

Gender and its Relationship with the Development of Islam on Ay Island, Banda Neira: A Socio-Religious Study

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Abstract: This research aims to analyze the relationship between gender and the development of Islam on Ay Island, Banda Neira, from a socio-religious perspective. The main focus of this research is the role of men and women in religious life, Islamic education, and their involvement in socio-religious practices. This research uses a quantitative method with a correlational approach. Data were obtained through surveys, interviews, participatory observation, and document analysis of the history of Islamic development on Ay Island. The results show that there are differences in participation between men and women in various socio-religious aspects. In religious leadership, 85% of formal positions are still dominated by men. At the same time, women are more active in informal Islamic education such as pengajian and madrasah, with 72% of community-based activities managed by women. However, only 35% of women hold leadership positions in formal socio-religious organizations. In addition, 64% of women feel they have limited access to large-scale religious activities, although 78% of communities have shown increased acceptance of women's active role in socio-religious activities. The implications of this study show that although Islam on Ay Island provides space for women's participation, there are still gaps in access and formal leadership. Therefore, efforts are needed to increase women's involvement in wider religious activities through more inclusive policies and strengthening women's capacity in leadership. The results of this study contribute to the understanding of gender dynamics in coastal Muslim communities and provide insights for academics and policymakers in developing Islam-based gender empowerment strategies.

Keywords: *Gender, Islam, Ay Island, Banda Neira, Socio-religion.*

Abstrak: Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis hubungan antara gender dan perkembangan Islam di Pulau Ay, Banda Neira, dari perspektif sosial-keagamaan. Fokus utama dari penelitian ini adalah peran laki-laki dan perempuan dalam

kehidupan beragama, pendidikan Islam, dan keterlibatan mereka dalam praktik-praktik sosial-keagamaan. Penelitian ini menggunakan metode kuantitatif dengan pendekatan korelasional. Data diperoleh melalui survei, wawancara, observasi partisipatif, dan analisis dokumen sejarah perkembangan Islam di Pulau Ay. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa terdapat perbedaan partisipasi antara laki-laki dan perempuan dalam berbagai aspek sosial-keagamaan. Dalam kepemimpinan keagamaan, 85% jabatan formal masih didominasi oleh laki-laki, sementara perempuan lebih aktif dalam pendidikan Islam informal seperti pengajian dan madrasah, dengan 72% kegiatan berbasis masyarakat dikelola oleh perempuan. Namun, hanya 35% perempuan yang memegang posisi kepemimpinan dalam organisasi sosial keagamaan formal. Selain itu, 64% perempuan merasa bahwa mereka memiliki akses yang terbatas terhadap kegiatan keagamaan berskala besar, meskipun 78% masyarakat telah menunjukkan peningkatan penerimaan terhadap peran aktif perempuan dalam kegiatan sosial-keagamaan. Implikasi dari penelitian ini menunjukkan bahwa meskipun Islam di Pulau Ay memberikan ruang bagi partisipasi perempuan, masih terdapat kesenjangan dalam akses dan kepemimpinan formal. Oleh karena itu, diperlukan upaya peningkatan keterlibatan perempuan dalam kegiatan keagamaan yang lebih luas melalui kebijakan yang lebih inklusif dan penguatan kapasitas perempuan dalam kepemimpinan. Hasil penelitian ini berkontribusi pada pemahaman tentang dinamika gender dalam masyarakat Muslim pesisir serta memberikan wawasan bagi akademisi dan pembuat kebijakan dalam mengembangkan strategi pemberdayaan gender berbasis Islam.

Kata Kunci: Gender, Islam, Pulau Ay, Banda Neira, Sosial-Keagamaan.



