



Gender-Based Violence in Muslim Families: A Quranic Analysis of Power Relations and Victim Protection

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Abstract

This article begins with the gap between the normative construction of the Quran, which emphasizes justice, reciprocity, and moral responsibility in family relations, and the empirical reality of persistent gender-based violence in Muslim families. This gap is exacerbated by the tendency of reading religious texts to place power relations hierarchically, thereby normalizing gender inequality and weakening the position of victims. This study aims specifically to analyze the concept of power relations in the family according to the Quran and to identify the ethical principles of the Quran that serve as a normative basis for protecting victims of gender-based violence. The study uses a qualitative method based on a literature review, with a thematic-critical interpretation and contextual analysis, examining key verses on family leadership, husband-wife relations, trust, justice, and the protection of vulnerable parties through the ethical framework of the Quran, with a focus on *maqāṣid al-Sharī'ah* and human dignity. The results of this study indicate, first, that the concept of *qiwāmah* and family authority in the Quran is strictly limited by the principles of justice, non-exploitation, and moral responsibility, rather than by the legitimacy of domination. Second, the Quran normatively rejects all forms of violence by positioning power relations as an ethical mandate that must safeguard the safety, honor, and rights of the more vulnerable. Third, gender-based violence is a distortion of the Quran's normative purpose and arises from a textual-hierarchical reading that ignores the context and ethical orientation of the verses. In conclusion, the Quran provides a firm ethical-theological

framework for rejecting the normalization of violence and siding with victims, with important implications for the development of gender-sensitive and integrative Quranic interpretations in responding to the problem of contemporary family violence.

Keywords: Violence; Gender; Power Relations; Thematic Interpretation; Victim Protection; Al-Quran

Abstrak

Artikel ini berangkat dari kesenjangan antara konstruksi normatif Al-Quran yang menegaskan keadilan, kesalingan, dan tanggung jawab moral dalam relasi keluarga, dengan realitas empiris kekerasan berbasis gender yang masih persisten dalam keluarga Muslim. Kesenjangan ini diperparah oleh kecenderungan pembacaan teks keagamaan yang menempatkan relasi kuasa secara hierarkis, sehingga menormalisasi ketimpangan gender dan melemahkan posisi korban. Penelitian ini bertujuan secara spesifik menganalisis konsep relasi kuasa dalam keluarga menurut Al-Quran serta mengidentifikasi prinsip-prinsip etis Al-Quran yang berfungsi sebagai dasar normatif perlindungan korban kekerasan berbasis gender. Penelitian menggunakan metode kualitatif berbasis studi kepustakaan dengan pendekatan tafsir tematik-kritis dan analisis kontekstual, dengan menelaah ayat-ayat kunci tentang kepemimpinan keluarga, relasi suami-istri, amanah, keadilan, dan perlindungan pihak rentan melalui kerangka etika Al-Quran yang berorientasi pada *maqāṣid al-Syarī'ah* dan martabat manusia. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan, pertama, bahwa konsep *qiwāmah* dan otoritas keluarga dalam Al-Quran dibatasi secara ketat oleh prinsip keadilan, non-eksploitasi, dan tanggung jawab moral, bukan legitimasi dominasi. Kedua, Al-Quran secara normatif menolak segala bentuk kekerasan dengan menempatkan relasi kuasa sebagai amanah etis yang harus menjaga keselamatan, kehormatan, dan hak pihak yang lebih rentan. Ketiga, kekerasan berbasis gender merupakan distorsi terhadap tujuan normatif Al-Quran dan lahir dari pembacaan tekstual-hierarkis yang mengabaikan konteks dan orientasi etis ayat. Kesimpulannya, Al-Quran menyediakan kerangka etis-teologis yang tegas untuk menolak normalisasi kekerasan serta berpihak pada korban, dengan implikasi penting bagi pengembangan tafsir Al-Quran yang sensitif gender dan integratif dalam merespons problem kekerasan keluarga kontemporer.

Kata Kunci: Kekerasan; Gender; Relasi Kuasa; Tafsir Tematik; Perlindungan Korban; Al-Quran

Introduction

Gender-based violence is a structural problem rooted in asymmetrical power relations, patriarchal social constructions, and uncritical religious interpretations in Muslim family life. This violence is not limited to physical acts, but includes psychological, sexual, economic, and symbolic violence that often persists latently and is normalized through theological legitimacy (Lombard & Hankela, 2025). Husband-wife relations, understood hierarchically and subordinately, transform the family—normally projected as a space of peace and protection—into an arena of domination (Firdawaty, Asnawi, & Mahmudah, 2024). Normative interpretations of verses on gender relations that are detached from the principles of justice (*'adl*), compassion (*rahmah*), and protection of the vulnerable contribute to the reproduction of gender-based violence (Puspita & Yuslem, 2025). This condition shows that the problem of domestic violence does not originate from the teachings of the Quran, but rather from the construction of power relations that are legitimized

by partial and ahistorical interpretations, thus demanding a critical, holistic reading of the Quran that is oriented towards the ethics of liberation.

