

## Feminism Among Muslimah Students: A Gender Perspective Study Through Islamic Values

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### ABSTRACT

**Purpose of the study:** This research aims to understand how Muslimah students at the Faculty of Art and Design Education UPI interpret feminism in three main dimensions: humanization in peer relations, liberation: impact on the self, and transcendence: influence on religious understanding.

**Methodology:** A qualitative phenomenological technique was used in this investigation. In-depth interviews with Muslimah students at FPSD UPI were used to gather data, which were bolstered by document analysis and observation. The data was interpreted using thematic analysis, which concentrated on the aspects of transcendence, liberation, and humanisation within the context of Islamic principles.

**Main Findings:** The study reveals that Muslimah students at FPSD UPI interpret feminism in diverse ways across three dimensions: humanization, liberation, and transcendence. Feminism encourages more inclusive social interactions, inspires artistic expression on gender themes, and prompts reflective engagement with religious teachings. While some view feminism as compatible with Islamic values, others experience tension, showing varied levels of internalization shaped by personal, cultural, and spiritual contexts.

**Novelty/Originality of this study:** This study provides a fresh perspective by examining how Muslimah students in a department of art and design see feminism from an Islamic perspective. By presenting feminism in three interconnected dimensions: humanization, freedom, and transcendence, it contributes to the current conversation by emphasising the contextual interaction between gender consciousness, artistic expression, and religious knowledge in an academic context with cultural roots.

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

The gender equality movement or feminism has grown rapidly in the modern era, especially with advances in technology that facilitate the dissemination of information through social media and videos. This movement aims to provide equal rights for women and improve their status in various aspects of life, including in the political, economic, and social fields [1]. With the existence of digital platforms, voices and thoughts related to feminism can spread quickly, making it a topic that is widely discussed by various groups, including students

[2]. The gender equality movement refers to efforts to realize equal rights and opportunities between men and women in various aspects of life, including in the political, social, economic, and cultural fields [3].

This movement focuses on eliminating gender-based discrimination, where every individual, regardless of gender, has equal rights to access opportunities and resources [4]. The main goal of the gender equality movement is to reduce the injustice experienced by women and change social structures that limit the roles and potential of individuals based on gender stereotypes [5]. The emergence of popular feminism in the digital age has created both opportunities and challenges for the gender equality movement, especially among young people who engage with feminism through social media [6].

This movement has various approaches, from the legal approach, which proposes the enactment of laws that guarantee equality, to the social and cultural approach, which seeks to change norms and perceptions that are rooted in society [7]. One of the main aspects of the gender equality movement is feminism, which focuses on fighting for women's rights, although this movement also involves various efforts to balance the roles and rights of men and women in social life [8]. However, among Muslimah students, feminism is often a controversial topic. Although this movement has a noble goal of realizing equality, many Muslimah students oppose it on the grounds that feminism is contrary to Islamic teachings [9]. They believe that the values contained in feminism are often incompatible with religious principles that place the role of women in a certain context [10].

At the Faculty of Art and Design Education (FPSD) of the Indonesian University of Education (UPI), there is an interesting dynamic related to the understanding of feminism among female Muslim students. As an institution that combines artistic expression with Islamic educational values, FPSD is a space where female students face challenges in expressing their gender identity. Several works of art produced by students, such as paintings that raise issues of gender inequality, reflect their efforts in voicing their experiences and views on the role of women in society [11]. However, on the other hand, there is also concern that such artistic expression may conflict with the Islamic values they adhere to, thus creating a dilemma in balancing freedom of expression and adherence to religious teachings. This phenomenon indicates the need for further study to understand how female Muslim students at FPSD UPI interpret and integrate feminist values with Islamic teachings in the context of art education.

Previous studies have shown that the understanding and acceptance of feminism in higher education environments are heavily influenced by cultural and religious contexts. Kitta and Cardona-Moltó [12] highlighted the lack of internalization of gender perspectives in university curricula despite students supporting gender equality. Nojan et al., [13] found that religious students tend to experience tension between religious identity and secular institutional norms, affecting acceptance of equality values. Thoriquttyas [14] showed that Muslim students can understand feminism positively when associated with Islamic values that uphold justice. In line with this, other studies have revealed that young Muslim women often face dilemmas between feminism, religious interpretation, and social pressure, even though they ideologically accept the principle of equality [15].

