

# **Gender, Female Principalship, and Students' Achievements: A Case Study of a Female Principal Leading an Islamic School**

Thesis

Submitted to meet the Graduation Requirements of

Master's Degree MA in Education



**Universitas  
Islam Internasional  
Indonesia**

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# **GENDER, FEMALE PRINCIPALSHIP, AND STUDENTS' ACHIEVEMENTS: A CASE STUDY OF A FEMALE PRINCIPAL LEADING AN ISLAMIC SCHOOL**

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The hegemonic masculinity that perpetuates the larger educational leadership culture persists to this day, making it important to understand the kind of gender construction that is working for existing female leaders, especially in the context of Islamic schools. However, these constructs also need to be understood for their implications on educational practices, such as on students' achievements. Indeed, there have been few studies that highlight these three elements of the gender of the principal, leadership, and students' achievements despite their interrelatedness. Therefore, this study seeks to explore how gender construction facilitates female principalship in an Islamic school and the implication for students' achievements. The study applies the post-structuralist feminist theory of Gendered Educational Leadership as will become clear how an Indonesian private Islamic school discursively presents the gender of the female principal. This study employs a qualitative case study of the leadership of a female principal at Al-Wahid Islamic Elementary School (pseudonym) in light of feminist perspectives. In collecting the data, observation, interviews, and analysis of documents were conducted for triangulation. Meanwhile, the data analysis is done through thematic analysis. The findings show that (1) gender concept in the Islamic school indicates binary construction of the *ikhwan* and *akhwat* categories reflected through school facilities, regulation, and social interaction. (2) Within this context, the acceptable ideal female principal is someone who performs both masculine and feminine leadership styles. In practice, the female principal also accordingly performs masculine and feminine styles. However, the overall evaluation by school members seems to stabilize it to be exclusively feminine. This masking is revealed as rooted in the essentialist view of gender and feminization of the elementary school level and its leadership position. (3) Finally, the implication is found to be central to how the principal and school members approach students' achievement issues; how the principal approaches students' achievements with a socioemotional emphasis, how the school members downplay the female principal's role in promoting students' achievements, and how there are discernible gender differences in students' achievements. Therefore, this study indicates the need to be more critical and aware of possible bias in evaluating the performance of female leaders. Further research is recommended to explore more than just one case of a female principal in this issue or on a different level of education, such as in secondary or higher education. Finally, incorporating more of the perspective of students as those who benefit from the issues of achievement is also encouraged.

**Keywords:** *Gender, leadership, female principal, gendered educational leadership, students' achievements*

## ABBREVIATION AND GLOSSARY PAGE

Androgynous leadership	A leadership style that combines traditionally masculine and feminine styles
BK	Counselling Service ( <i>Bimbingan Konseling</i> )
CV	Curriculum Vitae
Feminine leadership	A leadership style characterized by stereotypically feminine behaviors
Heteroglossic gendered leadership	The enactment of transgressing or going against the dominant discourse of female or male ways of leading
Japres	Achievement track for school admission ( <i>Jalur Prestasi</i> )
JSIT	Integrated Islamic school network (Jaringan Sekolah Islam Terpadu)
Masculine leadership	A leadership style characterized by stereotypically masculine behaviors
Monoglossic gendered leadership	The enactment of conforming to the dominant discourse of female or male ways of leading
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
OSN	National Science Olympiad ( <i>Olimpiade Sains Nasional</i> )
PASEC	The Programme for the Analysis of Education Systems
PC	Personal Computer
PIC	Person in Charge
PMS	Premenstrual Syndrome
Polyglossic gendered leadership	The enactment practicing leadership outside the dominant discourse of female or male ways of leading, such as mixing, rejecting, and proposal of alternatives

PTKIN	State Islamic Religious Higher Education Institution ( <i>Perguruan Tinggi Keagamaan Islam Negeri</i> )
SDG	Sustainable Development Goals
SDIT	Integrated Islamic Elementary School ( <i>Sekolah Dasar Islam Terpadu</i> )
SEL	Social Emotional Learning
SIT	Integrated Islamic School ( <i>Sekolah Islam Terpadu</i> )
SOP	Standard Operating Procedure
STEM	Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics
T2Q	Recitation and Memorization of the Quran ( <i>Tahsin dan Tahfidz Al-Quran</i> )
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund

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# CHAPTER 1

## INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Research Background

The idea that gender is a crucial construct in education has been extensively discussed as it affects various aspects of the educational experience and has far-reaching implications in various dimensions. For students, gender has a crucial role in constructing their identities (Danielsson, 2012; Zahara, 2023a), how they experience school belonging (Huyge et al., 2015), physical or body performances (Dahl-Michelsen & Solbrække, 2014; Zahara, 2023b), shaping their beliefs regarding their school outcomes and achievements, directing them towards certain limited interests and activities, leading to self-stereotyping (Kamwendo, 2010), and more. Teachers also play a crucial role in perpetuating these norms through biased evaluations and expectations which in turn, impact students' academic performance (Watson et al., 2019). Similarly, in their case, teachers perform masculinity and femininity in certain ways to embody professionalism and gain authority through the way they dress, speak, behave, and more (Allard, 2004; A. Braun, 2011). Even beyond the experiences of students and teachers, the role of gender has been addressed as gender stereotypes are manifested in school textbooks, facilities such as gender binary washrooms, school policy, school members' sex compositions, etc. (Davies et al., 2019; Meyer & Keenan, 2018; UNESCO, 2020; Van Houtte, 2021).

It cannot be denied that this issue of the centrality of gender in education is initially dominated by concerns about the persistent disparities between males and females in education. Evidence shows that females have been consistently disadvantaged in various aspects of education, including enrolment, academic achievement, and representation in leadership positions (UNESCO, 2020). It has therefore become a worldwide issue, especially seen in the inclusion of excellent education and gender equality as two of the seventeen Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) (Sustainable Development Goals) (United Nations, 2015). However, when it is seen in terms of parity, apparent improvement cannot be denied. The

gender gap in primary and secondary school enrolment which existed in 1995 at a rate of 90 girls for every 100 boys was closed in 2018 (UNESCO, 2020). Indeed, girls have made great strides in the previous two decades in closing the gender gap, both in terms of access and completion, as well as in terms of learning at all levels of schooling (UNESCO, 2022), indicating a clear shift toward gender parity.

However, despite these gender issues in education that touch upon various educational elements, one of the most persisting challenges comes to females in educational leadership. This concern can be seen even in terms of access or participation itself. Data showed that teaching is increasingly a feminine profession, but fewer females are recruited and represented in leadership positions (UNESCO, 2020, 2022). Globally, only 30% of all heads of schools are females (UNESCO, 2021). The case is also not exceptional in the Indonesian context where though they make up a sizable portion of the teaching workforce, females remain underrepresented in positions of authority (Yarrow & Afkar, 2020). Moreover, the percentage of females as school principals get lower as the educational level gets higher since there are only 45%, 29%, and 25% of them at elementary, middle, and high school levels (Education Partnership - Performance Oversight and Monitoring, 2016; Margret et al., 2021).

It needs to be noted that those are still quantity matters of female leadership as it is even further more complex when it comes to the quality matter of their experiences. Indeed, even though the proportion of females in managerial roles is higher in numbers, tensions are found regarding their gender and managerial identities because of the hegemonic masculine values persist in the organization (Priola, 2007). Thus, it is not only a matter of male or female dominance in education, but also the bigger scope of the sociocultural realm. Moreover, studies have highlighted obvious gender-based challenges and the dual burden female educational leaders face that males do not have which hinder the quality of their leading experiences, how people perceive their leadership, and undermining their performances in general (Nichols & Nichols, 2014; Priola, 2007). Female leaders also face additional challenges in navigating the gendered expectations and norms

of leadership, including balancing work and family responsibilities, overcoming the stereotype that they are not as competent as males in leadership positions, facing attitudinal and organization biases that exclude them from upper-level leadership positions, and more (Ballenger, 2010; Cruz-González et al., 2020; Eagly & Carli, 2018; Nichols & Nichols, 2014; Priola, 2007). These show the legitimization of patriarchal power in educational institutions where males hold the majority of management roles as well as the hegemonic masculinity that perpetuates the educational leadership culture. In other words, both quantity and quality matters of female educational leadership seem to be far from gender equity.

Such findings are unfortunate considering the strength and benefits female leaders have brought in education. It is found that their leadership bring positive support for students' well-being (Global School Leaders, 2021), as well as increasing students and teachers engagement and family participation (Játiva et al., 2022), and student learning outcomes are improved in both high- and low-income countries (Bergmann et al., 2022; Grissom et al., 2021). Thus, the beneficial implications and functions that female leaders offer to education have not been maximized because the position has been formed and is still maintained as a male-dominated position. Therefore, considering this evidence, it is important to question the argued incompatibility and incapability of females for leadership positions in order to challenge such constructed stereotyped image which reflects a discriminatory perspective from which possible better quality of education could be held back or denied.

Thus, considering that gender is indeed central in the leadership practices of female leaders, the next question would be; What kind of gender construction is actually working for existing female leaders that facilitate them to lead? Do they have to lead in a feminine way to avoid the masculine anxiety of being taken over (MacKinnon, 2021)? Do they have to perform masculinity to gain authority? (K. H. Arar & Oplatka, 2014; A. Braun, 2011; Priola, 2007) Do they need to mix both depending on the situation? (Blake-Beard et al., 2020; Morin, 2020; Park, 1997) or is there any specific way of managing their gender and leadership in order to be accepted as female leaders?

In this light, one of the most relevant theories to understand such discussion is the Gendered Educational Leadership theory by Fuller (2014). This concept helps to understand whether someone's leadership is constructed or perceived using dominant gendered leadership discourse (monoglossia), conflicting or transgressive gendered leadership discourse (heteroglossia), or multiple approaches, rejection, or redefining gender discourse (polyglossia). It allows for understanding the complicated and dialogical ways of how educational leaders do leadership from its gender dimension. This concept is explained further in a later discussion. What makes it important to address this issue and critically deconstruct gender in leadership is beyond merely finding out the 'working' gender construction that makes female leadership a possibility, but also unveiling the 'masked' gender bias in leadership or what Fuller (2014) said as 'façade' so that future female leaders can be prepared, and even resist and challenge them.

From these existing studies and expansive literature on gender and female leadership and principalship, however, there are some noticeable gaps. First of all, although many studies discussed female leaders or principals and their leadership style, very few focused on the gendered educational leadership style which grounds its approach on critical non-essentialist gender analysis (Fecher, 2007; Fuller, 2014, 2017). This is beyond crucial considering as previously elaborated how central gender is in educational leadership practices. Without this kind of focus, discussing gender can have the risk of essentializing it as seen in how some discussions rely on the gender binary or the idea of 'male and female ways of leading', which is highly problematic since it perpetuates gender bias and stereotypes (MacKinnon, 2021). Indeed, many earlier research either mirror or make use of the essentialist definition of gender that is assumed. These essentialist perspectives are reflected in generalizations about the manner in which females lead, such as the notions that they are naturally more people-focused, communicative, committed to social justice via relational leadership, and nurturing. (Cruz-González et al., 2020; Smit, 2013). Second, it is especially also rare to find such a gender-critical study on a female principalship in an Islamic private school context in Indonesia where the school has more authority to incorporate the Ministry of Education and Culture's national

curriculum and their local one compared to those of public. Furthermore, most studies in the Indonesian context seem to disproportionately favor the *pesantren* and boarding school types (Cardozo & Srimulyani, 2021; Kusmana, 2019; Samsu et al., 2021; Srimulyani, 2012) though the existence of Islamic private schools in Indonesia is abundant and many female principals are practicing leadership in these schools, especially since they are also chosen by the foundation, a free private party. Third, they tend to focus merely either on the female leaders' gender subjectivities or the school members' perspectives (K. H. Arar & Oplatka, 2014; Cruz-González et al., 2020; Nichols & Nichols, 2014; Shah, 2018) while this study aims to have a more comprehensive look on gender construction and leadership and how they communicate with each other, thus, involving various school members. This is crucial in a dialogic conceptualization of gendered leadership, especially because there is no single or static construction of gendered leadership (Fuller, 2014). Lastly, many studies exclusively studied the leadership style of female leaders without further exploration of how it impacts beyond interpersonal matters, such as school units, members, activities, etc., or stopping on the subjectivities matter. Thus, this study also explores the further implication, specifically on students' achievements as elaborated further below.

Building on the idea of how central gender in female leadership and principalship is, the next step would be understanding the further practical implication for education itself. Previous studies have shown the importance of female principals in various aspects, such as their roles in terms of the school's social dimension, organizational culture, gender relations among school members, and the sharing of power and inclusivity, among other things (K. H. Arar & Oplatka, 2014; Oplatka, 2004; Priola, 2007). These findings highlight the importance of further investigation on the role of female leadership in education, and the potential for female principals to drive positive change in education, especially in improving students' achievement.

Despite this, it is noticeable that one of the most overlooked aspects in discussing the educational implication of female principals is regarding students' achievements. It is understandable because many of the previous studies showed

there is only an indirect correlation between principals and students' achievement through impact on teachers' satisfaction, learning climate, teaching staff hiring and allocations, teacher emotions and trust, curriculum, etc. (Bloom & Owens, 2013; Clifford et al., 2012; Sun & Leithwood, 2015). Thus, many research focuses on those mediators when it comes to the discussion of students' achievements, but few studies specifically focus on principals and students' achievements, let alone the cases of female principals.

On the other hand, the space of such direct impacts and possibilities are pronounced based on other studies, such as that the existence of female leaders has helped address the learning crisis for students, in having better-performing students or learning outcomes compared to male-led schools, higher exam results among female students, and more (Brossard & Bergmann, 2022; Dhuey & Smith, 2014; PASEC, 2020). Other studies even showed that there is a direct correlation between the two (Branch et al., 2013; Chiang et al., 2016; Dhuey & Smith, 2014, 2018). These varying findings show that principals' gender is not something to be overlooked when discussing students' achievements, yet high numbers of educational research ignore the critical touch of gender analysis.

Despite these, those studies that have explored this matter have been majorly quantitative ones while it is more than important to understand the way how such interrelation works. In other words, it is questioning how female principals facilitate such students' achievements in the school in practice. This matter is without a doubt a global concern that needs to be addressed as elaborated by Brossard & Bergmann (2022) regarding UNICEF Innocenti's research initiative that there is a need to identify what female school leaders do that leads to better school performance. It suggests research to expand the evidence on females in such positions based on gender and school leadership, especially considering many students around the world still move through their educational experiences without seeing females as part of the leadership landscape.

Indeed, there have been few studies that highlight these three elements of the gender of the principal, leadership, and students' achievements despite their interrelatedness. The existing few studies that have touched on these elements

showed that female principals experience negative perceptions of school staff despite the students' achievements in their schools being comparable to those led by male principals (Nichols & Nichols, 2014). It shows that female principals have been effective in providing a school climate for students' achievement. This dynamic is even more interesting considering Giesselman's (2004) finding that though leadership skills do not indicate higher state exams result for students, the principals' sex has that impact. What needs to be highlighted, however, is that this focus of studies is still mostly in the context of western countries, and rarely is it found in the context of Muslim society. A possible explanation for this scarcity is that they are still concerned with the access issues of females in educational leadership and gender-based challenges issues in doing leadership (K. H. Arar & Oplatka, 2014; K. Arar & Shapira, 2016a; Faiza Adil Gonaim, 2018; Shah, 2018; Tahir et al., 2018) while the western society expands further beyond such issues. However, in reality of educational practice, Muslim society like Indonesia has also been progressively participated by females, emphasizing the importance to attend to their needs. Thus, paying attention to existing schools in Indonesia that are led by females can be taken as a case. By focusing on it, it can be found what kind of gendered leadership has been practiced in facilitating such outcomes.

However, it is important to clarify that in this study, the concept of students' achievement is not limited to academic ones such as exam scores and grades, but it also includes non-academic achievements. If academic achievement is defined as the result of a student's efforts during a certain time period in in a particular subject (Kartika, 2016), then non-academic achievements are those achieved through activities outside of teaching and learning activities or other than the subjects taught, such as extracurricular activities, sports, competitions, program exchanges, participating in community service or volunteer work, internships, leadership roles in student organizations, artistic or athletic accomplishments, etc. (Epstein & Sheldon, 2002; National Research Council, 2012; Wisudanto et al., 2022). They are especially important for student success and should be given equal attention by educators where they comprehensively facilitate not only academic learning but also social, emotional, and physical development for students, increase students'

social capital, and facilitate their access to career opportunities later (Epstein & Sheldon, 2002). Thus, by recognizing the value of non-academic achievements, educators, including school principals, can provide students with a well-rounded education that prepares them for success beyond the classroom.

Finally, when it comes to female leaders' leadership and its educational implication on students' achievements, there is a need to specify the context of the discussion. From a gender perspective, especially from post-structuralist feminism which is a branch of feminism that challenges the fixed and universal meanings of gender, identity and power, gender construction differs from one society, culture, individual, to another where there is no such universal construction where females and males bodies only perform exclusive femininity or masculinity (Butler, 1990; Francis, 2010, 2012; Salih, 2002). What it means to be masculine and feminine can even vary based on each context. Thus, it needs to be clearly stated that this study takes on the specific context of a private Islamic school in Indonesia.

In conclusion, given the centrality of gender in leadership practices, especially in the experience of female leaders or principals as minorities and the proven further implication of that matter to the school quality, such as the students' achievements, it becomes important to explore this matter from gender approach comprehensively and contextually. Therefore, this study aims to explore gender construction in an Islamic Elementary School through the experience of a female school principal and how it is fundamental to their leadership practices. In other words, this study aims to explore how gender construction facilitates female principalship in an Islamic institution and how such it facilitates students' achievements. The study applies the theory of Gendered Educational Leadership (Fuller, 2014) as will become clear how an Indonesian private Islamic school discursively presents the gender of the female principal. Accordingly, this research is titled "Gender, Female Principalship, and Students' Achievements: A Case Study of a Female Principal Leading an Islamic School".

## **1.2 Research Questions**

1. What kind of gender concept is constructed in the Islamic Elementary School?
2. Considering the existing gender construction, how do the female principal and school members perceive her leadership?
3. How does the perception regarding the female principal's leadership play roles in approaching students' achievement issues at the school?

## **1.3 Research Objectives**

1. To know the kind of gender concept constructed in the Islamic Elementary School.
2. To explore how the female principal and school members perceive the female principal's leadership.
3. To find out the implication of such gendered educational leadership in facilitating students' achievements.

## **1.4 Significance of the Research**

This research is significant in terms of its theoretical and practical contributions. Considering the underrepresentation of female educational leaders in the Indonesian context, which emphasizes the issue as a global concern, this study may contribute to its understanding. Second, this case study can shed light on the dynamics underlying the scarcity of female principals, particularly in Islamic educational institutions, and how gender construction sustains this situation. In other words, it helps to unravel how Islamic institutions may legitimize patriarchy and reify stereotypical gender relations despite the fact that female leaders navigate this terrain. Thirdly, this research can encourage and ensure that leadership practices and evaluations are not limited by gender bias. Finally, it may also serve as a guide for Islamic schools and future educational leaders to prepare for and be aware of intrapersonal, interpersonal, and institutional challenges that a female principal may face. In other words, it can help Islamic institutions provide a more gender-inclusive environment in order to support more Muslim females in managerial positions.

## CHAPTER 2

### THEORETICAL FOUNDATION

#### 2.1 Gender

##### 2.1.1 The Nature vs. Nurture Debate of Gender

The discourse surrounding gender has been marked by extensive debates regarding its definition and understanding. This compasses what Rose (2001) proposed as the tired dichotomy of nature vs. nurture, the contested views on gender as either innate or socially constructed. Some believe that these differences are a natural consequence of the inherent biological dissimilarities between males and females. In other words, they think that the dissimilarities in behaviors, abilities, and characteristics of males and females are inevitable due to their biological makeup (Francis, 2006; R. Wright, 1994). On the other hand, some attribute gender differences to external influences such as societal norms, historical circumstances, and political structures. According to this view, gender roles and identities are largely socially constructed, and vary across different cultures and times (Francis, 2006).

In the educational field itself, such contrasting views on gender can result in contrasting approaches to understanding educational practices. For instance, in viewing gender as innate or ‘natural’ differences, one of the well-known stances is those of ‘brain differences’ proponents (Francis, 2006). They believe that the innate biological difference between male’s thinner *corpus callosum* (the nerves that link both sides of the brain) compared to females limit their communication and results in a more linear approach to solving problems while females take a more holistic approach, that females learn talking sooner than males, that females dominate humanities and communication subjects while men in sciences, and that there are different ways between male and female’s way of learning, etc. (Francis, 2006; Logan & Johnston, 2010; Zaidi, 2010). However, neuroscientific findings challenge such a deterministic view with the evidence that even the brain, actually develops as a result of environmental factors and social interactions or different experiences (Francis, 2006; Gerhardt, 2004; Paechter, 1998).

Considering such essentialist and non-contextual ideas of gender, it explains why other scholars lean towards the idea of gender as a social construction. They believe that society plays a role in shaping gender identities and expressions. Gender, thus, is not innate or biologically determined, but is shaped by cultural and social norms, expectations, and practices. This includes the social practices embedded in the legal system, conventions, and institutions, including in education. For instance, the way higher education was accessible exclusively for males but not females, the subjects and curriculum they were given access to, the expectations, and more contribute to the construction of the idea of gender that females are lesser or inferior (Francis, 2006). However, even from this seemingly critical perspective of gender, the discussion implies the idea as if humans are merely passive recipients of socialization.

Based on the nature vs. nurture debates on gender is still, however, the limitation of the concepts reflects a dichotomy where gender is either natural or socially constructed. Meanwhile, both perspectives have their weaknesses and gaps in fully capturing the complexity of gender. In this light, poststructuralist feminism's idea of gender comes into discussion, which recognizes the complexity in the shaping of gender identities and experiences.

### 2.1.2 Poststructuralist Feminism's Critical Approach to Gender

As in the poststructuralism school of thought itself where they question the dominant discourses and practices in society, poststructuralist feminism offers a critical perspective on the concept of gender. By arguing that gender is a fluid and dynamic social construct instead of a fixed, stable, and objective fact, it helps to reveal and explain those who do not conform to the dominant (patriarchal) social and cultural norms (Butler, 1990; Dobscha, 2019). For instance, we might assume that gender is a biological fact that can be easily observed based on one's genitalia and assign them as what dominant society knows as male/men and female/women. However, poststructuralism challenges and deconstructs such traditional ideas about gender by examining how they are constructed and reinforced through normative forces and institutional power, such as language, discourse, and power relations (Butler, 1990), such as revealing the way we talk about gender exclusively

in a binary way, the words we use to describe it, and the social norms and expectations that are associated with gender. For instance, the language use of gendered pronouns like "he" and "she" reinforces the idea that there are only two distinct genders, male and female. In this view, 'maleness' and 'femaleness' are produced by discourse, thus some feminists even argue these pronouns are misleading and maintain the production of such binary and fixed concepts of gender (Butler, 1990, 1993). It is important, thus, to clarify that this study utilizes the terms females and males, girls and boys, women and men, and she and he for the sake of identification that reflects the dominant discourse (Francis, 2006, 2010; Soper, 1990). But, it is with consciousness that these categorizations are socially constructed which would have been more accurate to identify by using 'those discursively constructed as male/boy/men' and 'those discursively constructed as female/girl/woman' (Francis, 2010). Despite that, the traditional terminology is used with this explainer in mind.

The discussion of gender presented above rejects the notion of gender as a fixed, stable, and objective concept. In other words, gender is fluid and characterized by multiplicity. For example, an individual who was assigned female at birth may perform femininity in certain social contexts by wearing dresses, putting on makeup, and speaking in a high-pitched voice while simultaneously performing masculinity in other contexts by wearing pants, speaking in a deeper voice, and displaying assertiveness. These performances are fluid and are not essential to the person's identity, but rather, are responses to social interactions (Butler, 1990; Francis, 2012).

Considering such fluidity and multiplicity, gender is not universal in which people experience it in the same way. Indeed, individuals' gendered experiences are unique and complex in that they are intersected with other social categories, such as race, class, and sexuality. For instance, black female leaders have different gendered experiences compared to other females of different races (Jang & Alexander, 2022), Muslim male principals have different experiences compared to those of Jewish (K. H. Arar & Oplatka, 2014), female leaders of schools in rural areas also have their unique dimension that others do not have (Cruz-González et

al., 2020; Smit, 2013). Thus, diversity of experiences and identities is recognized in this school of thought.

From the discussion above, one may ask; how is it possible for gender to be fluid, multiple, and diverse? Is not it obvious that gender consists of only two categories, male/men/masculine and female/women/feminine? Such an approach to understanding gender is what was previously discussed as seeing gender as a predetermined construct that one 'has'. However, in poststructuralist feminism, gender is something that one 'does' or 'performs' (Butler, 1990; Meyerhoff, 2015; Salih, 2002). This idea of 'doing gender' or gender performance when it is done repetitively or "stylized repetition of acts" (Butler, 1990, p. 140), produces the illusion of a stable, coherent, and natural gender identity. The doing of gender itself can include a wide range of cultural practices, such as clothing, makeup, hairstyle, voice, posture, and body language (A. Braun, 2011; Danielsson, 2012; Hart & Lester, 2011; Jachyra et al., 2014; Priola, 2007).