The phenomenon of gender-based violence in the domestic sphere has received widespread attention due to its systemic and cross-cultural impacts. A (2018) United Nations Development Programme report confirmed that gender inequality remains deeply rooted globally, with domestic violence being the most consistent manifestation. The United Nations Women (2025) noted that one in three women worldwide has experienced physical or sexual violence, the majority of which occurred within intimate relationships. The International Labour Organization (2019) demonstrated the close link between domestic violence and women's economic dependence, which reinforces unequal power relations. These findings emphasize that gender-based violence is not a private matter, but rather a structural problem that requires normative and theological analysis. In the context of Muslim families, this issue becomes even more complex when violence is symbolically justified through religious narratives, making Quranic analysis crucial for challenging this legitimacy and establishing a framework for victim protection.

Previous studies have shown significant attention to gender and justice issues in Islam, but remain analytically limited. Alfani et al. (2025) emphasize a monotheistic reading of the Quran that rejects gender superiority and affirms moral equality, but do not elaborate on mechanisms for protecting victims of domestic violence. Al-Sharmani (2023) criticizes epistemic patriarchy in the *tafsīr* tradition and asserts that the Quran is not misogynistic, but focuses more on theological deconstruction without analyzing family power relations. Wardatun and Smith (2020) discuss gender relations through a critical fiqh perspective, but have not integrated a thematic reading of Quranic verses related to victim protection. Ginting et al. (2023) highlight the theological roots of gender injustice, but do not directly link them to the dynamics of contemporary domestic violence. Wijaya, Muchlis, and Rohmatulloh (2025) offer a normative reinterpretation of gender verses for social justice, but have not analyzed micro-power relations within the family textually and analytically. Overall, there has been no research that systematically maps the power relations of Muslim families based on verses of the Quran and, at the same time, formulates the principles of protecting victims of gender-based violence through a thematic-contextual approach, thus forming a research gap in this study.

Based on these gaps, this study formulates two main questions: how the Quran views power relations within Muslim families and how Quranic principles establish a framework for protecting victims of gender-based violence. This study aims to analyze Quranic verses related to husband-wife relations, authority, justice, and the protection of vulnerable parties through a thematic-contextual approach and formulate their implications for the prevention and handling of domestic violence. The initial argument of the study is based on the assumption that gender-based violence does not originate from Quranic teachings, but rather from power

relations legitimized by reductive interpretations. Thus, the research contribution is expected to strengthen the discourse of Quranic interpretation from a gender justice perspective, provide a theological framework for advocacy and recovery for victims of domestic violence, and enrich contemporary Islamic studies to be more responsive to actual humanitarian issues within Muslim families.

Method

This research uses a qualitative, normative-interpretive method grounded in a literature review, with a critical thematic interpretation (*mawḍūʿī*) approach, explicitly situated within the framework of an analysis of Quranic ethics and Islamic feminism. The primary data of the research are Quranic verses directly or implicitly related to gender relations, family structure, violence, justice, and the protection of vulnerable groups, selected based on thematic criteria, normative relevance, and the socio-historical context of revelation. Secondary data include classical, modern, and contemporary commentaries selected purposively for their scientific authority, methodological diversity, and sensitivity to gender issues, along with Islamic feminist literature and relevant recent scientific publications. Data collection techniques are carried out systematically by identifying thematic keywords using the Quranic index and verse inventory, grouping verses into normative, ethical, and relational categories, and selecting interpretations that represent the spectrum of interpretative views. Data analysis was conducted in a hierarchical and integrative manner through linguistic-semantic analysis to examine the key meanings of the verses, contextual-historical analysis to understand the social background of the revelation, and relational analysis to identify patterns of authority, legitimacy, and the victim's position within the family structure. All findings were analyzed through interpretive synthesis, using the principles of *maqāṣid al-Sharīʿah* and human dignity as the ethical framework of the Quran to produce a coherent, critical, and methodological reading.

Results and Discussion

Power Relations in Muslim Families According to the Quran

The concept of Muslim family power relations is rooted in the principle of monotheism, which affirms the ontological equality of humans as moral subjects who share ethical responsibility (Alamsyah & Zuhdi, 2024). This framework can be analyzed using a dialogical power-relations approach, as developed within relational power theory, which views authority not as a fixed possession but as a capacity negotiated through responsibility and moral legitimacy (Young & Seedall, 2024). This perspective aligns with Quranic ethics, which views authority as a trust held in trust, limited by individual accountability. Al-Ṭabarī's (2001) interpretation of family verses emphasizes responsibility and care as the core of domestic leadership, rather than an essential gender-based superiority. The integration of contemporary power relations theory with Quranic hermeneutics demonstrates

that family structures are built through ethical coordination between subjects with varying capacities. At the same time, the legitimacy of leadership is always linked to obligations of protection and justice, not rights of structural domination.

