

MAQOLAT: Journal of Islamic Studies

Journal website: <https://maqolat.com/>

ISSN : 2985-5829 (Online)

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.58355/maqolat.v4i2.239>

Vol. 4, No. 2 (2026)

pp. 188-203

Research Article

Discursive Equality in Revelation: Gender, Agency, and Moral Authority in Qur'anic Communication

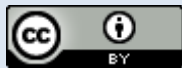
Sumadi, Lilis Nurteti, Arjen Robben GS

1. Universitas Islam Negeri Bandung PDPK UID Ciamis, Indonesia;

Sumadiz009@gmail.com 

2. Universitas Islam Darussalam (UID) Ciamis, Indonesia; Sumadiz009@gmail.com

3. Universitas Negeri Semarang, Indonesia; Sumadiz009@gmail.com



Copyright © 2026 by Authors, Published by MAQOLAT: Journal of Islamic Studies.

This is an open access article under the CC BY License

<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>

Received : February 02, 2026

Revised : March 14, 2026

Accepted : April 01, 2026

Available online : May 21, 2026

How to Cite: Sumadi, S., Lilis Nurteti, & Arjen Robben GS. (2026). Discursive Equality in Revelation: Gender, Agency, and Moral Authority in Qur'anic Communication. *MAQOLAT: Journal of Islamic Studies*, 4(2), 188–203. <https://doi.org/10.58355/maqolat.v4i2.239>

Abstract. This article examines whether gender equality in the Qur'an is a product of modern reinterpretation or a feature embedded within the communicative architecture of revelation itself. Focusing on Q 33:35, Q 9:71, Q 4:124, and Q 3:195, the study employs an integrative qualitative approach combining critical discourse analysis, rhetorical examination, and ethical-hermeneutical reflection. The findings demonstrate that discursive equality is textually encoded through structured gender parallelism, reciprocal moral guardianship, and eschatological symmetry. Q 33:35 performs equality through explicit masculine-feminine pairing; Q 9:71 constructs men and women as mutual allies in ethical governance; and Q 4:124 and Q 3:195 affirm universal divine recompense irrespective of gender. Together, these verses establish a dialogic model in which men and women are co-addressed moral subjects and co-bearers of agency. While historical interpretations have often privileged hierarchical readings, the Qur'an's linguistic and ethical design sustains a recoverable framework of shared accountability and justice. The study argues that discursive equality is not a concession to modernity but a normative principle rooted in revelation's communicative logic. By aligning interpretive practice

with this architecture, the Qur'an emerges as a dynamic ethical text capable of sustaining gender-inclusive moral authority across contexts.

Keywords: Discursive Equality, Qur'anic Communication, Gender Agency, Moral Authority, Feminist Hermeneutics.

INTRODUCTION

The Qur'an, as the foundational text of Islam, is distinguished not only by its theological authority but also by its dialogic architecture and rhetorical plurality. Rather than presenting revelation as a monologic proclamation, the Qur'an hosts multiple voices, narrative layers, dialogic exchanges, and ethical invitations that together construct a communicative space in which moral subjects are addressed, formed, and held accountable. Recent scholarship has increasingly conceptualized this architecture in terms of discursive equality: a communicative mode in which gender, agency, and moral authority are negotiated through linguistic and rhetorical strategies rather than fixed through hierarchical closure (Barlas, 2006; Bauer, 2015; Darzi et al., 2021; Izadi, 2020).

This inquiry is not merely philological. Debates over gender in Qur'anic interpretation remain central to broader discussions of religious authority, legal reform, and social justice in Muslim societies. While the Qur'an contains explicit formulations of spiritual equality and shared accountability, interpretive traditions have often articulated gender hierarchies, particularly in legal and domestic domains (Afsaruddin, 2020; Bauer, 2015). The tension between textual inclusivity and interpretive patriarchy continues to shape contemporary scholarship, reform movements, and feminist hermeneutics. Thus, examining discursive equality in Qur'anic communication is simultaneously a textual, methodological, and socio-ethical endeavor.

This article argues that discursive equality is embedded within the Qur'an's linguistic and dialogic strategies. Verses such as Q 33:35, which enumerates believing men and believing women in explicit parallelism; Q 9:71, which frames men and women as mutual protectors (*awliyā'*); Q 4:124; and Q 3:195, which affirm equal spiritual recompense, collectively form a core corpus demonstrating that agency and moral responsibility are framed as shared human capacities rather than gendered privileges. The Qur'an's gender discourse is integrative, dynamic, and non-linear, resisting reduction to a singular ideological pattern. The presence of explicit parallel constructions, dual forms, and inclusive rhetorical devices indicates a deliberate communicative strategy oriented toward comprehensive address (Darzi et al., 2021).

Central to this strategy is the Qur'an's use of concurrent masculine and feminine markers, as well as the rhetorical principle of *taghlib*, whereby masculine grammatical forms often function inclusively (Barlas, 2006; Sultan et al., 2025). Linguistic analyses reveal that gender marking in the Qur'an cannot be read simplistically as evidence of hierarchy; rather, it operates within a complex semantic system in which context, syntax, and rhetorical emphasis shape meaning. The principle of duality in creation further reinforces this theological anthropology: the Qur'an repeatedly invokes pairing as a sign of divine design, underscoring complementarity without

necessitating subordination (Omari, 2019). Such structural features challenge claims that the text itself encodes a rigid gender hierarchy.

