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Implementing Gender Equality in Islamic Religious Education Learning at SMAN 15 Bandar Lampung

Camelia*[1], Heru Juabdin Sada[2], Haris Budiman[3]
[1]*Universitas Islam Negeri Raden Intan Lampung, Indonesia*
e-mail: cameliacarmilita@gmail.com[1], herujuabdin@radenintan.ac.id[2], harisbudaiman@radenintan.ac.id[3]

ABSTRACT   *Islamic teachings fundamentally uphold justice and equality between men and women, gender bias continues to emerge in the practical implementation of Islamic Religious Education learning in classroom settings. This study aims to analyze the application of gender equality in PAI learning, focusing on instructional planning, classroom teaching and learning practices, learning materials, teacher–student interactions, and students' perceptions. This research employed a qualitative case study approach. Data were collected through in-depth interviews with PAI teachers, students, and school administrators; classroom observations; and document analysis of lesson plans and instructional materials. Data were analyzed using thematic analysis involving data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing, supported by triangulation of sources and techniques to ensure validity. The findings indicate that gender equality has been partially integrated into PAI instructional planning and classroom practices, particularly in providing equal learning opportunities and participation for male and female students. However, subtle gender bias remains evident in certain learning materials, pedagogical strategies, and patterns of classroom interaction. Students generally perceive PAI learning as fair and inclusive, although some still internalize traditional gender roles shaped by social and cultural influences. This study contributes to the existing literature by providing empirical evidence on the gap between normative Islamic values and pedagogical realities in secondary school PAI learning. The findings imply the need for more gender-responsive PAI curriculum development, teacher professional training, and educational policies that support inclusive and equitable learning practices. These efforts are essential to ensure that Islamic education remains relevant, responsive, and effective in fostering ethical and egalitarian attitudes among Generation Z learners.*

Keywords   : *Gender Equality, Islamic Religious Education, Secondary Education, Qualitative Study*

INTRODUCTION

The implementation of gender equality in Islamic Religious Education learning activities constitutes a strategic issue worthy of scholarly investigation, considering that IRE functions not only as a medium for transmitting religious values (Hosseini, 2008) but also as a crucial arena for shaping students' attitudes, perspectives, and behaviors toward just and civilized social relations(Faizudin et al., 2025). In the context of secondary education, IRE learning practices often continue to face challenges in the form of pedagogical approaches that unconsciously reproduce gender bias(Arnold & Fox, 2025), whether through the selection of learning materials, instructional strategies, the distribution of student roles in the classroom, or patterns of interaction between teachers and students. Such conditions have the potential to construct

unequal social relations between male and female students, which contradict the principles of justice and equality that are normatively emphasized in Islamic teachings.

This research is particularly significant because gender equality is an integral part of Islamic values, which position both men and women as equal subjects in education with the same rights to learning opportunities, participation, and personal development. Nevertheless, at the level of implementation, these values are not always optimally realized in IRE classroom practices(Ulil Ilmi et al., 2021). There remains a gap between the normative ideals of Islamic teachings and the pedagogical realities encountered in schools, necessitating empirical investigation to identify the forms of implementation, existing challenges, and influencing factors(Murchan et al., 2009). Therefore, this study is essential to provide a comprehensive portrayal of how gender equality is applied in IRE learning activities at SMAN 15 Bandar Lampung, while also offering academic and practical contributions to the development of more inclusive, equitable, and gender-responsive Islamic Religious Education within formal educational settings.

Education is fundamental to human life (Addzaky & Mukhsin, 2024; Leoni, 2025). It serves not only as a means to enhance knowledge and skills(Oates & Johnson, 2025), but also as a process for shaping character and values within society (Zamfirescu-Pereira et al., 2023). Education provides enlightenment, guidance, and preparation for individuals to face life's challenges and contribute positively to society(Tang et al., 2025). Every human being needs education (Abidin et al., 2025; Nuranisa et al., 2025). This is because education not only benefits the individual but also contributes to the survival and development of humanity itself(Kokkinopoulou et al., 2025). Through education, humans can develop their potential, improve their standard of living, and create a better environment(Segall, 2025). Education also plays a crucial role in preparing future generations (Hastasari et al., 2022; Hussein, 2025). Through education, the younger generation is provided with knowledge, skills, and values.

