

The Role of the Qur'an and Hadith in Shaping Women's Religious Identity, Agency, and Public Engagement in Contemporary Islam

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Abstract. This article examines the role of the Qur'an and Hadith in shaping women's daily practices, their position in the public sphere, and the construction of their identity in contemporary society. Drawing on the historical reality that women have historically faced marginalization across various civilizations, this study asserts that Islam brings a mission of liberation and the elevation of women through the principles of justice, moral equality, and social responsibility. This research employs a qualitative method based on a literature review, analyzing verses from the Qur'an, the Prophet's Hadith, and classical and contemporary exegetical literature. The findings indicate that the Qur'an and Hadith position women as active moral agents possessing theological legitimacy to participate in social life, education, and the digital sphere. Furthermore, both provide a relevant ethical framework for addressing modern challenges, including social pressure, gender bias, and the post-truth phenomenon. Thus, Islamic scriptural values are not merely normative but also contextual in guiding women to build an identity that is dignified, of integrity, and adaptable to the dynamics of the times.

Keywords: Women, The Qur'an and Hadith, The Public Sphere, Identity

Introduction

The Qur'an and the Hadith occupy a central position in the structure of Muslim life and serve as moral, social, and spiritual guides in various aspects of human behavior. These two primary sources of Islamic teaching not only govern the relationship between human beings and their Lord but also guide in shaping social relations, including the relationship between men and women. Islam regards men and women as noble beings entrusted with the role of vicegerents on earth.¹ This principle is consistent with the idea that every human being, regardless of gender, is created to fulfill social and religious roles in a balanced manner.

Women hold a prominent position in Islamic thought and have had a significant influence on the development of human civilization.² In line with the changing times, the status of women in Islam has also undergone various reinterpretations over the years. Before the revelation of the Qur'an, women generally occupied a lowly position, often deprived of their dignity and treated

¹Zuhripatul Jannah, 'Qur'anic Ecofeminism as a Response to the Global Ecological Crisis: An Examination of Feminine Values in the Ecological Interpretation of the Qur'an', *AL QUDS: Jurnal Studi Alquran Dan Hadis* 9, no. 3 (2025): 576–95, <https://doi.org/10.29240/alquds.v9i3.14973>.

²Feyza Burak-Adli et al., "Genderless Souls?: Sufi Women in Sociopolitical Contexts", *Culture and Religion* 24, no. 2 (2024): 113–34, <https://doi.org/10.1080/14755610.2024.2426343>.

unfairly.³ Historical records show that women lived in conditions of severe oppression long before the advent of Islam, an experience shared by women in various parts of the world.

In contemporary Muslim societies, interpretations of the Qur'an and Hadith continue to evolve dynamically. Advances in education⁴, access to religious literature, as well as the rapid development of digital technology⁵, have led to religious texts being discussed, interpreted, and debated more widely in various settings, ranging from academic circles to online platforms.⁶ Research conducted by Aktaş & Hearn shows that the construction of gender identity, particularly masculinity, is inextricably linked to the influence of social and cultural structures, as well as institutional policies, within the process of modernization.⁷

A study on regulations regarding men's hair in the civil service in Turkey reveals how the state plays a role in shaping gender identity standards through social symbols that appear simple yet are laden with meaning, such as physical appearance.⁸ This underscores that women's identity in Islam is also dynamic and is continually being reconstructed through the interplay between religious texts and contemporary social change. Thus, religious authority is no longer confined to clerics and formal institutions but is negotiated through the participation of the wider public, who help to shape religious discourse in the public sphere.

One of the most prominent issues in this development is the discussion regarding the status and role of women. Women are often at the center of religious debate because their position is closely linked to social structures, cultural norms, and the interpretation of normative texts.⁹ Verses from the Qur'an and the Prophet's hadiths relating to gender relations continue to be interpreted in light of changing contexts, giving rise to a variety of perspectives, ranging from classical interpretations that emphasize a normative framework to contemporary approaches that are more contextual and responsive to social change. A study by Alfurayh & Burns states that Muslim women living in cross-cultural contexts undergo a process of negotiating and reconstructing their religious, social, and gender identities, including in interpreting Islamic values in light of the dynamics of social change and contemporary life experiences.¹⁰

Historically, the status of women has been one of the most significant social issues across various civilizations. For centuries, many societies have relegated women to subordinate roles,

³Ruhama Wazna and Nurul Khansa Fauziyah, 'Misogynistic in Women's Cryptography: A Critical Review of Hadith', *AL QUDS : Jurnal Studi Alquran dan Hadis* 9, no. 3 (2025): 523–35, <https://doi.org/10.29240/alquds.v9i3.14996>.

