Gender Bias in Islamic Children's Literature: Case Study in Indonesia

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Abstract

Children's books with Islamic content are popular in Indonesia. The motivation of parents to introduce this genre of books is to help them teach their children the faith and knowledge of Islam from an early age. The more complete the information about Islam available in the book, the more parents will consider buying the book. Meanwhile, consideration of books with content that introduces gender equity needs to be considered. This study analyzes the gender bias in stories of Islamic content. The books analyzed are several popular books published by various different publishers. The research method used was qualitative and the narrative and visual data were critically analyzed with a gender perspective. Feminist linguistics was used to more deeply reveal the signs that will be described based on the context that surrounds the female character. The depiction of women in the four books is generally represented by traditional gender patterns. The female figure is depicted as dependent on men, not involved in dominant narratives. The female characters are described as weak while the male characters are described as stronger without regard to the female character.

Keywords: Children's Readings, Islamic Genre, Gender Equality, Sexism

Abstrak

Buku anak-anak dengan konten islami sangat populer di Indonesia. Motivasi orang tua untuk memperkenalkan genre buku ini adalah untuk membantu mereka mengajarkan iman dan pengetahuan Islam kepada anak-anak mereka sejak usia dini. Semakin lengkap informasi tentang Islam yang tersedia dalam buku, semakin banyak orang tua yang akan mempertimbangkan membeli buku tersebut. Sementara itu, pertimbangan buku-buku dengan konten yang memperkenalkan kesetaraan gender perlu diperhatikan. Studi ini menganalisis bias gender dalam cerita konten Islami. Buku-buku yang dianalisis adalah beberapa buku populer yang diterbitkan oleh berbagai penerbit berbeda. Metode penelitian yang digunakan adalah kualitatif dan data naratif dan visual dianalisis secara kritis dengan perspektif gender. Pendekatan linguistik feminis digunakan untuk mengungkap lebih dalam tanda-tanda yang akan dideskripsikan berdasarkan konteks yang melingkupi karakter perempuan. Penggambaran perempuan dalam keempat buku tersebut umumnya diwakili oleh pola gender tradisional. Sosok perempuan digambarkan bergantung pada laki-laki dan tidak terlibat dalam narasi dominan. Karakter wanita digambarkan lemah sedangkan karakter pria digambarkan lebih kuat tanpa memperhatikan karakter wanita.

Kata Kunci: Bacaan Anak, Genre Islami, Keseteraan Gender, Seksisme

Introduction

The trend of children's books with Islamic content is currently booming. Such books are easy to find in all bookstores in Indonesia and even in online bookstores. Another example, this recent phenomenon is often found in book fairs. For example, a book fair like *Big Bad Wolf* in Surabaya and several big cities in Indonesia. In a special area on the bookshelf for Indonesian publications, most of the children's books on display are in the Islamic genre. Lined up with Islamic books with the theme of Islamic history, especially for children. There are also children's books that feature *hijaiyah* letters and also pictures of prophets and companions. The picture shows a kind of social symptom of the desire of parents to educate their children to be more religious. It is certain that one of the motivations for buying Islamic books for their children is to introduce their children to the faith and knowledge of Islam from an early age. Instilling faith is an important capital to form the ideal image of parents towards their children; namely forming pious children (*sholehah*). Therefore, choosing an Islamic book with complete Islamic knowledge content is the most important consideration in addition to looking for other sources.

The proliferation of Islamic genre children's books on the other hand could be a signal of parents' desire to cultivate children's interest in reading, but that does not mean choosing children's books without being careful. Children's books

are by no means without gaps which of course may reproduce negative discourses on children such as radicalism or gender bias. In January 2016, an Islamic genre children's book was found that contained elements of radicalism and unfortunately this book has even been printed in its 167th edition (Rokib, 2016). The emergence of gender bias in children's books is as dangerous as the issue of radicalism. This bias occurs when depictions of women are less, even if they do not exist. Rarely or perhaps even the role of women is mentioned in, for example, topics about war. On the other hand, if domestic roles, such as cooking or going to the market, women are more dominant. This depiction will strengthen traditional gender roles in children, which of course can be the root of injustice against women.

