
Career Women in Tafsir Al Misbah: An Analytical Study of Fazlur Rahman's Double Movement Theory

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Abstract

Objective: This study aims to examine contemporary issues regarding career women from the perspective of Qur'anic interpretation. The main focus is to examine Quraish Shihab's views in Tafsir Al-Misbah on women working in the public sphere, as well as analyze them through the theory of double movement developed by Fazlur Rahman. **Theoretical framework:** Using Fazlur Rahman's theory of double movement, which emphasizes historical analysis of verse and its reinterpretation in contemporary social contexts, to understand the role of women in Islam in a relevant way. **Literature review:** Previous studies are still dominant in normative and fiqh. This study fills the gap by combining Fazlur Rahman's theory and contemporary interpretation of Quraish Shihab in discussing career women thematically. **Methods:** Using a qualitative method based on literature study, with the main source of Tafsir Al-Misbah and literature on the theory of double movement. The analysis was carried out in a descriptive-analytical manner. **Result:** The results of the study show that both Quraish Shihab and Fazlur Rahman support women's right to have a career and contribute to the public sphere, while maintaining Islamic Sharia values. In his commentary, Quraish Shihab emphasizes that Islam does not prohibit women from working, as long as they adhere to the moral and ethical principles set by the religion. **Implications:** This contextual interpretation can be a theological foundation in supporting gender equality and the participation of Muslim women in the workforce. **Novelty:** Integrating the theory of double movement with the interpretation of Quraish Shihab, specifically in the issue of career women, offers a new approach in the study of contemporary thematic interpretation.

Keywords: career women, double movement theory, gender equality, fazlur rahman, quraish shihab.

INTRODUCTION

The discourse on women's participation in the workforce within Islamic scholarship has often been framed through the lenses of fiqh rulings and traditional gender roles. While these normative approaches have provided valuable insights, they tend to emphasize prescriptive legal opinions without adequately addressing the dynamic interplay between historical contexts of revelation and the evolving socio-economic realities of Muslim societies. As a result, the nuanced and contextually sensitive interpretations that could bridge classical teachings with contemporary gender issues remain underexplored [1].

In the Indonesian context, Quraish Shihab's Tafsir Al-Misbah offers a distinctive hermeneutical approach that emphasizes the moral and ethical dimensions of Qur'anic guidance. His treatment of the topic of women's work situates female participation in the public sphere within a framework that is faithful to Islamic principles while responsive to modern challenges. However, scholarly engagement with his interpretation has largely been descriptive—summarizing his views—without critically analyzing them through established contemporary hermeneutical theories. One such theory, Fazlur Rahman's double movement, provides a methodological tool for reinterpreting the Qur'an by first understanding the historical and socio-cultural circumstances of revelation, and then reapplying its moral objectives to current contexts. Although widely discussed in Qur'anic studies, this theory has seldom been systematically applied to gender-related themes in Indonesian exegesis, especially in relation to Quraish Shihab's work [2].

The absence of studies that integrate Fazlur Rahman's double movement with Tafsir Al-Misbah in addressing the issue of career women leaves a significant research gap. Such integration would not only provide a deeper understanding of Shihab's interpretive strategies but also offer a model for reconciling textual fidelity with contemporary gender equity concerns. Furthermore, it would contribute to a more inclusive theological framework that validates women's public roles while safeguarding the ethical boundaries outlined by Islam. Addressing this gap is crucial in an era where Muslim women's economic participation is both a social reality and a point of theological debate. By filling this void, the study can advance the discourse on gender and Qur'anic interpretation, offering insights that are academically rigorous, socially relevant, and normatively grounded [3].

In the Great Dictionary of the Indonesian Language (KBBI), "Woman" means an adult woman, while "Career Woman" means a woman who is engaged in professional activities (business, office, etc.). A career is a job that provides hope for a more advanced life, similar to money and power. For a few people, a career is not just that, but a work that is inherent in that person. The opportunity to work is certainly entitled to be felt by men or women, because there is no difference in work according to sex. Career women face problems that a career woman must face in today's modern era, especially in dealing with patriarchal social structures that place women in subordinate positions. Modern forms of work that are considered advanced perpetuate the patriarchal system, which is the most problematic for career women. It is known that career women experience more problems that are either felt internally or externally, with a comparison of 54.1% for working mothers and 38.2% for career women. Women are still positioned as the second class while men are the first class; women who already hold the title of "wife" are still obliged to take care of domestic household affairs, so that it becomes a double burden, which is the impact of an unfair gender mindset. In essence, domestic affairs are household affairs and joint obligations between husband and wife; this construction of gender bias is firmly rooted in the community environment [4].

In Islam, men and women have the opportunity to strive and get equal rewards. The work and activities carried out by women in the Prophet Muhammad SAW are quite diverse, until they are directly involved in war. Several circumstances allow to require women to work, as quoted by Quraish Shihab, that even in the time of the Prophet, there were several groups of women working because of the situation that demanded that they have to work to cover their living expenses. The scheme of life described by Islam is about rights and obligations; thus, men and women have equal rights in work, so Islam does not distinguish in sharia acts between men and women. Sayyidah Khadijah, the wife of the Prophet PBUH, was a successful businesswoman and helped the Prophet in his preaching, spending his wealth for the benefit of Muslims until there was nothing left [5].

