narratives. The research also involves interviews with key stakeholders involved in the regulation of PERSIS education, such as teachers, students, and parents. The total number of interviewees is 11, with interviews lasting from 30 minutes to 3 hours. These interviews help in understanding how gender narratives

in the media influence their perceptions and experiences in the educational environment.

The results from the media content analysis and interviews are used to provide context and a deeper understanding. Data integration helps create a comprehensive picture of gender construction in the media and its impact on gender equality in Islamic PERSIS education. Qualitative data analysis involves the use of specialized software, such as NVivo, to organize and analyze data obtained from media content analysis and interviews.

Throughout the research, ethical research principles will be upheld. Participants in the research will be provided with sufficient information about the research's purpose and process, and their consent will be obtained before data collection. Data will be treated with confidentiality, and participants' anonymity will be maintained.

Through this approach, this research provides a deeper understanding of how media influences gender construction in the Islamic PERSIS educational environment and how this affects gender equality. The results of this research offer valuable insights and recommendations for enhancing gender equality in this context and can provide a foundation for further research in this field.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Unveiling Gender Constructs in the Islamic Education Setting of the Islamic Union (PERSIS) - A qualitative approach is utilized in this research to investigate how media narratives influence the construction of gender in the context of Islamic education within the Islamic Union (PERSIS) in greater depth. The research findings reveal significant insights into how media narratives play a role in shaping perceptions and realities of gender in the PERSIS Islamic education environment.

The Role of Media in Influencing Gender Construction in the Islamic Education Setting of PERSIS

Through media content analysis, researchers have examined various media sources, including articles, videos, and online materials related to Islamic education within PERSIS. These findings provide a profound understanding of how media narratives construct gender in this context. It was discovered that

media narratives often reflect existing social norms in society (Ali, 2010) (Henry et al., 2022). There are examples of narratives that depict traditional gender roles, with women being considered primarily responsible for household duties and men as leaders and breadwinners for the family (Muhibbu-Din, 2019). There are also narratives that portray women as "followers" who must submit to male authority, especially in a religious context (Islam & Siddiqui, 2020) (Lopes Cardozo & Srimulyani, 2021)t. However, positive findings also emerged in the content analysis. Some media narratives aim to celebrate the role of women in Islamic education and acknowledge their contributions to various aspects of society. They create narratives that provide examples of strong and highly educated women who significantly contribute to society.

In the field of gender sociology, the concept of gender roles refers to the understanding of tasks, responsibilities, and behaviors considered appropriate for a specific gender in a society. In this context, women are considered to have the primary role of managing the household, caring for children, and being responsible for domestic duties. Meanwhile, men are regarded as leaders and breadwinners responsible for providing for the family.

In gender sociology analysis, this reflects traditional views on gender roles that often result in gender inequality (Mustofa et al., 2021b). Such views have long been a part of the culture in many societies and are often passed down from generation to generation. In this context, women are often limited in career choices and activities outside the household, while men often feel pressured to meet expectations as the primary breadwinners.

Numerous studies in the field of gender sociology have revealed the negative impacts of these traditional views, including economic disparities and limited opportunities for women to develop their potential beyond their roles within the household (Cuberes & Teignier, 2010) (Hefner, 2017), (Larasati, 2021). This can also lead to women being more vulnerable to domestic violence and gender discrimination (Antasari et al., 2022). Therefore, gender sociology has sought to document and analyze the impact of these traditional gender role concepts, as well as promote changes in societal views regarding gender roles.

In the context of Islamic gender sociology, the concept of gender roles is also of significant concern. Islam as a religion has principles that emphasize gender equality and respect for women's rights. However, interpretations and practices can vary worldwide, depending on culture, traditions, and societal perspectives (Shah, 2020).

Some Muslim communities may adhere to more traditional views of gender roles, as described in the statement. They may refer to more conservative interpretations or local culture in understanding gender roles (Eger, 2021). In some cases, this can result in gender inequality within society and the suppression of women's potential. However, it's important to remember that there are various perspectives within the Islamic world, with many individuals and groups embracing more inclusive views on gender roles. They may blend Islamic values with the concept of gender equality and advocate for more progressive changes within Muslim communities. Muslim gender sociology also strives to address the challenges and opportunities faced by Muslim women in various societies. This involves research on social change, women's roles in society, and how gender norms within Islam are translated and practiced in everyday life (Cavaghan, 2017).