The above is in line with research on children's literature in the genre of Indonesian folklore such as *Sangkuriang, Timun Emas, Bawang Merah Bawang Putih* which has a tendency to instill unequal characters gender (Setiyawan & Lestari, 2020). Women tend to be described based on a certain standard of beauty and are always domesticated. The patriarchal discourse is described as still very conventional, such as women work in the private sphere and men work in the public sphere. The beautiful depictions of female characters such as *Dayang Sumbi, Bawang Putih and Bawang Merah, and Timun Mas* show the existence of a beautiful myth that actually shows the domestication of women. This research clearly explains that patriarchal discourse is still very strong in children's stories in Indonesia.

The description of children's stories and patriarchal discourse is a separate problem. This paper attempts to complement the previous studies. One of the readings that children often read under the pretext of strengthening religious insight is the Islamic genre of children's reading books. This study will review in depth how gender relations in children's stories are. The study in this study used a critical perspective. A perspective that seeks to look critically at gender relations and the implications of these relations.

Research Method

The sign system involves whatever humans create in their minds, a mental process that Plato called (428-347 BC) as a result of human thought (Danesi, 2004). The sign according to him does not refer to something real but is inspired by it. He gave an example that the circle is the result of human mental processes but he was also inspired by a certain form of nature. A possible shape according to geometry experts refers to something perfect and they call it a circle. As well as language, visual images, stories, artifacts, rituals, advertisements, myths, movements and all other things that are part of the creation of human mental processes. The signs are not living in a meaningless vacuum, they exist because they are meaningful.

The meaning of a sign can be different depending on the context around the sign. (Danesi, 2004)also explains that interpreting signs needs to use a binary opposition technique which means that signs cannot be interpreted singly and absolutely. Referring to the theory of Ferdinand de Saussure, parsing the meaning of a sign is done in two ways, namely syntactically and paradigmatically. The first is to unravel the sign through the visible characteristics of the sign. For example, parsing the meaning of a meaningful word can be done through the elements that make up the word. The second stage, paradigmatic, is an in-depth step by observing other elements around the sign. For example, parsing the meaning of the words *cat vs rat, cat vs bird, cat vs dog, etc.* will be different from each other; *rats, birds, dogs are* like other contexts around the word *cat*.

In terms of interpreting signs, women in children's stories are signs whose meaning will be described based on the context that surrounds them. Whether as language or visual images, women in children's stories are represented in these two sign systems. Therefore, by using feminist linguistics, this study reveals women as signs at the level of applying the sign as a social practice (Litoselliti, 2014).

In this case, the perspective of feminism can be used as a context to place the development of feminist linguistics. Level 1 feminism emphasized the women's suffrage movement in the 19th and 20th centuries. However, feminist linguistics was of less interest in this first level movement. Along with the development of the feminist movement, level two emerged as a political resistance movement against gender discrimination. In line with this level, linguistic feminism emphasizes discrimination and sexist vs inclusive language, Along with the third level feminism movement, feminist linguistic research emphasizes diversity, multiplicity, performativity, and the. Co-construction of gender identities in particular contexts and communities of practice, and about politics development of power and subject position (Litosseliti, 2014). Thus, this study looks critically with the perspective of feminism contained in the choice of diction, narration or images in Islamic children's books.

Below are some of the titles of books that were used as research subjects.

No.	Book Title	Publisher
1	Amah Binti Khalid: Anak Perempuan Menyebrangi Lautan	Sygma Elexmedia
2	Mandiri dan Bertanggung Jawab "Seri Muhammad is My Hero	Cordoba Kids
3	Fatimah Putri Rasulullah	Mizan.
4	Seri Bunda Ajarkan Aku Ibadah	Cordoba Kids

Four books above have different ways of representing Muslim women, seen from the pictures, characterizations, and narratives presented. The depiction of women in the third book represents wearing long and wide clothes, wearing a robe, wearing a wide headscarf, and even veiling.

