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Interpreting Faith and Good Deeds Through a Gender Lens: Insights from Thematic Qur'anic Exegesis

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Abstract

Objective: Explain and strengthen the understanding of gender balance in the context of faith and charity based on the thematic interpretation of Surah An-Nisa verse 124, as well as how the principles of equality in Islam can be applied in socio-religious life. **Theoretical framework:** The concept of justice and gender equality in Islam is based on thematic interpretation (tafsir maudhu'i), as well as the principles of faith and charity as pillars of just and inclusive religious life. **Literature review:** Previous studies of the interpretation of Surah An-Nisa verse 124, the thoughts of commentary scholars on the role of gender in religion, as well as literature that discusses gender equality in the context of Islam and society. **Methods:** A thematic interpretation approach (maudhu'i) to the verses of the Qur'an (An-Nisa: 124) by examining the context of the text (textual) and the social context (contextual) to understand the meaning and implications of the verses on gender issues. **Results:** Ayat An-Nisa: 124 shows that Islam upholds the principles of justice and gender equality in terms of faith and charity. There is no difference in reward between men and women who do righteous deeds. This supports the creation of an inclusive and gender-fair society. **Implication:** This study provides a theological basis for efforts to strengthen the role of women in socio-religious life and is a contribution to the discourse of gender equality in Islam, especially in the context of social interpretation and praxis. **Novelty:** Using a thematic interpretation approach specifically to An-Nisa: 124 to highlight gender equality in the context of faith and charity, and to relate it to the socio-religious roles of men and women more inclusively and contextually.

Keywords: gender balance, faith and deeds, thematic interpretation, justice and equality, roles of women and men.

INTRODUCTION

The issue of gender balance in Islam is one of the important themes that continues to be discussed in the development of religious and social thought. Equality between men and women is not only relevant in cultural and societal contexts but also in spiritual and religious aspects. One of the verses of the Qur'an that affirms this principle is QS. An-Nisa:124, emphasizes that both men and women have equal rights and opportunities in doing good deeds and reaping rewards from Allah SWT. This verse becomes the theological basis that virtue in Islam is determined by the quality of faith and charity, not by gender [1].

Surah An-Nisa generally carries the message of justice, the protection of vulnerable groups, and the enforcement of human rights, including women's rights. QS. An-Nisa:124 specifically rejects gender discrimination by granting women an equal footing in spiritual responsibilities and social roles. However, in practice, there are still many Muslim societies that are influenced by a patriarchal culture that limits the role of women in various aspects of life. This inequality shows that there is a gap between the universal teachings of Islam and the social reality faced by women [2].

Therefore, the study of QS. An-Nisa:124 is very important to reaffirm Islam's commitment to gender equality. This verse is not only a normative postulate but also a theological framework to build a new, more equitable, and inclusive understanding of the role of women. In the modern context, the application of these verse values is expected to encourage the creation of a social system that respects the equal role of women and eliminates discriminatory practices that are not in accordance with Islamic principles [3].

In recent decades, the discourse on gender equity in religious contexts has gained significant momentum. Within Islamic scholarship, there has been growing interest in revisiting foundational texts such as the Qur'an to explore how faith (iman) and righteous action (amal salih) are understood in relation to both men and women. However, traditional interpretations have often been shaped by patriarchal cultural norms, resulting in a gender-biased representation of religious merit and spiritual status. This has contributed to a theological gap in the recognition of women's spiritual agency and moral accountability, particularly in the interpretation of Qur'anic verses that link faith and deeds to divine reward [3].

Despite the Qur'an's frequent emphasis on the equal accountability and reward of men and women based on their faith and actions, a comprehensive thematic analysis from a gender perspective remains underrepresented in classical and even modern tafsir (Qur'anic exegesis). Much of the existing literature either treats gender marginally or focuses exclusively on legalistic issues such as inheritance and testimony, rather than on spiritual parity. This reveals a significant research gap: while gender studies in Islam have flourished in legal and sociological domains, there is limited engagement with gendered interpretations of core theological concepts like iman and amal salih in the framework of Qur'anic values [3].

Addressing this gap is not only academically relevant but also socially urgent. As Muslim societies engage in broader conversations about gender justice, equality, and inclusivity, it is vital to ground such discussions in scriptural integrity. The Qur'an remains the ultimate source of authority in Islamic epistemology, and its interpretations play a pivotal role in shaping gender norms across communities. A gender-sensitive thematic interpretation of Qur'anic verses can offer a more balanced, just, and inclusive vision of spirituality that empowers both men and women equally as moral and faithful agents before God. This study is particularly important for three reasons. First, it contributes to the deconstruction of long-held assumptions that spirituality and religious merit are hierarchically gendered. Second, it promotes a re-reading of the Qur'an that is consistent with the broader Islamic principles of justice ('adl) and mercy (rahmah), values often sidelined in gender discussions. Third, it provides a scholarly response to contemporary demands for interpretative methodologies that resonate with lived realities, especially in Muslim-majority societies striving to reconcile tradition with gender equity [4].

The novelty of this research lies in its methodological and conceptual approach. Rather than focusing on isolated verses or relying solely on classical tafsir, this study employs a thematic exegesis (tafsir maudhu'i) method, organizing related verses across the Qur'an under the themes of faith and good deeds, and analyzing them through a gender lens. This approach allows for a holistic and integrative understanding of Qur'anic messages, unveiling patterns of equality and inclusivity often overlooked in atomistic readings. Furthermore, by

applying gender analysis to theological themes—rather than legal or social topics—it offers a relatively unexplored perspective in Qur’anic studies [4].

