

The Application of Sayyidah ‘Ā’ishah’s Pedagogy in Islamic Education: A Field Study on Gender Justice at Pesantren in Madura

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to investigate the application of Sayyidah ‘Ā’ishah’s emancipatory pedagogy in contemporary Islamic education, with a focus on gender-inclusive educational models implemented in Pesantren (Islamic boarding schools) and Madrasah (Islamic schools) in Indonesia. The primary research question explores how the pedagogical principles exemplified by Sayyidah ‘Ā’ishah, such as dialogical teaching, intellectual courage, and constructive critique of

religious text interpretations, are integrated into modern Islamic educational practices. Employing a qualitative, field-based methodology, data was collected through in-depth interviews with educators and students, classroom observations, and an analysis of relevant curriculum documents implemented in Pesantren and Madrasah. The findings reveal that while Sayyidah 'Ā'ishah's legacy provides a powerful model for promoting gender justice within Islamic education, its application faces various challenges, including resistance from some conservative educational structures. This research asserts that Sayyidah 'Ā'ishah's pedagogical model offers a feasible framework for reforming Islamic education, providing a path towards gender equity and intellectual liberation, while promoting critical thinking within Islamic educational institutions.

Keywords: Emancipatory Pedagogy, Gender Epistemology, Female Religious Authority, Sayyidah 'Ā'ishah

A. Introduction

The discourse surrounding gender justice and women's empowerment in Islamic education has undergone significant transformation in recent decades. Traditional patriarchal interpretations of religious texts, which have placed women in subordinate roles, are increasingly being challenged by a scholarly movement that seeks to reclaim the egalitarian principles inherent in Islam. A central figure in this reform movement is Sayyidah 'Ā'ishah bint Abī Bakr, whose intellectual legacy as a scholar, educator, and transmitter of hadīth offers crucial insights into the inclusive spirit of early Islamic thought (Aulia, 2024; Duderija, 2015; Hesová, 2019).

Sayyidah 'Ā'ishah was not only the wife of Prophet Muhammad but also a prominent intellectual who transmitted over 2,000 hadīths, issued legal opinions, and engaged in scholarly debates with male companions (Aasadi, 2023). Her contributions

challenge the marginalisation of women in religious discourse. However, many contemporary Islamic educational institutions, especially traditional *pesantren*, have not fully embraced female-centred pedagogical models such as those exemplified by 'Ā'ishah, thereby perpetuating gender-exclusive narratives and disregarding women's roles as epistemic authorities (Salime, 2016; Zuadah, 2023).

Islamic education has remained deeply rooted in androcentric epistemologies, which limit its transformative potential and maintain gender hierarchies that contradict Qur'anic principles of *ta'līm* (education), *tarbiyah* (character development), and *ta'dīb* (ethical discipline) (Al-Attas, 1980; Bint Yunus, 2023). Most previous studies have focused on descriptive accounts of women's roles in Islam or juridical debates, with little attention given to the pedagogical implications of female intellectual leadership within Islamic education.

This study addresses this gap by employing a qualitative, library-based methodology. Data were collected and analysed from primary classical sources, such as hadīth compilations, biographical dictionaries, and *tafsir* (interpretation) literature, alongside with contemporary theories of emancipatory pedagogy inspired by Paulo Freire and Islamic feminist thought. This approach allows for a deeper, contextual exploration of 'Ā'ishah's educational contributions, enabling critical engagement with historical texts and modern pedagogical frameworks (Bint Yunus, 2023; Freire, 2021).

Data analysis followed a thematic narrative approach in three stages: (1) reducing data by selecting relevant information on education, gender epistemology, and female authority in Islam; (2) presenting thematic data that links classical Islamic sources with emancipatory pedagogical concepts; and (3) drawing conclusions that highlight 'Ā'ishah's role as an agent of transformative, gender-inclusive Islamic education (Huberman & Miles, 2002).

