

Reconstructing *qiwamah*: Implications for gender justice in Indonesian Islamic family law

Siti Aisyah^{*1}, Ahdiyatul Hidayah¹

¹ Sekolah Tinggi Agama Islam Rasyidiyah Khalidiyah Amuntai, South Kalimantan, Indonesia

Article Information	Abstract:
Submitted: 2023-08-20 Revised: 2023-10-24 Published: 2023-12-23	The construction of <i>qiwamah</i> in Islamic family law faces tension as normative male leadership intersects with changing women's economic and social roles. This condition calls for a reconstruction of <i>qiwamah</i> that connects normative status, responsibilities, spouses' actual capacities, partnership, and gender justice. This study aims to analyze the construction of <i>qiwamah</i> in Islamic family law and formulate a family leadership framework responsive to the dynamics of contemporary Muslim families. The study employs doctrinal literature analysis and reflexive thematic analysis of the Qur'an, Hadith, Indonesian family law, and academic literature on <i>qiwamah</i> , spousal relations, and gender justice. Data were collected through structured documentary searches and analyzed using deductive inductive coding and source triangulation. The findings show that <i>qiwamah</i> encompasses normative, functional, relational, and accountable dimensions. Three key findings indicate that: (1) husband's leadership constitutes a functional-accountable mandate expressed through financial maintenance, protection, guidance, and fulfillment of family needs; (2) spousal relations are based on partnership, mutual support, deliberation, reciprocity, and proportional distribution of responsibilities; and (3) <i>qiwamah</i> is normative-functional and complementary-participatory, taking into account social change and spouses' actual capacities. The study concludes that <i>qiwamah</i> is not merely a gender-based authority but leadership legitimized through responsibility, accountability, participation, rights protection, and family welfare. It contributes an integrative construction of <i>qiwamah</i> that connects Islamic normative foundations, contextual interpretation, and gender justice within contemporary Muslim family leadership.

Keywords:

Qiwamah; Gender Justice; Islamic Family Law; Gender Equality.



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To cite this article (APA Style):

Aisyah, S., & Hidayah, A. (2023). Reconstructing *qiwamah*: Implications for gender justice in Indonesian Islamic family law. *An-Nisa' Journal of Gender Studies*, 16(2), 253–268. <https://doi.org/10.35719/annisa.v16i2.181>

***Corresponding author:** Siti Aisyah, Sekolah Tinggi Agama Islam Rasyidiyah Khalidiyah Amuntai, South Kalimantan, Indonesia e-mail: sitiaisayah032002@gmail.com

INTRODUCTION

Islam upholds the principle of human equality and recognizes the leadership potential of both men and women in governance, personal affairs, and family life. Nevertheless, the realities of contemporary families indicate that many women serve as heads of households while simultaneously assuming economic and domestic responsibilities (Samtleben & Müller, 2022). This situation causes legal and social concerns because both Islamic law and Indonesian positive law assign husbands the primary responsibility for providing financial support and meeting the family's material needs (Rahman, 2022). In this context, the concept of *qiwamah*, which positions men as family leaders, constitutes one of the foundations for the gendered division of roles and is commonly associated with maintaining household order (Astutik & Muttaqin, 2020). However, socioeconomic transformations have called into question the rigid application of *qiwamah* (Basir, 2020), particularly when women contribute equally to, or even more than, the family's economic security (Ge et al., 2022; Naveed et al., 2023). Therefore, the central issue is not simply whether *qiwamah* should be preserved or rejected, but rather how it can be reconstructed to retain its normative foundations as remaining responsive to changing family relationships and structures.

Previous studies on *qiwamah* can be classified into three major strands. The first strand critiques established interpretations that may perpetuate women's subordination when male leadership is applied absolutely and rigidly within the family (Putung & Raihanah Azahari, 2020; Rohmah, 2018). The second focuses on the contextualization of *qiwamah* by considering changes in family economic structures and the reciprocal responsibilities inherent in marriage (Cheema, 2014; Faizah, 2018; Musfiroh & Syamsuddin, 2020). The third directs the division of spousal roles toward justice, equality, and a balanced distribution of responsibilities rather than relying exclusively on conventional gender norms (Auspurg et al., 2017; Bauer, 2016; Nuroniyah, 2022). Collectively, these three strands demonstrate a shift from gender-based leadership toward a more contextual and justice-oriented understanding of family relationships.

