

Gender Justice in Islamic Education: A Study of Parents' Perceptions and Practices in Disanah Village, Indonesia

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Abstract

This study examines the implementation of gender justice principles in Islamic education within family contexts in Disanah Village, Indonesia. Using a mixed-methods approach combining surveys (n=83 households) and in-depth interviews, the research explores parental perceptions regarding educational equality between male and female children. The study investigates how Islamic principles related to educational justice are understood and applied at the family level, particularly in rural Indonesian Muslim communities. Through a sequential explanatory design, quantitative data were collected via questionnaires and analyzed using descriptive statistics, followed by qualitative interviews analyzed thematically. The findings reveal that while all respondents (100%) acknowledge their responsibility for children's education, perspectives on equal treatment vary slightly, with 94.04% supporting equal educational opportunities regardless of gender and 5.95% prioritizing children with exceptional abilities. The study concludes that Islamic principles of educational justice are widely understood and valued in the community, though implementation challenges persist. These findings contribute to understanding how religious values can support gender equality in educational settings and offer insights for developing culturally-sensitive approaches to promoting educational equity in Muslim-majority contexts.

Keywords

Educational Equality; Gender Justice; Islamic Education; Parental Attitudes

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1. INTRODUCTION

From an Islamic perspective, lifelong education holds paramount importance. The obligation to seek knowledge is not limited to certain groups but is the responsibility of every Muslim, regardless of gender. The Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) likened the ink used by knowledge seekers to the blood of martyrs on the Day of Judgment. Consequently, those engaged in education are considered esteemed figures in society, driven by religious zeal to explore, develop, and apply their knowledge continuously (Rofiqi et al., 2025). As stated in the Qur'an:

وَمَا كَانَ الْمُؤْمِنُونَ لِيَنفِرُوا كَافَّةً فَلَوْلَا نَفَرَ مِن كُلِّ فِرْقَةٍ مِّنْهُمْ طَائِفَةٌ لِّيَتَفَقَّهُوا فِي الدِّينِ وَلِيُنذِرُوا قَوْمَهُمْ إِذَا رَجَعُوا إِلَيْهِمْ لَعَلَّهُمْ يَحْذَرُونَ



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“It is not for the believers to go forth all at once. For there should separate from every division of them a group to obtain understanding in the religion and warn their people when they return to them that they might be cautious.” (Qur’an 9:122)

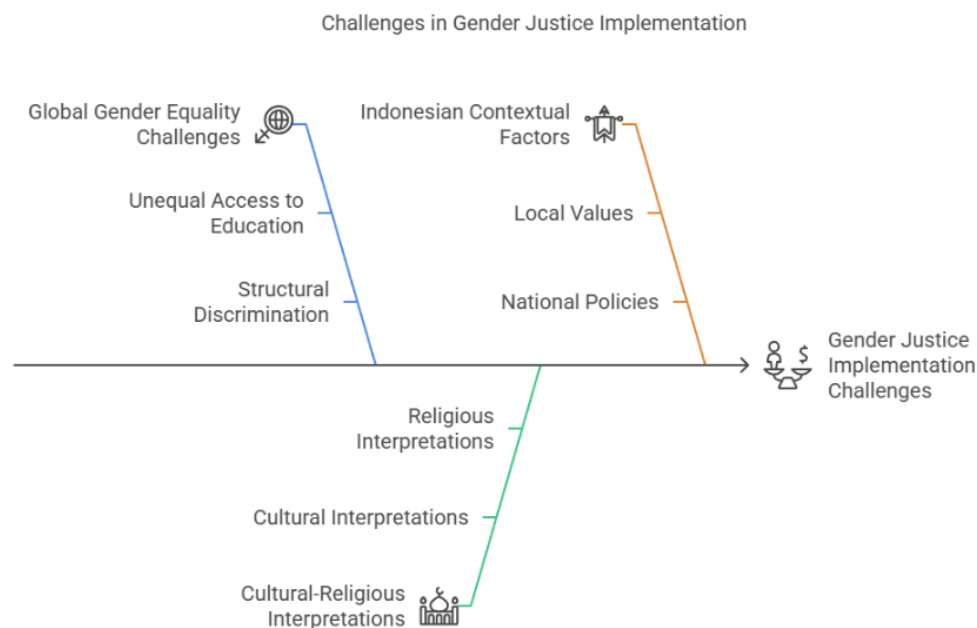


Figure 1. Conceptual Framework of Islamic Gender-Based Education

Gender equality in education remains a critical global concern, with UNESCO reporting that girls still face significant barriers to educational access in many regions worldwide (UNESCO, 2020). While substantial progress has been made toward achieving gender parity in primary and secondary education enrollment, deep-seated cultural and religious beliefs continue to influence educational opportunities for boys and girls differently (Keddie, 2006). In Islamic contexts, interpretations of religious texts and traditions can either support or hinder gender-equal educational practices, creating complex dynamics in Muslim-majority communities (Shah, S., & Khurshid, 2019).

