

Islam and Gender: Media Construction in Television Drama Series *Para Pencari Tuhan* on SCTV

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Abstract

This study examines gender equality and the principles of Islamic teachings in the TV drama *Para Pencari Tuhan*. This study aims to outline how the drama series' plots and visuals portray Islam and gender narratives. The Social Construction Theory of Peter L. Berger and Thomas Luckmann and the theory of Gender Injustice by Mansour Fakih serve as the foundational framework. Based on Muhammad Quraish Shihab's main concepts of Islamic teachings, the three primary principles of Islam are *aqidah*, or belief; *sharia*, or experience of legal requirements; and *akhlaq*, or manners. This qualitative study used Norman Fairclough's discourse analysis approach. At the same time, data collection techniques were carried out by watching thirty episodes of the TV drama series *Para Pencari Tuhan* season 16 three times and interviewing the production team and correlated informants. This research shows that the basic values of Islamic teachings are conveyed through the series' narrative elements (storyline) and cinematic elements (setting, audio, and appearance of the characters). Meanwhile, gender equality is shown through female characters who experience injustice. It is also shown that Women have potential and qualities that are no less than men. Mass media, including TV drama series, can convey positive *da'wah* messages about Islam and gender equality. Until now, television has been an alternative media besides the internet for people who want to find entertainment. This study's theoretical implication is that social construction theory can be used to explain Islamic values and gender equality in soap operas. The TV drama *Para Pencari Tuhan* exemplifies how Islamic ideals and gender identity are created, replicated, and interpreted in popular media. In the meantime, producers who wish to learn professional teamwork from the series team might gain practical knowledge from this study. Data demonstrates that the production team for this show performed effectively during pre-production, production, and post-production.

Keywords

TV Drama Series; Islamic Values; Gender Equality; "Para Pencari Tuhan"

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1. INTRODUCTION

In the modern era of technological advancement, entertainment content can incorporate Islamic values (Hosen, 2017). This approach makes the public more likely to embrace the messages. TV must be innovative as one of several traditional media outlets that can survive the current digital media trend. Since most Indonesians practice Islam, the religion's teachings must have appealing substance. TV drama series can be one example (Nurliana, 2020).

The topic of women's representation in broadcast programs draws attention despite the range of programming on the network. In the media, women are constantly portrayed in a variety of ways and become the object of commercialization. Efforts to present women as spectacles are sometimes at odds with the moral and religious ideals in Indonesia. Thus, the Indonesian Broadcasting Commission and the government require a third party to oversee the broadcast content. Over time, mass media has demonstrated its ability to foster civilization and educate the general population (Rachman, 2016; Zimbardo & Ebbeson, 1971). However, mass media may also serve as a hub for propaganda; customers and producers of wisdom must always coincide for mass media products to have the desired effects (Holmes, 2005).

Surya Citra Televisi (SCTV) is one of the most active TV stations broadcasting the Ramadan special series. The TV drama *Para Pencari Tuhan*, broadcast by SCTV, is a Ramadan series with a high viewership. This Indonesian drama series has been broadcast every day during the month of Ramadan on SCTV since 2007. In general, this tells the life of a *marbot* named Bang Jack (a mosque caretaker). *Para Pencari Tuhan* has had a long journey of broadcasting every Ramadan since 2007 and has entered its 16th season with various awards received. The researcher intends to study *Islam and Gender: Media Construction in the SCTV TV drama series Para Pencari Tuhan*, based on the factors mentioned earlier. This study aims to examine the representations of gender and religion in season 16 of SCTV's drama series *Para Pencari Tuhan*, 2023.

This research uses Peter L. Berger and Thomas Luckmann's Social Construction Theory and Mansour Fakih's Gender Injustice Theory. This research analyzes social construction in a television product, the religious series *Para Pencari Tuhan* (PPT) season 16, which airs on SCTV. There are three main Islamic religious teachings to analyze in the religious narratives contained, consisting of *Aqidah* (beliefs), *Sharia* (experience of legal provisions), and *aqhlak/morals* (good characters). The rationale used comes from Muhammad Quraish Shihab's ideas on the implementation of the main teachings of Islam (Shihab, 2017). Every Muslim believes Islamic teachings must be the absolute guide in their lives (Aminuddin, 2005). Mass media is one of the many instruments that build mindsets or gender construction in society. Mass media, which has wide coverage, is always effective in spreading any thoughts, including gender construction

(Basit, 2022). The struggle to achieve gender equality takes place in many approaches (Roifah, 2022).

