

# Women Right and Gender Equality in Islam: A Survey of Students Perception on Feministic Discourse

Titis Thoriquttyas<sup>1,\*</sup>, Ahmad Munjin Nasih<sup>2</sup>, Achmad Sultoni<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1,2,3</sup> Universitas Negeri Malang

\*Corresponding author. Email: [titisthoriq.fs@um.ac.id](mailto:titisthoriq.fs@um.ac.id)

## ABSTRACT

This study seeks to explore the student perceptions of Universitas Negeri Malang (UM) who are scattered in the Faculty of Mathematics and Natural Sciences, Faculty of Economics and Faculty of Social Sciences regarding their understanding on the concept of gender equality and women's rights in Islam. The hypothesis offered by the researchers is that the respondent's understanding of feministic discourse is expected to be able to be increasing the understanding and the behavior with gender awareness in concrete forms. This study involved students who were taking courses in Islamic Religious Education (IRE) in 2020-2021. The research sample consisted of students from the Faculty of Mathematics and Natural Sciences (80 students), the Faculty of Economics (40 students) and the Faculty of Social Science (30 students). This research uses a survey approach through correlational analysis and cross-sectional study. However, what the researcher will present in this study does not necessarily represent the overall response of the UM students, this is related to the selection of research samples and differences in the backgrounds of students' religious understanding. This study has an urgency for mapping UM students' understanding of terms related to feministic discourse in the study of Islamic studies so that the results of this study can be used to formulate advanced policies in the implementation of Islamic religious education in public universities that are more accommodating positive perceptions for the rights of women.

**Keywords:** *feministic discourse, Islam, women right.*

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Discussions about gender's discourse cannot be separated from the social setting, the context of life and the conditions that surround it, starting from the geographical, political, religious, economic, educational, and other aspects. Gender that has been constructed and reflected in society is then socialized through various processes, one of which is the learning process [1], [2]. The development of human character is the result of the accumulation of innate traits and the influence of the surrounding environment [3], [4]. In essence, gender is a phenomenon that is constructed socio-culturally, and the environmental factors will greatly affect a person's perception of gender itself [5], [6].

Gender is a social construction in relation to the different roles and opportunities between men and women in family and community life [7]–[9]. Culture and values in society have been shaped in such a way that there is a role played by men and handed over to women. In terms, Bano defines it as an inherent trait of men and women who are socially and culturally constructed [1].

As a social institution, gender is not something that is standard and it does not apply universally. It means that understanding gender differs from one society to another and from one time to another.

It is interesting to note that most of the Islamic teachings that touch on gender relations, such as marriage, inheritance, family relations, dress ethics and leadership fall into the second category, non-basic teachings, so they are more *ijtihad* (utilizing the reason/*aql*) [10]–[12]. For this reason, it is necessary to re-read and reconstruct the results of *ijtihad* or old interpretations which are judged to be gender biased and patriarchal value bias. New interpretations of Islamic texts are urgently needed to rediscover essential and universal moral messages, such as messages of equality, brotherhood, freedom, equality, and justice, including gender equality and justice [10], [13], [14].

Gender equality can also mean that the existence of equal conditions for women and men in obtaining opportunities and their rights as human beings, to be able to play a role and participate in political, legal, economic,

socio-cultural, education and national defence & justice activities as well as equality in enjoying development results [15]–[17]. This is marked by the absence of discrimination between women and men to have access, the opportunity to participate and control over and to obtain equal and fair benefits from development.

Gender equality does not mean treating men and women equally, but rather realizing fair treatment for men and women by considering the different needs of women and men [18]–[20]. Qualitatively, the direction and targets of gender equality policies are aimed at systematically addressing various gender inequality issues in various development fields [6], [21]. Quantitatively, gender equality refers to: 1) Achievement of basic abilities (education, health, and economy) that is equal for men and women because of the development priorities; and 2) improve the balance of women's representation in the realm of decision-making [22], [23].

Even in the educational aspect, gender discourse that still needs to be studied. The gender perception brought by students is innate and a form of accumulation of other social and cultural backgrounds [24]. Thus, the perception that students build is a form of identification of gender-related to experiences and information that will be developed by them in the future. Furthermore, this research is focus on three formulations. They are the relationship between student's sex, student's ethnicity, and student's organization Involvement on the perception of gender awareness.

