

Reinterpreting Khadijah's domestic and social agency: Insights from Fatima Mernissi's gender perspective

Fitria Wahud^{1*}, Widya Ningsih², Rif'atul Khoiriah Malik², Faizah Binti Awad²
Eldar Kafarov³

¹ Sekolah Tinggi Ilmu Ekonomi Enam Enam Kendari, Southeast Sulawesi, Indonesia,

² Institut Agama Islam Negeri Kendari, Southeast Sulawesi, Indonesia

³ Massachusetts Institute of Technology, United States

Article Information	Abstract:
Submitted: 2025-06-04 Revised: 2026-03-16 Published: 2026-06-26	The role of Muslim women is frequently limited to domestic responsibilities, with their broader social contributions often marginalized by patriarchal interpretations of Islamic history. The figure of Khadijah is therefore significant for reexamining women's agency in early Islam from a contemporary critical perspective. This study analyzes Khadijah's domestic, social, and gender agency through the lens of Fatima Mernissi. A qualitative library research design was utilized, employing Braun and Clarke's thematic analysis alongside Mernissi's gender framework. Data were collected from historical sources, biographies, ḥadīth, and scholarly literature, with source triangulation employed to ensure data credibility. The findings identify three interconnected dimensions of Khadijah's agency. First, her domestic agency is evident in the emotional, moral, material, and spiritual support she provided, which strengthened the Prophet's family and sustained the prophetic mission. Second, her social agency is reflected in her solidarity, sacrifice, and public leadership during the Quraysh boycott, which contributed to the resilience of the early Muslim community. Third, from Mernissi's perspective, Khadijah exemplifies gender agency through her critique of patriarchy, egalitarian partnership, and active participation in social transformation. This study proposes an integrated conceptual model of Muslim women's agency that combines domestic, social, and gender dimensions, demonstrating that Khadijah's role extended beyond domesticity to transformative participation in family, society, and religion. The findings provide a foundation for strengthening Islamic gender education, promoting egalitarian family partnerships, and enhancing Muslim women's public participation through historically grounded and contextually informed interpretations of Islamic sources.

Keywords:

The Role Model of Khadijah; Gender Analysis; Fatima Mernissi; Islamic Feminism.



Copyright: © The author (s) 2026

This is an open access article under the terms and conditions of [the Creative Commons Attribution-Non-Commercial 4.0 International License](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc/4.0/).

To cite this article (APA Style):

Wahud, F., Ningsih, W., Malik, R. K., Awad, F. B., & Kafarov, E. (2026). Reinterpreting Khadijah's domestic and social agency: Insights from Fatima Mernissi's gender perspective. *An-Nisa' Journal of Gender Studies*, 19(1), 17-30. <https://doi.org/10.35719/an-nisa.v19i1.207>

*Corresponding author: Fitria Wahud, Management Study Program, Sekolah Tinggi Ilmu Ekonomi Enam Enam Kendari, Southeast Sulawesi, Indonesia, Email: fitriawahud@gmail.com

INTRODUCTION

Indonesian women continue to experience a double burden as they participate in both domestic and public spheres, yet their empowerment remains lower than that of men. This disparity suggests that increased female participation has not resulted in an equitable distribution of roles within families and society (Cerrato & Cifre, 2018; Pereira & Rebelo, 2024). According to BPS (2025), the female labor force participation rate in 2024 was 56.42%, significantly lower than the male rate of 84.66%. Although this figure increased from 51.80% in 2018 and the gender gap narrowed to 28.24 percentage points, substantial inequality persists. These conditions highlight the necessity for historical models that affirm the legitimacy of Muslim women's public roles (Samier & ElKaleh, 2021; Okumuş & Gümüş, 2025). In Islamic history, *Rasūlullāh ṣallā Allāhu 'alayhi wa-sallam* elevated women's status through their involvement in economic, educational, and da'wah activities. *Khadījah raḍiya Allāhu 'anhā* was a successful merchant, and *Ā'ishah raḍiya Allāhu 'anhā* became an educator of the Muslim community (Sulasmini et al., 2020). Studying *Khadījah raḍiya Allāhu 'anhā* is therefore essential for illustrating a model of empowered womanhood in family life, spirituality, and society (Ernaeny et al., 2025; Rashidah, 2019).

Extensive research has examined women's roles in both domestic and social contexts. The present study synthesizes these findings into three primary categories. First, Khadījah is depicted as a visionary, independent, and courageous leader, a successful merchant, and a supporter of Prophet Muḥammad's da'wah through significant material, spiritual, and social contributions (Riyadi et al., 2021; Sbaihat, 2022; Ihsani et al., 2024; Nafila et al., 2025). Second, Khadījah fulfilled her family responsibilities, cultivated relational ethics, and supported Prophet Muḥammad in domestic, socio-religious, and early Muslim community contexts in a balanced manner (Swastika & Wiyatmi, 2020; Munazir, 2024; Hamid et al., 2025b; Qadeer et al., 2025). Third, Muslim women are framed as agents of empowerment, leadership, textual reinterpretation, gender justice advocacy, and resistance to patriarchy, fundamentalism, and social control (Susiawati, 2025; El Marwiah, 2025; Ali, 2025; Othman, 2006; Mamun & Hossen, 2025). This study addresses a gap in the literature by analyzing Khadījah as an agent of domestic, social, and gender empowerment through an integrated historical-feminist approach, focusing on family support, early Islamic resistance, and Mernissi's critique of patriarchy.