Besides Judith Butler, other prominent scholars have also reflected similar critical approaches to the diversity and fluidity of gender construction. Connell (1987, 1995) conceptualized the idea that there are various types of masculinity where 'hegemonic masculinity' is the dominant and idealized one, associated with power and control over others, particularly over women. Though this concept has inspired the idea of the plurality of masculinity and femininity, it is seen as lacking since it simplifies complex gender construction into seemingly clear typologies, and it has the risk of essentializing gender as fixed categories (Francis, 2002; Hawkesworth, 1997; McInnes, 1998). Another prominent concept is Halberstam's (1998) notion of female masculinity and male femininity which has been used extensively in education research. Halberstam's concept challenges traditional ideas about gender by recognizing that people can express masculinity or femininity regardless of their sexed bodies; the female body can express what is socially considered masculine, and so is the male body in expressing femininity. However, the concept still relies on a binary view of gender (masculinity vs. femininity), thus it has the risk of reinforcing gender stereotypes by reinforcing that certain characteristics or behaviors are inherently masculine or feminine (Francis, 2008).

Moreover, such a disembodied approach to gender overlooks the importance of the material body in gender construction (Francis, 2010, 2012).

The question now is, if gender is deemed to be understood beyond the binary or that it is supposed to be multiple, fluid, and diverse, how come the existing social construction of gender seems to categorize gender in that way? How come a society agrees with the idea of wearing a dress is feminine, and showing assertiveness is masculine? How can we capture the complexity of various gender construction without stereotyping them or fitting them into categorizations and typologies as previous theories were criticized? These seeming contradictions of diverse gender practices on the individual level and the bigger sociocultural level can be explained by the theory of gender monoglossia and heteroglossia by Francis (2010, 2012) in the following discussion.

### 2.1.3 Gender Monoglossia and Heteroglossia

Among various concepts and theories, the concepts of gender monoglossia and heteroglossia are holistic, inclusive, and less rigid to analyze gender, thus able to explain more cases of gender experiences. According to Francis (2010, 2012), this concept facilitates the analysis of ongoing patterns of gender inequality (via the concept of gender monoglossia) and individual diverse gender performances (gender heteroglossia). The term ‘monoglossia’ here refers to the dominant forms of gender construction that represent the interest of the dominant social group where it is positioned as unitary and total. However, as elaborated previously, gender can never be that static or fixed in practice, but it is rather diverse because of its dialogic, responsive, or social and interactive nature where the meaning is created between the doer and the reader. Therefore, although on a macro level gender might appear as stable and give a sense of truth or ‘monoglossia’, on the micro level, gender is fluid, diverse, consisting of contradiction and resistance, and always in dialog or what is called ‘heteroglossia’(Francis, 2010, 2012).

Thus, ‘gender monoglossia’ or ‘monoglossic construction of gender’ means the socially dominant gender construction (Francis, 2010, 2012). It specifically refers to the binary construction of male/masculine as the subject and female/feminine as the other (de Beauvoir, 1973; Walkerdine, 1990), which is an

essentialist view on gender that society believes in. Here, gender and sex embrace inseparably. This construction also includes the binary understanding that masculine is rational, strong, active, etc. while feminine is emotional, weak, passive, etc. (Francis, 2010). This construction has the power to make itself accepted as natural and inevitable. Thus, it can discipline or constrain possible resistance that may defy the dominant gender production. Butler (1990) termed this kind of arrangement as the 'heterosexual matrix'. In other words, this binarized model of gender has hegemonic power over other types of models since it is agreed as true, the common sense, or uncontested that saturates the culture.

However, despite such imposing characteristics of gender monoglossia on the sociocultural level/macrolevel, there is gender heteroglossia at the microlevel/individual subjectivities; gender construction that has contradictive characteristics in its construction, such as females performing masculinity. Such heteroglossic characteristic is maintained by Francis (2010, 2012) as inevitable in all gender performances. Therefore, considering the fluidity on the individual level yet it appears stable on the social level, gender monoglossia works as a façade that masks gender heteroglossia to maintain its dominant and power in society (2010, 2012).

After understanding how gender construction works at such political macrolevel and microlevel, it is then crucial to address important elements in gender construction; the doer & the reader, as well as the performance & the body (Francis, 2010, 2012). Not only the doer of gender, the reader or people who perceive it plays important roles as they are the ones who read the performances, give a reaction, and contribute in adding meanings to it (mutual construction of gender viability). For instance, if readers attribute someone as a 'masculine woman', this will affect not only their readings of all behaviors of the doers, but also affects how the doers see themselves/subjectivity (Francis, 2010, 2012).

Moving on to the next element, if we are to reject the essentialist view that associate gender with the body/genitalia/biological disposition, it means there is a need to see gender as a performance. Yet, this theory shows that both the body and performance are of huge importance. The role of the body is inevitable since gender

is experienced and lived through the body or ‘the embodiment of gender’ (Francis, 2010, 2012). For instance, a behavior can be seen as ‘aggressive’ in male bodies while seen as ‘bitchy’ in female bodies (Francis, 2008). This is of course influenced by social structures where we have been socialized to understand bodies based on the binary sex, resulting in such biased views. The embodiment can also be seen in the way that people present themselves in social situations. For example, an individual might express their masculinity and femininity through clothing choices, hairstyle, manner of speaking, etc.

There are several reasons why this theory offers the most suitable framework for analyzing gender critically. First of all, in response to the earlier debate of nature vs. nurture, this theory avoids essentialism while acknowledging the role of the material or the body (embodiment) and the power of social structure in gender construction. It builds the bridge between the debates. This kind of involvement in the role of corporality is more than important, especially considering its rarity in the educational field. Second of all, this theory proposes that individuals do not passively accept pre-existing gender norms and identities, but actively engage in ongoing negotiations and dialogues with others to construct and redefine their own gender identities and expressions (dialogic). Thus, though it acknowledges the tyrannical power of social structure, it also acknowledges the individual power, resistance, and agency of people in constructing their gender. It dismisses seeing gender as a system where there is no interaction and context. Therefore, it also recognizes the importance of contexts in shaping gender identities and expressions. The gender performance itself bears no meaning in isolation, but how it is meaningful in the context that bears it.

However, the most important reason would be that this concept is able to facilitate analysis of continuing patterns of gender inequality (through the concept of gender monoglossia) and of individuals’ gender performances that are transgressive (through the concept of gender heteroglossia). This is indeed suitable for this study considering female principals’ practices in leadership that have been facing gender-based challenges and inequality (Ballenger, 2010; Cruz-González et al., 2020; Eagly & Carli, 2018; Nichols & Nichols, 2014; Priola, 2007). Moreover,

previous studies have shown the usefulness of this theory to the educational field despite it being a new concept. A previous study shows that popular students with high achievements showcase gender performance that has heteroglossic contradiction by performing caring in one subject, yet assertive in another subject, and many more examples. However, this contradiction is masked by gender performances that are considered as tropes among them, such as female students engaging in feminine pursuits of fashion, celebrity, etc., and boys in sport which results in an overall stable impression of their gender perceived by peers and teachers (Francis, 2010). Indeed, this issue has been globally applied to explore gender-sensitive education (Forde, 2014), the femininities of South African female students (Bhana & Pillay, 2011), female offenders' probation practitioners in England (Perry, 2013), gender production of Antiguan secondary schoolgirls (Cobbett, 2013), and kindergarten boys' classroom play in the US (Wohlwend, 2012). It can be seen that there is a lack of exploration in Asian and Muslim contexts and educational female leaders' cases, asserting the need to explore them. Finally, considering poststructuralist feminism's emphasis on critically examining dominant gender norms and expectations is another benefit for educational research on female principals. It encourages researchers to examine how gendered expectations and stereotypes may shape the experiences of female principals.

## **2.2 Gendered Educational Leadership**

### **2.2.1 Gender and Educational Leadership**

Considering that gender is not experienced in the same way, it leads to the diverse experiences that individuals go through in their professional life, such as in leadership positions. How gender identity shapes the experiences of individuals in such educational leadership positions is known as gendered educational leadership (Court, 2005; Fuller, 2014; Maranto et al., 2018; Showunmi et al., 2017; Wilkinson et al., 2021). This can include how gender-based expectations or dominant gender construction (gender monoglossia) affects access to leadership opportunities and positions, as well as the ways it shapes leadership behaviors (K. Arar & Shapira,

2016a; Cruz-González et al., 2020; Eagly et al., 1992; Faiza Adil Gonaim, 2018; Fuller, 2010; Kamwendo, 2010; Whitehead et al., 2018).

Literature on gender and educational leadership and management suggested that there are common themes in exploring this issue (Shakeshaft, 2006; Wilkinson et al., 2021). The studies were initially concerned with the underrepresentation of female leaders where they sought to know how many and what level they are in, they moved to explore the reason behind such underrepresentation, and finally, they tried to identify the style or the ways females lead in education which usually compared to those of males. It needs to be clarified, however, that it does not mean recent studies only focus on the last one since many also still contribute to the discussion of the number of females in educational leadership and management, as well as the challenges and barriers them in accessing the position (Ballenger, 2010; Faiza Adil Gonaim, 2018; Gabster et al., 2020; Howe-Walsh & Turnbull, 2016; Shepherd, 2017).

First of all, there is a discussion of the underrepresentation of female school leaders. If previously there was a lack of data that provide a global snapshot of how many females are in school administration (Shakeshaft, 2006), this is not the case in recent times. For instance, data from UNESCO (2021) shows that globally, only 30% of all heads of schools are females. Despite such data, it is still hard to find accessible national data in some cases, for instance in Indonesia, because the categorization of principals is blended into teachers (Badan Pusat Statistik, 2021; Dinas Pendidikan Provinsi Jawa Barat, 2021; Kementerian Pendidikan dan Kebudayaan Indonesia, n.d.), making it difficult to identify the numbers of female principals. Not forget the difficulty in the further detail of the documentation of female leaders by sex and religion, by sex and types of school, etc. Such lack of data is political as documentation reflects what the government seeks as important or valued, thus, its absence means failure to report the proportion or a form of resistance to change that proportion (Shakeshaft, 2006). Beyond the concern of numerical representation, this phenomenon is not trivial considering the persisting idea that males have more potential to be leaders while females lack them due to

their softer characteristics (Nichols & Nichols, 2014). In other words, ‘femaleness’ appears to be problematic in such a field dominated by males.

Secondly, beyond the underrepresentation matters, there is an exploration of why it occurs. There have been many studies that try to explain this, especially by touching on the issue of gender-based challenges and barriers female leaders face in education. They majorly proposed that it is due to sex discrimination or devaluation of the female-sex in society in general (Schachter, 2017; Shakeshaft, 2006), the strong male-dominated characteristic of the job (Chen & Hsieh, 2019; Derks et al., 2016; MacKinnon, 2021; Priola, 2007), the lack of support systems like family, networks, role models, and mentors (Chisholm-Burns et al., 2017; Derks et al., 2016; Howe-Walsh & Turnbull, 2016; Shah, 2018), personal and family responsibilities that make them undesirable candidates and they find as difficult to negotiate (Howe-Walsh & Turnbull, 2016; Shah, 2018; Toffoletti & Starr, 2016), lack of interest in and preparation for the job (Nurmila, 2020), etc.

Lastly, there is a discussion on the identification of female leadership styles in education. What made this theme important is that it was a critical response to the domination of the male framework in leadership studies which results in androcentric conceptual bias (Shakeshaft, 2006). Thus, researchers started to study female capability in leadership to show that they are at least as good as or better, especially considering the existing belief that females are unfit for the job. In short, socially constructed masculinity was the measuring stick that define what good leadership is (MacKinnon, 2021; Nichols & Nichols, 2014; Shakeshaft, 2006). Thus, early studies on female leaders were necessary to be compared to males to prove females’ adequacy for leadership, and these studies were mostly quantitative ones (Shakeshaft, 2006).

However, studies that discussed female-only eventually emerged, and the theme of ‘the ways female leads’ took place. From the studies, their leadership styles are argued to be committed to social justice, spiritual, relational, focused on instruction, and striving for balance (Shakeshaft, 2006). As those who are committed to social justice, female leaders have been found to focus on bringing change, making things better, and supporting the disadvantaged (Cruz-González et

al., 2020; Sinyosi & Potokri, 2021; Smit, 2013). Female leaders are also more likely to show a spiritual dimension in their leading compared to males, especially in the way they behave and inspire others (Ramachandaran et al., 2017; Shakeshaft, 2006). Besides that, studies also showed that relational styles are highly associated with female educational leaders where they value relationships compared to males seen in their strength of communication, teamwork, collaboration, emotional connection, and connecting with the community, especially as they see the concept of power to be shared (power with) instead of to control (power over) (Park, 1997; Shakeshaft, 2006). Finally, their styles are found to be within the framework of balancing personal and professional domains (Howe-Walsh & Turnbull, 2016; Shah, 2018; Toffoletti & Starr, 2016).

Within this heterosexual matrix where society sees gender as binary, such female ways of leading are argued to be in contrast to those of males or known with the term feminine and masculine leadership styles. Feminine leadership refers to a leadership style that is characterized by stereotypically feminine behaviors, such as being relations-oriented, nurturing, empathetic, collaborative, warm, gentle, sensitive to others' needs, addressing the socio-emotional needs of a community, as well as placing a high value on people's lives and well-being (Blake-Beard et al., 2020; Kark et al., 2012; Park, 1996, 1997). It is often devalued in comparison to stereotypically masculine, task-oriented leadership styles. Meanwhile, masculine leadership refers to a leadership style that is characterized by stereotypically masculine behaviors, such as being task-oriented, characterized by assertiveness, dominance, independence, competitive, and decisive (Blake-Beard et al., 2020; Kark et al., 2012; Park, 1996, 1997). In other words, it focuses on achieving specific goals and objectives and is often valued more highly than relations-oriented leadership (Park, 1996, 1997). However, there is also room for the androgynous style which combines both where it is more situational (Morin, 2020; Oplatka, 2004; Park, 1997), showing how gendered leadership is treated as a non-essential construct that can be performed strategically despite the male or female sexed bodies, which will be discussed in the later discussion of Fuller's (2014) theory.

Placing itself among these discussions, this study is involved in the third one which touches upon the styles and further implications of gendered educational leadership of a female principal on students' achievements. However, instead of merely identifying based on such feminine or masculine styles, this research seeks to deconstruct, trouble, and question these styles and see them beyond the binary lens. Thus, it hopes to cover not only the styles that reflect or fit into this socially dominating notion of masculine or feminine style, but also possible resistance or even new style and characteristics that might even violate the binary norm.

### 2.2.2 Problematizing 'Female's Ways of Leading'

From the extensive progress in research that clearly shows how gender can shape one's leadership, there is some critical awareness needed to be addressed that problematize the notion of male and female ways of leading. The early studies, and those that try to generalize females' experiences, challenges, and styles in leadership positions as discussed above, tend to present them as if they are a homogenous group of people or as if gender is constructed in the same way across culture, race, religion, sexuality, etc. (Court, 2005; Fitzgerald, 2003). Even if these factors are included or mentioned in the discussion, there was no conscious attempt to theorize how power is exercised in such complexity (Fitzgerald, 2003). For instance, it can be seen in one of the ground-breaking studies by Shakeshaft (1987) on females in educational leadership where it is explored that relational and care are the female culture in administration; the centrality of relationship with others, interest in teaching and learning, the focus on building community, experiencing marginalization based on sex, and the struggle of dealing with the blurred private and public world.

This kind of discussion has been covered by cultural feminism's discourse on female ways of leading (Court, 2005). Cultural feminism itself argues that females possess certain innate qualities that are uniquely valuable to society, such as empathy, nurturing, and collaboration, and these qualities are often associated with traditional feminine roles and activities, such as motherhood and domesticity. They argued that these qualities should be celebrated and valued rather than dismissed as inferior to traditionally masculine traits, like competition and

aggression (Alcoff, 1988; Belenky et al., 1986; Court, 2005; Fuller, 2022). In the field of educational leadership, this similar idea can be found in Nodding's (1984, 1999, 2005) ethic of care which has influenced many studies (Bergmark, 2020; Martin, 2020; Moen et al., 2020). It can also be seen in Rogers' (1988) 'female ethos' which suggests that females bring a distinct set of values, attitudes, and behaviors to leadership roles that differ from those traditionally associated with masculinity, such as caring, nurturing, and inclusive participatory management practices. Although, some other cultural feminist differs in a way that they favor understanding leadership differences between gender based on social constriction instead. For instance, Robins and Terrell (1987) argued that males and females learn according to society's rules: for females to share, and show compassion, caring, and nurturing, while males are to win at all costs.

Despite how this insight helps to understand females' approach to leadership, such a perspective has apparent limitations (Court, 2005) as it tends to end in universalizing discourse or essentialization where female leaders are treated as 'naturally' using feminine leadership or the females' way of leading. Court (2005) argued that whatever the basis for understanding such gender differences in leadership, the effect of such an approach will lead to the binary and oppositional discourse of masculine vs. feminine leadership style which has been explored above. This is a significant problem since they reinforce gender stereotypes where feminine and masculine are monolithic or universal categories as if there are no other modes of difference intersected, like class, ethnicity, sexuality, personality, values, religion, etc. Furthermore, instead of challenging gender dichotomies and hierarchies, it rather solidifies them. It also has the risk of 'reverse sexism' where although it aims to counter masculinist gender discourse, it instead, through valorizing traditionally feminine qualities, reinforces gender stereotypes and promotes the exclusion of males from certain roles or activities (Blackmore, 1999; Court, 2005). Therefore, in response to this, as elaborated in the gender discussion above, poststructuralist feminism is applied as it provides a more complex and dynamic understanding of female leaders' agency in educational leadership (Court, 2005).

### 2.2.3 Monoglossic, Heteroglossic, and Polyglossic Gendered Educational Leadership

As discussed previously, post-structuralist feminism offers a suitable framework for exploring females in leadership without essentializing them while acknowledging the power of social structure as well as possible resistance. One of the manifestations of the theory that encompass all these is Francis' (2010, 2012) influential theory of gender monoglossia and heteroglossia. However, when it comes to educational leadership study, there has been an expansion of the theory by Fuller (2014), a prominent scholar who is an expert in gender and educational leadership. This theory helps to explore multiple accounts—not only binary accounts—of gendered leadership. Before going into the gendered educational theory, it will be helpful to understand the political characteristics of the concepts; monoglossia means dominating or hegemonic while heteroglossia indicates contradiction/struggle/differences, and finally, polyglossia is simultaneity. Adopting this conceptualization of gender as a lens to approach educational leadership results in Fuller's (2014) theory of gendered educational theory.

First of all, monoglossic gendered leadership refers to the enactment of conforming to the dominant discourse of female or male ways of leading (Fuller, 2014). For instance, female leaders have been socialized to adopt sharing and caring characteristics (Blackmore, 1999), leadership for learning, social justice, collaborative, relational leadership, balanced leadership, spiritual leadership, etc. which are discussed earlier. Thus, a female leader is 'doing monoglossic gendered leadership' when she conforms to the feminine leadership or female ways of leading.

Second, heteroglossic gendered leadership occurs when female leaders practice leadership transgressing from traditional femininity or feminine leadership (Fuller, 2014). This occurs when female leaders perform masculine leadership which is in contrast to the essentialist monoglossia. Thus, there is a deconstruction of gender to show that gender can be performed despite the sexed body.

Finally, polyglossic gendered leadership is when the leadership practice can be understood outside the existing gender binary conceptual frames, thus a space

for new discourse to develop (Fuller, 2014). It is when there is acceptance of the multiplicity of gendered leadership discourses (not only feminine or masculine), such as resistance to, rejection of the dominant binary view of gendered leadership, or even proposal of an alternative. A similar example can also be identified in Fuller's (2010, 2014) work on a female educational leader who is perceived differently as: 'switching' between feminine and masculine styles, somewhere in between the feminine-masculine realm, and even neither/both feminine and masculine. These all reflect the simultaneity and fluidity of gendered leadership construction.

Indeed, the effectiveness of this conceptual framework to study female leaders have been recognized by scholars in recent times. This discussion has explored learning gendered leadership in a senior leadership team (Fuller, 2015), school members' construction of female leaders' gendered leadership (Fuller, 2014), a female leader's self-analysis of leadership in the academy (Acker, 2012), engagement in multiple leadership discourses (Gunter, 2013), etc. It can be seen although many studies have recognized the cruciality of this gender-critical approach in educational leadership, rarely studies on female leaders in Islamic schools or Muslim society are critically approached using this lens.

## **2.3 Female Principals and Students' Achievements**

### **2.3.1 Principals' Roles in Students' Achievements**

The importance of exploring the experiences and cases of principals as educational leaders have been widely discussed in the educational field. Studies on principals have reached a wide range of discussions starting from leadership style, principals' professional development, principals' turnover, teacher satisfaction, and more. When it is compared to such extensive research on educational leadership and the role of principals, however, there is not that many literature on principals and students' achievement. It is important to be addressed considering the growing recognition that effective school leadership is a critical factor in improving students' achievement. Indeed, school leadership is one of the key determinants of

students' achievement, and effective school leadership can lead to improvements in student learning outcomes (OECD, 2011).

As mentioned earlier, despite its cruciality, the topic is not a widely researched area. One reason for this lack of exploration is that early studies focused primarily on classroom-level factors when it comes to students' achievements which have led to the perception that school principals have little direct impact on it, overlooking the role of principals in creating a conducive learning environment (Gentilucci & Muto, 2007; Grissom et al., 2021). Indeed, research has questioned the direct impact of school principals on students' achievement as principals are found to spend a significant amount of their time on non-instructional duties such as entertaining guests, day-to-day management of maintaining physical security, facilities, resources, etc. (Bastian & Henry, 2015; Wolcott, 1973) which raises doubts and debates about the extent to which they can influence student learning and achievement.

While doubts about the impact of principals on students' achievement have been raised, recent research has suggested that leadership practices can have a significant and positive impact on student outcomes. Studies showed that campuses with principals with six or more years of experience had higher students' achievements in reading and math compared to those with less experience (Azaiez & Slate, 2017); the leadership behavior of principals affects students' academic achievements (Tatlah et al., 2014); the early career of principals in high-value-added school is associated with students' achievements gain (Bastian & Henry, 2015); principals' experience in educational management, training, networking activities, and teaching-focused seminars has small but significant associations with students' achievements (Gümüş et al., 2021), and more. Recently, it is found that principals' effect on students' achievement could even be as large as the average contribution of teachers (Grissom et al., 2021). Another relevant piece of evidence would be Bastian & Henry's (2015) review on how principals' domains of instructional management, organizational management, internal relations, external relations, and administrative duties have roles in students' achievements.

Overall, the mechanism of how principals influence students' achievements can be seen as highly linked to the focus on teachers. It is understandable because many of these previous studies showed there is only an indirect correlation between principals and students' achievement through the impact on teachers' satisfaction, learning climate, teaching staff hiring and allocations, teacher emotions and trust, curriculum, etc. (Bloom & Owens, 2013; Clifford et al., 2012; Sun & Leithwood, 2015). Thus, many research focuses on those mediators when it comes to the discussion of students' achievements, but few studies specifically focus on principals and students' achievements, and moreover, the cases of female principals.

It is intriguing to note that other studies counter this argument, suggesting a rather direct link. Waters et al. (2003) found leadership practices are significantly correlated with students' achievements, such as through classroom visitation, interaction with students frequently, celebrating students' accomplishments publicly, and visibility at school. Other studies also showed that there is a direct correlation between the two (Branch et al., 2013; Chiang et al., 2016; Dhuey & Smith, 2014, 2018).

Given the evidence suggesting such an impact, it is justifiable to conclude that principals play an important role in facilitating students' achievements, either directly or indirectly. However, it is not enough to only find out about such concerns based on the matter of correlation and causality. The next question is how principals work to facilitate such outcomes, which is still overlooked in the debate dominated by quantitative studies of the two variables (Azaiez & Slate, 2017; Bastian & Henry, 2015; Gentilucci & Muto, 2007; Gümüş et al., 2021; Nichols & Nichols, 2014; Tatlah et al., 2014). Thus, the need for qualitative studies on this matter is important to contribute to the existing few discussions.

While the discussion on the impact of principals on students' achievement has been dominated by quantitative studies, there are existing qualitative studies that provide valuable insights into this topic. For instance, a qualitative study explored the dynamics of principals and students' achievements where it is found that principals' instructional leadership behaviors by being approachable,

interactive during class visitation, and acting as principal teachers are perceived by students to be directly influencing their drive for academic achievement (Gentilucci & Muto, 2007). Similarly, elementary teachers' perceptions in high-achieving elementary schools on their leadership practices show emerging themes where high expectations for students' achievements, supportive learning environment, consistent collection and review of students' achievement, and overall positive school climate are influential for students' achievements (Jackson, 2018). However, some researchers have argued that studies have placed too much emphasis on the perspective of adults like principals, teachers, parents, school board members, and staff (Nichols & Nichols, 2014; Tatlal et al., 2014) while neglecting the views of students, who are the primary beneficiaries of education. It is important to attune to what students think and perceive as influential in principals' behavior that influences their academic achievements, such as principals' approachability, instructiveness in classroom observation, and principal teachers characteristic (Gentilucci & Muto, 2007). Thus, this study also considers such comprehensive perspectives on the topic since by taking into account the experiences and opinions of all stakeholders, researchers can develop a more nuanced and holistic understanding of the role of principals on students' achievement.

### 2.3.2 The Cases of Female Principals and Students' Achievements

Up to this point, it may seem that there has been a considerable amount of research exploring the role of principals in students' achievement. However, when it comes to a specific focus on female principals, there is a notable lack of research on their roles in students' achievement. Accordingly, exploring the case of female principals and students' achievements is important to fill the existing gap in knowledge.