The TV drama *Para Pencari Tuhan*'s portrayal of gender and Islamic principles serves as the research's statement formulation. Numerous research studies have been conducted on this television series thus far. Still, given that this is a religious broadcast, the topic of discussion is usually Islamic ideals or da'wah (Titin, 2021). Gender in TV drama has been the subject of extensive studies in the interim (Siregar, Khairani, & Daulay, 2022). On the other hand, little gender study has been done on religious television series like *Para Pencari Tuhan*.

2. METHODS

This research uses qualitative methods to explore the uniqueness of the research object (Suprayoga & Tabrani, 2001), the best Ramadan TV drama series in Indonesia, *Para Pencari Tuhan*. This research also employs Norman Fairclough's critical discourse analysis approach. The discourse studied is the Islamic narrative and gender narrative as outlined in the TV drama series *Para Pencari Tuhan* season 16 script. Discourse is not only about what is written or verbal language; more than that, it can also be messages conveyed in other forms (Fairclough, 1992b).

The discourse seen in this study is based on components found in media products, such as audiovisual drama series. The components are dialogue, visuals, and acts played by the characters. Fairclough formulated three process dimensions of critical discourse analysis: the production process, the interpretation process, and practical socio-cultural aspects (Fairclough, 1992a). Semi-structured interviews with the production crew were used in this study to investigate the production process. After three viewings of this TV drama, the interpretation process was completed. Researchers also observe socio-cultural characteristics through audience responses relayed through literature or mass media and literature studies relating to the issues discussed.

The data in this research is the audiovisual product of 30 episodes of *Para Pencari Tuhan* season 16 broadcast on SCTV in 2023, informants' interviews, and several literary data sources. Data collection techniques and procedures used in qualitative studies are interviews, observation, documentation, and interpretation. (Moeloeng, 2008) Researchers conducted interviews with three production teams from *Para Pencari Tuhan* season 16. They were David Setiawan Suwanto, director of PT Surya Citra Media; Deddy Mizwar, producer of the TV drama series *Para Pencari Tuhan*, season 16; and Tito Kurnianto, director. The three people were selected as informants due to their extensive knowledge of the ins and outs of the TV drama *Para Pencari Tuhan* industry. Semi-

structured questions about the pre-production, production, and post-production procedures were asked during the interviews.

Data validity testing is founded on triangulation, verifying findings through numerous analyses from diverse data sources or methodologies (Bogdan & Taylor, 1990). To verify the results, the researchers watched *the Para Pencari Tuhan* season 16 broadcast three times (via television and the Internet) as part of this study's triangulation data validity test. Researchers interviewed three informants about TV drama series production and performed a literature review on the topics discussed. Research data analysis is carried out by reducing the data, such as summarizing, selecting the main things, and focusing on things that follow the research topic. Data from interviews, observations, documentation, and interpretation will be collected and sorted. After that, all data is presented with a certain categorization, which refers to the problem formulation and the data that has been obtained (Fitria & Rachman, 2024).

3. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Para Pencari Tuhan is a signature TV drama series broadcast every Ramadan since 2007. In 2023, this program broadcasts when Muslims have sahur at 02.30 and broadcasts again on the same day at 12.15. *Para Pencari Tuhan* season 16 can also be enjoyed streaming via www.vidio.com, a business network with SCTV under EMTEK media company. This season's theme is *Doomsday Getting Closer*, which tells the story of youths who identify as punk and often occupy a place called DPR (Under the Shady Tree/ *Di bawah pohon rindang*). Tito Kurnianto is the director. Deddy Mizwar provided the story ideas, and the screenwriters are a team of Iip Sariful Hanan, Ferdiansyah, and Sockat Rachman.

At first, the selection of the focus of the series was on the youth who were members of punk and tended to be disliked by the public. Punk is well-known for its principle of "resistance" and willingness to fight the system in terms of culture, society, family, or even religion. On the other hand, the growing solidarity among the members is attention-grabbing, considering modern humans tend to be individualists today.