Beyond morphology and syntax, the Qur'an models dialogic communication through invitational rhetoric and argumentation. It has been argued that the Qur'an functions as a "hidden academy" of dialogic exchange in which argumentation integrates rational, ethical, and theological dimensions. Qur'anic argumentation also transcends adversarial models by blending pragma-dialectics with metadiscursive cues that invite reflection rather than impose coercion. This dialogic quality is crucial for understanding moral authority in revelation. Authority is not exercised solely through command but through persuasion, narrative exemplification, and relational engagement (Hassanein, 2026; Wehby, 2020).

Politeness strategies and face-saving techniques further complicate simplistic notions of divine command. Religio-pragmatic analyses reveal that prohibitive discourse in the Qur'an often employs solidarity, deference, and mitigated forms, constructing compassionate divine-human interaction. Supplicatory and dialogic passages likewise preserve relational harmony and ethical dignity. Such communicative features indicate that moral authority in the Qur'an is dialogically constituted. The addressee is recognized as a morally capable agent whose dignity is preserved even in correction. This relational mode reinforces discursive equality by framing both men and women as interlocutors within a shared ethical horizon (A. O. Ahmad, 2021; Al-Khatib, 2012; Arifianto et al., 2023; Saleh, 2025).

Nevertheless, medieval exegetical traditions frequently articulated gender hierarchies, often privileging male authority in legal and domestic contexts (Bauer, 2015). These interpretations were shaped by socio-historical conditions, legal assumptions, and broader patriarchal norms. Contemporary scholarship increasingly demonstrates that such hierarchies reflect interpretive trajectories rather than the full rhetorical complexity of the Qur'anic text (Banu & Jamali, 2019; Izadi, 2020). The importance of revisiting inherited assumptions through historically grounded yet ethically attentive analysis has been emphasized in contemporary Qur'anic scholarship. The resulting scholarly landscape is marked by contestation: between textual possibility and interpretive precedent, and between inherited authority and methodological renewal (Afsaruddin, 2020).

Feminist hermeneutics respond to this tension by foregrounding women's agency, lived experience, and intersectional identity (Mubarak, 2021; Wan et al., 2025). These approaches employ critical discourse analysis, rhetorical-legal hermeneutics, and integrative epistemologies to recover egalitarian dimensions embedded in the text (Supena, 2024; Yasmar et al., 2025). Rethinking gender justice in the Qur'an requires moving beyond binary oppositions and embracing dynamic interpretive paradigms (Wijaya et al., 2025). At the same time, scholars caution against ideological reductionism and emphasize the need to balance feminist commitment with hermeneutical rigor (Naguib, 2010; Roded, 2015). The challenge is methodological as much as political: how to articulate a gender-conscious reading that remains philologically grounded and theologically coherent.

Translation studies further illuminate how discursive equality extends beyond the source text into reception and mediation. Feminist translation strategies through

lexical choices, paratextual commentary, and contextual framing reshape how gendered passages are perceived (Elewa, 2026; Hassen, 2020; Mahmoud, 2025). Translation thus becomes an arena of discursive negotiation, where interpretive authority is enacted and contested. These developments confirm that discursive equality is not confined to grammar; it is also sociolinguistic and hermeneutical, unfolding across interpretive communities.

Despite significant progress, important gaps remain in contemporary Qur'anic gender studies. An underdeveloped integration of *maslahah* and gender perspectives in Qur'anic interpretation has been identified in recent bibliometric and epistemological analyses (Fitriyah et al., 2025). While maqasid-oriented frameworks prioritize justice, compassion, and public welfare as overarching ethical principles (Duderija, 2017; Rois et al., 2025; Saeed & Akbar, 2021; Takim, 2014), the systematic incorporation of gender analysis within these paradigms is still emerging (Fitriyah et al., 2025).

Moreover, socio-cultural realities including domestic violence, unequal household decision-making, and structural gender inequality demonstrate a persistent gap between scriptural ideals and lived experience (Azid & Ward-Batts, 2020; Munir, 2006; Rubab et al., 2026). Bridging this gap requires epistemological integration capable of linking textual discourse with social transformation.

This study contributes to the field by synthesizing linguistic, rhetorical, and maqasid-driven approaches into a coherent framework of discursive equality. By centering the core corpus of Q 33:35, Q 9:71, Q 4:124, and Q 3:195, it demonstrates that gender-inclusive address, reciprocal agency, and ethically mediated moral authority are embedded within Qur'anic communication itself. Rather than treating gender as a marginal theme, this article situates it within the communicative logic of revelation. Discursive equality emerges not as an external imposition but as an internal feature of the text's dialogic design.

Ultimately, reconceptualizing gender through the lens of discursive equality reconfigures the understanding of religious authority. Authority in the Qur'an is not unidirectional or gender-exclusive; it is dialogic, relational, and ethically framed. Men and women appear as co-addressed moral subjects, co-agents of ethical action, and co-bearers of spiritual accountability (Barlas, 2006; Darzi et al., 2021; Wijaya et al., 2025). Such a reframing advances theory-building in Qur'anic studies by integrating philology, rhetoric, feminist hermeneutics, and maqasidic ethics into a unified analytical arc. In doing so, it positions discursive equality not only as a descriptive category but as a normative horizon for contemporary Qur'anic scholarship.

METHODS

This study adopts a qualitative interpretive design integrating critical discourse analysis (CDA), rhetorical-linguistic analysis, and maqāsid-oriented hermeneutics to examine constructions of gender, agency, and moral authority in Qur'anic communication. The framework draws on integrative Qur'anic gender discourse studies (Darzi et al., 2021), historical-interpretive critique of hierarchy (Bauer, 2015), epistemological integration of tafsir and hermeneutics (Supena, 2024), and *maslahah*-oriented gender scholarship (Fitriyah et al., 2025). The aim is theory-building:

reconstructing the communicative logic of revelation through systematic textual analysis.