Islamic Genres Children's

Stories are one of the genres in children's literature states that the genre of children's literature is divided into six categories, namely: realism, formula fiction, fantasy, traditional literature, poetry and nonfiction. Another child literature expert, Mitchell (2003) suggests that in children's literature there are seven genres which include: (a) Picture story book; (b) Poetry book; (c) Traditional literature which includes folklore, fairy tales, myths and fables; (d) Fiction consisting of realistic fiction and historical fiction; (e) Fantasy stories divided into modern fantasy and science fiction; (f) Non-fiction books and information books; (g) Biography.

Children's literature is also said to have various forms including comics, graphic novels, illustrated story books, picture story books, fairy tales, fables, fiction stories, fantasy stories and others. The first four genres are telling stories using elements of verbal text and visual text. The picture story book (which will be examined in this research) is a form of book with its own complex nature because in general this book is not considered a book in the conventional sense where the story is told verbally. The writer of a picture-story book tells stories through pictures and is assisted by visual text, so that in general, picture story book pages, visual text (pictures) are more prominent than verbal texts with visual text compositions dominating the verbal text. Islamic children's stories in this paper are books that tell certain stories that are closely related to Islamic teachings and stories.

The story is taken based on the history of the previous life whose purpose is to strengthen the understanding of religion. Islamic stories are still being debated, whether they are classified as literary works or only as religious books packaged as stories (Rokib, 2016). The reason is that the stories in it are considered to have violated the rules of storytelling in literary works. Islamic story books such as *Ayat-Ayat Cinta, When Love Praises*, *Kasidah-Kasidah Cinta*, *Tahajjud Cinta*, *Tasawuf Cinta*, and other books are considered too highlight the *da'wah* of Islam rather than telling stories according to the essence and principles of literary works. Nevertheless, this new genre has its own charm in the hearts of its fans so that its presence is increasingly being published in Indonesia.

The popularity of Islamic works or stories has long been growing. After the reformation, the emergence of Islamic storytelling communities such as: *Lingkar Pena Forum* (FLP), *Mata Pena Community, Rohis and various similar works* (Ibid). They then gave their own term to the works that raised the theme of Islam as Islamic literature, although in fact this kind of literature had appeared before

the existence of this group. Just look at the novels by Kuntowijoyo, Buya Hamka, or Muhammad Ali. After the novel Ayat-Ayat Cinta had its own name for its fans, this term was raised but not all writers with the theme of Islam were categorized as writers of Islamic literature, for example the novel Goat and Rain by Mahfud Ikhwan. The selection as a category of Islamic literature is based on the existence of glorification of Islamic and Arabic symbols that are closely attached to their storytelling, for example as written by Habibur Rahman El-Shirazy.

The glorification of Islamic symbols and Arabic culture is reflected in figures such as Fahri or Aisyah in the story of *Ayat-Ayat Cinta*. I remember the first time when I read the Islamic novel in 2004. How Fahri was described with perfection as a Muslim youth who was successful in his educational career, kind, and especially pious who might if in a fairy tale he was a representation of a prince. Meanwhile, an Aisyah who was described as a pious woman; veiled, obedient to her husband, gentle and graceful, willing to be polygamous, which I know it wants to reproduce the image of the "ideal Muslim woman", which in fairy tales is perhaps another version of Cinderella, of course in the context of Islam. Like the ending in *fairy tales*, like other fairy tales, this story has a happy ending.

Meanwhile, Islamic stories have begun to penetrate the world of children. They are present to fill offline bookstores, online, and book fairs. The proliferation of these books can be assumed as a religious literacy movement but besides that it can become a commercial movement (Wati & Susanto, 2019). Instead of seeing these Islamic children's stories as works that adhere to literary standards, these stories have been transformed into a religious literacy movement because they show and teach children the morality of the Islamic religion.