When the Quran was revealed, the fate of the family was very bad. The Quran states that during the time of ignorance, the pagan Arabs killed their daughters. To reposition the position of women to their original place to social society, the concept of gender was born to rebuild the relationship between men and women in general, to break through the door of

equal opportunities to be able to participate in various aspects of life without the influence of gender differences. In the era of globalization, the phenomenon of career women seems to be unstoppable. In the past, the role of women was synonymous with housework, serving husbands, and educating children. Now, the role of women has undergone many changes. Women are no longer satisfied with household work, so many women choose to enter the world of careers. Dual roles for career women are not an easy situation to resolve. Both roles demand equal roles. If career women prioritize work more, they can sacrifice many things for their families. On the other hand, if he prioritizes his family more, he will tend to lower his performance at work [6].

Significance. This study is significant because it addresses a pressing and often contested issue in contemporary Muslim societies: the theological legitimacy of women's participation in the workforce. While numerous Islamic legal and exegetical works have discussed women's public roles, the majority remain rooted in normative jurisprudence, without engaging deeply with methodologies that bridge classical textual meanings and modern realities. By applying Fazlur Rahman's double movement theory to Quraish Shihab's Tafsir Al-Misbah, this research contributes to the development of a dynamic interpretive framework that is both faithful to the Qur'anic text and responsive to contemporary gender discourse. It also enriches scholarly understanding of Shihab's interpretive method, positioning him within the broader landscape of modern Qur'anic hermeneutics [6].

Implications. The findings of this study have broad implications for Islamic scholarship, gender studies, and policy-making in Muslim-majority societies. First, for academic discourse, it provides a case study of how classical principles and modern contexts can be harmonized in the field of Qur'anic interpretation. This can serve as a methodological reference for scholars dealing with other socially relevant themes, such as education, leadership, or environmental ethics. Second, for religious education and community leadership, the research offers a nuanced theological foundation for acknowledging women's right to work, grounded in both classical exegesis and modern hermeneutical theory. This could guide preachers, educators, and Islamic institutions in framing more inclusive religious narratives that encourage women's participation in various sectors while maintaining adherence to Islamic ethical norms. Third, for policy-makers and advocacy groups, the study's conclusions may inform gender-sensitive policies that are both culturally authentic and religiously legitimate. In contexts where debates on women's employment are polarized, this research can function as a bridge between progressive calls for equality and conservative demands for Sharia compliance [7].

Novelty. The novelty of this research lies in its integration of Fazlur Rahman's double movement theory with Quraish Shihab's thematic interpretation, specifically on the issue of career women—an area rarely examined in depth. While Rahman's methodology has been widely cited in theoretical discussions, its practical application to a major contemporary Indonesian tafsir remains underdeveloped. This study operationalizes the theory, tracing the historical context of Qur'anic verses relevant to women's roles, then mapping how these moral imperatives can be reinterpreted for the modern workplace. Furthermore, by situating the discussion in Indonesia—a diverse Muslim society with a unique blend of tradition and modernity—the research offers a culturally specific yet globally relevant model of contextual Qur'anic interpretation. This approach not only advances the scholarly conversation on gender in Islam but also opens pathways for similar analyses in other thematic areas [8].

LITERATURE REVIEW

A Literature Review is a review of the literature or references related to this researcher, which then explains the similarities and differences between previous researchers and current research. This is an important aspect to know the originality of the research conducted. In this literature review, the researcher did not find any literature with the same discussion as this study. To identify previous research, the researcher will divide it into two variables. First, research related to material objects or topics of discussion, "Career Women from the

perspective of Tafsir Al Misbah". Second, research related to formal objects, namely, according to the Perspective of the Theory of Double Movement by Fazlur Rahman [9].

Research related to the topic of discussion, "Career Women from the perspective of Tafsir Al Misbah," has been widely studied by previous researchers. Some related references that are quite closely related to this research are a thesis written by Umi Nurrohmah with the title "Career Women according to M. Quraish Shihab in Tafsir Al Misbah ". According to Quraish Shihab, being a career woman is not contrary to Islam, as long as it is carried out within the Sharia corridor and does not ignore the main role of women in the family. Women not only have the right to work, but also must maintain domestic harmony [10].