Viewers were enthralled by this group's conversion from agnostic to Muslim. September 2022 marked the start of the casting process for this television series. Following the selection of the casts, a workshop and script reading procedure were conducted. The script was written a long time ago. It took the crew three months to discuss the concept and write the script. The roles of the players were developed during the workshop phase. Filming began in November 2022 and concluded on March 23, 2023, the first day of Ramadan. This indicates that the entire filming lasted approximately six months, with each episode requiring five days of filming on average.

The creative and production teams developed the subjects that will be used in this season and each episode. Every season, *Para Pencari Tuhan* introduces a new major theme. For example, season 15 brought the theme of nursing homes, while season 16 took the theme of youth who identified as punk. The formulation of religious values cannot be separated from Islamic religious teachings, considering this drama series has an Islamic nuance. Islamic teachings about *aqidah*, *Sharia*, and *akhlaq* are conveyed through dialogue, acts, and visuals.

This section presents successive sub-sections: Islamic values, social construction, and gender narratives in the TV drama *Para Pencari Tuhan*. This study could have implications for the importance of producing professional TV dramas and da'wah across media, including television series, and expanding channels for gender activism in Indonesia. This study expands on earlier studies that concentrated on using religious film to preach, even though religious film can also serve as a platform for the fight for gender equality. It is also necessary to recognize that religious TV drama and commercial interests are inextricably linked, particularly during Ramadan (Fianto & Qorib, 2022).

3.1. Islamic Values

The main values of Islamic teachings in the TV drama series "Para Pencari Tuhan" season 16 include *Aqidah* (beliefs), *Sharia* (experience of legal provisions), and *akhlaq*/morals (characters) found in thirty episodes. The *akhlaq* narrative appears 371 times, the *aqidah* narrative appears 135 times, and the *Sharia* narratives appear 114 times. All of this can be seen in dialogue 486 times, in act 84 times, and in visuals 67 times.

The main character, Bang Jack, mostly employs 'dialogues' to convey religious guidance under *sharia* concepts. Aside from that, the characters in the series typically greet each other by stating "Asalamualaikum" "walaikumsalam" and speaking other phrases that contain *thoyyibah*, such as "Mashallah," "Astaghfirullah," "Alhamdulillah," and so forth. The moral/*akhlaq* representation of this drama is in the form of the habit of paying respect to fellow Muslims.

The three Islamic teachings of the drama series are *akhlaq*, *aqidah*, and *sharia*. *Akhlaq* is the term used to describe the moral principles and manners Islam teaches, particularly the admirable traits a Muslim should have toward Allah, His Messenger, and others. "Aqidah" refers to a belief system almost exclusively based on faith in Allah and His angels, His books, His messengers, the Last Day, and the Divine Decree, which includes both good and evil decrees. *Syariah* is about religious regulation governing the lives of Muslims.

In the first episode, Bang Jack stated that all citizens of this Pancasila-based nation must accept the existence of God. This is how faith is portrayed. All residents must embrace a religion

or other belief system in its implementation. In this episode, he also pointed out that the world's end was approaching. In the last few episodes, Jack emphasized again that the doomsday would come and everyone would be held accountable for all their deeds. This declaration emerged triggered because, bang, Jack met a group of youth who did not believe in the existence of God. In this part, this series displays the conflict between the struggle for goodness, represented by the figure of Bang Jack, and the temptation of fault, represented by the band members who disbelieve in God.

The character of Bang Jack, as an entity created in the series, conveyed religious messages and declared the definition of destiny according to the Aqidah, which is the obligation to strive to achieve one's goals and leave the final result to Allah. Whatever the result is, it is by the qada/qadar determined by God. In general, the dimensions of Aqidah that appear in the next episode touch on faith in the decrees of God Almighty. The urgency to always follow the path left by the Prophet Muhammad is also a spectrum discussed in this series. As a religious series, the most fundamental is the urgency to share the principles of divinity. Conveying Islamic messages in religious series is the direction that must be taken (Suwari & Pradesa, 2019). The narrative of the faith in this series is not far from the principle of tawakal or surrender to God Almighty as the creator and regulator of the universe. The implementation of faith is an invisible thing. Faith lies in the heart, but it needs to be followed up with vows in the mouth and actions by Islamic teachings (Suryani, Ma'tsum, Santi, & Manik, 2021).