Addressing the identified research gap, this study examines the role of Khadījah as a Muslim woman who demonstrated domestic, social, and gender agency in early Islamic history, analyzed through the lens of Fatima Mernissi. The study explores the following questions: (1) In what ways did Khadījah's domestic agency strengthen the Prophet's family and support the continuity of the prophetic mission? (2) How did Khadījah's social agency contribute to early Islamic resistance through solidarity, sacrifice, and public leadership? (3) How does Mernissi's perspective interpret Khadījah as a symbol of patriarchal critique, egalitarian relations, and women's public participation? By integrating the history of Khadījah, Islamic feminism, and the concept of women's agency, this study contributes to Islamic gender studies. Additionally, it provides practical insights for contemporary Muslim women seeking to balance family responsibilities, spirituality, social engagement, and public leadership in a just and empowering manner.

This study contends that the role of Sayyidah Khadījah exemplifies the agency of Muslim women, challenging the notion of passive domesticity. Within the family, Khadījah's emotional, moral, material, and spiritual support for Prophet Muḥammad established the foundation for household resilience and the continuity of the prophetic mission. Socially, her participation during the Quraysh boycott demonstrated solidarity, sacrifice, and public

leadership, thereby strengthening the early Muslim community's resistance and resilience. From a feminist perspective, Khadījah embodies a critique of patriarchal structures, as her relationship with the Prophet was characterized by egalitarian partnership, trust, and shared contribution. Consequently, this study asserts that early Islamic history provides both normative and historical grounds for recognizing women's agency in the family, the economy, religion, and the public sphere in transformative ways. The research aims to reinterpret the roles of contemporary Muslim women in addressing the double burden, gender inequality, and the pursuit of just and empowering social participation.

METHOD

Research Approach

A descriptive qualitative approach with a library research design is employed to systematically describe the role of Khadījah bint Khuwaylid in domestic and social spheres (Elliott & Timulak, 2021). The analysis is situated within Islamic gender studies, specifically adopting Fatima Mernissi's perspective to examine the relationship between text, culture, power, and the construction of women's roles (Ennaji, 2022; Rhomari & Edderaouy, 2025). Mernissi contends that gender inequality in Muslim societies does not originate from al-Qur'ān, but rather from human interpretive biases toward the sacred text (Mernissi, 1991). Within this framework, Khadījah is conceptualized as a historical figure who held significant social, economic, spiritual, and familial positions, and whose legacy remains relevant for examining the condition of contemporary Indonesian women (Riyadi et al., 2021).

Data Sources and Collection

Primary data are derived from works on prophetic history and the biography of Khadījah, including *Sīrah Nabawīyyah* by Ibn Hishām, *The Complete History of the Life of the Prophet PBUH*, *Biografi Umm al-Mu'minīn Khadījah* by Shaykh 'Abd al-Ḥamīd Maḥmūd Ṭahmāz, and scholarly journal articles on Sayyidah Khadījah (raḍīya Allāhu 'anhā). These sources provide historical information regarding Khadījah's domestic, social, spiritual, and economic roles. Secondary data are obtained from studies on family fiqh, women's double burden, family resilience, women in the household from an Islamic perspective, women-initiated divorce, fiqh feminism, and nushūz in marriage. All data are selected based on source credibility, consistency, and relevance to Islamic gender analysis, forming the basis for interpreting Khadījah's agency historically, textually, critically, and contextually.

Data Analysis

Data are analyzed using Braun and Clarke's (2006) thematic analysis within the gender perspective of Fatima Mernissi (1991). The analysis process includes exploration and in-depth reading of credible sources on the biography of Sayyidah Khadījah (raḍīya Allāhu 'anhā), followed by data identification, coding, theme classification, interpretation, and conclusion drawing. The thematic framework comprises three main themes: Khadījah's domestic agency in strengthening the prophetic mission, her social agency in supporting early Islamic resistance, and her gender agency from Mernissi's perspective. These themes facilitate examination of emotional, moral, material, and spiritual support, solidarity, sacrifice, public leadership, patriarchal critique, egalitarian relations, and women's participation. This framework enables a critical reading of women's position in Islam and its relevance to the empowerment of contemporary Indonesian Muslim women.

Trustworthiness of the Data

To ensure trustworthiness, source triangulation is applied by comparing various relevant works on Islamic history, biography, ḥadīth, and Islamic gender studies (Meydan & Akkaş,

2024). Triangulation ensures that information about Sayyidah Khadījah's life, roles, and contributions is corroborated by multiple credible, complementary sources (Kumar et al., 2023; Papavasileiou & Dimou, 2024). Additional considerations include content consistency, authorial authority, relevance to the research focus, and alignment with Fatima Mernissi's theoretical framework. These measures provide a strong academic foundation, enhance accountability, and minimize interpretive bias.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results

Khadījah's domestic agency in strengthening the prophetic mission

The thematic analysis of primary and secondary sources identified the first major theme: Khadījah's domestic agency in strengthening the prophetic mission. This theme comprises five subthemes: (1) a loyal and caring wife, (2) a provider of emotional and physical support, (3) a spiritual companion, (4) a source of moral strength, and (5) the earliest supporter of the Islamic mission. Together, these subthemes demonstrate that Khadījah's domestic support strengthened family resilience, sustained the prophetic mission, and contributed to the formation of the early Muslim community. The findings are presented in Table 1.

