

Renegotiating Piety, Identity, and Modernity: Islamic Education System of Salafi Women in Lampung

A Thesis

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Author

**Murni Mupardila
04242110023**

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Author

**Murni Mupardila
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Murni Mupardila

Murni07mupardila@gmail.com

MA in Education

ABSTRACT

The rapid development of gender studies has given rise to various feminist movements worldwide, leading to a wide range of perspectives on gender equality issues. Conservative and progressive groups have emerged, each holding their own interpretations of the relationships between men and women. Salafi women, who adhere to a patriarchal and conservative system, are often seen as passive and subordinated by secular liberal feminists. However, they also play an active role in spaces where men were previously dominant. This aligns with the growing number of Salafi followers and their educational institutions. This research aims to: 1. Explore the curriculum and the women's program at the Salafi Islamic boarding school; 2. Understand the implementation of the curriculum and the women's program which justify their practice of what they practise as authentic Islam; 3. Know how Salafi women negotiate piety, identity, and modernity with the existing relationship between men and women within the Salafi circle. This study employed a qualitative methodology using a case study approach. Data were collected through three distinct methods: Document analysis, which included the review of curricula, lesson plans, and specific school rules. Observations to assess interactions between teachers and students, peer interactions among students, and the overall learning process. Interviews with six participants, comprising three teachers and three students. A triangulation method, drawing on multiple data sources, was employed to analyse the data, this ensured the credibility and validity of the findings. The findings of this research showed: (1) The Islamic boarding school of Salafi women has embraced educational autonomy by integrating its curriculum with elements sourced from the Middle East, *Gontor*, and the Ministry of Religious Affairs. In addition, the women's program at this school is implemented through extracurricular activities such as sports and entrepreneurship. Moreover, there are special classes like *Tarbiyah al-nisa* and *Fiqh* subjects. (2) They use the Qur'an and Hadith as the main sources of their practice particularly concerning women's issues. They refer to lessons that come directly from the Middle East and consistently implement the knowledge gained in their everyday lives. (3) They focus on studying religious sciences and emphasize personal piety. They reinterpret the concepts and practices of Salafi teachings without intending to oppose or discard them. They also utilize advances in technology and information as a foundation for da'wah. In this setting, women, as active participants, harmonize and negotiate with modernity rather than defying the system. This allows them to follow divine orders while remaining relevant in modern society.

Keywords: *Islamic Boarding School, Women Salaf, Agency, Gender, Feminist, Conservative, Progressive, Islam Transnational.*

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GLOSERY ABBREVIATION PAGE

| | |
|-----------|--|
| CEDAW | Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women |
| LSI | Indonesian Survey Circle (<i>Lingkaran Survei Indonesia</i>) |
| UIN | State Islamic University (<i>Universitas Islam Negeri</i>) |
| NU | Nahdlatul Ulama |
| SDGs | Sustainable Development Goals |
| FPI | Islamic Defenders Front (<i>Front Pembela Islam</i>) |
| NKRI | The Unitary State of the Republic of Indonesia (<i>Negara Kesatuan Republik Indonesia</i>) |
| BOS | School Operational Assistance (<i>Bantuan Operasional Sekolah</i>) |
| MTA | Manual Thematic Analysis |
| KMI | (<i>Kulliyatul Muallimin Al-Islamiyyah</i>) |
| GONTOR | Pondok Pesantren Modern Darusalam Gontor |
| IKHTILAT | mixing of men and women in one place or activity |
| TABARUJ | referring to inappropriate behaviour or actions by women, such as in dress or manners, leading to requirements for women to cover their <i>aurat</i> and behave modestly |
| Mu'adalah | The system represents the process of equalization among education institution, encompassing both Islamic boarding school and other types of schools, to ensure they obtained legitimacy to the existing government regulation. |

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1. Research Background

1.1.1. Women in Historical Context

The status and role of women throughout history have been widely debated and problematized, not only within Islamic discourse but also within significant religions such as Christianity (Lawson, 1989), Judaism (Berman, 2023), Hinduism (Wadley, 1977), and some traditions like Greek (McClendon et al., 2018) and pre-Islamic societies (Maarif, 2018). Women have been viewed as having little value, lacking independence, and causing problems, while men have been privileged and respected at the centre of history (Hasyim, 2006). Discriminatory treatment of women across cultures and history has been based on the belief that women are physically and biologically weaker than men and inferior intellectually to fate from God. For instance, a sexist prayer in Judaism says, *"I thank you, God, for not making me a woman"* (Hasyim, 2006). This prayer is considered antipathetic toward the negative aspects of women. In Christianity, women are often depicted as responsible for Adam's fall from heaven and regarded as something terrible and full of slander. Islam, misogynistic hadiths exist that demean women, such as the one, from Abu Bakrah r.a., *"It is not the fortune of a people to appoint a woman as their leader"* (Sahih al-Bukhari, Kitab al-Maghzani, no 4469). Even though the truth of this hadith is debatable, this hadith has been used to legitimize limiting women's role in the public sphere (Abdul Kadir, 2021; Mernissi, 1991; Rohmaniyah, 2021)

Negative attitudes in which women are viewed as inferior to men are present in religious teachings, socio-cultural discourses, and norms deliberately constructed and perpetuated in society (Rohmaniyah, 2021; Hasyim, 2006). These attitudes eventually

become accepted as justified customs, leading to the marginalization and segregation of women. For example, in traditional Greek society, women were seen as property and placed in the third position in the social hierarchy, after merchants and the elite. They were traded as such (Hasyim, 2006). Meanwhile, in pre-Islamic tradition, women have not been appreciated and respected commensurate with their dignity as complete human beings; women were treated inhumanely, considered a family disgrace due to their perceived weakness and troublesome nature, and many were even buried alive (Syafii Maarif, 2018) This emphasizes that women throughout history and across cultural contexts have been equally subjected to subordination and discrimination. It is just that this treatment takes different forms, places, and situations (Zainal Abidin, 2021). This view does not mean to negate the existence of traditions and cultures that uphold the dignity of women. However, it stresses that such histories are often undocumented. Therefore, the narration is considered non-existent (Maarif, 2018; Mernissi, 1991b; Wadud, 1999).

Additionally, Bradley (2007) elucidates that the interchangeable use of the concepts of gender and sex has caused discrimination against women throughout history. Sex pertains to physical and biological distinctions between men and women, such as reproductive organs, hormones, and body structure. Conversely, gender refers to the societal and cultural construction of the roles and identities of men and women. Gender is not exclusively determined by biological factors but also by life experiences, social environments, and cultural norms, including social roles, behaviours, and preferences associated with men and women. Gender is not absolute because it is a product of human thought that can be exchanged, and even gender roles differ from one culture to another. However, the predicament arises when gender is misconstrued as sex, leading to the belief that the division of roles between men and women is innate. Thus, if women or men

assume roles beyond the prescribed gender norms, they are viewed as deviating from the established rules. This perception is especially prevalent when the division of roles is legitimized by religion and culture (Bradley, 2007).

A system that prioritizes the interests and power of men throughout history has formed a system known as the patriarchy. This system is maintained and socialized from generation to generation and manifested in private and public behaviour. The patriarchal system conceptualized through culture and religion has caused injustice to women identified in five forms: stigmatization, marginalization, subordination, double burdens, and violence (Rofiah, 2021; Nurmila, 2015). Stigmatization is a form of mistreatment that discredits a person simply because of gender, resulting in negative labelling, stereotyping, and discrimination. Women often experience stigmatization concerning their biological, physical, and cognitive abilities. For example, women may be labelled as weak and therefore considered incapable of doing physically demanding work or prioritizing their emotional side over their rational side, leading to exclusion from decision-making processes. Marginalization is a situation where women are denied access to resources that can develop their potentials, such as education, employment, and technology, due to the assumption that men are more entitled and deserving of such access than women, resulting in women being more likely to experience poverty than men (McClendon et al., 2018).

Furthermore, subordination is a situation that women face due to the belief that one gender is inferior to the other, particularly men and women, resulting in their placement in social structures. For example, women are considered more suitable to care for household affairs than public affairs because it is viewed as part of their role as mothers. The double burdens occur when women are allowed to participate in the public sphere but are still expected to fulfil traditional gender roles in the domestic domain

(Nurmila, 2020a). The final form of injustice is violence, which involves an attack on a person's physical, sexual, or psychological well-being based on existing gender assumptions. While gender-based violence can happen to anyone, women are the most vulnerable victims due to the assumption that they are weak, submissive, and objectified, making them easy targets for assault (Bondestam & Lundqvist, 2020). To eliminate these injustices, it is necessary to reconstruct the norms of society and religious teachings based on the principles of justice and equality (Syafii Maarif, 2018; hooks, 2014; Hasan, 2001).

One form of reconstruction that has emerged is from the feminist struggle, a movement based on the realization that women have been discriminated against and subordinated by the patriarchal system. Through consistent activism and advocacy, feminists strive to change unjust structures and fight for women's rights (Nurmila, 2022). The development of feminist movements, driven by various backgrounds, especially in Europe, has resulted in various well-known tenets, including Marxist, Socialist, Radical, Liberal, and Cultural feminism (Lawton & Gordon, 2002). This development has also extended to Islamic-majority countries, where it is known as Muslim feminism (Mernissi, 1991). However, not everyone accepts the feminist movement, and some women themselves reject it because mostly they think a feminist is a bunch of angry women who want to be like a man as well as they view feminist thought as undermining established social orders such as the division of labour and family structures (hooks, 2014). The term "feminist" is often perceived as sensitive and negative because Western scholars initially led the movement, and it took place amidst a longstanding conflict between Muslims and the West. Some may view the feminist movement as a Western agenda to undermine Islamic values (Tong & Botts, 2017; Rohmaniyah, 2014; Anthony Iswara, 2021). However, according to Nurmila, which is in line with Riffat Hasan's thought, the objective of feminists is not to cause harm but rather to fight against injustice, and feminists mean

women have similar rights as men. While the term was coined in the West, the core principles and values of feminism have existed since the inception of Islam and can be found in different forms in other parts of the world. Furthermore, the term feminist is not limited to women; men who fight for justice and equality, just like women, are also classified as feminists (Nurmila, 2022; Hasan 2001).

The resistance to feminist thought and struggle can be attributed to the varying socio-cultural and historical contexts in which such movements emerge and develop. It is natural for some to reject feminist ideals that they perceive as misplaced, mainly when particular cultural rhetoric is used to generalize the concepts of women's status, equal freedom, and rights (Abu-Lughod, 2002). These efforts are commendable, and it is essential to recognize that being a feminist is not inherently wrong. The problem arises when femininity is regarded as inferior to masculinity or vice versa. The feminist movement is not against men but rather against injustices perpetuated by societal norms. Many men have actively participated in the women's movement, and their involvement has been positively received as they are seen as partners rather than adversaries in the struggle for equality. Globally, the feminist struggle has made significant progress, with most gender activists and advocates working towards increasing women's participation in the public sphere, removing barriers to women's freedom that are justified by tradition, culture, or religion, and promoting self-awareness among women through education and training (Kull, 2012; Khurshid, 2014; Sah, 2017)

1.1.2. Mapping Muslims' Understandings of Gender Issues

Discussing the status and identity of women in traditional major religions becomes very complex and complicated, particularly concerning the attitudes of groups who faithfully adhere to religious traditions and teachings that support the patriarchal system. One religion that still upholds its traditions is Islam (McClendon et al., 2018; Hasyim, 2006). The debates about women in Islam continues to this day, whether Islam is indeed a religion that legitimizes and perpetuates patriarchal power or whether Islam is a religion that upholds justice and equality.

Groups who state that women in Islam have experienced subordination due to their adherence come from the secular liberal feminist perspective (Shah, 2018). Liberal feminists argue that the Quran and Hadith have put women in the domestic domain and prioritized men's positions. This argument is based on Quranic verses, such as the male is the leader of the female (4:34), polygamy (4:3), veil (33:59), and inheritance (4:11,4:17). The consequences of this religious teaching within the existing relationship between male and female have created injustice, in which man is regarded to be superior to women; women cannot become a leader; women are obliged to wear a veil to maintain the dignity and honour of men; women must be willing to be married polygamously with the guarantee to get heaven in the hereafter for the happiness of husband. This situation asserts that men are more robust, virtuous, and intellectually and spiritually competent.

On the contrary, women are considered weak and ignorant and must be protected. Therefore, if there are women who still support, uphold, and implement those verses textually, it cannot be denied that they have been subjugated by an oppressive system legitimized by religion (McNae & Reilly, 2018; Shah, 2018, Asad, 2009 Mernissi, 1991; Rohmaniyah, 2019). Those arguments elicit various responses, criticism, and debate among Muslim women scholars. Some Muslim scholars disagree with that statement and

provide evidence that Islam is an egalitarian religion, meaning it carries a mission of equality and justice. They believe that injustice and discrimination in the relationship between men and women is not authentic Islamic teaching (Wadud, 1999; Raḥmān, 2002; Mernissi, 2003; Nurmila, 2020a).

In Indonesia, there are two main perspectives regarding the position of women in Islam: progressive and conservative. Both perspectives agree that Islam values and respects women, but they have different views on how to deal with the patriarchal system in society (Nurmila, 2020b). Progressive women tend to criticize the patriarchal system more and fight for gender equality. They aim to abolish the patriarchal system and promote women's rights, such as educational, economic, and political rights. Additionally, they tend to be more receptive to diverse interpretations of sacred texts and embrace modern thinking to resolve gender issues, as written by Maarif (2018) who explains the status of women in Islam:

“A woman's position is equal to a man, and both genders can directly relate to Allah. Allah does not differentiate between men and women in rewarding good deeds. *Surah Al-Nahl*, verse 97, explains that both men and women who perform righteous deeds in faith will receive a good life and the reward for their actions. Therefore, discriminatory treatment towards women goes against the Quran's command and is a patriarchal culture that should be buried forever. Any differences in treatment should be based solely on personal achievements and open to everyone, not on gender. *Surah Al-Hujurat*, verse 13, emphasizes equality among humans, regardless of gender, ethnicity, or nationality. The most honourable person in the sight of Allah is the one with the most piety. To achieve the highest position in truth, sincerity, and determination are crucial, and both men and women have equal opportunities” (Maarif, 2018, p. 129).

According to this perspective, both men and women are considered equal in the eyes of God, highlighting that there is no distinction or inequality based on gender. Furthermore, Amina Wadud, an American Muslim scholar, argues that discrimination against women in Islam stems from the limited involvement of women in interpreting religious texts. Traditionally, male scholars have determined the status of women without considering their perspectives. Wadud suggests moving away from literal interpretations

of Quranic verses and adopting a hermeneutic approach. This approach involves considering the historical context of revelation, analysing grammar, and considering social realities. Wadud criticizes interpretations that subordinate women and instead asserts that men and women are equal in the eyes of God (Wadud, 1999).

In line with Wadud, Fazlur Rahman (year) also introduced the method of interpreting verses using the double movement approach, emphasizing the socio-historical context. This approach involves interpretations that connect the past and present. An example of this method in understanding the problematic prohibition of polygamy in Islam is that the polygamy verse indicates that the Prophet's teachings had a mission to humanize humans, especially women, who were previously used as concubines without restrictions, were then restricted. Fazlur Rahman (year) argues that the emphasis is not only on the number of wives but on the essence and spirit of these restrictions that must be emulated. This is a revolutionary process to free women from injustice, in which monogamy is the best choice (Fazlur Rahman, 1982). In Indonesia, there is also an interpretation that is seen as very egalitarian and promotes gender justice, namely the *Qiraah Mubadalah* method. Faqihudin Abdul Qodir initiated this reciprocal approach and invited individuals to read misogynistic texts while applying the principles of justice, wisdom, compassion, and kindness (Abdul Kodir, 2021). This progressive thinking has made women feel more confident in coming forward, leaving their domestic territory, and pursuing opportunities to actualize themselves in the public sector (Abu-Lughod, 2002).

Besides that, conservative thought is a way of thinking that typically prefers to preserve established interpretations and social structures. In this context, conservative thought opposes any liberal or progressive reinterpretations of Islamic teachings. As a result, it indirectly influences perspectives on the position and role of women (Wahid,

2014b). For example, they establish a structural division of status and work between men and women, where women are considered better off in the domestic sphere than in the public sphere. This structural division is an effort to maintain the harmony of the family and society. Men are seen as the leaders of women in all matters and are not interchangeable. Therefore, this privilege gives them full authority over women, who are expected to protect, maintain, and provide for their families. Conservative women believe that the differences created between men and women are inevitable to create harmony and promote the well-being of women themselves (Bianca & Woodward, 2014; Apandi, 2015).

Various criticisms have been directed at conservative women's groups for their decision to defend and support an unjust and discriminatory patriarchal system, both from liberal secular feminists and progressive Islamic feminists, who are questioning how individuals can choose to live under a system that restricts their freedom. Feminists assume such actions may be due to a lack of knowledge and education. As well as asserting that if individuals were aware of the truth, they would likely be appalled and repulsed by these acts (Mahmood, 2005). However, what often happens is the opposite, where women considered to be restricted by their religion are more confident in their choices. They believe that the freedom offered by Western secularism provides pseudo-freedom (Zainal Abidin, 2021).

1.1.3. Women Salafi as Subjects of Research

In the current Indonesian context, amidst the rapid development of gender issues and the feminist movement that seeks to eliminate gender injustice against women, there is evidence of efforts to realize the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) program. This program aims to eliminate all forms of discrimination against women to ensure that men and women have equal rights

in terms of citizenship, education, politics, social economy, and culture (Merry, 2006). Additionally, the SDGs global agenda aims to achieve universal sustainable development to achieve gender equality and empower women (W. Steele, L Rickards, 2021). However, along with this progress, there is a phenomenon of the re-strengthening of conservatism in society, which is known as the “conservative turn”, the term popularized by Van Brunnesen (Bamualim et al., 2018;). This phenomenon is characterized by the growing influence of Middle Eastern Islam, which emphasize a literal interpretation of scripture, its influences is visible through the intolerant pattern of community life, the occurrence of various acts of terror aimed at enforcing Islamic law, the emergence of violent community organization and exclusive educational programs (Roy, 1994; Bamualim et al., 2018; Wahid, 2014b).

The term conservative group connected to the transnational Islamic network, refers to the interconnectedness of Islamic organizations and movements across national borders. These organizations share similar ideologies, objectives, and affiliations, allowing for collaboration and support beyond individual countries. The growth of the transnational Islamic movement in Indonesia is rapid after the collapse of Soeharto's presidential regime in 1998. Since 1998, Indonesia experienced a significant political transformation from an autocratic regime to a democratic system. This transition brought about various changes, including the opening up of freedom of the press and organizations. The government, which had previously been strict and selective towards social and religious groups, allowed for a more diverse and open civil society (Hasan, 2018).

Many transnational Islamic tenets have entered Indonesia, such as *Ikhwanul Muslimin* from Egypt, *Jama'ah Islamiyah* from Pakistan, *Shi'a* from Iran, and *Salafi* from Saudi Arabia (Bamualim et al., 2018). Salafi is one of the tendencies that has the highest

acceptance and adherence among the majority of the Indonesian population (Jamhari & Asrori, 2022). Salafi, which refers to the word "*al-salaf*," means a return to earlier teachings known as puritanism, also known as the rejection of "*kalam*," or speculative theology, in which Aristotelian philosophy and logic are used to understand the word and nature of God. The Salafi doctrine focuses on maintaining monotheism not only in declarations but also in personal life, such as appearance, social customs, and religious ways of praying and preaching. Salafis establish a clear Muslim identity and maintain the purity and legitimacy of their religion. Therefore, they reject religious traditions that depart from Salaf teachings and are considered deviant (Ismail, 2021). This tenet has a mission to encourage a return to the purity of Islamic teachings from the Quran and Hadith, as adherents of this sect believe that current Islamic teachings have been updated outside the provisions of sharia (*bid'ah*), especially after intersecting with Westernization (Ismail, 2021). Scholars assert that there is nothing inherently wrong with the goal of the Salafi movement. However, the problem arises when the mission of this movement leads its followers to act in an exclusive and intolerant manner. Additionally, if the movement becomes politicized, it could pose a threat to unity of the state.

However, despite the contraception issue attached to the Salafi movement, its numbers continue to increase each year (Rosadi, 2015; Krismono, 2020). According to research conducted by UIN Jakarta's Center for the Study of Islam and Society (PPIM) from August 15 to October 15, 2017, in 25 districts and cities across 13 provinces, there were 95 *pesantren* (Islamic boarding schools), 11 elementary schools, and 2 course institutions affiliated with the Salafi movement (UIN News Online, 2018). It is predicted that this number will continue to increase annually. Furthermore, according to a survey conducted by *Lingkaran Survei Indonesia* (LSI) in February 2019, the Muslim population in Indonesia accounts for 87.8% of the total population. Out of this, 49.5% are affiliated

with *Nahdlatul Ulama* (NU), 4.3% are affiliated with *Muhammadiyah*, 1.3% are affiliated with other Islamic mass organizations, 0.7% are affiliated with *Presidium Alumni* (PA) 212, and 0.4% are affiliated with the Islamic Defenders Front (FPI). Overall, 56.2% of Indonesian Muslims are affiliated with some Islamic mass organizations, while 43.8% do not have any affiliation. Some of those without affiliations may be followers of Salafi Islam (Jamhari & Asrori ,2022, p. 251). This study highlights the remarkable expansion of *pesantren* (Islamic boarding schools) and educational institutions affiliated with the Salafi movement in Indonesia. Salafi followers have experienced a significant increase in numbers each year, in part due to their proactive efforts in disseminating the ideas and values of Salafi teachings through various communication tools and technologies. Currently, the Salafi teachings are easily accessible through social media platforms, radio and television broadcasts. Furthermore, they continue to conduct recitations, *halaqoh* (study circle) and *dauroh* (intensive study program) directly at homes or in mosques (Chaplin, 2018).