**2. METHOD**

This research used a survey approach. The design of this research was explanatory research through correlational analysis. This research was also included in a cross-sectional study involving a population of 150 students (60 males and 90 females) who have taken Islamic religious education (IRE) courses in 2020-2021 from various faculties at the State University of Malang. The sampling method used was multistage random sampling, which was first randomized by means of clustering to determine a brief description (pre-research stage) of student perceptions related to gender discourse. Then, the selection of respondents was done by simple random sampling based on the list of student's names. In determining the sample, the researchers calculated the proportion of respondents from each faculty, the results obtained were 80 students from faculty of mathematic and natural sciences, 40 students from faculty of economics and 30 students from faculty of social sciences. The results of the preliminary research showed that the respondents' sexes are female (60%) and male (40%). Furthermore, based on the ethnicity, most of the respondents came from Javanese ethnicity by 85 students (56%), Madurese ethnicity by 35 students. (23%) and ethnic Sundanese by 10 students (6%) and others by 20

students (13%). The collected data consist of the primary data. Primary data were obtained through interviews conducted at the time of filling out the questionnaire. The measurement used in measuring the students' perceptions related to the level of gender awareness is the Likert scale. The data was processed by using the SPSS 21 program. Chi-Square test and Spearman correlation test were used to analyse the relationship between variables.

**3. FINDINGS**

Most of the students in this research is female. A total of 60 students (40%) are male and 90 students (60%) are female. Respondents were classified into three ethnic categories consisting of Javanese, Madurese and Sundanese, and others (Betawi, Banten, Bugis, and Chinese). Most of students in this research is Javanese, and others are Madurese, Sundanese etc. For further illustration related to student's background in Table 1.

**Table 1.** Student's background: an overview

Indicators	Categorization	Total [n]	Percentage [%]
<b>Sex</b>	Male	60	40%
	Female	90	60%
<b>Ethnicity</b>	Javanese	85	56%
	Madurese	35	23%
	Sundanese	10	6%
	etc	20	13%
<b>Involvement in student's organization</b>	High	65	43%
	Low	85	57%

n: 150 students

Regarding the novelty and the research gap between previous studies, there are fundamental differences in the types of respondents from student segmentation in the Indonesian Higher Education [25] as well as the topic [12], [19]. In research conducted by Boediarsih, the research respondents involved students at Indonesian secondary schools [26]. Yet, in this research, the number of the respondents was gained quantitatively, and their selection involved cross-faculty students. The research gap offered in this study provides a more comprehensive portrait related to the gender issues than the prior research in the similar topic.

**4. DISCUSSION**

**4.1. The relationship between student's sex and the perception of gender awareness**

In this study, student's sex is to be related to students' perceptions of gender awareness because the sex provides their own meaning regarding gender perceptions. Thus, through this research, the correlation between student's sex and gender perception will be

explored. The results of the field data survey related to student's sex in table 2.

**Table 2.** Student's Sex

Perception	Sex					
	Female		Male		Total	
	n	%	n	%	N	%
<b>High</b>	56	62%	21	35%	77	51%
<b>Medium</b>	20	23%	20	33%	40	27%
<b>Low</b>	14	15%	19	32%	33	22%
<b>Total</b>	90	100%	60	100%	150	100%
<b>P-value</b>	0,001					

Table 2 shows the dominance of findings that female students have a perception of gender awareness at a high level (62%), as well as male have a perception of gender awareness at a high level (35%). The results of the Chi Square statistical test obtained a *p-value* of 0.001. This value is much lower than  $\alpha$  score of 0.05 ( $p\text{-value} > \alpha$ ). This indicates that the research hypothesis is accepted, which it means there is significant relationship between student's sex and the perception of gender awareness.

This study shows that female and male students have gender awareness at the high level. For some cases, the few numbers of students had the lower gender awareness (15% for female students and 32% for male students).

**4.2 The relationship between student's ethnicity and the perception of gender awareness**

In this study, ethnicity is to be related to students' perceptions of gender awareness because perceptions of gender can differ from one ethnicity to another. The social and ethnic backgrounds of students provide their own meaning regarding gender perceptions. Thus, through this research, the correlation between ethnicity and gender perception will be explored. The results of the field data survey related to student's ethnicity in table 3.