This scarcity needs to be problematized, especially considering the evidence of their crucial roles. For instance, studies found that the existence of female leaders helps addressing the learning crisis for students in having better performance and learning outcomes compared to schools led by males, as well as higher exam results among female students (Brossard & Bergmann, 2022; Dhuey & Smith, 2014; PASEC, 2020). Similarly, Brossard & Bergmann (2022) reported that the PASEC-

participating countries have observed that female-led schools have higher learning outcomes for both girls and boys at the end of primary school. It is also shown that having female leaders in education helps to address the learning crisis, not only for female students, but also for male students (Brossard & Bergmann, 2022).

However, the gap is not only in the rarity of the topic of female principals and students' achievement cases, but also in how studies approach it as there is a lack of approach from a gender lens perspective. It is especially because these studies treat gender interchangeably with sex where both are seen as stable binary construct. Such simple identification of 'female ways of leading' has the risk of generalizing or maintaining gender stereotypes, supporting that females work best only when they practice femininity. As discussed before, this kind of approach limits the understanding of how gender plays a complex role in principalship, such as through gender-based expectations and the ways it shapes leadership behaviors.

Lastly, the existing studies defined students' achievements only in terms of academic achievement. It is understandable considering that principals are now not only held accountable for school improvement, but also for students' achievement, especially since the position has shifted to a role that is more attentive to student learning (Lunenburg & Irby, 2013). Indeed, from a critical perspective, such a narrow idea of achievements excludes those whose aptitude is outside the hegemonic academic category, and it has also resulted in a deficit model of education, which emphasizes what students lack rather than what they possess.

If academic achievement refers to the grades and results obtained by students in a specific subject during a certain period (Kartika, 2016), non-academic achievements are the accomplishments that students attain through activities that are not part of their regular learning and teaching process. These can include extracurricular activities, sports, competitions, community service, internships, leadership roles in student organizations, artistic or athletic accomplishments, and more (Epstein & Sheldon, 2002; National Research Council, 2012; Wisudanto et al., 2022). It is important to note that non-academic achievements are also crucial as they contribute to the social, emotional, and physical development of students, as well as increase their social capital and career opportunities (Epstein & Sheldon,

2002). Despite their significance, non-academic achievements have received less attention on this issue. Therefore, when talking about achievements in this study, it is not only limited to academic ones.

## **2.4 Females Leading Islamic Schools**

### **2.4.1 Females Leading Islamic Schools**

It is worth noting that the gender context of the workplace makes a difference in leadership style (Shakeshaft, 2006). This contextuality is also applied to the schools the leaders manage, for instance, the context of Islamic schools. Indeed, there is a lack of exploration of female principalship or leadership and students' achievements in the context of Islamic schools or Muslim society. While some studies do examine the experiences of female leaders in this context, they tend to focus on their limited discussion in terms of access to the position, the challenges and struggles, and the categorization of leadership styles indicated in their practices (Abrianto et al., 2019; Brooks & Ezzani, 2022; Cardozo & Srimulyani, 2021; DeCuir, 2016; Srimulyani, 2012). This is understandable considering the fundamental access issue of the underrepresentation of female leaders in Islamic schools.

Although not touching upon students' achievements, the discussion of Muslim female leaders in education has been vastly explored. In the US, teachers and principals of American Islamic schools are found to practice transformational and transactional leadership to change the community which shows similar characteristics to those of other US principals in general (Elsegeiny, 2005). They also show how religious practices like veiling can give power to principalship, and that spirituality intersects with the leading experience (K. Arar & Shapira, 2016b, 2016a; Brooks & Ezzani, 2022). Female principals in Islamic schools also resist injustice and oppression with Islamic feminist leadership, reflecting their agency (Khalil & DeCuir, 2018). Similarly, Muslim female principals in Israel who lead Islamic schools perceive their femininity as a powerful tool to minimize conflict while leading in the patriarchal tribal society, which shows contrast to the dominant western literature (Quader & Oplatka, 2008). Another study also shows that female

principals express emotion differently based on their career stage where they first show toughness and assertion, but come to be more empathic and teaching-and-learning-oriented the longer they work (K. Arar, 2017).

While there are some studies on Muslim female leaders, there is limited research exploring how these cases intersect with students' achievements. This is likely due to the ongoing issues surrounding access for female leaders in Islamic schools. In the following discussion, the focus will be on the Indonesian context, where these issues have been examined in greater detail.

#### 2.4.2 Female Principals, Students' Achievements, and Indonesian Islamic Schools

Female principalship has been extensively discussed not only in the global context (Cardozo & Srimulyani, 2021; Cruz-González et al., 2020; Eckman, 2004; Myende et al., 2021; Smit, 2013), but also in the Indonesian context. It is shown that gender is indeed influential in Indonesian female principals' leadership and performance, along with other contextual factors, and that female educational leaders in Indonesia have been dealing with the glass ceiling which derived from the root causes of power and structure (Airin, 2010; Cardozo & Srimulyani, 2021; Juwitasari, 2021). Indonesia, like many other global countries, is still struggling with the underrepresentation of female principals in education. In Yogyakarta for instance, the total number of female principals at the high school level is only 11.11% while male principals reach the percentage of 88.89% (BPS Kota Yogyakarta, 2020).

However, the case is even more appealing when further focus is directed toward Islamic schools in Indonesia due to their rarity in numbers. In Indonesia, although the majority of the population is Muslim, the number of female leaders in Islamic schools is still limited. Data showed that less than 50% of public elementary schools (*Sekolah Dasar Negeri*) and *madrasahs* (*Madrasah Ibtidaiyah*) are led by female principals although the teacher percentage reaches 70% in the former and 78% in the latter (Margret et al., 2021).

Despite the underrepresentation of females in leadership roles in Islamic educational institutions in Indonesia, some studies have explored the experiences

of female principals in this context. These studies have shown that while some female leaders may face challenges and exclusion when managing, others are able to bring about social change as the head of vocational schools within a *pesantren* (Fatimah, 2020). These experiences highlight the diverse challenges faced by female leaders in Islamic schools. Additionally, these female leaders often navigate the tensions between traditional and modern values, negotiate their subjectivities, and demonstrate agency in their leadership (Cardozo & Srimulyani, 2021; Kusmana, 2019). Some female principals in Islamic schools have also been found to utilize democratic and situational leadership styles to effectively lead their institutions (Fatimah, 2020).

As can be seen from these studies, the studies on female principals in Islamic schools have primarily focused on leadership styles and challenges, with less attention paid to further implications on students' achievements. One of the few studies, however, shows that an effective *madrasah* focuses on factors such as recruitment processes, testing before enrolment, and students' histories of achievement in *Raudhatul Athfal*/kindergarten. Additionally, female principals in these schools often facilitate students' non-academic potential for achievement, such as *tahfidz* competitions, and community service activities (Marhawati, 2017). Another study found that female leaders in Islamic schools have achieved significant progress in facilitating students' achievements, demonstrating that their leadership is not inferior to that of male principals (Abrianto et al., 2019). Thus, Islamic schools led by female principals in Indonesia have shown success in producing students' achievements in various areas.

The studies discussed provide valuable insights into the leadership styles and challenges faced by female leaders in Islamic educational institutions in Indonesia. However, there are some limitations to these studies that should be addressed. Firstly, many of the cases of female leaders leading Islamic educational institution shows a rather conformation to the feminine style or female ways of leading. Indeed, considering the importance of contextuality as mentioned earlier, it is important to deconstruct this idea from the lacking discussion of the gender approach, thus problematizing the dominant gender construction (monoglossic) in

Muslim society. Furthermore, these studies do not further explore the mechanism of how these kinds of styles are practiced, and what are the implications of it. This study will fill the gap, especially in this perspective of the gender approach. Moreover, the studies conducted in Indonesia have primarily focused on *pesantren* and *madrasah*, which are unique to the Indonesian context. This focus overlooked private Islamic schools, such as integrated Islamic schools, which also play an important role in the country's educational landscape (Hasan, 2009).

#### 2.4.3 Females as Educational Leaders in Islam

Based on the literature, the idea of gender in the Islamic context or Muslim society research has shown a somewhat monoglossic account where they maintain the dominant construction of gender where females are discouraged from public activities and representations, such as leadership positions. This occurs even though neither Prophet Muhammad's teachings nor the Quran support such a perspective. The root of this mentality is patriarchal interpretations of Islamic scriptures that portray females as inferior to males (Jawad, 2009).

As a result, scholars made a conscious decision to challenge dominant patriarchal conventions by re-reading Islamic literature from the female viewpoint to address gender (in)equality. For instance, Wadud (1999) explained that there are no human beings destined to be or created inferior, including in terms of gender. This is seen from the Quranic verses she deconstructed by focusing on the 'spirit' of the Quran. In similar, Nurmila (2020) explored the patriarchal interpretation of the Quran and tried to contextually interpret the Quran that is gender-friendly, especially regarding female leadership which the study discussed in the context of PTKIN (*Perguruan Tinggi Keagamaan Islam Negeri*) in Indonesia.

This effort to reinterpret Islamic text (feminist reading and interpretation) raises the concern of how it is only males who have the authority to be translators and commentators while females are excluded from such positions. Despite the reality that neither the Qur'an nor the *Sunna* bans females from such positions, this idea persists. It is reinforced by the societal and cultural belief in the Muslim world that females are emotional and illogical, and hence unqualified to fulfill the serious

duty of reading scripture (Jawad, 2009). The above assumption has been applied to the public realm, so that females are considered unqualified for key public positions, such as leadership roles and other forms of public representation. This exclusion persists despite significant historical proof of the existence of female scholars who contributed positively to the life of the early Muslim community, such as the heritage of Aisha and others from the early period of Islam that has not been preserved (Jawad, 2009). Thus, it demonstrates how females have been disadvantaged in terms of assuming public positions, and that discrimination between males and females has grown and continues to exist.

## **CHAPTER 3**

### **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

#### **3.1 Research Approach**

Research approach is the overall plan of research starting from the broad assumptions to the ways data are collected, analyzed, and interpreted (Creswell & Creswell, 2017). This research applies a qualitative approach considering the nature of the research problems that seek to understand and explore how gender plays a role in leadership practices and its implication to facilitating students' achievements. This is in line with the idea of the qualitative approach as an approach to understanding social problems ascribed by individuals or groups (Creswell & Creswell, 2017). In order to have a clear understanding of this research, it is necessary to elaborate on the components of the qualitative approach applied which consist of the philosophical assumptions brought into this research, the suitable research design, and the specific methods or procedures used in conducting the research.

##### **3.1.1 Philosophical Assumption: Transformative Feminist Paradigm**

Philosophical assumption, worldview, or paradigm is a belief system that plays as a means to view or to make sense of the world (Creswell & Creswell, 2017). This study underlies the transformative worldview or critical paradigm. Researchers of this paradigm are concerned with how education is political or the construction of knowledge, curriculum, and teaching serves the interest of those in power, and schools reproduce and maintain them (Mack, 2010). Thus, educational research with this paradigm challenges such reproduction of inequalities. Because this study places importance on the experiences of a female principal in the male-dominated leadership position, the paradigm is integrated into this research, specifically through feminism.

The feminist understanding from which this research draws believes that gender is central in structuring social life. According to Marshall and Young (2006), the main characteristic of the feminist framework is that it is grounded in the feminist

theory applied in the research. In this study, it is the feminist theory of Gendered Educational Leadership (Fuller, 2015) which will be applied to understand female principals' gender construction and show its centrality to students' achievements at school. This paradigm is crucial considering that not all research on gender issues, including those in education, applies a feminist perspective. Meanwhile, Marshall & Young (2006) stated that researching gender should incorporate feminist stances as it is necessary to eradicate androcentric gender biases, and in education, it helps to unravel the educational practices that maintain and reproduce the ideological male and female identities (Marshall & Young, 2006).

### 3.1.2 Research Design: Qualitative Case Study

After addressing the worldview that underpins this study, it is important to address how it guides or leads researchers to lean towards the continuum of quantitative or qualitative approach (Creswell & Creswell, 2017). Considering the transformative feminist paradigm of this study, it is appropriate that qualitative design is applied because it facilitates an in-depth and in-context understanding of how things work, why, and how others see them (Gay et al., 2012). In detail, the design of a qualitative case study is taken where the researcher conducts an in-depth analysis of a case.

Given that this research focuses on a unit of study of an Islamic school led by a female principal, the appropriate approach for this study is a qualitative case study. According to Miles and Huberman (1994), a case study investigates a phenomenon that occurs in a specific context, such as the specific context of an Islamic school in this study. In other words, it is particularistic, descriptive, and heuristic (Gay et al., 2012). The epistemological question of case studies, thus, is what can be learned about a single case (Stake, 2005, p. 443) or the characteristics of this particular entity, phenomenon, or person (Gay et al., 2012, p. 12).

Considering this as a case study that prioritizes the idea of a bounded system, it is important to address boundaries. As in this particular study, the boundaries are as followed: Firstly, the study is conducted in a city in West Java, Indonesia; second, it involves a private integrated Islamic school (SIT/*Sekolah Islam Terpadu*;

finally, this study focuses on a single case of a female principal, and did not include other female principals with the strength of in-depth discussion of the case.

### **3.2 Research Context**

This study took a female principal's leadership of Al-Wahid Islamic Elementary School (pseudonym) as a case. The school is located in one of the big cities of an urban area in West Java, Indonesia. As one of the earliest Islamic schools in the city, the school is an integrated Islamic school known as *Sekolah Islam Terpadu*, which is a private school under a foundation that not only has an elementary school unit, but also kindergarten, middle school, high school, and other units. As in this case, this study focuses its scope on the level of elementary school level (SDIT) considering the availability and the length of the female principal's leadership in the school which started in 2015, making it more appropriate for the study. As an integrated Islamic school, the school is under the administration of the Ministry of Education, integrating the national curriculum, JSIT (*Jaringan Sekolah Islam Terpadu*) curriculum, and the school's curriculum.

In terms of the school's characteristics, this school is located in the city which is highly accessible. During the research period, the school is attended by 776 students (419 male and 357 female students) and 102 teachers and staff (32 males and 70 females). It is also obtained from the school members and 357 administration staff that the students and parents are from middle to higher social economical classes where the parents are not only financially stable, but also educated from reputable universities in Indonesia. The school applies *full-day* school schedules from Monday to Friday, however, during the period of this research, the schedule was half-day considering the *Ramadhan* month and preparation towards the 6<sup>th</sup> grade's final examinations.

### **3.3 Research Subjects**

As a case study, this study investigated the gendered educational leadership of a female principal who has been leading an Islamic school for seven years. Besides the principal, this study initially planned to involve other 8 participants of school members; 2 vice principals (1 female vice principal of academic affairs and

1 male vice principal of student affairs); 2 teachers (1 female and 1 male teacher); 2 staff (1 female BK/counseling staff and 1 male administration staff), and 2 students (1 female student and 1 male student) by considering the socially constructed male and female compositions and to gain diverse perspectives from different individuals. However, additional participants were involved (1 male vice principal of Quran and *diniyyah*, 1 male teacher, and 1 female PIC/Person in Charge of student competitions affairs) during the research period while the researcher was doing observation and encountered these individuals. Thus, there are 12 participants in total whose pseudonyms and other information can be found in Appendix I.

The teachers and staff were selected purposively based on their length of working years at the school to assure richer information regarding the principal. Meanwhile, the students selected are those who are considered as high-achieving according to the principal and teachers, basing it on their record of academic or non-academic achievements, especially those who are in the 6<sup>th</sup> grade of elementary school considering the length of their experience under the female principal's leadership. This inclusion of student participation also contributes to the research gap about principalship and students' achievements where few studies listen to the voice of students regarding this issue (Gentilucci & Muto, 2007). With such considerations, the researcher received the help of the principal to get access to these participants. Finally, for the sake of confidentiality, the names of the school and all participants are substituted with pseudonyms.

### **3.4 Ethical Considerations**

This chapter aims to outline the ethical considerations that have been implemented in this research. First of all, one of the main ethical considerations addressed is confidentiality. To ensure confidentiality, pseudonyms are used for both participants and the research site to protect their identities and ensure that their privacy is maintained throughout the research process. Second of all, verbal consent was obtained from the participants before the interview sessions, and for the case of student participants, the consent was requested through their homeroom teachers who delivered them to the parents. It is necessary to ensure that participants were

fully aware of their rights and their roles as informants and that they have been given permission to participate. Indeed, this information was also delivered to participants before data collection was conducted. Third, the research instruments utilized in this study were checked by supervisors to ensure that they do not harm any of the participants.

Furthermore, it is also important to address positionality as a researcher besides the worldview stance and theoretical approach applied in this study. The researcher is an Indonesian Muslim female who has previously undertaken her schooling years in a similar private integrated Islamic school from her elementary to high school level. Moreover, the researcher is familiar with the area in which the research site resides. Thus, this shared membership and previous encounters may facilitate a relationship and communication in which participants are able to comfortably share their perspectives.

Finally, it is important to acknowledge the subjectivity matter in this research through critical reflection. In this purpose, there have been several steps taken and considered by the researcher. Firstly, the various data collection methods have allowed the researcher to triangulate the data which helps in being reflective in answering the research questions. Second of all, during data collection, the researcher consulted her understanding to the participants before proceeding to the next discussion. This allows for clarity and awareness of different interpretations between the researcher and the participants.

Lastly, this bias and subjectivity matter becomes clearer when understood through Milner's (2007) framework that rejects researchers as detached from the research process which is also applied in this study. Specifically, it is by 1) researching the self. The researcher engaged in self-reflection regarding her understanding of gender and leadership; 2) researching the self in relation to others. After being aware of her own understanding, the researcher related it to those of the participants. Consequently, it was also possible to recognize and identify different perspectives among the parties; 3) engaged in reflection and representation. This step was done by representing diverse perceptions in the study or what Milner (2007) termed as point and counterpoint, or narrative and counter-narrative. For

instance, in this study, it is explicitly reported that the participants argued that ‘sex does not matter’, but so was the researcher’s interpretation of it being matter as after discussing, the theme of the role of gender in the principal emerged; 4) shifting from the self to system. Finally, it is important to relate the research to the bigger social construct or how it is explained by the bigger culture. Among all these, this explicit statement of positionality is also one of the efforts to acknowledge the researcher’s subjectivity.

### **3.5 Method of Data Collection**

In order to reach the ways data will be collected, it is necessary to first identify the types of data that help to answer the research questions (Creswell, 2012). In this light, this study seeks to find data on gender construction in the school context, the female principal’s gendered educational leadership, and the implication for students’ achievements. Thus, this study used the systematic steps of preliminary observation, interviews, and main observation, as well as documents. This variety of methods allows for triangulation, and they are elaborated further in the following discussion.

#### **3.5.1 Observations**

Observation is a form of data collection that records information that occurs in the research site and studies participants’ behaviors by observing or paying attention to people and places (Creswell, 2012). Specifically, after receiving permission to conduct the study at the school, the researcher spent 2 days on March 28 and April 4 for preliminary non-participant observation to get familiar with the research site. Through this method, the researcher focused on observing the physical features of the school (school’s surrounding, buildings, facilities, resources, etc.) as well as daily activities there in order to answer the first research question regarding gender construction in the school. The protocol of observations used is available in Appendix A.

Besides preliminary observation, another observation took place after interviews with participants, which specifically focused on the female principal’s daily activities along with her gendered educational leadership through

appearances, behaviors, and utterances derived from the Gender theory and Gendered Educational Leadership theory (Francis, 2010, 2012; Fuller, 2010, 2014, 2015). Not only was the researcher pay attention to the principal, but the reaction of school members was also part of the observation, especially considering the dialogical characteristic of gender construction. This observation was also done non-participatively which took place for 2 days, on May 9 and May 11, 2023. On May 9, the researcher observed the principal's daily activities, such as morning greetings, classroom visitations, and working in the principal's office. While on May 11, the female principal's agenda or involvement in an event of meeting with parents for the 6<sup>th</sup> grader's upcoming final school examination was observed. Meanwhile, the plan to observe during the principal and teachers meeting was unable to be conducted due to access issues and confidentiality matters of school information. These observations were crucial to answer the second research question regarding the female principal's leadership, and the protocol used can be found in Appendix B. Finally, it is important to note that during observations, the researcher also had an informal discussion with students, a parent, and teachers besides the mentioned participants which was also noted down in fieldnote and used as part of the data.

### 3.5.2 Interviews

Interviews in a qualitative study are a way of collecting data by asking participants with open-ended questions, recording their answers, and transcribing them into written text (Creswell, 2012). The rationale behind using this method is to collect information on the perspectives of the female principal and school members which cannot be done through document analysis and observation. In interviewing participants, semi-structured interviews were conducted to keep the focus on the research topic, yet flexible towards participants' perspectives which allows nuanced understanding.

Moreover, individual interviews were conducted although interviews with the two students utilized focused group discussion instead due to the participant's time and availability. This method of individual interview was chosen with consideration

of the depth of discussion and diverse perspectives, especially with the theoretical belief that gender construction is non-universal, that it can transgress from the dominant discourse, and even propose a new understanding (Francis, 2010, 2012; Fuller, 2014). Specifically, these interviews helped to answer the second and third research questions regarding the female principal's leadership and implication for students' achievements.

In collecting data through interviews, it took place on April 5<sup>th</sup>, April 6<sup>th</sup>, and April 9<sup>th</sup>, followed by additional interviews to clarify and discuss further some findings on June 20<sup>th</sup> and June 26<sup>th</sup>, 2023. Considering the study focuses on the female principal's case of gendered leadership, the researcher interviewed the school members first in order to understand the monoglossic construction of gendered leadership (the social level of dominant construction by school members). Finally, interviews with the female principal took place (the individual level of her gendered leadership construction). These interviews were conducted using the research protocol that is available in Appendix C to G. During the interviews, an audio recorder was used to record the conversation with participants' permission and awareness of its confidentiality. In terms of location, the interviews took place in the school's guest room inside the principal and staff offices.

### 3.5.3 Documents

Documents are one of the valuable sources of information in qualitative studies that record sites or participants with readiness for analysis without necessary transcription as in observation and interview (Gay et al., 2012). In this study, collecting school documents was the final data collection taken. After observation and interviews, the researcher requested school documents related to the school profile, specifically, the school's vision and mission, the school's guidance book for students and parents, organizational structure, curriculum, and the list of students' achievements to understand further the school culture, its members, and the students' achievements. Meanwhile, documents of the participant's CV (*Curriculum Vitae*) were not available. In other words, these documents help to also answer all the research questions, specifically the first research questions regarding

school culture and gender construction and the third research question regarding the implication for students' achievements. Indeed, in educational settings, researchers can use documents without much difficulty as long as they find them within the setting they are studying (Gay et al., 2012). These documents are elaborated further in the research instrument protocol or study document guide in Appendix H.

### **3.6 Methods of Data Analysis**

Before going into data analysis, the data collected was organized and transcribed into written forms from which the decision to do analysis will be made (Creswell, 2012). First of all, unlike documents and observation data which were already in the form of text by the time data collection was done, the researcher first transcribed the interviews with participants. Afterward, since all the data collected were in the Indonesian language, the researcher translated them from Indonesian to English.

In this study, the type of data analysis applied is manual thematic analysis. The manual analysis was conducted considering the researcher's previous experience and the intention to have a hands-on feel with the data. Applying this kind of manual analysis required the researcher to read, mark, and divide the data into parts by color coding (Creswell, 2012) which also took around 1 week to be done. In specific, the method allows for the identification of patterns and themes that emerge from the data and involves a systematic process of coding and categorizing data (V. Braun & Clarke, 2022).

In detail, it involves familiarization with the data set, identifying the patterns, systematically coding them, deriving themes, and creating the narrative (V. Braun & Clarke, 2022). First of all, it starts with getting familiar with the data by reading the transcripts, observational fieldnotes, and documents. After getting familiar with the data and seeing patterns, the researcher set initial color codes based on those patterns. As in analyzing the data of this study, initial color codes were; red for the ideal construction of female principal, pink for feminine leadership style, and light blue for masculine style as these were the most apparent patterns found. It is important to address the use of these colors as influenced by society's construction

of feminine and masculine concepts through colors. Next, the color-coding took place where the researcher labeled the data or excerpts accordingly. During this process, emerging new codes were also added, such as; yellow for gender construction at the school, dark blue for students' achievement implication, and more. After that, these codes were arranged followed by the pieces of evidence from the supporting data. Finally, these codes were grouped into themes, specifically by referring to the research questions to present them in the discussion section. Last but not least, the themes that emerged were further analyzed from the lens of the feminist approach, especially using the theory of Gendered Educational Leadership (Fuller, 2014) to make sense of the data.

## **CHAPTER 4**

### **FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION**

This chapter elaborates on the research findings that answer the research questions. The first sub-chapter answers the first research question of “What kind of gender concept is constructed in the Islamic Elementary School?”. The answer helps to understand the bigger sociocultural context before diving into the principalship experiences. The second sub-chapter, then, delves further into the female principal’s leadership and how school members, as well as herself, perceive it. This sub-chapter answers the second research question, “Considering the existing gender construction, how do the female principal and school members perceive her leadership?”. Finally, the third sub-chapter highlights the educational implication of the previous discussions on the specific issue of students’ achievement. This discussion is elaborated to answer the third research question, which is “How does the perception regarding the female principal’s leadership play roles in approaching students’ achievement issues at the school?”. Lastly, the fourth sub-chapter concludes and discusses the findings further.

#### **4.1 Gender Construction in Al-Wahid Islamic Elementary School**

When discussing human issues and social practices, such as gendered educational leadership, the significance of contextuality is undeniable. It is especially the case as gender is not an inherent or fixed trait, but rather a socially constructed performance that is dependent on its specific cultural and historical context (Butler, 1990; Francis, 2006, 2012). Thus, it is crucial to situate gendered activities and experiences of individuals within the broader sociocultural context of that society. Before exploring how Amani (pseudonym), the female principal of Al-Wahid Islamic Elementary School (pseudonym), performs and is perceived by others regarding her educational leadership, it is crucial to understand the larger social context in which she operates, namely the school itself, in order to avoid essentializing or presuming the universality of gender construction, which has been

the practice of some previous studies. Therefore, this discussion must serve as the starting point.