The intersection of religious values and gender equality in education presents challenges and opportunities. As Brooks et al. note, religious beliefs can provide powerful motivation for promoting educational equality when framed within justice-oriented interpretations (Brooks et al., 2024). However, limited research has examined how Islamic principles regarding educational justice are understood and implemented at the family level, particularly in Indonesian contexts where local traditions and religious interpretations interact (Raihani, 2023).

This study addresses this research gap by examining how parents in a rural Indonesian Muslim community conceptualize and implement gender justice in their children’s education. By exploring parental attitudes and practices through Islamic educational principles, this research contributes to the broader discourse on religion’s role in promoting gender equality in educational settings.

Among the three existing educational pathways, education in the family environment represents the first experience a child acquires. From the beginning of their life, a child begins to learn to move, speak, recognize their environment, imitate behavior, and perform various other activities through interaction with their family, especially parents as primary educators. Therefore, parents are often referred to as children’s first and most important teachers. Within family education, children begin to recognize various stimuli through hearing, sight, and feeling.

This is where the initial formation of character, morals, intelligence, attitudes, and other important aspects occurs. Therefore, family education becomes the main foundation for continuing children’s education in formal and non-formal pathways. In addition, education within the family is very decisive

in forming a child's personality and character (Jordan, 2005).

Furthermore, the family is the most basic social unit that significantly influences the development of a child's social education. As a fundamental part of the education system, the family plays an important role in internalizing social values, forming identity, and instilling sustainable habits in a child's life. Through the family environment, children begin to understand norms, ethics, and patterns of social interaction that form the basis of their behavior in society (Eickelman, 1978).

This means that the family becomes the starting point for the formation of an individual and their personality structure. In everyday life, children tend to imitate the habits and behaviors displayed by their parents. Therefore, the active involvement of parents in a child's education process becomes very important. In the context of gender education, parents' role is decisive in instilling fair and equal values. If there are gender imbalances or biases in the family environment, it can negatively impact the mental development and perspective of children in the future (Daraz et al., 2018).

Gender inequality in the family environment often appears in various forms, such as the marginalization of women's roles, placing women in lower positions, negative labeling attached to women, acts of violence directed at them, and the excessive burden of domestic and social tasks. All these forms of inequality reflect the still-strong patriarchal culture that influences patterns of relationships within the family (Nadal, 2017). Children are highly sensitive to the social responses and behaviors shown by both their parents. They easily capture emotional cues and interaction patterns in the family, which then influence how they behave and think.

Recent studies indicate that parents' religious networks and communities significantly influence their educational decisions and attitudes toward gender equality (Mayrl & Uecker, 2011). Students' critical awareness of digital resources for religious learning is increasingly shaped by both formal educational contexts and family socialization practices, highlighting the importance of parental guidance in navigating religious information (Foley et al., 2024).

Research suggests that effective religious education requires pedagogical approaches that integrate traditional values with contemporary contexts, particularly when addressing gender issues (Tulung et al., 2024). The integration of technology with traditional pedagogy has proven effective in enhancing Islamic education in the digital era, offering new opportunities for gender-inclusive educational approaches (Nursalim, 2024).

Recent studies on Islamic religious education media show considerable diversity in approaches, with increasing incorporation of digital platforms to enhance learning experiences for both boys and girls (Huda et al., 2024). These developments highlight the evolving nature of Islamic education in response to contemporary challenges, including gender equality considerations.

Research on gender equality in Islamic education has expanded significantly in recent years, with studies exploring how religious principles can support, rather than hinder, educational justice. Haryanto examined how Indonesian Islamic boarding schools adapt curricula to promote gender equality while maintaining religious values. Their research demonstrates that Islamic educational institutions can successfully integrate gender-responsive teaching methodologies within traditional frameworks (Haryanto, 2022). Similarly, Chowdhury et al. documented the transformation of parental attitudes toward girls' education in rural Muslim communities in India, noting that religious leaders play a crucial role in reshaping community perceptions about gender equality (Chowdhury et al., 2024).

The role of digital transformation in Islamic education has been extensively studied by Nur et al., who found that technological integration provides new opportunities for gender-inclusive learning environments in conservative communities (Nur et al., 2025). This finding is supported by Çakiroğlu & Kahyar, whose research demonstrates that online learning platforms can mitigate traditional gender barriers in religious education by providing equal access and participation opportunities for both male and female students (Çakiroğlu & Kahyar, 2022). Additionally, Fazaeli explored how progressive

religious scholars' interpretations of Islamic texts have created new frameworks for understanding gender equality in education as a religious obligation rather than a secular imposition (Fazaeli, 2016).