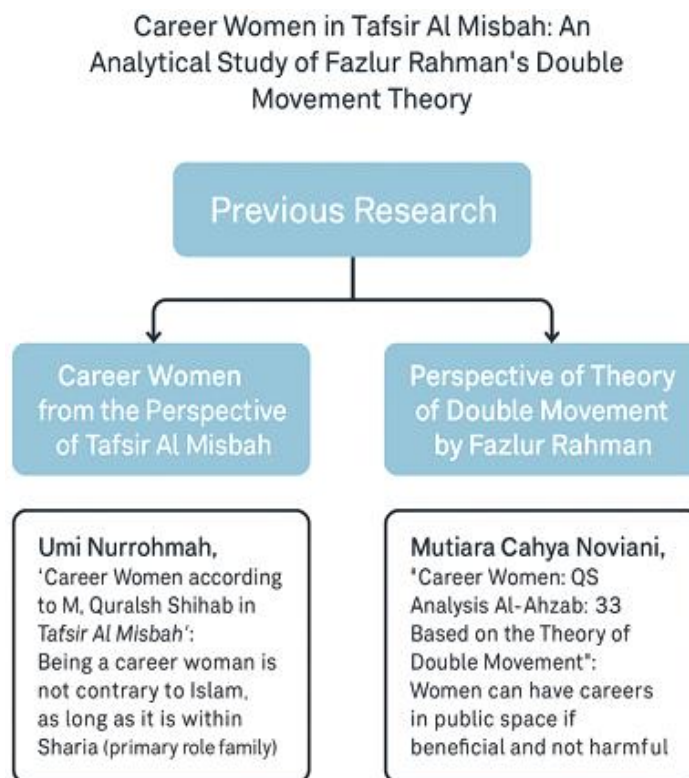


Figure 1. Literature Review and Relevant Research

The Double Movement Theory has also been discussed with the same theme, namely "career women" by Mutiar Cahya Noviani with an article entitled "Career Women: QS Analysis. Al-Ahzab: 33 Based on the Theory of Double Movement" explained that women are allowed to have a career in the public space, as long as it does not bring harm to themselves, and work brings benefits to the people. With the Double Movement approach, the understanding of the text of the Qur'an does not only stop at the historical context (for the Prophet's wife), but is drawn to universal moral values that are relevant to modern times, thus supporting the role of women in the public sphere fairly and wisely. This proves that until now, no one has integrated Tafsir Al Misbah regarding career women with Fazlur Rahman's approach (double movement). Thus, this article is expected to fill the gap in the study by presenting an analysis of the interpretation of the Qur'an that is relevant to the social reality of modern women [11].

METHODOLOGY

This study employs a qualitative research design with a primary focus on a literature-based approach, enabling a comprehensive exploration of the selected theme through an in-depth review and interpretation of relevant textual sources. The qualitative nature of this research is intended to generate rich, descriptive, and interpretative insights rather than numerical or statistical data, thus allowing for a deeper understanding of the theological and

hermeneutical dimensions of the topic. The research adopts the thematic method (tafsir maudhū'ī), a Qur'anic interpretation technique that systematically collects and analyzes all relevant verses about a specific theme—in this case, “career women”—from various parts of the Qur'an. This method is particularly suited for addressing contemporary issues as it allows for the synthesis of diverse Qur'anic references into a coherent thematic framework, facilitating a holistic and integrated perspective [11].

In operationalizing this thematic approach, the study integrates Quraish Shihab's interpretation in Tafsir Al-Misbah with Fazlur Rahman's theory of double movement. Quraish Shihab's work provides a contemporary Indonesian exegetical lens that emphasizes the ethical, moral, and spiritual principles underlying the Qur'anic guidance on women's roles. Fazlur Rahman's double movement theory, on the other hand, offers a hermeneutical methodology that proceeds in two stages: first, moving from the present context to the historical context of revelation to understand the original socio-historical circumstances and intent of the text; and second, moving back to the present to derive normative principles applicable to contemporary realities. This dual process ensures that the interpretation remains faithful to the Qur'anic message while being relevant to modern socio-cultural conditions [12].

Data Sources. Primary data for this research consists of the relevant sections from Tafsir Al-Misbah that address themes related to women's work, participation in the public sphere, and gender ethics in Islam. These textual materials are analyzed to identify Quraish Shihab's interpretive stance, the Qur'anic verses he references, and the exegetical reasoning he employs. Secondary data are drawn from a wide range of contemporary scholarly works on Qur'anic exegesis, Islamic feminism, gender in Islam, and studies applying Fazlur Rahman's methodology. This includes journal articles, academic books, conference proceedings, and reputable online publications that provide theoretical, methodological, and contextual background to support and enrich the analysis [12].

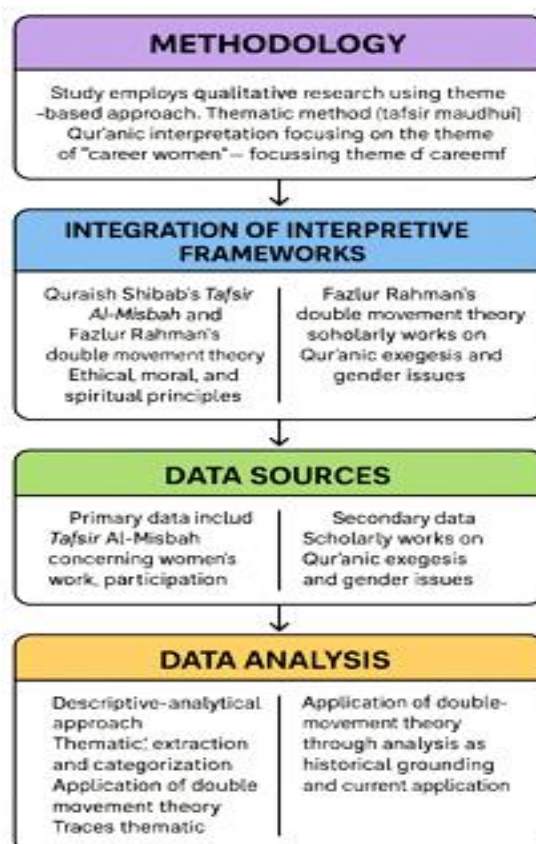


Figure 2. Research Methodology

Data Analysis. The analysis follows a descriptive-analytical approach. First, thematic content is extracted from Tafsir Al-Misbah and categorized according to key sub-themes, such as conditions for women's work, ethical guidelines, and societal implications. Second, each thematic finding is examined through the lens of the double movement theory to trace its historical grounding and contemporary application. The integration of these two frameworks produces a synthesized interpretation that is both textually grounded and contextually responsive. This methodological design ensures that the study remains rigorous in textual fidelity, methodical in hermeneutical application, and relevant in addressing contemporary debates surrounding Muslim women's careers [13].