Among the various media used to convey Salafi teachings, educational institutions are considered one of the most effective means to instil Salafi values (Jamhari & Asrori, 2022; Wahid, 2014a). In fact, there has been a proliferation of schools, colleges, boarding schools, and training institutions (Chaplin, 2018; Wahid, 2014a). One of the reasons is that transnational Islamic education receives funding directly from the Middle East such as Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, and Egypt, which are home to many well-known Salafi scholars (Chaplin,2018; Ismail,2021; Wahid,2014a; Johnson&Fairweather,2017).

These institutions are dedicated to providing a comprehensive education that emphasizes Salafi principles and practices, with the aim of preserving and promoting this branch of Islamic thought. Funding from these countries has enabled the development of high-quality educational facilities equipped to train the next generation of Salafi scholars and

leaders. It attracts parents who want to send their children to these schools (Muthohirin et al., 2022). Furthermore, In Indonesia Salafi movement has undergone significant transformation in its approach to education in order to overcome negative perception and attract more followers (Jamhari & Asrori, 2022; Muthohirin et al., 2022).

Education is closely linked to social transformation; therefore, as a process of change, education is not only seen as an allocation system that provides success for some and failure for others, but as a legitimizing system that can restructure entire populations. Therefore, education as a tool is not only individually influential but also important for the transformation of a broader society, with the hope that education can create a better social system (Meyer, 1977). This is because in education there is a process of transmitting culture, values, and norms through the process of teaching, training, and empowerment. All of which are structured and organized in the curriculum (W. Tyler, 1949). However, understanding education issues is complex. Michael Apple's explanation of "Ideology and Curriculum" tells us that curriculum isn't just about what is taught, but also about how it's taught and who it's taught to (Apple, 2019). This means that the curriculum isn't neutral container of knowledge; it reflects specific ideologies and values. Particularly, developing curriculum policies involves a complicated and highly political process, influenced by factors like economic, ideology, culture, and power dynamics. These factors shape the knowledge and values that schools prioritize. For example, content in history subjects relating to events and happenings can be heavily influenced by power dynamics and political pressure (Connelly et al., 2008).

There are numerous studies on the Salafi movement in Indonesia have been conducted, but almost all of them focus on the pattern of movement and jihad envelopment in the male Salafi (Zainal Abidin, 2021). While issues such as, politics, and Islamic law have received considerable attention in research (Ismail, 2021; Hasan, 2010;

Rosadi, 2015). However, the phenomenon of Salafi women's groups and their educational process remains an understudied and captivating research topic. It is particularly significant considering their active engagement in the global Salafi movement. Examining the involvement of these groups can provide valuable insights into their contributions, roles, and impact on the broader Salafi community. These women also face dynamics related to their roles and experiences within the movement, including strong patriarchal structures, strict adherence to gender norms, and the challenges of navigating modern socio-political and cultural changes while maintaining conservative traditions (Bianca J & Woodward, 2014).

According to Maryam Rajavi (2018) asserts fundamentalists treat women as second-class citizens, excluding them from leadership, governance, and the judiciary, and marginalizing them in social life. In this case, fundamentalists aim to keep women uninformed to ensure their compliance (Rajavi;2018). Consequently, instead of choosing to live independently and freely according to feminist concepts, some women opt for a life of subordination based on their belief system. They wear the veil or niqab, limit their public appearances, enforce segregation between genders, and submit their lives to their husbands after marriage, signifying their acceptance of the view that women are inherently bound to the home (Khotijah & Madkur, 2018).

As a teacher who teaches Islamic education in one of the Islamic schools in Bandar Lampung. I often find discrimination and biased treatment towards Salafi women such as, there is suspicion that people from such communities are dangerous and unacceptable just because they have a different outlook on religious doctrine and, even appearance. And considered the women who are powerless, passive, and submissive within the patriarchal system. At the same time, this image is also worsened by mass media framing that stigmatizes Salafi groups as anti-NKRI and accuses to change the

state order. That label is more powerful when a few years ago Salafi women have involved to take extreme actions that intend to fight against authoritarian power (Rosadi, 2015). Likewise, radicalism and terrorism issues have also penetrated the world of academia. Educational institutions are indicated to be potential places to inseminate and spread radical and conservative teaching and understanding (Merriam, 1992). However, in addition to the negative view of Salafi women, which is described as passive and submissive in acting and subordinated by the patriarchal system. On the other hand, they reflect active behaviour and is even able to take positions that were previously dominated by men, such as preaching, demonstrating, pursuing higher education, and becoming professionals (Rinaldo, 2010; Zainal Abidin, 2021). How do we understand this behaviour? Indeed, gender issues in Indonesia have undergone significant development amidst the complexities of a multicultural and pluralistic society (Bianca J & Woodward, 2014; Baily & Holmarsdottir, 2015; Inayah, 2014). While most gender activists and campaigners focus on increasing women's participation in the public sphere, I argue that gender activists have not paid enough attention to the existence of "Salafi women", how they are educated proportionately, and how they function as part of the family and society.

By highlighting the dynamics and phenomena of Salafi women, especially in Indonesia, this research generally focuses on discussing the role of education in shaping and transforming individuals and social systems, especially through the curriculum, as well as exploring the efforts of Salafi women to challenge their agency in the midst of a patriarchal system.

1.2. Research Questions

1. What is the curriculum and the women's program implemented in the Salafi Islamic boarding school?
2. How does the implementation of the curriculum and women's program justify what they practice as authentic Islam?
3. How do Salafi women negotiate piety, identity, and modernity with the existing relationship between men and women within the Salafi circle?

1.3. Objectives of Study

1. To explore the curriculum and the women's program in the Salafi Islamic boarding school.
2. To understand the implementation of the curriculum and the women's program justify their practice of what they receive as authentic Islam.
3. To know how do Salafi women negotiate piety, identity, and modernity with the existing relationship between men and women within the Salafi circle.

1.4. Significance of the Study

1. The significance of this study is to provide scientific sources as references to offer a different perspective on understanding women, who are mostly perceived to be exclusive and conservative, with the understanding that the women's movement develops differently depending on culture and characteristics, particularly in more religious societies.
2. This research is expected to serve as a resource for further investigation into the relationship between education and women, specifically within the context of Islamic female boarding school institutions, in an effort to enhance women's empowerment through education.

CHAPTER II

THEORETICAL FOUNDATION

2.1. Portraying Salafi Women and Their Educational Framework

In this section, I will discuss studies related to Salafi teachings as the research object. This section will cover two themes: first, the portrayal of Salafi women in the context of identity and modernity; second, I will delve into the education system of Salafi teachings as it has developed in Indonesia.

2.1.1. Salafi Women: Piety, Identity and Modernity

In the modern era, the existence of Salafi women often sparks controversial debates. This is due to society's perception of Salafi women as being conservative and out of touch with contemporary times. However, this viewpoint is debatable since Salafi women also possess unique perspectives and understandings of identity and modernity that diverge from mainstream societal norms (Nisa, 2012; Sunesti & Hasan, 2018; Inge, 2017).

The ideological foundation of Salafi movement refers to the adherence to al-Salaf al-Salih, which is the practice of following the previous generations that are considered the best, namely the generation closest to the Prophet Muhammad and those who lived during the golden age of Islam. The three generations that are referred to are the companions who lived at the time of the Prophet and had direct contact with him, the *Tabi'in* who lived after the death of the Prophet and interacted with his companions, and the *Tabi'it Tabi'in*, who were the generation after the *Tabi'in* and also adhered to the previous traditions. Salafi teachings strongly emphasize monotheism and oppose *shyrik* (associating anything with God), *bid'ah* (innovations in Islamic teachings), and *taqlid* (a practice that is based on someone's opinion without any legal basis in Islamic law). As a

sect that adheres closely to ancestral traditions, Salafists are very concerned about changes caused by cultural encounters that may result in reforms in Islamic teachings. Therefore, Salafists advocate for a return to the authentic sources of Islam, namely the Quran and Hadith (Wahid, 2014a; Chaplin, 2018; Ismail, 2021; Jamhari, 2022).

In its development, the Salafi movement is classified into three groups. First, *Quietest* Salafis, also known as purists, Salafis who are not involved in political affairs or violence in preaching, but focus only on nurturing and *tarbiyah* (education), which is educating others about the correct way of Muslim life. Second, *Haraki* or political Salafi are Salafis who participate in parliamentary elections and focus on implementing Salafi doctrine through political engagement. The followers of this group believe that participating in politics is one of the methods of preaching. Third, Jihadi Salafists are Salafi movements that call for *jihad* (Jamhari & Asrori, 2022; Hasan;2018). In this research, the focus is on women Salafist Purists or Quietists, where women are not involved in political or jihadist movements but practice Salafist teachings in their daily lives as a way of life (Ismail, 2021).

In the context of Saudi Arabia, which is considered the centre of Salafi teachings and a country with strong religious nationalism, Ulama or Islamic scholars play a critical role in the survival of society as they hold the authority to issue fatwas, which are considered religiously legitimate orders or regulations (Nisa, 2012; Ismail,2021). As Ismail notes, Arab clerics are primarily focused on purifying the public space by enforcing segregation between men and women. Even Salafi scholars pay attention to all aspects of women's lives and define a vision of the ideal Muslim woman, regulating their appearance, mobility, practice of religious teachings, education, and work. Salafi propaganda emphasizes the importance of the family as the heart of society and

preserving public morality, which has an impact on women becoming religious and ethical subjects rather than social agents (Ismail, 2021).

In Indonesia, the spread of Salafi has increased since the 1980s. Its followers have spread throughout the archipelago (Chaplin, 2018). Salafi followers have a tendency to adopt an exclusive identity, emphasizing identity symbols in the public sphere by adhering to a puritanical Islamic lifestyle and making truth claims by accusing other groups of heresy (Krismono, 2018; Krismono, 2020; Wahid, 2014). They are easily recognizable in the general public by the symbols they use, such as bearded young men (*lihyah*) wearing robes (*jalabiyyah*), turbans (*imamah*), and pants above the ankles (*isbal*), as well as women wearing wide black clothing and face coverings (*niqab*) (Hasan, 2018). They refrain from listening to music, drawing animate beings such as humans or animals, and participating in or acknowledging non-Muslim festivals or celebrations, these teachings are diligently practiced and are instilled in followers from an early age, both at home and through educational institutions that follow the Salafi *manhaj* (Wahid, 2014a; Jamhari & Asrori, 2022).

In principle, followers of Salafi teachings believe that what they practice is a form of piety. Piety is seen as an act of obedience to Allah, a manifestation of strong belief and a strong intention to surrender to Allah's rules in order to avoid sin. This obedience, known as *ta'at*, can be achieved by adopting disciplinary techniques, such as wearing proper Muslim clothing and closely following religious teachings (Nisa, 2012). *Ta'at* also includes dispositions associated with *taqwa* or fear of Allah (Mahmood, 2005). Obedient women are usually called *salihah* or *hasanah*. Not only do Salafi followers believe in obedience to Allah, but also to the Prophet, as evidenced by carrying out all his commands and staying away from all his prohibitions. Further Salafi women adhere to strict rules

of modesty and purity, prioritizing obedience to Islamic law and focusing on personal purity (Inge, 2017).

The practice of modesty, which is a central characteristic of Salafi women, is considered by some liberal feminists to be a form of subordination. Salafi women adhere to the practice of veiling, which entails covering the face, hands, and the entire body that is considered the *aurat*, or private parts of the body. It is strictly forbidden to engage in *tabaruj*, which is the act of displaying the body carelessly (Ismail, 2021). This practice is meant to maintain the modesty of women and protect them from the gaze of men who are not their relatives. Salafi women also oppose the mixing of genders (*ikhtilat*) in public or private with the opposite sex who are not family. They argue that this is against Islamic law and can lead to moral decay and sinful behaviour. To legitimize this belief, they refer to the hadith of the prophet, "Whenever a man and a woman are together, Satan is the third person with them," as well as Quranic verses that emphasize the need for modesty and chastity in behaviour and dress (Wagemakers, 2016; Astuti, 2010). The Salafi view of gender relations is based on a strict interpretation of Islamic law and tradition, which emphasizes the importance of modesty, chastity, and separation between men and women. Salafi women see their adherence to these practices as a way to honour their faith and protect themselves from the potential harms of interacting with the opposite sex outside of the bounds of family.

From a Salafi perspective, women's roles are believed to be better suited to the home than the public sphere (Nielsen, 2022). Women are permitted to leave their home only when accompanied by their mahram and with the permission of their husband, provided that they wear the correct hijab and refrain from wearing ornaments. However, in cases of security or necessity, they may be allowed to leave the house. This belief is supported by the hadith of the Prophet, which states that "a woman's prayer in her home is superior to her prayer in the mosque, and her prayer in her room is superior to her prayer in her home". Salafi scholars view women as an identity to be protected and believe that the behaviour of women indirectly affects the fate of society. Consequently, women are often restricted from playing an active role in politics, and may only work in professions such as teaching or nursing, where they can address women's issues, or may

be allowed to lead other women. The source of this fatwa is the Qur'anic verse that instructs the Prophet's wives to stay at home. In conservative societies such as Egypt, *tabarruj* (the act of displaying one's beauty that goes against modesty and societal norms) is utilized as a means of keeping Muslim women secluded. It is the responsibility of the husband to ensure that his wife wears the correct veil, as the niqab is viewed as part of commanding good and forbidding evil (*Al-amru bil ma'ruf wan nahyu'anil munkar*) (Inge,2017;Astuti,2010; Wagemakers, 2016).

Anabel Inge, conducted research and explained the various factors that influence women's decisions to choose and follow the Salafi *manhaj*. These factors include life experiences, identity search, social environment, education, and knowledge. Based on the results of her interviews with several Salafi women, Inge found that most of them had difficult and challenging life experiences that led them to search for alternatives in carrying out religious teachings. Additionally, the increasing secular and materialistic nature of the surrounding community was another reason for their adoption of Salafism. They felt that society was moving away from religious values and sought alternatives that aligned more closely with their beliefs. Moreover, the search for identity amidst the turmoil of self-description includes an understanding of the self, values and beliefs, life goals, and personal characteristics. Lastly, education and knowledge also play a crucial role. Some individuals learn directly through deeper Islamic studies, while others find their *manhaj* through social media or the internet (Inge, 2017).

According to the factors identified by Inge in her research, there are similarities with studies conducted by several Indonesian researchers, including (Sunesti & Hasan, 2018; Nisa, 2012; Afrianty 2012) who have also explored the factors that encourage women to choose Salafi as a way of life. Afriyanti added that in Indonesia, there is a phenomenon where Salafi followers are more likely to be attracted by women who have graduated from public schools because they feel they have received less Islamic education during their time in public schools. As a result, when seeking an identity related to spirituality, they tend to prefer Salafi as an authentic form of Islam. This preference is

due to the Salafi style of proselytizing that uses various approaches, including entering the campus world with diverse agendas and activities (Afrianty, 2012).

Socially, Salafi women are often perceived as intolerant and exclusionary due to their adherence to rigid religious interpretations, which are typically based on literal teachings of Islam. This can create an impression of exclusivity and intolerance because their view is considered to be the only correct one, making it difficult for them to accept different perspectives, such as rejecting cultures or traditions that are considered incompatible with Islamic teachings (*bi'dah*). This often leads to conflicts with the local neighbourhood (Wahid, 2014a). By following the strict and traditional teachings of Islam, Salafi women are very careful about the actions they take in order to avoid sin, including their choices for clothing, food, and shelter. They tend to consume only natural and halal food, both in terms of processing and distribution. Similarly, when it comes to clothing and cosmetics, they tend to choose products that are designed and formulated by Muslims only, and even tend to avoid western products. Even in terms of work, Salafi women are very selective and avoid usury, all in an effort to protect themselves from outside influences that are not in line with Islamic values (Astuti, 2010).

In short, Salafi women possess unique perspectives and understandings of piety, identity and modernity that diverge from mainstream societal norms. They believe that what they practice is a form of piety and an act of obedience to Allah. Salafi women also believe in the importance of family as the heart of society and preserving public morality, which has an impact on women becoming religious and ethical subjects rather than social agents. Salafi women do not necessarily view the recommendations as coming from a patriarchal perspective but rather as commands from God. Salafi followers have a tendency to adopt an exclusive identity, emphasizing identity symbols in the public

sphere by adhering to a puritanical Islamic lifestyle and making truth claims by accusing other groups of heresy.

2.1.2. Salafi Educational Framework

In Indonesia, the education system is divided into two main categories: Islamic education and general education (Tan, 2011; Hasan, 2019). Public schools, focus on providing education without a specific religious affiliation. They follow the national curriculum set by the Ministry of Education and Culture, which is comprehensive and inclusive, catering to students from diverse cultural and religious backgrounds. (OECD & Asian Development Bank, 2015; Suryadarma, 2013). On the other hand, religious education in Indonesia refers to a system based on the principles and values of a particular religious faith, such as Islam. Islamic education is further divided into three categories: Islamic boarding schools, madrasahs, and Islamic schools. These institutions aim to develop a generation with Islamic morals and provide education based on Islamic teachings (Hafner, 2009; Tan, 2014). The dichotomy of education between public and Islamic schools has led to various debates, including differences in the quality of education, curriculum and even issues of tolerance, integration and equality. Public education is considered more qualified, tolerant, inclusive and modern, while Islamic education is seen as the opposite traditional and exclusive. In addition, Zakaria in Charlene Tan's article highlights that the general education system produces graduates who are strong in methodological approaches but lack in religious knowledge base, while the Islamic education system produces graduates who have a strong religious knowledge base and moral attitudes but lack in methodological approaches (Tan, 2011). This is based on the different curriculum, teaching approach and educational environment between public and Islamic schools. The democratic system in Indonesia has allowed religious organizations to flourish and express their identity. One way they do this is by utilizing

educational institutions for their regeneration. Along with conventional and Islamic education, which have made notable progress, transnational Islamic movements like the Salafi movement have also experienced significant growth (Chaplin, 2018).

Salafi education is a type of schooling in Indonesia that focuses on interpreting Islam based on the Qur'an and Sunnah and is known for its strict and literal approach to Islamic teachings. These schools prioritize strengthening students' faith, morals, and belief in one God while often disregarding the scientific knowledge and teachings associated with Sufism. Salafi schools teach what they consider to be authentic Islamic ideas, with a strong emphasis on monotheism, the rejection of innovation in Islamic teaching, and adherence to specific dress codes and religious practices (Muthohirin et al., 2022; Wahid, 2014a ; Hasan, 2019). These characteristics are integrated into their educational curriculum. The teachings of Salafi schools have gained popularity and play a significant role in spreading the Salafi message. They offer various educational programs, from early childhood to higher education, as their followers believe these institutions effectively promote the Salafi (Muthohirin et al., 2022; Delong-Bas, 2004).

However, the exclusive and conservative nature, as well as the inherent extremist image, have hindered the ability of the Salafi movement to attract sympathy from its followers (Wahid, 2014b). As a result, the Salafi movement has undergone a transformation in its approach to Salafi education in order to eliminate this negative perception. There are three forms of transformation that can be identified. The first transformation involves integrating three curricula: the national education curriculum, the Salafi Islamic education curriculum (*diniyyah*), and the *pesantren* curriculum, in order to enhance the Islamic education system. By adopting the national education curriculum, Salafi madrasas are no longer exclusive, rigid, and conservative. This curriculum integration allows Salafi madrasas to be recognized as formal institutions by the state,

and they are now required to adhere to the 2013 National Education Curriculum. This curriculum includes subjects such as religious education, civic education, Indonesian language, mathematics, natural science, social science, and English. The second transformation focuses on modern and professional school management that meets international standards. Salafi Islamic schools often adopt school identities such as *SD IT*, *SMP IT* (Integrated Islam), or *SMA International Islamic Boarding School (IIBS)*, which reflect their modern approach. These schools implement bilingual classes in English and Arabic, and actively participate in national competitions such as *MTQ* (Quranic recitation competition) and *Tahfidz* Quran competitions, as well as science Olympiads abroad.

Furthermore, according to Saparudin, from the Ministry of Education and Culture's 2016 data, by becoming formal Islamic schools recognized by the state, Salafi madrasas gain access to various financial assistance from the government, including School Operational Assistance (BOS). This financial support further facilitates the transformation of Salafi madrasas and contributes to their development (Muthohirin et al., 2022; Saparudin, 2017). However, even though Salafi education has evolved over the past two decades, it has shifted from being confined to traditional boarding school to modern and professional Islamic madrasas and schools that adhere to international standards. These institutions typically describe themselves as "integrated," but despite their modern and professional nature, they maintain a focus on exclusively teaching and reinforcing Islamic materials (Jamhari & Asrori, 2022; Muthohirin et al., 2022).

The teaching of the Salafi *manhaj* begins at an early stage, even in kindergarten, where students learn the fundamental principles of Salafism. This includes the memorization of important prayers based on Prophetic traditions, the avoidance of depictions of living things such as humans and animals, the rejection of music, and the

segregation of male and female students into separate classes (Wahid, 2014a). Additionally, there is a strong emphasis on distinct appearances, with female students encouraged to wear the veil. The *da'wah* training program is provided to senior *santri* (students) who are ten years old and above. This program equips them with the knowledge to propagate Salafi teachings to others. During these training sessions, a teacher employs the *mulazamah* method, where all students gather and attentively listen to the teacher's speech or explanation of the text from a particular book (Wahid, 2014a). Salafi boarding school also offer women's education programs, commonly known as "*tarbiyah al-nisa'*" (women's education), which aims to prepare female students to become supportive wives in promoting and advancing Salafi teachings. The curriculum of this program covers important topics such as conjugal relations, as explained in Sheikh Muqbil's book *Nasihah lil al Nisa'*, as well as practical skills like cooking and sewing. Another crucial aspect of the Salafi boarding school *manhaj* is their affiliation with Salafi networks at both national and international levels. Consequently, these boarding school receive donations of funds and books from governments in countries such as Saudi Arabia and Kuwait, which further support their activities (Jamhari & Asrori, 2022).