In the Indonesian context specifically, Hairiyah et al. documented the evolution of gender justice discourses within Islamic educational institutions, highlighting how religious narratives about educational rights have shifted over time in response to changing social contexts (Hairiyah et al., 2024). This research is complemented by Satria et al., who explored how Indonesian Muslim families navigate tensions between traditional gender role expectations and increasing educational opportunities for girls (Satria et al., 2025). Their findings suggest that many parents reinterpret religious principles to support equal educational investment in sons and daughters.

Gender bias that occurs in families and society is not merely a women's issue, but is strongly related to the roles and strengths of social institutions that exist in society. Women, as part of social institutions, cannot be separated from the overall structure of society. Thus, efforts to eliminate oppression against women are not only the responsibility of women but require the active involvement of all elements of society in encouraging the creation of emancipation and equality.

2. METHODS

This section presents a structured methodology, covering research type and approach, research subjects and objects, data collection techniques, and data analysis techniques used in this study.

Research Type and Approach

This study employed a sequential explanatory mixed-methods design (Creswell, 1998) Beginning with a quantitative survey of 83 households (15% of the 950 families in Disanah Village), followed by in-depth qualitative interviews with selected respondents. In the first phase, quantitative data were collected through surveys to obtain an overview of parental attitudes toward gender equality in education. In the second phase, qualitative data were collected through in-depth interviews to further explore findings from quantitative data and gain a deeper understanding of gender-based educational justice interpretations in Muslim families.

The sequential explanatory approach was chosen for its ability to provide a comprehensive understanding of complex social phenomena such as gender justice in contemporary Islamic education (McNabb, 2018). This approach also allows for deeper exploration of socially and religiously sensitive norms and practices in a more contextual manner (Oranga & Matere, 2023).

Research Subjects and Objects

The subjects of this research were 83 Muslim households (15% of the total 950 families) in Disanah Village, Sreseh District, Sampang Regency, Madura. This village was selected for its characteristics as a rural Muslim community experiencing socio-cultural transition related to Islamic educational practices. The research objects were perceptions, understanding, and implementation of gender justice principles in children's education based on interpretations of Islamic values.

The selection of respondents utilized stratified random sampling to ensure proportional representation from various socio-economic groups within the community. Stratification was based on the education level of household heads (no schooling, elementary, junior high, senior high, university), occupation types (farmers, traders, civil servants, private sector workers), and number of children in the family (1-2, 3-4, >4 children). The sample size of 15% of the population was determined based on Slovin's formula with a 5% margin of error, yielding a minimum sample of 83 households to achieve a 95% confidence level (Cohen et al., 2018).

Data Collection Techniques

This research employed four data collection techniques:

- a. **Questionnaire Method:** The questionnaire consisted of 25 items across five dimensions related to gender-based education, using a 5-point Likert scale. Validity was tested through content validity assessment by 5 experts ($S-CVI = 0.87$), and reliability was confirmed with Cronbach's alpha (0.83). The questionnaire was structured to assess parental attitudes toward gender equality in education, their understanding of Islamic principles related to educational justice, and their implementation of these principles in family settings.
- b. **Interview Method:** Semi-structured interviews were conducted with 20 respondents (24% of the survey sample) selected through purposive sampling. The interview guide covered six topics: personal interpretations of gender justice in Islam, educational experiences, and changing attitudes toward girls' education. Respondents in this study are parents from 85 families who are the research subjects. The interviews were conducted in a semi-structured format, allowing for deeper exploration of themes that emerged from the survey responses while maintaining focus on the research questions.
- c. **Documentation Method:** The recording method is used to collect data recorded in various forms of documentation. According to Suharsimi Arikunto, this method involves collecting data on things or variables that are recorded in the form of notes, transcripts, books, newspapers, magazines, inscriptions, meeting minutes, ledgers, agendas, and so on (Moleong, 2018). This method provided contextual information about the village, its educational institutions, and historical patterns of educational access.
- d. **Observation Method:** Non-participant observations were conducted with 15 families to document parent-child interactions, focusing on time allocation, domestic tasks, academic support, and educational expectations across gender lines. This method is applied to gain direct understanding about Gender-Based Islamic Education: A Reflection of Parental Justice in Families in Disanah Village, Sreseh, Sampang, to verify the truth of the results from questionnaires and interviews that have been carried out.