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Fazlur Rahman's Double Movement Theory

The theory of double movement is an interpretive process that involves a "double movement", from the present situation to the situation where the Qur'an was revealed, to then return to the present. Rahman uses a socio-historical approach in studying the Quran. Because, according to Rahman, a mufassir is not able to enter the "mind of God" if he does not understand the historical context in which the text was written. Although he seems less appreciative of the micro nuzul asbabun or the verbal historical context, as has been done by the mufassir. Rahman believes more in the direct background, namely the struggle of the Prophet for approximately 23 years under the guidance of the Quran. According to Rahman, a mufassir also needs to understand their pre-Arab religion, social, economic, and political life well, because without understanding such things, efforts to understand the message of the Qur'an in its entirety and comprehensively become futile [14].

The development of Islamic thought in the last few decades has been colored by the development of modern interpretation methodologies. One of them that is famous among Muslim intellectuals is the theory of double movement by Fazlur Rahman. Fazlur Rahman, a Muslim scholar who positioned himself in the ranks of Neo-Modernists, began his career in Islamic thought in the contemporary era, which made him an extraordinary intellectual figure among Muslims. His ability to combine the old (tradition) with the present (modern) form is indeed a bright spot for Fazlur Rahman's ability, the potential he has that enables him to explain the field of education [15].

Fazlur Rahman sees that classical interpretation methods only tend to interpret the Qur'an separately and often do not solve problems, and even create new problems. According to him, there is a need for a reinterpretation of the Qur'an that can meet contemporary needs using a systematic and comprehensive methodology. That is what made Fazlur Rahman create a theory that is famous for being praised by the public with the nickname Double Movement Theory. This theory is a process of interpreting the Qur'an that has a double movement, starting with looking at the contemporary perspective towards the time of the Quran and returning to the present [16].

In carrying out this theory, 2 movements are needed to explain it. The first movement is to explore and trace the general principles, values and long-term goals to understand the context both micro and macro in which the Qur'an was revealed to understand The first movement requires 2 steps: first, understand the historical problems and situations to which the statement of the Qur'an is the answer, before understanding the specific verses it is necessary to understand the situation and history of the life of the Arab people at that time. Second, uniting specific answers into a common understanding that contains the values of goodness and social justice, by looking at the historical background and the underlying logical reasons [17].

The second movement is to find the core message contained (moral message) and draw the message into the contemporary context, so that the global concept of the Quran can be applied to the contemporary context. The concepts and principles that have been explored in

the first movement can be immediately demanded to be applied to the Muslim community today. Rahman thinks that if this movement is carried out smoothly, then the commands of the Quran will become alive and effective again. It is also a tool for correction to the first moment, namely, from the results of interpretation. If the results of this understanding fail to be implemented now, then there has been a failure in understanding the Qur'an in understanding the current situation [18].

Rahman tends to use historical methodology in understanding the context of the Quran. The historical method has a serious, critical, and profound effort in understanding the message of the Qur'an by considering two factors: internal and external factors. External factors include sociological, political, and geographical points of view; internal factors include the 'inherent' message contained in the holy text of the Qur'an [19].

The way the double movement theory works can interpret the theme being discussed, namely, Career women, from the perspective of double movement theory. In QS Al Ahzab: 33, which means "stay in your house and do not decorate (and behave) like the ignorant people of the past". The prohibition of a woman wearing tabarruj is to show jewellery excessively, for example, dressing up and putting on her headdress while walking. According to Quraish Shihab, the word jahala was used to describe the condition of the community at that time before the arrival of Islam (pre-Islam), which at that time the people still turned their backs on or ignored the divine [20]. According to Shihab, the word waqarna or meaning "stay still," is aimed at the wife of the Prophet. The next problem is, what is the fate of those other than the Prophet's wife? , quoted from a book entitled Al Hijab, that women have the best place, namely in their homes, are allowed to leave the house under certain conditions, namely by maintaining their shyness and maintaining their purity The way the double movement theory works can interpret the theme being discussed, namely career women in the perspective of double movement theory. In QS Al Ahzab: 33, which means "stay in your house and do not decorate (and behave) like the ignorant people of the past ... ". The prohibition of a woman wearing tabarruj is to show jewellery excessively, for example, dressing up and putting on her head while walking [21].

The analytical results of QS Al Ahzab verse 33 of the interpretation approach put forward by Fazlur Rahman state that women are allowed to have a career in public spaces with certain records that must be met, first, women who want to work must get permission from guardians, either parents or husbands, second, maintain interactions that are not mahram by the limits of sharia, Third, it is forbidden to do tabarruj excessively so that it can trigger fitnah, fourth, not to use excessive perfume when outside the house, which attracts the attention of the opposite sex, fifth, it is required to cover the awrah perfectly. This provision aims to maintain a balance between the role of women in the public sphere and still be in harmony with religious values [22].

Career Women according to Tafsir Al Misbah Quraish Shihab

A career woman is a woman who has a high dedication to her dreams and profession, and has a strong ambition to achieve the best results and achievements. Today, women are not only limited to playing a role in the domestic realm and accepting their circumstances without many options; not a few women stand out as active individuals in the world of work. The term career woman is a symbol of the struggle against stereotypes and an effort to show that women have the same capacity as men in the public sphere [23].