Table 3 shows that students with Javanese, Madurese and Sundanese ethnic groups have a perception of gender

**Table 3.** Student's Ethnicity

Perceptio n	Ethnicity									
	Javanese		Madurese		Sundanese		etc		Total	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	N	%
<b>High</b>	36	42%	5	17%	2	20%	12	60%	65	43%
<b>Medium</b>	24	28%	10	33%	4	40%	6	30%	49	33%
<b>Low</b>	25	30%	15	50%	4	40%	2	10%	36	24%
<b>Total</b>	85	100%	35	100%	10	100%	20	100%	150	100%
<b>P-value</b>	0,311									

awareness that is dominated at the low level with little difference at the intermediate level. However, the students with other ethnic groups (Betawi, Banten, Bugis, and Chinese) showed a high level of awareness of gender perceptions. The results of the Chi Square statistical test obtained a *p-value* of 0.311. This value is much greater than  $\alpha$  score of 0.05 ( $p\text{-value} > \alpha$ ). This indicates that the research hypothesis is rejected, which means there is no significant relationship between student's ethnicity and the perception of gender awareness.

This research indicates that the ethnic group affiliated by the students do not affect their perception to gender awareness. Even though the tribe that the students belonged to is a patrilineal one [25], [26], the students do not feel that one sex should be superior than one another. This kind of feeling is based on the students' experience, that is the waning of traditional internalization customs in their family. Some students in their family give more priority in discussion before taking decisions or solving problems.

**4.3 The relationship between Involvement in student's organization and the perception of gender awareness**

In this study, the student organizations involvement is to be related to the students' perceptions of gender awareness because the perceptions of gender can differ at the level of student participation in the organization. Thus, through this research, the correlation between ethnicity and gender perception will be explored. The results of the field data survey related to student organizations involvement is in table 4.

**Table 4.** Student's organization Involvement

Perception	Student's organization Involvement					
	High		Low		Total	
	n	%	n	%	n	%
<b>High</b>	30	46%	30	35%	66	44%
<b>Medium</b>	20	31%	36	42%	50	33%
<b>Low</b>	15	23%	19	23%	34	23%
<b>Total</b>	65	100%	85	100%	150	100%
<b>P-value</b>	0,001					

Table 4 shows the dominance of findings that the students who have an active level of participation in student organizations have a perception of gender awareness at a high level (46%), but students with a passive level of participation in student organizations have a perception of gender awareness at a medium level (42%). The results of the Chi Square statistical test obtained a *p-value* of 0.001. This value is much lower than  $\alpha$  score of 0.05 ( $p\text{-value} > \alpha$ ). This indicates that the research hypothesis is accepted, which means that there is a significant relationship between the student organizations involvement and the perception of gender awareness.

This study shows that the more the students actively participate in a student organization, the more they will have positive implications for the high level of perception of gender awareness. The findings implies that if it is taken in the opposite position, it will reduce the level of gender awareness. The findings of this study strengthen previous research related to awareness of gender understanding for students [25], [26], which focused on elaborating the background of the formation of that understanding. That is, some of the variables behind the understanding of gender for students include gender and involvement in student organizations.

## 5. CONCLUSION

This study resulted that gender perception and understanding of student feminism are determined by two variables, namely gender and participation in student organizations. As for the variable of student ethnicity background, there is no strong correlation in shaping students' gender understanding. This study reveals that gender and activeness in student organizations have positive implications for increasing perceptions of gender awareness. These findings are supported by statistical tests through *chi square* with comparisons on alpha scores. This research contributes to providing academic input for efforts to increase gender awareness at the tertiary level by optimizing student activity through student organization.