The corpus comprises four purposively selected verses (Q 33:35; Q 9:71; Q 4:124; Q 3:195) chosen for explicit masculine–feminine parallelism, reciprocal ethical agency, and symmetrical reward formulations. Analysis was conducted on the canonical Arabic text to preserve grammatical gender markers and rhetorical structures. CDA mapped subject positions and agency attribution (van Dijk, 2001), rhetorical analysis examined dialogic and parallel constructions (Littlejohn et al., 2021), and maqāṣid hermeneutics evaluated alignment with higher ethical objectives (Fitriyah et al., 2025; Supena, 2024).

Rigor was ensured through theoretical triangulation, transparent corpus delimitation, and comparison with hierarchical exegetical traditions. GPT-5.2 (January 2026) was used only for grammar and clarity refinement, and Scopus AI (January 2026) for reference and structural mapping; all outputs were carefully reviewed and revised by the author through multiple rounds.

RESULTS

The results conceptualize discursive equality as an observable communicative construct embedded within the Qur'anic text. Drawing on critical discourse analysis (CDA), rhetorical-linguistic examination, and maqāṣid-oriented ethical evaluation, the analysis of the primary corpus (Q 33:35; Q 9:71; Q 4:124; Q 3:195) demonstrates that gender inclusivity is not marginal or incidental, but structurally encoded within revelation. Rather than treating equality as an abstract theological ideal, the findings show that it is enacted through grammatical structure, dialogic positioning, and universal moral evaluation.

The results progress from micro-level linguistic features to macro-level theological implications. At the grammatical level, equality is performed through structured parallelism; at the discursive level, agency is framed as reciprocal; at the theological level, moral authority is universalized beyond gender differentiation. Together, these dimensions reveal that gender, agency, and moral authority are co-constituted within a coherent communicative architecture.

The results progress from micro-level linguistic features to macro-level theological implications. At the grammatical level, equality is performed through structured parallelism; at the discursive level, agency is framed as reciprocal; at the theological level, moral authority is universalized beyond gender differentiation. Together, these dimensions reveal that gender, agency, and moral authority are co-constituted within a coherent communicative architecture.

Grammatical Parallelism as Performative Equality (Q 33:35)

The analysis of Q 33:35 reveals that equality is constructed explicitly at the level of syntax. The verse enumerates believing men and believing women across a symmetrical sequence of ethical qualities—faith, devotion, truthfulness, patience, humility, charity, fasting, chastity, and remembrance of God culminating in a shared promise of forgiveness and great reward. The repeated pairing of masculine and

feminine forms eliminates reliance on implicit inclusion through grammatical convention.

From a CDA perspective, this duplication performs equality rather than merely describing it. The verse's syntax generates structural balance, ensuring that each moral attribute is discursively attributed to both genders without hierarchy. Equality is therefore encoded in the linguistic architecture itself. The rhetorical repetition functions cumulatively, reinforcing parity across the entire moral spectrum rather than limiting it to isolated virtues.

Importantly, this grammatical symmetry cannot be dismissed as stylistic redundancy. Its systematic construction indicates intentional communicative design. By placing masculine and feminine forms in uninterrupted parallel sequence, the verse transforms syntax into theological affirmation. The equality of moral subjectivity is not assumed; it is staged through discursive structure. Thus, Q 33:35 operates as a paradigmatic anchor within the corpus. It establishes spiritual parity as a normative baseline for understanding subsequent gender-related discourse. Discursive equality, at this foundational level, emerges as a grammatical and rhetorical fact rather than an interpretive extrapolation.

Reciprocal Agency in Communal Moral Governance (Q 9:71)

While Q 33:35 establishes spiritual parity, Q 9:71 extends equality into the domain of communal agency. The verse describes believing men and women as mutual *awliyā'*, positioning them as allies or guardians of one another. Agency is distributed symmetrically: both genders are tasked with commanding right, forbidding wrong, establishing prayer, giving charity, and obeying God and His Messenger.

Discourse mapping confirms that the verse attributes action equally. There is no syntactic prioritization of male initiative or female subordination. Both subjects are grammatically active and equally responsible. This symmetrical attribution of moral tasks indicates that communal governance in the Qur'an is constructed through reciprocity rather than unilateral authority.

From a rhetorical perspective, the concept of mutual guardianship reframes authority as relational stewardship. Rather than situating leadership within a fixed gender hierarchy, the verse constructs moral authority as shared ethical participation. Communal responsibility is dialogically co-produced. The verse thus destabilizes assumptions that public religious agency is inherently male-centered. This finding demonstrates that discursive equality extends beyond spiritual recognition into public ethical action. Agency is not merely acknowledged; it is operationalized through reciprocal moral governance. The Qur'anic communicative model situates men and women as co-actors within the moral community.

Eschatological Universality and Non-Gendered Divine Evaluation (Q 4:124; Q 3:195)

The analysis of Q 4:124 and Q 3:195 reveals a third dimension of discursive equality: eschatological universality. Both verses explicitly affirm that righteous deeds

are recognized “whether male or female.” The formula negates gender differentiation in divine recompense and universalizes accountability before God.

Grammatically, the structure connects moral action directly to divine evaluation without mediating hierarchy. Faith and righteous conduct constitute the sole criteria for reward. The evaluative axis is vertical human to divine rather than horizontal male to female. Gender is acknowledged but rendered irrelevant in determining moral worth.

From a maqāṣid perspective, this universalism reflects the overarching ethical objective of justice. Divine impartiality functions as the ultimate normative standard. By situating moral authority within eschatological universality, the Qur'an establishes a theological baseline that resists gender stratification. This finding is critical because it anchors equality in ultimate accountability. Even where social structures fluctuate historically, the eschatological horizon remains constant. Discursive equality, therefore, is grounded not only in grammar and communal ethics but in divine justice itself.