Data Analysis Techniques

Data analysis employed an integrated approach combining quantitative and qualitative methods:

- a. **Quantitative analysis:** Descriptive statistics were used to calculate frequencies and percentages. Chi-square tests examined relationships between demographic variables and attitudes toward gender equality.
- b. **Qualitative analysis:** Thematic analysis, following Naeem's six-step process, was used for interview and observation data (Naeem et al., 2023).
- c. **Data integration:** Triangulation was implemented by comparing findings across methods. Integration occurred at three levels: item level (connecting questionnaire items with interview themes), dimension level (comparing quantitative scores with qualitative themes), and interpretation level (developing combined insights)

To analyze the collected data, data analysis techniques appropriate to the characteristics of the existing data are used. The analysis results are then formulated according to the relevant formula:

To analyze the collected data, data analysis techniques appropriate to the characteristics of the existing data are used. The analysis results are then formulated according to the relevant formula:

$$F$$

$$P = \frac{F}{N} \times 100\%$$

$$N$$

Where:

F = Frequency being sought for the percentage

N = Number of Cases (frequency sum/number of individuals)

P = Percentage

By calculating the percentage obtained, the author will then explain it in qualitative form. In this case, the author refers to Miksza's opinion, which classifies the results as follows: very good (76-100%), quite good (56-75%), not good (40-55%), and bad (below 40%) (Miksza et al., 2023).

The research design incorporated rigorous validity and reliability measures following Creswell's methodological framework for mixed-methods research in educational contexts (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Quantitative data reliability was assessed using Cronbach's alpha coefficient, while qualitative validity was enhanced through member checking and triangulation procedures as recommended by (Birt et al., 2016). The combined approach allowed for methodological triangulation, thereby strengthening the validity of findings as suggested by Tzagkarakis & Kritas in their work on qualitative research design (Tzagkarakis & Kritas, 2023). Furthermore, the sequential explanatory design follows Mik-Meyer recommendations for integrating quantitative and qualitative data in social science research, particularly when investigating culturally sensitive topics like religious practices and gender norms (Mik-Meyer, 2020).

Limitations include the study's focus on a single village, though the rigorous mixed-methods approach provides contextual depth that supports transferability to similar socio-religious communities

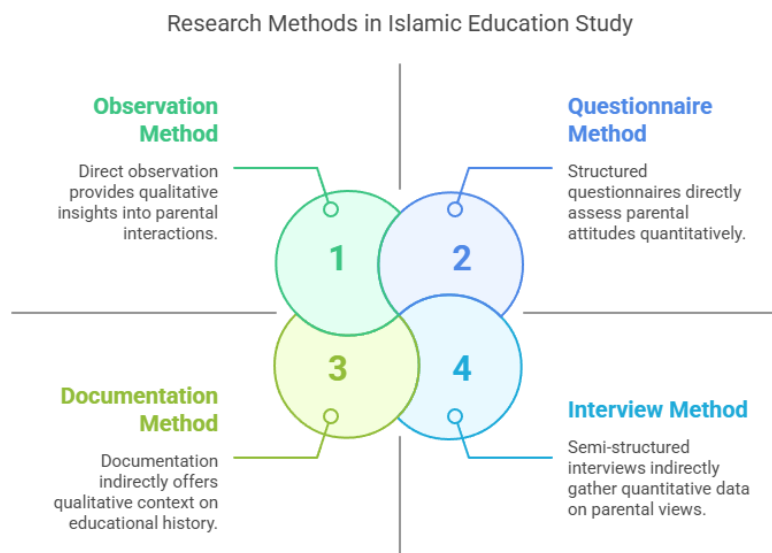


Figure 2. Comprehensive Research Methodology Process

The figure depicts the four integrated research methods used in this study through interconnected circles: observation (direct qualitative insights into parental interactions), questionnaires (structured quantitative assessment of 83 households), documentation (contextual qualitative information on educational history), and interviews (in-depth perspectives from 20 selected respondents). These overlapping circles represent the sequential mixed-methods approach where quantitative data collection preceded qualitative methods, enabling comprehensive triangulation to enhance the validity of findings on gender-based Islamic education in Disanah Village.

3. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

The results obtained from the research have to be supported by sufficient data. The research results and the discovery must be the answers or the research hypothesis stated previously in the introduction.

Parents' Views on Children's Educational Obligations

Children's education is the responsibility of both parents. Although every child is born from the mother's womb, this does not mean that the mother alone bears the entire burden of care. The father's responsibility is not limited to meeting material needs; he also has an important role in educating his children. Therefore, the role and responsibility of parents in children's education are crucial. To understand more about the role and obligations of parents in educating children, an in-depth study needs to be conducted, as shown in the following table:

Table 1. Role and Responsibility of Parents in Children's Education

No. Item	Alternative Answers	N	F	%
1.	a. Mandatory	83	85	100
	b. Not Mandatory	-	-	-
	c. Perfunctory	-	-	-
Total		83	85	100

Source: Parent Respondents in Disanah Village

Based on the table above, it can be seen that all respondents, namely 100% of household heads, agree that the role of parents in children's education must be carried out well. As explained by H. Junaidi:

"Educating children is the obligation of parents, who have a very large role and responsibility. Every parent must be aware of and carry out this responsibility as well as possible." (Junaidi, 2024)