Table 1

Thematic Analysis of Khadījah's Domestic Agency in Strengthening the Prophetic Mission

Theme	Subtheme	Thematic Evidence	Interpretation	References
Khadījah's domestic agency in strengthening the prophetic mission	A loyal and supportive wife	Khadījah consistently provided emotional, moral, and material support to the Prophet Muḥammad from the beginning of his prophethood until her death.	Their marital relationship was founded on partnership, mutual trust, and shared responsibility, all of which contributed to the continuity of the prophetic mission.	Thahmaz (2015); Mernissi (1991)
	A provider of emotional and physical support	The account recorded in <i>Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī</i> states that Khadījah comforted the Prophet when he received the first revelation and offered him psychological reassurance.	Emotional support constituted an essential component of family resilience and strengthened the capacity to confront social pressures.	<i>Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī</i> (2002)
	A spiritual companion	Khadījah was the first person to affirm Muḥammad's prophethood and embrace Islam when the wider community rejected his message.	Women played an active role in providing spiritual reinforcement and sustaining the Islamic mission.	<i>Musnad Aḥmad</i> ; <i>Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī</i> (2002)
	A source of moral strength	Khadījah's faith and conviction motivated the Prophet to remain steadfast in the face of opposition from the Quraysh.	Moral support within the family provided psychological and spiritual strength during times of crisis.	ʿUmar (2012)
	The earliest supporter of the Islamic mission	Khadījah was the first woman to embrace Islam and accompanied the Prophet in worship and in the dissemination of Islam from the earliest period of the mission.	Women made a fundamental contribution to the transformation of religion and the development of the early Muslim community.	Ibn Hishām (2015); Ibn al-Athīr al-Jazarī (2009)

Source: Authors' thematic analysis of primary and secondary sources (2026).

The findings in Table 1 indicate that Khadījah's domestic agency was shaped by five interrelated subthemes. The subtheme of a loyal and supportive wife demonstrates that Khadījah established a marital relationship characterized by loyalty, mutual trust, and shared responsibility, providing the Prophet Muḥammad with emotional, moral, and material support. This evidence suggests that marriage in early Islamic history operated not only as a familial bond but also as a partnership that supported the prophetic mission.

The subtheme of providing emotional and physical support illustrates that Khadījah offered the Prophet comfort, reassurance, and a sense of security, particularly following his first revelation. This support was instrumental in strengthening the Prophet's psychological resilience amid the social pressures of the early Islamic mission. Additionally, the subtheme of spiritual companionship reveals that Khadījah was the first to accept and affirm Muḥammad's prophethood, even as the people of Mecca rejected his message. Her faith evolved into a form of spiritual support that contributed to the endurance of the Islamic mission.

The subtheme of being a source of moral strength demonstrates that Khadījah's faith in God and conviction in the prophetic mission motivated and reinforced the Prophet's steadfastness in the face of rejection and pressure from the Quraysh. The subtheme of being the earliest supporter of the Islamic mission further indicates that Khadījah was not only the first Muslim woman but also an active participant in the early dissemination of Islam, contributing through spiritual support, personal sacrifices, and sustained commitment to the prophetic cause.

In summary, the findings indicate that Khadījah's domestic agency extended beyond conventional familial roles and formed a crucial foundation for family resilience, the psychological fortitude of the Prophet Muḥammad, and the continuity of the Islamic mission during its formative period. Through the lens of Fatima Mernissi's gender perspective, these patterns suggest that the domestic sphere can serve as a site where women exercise agency via emotional, spiritual, moral, and material support, thereby contributing significantly to social and religious transformation. The findings also demonstrate that women in early Islamic history assumed active roles through egalitarian partnership, spiritual commitment, and shared responsibility, challenging patriarchal interpretations that confine women to passive domestic functions.

Khadījah's social agency in supporting the early islamic struggle

The thematic analysis identified the second major theme: Khadījah's social agency in supporting the early Islamic struggle. This theme comprises five subthemes: (1) a symbol of social solidarity, (2) a source of community resilience, (3) an advocate for marginalized groups, (4) a contributor to the development of the Muslim community, and (5) a model of women's public leadership. Together, these subthemes demonstrate that Khadījah's contributions extended beyond the domestic sphere, strengthening social solidarity, sustaining the early Muslim community, and advancing women's leadership in public life. The findings are presented in Table 2.

Table 2

Thematic Analysis of Khadījah's Social Agency in Supporting the Early Islamic Struggle

Theme	Subtheme	Thematic Evidence	Interpretation	References
Khadījah's social agency in supporting the early Islamic struggle	A symbol of social solidarity	Khadījah accompanied the Prophet Muḥammad and Banū Hāshim during the Quraysh boycott in Shi'b Abī Ṭālib, enduring hunger, social pressure, and isolation	Social solidarity demonstrates that women acted as active participants in collective and humanitarian struggles.	Mernissi (1991)

	alongside the Muslim community.			
A source of community resilience	Khadījah utilized her wealth, social networks, and influence to sustain the Muslim community during periods of crisis.	Community resilience was strengthened through women's contributions in social, economic, and humanitarian spheres.	Armstrong (2002)	
An advocate for marginalized groups	Khadījah willingly relinquished her comfortable life and shared the suffering of Muslims subjected to the boycott.	Social leadership was expressed through empathy, sacrifice, and solidarity with vulnerable groups.	Haykal and Al-Faruqi (2014)	
A contributor to the development of the Muslim community	Khadījah's support contributed to the continuity of the prophetic mission and the formation of the first Muslim community.	Women made a fundamental contribution to the formation of Muslim society and civilization from its earliest phase.	Yulianti et al. (2024); Mariadi et al. (2025)	
A model of women's public leadership	Khadījah actively engaged in trade, social sacrifice, and various public activities that supported the Islamic mission.	Women's public leadership is compatible with Islamic values and can coexist with familial responsibilities.	Mernissi (1991)	

Source: Authors' thematic analysis of primary and secondary sources (2026).

Table 2 reveals that Khadījah's social agency is articulated through five interrelated subthemes. The subtheme of social solidarity highlights Khadījah's active participation with the Prophet Muḥammad and Banū Hāshim during the Quraysh boycott in Shi'b Abī Tālib. Her endurance of hunger, social pressure, and isolation exemplifies women's ability to engage directly in collective struggles within the Muslim community.

The subtheme of community resilience demonstrates that Khadījah leveraged her wealth, social networks, and influence to sustain the Muslim community during times of crisis. Her support reinforced both the community's economic stability and social resilience under pressure from Quraysh. Additionally, the subtheme of advocacy for marginalized groups shows that Khadījah shared the hardships of persecuted Muslims despite her privileged social and economic status. This pattern indicates that social leadership is defined by empathy, sacrifice, and dedication to social justice.