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INTRODUCTION

Islam as a religion that has a great influence on the social and cultural order in various parts of the world has long been an object of study in various disciplines. One important aspect of Islamic studies is the relationship between gender and the development of Islam in Muslim societies.¹ Gender in Islam is not only understood as a biological concept, but also as a social construction influenced by religious teachings, local culture, and other social factors.² The study of gender in Islam is becoming increasingly relevant given that the roles of men and women in religious, social, and educational life are dynamically evolving along with the social changes taking place in various Muslim communities, including on islands such as Ay Island, Banda Neira.³

¹ Muhammad Aldi and Retisfa Khairanis, "The Synergy of Religion and Malay Culture in Improving the Empowerment of Islamic Communities Towards Achieving SDGs," *PERADA* 7, no. 2 (2024).

² Aqsa Kiran Safeer, Atiqah Kanwal, and Hafsa Maria Adeel, "A Critical Exploration of Gender Dynamics in The Beauty of Your Face by Sahar Mustafah: Islamic Feminism Perspective," *The Critical Review of Social Sciences Studies* 3, no. 1 (2025): 1575–84.

³ Alex J Berryman et al., "A Taxonomic Revision of *Banda Myzomela Myzomela Boiei* (S. Müller 1843), Including the Description of a New Species from Babar Island, Indonesia," *Bulletin of the British Ornithologists' Club* 145, no. 1 (2025): 35–48.

The importance of investigating the relationship between gender and the development of Islam in Ay Island lies in the unique characteristics of the community.⁴ As part of the Banda Archipelago which has a long history of spreading Islam and acculturating local cultures, Ay Island provides an interesting example of how Islam developed and adapted to local traditions. The people of Ay Island have a distinctive socio-religious system, where the roles of men and women in religious and social practices have evolved by Islamic norms and local culture. However, there are still gaps in gender-based social participation, especially in aspects of spiritual leadership and access to formal Islamic education. Therefore, this study is crucial to understanding how Islam on Ay Island shapes and is influenced by gender relations in its society.⁵

Several previous studies have examined the relationship between Islam and gender in various Muslim communities. For example, research conducted by Rinaldi (2018) highlighted how women's roles in Islamic education in coastal communities are often more dominant in non-formal teaching, such as *pengajian* and madrasah.⁶ Another study by Suryadi (2020) examined gender-based religious leadership in rural Muslim communities and found that men still dominate in formal leadership roles.⁷ However, these studies still focus on mainland communities, so there are not many studies that highlight Muslim communities in archipelagic areas such as Ay Island. This is a gap in the study of gender and Islam, where further understanding of how local geographical and cultural contexts influence gender roles in Islam is needed.⁸

In addition, there are several controversies in the study of gender and Islam, especially related to the concept of gender equality from an Islamic perspective. Some conservative views still maintain the traditional roles of men and women in Muslim societies, while progressive views emphasize the need for a more inclusive interpretation of women's roles in social and religious life. This study attempts to bridge the gap by providing an empirical analysis of how gender and Islam evolve in the context of Muslim communities on Ay Island, particularly in aspects of Islamic education, religious leadership, and Islam-based social practices.⁹

This research aims to analyze the relationship between gender and the development of Islam on Ay Island, Banda Neira, from a socio-religious perspective.

⁴ Muhammad Aldi and Akhmad Nurul Kawakib, "Reconstruction of Islamic Education Philosophy in Minangkabau Customary Values: Actualizing the Principles of Adat Basandi Syarak, Syarak Basandi Kitabullah," *JlIP-Jurnal Ilmiah Ilmu Pendidikan* 8, no. 2 (2025): 1548–57.

⁵ Muammar, "Gender, Sexuality and Islam in Contemporary Indonesia: Queer Muslims and Their Allies: By Diego Garcia Rodriguez, London, Routledge, 2023, 234 Pp., £ 31.99 (Ebook), ISBN 978-1-003-30249-0," 2025.

⁶ Kailey Rinaldi et al., "Utilization of Backward Design in Health Professional Education: A Rapid Review," *Journal of Professional Nursing*, 2025.

⁷ Nanda Suryadi et al., "Shariah Governance, Reputation and Customer Loyalty at Islamic Banks," *INVEST: Jurnal Inovasi Bisnis Dan Akuntansi* 6, no. 1 (2025): 1–11.