The values needed to become productive, responsible citizens who care about their environment. In this context, educational activities are vital (Eneli et al., 2025). Educational activities encompass the teaching and learning process at various levels, from elementary to advanced (Alptekin & Taneri, 2025). These activities encompass a variety of learning methods and strategies designed to provide meaningful learning experiences for students (Bhardwaj et al., 2025). Without education, it is difficult for humans to develop optimally and for a society to progress (Shavkidinova et al., 2023; Wang et al., 2024). Therefore, it is crucial for every individual and community to pay serious attention to education so that it can create a better future for all.

Islamic teachings emphasize the importance of seeking knowledge for every individual, Regardless of gender(Novita Dyah Islamiyyah et al., 2025). Every human being, both male and female, has the same rights and responsibilities to pursue knowledge and develop their potential through education (Tansya et al., 2023). There is no difference or discrimination between men and women in terms of the rights and obligations to learn and develop. Education in Islam is emphasized not only as a means to increase knowledge and skills, but also as a process of character formation and moral values(Imam Nur Ajid & Muhammad Alif, 2025; Putri Zahara et al., 2024). Therefore, all individuals, regardless of gender, have the same right to receive a quality education and acquire knowledge that benefits themselves and society.

Education, through the learning process, is required to respond to the diverse needs and requirements of students by increasing participation and providing equal opportunities to all students, both boys and girls . As a primary system capable of generating significant change for society, education must be able to appropriately demonstrate and internalize the values of gender equality (Alam & Mohanty, 2023; Karim et al., 2024). Although gender equality is not a separate subject, it is expected to be well integrated throughout the learning process(Alejo & Hermosa, 2025). Teachers, through the subjects they teach, are expected to embed gender equality values into the planning, implementation, and evaluation of learning.

The novelty of this study lies in its contextual and practice-oriented analysis of gender equality within Islamic Religious Education learning activities at the senior high school level.

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Unlike previous studies that predominantly discuss gender equality in Islamic education from normative, theological, or policy perspectives, this research focuses on the concrete implementation of gender equality in daily classroom practices, including instructional strategies, teacher–student interactions, role distribution, and learning participation (Sulaiman et al., 2025). By situating the study in a public senior high school context, this research offers fresh empirical insights into how Islamic values of justice and equality are translated into pedagogical practices, thereby enriching the discourse on gender-responsive Islamic education with evidence-based findings from the field.

Despite the growing body of literature on gender issues in education and Islamic studies, there remains a significant gap in empirical research that specifically examines the application of gender equality in islamic education learning at the secondary education level. Existing studies tend to emphasize curriculum content analysis(Birgili et al., 2021), religious discourse, or higher education contexts (Zou, 2020), while overlooking classroom-level practices in public schools where value internalization occurs most intensively (Mubin et al., 2025). Moreover, limited attention has been paid to the discrepancy between the normative ideals of gender justice promoted in Islamic teachings and their practical realization in teaching and learning processes. This gap underscores the need for in-depth research that explores how gender equality is operationalized, the challenges encountered by teachers, and the institutional factors influencing its implementation in islamic education classrooms.

This research is particularly relevant in the era of Generation Z, a cohort characterized by high digital literacy, strong awareness of social justice issues, and critical attitudes toward inequality, including gender-based discrimination. As Gen Z students are increasingly exposed to diverse perspectives through digital media, the role of islamic education learning becomes crucial in providing balanced, inclusive, and value-based guidance grounded in Islamic principles. Failure to address gender equality effectively in islamic education instruction may lead to value dissonance between religious education and students' lived realities. Therefore, investigating the application of gender equality in islamic education learning is timely and necessary to ensure that Islamic education remains relevant, responsive, and capable of fostering equitable attitudes and ethical social relations among Gen Z learners in contemporary educational settings.