The metaphor of a spouse as a “garment” in the Quran 2:187 acquires strong relational significance when analyzed through classical and contemporary comparative interpretations. Al-Rāzī (2001) interprets the term *libās* as a symbol of existential closeness that negates hierarchical distance, while Ibn ‘Āshūr (1985) emphasizes the dimension of reciprocal protection that embodies the principle of mutual responsibility. Amina Wadud (1999) and Asma Barlas (2012) view this metaphor as the theological foundation of ethical partnership that rejects the subordinative construction of gender. Linguistic analysis shows that the use of symmetrical nouns without markers of superiority emphasizes a mutually equal relationship structure. A thematic approach to verses on family relations reinforces the interpretation that the distribution of domestic roles is functional and contextual, adjusting to the economic, psychological, and social capacities of family members (Ismail, Firdaus, & Darmawijaya, 2024). The hermeneutic conclusion shows that the Quran formulates family power relations as a mutually supportive mechanism oriented towards the sustainability of collective welfare, not the legitimization of gender domination structures.

The discussion of *qiwāmah* in the Quran 4:34 requires a philological analysis of the sentence structures *bi-mā faḍḍala Allāhu ba’dahum ‘alā ba’d* and *bi-mā anfaqū*, because both phrases define the conditional character of authority. Al-Zuhaylī (2009) interprets functional excellence as a capacity for responsibility that can vary according to socio-economic conditions, rather than an essential attribute permanently attached to a particular gender. Contemporary Islamic legal hermeneutics studies confirm that associating leadership with responsibility for livelihood establishes a causal relationship, opening the possibility of redistributing authority when material prerequisites are not met (Akmal & Usmani, 2024). This analysis aligns with the theory of negotiated authority, which views leadership as the result of social interactions based on actual capacity (Fox & Comeau-Vallée, 2020). The interpretation of *qiwāmah* as absolute authority lacks textual legitimacy because the verse links leadership to concrete obligations that require maintenance, protection, and economic responsibility as the foundation of normative legitimacy.

The connection between Quranic verses 4:34 and 9:71 emphasizes the Quranic social relations framework, which views men and women as *awliyā’* who support each other in the practice of collective good. A thematic interpretation connects the two verses through the principle of relational justice, which integrates domestic leadership with the community’s moral solidarity. Kecia Ali (2016b) shows that the Quran’s relational structure cannot be understood through a partial reading of a single verse, but rather through a network of meanings that emphasize mutual responsibility. This comprehensive interpretation reveals that family leadership

functions as an ethical coordination that directs the distribution of roles towards the common good. Intertextual analysis demonstrates the consistency of the Quranic message, which places authority within a framework of social responsibility, so that the concept of leadership does not stand as a unilateral command mechanism, but rather a system of moral collaboration that requires ongoing legitimacy through the practice of interpersonal justice.

The distinction between functional authority and gender subordination gains a strong conceptual foundation when linked to feminist power hierarchy theory, which critiques the absolutization of biological differences as a basis for legitimizing domination (Eagly, 2018). The Quranic ethical framework rejects this absolutization by emphasizing the universal principles of trust and individual accountability. Quranic verse 2:233, concerning family deliberation in childcare, demonstrates a rational consensus-based decision-making mechanism, while Quranic verse 42:38 emphasizes deliberation as a general principle of social governance. Al-Marāghī (1997) interprets deliberation as a means of avoiding the imposition of will that harms family members. The integration of these verses demonstrates that the distribution of domestic authority operates through ethical dialogue rather than through subordination structures. This conceptual framework demonstrates that power relations in the Quran make procedural justice a prerequisite for legitimizing family leadership, thereby rendering unilateral domination contrary to the basic principles of relational governance idealized by the sacred text.

Traditional patriarchal readings of family verses can be understood through a social-historical analysis of interpretation, which demonstrates the relationship between the interpreter's societal structure and the construction of religious meaning. Leila Ahmed (1992) and Ayesha Chaudhry (2014) identified that hierarchical interpretations often emerge in social contexts that view gender relations through the lens of patrimonial power structures. A contextual hermeneutic approach emphasizes the need to distinguish between the text's normative message and the interpreter's cultural reflection (Harahap, Is, & Julaiha P, 2025). Modern interpretations that emphasize the ethical responsibility of leadership tend to reconstruct meaning toward an egalitarian model of relations, more consistent with the Quranic principle of justice (Espihani et al., 2025). This comparative analysis does not aim to negate the authority of the interpretive tradition, but rather positions it as a historical product that can be re-examined through a thematic-contextual methodology to produce a more coherent understanding of the universal values of justice and the protection of humanity.