2.2. Education and Transformation

This chapter will delve into several key topics. To begin, we will explore the concepts of education and transformation. This discussion will include defining research, exploring its purpose, and understanding its role as a tool capable of initiating change in individuals and broader social systems. Next, we will navigate the interconnected terrain of curriculum and ideology. These two aspects are so deeply intertwined that it's impossible to view education as a value-free entity. Lastly, we'll illuminate the perspective of education as a tool of empowerment. More specifically, we'll examine the role of education as a means of empowering women. Through these discussions, this chapter aims to shed light on the multifaceted role and impacts of education within society.

2.2.1. Understanding Education and Transformation

Education and transformation are intertwined aspects that mutually influence one another. Referring to the view of Desjardins (2015), Education encompasses both reproductive and transformative elements, in which both of which establish the social system of society and individuals. The reproductive aspect of education involves the transmission of "good" elements such as knowledge, skills, values, and norms from one generation to the next. Additionally, education also possesses transformative elements, which aim to address and rectify "bad" aspects like injustice and social inequality (Desjardins, 2015). However, He also emphasized that the positive and negative values generated by the education system cannot be separated from the existing form of government, the dynamics of power relationships, and the prevailing socio-cultural and socio-political institutions. In other words, borrowing from Michael Apple's point of view, the education system is not neutral (Apple, 2019). Meaning that education systems

are not impervious to external pressures, and the need to comply with global standards and market demands may result in significant alterations in educational objectives and values. Nevertheless, it is extremely important to prioritize the creation of an education system that promotes justice and facilitates the holistic development of individuals and society.

Education has many definitions and interpretations depending on different viewpoints such as philosophy, economics, politics, psychology, etc. Broadly speaking, education is understood as the process of transferring knowledge, skills, values, and cultural norms from one generation to the next (Jafri, 2012; Lauder et al., 1999). In this understanding, education plays a crucial role in upholding and safeguarding established values, ensuring their continuity and stability in society. From a philosophical standpoint, education is defined as a lifelong process. This means that education is not limited to a specific period but rather represents a continuous journey of growth and development that begins at birth and continues until the end of one's life (Dewey, 1986; Freire, 2008; Al-Attas, 1999; Sahin, 2021). The two definitions highlight that education involves more than just gaining knowledge and skills. It also includes the experiences and reflections that occur throughout a person's life. This is important because individuals go through continuous change and growth, so we need an education system that can adapt to development. That's why lifelong learning is crucial—it allows people to keep learning and developing throughout their lives (Hansen, 2006; Dewey, 1986).

Dewey classified the purpose of education into two categories: conservation and progressive education (Dewey, 1916). Education serves a conservation purpose when it is used to transmit culture and preserve societal values (Curtis & Dufour, 2011). This idea emphasizes the preservation of knowledge, norms, values, culture, and language from one generation to the next. The aim is to ensure that important values and beliefs are not lost,

making it inherently conservative. The characteristics of education with conservation goals can be seen in the role of teachers as intellectual and moral role models. Children are taught to respect authority, tradition, and scientific truth. They attend school to gain knowledge and skills to contribute to society (Dewey, 1916; Dewey, 1986). In addition to cultural transmission, the goal of conservation in education is to encourage students to understand eternal and universal truths, which is also known as perennialism (Curtis & Dufour, 2011). Despite different cultures and beliefs, this principle believes that there are absolute and indisputable truths. In the educational process, teachers teach students timeless principles that are common to all people, rather than culture-bound skills or facts.

Universal and eternal truths have three main characteristics. Firstly, religious truth is the goal of education to support personal development through engagement with spiritual truth. It refers to a deeper understanding of existence, consciousness, and the universe beyond the boundaries of rational thought and empirical observation. This goal is achieved through self-awareness and empathetic wisdom based on religious teachings. Secondly, idealistic truth is the concept of truth that lies beyond the physical world (Plato, 2007). This truth often refers to the world of ideas where forms are perfect, unchanging, and eternal, such as beauty, justice, truth, and goodness. This concept believes that true knowledge and understanding can only be achieved by accessing the world of ideas through philosophical contemplation. Thirdly, realistic truth is an educational goal that seeks to teach students empirical, scientific, and humanist truths (Curtis & Dufour, 2011). The observational objectives that aim to uphold long-standing traditions have faced criticism for potentially hindering critical thinking and innovation. Students are solely taught to accept and replicate what has already been established, which can impose particular ideologies and exclusivity (Curtis & Dufour, 2011; Freire, 2008; Dewey, 1986).

The second goal is progressive education, or education for change, which prioritizes the development of individual critical thinking and independent problem-solving skills in the face of changing times. As proposed by Dewey in 1916, this approach emphasizes students how to think rather than telling them what to think (Connelly et al., 2008). In the implementation of progressive education, students are the main characters in the educational process, and teachers act as partners rather than instructors, creating a socially interactive learning process that requires experience, interaction, and reflection from students (Dewey, 1916). This approach emphasizes the growth of personal qualities such as self-esteem, confidence, and communication, encouraging students to think and act for themselves (Curtis & Dufour, 2011; Dewey, 1916). In addition to promoting individual critical thinking and independent problem-solving skills, the progressive education approach also aims to foster awareness of social injustices and encourage students to become agents of change. This view is rooted in Paulo Freire's theory of critical pedagogy, which emphasizes the importance of education in developing critical consciousness and empowering individuals to effect change (Freire, 2008).

According to Freire (2008), teachers have a moral obligation to be active agents of change rather than neutral supporters of the status quo. He criticized the traditional "banking education" approach, which views teachers as active, powerful, and knowledgeable, while students are passive recipients of information (Freire, 2008). This approach can lead to a passive, uncritical, and dependent society. Instead, Freire advocated for a problem-posing approach to education, which involves open, authentic, and trusting communication between students and teachers. This approach encourages learners to actively engage with social issues and develop visions for a better future. Problem-posing education involves a conversational process of problem-solving, rather than passive listening and memorization (Curtis & Dufour, 2011). By encouraging

learners to confront social injustice and change dominant ideologies, education can be transformational at both the individual and systemic levels. It preserves the value of established traditions but also to be a progressive tool to encourage students to think critically and innovatively. In order to be effective, education should be able to provide not only welfare but also justice.

2.2.2. Education in Islamic Perspective

In addition to the concept of education that is initiated in general from the Islamic perspective, education has its own approach. There are several terms that are often used, such as *taklim* (teaching), *talkin* (instruction), *takziah* (purification), but the terms *tak'dib* (moral discipline) and *tarbiyah* (nurturing) are the two most commonly used (Sahin, 2017). However, the two terms are still often debated. The concept of *tak'dib* education, which was popularized by Al-Attas, is the most appropriate concept because it includes the elements of *ilm*, *ta'lim*, and *tarbiyah* (Ahmad, 2021). In his article "The Concept of Education in Islam", Al-Attas defines education as the process of instilling something into human beings (Al-Attas, 1999). The implantation in question is *adab* (moral discipline) or virtue. According to him, education is not just about acquiring information and skills, but also virtues such as wisdom, humility, compassion, and moral responsibility. Therefore, his concept of education is known as the concept of holistic education, which includes physical, intellectual, emotional, social, and spiritual aspects. The implication of this concept is that Islamic education must produce universally good human beings who are oriented in two dimensions simultaneously, namely as servants of Allah and as caliphs on earth. In addition, Al-Attas explained that the purpose of education is to create or produce good human beings who have morals. In his philosophy of education, Al-Attas emphasized the importance of acquiring religious knowledge as a foundation before pursuing other general sciences. He believes that humans have two

aspects that must be fulfilled, namely the spiritual-emotional aspect to fulfil transcendental needs called "*fardu'in*", and material-emotional needs or "*fardu kifayah*" to fulfil pragmatic needs. The most important aspect is to fulfil the needs of "*fardu'ain*" (obligatory) before "*fardu kifayah*" (sunnah), which creates a dualistic approach to education. In addition, "*ta'dib*," which leads to the cultivation of "*adab*," when viewed from a methodological approach, achieves educational goals and contains pedagogical value. It also includes the process of inculturation, which is the acculturation of learners into a society based on ancestral values, especially religious understanding to maintain established truth values (Kosim et al., 2020; Ahmad, 2021).

Besides *ta'dib*, in Islam, education is known as *tarbiyah*, which has the same purpose as *ta'dib*. Conceptually, *tarbiyah* is a holistic system that covers three aspects: spiritual, intellectual, and cognitive (Dana & Ramadhani, 2020; Saputro, 2022; Sahin, 2018b). Education in the concept of *tarbiyah* is broader and more comprehensive. The term "*tarbiyah*" originates from the word "*rabba*," which conveys the meanings of being an owner, nurturer, and guide. Another word derived from "*rabba*" is "*yaribbu*," which means raising and educating. Additionally, "*rabb*" refers to God. In a broader sense, *tarbiyah* represents a process of guidance and education aimed at shaping and developing a person's human and spiritual aspects (Sahin, 2018b; Wati et al., 2022). This concept highlights that education is akin to the relationship between God (*Rabb*) and His creation. God is not merely a creator but also deeply cares for His creation, which encompasses the universe and humanity. Particularly, the relationship between humans and God is portrayed as an educational journey rooted in profound ethical values such as care, gratitude, compassion, and respect for human rights and dignity, as well as God's rights. Thus, the purpose of education aligns with God's intention of creating humans as custodians on Earth, responsible for nurturing and protecting both humans and the

environment. All endeavors are entrusted to humans as servants, blessed with the faculty of reason to manage and care for the Earth by observing the signs present in every aspect of creation (Günther, 1961; Arqasusi, 1419, p. 18–19; Sahin, 2018b). Another definition can be analogized as the process of raising children by parents. Parents play a vital role in this process by providing their children with the necessary physical, educational, moral, and spiritual support, enabling them to mature and contribute positively to society. *Tarbiyah* in Islam is about raising and educating individuals in a comprehensive manner, addressing their physical, intellectual, and moral aspects to help them become well-rounded human beings.

Tarbiyah is fundamentally different from mere indoctrination or training. It emphasizes the comprehensive growth and nurturing of an individual's intellectual, moral, emotional, and spiritual dimensions, and ensures balance and mutual respect between the authority of educators and the autonomy of learners. The belief in Islam is that humans are born in a state of purity (*fitrah*) and have a tendency towards good and bad, but are commanded to always do good and follow the straight path (worship of Allah) (Surah Al-Baqarah,2:256). Quranic verses also highlight the importance of human freedom and the moral responsibility to take care of oneself and the consequences of neglecting it (Surah An-Nisa, 4:79). Education is seen as a lifelong process of transformation, which recognizes the incompleteness of the human condition. The autonomy that humans have in determining their life path is also recognized in the educational process, meaning that there is no coercion that causes learners to lose the ability to maximize their potential. Therefore, the concept of *tarbiyah* education, which emphasizes *Al Rabb* (Divine educator) with His pedagogical attributes of compassion, love, and forgiveness, becomes the basis for interaction between students and teachers. The concept of *tarbiyah* emphasizes interactive education, problem solving, and

experimentation. Through a comprehensive and holistic framework, it covers not only the physical, intellectual, and spiritual aspects of the individual, but also social transformation in line with the purpose of human creation as *Khalifah fil ardi* (stewards of the earth) (Sahin, 2018b; Sahin, 2021).

In this theoretical framework, education is viewed as more than simply transferring knowledge or training for specific skills. It goes beyond instilling moral discipline based on culture. Instead, education is understood as a lifelong process that encompasses various cognitive, emotional, and spiritual aspects. This involves incorporating experiences and reflection, which not only preserves existing values but also serves as a transformative tool that promotes critical thinking and problem-solving in relation to values and educational traditions. Consequently, education should be characterized by democracy, compassion, transformation, and inclusivity.

2.2.3. Education as Tool for Empowerment

The issue of women's empowerment has gained significant attention in government programs and international organizations. The aim is to enhance women's participation in various aspects of life, including the economic, education, political, and social spheres, and to eliminate gender injustice (Maslak, 2008; Vavrus 2022). However, defining the term women's empowerment remains challenging and subject to debate due to the multifaceted nature of the concept. Women's empowerment involves power relations, social and cultural changes, and women's participation in decision-making processes. Moreover, the interpretation of empowerment varies among individuals and groups depending on their backgrounds, experiences, and political views. Therefore the concept of empowerment is often understood subjectively and develops along with social and political (Kabeer, 1999; Mishra & Tripathi, 2011).

The terms empowerment and agency are often used interchangeably (Mishra & Tripathi, 2011). It is especially in the context of developing the ability to make authentic choices, although they are interrelated. Empowerment can be defined as a process of transformation from a state of powerlessness to one of empowerment (Kabeer, 1999). Kabeer's conceptualization of empowerment includes three interrelated elements: resources, agency, and achievement. This framework emphasizes the importance of not only having access to resources but also having the agency to utilize those resources to achieve desired outcomes. This process requires institutions that can facilitate transformation, for example, through education, training, empowerment programmers, and involvement in development plans. Through this process, women can become aware and develop the capacity to act on opportunities that they did not have before. Agency is a crucial aspect of empowerment as it enables women to exercise greater control over their lives and achieve their own goals and aspirations. In short, agency emphasizes the ability of individuals to take their own actions and decisions, whereas empowerment emphasizes the ability of individuals to gain power and autonomy to change their situation through support and access to resources (Mishra & Tripathi, 2011; Kabeer, 1999).

In addition, Cornwall (2016) also defines women's empowerment as a process of increasing the capacity of individuals or groups to make choices and turn these choices into actions to get the desired results. The concept of empowerment defined by Cornwall is not only limited to gaining access to resources but also emphasizes a shift in consciousness, especially in the face of gender injustice or discrimination. This empowerment process is shown and taught to see themselves as women, as citizens, and as human beings. In which involves critical consciousness, by questioning norms that are taken for granted, and providing important contributions to changing power. This

emphasis is underlined because of the risk that women's empowerment programs can become "projects" imported from outside that do not take local conditions and culture into account and fail to produce the expected results. There is also empowerment as a form of aid or gift given to communities, where empowerment focuses only on inculcating narrow, internal resource-oriented values such as providing access to markets or entrepreneurial skills and services without considering methods that can give women space to build confidence and self-esteem (Cornwall, 2016; Manion Caroline, 2008). Based on this definition, empowerment is meant to be a process of improving capabilities that not only provides access to resources but also takes into account the local context and complexity of women's lives.

An addition, education is one of the means used to empower individuals who were previously powerless because in education there is a process of knowledge transformation through teaching, training, and development, which in essence encourages progress and change (Qutteina et al., 2019; Kabeer, 1999; Mishra & Tripathi, 2011; Maslak, 2008). Education is widely recognized as a crucial component of the modern "knowledge society." Governments and society as a whole view education as a primary tool for promoting equality among various social groups, with a particular focus on gender equality. International organizations like the United Nations, as well as civil society groups from numerous countries, strongly support efforts to expand women's access to formal education. The World Bank, which holds significant sway over public policies in developing nations, emphasizes that "education is the most valuable productive asset that most individuals will possess (Maslak, 2008; Vavrus 2002; Perry et al. 2003). Such is the importance of education for women that many have high expectations of it, with one of the most frequently voiced statements being: "If educating a man is like educating an individual, then educating a woman is like educating an entire family (Syafii Maarif,

2018; Susan Blacburn, 2007). Therefore, investing in the education of women can have significant social and economic benefits, not just for women but for society as a whole (Mernissi, 1991; Hasan, 2001). Therefore, the success or failure of women's empowerment is closely linked to the education system that is implemented. When education promotes gender equality and multiculturalism, it can create a more tolerant and inclusive society that values diversity and is open to social change. In contrast, an education system that promotes conservatism and radicalism can lead to a society that is exclusive and intolerant, hindering its ability to adapt to social change and maintain the status quo (Desjardins, 2015). It is essential to comprehend the process of empowering women, particularly within educational institutions. This is crucial because instead of assuming that education will automatically promote gender equality, it is necessary to acknowledge that it can inadvertently perpetuate gender injustice.

Based on Nelly Stromquist's research on women's empowerment through education, it is argued that formal education, such as schools, may not always provide a supportive or safe environment for women (Stromquist, 2015). This can be proven by the high level of violence and sexual harassment in institutions that are considered safe such as schools. While these incidents can occur to anyone regardless of gender or age, women are more vulnerable to becoming victims (Hidayahtulloh et al., 2022). Additionally, gender discrimination and biased gender treatment often persist within the school environment, both directly and indirectly. For example, teachers often implicitly divide traditional gender roles in their learning process. and gender stereotypes directly found through learning materials such as textbooks (Baily & Holmarsdottir, 2015).

With this fact, Nelly Stromquist sees education critically: indeed, knowledge is the power to know and understand, but it is not always the power to act or change (Stromquist, 2015). She highlighted the phenomenon of women and education with the

example that occurred in Japan, there is progress in the proportion of highly educated women, but most of these women do not work because of cultural factors that associate them with the household and children. This fact is in line with research conducted by Saeeda Shah (2018) on educated women in Malaysia. Although the number of women holding high positions such as rectors and deans in universities continues to increase, these women are still trapped in a double burden system. Where women are still trapped in socially constructed gender stereotypes so that when women play an active role in the public sphere, they can never be separated from the domestic sphere, which is considered their main job (Shah, 2018). This finding reveals that education has not truly evolved into a progressive platform but rather continues to serve as a mechanism for perpetuating patriarchal norms. It reinforces the notion that women are primarily responsible for domestic duties and portrays women in the public sector merely as assistants to men's work.

Furthermore, particularly duo to the rapid advancement of technologies and access to information, the shift in educational aims and values is undeniable. Abdullah Sahin (2017), in his critical analysis, argues that education is no longer geared towards individual and societal change that promotes justice, but rather towards meeting market and labor needs (Sahin, 2017). This is particularly evident in schools in the context of Western industrialization, where curriculum objectives are focused on technical and professional skills, and schools are used as training grounds to develop such skills, while character development is often neglected (Zakaria, 2015). Sahin also criticizes the Islamic education approach for experiencing a value shift that emphasizes strict moral imposition through the narrow concept of *adab* (Sahin, 2017). In some countries, the Islamic education system focuses on strengthening conservative values and emphasizes the elimination of differences and independent critical thinking (Sahin, 2018; Sahin, 2021;

McClendon et al., 2018). Therefore, understanding education as a tool used for empowerment and transformation must be viewed holistically. This involves not only narrowly assessing it as a teaching and learning process but also considering its broader social and political context.

2.3. Women Agency

The subsequent section will elucidate the broad understanding of agency, followed by an examination of the demonstration of agency by religious women. Afterward, we will discuss the concept of agency as proposed by Saba Mahmood. Her theory will serve as the analytical framework in this study.

2.3.1. Definition of Agency

As a historical fact, women have been subjected to subordination and marginalization within the patriarchal system that exists in many cultures and societies worldwide (Tong & Botts, 2017; hooks, 2014). Patriarchy refers to a system of male domination over women that has pervaded social, political, economic, and cultural life. This gender injustice has led to women being stigmatized, marginalized, subordinated, and criminalized, indirectly diminishing women's agency or ability to make decisions and act in their own lives (Rofiah, 2021). Although every human being is born with the desire to be free, not everyone has the ability to express their freedom, particularly in hegemonic system (Mahmood, 2005). Therefore, according to feminist and postcolonial theories, when an individual is unable to resist oppressive hegemony, they become subordinated and powerless (Riyani & Parker, 2018; Gramsci, A. 1971). However, the concept of agency becomes more complex in the face of religious, cultural, and social diversity in society. This part will define agency, explain the difference between agency and empowerment, and explore how women who tightly adhere to patriarchal systems can still possess agency, despite being systemically limited in their freedom.

According to Kabeer, agency refers to the capacity of a person to make choices and decisions, allowing them to act independently instead of conforming to the expectations or coercion of others or society (Kabeer, 1999). Anthony Giddens defined agency as an actor's ability to influence the social world, to produce effects, change structures, and alter outcomes (Giddens, 1984). Therefore, women's agency refers to the capacity of women to make choices and decisions that shape their lives and to influence the social world and its structures; therefore, it encompasses their ability to take control of their lives and make decisions about various aspects, including education, career, relationships, sexuality, and reproductive health. For instance, a woman can choose to pursue higher education, remain single or get married, have children or not, and use contraception or not, among others (Cornwall, 2016; Kabeer, 1999). These choices are essential in determining a woman's identity and enabling her to lead a fulfilling life (Riyani & Parker, 2018).

Richard Scot, a prominent American sociologist, classified agency into three forms: individual, collective, and structural. This refers to the ability to act independently, together, and within social structures. Agency can also involve the capacity of individuals, groups, and politics together to bring about change within the social or political systems that govern them (Scott & Davis, 2016; Giddens, 1984). This concept is particularly relevant when examining women's agency within dominant systems. According to Riyani, although women's agency may not necessarily change the world, it can empower them to transform the conditions and ways of their daily lives (Riyani & Parker, 2018; Burke, 2012).