It is this aspect that is the bestselling point for Islamic children's book publishers so that it cannot only be called a literacy movement but also a commercialization of religious-based stories. Promos for Islamic children's books are heavily advertised through social media by cooperating with *influencers* or artists to sell the book. This means that children's books have become a promising business, especially if they are given Islamic embellishments. The Indonesian market, where the majority of the population is Muslim, is certainly a good place to sell.

In addition to being a means of education, entertainment, and a tool to make a profit, we cannot ignore the role of children's books or stories as a way to contribute to the development of children, including fostering children's empathy (Pires & Pereira, 2014) with the hope, that when they grow up will be a good person and have a clear identity. Through reading the experiences of the characters in a narrative manner, the reader is required to abstract and reflect on them. Just like in everyday life, when we read stories and literary works, we do the same process when we cultivate empathy.

This process starts from when we see or hear stories about other people and then we absorb them in our cognitive skills by thinking about their condition and then giving responses or determining what attitude is right to help them. In reading literary works, this occurs when readers feel they have found themselves and entered into the story (Mar & Oatley Keith, 2009). Therefore, children's stories have an important role as a means to develop and instill character values, including values about gender sensitivity.

Even though literature can refine the mind according to observers, in reality literature can also be used as a tool for inculcating ideology. Therefore, parents should be careful in choosing the literature to be read (Pires & Pereira, 2014). In the context of Islamic children's literature, parents also need to be careful in determining which Islamic stories are appropriate for children to be read. The topics raised in the digital film media of *Dodo and Syamil* children's stories include affirmation of faith, worship, and morals (Wati & Susanto, 2019). These topics do reflect the existence of a religious literacy movement, but if you look at the ideological side, from the structure of stories and images, it is alleged that the story of *Dodo and Syamil* shows an attempt to reproduce puritanism as a step to bring back Islam in accordance with the Qur'an and Hadith.

Unfortunately, the content forgets the social and cultural context in which it was made so that it is not an exaggeration if Islamic children's books are not children's books. Religious literacy in the *Dodo and Syamil* film is presented through classical interpretations of religious stories written in both the Qur'an and the Qur'an and hadith, not contextual and regardless of the locality where and to whom the story was given.

Clara Evi in *Breaking a Curse Silence: Malin Kundang and Transactional Approaches to Reading in Indonesian Classrooms* – an empirical study. Ph.D. thesis. Macquarie University in this study explains that the story text of a nation is a text that is able to become a mirror for that nation (Clara Evi, 2011). This is included and, even more clearly, seen in the text of children's stories. Various research results show that children's stories are not ordinary neutral stories because children's stories have been deliberately used astools *edutainment* for children.

Soelistyarini and Titien Diah explained that the study of children's stories by Indonesian children writers in the series (KKPK) shows the practice of gender as a social creation and cultural representation, including in children's literature (Soelistyarini & Diah, 2013). Although these writers are children who can be said to be the 21st century generation, it still seems that they cannot escape the influence of patriarchal ideology that promotes traditional gender roles which define the role of men as superior to women based on gender constructs that have been established in society.

In addition, Purbani stated that the five texts examined contain the ideology of perfectionism, namely the ideology that places children as *the perfect hero* as indicated by the depiction of children who have pious, intelligent, virtuous

character, national spirit, courageous, love nature and the environment, have leadership spirit, and are finally crowned heroes (Purbani, 2019).

The idealized children in this text also live in the ideologies of paternalism, patriarchy and instantism that place children in the protection of adults, celebrate the freedom of boys, marginalize girls and leave children without the process of becoming. Children are constructed to be dependent on the adults around them. Purbani stated that the texts that were favored by the Indonesian people during the New Order era had the potential to paralyze children through the strong control and control of adults over children through texts.