Fidhayanti et al., [16] highlighted how Islamic feminism developed through the reinterpretation of religious teachings that promote gender equality without abandoning religious identity. Khalil and Saputro [17] showed that Muslim students tend to accept feminist values if they do not conflict with Islamic norms, while Tuki [18] found that students' gender views are greatly influenced by how they interpret religious teachings. Şenel and Demmrich [19] emphasized the tension between Western feminism and Muslim identity, which led to the formation of a selective approach or Islamic feminism. However, the majority of these studies focus more on women or activists, rather than specifically on art students or Islamic higher education as communities with distinctive gender expressions and spiritual values. Not much research has focused on how Muslim girls studying creative subjects discuss feminism in terms of their gender, their religion and their art in Islamic universities. This study fills that gap by offering a fresh perspective rooted in the lived experiences of Muslimah students in an arts-based faculty. It provides a lens through which the intersection of feminism, religiosity, and artistic identity can be understood not as mutually exclusive, but as overlapping spheres with rich potential for integration and reflection.

The novelty of this study lies in its unique focus on Muslimah students within an art and design faculty, exploring how they interpret feminism through an Islamic lens in a culturally and spiritually embedded academic environment. By framing the research through three key dimensions: humanization, liberation, and transcendence this study develops a multidimensional model that reveals how gender awareness, artistic self-expression, and religious interpretation are meaningfully negotiated. The humanization dimension uncovers how feminism influences everyday peer relations, fostering fairness and inclusivity. The liberation dimension shows how feminism acts as a source of empowerment and a catalyst for creative exploration of women's experiences. The transcendence dimension examines the dynamic interplay between feminist values and religious beliefs, highlighting areas of harmony and tension.

This research is important as it addresses the limited discourse on how gender justice, spiritual identity, and creative self-expression intersect within Islamic higher education, particularly in art and design faculties. At a time when gender discourse is increasingly visible and contested, especially in religious academic environments, understanding how Muslimah students experience, negotiate, and reinterpret feminism is essential. Focusing on

students at the Faculty of Art and Design Education (FPSD) UPI, the study explores their interpretation of feminism through three key dimensions: humanization in peer relations, liberation as a personal and artistic impact, and transcendence in relation to religious understanding.

This integrative and analytical framework provides a deeper appreciation of the complex negotiations these students undertake as women, Muslims, and artists. It fills a critical gap in literature that often isolates feminist discourse from religious or creative contexts and offers practical insights for educators and institutions striving to balance gender discourse with Islamic values. By revealing how feminist values can be contextually internalized without undermining religious sensibilities, this study lays a foundation for inclusive, reflective pedagogies and contributes to broader conversations on gender justice and identity negotiation in Islamic higher education, especially in creative disciplines. The findings are expected to support future dialogue on inclusive, value-based gender education within culturally and spiritually grounded academic spaces.

## **2. RESEARCH METHOD**

### **2.1. Research Type**

In order to investigate Muslimah students' lived experiences and perspectives on feminism within the context of Islamic ideals, this study combined a qualitative research methodology with a phenomenological method. The qualitative method makes the researcher the main tool for gathering and analysing data, allowing for a close examination of participant narratives and interpretations [20]. This method is especially well-suited to learning in-depth about the ways in which Indonesian education university, Faculty of Art and Design Education students comprehend feminism and connect it to Islamic principles.

### **2.2. Data Collection Technique**

Direct, in-depth interviews with Muslimah students enrolled in FPSD UPI were used to gather primary data. Smartphones and recording devices were used to record interviews in order to maintain authenticity and guarantee data correctness. To learn more about the relationship between gender equality and Islamic beliefs, document analysis was also done. This included looking at how Qur'anic texts and hadiths related to women and feminism were interpreted, which gave the students' viewpoints a religious-textual framework.