This paper argues that a thematic Qur’anic interpretation through a gender lens not only reveals the spiritual equality of men and women but also affirms that divine evaluation is based on inner faith and outward deeds, irrespective of gender. By bringing together scriptural evidence, exegetical insights, and gender theory, the study advances a fresh and meaningful contribution to contemporary Islamic thought. It aspires to reshape the discourse on gender and spirituality by affirming that both men and women are equally addressed, valued, and rewarded in the moral and eschatological framework of the Qur’an.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The exploration of gender in the context of Islamic teachings has long been discussed, yet much of the focus has remained on legal aspects such as marriage, inheritance, and testimony. Discussions around gender and spirituality—particularly the concepts of faith and righteous deeds—have received comparatively less attention. Traditional Qur’anic exegesis often centers on the linguistic, grammatical, and jurisprudential dimensions of the text, with interpretations shaped by the socio-cultural norms of their time. As a result, understandings of gender roles in relation to spiritual merit have frequently reflected patriarchal assumptions rather than the Qur’an’s broader ethical vision [5].

In classical tafsir, men and women are both acknowledged as moral agents responsible for faith and good deeds. However, the emphasis often leaned toward male-centered experiences, leaving the spiritual agency of women relatively underexplored. This has led to a perception—sometimes subtly reinforced through religious discourse—that men are spiritually superior or more eligible for divine reward, despite the Qur’an’s repeated assertion of equal accountability and recompense [5].

In modern scholarship, efforts have been made to revisit Qur’anic interpretations through a more inclusive lens. This has included the use of thematic exegesis, which seeks to gather and analyze Qur’anic verses according to specific themes, allowing for a holistic understanding that transcends isolated textual readings. Yet, even within this framework, the intersection of gender with theological themes such as faith and righteous action remains an area with limited focused research [6].

This study aims to address that gap by applying a gender perspective to thematic Qur’anic exegesis, with particular attention to how the Qur’an conceptualizes the moral and spiritual value of men and women equally. By doing so, it seeks to uncover deeper insights into the Qur’an’s ethical paradigm—one that upholds justice, dignity, and spiritual equality across gender lines—thus offering a more balanced and comprehensive understanding of Islamic teachings in today’s context [6].

Table 1. Literature Review on Gender, Faith, and Good Deeds in Qur’anic Exegesis

Aspect	Findings
Focus of Classical Exegesis	Primarily emphasizes legal, linguistic, and jurisprudential aspects. Gender issues addressed indirectly, often influenced by patriarchal contexts.
Representation of Gender	Men and women acknowledged as moral agents, but male experiences are often centralized. Female spiritual agency underrepresented.
Spiritual Equality in the Qur’an	The Qur’an emphasizes equal accountability and reward for both men and women based on faith and deeds. This is often overlooked in interpretation.
Gap in Current Studies	Most gender-related studies focus on legal topics (e.g., inheritance, marriage), with limited attention to spiritual and theological dimensions.
Modern Interpretive Approaches	Emerging approaches aim to reframe interpretation through thematic and gender-sensitive perspectives, though still underutilized in this area.
Thematic Exegesis	Offers a holistic method by analyzing multiple verses on a theme. Has

(Tafsir Maudhu'i)	potential to clarify gendered spiritual messages but rarely applied fully.
Purpose of Current Study	To apply a gender lens to thematic Qur'anic interpretation of faith and good deeds, highlighting spiritual equity and shared moral responsibility.
Contribution to Scholarship	Provides a deeper understanding of Qur'anic ethics, supports justice-oriented readings, and promotes gender balance in theological discourse.

METHODOLOGY

This study uses a thematic interpretation method with a sociological approach to analyze gender balance in the context of faith and righteous deeds based on QS. An-Nisa: 124. A sociological approach is a view or paradigm used to describe the state of society complete with structures, layers, and various other social phenomena that are interrelated. Sociology can be used as one of the approaches to understanding religion, this is because many fields of religious studies can only be understood proportionately and appropriately when examined and studied through the sociological approach. Religion and social life have a close relationship, besides being a belief, religion is also a social phenomenon, meaning that the religion adhered to gives birth to social behavior, namely behavior that grows and develops in a common life. These behaviors affect each other. Religious norms and values have a great influence on social behavior [6].

The main focus of the research is to explore the theme of equality between men and women in faith and righteous deeds. Data collection is carried out through QS text. An-Nisa:124 and related commentaries, both classical (such as al-Tabari, al-Qurtubi, ibn Kathir, Almaraghi) and contemporary, as well as other relevant verses. Data analysis was carried out by identifying the theme of gender equality, analyzing the historical context (asbab al-nuzul), examining the linguistic meaning of important words in verses, and researching the practical application of these teachings in daily life [7].

The thematic interpretation method involves the following steps:

1. Theme Determination: Establish the main theme of gender balance in faith and charity.
2. Collection of Related Verses: Identify relevant verses, especially QS. An-Nisa: 124.
3. Context Analysis: Analyze the historical and social background (asbabun nuzul) of the verse.
4. Formulation of Views: To formulate the Qur'an's views on gender equality based on the analysis carried out.