⁴Try Heni Aprilia and Munifah Munifah, 'Manifestation Of Prophetic Leadership Values In Islamic Education', *Tadbir: Jurnal Studi Manajemen Pendidikan* 6, no. 2 (2022): 273–85, <https://doi.org/10.29240/jsmp.v6i2.4896>.

⁵Munifah et al., 'Asset Management Information System in Private Islamic College Environment', *Al-Hayat: Journal of Islamic Education* 9, no. 1 (2025): 159–80, <https://doi.org/10.35723/ajie.v9i1.38>.

⁶Ahmad Mujahid and Ibnu Arabi, 'TAFSIR DAN WANITA (STUDI TERHADAP PENAFSIRAN GURU BAKHIET)', *AL QUDS : Jurnal Studi Alquran dan Hadis* 9, no. 1 (2025): 52–69, <https://doi.org/10.29240/alquds.v9i1.9791>.

⁷F. Oya Aktaş and Jeff Hearn, 'Re-Reading Men's Facial Hair: The Case of the Modernization of the Turkish Civil Service', *Journal of Gender Studies* 35, no. 1 (2026): 154–73, <https://doi.org/10.1080/09589236.2025.2467451>.

⁸Oya Aktaş and Hearn, 'Re-Reading Men's Facial Hair'.

⁹Hamzah Mardiansyah et al., 'A Study of Hadith on Women's Veils in the Perspective of Religious Moderation in Indonesia', *AL QUDS : Jurnal Studi Alquran Dan Hadis* 9, no. 1 (2025): 17–26, <https://doi.org/10.29240/alquds.v9i1.11086>.

¹⁰Luluh Alfurayh and Melanie C. Burns, 'Redefining "Me": Identity Change among Female Saudi Study Abroad Students in Australia', *Journal of Gender Studies* 29, no. 5 (2020): 558–69, <https://doi.org/10.1080/09589236.2019.1707645>.

marginalizing their rights and contributions.¹¹ In many ancient traditions, women were denied authority, excluded from public life, and restricted in their ability to own property and make independent life decisions.¹² This situation reflects the strength of patriarchal structures that place women in a subordinate position within the social order.¹³ Developing social constructs, such as the negative labelling of women as a source of bad luck or moral decline, serves to reinforce the legitimacy of the various forms of injustice they experience.

In contemporary Muslim discourse, the status of women is examined through the prism of equality, justice, and human rights. Modern Muslim thinkers such as Wadud¹⁴, Barlas¹⁵, and Engineer¹⁶ believe that Islam essentially grants equal dignity to men and women¹⁷, and that the various forms of inequality currently observed are influenced more by cultural practices than by the teachings of religious texts.¹⁸ Meanwhile, the rise of digital media has opened up new avenues for women to express their religious identity, advocate for their rights, and challenge interpretative traditions deemed unfair.

Both classical and modern literature affirm that Islam regards women as noble beings who possess spiritual, intellectual, and social capacities equal to those of men. In practice, however, cultural constructs and social customs often influence how women are positioned, thereby creating a tension between the ideal values taught by Islam and the social reality experienced by Muslim women.

This study offers a scientific innovation through an integrative approach that positions the Qur'an and Hadith not only as normative sources but also as a living and dynamic ethical framework in shaping everyday practices, public discourse, and the construction of women's identities in the digital and post-truth era. Unlike previous studies, which tend to separate textual analysis from social reality, this article links the two simultaneously by emphasizing the role of women as active moral agents in the process of interpreting and actualizing Islamic values.

The research question addressed is how the Qur'an and Hadith are understood, interpreted, and implemented within the context of complex contemporary social change, and to what extent these values can address the challenges faced by women in the public and digital spheres. The discussion focuses on three main aspects, namely, the scriptural foundations that shape women's daily behavior; the dynamics of public debate regarding women's participation in education,

¹¹Waheeda Amien, 'Codifying Religious Family Laws in South Africa: Reframing the Debate within the Paradigm of Substantive Gender Equality', *Culture and Religion* 24, no. 1 (2024): 60–89, <https://doi.org/10.1080/14755610.2024.2425326>.

¹²Fakhira Qurratul Aini et al., 'Optimizing Marriage Law through Acehnese Customs: A Qur'anic Perspective', *Jurnal Ilmiah Al-Mu'ashirah: Media Kajian Al-Qur'an Dan Al-Hadits Multi Perspektif* 22, no. 2 (2025): 422–40, <https://doi.org/10.22373/jim.v22i2.30812>.