### **2.3. Data Validity Test**

The criteria of credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability were used to guarantee the validity of the results. Member verification, in which participants were requested to confirm the authenticity of transcripts and thematic interpretations, was used to establish credibility [21]. The study's robustness was increased by triangulating observation notes, interview data, and religious documents [22]. Reliability was ensured by keeping an audit trail, and confirmability was reinforced by basing the analysis on participant opinions rather than the prejudice of the researchers.

### **2.4. Data Analysis**

The three primary steps of Miles and Huberman's interactive model: data reduction, data display, and conclusion formulation and verification, were followed in the qualitative data analysis of this study [21]. Due to the large amount of field data, preliminary analysis was carried out by reducing the amount of data by summarising, picking out the most important components, and figuring out important themes and trends. During this approach, important facets of Muslimah students' experiences and understandings of feminism were examined.

Clearer comprehension and pattern detection were made possible by the subsequent organisation and visual presentation of the condensed material in the form of tables and thematic maps. Iteratively, the third step, drawing conclusions and verifying them, was completed. On the basis of additional data validation and member checking, preliminary interpretations were reviewed and improved. As evidence gathered from regular patterns in document studies and interviews, the conclusions gained credibility.

Thematic analysis was used to find recurrent themes and organise the interpretation [23]. This procedure involved getting to know the facts, creating preliminary codes, creating themes, and honing them. Following that, the Islamic social theory framework, which comprises three essential dimensions: transcendence, freedom, and humanization, was used to organise the theme interpretation. Through the prism of their Islamic beliefs, Muslimah students in higher education settings see, negotiate, and express feminist ideas. This knowledge is made possible by this analytical lens, which is contextualised and culturally grounded.

## **3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

### **3.1. A Gender Perspective Study Through Islamic Values: Humanization in Peer Relations**

The results of the study show that understanding feminism has begun to shape the perspective of Muslimah students at FPSD UPI in establishing more inclusive and fair social relationships. Most respondents stated that feminism helped them see relationships between students without gender limitations. As expressed by Informant 1:

*"I don't really understand but maybe it's more enjoyable because it doesn't categorize people by gender, or in the context of a study group, it doesn't have to be balanced between the number of girls and boys or it doesn't have to be girls and girls and vice versa. So it's like, whoever is the same, what's looked at to invite friends to a group is just their skills or because they're close. In the context of friends to play, just play, whether it's two with a girl or two with a boy because it's fun."*

This statement shows a shift in values from gender-based social norms to appreciation for individual competence. From an Islamic perspective, the principle of gender equality is also reflected in the word of Allah in Surah An-Nisa verse 1, which emphasizes that men and women were created from one soul: *"O mankind! Be dutiful to your Lord who created you from a single soul (Adam), and from him (Allah) created his wife (Eve)..."* (QS. An-Nisa: 1). This verse emphasizes the essential equality between men and women as part of the same creation, which is the spiritual basis for fighting for justice and equal treatment in social life [24].

Gender structures are essentially social, not biological, and can therefore be negotiated through individual awareness and experience [25]. This means that roles and expectations for men and women are shaped by societal norms, and can change with critical reflection, education, and life experience [26]. Individual awareness is key to challenging, adjusting, or even reshaping gender constructions to be more just and inclusive [27]. The arts campus becomes a potential space to form a collaborative culture that emphasizes the values of justice and ability, not just biological identity. Thus, feminism does not conflict with Islamic teachings, but can go hand in hand as part of efforts to uphold social justice rooted in spiritual and humanitarian values [28].

Informant 2 added that feminism opens up a space of acceptance for self-expression, including in the way of dressing, by saying:

*"Seeing everyone as equals, maybe like how they dress. If someone wants to act or dress feminine regardless of gender then look at them like they would a normal person."*

This indicates that the understanding of feminism also touches on aspects of freedom of expression and respect for the diversity of identities. This shows that understanding feminism also touches on aspects of freedom of expression and respect for diversity of identities [29]. Feminism is about equality of roles, and space for individuals to express themselves without being limited by gender stereotypes, as well as the recognition of various forms of legitimate identities in society [30].