So many women do not get their rights because of inequality based on or foundation of religion. For example, in surah Al Ahzab: 33, which explains the prohibition for Women to leave the house, this verse is also a debate among mufassir who have different opinions. The sentence reads: Stay in your houses and do not decorate (and behave) like the ignorant people of old. Establish prayer, pay zakat, and obey Allah and His Messenger. Indeed, Allah only wants to remove sin from you, O AhluBayt, and to cleanse you as thoroughly as possible [24].

Quraish Shihab explained that in this verse, Allah SWT gives signs to women regarding their deeds and behavior. Allah SWT asks women to stay and stay at home unless there are interests that do not violate the Sharia. The order was continued with the prohibition of women to wear tabarruj (self-adornment) as the jahiliyah did at that time (pre-Islam) [25]. The explanation of Quraish Shihab is different from the views of some other mufassir. One of the mufassir of the law of Al Qirtubi explained that "the meaning of the verse is ordered to stay at home, shown to the wife of the wife of Prophet Muhammad SAW, but apart from them, they are also covered by the order. This mufassir emphasized that religion is indeed fulfilled by guidance so that women stay at home and do not leave the house except for emergencies. However, according to Ibn Kathir, Ibn Al Arabi in their commentary, the prohibition of " tabarruj" is not only aimed at the wives of the Prophet but also all Muslim women. Ibn Kathir gave leeway to allow women to leave the house only for emergencies, provided that she was able to maintain their purity and shame [26].

So, what if the status of work for women becomes mandatory, with several conditions that require her to work? The economic squeeze forces women to jump directly into meeting the economic needs of families. In this condition, a woman has no choice but to participate in meeting the family's needs, mentioned in QS Al Qasas: 23–24: 23. When he arrived at the source of the water of the state of Madyan, he found there a group of people who were giving water (their cattle, and he found behind them two women driving their cattle from the water source. He (Moses) said, "What do you mean (to do so)?" The two replied, "We cannot give (our cattle) water until the shepherds return (the cattle), while our father is an old man." 24. So, he (Moses) gave the two women a drink. He then moved to a shady place and prayed, "O my Lord, I am in great need of a good (sustenance) that You have sent down to me."

According to Quraish Shihab, the word (وَرَدَ) means to arrive, and the word (مَاءً) means water, and what is meant here is a spring, a source of spring water that was needed in the desert in ancient times, because there is often a meeting place there. It is said that 2 girls are bringing livestock; they are shepherds. They worked because their father was old, or called Syu'aib, and could no longer work, requiring them to earn their own money. It is stated that the two women were related; it is also mentioned that their father had 7 daughters [27]. In the tafsir, it is stated that the old man is Shu'aib. Meanwhile, scholars use this verse as one of the pieces of evidence about the permissibility of the waiinita to work and gather in the same arena with men, as long as she appears in a respectable atmosphere. According to Quraish Shihab, Islamic principles do not prohibit women from working indoors or outdoors, as long as the work does not degrade their dignity as women. Working can be mandatory for women. If the situation required it, there were many women in the time of the Prophet Muhammad SAW and his companions who worked, independently or not, to help support their husbands' livelihoods, including: Ummu Salim bint Malham, as a makeup artist. Qilat Ummi Bany Ammar, as a merchant, and many more. As a woman who holds the title of wife, she must have the permission of her husband before she works, and if without her husband's permission, then the husband must provide for the maintenance. His wife was stabbed to death [28].

The issue of subordination stereotypes due to gender inequality is an issue that is still hotly discussed today, as evidenced in the film *Gadis Kretek* by Ratih Kumala, which is set on the island of Java. Portrait of Women who experience subordination and stereotypes about Women. This is because women are considered weak and not intelligent in thinking, so they are only employed in the domestic realm. This stereotype is due to the assumption that women are often the culprits of bad luck, reinforced by patriarchal social and cultural constructs that consider women do not have the same self-esteem as men [29].

Women are often considered to be weak and helpless creatures, to causes inequality in social constructs. This is contrary to the story of Maryam, which contains her son, Prophet Isa AS her strength and steadfastness are written in QS Maryam verses 22 -23: 22. So she (Maryam) conceived him and went away with him to a distant place. 23. Pain will cause him

to force (leaning on the base of the date tree. She said, "Oh, if only I had died before this and been a person who was not noticed and forgotten (forever)."

Quraish said that Maryam endured great pain while pregnant with the Prophet Isa AS when the contractions arrived, she forced herself to walk towards the date palm tree to lean on. The word (الْمَخَاضُ) al makhadh is taken from the word (لَمْخَضٌ) al makhadh means Very hard movement Female nature, namely pregnancy and childbirth, is a role transition that is not easy, the development of the fetus can cause discomfort and cause its daily activities to be quite disrupted. Pain during pregnancy often occurs, especially entering the third trimester, and is a common complaint that is often felt by 70% of pregnant women. Changes in body and mechanical load during pregnancy can easily affect and worsen the spine, plus the burden of domestic work that is completely delegated to women, which is an indication of a woman's multidimensional power that men do not have, capable of making friends with pain and discomfort [30].

Wives may work in various fields, inside or outside the home, either independently or with others, as long as she is in a respectful and courteous environment. In the time of the Prophet, wives and wives at that time did various jobs and activities, such as Ummu Salim binti Malhan as a bridal makeup artist who had done Shaiyyah bint Uyyay. In trade, there is Sayyidah Khadijah binti Khuwaid, who is a very successful businesswoman. Working for wives is not just to earn a living, but also as a means to express their skills, and the basic needs of women psychologically need actualization and achievement [31].