Nevertheless, previous studies have tended to address critiques of *qiwamah*, its contextualization, and equality in spousal roles separately. Few studies have integrated the husband's normative position, the fulfillment of responsibilities, the partners' actual capacities, partnership relations, deliberation, and gender justice into a unified analytical construction of *qiwamah*. Filling this gap is important because changes in household structures do not necessarily eliminate the husband's normative position; rather, they require an explanation of how such a position acquires legitimacy in practice. This study offers an original contribution by reconstructing *qiwamah* as a form of normative-functional leadership that distinguishes among normative status, functional performance, and ethical legitimacy. Within this system, leadership derives its legitimacy from the fulfillment of responsibilities, demonstrated capacity, participation, protection of rights, deliberation, and the promotion of family welfare.

Drawing on this research gap, the present study intends to analyze the construction of *qiwamah* in Islamic family law by connecting the husband's normative position with the fulfillment of responsibilities, the partners' actual capacities, partnership relations, and gender justice. It addresses three research questions: (1) How can *qiwamah* be constructed as both normative and functional leadership? (2) How can spousal roles and responsibilities be distributed according to capacity, deliberation, and partnership? and (3) How can gender justice serve as an ethical standard for the implementation of *qiwamah*? This study uses thematic analysis of the literature on Islamic family law and *qiwamah* to identify recurring patterns across the dimensions of responsibility, leadership legitimacy, functional

distribution, partnership, deliberation, and gender justice. Theoretically, the study devises a construction of *qiwamah* that integrates normative principles, functions, relationships, and justice. Practically, this system may provide a foundation for the proportional distribution of spousal roles, the protection of partners' rights, the prevention of control, and the realization of family welfare within contemporary Muslim families.

METHOD

Research Approach

This study employed doctrinal legal research and qualitative thematic analysis to examine the normative foundations, legal construction, and contemporary interpretations of *qiwamah* in family leadership (Blackham, 2022). Doctrinal analysis was applied to the Qur'an, Hadith, Indonesian marriage legislation, and the Compilation of Islamic Law. Contextual thematic analysis was used to examine the literature on spousal relations, the distribution of responsibilities, socioeconomic change, and gender justice (Kiger & Varpio, 2020). Combining these approaches enabled a dialogue among religious norms, legal provisions, and the dynamics of contemporary Muslim families. Rather than empirically examining family practices, this study developed a conceptual construction of *qiwamah* that is normative in its foundations, functional and accountable in its legitimation, relational in its orientation, and complementary and participatory in its implementation. This construction is intended to promote family welfare in a just and sustainable manner.

Data Sources

The research data comprised primary and secondary sources. The primary sources included Qur'anic verse An-Nisā' [4]:34 and other family-related verses, hadiths concerning leadership and accountability, Law No. 1 of 1974 on Marriage as amended by Law No. 16 of 2019, and the Compilation of Islamic Law. The title of each hadith collection, edition, hadith number, and authenticity status were recorded to ensure traceability. The secondary sources consisted of peer-reviewed journal articles and academic books published between 2013 and 2023 on *qiwamah*, family leadership, spousal relations, the division of family roles, and gender justice. No publication-date restriction was applied to the primary sources because they were selected for their authority, relevance, and status as the doctrinal and legal foundations for developing the study's conceptual-analytical framework.

Data Collection

Data were collected throughout 2023 through a structured documentary search of Scopus, Google Scholar, and Garuda. The search terms included "*qiwamah*," "family leadership," "husband–wife relations," "gender justice," and "Islamic family law," together with their Indonesian equivalents. Sources were included if they were published between 2013 and 2023, available in full text, academic in nature, and directly relevant to the research questions. Duplicate records, non-academic publications, sources with insufficient bibliographic information, and publications unrelated to the research focus were excluded. The selection process comprised record identification, duplicate removal, title and abstract screening, full-text eligibility assessment, and determination of the final corpus. Each stage was documented to ensure a transparent and systematic selection process.