Informant 3's view shows that feminism in the art campus environment is Informant interpreted as a theoretical discourse, and as an ethical guide in building fair and equal social relations. She said that:

*"Feminism in the art campus may be about how we behave and build fair and equal relations and may be able to recognize inequality, challenge it through work, and form a healthier culture."*

This statement emphasizes that gender awareness can encourage students to create more equal interpersonal relationships, and make art a medium of resistance to existing inequality [30]. Thus, feminism in this context functions as a catalyst for social transformation rooted in collective experience and expression, and forms a more reflective and humane campus ecosystem. However, some inequalities are still felt, especially in the organizational realm. Informant 4 noted that:

*"So far, I think there is no discrimination against women, in terms of friendship, everyone is equal. However, in some things such as organizations, men are mostly prioritized to lead or join a group."*

Islamic values that support respect for human dignity can also be used as a basis. The Qur'an in Surah Al-Hujurat verse 13 states: *"O mankind! Indeed, We have created you from a male and a female and made you into nations and tribes so that you may know one another. Indeed, the most noble among you in the sight of Allah is the most pious."* (QS. Al-Hujurat: 13). This verse emphasizes that biological differences or social identities are not the basis for nobility or judgment, but rather piety and morals. Thus, self-expression that does not violate moral values and manners can be understood as part of the diversity recognized in Islam.

Informant 1 indicated that feminism helped her develop a new awareness in treating friends of different genders more fairly and equally. She said:

*"Maybe yes, for example, I used to think it was okay for guys to go home late at night alone, but now I think whether it's a girl or a boy, it's equally good to be accompanied home..."*

This statement reflects a shift in mindset from traditional gender constructions to awareness of equal rights and treatment in everyday social situations. The informant also gave an example of a change in views on who has the right to sit in a safer place on public transportation, no longer based on gender assumptions, but on the principle of situational justice. This shows that feminism encourages the growth of empathy and egalitarian attitudes in students' social interactions in public spaces [31].

This change shows that feminism encourages the growth of empathy and egalitarian attitudes in students' social interactions, which are in line with the values in Islamic teachings. In addition to QS. Al-Hujurat: 13 which emphasizes the equality of humans as God's creations, the value of justice is also emphasized in Surah An-Nahl verse 90: *"Indeed, Allah commands (you) to act justly and to do good, to give to relatives, and Allah forbids from indecency, evil and hostility. He teaches you so that you may learn a lesson."* (QS. An-Nahl: 90)

This verse is the basis of social ethics in Islam, that justice is the main principle in treating others, without distinguishing status or gender. Thus, the views and changes in attitude experienced by Informant 1 show that feminist values that encourage justice and equality can be in line with Islamic teachings, especially in the context of building more empathetic and just social relations in public spaces.

Informant 2 expressed an ambivalent view regarding the influence of feminism on how to treat friends of the opposite gender. She stated:

*"Half true, because unfortunately they still follow society's perspective on different genders, either because they are embarrassed or so that they can be accepted by the majority view."*

This indicates that although there is an initial awareness of the importance of gender equality, social pressure and the desire to conform to majority norms are still obstacles to a more complete change in attitude. This statement reflects the dynamics of the internalization of feminist values that are not yet fully even, and shows that cultural change in inter-gender relations still faces resistance from established social constructions in the student environment [32].

Informant 3 showed that feminism plays a role in forming a more equal attitude in everyday social life. She stated:

*"Yes, so I respect opinions more regardless of gender and don't belittle or discriminate against one gender either."*

This statement indicates the internalization of equality values that influence how people view others, especially in valuing opinions and contributions without gender bias. This is a reflection of the principle of humanization, where every individual is treated fairly as an equal subject in the space of social interaction. This attitude also strengthens the culture of inclusive dialogue in the arts campus environment. These two views illustrate the spectrum of acceptance of feminism in student social interactions, from openness to limitations due to the pressure of social norms. From an Islamic perspective, this principle is in line with the QS. An-Nisa: 135, which calls for justice regardless of background: *"O you who believe! Be upholders of justice, witnesses for Allah, even against yourselves or your parents and your relatives..."* (QS. An-Nisa: 135) This verse emphasizes that justice is a value that must be upheld, even though it conflicts with public interests or views. Thus, even though the process of change towards equal social relations still faces challenges, feminist values which are based on the principles of justice can work together with Islamic teachings to encourage a more just and inclusive culture in the campus environment [33].