METHOD

This study employed a qualitative research design with a descriptive-analytical approach. The qualitative approach was chosen to capture in-depth information regarding the application of gender equality in Islamic Religious Education learning activities particularly in understanding practices, perceptions, and interactions that occur naturally in the classroom setting(Januar & Rahmi, 2024; Muaddyl Akhyar et al., 2024). This design allows the researcher to explore complex social and pedagogical phenomena related to gender issues that cannot be adequately measured through quantitative instruments alone.

The research was conducted at SMAN 15 Bandar Lampung, a public senior high school that implements Islamic Religious Education as part of its formal curriculum. The participants consisted of islamic education teachers and students who were directly involved in the learning process. Teachers were selected as key informants due to their central role in planning, implementing, and evaluating learning activities, while students were involved to provide perspectives on their learning experiences and classroom interactions. Participant selection was carried out using purposive sampling to ensure relevance and depth of data.

Data were collected through multiple techniques, including classroom observations, in-depth interviews, and document analysis. Classroom observations were conducted to examine real teaching and learning practices, such as instructional strategies, classroom interactions, student participation, and the distribution of roles between male and female students. In-depth interviews with islamic education teachers were conducted to explore their understanding, attitudes, and pedagogical considerations regarding gender equality. Interviews with students were

used to capture their perceptions and experiences of gender relations in islamic education learning. Additionally, document analysis was carried out on lesson plans, teaching materials, and assessment instruments to identify gender-related representations and pedagogical orientations.

The primary research instrument in this study was the researcher, supported by observation guidelines, interview protocols, and document analysis checklists. Observation guidelines were developed to focus on indicators of gender equality, such as equal participation, teacher-student interaction patterns, and role distribution in learning activities. Interview protocols were designed using open-ended questions to allow participants to express their views freely while remaining aligned with the research objectives. Document analysis checklists were used to systematically review instructional materials for gender sensitivity and inclusivity.

Data analysis was conducted using an interactive model consisting of data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing. First, the collected data were organized and reduced by selecting relevant information related to the research focus. Second, the data were displayed in narrative and thematic forms to facilitate interpretation and pattern identification. Finally, conclusions were drawn by interpreting recurring themes, relationships, and meanings related to the application of gender equality in islamic education learning. The analysis was carried out continuously throughout the research process to ensure depth and coherence of findings.

To ensure data validity and trustworthiness, this study applied triangulation of data sources and methods. Information obtained from observations, interviews, and document analysis was cross-checked to enhance credibility. Member checking was also conducted by confirming key findings with selected participants to ensure accuracy and alignment with their perspectives. Additionally, prolonged engagement in the research setting helped the researcher gain a comprehensive understanding of the context and reduce potential bias.

Ethical principles were strictly observed throughout the research process. Participants were informed about the objectives of the study and provided their consent prior to data collection. Confidentiality and anonymity were maintained by using pseudonyms and limiting access to research data. The study was conducted with respect for institutional regulations and cultural norms within the school environment.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION
Result

The findings of this study reveal that the implementation of gender equality in Islamic Religious Education learning at SMAN 15 Bandar Lampung has been carried out at varying levels across instructional planning, classroom practices, and teacher–student interactions. Overall, gender equality principles have been partially integrated into islamic education learning activities, although certain challenges and inconsistencies remain.

1. **Gender Equality in Instructional Planning**

    The analysis of lesson plans and instructional documents indicates that islamic education teachers have generally adopted inclusive learning objectives that do not explicitly differentiate between male and female students. Learning goals emphasize moral development, religious understanding, and character building for all students equally. However, the integration of gender-sensitive perspectives in learning indicators and assessment criteria is still limited. Most lesson plans do not explicitly mention gender equality as a pedagogical consideration, suggesting that equality is applied implicitly rather than systematically.