If parents realize the importance of education for their children, it means they have carried out one of the responsibilities given by God, namely, educating their children. To find out who has the right or obligation to educate children, it can be seen in the next table:

Table 2. Who Has the Right or Obligation in the Education of Their Children

No. Item	Alternative Answers	N	F	%
2.	a. Parents	83	81	95.23
	b. Educators	4	4.76	
	c. Others	-	-	
Total		84	100	

From the table above, it can be seen that 80 respondents (95.23%) believe that parents are obligated to educate their children. Meanwhile, four respondents (4.76%) gave different opinions. To delve deeper into parents' views regarding who has the right or obligation to educate their children, the author conducted interviews with several parents, one of them being Mr. Sibani Ansori, who is a parent and village head, who provided the following explanation:

"I believe the obligation to educate children still rests with the parents, while teachers or ustadz (religious teachers) act as intermediaries. If we cannot educate our children, we can delegate part of that responsibility to them, but this doesn't mean we relinquish it completely. We must still monitor and know how our children's education is developing, because we still must supervise and ensure their progress." (Sibani Ansori, 2024)

Although there are a small number of parents who entrust the responsibility of their children's education to teachers, ustadz, or kyai (religious leaders), they still hold the responsibility to ensure their children receive formal education by sending them to school. As stated in the Qur'an:

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا قُوا أَنْفُسَكُمْ وَأَهْلِيكُمْ نَارًا وَقُودُهَا النَّاسُ وَالْحِجَارَةُ عَلَيْهَا مَلَائِكَةٌ غِلَظٌ شِدَادٌ لَا يَعْصُونَ اللَّهَ مَا أَمَرَهُمْ وَيَفْعَلُونَ مَا يُؤْمَرُونَ

"O you who have believed, protect yourselves and your families from a Fire whose fuel is people and stones, over which are [appointed] angels, harsh and severe; they do not disobey Allah in what He commands them but do what they are commanded." (Qur'an: 66:6)

The Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) also emphasized that both parents play a crucial role in shaping a child's character:

كُلُّ مَوْلُودٍ يُوَلَّدُ عَلَى الْفِطْرَةِ فَأَبَوَاهُ يُهَوِّدَانِهِ أَوْ يُنَصِّرَانِهِ أَوْ يُمَجِّسَانِهِ

"Every child is born in a state of fitrah (natural disposition), and it is his parents who make him a Jew, a Christian, or a Magian." (Narrated by Ahmad, Thabrani, and Al-Baihaqi).

Both parents have a significant role and attention towards their children, as they both participate in giving birth to and raising these children. Parents need to be aware of their obligation to educate their children. Children are a gift from God given to parents, so they are jointly responsible for ensuring a good education for their children.

These findings align with Nasri's educational concept that positions parents as primary educators responsible for both moral and intellectual development of children (Nasri et al., 2024). Similarly, Abbas and Abdulkadir (2019) found that parental involvement significantly impacts children's educational outcomes, particularly in religious education contexts (Jaafar, 2024). Their research demonstrates that Islamic frameworks for parental responsibility are strengthened when parents recognize education as a divine mandate rather than merely a social obligation. Additionally, Ubale et al's study of Muslim parenting styles found that religiously-motivated educational involvement creates stronger parent-child bonds and better educational outcomes compared to involvement motivated solely by secular considerations (Ubale et al., 2015).

Disanah Village Community's Views on Parental Justice for All Children in Providing Education

Every child has the right to receive equal education in the family; therefore, the justice of parents in providing education to their children must be ensured. Further observation must be conducted to understand parents' attitudes regarding justice in educating all children. This can be seen in the table below:

Table 3. Parents' Attitude in Providing Education to All Their Children

No. Item	Alternative Answers	N	F	%
4.	a. Differentiating	84		
	b. Equalizing		78	94.04
	c. Prioritizing the more prominent ones		6	05.95
Total			84	100

As seen in the table above, 79 respondents (94.04%) believe parents should provide education fairly and equally to all their children. Meanwhile, five respondents (5.95%) believe that parents prioritize educating children with extraordinary abilities. This view is in line with the results of interviews conducted by the author, including with Khuzaini, who all agree that high-achieving children are prioritized over children who do not have special achievements, as explained by Mr. Khuzaini as a

parent:

"For both of us, attention is needed; the smart child should be given more attention, so that his achievements increase, especially since he can become the pride of his parents." (Khuzaini, 2024)

In contrast to the explanation from Hj. Syarifah:

"In educating children, we should not only focus on apparent excellence. Each child has different talents and abilities. The task of parents is to guide them to find their path. Discrimination against children can have negative consequences and hinder their overall development." (Hj. Syarifah, 2024)

It is important to understand that what is true and rational for all children is the best thing to do. Each child has a unique personality and character, but that doesn't mean the treatment should be unfairly different. Justice doesn't mean providing the same treatment, but rather providing treatment that suits the needs of each child.