There are multiple religious teachings on Aqidah in Episode 12. One of them is that nothing can move people's hearts or change their thoughts—not even a leaf falling without Allah *subhanahu wa ta'ala* being aware of it. Only God can do these things. The following message is reported in numerous hadith narrations about one of the prayers that the Prophet Muhammad taught: *Yaa muqollibal quluubi tsabbit qolbii 'ala diinik* (means: "O Controller of hearts, make my heart firm in Your religion)." (HR. Tirmidzi, no. 3522 and Ahmad, 6:315). Surah Al-An'am verse 59: *Wa 'indahū mafātiḥul-gaibi lā ya'lamuhā illā huw, wa ya'lamu mā fil-barri wal-baḥr, wa mā tasquṭu miw waraqatin illā ya'lamuhā* (With Him are the keys of the unseen—no one knows them except Him. Moreover, He knows what is in the land and sea. Not even a leaf falls without His knowledge, nor a grain in the darkness of the earth or anything—green or dry—but is written in a perfect Record) (Shihab, 2017).

The highest point of faith shown in this series was changing the band's name from GodLess to GodBest. This transformation is fundamental and important, a change from doubting the existence of God to being convinced that God is an Almighty being. Moreover, this band released a song entitled: *Ana Uhibbullah*, which means I love Allah. It is said that the video clip

for this song was prepared as a dowry for King's character (the band's bad boy character who becomes a religious figure) to marry Isyana's character (a pious and independent female character).

Furthermore, *Para Pencari Tuhan* season 16 also adheres to Islamic Sharia values. Islamic Sharia is the law or rules for carrying out religious teachings in everyday life. Several characters display sharia and Islamic values. Even though not all characters wear clothing according to Sharia law or visual symbols that represent the implementation of Islamic rules, most scenes in the series are equipped with characters wearing koko shirts, caps, headscarves, and Islamic attributes such as turbans and prayer beads. Several times, the characters Haji Sholeh and Isyana are shown as religious figures carrying books on Islamic topics, iqro, and Al-Quran. The use of the cap, songkok, and turban in this series is not interpreted as an obligation to fulfill sharia because those depicted symbols are not related to sharia but to adab as a form of submission to Allah. This is different from the law of covering the private parts for women; the hijab and robes in this series are depicted as representations of devout Muslim women.

Aside from prayer, the most common *Akhlaq* representation in the series is *dzikrullah* or the recital of Allah's name. Lafaz stated it is in the form of prayers and expressions of the characters. Prayer words, such as "asalamualaikum" and "walaikumsalam," frequently surface in dialogue as characters greet one another. This means the person asks God for salvation for the person they are talking to. Apart from that, there are also pronunciations for expressing feelings; for example, when people are surprised, they will say *astaghfirullahaladzim* or Masha Allah. When a character feels good or grateful, they say *Alhamdulillahirobbilalamin*. Meanwhile, if a disaster strikes someone, say, *innalillahi wa innailahirojiun*.

In episode 22, Pak Ronald wanted to propose to Bu Ira at eleven o'clock at night, and Pak Jalal forbade him because proposing in the middle of the night indicated a lack of manners. In the end, Pak Ronald failed to propose to Bu Ira because Haji Sholeh was ahead of him. Pak Ronald could not do anything because, according to religious rules, if someone has proposed to a woman, other men are not allowed to propose to her.

In episode 8, Bang Jack tells a story about three people whose ranks are escalated by God: knowledgeable people, civilized people, and honest people. Meanwhile, in episode 22, in the dialogue between Bang Jack and Bang Badar, there is a description of the prohibition on taking other people's rights. Bang Badar used to be a car robber who wanted to repent, so he was advised by Bang Jack. The acts, dialogues, and visuals in this series reflect Islamic ideals. The regulation of muamalah, such as a man proposing to a woman and the terms of marriage, describes the Sharia narrative. Stories about the benefits of concealing one's private areas and images of people

wearing such clothing exemplify how the Shari'a is applied correctly. Sincere good Akhlaq is directed toward not just other people but also Allah SWT's creatures.