From these following discussions, we will come to see that in this Islamic school, gender is constructed as binary, and often interchangeably used with 'sex'. Indeed, this is the dominant gender construction in the bigger society of Indonesia itself with its majority of Muslim citizens. Furthermore, beyond the binary gender construction, it is also found that there is underlying hegemony of masculinity treated as superior compared to femininity.

#### 4.1.1 The Umar bin Khattab Classroom: Gender Construction Reflected in School Facilities

Al-Wahid Islamic Elementary School is a private Islamic school that provides its students with an extensive range of facilities and a learning environment. Notably, it is found that these facilities reflect and reinforce the prevalent social notion of gender binarism, which rigorously divides its members into male and female categories or what is known as binary gender construction based on biological factors or sexed bodies. This is evident in various aspects of the school, such as the mosque, restrooms, and classrooms.

First, like mosques in general, the mosque in this school separates males and females in terms of prayer space, with males occupying the front and females in the back. There have been numerous debates among scholars regarding this physical placement, wherein such order reflects the superiority of males in Islam when viewed in terms of social discourse, especially when the justification of females as a distraction had they prayed in front of males or even present in the mosque comes into account (Anwar, 2013; Woodlock, 2010). Although such debate is beyond the scope of this study, it is important to note that those who pray at the mosque are the male students while female students are assigned to be at the classrooms due to the quantity matters. It is possible to overlook this issue and downplay its significance, but this phenomenon should not be ignored because it highlights the ongoing nature of the mosque's contested status as a male-dominated site that reflects and embodies the cultural and societal values of the communities it serves.

Additionally, gender binary construction is also reflected in the school's restrooms. Segregation of restrooms into male and female categories is commonly regarded as an unquestionable norm and accepted without inquiry. Nonetheless, this practice reflects and reinforces the prevalent societal conception of gender. A study, for example, described how the concealment of gender-inclusive restrooms in an American college demonstrates the 'deviance' of transgender students (Hart & Lester, 2011). This construction is evident not only by the separation of male and female restrooms in Al-Wahid Islamic School, but also by the distance between them which is far from one another. Notably, the female's restrooms are located on each floor's left wing while the males' restrooms are on each floor's right wing. At each location, there were signs put up written for *ikhwan* and for *akhwat* which applied to all school members without exception, including students, teachers, and staff. The fact that there is no separation for student, teacher, or staff restrooms but there is for male and female school members, makes the gender construction even more pronounced and supported the significance of its centrality in the educational environment. This spatial division and distance, thus, perpetuate the biologically distinct notions of what it means to be male and female.

At Al-Wahid Islamic Elementary School, there is no class separation between male and female pupils, but males are seated on the right and females are on the left and the teacher's tables are in the middle. These students should not recline next to one another, reflecting the social interaction permitted within the school society. This sex separation within the class is also observed during students' activities in other places, such as the laboratory, media room, schoolyard, and mosque. However, one of the most intriguing manifestations of gender binary construction in the school would be the names of these classrooms affixed to each classroom's door. These classes use the names of Muslim figures, scholars, and *sahabah*, such as Umar bin Khattab, Usman bin Affan, etc. As observed, this is not a new phenomenon as it is commonly observed in Islamic educational institutions, such as *pesantren* and other Islamic schools. What attracts attention is how few female figures' names, such as Fatimah Az-Zahra, were used to name only a few classrooms. The limited representation of Muslim female figures may represent the

extent to which gender equality is considered within the binary gender construction. Interestingly, upon being asked about this matter, the school argued that they have changed this naming system.

Our classes' names go by A, B, C, D. Those were not changed yet (Kanita, Vice Principal of academic affairs, June 26, 2023).

The fact that they changed the naming system shows how despite the dominant gender construction, resistance towards unequal representation of male and female Muslim figures is simultaneously found. This transformation indicates a rather gender-neutral approach in naming the classrooms compared to the previous one. Although, the persisting presence of physical signs of these Muslim figures' names in front of the class is still more than apparent as a socialization to the school members. This overrepresentation of male Muslim figures can be argued as one of the ways Islamic educational institutions maintain the dominant gender construction. Indeed, dominant discourses and non-contextual patriarchal interpretation of religious text have made it appear as if maleness is perceived as superior in religious matters and authorities (Khan et al., 2018; Nurmila, 2020; Shah, 2018).

Thus, it can be inferred that the school facilities at Al-Wahid Islamic Elementary School reflect and maintains binary gender construction. Indeed, other facilities like shoe racks and more are also divided based on that binary division. However, it is also important to note how the binary construction is beyond merely categorizing gender into the constructs of girls/women/females/*akhwat* and boys/men/males/*Ikhwan*, but also the subtle socialization of the superiority of one compared to the other or the hegemony of masculinity. The unequal opportunities for female school members to access prayers at the mosque and the underrepresentation of female Muslim figures in classroom names show proof of this argument. However, the simultaneous resistance against unequal gender representation should also be acknowledged.

#### 4.1.2. ‘Akhwat, please go to the *ustadzah* while *ikhwan* to the *ustadz*’: Gender Construction Reflected in Social Interactions

As an educational institution, school members of Al-Wahid Islamic Elementary School attend the school and interact with each other. Through observations, it was able to give insights into how they interact with each other. In accordance with the previous finding on school facilities, the division of gender binarism into *ikhwan* and *akhwat* is also found in this aspect. This characteristic can be seen in the student-teacher and student-student relationships where interaction regulations are differentiated or centered based on the students’ sex as males or females.

The student-teacher relationships were apparent from the activity of daily morning greetings. In Al-Wahid Elementary Islamic School, every morning, teachers and the principal would stand in line in front of the school gate to welcome and greet students starting from 07:20 until 07:30 when the bell rings. During these daily morning greetings, it is apparent female teachers and the principal would stand on the left side of the school gate while male teachers were on the right side of the gate. Moreover, it can be seen that female students only offered *salam* to *ustadzah* and male students only to *ustadz*.

*Akhwat*, please go to the *ustadzah* while *ikhwan* go to the *ustadz* (Amani, the school principal, May 9, 2023).

Similarly, when there was an event in the mosque, male students and parents performed *salam* to *ustadz* while female students and parents to *ustadzah*. It is not only the partner of interaction that matters here, but also the way the teachers communicate with them. It is apparent that female teachers and the principal were rather softer in tone, facially expressive, initiating small talks, and using words and nicknames to address students which is less apparent in male teachers. This is also an example of how gender roles in terms of how males and females should behave are maintained and socialized by the teachers to the student directly, especially with the mindset of adults as role models in the school.

Besides that, when they have to communicate with the different sex, they will do and show examples of maintaining physical distance and saying *salam* with both hands in front of their chest. This is accordingly found in the school's guide book where there displayed pictures of a male student doing *salam* to *ustadz*, a female student doing *salam* to *ustadzah*, as well as pictures of male students lining up separately from female students in front of the classroom before entering it. Thus, with this setting of the school environment, students also mostly socialize among themselves with those of the same sex.

Student-student relationship, similarly, also indicates such exclusive social interaction without teachers having to continuously monitor them all the time. During observations, it is apparent that many groups of students who were hanging out outside the class only consist of same-sex students. For instance, 6<sup>th</sup>-grade students were in front of their class helping each other to practice Arabic vocabulary memorization, and there were only female students on each pair. This characteristic can also be seen in the segregation based on sex during students' queuing in front of the classroom for reciting students' pledges or *ikrar* and prayers before entering class, as well as queuing or lining up for any events at school.

Similarly, in the school field, female students were seen near the classroom or playing traditional games of *engkle* outside while male students played soccer among themselves. Such gender segregation in play among students has been indeed addressed by a previous study, suggesting instead of a natural phenomenon, it is a social process influenced by adults and environments at school (Thorne, 1993). Moreover, it becomes even more interesting when a critical approach is applied to how different the plays are done although both are playing kinesthetically, male students occupy and are facilitated with more space compared to the females. This also indicates the maintenance of stereotypical gender construction where males move more and are considered more sporty compared to girls.

However, when it comes to teacher-teacher interactions, such sex-based segregation is not as apparent. In contrast to the students, teachers were seen to mingle with each other in social interaction. This is of course with the limitation of

physical distance and interaction that are not involved in the communication. The main point here is how it reflects resistance or transgression within the dominant gender norms within the school culture, similar to previous findings regarding the school facilities.

Therefore, similar to the discussion on the facilities, it can be seen that binary gender construction is also found in social interaction at Al-Wahid Islamic Elementary School. By categorizing the ways to communicate among school members based on the sex of the person, it is clear that the construction of *ikhwan* and *akhwat* categories is practiced and maintained, making it an uncontested social establishment in the school community. However, when further analysis is applied, it can be seen that beyond mere categorization, there lies maintenance of subtle superiority of male activity in students' plays. This is even more crucial to highlight considering the activities that occur daily at the school.

#### 4.1.3. 'Keputrian is mandatory for akhwat': Gender Construction Reflected in School Regulations

As a private school, Al-Wahid Islamic Elementary School has its own set of regulations that students, teachers, and all school members must adhere to. Since a private Islamic school like this has the authority to establish its own rules and policies based on its own requirements, vision, and missions, it is crucial to pay close attention to the dominant discourse that the school adopts and socializes it to its members. For this discussion, the regulations touch upon the school's disciplinary regulations of dress code and curriculum.

Firstly, in terms of regulations of ways of dressing, all pupils and school members are required to wear a school uniform based on the day as is the case in Indonesian institutions. This is not just a matter of preference, but rather implies or indicates the way how certain ideas are mandatorily needed to be followed by people of certain societies, thus, adopting and maintaining that daily. This regulation of school uniforms is prominently displayed at Al-Wahid Islamic Elementary School in the form of a large banner approximately 1.5 x 2 meters in size, where all school members can see it. In the banner, there are photographs of two varieties of attire for male and female school members, which they refer to as

*ikhwan* for males and *akhwat* for females. For males, the required uniform includes a loose-fitting shirt, pants, complete school badges, nametags, ties, belts, socks, the permission to wear hand-watches but the prohibition of wearing bracelets, and short hair that does not reach the eyebrows and ears. Meanwhile, female students must wear the school uniform that is loose-fitting and non-transparent, a *jilbab* that covers the bosom and extends to the forearm and elbow, name tags, complete school badges, socks that reach the calf, and long trousers under the long skirt. All of these specifications are listed in the banner alongside a caricature illustration. These regulations are also found in the school's guidance book which all school members possess.

This differentiation of the way of dressing based on the individual's maleness and femaleness demonstrates not only the binary construction of gender within the school, but also involves the complex social expectations regarding the appearance of what it means to be good Muslim males and females. For instance, the prohibition for males to wear bracelets, but there were no such rules for female students reflects such expectations. The school's handbook states explicitly that male pupils should not wear any accessories or jewelry, highlighting gendered expectations. Similarly, female students are required to cover their hair and the shape of their bodies with an elbow-length veil, which is the only prescribed style of wearing the headscarf (*jilbab*) in the school. Moreover, despite already wearing long skirts and pants, female students are required to wear calf-length socks and non-transparent apparel. These requirements apply exclusively to female students and teachers, but not to males.

Indeed, the legitimacy of these regulations is justified in the school's handbook, which identifies them as the *syar'i* ways of dressing, or the ideal attire based on Islamic law. Any deviation from these guidelines is regarded as *tasyabuh* or following inappropriate trends, which is mentioned in the book. Moreover, considering how this regulation is under the discussion of "School Culture" in the guidebook, the interplay between cultural, religious, and societal influences that shape the construction of gender in the school is apparent.

Second of all, some aspects of the school curriculum can also be discussed to prove the dominant gender construction in the school which also underlies the underrepresentation of female figures in the Islamic school. As *Sekolah Islam Terpadu*, Al-Wahid Islamic Elementary School does not only apply the national curriculum, but they also apply JSIT (*Jaringan Sekolah Islam Terpadu*) curriculum and their own curriculum. It is apparent, thus, this type of school, despite following the national standard, still have their authority under the educational foundation (*Yayasan*) to design and shape contents and goals they want to achieve and applied to its members.

Indeed, when it comes to the school's curriculum, certain points become visible in terms of gender construction. For instance, as an Islamic School which teaches its students about Islamic values and contents integrated into the curriculum, one of the contents taught is learning about Muslim scholars and figures which is one of the goals for achieving students' quality of "having broad knowledge in the field of religion." The points mentioned are;

...studying the *siroh* of the 10 *sahabah* guaranteed to enter paradise, studying the *siroh* of the *khulafaur rasyidin*, getting to know Muslim scholars (Ibn Sina, Al-Khwarizmi, Ibn Hayyan, Ibn Khaldun) (Buku Panduan dan Budaya Sekolah, n.d.).

Based on this focus, it is clear how there is an underrepresentation of female Muslim scholars and figures as religious authorities worth studying. Many students do not know female *sahabahs* or prominent figures besides the four *khulafaur rasyidin*. Even Muslim scholars, like Ibn Sina and others who are proposedly studied for their significance during the Islamic golden age, are limited to only male figures while female scholars and figures are overlooked. Indeed, it is important to notice this kind of absence in the Islamic educational institution.

Despite this, it is important to also indicate the complexity and multifaceted of gender construction as previously discussed. Indeed, although this kind of hegemonic masculine binary construction of gender is found in this aspect, there is also found resistance or challenging attitude towards the persisting gender stereotype in another aspect of the school curriculum. For instance, one of the

quality assurances they expect from the students is to possess life skills, one of which is “possessing basic household skills”. Interestingly, there is no specific categorization or emphasis for this skill to be applied to certain groups of gendered individuals, but rather stated neutrally applying to all students of the school. It is important to address that household skills are stereotypically associated with and expected exclusively towards females, but this is not the case in this school as discussed. However, when the bigger picture is considered, female students still have an additional program that is mandatory for them, but not for the male students.

Mandatory participation in habituation and development programs, one of which is *keputrian* (specifically for *akhwat*) (Buku Panduan dan Budaya Sekolah, n.d.).

Indeed, during observation in which the researcher got to see the structure of the organization and access to curriculum documents, it is apparent they have the program and assigned specific teachers for this *keputrian* program. The program consists of female students learning “girl’s stuff” according to the remark of the vice principal of student affairs, such as cooking, ironing, etc. It shows rather an additional emphasis on the domestic role as the exclusive role of the females.

Based on this discussion, it can be seen how gender construction is also reflected in school regulations. It especially becomes more apparent how the gender construction is not only binary where it is differentiated between *ikhwan* and *akhwat*, but also how there is underlying underrepresentation of female Muslim figures as religious authorities and stereotypical emphasis on domestic skills for females. Although, resistance is also found to some extent in the school’s quality assurance of household skill expected from all students, not limited to the stereotypical demand applied only to females.

#### 4.1.4 Conclusion

To conclude, it is evident that the notion of gender that is socially believed and maintained at Al-Wahid Islamic Elementary School reflects a binary construction as two distinct categories with its basis or origins in the biological construction of humans; the *ikhwan* and the *akhwat*. In this institution, as in the

dominant culture of Indonesian society, gender is understood and applied interchangeably with 'sex'. However, what needs to be highlighted here is the existence of a subtle idea of the hegemony of maleness, or what Connell (1987, 1995) termed as hegemonic masculinity in relation to femaleness. The fact that this construction is largely justified, secured, or stabilized by the 'Islamic', 'God's order', or '*Syariah*' label results in an even more uncontested view of gender construction. It is clear how school members believe these to be the Islamic truth where different interpretations or practices are not permitted in the school setting. Thus, the constructed understanding of gender binarism with its stereotypical gender roles among the school members is evident where they understand it as unquestionably Islamic. Consequently, this should also be the case when attempting to comprehend the truth or the uncontested construction of gender concerning leadership.

#### **4.2 Gendered Educational Leadership of a Female Principal in the Islamic School**

After comprehending the larger sociocultural construction of gender in Al-Wahid Islamic Elementary School, it can proceed to understand the female principal's leadership in this context. In the history of the school, there have been numerous principals who lead the institution. Among them, Amani (pseudonym) is one of the principals who are in charge of leading the school. As a 53-year-old female principal, she has been leading the school since 2015 until now as the fifth principal which comes after three male principals and 1 female principal before her. She has also been in the position for two periods as assigned by the educational foundation boards, making her the longest-leading principal in the school.

From her experience, it is apparent that gender is a central concept that plays a role in her leadership. Although some of the school members stated they see no problem with male or female principals and that what matters is professionalism and skills, after examining the perspectives of the female principal and the school members deeply, it is evident that educational leadership is a gendered activity. This discussion will demonstrate how 'gender' is important in the construction of 'leadership' in the community which is also intersected with Islamic values promoted in the Islamic school. In this section, the centrality of gender in leadership

experience will be elaborated by; First, understanding the conception of what is the ideal principal figure among school members. Second, exploring the practice of Amani herself to understand how she performs under the expected ideals. Third, exploring how school members and Amani view her leadership and gender. Finally, the fourth sub-section tries to explain the underlying ideas behind such views.

#### 4.2.1. 'Arrijalu qowwamuna 'alannisa': The Construction of The Ideal Female Principal

In the same way that the preceding discussion revealed that various aspects of Al-Wahid Islamic Elementary School reflect the dominant gender construction as a distinct binary construction, it is accordingly found that how the participants perceive the principal's leadership is related to her gender. This section demonstrates how school members and the principal perceive the gendered aspect of principalship through their conceptions of the 'ideal principal in Islamic school'. This discussion touches on various facets of the principal's experiences, including physical appearance, behavior, as well as utterances.

Before going into the ideal concepts of female principals, it is important to address that many participants first started their discussion about principalship as an activity that has nothing to do with gender or sex. In other words, they first argued that whether or not the principal is male or female does not matter. However, later in the following discussion as will be elaborated in this section, it is clear how gender construction is undeniable in their perceptions about school principals.

In terms of gender, it isn't a problem because our regulations are very dynamic... The rotation of male and female leadership is highly dynamic. There's nothing, so the issue of gender doesn't exist (Amani, the school principal, April 6, 2023).

First of all, the ideal female principal conception touches upon the appearance aspect. Appearance is not a trivial issue in education as previous studies have shown how educators control their appearance to exercise power and authority (A. Braun, 2011). Accordingly, this cruciality is also found in this case study. In terms of the ideal appearance of the female principal, it is found that the female principal is expected to conform to the school regulations of clothing.

... it is actually already regulated, you know, in the positive school culture, uhm, how the new leader should behave... There is already SOP for everything like that, you know (Kanita, the vice principal of academic affairs, April 5, 2023).

Indeed, the female principal is expected to follow the regulations of clothing of *akhwat* in general as discussed before, which means it is no different to other school members. However, one thing apparent that makes her different as the leader of the school, she has to embody and showcase the appearance conformation as the best and consistent one through the notion that a principal should serve as a role model for all school members. Thus, it entails the expectation that Amani, as the principal, embodies 'the good *Muslimah*' or 'the best *Muslimah*' manifestation through appearance. Indeed, the school regulations also encourage its members to not perform *tasyabbuh*, imitating the actions or practices of those outside the *syariah*, this also includes the prohibition of looking like or wearing male attires, such as pants among *akhwat*, and vice versa. This idea asserts the idealness of embodying the *Muslimah's* appearance. Thus, it can be seen that in terms of ideal appearance, feminine conformation is expected.

Besides appearance, this idealistic concept encompasses the domain of behavior in the leadership of the female principal. Based on discussions with participants, it appears that there are various behaviors they perceive as ideal for female principals leading the Islamic school. These behaviors encompass both feminine; 1) mother-like and caring, 2) communication skills, 3) empathetic and *sabr* to others, and masculine characteristics; 1) assertive, 2) resilience, 3) quick decision making, and 4) technological skills. The categorization of these into feminine and masculine characteristics is based on the participants' understanding of maleness and femaleness, which is also in line with the dominant construction in the bigger society documented in previous studies and literature.

First of all, in terms of mother-like and caring qualities, this notion is easily found almost among all participants, both males and females. There were mentioned female school principals needing to possess motherly qualities, thus also undeniably caring towards students. This perception aligns with the idea that females are often associated with nurturing characteristics.

But if it's a female principal for an elementary school, in my opinion, it's suitable. Why? Because the interaction is with children, you know, in elementary school... And one important thing, uh, in my opinion, females tend to be more caring towards children (Kanita, the vice principal of academic affairs, April 5, 2023).

Second of all, the feminine characteristic of good communication and relationship orientation is also found. The emphasis on interpersonal skills in interacting with school members was particularly noted. Female school leaders were expected for their proficiency in fostering open and effective communication channels, actively listening to the concerns and ideas of school members, and cultivating positive relationships within the school community.

So, the personal approach is close, like, it's good, you know... they can have a personal approach to each teacher, right, and eventually, the teachers feel close, you know (Karisma, counseling staff, April 5, 2023).

Third, empathetic and *sabr* are also deemed to be ideal for a female principal. The ability to empathize with the experiences and challenges faced by teachers, students, and other stakeholders within the school community was regarded as crucial. Additionally, the concept of *sabr*, which is patience and perseverance, was highlighted as an important attribute in a principal. It has to be noted, however, this characteristic should not include being overly emotional and sensitive.

And also, it seems like we still need to have a high level of empathy. Because we can't see everything only from our own perspective. So, we also need to understand the conditions, uh, of the teachers (Badriah, teacher, April 5, 2023).

Besides these feminine leadership qualities, masculine qualities are also found among participants' construction of the ideal female principal. One prominent masculine quality identified is assertiveness. This attribute encompasses the ability to confidently and firmly express opinions and expectations, and make decisions.

But indeed (besides the feminine side), the assertive side of her also frequently emerges. Well, this character is actually necessary for a leader, you know (Gilang, the vice principal of student affairs, April 5, 2023).

Second, resilience is also proposed as an ideal quality. This encompasses various aspects of resilience, including self-management, task management, people management, and goal and vision alignment. Participants emphasized the importance of resilience in facing the numerous challenges and complexities of educational leadership.

However, for an elementary school principal, it is also necessary to have someone resilient. They should be able to interpret themselves well and effectively distribute tasks, have a forward-thinking vision, and develop good plans (Kanita, the vice principal of curriculum affairs, April 5, 2023).

Third, quick decision-making is also continuously found throughout discussions with participants. This ability is regarded as a vital quality for an effective female principal. In the dynamic and fast-paced environment of a school, there are often situations that require swift actions and decisive choices.

Uh, furthermore, being able to respond quickly is important because sometimes delayed responses can trouble the person providing input or asking a question, they need quick decisions (Dino, teacher, April 5, 2023).

Finally, technological skill is also deemed important for an ideal female principal. This finding indicates the demand of modern-world society, where the effective use of technology is increasingly integral to educational practices. A proficient female principal should possess a strong understanding of digital tools, platforms, and advancements relevant to the educational landscape.

Updating, well, now we're in the digital era, especially... there are also weaknesses if females are not careful in terms of digitalization, being digitally literate, you know... Those who have PCs, have new breakthroughs to keep up. Al-Wahid Islamic School has many competitors, sister. There are many similar schools around us (Suryadi, administration staff, April 5, 2023).

Based on this discussion, it can be seen how even in an Islamic school, the ideal expectation of female principal behavior involves a mix of feminine and masculine characteristics. In this case, mother-like and caring, good communication, as well as empathetic and *sabr* to others are the feminine qualities that the idea is centered around the concept of people or a relation-oriented approach. Meanwhile, the qualities discussed which are assertiveness, resilience, quick decision-making, and technological skill underlies a rather task-oriented approach, which indicates masculine characteristics (Blake-Beard et al., 2020; Kark et al., 2012; Park, 1996, 1997).

Last but not least, utterances are something that is interestingly found in this case. This dimension is important to be possessed by female principals in terms of choice of words and the voice's pitch and volume or clarity. This emphasis on utterances reflects societal expectations of femininity.

As a female principal, it is expected of her to speak and talk in a caring manner. Moreover, the importance of voice pitch and volume is also addressed. It should also be noted that Amani is a middle-aged female with a distinctively high-pitched voice and a soft volume. Thus, this quality contributes to the participants' construction of the ideal female principal.

...for example, during events, her voice is not really clear because it is more like, female voices tend to be softer and quieter (Jefri, student, April 5, 2023).

These qualities are especially important when the principal's interaction with the students comes into account. Indeed, this discussion is not present among teachers and staff possibly because they communicate with the principal one-on-one or in small groups more frequently than the students. According to the students, Amani's high-pitched voice makes it difficult to hear and understand, even when the principal uses microphones. They believe that such a voice is not ideal for a principal due to it hindering her ability to communicate effectively. Thus, what needs to be highlighted from this is that this ideal construction of utterances asserts the previously discussed behavioral dimension of the principal as a good communicator. Indeed, it plays a role in the way students value or perceive Amani

when she performs her role as principal, such as when giving a speech or opening a ceremony.

It can be seen, thus, for utterances, the performance of feminine quality is expected. But specifically, there needs to be a certain amount of femininity. Softness, when it is considered as too much in intensity, as seen in the discussion, is also denied as the ideal in this case. This may contribute to the way school members perceive or read the female principal's leadership.

Interestingly, all these ideal appearances, behavior, and utterances are constructed by the participants under the bigger idea of the principal as a role model or a good and even best *Muslimah* for an Islamic School. Thus, making the suggested ideals not only indicate professionalism, but also religiosity. This, as a result, makes the proposed ideal an even more strong demand justified by religion and the school system for Amani as the school principal.