The conceptualization of the ethics of power in the Quran requires an operational definition that integrates the principles of monotheism, trust, deliberation, and moral accountability as indicators of the legitimacy of authority. This ethical model can be formulated through three main components: responsibility-based legitimacy, flexible role distribution based on actual capacity,

and a correction mechanism through collective deliberation. This framework aligns with relational ethics theory, which views power as legitimate when it serves to balance the interests of the parties involved (Fishbane, 2023). A comparative interpretation of family verses demonstrates that authority structures do not exist as permanent privileges but rather as mechanisms for managing social responsibility, continually renegotiated in response to changing conditions. This conceptual formulation provides a theoretical foundation that allows the analysis of power relations in Muslim families to move beyond normative debates toward a measurable analytical model compatible with contemporary social-theoretical frameworks.

A thematic synthesis of Quranic verses 2:187, 4:34, 2:233, 9:71, and 42:38 demonstrates the consistency of the power relations paradigm in the Quran, which positions the family as a learning space for ethical responsibility. The domestic leadership structure operates through the integration of protective responsibilities, mutual moral support, and deliberation mechanisms that guarantee procedural justice. The dialogue between classical, modernist, and feminist interpretations demonstrates interpretive convergence regarding the non-absolute nature of family authority, despite variations in methodological emphasis. The integration of Quranic gender studies literature with authoritative interpretation analysis produces a more comprehensive and relevant interpretive framework for the contemporary social context. The model of power relations in the Quran can ultimately be understood as a relational ethical system that tests the legitimacy of leadership through its capacity to protect, its ability to fulfill responsibilities, and its commitment to maintaining the balance of dignity of all family members as equal moral subjects.

Gender-Based Violence as a Distortion of Power Relations in the Quran

The Quran places violence as a manifestation of *ẓulm*, namely an act that exceeds the limits of moral legitimacy that disrupts the balance of human relations (Al-Ifriqī, 1999). This ethical framework is reflected in several verses that emphasize the prohibition of treating one's partner in a hurtful manner; for example, Quran 2:231 prohibits maintaining a marital relationship with the intention of causing harm, and Quran 4:19 commands treating *mu'āsharah bi al-Ma'rūf*. These textual references demonstrate that family power is not a right of domination, but rather an ethical trust bound by the obligation to maintain the dignity of others. Amina Wadud (1999) and Asma Barlas (2001) interpret relational verses as a framework of ethical interrelationship, not absolute hierarchy. This perspective shows that gender-based domestic violence contradicts the moral orientation of revelation because it transforms relational trust into an instrument of subordination. The conceptualization of violence as *ẓulm* emphasizes that deviant social practices cannot be legitimized through religious claims that ignore the Quranic principle of justice.

The relationship between abuse of power and the emergence of domestic violence can be explained through relational power theory, which views authority as a social construct that gains legitimacy through religious symbols, norms, and interpretations. Power loses its normative function when biological or cultural claims are treated as theological mandates immune to criticism (Bettiza & Lewis, 2020). Quran 49:13 affirms the ontological equality of human beings as the basis for individual moral responsibility, thus rendering any form of coercive domination theologically unfounded. Kecia Ali (2016a) shows that historical patriarchal structures often construct the husband-wife relationship as a relationship of ownership, even though normative texts position marriage as an ethical contract based on reciprocal responsibility. This analysis reveals an epistemic mechanism that transforms moral authority into dominative authority through cultural naturalization. Gender-based violence arises when these symbolic constructs are accepted as religious norms without critical evaluation of their conformity to the values of revealed justice.

The *maqāṣid al-Sharī'ah* framework provides a more operational normative basis for assessing domestic violence as a serious violation of the objectives of sharia. The principles of protecting life (*ḥifẓ al-Nafs*), honor (*ḥifẓ al-'Irq*), and reason (*ḥifẓ al-'Aql*) require family relations to function as a space of psychological and physical safety (Munirah et al., 2026). Violence, whether physical or verbal, directly contradicts these objectives because it causes structural damage to individual integrity. Putra and Acela (2023) demonstrate that tolerant interpretations of family law toward domestic violence are the result of a partial reading that ignores the protective orientation of sharia. An integrative approach between *maqāṣid* and gender hermeneutics demonstrates that family authority is functional, namely, to maintain the well-being of family members rather than to dominate. Power relations that do not fulfill their protective function lose their normative legitimacy and turn into a form of oppression that is categorized as *ẓulm* within the ethical framework of the Quran.