Furthermore, the implementation of devotion requires Sharia law, which regulates the procedures for the worship of both mahdloh and ghairu mahdloh. With this perspective, the relationship between the main principles of Islamic teachings becomes increasingly clear. Aqidah, Sharia, and Akhlaq can be said to be a tree. Aqidah is the foundation or roots, Sharia is the stem and branches, while Akhlaq is the fruit and leaves. These three things complement each other.

In the conversation with Cupi in episode 6, Bang Galak stated that Allah subhanahu wa ta'ala is the only one in whom he has faith and who can assist him. This is an example of having an optimistic perspective on God. The series also illustrates the importance of showing a good akhlaq towards parents or older people. This series accommodates the moral lessons of Indonesian ethics, which perform the gesture of shaking hands and kissing hands as a sign of respect. In episode 4, Dwi kisses the hand of his older brother Gembel; in episode 11, Isyana's students kiss Isyana's hand before going home. Isyana also kisses his father's hand every time they are going to meet or separate. The "bad boy" characters also demonstrate their respect for their parents and elders, as evidenced by Gembel kissing Bang Jack's hand and King kissing his mother's.

The good *akhlaq* is also shown in this series in the form of helping or caring for each other (Kalia, 2023). Cupi protects Bu Ira from someone who harasses her, and King attacks the perpetrator who harasses women in the market. Another example is King and his friends trying to help carry pregnant women's goods. This is also good behavior in the context of social concern. In episode 22, Bang Jack advises Tri to be a trustworthy child so he does not fall into hypocrisy. Meanwhile, hypocrisy is bad, Akhlaq. Hypocrites/ munafiq are often characterized as kafir, fasiq, or mushrik. The word munafiq has a paradigmatic relationship with kafir, fasiq, and mushrik so that they could be fought and even thrown into hell (Pajarudin, 2018). The parameter for an akhlaq is that if a bad act is committed, it is punished as a sin. It is a sin, no longer called an ethical or moral violation. However, in the contemporary era, Akhlaq is often associated with the terminology of morals, ethics, good manners, and etiquette (Marzuki, 2009).

3.2. Social Construction

In the context of audiovisual products such as films and TV drama series, social construction cannot be considered a simple reality formation (Bacik, 2023). Viewers who watch a film or drama series, receiving messages from those they watch, cannot immediately agree on objective reality or reality outside themselves as a concrete reality. There is a dialectic that Berger

and Luckman call externalization, objectivation, and internalization. The process in a social ecosystem between the message creator, the message object, and the message listener builds an intertwined human consciousness (Bungin, 2015).

The thirty episodes of *Para Pencari Tuhan* season 16 feature a production team of about fifty individuals in each scene. Five distinct writers are writing the screenplay. In addition to being the producer, Deddy Mizwar is also the owner of Citra Media, the production company that launched this series and formed a collaboration with SCTV. Other than that, from season one to season sixteen, Deddy Mizwar owned the creative idea. In addition, he oversaw the group of five young people who wrote the scripts, coordinating their efforts to create a broad synopsis of each episode and specific dialogue for every shot. It does not stop there; Deddy Mizwar is included in the creative and quality control teams (these two teams are categorized as production teams). One of the tasks of the creative team is to formulate how values or moral messages can be inserted into each scene. Meanwhile, the quality control team checks each production stage, especially after the series product per episode has been edited and is ready to be sent to the Film Censorship Institute and SCTV.

Social construction is a process of interaction between various parties. In this TV series, interaction and communication also involve the production team and Deddy Mizwar (also on the production team). Before objectivating social products in mass media as drama series, there is an externalization process for each individual in the production team. Externalization is expressing ideas about an object or a topic that contains a message in a drama series. Islam is the topic most explored in this drama series. Religious nuances are highlighted as a religious drama series that airs in the month of Ramadan. The creative team carried out intensive discussions to highlight strong Islamic messages. Each team member submits an idea and then compares that idea with the ideas expressed in seasons 1 to 15. As a long series, efforts to make something different must be applied. Then, the team equalized their perceptions and agreed on the theme of a group of people who identify as punk who transformed from initially liking to rebel and not caring about God to becoming religious.