Agency is commonly associated with actions taken to resist authoritarian, oppressive, and hegemonic systems. Therefore, a free or independent human being is typically defined as someone who is capable of fighting against oppression and acting according to their own desires. Conversely, if a person does not resist and cannot express their

wishes, they are often considered to be subordinated (Hellstrand, 2012; Zainal Abidin, 2021; Mahmood, 2005; Giddens, 1984). However, when considering the agency of religious women in traditional gender context, the concept becomes more complex and multidimensional. While some may view religious women as victims of social institutions dominated by men (Qutteina et al., 2019; Al-deen, 2019; Riyani & Parker, 2018), numerous studies have demonstrated that they possess agency and act as agents and executors in the midst of cultural, political, and religious dominant.

Saba Mahmood (2005) conducted research on women's religious activities that are seen as conservative in three mosques in Cairo, Egypt. Mahmood has made a major contribution to the discourse of gender and feminism. Through her ethnographic research, Mahmood observed women's religious activities. Unlike the general assumption developed by Liberal Feminists who consider religious symbols attached to women are part of the subjugation that limits women's freedom, Mahmood proves that such arguments are not always acceptable. In the context of this Islamic movement, freedom is understood more as attachment to religious values and practices that are perceived as "right" and "good", rather than freedom to make free individual choices without moral or religious considerations. Mahmood pointed out that these women can empower themselves both in the family and in society. The wearing of the burqa is not represented as a symbol of subjugation, but as a realisation of their piety as Muslim women on the one hand and as members of society on the other. Mahmood's concept of "development and realisation of the pious self" is useful to reveal how women as research subjects express their piety and identity (Mahmood, 2005).

Masooda Bano (2007) in her book *Female Islamic Education Movements: The Re-Democratisation of Islamic Knowledge*, discusses the emergence of female Islamic education movements in various Muslim countries. Bano highlights the agency and role

of women in these movements, as they take the initiative to reform and democratize Islamic knowledge. By challenging patriarchal norms and social demands that limit their participation in the public sphere and knowledge formation, women in this Islamic education movement demonstrate a tendency to question inherited knowledge and seek more inclusive and contextualized understandings. Women in the Islamic education movement have expanded their agency by establishing women's educational institutions, organizing themselves, and promoting an inclusive and democratic understanding of Islam. Through these efforts, they have shown that women have an important role to play in promoting more inclusive and democratic social and intellectual change in Muslim societies. Bano also acknowledges that the movement faces obstacles, such as the gap between the desire to achieve gender equality and traditional expectations of women's roles as mothers and wives. However, Bano argues that the movement has great potential to change society's view of women and Islam, and to fight for women's rights. Bano's book highlights the important work of women in the Islamic education movement, who are challenging traditional gender roles and promoting more inclusive and democratic understandings of Islam. Their efforts have the potential to lead to greater gender equality and social change in Muslim societies (Bano, 2017).

Lihi Ben Shitri (2013) conducted research on women's freedom and agency in political religious movements, focusing on two distinct groups of women who did not represent an elite class, the Islamic Movement (*al-Haraka al-Islamiya*) and the Haredi Jews (Ultra-Orthodox) in Israel and the Shah. Despite these movements being seen as limiting women's freedom, However, based on her ethnographic research, she finds that women's activist interpretations of agency in devotional practice are deeply invested in the idea of the autonomous individual. They believe that subordination that occurs in relations between men and women is not governed by religion, but by low economic

status, lack of education for women and women's unemployment. One-way women challenge their agency is by reinterpreting religious texts and traditions in ways that support their empowerment and liberation. Based on the results of their interviews, they find that in the midst of an oppressive system they realize that with education they learn to gain knowledge they are able to fight the patriarchal system. Not only that, support from family and community helps women gain agency and can be involved in religious political movements (Ben Shitrit, 2013).

Based on the research conducted by the experts above, it is evident that women's agency takes many forms namely bargaining, complicity, compromise, deviance, or resistance. Moreover, they also argue that women who uphold and promote the patriarchal system are not always subordinated. These women have ways to articulate their experiences and aspirations within the dominant system. Therefore, agency theory is crucial to understand that subordination is not always synonymous with passivity.

2.3.2. The Approach of Agency

Burke (2012) a scholar at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln writes of four approaches through which women enact and negotiate gender norms in religious traditions, according to her work there are four approaches that emphasise the complexity and diversity of women's experiences in religious traditions, namely: Resistance agency, Empowerment agency, Instrumental agency and Compliant agency (Burke, 2012).

The first is resistance agency; the term resistance is very much attached to an action to show one's agency; resistance can be against the status quo (Kabeer, 1999). This approach is widely used by several scholars, such as Michael Foucault, Judith Butler, and Bell Hooks, to define freedom; they consider agency as a form of resistance to power and social norms that limit the ability of individuals to act freely (Arymami, 2021). Although they believe that agency is a form of freedom, they realize that no agency is completely free from power. Resistance agency refers to actions taken by individuals, especially

women, to challenge or deviate from traditional norms and practices within their religious or cultural communities. This can include visible acts of protest or more subtle forms of non-compliance. Such resistance is seen as a way for individuals to assert their autonomy and demonstrate that they are not simply victims of their circumstances. For instance, few Western secular and Muslim women scholars advocate for Muslim women to oppose the use of the headscarf, as they view it as a symbol of female subjugation (Burke, 2012). However, defining agency solely through acts of resistance can be problematic. This excludes women who choose to adhere to traditional gender roles and may promote cultural stereotypes, such as the assumption that women who embrace traditional gender roles are passive or oppressed (Burke, 2012).

The second is empowerment agency, the empowerment agency approach shares similarities with the resistant approach in that both recognize traditional gender relations as being detrimental to women. However, the difference lies in the fact that the empowerment agency approach does not seek to abandon religious teachings or societal norms that it adheres to. Instead, it aims to change perspectives and responses to existing traditional social and religious practices. This approach views religious teachings not as legitimizing discrimination against women, but rather, it takes the essence of these teachings to portray religion in a positive light. For example, the requirement for women to wear a jilbab is not seen as a form of restraint, but rather, as an effort to protect themselves from views that condone mistreatment. According to Burke, the agency empowerment model can be understood by how women reconstruct and reinterpret the religious teachings they adhere to, so that religion becomes a path towards greater liberation for women.

The third is instrumental agency; this type of approach recognizes that the patriarchal system severely restricts women's lives, but adherents of this approach do not

seek to change it, nor do they make religion an internal force for gaining freedom. Instead, they emphasize the external benefits that women can gain through their religious participation. These benefits can be social, such as choosing to be conservative in an environment where conservatives are more likely to be accepted than progressives or acting otherwise to benefit from the relationship even if it is not in accordance with their conscious choices. Alternatively, the instrumental agency approach posits that religion can be a means to an end unrelated to religious belief itself; for example, participating in a religion with traditional gender aspects can provide material benefits such as employment opportunities and higher education, or relational benefits in everyday life such as strengthening social relationships. However, such an approach can overlook the fact that actions taken against one form of oppression can at the same time maintain and legitimize other forms of oppression (Chad Bauman, 2008).

The fourth is compliant agency, this approach understand women's agency in religious context, emphasizing that women's agency can be seen in the way they comply with religious teaching, but not all women comply in the same way. Compliant agency also show that agency does not always have to be interpreted as individual freedom to realize their desires, as this is not always possible in different context, such as outside the western context. Therefore, compliant agency broadens the definition of agency by recognize that women can demonstrate their agency through acts of conformity or resistance (Burke, 2012).

In conclusion, these four approaches emphasize the complexity and diversity of women's experiences in religious traditions. They highlight the various ways in which women negotiate and navigate their roles and choices within the context of religious norms and practices. It is important to recognize that agency can manifest in different ways and should not be limited to one particular approach. Women exercise agency

through resistance, empowerment, instrumentality, and compliance, demonstrating the multifaceted nature of their engagement with gender norms in religious traditions

2.3.3. Agency, Self-pious Cultivation and Embodiment

To understand the agency exercised by Salafi women in this study, I employ the framework of Saba Mahmood, a Pakistani academic and anthropologist who studied at the University of the Punjab in Lahore, Pakistan, and later earned a Master's and Doctorate degree from Washington University in St. Louis, USA. With reference to her seminal work entitled *Politics of Piety*, she analysed the Islamic revival movement in Egypt and its influence on women. As written earlier, in her book, she challenges Western perspectives on individual freedom and women's rights, and demonstrates the intricate relationship between religion, politics, and gender (Johnson & Fairweather, 2017; Zainal Abidin, 2021; Mahmood, 2005).

Agency is often interpreted as an ability to do something (Burke, 2012; Cornwall, 2016; Kabeer, 1999; Mishra & Tripathi, 2011). However, according to Mahmood, agency is not only about the ability to act or do something, but it is also about the capacity to make meaningful choices that reflect one's identity and values. In other words, agency is not just about being able to resist dominant structures or cultures, but it is also about how individuals navigate and negotiate those structures in their everyday lives (Mahmood, 2005).

Mahmood's perspective challenges the liberal discourse that sees agency as an act of resistance against dominant structures or cultures, including religion. Liberal freedom is often understood as procedural in nature, where individuals are free to choose their path, whether it be liberal, traditional, or even servitude, as long as they acknowledge their will and self-interest as an autonomous subject. This perspective sees freedom as a concept that is not concerned with the content of one's choices (Amanulloh, 2016).

Therefore, even the decision not to be free is considered a form of freedom. However, Mahmood argues that this liberal understanding of freedom ignores the social, cultural, and historical constraints that shape individuals' agency and limit their choices. In her view, agency is not just about individual autonomy, but it is also about the social and cultural practices that constitute the self and the world in which individuals are situated. She emphasizes the importance of understanding how cultural and religious practices shape individual agency and how individuals negotiate those practices in their everyday lives (Johnson & Fairweather, 2017; Amanulloh, 2016; Mahmood, 2005).

In this view Saba Mahmood does not see agency as always located but can also enforce and perpetuate forms of self- cultivation and embodiment. According to Mahmood, this is a paradigm in which religious believers have a desire to cultivate themselves to be more devout (Mahmood, 2005,p 158).

Self-cultivation refers to the intentional and conscious efforts made by individuals to transform themselves according to certain religious ideals and moral frameworks. In the context of religious devotion, self-cultivation involves practices such as prayer, fasting, recitation of religious texts, and adherence to religious rituals (Johnson & Fairweather, 2017). These practices are aimed at developing a stronger spiritual connection with the divine and fostering a sense of moral discipline and virtue. Through self-cultivation, individuals strive to become more devout and fulfil religious obligations.

Embodiment, on the other hand, refers to the way in which individuals embody and internalize the norms, values, and expectations of their social and religious contexts. It involves the incorporation of these norms and values into one's bodily practices, habits, and comportment. In the case of religious believers, embodiment involves the physical enactment of religious rituals and the cultivation of specific bodily dispositions and comportments that align with religious ideals (Johnson & Fairweather, 2017). For

example, the way one dresses, the way one carries oneself, and the way one interacts with others may be influenced by religious norms and expectations. According to Mahmood, self-cultivation and embodiment are mutually constitutive processes. Through self-cultivation practices, individuals cultivate certain embodied dispositions and behaviors that reflect their religious commitments. At the same time, the embodiment of religious norms reinforces and sustains these norms within the social and cultural context. This embodiment is not solely an individual endeavour but is also shaped by social structures, cultural discourses, and collective practices.

Therefore, social practices such as wearing the veil, practicing recitation or teaching activities cannot be judged from the outside but must be explained according to the subject's own perspective (Amanulloh, 2016). The point is that the women's *da'wah* movement is not only limited to the dissemination of ideas. Instead, it encompasses practice that involves self-affection and transformation. It serves as a means to develop oneself where the concept of gender equality whether alighted with, contrary to, or indifferent to the idea of gender equality is not the most important thing. That becomes the main differentiator of the movement is the commitment to live following what is understood as God's commandment (Zainal Abidin, 2021). The concept of agency and power introduced by Saba Mahmood will be utilized to examine the behaviours of Salafi women within Salafi schools. This study will examine how Salafi women navigate their daily lives and the extent to which they are able to exercise their agency within the confines of the dominant patriarchal structures of Salafi society.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

This chapter focuses on the research methodology, approach, instruments, ethical issues and data analysis. Firstly, it describes the research paradigm that aligns with the fundamental philosophy of the current study. Next, the chapter outlines the research methodology, explaining all aspects of the research methods and tools. This includes the instruments used in the study, data collection methods, ethical issues and data analysis techniques.

3.1. Research Paradigm and Methodology Approach

Methodology plays a very important role in research because it provides a systematic and rigorous approach that serves to increase the validity and reliability of findings. Additionally, behind every research conducted, there is research paradigm that underpins the perspective, beliefs, and methodology employed by researchers. In some research methodology literature, four primary research paradigms are often discussed: positivist/post-positivist, constructivist/interpretivist, transformative, and pragmatic. These paradigms represent different philosophical approaches to conducting research and understanding knowledge (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). The research paradigm used in this study is the interpretive or constructivist paradigm, which is a philosophical belief system in the context of scientific disciplines and emphasizes the subjective nature of human experience (Leavy, 2017). According to Stake (1995) and Yin (2003), constructivism states that truth is relative and depends on one's perspective. This paradigm recognizes the importance of the subjective creation of meaning by humans but does not reject the idea of objectivity outright. Interpretivism requires researchers to understand the meanings that shape particular actions (Yin, 2013). For example, this research is conducted on a group of women who have different arguments influenced by different religious sects and teachings. Various interpretations will emerge during this

research process. Perhaps they believe that women should be mothers and take care of their children; women should stay at home and do household chores; or they believe that women should play both public and private roles. Therefore, truth is not only seen from one point of view but also from what they believe, although it is possible that there are critical arguments that can be deduced from these statements.

Furthermore, Identifying the correct research method is crucial because it helps us answer our research questions effectively. Punch (2013) emphasizes the importance of matching research questions with suitable methods. The link between research questions and design is critical as it falls within quantitative, qualitative, or mixed methods. Often, research questions focus on whether the data can be measured or not (Punch, 2013; Thomas,2003). Based on three research questions as I have written namely:

1. What is the curriculum and the women's program adoption in the Salafi Islamic boarding school?
2. How does the implementation of the curriculum and the women's program justify their practice of what they receive as authentic Islam?
3. How do Salafi women negotiate piety, identity, and modernity with the existing relationship between men and women within the Salafi circle?

This research is conducted through a qualitative approach, which is a set of research procedures used to collect, manage, analyse, and interpret non-numerical data (Merriam, 1992). Data obtained from the process of exploring and analysing social phenomena from the point of view of those being studied aims to reveal the underlying reasons, opinions, and motivations of individuals or groups. There are three compelling reasons leading me to use this method: firstly, my research question focuses on data that answers how and why the condition occurs rather than counting how many, how much, or how often it occurs. Secondly, I focus on investigating human behaviour and

perspectives, therefore the research explanations would be more narrative than numerical. Third, qualitative research believes that the truth in general is not the main concern, but how respondents perceive the truth is more important (Leavy, 2017; Burns, 2009). These factors make the qualitative approach the most suitable for exploring the underlying aspects of the research question.

According to Merriam (1992), qualitative research has many variations: ethnography, case studies, grounded theory, and phenomenology the type of which is determined based on the orientation of the research (Merriam, 1992). Referring to the research problem that I identify, this research uses a qualitative case study, which is a process of investigating and analysing a phenomenon or single instance of a social unit intensively and holistically. The case study approach is oriented toward gaining an in-depth understanding of the situation and the meaning of what is observed. The case study design is very appropriate to be implemented in this research, which is based on the specific and complex nature of my research object (Hancock & Algozzine, 2006; Yin, 2013; Merriam 1992).

There are three reasons justifying the use of the case study approach. First, this study aimed to gain a deep understanding of a specific group of Muslims in Indonesia, particularly the Salafi, focusing on the education of Salafi women. Second, the case study methodology was chosen because it is well-suited to answering 'how' or 'why' questions. In this case, the investigation was to determine "how" the curriculum and women's programs are implemented in Islamic boarding schools. Third, the study anticipated obtaining a close-up view of women's education in the Salafi context, providing an in-depth investigation of the behaviours of involved participants that could not be manipulated. The research took into account all conditions and situational contexts, especially those related to the phenomenon under study. The type of case study used was

a descriptive case study because this research sought to describe an intervention or phenomenon and the real-life context in which it occurs (Yin, 2013).

3.2. Data Collection Methods

There are several techniques to collect data in qualitative research using a case study approach: interviews, observations, document analysis, archival records of participant observation, focus groups, and so on (Crowe et al., 2011). Thereby, for getting more and valid data in this research, I use three data collection methods: Document analysis, observation, and interviews.

3.2.1. Document analysis

The first type of data collection is document analysis, a method for systematically investigating texts to understand the meaning of circulating texts, both printed and electronic documents (Merriam, 1998; Yin, 2013). Through document analysis in education, researchers gain insight into educational practices, policies, and procedures. In accordance with those purposes, document analysis is used in this research to understand how the educational framework is used as a reference to carry out the learning process. Various documents are needed to identify the basic foundation for the implementation of school activities that influence students' actions and behaviours. In the data collection process, some documents are obtained directly from the school, such as written policies/rules, the curriculum, and lesson plans. Meanwhile, additional data, such as school profiles and activities, are gathered through website.

3.3.2. Observation

The second type of data collection is observation, which is a data collection method that involves systematic and detailed observation of a phenomenon in the form of recording behaviour, events, and situations at the research site. Therefore, with the

observation method, researchers will get richer and more detailed data (Baxter & Jack, 2015; Hancock & Algozzine, 2006). There are two categories of observation: The first is participatory observation, which requires the researcher to be involved in the activities the person being studied by taking systematic notes. The second is non-participatory observation, where the researcher observes participants in a situation without engaging in the same activity (Leavy, 2017; Merriam, 1992). In this research, I used non-participant observation. As a researcher, I do not interact directly with the object of research. The process of data collection involved observations during three meetings. The purpose of these observations was to understand the interactions between teachers and students, as well as among the students themselves. It was also intended to examine the learning process within the classroom. My role was solely that of an observer, documenting events through note-taking, audio recordings, or video.

3.3.3. Interview

The third type of data collection is an interview, which is a method of collecting data through a question-and-answer process with the aim of obtaining certain information about a person's experiences, opinions, and attitudes related to the research question (Merriam, 1992). There are three types of interviews popularly used by researchers: structured, which is an interview process using pre-determined questions; semi-structured, using a set of open-ended questions; and unstructured, which allows the interviewer to speak free (Braun & Clarke, 2013). In this research I used semi-structured interviews, which is an interview process that asks open-ended questions that allow for exploration and make the interview more flexible with the aim of gaining a deeper understanding of the topic. This is done by allowing participants to share their experiences, opinions and perspectives. The communication style used was a narrative approach, which is an approach with a communicative storytelling style. Participants can

use their own language to provide lengthy and detailed responses, which allows for greater flexibility in exploring topics in depth (Braun & Clarke, 2013).

During the interview process, research instruments (attached) were prepared with the intention that the questions asked would not go out of topic. From one selected Islamic Boarding School, the purpose of conducting interviews with teachers is to:

1. Understand how the curriculum, and women's programs, are implemented for students.
2. Explore the efforts made by teachers to provide students with an understanding that these teachings represent authentic Islam.
3. Uncover the initiatives undertaken by female teachers as agents who actively choose to adhere to religious teachings despite the challenges posed by a patriarchal system and the strict rules of Salafi teachings.

In addition, the purpose of conducting interviews with students is to:

1. Understand their perspective on the application of the curriculum and women's programs.
2. Gain insights into what is considered authentic Islam from their point of view.
3. Explore the efforts made by female students as the active agents who choose to adhere to their religious teachings despite the challenges posed by a patriarchal system and the strict rules of Salafi teachings.

3.3 Ethical Issues

To avoid undesirable events in the future due to the sensitivity of the issues raised, ethical issues are strongly considered in this research. According to Hertz (1996) that human subjects deserve special ethical consideration. According to him, deception in social research poses a real problem between loss and gain (Hertz, 1996: 4–19).

Therefore, in order to protect the privacy and confidentiality of the participants involved, particularly sensitive and personal information, I use codes, pseudonyms, and secure data storage for names, places, and events. The name of the institution is referred to as Islamic boarding school Salafi women.

Furthermore, in the process of data collection, such as interviews and observations, the consent of participants is very much considered, meaning that participants have the choice to refuse or vice versa. The last is the full awareness of the researcher to avoid imbalances in power between participants and researchers who can lead participants 'opinions thereby, that they can dilute the objectivity of participants' opinions.

3.4. Data Analysis

After collecting data through the processes of document analysis, observation, and interviews, the next step is to conduct data analysis. According to Leavy (2017), data analysis is the process of systematically examining, categorizing, transforming, tabulating, and recombining data with the aim of producing findings based on empirical evidence (Leavy, 2017). Examining the data: Review and understand the data collected by reading documents, reviewing notes, and organizing recordings. Categorizing and coding: Label or tag segments of data to identify patterns, themes and relationships. Transforming the data: Clean, filter, combine, separate and create new variables for better analysis. Tabulating data: Summarize and organize data using tables, charts, or graphs to highlight trends and comparisons. Combining and synthesizing: Combine and analyse data to identify overarching themes, relationships, and patterns (Leavy, 2017).

Furthermore, this research, as a social study, cannot be fully detached from bias as personal positions potentially influence how this study is conducted, obtained, and resulted. This is because no researcher can objectively elucidate a matter (Darwin Holmes, 2020). Consequently, I acknowledge that this study cannot be separated from my

subjectivity as a researcher, especially as someone who has prior experience as a teacher and is a strong advocate for the feminist movement's agenda.