Moreover, this is an Islamic school. A school that, if in Islam is indeed, uh, we call it *amal*. So, then it's the most important, someone who can be a role model from their words, deeds, and more so that people- even if they say anything, just look at their actions, just look at their attitude, it's already become a *tausyiah* (Gilang, the vice principal of student affair, April 5, 2023).

In addition to this, there is one more thing that needs to be addressed regarding these ideal constructions of female principals. Commonly found among almost all participants is that despite the proposed ideals which involve a mix of feminine and masculine qualities, they still believe that the foremost ideal construction is that male is still the ideal leader for not only Islamic school but also schools in general. As cited by the participants like Dewa, Gilang, Dino, and Karisma, the reference to this argument goes to the Quran (QS. An-Nisa: 34) which says *arrijalu qowwamuna alannisa*.

One thing to be noticed here, those proposing and expressing this ideal are mostly male staff and teachers compared to the females. This is not surprising considering the existence of anxiety in taking over leadership positions by females in the educational field (MacKinnon, 2021). Thus, based on the discussion, just because a female principal is appointed by the foundation and the school members

are working under her principalship, it is apparent this case is considered an ‘emergency’ when there is no suitable male leader. In fact, many of them claim that this is more of a decision made by the system or the foundation, and that they are doing so out of loyalty to the foundation.

Similarly, Dino also suggested that having a male principal is ideal as in the example of *khulafawu rasyiddin*. Indeed, this idea is even clearer based on the remark of one of the participants on how female principals or leadership in the Islamic school can be accepted as long as there is a male figure alongside the leader. Eventually, the weight of leadership qualities is placed on or assured by these male figures. In this case, Amani leads the school along with three vice principals in which two of them are males.

As we know, uh, actually, the best leader is indeed a male, you know. As for me, personally, it's not a problem, you know... Uh, and also, of course, as long as there's the male teacher as the vice who can maybe help with certain things that might need backup, for example (Karisma, counseling staff, April 5, 2023).

In conclusion, based on the elaboration of the ideal principal, it is found that it encompasses complexity and is not limited to only socially constructed female qualities or feminine style of leading. This all shows that the ‘ideal’ female principal in the Islamic school in this modern era and context does not demand total feminine confirmation, but rather combinations depending on situations.

#### 4.2.2 ‘It is complicated’: The Complex Practice of the Female Principalship

What has been discussed previously is the dominant or ideal conception among school members of how female principals should be or the socially expected qualities of female principals in the Islamic school. To see the actual practices of Amani, however, the practice must be brought to light. This discussion strengthens the notion that leadership is indeed gendered, or that gender plays a role in how a female school principal leads and how it is perceived or interpreted by school members. In practice, it can be seen that similar to the ideal construction, leadership is not static or limited to where one only does feminine style (monoglossia) or only masculine style (heteroglossia), but rather complex, where there are

mixes/combinations (polyglossia). In this discussion, Amani's leadership practice compared to the ideals is discussed in terms of appearance, behaviors, and utterances, as well as the situations or states of this mix.

In comparison to the ideals, Amani's principalship in terms of appearance can be discussed first. As a principal, Amani usually goes to school in uniform like other teachers, following the school dress codes. She does not appear to apply makeup except neutral-colored lipstick, but rather wears accessories, such as a hand watch, a gold bracelet, and a ring. The usage of heeled shoes is also found in her daily apparel. Based on these practices, and the school regulations, it is apparent that Amani is conforming to the school regulations for *akhwat* by performing femininity. Thus, she is performing her role as a principal or leader here in a sense of a role model of a good *Muslimah*.

Yeah, *Ustadzah* (Amani), she is feminine. Because it's already evident from her nature. The way she speaks and her appearance (Jefri, student, April 5, 2023).

Furthermore, in terms of behaviors, as demanded by the ideal expectation of incorporating both feminine and masculine styles, Amani indeed practiced these qualities in her principalship. In terms of feminine characteristics, they are found; 1) mother-like characteristics, 2) communication skills, 3) involvement of emotions, and 4) timely decision-making. Meanwhile, the masculine characteristics described are; 1) assertive, 2) goal-oriented, and 3) procedural. These characteristics are similar or close to the proposed ideals in the previous discussion in terms of its emphasis on relation or people and task orientation. In terms of unmentioned qualities previously discussed, specifically technological skill, it appears that the school members see her as still lacking in this quality, but not perceiving her as necessarily feminine because of it.

The first feminine quality found is mother-like characteristics. It is indeed pervasively found throughout discussion with all participants. This quality is especially mentioned when it comes to describing Amani's relationship with students.

Well, it's nice, and then, uh, she also provides this, providing a nurturing atmosphere, in my opinion. She also has a motherly nature (Suryadi, administration staff, April 5, 2023).

The second one is communication or interpersonal skill. This quality reaffirms the centrality of people or relationship orientation in her leadership. This quality is also often mentioned by participants as beneficial in allowing giving opinions and suggestions to the principal. Moreover, in daily life, it appears that Amani always does class visitation and controls school every day, greeting students at the school gate every morning while teachers take turns, and tend to go for discussion and consultation with teachers and colleagues.

She surely checks the school every morning, you know, when the students line up (before going into the class) like that... She also checks if the classrooms are empty or not, like that... she does it (morning greeting) every morning... And for other teachers, we take turns (Badriah, teacher, April 5, 2023).

The third one is the involvement of feelings or emotions. This quality is found to be practiced when Amani is communicating work issues with teachers and staff. However, this quality is not only seen on the positive side as Gilang, Jefri, and Hawa mentioned this quality made her a *sabr* figure who never expresses her anger harshly, even when she is in her assertive mode. However, it is also read negatively as 'too emotional' or 'too sensitive' in some cases which disadvantage her leadership practices according to school members.

Uh, yeah, but it cannot be denied that as a female, there's still an emotional aspect involved, you know, like that, you know. Still, there's that emotional aspect involved (Karisma, counseling staff, April 5, 2023).

The last one is the timely decision making. Unlike the demanded ideal which is the quick decision-making process, Amani is found to be taking time in decision making which the participants constructed as a feminine quality. This characteristic seems to be related to her approach or people or relation-oriented approach, thus making her seek other members' opinions before taking any decisions.

I think that's how it is, uh, for females, although once again, sometimes it makes us impatient... like why don't they go "chop chop chop" (quickly), you know? Because maybe females are more inclined to do this first, setting the rhythm (Gilang, the vice principal of student affairs, April 5, 2023).

Accordingly, masculine styles are also identified one of which is assertiveness. This particular characteristic becomes evident when addressing matters of school discipline. Notably, she does not shy away from taking decisive action when confronted with serious violations of school rules or crucial institutional regulations.

It's not a weakness, though, because she can also be assertive at times. If there's a severe violation of a crucial institutional rule, the person involved is called in... Well, if it's a serious violation of the institution's regulations, she's willing to take disciplinary action, so to speak (Gilang, the vice principal of student affair, April 5, 2023).

Another masculine quality is goal orientation. This style comes apparent in Amani's execution of the task given by the institutional boards of the foundation. From this, it can be seen how she focuses on achieving the foundation's goal.

...because the goal is framed by the foundation, right? So, what we want to achieve and what will follow are how the principal implements the programs provided by the foundation. For example, in the case of an elementary school, the goal is to shape students with a strong character (Kanita, the vice principal of academic affairs, April 5, 2023).

Finally, a procedural or instrumental approach in her leadership is also found. It can be seen that Amani is often found to practice her principalship following what her uppers ordered or play a role as an instrument. In other words, she is applying what the foundation has decided which for some school members, it can be somehow inflexible.

... as we also depend on the system and the meetings. We just follow through with it, you know. That's what makes it easier for me. No matter how big my responsibilities are... once the system is in place, we don't have any additional

burdens. Because that's how all the rules are set (Amani, the school principal, April 6, 2023).

Last but not least, the dimension of utterances in her principalship is also important to be explored. In accordance with the previously discussed ideals, Amani's practice of utterances in a caring manner during her principalship also reflects the use of words such as "sweetheart", "smart child", "*soleh*" and "*solehah*" to the students. However, in terms of volume and pitch, it is apparent as mentioned before, that her voice is rather unclear which results in difficult understanding from the students' perspective.

In addition, Amani also usually approaches students first and communicates with them. When communicating with younger students, Amani even involved physical affection in her communication. It is also interesting to address how Amani, when discussing her principalship practices, often use the pronoun "we" and "us". This might support the previously discussed qualities of relationship or people-oriented style that she performs, especially considering how she presents her leadership as teamwork.

In understanding this mix of feminine and masculine qualities, it can be helpful to understand the shift between the two based on the situation or the context. Based on the discussion with participants, it is apparent that Amani performs gendered leadership based on certain situations. A pattern emerged that when interacting with students and female staff and teachers, she performs her feminine style more. This does not mean she does not practice femininity when it comes to dealing with males. She performs it too which makes her less threatening or powerful, thus an acceptable leader for them. However, the intensity is described as more apparent in the earlier case.

Moreover, the state is also apparent in terms of the period of her leadership. As time passed by, it appears that she performs more femininely compared to her early days based on remarks of Amani herself and most participants. This can be explained by the need of proving her illegibility for the position in the early days, especially considering the existence of male seniors who questioned her compatibility, showing that her focus was on her colleagues and seniors. However,

in recent times, she shifted her focus to students, thus she expressed comfort in performing her feminine side compared to before.

At first, I did feel the pressure of being able to interact with people who are very different from me, like senior teachers. It was a burden for me. It was like, "Wow." I had this thought of how I should communicate because, you know, they're males. The difference in sex and their seniority posed a challenge for me in the beginning (Amani, the school principal, April 6, 2023).

All these complexities show that gendered leadership is indeed a doing instead of being. The qualities of femininity and masculinity can be shifted, mixed, and changed accordingly based on the situation needed instead of an essential aspect unseparated from the female or male sexed bodies. Indeed, this strategy is found in Amani herself where she compared leadership to wearing hats.

For example... it's like wearing a hat. The red hat represents emotions, the green hat represents affection, and the yellow hat represents decision-making. We need to play with them when required. I'm currently learning that. For me, it's the most challenging aspect (Amani, the school principal, April 6, 2023).

Lastly, it is crucial to note that this mix is not always intentional, as there is always implicit negotiation and mix of performance in terms of how she presents her appearance, voice, and body as feminine, even when her behavior is viewed as masculine by school members. This demonstrates that even if one aspect of behavior resists performing masculinity, another aspect of appearance or speech may do other things. Therefore, multifaceted is readily apparent.

In conclusion, in practice, Amani's leadership indeed involves the mixing of feminine and masculine characteristics. This mix is also situational where it can be performed in different situations. It also indicates that leadership is a complex matter and Kilan, one of the teacher participants, expressed this complexity as "It is very complicated". Despite this, as will be discussed in the following section, almost all participants view and conclude her overall leadership as feminine.

#### 4.2.3 The Feminine Façade: Masking the Complex Gendered Leadership with Stable Construction and Revealing it

Despite the dynamic characteristic of the female principal's leadership, it is evident that almost all participants concluded and believed that Amani's leadership is undeniably feminine. Thus, the elaborated dynamic and complexity are hidden or masked. This makes it seem like she is an acceptable female leader who does not threaten the social norm and conforms to the monoglossic order.

Feminine is like feminine qualities. Like females... because *Ustadzah* (Amani) is a female. Also, because she doesn't like to get angry or anything like that (Hawa, student, April 5, 2023).

Similarly, this conclusion is also found among other participants except Badriah and Karisma. Despite their discussion of how Amani performs gendered leadership complexly, they give more credit to the feminine style as dominating in identifying Amani. It can be seen that they try to stabilize her gender performance by focusing on the existence of socially acceptable feminine qualities found in Amani even if it is just a little. Therefore, the complexity of gendered leadership is masked by those conforming ideas.

What becomes the next discussion at this point is how such masking occurs. It is important to reveal this as it affects the way Amani's principalship and roles are seen in the school. Thus, based on further discussion with the participants, there have emerged explanations for why this masking occurs, which is the underlying gender-essentialist view on the participants' individual level (which is also reflected in the school as discussed before), and the feminization of elementary school and its principalship on the institutional level.

First of all, the underlying essentialist gender assumption helps to explain and reveal why such masking happens. It is vastly found that school members do not differentiate between sex and gender. Thus, although their discussion about gender might show complexity, in conclusion, they are still dominated by the discourse of 'female ways of leading'. There are found beliefs that males and females lead differently, and these differences are inherent or essential in them.

Perhaps in that aspect, females are more communicative, and more detailed, ensuring that the rules are followed thoroughly. Because we tend to be more meticulous... Sometimes, males, on the other hand, go with the flow (Amani, the school principal, April 6, 2023).

This understanding is not only found in Amani herself, but also among other school members. The perceptions found are also in line with the stereotypical assumptions about male and female ways of leading where school members believe female leaders are essentially or in *kodrat* are more emotional, physically weaker, etc. This essentialist view is even more apparent when discussion regarding female leaders' incapability in taking decisions emerged which is credited to the female's menstruation cycle as the cause. This indicates the differentiation of leading capacity is taken by focusing on the individual's biological differences. Thus, making it appear as a rather stable and uncontested view.

So, as a female, you know there are times when we can't concentrate, right? What is that? Before menstruation, yeah, PMS! Well, usually during that time, we are not stable, you know... So, when making decisions, try to do it in a calm state, because we should understand that females have those feelings, and it's undeniable that there are emotional conditions for females. That's one of the differences with males as they are more stable (Kanita, the vice principal of curriculum, April 5, 2023).

Because of such assumptions, it explains the possibility of the overpowering of feminine characteristics overall even when there is a masculine trait found in Amani's principalship. Thus, it explains why there is such a feminine bias in reading the leadership or in Karisma's words, it "cannot be denied". Such bias underscores the need to understand how gender norms and expectations impact perceptions regarding one's leadership.

Some of the examples of such bias can indeed be found in the data. For instance, in reading one's leadership, the same activity can be read differently when it is done by a male or female principal. For instance, it can be questioned and criticized how Amani's emotional expression is interpreted by some school members as being too emotional, irrational, or incapable of handling pressure.

Kilan, one of the teachers, accordingly told his point of view of how Amani handled his transferring issue to Al-Wahid Islamic School as “illogical” because she was displaying concerns for other teachers’ opinions. Although further research might be needed, the same trait can be read as passionate and driven when a male principal does it. Indeed, a study showed how female leaders can be evaluated more negatively (Murakami & Törnsén, 2017).

Another example found is regarding Amani’s timely decision-making. When she seeks input and prioritizes collaboration, the interpretation came off as indecisive, lacking in confidence, or unable to take charge of some of the school members. This interpretation needs to be put under critical analysis whether or not it is based on a gender bias perspective in leadership. It is especially since the same act can be seen as considerate and deliberate decision-makers had male leaders perform it.

The second point is the feminization of elementary school and its principalship role. In this institutional level of Al-Wahid Islamic Elementary School, it can be seen how there appears domestication of the school where it has been treated as a ‘house’ or private realm for students with its ‘mothers’ and ‘fathers’ figures where ‘the children’ can learn and socialized about their ‘gender identity’ through the ‘school curriculum, practices, facilities, etc. It can even be seen from the way the school uses the term ‘*rumah*’ in naming the counseling unit and ‘*griya*’ in naming the science laboratory, strengthening this argument of domestication or what Amani mentioned as a “homey” school. Indeed, it is continuously discussed by participants how the school has literally become a second home for the students where the school members also treat each other like a family. Dewa even described the teachers at the school by using the term *ayah* and *ibu*, or father and mother figures.

But there's another side, you know, in, uh, this, mothers and fathers both want to provide this, but you see, the sense of delivery is not the same. Even though there is a responsibility as a father to their child, they want to give the best and so on. But still, the approach, well, it definitely can't be the same (Dewa, the vice principal of Quran and *diniyah*, April 5, 2023).

This is in line with previously discussed motherly characteristics in the female principal. It is found not only as the ideal construction, but also the actual practice of Amani. Indeed, she also addressed the students during her interview as “*anak saya*” or my child. This sense of family relationship of father and mother figures in school can also be found in the school guidebook.

My *ustadz/ustadzah* provide education like my own parents at school (Buku Panduan dan Budaya Sekolah, n. d.).

Moreover, the high number of female teachers at this elementary level compared to the male teachers also supports the feminization of the environment. It is found that participants view female teachers as more suitable for elementary school compared to male teachers because the students are children or they are still little, thus in need of a mother figure. Indeed, there has been an underrepresentation of male educators at the primary level of education (Cruickshank et al., 2018; Lovett, 2014). As a result, the practice of female principalship is acceptable and even encouraged within this worldview. Thus, the leadership practice is more like maintaining the nurturing role of a mother figure in the house.

But it needs to also be addressed that despite such acceptance of leadership roles, there is found the idea of female leaders being accompanied or having ‘backup’ and support of male figures as discussed before. As in the case of Amani, she is indeed supported by two male vice principals. Such male existence gives some sense of security among school members regarding her leadership. Thus, the feminization of the elementary school level is actually under the bigger idea of gender role maintenance.

Furthermore, gender role socialization and maintenance can also be seen not only in the overrepresentation of the numbers of female teachers but also in the distribution of these teachers. It can be observed that in the school when it comes to the counseling staff, they are all female staff. Similarly, the role of nurturing sick students in the school’s health unit as well as in facilitating literacy in the library are all under the responsibility of female staff. Meanwhile, those in charge of the physical education and Quran activities are held by male teachers. These are not

trivial matters since it socializes gender norm and role to school members, including the students.

Indeed, even in a more direct way, students are socialized with gender norms through school curriculum and activities which contribute to the development of their gender identity as mentioned in the school guidance book. For example, activities of male students praying at the mosque/outside the building of classrooms while female students pray in the classroom. Similarly, through *keputrian* program on Friday, female students are obligated to learn “girl’s stuff” like cooking, ironing, and other practices which asserts this argument.

In conclusion, the notion that female principalship is feminine is held by the majority of school members. However, this notion is merely a façade that conceals a practice that is not only feminine. The mix and shift with masculine qualities also exist but are masked due to the essentialist gender assumption and feminization of elementary school level which impacts bias interpretation of Amani’s leadership.

#### 4.2.4 Conclusion

To conclude, gender is indeed central in the leadership experience of the female principal and how the school members perceive it. It is especially apparent in how the participants proposed the concepts of the ideal female principal as involving the mix of feminine and masculine qualities, which is found in Amani’s practice too. However, this dynamic is masked by the sole feminine interpretation of Amani’s leadership. The analysis showed that it is contributed by essentialist gender assumption and feminization of elementary school level.

### **4.3 The Implication of Gendered Educational Leadership Construction for Students’ Achievements**

Now that it has been determined that despite its complexity, the leadership of the female principal is predominantly viewed as feminine, this construction extends beyond the intrapersonal matter. In fact, this perspective and way of thinking permeate the school’s daily social, cultural, and organizational practices. Among many of these practices, the focus of this study is to explore how such construction of the female principal has intersected with, played a role in, or shed

light on the school's students' achievement. Given the diverse academic and non-academic accomplishments of the students, this is crucial to be a focus. Moreover, considering that the school is led by a female principal and that leadership is indeed gendered activity, it is essential to understand how they play roles in students' achievement at Al-Wahid Islamic Elementary School.

#### 4.3.1 Redefinition of Achievements in Al-Wahid Islamic Elementary School

Before delving into the discussion about implications, it is important to understand how achievement is defined within this particular school. It is especially crucial considering that the study adopts a poststructuralist feminist perspective that values the diverse and unique nature of constructions. Through discussions with the participants, it becomes clear that the school's approach to achievement aligns with their system of integrated Islamic school, integrating both regular or national and Islamic values.

As a result, they also adopt such a view when it comes to achievement, encompassing three categories: academic, non-academic, and T2Q/Quranic accomplishments. This holistic perspective is also evident in the division of responsibilities among the three vice principals who oversee the matter of curriculum, student affairs, and Quranic affairs. By embracing this framework, the school aims to foster a comprehensive understanding of achievement that goes beyond traditional academic measures, considering a wide range of growth and development factors. It needs to be highlighted, however, when it comes to the non-academic category, it is not only limited to certain disciplines only. They also include qualities of students' characters and *akhlaq* in this category.

What we appreciate in class, we are actually changing now. High academic achievements, we still give appreciation. Regarding non-academic behavior, we also have the 8 habits, from those 8 dimensions. They are honesty, cleanliness, tidiness, being a learner, and so on. *Birrul walidain*, love for the Quran, and so forth (Amani, the school principal, June 20, 2023).

In terms of achievements of the students based on these categorizations, it is apparent from the school documents that the students under the leadership of

Amani have reached various accomplishments. Not only academic, but also non-academic and the Quranic ones. These various accomplishments will be further discussed in the sub-section of 'Gender-based Divisions of Students' achievements.

#### 4.3.2 Implication 1: Socioemotional Emphasis in Facilitating Students' Achievements

As mentioned earlier that the dominant perception of Amani's leadership is feminine style or the relation/people orientation, this shows the contribution for the way Amani herself chooses strategies in facilitating students' achievements. It is specifically by emphasizing social and emotional approach. By socioemotional emphasis, it means that the leader shows socioemotional skills or socio-emotional intelligence in her practices (Furtner et al., 2010; Mulyana et al., 2022). It refers to the leader's ability to understand and manage their own and the subordinates' emotions, communicate effectively, build relationships, and create a positive work environment (Mulyana et al., 2022). For instance, its manifestations through empathy, active listening, conflict resolution, and motivation can be taken (Mulyana et al., 2022). As in this study, Amani's socioemotional emphasis can be seen in how she motivates students through various ways of appreciation.

However, the socioemotional emphasis found in this study is not only limited to the skill of the leader herself but also her intention for students' socioemotional well-being. In the educational study, this can be referred to as 'leadership that incorporates Social Emotional Learning (SEL)', which is the leadership that cares about developing students' social and emotional skills alongside their academic skills (J. S. Wright et al., 2018). This characteristic can be found throughout Amani's ways of appreciating students' achievements that highlight and strive for students' ability to deal with success, cope with disappointments, learn for self-improvement, be grateful, etc. It is also important to assert that this socioemotional emphasis is in line with the concept of feminine leadership which prioritizes relations, people, empathy, etc. (Blake-Beard et al., 2020; Kark et al., 2012; Park, 1996, 1997). Thus, the implication of perceiving Amani's leadership as feminine, which is also believed by Amani, allows her to

further perform this socioemotional emphasis in facilitating students' achievements.

Before going into that discussion of Amani's socioemotional emphasis through appreciation for students' achievements, it is important to note that Amani practices a broad conception of what achievement is. Thus, those who receive these recognitions are not only those excelling academically in terms of school grades and scores, but also their non-academic and Quranic achievements. Indeed, it also includes how achievements are not limited to goal, product, or result, but also the process and participation itself. Thus, students are recognized not only when they achieve a result or a goal, but also when they prepare for the activities, when they are participating in those activities, and even when they do not get the expected result. This way, students feel appreciated and healthily motivated not based on the 'lacking' perspective, but rather self-improvement approach. For instance, during the parent gathering before the 6<sup>th</sup>-grade students' final school exam, Amani delivered a welcoming speech. Throughout her speech and the whole event design, it was apparent that although the event was about students' academic examination, the emphasis was placed more on the idea of how examination helps students grow as a better person, resilient, and honest human being instead of focusing on tips.

Going into the discussion of socioemotional emphasis, considering how Amani herself also perceives her leadership as dominantly feminine, as it is also the mode which she is comfortable with, she makes this relationship or people orientation as her focus by motivating students through various and direct achievements appreciation. Indeed, when it comes to the ways of appreciation, Amani has suggested and practiced various ways in which she treats all students to be recognized. These means are proposed by Amani during her leadership period, such as verbal motivation, physical presence, and visitation during learning activities and the competition process.

First of all, verbal motivation emerges as one of the primary ways mentioned by participants when discussing Amani's role in fostering students' achievements. Amani's impact through verbal motivation is not limited to her formal speeches, which she consistently delivers during Monday assemblies. Her

words of encouragement and support extend beyond these formal settings, as she actively engages with students regularly.

Then she motivates those who have and haven't achieved their goals, that's something she often does by directly engaging with the students... For example, in the group, she would say, 'Oh, I am sorry for that.' There, and she has been uplifting them... What matters is the experience. The experience of participating, the experience of having the courage to step forward, winning the championship is just a bonus, you know... it is also training the emotion (Gilang, the vice principal of student affairs, April 5, 2023).

The next one is also one of the most apparent strategies in her leadership in facilitating students' achievement which is physical presence. Even in general, Amani seems to be physically available and visible around the school area. Even in her room, she never closes her door, applying the open-door policy, so that students can even see her directly when they walk past by the principal, vice principal, and staff room. This physical presence and availability are also apparent in her facilitation of students' achievements, especially in how she does class visitation during students' learning hours every day, engages with students during their class and asks about the current course studied, physically joining them when memorizing Al-Quran, monitoring and seeing students practice when they are preparing for competition, and physically going to the competition area to give support.

Sometimes she also, what is it, during competitions, gathers the students and encourages them. When there's time, she stops by, goes there, and watches the competition (Karisma, counseling staff, April 5, 2023).

Thus, Amani can be seen physically present during students' academic, non-academic, and Quranic activities inside and outside the school. During observation for instance, as there was a program of parents fathering for the 6<sup>th</sup>-grade students' final school examination, Amani was seen staying and following the event until it finished although her part of giving speech was only at the beginning of the event.

This physical presence is also observed during students' sports activities in the school.