Traditional gender roles reflect long-standing societal views. However, in both gender sociology and Muslim gender sociology, it's important to understand the diversity of perspectives within society and the significant role played by culture, religion, and individual interpretations in shaping gender role concepts (Holloway-Friesen, 2016). In various contexts, social change and a more inclusive understanding of gender roles can be crucial steps toward greater gender equality (Watson, 2016).

The interviews conducted with education stakeholders within PERSIS, including teachers, students, and parents, provided a deeper understanding of how media narratives influence their views of gender in the context of Islamic education. Most respondents acknowledged that media narratives play a significant role in shaping their perceptions of gender in society. Many respondents noted that media narratives depicting women in traditional roles could influence social expectations of them. For example, some students mentioned feeling pressured by societal expectations to conform to existing social norms. However, some respondents also recognized the positive impact of media narratives that depict strong and highly educated women. They found inspiration

in these examples and believed that women could also achieve success in various fields, including education.

Media narratives are defined as the way media portrays stories, characters, and content that reflect existing social, cultural, and ideological norms within society (Bouvier, 2020). In the context of this statement, media narratives have a significant influence on shaping public perceptions and expectations regarding gender roles - (Moitra et al., 2021). Some respondents acknowledged that media narratives depicting women in traditional roles, such as homemakers or supporters of their husbands, could influence social expectations for women. This creates pressure for women to conform to existing social norms, limiting their choices in terms of careers, education, and personal aspirations. In this regard, the media plays a role in reinforcing traditional concepts of gender roles and perpetuating gender inequality (Holmes, 2008) (Izharuddin, 2017) (Mustofa et al., 2021b).

However, it's important to note that there are respondents who recognize the positive impact of media narratives that depict strong and highly educated women. Media narratives that portray successful, independent, and strong women can provide inspiration and promote a more inclusive understanding of gender roles (Friesen et al., 2021). This can influence public perceptions of women as individuals with great potential beyond traditional roles.

Media sociology emphasizes that media has a significant influence on shaping public views and affecting social norms. In this context, the media's role in understanding, representing, and celebrating diverse gender identities is highly significant (Martam, 2016). This statement reflects how media narratives can have complex impacts on individuals' views and behaviors related to gender roles within society.

The role of religion in shaping perceptions and practices related to gender roles is also of significant concern. Religion often has norms and teachings that govern gender roles within society (Öztürk, 2022), and media narratives can impact how individuals understand and practice these norms. Most religions have values that support gender equality and respect women's rights (Ikhwan et al., 2020) (Kailani & Slama, 2020). However, in practice, there is variation in how these religious norms are interpreted and implemented within society. This

statement reflects how media narratives can influence how individuals understand religious norms related to gender roles.

Students who feel pressured by societal expectations to conform to gender roles may also experience pressure from traditionally interpreted religious norms. Media narratives that reflect traditional views of gender roles in religion can reinforce these norms and deepen gender inequality (Kloos & Künkler, 2016). However, there are also respondents who recognize the positive impact of media narratives that depict strong and highly educated women. In religious sociology, this reflects how individuals can interpret religious teachings in a more inclusive and progressive manner. They may see gender equality values as an integral part of their religious teachings and strive to incorporate these values into their lives.

In the context of religious sociology, media narratives can influence how individuals understand, interpret, and practice religious norms related to gender roles. This statement reflects how media narratives can create either conflict or harmony between religious values and existing social norms. It also indicates that individuals have the freedom to interpret religious teachings in ways that support gender equality values or maintain more traditional views.