The normalization of gender-based violence is often rooted in partial interpretations of relational verses divorced from the overall ethical context of the Quran. The debate over the interpretation of Quranic verse 4:34 demonstrates how a literal reading, devoid of consideration for the *maqāṣid* (purposes of action) and historical context, can legitimize domestic domination. Omaira Abou-Bakr (2023) demonstrates that reinterpretation, based on linguistic and historical analysis, opens the possibility of a nonviolent understanding of terms that have traditionally been read as justifying corporal punishment. This critical hermeneutic approach demonstrates that interpretive authority is always linked to the interpreter's power relations, allowing patriarchal bias to influence the interpretation (Tafkir, Hidayat, & Ayob, 2026). Methodological analysis confirms that indicators of partial interpretation include isolating verses, neglecting discursive context, and separating

the text from universal principles of justice. This practice of selective interpretation allows normative texts to be used as symbolic legitimization of domestic violence.

The mechanism of symbolic legitimacy operates through the internalization of norms that present domination as religiously normal. Pierre Bourdieu's (1993) theory of symbolic violence explains how power structures can operate without physical coercion through social acceptance of hierarchies deemed natural. Analysis of family practices shows that domestic violence often emerges after symbolic domination successfully constructs obedience as the victim's moral obligation (Mshweshwe, 2020). The Quranic perspective, which emphasizes individual responsibility and prohibits oppression, rejects such symbolic structures because it links justice to personal moral accountability. Sharifnia et al.'s (2025) study of domestic violence in Muslim communities across various countries shows that perpetrators often use religious legitimacy to silence social criticism. These findings emphasize that hermeneutical deviations do not stop at the realm of interpretation but instead transform into social practices that reproduce gender power imbalances.

Criticism of patriarchal interpretations does not negate the differences in family roles, but rather emphasizes that functional differences cannot be used as a basis for legitimizing violence. Ismail et al. (2024) demonstrate that the concept of *qiwamah* should be understood as a contextual ethical responsibility rather than an absolute authority that transcends the principles of justice. This reinterpretation is supported by verses that emphasize marital reciprocity and affection, such as Quran 30:21, which describes the relationship between spouses as a space of tranquility and mercy. Rois et al. (2025) demonstrate how classical and modern interpretive approaches have shifted from a hierarchical model to a relational model based on reciprocal responsibility. This interpretive shift demonstrates that the legitimacy of domestic violence is not a consequence of normative teachings, but rather the result of a social construction that links family authority with the right to physical control. An ethical hermeneutical framework allows the Quranic text to be read as a source of protection for victims, rather than as an instrument for justifying domination.

The distortion of power relations can be understood as an epistemic shift that replaces the ethics of justice with an ideology of domination through changes in interpretive authority. Interpretive authority concentrated in patriarchal social structures can produce readings that maintain hierarchy, whereas a participatory approach opens space for correcting interpretive bias. Yang and Li (2021) show that the production of religious meaning is always linked to the configuration of institutional and cultural power. When the principle of non-injustice does not monitor interpretive authority, interpretation can serve to reproduce social inequality. An analysis of the Quran that emphasizes the moral accountability of each rejects the absolutization of authority and places justice as the criterion for the legitimacy of action. Domestic violence legitimized through ahistorical interpretations demonstrates an epistemic transformation that transforms

relational mandates into ideologies of domination, necessitating hermeneutical correction based on the principle of universal justice.

The conceptual synthesis reveals an analytical chain linking power relations in the Quran to the phenomenon of gender-based violence. Power relations, designed as an ethical mandate, are distorted when partial interpretations separate the text from its orientation towards justice, resulting in symbolic legitimacy of domination, and ultimately producing the practice of domestic violence. This analytical model asserts that the primary cause of violence is not the structure of family relations itself, but rather a hermeneutic distortion that transforms moral authority into a right to control. An integrative approach between verse analysis, relational power theory, *maqāṣid al-Sharī'ah*, and empirical studies of domestic violence demonstrates that Quranic ethics consistently rejects all forms of gender-based oppression. This framework provides a theoretical basis for understanding victim protection as a direct consequence of the principle of revealed justice, while also opening up space for normative reinterpretation that positions family relations as an arena of ethical responsibility that guarantees the dignity of every individual.