Modern civilization has applied to all mankind. The role of a career is not only the right of a man, but women have the right to choose their future path, one of which is by having a career. In line with the functional theory, men and women have their respective duties in carrying out their roles; men play a role in providing for the family, and wives are tasked with taking care of the household and educating their children. Being a career woman means carrying out two roles at once, having an impact on the stigma of society that requires women to successfully play multiple roles [32]. They are required to be able to be independent and dominant, and that is what makes women feel a dilemma to take on dual roles, careers, and take care of the household. Janet Zullennger Grele argues that women tend to prefer to cooperate rather than dominate, creating peace rather than creating conflict. Psychologists mention 4 main components of maternal emotions, namely: altruism means prioritizing the interests of others over oneself; second, tenderness; third, affection; fourth, activity. This makes women have great resources and potential to develop in the career world [33].

الرِّجَالُ قَوَّامُونَ عَلَى النِّسَاءِ بِمَا فَضَّلَ اللَّهُ بَعْضَهُمْ عَلَى بَعْضٍ وَبِمَا أَنْفَقُوا مِنْ أَمْوَالِهِمْ ۗ
فَالصَّالِحَاتُ قَنَاطٌ حَفِظَتْ لِّلْغَيْبِ بِمَا حَفِظَ اللَّهُ ۗ وَالَّتِي تَخَافُونَ نُشُوزَهُنَّ فَعِظُوهُنَّ وَاهْجُرُوهُنَّ فِي
الْمَضَاجِعِ وَاضْرِبُوهُنَّ ۗ فَإِنْ أَطَعْنَكُمْ فَلَا تَبْغُوا عَلَيْهِنَّ سَبِيلًا ۗ إِنَّ اللَّهَ كَانَ عَلِيمًا كَبِيرًا ۗ ٣٤

34. Men (husbands) are responsible for 154 women (wives) because Allah has given some of them (men) more than others (women) and because they (men) have provided for some of their wealth. Righteous women are those who are obedient and take care of themselves when their husbands. They are not there because Allah has taken care of them. The woman whom you are worried about, nusyuz,155) give them advice, leave them on the bed, and (if necessary,) beat them (in a way that is not painful). However, if they obey you, do not seek to trouble them. Indeed, Allah is the Highest and the Most Great [34].

This verse, in classical and intermediate interpretations, is used as a justification to describe the superiority of men over women. According to Ibn Kathir, Al Qurtubi, and others interpreted the word ar-Rijal is interpreted to mean male, which is the plural form of the word al-Rajul, and its opponent al-Nisa, the plural form is the word mar'ah, which means

Woman. Some scholars interpret the word qowwamina as a leader, unlike Quraish Shihab and Ibn Assyria, who interpret the word qowwamina as a protector, which means the position of women and men is the same. Women are often seen as inferior to men [35]. According to Mbah Sahal Mahfudz, the alignment between men and women is very weak, basically 3 assessments have strong assumptions in terms of religion, first, dogmatic and explicit assumptions that place women as complements men, second, dogma that women's ethical moral talents are inferior to men's, third, materialistic views, the ideology of pre-Islamic Mecca society underestimated the role of perempuan in production [36].

Amina Wadud Muhsin presents a different explanation from other conservative mufassir, he interprets it by combining the order to remain silent at home with the prohibition of appearing like the ignorant. He disagrees with other mufassir about the prohibition of women leaving the house in all its forms. According to him, what is prohibited in this verse is going out to show off. The ban is not gender-specific; both men and women are prohibited from leaving the house for showing off. According to him, there is no limit for women to leave the house; originally, men and women have the same right to do everything beneficial for the benefit of the people [37]. Mentioned in QS An Naml verse 34, namely "men are female leaders", the argument does not directly mention that the role of leaders is only for men, but unlike other scholars, they argue that the "leader" in this context is meant to be the family. It proves that Women also have room to hone their ability to lead. Through QS An Naml, the Qur'an praises the leadership of Queen Balqis and her wisdom, it is told in the past, scholars opposed women to become leaders because of the condition of women who are not ready and mature in terms of their abilities, In contrast to today's times, many women easily get access to learn freely, this is a trigger for women in today's era to increase their capacity and be able to become leaders.

According to Quraish Shihab, there is one of the verses related to the political rights of women, in QS At Taubah verse 71 :

وَالْمُؤْمِنُونَ وَالْمُؤْمِنَاتُ بَعْضُهُمْ أَوْلِيَاءُ بَعْضٍ يَأْمُرُونَ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ وَيَنْهَوْنَ عَنِ الْمُنْكَرِ وَيُقِيمُونَ
الصَّلَاةَ وَيُؤْتُونَ الزَّكَاةَ وَيُطِيعُونَ اللَّهَ وَرَسُولَهُ أُولَئِكَ سَيَرْحَمُهُمُ اللَّهُ إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَزِيزٌ حَكِيمٌ ٧١

71. The believers, men and women, some of them are helpers to others.328) They enjoin (do) makruf and prevent (disobedience), enforce prayers, pay zakat, and obey Allah and His Messenger. They will be blessed by Allah. Indeed, Allah is Mighty and Wise.

The above verse gives an overview of the obligation to cooperate between men and women for various lives, which is shown in the sentence "ordering to do makruf and preventing munkar."