Data Analysis

The data were analyzed using reflexive thematic analysis through six phases: familiarization with the data, generation of initial codes, construction of themes, review of themes, definition and naming of themes, and production of the research report (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Coding was conducted deductively using the concepts of responsibility,

leadership, spousal relations, and gender justice, while also proceeding inductively to identify patterns emerging from the literature. Each relevant excerpt, concept, and argument was recorded in an analytical matrix linking the source, code, category, interpretative tension, and inference. Cross-source comparisons generated five major themes: the mandate of responsibility, obligation-based legitimacy, the distribution of family functions, relational partnership, and gender justice. These themes were subsequently synthesized into a normative-functional, relational, complementary-participatory, and accountable construction of *qiwamah* within contemporary Muslim families.

Data Trustworthiness

The trustworthiness of the analysis was ensured through source triangulation, an audit trail, researcher reflexivity, and the examination of disconfirming evidence. Source triangulation involved comparing religious texts, legal provisions, academic literature, and social studies to identify convergences and divergences in perspectives on *qiwamah* (Santos et al., 2020; Campbell et al., 2020). The audit trail documented the search strategy, source-selection process, coding matrix, category revisions, and theme development. Researcher reflexivity was employed to identify how the researchers' assumptions might have influenced normative and gender-related interpretations. The conclusions were verified by tracing the relationships among the data, codes, categories, themes, and inferences, including evidence that challenged the emerging interpretations. As the study did not involve human participants, ethical approval was not required. Nevertheless, interpretative accountability was maintained throughout the research process.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results

***Qiwamah* and the construction of gender justice in family leadership**

The findings demonstrate that *qiwamah* not only establishes the husband's normative position but also encompasses responsibility, capacity, spousal relations, and family welfare. The legitimacy of the husband's leadership is derived from fulfilling the obligations of financial provision, protection, and guidance as dimensions of multidimensional accountability. In contemporary families, these functions may be negotiated according to the partners' actual capacities without necessarily altering the normative position of family leadership. The analysis identified four major themes: the mandate of responsibility, legitimacy derived from the fulfillment of obligations, multidimensional and distributed responsibilities, and gender justice as an ethical standard. Together, these themes constitute the concept of *functional-accountable qiwamah*, which grounds the legitimacy of family leadership in responsibility, deliberation, capacity, the protection of rights, and the promotion of family welfare.

Table 1

Thematic Analysis of Qiwamah and Gender Justice

No.	Finding Theme	Codes and Indicators	Interpretive Tension	Thematic Inference	Sources
1	<i>Qiwamah</i> as a mandate of responsibility	Leading, caring, maintaining, protecting, guiding, and assuming family responsibility	<i>Qiwamah</i> may denote male authority, but its semantic roots also emphasize care and accountability.	Authority does not stand independently; it gains meaning through fulfillment of family responsibilities.	Putung & Azahari (2020)
2	Legitimacy of leadership	Dower, financial maintenance,	Some interpretations	Husband's leadership is legitimate through	Efendi (2020)

	and fulfillment of obligations	protection, ability to fulfill responsibilities, and leadership capacity	associate male leadership with sex-based advantages, whereas maintenance and protection indicate a functional basis.	fulfillment of obligations, not as a right to dominate his wife.	
3	Multidimensional and distributed family responsibilities	Material, emotional, intellectual, educational, socio-moral needs, guidance, and decision-making	Husband's position as head of family does not mean all functions must be performed by him.	Family functions may be shared and negotiated according to spouses' actual capacities without automatically altering normative statuses.	Sari (2015); cross-thematic synthesis
4	Gender justice as an ethical criterion for <i>qiwamah</i>	Rights, responsibility division, consent, deliberation, opportunities, and prevention of domination	Role differences may reflect responsibility division but may produce inequality when imposed unilaterally.	Justice depends on how roles are distributed and their effects on rights, capacities, and spouses' well-being.	Muzani & Shofa (2013); Hapsari (2021); Ismail (2015); Hanifah (2020)

Source: Author's analysis (2023).

Table 1 shows that *qiwamah* links family leadership to the duties of care, guidance, protection, and provision. The husband's designation as *qawwam*, associated with the obligations of dowry, maintenance, and protection, indicates that authority entails accountability. Economic, domestic, caregiving, educational, protective, and decision-making functions may be distributed according to each spouse's capacity without necessarily altering the husband's normative leadership position. From a gender-justice perspective, differentiated roles are acceptable when negotiated through mutual consultation, protective of both spouses' rights, and free from disproportionate burdens. Thus, this study reconstructs *qiwamah* as functional, accountable leadership legitimized by responsibility, the protection of rights, spousal participation, and family welfare.