It must also be understood that their ideas are based on their subjective reality. Each team member has their own opinion about Islam and punk. Their subjective reality begins with the process of internalizing or absorbing Islam and punks so far, or before they externalize or convey ideas in discussions. This is a real illustration that social construction is a circular and continuous process (Sulaiman, 2016).

After going through the stage of determining the big topic, the scriptwriting team creates an initial draft. The scriptwriting took three full months to create thirty episodes, which was

carried out by a team of five young writers under the direct supervision of Deddy Mizwar. Each team member's thoughts contain subjective reality, and then they discuss to carry out the process of externalizing reality. When this reality is stated in the script and becomes part of the drama series, the flow of the process is part of the objectification. Objective reality is ultimately published through a public entity or institution, or in theoretical language; it is called institutionalized; it does not rule out the possibility of it being institutionalized through mass media so that it can be witnessed by the public and interpreted; the objectivation process reaches its peak. *Para Pencari Tuhan* season 16 becomes an objective reality. For viewers, social construction does not stop there. They absorb the objective reality by agreeing or disagreeing; the result is a subjective reality for themselves. In this cycle, the relationship is also visible from the upstream of a drama series, precisely starting from the complex production process to the downstream when the series contributes understanding to the audience.

3.3. Gender Narratives

The gender narratives studied consist of one of five discriminatory elements: marginalization, subordination, stereotypes, violence, and double burden (Little, 2023). The concept of marginalization referred to in this research is marginalization due to gender differences, resulting in poverty and exclusion in the economic, social, cultural, political, and legal fields, which generally occurs more often in women. The concept of subordination in this research is the assumption that one type of position gender is higher than the other genders; women are positioned after or second to men. The stereotype concept of giving an image/label to a person or group of women is based on a wrong assumption, a negative image of someone, such as a crybaby, a tease, or a source of crime, which leads to various forms of injustice.

The concept of verbal and non-verbal violence includes torture, teasing women, making women into sex objects, beatings, rape, sexual harassment, sexual exploitation of women and pornography, hurtful remarks, dirty words, shouting, insults and threats. Meanwhile, the concept of double burden in this research is interpreted as the workload received by one gender more than the other. Gender narratives in this series appear in various forms, such as acts (65), dialogue (55), and visuals (5). In the analysis of the text carried out by researchers, it is shown that gender narratives, as per Mansour Fakhri's theory, can be seen as narratives containing 48% content of domestication, 18% content of stereotypes, 14% content of violence, 11% content of harassment, 7% content of discrimination and 2% content of subordination.

In the first episode of *Para Pencari Tuhan* season 16, it was shown that a pregnant woman was carrying many shopping items. Therefore, King and his friends asked the woman about her

husband's whereabouts. They argued that her husband did not care. The woman should be assisted by her husband in sharing tasks. In this broadcast, a woman receives a double burden; the first is the burden of reproduction, and the second is the burden of completing domestic work by shopping for many items.

On the other hand, there is a moral message about the urgency of a husband's attention to his pregnant wife. Pregnant women can be a vulnerable group. Therefore, she needs more attention from her husband or family (Dewi, 2019). Based on the data collection results, women's production roles are represented by four characters: Isyana, Bu Ira, Cupi, and Dwi. Most of this drama series is conveyed through portraits of the characters of Isyana and Bu Ira. Isyana is a woman with religious knowledge and financial management abilities. Therefore, she also works as a financial manager in his father's workshop. She can teach religion to children at the mosque near her house, especially teaching Koran recitation and Islamic jurisprudence. However, she also has to do domestic tasks at home.

Meanwhile, her father was never seen carrying out these domestic tasks. The tasks are related to needs in the kitchen, such as cooking, preparing food at the dining table and putting it into the basket for going out, serving drinks, washing dishes, and cleaning the house. In her role, the character Isyana also represents a woman who has a public role because of her abilities. With Mansour Fakhri's analysis, it can be seen that Isyana's figure is the profile of a woman who carries a double burden. She works and also performs domestic duties in the family. However, there is a proportional division of tasks. When Isyana carries out domestic tasks, Isyana's father starts the work by attending the workshop before Isyana.