In the humanization dimension, feminism is understood as a pathway to more inclusive peer relations, where gender no longer determines one's role or value in social interactions. Students begin to challenge binary norms by emphasizing competence, empathy, and fairness. This finding aligns with Thoriquityas [14], who notes that Muslim students positively receive feminism when framed through the Islamic lens of justice. However, this study extends the discussion by demonstrating how such perspectives are lived out specifically in art-based environments, where social interaction is often collaborative and fluid. Compared to Kitta and Cardona-Moltó [12], who found that gender perspectives are under-internalized in university settings, this study shows that the integration of feminist values is possible when tied to practical and interpersonal experiences on campus.

This findings recommends that universities, particularly creative faculties like art and design, integrate gender equality education aligned with Islamic values through workshops and peer discussions. Encouraging inclusive leadership in student organizations and fostering a culture based on competence and empathy can support the internalization of feminist values and promote just, respectful social interactions on campus.

### **3.2. A Gender Perspective Study Through Islamic Values – Liberation: Impact on the Self**

In the dimension of liberation, Informant 1 understands feminism as an effort to create gender equality and fight for equal opportunities for women in society. She stated:

*"As far as I understand, feminism is what strives for gender equality and basically so that women have the same opportunities in society as men, such as in work. Men can also be feminists, not just women."*

This statement shows that feminism is understood Informant as a struggle for women, and as a collective movement that can involve men as part of the solution to gender inequality. This view reflects the spirit of inclusivity that is also emphasized in Islam, that social responsibility and goodness are not limited to one gender. In Surah At-Taubah verse 71, Allah says: *"And the believers, men and women, are helpers of one another, enjoining what is right and forbidding what is wrong..."* (QS. At-Taubah: 71). This verse emphasizes that men and women have a collective role in upholding the values of goodness and justice in society [34].

This shows an inclusive view that feminism can be a shared value across genders. This view is in line with Islamic values that recognize the spiritual and moral status of men and women as equal. In Surah Al-Ahzab verse 35, Allah explicitly mentions the equality of deeds and rewards for men and women in terms of faith and goodness: *"Indeed, Muslim men and Muslim women, believing men and faithful women, obedient men and obedient women... Allah has prepared for them forgiveness and a great reward."* (QS. Al-Ahzab: 35) This verse shows that women are not positioned as passive objects in society or religion, but rather as active subjects who have equal roles and values in social and spiritual development [15].

In the context of liberation, Informant 2 interprets feminism as a form of pride and courage to voice women's rights so that they are treated equally with other genders. He stated briefly but firmly:

*"Pride/voice for women to be treated equally with other genders."*

This view reflects the spirit of self-liberation from structural and cultural injustice, as well as showing courage in fighting for a more equitable space for women in social life. This meaning is in line with the values of justice and courage in voicing the truth taught in Islam. In Surah Al-Mujadilah verse 1, Allah emphasizes His side with women who speak out about injustice: *"Indeed, Allah has heard the words of the woman who filed a lawsuit against you about her husband and complained (the matter) to Allah. And Allah heard the dialogue between the two of you..."* (QS. Al-Mujadilah: 1). This verse shows that the voices of women who express objections to unfair treatment are heard and respected by Allah, thus becoming a strong spiritual basis for women to voice their rights and justice. Thus, Informant 2's pride in voicing women's rights reflects a form of liberation that is Informant social in nature, and has legitimacy in Islamic teachings as part of amar ma'ruf and the struggle to uphold justice [35].