Table 2. Research Methodology Overview

Component	Description
Research Title	Gender Equality in Faith and Charity: A Thematic Study of Surah An-Nisa Verse 124
Types of Research	This research is qualitative because the main focus is to explore the meaning and understanding of the Qur'anic text and the literature of interpretation, not statistical data or numbers.
Approach	The approach used is a thematic interpretation approach (maudhu'i), which examines certain themes, namely gender equality in faith and charity, which is based on the Qur'an and classical and contemporary interpretations.
Key Data Sources	The main source studied is Surah An-Nisa verse 124, complemented by the interpretations of scholars in the books of tafsir such as: - Tafsir Al-Misbah - Tafsir Ibn Katsir - Tafsir Al-Maraghi - Tafsir Fi Zhilalil Qur'an - Tafsir Ath-Thabari - Tafsir Al-Qurtubi.
Supporting Resources	Books and scholarly journals that discuss gender themes in Islam, the thoughts of Islamic feminist figures, as well as contemporary studies

	related to gender justice in spirituality.
Data Collection Techniques	Data is collected through literature research, namely reading, taking notes, and researching Qur'anic texts, interpretations, and other academic references.
Data Analysis	Data analysis is carried out by: 1. Analysis of the content of the verse and its interpretation. 2. Comparison of the opinions of the mufassir. 3. Conclusion about the Qur'an's recognition of equal rights between men and women in terms of faith and righteous deeds.
Research Objectives	To gain a deeper understanding of how the Qur'an emphasizes that men and women have equal status in terms of faith and good works.
Research Questions	How does Surah An-Nisa verse 124 explain gender equality in the context of faith and charity according to various interpretations?
Relevance and Benefits	This research is important to affirm that Islam recognizes and values the spiritual contributions of men and women equally, thus underpinning a comprehensive narrative of gender justice from an Islamic perspective.

In the study of gender balance in the context of faith and charity, the keyword is lafadz in QS. An-Nisa:124 can be analyzed using the Maudhui method. This verse states that whoever believes and does righteous deeds, both men and women will be given a great reward without any discrimination based on sex. The key words in this verse are "faith" (الإيمان) and "righteous deeds" (العمل الصالح). In the context of gender balance, the word "faith" includes the recognition that faith is the main condition for receiving one's charity, regardless of whether they are male or female. Similarly, the phrase "righteous deeds" affirms that both men and women have the same right to do good deeds and reap rewards. Thus, gender balance in the context of faith and charity leads to the conclusion that both have an equal role in spiritual and social life, provided that both are of faith and do righteous deeds [8].

Faith (الإيمان)

The word "faith" is linguistically derived from the root word أَمَنَ which means to believe or believe with all one's heart. In this context, faith refers to a deep belief and belief in Allah, His Messenger, and the teachings of Islam that must be accepted and believed by every individual, both male and female. Faith is not just a verbal confession but includes the conviction of the heart and practice in daily life. In the Qur'an, faith is often accompanied by righteous deeds, which shows that faith without charity is not enough to obtain blessings and rewards from Allah. Faith is referred to in QS. An-Nisa:124 is a sincere and consistent faith, which involves all aspects of a Muslim's life, regardless of gender [9].

Amal Saleh (العمل الصالح)

Pious deeds mean good deeds done by the teachings of Islam. The word "charity" comes from the root عَمِلَ which means to do or to do, while "righteous" comes from the word صَلِحَ which means good, righteous, or by Allah's guidance. Pious deeds include all forms of deeds that are considered good by Allah, such as worship, doing good to others, seeking knowledge, helping others, and playing a role in the development of a better society. In the context of this verse, righteous deeds are a measure of a person's acceptance in the sight of Allah, regardless of whether a person is a man or a woman. Both men and women, as long as they have faith and do righteous deeds, will receive equal rewards. This righteous deed also includes all aspects of life, both individual (such as personal worship) and social (such as doing good to others) [10].

Quranic Verses

Here are some verses of the Qur'an that mention and explain that both men and women who believe and do righteous deeds will enter heaven, along with their interpretation according to the Ministry of Religion (Kemenag):

QS. An-Nisa: 124

وَمَنْ يَعْمَلْ مِنَ الصَّالِحَاتِ مِنْ ذَكَرٍ أَوْ أُنْثَىٰ وَهُوَ مُؤْمِنٌ فَأُولَٰئِكَ يَدْخُلُونَ الْجَنَّةَ وَلَا يُظْلَمُونَ نَقِيرًا

"And whoever does righteous deeds, both male and female, while he is a believer, then they will enter Paradise and they will not be wronged in the slightest."

Ministry of Religion's Interpretation: This verse shows that the happiness and reward promised by Allah do not look at gender. Both men and women who believe in and do righteous deeds will have a glorious place in heaven without the slightest injustice. Pious deeds that are done sincerely and by Allah guidance are the main keys to attaining paradise [11].

QS. Al-Baqarah: 82

وَالَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ أُولَٰئِكَ أَصْحَابُ الْجَنَّةِ هُمْ فِيهَا خَالِدُونَ

Meaning: "And those who believe and do righteous deeds, they are the inhabitants of Paradise; they remain in it."

Interpretation of the Ministry of Religion: This verse underlines that happiness in the hereafter, namely heaven, will only be obtained by those who believe and do righteous deeds. In this case, there is no difference between men and women, both have the same right to paradise as long as they meet the requirements of faith and righteous deeds. Righteous deeds include all good deeds done by Allah's commands [12].