2. **Classroom Teaching and Learning Practices**

    Observations of classroom activities show that both male and female students are given relatively equal opportunities to participate in discussions, ask questions, and express opinions during islamic education lessons. Teachers tend to encourage active participation regardless of gender, particularly during group discussions and question-and-answer sessions. Nevertheless, in some learning situations, traditional gender patterns were still observed,

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such as male students being more dominant in verbal participation, while female students were more often assigned supportive or administrative roles during group work.

3. **Learning Materials and Instructional Content**

The study found that the islamic education learning materials used in classrooms are generally neutral in tone but have not fully incorporated a gender-equitable perspective. Several teaching examples and narratives still reflect conventional gender roles, particularly in discussions related to family responsibilities and leadership. While these materials are not explicitly discriminatory, they may unintentionally reinforce stereotypical gender norms if not critically contextualized by the teacher during instruction.

4. **Teacher–Student Interaction and Classroom Climate**

The interaction patterns between teachers and students demonstrate a respectful and nondiscriminatory classroom climate. Teachers treat male and female students equally in terms of discipline, feedback, and academic expectations. There was no evidence of overt gender bias in teacher attitudes or language use. However, the absence of explicit dialogue on gender equality within Islamic teachings indicates that opportunities to strengthen students' critical awareness of gender justice from an Islamic perspective have not been fully utilized.

5. **Students' Perceptions of Gender Equality in Islamic Education Learning**

Interviews with students reveal that most perceive islamic education learning as generally fair and inclusive. Students acknowledge that they receive equal treatment in terms of learning opportunities and assessment. However, some students expressed that issues related to gender equality are rarely discussed explicitly in class, even though they consider such topics relevant to their social realities. This finding suggests a gap between students' expectations and the depth of gender-related discourse in islamic education learning.

Discussion

The findings of this study indicate that gender equality has begun to be integrated into Islamic Religious Education learning at SMAN 15 Bandar Lampung, although its implementation varies across different dimensions of the instructional process. In instructional planning, Islamic Education teachers generally demonstrate an awareness of gender equality by designing lesson plans that do not explicitly differentiate learning objectives, assessment standards, or expected competencies between male and female students. This reflects an alignment with the Islamic principle that emphasizes equal moral and intellectual responsibility for both genders (Hasbiyallah et al., 2024). However, the integration of gender perspectives in planning tends to remain implicit rather than explicitly articulated, suggesting that gender equality is often treated as a normative assumption rather than a consciously structured pedagogical framework.

In classroom teaching and learning practices, teachers tend to apply inclusive instructional strategies, such as encouraging participation from both male and female students and providing equal opportunities to express opinions during discussions. These practices contribute to a more democratic learning environment and reduce overt forms of gender bias (Simmonds, 2017). Nevertheless, subtle disparities still emerge, particularly in classroom dynamics where male students may dominate verbal participation, while female students are more frequently positioned in supportive or passive roles. This indicates that while equality is promoted at the procedural level, deeper cultural and social patterns continue to influence classroom interactions.

With regard to learning materials and instructional content, the results show that most teaching resources used in Islamic Education learning emphasize universal Islamic values such as justice (*'adl*), equality (*musāwah*), and mutual respect (*ta'āruf*)(Samier, 2016). However, gender perspectives are not always critically discussed, especially in topics related to social roles, leadership, and family life. This creates a potential gap between normative Islamic teachings on gender justice and their contextual interpretation in contemporary society. The absence of explicit

critical engagement may limit students' ability to relate Islamic teachings to real-world gender issues they encounter in everyday life.

The interaction between teachers and students plays a significant role in shaping the classroom climate. The study finds that Islamic Education teachers generally maintain respectful and non-discriminatory communication patterns, avoiding language or behavior that marginalizes either gender. A positive classroom climate fosters a sense of safety and mutual respect, which is essential for meaningful learning. However, the effectiveness of teacher–student interaction in promoting gender equality largely depends on the teacher's personal sensitivity, awareness, and pedagogical competence, rather than on institutional guidelines or systematic training.