The third one is award-giving and appreciation. This is not only limited to students who achieve or win competitions, but they also have student award at the end of each semester where all students receive awards based on their strengths. All of these are done publicly to motivate other students and socialize the idea of achievement as a bigger concept than just academic reports or competition winners, but also one's Quran memorization improvement, their discipline regarding time, honesty, and other qualities which fall under their category of non-academic achievements.

These appreciations are not limited to only physical awards, but also social media postings, featured in the school's magazine, as well as invited to the school's *youtube* podcast. It is also visible from observation and discussion with Amani that there were pictures of students and their achievements throughout the school area, especially displayed in the school halls. This is also one of many ways that she initiated and practiced to motivate the students and appreciate their strengths.

It needs to be highlighted that Amani is directly involved in these appreciations where she congratulates, communicates, and appreciates them in person. They are not only aware of Amani's presence but also recognize her genuine contribution in recognizing their accomplishments. This personal touch and engagement from a leader whom they respect and admire serve as a significant source of motivation for the students.

Yes, by providing motivations, for example, during ceremonies, you know, I was in the first grade, so I did not immediately win competitions or anything like that, I was just starting. So, during ceremonies, I observed who won things and all that. I got motivated to think, "Oh, I want to be like that too" (Jefri, student, April 5, 2023).

Thus, it is clear how the perceptions of Amani's own leadership as feminine lead her to focus on that strength by making it a strategy for socioemotional-emphasized facilitation of students' achievements. Her focus on students' socioemotional well-being aligns with her feminine orientation in leadership, as she

understands the significance of addressing the holistic strength of students beyond just academic success. This approach not only promotes a sense of belonging and emotional security but also motivates students to actively pursue what they are good at.

#### 4.3.3 Implication 2: The Underplaying of the Female Principal's Role in Students' Achievements

Based on the previous discussion, it can be seen how Amani has proposed, contributed, and executed various ways and programs in facilitating students' achievements. Not only in terms of direct appreciation as mentioned above, but it also involves the ones like administration, information sharing, permission to practice or prepare during school hours, etc. What needs to be highlighted here is that despite such involvements, it appears that school members tend to underplay her roles in students' achievement and believe it is a small contribution. In other words, her role is seen as 'not much' or 'not special'. When it is acknowledged, it is seen as 'normal' or expected from a female principal to be that caring and involved.

First and foremost, during the discussion with participants on the key factors of students' achievements within the school, Amani's role was notably absent from the participants' remarks. None of them considered Amani as one of the most influential factors in this matter. Instead, their focus was more on acknowledging other elements, such as the students themselves as well as the support provided by their parents. The participants also highlighted the significance of extracurricular programs and private tutoring in enhancing students' wide range of achievements. These were seen as substantial contributors to the student's success, overshadowing any recognition of Amani's involvement.

...the children are self-motivated because of this, what is it, the achievement path for school admission, yes, the one that leads to public junior high schools, there are *japres (jalur prestasi)*, so they participate in competitions, like taekwondo, archery, and so on. Therefore, because of our human resources, the input comes from the middle-up level, and they already have a high motivation in learning. So, they are active outside, like taking EF courses, participating in competitions, and such, and

their parents are supportive and independent (Kanita, the vice principal of curriculum, April 5, 2023).

Secondly, when the topic of Amani's role did arise, her significance is consistently undermined. Words like "only" and "just" are employed to downplay her contributions, such as remarks saying that she only issues a letter, she just comes and sees students practice, she comes to watch the competitions sometimes, etc. Furthermore, it is asserted that her role is not technical and therefore not deemed as important. This is despite the earlier mentioned socioemotional-emphasized approach that Amani performs.

... for example, like the National Science Olympiad (OSN), (her contribution) is only a letter... Letters issued by the school principal (Kanita, the vice principal of academic affairs, April 5, 2023).

Finally, when they do acknowledge her role, it can be seen that it is as long as it is seen as teamwork's result with the teachers, staff, or the foundation. The teachers and staff give credit to the roles as their contribution along with Amani. Rarely do participants highlight or mention the initiative and ideas she gave and proposed as discussed in the previous subsection.

...because sometimes the competition links are shared in the school principals' group... So, in terms of the technical aspects, *Ustadz* Gilang will also provide a coaching team... and we as teachers, we also work for that, so we align our perceptions, you know (Dewa, the vice principal of Quran and *diniyyah*, April 5, 2023).

Hence, these findings highlight a concerning lack of recognition among the school members regarding Amani's significant contributions, despite her proactive initiatives and daily involvement in fostering students' achievements. Instead, the credit for the work accomplished tends to be attributed to other staff members or the foundational boards, overlooking the pivotal role played by Amani in implementing effective strategies and initiatives. This idea should be addressed considering the valuable impact Amani has had on facilitating the educational experience and supporting the student's progress.

This underplaying is clearly intertwined with the dominant construction of Amani's leadership as feminine as the perception is based on essentialist and stereotypical views of women. Such bias can infiltrate the evaluations of leadership, resulting in the underestimation of the female principal's abilities in facilitating students' achievements. Indeed, because of the idea of Amani's qualities as essentially feminine or that her *fitrah* is feminine, caring about others, caring about emotional wellbeing, and relational with school members as an essentialist or embedded construct, they take this feminine approach in facilitating students' achievements for granted.

In a sense, the finding is not surprising given that many previous studies argued principal in relation to students' achievement is rather indirect (Bloom & Owens, 2013; Clifford et al., 2012; Sun & Leithwood, 2015). However, a study contrastingly proposed that such activities of a principal like classroom visitation, interaction with students frequently, celebrating students' accomplishments publicly, and visibility at school (Waters et al., 2003) are directly related to students' achievements. In similar, as also found in the previous study, students in Al-Wahid Islamic Elementary School put weight on the principal's contribution, such as the daily motivation and the concern about the principal's voice in communication. Interestingly, this is rather seen as not much of importance by the adults like teachers and staff. This perspective of students is not less important and indeed, has been missing in educational studies when it comes to understanding the role of the principal on students' achievement. Therefore, considering the debate, this finding might contribute to explaining from a sociocultural gender perspective that the unrelatedness or the gap of perceived influence might undermine such gendered-bias perception on the female leaders which is seen as exclusively feminine while simultaneously evaluating them based on these biases.

#### 4.3.4 Implication 3: Gender-based Divisions of Students' Achievements

The 'seemingly feminine leadership' of Amani in Al-Wahid Islamic Elementary School shows another implication for students' achievements. However, in this case, it is important that instead of saying that the feminine leadership evaluation in itself results in this implication, it is more on that the way

Amani and school members construct or approach Amani's leadership as exclusively feminine because of her female-sexed body reinforces traditional gender roles and expectations to students, including in their achievements, based on their sex.

First, it can be analyzed and seen the disparity between *ikhwan* and *akhwat* students in their achievements based on the school documents, but this is limited to only achievements in 2022 and the school's public data on the school's website within the category of students' competitions. Based on the document, unlike in the Quranic category where male and female students participate in the discipline, disparities are found in academic and non-academic categories. In academic competitions, it is apparent that subjects like math, science, and coding are participated and achieved by male students, but not even one female student. Meanwhile, in non-academic competitions, although both male and female students participate and achieve various types of sport (e.g. badminton, *silat*, swimming, karate, taekwondo, basket, tennis, archery), it is noticeable that soccer is only participated by male students.

At first, Amani and the school members deny these differences. One of the teachers, Gilang, even justified it by saying that it is a "coincidence". Indeed, when discussed further about this issue, gender-based differences ideas are found in their remarks. First of all, when it comes to the general academic achievements of students in school, participants mentioned that female students tend to perform better academically in the overall sense, especially regarding them achieving first rank in the classes.

...the class achievements, usually girls are the ones who are diligently working on various things... because girls are diligent (Gilang, the vice principal of student affairs, June 20, 2023).

It can be seen that the credit of this achievement reflects gender assumptions and bias of girls being more diligent compared to boys. With this assumption as the foundation, individuals may perceive and expect students' achievements in bias approach too. If teachers believe that boys are naturally less capable in certain areas,

they may inadvertently provide less support or guidance for them. On the other hand, girls may be given more challenging tasks and higher expectations, which can enhance their performance. Indeed, a study supported such idea that gender stereotypes held by teachers regarding students can influence their grading of math exams (Doornkamp et al., 2022). Similarly in this study, this bias contributes to a perception that girls are more successful academically, even when their actual performance is comparable to boys.

It's just like I said earlier that males are more with physical things or logical things, and females are more creative and diligent (Gilang, the vice principal of student affairs, June 20, 2023).

From this discussion, it can be seen how furthermore, the bias is also apparent when it comes to non-academic activities. This gender bias and assumption of how male students excel more in physical activities and logic while females are in diligence and creativity to some extent explains the disparities in the field of sports where males participate more in various sports, and in the field of arts where female students participate and achieve more. In terms of the sport, it is apparent that the disparity is especially most prominent in the exclusivity of certain sports to only accessible for male students, such as soccer.

... except for playing soccer... if we just think about it, it's taboo, because it's as if her femininity has been ripped out. In volleyball and basketball, that's neutral, right? (Amani, the school principal, June 20, 2023).

It can be seen how this kind of division is clearly gendered or based on the people's construction of gender. Thus, some disciplines are considered feminine, and others are considered as masculine. Similarly, in the school, arts activities and competitions are dominated by female students, specifically in piano recitals and dance performances and competitions.

So far, for dancing... boys rarely participate, but even for girls we'll take a look at the content first, what is it, we'll still bring the norms of SDIT regarding music that's not too vulgar... especially in terms of costumes, performance... Alhamdulillah, the performance with makeup up, we don't highlight it too much,

it's simple and Islamic (Talia, person in charge of student competition, June 20, 2023).

Thus, it is clear from these elaborations that gender-based division exists and it is underlined by gender-based assumptions and biases the school members practice and socialize. It is important to be critical of these differences or gaps. It is even more apparent when the discussion regarding how the principal and school members give access or allow its students to participate in a certain field and not in others based on their sexed bodies comes into account. This includes the way the principal decided to share certain information, for instance.

Thus, this gender bias may help to explain why such gender-based divisions of students' achievements occur. Instead of the inherent difference in ability between male and female students, based on this case, it is apparent that there is rather a limitation imposed which maintains gender stereotypes in education where girls are good at certain fields and boys are good at others. Indeed, it is also reflected in this case at Al-Wahid Islamic Elementary School.

Finally, it is important to also address the complexity. It does not mean that all dimensions in the school are this rigidly and universally divided based on sex differences, especially since there is found some emerging resistance that the principal addresses due to the support from the national program. For instance, based on Amani's remark, they are now more open to the idea of boys performing dances as encouraged through implementing the *Projek Penguatan Profil Pelajar Pancasila*.

In conclusion, seeing one's leadership style as inherently feminine shows a similar approach to understanding the students' ability for achievement too. Therefore, it is important to be aware of the complexity of gendered leadership so that gender disparity among students' achievements can be tackled. This is not trivial considering the gender-bias assumptions in those mentioned fields based on the sex of the students which hinder, limit, and decrease the quality of learning and experiences of students in various fields, showing how vulnerable students are towards socialization of gender bias, including in terms of their skill and potential in the academic and non-academic fields.

#### 4.3.5 Conclusion

The implication of gendered educational leadership is apparent in students' achievements. Specifically, by constructing and limiting the female principal's leadership as feminine, it shows the adaptation of such an idea by the principal to facilitate students' achievements through socioemotional emphasis. However, these involvements seem to be undervalued and underestimated by the school members due to the gender-bias interpretation of her principalship. Finally, it also shows the implication of the gender-based division of students' achievement fields through bias opportunities and information sharing from the principal.

#### 4.4 Gender, Female Principalship, and Students' Achievements

Based on the findings, it is evident that gender and leadership construction is dynamic. Specifically, when it is framed by using the Gendered Educational Theory (Fuller, 2014), it is also considered polyglossic leadership where the leader is not only limited to performing femininity, but also mixing or shifting to masculinity too. Indeed, overreliance on either masculine or feminine leadership behaviors is insufficient in leading since the mix reflects the ability to discern situational appropriateness, and it is key to effective leadership (Blake-Beard et al., 2020).

However, the fact that this case study found that there is an attempt to 'stabilize' Amani's leadership to be exclusively feminine is also in line with or proves the theory. Specifically, it is how the monoglossic account or socially dominant construction, as in this case is feminine leadership, is internalized to 'mask' or play as a 'façade' which displays a rather stable and uniform leadership style stereotypically on female leaders. Thus, the findings conform to the theory Fuller (2014) proposed, especially regarding the transgression and dynamic of gendered leadership practices. Indeed, a previous study also showed similar findings where although the gender performance of a female in a probation classroom shows transgressive gender performances, but males around her still perceive feminine behaviors as part of her 'natural' identity while her masculine behaviors are viewed as performance (Perry, 2013). Though from my study, it can further contribute to the discussion of how such biased reading does not only occur

among male colleagues but also females. Thus, it is a matter of gender essentialist perceptions itself rather than the sex of the readers.

The importance of understanding this complexity is to be aware and critical of possible gender bias in understanding and evaluating the performance of female leaders. Indeed, this is what happens as found in previous studies (Elsesser, 2016; Hoyt & Burnette, 2013; Nichols & Nichols, 2014). Similarly in this case, despite the dynamic practices, Amani is still perceived as dominantly, even solely feminine. This bias based on the reference to the female-sexed body becomes more problematic when the upheld idea is ‘the most ideal principal is still the males’, indicating though female principalship is accepted, it is an emergency case and it is still inferior compared to the male principals. Thus, the performances are read from a gender bias perspective, such as how in this study found there is perspective of Amani as indecisive instead of deliberate when taking her time in decision making. This is a problematic stance as females paid a higher penalty for not being perceived as mixing femininity and masculinity or androgynous in comparison to males (Kark et al., 2012). It is even more concerning because as seen in this study, even though the principal mix both qualities as the previous study also suggested for male and female leaders who want to be perceived as effective leaders (Kark et al., 2012), this study shows that how the principal practices are not enough, but it also how the school members perceive or evaluate them.

Besides being aware, knowing the complexity helps to reveal why such masking occurs. As in this study, it is clear that the emerging reasons are the essentialist view of gender and feminization at the elementary school level. Indeed, the essentialist gender view is able to mask one’s complex behavior into a limited frame of gender-based expectations as also found in a study that when people hold beliefs on female leaders’ attributes as fixed based on gender stereotypes, their evaluations tend to be gender-biased (Hoyt & Burnette, 2013). In the context of leadership, when people expect females to be communal and nurturing, there can be bias in the evaluation as seeing them as not suitable for leadership roles (Elsesser, 2016). This is a crucial issue as such bias in performance evaluation has been detaining them from making it to the higher academic hierarchy (Fan et al., 2019).

Furthermore, the emerging theme of feminization in elementary school is also supported by previous studies (Skelton, 2002, 2012; Verniers et al., 2016). However, these studies mostly addressed the feminization of primary-level schooling in terms of the lack of male teacher numbers and the gender-stereotypical practices encouraged in the school, but there is no clear discussion regarding student outcomes through principalship. While in this study, not only that gap is fulfilled, but it reveals feminization as something that shows implications to understand students' achievement issues.

What makes this gender-based approach to studying the female principal interesting and important is that it is related to or has implications for understanding the concepts and practices of students' achievements. Because of such essentialist construction of Amani's practice as a female principal, this study found that despite being socioemotionally available and active in supporting students' achievements, she is still perceived as not that much of important. This finding is not surprising considering how previous studies have been highlighting this gender bias in evaluating female principals and underplaying their works (Murakami & Törnén, 2017; Nichols & Nichols, 2014).

When it comes to the socioemotional approach of female principals, this is also previously covered by other studies (Gannerud, 2001; Mdluli, 2002). Although they talked about the socioemotional approach of female principals in general, this study reveals the specific mechanism of how the stereotypical expectation of feminine female principal exercises such approach by motivating students through appreciations like verbal motivation, physical presence, and awards giving facilitate for students' achievements. From this finding, it is interesting to address that though studies have shown motivation and awards as facilitating students' achievements, physical presence and availability have been lacking in discussion which is also the general gap in educational research regarding the physical experience, also known as corporal research (A. Braun, 2011). Thus, this study contributes to this gap as well.

Another interesting point or novelty in this discussion is that this approach is taken by Amani deliberately to her and the student's advantage. In other words,

the stereotypical construction of her feminine principalship is also believed by her and used as a mechanism to facilitate students' achievements. In a previous study, a similar approach is found where female leaders use the limitations imposed by traditional gender roles, such as *kodrat*, to their advantage and apply modern values to influence female leadership agency (Kusmana, 2019). Thus, this study enriches the understanding of female principalship and gender and such deliberate use is also applicable to facilitate students' achievements.

Besides the underplayed socioemotional practices, it is also found that the stereotypical construction of gendered leadership limits the fields of students' achievements. It is vastly discussed in educational studies how gender bias is also maintained through such idea that there are male and female things in certain fields, such as boys are better in STEM, physical sport, technology, etc. due to their logical approach while girls are in languages, humanities, arts, etc. due to the socioemotional inclination (Francis, 2006; Moè et al., 2020; Skelton et al., 2006). This kind of gender stereotype can even have detrimental consequences for the self-concept of the ability of the students themselves (Guimond & Roussel, 2001). Thus, this study may help to explain why there is such seemingly inherent difference while underneath it, it is because the students have been socialized by limited gender stereotypes through the school facilities, regulations, social interactions, and role models from the adults, including the principal. Thus, instead of saying it as inherent differences, it is more due to bias in facilitating for their achievements.

Furthermore, all this occurs in the context of an Islamic elementary school or SDIT (*Sekolah Islam Terpadu*). Indeed, this issue of traditional gender construction in Islamic schools is not of new discussion (Kull, 2012; Naeimi & Kjaran, 2021). The importance of addressing this Islamic education aspect in this study is to highlight how this gendered leadership construction for students' achievements is actually maintained, stabilized, or justified by the whole school system and the 'Islamic' tagline or label institutionalized. As reflected in this study, the male-dominating culture is maintained through its curriculum, regulations, social interactions, and role models from the teachers and the principal. Even when the school members show possible resistance to accepting a female principal, it

appears to be suppressed with the idea that the ‘foundation’ or *Yayasan* is still the highest leader or their leader of all. Thus, the idea of accepting the female principal is rather out of ‘loyalty’ and ‘obedience’ to the foundation which in itself is a male-dominated circle.

This is not to say the Islamic educational institution promotes gender stereotypes in total, especially since it is also found that there are various resistances in different aspects. Indeed, since this school also applies the national curriculum, these characteristics and systems allow for resistance towards essentialist gender and leadership construction. For instance, in this study, the program of *Projek Penguatan Profil Pelajar Pancasila* encourages the flexibility for male students to be more participative in the discipline of art and dance performances which previously only limited to female students.

Among all these, this study indicates the school culture itself is a crucial construct in understanding such socialization. In such Islamic educational institution, it is important to attune to every little thing in its culture like the names of classes, the distribution of teachers’ roles, students’ roles, etc. There is a need to be more critical and attuned to offering an explanation of why things are the way they are as it is clear how gender construction on a cultural level turns out crucial in shaping the way its school members understand gender, including the gender of the principal which contributes to bias evaluation of her performance in facilitating students’ achievements.

In conclusion, it is clear how gender, when it is understood as limited to the essentialist binary, can perpetuate limited views on understanding the principal’s performance. This does not only impact the school members but even the principal herself, her sense of leadership, and approach in her principalship, including students’ achievements. Thus, as Butler (1990) proposed regarding gender, ‘leadership’ is also better understood as ‘doing’ instead of ‘being’ since female leaders can perform based on situations, and bias towards their practices can be deconstructed.

## CHAPTER 5

### CONCLUSION

It can be concluded that gender indeed plays a central role in shaping the leadership experiences of a female principal in an Islamic school. This cruciality extends beyond the perceptions of the school members and the principal's herself regarding the concept of the ideal female principal. It also plays a role in how the principal exercises her leadership daily, how others evaluate and interpret her, and the leadership's implication for students' achievements.

Thus, the study answers the proposed three research questions where (1) gender construction in the Islamic school reflects binary construction of *ikhwan* and *akhwat* categories reflected through school facilities, regulation, and social interaction. (2) Within this context, the acceptable construction of the ideal female principal is someone who performs both masculine and feminine leadership styles. Nonetheless, there is an implicit belief that male leadership is still the most desirable and female leadership is a last resort or an emergency case. In practice, the female principal also accordingly performs masculine and feminine styles. However, the overall evaluation by school members seems to stabilize it to be exclusively feminine leadership. This masking is revealed in the study as rooted in the essentialist construction of gender and feminization of the elementary school level and its leadership position. (3) Finally, the implication of such stabilization of leadership into exclusively feminine is found to be central to how the principal and school members approach students' achievement issues. First, it appears that the principal approaches students' achievement with a socioemotional emphasis. Second, it is discovered that school members downplay the female principal's role in promoting students' achievement. Third, there are discernible gender differences in students' achievements. Therefore, this study indicates the need to be more critical and aware of possible bias in evaluating the performance of female leaders. To address this issue, critical reflection is necessary for both school members and the female leaders themselves to examine their biases and assumptions regarding

leadership. By acknowledging and challenging these biases, it is possible to create a more inclusive and equitable educational environment that benefits all students.

However, it is important to acknowledge the limitations of this study and recommendations for future research. This study primarily focuses on the perspectives of adults, thus in need of more insight from the students as those who benefit from the principalship. Even within the limited scope of this study, it becomes evident that students place greater importance on the role of the principal in their achievements compared to adults, emphasizing the need to further consider their perspectives. Additionally, this study is only based on a single case of a female experience. Thus, further research is recommended to incorporate more than just one case of a female principal or on a different level of education, such as in secondary or higher education.

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## APPENDICES

### Appendix A: Protocol of Preliminary Observation

#### Protokol Preliminari Observasi (Hari ke-1)

Tanggal :  
Tempat :  
Observator : Difa Mahya Zahara  
Yang diamati : Sekolah  
Waktu :  
Durasi observasi :  
Tujuan observasi : Untuk mengenal lingkungan sekolah dan memahami budaya sekolah terkait konstruksi gender dalam manifestasi fisik. Observasi ini membantu menjawab pertanyaan penelitian ke-1.

No.	Fitur Fisik	Catatan Deskriptif	Catatan Reflektif
1.	Bangunan & tata letak sekolah		
2.	Ruangan Kelas		
3.	Ruang Guru		
4.	Perpustakaan		
5.	Fasilitas		
6.	Lain-lain		

### Preliminary Observation Protocol (Day-1)

Date :  
Place :  
Observer : Difa Mahya Zahara  
Observed : The school  
Time :  
Duration of observation :  
The aim of observation : To know the school environment and understand the school culture related to gender construction in its physical manifestation. This observation helps answer the first research question.

No.	Physical features	Descriptive Notes	Reflective Notes
1.	School building & layout		
2.	Classrooms		
3.	Teacher rooms		
4.	Library		
5.	Facilities		
6.	Others		

### **Protokol Preliminari Observasi (Hari ke-2)**

Tanggal :  
Tempat :  
Observator : Difa Mahya Zahara  
Yang diamati : Kegiatan dan budaya sekolah  
Waktu :  
Durasi observasi :  
Tujuan observasi : Mengamati kegiatan harian di sekolah mulai dari anggota sekolah pertama tiba hingga kegiatan sekolah selesai. Observasi ini membantu menjawab pertanyaan penelitian ke-1.

<b>Waktu (jam)</b>	<b>Kegiatan</b>	<b>Catatan Deskriptif</b>	<b>Catatan Reflektif</b>

### **Preliminary Observation Protocol (Day-2)**

Date :  
Place :  
Observer : Difa Mahya Zahara  
Observed : School activities and culture  
Time :  
The duration of observation :  
The aim of observation : To observe the day-to-day activities at the school from the first members of the school arrived until the school activities finish. This observation helps answer the first research question.

<b>Time (clock)</b>	<b>Activities</b>	<b>Descriptive Notes</b>	<b>Reflective Notes</b>

### **Appendix B: Protocol of Observation**

#### **Protokol Observasi**

Tanggal :

Tempat :

Observer : Difa Mahya Zahara

Individu yang diamati : Kepala sekolah

Waktu :

Durasi observasi :

Tujuan observasi : Mengamati kepemimpinan kepala sekolah perempuan sehari-hari. Observasi juga mencatat konteks (waktu, tempat, kepada siapa, dll.) dari perilaku dan kegiatan kepala sekolah, serta tanggapan warga sekolah (guru, staf, dan siswa). Observasi ini membantu menjawab pertanyaan penelitian ke-2.

<b>No.</b>	<b>Area Observasi</b>		<b>Konteks</b>	<b>Catatan Deskriptif</b>	<b>Catatan Reflektif</b>
1.	Penampilan	Fitur fisik (tampilan fisik; tinggi badan, postur tubuh, dan lain-lain)			

		Pakaian			
		Riasan			
		Aksesori			
		Lain-lain			
2.	Tindakan/ aksi	Bahasa tubuh (Gerakan, gestur, postur, ekspresi wajah, kontak mata, dan lain- lain.)			
		Penggunaan waktu (ketepatan waktu, disiplin, dan lain-lain)			
		Kontak fisik (Jabat tangan, rangkulan,			

		dan lain-lain.)			
		Lain-lain			
3.	Ucapan *terutama saat wawancara	Pilihan kata			
		Intonasi, tinggi suara, besarnya suara, dan lain-lain			
		Isyarat non-verbal			
		Lain-lain			

### The Protocol of Observation

Date :  
 Place :  
 Observator : Difa Mahya Zahara  
 Observed : The principal  
 Time :  
 The duration of observation :  
 The aim of observation : To observe the day-to-day leadership of the female school. It also records

the context (time, place, to whom, etc.) of the behavior and activities of the principal, as well as the responses of the school members (teachers, staff, and students). This observation helps answer the second research question.