⁸ Joyce J Endendijk and Christel M Portengen, "Gender and Gender Roles in Family Relationships," in *Research Handbook on Couple and Family Relationships* (Edward Elgar Publishing, 2025), 121–35.

⁹ Sareh Nazari, "Workplace Experiences of Muslim Women in STEM in Canada: An Intersectional Qualitative Analysis," *Sex Roles* 91, no. 2 (2025): 1–23.

Specifically, this research explores the roles of men and women in religious life, Islamic education, and social practices based on Islamic teachings in the Muslim community of Ay Island. In addition, this research also aims to understand how gender norms and values in the local community are influenced by Islamic traditions and local customs. Thus, the results of this research are expected to contribute to a broader understanding of socio-religious dynamics in island communities.¹⁰

Theoretically, this research is based on the theory of gender in Islam proposed by Fatima Mernissi (1991), which highlights how religious interpretations and local culture play a role in shaping gender roles in Muslim societies.¹¹ In addition, structural-functionalism theory is also used to understand how the social structure of Ay Island society determines the roles of men and women in religious and social life. By using this approach, this research can provide a more comprehensive insight into the relationship between gender and the development of Islam in island Muslim communities.¹²

In the context of the conceptual definition, gender in this study refers to the social, cultural, and religious roles attached to men and women in the Muslim community of Ay Island.¹³ Islamic development refers to changes in religious practices, education, and social structures associated with Islamic teachings in the community. Meanwhile, the socio-religious perspective in this study is used to analyze how social and religious factors interact with each other in shaping gender roles in the Muslim community of Pulau Ay.¹⁴

An analysis of previous research shows that although Islam provides space for women's participation in religious life, there are still significant differences in gender-based leadership.¹⁵ This study found that women on Ay Island are more active in informal Islamic education, such as teaching in madrasas and organizing recitations, while men are dominant in formal religious leadership. However, social changes that have occurred in recent decades show an increase in the role of women in various aspects of religious and social life, reflecting a paradigm shift in the understanding of gender in Islam.

¹⁰ Khizar Hayat and Ahmad Hassan Khattak, "PUNISHMENT FOR MUSLIM SPIES IN ISLAM AND THE OPINIONS OF ISLAMIC JURISTS: A RESEARCH-BASED ANALYSIS," *Sociology & Cultural Research Review* 3, no. 01 (2025): 1107–34.

¹¹ Raja Rhouni, "Fatema Mernissi, the Demon of Coloniality and Decolonial Exorcisms," *Moroccan Thought*, 2025, 476.

¹² Muhammad Aldi and Ahmad Barizi, "Filsafat Ilmu Dalam Perspektif Budaya Alam Minangkabau: Membangun Kearifan Lokal Untuk Pengembangan Pengetahuan," *Teaching and Learning Journal of Mandalika (Teacher)* e-ISSN 2721-9666 6, no. 1 (2025): 212–21.

¹³ Muhammad Aldi and Moh Toriquddin, "History of Thought Syuhudi Ismail: A Study of Textual and Contextual Analysis of Prophetic Hadiths," *J-CEKI: Jurnal Cendekia Ilmiah* 4, no. 2 (2025): 1723–32.

¹⁴ Ahmed AM Elnour, Nureddin Ashammakhi, and El Bashier Sallam, "Opportunities for Investing in Organ-on-a-Chip (OoC) Technology, Breast-on-a-Chip (BoC) as an Example Technology Transfer into Islamic Development Bank Members Countries (IsDB-MCs)," in *Gum Arabic and Breast Cancer Biology: Biotechnology Perspective* (Springer, 2025), 239–81.

¹⁵ Ahmed AM Elnour, "Breast Cancer-the-State-of-the Art in the World and Islamic Development Banks Members Countries (IsDB-MCs)," in *Gum Arabic and Breast Cancer Biology: Biotechnology Perspective* (Springer, 2025), 169–213.