Moral Authority as Dialogic and Relational

Beyond specific verses, analysis of directive and prohibitive discourse within the corpus reveals that Qur'anic moral authority is framed dialogically rather than coercively. Commands are embedded within relational structures that presuppose moral capacity in all addressees. CDA indicates that divine authority is articulated through collective address, solidarity-building language, and shared accountability. Men and women are interpellated equally as morally responsible interlocutors. The communicative mode assumes capacity for ethical response rather than subordination based on gender.

Rhetorically, this dialogic framing constructs moral authority as relational alignment with divine justice. Authority emerges through ethical persuasion and shared responsibility, not through stratified control. The communicative architecture thereby reinforces equality at the level of moral subject formation.

This result demonstrates that equality is sustained not only through explicit parallelism but also through the relational texture of revelation. The Qur'an constructs moral authority as participatory and dialogic, embedding gender inclusivity within the dynamics of command and response.

Rhetorical-Legal Framing and the Protection of Dignity

Rhetorical-legal analysis of the corpus indicates that gender references are embedded within broader ethical universals rather than framed as ontological distinctions. Legal or normative statements operate within balanced constructions that preserve dignity across genders. Linguistically, grammatical masculinity does not function as a marker of moral superiority. Inclusivity is contextually activated rather than structurally excluded. Semantic analysis reveals that where differentiation occurs, it does not negate spiritual parity or eschatological universality established elsewhere in the corpus.

This finding clarifies that patriarchal interpretations frequently arise from external socio-historical mediation rather than intrinsic discursive hierarchy. The text

itself sustains inclusive semantic potential, even where later interpretive traditions narrow its application. Consequently, rhetorical-legal structuring operates as a safeguard of dignity. Equality remains communicatively protected within the Qur'an's ethical framing, providing a stable textual basis for inclusive interpretation.

Hermeneutical Mediation and the Visibility of Female Agency

Comparative exegetical review demonstrates that medieval interpretive traditions often constrained female agency despite egalitarian textual elements. Agency was acknowledged but frequently circumscribed within culturally defined boundaries. This indicates that discursive equality did not automatically translate into egalitarian social implementation.

Contemporary methodologies particularly feminist and critical approaches—have recovered dimensions of female agency grounded in textual structure. By foregrounding thematic coherence and ethical objectives, these approaches reveal egalitarian features previously overshadowed by hierarchical readings. Importantly, the shift from restrictive to reciprocal interpretations reflects methodological evolution rather than textual alteration. The Qur'anic communicative architecture remains constant; interpretive frameworks determine which features become visible or marginalized.

This result underscores the decisive role of hermeneutics. Discursive equality becomes socially operative when interpretive practice aligns with the text's dialogic and symmetrical structure. The debate on gender justice is therefore fundamentally methodological.

Discursive Equality as Coherent Communicative Architecture

Synthesizing grammatical, rhetorical, and ethical findings reveals a coherent communicative pattern across the corpus. Structured parallelism (Q 33:35), reciprocal guardianship (Q 9:71), and eschatological universality (Q 4:124; Q 3:195) form an interlocking architecture of equality. At the micro-level, equality is enacted through syntax; at the meso-level, it is operationalized through reciprocal agency; at the macro-level, it is grounded in divine justice. These layers converge to construct men and women as co-addressed moral subjects and co-bearers of responsibility.

The coherence across these dimensions indicates systemic inclusivity rather than isolated egalitarian moments. Discursive equality is woven into revelation's communicative logic. Gender, agency, and moral authority are not separate themes but mutually constitutive elements within the Qur'an's dialogic structure.

Accordingly, the results substantiate the central thesis: discursive equality is a structural feature of Qur'anic communication. The text's linguistic architecture, relational ethics, and universal accountability converge to sustain an inclusive model of moral authority that remains textually grounded and theologically coherent.

DISCUSSION

The findings of this study demonstrate that discursive equality in revelation is not a retrospective projection imposed upon the Qur'an, but a communicative feature embedded within its textual architecture. The structured gender parallelism of Q

33:35, the reciprocal guardianship articulated in Q 9:71, and the eschatological symmetry of Q 4:124 and Q 3:195 collectively construct men and women as co-addressed moral subjects. When read together, these verses substantiate that gender inclusion is not peripheral but grammatically, rhetorically, and theologically encoded within Qur'anic discourse.

Q 33:35 explicitly enumerates believing men and believing women across a symmetrical list of virtues—faith, devotion, truthfulness, patience, humility, charity, fasting, chastity, and remembrance of God—concluding that “Allah has prepared for them forgiveness and a great reward.” The verse does not rely on implicit inclusion through masculine default forms; instead, it performs equality through deliberate parallel construction. This grammatical staging of parity supports arguments that the Qur'an advances a complex and nonlinear gender discourse rather than a rigid hierarchy (Darzi et al., 2021). At the same time, the historical dominance of patriarchal interpretation demonstrates that textual egalitarianism does not automatically translate into interpretive equality (Bauer, 2015). The tension between discursive symmetry and hierarchical exegesis thus becomes central to understanding gendered moral authority.

The reciprocal ethic of Q 9:71 deepens this textual pattern: “The believing men and believing women are allies of one another; they enjoin what is right and forbid what is wrong, establish prayer, give zakat, and obey Allah and His Messenger.” The designation of men and women as mutual *awliyā'* reframes communal authority as shared moral guardianship rather than unilateral male control. Contemporary ethical readings highlight the relational logic of this verse, emphasizing reciprocity and mutual care as normative principles (Karim, 2025). When juxtaposed with debates surrounding *qiwāmah* in Q 4:34, this reciprocal framing provides an internal corrective to strictly hierarchical constructions of authority (N. Ahmad & Rasheed, 2018). Discursive equality, therefore, operates not only through syntactic pairing but also through relational positioning within communal ethics.