The studies described above clearly illustrate that there are problems with children's reading. But in this study, it has not been studied in depth how the condition of children's reading in the Islamic genre. This article is here to review this. By taking three Islamic genre children's books, it will be clear how the gender relations exist.

Results and Discussions
Traditional Gender and Women's Stereotypes

Using the feminist linguistic method, it is possible to identify the practice of gender equality or discrimination based on gender or gender in society (Litoselliti, 2014). Various domestications, stereotypes, discrimination and gender inequality reviewed in this study. "Amah Binti Khalid: Anak Perempuan Menyeberangi Lautan" is the title of the first story that is reviewed in this study. The women in this story get the roles of mother and teacher. Both figures are described as gentle, patient, loving Even though in the title, women seem to be described as "brave" but that word is far from describing the figure of Amah in the story. The figure of Amah is described as a woman who is smart, kind-hearted, and makes friends regardless of racial identity. But on the other hand, her role has been domesticated. The role of mother who takes care of the children at home, and the father as the breadwinner. This description confirms that the traditional gender concept is still strong in the family concept of the story.

In addition, the tendency to place women as weak creatures is still felt. It is proven by the word "valiant" attached to sons, such as the following sentence, "*She (Amah bint Khalid) has two sons who are valiant.*"

The word "valiant" is not attached to the figure of Amah or the other women who are told. There is no predicate brave or tough attached to the figure of Amah even though the title of the story is *Amah bint Khalid, Anak Perempuan Menyeberangi Lautan*. *Anak Perempuan Menyeberangi Lauta*n is not close to the terminology of valiant, and tough. She is actually closer to the term "Wife of the hero of Islam, Zubair bin Awwam." In fact, Amah never missed defending the Prophet's da'wah, for example, she often taught her children to pray.
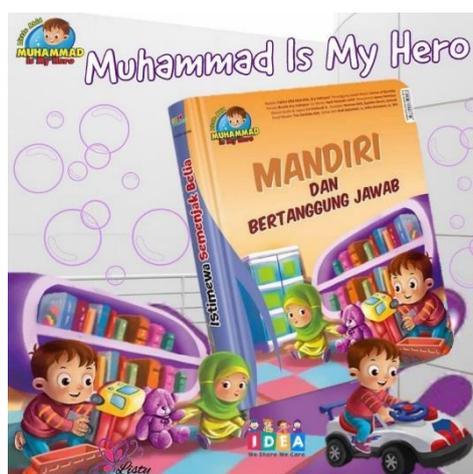
Book cover

In another storybook, the title "Muhammad is My Hero" published by *Cordoba Kids* contains two story titles. First, entitled Independent and Responsible. The cover of this storybook is full of gender stereotypes. Stereotypes arise when women and men get different assessments of something, where it has no reason to be explained based on objectivity regarding individual qualities and it seems to exclude an individual just because of their gender (Mengel, Sauermann, & Zolitz, 2017). In the cover of this book, stereotypes appear on the toys held by the two children, the boy holding the red toy car, while the girl holding the pink doll. The appearance of the toy perpetuates the public perception that toys have a certain gender. The structure of adult society that seems to normalize a behavior that can foster the development of strong gender stereotypes in children.

Game patterns determined by parents and parental words or conversations that are instilled in children regarding gender stereotypes will be imitated by children (Sullivan, Moss Racusin, Lopez, & Williams, 2018). Girls are only allowed to play dolls, while boys play with toy cars as a representation of their traditional gender roles in society. By playing with dolls, girls are expected to play a single role in parenting, be gentle, and patient. The same applies to men, the cars they hold are actually a symbol of the hope that is pinned on them so that they will become the 'motor' of the family (leaders), be present in the public sphere as breadwinners, and be fully responsible for their families.