Exploring the Influence of Media on Gender Equality in the Context of PERSIS Islamic Education

Muslim feminism emphasizes the importance of deconstructing gender norms that may limit women within Muslim society (Iqbal & Cyprien, 2021). Respondents' awareness is an initial and vital step in identifying gender inequalities that are manifested in media narratives. From a Muslim feminist perspective, this awareness can be used as a foundation for critiquing media narratives that perpetuate gender stereotypes and for advocating change toward more inclusive media (Krijnen, 2020). In the context of the social construction of media, this statement reflects an understanding that media plays a significant role in shaping social norms, including gender norms (Hashmi et al., 2021). Respondents' awareness of gender constructions in media narratives reaffirms that media has a powerful influence on shaping public perceptions of gender (Hirji, 2021). Those who realize this may be more inclined to critically assess media narratives and understand that media can significantly impact gender perceptions.

The statement also reflects the fact that media not only reflects culture but actively shapes it. When respondents are aware that media plays a role in gender construction, they become more conscious of the power of media in influencing social norms. This awareness can motivate individuals to consume media more critically and to contribute to changes in gender norms through dialogue and action (Öztürk, 2022). This awareness is a crucial initial step towards efforts to create a more just and gender-equal society.

The majority of respondents felt that media narratives often depict women in traditional roles while men are seen as leaders. The qualitative approach, emphasizing Muslim feminist perspectives, identifies the influence of media on perceptions of gender roles in PERSIS Islamic education as a crucial finding. It highlights how media can shape public views on gender equality and the role of women in education (Lopes Cardozo & Srimulyani, 2021). This suggests that individuals who question existing gender norms portrayed in media are more likely to support changes toward inclusivity in Islamic education (Muhibbu-Din, 2019).

Within the framework of the social construction of media, this finding underscores the media's power in shaping social norms and influencing public views (Duffy & Hund, 2021). It illustrates how media narratives depicting strong and highly educated women can inspire individuals to pursue equal achievements in education and careers, regardless of gender (Priola & Chaudhry, 2021). This demonstrates the media's potential to stimulate changes in social norms and individual aspirations towards greater gender equality. These findings align with arguments from the perspective of Muslim feminism and the social construction of media, emphasizing the crucial role of media in shaping public views on gender roles in PERSIS Islamic education (Henry et al., 2022). Awareness of the correlation between media narratives and respondents' views underscores the importance of deconstructing media narratives that limit women to traditional roles and promoting more inclusive narratives in Islamic education (Wilodati et al., 2019). It also highlights the media's power to stimulate changes in social norms and individual aspirations towards greater gender equality.

This result provides a comprehensive understanding of the construction of gender in media narratives and its impact on gender equality in PERSIS Islamic education. It reveals that media narratives play a significant role in shaping societal perceptions and expectations regarding gender roles in PERSIS education. Media narratives that portray women in traditional roles can reinforce pre-existing social norms and hinder the development of gender equality in education. However, narratives celebrating strong and highly educated women can inspire individuals to reach their full potential in education and careers.

CONCLUSION

In our exploration of the influence of media on gender equality within Islamic PERSIS educational settings, we've navigated through a complex landscape of societal norms, religious interpretations, and the power dynamics inherent in media narratives. This journey has revealed the deeply ingrained traditional gender roles and expectations within Islamic education, perpetuated by media narratives that predominantly portray women as homemakers and men as leaders. However, we've also identified instances where media narratives challenge these norms, depicting women as strong and educated. The intersectionality of feminist Muslim perspectives has emerged as a critical force in advocating for a reevaluation of these traditional roles and promoting more inclusive interpretations of religious teachings. The awareness of gender constructs in media narratives serves as a foundation for criticism and proactive dismantling of established norms. Our findings suggest that media narratives can both reinforce and challenge traditional gender constructs, influencing individuals' perceptions and aspirations. This underscores the transformative potential of media in advancing gender equity within Islamic PERSIS educational settings. However, achieving gender equity requires a collective effort from all sectors of society to promote inclusivity and justice. As we conclude this study, we recognize the ongoing journey toward equality and the crucial role of media in shaping this narrative.

Funding Acknowledgement

This research was funded by the University Research Funding. We gratefully acknowledge the support of the University Research Funding for

making this research possible. Additionally, we extend our appreciation to all participants who contributed their time and insights to this study.

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