The subtheme of contribution to the development of the Muslim community underscores Khadījah's direct support for the Prophet Muḥammad's mission, which facilitated the formation of the earliest Muslim community. This evidence emphasizes the foundational role of women in the initial development of Muslim society. Furthermore, the subtheme of women's public leadership illustrates that Khadījah's engagement in trade, social sacrifice, and public activities demonstrated women's ability to exercise social leadership while maintaining familial responsibilities.

In summary, the findings indicate that Khadījah's social agency extended beyond domestic roles. Her efforts in fostering social solidarity, enhancing community resilience, protecting vulnerable groups, and supporting the development of Muslim society position women as key agents of social transformation in the early Islamic period. Through Fatima Mernissi's gender perspective, these patterns reveal that the public sphere is not exclusively male, but rather a domain where women can demonstrate leadership, promote solidarity, and

actively contribute to social change. Khadījah thus exemplifies women's leadership in Islam, rooted in moral courage, sacrifice, social concern, and commitment to the common good.

Reinterpreting Khadījah's Agency through Fatima Mernissi's Gender Perspective

Following the identification of the two principal themes, Khadījah's domestic and social agency, the thematic analysis generated a synthesizing theme that explains how these two forms of agency can be understood through Fatima Mernissi's gender perspective. This theme does not represent an additional empirical finding; rather, it constitutes an interpretative synthesis of the patterns identified in the two preceding themes. The analysis indicates that Khadījah's agency encompasses three principal dimensions within Mernissi's perspective: a critique of patriarchy, egalitarian relationships, and women's participation in the public sphere. These dimensions demonstrate that Khadījah's contributions were not confined to the familial domain but also encompassed moral, social, and religious leadership, which played a significant role in the development of the early Muslim community. The thematic synthesis is presented in Table 3.

Table 3

Synthesis of Khadījah's Agency through Fatima Mernissi's Gender Perspective

Dimensions of Mernissi's Perspective	Synthesis of Findings on Domestic Agency	Synthesis of Findings on Social Agency	Gender Interpretation
Critique of patriarchy	Khadījah's emotional, spiritual, moral, and material support demonstrates that women's domestic roles can constitute a form of family leadership rather than subordination.	Khadījah's involvement in social struggles demonstrates that women actively participated in societal transformation from the earliest period of Islam.	Women's agency challenges patriarchal constructions that restrict women to passive domestic functions.
Egalitarian relationships	The relationship between Khadījah and the Prophet Muḥammad was founded on trust, partnership, and shared responsibility in supporting the prophetic mission.	Khadījah's contributions to the Muslim community demonstrate cooperation between women and men in the development of Muslim society.	Gender relations are understood as equal, complementary, and responsibility-sharing partnerships rather than relations of domination.
Women's participation in the public sphere	Khadījah's domestic support provided a foundation for the continuity of the Islamic mission.	Her commercial activities, social solidarity, and public leadership demonstrate women's full capacity to participate in economic, social, and religious life.	Women possess the right, capacity, and legitimacy to participate in the public sphere while maintaining familial responsibilities.

Source: Authors' thematic synthesis based on Braun and Clarke (2006) and Mernissi (1991), 2026.

The synthesis presented in Table 3 demonstrates that Khadījah's domestic and social agency were mutually reinforcing in constructing a model of women's leadership in Islam. In the context of critiquing patriarchy, the patterns identified in the preceding themes indicate that Khadījah's domestic roles were not acts of subordination. Rather, these roles served as expressions of moral, spiritual, and social leadership that sustained the Islamic mission. Her engagement in public activities further illustrates that women had opportunities to contribute to social transformation from the earliest period of Islamic history.

The dimension of egalitarian relationships reveals that the relationship between Khadījah and the Prophet Muḥammad was based on trust, cooperation, and shared responsibility. Khadījah's emotional, spiritual, and material support for the Prophet, combined

with her efforts to strengthen the Muslim community, demonstrates that the success of the Islamic mission relied on collaboration between women and men. This evidence indicates that gender relations in early Islam were not solely defined by male domination but were also rooted in partnership and complementarity.

Moreover, the scope of women's participation in the public sphere demonstrates that Khadijah's economic activities, social solidarity, and leadership expanded the agency she exercised within the domestic sphere. Her familial responsibilities did not limit her societal engagement; rather, they served as a foundation for her broader contributions to social, economic, and religious life. Consequently, the domestic and public spheres should be regarded as interconnected spaces that collectively reinforced women's leadership.

Overall, this synthesis demonstrates that Khadijah's agency constitutes an integrated form of women's leadership encompassing both the domestic and social domains. Through Fatima Mernissi's gender perspective, these patterns affirm that women possess moral, spiritual, economic, and social authority alongside men in the development of families, communities, and Islamic civilization. Khadijah thus represents a significant historical figure in early Islam and serves as a model of women's leadership that challenges patriarchal constructions and remains relevant to contemporary Muslim women's empowerment.

Discussion

This study demonstrates that Sayyidah Khadijah played pivotal roles in both domestic and social contexts. Her domestic contributions encompassed emotional, moral, material, and spiritual support, which fortified the Prophet's family and facilitated the continuity of the prophetic mission during a period of significant historical transformation. In the social sphere, Khadijah demonstrated solidarity, sacrifice, and public leadership, particularly in confronting the Quraysh boycott and in strengthening the resilience of the early Muslim community. From Fatima Mernissi's perspective, Khadijah embodies gender agency by critiquing patriarchal norms, fostering egalitarian relationships, and engaging in substantive public participation during the formative years of Islam. Consequently, Sayyidah Khadijah's example illustrates that Muslim women's agency from the earliest Islamic period extended beyond domestic roles to encompass moral, social, and spiritual leadership, as well as active resistance to patriarchal limitations on women's participation in society.