In line with that, Informant 3 emphasized that feminism is *"an ideology and social movement to fight injustice experienced by women and create a more just society for everyone."* Other Informants see feminism as a form of pride in voicing women's rights to be equal in various areas of life (Informant 2), as well as a means to stop discrimination that women still experience (Informant 4). This view is in line with the principle of justice in Islam, where defending the rights of the oppressed is part of the religious command. In Surah An-Nahl verse 90, Allah says: *"Indeed Allah commands (you) to act justly and do good..."* This verse emphasizes that justice is a primary principle in Islam, and all forms of inequality or discrimination—including those based on gender—need to be fought in order to create a balanced and civilized society. The feminist struggle interpreted by Muslimah students of FPSD UPI as a form of advocacy for equality and rejection of discrimination, can be understood as not contradicting Islamic teachings. In fact, it is in line with the values of justice, respect for human dignity, and social responsibility mandated in the Qur'an. Feminism in this dimension is a tool to voice Islamic principles contextually and relevantly in the midst of a social reality that is still full of inequality.

When asked whether feminism influences the way they express themselves or work in the world of art, the answers of the informants varied. Informants 2 and 4 admitted that feminism had quite an influence on the way they expressed their ideas through artwork. Informant 3 specifically mentioned that feminism encouraged her to "explore themes about women" in her work. However, there were also those who felt that the influence of feminism had not been felt too much in their art practice. Informant 1 stated, *"I don't really know. What I think is that maybe the feminist movement has opened up opportunities for female artists to be more recognized."*

From an Islamic perspective, artistic expressions that promote the values of justice, equality, and humanity are part of amar ma'ruf, namely encouraging goodness through a medium that is relevant to the context of the times. The Qur'an encourages its people to use their creative potential positively, as in QS. Al-Mujadilah: 11: *"... Allah will exalt those who believe among you and those who are given knowledge by degrees..."* This verse can be interpreted to mean that women's involvement in scientific and artistic expressions is Informant legitimate, and has the potential to increase their dignity and social influence [36]. Thus, although the influence of feminism in art practice has not been felt evenly by all Muslimah students at FPSD UPI, there is a tendency that gender awareness is starting to be integrated in the form of theme exploration and selection of visual expressions. This shows that feminism, within the framework of Islamic values, can be a means to raise women's voices and encourage social change through works of art.

The liberation dimension emphasizes feminism as a form of self-empowerment and artistic activism. While previous studies such as Nojan et al., [13] highlight tensions between feminist values and institutional religiosity, our findings nuance this by showing that feminism is not necessarily rejected but rather selectively internalized as pride, voice, and a means to address structural inequality both within and beyond the realm of art. The acknowledgement of women's artistic contributions, as reported by several informants, echoes findings from Fidhayanti et al., [16] who emphasize Islamic feminism as a reinterpretative approach rooted in justice. Yet, this study contributes a novel perspective by demonstrating that artistic production itself becomes a medium through which religiously observant students explore feminist themes, something rarely captured in previous Islamic feminism literature.

These findings suggest that feminism has become part of the self-awareness of some students, although its influence on artistic expression is not entirely even. This difference reflects the diversity in the process of internalizing feminist values among Muslimah students, both in personal contexts and in artistic practice [37]. Some individuals adopt the value of equality explicitly in the themes of their work, while others feel it more as a structural push, such as increasing space for female artists to be recognized [38]. This variation also shows that the meaning of feminism is greatly influenced by life experiences, religious understanding, and the space for expression available in the art campus environment [39].

### 3.3. *A Gender Perspective Study Through Islamic Values – Transcendence: Influence on Religious Understanding*

The transcendence dimension in this study reveals how Muslimah students at FPSD UPI interpret the relationship between feminism and the teachings of their religion, especially Islam. The majority of informants believe that feminism does not conflict with Islamic values, as long as it is understood contextually and deeply. Informant 1 stated firmly,

*"Yes, it can be done in Islam. Because Islam is also in line with feminism."*

This reflects the belief that the principles of equality and justice in feminism can coexist with the basic values in Islamic teachings. This reflects the belief that the principles of equality and justice in feminism can coexist with the basic values of Islamic teachings [40]. These two approaches, although originating from different frameworks, have common ground in efforts to uphold human dignity, reject discrimination, and uphold social justice proportionally and contextually [41].