Parents should be proportional, without distinguishing one child from another. They should not neglect children who are weaker, either physically or in terms of ability, and only prioritize stronger or high-achieving children. Parents' love for their children should be the same, with none being more important than the others.

Fair treatment should also be applied to both sexes in providing education, while maintaining equality and justice for all children. To know more clearly, this can be seen in the following table:

Table 4. Opportunities for Boys and Girls in Obtaining Education

No. Item	Alternative Answers	N	F	%
5.	a. Boys are more important	84	-	-
	b. Girls are more important		-	-
	c. Boys and girls have the same opportunity		84	100
Total		84	84	100

Ana, based on the table above, it can be seen that boys and girls have the same opportunity to get an education. As many as 84 respondents (100%) stated that both boys and girls have equal opportunities in obtaining education. The following statement reinforces this finding. Mr. Ahmad Khairi explained:

"Nowadays, there is no longer any reason to forbid children from attending school. Both boys and girls have the same right to get an education. How can they develop and progress if they don't get a proper education?" (Ahmad Khairi, 2024)

This emphasizes that parents must be fair and provide equal opportunities to all children in terms of education, regardless of gender. Although men and women are created with differences, that doesn't mean they should be treated differently.

Parents should educate them equally so they can grow into good individuals with noble character. Parents are obliged to provide the same facilities, equal educational opportunities, and support the development of their abilities according to their potential. Considering that women do not need higher education because their role is only at home is a mistaken view.

Similarly, assuming that girls do not need to pursue high levels of education is a very wrong thought. Education is the best gift for children, and providing fair educational opportunities for all children will positively support their psychological development. This can be seen in the table below:

Table 5. Impact of Injustice in Providing Education on a Child's Psychological Development

No. Item	Alternative Answers	N	F	%
6.	a. Positive impact	83	-	-
	b. Negative impact		84	97.61
	c. No impact at all		2	2.38
Total		83	84	100

As seen in the table above, out of 83 respondents, 81 respondents (97.61%) believe that providing unfair educational opportunities to children by parents will negatively impact their psychological development. Meanwhile, two respondents (2.38%) believe no significant impact exists. As explained by H. Sulton Djakfar:

"I will only send children who are considered smart to school. If the children are not too smart, it's better for them not to go to school and join me in farming, helping the family at home." (Sulton, 2024)

After the author asked if they were not given the same educational opportunities, is there a certain impact? Hj Syarifah answered: "There is no effect, they are happy." (Hj. Syarifah, 2024)

As seen from the above statement, there are still people who think that injustice in providing educational opportunities to children will not have any impact. Unfair treatment by parents towards children can hurt their emotional development. Children will feel pressured and unappreciated if they feel different treatment from their siblings.

Although some children may feel proud because they are obedient, diligent, and high-achieving, that doesn't become a reason for parents to praise one child more and ignore other children. Parents should provide fair treatment and value each child as an individual, as this will help them grow into self-respecting and confident individuals.

So what if there is injustice in providing educational opportunities to children? To find out, it can be seen in the table below:

Table 6. If There Is Injustice in Providing Education to Children

No. Item	Alternative Answers	N	F	%
8.	a. Agree	85	-	-
	b. Disagree		83	100
	c. Hesitant		-	-
Total		85	83	100

The table above shows that 85% of respondents, or all of them (100%), disagree that parents act unfairly in providing access to education to their children, both boys and girls. As explained by H. Nor Khalis:

"Education is very important, and every child has the right to feel and enjoy a learning experience filled with intellectual curiosity. I agree that currently, there are still some parents who forbid their children from going to school. However, this is a different era, where freedom is wide open and there are no more restrictions like during the colonial period." (Nur Kholis, 2024)

This shows that the Disanah community already understands how important education is for their children. Therefore, they are committed to educating all children without differentiating between boys and girls. In Islam, justice in providing education to all children is highly recommended. This case can

be seen like the following table:

Table 7. Being Fair to All Children According to Islamic Teachings

No. Item	Alternative Answers	N	F	%
9.	a. Required	84	84	100
	b. Not required		-	-
	. No recommendation		-	-
Total		84	84	100

As seen in the table above, 84 respondents (100%) agree that Islam must ensure justice for all children. This shows that the Disanah community realizes their responsibility as Muslims to always apply the principle of justice, especially in providing education to children. As explained by Hj. Ninti:

“In Islamic teachings, parents must be fair to their children, without differentiating treatment between one child and another. All children are a trust from God that must be protected and cared for with full love. As parents, we are responsible for educating them well, because education is an obligation God gives us.” (H. Ninti, 2024)