The findings of this study are pertinent to contemporary social challenges encountered by Indonesian Muslim women, particularly the dual burden of managing domestic responsibilities, employment, social engagement, and family economic obligations (Samtleben & Müller, 2022; Sahni et al., 2025). Khadijah's example demonstrates that the domestic sphere serves as a foundation for family resilience and social transformation, providing comprehensive support for Prophet Muhammad. Her leadership during the Quraysh boycott underscores women's capacity for leadership, solidarity, and public contribution in times of crisis. According to Fatima Mernissi, Khadijah exemplifies gender agency by challenging patriarchal structures through egalitarian relationships and substantive social participation (Sahar, 2025). This relevance is further reflected in Minangkabau matrilineal culture, which enhances women's agency through robust social and familial support systems (Kiram, 2025; Wan et al., 2024). Consequently, the reinterpretation of Islamic values and local wisdom is crucial for advancing equality, economic empowerment, family resilience, and equitable, sustainable public participation among contemporary women.

Fatima Mernissi's (1991) feminist theoretical framework applies a historical-critical analysis of ḥadīth, examining both isnād and matn, to reveal patriarchal constructs that restrict women's public roles (Rhomari & Edderaouy, 2025). A central focus of her critique is

the ḥadīth regarding the prohibition of women's leadership (Mujtahid et al., 2023; Wijayanti et al., 2018). This study argues that cultural and gender biases require critical reassessment, as women are active and integral participants in both family and society. Mernissi (2008) presents Khadījah as an independent woman, an accomplished entrepreneur, and a respected supporter of the Prophet. This portrayal exemplifies an egalitarian domestic and social partnership grounded in equality and justice (Anadza, 2024; Romdhoni, 2024; Khofiyya et al., 2024). This perspective is further supported by interpretations of al-Qur'ān that advocate for equitable household labor division (Boo, 2025; Kiram, 2025), facilitating the development of an inclusive Muslim society that optimizes the potential of both men and women without subordination.

This study contends that the dual role of Muslim women should be recognized not solely as an individual challenge, but as a broader social issue necessitating awareness, policy intervention, and collective support (Houmine, 2024; Sharifnia et al., 2024). The example of Khadījah demonstrates that women can successfully integrate family responsibilities, spirituality, economic activities, and social contributions when supported by equitable family relations and egalitarian partnerships (Anis, 2019; Hamid et al., 2025). Consequently, equitable domestic labor division, acknowledgment of wives' economic contributions, spousal support, and effective family time management are essential for alleviating women's psychosocial pressures. Wahyu et al. (2023) highlight that family support is crucial for establishing equal family structures and fostering a sustainable society. This study positions Khadījah as a model of active, resilient, and spiritual Muslim womanhood. Zaman et al. (2020) further note that Khadījah's balanced application of Islamic psychological management renders her an exemplar for self-development, family resilience, and the empowerment of contemporary Muslim women.

Compared with previous studies, this study is consistent in positioning Khadījah as an important figure in early Islam. Hamid et al. (2025a) and Hamid et al. (2025b) examine her through phenomenology and textual analysis based on the narrations of 'Ā'ishah (raḍīya Allāhu 'anhā); Nafila et al. (2025) employ a thematic approach to al-Qur'ān and ḥadīth; Asdlori et al. (2025) and Kusaini et al. (2021) emphasize biographical and ethical analyses; while Sbaihat (2022) highlights her image in nineteenth-century Orientalism. In contrast, this study emphasizes three forms of Khadījah's agency: domestic, social, and gender agency. Khadījah is understood as the Prophet's emotional, moral, material, and spiritual supporter; a leader of solidarity during the Quraysh boycott; and a representation of patriarchal critique, egalitarian relations, and public participation from Fatima Mernissi's perspective (Mujtahid et al., 2023). The scholarly position of this study expands the fiqh of egalitarian partnership by integrating historical studies, Islamic feminism, and the contemporary social needs of Indonesian women in a critical and contextual manner within current Islamic gender studies (Fatimah et al., 2025).

Based on the findings, several practical recommendations should be implemented to support the realization of a balanced role for women in both the domestic and social spheres. First, the Office of Religious Affairs (KUA) should provide premarital education on the deconstruction of patriarchy so that the smallest social institution, namely the household, can gain a direct understanding of egalitarian partnership based on Islamic teachings. Second, feminist figures and religious leaders should be encouraged to continue providing practical guidance on creating harmony within the family. Finally, the government, as the highest authority, needs to develop special programs for men concerning the importance of husband-wife partnership, the division of domestic roles, and mutual support in public activities. In addition, Khadījah and Prophet Muḥammad should be presented as concrete examples of egalitarian partnership in Islamic family life.

CONCLUSION

The findings indicate that Sayyidah Khadijah exemplifies the agency of Muslim women, extending beyond restrictive domestic roles. Her emotional, moral, material, and spiritual support for Prophet Muhammad illustrates that the household can function as a site for cultivating resilience, vision, and historical transformation. Additionally, her participation during the Quraysh boycott demonstrates that women are capable of social solidarity, public leadership, and collective courage during periods of crisis. According to Fatima Mernissi, Khadijah was not merely the Prophet's wife but an active agent who contested patriarchal norms through egalitarian relationships and substantive social engagement. Therefore, the analysis affirms that women's agency in early Islam was multifaceted, encompassing family, economic, spiritual, communal, and critical social dimensions, and remains pertinent for analyzing the challenges encountered by contemporary Indonesian Muslim women, particularly regarding the double burden and the pursuit of gender justice.