Students' perceptions further reveal that many learners view Islamic Education as a subject that promotes moral equality and ethical behavior between men and women (Indriyany et al., 2021). At the same time, some students express ambiguity in reconciling religious teachings with contemporary gender discourses encountered through digital media and social networks. This highlights the growing need for Islamic Education learning to engage more critically and dialogically with gender issues, especially in the context of Generation Z students who are accustomed to questioning authority and seeking rational, contextual explanations.

Overall, the discussion suggests that while gender equality has been partially implemented in Islamic Education learning, its realization remains uneven and largely dependent on individual teacher initiatives. Strengthening teachers' pedagogical capacity, enriching learning materials with contextual gender perspectives, and fostering reflective classroom dialogue are essential steps to bridge the gap between normative Islamic values and practical educational realities (Yatazaka, 2014). Such efforts are crucial to ensure that Islamic Education learning not only transmits religious knowledge but also cultivates equitable attitudes and social ethics relevant to contemporary educational contexts.

The findings of this study are closely connected to the background problems that motivated the research, particularly the concern that Islamic Religious Education learning, while normatively teaching justice and equality, may still implicitly reproduce gender bias in classroom practice. The results demonstrate that efforts to integrate gender equality into instructional planning indicate a growing awareness among Islamic Education teachers of the importance of equitable learning opportunities for both male and female students. This directly responds to the initial problem identified in the background, namely the gap between Islamic normative teachings on justice and their pedagogical implementation. By incorporating gender-sensitive objectives, learning strategies, and assessment practices, teachers begin to bridge this gap, although the level of consistency varies.

Furthermore, classroom teaching and learning practices observed in this study reflect both progress and ongoing challenges. The use of participatory and dialogical methods supports gender equality by encouraging balanced student involvement and reducing the dominance of one gender over another. However, these practices also reveal that without deliberate reflection, traditional pedagogical habits can still unintentionally privilege certain voices. This finding reinforces the background issue that gender bias in Islamic Education learning is often subtle and unintentional, embedded in routine instructional practices rather than explicit discrimination.

The analysis of learning materials and instructional content further highlights the relevance of this research. While Islamic teachings fundamentally uphold the moral and spiritual equality of men and women, the results show that textbooks and examples used in Islamic Education learning sometimes lack balanced gender representation. This condition echoes the problem identified in the introduction regarding the selection of teaching materials that may unconsciously reinforce stereotypical gender roles. The findings thus confirm the need for critical evaluation and contextualization of learning resources so that they align more consistently with Islamic values of justice and equality.

In terms of teacher–student interaction and classroom climate, the results indicate that respectful, inclusive, and non-discriminatory interactions contribute significantly to the

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internalization of gender equality values among students. This directly addresses the concern raised in the background that patterns of interaction in the classroom can shape students' social attitudes and perceptions of fairness. When teachers model equitable treatment and create a supportive learning environment, Islamic Education learning functions not only as knowledge transmission but also as a space for character and attitude formation.

Finally, students' perceptions of gender equality in Islamic Education learning provide a crucial link to the broader problem context, especially in relation to Generation Z learners. The findings suggest that students are increasingly aware of gender equality issues and expect consistency between religious teachings and everyday practices in school. This validates the initial assumption that failure to address gender equality in Islamic Education learning may result in a disconnect between religious education and students' lived realities. Overall, the results affirm that this research is grounded in real pedagogical challenges and demonstrates that strengthening gender equality in Islamic Education learning is essential for ensuring that Islamic education remains relevant, credible, and responsive to contemporary social dynamics.