The Position of Victims of Violence in the Framework of Quranic Ethics

The concept of *al-Maḏlūm* occupies a fundamental position in Quranic ethics regarding the protection of victims of violence, because the term does not simply refer to a state of oppression but also signifies a moral status that demands a collective normative response. Al-Qurṭubī (1964) suggests that the category of *al-Maḏlūm* encompasses individuals who lose the ability to defend their rights due to structural domination, including unequal domestic relations. Abdullah Saeed (2006) emphasizes that siding with victims is rooted in the principle of divine justice, which requires the active defense of the disadvantaged. This framework allows for a conceptual integration between normative texts and the reality of gender-based violence through a contextual hermeneutic approach. Family relations are understood as an ethical space that must guarantee personal security, so any power structure that results in oppression is contrary to the moral purpose of revelation.

Divine justice, which underlies the advocacy of victims, is articulated through the principle of collective moral responsibility to prevent injustice and restore violated rights. A thematic interpretation of verses on justice demonstrates that the Quran views social relations as a test of human moral integrity; allowing oppression to persist is treated as an ethical failure of the community (Laili, 2024). Khaled Abou El Fadl (2005) asserts that Quranic ethics rejects neutrality toward power that violates human dignity, as moral authority is only valid when it protects vulnerable groups. Integrating this perspective with an analysis of domestic violence demonstrates that family legitimacy is inseparable from ensuring the safety of family members. A victim-oriented hermeneutic interpretation allows for a rereading of domestic power relations as an ethical responsibility governed by the principle of substantive justice rather than merely symbolic harmony. This theoretical

framework bridges the gap between the theological concept of justice and the social implications of the obligation to protect victims of gender-based violence.

Empathy in the Quran gains normative standing through the prohibition on participation in sin. Hostility is stated in Surah 5:2, which many commentators interpret as a command to distance oneself from structures of collective oppression. Ibn Kathīr (2004) and al-Rāzī (2001) argue that this prohibition extends to not only direct action but also to silence that prolongs the suffering of victims. Fazlur Rahman (1982) interprets this provision as the basis for social responsibility to support victims of oppression. This framework is relevant in the context of family violence, as the normalization of violence under the guise of domestic patience has the potential to constitute a form of moral collaboration with the perpetrator. A hermeneutic approach that connects the text to the victim's experience emphasizes that empathy is not merely an emotional response but an ethical obligation that demands public recognition of suffering and an institutional commitment to end the violence (Alyce, Taggart, & Sweeney, 2023). This principle extends the meaning of family solidarity to a solidarity of justice that prioritizes the safety of oppressed individuals.

The command to uphold justice even when it conflicts with family interests, as stated in Surah 4:135, underscores the Quran's ethical orientation, which rejects false solidarity based on social proximity. Al-Zamakhsharī (1987) emphasized that the verse commands objective testimony even when it harms the interests of the immediate group, thereby demonstrating that the principle of justice transcends family loyalty. This perspective has direct implications for the issue of domestic violence, as defending the perpetrator in the name of family honor contradicts the mandate of revelation. Amina Wadud's (2021) analysis of gender-justice hermeneutics shows that patriarchal structures often use the rhetoric of harmony to close off the space for victims to testify. The integration of classical and contemporary interpretations makes clear that, in the Quran, ethics shifts the orientation of family relations toward protecting human dignity. Justice is not understood as symbolic reconciliation, but rather as a normative mechanism that ensures the recognition of victims' wounds and the restoration of violated rights through concrete actions.

The principle of *raf' al-Ḥaraj*, or the removal of hardship, reflected in Surah 2:185 and Surah 22:78, provides a *fiqh*-ethical basis for the protection of victims of family violence. *Maqāṣid al-Sharī'ah* places the protection of life (*ḥifẓ al-Nafs*) and honor (*ḥifẓ al-'Ird*) as the primary objectives of law, so any practice that causes systematic suffering is contrary to the objectives of sharia (Auda 2010). Muhsin, Ma'mun, and Nuroniyah (2021) demonstrate that applying this principle enables a legal interpretation that prioritizes the safety of victims over the preservation of harmful relationship structures. The integration of *maqāṣid* with the thematic interpretation of the *iḥsān* verse and the prohibition of mutual harm establishes an

evaluative standard for assessing the legitimacy of family relationships, grounded in the protection of human dignity. This perspective strengthens the argument that the victims' suffering cannot be interpreted as a moral test to be accepted, because revelation actually orders the elimination of conditions that harm human welfare.

The prohibition on maintaining relationships that cause harm, as reflected in Surah 2:231, emphasizes that family sustainability should not be built through one-sided suffering. Al-Qurṭubī (1964) explains that this verse condemns the practice of maintaining marital relations to harm one's partner, so family goals must be aligned with the principles of *iḥsān* and justice. The modern *maqāṣid* approach developed by Jasser Auda (2010) interprets this provision as a normative basis for policies to protect victims of domestic violence. This analysis shows that the family's legitimacy lies in its capacity to provide psychological and physical security for its members. This perspective rejects religious discourse that sacrifices the safety of victims for the sake of an image of social harmony, because families that maintain violence actually contradict the moral goals of sharia. Restoring the victim's dignity includes guarantees of security, access to justice, and social support that allow for the reconstruction of life without the threat of repeated violence.