Communities often suppress children's expressions by regulating play patterns, clothing colors, and even activities that children want to do and give strong expectations of gender roles which will later shape the behavior of children. This is often reinforced by the cultural background and customs of the local community. In the construction of society, individuals seem to be under pressure to continue to behave according to their respective sexes, and these beliefs continue to be passed down from generation to generation (Sullivan, Moss

Racusin, Lopez, & Williams, 2018). In the narrative of the story, that role is more clearly shown.

The same thing is also illustrated in the *Little Abid Family* book. The story describes a family consisting of Father, Mother, Hakim, Abid, and Syafa. In the family relationship, it is illustrated how when Hakim invited Abid to the Market, while Abid still had the responsibility to look after his younger sister, Syafa. He told Hakim to wait for their Mother to finish cooking. In this case, traditional gender roles depict that cooking is the mother's responsibility. Women are clearly attached to domestic roles in the household. Hakim, a son who was supposed to help his parents, is told that he just waits for his mother to cook in the kitchen.

Even though it could be told that Hakim is helping his mother to cook in the kitchen while Abid was playing with his sister. So that it gives value that boys can help their mother to cook in the kitchen and that it's not only girls who can help their mother to cook in the kitchen. In this way, the values of religious teachings to love parents are also conveyed without any gender bias, that both boys and girls have the same obligation to help their parents.

The story in this book also seems to want to narrow the distance between the social context and the story of the prophet Muhammad. Independent and responsible is an interpretation of the contemporary context of the story of the prophet Muhammad. However, independence and responsibility are attached to male characters, as if equated with the childhood story of the prophet Muhammad. The figure of Muhammad who is described as having the responsibility to work hard, to earn a living and help his uncle meet the needs of him and his uncle's family. In the context of Abid's story, a boy is told to work as a shoe shiner and a snack seller. By seeing them, Abid felt sorry and wanted to sell snacks, which he then saved to buy clothes and sandals for them. Hakim admires Abid's attitude like Rasulullah as a child who had worked independently and was able to be responsible for earning a living. In these two contexts, the role of men as breadwinners is a reproduction of gender roles and independence is the word that is mostly attached to them.

In addition, Islamic children's story books look awkward showing the closest family of the Prophet Muhammad. Generally, they describe their appearance by showing it from behind only, not including the figures in the picture, and displaying them with veils. In contrast to the books published by Cordoba Kids, which show the closest people to the Prophet Muhammad as women who are clearly veiled. However, it does not show the figures of women in war in the picture. The image of men riding horses and carrying swords often appears in this story, without being seen to involve female warriors.

As if the war became the authority of Muslim men in that time. In fact, fighters are attached to Fatimah as a representation of other women who participated in the struggle, but nothing is found in the arena of pictures that tell the story of the war. The warrior in the context of this story is a part of wound

care and soup kitchen. This is of course contrary to the stories that have told that women were also present on the battlefield, such as Aisyah or Khaulah Bint Azur. However, this kind of story is rarely told and depicted in Islamic children's story pictures.

In another story series entitled "Bunda Ajarkan Aku Ibadah". Each character is described as closely related to masculine and feminine traits. Masculine characters are generally considered as male characters and feminine as female characters are also reflected in this series. Masculine characters are found in traits that are associated with men such as male, strong, and courageous while feminine is associated with women whose nature is described as weak, gentle, sensitive/loving (J.T. & Buckner, 1995).

> *"This is Abid. Abid is only 8 years old. His body is small, agile, and **strong.** Abid's hobbies are **practicing silat** and **hunting animals** with Dad in the forest. That's why Abid became strong and **brave.**"* (*Little Abid*, series *Mother Teach Me Worship*)

The characterization of Abid is a child who likes silat, hunts animals, strong, and brave, and closely reflects the masculine character that has been believed by the public to only belong to men. Thus, a man who does not have this masculine character is generally humiliated, reviled, and belittled. Whereas on the side of the stories of the Prophet's example series from the same book, Muhammad SAW is often described as a man who is also gentle. Of course, this different story implies that the existence of masculinity and femininity is never separated and is only distinguished by gender.