¹³Sugeng Sejati et al., 'Sexual Identity Transformation After Hysterectomy: A Qur'anic Perspective', *AL QUDS: Jurnal Studi Alquran Dan Hadis* 9, no. 1 (2025): 167–76, <https://doi.org/10.29240/alquds.v9i1.11594>.

¹⁴Amina Wadud, *Qur'an and Woman: Rereading the Sacred Text from a Woman's Perspective* (Kuala Lumpur: Oxford University Press, 1999), 29.

¹⁵Asma Barlas, *Believing Women' in Islam: Unreading Patriarchal Interpretations of the Qur'an* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2002), 129.

¹⁶Asgharali Engineer, *The Rights of Women in Islam* (Sterling Publishers Pvt. Ltd, 2008), 143.

¹⁷Amina Wadud, 'Towards a Qur'anic Hermeneutics of Social Justice: Race, Class and Gender', *Journal of Law and Religion* 12, no. 1 (1995): 37–50, <https://doi.org/10.2307/1051608>.

¹⁸Dwi Fidhayanti et al., 'Rethinking Islamic Feminist Thought on Reinterpreting the Qur'an: An Analysis of the Thoughts of Aminah Wadud, Fatima Mernissi, Asma Barlas, and Riffat Hassan', *Tribakti: Jurnal Pemikiran Keislaman* 35, no. 1 (2024): 37–56, <https://doi.org/10.33367/tribakti.v35i1.4956>.

leadership, and the digital sphere; and the moral challenges faced by women in the post-truth era, where emotional narratives are often more dominant than facts.

This article aims to analyze the role of the Qur'an and Hadith in shaping women's daily practices, to examine women's position and participation in contemporary public discourse, and to understand the process of constructing women's identities within modern social dynamics. Furthermore, this study also aims to reveal how the ethical values contained within Islamic teachings provide a normative and contextual foundation for women¹⁹ in the face of social change, developments in digital technology, and moral challenges in the post-truth era.²⁰ Consequently, this study aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of the relevance of the teaching of the Qur'an and the Hadith in supporting women's active role as moral and social agents in modern life.

This study employs a qualitative approach²¹ using library research²², which focuses on the examination of textual sources as its primary data. Data was collected through a study of verses from the Qur'an, the Prophet's hadith, and classical and contemporary exegetical literature relevant to the theme of women. Furthermore, this research also draws upon modern academic works that address gender issues from an Islamic perspective to enrich the analysis. The data analysis technique employed was descriptive-analytical in nature, utilizing an interpretative approach; that is, interpreting the meaning of the text based on its historical and social context and relating it to contemporary realities.²³ Through this method, the study seeks to explore the relevance of scriptural values in comprehensively and contextually addressing the dynamics of women's roles, positions, and moral challenges in the modern era comprehensively and contextually.

Discussion

The Role of the Qur'an and Hadith in Women's Everyday Practice

The Qur'an and Hadith serve as the primary sources for Muslim women in their daily lives, whether in the domestic, public, social, or spiritual spheres.²⁴ These teachings serve as an ethical framework that shapes the way women build relationships with their families, communities, and themselves. In many cases, women interpret religious values not merely as texts to be read but as principles that guide their day-to-day decision-making, ranging from child-rearing, education, and work to social engagement and the formation of their own identity.²⁵ Therefore, to understand how

¹⁹Sarah Banet-Weiser and Kathryn Claire Higgins, 'Liars, Scammers and Cheats: Con(Fident) Women and Post-Authentic Femininities on Television', *Journal of Gender Studies* 34, no. 6 (2025): 774–85, <https://doi.org/10.1080/09589236.2024.2418108>.

²⁰Asuman Ozgur Keysan and Ege Elif Tektas, 'Alternative Regimes of Truth: Anti-Gender Politics, Digital Platforms and Epistemic Struggles in Turkey', *Journal of Gender Studies* 0, no. 0 (2026): 1–33, <https://doi.org/10.1080/09589236.2026.2632905>.

²¹John W. Creswell, *Research Design: Qualitative, Quantitative, and Mixed Methods Approaches* (California: SAGE Publications, 2014), 186.

²²Mestika Zed, *Metode Penelitian Kepustakaan* (Jakarta: Yayasan Pustaka Obor Indonesia, 2008), 3.

²³Sugiyono, *Metode penelitian pendidikan: (pendekatan kuantitatif, kualitatif dan R & D)* (Bandung: Alfabeta, 2008), 9.