This research contributes to Islamic gender studies by integrating the historical narrative of Khadijah, Islamic feminism, and the concept of egalitarian partnership. This approach reframes women from passive domestic figures to active subjects with moral, economic, social, and spiritual capacities. In practical terms, the study offers a basis for enhancing family policy, gender education, and the empowerment of Muslim women. The proposed values extend beyond public participation to emphasize spousal support, equitable domestic labor division, acknowledgment of wives' economic roles, and mutually supportive family relationships. Consequently, Khadijah emerges as a normative model for contemporary Muslim women seeking to balance family life, spirituality, professional engagement, social leadership, and economic independence in a just, sustainable, and contextually relevant manner.

The primary limitation of this study is its textual, historical, and conceptual orientation, which does not fully address the empirical experiences of contemporary Muslim women across diverse social classes, cultures, and regions. The analysis also relies on interpretations of Khadijah and Mernissi's theoretical frameworks, indicating a need to engage with additional perspectives within Islamic feminism. Future research should include field studies to investigate how Khadijah's values of agency are enacted within families, women's organizations, Islamic educational settings, and public policy. Furthermore, comparative studies across Muslim communities in Indonesia are necessary to explore variations in family support, domestic labor division, public participation, and women's empowerment strategies, particularly among urban populations, pesantren communities, matrilineal societies, and women workers.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

Gratitude is extended to colleagues and friends whose discussions and constructive suggestions contributed to the completion of this article. It is anticipated that this study will offer meaningful benefits and significant implications for the sustainability of women's empowerment in both domestic and public spheres.

AUTHOR CONTRIBUTION STATEMENT

Fitria Wahud: Conceptualization; Data Curation; Formal Analysis; Methodology; Writing Original Draft. **Widya Ningsih:** Conceptualization; Data Curation; Formal Analysis; Methodology; Writing Original Draft. **Rif'atul Khoiriah Malik:** Formal Analysis; Visualization; Writing Review & Editing. **Faizah Binti Awad:** Formal Analysis; Resources; Writing Original Draft. **Eldar Kavafro:** Formal Analysis; Resources; Writing Original Draft.

REFERENCES

- Al-Bukhārī, M. ibn I. (2002). *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*. Dār Ibn Kathīr.
- Ali, B. (2025). Model penelitian feminisme: Khadijah Al Kubra role model feminisme dalam Islam. *Muqaddimah*, 16(1), 9–25. <https://doi.org/10.71247/kdmyz012>
- Al-Jazarī, I. al-A. (2009). *Jāmi' al-uṣūl fī aḥādīth al-Rasūl*. Dār al-Kutub al-'Ilmiyyah.
- Anadza, H. (2024). Redefining boundaries: Women's strategic position in the evolving international public realm. *Global: Jurnal Politik Internasional*, 26(1), 1–24. <https://doi.org/10.7454/global.v26i1.1303>
- Anis, R. B. (2019). Asiyah, Maryam and Khadijah as role models for contemporary Muslim women. *IJUM Journal of Human Sciences*, 1(1), 30–42. <https://doi.org/10.31436/ijohs.v1i1.13>
- Armstrong, K. (2000). *Islam: A short history*. Modern Library.
- Asdlori, A., Diasworo, O., & Purnomo, S. (2025). Khadijah's concept of moral education: Humanity and faith. *International Journal of Social Science and Human Research*, 8(5). <https://doi.org/10.47191/ijsshr/v8-i5-34>
- Boo, H. S. (2025). Islamic religiosity and its impact on Muslim men's share of housework and childcare time in Malaysia: A proxy investigation. *Social Sciences & Humanities Open*, 11, Article 101292. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ssaho.2025.101292>
- BPS. (2025). *Keterlibatan perempuan di parlemen*. <https://www.bps.go.id/id/statistics-table/2/NDY0Izl=/keterlibatan-perempuan-di-parlemen.html>
- Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2006). Using thematic analysis in psychology. *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, 3(2), 77–101. <https://doi.org/10.1191/1478088706qp063oa>
- Cerrato, J., & Cifre, E. (2018). Gender inequality in household chores and work-family conflict. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 9, Article 1330. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2018.01330>
- El Marwiah, K. (2025). Unveiling the forgotten voices: Women's role in Islamic civilization through Fatima Mernissi's perspective. *JUSMA: Jurnal Studi Islam dan Masyarakat*, 4(1), 24–38. <https://doi.org/10.21154/jusma.v4i01.4387>
- Elliott, R., & Timulak, L. (2021). *Essentials of descriptive-interpretive qualitative research: A generic approach*. American Psychological Association. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0000224-000>
- Ennaji, M. (2022). Mernissi's impact on Islamic feminism: a critique of the religious approach. *British Journal of Middle Eastern Studies*, 49(4), 629–651. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13530194.2020.1840963>
- Ernaeny, W., Nurhadi, A., Aurell, A., & Haque, I. (2025). Psychological support of Sayyidah Khadijah (RA) in the early reception of revelation. *Psikis: Jurnal Psikologi Islami*, 11(1), 176–190. <https://doi.org/10.19109/PSIKIS.V11i1.24728>
- Fatimah, Rosyadi, I., & Arifin, M. Z. (2025). Kurikulum PAI responsif gender: Peran mahasiswa PTKI dalam visi keluarga sakinah berbasis kemitraan. *An Naba*, 8(2), 206–219. <https://doi.org/10.51614/5hencs23>
- Hamid, N. B. A., Sadini, M. L., Karim, H. H., Che Rus, M. F., & Zulkepli, M. I. S. (2025a). Beside every great man is a great woman: An analytical study of a hadith on the Prophet Muḥammad's wife, Khadijah RA, as narrated by 'Ā'ishah RA. *International Journal of Research and Innovation in Social Science*, 9(XX), 163–172. <https://doi.org/10.47772/IJRISS.2025.90200016>
- Hamid, N. B. A., Sadini, M. L., Karim, H. H., Zulkepli, M. I. S., & Zakaria, A. T. B. (2025b). Khadijah Binti Khuwaylid: Intelligence, character, and her role in strengthening Islam through the family institution. *International Journal of Research and Innovation in Social Science*, 9(2), 217–224. <https://doi.org/10.47772/IJRISS.2025.90200022>