## REFERENCES

- [1] R. Bano, "The Fragrance of Gender Equality in Islam. Globus Journal of Progressive Education," *Globus Journal of Progressive Education*, vol. 8, no. 2, 2018.
- [2] T. Thoriquttyas, "Segregasi Gender dalam Manajemen Peserta Didik di Lembaga Pendidikan Islam," *Martabat*, vol. 2, no. 2, pp. 287–314, 2018.
- [3] T. Anggoro, "The Methodology of Contemporary Gender Interpretation: A Study of Qirā'ah Mubādalāh," *Sawwa: Jurnal Studi Gender*, vol. 15, no. 1, pp. 53–74, 2020.
- [4] S. Blanchy, "A matrilineal and matrilocal Muslim society in flux: Negotiating gender and family relations in the Comoros," *AFRICA*, vol. 89, no. 1, pp. 21–39, 2019.
- [5] I. Bouzghaia, "Whose Gender Equality? On the Boundaries of Islam and Feminism in the MENA Region," dalam *Double-Edged Politics on Women's Rights in the MENA Region*, Springer, 2020, pp. 71–93.
- [6] S. Brenner, "Islam and gender politics in late New Order Indonesia," dalam *Spirited Politics*, Cornell University Press, 2018, pp. 93–118.
- [7] S. Glas, N. Spierings, dan P. Scheepers, "Re-understanding religion and support for gender equality in Arab countries," *Gender & Society*, vol. 32, no. 5, pp. 686–712, 2018.
- [8] A. Harahap dan H. Wahyuni, "Studi Islam dalam Pendekatan Gender," *Jurnal Kajian Gender dan Anak*, vol. 5, no. 1, pp. 47–64, 2021.
- [9] K. Hasni, "Qanun Jinayat And Sharia Police: A New Violence In The Context Of Gender In Aceh Indonesia," *Musāwa Jurnal Studi Gender dan Islam*, vol. 19, no. 2, pp. 187–203, 2021.
- [10] M. E. Hegland, "Gender and religion in the Middle East and South Asia: Women's voices rising," dalam *Social history of women and gender in the modern Middle East*, Routledge, 2018, pp. 177–212.
- [11] K. Hissong, *Islam and Gender: Major Issues and Debates*. 2020.
- [12] M. C. Inhorn, "Two 'quiet' reproductive revolutions: Islam, gender, and (in) fertility," dalam *The Routledge Handbook of Islam and Gender*, Routledge, 2020, pp. 343–357.
- [13] M. Stivens, "Gender, rights and cosmopolitanisms," dalam *Anthropology and the New Cosmopolitanism*, Routledge, 2020, pp. 87–109.
- [14] G. Tett, "'Guardians of the Faith?': Gender and Religion in an (ex) Soviet Tajik village," dalam *Muslim women's choices*, Routledge, 2020, pp. 128–151.
- [15] A. Samuels, "Islam, Gender, and the Ethics of Grieving," dalam *After the Tsunami*, University of Hawaii Press, 2019, pp. 80–110.
- [16] F. Shahin, "Islamic Feminism and Hegemonic Discourses on Faith and Gender in Islam," *International Journal of Islam in Asia*, vol. 1, no. 1, pp. 27–48, 2020.

- [17] S. Suwardi, S. Anitah, M. Akhyar, dan A. Asrowi, "Gender bias in Islamic textbooks for Muslim children in Indonesia," *ATTARBIYAH: Journal of Islamic Culture and Education*, vol. 2, no. 2, pp. 214–235, 2017.
- [18] T. Islam, L. K. Awasthi, dan U. Garg, "Gender and Age Estimation from Gait: A Review," 2021, pp. 947–962.
- [19] N. Mahomed dan S. Shaikh, "Islam between Margins: Reassessing Gender and Sexuality in Islam," *African Journal of Gender and Religion*, vol. 24, no. 2, pp. 2018.
- [20] E. Midden, "Rethinking 'Dutchness': Learning from the intersections between religion, gender and national identity after conversion to Islam," *Social Compass*, vol. 65, no. 5, pp. 684–700, 2018.
- [21] K. M. A. Harris dan A. Muhtar, "Konsep Kesetaraan Gender Menurut Perspektif Islam dan Barat: The Concept of Gender Equality in Islam and the West," *Afkar-Jurnal Akidah & Pemikiran Islam*, vol. 21, no. 2, pp. 33–74, 2019.
- [22] L. Nyhagen, "Mosques as gendered spaces: The complexity of women's compliance with, and resistance to, dominant gender norms, and the importance of male allies," *Religions*, vol. 10, no. 5, pp. 321, 2019.
- [23] T. Orr, "Gender Justice In Islam: An Evaluation of Ziba Mir-Hosseini's Religious Epistemology by Examining her Interpretation of Qur'an 4:34," Middlesex University, 2020.
- [24] M. Platt, S. G. Davies, dan L. R. Bennett, "Contestations of gender, sexuality and morality in contemporary Indonesia," *Asian Studies Review*, 2018.
- [25] A. Taher dan A. V. S. Hubeis, "Persepsi mahasiswa terhadap kesadaran gender," *Jurnal Penyuluhan*, vol. 5, no. 3, 2009.
- [26] B. Boediarsih, Z. Shaluhiah, dan S. B. Mustofa, "Persepsi Remaja tentang Peran Gender dan Gender Seksualitas di Kota Semarang," *Jurnal Promosi Kesehatan Indonesia*, vol. 11, no. 1, pp. 28–37, 2016.