No.	Items of Observation		Context	Descriptive Notes	Reflective Notes
1.	Appearance	Physical features (Physical appearance; height, posture, etc.)			
		Clothing/attire			
		Makeup			
		Accessories			
		Others			
2.	Actions/ Behaviors	Body language (Movements, gestures, posture, facial expressions, eye contact, etc.)			

		Time management (On-time, discipline, etc.)			
		Physical contact (Handshakes, hugs, etc.)			
		Others			
3.	Utterances *especially during interviews	Word choices			
		Intonation, pitch, volume, etc.			
		Non-verbal signs			
		Others			

## **Appendix C: Protocol of Semi-structured Interviews with Teachers**

### **Protokol Wawancara**

Waktu wawancara	:	
Tanggal	:	
Tempat	:	
Pewawancara	:	Difa Mahya Zahara
Individu yang diwawancarai	:	Guru

#### **Pertanyaan Wawancara Pengantar**

1. Perkenalkan saya Difa Mahya Zahara, mahasiswa S2 di Fakultas Ilmu Pendidikan Universitas Islam Internasional Indonesia, saya berharap Ibu/Bapak dapat memperkenalkan diri kepada saya. Sudah berapa lama Ibu/Bapak menjadi guru di sini?
2. Bagaimana dengan latar belakang pendidikan Ibu/Bapak? Apakah membantu Ibu/Bapak dalam pekerjaan menjadi seorang guru?
3. Dapatkah Ibu/Bapak menjelaskan tugas Ibu/Bapak sebagai guru di sekolah ini?

#### **Pertanyaan Wawancara untuk Pertanyaan Penelitian 2 (konstruksi anggota sekolah tentang kepemimpinan kepala sekolah perempuan)**

1. Bisakah Ibu/Bapak mengenalkan dan mendeskripsikan tentang Ibu kepala sekolah (penampilan, perilaku; pengetahuan tentang pendidikan; keterlibatan dengan kegiatan sekolah; kedisiplinan; pengaruh pada budaya sekolah; hubungan dan komunikasi dengan anggota sekolah)? Bagaimana pendapat Ibu/Bapak tentang beliau sebagai kepala sekolah?
2. Apa saja kualitas yang Ibu/Bapak lihat pada dirinya?
3. Apa pendapat Ibu/Bapak memiliki seorang kepala sekolah perempuan di sekolah Islam? Menurut Ibu/Bapak, apakah jenis kelaminnya sebagai perempuan berperan terhadap kepemimpinannya? Bagaimana pendapat Ibu/Bapak tentang hal tersebut? (Sebagai tantangan/kesulitan, keuntungan atau persepsi lainnya).

4. Apa kelebihan dan kekurangan memiliki kepala sekolah perempuan di sekolah Islam?
5. Pernahkah Ibu/Bapak melihat, mendengar, atau menyaksikan anggota sekolah lain berpendapat tentang kepala sekolah karena jenis kelaminnya (baik positif, negatif, dan lainnya)? Tolong jelaskan dan berikan gambaran. Strategi apa yang digunakan oleh Ibu kepala sekolah dalam menghadapi hal tersebut?
6. Menurut Ibu/Bapak, apakah Ibu kepala sekolah telah melakukan tugas sebagaimana mestinya? Bagaimana Ibu/Bapak mendeskripsikan sosok seorang kepala sekolah perempuan yang ideal untuk memimpin sekolah Islam (dalam perihal penampilan, perilaku, ucapan)? Bagaimana performa Ibu kepala sekolah jika dibandingkan dengan konsep ideal tersebut? Tolong jelaskan dan berikan contoh pengalaman.
7. Dalam pengalaman karir Ibu/Bapak sebagai guru, apakah ada yang membedakan Ibu kepala sekolah dari kepala sekolah Islam lainnya (baik laki-laki maupun perempuan)? Apakah karakteristik unik yang Ibu/Bapak temukan dari Ibu kepala sekolah?
8. Bagaimana Ibu/Bapak mendefinisikan seorang kepala sekolah Islam yang feminin? Bagaimana dengan kepala sekolah Islam yang maskulin? Lalu, bagaimana Ibu/Bapak melihat Ibu kepala sekolah berdasarkan konsep tersebut? Apakah menurut Ibu/Bapak beliau sesuai dengan kategori tersebut secara utuh? Tolong diskusikan lebih lanjut.
9. (Menjelaskan terlebih dulu tentang gaya kepemimpinan feminin, maskulin, dan androgini berdasarkan literatur) Jika berdasarkan dengan gaya kepemimpinan yang saya jelaskan, bagaimana pendapat Ibu/Bapak tentang gaya kepemimpinan Ibu kepala sekolah? Bisa dijelaskan dan diberi contoh pengalaman?

Pertanyaan Wawancara untuk Pertanyaan Penelitian 2 (konstruksi kepala sekolah tentang kepemimpinan perempuan)

1. Berdasarkan pemahaman Ibu/Bapak, bagaimana Ibu kepala sekolah melihat dirinya sendiri sebagai seorang pemimpin sekolah Islam? Pernahkah beliau

berbagi pemikiran mengenai hal tersebut? Pernahkah Ibu/Bapak menyaksikan atau mendengarnya dari anggota sekolah lain? Berikan penjelasan lebih lanjut.

Pertanyaan Wawancara untuk Pertanyaan Penelitian 3 (memfasilitasi prestasi murid)

1. Dapatkah Ibu/Bapak mendeskripsikan pemahaman Ibu/Bapak mengenai prestasi akademik dan non-akademik murid? Di bidang apa saja prestasi yang telah dicapai murid sekolah ini? Bagaimana pendapat Ibu/Bapak akan hal tersebut?
2. Bagaimana murid di sekolah ini dapat mencapai prestasi tersebut? Apa sajakah faktor yang berperan besar dalam pencapaian itu? Apakah menurut Ibu/Bapak ibu kepala sekolah memiliki peran dalam hal tersebut? Berikan penjelasan dan gambaran lebih lanjut
3. Berdasarkan diskusi sebelumnya mengenai kepemimpinan gender Ibu kepala sekolah (konsep ideal tentang kepala sekolah perempuan, gaya feminin, gaya maskulin, dan lainnya), bagaimana kepemimpinan tersebut berkontribusi kepada murid di sekolah ini dalam menggapai prestasi-prestasi yang ada? Dapatkah Ibu/Bapak jelaskan strategi spesifik atau inisiatif yang dilakukan oleh Ibu kepala sekolah?
4. Apakah menurut Ibu/Bapak Ibu kepala sekolah memiliki dampak langsung kepada prestasi murid di sekolah ini secara akademik? Bagaimana dengan prestasi non-akademik? Tolong jelaskan secara detail
5. Bagaimana dengan peran Ibu kepala sekolah terhadap Ibu/Bapak sebagai guru? Bagaimana kepemimpinannya memengaruhi Ibu/Bapak dalam memfasilitasi murid mencapai prestasi?
6. Sebagai sekolah Islam, adakah ciri khas atau langkah unik yang sekolah ini terapkan dalam memotivasi/membantu murid-murid untuk berprestasi? Bagaimana peran Ibu kepala sekolah dalam hal tersebut?

### Pertanyaan Wawancara Penutup

1. Sebagai kesimpulan, dapatkah Ibu/Bapak memberikan komentar akhir/intisari tentang Ibu kepala sekolah sebagai pemimpin di sekolah Islam?
2. Apakah ada poin atau komentar tambahan yang ingin Ibu/Bapak sampaikan mengenai diskusi ini?

### **The Protocol of Interview**

Time	:	
Date	:	
Place	:	
Interviewer	:	Difa Mahya Zahara
Interviewed individual	:	Teachers

### Opening Interview Questions

1. Allow me to introduce myself, I am Difa Mahya Zahara, a Master's student at the Faculty of Education, International Islamic University Indonesia. I hope you can introduce yourself to me. How long have you been a teacher here, ma'am/sir?
2. How about your educational background? Does it help you in your job to become a teacher?
3. Can you explain your responsibilities as a teacher in this school?

### Interview Questions for Research Question 2 (School members' construction of female principal's leadership)

1. Can you introduce and describe the principal (appearance, behavior; education knowledge; involvement with school activities; discipline; influence on school culture; relationships, and communication with school members)? What do you think about her as the principal of the school?
2. What are the qualities do you see in her?
3. What do you think about having a female principal in an Islamic school? In your opinion, does her gender play a role in her leadership? What do you

think about this? (As challenges/difficulties, advantages, or other perceptions).

4. What are the strengths and weaknesses of having a female principal in an Islamic school?
5. Have you ever seen, heard, or witnessed other school members having opinions about the principal because of her gender (it can be positive, negative, or others)? Please explain and give examples. What strategy is used by the principal in dealing with this?
6. In your opinion, have the principal done her job properly? How would you describe the ideal female principal for leading an Islamic school (in terms of appearance, behavior, and speech)? How does the principal perform in relation to this ideal concept? Please explain and provide examples of experience.
7. In your career experience as a teacher, is there anything that distinguishes her as a school principal from other Islamic school principals (both male and female)? What unique characteristics did you find in the school principal?
8. How do you define a feminine Islamic school principal? How about a masculine Islamic principal? How do you see the principal based on these concepts? Do you think she fits the category as a whole? Please discuss this further.
9. (Explain in advance about feminine, masculine, and androgynous leadership styles based on the literature) Based on the leadership styles I described, what is your opinion about the principal's leadership style? Can you explain and give an example of your experience?

Interview Questions for Research Question 2 (The principal's construction of female leadership)

1. Based on your understanding, how does the principal see herself as a leader of an Islamic school? Has she ever shared her thoughts on this matter? Have you ever witnessed or heard about it from other school members? Please provide further explanation.

#### Interview Questions for Research Question 3 (Facilitating students' achievement)

1. Can you describe your understanding of students' academic and non-academic achievements? In what areas have the students of this school achieved achievements? What do you think about this?
2. How are students at this school able to achieve that? What factors played a major role in those achievements? Do you think that the school principal has a role in this matter? Please give further explanation and description.
3. Based on the previous discussion regarding the principal's gendered leadership (the ideal concept of a female principal, feminine style, masculine style, and so on), how does it contribute to students' achievements in this school? Can you explain the specific strategies or initiatives carried out by the principal?
4. Do you think that the school principal has a direct impact on students' achievement in this school academically? What about non-academic achievements? Please explain it in detail.
5. How about the role of the principal towards you as a teacher? How has her leadership played roles in you in facilitating students' achievement?
6. As an Islamic school, are there any unique characteristics or steps that this school applies in motivating/helping students to excel? What is the role of the principal in this matter?

#### Closing Interview Questions

1. In conclusion, can you provide a final comment/summary about the principal as a leader in this Islamic school?
2. Are there any additional points or comments you would like to convey regarding this discussion?

## **Appendix D: Protocol of Semi-structured Interviews with Staff**

### **Protokol Wawancara**

Waktu wawancara	:	
Tanggal	:	
Tempat	:	
Pewawancara	:	Difa Mahya Zahara
Individu yang diwawancarai	:	Staf

#### **Pertanyaan Wawancara Pengantar**

1. Perkenalkan saya Difa Mahya Zahara, mahasiswa S2 di Fakultas Ilmu Pendidikan Universitas Islam Internasional Indonesia, saya berharap Ibu/Bapak dapat memperkenalkan diri kepada saya. Sudah berapa lama Ibu/Bapak menjadi staf di sini?
2. Bagaimana dengan latar belakang pendidikan Ibu/Bapak? Apakah membantu Ibu/Bapak dalam pekerjaan menjadi seorang staf?
3. Dapatkah Ibu/Bapak menjelaskan tugas Ibu/Bapak sebagai staf di sekolah ini?

#### **Pertanyaan Wawancara untuk Pertanyaan Penelitian 2 (konstruksi anggota sekolah tentang kepemimpinan kepala sekolah perempuan)**

1. Bisakah Ibu/Bapak mengenalkan dan mendeskripsikan tentang Ibu kepala sekolah (penampilan, perilaku; pengetahuan tentang pendidikan; keterlibatan dengan kegiatan sekolah; kedisiplinan; pengaruh pada budaya sekolah; hubungan dan komunikasi dengan anggota sekolah)? Bagaimana pendapat Ibu/Bapak tentang beliau sebagai kepala sekolah?
2. Apa saja kualitas yang Ibu/Bapak lihat pada dirinya?
3. Apa pendapat Ibu/Bapak memiliki seorang kepala sekolah perempuan di sekolah Islam? Menurut Ibu/Bapak, apakah jenis kelaminnya sebagai perempuan memiliki peran terhadap kepemimpinannya? Bagaimana pendapat Ibu/Bapak tentang hal tersebut? (Sebagai tantangan/kesulitan, keuntungan atau persepsi lainnya).

4. Apa kelebihan dan kekurangan memiliki kepala sekolah perempuan di sekolah Islam?
5. Pernahkah Ibu/Bapak melihat, mendengar, atau menyaksikan anggota sekolah lain berpendapat tentang kepala sekolah karena jenis kelaminnya (baik positif, negatif, dan lainnya)? Tolong jelaskan dan berikan gambaran. Strategi apa yang digunakan oleh ibu kepala sekolah dalam menghadapi hal tersebut?
6. Menurut Ibu/Bapak, apakah Ibu kepala sekolah telah melakukan tugas sebagaimana mestinya? Bagaimana Ibu/Bapak mendeskripsikan sosok seorang kepala sekolah perempuan yang ideal untuk memimpin sekolah Islam (dalam perihal penampilan, perilaku, ucapan)? Bagaimana performa ibu kepala sekolah jika dibandingkan dengan konsep ideal tersebut? Tolong jelaskan dan berikan contoh pengalaman.
7. Dalam pengalaman karir Ibu/Bapak sebagai staf, apakah ada yang membedakan Ibu kepala sekolah dari kepala sekolah Islam lainnya (baik laki-laki maupun perempuan)? Apakah karakteristik unik yang Ibu/Bapak temukan dari Ibu kepala sekolah?
8. Bagaimana Ibu/Bapak mendefinisikan seorang kepala sekolah Islam yang feminin? Bagaimana dengan kepala sekolah Islam yang maskulin? Lalu, bagaimana Ibu/Bapak melihat Ibu kepala sekolah berdasarkan konsep tersebut? Apakah menurut Ibu/Bapak beliau sesuai dengan kategori tersebut secara utuh? Tolong diskusikan lebih lanjut.
9. (Menjelaskan terlebih dulu tentang gaya kepemimpinan feminin, maskulin, dan androgini berdasarkan literatur) Jika berdasarkan dengan gaya kepemimpinan yang saya jelaskan, bagaimana pendapat Ibu/Bapak tentang gaya kepemimpinan Ibu kepala sekolah? Bisa dijelaskan dan diberi contoh pengalaman?

Pertanyaan Wawancara untuk Pertanyaan Penelitian 2 (konstruksi kepala sekolah tentang kepemimpinan perempuan)

1. Berdasarkan pemahaman Ibu/Bapak, bagaimana Ibu kepala sekolah melihat dirinya sendiri sebagai seorang pemimpin sekolah Islam? Pernahkah beliau

berbagi pemikiran mengenai hal tersebut? Pernahkah Ibu/Bapak menyaksikan atau mendengarnya dari anggota sekolah lain? Berikan penjelasan lebih lanjut.

Pertanyaan Wawancara untuk Pertanyaan Penelitian 3 (memfasilitasi prestasi murid)

1. Dapatkah Ibu/Bapak mendeskripsikan pemahaman Ibu/Bapak mengenai prestasi akademik dan non-akademik murid? Di bidang apa saja prestasi yang telah dicapai murid sekolah ini? Bagaimana pendapat Ibu/Bapak akan hal tersebut?
2. Bagaimana murid di sekolah ini dapat mencapai prestasi tersebut? Apa sajakah faktor yang berperan besar dalam pencapaian itu? Apakah menurut Ibu/Bapak ibu kepala sekolah memiliki peran penting dalam hal tersebut? Berikan penjelasan dan gambaran lebih lanjut
3. Berdasarkan diskusi sebelumnya mengenai kepemimpinan gender ibu kepala sekolah (konsep ideal tentang kepala sekolah perempuan, gaya feminin, gaya maskulin, dan lainnya), bagaimana kepemimpinan tersebut berkontribusi kepada murid di sekolah ini dalam menggapai prestasi-prestasi yang ada? Dapatkah Ibu/Bapak jelaskan strategi spesifik atau inisiatif yang dilakukan oleh Ibu kepala sekolah?
4. Apakah menurut Ibu/Bapak Ibu kepala sekolah memiliki dampak langsung kepada prestasi murid di sekolah ini secara akademik? Bagaimana dengan prestasi non-akademik? Tolong jelaskan secara detail
5. Bagaimana dengan peran Ibu kepala sekolah terhadap Ibu/Bapak sebagai staf? Bagaimana kepemimpinannya memengaruhi Ibu/Bapak dalam memfasilitasi murid mencapai prestasi?
6. Sebagai sekolah Islam, adakah ciri khas atau langkah unik yang sekolah ini terapkan dalam memotivasi/membantu murid-murid untuk berprestasi? Bagaimana peran Ibu kepala sekolah dalam hal tersebut?

### Pertanyaan Wawancara Penutup

1. Sebagai kesimpulan, dapatkah Ibu/Bapak memberikan komentar akhir/intisari tentang Ibu kepala sekolah sebagai pemimpin di sekolah Islam ini?
2. Apakah ada poin atau komentar tambahan yang ingin Ibu/Bapak sampaikan mengenai diskusi ini?

### **The Protocol of Interview**

Time :  
Date :  
Place :  
Interviewer : Difa Mahya Zahara  
Interviewed individual : Staff

### Opening Interview Questions

1. Allow me to introduce myself, I am Difa Mahya Zahara, a Master's student at the Faculty of Education, International Islamic University Indonesia. I hope you can introduce yourself to me. How long have you been staff here, ma'am/sir?
2. How about your educational background? Does it help you in your job to become a staff?
3. Can you explain your responsibilities as a staff in this school?

### Interview Questions for Research Question 2 (School members' construction of female principal's leadership)

1. Can you introduce and describe the principal (appearance, behavior; education knowledge; involvement with school activities; discipline; influence on school culture; relationships, and communication with school members)? What do you think about her as the principal of the school?
2. What are the qualities do you see in her?
3. What do you think about having a female principal in an Islamic school? In your opinion, does her gender play a role in her leadership? What do you

think about this? (As challenges/difficulties, advantages, or other perceptions).

4. What are the strengths and weaknesses of having a female principal in an Islamic school?
5. Have you ever seen, heard, or witnessed other school members having opinions about the principal because of her gender (it can be positive, negative, or others)? Please explain and give examples. What strategy is used by the principal in dealing with this?
6. In your opinion, have the principal done her job properly? How would you describe the ideal female principal for leading an Islamic school (in terms of appearance, behavior, and speech)? How does the principal perform in relation to this ideal concept? Please explain and provide examples of experience.
7. In your career experience as a staff, is there anything that distinguishes her as a school principal from other Islamic school principals (both male and female)? What unique characteristics did you find in the school principal?
8. How do you define a feminine Islamic school principal? How about a masculine Islamic principal? How do you see the principal based on these concepts? Do you think she fits the category as a whole? Please discuss this further.
9. (Explain in advance about feminine, masculine, and androgynous leadership styles based on the literature) Based on the leadership styles I described, what is your opinion about the principal's leadership style? Can you explain and give an example of your experience?

Interview Questions for Research Question 2 (The principal's construction of female leadership)

1. Based on your understanding, how does the principal see herself as a leader of an Islamic school? Has she ever shared her thoughts on this matter? Have you ever witnessed or heard about it from other school members? Please provide further explanation.

#### Interview Questions for Research Question 3 (Facilitating students' achievement)

1. Can you describe your understanding of students' academic and non-academic achievements? In what areas have the students of this school achieved achievements? What do you think about this?
2. How are students at this school able to achieve that? What factors played a major role in those achievements? Do you think that the school principal has a role in this matter? Please give further explanation and description.
3. Based on the previous discussion regarding the principal's gendered leadership (the ideal concept of a female principal, feminine style, masculine style, and so on), how does it contribute to students' achievements in this school? Can you explain the specific strategies or initiatives carried out by the principal?
4. Do you think that the school principal has a direct impact on students' achievement in this school academically? What about non-academic achievements? Please explain it in detail.
5. How about the role of the principal towards you as a staff? How has her leadership played roles in you in facilitating students' achievement?
6. As an Islamic school, are there any unique characteristics or steps that this school applies in motivating/helping students to excel? What is the role of the principal in this matter?

#### Closing Interview Questions

1. In conclusion, can you provide a final comment/summary about the principal as a leader in this Islamic school?
2. Are there any additional points or comments you would like to convey regarding this discussion?

## **Appendix E: Protocol of Semi-structured Interviews with Students**

### **Protokol Wawancara**

Waktu wawancara	:	
Tanggal	:	
Tempat	:	
Pewawancara	:	Difa Mahya Zahara
Individu yang diwawancarai	:	Murid

#### **Pertanyaan Wawancara Pengantar**

1. Perkenalkan saya Difa Mahya Zahara, mahasiswa S2 di Fakultas Ilmu Pendidikan Universitas Islam Internasional Indonesia, saya harap kamu bisa memperkenalkan diri. Siapa namamu dan sekarang sudah kelas berapa?
2. Bagaimana perasaanmu belajar di sekolah ini?
3. Bisa ceritakan kegiatan apa saja yang kamu lakukan sebagai murid di sekolah ini?

#### **Pertanyaan Wawancara untuk Pertanyaan Penelitian 2 (konstruksi anggota sekolah tentang kepemimpinan kepala sekolah perempuan)**

1. Bisa tolong ceritakan pengalamanmu memiliki kepala sekolah seorang perempuan? Kesan apa yang kamu rasakan dari Ibu kepala sekolah? Menurut kamu, Ibu kepala sekolah itu pemimpin yang seperti apa?
2. Bagaimana pendapat kamu memiliki kepala sekolah seorang perempuan di sekolah Islam? Apakah menurut kamu akan berbeda kalau kepala sekolahmu laki-laki? Bisa tolong jelaskan?
3. Menurut kamu, apa saja kelebihan dan kekurangan memiliki kepala sekolah perempuan di sekolah Islam?
4. Pernah tidak kamu mendengar teman-teman, guru, staf, atau lainnya berbicara atau berdiskusi tentang Ibu kepala sekolah (baik positif, negatif, dan lainnya)? Bagaimana pendapat kamu sendiri?
5. Menurut kamu, kepala sekolah perempuan yang baik/ideal itu seperti apa? Tolong jelaskan lebih lanjut dan berikan contohnya. Apakah menurut kamu ibu kepala sekolah sudah menjalankan tugasnya dengan baik?

6. (Menjelaskan terlebih dulu tentang gaya kepemimpinan feminin, maskulin, dan androgini berdasarkan literatur) Jika berdasarkan dengan gaya kepemimpinan yang saya jelaskan, bagaimana pendapat kamu tentang Ibu kepala sekolah? Bisa dijelaskan dan diberi contoh pengalamannya?

Pertanyaan Wawancara untuk Pertanyaan Penelitian 2 (konstruksi kepala sekolah tentang kepemimpinan perempuan)

1. Menurut kamu, kira-kira bagaimana perasaan/pendapat ibu kepala sekolah menjadi seorang pemimpin perempuan di sekolah ini? Pernah tidak beliau bercerita tentang itu secara langsung atau mendengar dari anggota sekolah lain? Berikan penjelasan lebih lanjut.

Pertanyaan Wawancara untuk Pertanyaan Penelitian 3 (memfasilitasi prestasi murid)

1. Sebagai salah satu siswa yang berprestasi, bisa tolong ceritakan prestasi apa saja yang kamu capai selama bersekolah di sini? Bagaimana perasaan dan pendapatmu tentang prestasi itu?
2. Bagaimana kamu bisa mencapai prestasi seperti itu (akademik maupun non-akademik)? Hal penting apa di sekolah ini yang membantu kamu dalam meraihnya? Apakah menurut kamu ibu kepala sekolah punya peran dalam hal itu? Bagaimana beliau membantu kamu selama ini? Tolong ceritakan lebih lanjut
3. Bagi kamu, apakah dengan memiliki kepala sekolah perempuan membantumu dalam meraih prestasi-prestasi tersebut? Apa yang menurutmu akan berbeda jika kepala sekolahmu laki-laki? Tolong ceritakan lebih lanjut
4. Sebagai sekolah Islam, adakah hal unik yang kamu alami/temui di sekolah ini yang memotivasi kamu untuk menjadi murid berprestasi? Bagaimana peran Ibu kepala sekolah dalam hal tersebut?

Pertanyaan Wawancara Penutup

1. Sebagai kesimpulan, bisakah kamu memberikan komentar akhir tentang Ibu kepala sekolah sebagai pemimpin di sekolah ini?
2. Apakah ada poin atau komentar tambahan yang ingin kamu sampaikan?

### **The Protocol of Interview**

Time	:	
Date	:	
Place	:	
Interviewer	:	Difa Mahya Zahara
Interviewed individual	:	Students

#### Opening Interview Questions

1. Introducing me Difa Mahya Zahara, a Master's student at the Faculty of Education at the International Islamic University of Indonesia, I hope you can introduce yourself. What's your name and what grade are you in now?
2. How do you feel studying in this school?
3. Can you tell me what activities you do as a student at this school?