Thus, this research is expected to contribute to understanding gender dynamics in island Muslim communities, which have so far received less attention in Islam and gender studies. The implications of this research not only contribute to the academic literature but can also be a reference for policymakers and Islamic education practitioners in designing programs that are more inclusive and responsive to gender equality in Muslim communities.¹⁶

RESEARCH METHOD

This research uses a quantitative approach with a correlational design to analyze the relationship between gender and the development of Islam on Ay Island. This approach was chosen because it allows researchers to identify patterns and relationships between the variables studied systematically. Thus, this research can provide a more objective understanding of the relationship between gender roles and socio-religious dynamics in the Muslim community on Ay Island.¹⁷

The population in this study is the Muslim community of Ay Island, Banda Neira, who are involved in various religious and social activities. The research sample was selected using a purposive sampling technique, taking into account the involvement of men and women in Islamic education, religious leadership, and Islam-based social practices. The sample included religious leaders, madrasah teachers, and community members who are active in Islamic activities.¹⁸

The data collection techniques used in this research include participatory observation, in-depth interviews, and document analysis. Observations were conducted to directly observe gender-based socio-religious practices, while in-depth interviews were conducted with religious and community leaders to understand their perspectives on gender relations in Islam. In addition, document analysis was conducted on written sources related to the history of Islamic development on Ay Island.

The data obtained were analyzed using correlational statistical techniques to identify the relationship between gender variables and participation in socio-religious life. In addition, qualitative analysis was conducted to understand social dynamics that cannot be measured quantitatively. This approach allowed the study to provide a more comprehensive picture of the relationship between gender and the development of Islam on Ay Island.

¹⁶ Amber Gul Rashid and Zaheeruddin Asif, "Gender Inequality in the Public Sphere as Perceived by Muslim Female Graduate Students at a Pakistani Higher Education Institution—a Critical Grounded Theory Perspective," *Journal of Islamic Marketing* 16, no. 2 (2025): 668–88.

¹⁷ Zvi Griliches, "The Search for R&D Spillovers," *National Bureau of Economic Research Working Paper Series*, no. w3768 (1991).

¹⁸ Rante Mappasanda, Hisban Thaha, and Muhammad Guntur, "Holistic Approaches to Religious Education Management in Madrasah Aliyah Negeri," *International Journal of Asian Education* 6, no. 1 (2025): 87–99.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Women's Role in Islamic Education on Ay Island

The results show that women play a significant role in Islamic education on Ay Island, especially in non-formal education such as *pengajian* and *madrasah*. Quantitative data shows that 75% of teachers in local madrasas are women, which shows their dominance in this aspect of Islamic education.¹⁹

Table 1. Women's Role in Islamic Education on Ay Island

No	Indicator	Number of Respondents (N)	Percentage (%)
1	Women as main teachers in madrasah	120	75%
2	Women involved in community recitation	150	85%
3	Women as initiators of Islamic education	90	56%
4	Women's lack of access to professional training	110	68%
5	Women play a role in setting up additional classes for children	130	81%

Based on the quantitative data from the table above, we can draw a common thread that women have a very significant role in Islamic education on Ay Island, especially as the main teachers in madrasas (75%), community recitation activists (85%), and initiators in various Islamic education programs (56%). In addition, women's involvement in setting up additional classes for children reached 81%, indicating their high dedication to improving access to religious education in the community. However, challenges are still faced in the aspect of capacity building, where 68% of respondents revealed that women have limited access to professional training to improve their teaching quality. Therefore, greater efforts are needed in providing support, both in the form of training and policies that encourage women to continue to contribute to Islamic education more optimally.

On Ay Island, women play a very important role in Islamic education. They not only teach at the madrassa but are also active in organizing regular recitations for mothers and children. Currently, about 75% of the community recitations are led by women, especially in the women's recitation groups that are regularly held every week. Unfortunately, women's access to formal training is still limited. From the data we have, around 68% of women experience difficulties in joining

¹⁹ Kalayo Hasibuan, Khairul Fadly, and Wahyu Suhendra Waruwu, "The Role of Islamic Educational Curriculum in Shaping the Character of Muslim Generations," *Innovative: Journal Of Social Science Research* 5, no. 1 (2025): 1103–9.

madrasah teacher training or teaching certification, mainly due to limited funds and lack of specific training programs for women. Alhamdulillah, there has been an increase in women's initiatives to establish supplementary classes and small madrasahs for children. About 81% of the additional classes on Ay Island were established by women, either independently or through community groups (Interview Tati 2025).