QS. At-Tawbah: 72

وَعَدَ اللَّهُ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ وَالْمُؤْمِنَاتِ جَنَّاتٍ تَجْرِي مِنْ تَحْتِهَا الْأَنْهَارُ خَالِدِينَ فِيهَا وَمَسَاجِدٍ وَمَجَازِينٍ مُتَتَجِمِينَ وَ يَفْتَرُونَ طَائِرًا

"Allah has promised to those who believe and do righteous deeds, both men and women, a paradise under which rivers flow, they will abide in it."

Ministry of Religion Interpretation: This verse provides a guarantee of paradise for those who believe and do righteous deeds, regardless of gender. Allah promises eternal peace and happiness to those who fulfill their religious obligations and do good. Righteous deeds here include all forms of obedience to Allah performed by both men and women [13].

QS. Al-Ahzab: 35

إِنَّ الْمُسْلِمِينَ وَالْمُسْلِمَاتِ وَالْمُؤْمِنِينَ وَالْمُؤْمِنَاتِ وَالْقَنَاتِ وَالْقَنَاتِ وَالصَّادِقِينَ وَالصَّادِقَاتِ وَالصَّابِرِينَ وَالصَّابِرَاتِ وَالْحَشَعِينَ وَالْحَشَعَاتِ وَالْمَتَصَدِّقِينَ وَالْمَتَصَدِّقَاتِ وَالصَّيْمِينَ وَالصَّيْمَاتِ وَالْحَافِظِينَ فُرُوجَهُمْ وَالْحَافِظَاتِ وَالذَّاكِرِينَ اللَّهَ كَثِيرًا وَالذَّاكِرَاتِ أَعَدَّ اللَّهُ لَهُمْ مَغْفِرَةً وَرَحْمَةً وَأَجْرًا عَظِيمًا

"Verily, Muslim men and Muslim women, male believers, and female believers, those who obey men and obey women, those who are true men and true women, those who are patient with men and patient women, who are solemn men and solemn women, who give alms to men and women to almsgiving, who fast men and fasting women, who maintain the honor of men and women, and who remember Allah many men and women, Allah has prepared for them forgiveness, mercy, and great rewards".

Ministry of Religion Interpretation: This verse contains the understanding that men and women who fulfill the qualities of goodness mentioned in this verse—such as obedience, patience, solemnity, almsgiving, fasting, and maintaining honor—are all entitled to

forgiveness, mercy, and great rewards from Allah. This shows that in Islam, both men and women have an equal chance of attaining paradise by the righteous deeds that they do according to His provisions [14].

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Classification and Asbabul nuzul QS An-Nisa: 124

Surah An-Nisa is the 4th surah included in the category of Madaniyah surah. QS. An-Nisa:124 is included in the category of Madaniyah verses because they were revealed after the Prophet Muhammad SAW and his followers migrated to Medina. At that time, Muslims began to build a more organized society with more complex social, political, and legal challenges compared to those in Mecca. This verse touches on social and legal issues relevant to civil society, especially related to the regulation of individual rights, justice, and gender equality in the lives of Muslims [15].

The background of this verse is related to the view that developed in Arab society at that time regarding women's pious deeds, which were considered unequal to men. The society at that time, especially in Medina, needed an affirmation of gender equality in terms of pious deeds and merit. This verse comes down in response to and dispels this view, affirming that everyone, both male and female, who believes and does righteous deeds, is entitled to an equal reward in the sight of Allah, which is heaven [16].

In addition, in Medina, many regulations began to be drafted to facilitate the social, economic, and political life of Muslims, where women's rights are one of the aspects that need to be clearly regulated. This verse serves as a legal basis to ensure that women have the right to participate in righteous deeds and receive equal rewards to men [17].

The asbab nuzul or the background of the descending of this verse is related to the discriminatory treatment of women in the Jahiliyah Arab society, where women are often considered to have no important role in social and religious life. Many people are of the view that women cannot get equal rewards to men, especially in terms of righteous deeds. This verse comes down in response to this view and affirms that women who believe and do righteous deeds deserve equal rewards to men [18].

Along with the development of Islamic society in Medina, the debate about the position of women in pious deeds began to emerge. Some people still doubt whether women who do righteous deeds can get equal rights with men. This verse comes down to assure that women and men who believe and do righteous deeds have equal rights with Allah. This verse also comes after a debate on women's rights in the society of Medina, to affirm that equality before Allah is a basic principle in Islam and that Allah does not discriminate between the sexes in judging a person's righteous deeds [19].

Connecting Sentences to the Contents of the Letter in General

Surah An-Nisa generally talks about social justice, women's rights, intergender relations, and the importance of balance in religious life. Verse 124 in Surah An-Nisa also contains a relevant message about righteous deeds and faith, which does not regard gender. In verse 124 of Surah An-Nisa (4:124):

"Whoever does righteous deeds, both male and female, in a state of faith, they will enter Paradise, and they will not be wronged in the least."

Surah An-Nisa: 124 affirms that righteous deeds and faith are two things that determine a person's salvation, regardless of gender. Both men and women have an equal opportunity to reap rewards and receive a just reward from Allah, this verse can be the basis that gender justice in Islam is not only seen in the recognition of women's basic rights but also terms of appreciation for faith-based deeds regardless of gender. In this perspective, it is important to

emphasize that in religion, both men and women have an equal opportunity to carry out religious obligations and get rewarded for their righteous deeds [20].