²⁴Firdaus Muin et al., 'Understanding the Prophet's Hadith about Women with a Hermeneutic Approach: A Critical Study of Misogynistic Narrations', *Samarah: Jurnal Hukum Keluarga Dan Hukum Islam* 10, no. 1 (2026): 389–410, <https://doi.org/10.22373/sjhk.v10.i1.29253>.

²⁵Muhammad Rizka Muqtada et al., 'Feminist Interpretations Of Misogynistic Qur'an And Hadith: Strategies For Promoting Feminism In Indonesia And Malaysia', *Musawa Jurnal Studi Gender Dan Islam* 23, no. 1 (2024): 55–72, <https://doi.org/10.14421/musawa.2024.223.55-72>.

women negotiate their roles amidst the complexities of the modern era²⁶, it is important to examine how the principles of the Qur'an and the Hadith²⁷ operate in everyday life, both explicitly and through the internalization of ethical values.

The advent of Islam brought with it a mission to uphold the dignity of both men and women fairly and equitably. Islam not only recognizes women's rights but also elevates their status in various aspects of life. Islamic teachings provide scope for women to participate in various fields, provided this does not conflict with their natural disposition and fundamental character.²⁸ This demonstrates that Islam holds women in high regard, in contrast to many earlier civilizations and religious traditions, which tended to marginalize their position. From the very beginning, the teachings of the Prophet Muhammad emphasized the principle of tawhid, namely, the belief in individual accountability before God. Furthermore, Islam has also brought about reforms in family law by affirming fundamental human rights, including women's rights.²⁹

Some of the key reforms introduced by Islam include the following. Firstly, women were granted the right to own property, receive inheritance, and receive a dowry, and were recognized as free and dignified individuals. Secondly, women were granted the right to seek knowledge and study religious teachings, including Islamic sciences, narrating hadith, and conveying religious teachings, both before and after marriage. Thirdly, Islam restricts the practice of polygamy by setting strict conditions and emphasizing the husband's duty to safeguard women's rights and well-being. Fourthly, Islamic teachings provide knowledge regarding women's reproductive rights to maintain a balance of roles and responsibilities within the family. Fifthly, women are allowed to contribute to the family's well-being economically, socially, and emotionally as a means of preventing domestic violence and fostering family stability.³⁰

In the context of women's daily lives, particularly concerning their social roles, Surah At-Taubah, verse 71, serves as an important foundation that illustrates this concept, as Allah states:

وَالْمُؤْمِنُونَ وَالْمُؤْمِنَاتُ بَعْضُهُمْ أَوْلِيَاءُ بَعْضٍ يَأْمُرُونَ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ وَيَنْهَوْنَ عَنِ الْمُنْكَرِ

"In the context of women's daily lives, particularly concerning their social roles, Surah At-Taubah, verse 71, serves as an important foundation that illustrates this concept, as Allah states...." (Q.S at-Taubah [9]: 71)

This verse affirms that men and women are *awliya'* to one another, that is, partners who mutually support one another in building a moral society through enjoining what is good and forbidding what is evil, upholding religious observance, and upholding the values of truth. In her commentary, Zainab al-Ghazali explains that this verse positions women as active social agents in

²⁶Subhan Subhan et al., 'Women's Activities In Worship According to The Qur'an And Hadith', *AL QUDS: Jurnal Studi Alquran dan Hadis* 8, no. 2 (2024): 255–67, <https://doi.org/10.29240/alquds.v8i2.10115>.

²⁷Ahmad Subakir et al., 'LIVING HADIS DALAM DAKWAH KULTURAL KYAI AGENG MUHAMMAD BESARI: RELASI SANTRI-PRIYAYI DI TEGALSARI-PONOROGO (1742–1773 M)', *UNIVERSUM: Jurnal Keislaman Dan Kebudayaan* 18, no. 2 (2024), <https://jurnal.fuda.iainkediri.ac.id/index.php/universum/article/view/3659>.

²⁸Muslihin Sultan et al., 'Female Friendly, Patriarchy, and the Adoption of Arabic Pronouns: Linguistic Analysis of Family Law Verses in the Al-Qur'an', *Samarah: Jurnal Hukum Keluarga Dan Hukum Islam* 9, no. 3 (2025): 1491–517, <https://doi.org/10.22373/sjhk.v9.i3.29775>.