Criticism of religious discourse that places family integrity above the safety of victims is legitimized through justice in the Quran, which views trust and responsibility as the foundation of social relations. Quran 4:58 emphasizes the obligation to fulfill trust and uphold justice as a principle limiting power. Mohammad Hashim Kamali (1991) interprets justice in the Quran as a process of restoring victims' rights while limiting the perpetrator's dominance. This perspective is relevant in the context of domestic violence because reconciliation without victim protection has the potential to reproduce structural injustice. The integration of classical exegetical approaches and modern justice theory shows that ethics in the Quran does not idealize symbolic peace but rather seeks to transform power relations to align with the principle of human protection. This framework emphasizes that victim security is a moral prerequisite for the legitimacy of family relations and sustainable social stability.

A hermeneutic synthesis of the concepts of *al-Maẓlūm*, *maqāṣid al-Sharī'ah*, and justice in the Quran produces an ethical framework that positions victims of violence as the center of the normative concerns of revelation. A comparative analysis of classical exegesis and contemporary Islamic ethical literature demonstrates the consistency of the Quranic message regarding the obligation to defend the oppressed and to eliminate structures that enable oppression. This approach allows the formulation of a family ethic based on the protection of human dignity, assessing the sustainability of domestic relations by the extent to which they guarantee the safety of family members. The victim-centered hermeneutic perspective emphasizes that justice does not only mean ending violence but also restoring rights, social rehabilitation, and transforming power relations toward

moral equality (Amancik et al., 2024). This ethical framework rejects the legitimacy of suffering as the price of family stability. It emphasizes that protecting victims is a religious, social, and institutional obligation inherent to the Quran's moral purpose.

Reinterpretation of the Gender Relations Verse: From the Legitimacy of Power to the Ethics of Protection

Reinterpreting verses on gender relations requires a hermeneutical framework explicitly formulated through the *maqāṣid al-Sharī'ah* approach, thematic-critical interpretation, and contextual hermeneutics that positions the revealed text as a normative ethical system oriented towards relational justice. This perspective views verses on family relations not as isolated normative statements, but as an integral part of the Quranic moral vision that emphasizes the preservation of human dignity, social responsibility, and the protection of vulnerable groups. This hermeneutical formulation grounds the validity of interpretation not merely in literal conformity with lexical meaning, but in consistency with the Quranic ethical goal of rejecting all forms of oppression. This framework also provides a methodological foundation that allows for integrating linguistic analysis, the social history of revelation, and the *maqāṣid* principle as parameters for evaluating interpretation. Reinterpreting verses on gender relations through this framework presents a reading that is not only textual but also normative, contextual, and systemic.

This approach takes a new interpretive position in Quranic verse 4:34, viewing the concept of *qiwāmah* as a conditional function of socio-economic responsibility rather than an indicator of male ontological superiority. Comparative interpretations demonstrate differences in orientation between classical interpretations that emphasize domestic leadership structures and contemporary interpretations that emphasize moral responsibility grounded in relational justice. Fazlur Rahman (1980), Abdullah Saeed (2021), and Amina Wadud (1999) demonstrate that *qiwāmah* is related to the obligation to maintain family welfare and protect household members, so that the legitimacy of authority depends on the fulfillment of the requirements of justice, economic responsibility, and dignified treatment. When these normative requirements are not met, claims of authority lose their ethical basis and cannot justify domination. This interpretation shifts the interpretation's orientation toward the concept of relational *amānah*, which demands moral responsibility and social accountability as the core of family relations.

A semantic-historical analysis of the term *nushūz* indicates that its lexical meaning refers to a disruption of relational balance or a deviation from interpersonal commitment, rather than simply a wife's unilateral disobedience, as assumed by some normative interpretive traditions (Macsusu et al., 2025). Ibn Manzūr (1999) emphasized that the term has a relational dimension that can apply to both parties in a marital relationship. Contemporary interpretations then

emphasize mechanisms for restoring relationships through dialogue, mediation, and the reconstruction of ethical commitments, rather than repressive actions (AL-Gudah, 2023). This perspective aligns with the Quranic principle of relational justice, which views family conflict as a moral issue that requires just reconciliation. Such a reading broadens understanding of the structure of family relations, grounded in reciprocal responsibility and equal human dignity as the normative foundation of gender relations.