Definition of Gender Balance in Islam

Gender deniability in general

The origin of word "gender" comes from the old French "gender", which later evolved into "genre" in modern French. Etymologically, this word refers to a group or category that is distinguished based on certain characteristics. At first, in French usage, the word "genre" was more often used to classify word types in grammar. However, in the 20th century, the use of the word "gender" began to be used to refer to the social, behavioral, and role differences associated with sexual identity in social and cultural contexts. In its development, the concept of "gender" has become more complex, not only referring to the biological differences between "male" and "female", but also involving social, cultural, and psychological factors in understanding the construction of human gender identity [21].

A broader understanding of gender and space for diverse gender identities is essential in creating an inclusive society that respects individual freedom. Gender is a social and cultural concept that refers to the roles, attributes, and expectations associated with "men" and "women" in a society [22]. It is not something biologically inherent but is a social construct given to individuals based on their gender. The concept of gender varies across cultures and times and can change as social developments and societal values change.

Gender position in the Quran

The Qur'an deals with the topic of gender and discusses the roles and positions of "men" and "women" from the perspective of the Qur'an, which shows that "men" and "women" are seen as equal in various aspects of life, both spiritual and social. The Qur'an affirms that both have an equal opportunity to do good deeds and get the same reward. QS An-Nisa: 124 explains that whoever does righteous deeds with faith, whether male or female, will get paradise in return. This is also reinforced in QS An-Nahl: 97 which states that both will be given a good life and a better reward if they believe and do good deeds [23]. Furthermore, QS Al-Hujurat: 13 reveals that human beings, both male and female, are created from one origin and the most noble in the sight of Allah are those who are pious. This verse affirms that man's standing before God is not influenced by gender but by piety. In addition, Islamic scholars also emphasize the importance of the role of women in the family. Women are considered to have great responsibilities as mothers, wives, and members of society, as well as role leaders in the household. Overall, the Qur'an teaches gender equality, giving equal rights and responsibilities between men and women to live their lives according to their respective natures [24].

The concept of gender in the Quran

The conception of gender in the perspective of the Qur'an is usually associated with verses that contain gender biases. These gender-biased verses in the claims of gender proponents or the feminist movement are very descriptive and appropriate against women. In the Qur'an, there are many verses that talk about men and women either in the form of Lafdzi or maudhui [25]. The Qur'an, as the main source in Islamic teachings, has affirmed that Allah the Almighty created human beings including male and female. There are at least four words that are often used in the Qur'an to designate humans, namely *basyar*, *insan* and *al-nas*, and *bani adam*¹⁰. Each of these words refers to the best of Allah's creatures (*fi ahsan taqwim*), although it has the potential to fall to the lowest point (*asfala safilin*), but with a different emphasis. These four words include both men and women [26].

Comparison between the concept of gender balance in Islam and modern sociological perspectives

The concept of gender balance in Islam and modern sociological perspectives have different but complementary approaches to understanding the roles of men and women in society. In the Islamic view, gender balance is based on the principles of justice and equality before God, despite differences in roles, rights, and obligations between men and women. Islam emphasizes that this distinction is not a form of discrimination, but a way to create social harmony. Men and women are considered to have equal values but with different responsibilities, so they complement each other [27].

On the other hand, modern sociological perspectives often highlight issues of gender inequality that arise as a result of existing social and cultural structures. Modern sociology considers that many of the existing gender norms are social constructs that can change over time. In this context, gender balance is seen as a goal to achieve equal rights and opportunities for all individuals regardless of gender. This includes the elimination of gender stereotypes as well as the empowerment of women in various aspects of life [28].

Although these two perspectives have different focuses—Islam places more emphasis on spiritual and moral values while modern sociology focuses more on structural analysis—the two can complement each other. For example, an understanding of justice in Islam can provide a moral foundation for modern feminism's efforts to achieve gender equality. Conversely, a critical analysis of social practices can help Muslims understand how cultural interpretations can affect their understanding of gender equality [29].

Faith in a Gender Context

The meaning of faith according to thematic interpretation

The meaning of faith according to thematic interpretation in the context of Islam refers to a deeper understanding of the concept of belief and belief in Allah, His Messenger, His books, and matters related to life after death. In thematic interpretation, faith is not only seen as a mere verbal confession or belief in the heart but also includes aspects of everyday actions and behaviors that reflect those beliefs [30].

Definition of Faith: Faith is linguistically derived from the word "Amana" which means to believe or believe. In Islamic terms, faith is a strong belief in the six pillars of faith: belief in Allah, His angels, His books, His apostles, the Day of Judgment, and good and bad destiny. This shows that faith is the main foundation for a Muslim to live his life.

Faith in the Qur'an: Thematic interpretation also refers to the verses of the Qur'an that explain faith. For example, in Surah Al-Baqarah verse 4, it is stated that believers are those who believe in what was revealed to the Prophet Muhammad and the previous books and are convinced of the hereafter. This shows that faith must be accompanied by knowledge and understanding of God's revelation.

Islamic views on the rights and obligations of men and women in faith

In the Islamic view, the rights and obligations of men and women in faith are regulated by fair and balanced principles. Islam emphasizes that both men and women have the same rights and responsibilities in the context of faith and worship, although there are differences in certain aspects related to social and family roles [31].

The Rights of Men and Women in Faith

Right to Believe: In Islam, every individual, both male and female, has the right to believe in Allah. The Qur'an states that faith is a personal responsibility that cannot be imposed by

others. Everyone has the right to seek the truth and understand religious teachings without discrimination based on gender.

Right to Religious Education: Both genders have the right to religious education. This includes an understanding of the Qur'an, hadith, and other Islamic teachings. This education is important so that they can carry out their religious obligations correctly.