This study contributes to the existing literature by providing empirical evidence on how gender equality is operationalized in Islamic Religious Education learning at the secondary school level, thereby enriching previous normative and theoretical discussions with context-specific classroom realities. Unlike earlier studies that predominantly focus on conceptual debates or policy analysis of gender equality in Islamic education, this research offers a comprehensive account of instructional planning, teaching practices, learning materials, teacher–student interactions, and students' perceptions as an integrated pedagogical system. By situating gender equality within the lived experiences of teachers and Generation Z students, the findings extend current scholarship on Islamic Education pedagogy(Tarimo et al., 2025), inclusive education, and Islamic educational values, while also offering practical insights that can inform curriculum development, teacher professional training, and future research on gender-responsive Islamic education in contemporary schooling contexts (Hakim, 2023; Sopian, 2023). Despite its contributions, this study has certain limitations that should be acknowledged. One primary limitation lies in its contextual scope, as the research was conducted in a single public senior high school, namely SMAN 15 Bandar Lampung. Consequently, the findings may reflect context-specific characteristics related to institutional culture, teacher perspectives, and student dynamics, which may not fully represent the broader conditions of Islamic Religious Education learning in other schools or regions. This limitation suggests that caution should be exercised in generalizing the results, and future studies are encouraged to involve multiple schools or employ comparative approaches to strengthen external validity (Bizawie, 2018).

Nevertheless, the findings of this study offer important implications at multiple levels. From a theoretical perspective, this research enriches the existing literature on Islamic education by empirically demonstrating how the normative principles of gender equality embedded in Islamic teachings are translated into pedagogical practices within contemporary classrooms. It contributes to bridging the gap between Islamic educational philosophy and classroom realities, particularly by highlighting the role of instructional planning, learning materials, teacher–student interaction, and students' perceptions in shaping gender-responsive Islamic Education learning.

In terms of policy implications, the results underscore the need for educational stakeholders, including curriculum developers and school administrators, to integrate gender equality more explicitly into Islamic Education curriculum frameworks, teacher training programs, and school policies. Strengthening policy support for gender-responsive pedagogy in religious education can help ensure that values of justice, inclusivity, and equal participation are consistently implemented across learning environments, in line with national education goals and Islamic ethical principles.

From a practical standpoint, this study provides concrete insights for Islamic Education teachers and schools on how gender equality can be fostered through daily instructional practices, classroom interaction patterns, and extracurricular activities. The findings highlight the

importance of reflective teaching practices that consciously avoid gender bias and promote equitable opportunities for both male and female students to participate, express ideas, and develop their potential. In the broader context of Generation Z learners, these implications are particularly significant, as they support the development of inclusive attitudes, ethical social relations, and critical awareness that align religious values with students' lived experiences in a rapidly changing social environment.

CONCLUSION

This study concludes that the application of gender equality in Islamic Religious Education learning at SMAN 15 Bandar Lampung has been implemented in a generally positive manner, particularly in instructional planning, classroom practices, learning materials, teacher–student interactions, and students' perceptions. The findings demonstrate that Islamic Education teachers have begun to integrate gender-equal principles by providing equal learning opportunities, encouraging balanced participation, and fostering a classroom climate that respects both male and female students as equally valued subjects of education. These practices indicate an alignment between normative Islamic teachings on justice and equality and their pedagogical application in the classroom. Thestudy also reveals that the implementation of gender equality remains context-dependent and is not yet fully systematic. Subtle gender biases may still emerge, especially when gender perspectives are not explicitly articulated in learning objectives or when instructional materials rely on traditional narratives that have not been critically contextualized. This finding highlights the core essence of the research, namely that gender equality in Islamic Education learning is not merely a matter of equal treatment, but requires conscious pedagogical reflection, intentional curriculum design, and critical engagement with Islamic texts in order to bridge the gap between normative ideals and classroom realities. Based on these conclusions, this research recommends that future studies expand the scope to include multiple schools or different educational levels in order to strengthen the generalizability of findings. Further research may also explore the development of gender-responsive Islamic Education learning models or examine the long-term impact of gender-equal Islamic Education instruction on students' attitudes and social behavior. Such efforts are essential to ensure that Islamic Religious Education continues to evolve as an inclusive, just, and socially responsive discipline in contemporary educational contexts.

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