The first theme defines *qiwamah* as a mandate of responsibility linking leadership to family care. Derived from the Arabic root *q-w-m*, *qiwamah* denotes standing, protecting, maintaining, and managing responsibly, whereas *qawwam* refers to one who safeguards the family's interests (Putung & Raihanah Azahari, 2020). The husband's authority must therefore be exercised through fulfilling rights, providing protection, preventing harm, and promoting welfare. The second theme links leadership legitimacy to the fulfillment of economic, protective, and guidance-related duties. Al-Ṭabari, al-Zuhayli, and Muhammad Ali Albar associate *qawwam* with dowry, maintenance, protection, and leadership-related attributes (Efendi, 2020). However, assumptions concerning men's physical strength and emotional stability are socially situated interpretations rather than universal characteristics. The legitimacy of *qiwamah* is consequently limited by obligations, spousal rights, accountability, and family welfare.

The third theme presents *qiwamah* as multidimensional and distributable according to the spouses' actual capacities, encompassing material, emotional, intellectual, socio-moral, educational, caregiving, guidance, and decision-making responsibilities (Sari, 2015). Financial provision alone cannot constitute leadership without protection, communication, emotional support, and caregiving involvement. Family functions may be shared by agreement without eliminating either spouse's basic obligations. A wife's economic contribution or a husband's financial limitations do not automatically transfer leadership status but allow functions to be

renegotiated through cooperation, consultation, and equitable responsibility-sharing. The fourth theme establishes gender justice as the ethical standard of *qiwamah*. Gender roles are sociocultural constructions that evolve with social change (Muzani & Shofa, 2013; Hapsari, 2021). Justice requires proportional rather than identical treatment, the prevention of inequality (Ismail, 2015), and the removal of barriers to each spouse's capacity development (Hanifah, 2020). Its indicators include free consent, the fulfillment of rights, consultation, non-exploitative responsibilities, equal opportunities for development, and freedom from domination, discrimination, and violence.

These themes produce a model of *functional-accountable qiwamah*: family leadership exercised through responsibility and evaluated according to justice and welfare. Its functional dimension comprises maintenance, protection, guidance, emotional care, education, and decision-making, while its accountability dimension limits authority through spousal rights, consultation, and the prohibition of harm. The model retains the husband's normative position while linking it to fulfilled obligations and capacity-based functional distribution. Its theoretical contribution lies in distinguishing normative status, functional performance, and ethical legitimacy, thereby grounding *qiwamah* in responsibility, accountability, rights protection, and family welfare.

Relational partnership and spousal role differentiation from a gender-justice perspective

The thematic analysis shows that spousal relations are structured through partnerships shaped by partners' capacities, needs, and family circumstances. Although Islamic family law assigns specific responsibilities to husbands, domestic, social, economic, professional, and decision-making functions may be performed collaboratively. The literature coding generated five themes: (1) mutual spousal support; (2) role distribution and the prevention of double burdens; (3) emotional, spiritual, and social partnership; (4) deliberation in decision-making; and (5) the differentiation of roles and normative responsibilities. These findings affirm that family justice does not necessarily require identical spousal roles but demands partnership, reciprocity, proportional responsibility-sharing, and the protection of both partners' rights and agency.

Table 2

Thematic Findings on Husband–Wife Relations from a Gender Justice Perspective

No.	Finding Theme	Findings Indicators	Implications of the Findings	Sources
1	Mutual support between spouses	Love, prayer, motivation, access, sincerity, and support for social and professional life	Spousal success is influenced by mutual support and empowerment.	Amaranggana et al. (2021)
2	Division of roles and prevention of the double burden	Sharing economic and domestic functions, understanding each spouse's position, and jointly performing responsibilities	Proportional role distribution can prevent gender discrimination and disproportionate concentration of responsibilities.	Dilawati et al. (2021)
3	Emotional, spiritual, and social partnership	Spouses as friends and intimate partners; affection, attention, advice, motivation, and empowerment	Relations are not merely structural but oriented toward a <i>sakinah</i> , <i>mawaddah</i> , and <i>rahmah</i> family.	Thematic inference based on the overall literature
4	Deliberation in decision-making	Discussion, complementarity, shared responsibilities,	Joint decision-making prevents concentration of burdens and authority in	Utami & Priyana (2022)

		and joint decision-making	either spouse.	
5	Role differentiation and normative responsibilities	Husband as breadwinner and protector; wife managing the household by choice; financial maintenance, housing, healthcare, and children's education	Role differentiation is acceptable when freely agreed to, non-coercive, and it guarantees family members' rights.	Hidayah (2023); Hasanah (2020); Anisa & Ikawati (2021); Aswat & Rahman (2021)

Source: Author's analysis (2023).