The production/public role is represented by Bu Ira, who runs a cake business to support the family economy. King, Bu Ira's son, performs domestic duties to lighten his mother's duties. Episode 29 shows King learning to care for the house and make cakes. Bu Ira is often shown as a caring and soft-hearted figure, often shown in the scene where he prepares food for King and apologizes for being unable to give him a better life. In the final episode, King is depicted as a figure who also carries out production work and has independence in access and control of resources.

In this drama series, the figure of Bu Ira experiences several forms of violence. Bu Ira is described as a woman whose husband left her when King was five. Her husband left her for no apparent reason, even though the man was financially stable and famous. Bu Ira received psychological violence. She handles the financial affairs alone, so it could be interpreted that she has to carry a double burden. Apart from depicting gender bias towards women, Isyana and Bu Ira's figures depict gender equality. They are both independent women and can survive

economically and socially. They can earn a living and be independent. In society, Isyana as a teacher and Bu Ira as a cake maker have bargaining value, so they cannot be immediately marginalized. This shows the importance of women having a proportional bargaining position in society.

The discourse on excluding female stereotypes can best be felt from various dialogues, acts, and visuals of Cupi's characters. Cupi is the only female member of the music group band GodLess (which later changed its name to GodBest). The band usually hung out under shady trees (Di bawah Pohon Rindang), which later became known as one of their headquarters. In this band, Cupi's clothes are not different in nuance from those worn by his three male friends. Visually, Cupi's appearance is not limited by gender, so the dressing styles of GodLess are relatively similar. Not only that, Cupi is described as being able to sleep anywhere, including in shop windows or markets and under shady trees. In other words, Cupi's abilities are no different from those of her male friends. In Godless, Cupi shares the same decision-making as her three male friends. The stereotype of women being weak and unable to adapt to harsh environments is refuted by the presence of Cupi. This again shows that the roles of men and women, especially in the production space or social spaces, are presented equally in the story.

The discourse about women with abilities in public roles is also represented by the character Dwi. Dwi is the younger brother of Gembel (a member of GodLess), who is the backbone of the family. This character is the antithesis of stereotypes towards women in some circles of society. She is not weak and dependent on a male figure. In another part, Dwi shows and reminds the audience that women can play a role in public spaces. Dwi is an externalized product from the production team that is always oriented towards factual societal conditions. This drama series is a reflection of the reality of society. Loli is another female figure who has succeeded in playing a role in the public sphere. This woman only appeared in episode 25. However, she is not a new character in this series because Loli appeared as a household assistant in the previous season. In the previous season, Pak Jalal directed Loli to migrate to Papua. In season 16, episode 25, Loli becomes a successful businessman after migrating to Papua for years.

4. CONCLUSION

Through dialogue, act, and visuals (settings, symbols, and clothing) in the first thirty episodes, *Para Pencari Tuhan* illustrates the fundamental principles of Islamic teachings on *aqidah*, *sharia*, *akhlak*, and gender equality. This research finds the existence of a struggle for gender equality in the Islamic principles shown in the series. The message of Islamic teaching and gender equality is entwined. Social construction is inextricably linked to the reality that exists in society,

both throughout the production process and when the audience watches this performance. This TV drama series portrays social inequality and gender disparity in Indonesia, as well as Islamic ideals in interpersonal relationships, in a representative manner. This means that the series serves as a platform for introspection, parody, criticism, and solutions to the social realities of the day. This series also is a reminder for its viewers of the importance of gender equality and Islamic values.

TV drama "Para Pencari Tuhan," which airs during Ramadan, conveys Islamic messages and gender equality comprehensively. This research has limitations in the aspect of collecting audience opinions. Therefore, using quantitative content analysis or qualitative research supported by surveys, future research can concentrate on understanding the audience's opinions regarding gender equality and Islamic principles. The research's practical consequences include the possibility for television series producers to gain insight into the seriousness of the TV Drama "Para Pencari Tuhan" production team during the planning, production, and post-production phases. Religious authorities might contact the team producing the show to suggest religious ideals that should be featured in it, and policymakers can interact with the public and support high-quality television shows to guide them regarding which shows to watch.

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