This research employs manual thematic analysis, a method for examining qualitative data (in this case, observational interviews). This process relies heavily on the researcher's interpretation. Unlike techniques that simply tally words or prerequisites, thematic analysis focuses on the identification and explanation of both explicit and implicit data. The term "manual" suggests that the analysis is carried out without the use of software, with the researcher personally handling all stages of the process (Braun & Clarke, 2013).

Manual thematic analysis consists of six stages as described by Braun and Clarke (2021): becoming familiar with the data, coding, theme development, reviewing potential themes, naming themes, and compiling a report. In this study, the process began with the transcription of field notes and the validation of their accuracy. Subsequently, the transcriptions were condensed, resulting in the emergence of patterns, which are defined as relationships derived from participants' responses. These patterns were then classified and color-coded, a task performed both digitally and manually. After identifying the patterns, they were grouped into themes. These themes were named based on their common aspects, such as the implemented curriculum or repeated responses about strategies utilized by teachers. These themes were subsequently employed in the following analysis and interpretation to address the research question (Braun & Clarke, 2013).

Furthermore, because in qualitative research the researcher is the main instrument for collecting and analysing data, this research is inevitably human and subject to errors, missed opportunities, and biased interpretations (Merriam, 1992). However, to avoid all of that, in interpreting this research using the triangulation method, which involves the

use of multiple data sources including document analysis, interviews, and observations that together can increase the validity of the research results, (Greene, 2007; Hesse-Biber & Leavy, 2005, 2011).

3.5. Research Subject and Place and the Time of the Research

In this section, I will provide details about the educational institution selected as the site for my research, the participants involved in this study, and the timeline of the research.

3.5.1 Research Subject and Place

I conducted my research at a private boarding school in the province of Lampung, Indonesia, which was established in 2018. Originally, this boarding school admitted both boys and girls. However, in 2016, the boys were relocated to a different area due to an increasing number of students, and it became a female Islamic boarding school. Despite its specialization for women, it remains under the same Foundation, led by a male director, with a teaching staff composed of both men and women. Currently, the student comprises approximately 200 female students from grades 7 to 12. They come not only from the surrounding areas but also from various districts within Lampung, such as Mesuji, Metro, Bandar Lampung, Tulang Bawang, South Lampung, and even from cities outside the province, such as Palembang and Bengkulu. The vision is to foster high-quality human resources endowed with faith and devotion, proficient in science and technology, and insightful about community matters. The mission is to cultivate ummah leaders who master science and technology, and uphold IMTAQ (Faith and Piety) values rooted in the Aqidah of the righteous predecessors (*Salafus Saleh*).

The objectives include expanding students' knowledge, competence, and skills. The goal is to make the Islamic Boarding School a leading educational institution in the fields of science, technology, and IMTAQ (Faith and Piety). The school employs a blended curriculum that incorporates elements from three distinct educational models: the Middle Eastern curriculum, curriculum of Pondok Modern *Gontor*, and the National Education curriculum. The reasons for selecting this particular boarding school as my research site are manifold. Primarily, it is directly related to my research topic focusing on Salafi women and education. The school was chosen specifically because it practices Salafi teachings. This was determined based on various pieces of information gathered from friends, school staff, and characteristic observations such as the students wear large headscarves and veils. Furthermore, the school uses teaching resources from the Middle East, and it places a significant emphasis on puritanical Islam.

My research was conducted in Lampung, and I selected Lampung Province as my research location for a variety of reasons. First and foremost, Lampung is my hometown, providing me with a certain degree of familiarity and comfort. This familiarity streamlines the logistical aspects of conducting research as I know the area well. Moreover, my local ties facilitate easier access to a school that aligns perfectly with my study's specifications.

3.5.2 The Time of the Research

My research process began in January 2023 when I contacted an insider who served as the treasurer for the foundation of the boarding school I was investigating. While gathering information through telephone communication, I was directed to the deputy director of the female's boarding school, who happened to be a friend from my undergraduate years. I communicated my intentions over the phone to conduct research

at the boarding school under her leadership, noting that the project was still in its writing stages and might require significant time to complete.

I conducted my research in two stages. The first stage was from May 19–25, 2023 when I visited the school three times for collecting document and observation data. The second stage was from June 20–27, 2023 for interview session. The first stage starting On May 19, 2023, I undertook direct field research and have not finished my thesis draft yet. The intention was to get an initial overview and start collecting data due to the time constraint for data collection. On that day, I visited primarily to maintain contact and converse with the vice chairman of the women's foundation. This coincided with parents' visiting day at the boarding school. Due to the hectic schedule at the school, I had to return home and come back. On May 22, 2023. That Monday, I was granted the opportunity to tour the boarding school, observe dormitory activities, view the ongoing learning processes, and occasionally chat with students preparing for their upcoming exams. My school visit lasted from 08:00 to 12:00, starting with the flag-raising ceremony and ending after the midday prayer. On May 25, 2023, while the students were sitting for their exams. The purpose of these observations was to comprehend the interactions between the teachers and students as well as the interactions amongst the students themselves. I also aimed to scrutinize the classroom learning process. I served strictly as an observer, documenting events through note-taking, audio recordings, or video recordings. During the data collection process, I obtained some documents directly from the school. These included written policies and rules, the curriculum, and lesson plans. Meanwhile, additional data, such as school profiles and activities, was gathered from the school's website.

The second stage took place from June 20-27, 2023, during which interviews were conducted via Zoom meetings. The decision to divide the data collection into two stages

was necessitated by the need to revise the interview instrument, which was identified as lacking in comprehensiveness. Moreover, the timing coincided with the examination period, leading to the preoccupation of both students and teachers with their respective responsibilities. The study's participants comprised six individuals, whose real names have been anonymized for confidentiality purposes. Three of the participants were teachers: Mrs. Sarah, a 29-year-old teacher of Civic Education (PKN) and vice-director of the female' boarding school; Mariam, a 27-year-old English teacher; and Halimah, a 25-year-old Arabic teacher. All three are alumnae who returned to teach at the boarding school after obtaining higher education. The remaining three participants were students: Shopia, a 17-year-old 9th-grade student who also serves as an organizer at the female's boarding school; Laila, a 16-year-old 8th-grade student; and Hafza, a 17-year-old 9th-grade student.

In the process of collecting interview data, I encountered various challenges. These included issues with signal connectivity and the task of coordinating the schedules of students and teachers. These factors not only caused disruptions but also significantly extended the timeframe for data collection. After all the data was collected, it proceeded to the data analysis stage. Two types of member checks were implemented in this study. Firstly, participants member-checked the interview transcriptions during the data collection process. Secondly, they member-checked the entire manuscript after the research had been fully completed. Both member checks were conducted to guarantee that there was no misuse of data in this study.

CHAPTER IV

RESEARCH RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This chapter presents the results and analysis of the data collected through gathering school documents, conducting interviews, and observing the field. The process of analysing the data revealed several key themes that address the research questions in this study. The results section describes these findings using the themes identified through Manual Thematic Analysis (MTA). Meanwhile, the discussion section interprets the results and explains their significance in relation to the study.

4.1 Research Results

4.1.1. Curriculum and Women's Program Implemented in Islamic Boarding School of Salafi Women in Lampung.

To address the first research question of this study, we explore the curriculum and women's programs implemented at the Islamic Boarding School of Salafi women in Lampung. The research aims to identify the extent of teachers and students' knowledge regarding these aspects. The field findings revealed two main themes.

The first theme revolves around the adoption of an integrated curriculum that combines elements from the Middle East, *Gontor*, and the Ministry of Religion. This integrated curriculum comprises two subthemes. The first subtheme involves the amalgamation of the three curricula within the subjects. The second subtheme highlights the purpose of the curriculum, which is to foster holistic development encompassing spiritual, cognitive, and affective abilities.

The second theme centres on extracurricular activities and the women's education program known as *Tarbiyah al-nisa*. This program is composed of three subthemes. The first subtheme covers extracurricular activities such as sports and entrepreneurship. The

second subtheme is focused on the Women's Education (*Tarbiyah al-nisa*) and Fiqh Subjects. The third, primary goal of the women's program is to develop essential skills and instil morals and ethics.

4.1.1.1 Adopting an Integrated Curriculum and Its Purpose

Referring to data from documents that I obtained from the school, this female Salafi boarding school operates as a *Mu'adalah* school. This system represents the process of equalization among education institution, encompassing both Islamic boarding school and other types of schools, to ensure they obtained legitimacy to the existing government regulation. They are following the *Kulliyatul Muallimin Al-Islamiyyah (KMI/Gontor)* curriculum. The Directorate General of Islamic Education through Decree Number 49/07 of 2016. It grants equivalence status (*Mu'adalah*) to Religious Education Units, equivalent to Madrasah Aliyah or similar institutions. As a result, the school is authorized by the Ministry of Religion of the Republic of Indonesia to issue its own state-recognized diploma. Furthermore, according to the *Mu'adalah* curriculum provisions, Islamic boarding schools have the freedom to design and develop their own curriculum based on the unique characteristics of the school. In this case, this boarding school adopts an integrated curriculum that combines elements from three sources: the Middle East, *Gontor*, and the Ministry of Religion. This curriculum is then taught to the students.

The combination of three curricula in different subjects was implemented before the *Kulliyatul Muallimin Al-Islamiyyah (KMI)* was introduced, and it is indeed a defining characteristic of this Islamic boarding school. Both teachers and students are well-acquainted with this combination, and it is a familiar aspect of their educational approach. They do not feel there is a significant change. According to Miss. Sarah, who teaches civics and acts as the Deputy Director of the female boarding school, explained that the education system implemented here is the same as the one used previously, particularly

in terms of the curriculum. The only modification has been the addition of some general subjects.

The *Mu'adalah* Decree was issued in 2016, and since then, the curriculum has remained unchanged. We still use the same curriculum, especially in the subjects. When it comes to the Middle East, we adopt subjects like *Tawhid*, *Aqidah*, *Tafsir*, *Fiqh*, and *Hadith*. These subjects are religiously based. For subjects like *Mu'adalah*, we follow the curriculum of *Gontor*, which includes *Mutolaah*, *Durusul Lughoh*, *Nahwu*, *Tarjamaah*. In the Ministry of Religious Affairs, for the general subjects, there are some that are added, such as civic education and language. For social sciences and natural sciences, these are options (Author's interview, June 27th, 2023).

Additionally, Miss Mariam an Arabic teacher, explained that the curriculum is implemented in both *Madrasah Tsanawiyah* (equivalent to middle school) and *Madrasah Aliyah* (equivalent to high school).

In our education system, junior high and senior high schools are integrated. However, outside schools, like *kitab* (religious) and general lessons, are divided into Islamic boarding school and school lessons. Nevertheless, here the learning hours are combined from morning to afternoon, encompassing not only subjects from the Ministry of Religious Affairs but also a mixture of subjects from the Middle East and *Gontor* (Author's interview, June 25th, 2023).

It is not just the teachers who are familiar with this integrated curriculum system, the students are too. In line with what Miss. Sarah and Miss. Mariam said, Sophia (17), a ninth-grade high school student, confirmed that she studies subjects based on these references.

There are three curricula available. These include the *Gontor* curriculum, the Middle Eastern curriculum, and the Ministry of Religion curriculum. The Ministry's curriculum covers subjects such as Science, Math, and Civics. The *Gontor* curriculum focuses on subjects like *Tashil Lughah* and *Tamrin Lughoh*. The Middle Eastern curriculum includes topics like *Fiqh* and *Sirah Nabawiyah* (Author's interview, June 25th, 2023).

The explanation above shows that the combination of the Middle Eastern, *Gontor*, and Ministry of Religion curricula in the KMI Islamic boarding school provides students with a comprehensive education that includes religious studies and general subjects.

Furthermore, based on the profile of the Salafi Female Islamic Boarding School, the main focus of its education is to emphasize the development of religious knowledge and religious practices. Additionally, the school aims to foster scientific understanding

and cultivate various skills and abilities. Therefore, when reviewing the aspects that are emphasized, the main goal is to provide a comprehensive education that includes affective, cognitive, and psychomotor development. The emphasis on affective, cognitive, and psychomotor development is also explained by Sarah:

Our Islamic boarding school have four main components in our curriculum, known as BATU. Firstly, we emphasize having daily conversations in Arabic and English to improve language skills. Secondly, we cover various religious subjects related to strengthening faith in the Aqidah component. Thirdly, we have a *Tahfidz* program that focuses on recitation, pronunciation, and memorization of the Quran. Lastly, the *Ubudiyah* aspect includes non-classroom education, such as observing Monday and Thursday fasting, night prayer (*Tahajud*), and mid-morning prayer (*duha*) (Author's interview, June 27th, 2023).

She also further explained that by implementing the concept of integrating the three curricula, teachers and students have responded positively.

Most people hold the misconception that Islamic boarding schools solely focus on religious education, such as Quran recitation. However, I am grateful to say that our school emphasizes language skills, religious beliefs, and general knowledge (Author's interview, June 25th, 2023).

Laila that as a student also added that integration of curricula thought both academic and Islamic knowledge.

Attending this school entails more than just learning about religion to develop good manners and character. We also receive lessons on various subjects mandated by the government. This ensures that upon graduation, we are well-prepared to pursue further education in high school or college (Author's interview, June 02th, 2023).

This Islamic boarding school uses an integrated curriculum that can be seen in the subjects taught. The Islamic boarding school believes that an integrated curriculum helps students learn both religious knowledge and general sciences. The goal of this curriculum is to provide a balanced education, where students gain a broad understanding and are ready for higher education. It aims to give equal importance to religious and general knowledge, so students develop a well-rounded perspective.

4.1.1.2. Extracurricular and Women's Education Subjects (Tarbiyah al-nisa) as a Women's Program

As a boarding school devoted to women, does this Islamic boarding school have a special program that distinguishes it from male Islamic boarding school, especially in efforts to empower women? Based on the findings in the field, obtained through school documents and supported by the results of interviews, there are several activities that lead to women's empowerment. First, there are extracurricular sports and entrepreneurship. Second, in the subjects of Women's Education (*Tabiya al-nisa*) and *Fiqh* (Jurisprudence). The purpose of the women's program is skill development and moral cultivation

a. Sports and Entrepreneurship Extracurricular

Extracurricular activities, also known as non-academic activities, are typically conducted outside of regular learning hours. This women's Islamic boarding school offers an extracurricular program that includes various sports activities such as badminton, volleyball, basketball, and entrepreneurship such as handicrafts training in sewing, cooking, and selling.

According to Miss Sarah's explanation, extracurricular programs particularly those focused on sports and entrepreneurship, are designed to empower women.

There at the Islamic boarding school, we have lots of extracurricular activities for students to participate in. We offer mandatory scouts, *tapak suci* (martial arts), *tataboga* (cooking), and handicrafts. In addition, we have archery, basketball, tennis, badminton, and volleyball. These activities are designed to give students a break from their studies and make them feel happy and comfortable at the Islamic boarding school. These activities also give students a chance to discover and improve their talents and abilities (Author's interview, June 27th, 2023).

In addition, Miss. Mariam also emphasized the activities that had been carried out by the students of the boarding school who were directly coached by a lecturer from a university.

The existence of a specific activity called "*hasta karya*" where women are taught how to manage and transform plastic materials into shoes, which are then sold through workshops. This program was initiated by the wife of Ustad Muslim (a pseudonym) from UIN, who currently serves as the secretary of UIN (Author's interview, June 25th, 2023).

The extracurricular program at the women's Islamic boarding school appears to be well-rounded, offering a mix of sports, entrepreneurship, and skill-building activities. Based on what the participants said, I observed on May 29, 2023 that sports facilities such as basketball and volleyball courts were available at the boarding school. Additionally, the students showed me photos of sewing competitions held to commemorate Teacher's Day. Through these extracurricular sports and entrepreneurship programs, the Islamic boarding school aims to provide opportunities for female students to develop their skills and unlock their potential outside of academic activities.

Furthermore, Miss. Sarah also highlighted the positive changes resulting from the segregation between men and women, particularly in terms of increased freedom for female students to express themselves.

In the past, when men were present, none of our female students played basketball or volleyball unless they were forced to, as they felt embarrassed about their headscarves being exposed, among other reasons. However, now that we have separated, we are able to engage in these activities more freely. Now that we are separated, we have the freedom to participate in these activities without any constraints (Author's interview, June 27th, 2023).

This statement was also confirmed by Miss Mariam, a teacher, and graduate of this Islamic boarding school, who expressed that she feels more liberated now than she did in the past.

In the past, when there were men, we had many rules to follow. But after we separated, we were free to do anything around the school (Author's interview, June 25th, 2023).

Miss Halimah added that the shift was not solely limited to freedom of expression, but also encompassed participation in activities previously dominated by men. This

change, Halimah further explained, has contributed significantly to the advancement of women.

Before, during activities, we only did tasks that were typically done by women, like cleaning and cooking. But now, we all participate, which has made us more independent (Author's interview, June 25th, 2023).

However, even though the facilities are provided, there is still a lack of progress in sports like basketball, volleyball, badminton, and archery. These sports are often seen as primarily for men, which is likely due to the fact that the facilities were built when male and female boarding schools were combined. Students show little interest in pursuing these sports as a career and view them mainly as entertainment. Moreover, teachers do not support their students in becoming skilled athletes. To illustrate, Shopia, a student who enjoys one of the sports but merely for enjoyment.

For extracurricular sports I take badminton... not interested in being an athlete just for sport (Author's interview, June 25th, 2023).

Similarly, Laila, a second-year high school student, enjoys sports but has no desire to pursue a career in sports.

I take extracurricular basketball... to be tall (laughs)... Not interested (Author's interview, June 20th, 2023).

The lack of student interest in sports lessons that are not just leisure activities is influenced by the lack of encouragement from teachers, as conveyed by Miss Halimah, who still considers sports mere entertainment.

Many students here like to play volleyball, basketball, badminton, ... Not directed, just for the breaktime (Author's interview, June 25th, 2023).

Based on this information, it states that with this extracurricular sports and entrepreneurship program, this Islamic boarding school seeks to provide opportunities for female students to develop their skills and potential outside of learning activities,

although the stability cannot be denied due to other factors such as the values of the beliefs held.

b. Women's Education (Tarbiyah al-nisa) and Fiqh (Jurisprudence) Subject

Apart from extracurricular and entrepreneurship programs, which are used as tools to empower women, this Islamic boarding school also offers a special subject for women's education known as *Tarbiyah al-nisa*. This subject is taught either in class or during *kholaqoh* (study circle) sessions. Additionally, the content of the discussions about womanhood often stems from *Fiqh* (jurisprudence) lessons.

According to *Tarbiyah al-nisa* as a special program for women's boarding schools.

Actually, there are no significant differences between male and female boarding schools as both share a common foundation. However, as a special school for women, the most noticeable distinction lies in the women's education program class known as *Tarbiyah al-nisa*. This program aims to prepare female students to become supportive wives who assist their husbands in preaching (Author's interview, June 25th, 2023).

In addition to the *Tarbiyah al-nisa* lesson, Miss Sara stated that women's issues are frequently discussed in *Fiqh* classes, which are taught directly by prominent scholars.

There is one subject that specifically discusses womanhood, but it is included in the local content usually taught by the wife of a senior *ustad* whose husband teaches there. The discussion is about womanhood, such as how to be a pious wife and how to be a woman who is resilient with the many trials out there (Author's interview, June 27th, 2023).

Furthermore, the content taught in these classes is diverse and thorough in addressing women's issues, despite the focus on domestic tasks. This statement was explained by Miss Halimah.

In the context of being a woman, there may be a class where a female teacher specifically instructs women. This class teaches important skills such as being a kind and supportive wife to their husbands, taking care of children, and managing household chores. This education helps women become capable of multiple roles (Author's interview, June 25th, 2023).

According to the explanation above, the Salafi *pesantren* discussed in the statements incorporate a specific focus on women's education through the *Tarbiyah al-*

nisa program, aiming to equip female students with the necessary skills and values to fulfil their roles as wives and supporters of their husbands in preaching.

Similarly, female students are taught various aspects of womanhood, including matters of worship and *muamalah* (social transactions).

For the example explained by Shopia about the characteristic of *solehah* women

...What I understand from this women's education program is that it aims to shape us into becoming a "*solehah*" woman. The program emphasizes the importance of being good, maintaining tidiness, speaking with moral values, receiving a good education, and fostering independence (Author's interview, June 25th, 2023).

Laila also added that she learns how to be obedient to her parents.

...There are many, such as filial piety toward parents, how to become *soleha* women, covering the *aurah* (veil) and menstrual problems (Author's interview, June 20th, 2023).

Hafiza also learned the importance of preserving boundaries between men and women.

.. Regarding worship, women should not go over in terms of appearance, should not be too close to men to avoid zina (adultery) (Author's interview, June 02th, 2023).

Based on the information provided, *Tarbiyah al-nisa* is a special educational subject designed to provide education and guidance for women, in developing themselves religiously and morally. As well as facing the various challenges and tasks encountered as women.

Furthermore, beside the *Tarbiyah al-nisa* classes there is *Fiqh* (Jurisprudence) subject discussed the chapter on womanhood. However, there is an interesting aspect in this subject where not all teachers who teach in the field of womanhood are women. In the *Fiqh* (jurisprudence) lessons, all the teaching staff are men. According to Miss Mariam, male teachers in this Islamic institution are thought to be more effective at instructing females about women's issues than females themselves.

In the *Fiqh* (jurisprudence) lessons, all of them are taught by male ustad (religious teachers), including senior ustad, who also discuss women's *Fiqh* (jurisprudence). The reason for this is that the professionals in this field who teach specialized subjects are mostly men. These professionals are often graduates from foreign countries such as Sudan, Medina, and Egypt, and the majority of them are men. As a result, the responsibility falls upon the ustad to teach these subjects (Author's interview, June 25th, 2023).