Table 2 shows that spousal relations are constructed through mutual support, role distribution, emotional-spiritual intimacy, deliberation, and normative responsibilities. Family functions are determined not only by gender but also by the spouses' capacities, needs, circumstances, and agreements. The husband's normative responsibilities for financial provision and protection do not preclude the wife's participation in domestic, social, economic, professional, and decision-making domains. Conversely, the wife's public participation does not remove the husband's obligations. Role differentiation is just when it does not produce subordination, exploitation, restricted agency, or disproportionate burdens. Partnership, reciprocity, proportionality, and rights protection, therefore, constitute substantive parameters of justice in spousal relations.

The first theme identifies mutual support as the foundation of family relations. Spouses' personal, social, and professional achievements are supported by love, prayer, motivation, access, sincerity, and mutual appreciation ([Amaranggana et al., 2021](#)). Reciprocity enables spouses to empower one another without neglecting family responsibilities. The second theme concerns role distribution as a mechanism for allocating responsibilities proportionally and preventing discrimination and double burdens. Economic, domestic, caregiving, and social functions may be shared according to the spouses' capacities, time, needs, and agreements, particularly when wives engage in economic or professional activities while continuing to undertake domestic and caregiving work ([Dilawati et al., 2021](#)). Role distribution must therefore be negotiated to prevent exploitation, discrimination, and unequal burdens.

The third theme demonstrates that spouses are not merely formal partners but also intimate companions who provide affection, care, advice, and motivation. Their partnership encompasses religious, intellectual, social, and communicative support, respect for dignity, and the fulfillment of both partners' rights, thereby fostering a family characterized by *sakinah*, *mawaddah*, and *rahmah*. The fourth theme positions deliberation as a participatory mechanism for addressing financial matters, children's education, employment, residence, caregiving, and other household concerns ([Utami & Priyana, 2022](#)). It enables both spouses to express their interests, complement each other, and prevent the concentration of authority without negating the husband's normative position as head of the family. The fifth theme affirms the husband's primary responsibility for financial provision and protection, including housing, healthcare, and children's education. Meanwhile, the wife may contribute to domestic, economic, social, and professional domains according to her capacities and choices ([Hidayah, 2023](#); [Hasanah, 2020](#); [Anisa & Ikawati, 2021](#); [Aswat & Rahman, 2021](#)). Role differentiation becomes unjust when it is unilaterally imposed, coercive, rights-depriving, agency-restricting, or disproportionately burdensome.

The synthesis of these five themes yields a relational-proportional partnership that recognizes differentiated normative responsibilities while requiring mutual support, deliberation, equitable burden-sharing, respect for individual capacities, and the protection of rights. Its relational dimension emphasizes mutual empowerment in emotional, spiritual, social, and professional life, whereas its proportional dimension locates justice in allocating responsibilities according to capacity, need, time, circumstances, and agreement rather than requiring identical roles. This construction preserves the husband's normative obligations without legitimizing concentrated authority. The wife's economic participation neither removes the husband's obligations nor justifies assigning all domestic work to her. Its theoretical contribution lies in distinguishing consensual role differentiation from injustice that deprives rights, restricts agency, concentrates authority, or imposes disproportionate burdens.

Qiwamah as normative-functional leadership and its implications for gender justice

The thematic analysis reveals that *qiwamah* encompasses normative, historical, legal, functional, and relational dimensions. Normatively, the husband is positioned as the family leader with primary responsibility for financial provision and protection. However, social change and women's increasing economic participation require that its implementation reflect spouses' actual circumstances and capacities. The coding and categorization of the literature generated four themes: (1) the normative and historical foundations of *qiwamah*; (2) the institutionalization and accountability of the husband's leadership; (3) social change and the functional interpretation of *qiwamah*; and (4) complementary-participatory leadership from a gender-justice perspective. Together, these themes demonstrate how normative mandates, functional performance, changing family structures, and spousal participation shape the practice of *qiwamah*.