The term *ḍarb* requires a contextual semantic approach that considers the variations in meaning in classical Arabic usage as well as the relationships between verses that emphasize the prohibition of harm. Ibn Fārīs (1979) shows that the word has a broad spectrum of meanings, including symbolic, metaphorical, and nonviolent preventive measures. A thematic-critical exegetical approach places verses on family relations within a network of verses that emphasize the principles of compassion, good treatment, and the prohibition of injustice. Khaled Abou El Fadl's (2005) nonviolent exegesis asserts that a literal interpretation that permits domestic violence creates normative tensions with the ethical principles of the Quran as a whole. This analysis emphasizes that interpreting verses must consider the consistency of the revealed value system, not merely the possibility of lexical meanings separate from the Quran's moral vision.

The principle of *lā ḍarar wa lā ḍirār* holds a central place in the ethical construction of Islamic law, emphasizing the reciprocal prohibition of all forms of harmful actions. Al-Zuhaylī (2006) positions this principle as a normative basis for developing regulations to protect individuals and prevent acts of violence. Integrating this principle into the reinterpretation of verses on gender relations demonstrates that victim protection is not merely a moral implication but a normative demand with strong theological legitimacy. This ethical framework emphasizes the obligation of communities, legal institutions, and family structures to ensure domestic relations are free from violent practices. This approach connects theological dimensions, social ethics, and legal norms within a system of protection that prioritizes human security and dignity in family relations.

The reconstruction of the paradigm of interpreting gender relations requires a methodological formulation that encompasses the principles of contextual analysis, the integration of the *maqāṣid al-Sharī'ah*, thematic-critical reading, and normative ethical evaluation as parameters of interpretative validity. This paradigm views interpretation as a dynamic process that considers changing social contexts without neglecting the integrity of the revealed text. This methodological structure enables a reading that is responsive to the reality of gender-based violence and the need for victim protection. The formulation of this paradigm also clarifies the interpretive procedure through stages of linguistic analysis, historical evaluation, integration of *maqāṣid* values, and testing of ethical consistency with the entire system of Quranic teachings. This systematic approach ensures that reinterpretation

is not speculative but has a methodological basis that can be verified academically and theologically.

The practical implications of reinterpretation are evident in the possibility of reforming Islamic family law that prioritizes the protection of victims of domestic violence. The perspectives on family law reform developed by Ziba Mir-Hosseini (2003) and Abdullahi An-Na'im (1996) suggest that reforming family regulations can be achieved through reinterpreting Islamic normative principles without diminishing the authority of sacred texts. Integrating an ethical framework of protection into regulations on livelihoods, family responsibilities, and domestic conflict-resolution mechanisms demonstrates the potential to transform family law into a system more responsive to gender justice. Reinterpreting verses on gender relations thus not only contributes theoretically to the study of *tafsīr* but also creates space for institutional reform that ensures family relations function as a safe, dignified, and just space for all family members.

Conclusion

Thematic analysis of verses on family relations confirms that gender authority is a relational functional mandate that binds the responsibility for protection, so that the legitimacy of violence arises from ahistorical textual readings and patriarchal bias. Mapping the verses of *qiwāmah*, *mu'āsharah bi al-Ma'rūf*, the prohibition of *ẓulm*, and the principle of preventing harm demonstrates a protective ethical framework that positions female victims as dignified subjects, entitled to relationship restoration and justice. The theoretical contribution offers a *maqāṣid*-oriented ethical hermeneutic model that revises the paradigm of legitimating interpretations of power inequality. Practical implications include developing a gender-sensitive family education curriculum, protective sermon guidelines, and references for victim protection policies grounded in religious values. The limitations of this research are related to the normative-hermeneutic focus on the thematic corpus of verses and mainstream interpretations that limit generalization to empirical social practices. Further research agendas should integrate field studies of victims' experiences, cross-comparison of classical and contemporary schools of interpretation, and evaluation of the implementation of protective ethics approaches through qualitative-comparative and mixed-methods approaches. Strengthening the integration of normative findings and empirical data is expected to broaden the relevance of Quranic ethics as a foundation for sustainable prevention of gender-based violence in contemporary Muslim communities.

Acknowledgments

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Author Contribution Statement

HB conceptualized the research, developed the theoretical framework, conducted the primary analysis, and coordinated the overall writing and revision of

the manuscript. NK contributed to data collection, literature search, and preparation of the methodology section. IY was involved in analyzing supporting data, interpreting findings, and preparing the results section. AO played a role in strengthening the literature review, validating sources, and editing the academic substance. AE contributed to language refinement, formatting consistency, and final proofreading of the manuscript prior to submission.

Conflict of Interest

The authors declare that this manuscript was prepared without any conflict of interest whatsoever. There are no financial relationships, institutional affiliations, or personal interests that could affect the objectivity, integrity, and independence of the writing, analysis, and presentation of the research results. The entire contents of this manuscript are the result of scientific work free from intervention by any party.

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