This understanding is reinforced by Surah Al-Baqarah verse 177, which emphasizes that true goodness does not lie in the formal aspect of worship, and in an attitude of justice and defense of the oppressed: *"It is not a virtue that turning your face towards the east and west is a virtue, but actually virtue is believing in Allah... giving the wealth one loves to relatives, orphans, the poor... and upholding prayers and paying zakat; those who keep their promises when they promise, and those who are patient in adversity, suffering and in war. Those are the people who are true (in their faith); and they are the people who are pious."* (QS. Al-Baqarah: 177). This verse emphasizes that ethical values such as social justice, solidarity, and respect for the rights of others are integral parts of faith. Therefore, the struggle of feminism that focuses on justice and the elimination of discrimination against women can be in line with the authentic spirit of Islam [42]. Thus, the transcendental dimension in this context shows that most Muslimah students do not see feminism as a threat to faith, but as a reflective space that encourages them to understand religious teachings in a more just, humane, and contextual way [43].

However, there are also more critical views on the relationship between feminism and religious teachings. Informant 2 stated that according to her understanding, feminism is not entirely in line with the religion she adheres to. She believes that religion emphasizes more on respecting differences in roles than absolute gender equality. She said:

*"No, because in the religion that I follow there is no such thing as gender equality, but rather more about respecting and understanding the opposite gender."*

This view reflects doubts about the idea of Western feminism that demands equality in all aspects, which is considered contrary to the role-based social structure of religious traditions. However, it is important to review that in Islamic teachings, despite the division of roles in social and family life, the appreciation of deeds and spiritual rights is not differentiated based on gender. In Surah Ali Imran verse 195, Allah says: *"... I do not waste the deeds of those who do good among you, whether male or female. Some of you are descendants of others..."* (QS. Ali Imran: 195). This verse emphasizes that the deeds and contributions of men and women have the same value in the sight of Allah. This shows that the essence of equality in Islam should not be understood in an identical form, but rather in the form of proportional justice, where rewards are given based on value, not just social roles [44].

Critical views as conveyed by Informant 2 reflect the tension between religious social construction and feminist values. However, a contextual approach to religious texts shows that gender justice remains a central

principle in Islam, although not always articulated in terms of "absolute equality" [45]. This understanding opens up space for constructive dialogue between Islamic values and feminist discourse, especially in higher education environments that are full of dynamic thinking [46].

A similar thing was also conveyed by Informant 3, who assessed that the role of women in Islam is still respected even though there is a division of roles:

*"In my opinion, yes, feminism can be in line with Islamic teachings depending on how both are understood and approached. Because in my religion (Islam) the role of women is also appreciated and glorified even though there are some rules that lean towards men because of their "leading" role."*

This statement reflects the understanding that differences in roles do not necessarily mean inequality in value or spiritual status between men and women. From the perspective of the Qur'an, respect for women is explicitly emphasized in Surah An-Nahl verse 97: *"Whoever does good deeds, whether male or female, while being a believer, We will surely give him a good life and We will surely reward them with the best of what they used to do."* (QS. An-Nahl: 97). This verse shows that the rewards of goodness, dignity, and glory of life are promised to every individual regardless of gender, as long as they believe and do good. Thus, respect for women is Informant normative, and essential in Islam. Through this quote, it can be seen that Muslimah students at FPSD UPI try to bridge the values of feminism and religious teachings with a contextual approach. They do not see the division of roles as a form of absolute injustice, but as a structure that can be reviewed as long as it does not deny the principles of justice and respect for women that are upheld in Islam [12].

When asked whether feminism has ever influenced the way they practice their religion, the responses were varied. Informant 1 stated that feminism did not change the way she practices her religion. In contrast, Informant 4 admitted that feminism encouraged her to rethink several aspects of the teachings she has been practicing. Informant 3 showed a reflective attitude, "Sometimes there are rules in my religion that make me skeptical, but maybe because I haven't studied the religion deeply...", a form of tension between personal values and religious understanding that is not yet fully harmonious [47].