In addition to understanding the obligation of every Muslim, both men and women, in terms of seeking knowledge from the perspective of the Disanah Village community, it is important to pay attention to the role of parents in providing fair education to all children, as can be seen in the table below:

Table 8. The Command to Seek Knowledge According to Islamic Teachings

No	Alternative Answers	N	F	%
10.	a. Mandatory for men only	84	-	-
	b. Mandatory for women only		-	-
	c. Mandatory for both men and women		84	100
Total		84	84	100

As seen in the table, 84 respondents believe that seeking knowledge is an obligation for both men and women. This shows that the majority of the Disanah community understands the importance of education and knowledge for Muslims, both men and women. Based on interviews with several respondents, this view is influenced by the social understanding that education is the key to a child's future, so it must be given to all children without differentiating by gender.

These findings reflect current research on gender equality in Islamic educational contexts. Nofianti found that Muslim parents who view education as a religious obligation are more likely to provide equal educational opportunities for all children, regardless of gender (Nofianti, 2024). Similarly, Nisa's research on Indonesian Muslim families shows that interpretations of religious texts that emphasize gender equality in education correlate strongly with improved educational outcomes for girls (Nisa, 2019). Hasanah identified a growing trend toward progressive interpretations of Islamic texts that support gender equality in education across various Muslim-majority countries (Hasanah et al., 2025). Their work demonstrates how contemporary Islamic scholarship increasingly frames educational equality as a religious imperative rather than a Western imposition.

The psychological implications of educational inequality noted by respondents align with Hairiyah and Karim's research on the developmental impacts of gender-biased educational practices in Muslim families (Hairiyah et al., 2024; Karim & Rochmahwati, 2021). Their longitudinal study found that children experiencing differential educational treatment based on gender demonstrated higher rates of

psychological distress and lower self-efficacy compared to those in families practicing educational equality. Additionally, Fahrub documented how gender-based educational discrimination violates fundamental Islamic principles of human dignity (karamah) and justice (adl), creating a framework for understanding educational equality as an Islamic virtue rather than merely a secular value (Fahrub et al., 2023).

Analysis and Discussion of Research Findings

Understanding the spectrum of educational equity in Indonesian Muslim communities, from upholding traditional gender roles to advocating for complete equality.



Figure 3. Integrated Analysis of Research Findings on Parental Educational Justice

The findings from this research reveal a complex interplay of religious, cultural, and socioeconomic factors that shape parental attitudes toward gender equality in education within the Disanah Village community. Several key patterns and insights emerge from the data that warrant deeper analysis.

a. Religious Framework Supporting Gender Justice

The unanimity of respondents (100%) in recognizing their responsibility for children's education and the overwhelming agreement (94.04%) that education should be provided equally to all children demonstrates a strong foundation of educational justice in this community. This finding reflects an interpretation of Islamic teachings that emphasizes equal rights to knowledge, contradicting assumptions that traditional religious beliefs necessarily constrain gender-equal practices.

Unlike studies suggesting that religious conservatism correlates with gender-restrictive educational practices (Eisen, 2019). Our findings reveal how Islamic principles can provide powerful motivation for educational equality when understood through a justice-oriented framework. The community's complete agreement that Islam requires fair treatment of all children (100%) and that seeking knowledge is mandatory for both men and women (100%) indicates an internalization of religious values that support gender equity rather than constrain it.

This finding aligns with Shah and Khurshid's observation that religious texts can be interpreted in ways that either empower or limit gender equality (Shah, S., & Khurshid, 2019). Disanah Village has a predominantly empowering interpretation, with religious principles as the primary justification for equal educational opportunities. As one respondent, Hj. Ninti explained: "In Islamic teachings, parents are required to be fair to their children. All children are a trust from God that must be protected and cared for with full love."

This religious grounding for educational gender equality corresponds with Nakosteen and Szyliowicz's findings that Islam-centered justifications for educational equality are often more effective in conservative communities than secular arguments (Mehdi K. Nakosteen & Joseph S. Szyliowicz, 2018). Their research in several Muslim communities found that when gender equality is framed as Islamic justice (adl) rather than Western feminism, implementation barriers are significantly reduced. Similarly, Saeed identified a growing trend of Islamic scholarship reclaiming gender equality as an authentic Islamic principle rather than a foreign imposition, creating theological foundations for educational justice practices (Saeed, 2013; Barsihannor et al., 2023).

b. Tension Between Meritocratic and Egalitarian Values

Despite the strong consensus on gender equality, a small but significant minority (5.95%) reported prioritizing education for children with exceptional abilities, regardless of gender. This reveals an underlying tension between egalitarian values that emphasize equal treatment for all children and meritocratic values that privilege investment in children with perceived higher potential.