Miss Mariam further added,

Even the head of the *pesantren* emphasizes the importance of discussing issues related to menstruation, as women tend to be careless, especially in the Islamic boarding school environment (Author's interview, June 25th, 2023).

Another statement was also made by Miss. Sarah who was once a student and currently works as a teacher.

... When discussing the issue of women's classes, based on my experience with *fiqh* (Islamic jurisprudence) for women, I have noticed that male counterparts (*ustadz*) tend to provide more detailed explanations compared to their female counterparts. This is despite the fact that women are the ones directly experiencing these matters. However, the level of detail in their explanations may not always be as comprehensive as when men explain, such as discussing various aspects including the colours of blood and intricacies of the menstrual cycle (Author's interview, June 27th, 2023).

Based on the explanation above, the Salafi *pesantren* offers special programs and subjects aimed at empowering women in their women's roles. These programs include teachings on how to be an obedient wife to their husbands, nurturing children, managing household chores, and other aspects related to worship, *muamalah* (social transactions), and feminine issues. All of these roles, from the feminist perspective, is not empowering and in fact subordinating and domesticating women (Nurmila, 2020b). The involvement of male teachers in women's classes indicates that men play a dominant role in this *pesantren*, particularly in religious subjects.

c. The Aim of the Women's Program is Skill Development and Moral Cultivation

According to the school document, extracurricular activities are introduced to help students become skilled in different areas, such as science and practical subjects. These

activities aim to develop students' abilities and prepare them to effectively interact with others. In addition, according to Ms. Sarah's explanation, having extracurricular activities can also make the school more appealing to female students who want to enrol.

These activities are designed to give students a break from their studies and make them feel happy and comfortable at the *pesantren*. They also help students develop new skills. We've noticed that not all students have the same reasons for coming to the *pesantren*. Some students come because they genuinely enjoy learning, while others may have different motivations. That's why we provide these extracurricular activities—to give students something they enjoy doing and help them feel like they belong here. These activities also give students a chance to discover and improve their talents and abilities (Author's interview, June 25th, 2023).

The purpose of other women's programs is primarily to shape the character of Islamic women within the context of Islamic moral cultivation by imparting lessons on *Fiqh* (jurisprudence), *Akidah* (faith), and *Ubudiyah* (worship) subjects and encouraging their practical application in daily life.

4.1.2. The Implementation of the Curriculum and Women's Program

In addressing the second research question of implementing the curriculum and women's program at Salafi Islamic Boarding Schools as a manifestation of authentic Islam, three themes have emerged from field findings. Firstly, the primary source of knowledge is the Qur'an and Hadith. Secondly, the references for Islamic teachings are directly from the Middle East. Lastly, the practice of Islam encompasses not only the mastery of its teachings but also their application in daily life.

4.1.2.1. The Quran and Hadith are the Foundational Texts of Islam

The main goal of Salafi teaching is to encourage a return to the core principles of Islam. The idea is to rely on the truth found in the Quran and Hadith when dealing with various differences. According to document data, the mission of this boarding school aims

to prepare future leaders of the Muslim community who are knowledgeable in science and technology while also having strong faith and moral values based on the teachings of their pious predecessors (*Shalafus shalih*). By referring directly to the teachings of the Quran, students are encouraged to embrace a complete understanding of Islam in their daily lives. One way this is shown through the statements made by teachers and students, especially when discussing leadership and the veil.

Such as the perspective on wearing the hijab as expressed by Miss Marian, who insists that it's mandatory and is directly rooted in the teachings of the Quran.

For me, wearing the hijab is mandatory for every woman; the evidence is in Surah Al Ahzab ayat 59. However, in Islam, we often encounter various differences even in carrying out a decree such as using the hijab; therefore, the way to believe what we believe is authentic Islam is to not hear from one argument but from several arguments that explain, and what is lived is what is explained in the Qur'an.

This argument aligns with the viewpoint presented by Miss. Halimah, who believes that there's a significant change before and after starting to use the "*syar'i*" hijab. She explained that wearing a larger hijab heightens her alertness and helps her adhere more closely to the teachings of the Quran.

In the Quran, it's stated that we should cover our bodies, including up to our chests. However, if someone finds it difficult to implement, it's understood as part of their learning process. Nevertheless, if you have the ability to follow these guidelines, it's always best to do so.

Not only are there restrictions and obligations around the use of hijab according to the Qur'an and Hadith, but there are also guidelines around leadership roles. They assert that only men can hold leadership positions, implying that women cannot be leaders, especially within the household. This is as explained by Mrs. Sarah

If we go back to the roles of men and women, if we demand it in religion by the Qur'an and As-Sunnah, men automatically become leaders, and women are led. ...as wives, we still have to play a role that should not exceed that of men, but women can do some roles

Based on this explanation, indicate that they refer to the literal interpretation of the Quran, which mandates women to wear the hijab, as stipulated in verse 59 of the *Al-Ahzab* chapter. Additionally, the issue of women becoming leaders is discussed in verse 34 of the Surah An-Nisa chapter, according to Islamic teachings.

4.1.2.2. References to Islamic Teachings Originate from the Middle East

The influence of the Middle East is strongly evident in this female Islamic boarding school, and it can be observed in two main themes: The subject matter and the teaching staff, the subject matter taught at the school reflects a Middle Eastern influence. The teaching staff consists of individuals who have expertise and knowledge rooted in Middle Eastern traditions and practices. Based on school documents, the number of religious subjects is more than general subjects. School subjects consist of Indonesian, English, Mathematics, Economics, Science, *Tawhid*, *Tafsir*, *Fiqh*, *Hadith*, *Akhlaq*, *Tarik Islam*, *Durusul Lughoh*, *Usul Fiqh*, *Muthala'ah*, English Lesson, *Mustahalul Hadith*, *Tarbiyyah*, *Shorof*, *Nahwu*, *Tarjamaah*, *Mahfudzot*, *Tahfizh*, *Tahsin*, *Ulumul Qur'an*, Civics. Out of a total of 25 subjects only seven general subjects are taught.

Apart from some of the curriculum adopted from the Middle East, some teachers were also sent to the Middle East to gain knowledge directly from the source.

Based on Miss Mariam's explanation, it's not only the teaching methods that originate from the Middle East. Some teachers are also graduates of Middle Eastern institutions.

The majority of senior teachers specialize in subjects such as *Fiqh*, History of Islamic Culture, *Hadith*, *Aqidah*, and teaching tafsir are men. Some of these teachers are from outside the region, while others have settled here. These men are considered professionals, as they have received specialized education in their respective fields and have studied abroad in countries like Egypt, Medina, and Sudan (Author's interview, June 25th, 2023).

It is clear that this female boarding school is heavily influenced by the Middle East. This can be seen in the way religious subjects are prioritized over general subjects and in the presence of teachers who have education and knowledge directly from the Middle East. This influence reflects the effort to deliver an authentic and in-depth Islamic-based education to the students at this boarding school.

4.1.2.3. Implementing the Entirety of Islam's Teachings: Text and Practice

As a manifestation of their belief in the authenticity of Islamic teachings, both teachers and students actively practice these teachings in their daily lives. This is reflected in their appearance, behaviour, and worship. On May 29, 2023, during my first visit to the school, I noticed that both students and teachers had a similar appearance. They were wearing a long dress (*gamis*), along with large headscarves in modest colours. Occasionally, I saw some individuals wearing veils (*burqo*). Every student I encountered greeted me warmly with a smile, showing their respect for guests.

During my visit, I had the opportunity to explore the school premises, and I noticed several interesting rules posted on the notice board. One particular rule that caught my attention was regarding the attire, commonly known as "*syar'i*," which is required at the school. This rule, along with others, sets this boarding school apart from many others. For example, students are prohibited from carrying items depicting humans or animals. They are also not allowed to carry photographs of anyone, even their own family members. Additionally, wearing patterned clothes and listening to music are among the activities that are prohibited. During the interview session, I inquired about how they comprehended this situation and managed to cope with it in their daily lives. Based on Mrs. Halimah's description, what they learn at school is not much different from what they learn at home.

The prohibition of bringing things with eyes or lives is thoroughly discussed during the lesson. If someone asks about it, it is explained until they understand. However, most students don't ask because they already comprehend it from their own families, so they are not questioned anymore because that is our belief (Author's interview, June 25th, 2023).

Likewise, Laila stated,

Women should not appear excessively flashy and should avoid being in close proximity to boys to prevent adultery. This knowledge I got from school as well as conveyed by Abi (my father) at home (Author's interview, June 02th, 2023).

In addition to the practices reflected through appearance, there are also rituals of worship that are consistently carried out by both students and teachers.

Based on observations conducted on Monday, May 29, 2023, after the flag ceremony, the students were directed to the mosque to perform congregational *duha* prayers, directed by a female teacher for going to the mosque. On Mondays, it is a school rule for students to observe fasting, known as the Monday-Thursday fast, unless they are menstruating or sick. It is mandatory for all students to comply with this rule. Once the learning activities are completed, the students gather to perform congregational *zuhur* prayers, led by male teachers. However, some students may choose to pray individually in their respective rooms before continuing with school activities.

Furthermore, Miss Halimah Explained that students have hours that are from morning to good evening, where the evening agenda is more emphasized on *ubudiyah* activities (practice of worship activities)

In this boarding school, students attend classes from 8 a.m. to 2 p.m., similar to regular schools. From 2 p.m. to 4 p.m., there is an extracurricular agenda where students participate in activities such as basketball, archery, and *tapak suci* (a form of martial arts). After the extracurricular activities, the students return to the dormitory to engage in the *ubudiyah* agenda, which is a non-classroom educational curriculum implemented in dormitory education. This agenda includes practices such as *hadroh* (Islamic chants) and *siroh* (biographical accounts of Islamic figures), as well as a nightly prayer agenda (Author's interview, June 25th, 2023).

Furthermore, this activity was also explained by Shopia as one of the students who went through the learning process.

After learning in school, we also use what we've learned in our daily lives. For example, we practice *ubudiyah*, which means directly worshiping. We not only do these practices, but we also understand the rules, so we can put them into action right after learning about them in class (Author's interview, June 25th, 2023).

Overall, the practice of Islam in this school appears to be integrated into the daily lives of students and teachers. They try to implement Islamic teachings in their daily contexts, which is reflected in their actions, appearance, and worship practices.

4.1.3. Renegotiating of Piety, Identity and Modernity of Salafi Women within the Existing Relationship between Men and Women within the Salafi Circle

To address research question number three regarding how Salafi women negotiate piety, identity, and modernity within the existing relationship between men and women within the Salafi community, I have examined the endeavours undertaken by both Salafi students and teachers in addressing and engaging with these matters. Based on my findings in the field, I have identified various forms of effort that can be compiled into three themes. The first, is the focus on studying religious knowledge and emphasizing personal piety; second, reinterpreting the concepts and practices of Salafi teachings; third, utilizing technological advances and information as a medium for da'wah.

4.1.3.1. Focus on Studying Religious Knowledge and Emphasizing Personal Piety

During my field research, it was observed that students and teachers at Salafi boarding schools make earnest efforts to implement their Islamic beliefs in all aspects of life. This commitment is evident in their actions, appearance, and worship practices. To achieve this, strict rules are imposed in all boarding schools, requiring both teachers and students to adhere to them consistently. During the interview process, it was evident that these rules, derived from their deeply held beliefs, were not met with resistance. Instead,

both students and teachers expressed gratitude for the opportunity to continue fulfilling God's commands. As in the interview with Laila, she stated that what she does today is her provision for the future.

Because, in my opinion, this is a form of my savings for the future, namely, a form of my sincerity, so that in the future I have proof that I have really sought Allah's pleasure.

Likewise, Shopia feels happy because she is practicing religious orders.

Choosing a school here because of my personal desire to learn religion, because this is a special school for girls, I feel safer and the environment is very supportive. With all the rules there is absolutely no objection, in fact, it is happy to feel better to be able to pray, fast, read the Qur'an get a lot of lessons from the teacher here (Author's interview, June 25th, 2023).

Furthermore, living in accordance with one's beliefs is no easy task as it involves handling diverse perspectives and opinions that can push them into difficult situations as expressed by Mrs Sarah.

In college, when I wasn't wearing a *gamis*, I was wearing *batik* (traditional Indonesian clothing) and a skirt with a size 150 jilbab. I was called by my lecturer in front of the class, and the lecturer said "I can be honest about something, but I don't see you; you're a neat person." He spoke. "I don't like women with long hijabs!" He said that in front of the class. Because, in his view, women who wear wide headscarves and wide clothes are dirty and smelly. Since it happened in class, I felt mentally embarrassed because he was a lecturer and was speaking in front of other students. I am just saying that maybe that is your view and perspective. I can't limit that, but maybe there are also people whose education is not like that. It can't all be like that. Hijab does not dictate that someone has to be like this or that Jilbab is an obligation as a Muslim. For example, there are people who wear it untidily, and so on. That's the person's personality, not the hijab (Author's interview, June 27th, 2023).

Based on the interview above, it shows that in Salafi boarding schools, both students and teachers have a clear understanding of and respect for the teachings of Islam they believe in. They view the strict rules as a way to show sincerity and please Allah. Although there are differences in opinions, they still honour these differences and remain committed to their beliefs.

4.1.3.2. Reinterpreting the Concepts and Practices of Salafi Teachings

The beliefs and practices of obedience and piety, such as *tabaruj* (something should be covered) and *ikhtilat* (limits between men and women), present numerous challenges for individuals. One such example is Sarah (29) as a teacher and head of a women's foundation. Her leadership role necessitates her interpretation of what it means to be a leader, as women must also possess the capability to organize and manage nearly 200 students along with their various activities. She believes that the teachings she follows don't necessarily have to be taken literally. However, she still faces the limitation that women cannot lead men. Nonetheless, she believes in the capacity for women to be independent and not always dependent on men. She strongly believes that women must also embrace their leadership spirit:

If we go back to the actual roles of men and women, if we demand it in religion in accordance with the Qur'an and As-Sunnah, men automatically become leaders, and women are led. But back again, we are now living in an age where a woman must also be required to have skills. For our future as women, we may rely on a leader, namely our husband. But suppose there are people who are married and have young children, and suddenly the husband leaves his wife because of death or divorce, for example. Then how does a woman provide for herself and her family? Yes, that's right, as wives, we still have to play a role that should not exceed that of men, but there are roles that can be done by women (Author's interview, June 27th, 2023).

Her perspective is influenced by her family, education, and the need to adapt to her environment. This helps her ensure that women won't face difficulties in case of unexpected events. Sarah explains further. The extent to which her perspective on the status of women was shaped by her family and education.

If the view of women is indeed influenced by junior high school or even childhood, one of the lessons from parents is that a woman must go to college. As for boarding school, previous teachings about the role of women and such have not changed. The idea is that as long as I can maintain my identity as a Muslim woman without violating my obligations, then I will continue to develop myself. If there are people who choose to be closed-minded, that's their choice. It all

comes back to respecting individual choices. (Author's interview, June 27th, 2023).

Aside from Sarah's experience as a teacher, Sophia, a student who also serves as the leader of the boarding school student organization, recognizes the importance of cultivating a spirit of leadership among women. She deeply understands the stringent rules enforced by the school, which derive their legitimacy not only from the school's regulations but also from religious principles. In this situation, she attempts to be kind and polite while also showing bravery. This situation, Shopia explained in interview process.

We learn how to be devout, courteous, and kind women who can control our words and actions at the boarding school. As a role model for our younger siblings and an active member of the organization, we must be prepared to offer solutions to problems that arise. Socializing is also a significant part of our activities; whether we like it or not, we must present ourselves as prepared guests (Author's interview, June 25th, 2023).

Based on the information given, both Miss. Sarah (29th) and Shopia (17th) share similar experiences in distinct situations. As leaders, they have to redefine the concept of leadership. It is important to note that women do not necessarily have to lead men, but they should possess a spirit of leadership.

Along with understanding what leadership meant, they also defined what the *hijab* and segregation meant.

Miss. Sarah's point of view talks about boundaries.

I'm a typical person; although I have boundaries, I don't limit my movement. When I was in my bachelor's degree, my male friends from everywhere. What becomes a limitation is maybe things that must be kept private; that's the realm of privacy. But if it's a discussion or if we want to work together, it's okay. I'm not the type to do that, because he's a man and avoids them. I was just being friendly (Author's interview, June 27th, 2023).

Miss. Sarah's view on wearing hijab:

Maybe because my environment is from the boarding school, from the campus, it's an environment of all kinds. So, there is no difference if our friends from the campus have to be like this or if our friends from the mosque have to change, for example. nothing changes. But sometimes it adjusts. For example, if we usually wear daily clothes and invitation clothes, it is somewhat different, and this

sometimes adjusts if, for example, a wedding party is in a place where people are familiar with a monotonous appearance. I use clothes that are not too wide; the most important thing is to cover up to the chest and other restrictions. Or suppose we must change the hijab material, for example, from plain to rather slippery and a little bright and trendy but still *syar'i* and still good (Author's interview, June 27th, 2023).

This is also Shopia's way of understanding boundaries and hijab.

Actually, boundaries are indeed important to keep us from unwanted things, but if, for example, the person himself can limit how he speaks or behaves, I don't think it is necessary to avoid or make us even more separated. Because actually, by using this big hijab, we have indirectly made a limitation, meaning a limitation not to come close. But if you are exchanging ideas or discussing them, there is no prohibition (Author's interview, June 25th, 2023).

Furthermore, she also added boundaries of hijab

The hijab is not a barrier for us as women to transform into career women; maybe there are some people who see the hijab as a white and clean thing, so if you have a career, it violates the use of the hijab because, in my opinion, the hijab itself does not limit independence (Author's interview, June 25th, 2023).

Similarly, Sarah and Sophia, due to their personal experiences, strive to uphold their identity as pious women who observe the hijab and adhere to the boundaries of modesty, while not impeding their ability to socialize. They believe that social interactions are acceptable if they do not involve immoral behaviour. Therefore, they see no reason to completely avoid socializing, as long as it remains within the bounds of righteousness.

4.1.3.3. Utilizing of Technological Advances and Information as a Medium for Da'wah

Globalization and the development of technology and information are inevitable in today's world, permeating every aspect of our lives. It is essential for individuals to be prepared to embrace these changes, including followers of Salafi teachings. Despite Salafi teachings holding onto conservative traditions and rejecting the influence of globalization, particularly Western culture, women have found creative ways to navigate

their existence globalization and the development of technology and information can never be avoided, especially since they have entered all aspects of life. Every individual must be ready to accept all changes, and followers of Salafi teachings are no exception. But besides the teachings that still hold conservative traditions, which in fact reject the influence of globalization, especially western culture, women have creative ways to continue to exist. Based on the research findings in the field, there are several ways that are done, which I wrote about in one theme consisting of four subthemes, namely they utilize advances in technology and communication as a medium of da'wah with the first subtheme: seeing, searching, and sharing Islamic content, and the second, modifying appearance by following trends but not getting out of Islamic law; third: mastering English and Arabic language skills; forth continuing higher education.

a. Seeing, Searching, and Sharing Islamic Content

This school enforces regulations that restrict students' access to globalizing technology such as mobile phones and laptops, as well as entertainment materials like music, movies, pictures, and books unrelated to their subjects. During the interview, they admitted that this policy has led them to lag behind in terms of information, but they emphasized that it is an essential part of the learning process. The main reason for prohibiting students from bringing and accessing these items is to ensure their undivided focus on learning and to minimize the impact of external distractions, particularly the negative aspects of globalization. Hafza, one of the students confirmed that the use of technology and communication tools is very limited in the *pesantren*.

Ever since I became a student, I haven't used social media much because we have limited access to cell phones at the boarding school. I mainly use my cell phone when I'm outside the school, like when I go back home. college (Author's interview, June 02th, 2023)

This statement is similar to what other students have said. Despite their limitations, they have social media accounts that they create when they are at home and when there is an opportunity, they remain active users of social media with a particular interest in Islamic content. As stated by Laila, who often uses social media to find clothing references and share da'wah content with her relative

If I enjoy looking at Muslimah outfits and da'wah content, I also share them through stories or WhatsApp status to impart knowledge or useful information to the people closest to me college (Author's interview, June 02th, 2023)

In other interview session, we discovered that social media plays a crucial role in keeping parents informed about their children's school activities. It serves as a platform for sharing updates and insights into what their kids are doing at school. Moreover, social media acts as an effective learning tool, providing a diverse range of educational resources and opportunities for students to enhance their knowledge and skills.

b. Modifying Appearance by Following Trends but Remaining Compliant with Islamic Law

In addition to the Islamic content that they are interested in and share with their relatives, they also really enjoy the content on *syar'i* clothing, which has inspired them on how to dress modestly, stay polite, and remain stylish.

As Sophia explained about her activities at the boarding school. She uses social media to find references for the clothes she wants to wear.

When I go home, I play my phone more, and I like to look at Islamic content. ... sometimes I also look at the way Muslim women dress, now there are many Islamic outfits whose references are Middle Eastern and Indonesian that still look *Shar'i* (Author's interview, June 25th, 2023).

In addition to her duties as a teacher, Mariam added that she often uses social media as a reference for her appearance during her free time. She also appreciates technology for smoothing out her activities.