Eschatological symmetry further consolidates this framework. Q 4:124 affirms that “whoever does righteous deeds, whether male or female, while being a believer, will enter Paradise and will not be wronged even as much as a speck.” Similarly, Q 3:195 declares, “I will not allow the work of any worker among you to be lost, whether male or female; you are of one another.” These formulations explicitly negate gender differentiation in divine recompense. Theologically, the phrase “whether male or female” universalizes moral evaluation and affirms spiritual equality as the normative baseline of the Qur'anic ethical system. This corresponds with broader arguments that the Qur'an establishes a foundational spiritual egalitarianism even where later legal or social interpretations introduce asymmetry (Al-Mannai, 2010). The discrepancy between scriptural universality and uneven historical implementation underscores that gender hierarchy often emerges from socio-political mediation rather than textual determinism.

Yet the persistence of patriarchal readings cannot be ignored. Medieval exegetical traditions frequently reinforced male-dominated hierarchies, framing women's agency within culturally acceptable boundaries (Bauer, 2015; Khatib, 2025). While women's epistemic authority was not entirely absent, it was often

circumscribed and legitimized through complex social processes (Ragab, 2010). These interpretive trajectories reveal that the Qur'an's discursive equality was filtered through historical conditions that privileged male authority. The resulting disjunction between textual structure and socio-legal practice remains a defining challenge for contemporary scholarship.

Feminist hermeneutics responds to this tension by distinguishing between universal ethical principles and context-bound injunctions. Wadud's methodological emphasis on thematic coherence and ethical intentionality argues that justice and proportionality should guide interpretation (Wadud, 2021). Such approaches resonate with rhetorical-legal and maqāṣid-oriented models that prioritize the Qur'an's overarching ethical objectives over literalist or atomistic readings (Duderija, 2014; Yasmar et al., 2025). Importantly, this study's findings indicate that feminist reinterpretation is not an external imposition but an interpretive recovery of the Qur'an's dialogic and inclusive architecture.

The relational construction of moral authority further complicates hierarchical assumptions. The Qur'an establishes authority through ethical transformation, accountability, and universal moral codes rather than gendered domination (March, 2024). Female Qur'anic figures exemplify this dynamic. The Queen of Sheba is portrayed as deliberative, politically astute, and morally responsive, challenging restrictive models of female incapacity (Christiansen, 2018). Feminist theological analyses of prophetic traditions similarly uncover dimensions of women's competence and leadership that have been obscured in male-centered readings (Afifah et al., 2025). These narrative representations reinforce that discursive equality is embodied within scriptural storytelling, not merely abstract doctrine.

The socio-legal implications of reinterpretation are visible in contemporary reform efforts. Judicial *ijtihad* in Pakistan and family law reform in Tunisia illustrate how shifts in interpretive paradigms can expand women's rights within Islamic legal frameworks (Abbasi, 2017). Nevertheless, regional disparities persist, shaped by local political, cultural, and sectarian dynamics (Nugroho et al., 2024; Sawja, 2023). Empirical studies of household decision-making reveal that Qur'anic interpretations continue to influence male-dominant authority patterns, though women's education and feminist discourse are gradually reshaping norms (Rinaldo, 2019; Rubab et al., 2026). These findings confirm that discursive equality at the textual level requires institutional mediation to achieve social realization.

At the same time, resistance to egalitarian reinterpretation remains pronounced. Conservative backlash, misrepresentation of Qur'anic teachings in public discourse, and structural constraints within educational systems continue to limit women's recognition as moral authorities (Aziz et al., 2020; Shah, 2018). Translation practices and media representations further shape reception; gender-biased linguistic choices may either reinforce or challenge patriarchal assumptions (Burohaima et al., 2025; Elewa, 2026). The communicative dimension of revelation thus extends beyond the canonical text into pedagogical and cultural mediation, underscoring the need for critical discourse analysis at multiple levels.

The convergence of feminist hermeneutics, critical discourse analysis, and legal reform demonstrates the transformative potential of re-engaging Qur'anic

communication through a justice-oriented lens. Rather than collapsing equality into sameness or erasing contextual nuance, discursive equality foregrounds co-agency, reciprocal responsibility, and shared accountability before God. The Qur'an's ethical system rooted in justice, piety, and relational solidarity provides a textual foundation for this framework. Yet bridging spiritual egalitarianism and social implementation remains an ongoing challenge requiring methodological rigor and socio-political commitment.

Taken together, the integrated analysis of Q 33:35, Q 9:71, Q 4:124, and Q 3:195 demonstrates that gender, agency, and moral authority in Qur'anic communication are co-constituted within a fundamentally dialogic structure. These verses do not operate in isolation; rather, they form a coherent textual constellation in which grammatical construction, ethical reciprocity, and eschatological accountability mutually reinforce one another. Through this intertextual alignment, the Qur'an articulates a communicative logic that consistently addresses men and women as morally responsible subjects before God.

First, structured parallelism most explicitly visible in Q 33:35 affirms spiritual parity through deliberate syntactic symmetry. The repeated pairing of masculine and feminine forms functions as more than stylistic emphasis; it establishes equality at the level of discourse itself. By enumerating identical virtues for both genders and culminating in a shared promise of forgiveness and reward, the verse inscribes parity into the moral grammar of revelation. This discursive strategy resists reduction to implicit inclusion and instead performs equality as a communicative act.