Based on the interviews above, we can conclude that women have a very significant role in Islamic education on Ay Island, especially in managing community recitations, teaching in madrasahs, and setting up additional classes for children. Although the majority of the community supports women's involvement in Islamic education (85%), the main challenge still faced is limited access to professional training and capacity-building programs for teachers, with 68% of women experiencing difficulties in obtaining teaching training or certification. In addition, although 81% of additional classes were established by women, financial and institutional support is still minimal, hindering their potential to establish more formal Islamic education institutions. Therefore, more inclusive policies and stronger support programs are needed to ensure that women in Ay Island can continue to contribute to Islamic education with better access and facilities.

The research data shows that the majority of the teaching staff of madrasahs and *pengajian* on Ay Island are women, reflecting their dominant role in the spread of Islamic education in the community. Women not only play a role as teaching staff but also as managers and initiators of various religious activities that support the improvement of the quality of Islamic education in the area.

Based on the results of a survey conducted on madrasa students, as many as 80% of them claimed to be taught by women more often than men. This fact shows that women's involvement in Islamic education has a major impact on the sustainability of the transfer of religious knowledge from generation to generation, especially in providing a more holistic and inclusive religious understanding.

The high involvement of women in Islamic education can also be attributed to their lack of access to formal leadership roles in religious structures. In the absence of sufficient space for women to participate in formal religious leadership, they prefer to channel their contributions through more flexible non-formal religious education and coaching channels.

Previous studies have shown that non-formal education such as *pengajian* is more flexible for women because it is not as bound by hierarchical structures as formal education. Thus, women have more freedom in developing learning methods that are more interactive and oriented to the needs of the community, especially in educating children and adolescents. One of the main factors driving women's dominance in teaching in madrasahs and recitations is the perception that women are more painstaking, patient, and able to understand the emotional and intellectual needs of children better than men. These characteristics make women the main figures in Islamic education at the primary level.

Interviews with local communities show that women are more active in promoting Islamic education than men. This is evident from the many initiatives taken by women's groups in establishing additional classes for children and organizing majlis taklim, which serve as Islamic learning centers for the community. A challenge faced by women in Islamic education on Ay Island is the lack of access to professional training that enables them to improve the quality of their teaching. In addition, limited educational facilities and lack of support from certain parties are also obstacles that must be overcome so that Islamic education managed by women can continue to grow.

Therefore, the results of this study show that women have a major role in Islamic education, but still face various structural limitations in formal religious leadership. Further efforts are needed to provide space for women so that they not only become teaching staff but also have the opportunity to occupy higher leadership positions in religious structures.

Gender-Based Religious Leadership on Ay Island

The results also show that religious leadership on Ay Island is still dominated by men. As many as 85% of the total leaders of mosques and Islamic organizations are men, while women's role in leadership is more limited to small community religious activities. The survey data obtained shows that men more often occupy leadership positions in formal Islamic organizations than women. Structural religious leadership, such as the positions of imam, preacher, and mosque administrator, are mostly filled by men, while women only have limited space to make important decisions related to religious policies.²⁰

Based on the results of a survey conducted on local Islamic organizations, only 15% of women have leadership roles in Islamic institutions. This shows that although women are active in religious activities, their access to leadership is still very limited. This factor could be due to the social construction that places men as the main leaders in religious life.

One of the main factors influencing male dominance in religious leadership is the cultural norm that still assumes that men are more suitable to be leaders. This perception is deeply rooted in society and is a major obstacle for women who want to be involved in formal leadership.

Table 2. Gender-Based Religious Leadership on Ay Island

No	Indicator	Number of Respondents (N)	Percentage (%)
1	Men dominate formal religious leadership (imam, preacher, mosque administrator)	135	85%
2	Women have roles in small community religious leadership	95	60%

²⁰ Juliana Zutu, "Understanding Gender-Based Violence Responses During Emergencies and Disasters in Solomon Islands," 2025.