Table 3

Thematic Findings on Qiwamah and Their Implications for Gender Justice

No.	Finding Theme	Findings Indicators	Implications of the Findings	Sources
1	Normative and historical foundations of <i>qiwamah</i>	Qur'an 4:34; hadith on leaders' accountability; financial maintenance; protection; men's dominance over human and economic resources	<i>Qiwamah</i> entails a responsibility mandate developed within a socioeconomic structure positioning men as protectors and primary breadwinners.	Habibah (2015); Sukti et al. (2022)
2	Institutionalization of husband's leadership and accountability	Husband as head of family; wife as homemaker; material and emotional needs	The husband's legal status as head of family gains legitimacy through fulfillment of obligations toward wife and family members.	Anwar et al. (2018)
3	Social change and functional interpretation of <i>qiwamah</i>	Wives as breadwinners; industrialization; family needs; managerial and economic capabilities; women's leadership capacity	Changing family realities encourage a shift from gender-based leadership toward leadership grounded in capacity and fulfillment of responsibilities.	Said (2020); Murtadlo (2018); Dayu (2022); Ghufroon (2020); Andika (2018)
4	Complementary-participatory leadership and gender justice	Division of functions; complementarity; mutual assistance and respect; direction and guidance; decision-making	Functional differentiation is acceptable when nonhierarchical, safeguards both spouses' rights, and enables their participation.	Ibrahim (2013); Tusadia et al. (2023); Basyar (2020)

Source: Author's analysis (2023).

Table 3 shows that *qiwamah* connects the husband's normative leadership mandate with historical context, legal regulation, functional performance, and social change. Qur'anic verse An-Nisā' [4]:34, the hadith on leadership accountability, and Indonesian marriage law position the husband as the head of the family, responsible for financial provision and protection. However, changing family structures and women's increasing economic participation indicate that family functions are not always performed through rigid role divisions. Leadership legitimacy, therefore, depends on the capacity to manage the household, meet family needs, fulfill responsibilities, and protect family members' rights. Functional differentiation does not necessarily produce injustice unless it results in subordination, concentrated authority, or restricted spousal participation.

The first theme establishes that *qiwamah* is grounded in Qur'anic verse An-Nisā' [4]:34, which connects male leadership with the obligation to provide financial support (Habibah, 2015), while the hadith on leadership emphasizes the husband's accountability for his family. The concept developed within an Arab social context in which men predominantly controlled human and economic resources and assumed responsibility for protection and material provision (Sukti et al., 2022). Thus, *qiwamah* has a normative-historical dimension that frames the husband's authority as a mandate to provide maintenance, protection, guidance, and family welfare. The second theme concerns the institutionalization of *qiwamah* through Article 31(3) of Law No. 1 of 1974 on Marriage, which designates the husband as the head of the family and the wife as the homemaker. This position is linked to the husband's obligations to meet family needs and provide protection (Anwar et al., 2018). It is considered consistent with religious, sociocultural, and legal norms when the husband meets the family's material and emotional needs and maintains household. This institutionalization, therefore, connects the husband's status with familial duties and accountability.

The third theme reveals tension between formal role divisions and contemporary family realities. Industrialization, rising healthcare and educational costs, and expanding employment opportunities have increased women's economic participation. In some families, wives perform domestic work while also becoming breadwinners when husbands cannot meet all household needs (Said, 2020; Murtadlo, 2018). These conditions encourage a functional interpretation of *qiwamah* based on managerial ability, financial provision, and actual capacity. Amina Wadud Muhsin, Dayu (2022), Ghufroon (2020), and Andika (2018) argue that leadership capacity is not inherently attached to men. The fourth theme indicates that justice within *qiwamah* can be realized through complementary-participatory leadership. Spousal responsibilities may be distributed according to each partner's abilities and potential (Ibrahim, 2013), while wives' contributions to provision, education, management, direction, and family guidance should be recognized to prevent one party from monopolizing leadership (Tusadia et al., 2023). The husband's position as head of the family does not automatically subordinate the wife because role differentiation may reflect functional complementarity rather than hierarchy. Moreover, the duties of mutual love, assistance, respect, and fidelity apply equally to both spouses (Basyar, 2020).