This tension reflects what Kania termed the "capability dilemma" in Islamic educational ethics, where parents navigate competing religious obligations to treat children equally while also nurturing specific talents (Kania et al., 2017). Their research in Indonesian Islamic schools found that many parents reconcile these principles by providing equal basic education and additional support for children with particular aptitudes. Abdullah further explored this dynamic, finding that parents who prioritize meritocratic considerations still typically ensure minimum educational standards for all children, suggesting a nuanced rather than binary approach to educational justice (M., Abdullah & Ahmad, 2023).

This tension represents a nuanced interpretation of justice that distinguishes between equality (same treatment) and equity (treatment according to need or potential). As explained by Mr. Khuzaini: "The smart child should be given more attention, so that his achievements increase, especially since he can become the pride of his parents." This perspective reflects what Pew Research Center identifies as a common pattern in religious communities navigating trade-offs between traditional values and educational advancement (Center, 2016).

However, the contrasting view from Hj. Syarifah that "discrimination against children can have negative consequences and hinder their overall development" represents a more holistic understanding of educational justice that considers psychological and developmental impacts beyond simple achievement metrics. The overwhelming consensus (97.61%) that educational inequality negatively impacts children's psychological development indicates a community-wide recognition of the broader consequences of educational decisions.

These findings align with Manshur's research on the psychological impacts of educational inequality in Muslim families, which found that differential treatment based on academic ability created significant psychological distress even when justified on meritocratic grounds (Manshur et al., 2020). Similarly, Abubakar documented how educational equality positively influences family cohesion and child development outcomes in Indonesian Muslim families, suggesting that egalitarian approaches may yield broader developmental benefits than strictly meritocratic ones (Abubakar et al., 2023). Their research demonstrated that perceived fairness in educational opportunities strongly predicts positive self-concept and academic motivation, even among children with lower academic aptitude.

c. Evolution of Gender Attitudes in Post-Colonial Context

The historical context of education in Indonesia is important in understanding current attitudes toward gender equality. H. Nor Khalis's statement that "this is a different era, where freedom is wide open and there are no more restrictions like during the colonial period" connects educational equality to a larger narrative of national liberation and progress.

This finding echoes (Raihani, 2023) Observation that religious interpretations interact with

traditional practices and post-colonial national identity formation in Indonesian contexts. The unanimous support for equal educational opportunities for boys and girls (100%) suggests a significant evolution from traditional gender-differentiated educational expectations toward more egalitarian perspectives.

This transformation appears driven by both changing interpretations of religious texts and broader socioeconomic shifts in rural Indonesian society (Aldrin, 2024). Bentri et al. suggest, such changes in educational attitudes require pedagogical approaches that respect traditional values while embracing new opportunities for all children (Bentri et al., 2022).

The post-colonial framing of educational gender justice aligns with Hefner's (2023) analysis of changing gender norms in Indonesian Islamic communities, which traces how national independence movements incorporated gender equality in education as a form of resistance against colonial stratification. This historical dimension is further explored by Azra, who documented how Indonesian Islamic educational reforms integrated gender equality principles as part of broader national development goals (Azra, 2020). Their research demonstrates how religious and national identity formed a synergistic rather than antagonistic relationship in promoting educational equality.

The generational shift in attitudes is consistent with Hefner's findings that younger Muslim parents increasingly view gender equality in education as both an Islamic principle and a marker of modern national identity (Hefner, 2009; Robert W. Hefner, 2015). Similarly, Abdullah et al. found that rural Indonesian communities are rapidly evolving toward more egalitarian educational practices, driven by a combination of religious reinterpretation, economic necessities, and changing social expectations about gender roles (Abdullah et al., 2022). This evolution reflects broader patterns of what Hasan terms "indigenous modernities," where traditional religious communities selectively incorporate progressive educational practices within established cultural frameworks (Siddiq, 2023).

4. CONCLUSION

This study demonstrates that Islamic principles can effectively support gender-equal educational practices when interpreted through a justice-oriented framework, as evidenced by the Disanah Village community's near-unanimous commitment to educational equality for all children regardless of gender. The research reveals that parents view children's education as a sacred responsibility entrusted by God, with the majority (94.04%) supporting equal educational opportunities. In comparison, a small minority (5.95%) prioritizes children with exceptional abilities. These findings challenge simplistic narratives about religious conservatism and gender inequality, suggesting instead that religious values can serve as powerful motivators for educational equity when properly understood and applied. The practical implications include the need for educational programs that engage with rather than bypass religious frameworks when promoting gender equality, addressing both ideological commitments and implementation barriers, recognizing the dynamic nature of religious interpretations, and leveraging community-wide consensus to reinforce gender-just educational practices. Future research should examine how these parental attitudes translate into actual educational outcomes across gender lines, conduct longitudinal studies of educational equality's impact on child development, explore regional variations in Indonesian contexts, and investigate effective partnerships between educational institutions and religious communities to advance gender justice.

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