Second, reciprocal guardianship in Q 9:71 reconfigures communal ethics by framing believing men and women as mutual allies engaged in shared moral responsibility. Here, authority is neither monopolized nor gender-exclusive; it is relational and participatory. The obligation to enjoin right and forbid wrong, to establish prayer and give charity, is distributed across the believing community without hierarchical sequencing. Such reciprocity reframes moral authority as collaborative stewardship, thereby undermining unilateral constructions of gendered dominance.

Third, the eschatological universality articulated in Q 4:124 and Q 3:195 grounds moral evaluation in divine justice rather than social hierarchy. By explicitly affirming that righteous deeds are recognized "whether male or female" and that no work will be lost, the Qur'an universalizes accountability and reward. This eschatological symmetry establishes a theological baseline in which gender does not mediate divine judgment. Consequently, any subsequent hierarchy must be scrutinized against this normative standard of equal spiritual valuation.

Although historical interpretations have at times obscured or narrowed these egalitarian features, contemporary scholarship increasingly uncovers their enduring normative force. The dialogic architecture of revelation manifest in structured parallelism, reciprocal ethics, and universal recompense indicates that discursive equality is intrinsic rather than incidental. It should therefore be understood not as a concession to modern sensibilities, but as a recoverable and textually grounded principle. By aligning interpretive practice with the Qur'an's communicative design, scholars and communities can cultivate a model of moral authority that remains

faithful to textual integrity while advancing gender justice within lived religious contexts.

CONCLUSION

This study has examined whether gender equality in the Qur'an is primarily a modern interpretive construct or an intrinsic feature of revelation's communicative structure. Through a focused analysis of Q 33:35, Q 9:71, Q 4:124, and Q 3:195, the findings demonstrate that discursive equality is textually embedded. Structured parallelism, reciprocal guardianship, and eschatological symmetry collectively present men and women as co-addressed moral agents. The Qur'an's dialogic architecture affirms shared accountability before God and encodes equality within its linguistic and ethical framework.

The analysis shows that moral authority in Qur'anic communication is fundamentally relational rather than hierarchical. Authority is expressed through ethical responsibility, mutual obligation, and universal standards of justice. Q 33:35 performs equality grammatically through symmetrical enumeration; Q 9:71 frames communal ethics as reciprocal cooperation; and Q 4:124 and Q 3:195 explicitly detach divine judgment from gender differentiation. Together, these verses establish a theological anthropology in which moral worth and spiritual reward are grounded in faith and righteous action rather than sex.

At the same time, the historical development of interpretation reveals that egalitarian textual structures were often mediated through socio-political and cultural frameworks that privileged male dominance. The gap between scriptural symmetry and social hierarchy underscores the importance of hermeneutical method. Interpretive paradigms significantly shape how gender, agency, and authority are understood and implemented within religious communities. Recovering the Qur'an's dialogic and justice-oriented ethos requires sustained critical engagement with both textual form and historical reception.

The implications of these findings extend beyond textual theory. Interpretations of Qur'anic communication continue to influence legal norms, family dynamics, educational practices, and public religious discourse. Where interpretive approaches foreground reciprocity, accountability, and ethical universality, expanded recognition of women's agency and moral authority becomes possible. Bridging spiritual egalitarianism and social implementation therefore depends on interpretive rigor, institutional reform, and pedagogical transformation.

In sum, discursive equality in revelation should be understood as a recoverable normative principle rooted in the Qur'an's communicative design. Gender, agency, and moral authority are co-constituted within a dialogic structure that affirms shared responsibility and divine justice. By aligning interpretive practice with this communicative architecture, scholars and communities can cultivate a model of religious authority that remains faithful to the text while advancing inclusive and justice-oriented moral engagement.

REFERENCES

- Abbasi, M. Z. (2017). Judicial Ijtihad as a tool for legal reform: Extending women's right to divorce under Islamic law in Pakistan. *Islamic Law and Society*, 24(4), 384–411. <https://doi.org/10.1163/15685195-00244P04>
- Afifah, H., Anwar, Z., Sukmawardani, A. L., Ilmiawan, A. N., Salamah, D., Masrurroh, L., Fadhlurrahman, Z., Azizi, A., & Rohmah, U. (2025). Re-examining prophetic traditions: A feminist theological analysis of gender construction in Islamic hadith literature. *Research Journal in Advanced Humanities*, 6(3). <https://doi.org/10.58256/90sze568>
- Afsaruddin, A. (2020). Women and the Qur'an. In *The Oxford Handbook of Qur'anic Studies* (pp. 527–537). <https://doi.org/10.1093/oxfordhb/9780199698646.013.54>
- Ahmad, A. O. (2021). Politeness Strategies In The Qur'an As Model For Interpersonal Relationship: The Case Of Nigeria. *Quranica*, 13(1), 1–30. <https://www.scopus.com/inward/record.uri?eid=2-s2.0-85218243786&partnerID=40&md5=338a970fb81f9affc1309951829ae20>
- Ahmad, N., & Rasheed, M. A. (2018). The Qur'anic concept of qiwamah: A review of commentaries on the verse: 4:34. *Al-Shajarah*, 23(1), 169–181. <https://www.scopus.com/inward/record.uri?eid=2-s2.0-85049583280&partnerID=40&md5=b2oad15a787a6811c2bbo266995522c2>
- Al-Khatib, M. A. (2012). Politeness in the Holy Quran: A sociolinguistic and pragmatic perspective. *Intercultural Pragmatics*, 9(4), 479–509. <https://doi.org/10.1515/ip-2012-0027>
- Al-Mannai, S. S. (2010). The Misinterpretation of Women's Status in the Muslim World. *Digest of Middle East Studies*, 19(1), 82–91. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1949-3606.2010.00007.x>
- Arifianto, M. L., Izzudin, I. F., & Mujahidah, Z. A. (2023). Investigating Politeness in the Prayers of Prophets: A Quranic Discourse Perspective. *Journal of Ethnic and Cultural Studies*, 10(5 Special Issue), 112–135. <https://doi.org/10.29333/ejecs/1744>
- Azid, T., & Ward-Batts, J. (2020). Dimensions of Women Empowerment and Gender Inequality: A Muslim World Perspective. In *Economic Empowerment of Women in the Islamic World: Theory and Practice* (pp. 595–603). https://doi.org/10.1142/9789811212154_0028
- Aziz, E., Abdullah, I., & Prasojo, Z. H. (2020). Why are Women Subordinated? The Misrepresentation of the Qur'an in Indonesian Discourse and Practice. *Journal of International Women's Studies*, 21(6), 235–248. <https://www.scopus.com/inward/record.uri?eid=2-s2.0-85098881750&partnerID=40&md5=decocc49cd63e461c37755176ef7f7d3>
- Banu, M., & Jamali, P. S. S. M. (2019). Some reflection on paradigm shift in qur'anic, interpretation on gender issue discourse. *Hamdard Islamicus*, 42(1–2), 199–213. <https://www.scopus.com/inward/record.uri?eid=2-s2.0-85076564993&partnerID=40&md5=845041f41e2bebb4b4cc385bb43b38d>
- Barlas, A. (2006). Women's readings of the qur'an. In *The Cambridge Companion to the Quran* (pp. 255–272). <https://doi.org/10.1017/CCOL0521831601.013>
- Bauer, K. (2015). Gender hierarchy in the Qur'an: Medieval interpretations, modern responses. In *Gender Hierarchy in the Quran: Medieval Interpretations, Modern*