The synthesis of these themes yields a *normative-functional-participatory qiwamah*. Its normative dimension positions the husband as primarily responsible for financial provision and protection; its functional dimension emphasizes the actual capacity to manage the household and meet family needs; and its participatory dimension recognizes the wife's involvement in decision-making, education, caregiving, and provision. This construction retains the husband's normative position while preventing its use for the legitimization of domination. Gender justice is therefore determined not by identical functions but by fulfilled

responsibilities, protected rights, complementary role distribution, recognition of spousal agency, and commitment to family welfare.

Discussion

This study concludes that *qiwamah* is a concept of family leadership that integrates normative, functional, relational, and accountability dimensions. Three principal findings emerged. First, *qiwamah* constitutes a mandate for functional, accountable leadership that positions the husband as the family leader responsible for financial provision, protection, guidance, and the meeting of family needs. Its legitimacy derives from the fulfillment of obligations and accountability rather than absolute authority. Second, spousal relations are constructed through partnership, mutual support, deliberation, reciprocity, and the proportional distribution of responsibilities according to the spouses' capacities, needs, circumstances, and mutual agreements. Third, *qiwamah* is normative-functional and complementary-participatory because its implementation takes into account social change and the spouses' actual capacities. Gender justice does not require identical spousal roles; rather, it ensures that functional differentiation does not result in subordination, exploitation, double burdens, concentrated authority, restricted agency, or deprivation of rights. It is therefore oriented toward the protection of rights, spousal participation, and family welfare.

In contemporary society, *qiwamah* faces challenges arising from women's increasing participation in the labor market and changes in family economic structures (Koburtay et al., 2023; Nuroniyah, 2022). Many households depend on both spouses' incomes, and in some cases, wives become the primary breadwinners when husbands are unable to meet family needs (Murtadlo, 2018). These circumstances have prompted a redistribution of economic, domestic, and decision-making functions. In Indonesia, growing awareness of gender equality has also generated criticism of traditional role divisions that may subordinate women (Balducci, 2023; Stewart et al., 2021). Disproportionate arrangements, particularly when employed wives continue to bear most domestic responsibilities, may create double burdens and undermine family harmony (Chen et al., 2018; Tiffany et al., 2023). Therefore, *qiwamah* must be contextualized without disregarding the normative responsibilities and rights of either spouse.

From Amina Wadud's gender-justice perspective, *qiwamah* should be understood contextually as a functional responsibility grounded in the spouses' actual capacities and circumstances rather than as legitimizing absolute male superiority (Wadud, 2021; Bøe, 2022). As indicated in the Qur'an, male leadership depends on managerial and financial capacity. Fatima Mernissi similarly argues that the husband's leadership loses its functional basis when he cannot provide for his wife and children (Fahrudin & Ansari, 2021; Mukaromah, 2018). This condition allows family functions to be redistributed according to the spouses' capacities without automatically eliminating the husband's normative position. Both perspectives conceptualize *qiwamah* as an accountable mandate rather than a privilege, whose legitimacy must be demonstrated through the capacity to manage, protect, and meet family needs (Faizah, 2018). Gender injustice arises not solely from the Qur'anic text but also from interpretations shaped by patriarchal culture (Syaiqhu, 2018). Accordingly, *qiwamah* permits an equitable distribution of family functions without eliminating either spouse's normative responsibilities or legitimizing male domination.

This study demonstrates that family leadership constitutes a form of trust and service rather than power or privilege. *Qiwamah* requires responsibilities to be fulfilled according to each spouse's capacity, while justice is realized through a proportional distribution of roles

that disadvantages neither partner (Ibrahim, 2013). Family success is therefore determined not only by who occupies the leadership position but also by the spouses' synergy, cooperation, and ability to meet family needs. The husband's role as breadwinner and the wife's role as household manager may be understood as complementary functional differentiation rather than a hierarchical structure that subordinates the wife (Basyar, 2020). However, this arrangement must remain open to renegotiation when family circumstances and capacities change. Renegotiating family functions neither automatically removes the husband's normative responsibilities nor diminishes the wife's rights. This interpretation establishes flexibility, deliberation, reciprocity, and recognition of each spouse's contributions as foundations of a *sakinah* family free from unilateral domination.