> *"This is Shafa! Safa is only 4 years old. Syafa is a funny child, full of imagination, likes to ask questions, aka fussy. Although sometimes mischievous, Syafa loves animals"*.

In the character of Abid's younger sister, the quality of femininity is also very clearly seen in the description of Syifa who is referred to as fussy and affectionate. This is again reinforced by Syafa's appearance wearing a pink dress, which once again shows howcolor is *genderless* something that is always associated with gender; pink for girls while red or blue for boys. The quote above is an illustration that children's stories which are commonly referred to as Islamic stories still have the problem of gender bias.

Gender Bias and Islamic Children's Stories

From the analysis and information above, the most dominant forms of gender bias are depictions of traditional gender relations. Women tend to be presented with domestic roles related to household and child affairs. The existence of women in a literary work cannot be separated from the figure of the mother who is charged with the responsibility of the house, children, and

husband. The image of Islam has not moved from the traditional patriarchal family concept where women are still depicted as mother figures who are liked by children, patient, loving, and painstaking in managing the household.

The figure of a mother who prepares for the needs of her children and husband, the mother who does not work, teaches her children to worship, and just stays at home is an ideal mother. While the father figure is described as a firm figure and breadwinner. In fact, not all men can be assertive and not all women are painstaking in taking care of the household and cannot work to earn a living. In fact, this is a gender stereotype that is detrimental to both men and women.

What is described in the research above has implications that are not simple. Instead of wanting to strengthen the understanding of existing religions, they planted the seeds of gender inequality since childhood. The presence of Islamic children's story books clearly has serious implications. Bandura in (Udasmoro, 2012) reveals that children are great imitators. Children go through their daily experiences through the process of observing and imitating the things they observe. Departing from this, reading children's books also has implications for the way children view the world.

In this study, gender stereotypes can be analyzed from the title and main character; how the title was picked up, how the main character was portrayed, and quite possibly described the work of the characters representing both women and men. This picture, of course, does not necessarily represent the teachings of Islam. In world history, Islam is a religion that is committed to elevating the status of women. In the 7th century AD Islam had started a massive social reform. In a short time has managed to show extraordinary achievements.

Historians have written a lot about the achievements of the reforms initiated by Islam, including the issue of women's rights. The arrival of Islam shifted the social system of pre-Islamic Arab society which in many cases did not heed the rights and position of women. Islam calls for an end to the burial of babies alive, and then brings women to a respectable position: having inheritance rights, having a choice in determining husbands, and other privileges that were impossible to obtain in the pre-Islamic era. The above conditions are certainly a big capital to build a gender-friendly perspective of Islam from an early age. The history of Islam is a history of gender equality. It is important to look critically at reading books that call themselves Islamic story books. This study looks critically at how books that are often read by children have the potential to spread the value of gender inequality.

Conclusion

Islamic children's stories have emerged as an effort to strengthen the religious literacy movement. By being read or reading this story, it is as if parents are cultivating the seeds of faith in their children. However, this research shows that there are problems in the gender relations that are told. Stories in Islamic children's stories are still a means of reproduction of stereotypes on women by continuing to portray them in traditional gender roles. Stereotypes are not only present in words, but are also implied in story illustrations. This study found that men are the dominant party displayed in children's reading books. Both in the form of narration and illustrations. Men are shown more broadly than women. The traditional gender perspective that is biased, domesticated and stereotyped is still found in this study.

The above certainly needs to be taken seriously. What a child reads is very likely to affect his perspective in the future. Children are great imitators. Gender biased readings are very likely to influence his attitude towards different genders. Moreover, the stories above are related to certain religions and beliefs. Strong belief in religious beliefs will be very easily accepted without being critical. So that stories like the one above will very likely lead to the hope that they will grow and develop with faith but are negligent on the issue of gender justice.

Acknowledgment

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