- Responses. <https://doi.org/10.1017/9781139649759>
- Burohaima, L., Rabab'ah, G., & Benmessaoud, S. (2025). Rewriting Women in the Qur'an: Gender, Ideology and Translation. *Open Cultural Studies*, 9(1). <https://doi.org/10.1515/culture-2025-0080>
- Christiansen, J. L. (2018). A woman's "self-wronging": A gender subtheme in the Qur'anic encounter between Solomon and the Queen of Sheba. *Literature and Theology*, 32(4), 397–422. <https://doi.org/10.1093/litthe/fry014>
- Darzi, G., Ahmadvand, A., & Nushi, M. (2021). Revealing gender discourses in the Qur'an: An integrative, dynamic and complex approach. *HTS Theologies Studies / Theological Studies*, 77(4), 1–11. <https://doi.org/10.4102/hts.v77i4.6228>
- Duderija, A. (2014). Maqāṣid al-sharī'a and contemporary reformist Muslim thought: An examination. In *Maqasid Al-Shari'a and Contemporary Reformist Muslim Thought: An Examination*. <https://doi.org/10.1057/9781137319418>
- Duderija, A. (2017). Tensions between the Study of Gender and Religion: The Case of Patriarchal and Non-Patriarchal Interpretations of the Islamic Tradition. *Hawwa*, 15(3), 257–278. <https://doi.org/10.1163/15692086-12341329>
- Elewa, A. (2026). Re-Presenting Women in the Qur'an Translated: Sociocultural Re-Contextualization From a Feminist Perspective. *Domes : Digest of Middle East Studies*, 35(1). <https://doi.org/10.1111/dome.70011>
- Fitriyah, Z., Amani, W., Hikmah, S. F., Nisa, B. I., Laela, Y., Labib, M., Erlanda, J., & Muksin, A. (2025). Epistemology of masalah and its implementation in gender-related Qur'anic verses: Insights from a bibliometric review (2015–2025). *Research Journal in Advanced Humanities*, 6(4). <https://doi.org/10.58256/p4wwes80>
- Hassanein, H. S. A. (2026). "argument as war": A Synergy of Metadiscourse and Pragma-dialectics in Exploring Qur'anic Argumentation. *Argumentation*. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10503-025-09685-w>
- Hassen, R. (2020). Feminist strategies in women's translations of the Qur'an. In *The Routledge Handbook of Translation, Feminism and Gender* (pp. 496–507). <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315158938-43>
- Izadi, J. (2020). Women's Nature in the Qur'an: Hermeneutical Considerations on Traditional and Modern Exegeses. *Open Theology*, 6(1), 342–359. <https://doi.org/10.1515/opth-2020-0015>
- Khatib, M. (2025). Images of Women's Social Agency in Islamic Literature from the Ninth to the Fifteenth Centuries. *Hawwa*. <https://doi.org/10.1163/15692086-12341443>
- Littlejohn, S. W., Foss, K. A., & Oetzel, J. G. (2021). *Theories of human communication* (12th (ed.)). Waveland Press.
- Mahmoud, M. M. A. (2025). Gender Dynamics in Qur'anic Translation: Analyzing Male and Female Perspectives on Surat Al-Fatiha. *Traduction et Langues*, 24(1), 218–239. <https://doi.org/10.52919/translang.v24i01.1032>
- March, A. F. (2024). Islamic Political Thought. In *The Routledge Companion to Social and Political Philosophy: Second Edition* (pp. 211–221). <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003411598-21>
- Mubarak, H. (2021). Women's Contemporary Readings of the Qur'an. In *The*