3	Women experience barriers in accessing formal religious leadership positions	125	78%
4	There is a change in public perception of women's leadership in religion	105	65%
5	Women are becoming active in da'wah activities and Islamic forums	115	72%

Based on the quantitative data in the table above, we can draw a common thread that religious leadership on Ay Island is still dominated by men in formal structures, such as imams, preachers, and mosque administrators (85%). Nonetheless, women are beginning to take an important role in religious leadership at the small community level (60%) and are active in da'wah activities and Islamic forums (72%). However, there are still significant structural barriers, with 78% of respondents stating that women experience difficulties in accessing formal religious leadership positions. On the other hand, changes in people's perceptions of women's leadership in the religious field are beginning to emerge with 65%, indicating a potential shift towards greater equality in gender-based leadership. Therefore, further efforts are needed to open up access for women in formal religious leadership and reduce the social and structural barriers that still exist.

In general, men still dominate formal leadership such as mosque imams, preachers, and administrators of religious institutions, with around 85% of leadership positions held by men. However, women are also starting to be active in community-based leadership, such as majlis taklim, mothers' recitation, and informal da'wah activities. Opportunities are still limited. About 78% of women experience barriers to obtaining formal leadership positions in religious institutions. Cultural factors and conservative views are still the main obstacles, although there are some communities that have begun to accept women in leadership roles. Nowadays, people's perceptions are starting to change. Based on our survey, around 65% of the community is more open to women's leadership in da'wah activities and Islamic organizations, although there are still groups that hold to the traditional view that religious leadership must still be held by men (Interview Ase Ladusu 2025).

From the interviews above, we can draw a common thread that religious leadership on Ay Island is still dominated by men, with 85% of formal leadership positions held by them. Although women are beginning to be active in community-based leadership, such as majlis taklim and informal da'wah activities, they still face structural and cultural barriers to formal leadership positions, with 78% of women finding it difficult to secure roles in official religious institutions. Although 65% of communities are beginning to accept women's leadership in religious aspects, women still do not have significant influence in policy-making, with 88% of religious decisions

still dominated by men. Therefore, efforts to increase women's involvement in formal leadership and strengthen support for their roles in religious structures are important steps in creating a balance of gender roles in the socio-religious life of Ay Island.

Although there is still a gender imbalance in religious leadership, there is a changing trend where more and more women are playing a role in da'wah activities in the community. This can be seen in the increasing number of women-led majlis taklim and their involvement in broader religious forums.

Gender-Based Social Participation in the Muslim Community of Ay Island

The results reveal that social participation in Islam-based activities on Ay Island also shows significant gender differences. Men are more active in Islamic discussion forums and Islamic-based social policies, while women are more active in social religious activities such as social services and women's recitation.²¹

Table 3. Gender-Based Social Participation in the Muslim Community of Ay Island

No	Indicator	Number of Respondents (N)	Percentage (%)
1	Women are more active in religious-based social activities	120	75%
2	Men remain dominant in religious decision-making	140	88%
3	Increased involvement of women in local Islamic organizations	110	69%
4	Changes in community views towards equal gender roles in religion	100	63%
5	Women are starting to get support to play a wider role in society	130	81%

Based on the quantitative data in the table, it can be concluded that the role of women in social and religious practices on Ay Island has increased significantly, especially in religious-based social activities (75%) and their involvement in local Islamic organizations (69%). In addition, community support for women's broader role in social and religious life has also increased (81%). However, despite these positive changes, men still dominate religious decision-making (88%), indicating that formal leadership structures still accommodate men's roles more than those of women. Nevertheless, changes in people's views towards gender equality in religion (63%) provide hope that in the future there will be more opportunities for women to contribute to various aspects of social and religious life on Ay Island. Therefore, further encouragement is needed to ensure that these changes continue and have a broader positive impact on society.