- Haykal, M. H., & Al-Faruqi, I. R. (2014). *The life of Muḥammad*. American Trust Publication.
<https://muqith.wordpress.com/wp-content/uploads/2010/10/muhammadbyhaykal.pdf>
- Hishām, I. (2015). *Sīrah nabawiyah Ibn Hishām: Sejarah lengkap kehidupan Rasulullah SAW*.
- Houmine, M. (2024). Assessing the impact of Islamic teachings on the rights and welfare of Muslim women: A policy and social justice perspective. *Religion and Policy Journal*, 2(2), xx–xx. <https://doi.org/10.15575/rpj.v2i2.981>
- Ihsani, A. Z., Ramdani, N. M., Andini, R. P., Salsabila, R. A., Anisa, S. N., & Nurjaman, A. R. (2024). Pola asuh feminisme dalam perspektif Islam. *Profetik: Jurnal Mahasiswa Pendidikan Agama Islam*, 5(1), 1–10. <https://doi.org/10.24127/PROFETIK.V5I1.5639>
- Khofiyaa, R. N., Tazkiyatan, N., & Darnoto, D. (2024). The roles and rights of women in the modern era from an Islamic perspective. *Hayula: Indonesian Journal of Multidisciplinary Islamic Studies*, 8(2), 215–226. <https://doi.org/10.21009/hayula.008.02.05>
- Kiram, M. Z. (2025). Gendered division of domestic labour: Indonesian Muslim men's perceptions, participation, and experiences in housework and childcare. *Journal of Gender Studies*. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09589236.2025.2473923>
- Kumar, A., Shrivastav, S. K., & Bhattacharyya, S. (2023). Measuring strategic fit using big data analytics in the automotive supply chain: A data source triangulation-based research. *International Journal of Productivity and Performance Management*, 72(10), 2977–2999. <https://doi.org/10.1108/IJPPM-11-2021-0672>
- Kusaini, A. N., Muyasaroh, M., Ladamay, O. M., & Basri, H. (2021). Materi akhlak dalam keteladanan Khadījah menurut Ibrahim Muhammad Hasan Al-Jamal. *Tamaddun*, 22(1), 15–26. <https://doi.org/10.30587/TAMADDUN.V22I1.2914>
- Mamun, M. A. A., & Hossen, M. N. (2025). Faith and empowerment among Bangladeshi Muslim women. *Muslim Politics Review*, 4(2), 305–336. <https://doi.org/10.56529/mpr.v4i2.510>
- Mariadi, H., Alfarisy, H., Efendi, I., Demina, D., & Yahya, M. (2025). Pengaruh perjalanan spiritual Nabi Muhammad SAW terhadap perkembangan Islam. *Jurnal Studi Islam Indonesia (JSII)*, 3(1), 25–30. <https://doi.org/10.61930/jsii.v3i1.1033>
- Mernissi, F. (1991). *The veil and the male elite: A feminist interpretation of women's rights in Islam* (M. J. Lakeland, Trans.). Addison-Wesley Publishing Company. <https://archive.org/details/veilmaleelitefem00mernrich/page/n5/mode/2up>
- Mernissi, F. (2008). *Perempuan-perempuan harem*. Qanita.
- Meydan, C. H., & Akkaş, H. (2024). The role of triangulation in qualitative research: Converging perspectives. In A. Elhami, A. Roshan, & H. Chandan (Eds.), *Principles of conducting qualitative research in multicultural settings* (pp. 101–132). IGI Global Scientific Publishing. <https://doi.org/10.4018/979-8-3693-3306-8.ch006>
- Mujtahid, M., Assidiqi, A. H., & Sadiyah, D. (2023). Perspective on Fatima Mernissi's position of thought on Indonesian women's leadership in the 21st century. *An-Nisa': Jurnal Kajian Perempuan dan Keislaman*, 16(2), 171–182. <https://doi.org/10.35719/ANNISA.V16I2.175>
- Munazir, S. (2024). Khidmat as understanding: Muslim women, marriage, and ethics of care in Muslim households. *South Asia Multidisciplinary Academic Journal*, 32. <https://doi.org/10.4000/136kg>
- Nafila, L. R., Na'im, M. A., Budianto, B. F., & Huda, M. M. (2025). Khadijah bint Khuwaylid: Sacrifice in the religion of Islam. *Proceedings of International Conference on Islamic Civilization and Humanities*, 3, 1272–1281. <https://proceedings.uinsa.ac.id/index.php/iconfahum/article/view/3297>