²⁹Lusiana Margareth Tijow et al., 'Integrity of Women's Bodies: The Urgency of Protecting Women from Catcalling as a Form of Symbolic Violence', *Jurnal Hukum* 42, no. 1 (2025): 1–23, <https://doi.org/10.26532/jh.v42i1.48831>.

³⁰I. Nyoman Sujana et al., 'The Marriage Law Reform in The Global Era: Integrating Human Rights into Family Law', *Jurnal Hukum* 42, no. 1 (2026): 184–201, <https://doi.org/10.26532/jh.v42i1.48618>.

the development of society, rather than merely as an accessory within the social structure.³¹ Women, therefore, have theological legitimacy to participate in social life, education, community service, and various moral activities that contribute to the common good.

In addition to the social dimension, the Qur'an also affirms the moral equality between men and women, as set out in Surah Al-Imran, verse 195. This verse affirms that every righteous deed, in whatever form, holds equal value in the sight of Allah, without discrimination based on gender. As explained in Tafsir al-Munir, this verse guarantees equality in human endeavor (*'amal*), which has a direct impact on women's daily activities, ranging from child-rearing and education to professional roles and public engagement.³² This perspective broadens the scope of women's lives, in which working, studying, pursuing a career, and contributing to society are not separate from spirituality, but rather form part of worship that is valued in the sight of God. A hadith of the Prophet states the following:

“الدُّنْيَا مَتَاعٌ، وَخَيْرُ مَتَاعِ الدُّنْيَا الْمَرْأَةُ الصَّالِحَةُ”

“*The world is a treasure, and the finest treasure in the world is a virtuous woman,*”³³ further underscores that women's moral character plays a vital role in human life.

This view is consistent with Johanna Pink's analysis, which asserts that modern women are no longer merely recipients of interpretative authority but also active agents who shape the meaning of the Qur'an through their life experiences and daily religious practices.³⁴ In the modern context, women interpret and apply the teachings of the Qur'an in accordance with their needs, roles, and the social spheres in which they operate, whether within the family, the professional environment, or the ever-expanding digital sphere. Thus, the Qur'an and Hadith serve not only as sources of normative legitimacy but also as moral inspiration guiding women in upholding the values of humanity, spirituality, and civilization in their daily lives.

Women and Public Sphere Debates in Contemporary Society

In modern society, women are often at the center of public debates covering social, moral, and identity issues. The increasing participation of women in education, the economy, leadership, and the digital sphere has elicited a variety of responses from society. On the one hand, women's presence in the public sphere is seen as a sign of social progress in line with the principles of equality and human dignity. On the other hand, various groups still question the boundaries of women's roles, particularly regarding leadership, professional involvement, or participation in social issues deemed 'sensitive'.³⁵ This debate is often fueled by cultural constructs, media narratives, and religious interpretations that are not monolithic.

A wide range of issues related to women's participation in the public sphere continued to be a significant topic of discussion over time. These debates encompass how women position themselves in professional and domestic spheres, the extent to which they can engage in social

³¹Zainab al-Ghazali, *Nazarat Fi Kitabillah* (Dar al-Syurūq, 1994), 124.

³²Wahbah az-Zuhaili, *Tafsir Al-Munir Fi al-Aqidah Wa Syariah Wa Manhaj* (Dar al-Fikr: Damsyiq, 2009), 539.

³³Aḥmad ibn Shu'ayb al-Nasā'ī, *Sunan Al-Nasā'ī al-Kubrā, Tahqiq 'Abd al-Ghaffār Sulaymān al-Bandagī* (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-'Ilmiyyah, 1991), 369.

³⁴Johanna Pink, *Muslim Qur'anic Interpretation Today: Media, Genealogies and Interpretive Communities* (Berlin: Equinox Publishing Limited, 2019), 50.

³⁵Miguel Angel Mansilla and Luis Orellana Urtubia, 'The Ideology of Idoneousness: Mary Anne Hilton and Mercedes Gutierrez as Symbols of Women's Exclusion from Spaces of Power in Chilean Pentecostalism', *Culture and Religion* 22, no. 3 (2021): 279–98, <https://doi.org/10.1080/14755610.2023.2255310>.

activities, and how the moral and social legitimacy of women's leadership is understood within society. The emergence of digital spaces has further expanded these dynamics by providing opportunities for women to speak out, criticize, question, and construct new narratives about their experiences and roles.³⁶ Nevertheless, they continue to face resistance, social bias, and moral expectations that are often applied disproportionately compared to men.