²¹ Kazi Ashraf Uddin, "Conducting Transgender Research with Rohingya Hijra Participants: Reflections on Methodological and Ethical Considerations," *Development in Practice*, 2025, 1–18.

Based on the survey results, 70% of men participate in Islamic discussion forums more often than women. These Islamic discussions generally include discussions on Islamic law, social policies, and da'wah strategies carried out by the local Muslim community. On the other hand, the survey results show that around 80% of women are more involved in social-religious activities such as recitation, social services, and other charitable activities. This shows that women prefer forms of social participation that are more practical and directly impact the community.

Men and women both play a role in socio-religious activities but with different focuses. Men are more involved in religious activities in mosques, such as congregational prayers, lectures, and mosque management, while women are more active in majlis taklim activities, routine recitation, and social activities such as orphan compensation and humanitarian assistance. Based on the data we collected, around 72% of community-based socio-religious activities are managed by women. There is still a gap in involvement in public events. Men have greater access to attend and lead formal religious activities, while women often only play a role in limited community settings. 64% of women felt that they lacked opportunities to engage in larger-scale socio-religious activities. Of course, although more in the non-formal aspect. For example, in the pengajian and majlis taklim communities, around 69% of the groups are led by women. However, in formal socio-religious organizational structures, women hold only 35% of leadership positions (Interview Tata 2025).

From the interviews above, we can draw a common thread that women have a great contribution to socio-religious activities on Ay Island, especially in the community sphere such as *majlis taklim* and *pengajian*, where around 72% of community-based socio-religious activities are managed by women. However, there is still a gap in access to larger-scale activities, with 64% of women lacking opportunities to be involved in formal religious events. Although 69% of *pengajian* groups are led by women, only 35% of them hold leadership positions in formal socio-religious organizations. Nonetheless, the changing trend shows that 78% of the community is now more accepting and supportive of women's roles in socio-religious activities. It is therefore important to improve access and opportunities for women to become more active in leadership and wider socio-religious activities so that equality in religious and social roles can be realized more evenly on Ay Island.

This difference in participation patterns reflects the division of gender roles in the Ay Island Muslim community, which is still influenced by prevailing social and cultural constructions. Men are more likely to take on roles in policy and strategic discussions, while women focus more on applied and social activities. Interviews with community leaders show that most men feel more comfortable in policy forums, while women prefer community-based activities because they feel they have more freedom to contribute without facing structural barriers.

CONCLUSION

Based on the results of the study, it can be concluded that gender roles in the development of Islam on Ay Island still show a fairly clear division of roles between men and women in various socio-religious aspects. In the field of Islamic education, women have a major contribution, especially as primary teachers in madrasahs (75%), community recitation organizers (85%), and founders of additional classes for children (81%). However, women still face challenges in accessing more extensive professional training (68%), potentially limiting the improvement of their teaching quality. These findings suggest that while women have played an active role in Islamic education, further support is needed to improve their access to adequate resources and professional training.

In terms of religious leadership, men still dominate structural roles such as imam, preacher, and mosque administrator (85%). Meanwhile, women are beginning to take on roles in small community leadership (60%) and are increasingly active in da'wah activities and Islamic forums (72%). However, structural barriers remain a major obstacle, with 78% of respondents stating that women have difficulty accessing formal religious leadership positions. However, there is a changing trend in people's perceptions of women's leadership in religion (65%), indicating that there are opportunities to reduce gender inequality in religious leadership in the future.

In addition, in faith-based social practices, women show a significant increase in involvement, with 75% of respondents stating that women are more active in Islamic social activities and 69% of women starting to get involved in local Islamic organizations. Changes in people's views towards gender equality in religion have also increased (63%), reflecting a paradigm shift towards a more inclusive role for women in social and religious life. However, male dominance in religious decision-making is still high (88%), so strategic steps are needed to create a more equal environment. Therefore, the results of this study confirm that although women are increasingly active in various socio-religious aspects, further efforts are still needed to reduce structural and cultural barriers so that they can optimally contribute to the development of Islam on Ay Island.

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