The word awliya includes Cooperation, help, and mastery. In this aspect, there should be no more discrimination against women in their careers and performance in public spaces. In its development, the community should be able to see that work or career is not limited to gender issues only. Quraish Shihab said that Islamic principles do not prohibit women from working inside or outside their homes, independently or working with the private sector or the government, day or night, as long as the work is halal and avoids the impact of negative impacts. Many women in the time of the Prophet Muhammad PBUH worked to help their husbands who were unable to fulfill their obligations to provide for their families. There was Ummu Salim binti Malhan, who worked as a bridal make-up artist, Qilat Ummi BanyAmmar as a Merchant, Zainab Ibn Jahsy worked as a tanner of animal skins, As Syaffa got assignments from the Caliph, and many more. The Prophet also paid a lot of attention to women to make the best use of their time and fill it with useful work [38].

In this article, the reason for using the word "Woman" is that it comes from the Javanese language, which means "wani di tata," in Javanese culture, which means a woman who is willing to be regulated. Oppression of Women is a habit of relics in the era of ignorance,

where at that time Women were intended as "goods" that could be bought and inherited. Women were considered worthless and only brought disaster. In this modern era, the oppression of women does not mean that it has been eradicated, only different names, what we call "gender" Gender equality is one of the themes that has been talked about a lot lately, the definition of the theme of gender equality is quite hotly discussed because it contains a discussion about the limited opportunities for women to contribute and have more contributions outside the home. Many verses of the Qur'an discuss women and men. However, the misunderstanding of the interpretation of this verse gives rise to a gender-biased interpretation that, in the end, women continue to be the object of error and are doubly.

The discourse of career women and their participation in various public activities is an issue that is still debated to this day. Some people argue that women can gain an appreciation of their identity by working and being active in the outside household life sector. For them, women's entry into the world of careers means a positive thing, not only for women themselves, but also for their families. While some others consider women's participation in various public activities, including pursuing careers outside the home, to be something negative. For them, women who work outside the domestic sector can degrade a woman's dignity and neglect the duties they are supposed to perform, namely, domestic duties. Furthermore, according to Herien Puspitawati,¹ all the problems of gender inequality/inequality originate from a biased perception of gender roles because they are formed by a culture that has been hereditary and has been internalized for centuries [39].

Therefore, it is not uncommon to assume that women, as domestic creatures, should not be involved in public affairs. Often, the two opposing views, pro and con, are based on religious postulates or interpretations. Meanwhile, for groups that do not want to appreciate women's participation in public activities, including in the matter of career women basing their argument on the normative side of Islam which according to them strictly limits women's space of movement only to the domestic area, even with a hierarchical pattern, where women are placed as second beings below men. In this case, some verses about Eve's creation are often expressed [40].

There are several factors that women choose their life path for a career, including:

1. To fill the time, this reason is usually stated by a person whose husband works in the office and has fulfilled his birth responsibilities.
2. To supplement the needs of the family, it is carried out by wives who do not meet their husbands' needs.
3. To provide for the family, it is done by a woman who is not married (divorced/died), and no one provides for her and her family by birth.

The development of the industrial sector, with the advancement of the industrial sector and the expansion of the workforce, has resulted in a shortage of workers, making many women use this opportunity to develop their potential. Progress of Women in the Education sector, Women who receive higher education, are not satisfied with just dwelling at home; they need a place to channel their dedication to knowledge to the public, which makes them a teacher [41].

Table 1. Results and Discussion

Theme	Key Points	Source/Verse	Interpretive Insight
Fazlur Rahman's Double Movement Theory	Two-step hermeneutics: (1) move from present to revelation's historical context; (2) return to present with extracted moral principles. Emphasizes socio-historical understanding over literalism.	General theory	Encourages contextual application of Qur'anic ethics to contemporary issues.

Application to Career Women	Al-Ahzab 33: Women allowed to work under conditions: guardian's permission, modest interaction, avoiding tabarruj, no excessive perfume, covering awrah.	QS Al-Ahzab:33	Balances women's public role with Sharia ethics.
Quraish Shihab's View	Women may work if respecting Sharia principles; historical examples from the Prophet's era; working can be mandatory in economic necessity.	QS Al-Qasas: 23–24	Employment is permissible and sometimes obligatory.
Challenging Stereotypes	Counters patriarchal norms; women possess leadership capacity (Queen Balqis example); Qur'an encourages cooperation between genders.	QS Maryam: 22–23; QS At-Taubah: 71	Women's dignity is upheld; roles are not limited to the domestic sphere.
Gender Equality in Leadership	Leadership is not inherently male-only; women may lead if capable and contextually prepared.	QS An-Naml: 34; QS At-Taubah: 71	Removes blanket prohibition; focuses on competence and ethics.
Societal Debates	Pro: careers enhance self-worth, benefit family. Con: risk of neglecting domestic duties, degrading dignity.	Contemporary discourse	Divergence stems from cultural bias and selective interpretation.
Motivations for Women's Careers	Filling time, supplementing family income, sole breadwinner, and education application.	Socio-economic factors	Driven by personal, economic, and societal needs.
Industrial & Educational Impact	Industrial growth and higher education access expand women's career opportunities.	Modern context	Encourages utilization of skills in public sphere.
Combined Lens Conclusion	Shihab's ethics-based exegesis aligns with Rahman's double movement; Al-Ahzab 33 is seen as context-bound, not an absolute prohibition.	QS Al-Ahzab: 33	Supports women's careers within ethical boundaries.