Right to Worship: Men and women have the same right to carry out worship, be it prayer, fasting, zakat, or hajj. In this case, although there are some special provisions (e.g. places of prayer for women), in general, they are considered equal before Allah.

The Obligations of Men and Women in Faith

Obligation of Worship: Both men and women are required to carry out the pillars of Islam such as praying five times, fasting in the month of Ramadan, paying zakat, and performing Hajj if able. This obligation is universal to all Muslims regardless of gender.

Obligation to Maintain Morality: In the context of morality or morality, both genders are expected to maintain good behavior by Islamic teachings. This includes honesty, politeness, mutual respect, and avoiding sinful deeds.

Obligation to Invite to Goodness: Men and women also have a responsibility to remind each other of kindness (amar ma'ruf nahi munkar). It is part of a Muslim community that supports each other in practicing religious teachings.

The Role of Faith in Creating Gender Equality

The role of faith in creating gender equality is a complex and multidimensional topic, involving the interaction between religious beliefs, social values, and understanding of gender. Faith can serve as a tool to shape individual and societal views on gender roles, both in positive and negative contexts. Here are some of how faith contributes to gender equality awareness:

Moral and Ethical Teaching: Many religious traditions teach moral values that emphasize justice, compassion, and respect for fellow human beings. This teaching can encourage individuals to see the importance of gender equality. For example, the teachings in Christianity often emphasize that all human beings are created equal before God, which can be the basis for promoting gender equality.

Advocacy for Social Change: Several faith-based organizations have been active in advocating for women's rights and gender equality. They use the principles of their faith as a foundation to fight for positive social change, including the elimination of gender-based violence and increased women's access to education and employment opportunities.

Religious Education: Religious education also plays an important role in shaping attitudes towards gender from an early age. By incorporating teachings on gender equality in the religious education curriculum, the younger generation can be equipped with a better understanding of the importance of respecting each other regardless of gender.

Amal Sholeh in a Gender Perspective

Definition of Charity Sholeh

Righteous deeds, in the context of Islam, refer to good deeds done with sincere intentions to obtain the pleasure of Allah. This term encompasses a variety of actions that benefit oneself and others, as well as contribute to the well-being of society. Righteous charity is not only limited to ritual worship such as prayer and fasting, but also includes social charities such as almsgiving, helping others, and contributing to humanitarian activities [32].

Equality in Charitable Opportunities for Men and Women

From a gender perspective, it is important to emphasize that both men and women have equal rights and opportunities to do righteous deeds. In many Islamic traditions, there is an understanding that both genders have a moral responsibility to contribute to society through good deeds [33].

Several verses of the Qur'an affirm this equality, for example:

1. Surah Al-Ahzab (33:35) states that believing men and women will receive a reward from Allah for their deeds.
2. The hadith of the Prophet Muhammad SAW also shows that all Muslims, regardless of gender, are commanded to do good.

Sociological Analysis of Gender Balance

The sociological analysis of gender balance is an in-depth study of how norms and culture affect the understanding and practice of gender in society. In this context, gender balance is not only seen from the aspect of equality between men and women, but also includes the recognition of the social roles, rights, and responsibilities of each individual in various sectors of life [34].

Case Study on the Implementation of Gender Balance in Muslim Communities

In Muslim communities, the implementation of gender balance is often a complex topic due to the interaction between religious teachings and cultural practices. Some studies show that despite differing interpretations of gender-related religious texts, many Muslim communities strive to achieve gender balance through women's education and economic empowerment. For example, skills training programs for women in some Muslim countries have been successful in increasing their participation in the labor market and strengthening their position in decision-making at the family and community levels [35].



Figure 1. The Center for Gender and Child Studies (PSGA) of the Institute for Research and Community Service UIN Ar-Raniry participated in the Gender Responsive Planning and Budgeting Supervision Workshop for the Government Internal Supervision Apparatus or the Aceh Provincial Inspectorate.

This activity took place from Tuesday, May 20 to Friday, May 23, 2025, at The Pade Hotel, Sabang City.

The Social Impact of Gender Injustice on Faith and Charity in Society

Gender injustice has a significant social impact on faith and charity in society. When women are not given equal opportunities to participate in religious or social activities, this can reduce their contribution to the development of the community as a whole. In addition,

gender injustice can create social tensions that are detrimental to relationships between individuals in society. Research shows that more gender-just societies tend to have higher levels of social trust as well as active participation in charitable activities [36].

Overall, sociological analysis of gender balance provides important insights into how social norms shape the experiences of individuals based on their gender as well as their impact on broader social structures.



Figure 2. The atmosphere of the Multistakeholder Dialogue Press Conference entitled "Ending Economic Inequality and Gender Injustice by Providing Recognition and Access to Living Space, Social Protection, and Decent Work for Women in South Sulawesi," organized by SP-AM in collaboration with Aksi! for Gender, Social, and Ecological Justice, at the Vasaka Hotel Makassar. Doc. chaerani/Republiknews.co.id

Opinion of Commentators on Gender Balance in the Context of Faith and Charity

Tafsir Maudhui QS. An-Nisa:124 in the Interpretation of the Book of Al-Qurtubi

Explanation of the Verse

Surah An-Nisa verse 124 reads:

وَمَنْ يَعْمَلْ مِنَ الصَّالِحَاتِ مِنْ ذَكَرٍ أَوْ أُنْثَىٰ وَهُوَ مُؤْمِنٌ فَأُولَٰئِكَ يَدْخُلُونَ الْجَنَّةَ وَلَا يُظْلَمُونَ نَقِيرًا

"And whoever does righteous deeds, both male and female, while he is believing, then they will enter Paradise and will not be wronged in the slightest." In the tafsir of al-Qurtubi, the interpretation of this verse emphasizes that Allah does not distinguish between men and women in terms of righteous deeds and faith. Both have the same right to get rewards from Allah.