- Routledge Companion to the Qur'an* (pp. 319–333).
<https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315885360-32>
- Munir, L. Z. (2006). Domestic violence in Indonesia. *Muslim World Journal of Human Rights*, 2(1). <https://www.scopus.com/inward/record.uri?eid=2-s2.0-33746367093&partnerID=40&md5=527a5c017fa97a9bde3d23eeb848b2fe>
- Naguib, S. (2010). Horizons and limitations of Muslim feminist hermeneutics: Reflections on the menstruation verse. In *New Topics in Feminist Philosophy of Religion: Contestations and Transcendence Incarnate* (pp. 33–49).
https://doi.org/10.1007/978-1-4020-6833-1_3
- Nugroho, B. H., Mustaniruddin, A., & Taufik, A. (2024). Ideological Contestation on the Production of Gender Exegesis within Institutional Quranic Interpretation in Indonesia. *Jurnal Studi Ilmu-Ilmu Al-Qur'an Dan Hadis*, 25(2), 346–369.
<https://doi.org/10.14421/qh.v25i2.5388>
- Omari, D. E. (2019). The pair in the Qur'an as sign of divine creation. In *Muslim Women and Gender Justice: Concepts, Sources, and Histories* (pp. 106–122).
<https://doi.org/10.4324/9781351025348-7>
- Ragab, A. (2010). Epistemic authority of women in the medieval middle East. *Hawwa*, 8(2), 181–216. <https://doi.org/10.1163/156920810X529949>
- Rinaldo, R. (2019). Obedience and Authority among Muslim Couples: Negotiating Gendered Religious Scripts in Contemporary Indonesia. *Sociology of Religion: A Quarterly Review*, 80(3), 323–349. <https://doi.org/10.1093/socrel/sry045>
- Roded, R. (2015). Jewish and islamic religious feminist exegesis of the sacred books: Adam, woman and gender. *Nashim*, 29, 56–80.
<https://doi.org/10.2979/nashim.29.56>
- Rois, C., Irfan, A., & Anam, H. (2025). Islamic Hierarchy Of Value: Abdullah Saeed's progressive interpretation of the Qur'an. *Miqot: Jurnal Ilmu-Ilmu Keislaman*, 49(1), 205–221. <https://doi.org/10.30821/miqot.v49i1.1125>
- Rubab, I., Salahuddin, A., Siddiqui, A., & Javed, N. (2026). Gendered Household Decision-Making in Lahore: Different Contextual Interpretations of qawwam in Qur'anic verse 4:34. *Feminist Theology*, 34(2), 154–168.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/09667350251391785>
- Saeed, A., & Akbar, A. (2021). Contextualist approaches and the interpretation of the Qur'an. *Religions*, 12(7). <https://doi.org/10.3390/rel12070527>
- Saleh, M. N. I. (2025). Perceptions of pesantren leaders towards Islamic moderation approaches in combating radicalism and terrorism. *Cogent Arts and Humanities*, 12(1). <https://doi.org/10.1080/23311983.2025.2474826>
- Sawja, A. (2023). Propagating Gender Norms in an Islamic Republic: Three Pakistani Alims and their Online tafsirs. *Journal of Qur'anic Studies*, 25(3), 55–88.
<https://doi.org/10.3366/jqs.2023.0556>
- Shah, S. (2018). 'We are equals'; datum or delusion: perceptions of Muslim women academics in three Malaysian universities. *British Journal of Sociology of Education*, 39(3), 299–315. <https://doi.org/10.1080/01425692.2017.1343126>
- Sultan, M., Muttaqin, A., Hanafi, S., & Furqany, S. (2025). Female Friendly, Patriarchy and the Adoption of Arabic Pronouns: Linguistic Analysis of Family Law Verses in the Al-Qur'an. *Samarah*, 9(3), 1491–1517. <https://doi.org/10.22373/jqs4ej66>

- Supena, I. (2024). Epistemology of Tafsīr, Ta'wīl, and Hermeneutics: Towards an Integrative Approach. *Journal of Islamic Thought and Civilization*, 14(1), 121–136. <https://doi.org/10.32350/jitc.141.08>
- Takim, L. (2014). Maqāṣid al-sharī'a in contemporary Shī'ī jurisprudence. In *Maqasid Al-Shari'a and Contemporary Reformist Muslim Thought: An Examination* (pp. 101–125). https://doi.org/10.1057/9781137319418_5
- van Dijk, T. A. (2001). Critical discourse analysis. In *The handbook of discourse analysis* (pp. 352–371).
- Wadud, A. (2021). Reflections on islamic feminist exegesis of the qur'an. *Religions*, 12(7). <https://doi.org/10.3390/rel12070497>
- Wan, P. M., Qureshi, S. A., & Hussain, R. B. M. (2025). Muslim Women's Lived Experiences and Intersectional Identities: A Global Perspective. In *Muslim Women's Lived Experiences and Intersectional Identities: A Global Perspective*. <https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-75729-7>
- Wehby, M. (2020). The Qur'an As A Hidden Academy For Learning Dialogic Exchange. *Australian Journal of Islamic Studies*, 5(3), 50–75. <https://doi.org/10.55831/ajis.v5i3.285>
- Wijaya, A., Muchlis, I., & Rohmatulloh, D. M. (2025). Rethinking Gender Justice in the Quran: A Critical Exploration of Muslim Feminist Perspectives. *Jurnal Studi Ilmu-Ilmu Al-Qur'an Dan Hadis*, 26(1), 77–98. <https://doi.org/10.14421/qh.v26i1.5704>
- Yasmar, R., Nurmala, M., Nurbayan, Y., & Atikah, T. (2025). A Rhetorical-Legal Hermeneutic: Representations of Women in the Qur'an through Balaghah and Their Implications for Islamic Law. *Al-Istinbath: Jurnal Hukum Islam*, 10(2), 731–760. <https://doi.org/10.29240/jhi.v10i2.11132>