- Okumuş, H. Ş., & Gümüş, M. A. (2025). Revitalizing mahr for Muslim women's empowerment within Türkiye's secular legal system. *Social Sciences & Humanities Open*, 12, 101644. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ssaho.2025.101644>
- Othman, N. (2006). Muslim women and the challenge of Islamic fundamentalism/extremism: An overview of Southeast Asian Muslim women's struggle for human rights and gender equality. *Women's Studies International Forum*, 29(4), 339–353. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.wsif.2006.05.008>
- Papavasileiou, E. F., & Dimou, I. (2024). Evidence of construct validity for work values using triangulation analysis. *EuroMed Journal of Business*, 20(5), 98–115. <https://doi.org/10.1108/EMJB-10-2023-0287>
- Pereira, A., & Rebelo, E. M. (2024). Women in public spaces: Perceptions and initiatives to promote gender equality. *Cities*, 154, 105346. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.cities.2024.105346>
- Qadeer, M., Aslam, S., Akhtar, M., & Yaseen, M. (2025). Hazrat Khadija (R.A.) as a role model. *CJSSR*, 3(2), 1093–1102. <https://doi.org/10.63878/cjssr.v3i2.712>
- Rashidah, R. (2019). Khadījah (RA), an ideal wife: A perfect model and example of Muslim women. *Global Journal of Human-Social Science*, 19(A13), 1–5. <https://socialscienceresearch.org/index.php/GJHSS/article/view/3051>
- Rhomari, D., & Edderaouy, B. (2025). Western hermeneutics in the feminist writings of Fatima Mernissi. *International Journal of Research and Scientific Innovation (IJRSI)*, 12(7), 36–49. <https://doi.org/10.51244/IJRSI.2025.120700005>
- Riyadi, A., Saerozi, S., & Savitri, F. M. (2021). Women and the da'wah movement: Historical analysis of Khadijah RA's role in the time of Rasulullah SAW. *Ilmu Dakwah: Academic Journal for Homiletic Studies*, 15(1), 43–62. <https://doi.org/10.15575/idajhs.v15i1.9346>
- Romdhoni, A. A. (2024). The role and position of women in Islam according to Hanafi Agustin and Dewi Ratna in the journal of gender studies. *INTERDISIPLIN: Journal of Qualitative and Quantitative Research*, 1(4), 313–319. <https://doi.org/10.61166/interdisiplin.v1i4.59>
- Sahar, N. (2025). Feminist exegesis and Muslim women's agency: A critical analysis of Fatima Mernissi and Saba Mahmood's perspectives for contemporary times. *Middle East Journal of Islamic Studies and Culture*, 5(2), 172–184. <https://doi.org/10.36348/mejisc.2025.v05i02.007>
- Sahni, S., Kaushal, L. A., & Gupta, P. (2025). Gendered differences and strategies for work-life balance: Systematic review based on social ecological framework perspective. *Acta Psychologica*, 256, 105019. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.actpsy.2025.105019>
- Samier, E., & ElKaleh, E. (2021). Towards a Model of Muslim Women's Management Empowerment: Philosophical and Historical Evidence and Critical Approaches. *Administrative Sciences*, 11(2), 47. <https://doi.org/10.3390/admsci11020047>
- Samtleben, C., & Müller, K.-U. (2022). Care and careers: Gender (in)equality in unpaid care, housework and employment. *Research in Social Stratification and Mobility*, 77, 100659. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.rssm.2021.100659>
- Sbaihat, A. (2022). Khadījah's image in 19th century orientalism. *Al-Jāmi'ah: Journal of Islamic Studies*, 60(2), 399–426. <https://doi.org/10.14421/AJIS.2022.602.399-426>
- Sharifnia, A. M., Bulut, H., Ali, P., & Rogers, M. (2024). Muslim women's experiences of domestic violence and abuse: A meta-ethnography of global evidence. *Trauma, Violence, & Abuse*. Advance online publication. <https://doi.org/10.1177/15248380241286836>

- Sulasmini, R., Songidan, J., & Nur, M. (2020). Histori dan peran da'wah ṣaḥābiyyah: Khadījah, 'Ā'ishah, dan Umm Salamah. *Al-Idzā'ah: Jurnal Dakwah dan Komunikasi*, 2(1), 53–63. <https://doi.org/10.24127/AL-IDZAAH.V2I01.248>
- Susiawati, I. (2025). Feminisme dalam perspektif Islam: Dialog antara tradisi dan modernitas. *Journal of Southeast Asian Islam and Society*, 4(1), 1–14. <https://doi.org/10.30631/JSEAIS.V4I1.2927>
- Swastika, I., & Wiyatmi. (2020). The Muslim women figure in Sibel Eraslan's *Khadījah: Ketika Rahasia Mim Tersingkap*. 349–353. <https://doi.org/10.2991/ASSEHR.K.200804.068>
- Thahmaz, A. H. M. (2015). *Biografi Umm al-Mu'minīn Khadījah*. Kiswah Media.
- Umar, A. al-M. M. (2012). *Khadījah: The true love story of Muḥammad*. Pena Pundi Aksara.
- Wahyu, Suwandi, & Rofiq, A. (2023). *Feminism in Islam: Its relation to the rights and responsibilities of career women in domestic spaces*. <https://doi.org/10.15575/IJNI.V11I2.27967>
- Wan, P. M., Evelynd, E., & Mangsor, M. I. (2024). Beyond divorce: Unraveling the intersection of culture, religion, and agency in Minang Muslim women's lives. In *Muslim women's lived experiences and intersectional identities: A global perspective* (pp. 3–22). Springer. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-75729-7_1
- Wijayanti, R., Adinugraha, H. H., Sartika, M., & Anas, A. (2018). Pemikiran gender Fatima Mernissi terhadap peran perempuan. *Muwazah*, 10(1). <https://ejournal.uingusdur.ac.id/Muwazah/article/view/8628>
- Yulianti, S., Maulana, J., Wiska, W., Nasyifa, E., Wismanto, W., & Mayasari, F. (2024). Perjalanan dakwah Rasulullah SAW dari Makkah ke Madinah. *Reflection: Islamic Education Journal*, 2(1), 40–48. <https://doi.org/10.61132/reflection.v2i1.377>
- Zaman, R. Z., Che Nordin, M. K. N., Nasir, K., & Abd Azid, M. A. (2020). Pengurusan psikologi kekeluargaan: Penelitian terhadap keperihalan Khadījah RA dalam Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī [The conduct of family psychology: A comprehensive review of Khadījah RA in Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī]. *Hadis: International Refereed Academic Journal in Hadith Studies*, 10(19), 538–550. <https://doi.org/10.53840/HADIS.V10I19.82>