These findings are consistent with Efendi (2020), who positions *qiwamah* as male leadership in the domestic sphere, while this study places greater emphasis on its functional, conditional, and accountable character. It also extends Habibah's (2015) contextual approach, which relates Qur'anic verse An-Nisā' [4]:34 to the social conditions of Arab society at the time of revelation. Unlike Sukti et al. (2022), who explain male dominance in terms of control over human and economic resources, this study argues that such advantages are not permanent because economic and managerial capacities may change. Its contribution lies in integrating normative interpretation, contextual analysis, and Islamic feminist thought to construct *qiwamah* as normative in its foundations, functional-accountable in its legitimacy, relational in its orientation, and complementary-participatory in its implementation. This construction offers a middle ground between the husband's normative mandate and contemporary recognition of the wife's capacities and participation.

The findings support strengthening a contextual and gender-just understanding of *qiwamah* through premarital education and family counseling. The Indonesian Ministry of Religious Affairs and relevant institutions should update marriage-guidance materials to address flexible role distribution, capacity-based responsibilities, the prevention of double burdens, and deliberative decision-making. The Marriage Law and the Compilation of Islamic Law should also be reviewed in light of contemporary family realities in which wives may become primary breadwinners without eliminating husbands' normative responsibilities. Religious and community leaders should prevent *qiwamah* from being used to legitimize domination. At the household level, open communication is essential for distributing domestic and public roles fairly and eliminating stigma against employed wives and husbands who undertake domestic work. Future research should examine the implementation of this construction across diverse Indonesian Muslim communities to compare its conceptual formulation with actual family practices.

CONCLUSION

This study concludes that *qiwamah* constitutes a normative, functional, relational, and accountable mandate of family leadership rather than a justification for male superiority or domination. The husband's position derives its legitimacy from fulfilling responsibilities for financial provision, protection, guidance, household management, and meeting family needs. Its implementation is grounded in partnership, deliberation, mutual support, reciprocity, and the proportional distribution of functions in accordance with the spouses' capacities, needs, circumstances, and agreements. Changes in economic and managerial capacities may justify functional redistribution without eliminating the husband's normative responsibilities or the wife's rights. Gender-just *qiwamah* is therefore complementary-participatory and rejects role differentiation that produces subordination, exploitation, double burdens, restricted agency, concentrated authority, or rights deprivation. This

construction directs family leadership toward the protection of rights, meaningful participation, shared responsibility, and family welfare amid ongoing social change.

This study contributes to an integrative construction of *qiwamah* by combining Islamic normative foundations, contextual interpretation, and a gender-justice perspective. While retaining the normative sources of *qiwamah*, this construction situates its legitimacy and implementation within a functional, accountable, relational, complementary, and participatory framework. It offers a conceptual middle ground between hierarchical interpretations that may reinforce the husband's domination and approaches that disregard his normative responsibilities. Practically, the findings may inform the development of premarital education, family counseling, marriage-guidance materials, and Islamic family-policy evaluation. Their application encourages deliberation, flexible role distribution, recognition of both spouses' contributions, prevention of double burdens, and protection of spousal rights in response to the socioeconomic transformations affecting contemporary Muslim families.

This study is limited by its literature-based design; consequently, the proposed construction of *qiwamah* has not been examined through the experiences of Muslim families from diverse social, economic, cultural, and educational backgrounds. Its focus on normative discourse and Islamic feminist thought does not fully capture power negotiations, domestic conflict, caregiving practices, or changes in spousal roles across the family life cycle. Future research should employ comparative field studies, longitudinal approaches, and mixed methods to assess the implementation of the functional-accountable *qiwamah* framework in families with different breadwinning arrangements. Further studies should also incorporate the perspectives of husbands, wives, children, family counselors, marriage registrars, and religious leaders while examining how social class, geographical setting, local culture, and regulation shape just, participatory, and sustainable family relations.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The author would like to express sincere gratitude to the course supervisor for their valuable guidance, constructive feedback, insightful suggestions, and continuous support throughout the preparation of this article. The supervisor's contributions were instrumental in refining the arguments, improving the structure and quality of the manuscript, and supporting the author in completing this article.

AUTHOR CONTRIBUTION STATEMENT

Siti Aisyah: Conceptualization; Data Curation; Formal Analysis; Methodology; Visualization; Writing Original Draft; Writing Review & Editing. **Ahdiyatul Hidayah:** Data Curation; Formal Analysis; Supervision; Validation; Writing Original Draft; Writing Review & Editing.

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