This study integrates Quraish Shihab's Tafsir Al-Misbah with Fazlur Rahman's double movement theory to provide a critical and context-sensitive analysis of the discourse on career women in contemporary Muslim societies. The paper argues that Shihab's exegetical practice, which emphasizes ethical intent and situational reading, aligns well with Rahman's two-stage hermeneutic: moving from present concerns to the historical circumstances of revelation, then returning to apply the Qur'an's moral objectives to modern contexts. By applying this combined lens, the authors show that scriptural injunctions often cited to restrict women's public participation—such as the admonitions in Al-Ahzab 33—should be read as context-bound measures aimed primarily at preventing social harm rather than categorical prohibitions on women's work. This reframing opens theological space for women's careers so long as ethical constraints like modesty, dignity, and avoidance of fitnah are respected [41].

Textually, the analysis draws on multiple strands of evidence discussed in the attachment: historical examples of working women in the Prophet's era, narrative episodes such as the daughters of Shu'aib, and the Qur'anic portrayal of female leadership exemplified by Queen Bilqis. These elements are marshalled to show that normative jurisprudence has resources to permit female labor when circumstances, necessity, or public benefit so require. The authors correctly highlight that economic compulsion and social need historically justified female participation in labor markets, and that modernity simply amplifies contexts where such permissibility becomes practically relevant [40].

Methodologically, the *maudhui* (thematic) approach is effective in aggregating dispersed verses and tafsir remarks into coherent thematic conclusions. Its strength lies in synthesizing textual data and exegetical commentary into policy-relevant insights. Nevertheless, the analysis would benefit from more systematic engagement with dissenting tafsir traditions and with empirical studies documenting how contemporary Muslim-majority institutions handle gendered workplace norms, such as dress codes, segregation policies, and care-support measures. Including these would bridge hermeneutical argumentation with implementation realities. Normatively, the integrated framework advances a constructive middle path: it legitimizes women's career participation while preserving ethical guardrails articulated by Shihab and Rahman. This orientation shifts debate away from absolutist prohibitions toward contextually adjudicated permissibility, enabling religious educators, community leaders, and policymakers to develop gender-sensitive yet religiously grounded workplace practices. The paper thus contributes a pragmatic model for reconciling textual fidelity with contemporary demands for women's meaningful public participation [41].

Specifically, the study recommends concrete steps for translating hermeneutical openness into institutional practice: develop curricular modules in Islamic education that teach contextual tafsir and gender justice; promote workplace policies that accommodate religious dress, caregiving responsibilities, and flexible scheduling; incentivize employers to adopt family-friendly practices and anti-discrimination standards; engage religious leaders in public dialogues that reduce stigma attached to women's employment; fund qualitative and quantitative studies that document lived experiences of Muslim career women across diverse contexts; and create networks of scholars, policymakers, and civil society actors to pilot contextually grounded reforms. Future research should test the model empirically, examine comparative national policies, and evaluate how interpretive shifts influence social attitudes and legal frameworks. Such efforts would strengthen both religious authenticity and social justice simultaneously and sustainably.

CONCLUSION

Based on the analysis and discussion, it can be concluded that both Fazlur Rahman and Quraish Shihab provide a positive and constructive framework for recognizing and supporting the role of career women within an Islamic perspective. Fazlur Rahman, through his double movement approach, emphasizes the necessity of understanding the historical context of Qur'anic revelation before deriving its universal and timeless values. This method allows for the reinterpretation of verses, such as QS Al-Ahzab:33, in light of contemporary realities. Rahman asserts that the prohibition against women leaving the home in this verse was context-specific and cannot be universally applied to all times and circumstances. This opens the door for women's active participation in public spaces, including professional and leadership roles, provided these activities align with ethical and religious principles. Similarly, Quraish Shihab, in his *Tafsir Al-Misbah*, presents a balanced and proportionate view on women's participation in the workforce. He affirms that women have the same right as men to work and contribute to society, as long as such involvement upholds Islamic ethics, sharia guidelines, and cultural propriety. Shihab further highlights that employment for women is not merely an economic necessity, but also an avenue for self-actualization, personal growth, and the optimal use of their potential. He underlines that women's contributions, when conducted within moral and religious boundaries, enhance both individual dignity and societal development. Both scholars firmly reject gender-biased interpretations that limit women's opportunities without valid textual or contextual justification. They advocate for an inclusive reading of the Qur'an—one that integrates moral, social, and humanitarian considerations. This shared outlook strengthens the argument that Islam accords women a dignified position and the freedom to participate actively in social, political, and economic life, as long as these activities remain in harmony with religious values. Furthermore, this research underscores that the challenges faced by women in the public sphere stem not from the religious texts themselves, but from entrenched patriarchal interpretations and cultural norms. Such interpretations often distort the intended

spirit of the Qur'anic message, creating unnecessary barriers for women's empowerment. Consequently, there is an urgent need for interpretive approaches that are both contextually aware and gender-equitable. This will ensure that women can fulfill their public and professional roles effectively while preserving their religious identity and values. In conclusion, the integration of Fazlur Rahman's contextual methodology and Quraish Shihab's balanced exegetical approach offers a strong intellectual foundation for advocating the rights and roles of career women in contemporary Muslim societies. By promoting interpretations that are rooted in the Qur'an's universal principles and adapted to modern contexts, this research affirms that Islam supports the active, ethical, and meaningful participation of women in all spheres of life.

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Author Contribution

All authors contributed equally to the conception, analysis, writing, and revision of this article.

Conflicts of Interest

The authors declare no conflicts of interest regarding the research, authorship, or publication of this article.

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