In these various debates, the Qur'an and Hadith are frequently cited as references, whether to establish boundaries, expand the scope of women's participation, or seek common ground between traditional values and the demands of modernity. The Qur'anic teaching that places men and women as *awliya'* (Q.S. At-Tawbah [9]: 71) provides a strong foundation that social cooperation, rather than gender hierarchy, is the primary principle affirmed by the sacred text.³⁷ This verse positions women as active partners in building social life through enjoining what is good and forbidding what is evil, worship, and moral commitment. Scholars also hold diverse views on the permissibility of women working outside the home. Nevertheless, the majority of jurists permit women to work provided they are able to maintain their dignity and moral integrity. This view is consistent with the principles of Islamic economics, which regard the pursuit of a livelihood as a form of worship, particularly when undertaken to meet the needs of the family.

Women's participation in the public sphere also extends to the political arena. Generally speaking, the limited involvement of women in politics is influenced by a range of multidimensional barriers. According to Musdah Mulia's in-depth analysis, these barriers arise at cultural, structural, and even theological levels.³⁸ Among conservatives, it is often argued that Islamic teachings do not grant women political rights in the public sphere. This view holds that the Qur'an and the Hadith do not provide a basis for women to hold positions of political leadership within the wider social context.

Various issues relating to women's participation in the public sphere have consistently been a matter of significant concern. This debate encompasses how women position themselves in professional and domestic spheres, the extent of their involvement in social activities, and how the moral and social legitimacy of women's leadership is understood within society. In the modern era, issues such as highly educated women active in academia or professional fields, women's leadership in government and public institutions, involvement in the digital economy, ethical constraints on appearance, and women's roles in family decision-making serve as concrete examples of these dynamics. The presence of the digital sphere has further broadened this debate, providing opportunities for women to voice their views, criticize, ask questions, and construct new narratives regarding their experiences and roles.³⁹ However, at the same time, they also continue to face resistance, social bias, and moral expectations that are often more onerous than those faced by men.

In the debate regarding women's position in the public sphere, whether concerning access to education, professional participation, or the courage to voice opinions in the digital realm, the

³⁶Ahmad Fawaid and Nayla Amalia, 'The Representation of Muslim Women on Digital Platforms: Contestation and Fragmented Reception on Instagram's QuranReview Account', *Jurnal Ilmiah Al-Mu'ashirah: Media Kajian Al-Qur'an Dan Al-Hadits Multi Perspektif* 22, no. 1 (2025): 144–60, <https://doi.org/10.22373/jim.v22i1.29982>.

³⁷Dinda Dinanti Rusti et al., 'Kesetaraan Laki-Laki Dan Perempuan Dalam Perspektif Tafsir Tarbawi QS. At-Taubah Ayat 71 Terhadap Tantangan Di Era Modern', *Al-Mau'izhob: Jurnal Pendidikan Agama Islam* 7, no. 2 (2025): 108–12, <https://doi.org/10.31949/am.v7i2.16348>.

³⁸Prof Dr Hj Siti Musdah Mulia M.A., *Muslimah Sejati: Menempub Jalan Islami Meraih Ridha Ilahi* (Bandung: Marja30, 2011), 109.

³⁹Tamer Koburtay and Tala Abuhusseini, 'Normative Islam, Prejudice and Women Leaders: Why Do Arab Women Leaders Suffer?', *Journal of Gender Studies* 30, no. 2 (2021): 177–89, <https://doi.org/10.1080/09589236.2020.1863195>.

Qur'an provides an ethical framework that affirms women's capacity as moral and social agents. One relevant verse is Surah al-Mujādilah, verse 1, which features the figure of Khaulah binti Tha'labah, a woman who voiced her grievances against unjust social practices.⁴⁰ Her voice was heard, acknowledged, and even became the cause of a revelation. The explicit recognition of the dialogue between the Prophet and a woman in this verse serves as strong evidence that women's criticism, voices, and participation in the public sphere are not only permitted but also have scriptural legitimacy.

The prophetic tradition also provides significant reinforcement of women's intellectual and moral legitimacy. One example is the Prophet's appreciation of the women of the Anṣār, who were not afraid to ask questions and study religion without any sense of shame. A hadith states:

نِعْمَ النِّسَاءُ نِسَاءُ الْأَنْصَارِ، لَمْ يَكُنْ يَمْنَعُهُنَّ الْحَيَاءُ أَنْ يَتَفَقَّهْنَ فِي الدِّينِ

*“The best of women are the women of the Ansar; their modesty does not prevent them from deepening their understanding of their faith.”*⁴¹ This hadith demonstrates that women are not only permitted to participate in discursive spaces but are also commended for actively asking questions, offering criticism, and negotiating the meaning of religious teachings. The Prophet's attitude sets a strong precedent that women's intellectual activity, public participation, and courage in voicing their views are an integral part of the Islamic scholarly tradition.