#### Interview Questions for Research Question 2 (The school members' construction of female principal's leadership)

1. Could you please share your experience of having a female principal? What impression do you have of the principal? What kind of leader do you think she is?
2. What do you think about having a female principal in an Islamic school? Do you think it would be any different if your principal were a male?
3. In your opinion, what are the strengths and weaknesses of having a female principal in an Islamic school?
4. Have you ever heard friends, teachers, staff, or others talking or discussing about the principal (it can be positive, negative, and others)? What do you think about that?
5. In your opinion, what is a good/ideal female school principal like? Please explain further and provide an example. Do you think the principal has done her job well like that?
6. (Explain in advance about feminine, masculine, and androgynous leadership styles based on the literature) Based on the leadership style I

described, what do you think about the principal in relation to that? Can you explain and give an example of your experience?

Interview Questions for Research Question 2 (The principal's construction of female leadership)

1. In your opinion, how does the principal feel/think about being a female leader in this school? Has she ever told you about it directly or heard from other school members? Please provide further explanation.

Interview Questions for Research Question 3 (Facilitating students' achievement)

1. As one of the students with achievements, could you please tell me what achievements you have achieved while studying here? What do you think about it?
2. How did you achieve such achievements (academic or non-academic)? What are the important things in this school that helped you to achieve them? Do you think the principal has a role in it? How has she helped you so far? Please tell me more about it.
3. For you, does having a female school principal help you to achieve those? What do you think would be different if your principal were a male? Please tell me more about it.
4. As an Islamic school, is there anything unique that you experienced/found in this school that motivates you to become such a student? What is the role of the principal in this matter for you?

Closing Interview Questions

1. In conclusion, can you provide a final comment/summary about the principal as a leader in this Islamic school?
2. Are there any additional points or comments you would like to convey regarding this discussion?

## **Appendix F: Protocol of Semi-structured Interviews with Vice Principals**

### **Protokol Wawancara**

Waktu wawancara	:	
Tanggal	:	
Tempat	:	
Pewawancara	:	Difa Mahya Zahara
Individu yang diwawancarai	:	Wakil Kepala Sekolah

#### Pertanyaan Wawancara Pengantar

1. Perkenalkan saya Difa Mahya Zahara, mahasiswa S2 di Fakultas Ilmu Pendidikan Universitas Islam Internasional Indonesia, saya berharap Ibu/Bapak dapat memperkenalkan diri kepada saya. Sudah berapa lama Ibu/Bapak menjadi wakil kepala sekolah di sini?
2. Bagaimana dengan latar belakang pendidikan Ibu/Bapak? Apakah membantu Ibu/Bapak dalam pekerjaan menjadi seorang wakil kepala sekolah?
3. Dapatkah Ibu/Bapak menjelaskan tugas Ibu/Bapak sebagai wakil kepala sekolah di sekolah ini?

#### Pertanyaan Wawancara untuk Pertanyaan Penelitian 2 (konstruksi anggota sekolah tentang kepemimpinan kepala sekolah perempuan)

1. Bisakah Ibu/Bapak mengenalkan dan mendeskripsikan tentang Ibu kepala sekolah (penampilan, perilaku; pengetahuan tentang pendidikan; keterlibatan dengan kegiatan sekolah; kedisiplinan; pengaruh pada budaya sekolah; hubungan dan komunikasi dengan anggota sekolah)? Bagaimana pendapat Ibu/Bapak tentang beliau sebagai kepala sekolah?
2. Apa saja kualitas yang Ibu/Bapak lihat pada dirinya?
3. Apa pendapat Ibu/Bapak memiliki seorang kepala sekolah perempuan di sekolah Islam? Menurut Ibu/Bapak, apakah jenis kelaminnya sebagai perempuan memiliki peran terhadap kepemimpinannya? Bagaimana pendapat Ibu/Bapak tentang hal tersebut? (Sebagai tantangan/kesulitan, keuntungan atau persepsi lainnya)

4. Apa kelebihan dan kekurangan memiliki kepala sekolah perempuan di sekolah Islam?
5. Pernahkah Ibu/Bapak melihat, mendengar, atau menyaksikan anggota sekolah lain berpendapat tentang kepala sekolah karena jenis kelaminnya (baik positif, negatif, dan lainnya)? Tolong jelaskan dan berikan gambaran. Strategi apa yang digunakan oleh Ibu kepala sekolah dalam menghadapi hal tersebut?
6. Menurut Ibu/Bapak, apakah Ibu kepala sekolah telah melakukan tugas sebagaimana mestinya? Bagaimana Ibu/Bapak mendeskripsikan sosok seorang kepala sekolah perempuan yang ideal untuk memimpin sekolah Islam (dalam perihal penampilan, perilaku, ucapan)? Bagaimana performa Ibu kepala sekolah jika dibandingkan dengan konsep ideal tersebut? Tolong jelaskan dan berikan contoh pengalaman.
7. Dalam pengalaman karir Ibu/Bapak sebagai wakil kepala sekolah, apakah ada yang membedakan Ibu kepala sekolah dari kepala sekolah Islam lainnya (baik laki-laki maupun perempuan)? Apakah karakteristik unik yang Ibu/Bapak temukan dari Ibu kepala sekolah?
8. Bagaimana Ibu/Bapak mendefinisikan seorang kepala sekolah Islam yang feminin? Bagaimana dengan kepala sekolah Islam yang maskulin? Lalu, bagaimana Ibu/Bapak melihat ibu kepala sekolah berdasarkan konsep tersebut? Apakah menurut Ibu/Bapak beliau sesuai dengan kategori tersebut secara utuh? Tolong diskusikan lebih lanjut.
9. (Menjelaskan terlebih dulu tentang gaya kepemimpinan feminin, maskulin, dan androgini berdasarkan literatur) Jika berdasarkan dengan gaya kepemimpinan yang saya jelaskan, bagaimana pendapat Ibu/Bapak tentang gaya kepemimpinan Ibu kepala sekolah? Bisa dijelaskan dan diberi contoh pengalaman?

Pertanyaan Wawancara untuk Pertanyaan Penelitian 2 (konstruksi kepala sekolah tentang kepemimpinan perempuan)

1. Berdasarkan pemahaman Ibu/Bapak, bagaimana Ibu kepala sekolah melihat dirinya sendiri sebagai seorang pemimpin sekolah Islam? Pernahkah beliau

berbagi pemikiran mengenai hal tersebut? Pernahkah Ibu/Bapak menyaksikan atau mendengarnya dari anggota sekolah lain? Berikan penjelasan lebih lanjut.

Pertanyaan Wawancara untuk Pertanyaan Penelitian 3 (memfasilitasi prestasi murid)

1. Dapatkah Ibu/Bapak mendeskripsikan pemahaman Ibu/Bapak mengenai prestasi akademik dan non-akademik murid? Di bidang apa saja prestasi yang telah dicapai murid sekolah ini? Bagaimana pendapat Ibu/Bapak akan hal tersebut?
2. Bagaimana murid di sekolah ini dapat mencapai prestasi tersebut? Apa sajakah faktor yang berperan besar dalam pencapaian itu? Apakah menurut Ibu/Bapak Ibu kepala sekolah memiliki peran dalam hal tersebut? Berikan penjelasan dan gambaran lebih lanjut
3. Berdasarkan diskusi sebelumnya mengenai kepemimpinan gender Ibu kepala sekolah (konsep ideal tentang kepala sekolah perempuan, gaya feminin, gaya maskulin, dan lainnya), bagaimana kepemimpinan tersebut berkontribusi kepada murid di sekolah ini dalam menggapai prestasi-prestasi yang ada? Dapatkah Ibu/Bapak jelaskan strategi spesifik atau inisiatif yang dilakukan oleh Ibu kepala sekolah?
4. Apakah menurut Ibu/Bapak Ibu kepala sekolah memiliki dampak langsung kepada prestasi murid di sekolah ini secara akademik? Bagaimana dengan prestasi non-akademik?
5. Bagaimana dengan peran Ibu kepala sekolah terhadap Ibu/Bapak sebagai wakil kepala sekolah? Bagaimana kepemimpinannya memengaruhi Ibu/Bapak dalam memfasilitasi murid mencapai prestasi?
6. Sebagai sekolah Islam, adakah ciri khas atau langkah unik yang sekolah ini terapkan dalam memotivasi/membantu murid-murid untuk berprestasi? Bagaimana peran Ibu kepala sekolah dalam hal tersebut?

### Pertanyaan Wawancara Penutup

1. Sebagai kesimpulan, dapatkah Ibu/Bapak memberikan komentar akhir/intisari tentang Ibu kepala sekolah sebagai pemimpin di sekolah Islam ini?
2. Apakah ada poin atau komentar tambahan yang ingin Ibu/Bapak sampaikan mengenai diskusi ini?

### **The Protocol of Interview**

Time	:	
Date	:	
Place	:	
Interviewer	:	Difa Mahya Zahara
Interviewed individual	:	Vice Principals

### Opening Interview Questions

1. Allow me to introduce myself, I am Difa Mahya Zahara, a Master's student at the Faculty of Education, International Islamic University Indonesia. I hope you can introduce yourself to me. How long have you been a vice principal here, ma'am/sir?
2. How about your educational background? Does it help you in your job to become a vice principal?
3. Can you explain your responsibilities as a vice principal in this school?

### Interview Questions for Research Question 2 (School members' construction of female principal's leadership)

1. Can you introduce and describe the principal (appearance, behavior; education knowledge; involvement with school activities; discipline; influence on school culture; relationships, and communication with school members)? What do you think about her as the principal of the school?
2. What are the qualities do you see in her?
3. What do you think about having a female principal in an Islamic school? In your opinion, does her gender play a role in her leadership? What do you

think about this? (As challenges/difficulties, advantages, or other perceptions).

4. What are the strengths and weaknesses of having a female principal in an Islamic school?
5. Have you ever seen, heard, or witnessed other school members having opinions about the principal because of her gender (it can be positive, negative, or others)? Please explain and give examples. What strategy is used by the principal in dealing with this?
6. In your opinion, have the principal done her job properly? How would you describe the ideal female principal for leading an Islamic school (in terms of appearance, behavior, and speech)? How does the principal perform in relation to this ideal concept? Please explain and provide examples of experience.
7. In your career experience as a vice principal, is there anything that distinguishes her as a school principal from other Islamic school principals (both male and female)? What unique characteristics did you find in the school principal?
8. How do you define a feminine Islamic school principal? How about a masculine Islamic principal? How do you see the principal based on these concepts? Do you think she fits the category as a whole? Please discuss this further.
9. (Explain in advance about feminine, masculine, and androgynous leadership styles based on the literature) Based on the leadership styles I described, what is your opinion about the principal's leadership style? Can you explain and give an example of your experience?

Interview Questions for Research Question 2 (The principal's construction of female leadership)

1. Based on your understanding, how does the principal see herself as a leader of an Islamic school? Has she ever shared her thoughts on this matter? Have you ever witnessed or heard about it from other school members? Please provide further explanation.

#### Interview Questions for Research Question 3 (Facilitating students' achievement)

1. Can you describe your understanding of students' academic and non-academic achievements? In what areas have the students of this school achieved achievements? What do you think about this?
2. How are students at this school able to achieve that? What factors played a major role in those achievements? Do you think that the school principal has a role in this matter? Please give further explanation and description.
3. Based on the previous discussion regarding the principal's gendered leadership (the ideal concept of a female principal, feminine style, masculine style, and so on), how does it contribute to students' achievements in this school? Can you explain the specific strategies or initiatives carried out by the principal?
4. Do you think that the school principal has a direct impact on students' achievement in this school academically? What about non-academic achievements? Please explain it in detail.
5. How about the role of the principal towards you as a vice principal? How has her leadership played roles in you in facilitating students' achievement?
6. As an Islamic school, are there any unique characteristics or steps that this school applies in motivating/helping students to excel? What is the role of the principal in this matter?

#### Closing Interview Questions

1. In conclusion, can you provide a final comment/summary about the principal as a leader in this Islamic school?
2. Are there any additional points or comments you would like to convey regarding this discussion?

## **Appendix G: Protocol of Semi-structured Interviews with Principal**

### **Protokol Wawancara**

Waktu wawancara	:	
Tanggal	:	
Tempat	:	
Pewawancara	:	Difa Mahya Zahara
Individu yang diwawancarai	:	Kepala Sekolah

#### **Pertanyaan Wawancara Pengantar**

1. Perkenalkan saya Difa Mahya Zahara, mahasiswa S2 di Fakultas Ilmu Pendidikan Universitas Islam Internasional Indonesia, saya berharap Ibu dapat memperkenalkan diri kepada saya. Sudah berapa lama Ibu menjadi kepala sekolah di sini?
2. Bagaimana dengan latar belakang pendidikan Ibu? Apakah membantu Ibu dalam pekerjaan menjadi seorang kepala sekolah?
3. Dapatkah Ibu menjelaskan tugas Ibu sebagai kepala sekolah di sekolah ini? Bagaimana dengan kegiatan sehari-hari Ibu sebagai kepala sekolah? Bisa tolong deskripsikan?
4. Bagaimana Ibu mendeskripsikan pengalaman Ibu sebagai kepala sekolah? Bagaimana Ibu menegosiasi tuntutan personal dan profesional, terutama dari keluarga Ibu?

#### **Pertanyaan Wawancara untuk Pertanyaan Penelitian 2 (konstruksi anggota sekolah tentang kepemimpinan kepala sekolah perempuan)**

1. Apakah Ibu mengetahui atau pernah mendengar persepsi anggota sekolah mengenai Ibu sebagai seorang perempuan yang memimpin sekolah Islam? Apakah Ibu pernah mendengar tentang persepsi tersebut secara langsung? Mohon jelaskan.
2. Berdasarkan sepengetahuan Ibu, apakah anggota sekolah memiliki ekspektasi idealisme tertentu terhadap Ibu sebagai seorang kepala sekolah perempuan di sekolah Islam (konstruksi dominan)? Apakah Ibu pernah menerima atau mendengar ekspektasi semacam itu? Jelaskan lebih lanjut

Pertanyaan Wawancara untuk Pertanyaan Penelitian 2 (konstruksi kepala sekolah tentang kepemimpinan perempuan)

1. Mengingat adanya ekspektasi/konstruksi ideal, bagaimana reaksi Ibu terhadap hal tersebut? Bagaimana pengalaman Ibu dalam menghadapinya (kesulitan, kisah unik, tantangan, dan lainnya)? Menurut Ibu, bagaimana performa Ibu jika dibandingkan dengan ekspektasi ideal tersebut?
2. Bisakah deskripsikan diri Ibu sebagai seorang kepala sekolah perempuan di sekolah Islam? Kualitas kepemimpinan apa yang Ibu miliki?
3. Bagaimana pengalaman Ibu menjadi kepala sekolah perempuan di sekolah Islam? Pernahkan Ibu mengalami tantangan atau konflik karena jenis kelamin Ibu? Bagaimana Ibu menghadapinya?
4. Apakah jenis kelamin sebagai perempuan memiliki peran terhadap kepemimpinan Ibu? Bagaimana pendapat Ibu tentang hal tersebut? (Sebagai tantangan/kesulitan, keuntungan atau persepsi lainnya)
5. Apakah kelebihan dan kekurangan menjadi kepala sekolah perempuan di sekolah Islam?
6. Apakah Ibu merasa telah melakukan tugas kepala sekolah sebagaimana mestinya? Bagaimana Ibu mendeskripsikan sosok seorang kepala sekolah perempuan yang ideal untuk memimpin sekolah Islam (dalam perihal penampilan, perilaku, ucapan)? Bagaimana performa Ibu jika dibandingkan dengan konsep ideal tersebut? Tolong jelaskan dan berikan contoh pengalaman. Bagaimana Ibu menegosiasi hal-hal tersebut?
7. Berdasarkan sepengetahuan Ibu dalam berkarir dan interaksi di dunia pendidikan, apakah ada yang membedakan Ibu dari kepala sekolah Islam lainnya (baik laki-laki maupun perempuan)? Apakah karakteristik unik pada diri Ibu sebagai kepala sekolah perempuan?
8. Bagaimana Ibu mendefinisikan seorang kepala sekolah Islam yang feminin? Bagaimana dengan kepala sekolah Islam yang maskulin? Lalu, bagaimana Ibu melihat diri Ibu berdasarkan konsep tersebut? Apakah Ibu sesuai dengan kategori tersebut secara utuh? Tolong diskusikan lebih lanjut.

9. (Menjelaskan terlebih dulu tentang gaya kepemimpinan feminin, maskulin, dan androgini berdasarkan literatur) Jika berdasarkan dengan gaya kepemimpinan yang saya jelaskan, bagaimana pendapat Ibu/Bapak tentang gaya kepemimpinan Ibu kepala sekolah? Bisa dijelaskan dan diberi contoh pengalaman?

Pertanyaan Wawancara untuk Pertanyaan Penelitian 3 (memfasilitasi prestasi murid)

1. Dapatkah Ibu mendeskripsikan pemahaman Ibu mengenai prestasi akademik dan non-akademik murid? Di bidang apa saja prestasi yang telah dicapai murid sekolah ini? Bagaimana pendapat Ibu akan hal tersebut?
2. Bagaimana murid di sekolah ini dapat mencapai prestasi tersebut? Apa sajakah faktor yang berperan besar dalam pencapaian itu? Apakah Ibu memiliki peran yang signifikan dalam hal tersebut? Berikan penjelasan dan gambaran lebih lanjut
3. Berdasarkan diskusi sebelumnya mengenai kepemimpinan gender Ibu (konsep ideal tentang kepala sekolah perempuan, gaya feminin, gaya maskulin, dan lainnya), bagaimana kepemimpinan tersebut berkontribusi kepada murid di sekolah ini dalam menggapai prestasi-prestasi yang ada? Dapatkah Ibu jelaskan strategi spesifik atau inisiatif yang telah Ibu lakukan?
4. Apakah Ibu merasa memiliki dampak langsung kepada prestasi murid di sekolah ini secara akademik? Bagaimana dengan prestasi non-akademik? Tolong jelaskan secara detail
5. Bagaimana dengan peran Ibu terhadap mediator lain (anggota sekolah, fasilitas, dan lainnya) dalam memfasilitasi murid mencapai prestasi? Langkah apa yang telah Ibu lakukan untuk merealisasikan hal tersebut?
6. Sebagai sekolah Islam, adakah ciri khas atau langkah unik yang sekolah ini terapkan dalam memotivasi/membantu murid-murid untuk berprestasi? Bagaimana peran Ibu sebagai kepala sekolah dalam hal tersebut?

Pertanyaan Wawancara Penutup

1. Sebagai kesimpulan, dapatkah Ibu memberikan komentar akhir/intisari tentang diri Ibu sebagai pemimpin perempuan di sekolah Islam ini?

2. Apakah ada poin atau komentar tambahan yang ingin Ibu sampaikan mengenai diskusi ini?

#### **The Protocol of Interview**

Time	:	
Date	:	
Place	:	
Interviewer	:	Difa Mahya Zahara
Interviewed individual	:	The principal

#### Opening Interview Questions

1. Allow me to introduce myself, I am Difa Mahya Zahara, a Master's student at the Faculty of Education, International Islamic University Indonesia. I hope you can introduce yourself to me. How long have you been a principal here, ma'am?
2. How about your educational background? Does it help you in your job to become a principal?
3. Can you explain your responsibilities as a principal in this school? What about your daily activities as a school principal? Can you please describe it?
4. How would you describe your experience as a school principal? How do you negotiate personal and professional demands, especially regarding family matters?

#### Interview Questions for Research Question 2 (School members' construction of female principal's leadership)

1. Do you know or have heard of the perceptions of school members regarding you as a female who leads this Islamic school? Have you ever heard about this perception in person? Please explain.
2. Based on your knowledge, do school members have certain idealistic expectations of you as a female principal in an Islamic school (dominant construction)? Have you ever received or heard of such expectations? Please explain it further.

Interview Questions for Research Question 2 (The principal's construction of female leadership)

1. Given that there are ideal expectations/constructions, how do you react to this? How was your experience in dealing with it (difficulties, unique stories, challenges, etc.)? In your opinion, how does your performance compare to these ideal expectations?
2. Can you describe yourself as a female principal at this Islamic school? What leadership qualities do you have?
3. What was your experience as the principal of this Islamic school? Have you ever experienced challenges or conflicts because of your sex? How did you deal with it?
4. Does your sex as a female have a role in your leadership? What do you think about this? (As challenges/difficulties, advantages, or other perceptions)
5. What are the strengths and weaknesses of being a female principal in an Islamic school?
6. Do you think you have done principalship as you should? How would you describe the ideal figure of a female principal for leading an Islamic school (in terms of appearance, behavior, and speech)? How does your performance compare to this ideal concept? Please explain and provide an example of your experience. How do you negotiate these things?
7. Based on your knowledge of your career and interactions in the world of education, is there anything that differentiates you from the principals of other Islamic schools (both male and female)? What are the unique characteristics of you as a female school principal?
8. How would you define a feminine school principal? How about a masculine principal? Then, how do you see yourself based on that concept? Do you fit into that category completely? Please discuss this further.
9. (Explain in advance about feminine, masculine, and androgynous leadership styles based on the literature) Based on the leadership style I described, what is your opinion about your style? Can you explain and give an example of your experience?

#### Interview Questions for Research Question 3 (Facilitating students' achievement)

1. Can you describe your understanding of students' academic and non-academic achievements? In what areas have the students of this school achieved achievements? What do you think about this?
2. How are students at this school able to achieve that? What factors played a major role in those achievements? Do you think that you have a role in this matter? Please give further explanation and description.
3. Based on the previous discussion regarding the principal's gendered leadership (the ideal concept of a female principal, feminine style, masculine style, and so on), how does it contribute to students' achievements in this school? Can you explain the specific strategies or initiatives you have done?
4. Do you think that as a principal, you have a direct impact on students' achievement academically? What about non-academic achievements? Please explain it in detail.
5. What about your role in relation to other mediators (school members, facilities, and others) in facilitating students' achievement? What steps have you taken to make this happen?
6. As an Islamic school, are there any unique characteristics or steps that this school applies in motivating/helping students to excel? What is your role as the principal in this matter?

#### Closing Interview Questions

1. In conclusion, can you provide a final comment/summary about your experience as a leader in this Islamic school?
2. Are there any additional points or comments you would like to convey regarding this discussion?

## **Appendix H: Protocol of Documents Study**

### **Protokol Studi Dokumen**

Tujuan dari instrumen penelitian ini adalah untuk mengumpulkan data yang berkaitan dengan profil sekolah, profil kepala dan wakil kepala sekolah, profil anggota sekolah, serta catatan sekolah mengenai aktivitas dan prestasi akademik dan non-akademik murid. Dokumen-dokumen yang akan dikumpulkan adalah sebagai berikut:

#### Bagian 1: Profil Sekolah

1. Visi dan misi sekolah
2. Struktur organisasi sekolah
3. Kurikulum sekolah
4. Daftar klub, organisasi, dan kegiatan non-akademik yang tersedia untuk murid
5. Daftar partisipasi dan pencapaian akademik murid di lingkup internal dan eksternal
6. Daftar partisipasi dan pencapaian non-akademik murid di lingkup internal dan eksternal

#### Bagian 2: Profil Kepala Sekolah dan Wakil Kepala Sekolah (Partisipan)

1. Riwayat hidup atau *curriculum vitae* (CV); termasuk latar belakang pendidikan, pengalaman profesional, prestasi, dan penghargaan (jika ada)

#### Bagian 3: Profil Guru dan Staf (Partisipan)

1. Riwayat hidup atau *curriculum vitae* (CV); termasuk latar belakang pendidikan, pengalaman profesional, prestasi, dan penghargaan (jika ada)

#### Section 4: Profil Murid (Partisipan)

1. Daftar partisipasi dan pencapaian akademik murid
2. Daftar partisipasi dan pencapaian non-akademik murid

## **Document Study Protocol**

The purpose of this research instrument is to collect data relating to school profiles, profiles of the principal and vice principals, profiles of school members, as well as school records regarding students' academic and non-academic activities and achievements. The documents to be collected are as follows:

### **Section 1: School Profile**

1. Vision and mission of the school
2. School organizational structure
3. School curriculum
4. List of clubs, organizations, and non-academic activities available for students
5. List of students' participation and academic achievements internally and externally
6. List of participation and non-academic achievements of students internally and externally

### **Section 2: Principal and Vice Principal Profiles (Participants)**

1. Curriculum Vitae (CV); including educational background, professional experience, achievements, and awards (if available)

### **Section 3: Teachers and Staff Profiles (Participants)**

1. Curriculum Vitae (CV); including educational background, professional experience, achievements, and awards (if available)

### **Section 4: Students Profiles (Participants)**

1. List of students' academic participation and achievements
2. List of students' non-academic participation and achievements

**Appendix I: List of Interviewees**

No.	Name (pseudo- nyms)	Sex	Age	Working at school since	Interview date	Position
1.	Amani	Female	53	1998	6 April 2023 20 June 2023	Principal
2.	Kanita	Female	42	2004	5 April 2023 26 June 2023	Vice principal of academic affairs
3.	Gilang	Male	42	2005	5 April 2023 20 June 2023	Vice principal of student affairs
4.	Dewa	Male	49	2001	5 April 2023	Vice principal of Quran and <i>Diniyyah</i>
5.	Talia	Female	42	2005	5 April 2023 20 June 2023	Person in Charge of Student Competition Affairs
6.	Suryadi	Male	35	2005	5 April 2023	Administration Staff
7.	Karisma	Female	48	2002	5 April 2023	Student Counselling Staff
8.	Badriah	Female	53	2004	5 April 2023	Teacher
9.	Dino	Male	35	2010	5 April 2023	Teacher
10.	Kilan	Male	44	2015	9 May 2023	Teacher
11.	Jefri	Male	12	2018	5 April 2023	Student
12.	Hawa	Female	11	2018	5 April 2023	Student