Today, it's easy to find Sharia-compliant clothes online. Before, if the clothes didn't fit well, I have used cuffs or tried to hide your hands. But now, Muslimah-friendly outfits usually come as a complete package (Author's interview, June 25th, 2023).

c. Mastering English and Arabic Language Skills and Pursuing Higher Education

In addition to Islamic content, the main agenda of the boarding school is to strengthen language proficiency, particularly in English and Arabic. Each student is required to participate in extracurricular activities that focus on developing their speaking abilities in both languages, tailored to their individual interests. Language mastery serves as a significant attraction of this Salafi boarding school. Some alumni have experienced direct benefits from their language proficiency, such as obtaining scholarships and acquiring additional skills to teach effectively. They feel well-prepared to compete with students who did not attend the boarding school in terms of language competence.

This statement was explained by Miss Sarah as one of the alumni of this boarding school.

Alhamdulillah, studying at this boarding school is truly beneficial, particularly due to its emphasis on two languages, especially Arabic. The advantages it offers are significant, especially after graduation. Some of my friends also attend UIN, where they study both Arabic and English. Among them are Akbar and Hanafi, who were awarded scholarships because of their proficiency in language (Author's interview, June 25th, 2023).

Furthermore, all students interviewed, they chose to continue their education at a higher level. Various motivations are the reason why they continue their schooling, such as family and wanting to reach their goals. And believe that education is important for women, with the aim of being the first education for their children.

4.2 Discussions

4.2.1. Islamic Boarding School of Salafi Women: Embracing Renewal within a Conservative Framework

The Islamic boarding school where I conducted my research maintains conservative values as the primary basis for structuring its educational process. However, this Islamic boarding school also recognizes the need for renewal and adaptation to meet the demands of the times and the needs of its students, who live in a changing society. In the previous research some scholars reveal that Salafi Islam has transformed. It was once considered rigid, exclusive, and conservative but has now become more modern, particularly in its educational institutions (Chaplin, 2018; Jamhari & Asrori, 2022; Hasan, 2019). Despite adopting modern and professional Islamic school management techniques, the school emphasizes strengthening Islamic materials in its learning process. A line with the findings of this study indicates that the boarding school I identified is known as a modern institution due to its facilities and learning system, which follow modern school principles. This includes having the autonomy to design its own curriculum, adopting an integrated curriculum, teaching Arabic and English, and facilitating a women's empowerment program through extracurricular and subject activities. The primary goal is to prepare students who not only excel in academic knowledge but are also virtuous and ready to face contemporary world challenges.

4.2.1.1 Implementation of Educational Autonomy

This school operates as a *Muadalah* school; the system originates from the words "*adala, yudilu, muadalatan*", which signify equality following the curriculum of *Kulliyatul Muallimin Al-Islamiyyah (KMI/Gontor)*. Therefore, graduates from this Islamic Boarding School are considered equivalent to those from *Madrasah Aliyah* or

similar institutions, as authorized by the Ministry of Religious Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia to issue state-recognized diplomas. In addition, this policy gives autonomy to schools to design and develop the curriculum in accordance with the specialty of the *pesantren* itself. However, it is worth noting that the adherence to the *Mu'adalah* curriculum is sometimes perceived as a mere formality to attain recognition, rather than substantially altering the essence of education.

John Dewey, who underscored the importance of schools' ability to administer and structure their learning processes, advocated for experiential learning. He also supported freedom in the teaching and learning process (Dewey, 1916). The benefits of the autonomy system provided by the central authority to the regions or schools is that schools have the full right to choose the content, methodology, and assessment system for their students. Embracing a "bottom-up" approach, the curriculum's initiative and enforcement stem from the students, teachers, parents, and schools themselves, promoting independence, creativity, and innovation. The hope is to incorporate local wisdom into their educational practices, ensuring better alignment with the unique circumstances and needs of the school's surroundings (Fullan & Pomfret, 1977).

As a form of making the most of this autonomy, the school combines three curriculum references: Middle Eastern, *Gontor*, and the Ministry of Religious Affairs. Additionally, it offers unique extracurricular programs, such as archery and handicrafts, while also adopting Middle Eastern values and culture, which align with the needs of the students. This characteristic has proven appealing to parents, leading them to enrol their children in this female boarding school. However, it is essential to address the challenges that come with increased autonomy, particularly the potential for some schools to become exclusive, favouring students based on their beliefs, ethnicity, or race. This behaviour could harm the unity of Indonesia, a nation with rich cultural diversity. It is crucial,

therefore, to encourage schools to embrace diversity and instil a sense of belonging to the Indonesian nation, irrespective of individual differences, to prevent the negative consequences of exclusive attitudes and foster national unity.

Therefore, to assess the relevance of the adopted curriculum, it is imperative to consider not only its origin and target audience but also the broader environmental and cultural context. Because the importance of relevance will impact students' learning and the disconnect between what they learn in the classroom and the realities of life they will experience in society, it will promote an exclusive mindset (Apple, 2019). For instance, implementing *syar'i* clothing and veils associated with Arabic culture for female students in multicultural Indonesia may pose challenges, as Indonesian Muslim society exhibits diverse dressing practices. As a result, students from such schools may face adaptation challenges when they encounter a more homogeneous external environment after leaving the school.

Therefore, striking a balance between autonomy and inclusivity in the education system is vital to strengthen Indonesia's unity amidst its rich cultural diversity. By acknowledging and celebrating differences while promoting a shared sense of identity, the country can move forward together as a harmonious and cohesive nation.

4.2.1.2 Integration of the Curriculum

The second transformational approach involves the implementation of an integrated curriculum system derived from three sources: the Middle East, *Gontor*, and the Ministry of Religious Affairs. After reviewing interview results and school documents, the primary goal of integrating this curriculum is to ensure that students acquire balanced knowledge, enabling them to excel not only in religious sciences but also in general sciences. However, the successful implementation of this balance has not

been entirely evident, as there still remains a knowledge gap between religious sciences and general sciences.

The term "integration" refers to a systemic process wherein different elements are harmoniously blended to form a unified and cohesive whole (*Badan Pengembangan Dan Pembinaan Bahasa*, 2016). In practical application, integration systems encompass various models, including the integration model within the curriculum package. This approach involves the juxtaposition of subjects representing Islamic sciences alongside those representing general sciences. Additionally, integration can be achieved by establishing connections between two disciplines, one general and the other Islamic, and incorporating Islamic terminology, such as Islamic economics or Islamic psychology. Furthermore, integration can manifest through learning themes, which entail the amalgamation of related concepts or themes from multiple subjects (Kusnandi, 2017). According to the statements made by the director of the boarding school, the educational institution adopts an integration system by interweaving subjects from diverse sources and organizing them into categories of general and religious subjects. The primary goal of this integration approach is to provide students with a comprehensive educational experience that encompasses both conventional knowledge and Islamic principles.

Implementing integration in Islamic boarding schools has a positive impact. Firstly, it signals that the boarding school is open to renewal, moving beyond solely focusing on religious subjects. Secondly, it encourages the recruitment of new teachers who are not only alumni of the boarding school, bringing fresh perspectives to the education system. Thirdly, graduates gain broader recognition, enabling students to enrol in college-level education. On the other hand, the system of integrating the curriculum, which expects a dual system in education, if it has not been able to determine the coordinates optimally, the result is not curriculum integration but only mixing two or

three different curricula in a single system. Therefore, there is an overlap between one curriculum and another. The result is that students have to take many subjects during their education. For example, based on the school documents of this boarding school, there are more religious subjects than general subjects. The school offers a total of 25 subjects, out of which seven are general subjects, including Indonesian, English, Mathematics, Economics, Science, English lessons, and Civics. The remaining subjects are all related to religious studies, such as *Tawhid*, *Tafsir*, *Fiqh*, *Hadith*, *Akhlaq*, *Tarik Islam*, *Durusul Lughoh*, *Usul Fiqh*, *Muthala'ah*, *Mustahalul Hadith*, *Tarbiyyah*, *Shorof*, *Nahwu*, *Tarjamaah*, *Mahfudzot*, *Tahfizh*, *Tahsin*, and *Ulumul Qur'an*.

Learning methods significantly impact the integration of the learning system, particularly when religious subjects dominate the curriculum (Connelly et al., 2008). This is especially concerning if the approach remains normative-doctrinal, presenting religion as an absolute truth, which may lead students to accept beliefs without questioning or engaging in critical analysis (Siregar, 2014). For instance, in the subjects of Fiqh (jurisprudence) and *Tarbiyah al-nisa*, the learning process often follows a one-way path where the teacher simply imparts knowledge and the students passively listen and accept the information. This kind of teaching fosters a mindset where students feel no need to inquire further because they perceive religious legitimacy as sufficient justification. Consequently, this approach results in students becoming passive recipients of information rather than active learners.

Furthermore, an integration system that perpetuates a dichotomy between religious science and general science can impede the overall progress of scientific development (Sahin, 2018a). It is crucial to ensure that neither is considered more important than the other. Additionally, the integration system should aim to eradicate the outdated notion that educational institutions focusing on religious knowledge are

stigmatized or seen as inferior to those emphasizing general education with a few religious lessons. The ultimate goal of the integration system should be to eliminate any stigma or dichotomy between these two forms of knowledge. Instead of merely placing them side by side, the system should seek to unite them harmoniously. By doing so, it can promote a holistic and inclusive approach to education that values both religious and general scientific principles, fostering a better understanding and appreciation for the interconnectedness of knowledge. This, in turn, can significantly contribute to the advancement of science as a whole.

4.2.1.3 Facilitating a Women's Empowerment Program through Extracurricular and Subject Activities

The renewal of female boarding schools focuses on empowering women through extracurricular programs and special classes. The research indicates that there is a noticeable distinction when female and male boarding schools are segregated. Female students feel more liberated to express themselves, particularly in sports as basketball, volleyball, archery, and badminton, which are traditionally dominated by boys. In addition, students are taught entrepreneurship to live independently by being trained to make handicrafts with training in sewing, cooking, and selling. Furthermore, students also actively participate in organizing activities, being responsible for the entire process, from planning to evaluating the results of activities, so that they are more independent.

Despite the positive developments, it remains evident that sports are often perceived as more suitable for boys. Consequently, they are often relegated to a secondary role, merely seen as a form of entertainment between academic pursuits. Additionally, a prevailing stereotype persists, suggesting that men are considered to understand women's concerns better than women themselves. This perspective is largely due to the dominance

of male teachers, particularly in essential religious areas like Fiqh (jurisprudence) which encompasses discussions on femininity (Author's interview, June 25th, 2023).

Salafi women hold the belief that the relationship between men and women is not equal in both sex and gender (Ismail, 2021). They view the nature of women as encompassing roles like menstruation, conception, breastfeeding, and childbirth, and emphasize their importance in the domestic sphere. They believe that women should not take on leadership roles but should be led, and it is essential for them to cover their "*aurat*" (private parts). This perspective often leads to various stereotypes and stigmas. For instance, if a woman becomes a leader, her leadership may be perceived as violating her nature. If she fails in her leadership role, her actions are often blamed solely on her gender. And even if she succeeds in her leadership, it may not be fully credited to her efforts but attributed to external factors. However, it is crucial to understand that this viewpoint does not necessarily imply that women are inferior to men. According to them, there are certain boundaries and areas where women are meant to play a specific role, just as men have their designated roles. Salafi women do not oppose the idea of women being educated, having access to healthcare, or being treated equally with men in job opportunities. What they tend to oppose is the concept of feminism, which they perceive as a Western idea aiming to completely equalize the positions of women and men in all aspects of life (Jamhari & Asrori, 2022).

This perspective is conveyed through the subject of women class (*Tarbiyah al-nisa*), and this discussion is not only conducted in formal classes but also in study circles. The women's class was established with the aim of preparing students to become supportive wives and assist their husbands in preaching while also focusing on their own religious and moral development. The main objective is to mold women into the primary educators (*madrasah*) for their children, emphasizing their role within the domestic

sphere rather than the public sphere. Based on interviews with all participants, almost all of them express agreement with this viewpoint. Their highest aspiration is to become devoted wives who obediently support their husbands and caring mothers who can nurture their children.

Based on the findings in the field, empowerment, according to Kabeer, is a transformative process from a state of powerlessness to a state of being empowered, which means gaining abilities or opportunities that were previously unavailable. As part of the empowerment process, access to resources, termed "element," serves as a tool to facilitate empowerment. Schools are considered essential places of empowerment where individuals undergo a process of acquiring knowledge and developing skills, enabling them to become independent and capable (Kabeer,1999).

However, when we refer to Cornwall's definition of empowerment, it goes beyond merely gaining access to resources (Cornwall, 2016). Cornwall emphasizes that empowerment also involves a shift in consciousness, particularly in the face of injustice or gender discrimination. This empowerment process teaches individuals, especially women, to view themselves as citizens and human beings, cultivating critical consciousness. This means questioning societal norms that are often taken for granted and making a significant contribution to changing power dynamics. The women's Salafi boarding school's empowerment process can be analysed through two different perspectives, based on the theories of Kabeer and Cronwall. According to Kabeer's theory, empowerment is viewed merely as the provision of resources. From this perspective, the women's boarding school can be considered empowered, as it has access to resources and opportunities for education and self-development. However, when applying Cronwall's theory, the women's Salafi boarding school might not be fully empowered. This is because the school still adheres to norms that restrict women's freedom and perpetuate the belief

that men are superior to women, denying women their full capacity and potential. This mindset might prevent women from realizing their true potential and attaining true empowerment.

Nelly Stromquist's research results further highlight the consequences of using education solely as a means to access resources for women (Stromquist, 2015). Even if women pursue education and reach high levels of academic achievement, they might still be confined to traditional gender roles as housewives. This can lead to feelings of guilt if they decide to step outside the domestic sphere. If women choose to continue working, they may find themselves burdened with a double workload, as they are expected to fulfil domestic responsibilities alongside their professional roles. In essence, the women's Salafi boarding school might have access to resources and education, meeting the criteria of Kabeer's theory of empowerment. However, considering the impact of norms and societal beliefs highlighted by Cronwell's theory, the school's empowerment may be limited. Stromquist's research shows that using education solely for access to resources may not lead to women's full empowerment, as it might still reinforce traditional gender roles and expectations.

4.2.2 Justification of Authentic Islamic Teaching in Women's Programs at Salafi Boarding Schools

The field findings offer an in-depth exploration of the curriculum and implementation of women's programs in Salafi *pesantren*. The findings can be grouped into three important themes, each of which highlights a unique aspect of the Islamic education offered in the *pesantren*: 1. Beliefs are anchored in the teachings of the Quran and Hadith; 2. The Middle East is regarded as the primary source of authentic Islamic

teachings; 3. Knowledge acquired in school is consistently applied and integrated into everyday life.

4.2.2.1. The Firm Anchoring of Beliefs in The Teachings of The Quran and Hadith

In Islamic education, the Qur'an and Hadith serve as the primary sources of knowledge. The Qur'an is utilized as a legal and moral cornerstone for Muslims, offering guidance in various aspects of life. Similarly, the Hadith, which documents the actions and approvals of the Prophet, is employed to interpret the Qur'an and establish Islamic law (Sahin, 2017). In reference to the notion of "authentic Islam", this concept is frequently debated. However, there is a general consensus that authentic Islam is the form of Islam that adheres to the teachings of the Qur'an and Hadis. What remains a point of contention is the extent to which the interpretation of the Qur'an and Hadith by an exegete reflects Islam in its purest form (Sahidah, 2010.)

The debate has led to the emergence of two distinct views: Literal Islam and Ethical Islam (also known as Islam *Maknani*). Literal Islam insists on applying the religion strictly according to the actions of the Prophet, including rituals, attire, and behaviour (Nurmila, 2020b). This interpretation is blacker and whiter, viewing social life as static and unchanging. However, it promotes steadfastness and loyalty. On the other hand, Ethical Islam posits that while the physical manifestations of the religion may vary, they should not deviate from the substantive meanings. For instance, while Literal Islam interprets jihad as a holy war, Ethical Islam may understand it more subtly, as the struggle against one's own vices. This interpretation is more flexible, dynamic, and creative. However, it also runs the risk of obscuring core values and encouraging relativity. Both views have their strengths and weaknesses: Literal Islam is more straightforward but

could potentially be rigid and unadaptable, whereas Ethical Islam is more adaptable and innovative but may lead to blurred boundaries and relativism (Sahidah, 2010.).

The research findings in the field indicate that students and teachers seek to literal approach, which is evident in the teachings about the requirement to wear a hijab, as specified in Surah *Al Ahzab* verse 5. It also applies to matters of leadership as outlined in *Surah An-Nisa* verse 34, which posits that men are the leaders of women and this position should remain unexchangeable, particularly within the household setting (Author's interview, June 27th, 2023). Adhering to these foundational texts can foster a sense of continuity and integrity in students' religious identities. However, it may also limit diverse interpretations and adaptations of Islam that are relevant in our ever-evolving modern context

4.2.2.2. Middle East is Regarded as The Primary Source of Authentic Islamic Teachings

The term "*Salafi*" originates from "*al-Salaf al-Salih*," which translates to "pious ancestors." This phrase refers to the first three generations of Muslims, starting from the close companions of Prophet Muhammad. After the Prophet's companions passed away, the second generation of Muslims inherited their knowledge and understanding of the faith. This knowledge then passed on to the third generation of Muslims, known as the followers of the followers who are recognized as a reliable source of a lifestyle based on the Prophet's teachings (Jamhari & Asrori, 2022). Most renowned Salafi scholars are primarily found in Saudi Arabia, Egypt, and Kuwait. Particularly, Saudi Arabia is recognized as the heart of Salafi teachings and actively disseminates these teachings globally (Ismail, 2021).

Based on the findings of this study, the female Islamic boarding school makes reference to the Middle East and integrates teachings from the Middle East into its curriculum. This is seen as an attempt to connect students with the cultural and historical origins of Islam. The school includes Middle Eastern perspectives in its subject matter and leverages the expertise of its teaching staff. The intention behind this approach is to foster a sense of belonging and continuity with the global Muslim community, or ummah. This enriches the students' understanding and appreciation of their religious roots. However, the study also points out a potential drawback. The emphasis on Middle Eastern norms could overshadow the richness and diversity of Islamic practices globally. It could also fail to adequately consider the unique cultural aspects of the local Indonesian context.

4.2.2.3. The Application and Integration of Acquired Knowledge into Everyday Life.

Abdullah Sahin (2017) and Al-Attas (1999), in the sphere of Islamic education, both espouse the notion that Islamic education is holistic, encapsulating not just the physical, but also intellectual, emotional, social, spiritual, and cognitive dimensions. Education, in their view, extends beyond mere acquisition of information and skills, and is deeply entwined with virtues such as wisdom, humility, compassion, and moral responsibility. These values are not intended to be theoretical constructs but are to be embodied and reflected in everyday life (Al-Attas, 1999) .

This is in line with the concept of *iman, ilmu and amal* "Faith, Knowledge, Charity," advocated by Nurcholis Madjid. These three principles must coexist. "Faith" refers to having a divine orientation in one's life and making God the objective of all activities. "Knowledge" implies correctly understanding the teachings, while "Charity" involves comprehending the environment in which one participates. The harmony of these principles promotes a well-rounded understanding and practice of religious teachings (Madjid, 1998)..

This practice aligns with the methods followed by students and teachers at a female Islamic boarding school who prioritize faith, knowledge, and charity. Their daily practice of Islamic teachings highlights the school's focus not only on education but also on practicing their faith. From complying with the dress code (*syar'i*) to carrying out daily prayers and religious activities, the school embodies the idea that Islam provides a comprehensive outlook on life. This approach, centered on practice, can help reinforce the teachings and make them more prominent in the students' lives. However, strict rules and prohibitions, like banning certain items and activities, can potentially lead to a rigid and restrictive environment.

The explanation leads to this conclusion. The curriculum and programs of Salafi *pesantren* are designed to offer a comprehensive and authentic Islamic education. This goal is achieved through strict adherence to the teachings of the Qur'an and Hadith, taking inspiration from the Middle East, and incorporating Islamic practices into daily life. This strategy aims to create graduates who not only possess a profound understanding of Islam but can also implement its teachings in their everyday lives. However, while this approach may cultivate a robust Islamic identity among students, it may also restrict exposure to a variety of perspectives and interpretations of Islam. Moreover, the focus on rigid rules and practices could potentially confine personal freedom and autonomy, particularly for women.

4.2.3. Crossing Boundaries: The Harmony between Tradition and Modernity

Salafi women are commonly known for their conservative approach, emphasizing obedience in religious practices like praying, fasting, and reciting the Quran. They also hold the belief that men and women have distinct roles and functions, with men as leaders and women as followers. Men are generally seen as more suitable for the public sphere,

while women are expected to focus on the domestic sphere. In the relationships between men and women, there are certain restrictions in place. Unrelated men and women are not allowed to spend time together (for instance, going out alone). Additionally, women are required to wear the hijab, and they are encouraged to maintain modesty in their appearance and behaviour. All of these guidelines are aimed at cultivating a righteous and obedient woman, which is the ultimate goal (Ismail, 2021). These rules and restrictions are also applied in this Islamic boarding school, where both students and teachers are expected to abide by them in their daily activities. The goal is to create an environment that fosters religious devotion and adherence to traditional gender roles.

From a secular feminist perspective, these women's actions may be perceived as being subordinated within a system that perpetuates unjust relationships. According to this view, there is a need to reconstruct the system that upholds these unequal norms. However, the interviews reveal a different perspective (Johnson & Fairweather, 2017). Both teachers and students consistently adhere to the rules derived from their deeply held beliefs, and they do not challenge these norms. On the contrary, they express gratitude for the opportunity to follow God's commands.

In understanding the actions of these women, Saba Mahmood's idea is relevant. Mahmood suggests that agency can manifest not only through direct opposition but also through navigating and negotiating cultural norms and dominant rules in everyday life. The participants in this study demonstrate a unique way of harmonizing their beliefs' values with modernity.