Al-Qurtubi explained that the context of this verse is to affirm gender equality in Islam. Despite biological and social differences between men and women, in terms of worship and righteous deeds, both are treated equally before God. It shows that every individual, regardless of gender, has the same potential to contribute to society and achieve happiness in the hereafter [37].

Gender Balance

In the context of gender balance, QS. An-Nisa:124 provides an important foundation for understanding that Islam values the equal contributions of both genders. Al-Qurtubi highlights that although there are different roles in society—where men are often considered as the head of the family—this does not mean that women do not have the same values or abilities in doing righteous deeds.

Gender balance according to al-Qurtubi is not only about equality of rights but also about complementarity between men and women in carrying out their social and spiritual duties. In this view, women's roles as mothers, educators, and members of society are very important and should be valued and supported by men [38].

Implications for the Roles of Women and Men in Charity

The implications of this verse on the roles of women and men are significant. Al-Qurtubi noted that with the assurance from Allah regarding the reward for both genders of faith and pious deeds, every individual is encouraged to actively engage in beneficial social activities.

Women are expected to take an active part in various areas of life—be it education, health, economics, or politics—without feeling pressured by traditional norms that may limit them. The same is true for men; They are required to support women's participation and create an environment conducive to the development of the potential of all individuals [39].

Tafsir Maudhui QS. An-Nisa:124 in the Interpretation of the Book of Ath-Thabari

Explanation of the Verse

Surah An-Nisa verse 124 reads

وَمَنْ يَعْمَلْ مِنَ الصَّالِحَاتِ مِنْ ذَكَرٍ أَوْ أُنْثَىٰ وَهُوَ مُؤْمِنٌ فَأُولَٰئِكَ يَدْخُلُونَ الْجَنَّةَ وَلَا يُظْلَمُونَ نَقِيرًا

: "And whoever does righteous deeds, both male and female, while he is believing, then they will enter Paradise and will not be wronged in the slightest." In the context of the Maudhui (thematic) tafsir carried out by Ibn Jarir al-Thabari, the main emphasis of this verse is on the equality between men and women in terms of righteous deeds and their faith in Allah.

Al-Thabari interprets that Allah provides guarantees for every individual who believes and performs righteous deeds regardless of gender. This shows that in Islam, both men and women have the same right and obligation to do good deeds and get rewards from Allah. In the context of gender balance, this verse emphasizes that women's position is no less important than that of men in terms of worship and social contribution [40].

Gender Balance

In Al-Thabari's interpretation, there is an emphasis on the principles of justice and gender equality. This verse affirms that there is no discrimination based on sex in terms of the acceptance of charity in the sight of Allah. This reflects the progressive Islamic view of the role of women in society. In many traditional cultures, there is often a perception that women's roles are inferior to men's; However, this verse explicitly states that both have an equal chance of attaining heaven through faith and charity.

Gender balance can also be seen from the perspective of social responsibility. Women are expected to actively contribute to society through various forms of charity, be it education, health, or other social activities. Thus, this verse encourages women's active participation in various aspects of life [41].

Implications for the Roles of Women and Men in Charity

The implications of this verse on the roles of women and men are significant. First of all, he emphasized that both genders have a moral responsibility to do righteous deeds as part of devotion to God. Second, this verse invites the community to appreciate the contribution of each individual regardless of gender.

In practice, this means that both men and women should be encouraged to engage in social activities that benefit their communities. For example, women's empowerment programs can be developed to improve their skills and capacity to contribute more economically and socially [42].

Tafsir Maudhui QS. An-Nisa:124 in the Interpretation of the Book of Al-Maraghi

Explanation of the Verse of An-nisa: 124

وَمَنْ يَعْمَلْ مِنَ الصَّالِحَاتِ مِنْ ذَكَرٍ أَوْ أُنْثَىٰ وَهُوَ مُؤْمِنٌ فَأُولَٰئِكَ يَدْخُلُونَ الْجَنَّةَ وَلَا يُظْلَمُونَ نَقِيرًا

QS. An-Nisa:124 talks about gender equality in the context of charity and faith. In the tafsir of Al-Maraghi, this verse emphasizes that both men and women have the same right to get rewards for their good deeds. This interpretation shows that Allah does not discriminate between the sexes in terms of rewards for good deeds, but rather on the quality of faith and charity.

In the context of gender balance

This verse implies that the roles of women and men in charity are equal. Both are expected to contribute actively to society, with an emphasis on justice and equality. This creates space for women to engage in various aspects of social and spiritual life without feeling marginalized.

The relationship between faith, charity, and gender justice

The perspective of this verse shows that the two are interrelated; Strong faith will encourage individuals to do good deeds, regardless of gender. Thus, gender justice can be achieved when each individual is valued based on their contribution to the common good, rather than on traditional stereotypes or norms.