Through an understanding of these verses of the Qur'an and hadiths, it can be understood that the Qur'an and Sunnah do not position women as passive entities confined to the domestic sphere but rather as social actors possessing analytical capacity, moral courage, and spiritual authority. In the modern context, where women are increasingly active in higher education, the professional sector, and the digital sphere, this framework of values from the Qur'an and Hadith provides a strong ethical foundation for understanding that women's participation is not a deviation from religious tradition but rather a continuation of the spirit of justice, cooperation, and intellectual openness that has characterized Islam from the very beginning.⁴²

Women's Moral Challenges in Contemporary Society

Women in the modern era face a range of moral challenges that are far more complex than those faced by previous generations. Technological advances, changes in social structures, and the rapid development of digital culture have created new spaces for women to express themselves and negotiate their identities. On the one hand, women now have greater opportunities to contribute, build careers, and voice their opinions in the public sphere. On the other hand, however, they also face disproportionate social pressure, layered moral expectations, and standards of behavior that are often influenced more by cultural constructs than by religious values.

⁴⁰Marlinda Marlinda et al., 'Pendekatan Ma'na – Cum - Maghza Atas Kisah Khaulah Binti Ts'alah (QS. Al-Mujadilah: 1-4) Dalam Kaitannya Dengan Hak Suara Perempuan Di Indonesia', *TAFASIR: Journal of Quranic Studies* 1, no. 2 (2023): 151–67, <https://doi.org/10.62376/tafasir.v1i2.22>.

⁴¹Alḥmad ibn Ḥanbal, *Al-Musnad*, No. 26195, Jilid 44 (Beirut: Mu'assasah al-Risalah, 2001), 347.

⁴²Abdul Rofiqi et al., 'Islamic Feminism in Global Context: Negotiating Gender Justice and Religious Authority in Indonesian Higher Education Institutions', *Journal of Gender Studies* 0, no. 0 (2026): 1–20, <https://doi.org/10.1080/09589236.2026.2655827>.

One of the greatest challenges is how women build and maintain their sense of self amidst a rapid flow of information and social demands that are often at odds with one another.⁴³ The portrayal of women in digital media, for example, often creates unrealistic ideal standards and pressures women to present a certain image to be considered 'acceptable' or 'moral'.⁴⁴ At the same time, women also face gender-based social scrutiny, including judgments regarding their appearance, career choices, self-expression, and interactions in public spaces. These challenges demonstrate that women's identity is not merely a personal matter but rather an ongoing arena of moral negotiation.

The 'post-truth' phenomenon, a state in which objective truth no longer serves as the primary basis for shaping public opinion, is further complicating the situation faced by women. In a post-truth culture, emotional responses, viral narratives, and subjective perceptions often carry more weight than objective facts or established religious values.⁴⁵ The digital space has become an arena where information mixes with disinformation, blurring the line between truth and sensationalism. Women are often the target of unfounded moral judgments, digital stigma, and public campaigns that create a negative image. This situation forces women to face moral pressures that are not only growing heavier but also increasingly unstable, as they are shaped by rapidly shifting opinions that are not always grounded in clear ethical principles.

Amidst the moral pressures faced by modern women, including digital culture, social bias, and post-truth narratives, the Qur'an offers fundamental principles that affirm women's position as moral and social agents. One of the most relevant verses is Surah At-Tawbah [9]: 71. According to Wahbah al-Zuhaili, this verse positions women as social partners, not objects of subordination.⁴⁶ She emphasized that women have a public moral role in enjoining what is good and forbidding what is evil, as well as full access to social participation, because men and women "assist one another in building a righteous society." Zainab al-Ghazali's interpretation also emphasizes that this verse removes the cultural constraints that limit women.⁴⁷ In his view, women bear the same ethical responsibility for upholding the common good, so their participation in social life is not a departure from religious tradition but rather a moral duty rooted in divine revelation.

From both of these interpretative perspectives, it is clear that the Qur'an provides a strong normative foundation for women to develop personal integrity, intellectual capacity, and moral courage qualities that are of paramount importance in facing the challenges of the modern era, characterized by identity pressures, double standards, and the proliferation of disinformation.