Surah Al-Isra' verse 36 provides an important foundation for critical thinking in religiosity: *"And do not follow that of which you have no knowledge. Verily, the hearing, the sight, and the heart, all of these will be questioned."* (QS. Al-Isra': 36) This verse emphasizes that the search for truth and understanding of religious teachings requires a responsible intellectual and moral process, including in dealing with contemporary issues such as feminism [48]. The situation experienced by the informants shows that the process of internalizing religious teachings and gender equality values does not always run parallel, but is often challenging and requires reflective space to be bridged [49]. This kind of tension actually opens up opportunities for strengthening a more contextually aware spirituality, where feminist values should not be seen as a threat to religion [50], but rather as a starting point for understanding Islam in a more just, humane, and relevant way to today's life [51].

The transcendence dimension reveals a spectrum of attitudes toward the compatibility between feminism and Islamic teachings. While many informants see no fundamental conflict as also supported by Khalil and Saputro [17] some remain skeptical, viewing feminism as aligned only when contextualized within religious boundaries. The tension between Western feminist ideals and Islamic social roles, previously identified by Şenel and Demmrich [19], is echoed here. However, this study advances the discussion by highlighting the role of reflective religiosity among Muslimah art students: for some, feminism becomes a space for reinterpreting spiritual practice; for others, it raises critical questions about doctrine, but does not result in rejection. The contextual spiritualization of feminism observed in this study offers a nuanced departure from binary models of acceptance/rejection found in earlier works.

These findings reflect a broad spectrum of meanings—ranging from acceptance, seeking harmony, to skepticism—towards the integration of feminism within a religious framework [13]. For some Muslimah students, feminism is Informant seen as a social discourse, and as a tool for re-reflection on their spiritual relationship with religious teachings. In this process, feminism can act as a bridge to understanding Islamic values more contextually, while also being a challenge in building a more critical and reality-aware religiosity [52].

Overall, this study helps to further discuss how feminist ideals are compatible with Islam for Muslimah students in college. They point to the need to view both feminism and religion within different contexts in order to have a better understanding. The study helps teachers and curriculum makers in Islamic and gender studies understand how to teach with ideas on critical thinking, spirituality and justice. Besides, the research demonstrates that feminist ideas seen as ethical and just in religion can give birth to a deeper relationship with faith and inspire the Church to express its religious views in a way that dignifies people of all genders.

While the study gained many qualitative insights, there are limitations present. First, this study included only Muslimah students from one faculty (FPSD UPI) in Indonesia, so it might not reflect the true range of ideas held by Muslim women everywhere. In addition, the information comes from self-reporting, so it depends on what each person believes and what they prefer to admit. Next, the research mainly investigated what individuals under

study thought about feminism and did not analyze in depth how formal education, family or social context might affect their views.

In future, it would be valuable to include Muslimah students from various education systems, regions and subjects to improve how generalizable the results can be. Looking at the experiences of Muslim male and female students could clarify how people interpret religion differently, based on gender and feminist ideas. Another way to examine how religious understanding and feminist ideas change as time goes by is to use both long-term and mixed-research methods. In addition, investigating how digital media, online discussions and Islamic authorities affect this relationship would give a clearer picture of how contemporary Muslims define their identity.

#### 4. CONCLUSION

The study concludes that Muslimah students in the Faculty of Art and Design Education (FPSD) UPI understand feminism in three intertwined aspects: humanization, liberation and transcendence. In this area, feminism supports a more accepting and non-biased way to relate to others, by judging them by what they can do rather than by their gender. In the liberation aspect, feminism gives students a stronger sense of identity, pride and inspiration to challenge gender unfairness by creating art and joining activist groups. When looking at religiosity, feminism inspires thinking about the meanings of faith by inspiring some students to believe that Islamic principles and feminist ideas fit well together if seen in the right contexts and balanced comparisons.

The results suggest that feminism becomes integrated into the daily lives, communities and beliefs of Muslimah students. It can act as both a way to look at and promote identity, justice and religiosity in the college world. Future study should include students from different school divisions, locations and religious backgrounds to help understand more aspects of the topic. Investigations with men from Muslim backgrounds, as well as examining students' art and stories, might uncover better understandings of feminism in the classroom and society.

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