First, the adherence to religious practices, encompassing ritual worship, attention to personal appearance, the cultivation of politeness, and the avoidance of morally reprehensible acts, is driven by a commitment to faithfully follow God's mandates and

uphold the teachings of their belief system, with the ultimate aim of achieving spiritual purity.

Reinterpreting Islamic teachings, Sarah (29) and Shopia (17) aim not to engage in conflict or leave their positions but rather to discover ways to live in accordance with religious principles while maintaining a sense of calm. They are both leaders in a woman's dormitory and a *pesantren* organization. Traditionally, leadership has been predominantly associated with men, but Sarah and Shopia firmly believe that women can also assume leadership roles, especially when leading other women. They want to demonstrate that women can be effective leaders without compromising their religious beliefs and values. Nevertheless, Sarah and Shopia firmly believe that women can be leaders as long as they are leading other women. They see no problem with this and believe that both women and men can possess the spirit of leadership. They also acknowledge the importance of maintaining boundaries between men and women to avoid potential problems. They implement limits in their interactions with men, especially considering their roles as leaders that require frequent interaction with many people. However, when it comes to activities and exchanging ideas, they find no issue. Regarding hijab, they both value its significance and protection. Wearing the *syar'i* hijab (Islamic dress code) does not hinder their roles; on the contrary, they feel more 'respected and secure. They navigate' through negotiations to strike a balance, allowing them to fulfil their duties while adhering to their beliefs and principles

The next form is towards the advancement of 'technology and information; they do not totally isolate themselves and avoid external influences. In actuality, they frequently use social media. During interviews, a topic that came up for discussion was *d''wah*, or religious propagation. In their teachings, both men and women are obligated

to preach. When using social media, their primary focus is on searching, viewing, and sharing *d'wah* content, which serves as inspiration for one another.

Analysing their actions, we can observe that in the development of religious devotion, individuals engage in various practices such as prayer, fasting, reading sacred texts, and adhering to religious rituals. Saba Mahmood refers to this process as “self-cultivation” which involves conscious and intentional efforts to transform oneself in alignment with the religious ideals and moral principles of their faith (Mahmood, 2005). The goal of these practices is to strengthen on spiritual connection with the divine and develop good moral character. By working on themselves, individuals aim to become more devoted and fulfil their religious duties, leading to a more committed and morally disciplined way of living in accordance with their beliefs.

Furthermore, the efforts of those trying to incorporate the norms and values of their social and religious contexts into daily practices and behaviours are a form of embodiment (Mahmood, 2005). This can include the way they dress, like wearing the hijab, and the manners in which they conduct themselves. Embodiment involves physically carrying out sacred rituals and fostering certain attitudes and behaviours that align with religious ideals.

In this case, the clothes they wear carry a meaning beyond just serving as an identifier of being a Muslim, or simply being a piece of cloth without significance. Instead, there's a process of self-transformation that motivates them to continue to be obedient women. According to Saba Mahmood, self-development and embodiment are mutually dependent processes. Through practices of self-development, individuals adopt certain attitudes and behaviours that mirror their religious commitments. Simultaneously, the physical representation of religious norms strengthens and upholds these norms in

social and cultural contexts. Hence, compliance with religious practices and traditions through ritual and discipline is not merely submission to patriarchy. Instead, it's a discipline pursued to attain self-directness. In this context, adherence to norms and traditions represents a form of personal agency.

Furthermore, in reference to Burke's classification of the agency approach into four categories - resistance, empowerment, instrument, and compliance - one limitation is that religious devotion does not inherently exploit women or uphold their subordination (Burke, 2012). The agency exhibited by the Salafi Islamic Boarding School is an instance of the compliance agency. This form of agency interprets the text literally, aligning its activities to conservative patrons in the positioning of women. In terms of what Rinaldo calls an 'active religious agency', it refers to individuals or groups who actively participate in religious practices and uphold moral standards they firmly believe in (Rinaldo, 2010).

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

5.1. Conclusions

This research focuses on the examination of one conservative group in Indonesia, the Salafi Islamic Movement, a transnational Islamic network coordinated across various countries and centered in Saudi Arabia. Among the numerous Salafi factions, such as Queties, Haraki, and Jihadists, this study targets the Salafi Queties network, which prioritizes spreading Salafi teachings through education. This research has the following conclusion:

(1) An Islamic boarding school of Salafi women adopts an integrated curriculum by combining elements from the Middle East, *Gontor*, and the Ministry of Religious Affairs in its subjects. This curriculum is designed autonomously by the school because it implements the *Mua'dalah* education system, which is a religious education system organized by boarding schools, which gives it the right to develop the curriculum according to the characteristics of the boarding school. Through the *Mu'adalah* system, the graduates of the boarding school have been equalized with those of other public schools so that their graduates can continue to higher education.

Additionally, this Islamic boarding school has implemented women's empowerment programs through extracurricular activities and special classes. Extracurricular activities are sports such as basketball, volleyball, archery, and badminton. In entrepreneurship classes students are trained to make handicrafts training in sewing, cooking, and selling. Special classes include *Tarbiyah al-nisa* and *Fiqh* subjects. *Tarbiyah al-nisa* is an exclusive female class aims at helping women be supportive wives, assisting their husbands in preaching, and developing their own moral values. *Fiqh* is a subject about Islamic law, especially which discusses about femininity.

However, the design and implementation of these reform ideas are executed within a conservative framework. It is anticipated that this educational autonomy will enable the incorporation of local wisdom into their educational practices, aligning the learning experience better with the unique circumstances and needs surrounding the school. However, this autonomy has led to the adoption of foreign values and cultures, which tend to be exclusive. In addition, the integration of the curriculum, which is expected to unite religious and Islamic sciences, aims to eliminate the perceived dichotomy of science. However, it results only in juxtaposition, leading to an overlap in the curriculum. Furthermore, extracurricular empowerment programs tend to direct students towards material needs, such as economic gains and personal satisfaction. Similarly, the *Tarbiyah al-nisa* and *Fiqih* subjects tend to discriminate against women more than to empower them because they separate the roles of men and women in almost all aspects of life. Men are seen as superior to women intellectually, spiritually, and physically. In this class, the role of education is more likely to perpetuate traditional norms of domesticating and subordinating women.

(2) The implementation of curriculum and women programs in Islamic boarding school of Salafi women to justify what they practice as authentic Islam by using the Qur'an and Hadith as the main sources of every lesson, especially on women's issues. They refer to the source of lessons as originating directly from the Middle East, which is believed to be the place of origin of Islamic culture and history, and they implement the acquired knowledge in everyday life.

However, the expected adherence to the teachings of the Quran and Hadith fosters continuity and integrity in the students' religious identities. The literal interpretation they used may limit diverse interpretations of Islam relevant to modern contexts. In addition, acknowledging the Middle East as the primary source of Islamic teachings can enhance

students' understanding and appreciation of their religious roots. But it might overshadow the richness of Islamic practices worldwide and fail to account for local cultural contexts. Moreover, the consistent application of religious knowledge in everyday life can reinforce Islamic teachings, but strict rules could potentially create a restrictive environment.

(3) Salafi women negotiate piety, identity, and modernity with the existing relationship between men and women within the Salafi circle by focusing on learning religious knowledge and emphasizing personal piety. They reinterpret the concepts and practices of Salafi teachings without intending to oppose or discard them, and they utilize advances in technology and information as platforms for *Da'wa*.

In understanding the role and agency of Salafi women, it is crucial to acknowledge that agency doesn't necessarily entail challenging or altering existing norms and traditions. In this context, Salafi women exercise agency through their dedication to religious teachings and traditions and their efforts to adapt to and negotiate with the prevalent norms and rules in everyday life. Moreover, they demonstrate that religion and modernity are not mutually exclusive; instead, they can coexist and complement each other.

It can be concluded that the Salafi education systems, which uphold conservative methods, utilize education as a tool for transmitting culture and preserving established values. This approach has contributed to the perpetuation of traditional norms. As active agents, women in this Islamic boarding school do not attempt to oppose or reject the patriarchal system but continue to negotiate it by striving to harmonize and negotiate with modernity. This strategy allows them to fulfil divine commands without feeling left behind.

5.2 Suggestion

The research conducted illustrates a highly complex interplay among gender, religion, and education. This study only uncovers a small segment of the relationship among these three aspects. It is anticipated that future research will delve deeper into this relationship, moving beyond merely active agencies to explore more progressive entities.

5.3. Limitation

I realized that during the research there were many challenges faced, especially in data collection. Despite having access to insiders, the process has various obstacles. First, because of the constraints of being able to enter the school, the school is very selective about accepting research, especially those that discuss sensitive issues such as gender studies. Second, the research site was outside the area, so I could not freely visit the site. Third, in this process, I conducted two data collections: offline and online. The first was online; I was directly in the field for one week in May because it coincided with exams and approached school vacation time, so only research in the form of observation and data collection could be carried out. The second was offline; I conducted collecting interview data using zoom meetings for one week on June. In this process, numerous obstacles surfaced, including unstable network connections and a lack of seriousness from some participants, who occasionally got distracted by their peers. I had to replace some participants to get complete data.

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APPENDICES:

Appendix 1. Interview Questions

OUTLINES OF INTERVIEW

The participants interviewed in this study comprised both teachers and students.

1. Teachers were interviewed with the objective to:
 - Understand how the curriculum, specifically Islamic religious education and women's programs, are being delivered to students.
 - Explore the measures undertaken by teachers to provide students with an understanding that these teachings are authentic representations of Islam based on the implementation of curriculum and women's programs.
 - Identify the initiatives taken by female teachers, acting as active agents, who choose to follow religious teachings despite confronting challenges from the patriarchal system and the stringent rules embedded in Salafi teachings.

2. Students were interviewed with the goal to:
 - Comprehend students' perspectives on the application of the Islamic religious education curriculum and women's programs in schools.
 - Obtain insights into students' objective views on Islam.
 - Recognize the efforts made by female students, functioning as active agents, who choose to adhere to their religious teachings despite encountering hurdles from the patriarchal system and strict rules in Salafi teachings.

Teacher Interview

Opening Questions:

1. Personal Information:
 - Name
 - Age
 - Marital Status
 - Residential Address
 - Educational Background
2. How long have you been employed as a teacher at this institution?
3. Which class do you primarily teach, and what subjects are part of your teaching repertoire?
4. What motivated your decision to teach at this particular school?
5. Prior to joining this school, did you work elsewhere? If so, what kind of work did you engage in?

Research Questions - Focusing on Women's Curriculum and Programs in Salafist Schools:

1. What type of curriculum is utilized in this all-girls' school? Is it mandated by the government or does the school design its own curriculum?
2. How is the chosen curriculum put into practice?
3. What are the primary objectives behind implementing this specific curriculum?
4. Have there been significant shifts in the curriculum over time? If so, what were they?
5. What are the competency standards students are expected to achieve through this curriculum?
6. Which subjects are included in the teaching syllabus of this school?
7. In the educational focus of this school, is the emphasis placed more on inculcating Islamic morals and values, or is it shared with other academic disciplines and subjects?
8. How is Islamic religious education incorporated into this school's curriculum?
9. Which subjects are included within the scope of Islamic education?
10. What teaching methods are adopted by educators when instructing Islamic religious education subjects in the classroom (such as discussion, practical experimentation, observation, or a teacher-led lecture)?
11. Which extracurricular activities are offered in this school, and what is the rationale behind their selection?
12. Are there specific programs devised to foster and promote women's development and empowerment?
13. What type of content and activities are included in these women's empowerment programs?
14. How do teachers facilitate learning in women's programs?
15. What competency standards are students expected to meet through participation in these programs?
16. Does the curriculum, whether in Islamic religious education or women's programs, include content or discussions around gender equality?
17. How does the school adapt to technological advancements and global trends in education?
18. What initiatives does the school take to equip students with skills to navigate and thrive in a globalized and technology-driven environment?

Research Question 2: Does the implementation of Islamic education curricula and women's programs justify the practices they perceive as authentic Islam?

1. What Islamic values are anticipated, embraced, and practiced by students according to the application of the Islamic religious education curriculum?
2. What form of direct practices are executed by teachers and students, derived from the Islamic values taught in accordance with the curriculum and women's programs designed?
3. How do teachers convince students of the authenticity of Islamic values? Especially regarding the stringent rules imposed on students, such as adherence to *Shari'i* clothing, separation between genders, moderation in dress and decoration, prohibition of music that can affect emotions, and the prohibition of creating visual representations of living beings, etc.
4. How do teachers and schools nurture and sustain student consistency in adhering to the values taught both within and outside the school environment?
5. How are women's programs implemented in schools?
6. What is the objective of the program's implementation?
7. How is the program executed?
8. What are the advantages of the program?
9. What challenges do teachers encounter when executing the program?
10. How does this program shape female students' preparation and skill development for the future?
11. How does the Islamic religious education curriculum and women's programs instruct about the roles and responsibilities of women in society?
12. How does the women's program aid female students in preparing for motherhood and wifehood?

Research Question 3: How do women negotiate piety, identity, and modernity within the relationships that exist between men and women in everyday life?

Modesty

1. In the relationship between men and women, referring to the Aqidah *Salafus-salih*, there is the term *tabaruj* (referring to inappropriate behaviour or actions by women, such as in dress or manners, leading to requirements for women to cover their *aurat* and behave modestly):
 - a. Since when have you been wearing the hijab?
 - b. What is the religious mandate for women to wear hijabs?
 - c. How do you interpret the significance of wearing a hijab?
 - d. Is there a distinction between women who wear regular (*non-Shari'i*), long (*Shari'i*) hijabs, and veils, and which is preferable?
 - e. Does the veil or headscarf restrict or enhance your role and status as a woman?

- f. Have you encountered any resistance or negative views from family or society when you decided to wear a veil or headscarf? How did you cope with these challenges?
2. Besides, there is the term *Ikhtilaf* (mixing of men and women in a place or activity) in the relationship between men and women:
 - a. What is the reasoning behind gender separation in your school?
 - b. What are your thoughts on the boundaries between men and women?
 - c. What challenges have you faced while implementing these boundaries?
 - d. Do these separations or boundaries benefit or harm women?
 - e. How do you navigate situations in daily life when there must be a mix of men and women who are not mahram, such as at work, social activities, or other events?
3. Based on the Aqidah *Salafus-salih*, there are differences in status and roles between men and women in public and domestic spheres:
 - a. What, in your view, is Islam's perspective of women?
 - b. Does Islam distinguish between the roles and functions of men and women, and can these roles and functions be swapped?
 - c. Would you prefer to work outside or stay home caring for your husband and children, given a choice? What influences your choice?
 - d. Do you wish to contribute to society? If given the opportunity, what would you aspire to do?

Identity

1. What is your ideal self-image as a woman?
2. Have you implemented this ideal in your everyday life?
3. Did you ever fall short of your expectations, and if so, how did you navigate this process of change?
4. Who inspires you or serves as your role model as a woman?
5. In the process of making life decisions, who has the greatest influence? Your father, mother, husband, or is it entirely a personal decision?
6. Who has influenced your current identity (as a recognizable woman) the most: family, friends, education, or something else?
7. Have you ever faced challenges in expressing and asserting your identity, whether in social, familial, or group settings?
8. What steps have you taken to maintain your preferred identity as a woman?
9. What are your most significant life goals?

Modernity

1. With the rise in technology and information, nearly everyone nowadays uses electronic media and communication. Do you use them as well?
2. Are you an active user of social media platforms such as Instagram, YouTube, Twitter, and TikTok?
3. What kind of content do you usually follow and share on your social media profiles?
4. Do you stay current with today's fashion, music, and modern lifestyles?
5. Do you prefer Western or Middle Eastern fashion and lifestyle?
6. What are your views on the concepts of secularism (often associated with westernization) and liberalism (often associated with freedom) that are prevalent in our society today?
7. What is your perspective on gender studies and feminism?

Student Interview

Personal Information:

1. Could you please share your name?
2. May I know your age?
3. What class are you currently in?
4. Could you please share your address?
5. Can you tell me about your parents' background?
6. Could you describe your parents' educational history?
7. Can you share some information about your own educational background?
8. What are your plans for continuing your education after graduating from this school?

Research Question 1: Women's Curriculum and Programs in Salafi Schools?

1. Are you aware of the curriculum implemented in this school?
2. Have you experienced any changes resulting from curriculum adjustments, both in the learning process such as teaching methods and delivered content?
3. What would you say is the objective of this curriculum, and does it align with your personal goals?
4. In your opinion, does the primary focus of this school's curriculum lie in the instilling of Islamic morals and values, or does it emphasize other academic knowledge and subjects?
5. Could you tell me about the subjects taught in this school, including both religious and scientific disciplines? Which subjects particularly interest you?
6. How would you describe the learning process within the classroom?
7. What methods do teachers often employ when teaching religious education subjects such as *Tawhid*, *Fiqh*, *Akidah*, and *Akhlak* in the classroom? (For instance, discussions, experiments, observations, or teacher-centric explanations.)
8. What extracurricular activities are offered at this school, and have any of these aided you in cultivating your interests or talents?
9. Do you find the materials in your textbooks and the explanations provided by your teachers to be relevant to your daily life?
10. Have you ever perceived any inconsistencies between the content presented in your textbooks, the teacher's explanations, and real-life scenarios? If so, how have you responded to this?
11. Are there any specific programs initiated for the advancement and empowerment of women?
12. Could you describe how these programs are carried out?
13. What topics and activities are addressed through this women's program?
14. How do the teachers present the content in women's programs?
15. What are the competency standards that students are expected to achieve through this program?
16. What advantages have you gained after participating in this program?
17. What challenges have you encountered while participating in the women's program?

18. How have you adjusted to the current trends in globalization and technological advancements?
19. How does the school contribute to preparing and shaping students to cope with the ongoing developments in globalization and technology?

Research Question 2: How does the implementation of women's curricula and programs align their practices with what they accept as authentic Islam?

1. Based on the implementation of the Islamic religious education curriculum and women's programs, what kind of Islamic values are students expected to believe in and enact?
2. What are some direct applications students make from the Islamic values taught through the curriculum and programs?
3. As a student, how do you cultivate and maintain consistency with the Islamic values you have been taught, both individually and amongst your peers?
4. What roles do the school, teachers, and parents play in embedding the values of Islamic teachings and fostering these values so that students consistently adhere to them both in and out of school?
5. How do you ascertain that the Islamic values you are following are truly authentic, especially when dealing with strict guidelines such as wearing *Shari'i* compliant clothing, maintaining boundaries between men and women, avoiding ostentation in dress and adornment, abstaining from music that could influence emotions, and refraining from creating images or visual representations of living beings, etc.?
6. Are there any programs or activities specifically devoted to addressing women's issues at this girls' school?
7. How does this school equip female students with the skills they will need in the future?
8. How do girls' schools educate about women's roles and responsibilities within the family and the broader community?
9. How do girls' schools prepare female students to become competent mothers and wives?

Research Question 3: How do women negotiate piety, identity, and modernity with the relationships that exist between men and women in everyday life?

1. In the context of relationships between men and women as informed by the Aqidah *Salafus-salih*, the term *tabaruj* (referring to inappropriate behaviour or actions by women, such as in dress or manners, leading to requirements for women to cover their *aurat* and behave modestly) is used.
 - a. When did you start wearing the hijab?
 - b. What is the religious obligation for women to wear the hijab?
 - c. How do you interpret the act of wearing a hijab?
 - d. Do you see a difference between women who wear a regular hijab (non-Syariah compliant), long hijab (Syariah compliant), and a veil? Which do you think is the best choice?

- e. Does wear a veil or hijab limit your role and status in daily life, or does it empower you?
- f. What challenges and resistance have you faced, either from society or your family, when you decided to wear a veil or hijab? How have you tackled these challenges?

2. Additionally, in the context of relationships between men and women, the term *Ikhtilaf* (mixing of men and women in one place or activity) is used.

- a. Is there a specific reason why your school enforces separation of the genders?
- b. What are your thoughts on the boundaries set between men and women?
- c. Have you faced any challenges when enforcing these restrictions?
- d. Do you think these restrictions are beneficial or detrimental to women?
- e. How do you manage situations in everyday life, such as work or social activities, where interaction with men who aren't your close relatives is necessary?

3. Based on the Aqidah *Salafus-salih*, there are different roles for men and women in the public and domestic spheres.

- a. What do you believe Islam's view of women is?
- b. Do you see a difference in the roles and responsibilities of men and women in Islam, and can these roles be swapped?
- c. If you had a choice in the future, would you prefer to work outside the home or stay at home to care for your husband and children? What informs your choice?
- d. Do you wish to participate in societal activities? If given an opportunity, what role would you like to play?

Identity

1. As a person born female, what kind of woman do you aspire to be?
2. Have you applied this aspiration in your daily life?
3. Has there been a change in you from the past? If so, how did this change occur?
4. Who do you admire or look up to as a woman?
5. Who has had the most influence in shaping your current identity, be it family, friends, education or something else?
6. In decision-making processes, who influences you the most: your father, mother, husband, or do you make all decisions yourself?
7. Have you faced any challenges expressing yourself in social, family or group settings?
8. What efforts have you made to continue to be the woman you aspire to be?
9. What are your biggest goals in life?

Modernity

1. In the age of rapid technological and informational advancement, almost everyone uses digital and communication media. Do you also use them?
2. Are you an active user of social media such as Instagram, YouTube, Twitter, TikTok?
3. What type of content do you usually follow and share on your social media?
4. Do you stay updated with today's fashion, music and modern lifestyles?
5. Do you prefer Western or Middle Eastern fashion and lifestyle?
6. What are your views on the secularism and liberalism (freedom) currently present in our society?
7. What is your perspective on gender studies and feminism?