Thus, the moral challenges faced by women in the modern world cannot be understood solely as a consequence of social change or technological progress but also as an ongoing process of identity negotiation between religious values, societal expectations, and the fast-paced dynamics of the digital age. The phenomenon of post-truth is further expanding the realm of moral uncertainty,

⁴³Kartono - and Antonius Galih Arga Wiwin Aryanto, 'MENYOAL IDENTITAS PEREMPUAN Analisa Identitas Sosial Perempuan Sirofenisia Dalam Mrk 7:24-30', *Jurnal Ledalero* 21, no. 2 (2022): 207–18, <https://doi.org/10.31385/jl.v21i2.307.207-218>.

⁴⁴Cut Wan Moulida and Suryati Suryati, 'Pengaruh Media Sosial Terhadap Pembentukan Peran Sosial Dan Identitas Perempuan Generasi Z', *Journal of Innovative and Creativity* 5, no. 3 (2025): 27517–25, <https://doi.org/10.31004/joecy.v5i3.4129>.

⁴⁵David Eko Setiawan et al., 'Era Post-Truth dan Lonjakan Bunuh Diri Pada Remaja', *Jurnal Teologi Praktika* 6, no. 1 (2025): 48–62, <https://doi.org/10.51465/jtp.v6i1.103>.

⁴⁶Sabrina Lahutiy and Yunita Wulandari, 'Husband And Wife's Rights in Gender Study: Study of The Islamic Fiqh Wa Adilatuhu by Wahbah Azzuhaili', *Jurnal Mediasas: Media Ilmu Syari'ah Dan Abwal Al-Syakhsiyah* 8, no. 2 (2025): 387–97, <https://doi.org/10.58824/mediasas.v8i2.343>.

⁴⁷Aulia Azmi Syahidah Nasution and Abrar M. Dawud Faza, 'Kepemimpinan Laki-Laki Terhadap Perempuan Dalam Al-Qur'an: Analisis Penafsiran Zainab Al-Ghazali Dalam Nazharat Fi Kitabillah', *Kamaya: Jurnal Ilmu Agama* 8, no. 3 (2025): 47–59, <https://doi.org/10.37329/kamaya.v8i3.4580>.

leaving women more vulnerable to emotional judgments, misinformation, and unfounded stereotypes.

Nevertheless, the Qur'an and Hadith provide an ethical framework capable of guiding women to remain steadfast in their integrity, uphold social solidarity, and develop their intellectual and spiritual capacities. The principles of moral equality, recognition of righteous deeds, and the legitimacy of women's voices, as reflected in the sacred texts and their interpretations, provide a strong foundation for modern women to face contemporary challenges with wisdom and steadfast values. Therefore, women's moral struggle in the modern era is not merely about confronting external pressures but about building an authentic and dignified identity rooted in the ethical teachings of divine revelation.

Conclusion

Discussions regarding women in the context of modern life demonstrate that their roles are no longer confined to the domestic sphere but have expanded into various social, educational, professional, and digital spheres. In this dynamic reality, the Qur'an and Hadith serve as sources of values that provide an ethical foundation for women as they navigate the transformations of contemporary society. Principles such as mutual assistance, moral integrity, equality in righteous deeds, and intellectual courage affirm that women hold an equal position as moral and social agents within the Islamic tradition. Debates surrounding women in the public sphere, whether regarding leadership, higher education, digital expression, or moral legitimacy, demonstrate an ongoing process of negotiation between cultural norms, public opinion, and religious values. Nevertheless, the verses of the Qur'an and the prophetic tradition that acknowledge women's voices, capacities, and contributions demonstrate that Islam affords women ample scope to participate actively in shaping social life. Classical and contemporary exegetical works further affirm that women's participation is not a deviation, but rather an integral part of the social partnership affirmed by revelation.

In the post-truth era, where the line between fact and opinion is increasingly blurred, and misinformation spreads easily, women face more complex moral challenges, particularly regarding identity and the instability of public judgment. Nevertheless, the values of the Qur'an provide a firm guide for maintaining moral stability and preserving the integrity of one's identity through righteous deeds, ethical discernment, and spiritual resilience. Thus, modern women can build an authentic and dignified identity, not merely as a response to social pressures, but as an embodiment of divine values that remain relevant throughout the ages.

Overall, this study confirms that the Qur'an and Hadith serve not only as sources of legal or ritual guidance but also as sources of meaning and moral guidance that enable women to navigate the complexities of modern life. The presence of sacred texts within contemporary social dynamics provides space for women to continue to contribute, have a voice, and participate meaningfully, whilst upholding the ethical integrity that forms the foundation of a life oriented towards noble goals.

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