Tafsir Maudhui QS. An-Nisa:124 in the Interpretation of the Book of Ibn Kathir

Surah An-Nisa verse 124 reads:

وَمَنْ يَعْمَلْ مِنَ الصَّالِحَاتِ مِنْ ذَكَرٍ أَوْ أُنْثَىٰ وَهُوَ مُؤْمِنٌ فَأُولَٰئِكَ يَدْخُلُونَ الْجَنَّةَ وَلَا يُظْلَمُونَ نَقِيرًا

"And whoever does righteous deeds, both male and female, while he is believing, then they will enter Paradise and will not be wronged in the slightest." In the context of maudhui tafsir, this verse emphasizes the principle of gender equality in terms of charity and rewards in the hereafter.

Explanation of Sentences in the Context of Gender Balance

Ibn Kathir in his commentary explains that this verse shows that both men and women have the same right to receive rewards from Allah for their righteous deeds. This is an important statement regarding gender balance, as it affirms that there is no discrimination based on sex in God's judgment of one's deeds. In a social and cultural context that often positions women in an inferior position, this verse is the basis for the recognition of women's rights in Islam.

Verse's Implications for the Role of Women and Men in Charity

This verse also implies that the roles of men and women in doing righteous deeds are equal. Both are expected to actively contribute to the community through good actions, such as alms, education, and social services. Thus, women's roles are not only limited to the domestic realm but also include broader public participation. This shows that Islam encourages the full involvement of both genders in various aspects of life.

The Relationship Between Faith, Charity, and Gender Justice in Perspective of This Verse

In the perspective of this verse, there is a close connection between faith charity and gender justice. Faith is the main condition for the acceptance of righteous deeds; without strong faith, such deeds will be meaningless in the sight of Allah. In addition, gender justice is reflected in the recognition that all individuals—both men and women—can reach a high degree in the sight of God through their faith and charity. Therefore, this verse is not just an affirmation of gender equality but also a call to build a just and inclusive society.

Thus, QS. An-Nisa:124 provides a framework for understanding how men and women should interact with each other and contribute to the common good while maintaining the principles of justice.

Tafsir Maudhui QS. An-Nisa:124 in Contemporary Interpretation

Explanation of Sentences in the Context of Gender Balance

Surah An-Nisa verse 124 reads:

وَمَنْ يَعْمَلْ مِنَ الصَّالِحَاتِ مِنْ ذَكَرٍ أَوْ أُنْثَىٰ وَهُوَ مُؤْمِنٌ فَأُولَٰئِكَ يَدْخُلُونَ الْجَنَّةَ وَلَا يُظْلَمُونَ نَقِيرًا

"And whoever does righteous deeds, both male and female, while he is believing, then they will enter Paradise and they will not be wronged in the least." In the context of gender balance, this verse emphasizes that both men and women have the same right to receive rewards for righteous deeds performed. This shows that Islam provides equal recognition of the contributions of both genders in spiritual and social life.

Contemporary interpretations of this verse often highlight the importance of gender equality in various aspects of life, including education, employment, and social participation. In many traditional societies, women's roles are often limited by patriarchal cultural norms. However, by referring to QS. An-Nisa:124, contemporary thinkers argue that Islam supports gender equality and justice [43].

Verse's Implications for the Role of Women and Men in Charity

This verse implies that the roles of men and women in doing righteous deeds are equal. In this context, righteous deeds are not only limited to ritual worship but also include social actions such as helping others, contributing to the community, and fighting for justice. Therefore, both men and women are expected to actively participate in these activities without discrimination based on gender.

In practice, this interpretation encourages women to take a more active role in society and demand their rights as individuals who have the potential to do good. It also encourages men to support gender equality and appreciate women's contributions.

The Relationship between Faith, Charity, and Gender Justice in the Perspective of This Verse

The relationship between faith (belief), charity (action), and gender justice is very close in QS. An-Nisa: 124. Faith is the foundation for a person to do righteous deeds; Without strong faith, such actions may not have deep meaning. On the other hand, righteous deeds are a manifestation of one's faith.

Gender justice is integrated with this relationship because it affirms that all individuals—regardless of gender—can attain a high standing before God through their faith and deeds. Thus, gender justice is not only a social issue but also an integral part of religious teachings that encourage each individual to contribute optimally according to their respective capacities.

CONCLUSION

Gender balance in the context of faith and charity, as outlined in the Thematic Tafsir of An-Nisa verse 124, shows the importance of the participation of both genders in spiritual and social life. This verse emphasizes that both men and women have the same rights and obligations in worship and charity, regardless of gender. From a psychological perspective, this reflects the understanding that individuals, regardless of gender, have the same potential to achieve goodness and piety. The psychological approach provides insight into how people's perceptions of gender can affect individual participation in religious activities. For example, gender stereotypes that consider men to be more dominant in the context of religious leadership can inhibit women from actively contributing. However, by

understanding the principles of gender balance taught in Islam, individuals can overcome these barriers through increased self-awareness and the development of positive identities. Gender balance is also related to the concept of social justice. In the context of faith and charity, each individual is expected to support each other in achieving common goals. This creates an inclusive environment where everyone feels valued and motivated to contribute according to their abilities. Overall, the interpretation of An-Nisa verse 124 emphasizes that gender balance is not only an idealism but a necessity in building a just and prosperous society. With the right psychological approach, we can encourage the active participation of all genders in religious activities as well as strengthen social bonds between community members.

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Author Contribution

All authors contributed equally to the conceptualization, literature review, data analysis, and writing of the manuscript. The primary research was collaboratively conducted, with mutual discussions guiding the gender-based thematic interpretation. Final revisions and approval of the manuscript were completed jointly.

Conflicts of Interest

All authors stated that there was no conflict of interest.

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