The study also employs a field-based methodology to explore how Sayyidah ‘Ā’ishah’s pedagogical model is applied in contemporary Islamic educational settings, specifically within a *pesantren* (Islamic boarding school) in Bangkalan, Madura. Data were collected through interviews with educators and students, classroom observations, and curriculum document analysis to examine how gender-inclusive pedagogy, as exemplified by ‘Ā’ishah, is integrated into current Islamic education practices (Knisely, 2023; Wadud, 2013).

The literature reveals that ‘Ā’ishah not only transmitted prophetic knowledge but also actively challenged androcentric interpretations of Islamic teachings. Her willingness to correct erroneous hadīth transmissions established values like intellectual courage, dialogical reasoning, and gender justice, which align with Freire’s view of education as a liberating practice (Arik, 2015; Freire, 2021). Additionally, Islamic feminist scholarship advocates for redefining Islamic education by incorporating women’s voices and experiences as legitimate sources of religious authority, thus dismantling patriarchal biases (Barazangi, 2016; Wadud, 2021).

This study fills a critical research gap by showcasing the often-overlooked influence of female intellectuals in shaping progressive Islamic educational practices. It provides an alternative pedagogical model rooted in ‘Ā’ishah’s legacy, with potential for social and cultural transformation in *pesantren* (Islamic boarding schools) and *madrasah* (Islamic schools) settings. Through this research, the study aims to offer insights into how Islamic education can evolve towards more inclusive, egalitarian practices grounded in Islamic thought.

B. Discussion

This study highlights the lasting significance of Sayyidah ‘Ā’ishah’s intellectual legacy in shaping a gender-inclusive

framework within Islamic education. Her role as a transmitter of knowledge and critical interlocutor challenges long-standing androcentric interpretations that have historically marginalised women’s voices in religious discourse. By positioning ‘Ā’ishah as an epistemic agent, the research demonstrates the potential to revisit classical sources and inform progressive pedagogical practices in contemporary Islamic contexts.

The following mind map illustrates the key concepts of ‘Ā’ishah’s pedagogical legacy and its integration into contemporary Islamic education, reflecting how her principles foster critical thinking and gender equity within educational frameworks:

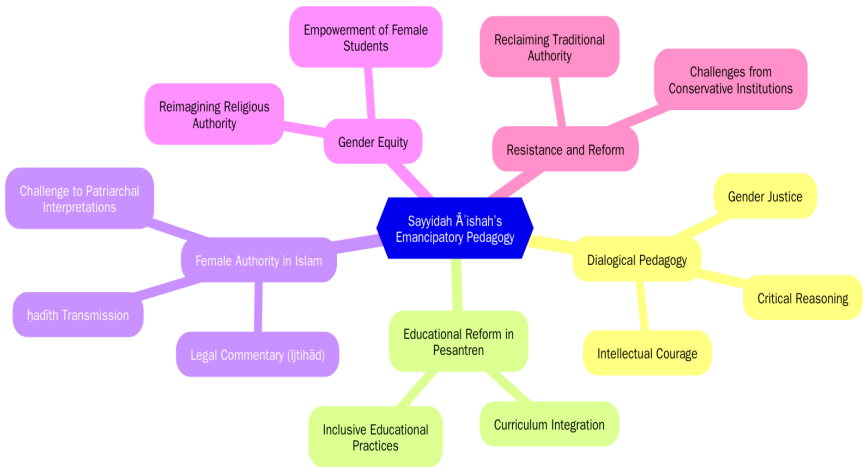


Figure 1. Mind Map of Sayyidah ‘Ā’ishah’s Emancipatory Pedagogy

Integrating ‘Ā’ishah’s educational model into *pesantren* and *madrasah* curricula is a crucial step toward advancing gender justice in Islamic education. Her emphasis on dialogical reasoning and critical thinking fosters intellectual agency, particularly among female students who face systemic barriers in traditional settings. This aligns with broader educational theories that advocate for learner-centred and emancipatory

pedagogies, suggesting that reclaiming female authority figures can disrupt patriarchal epistemologies.

The study also addresses the challenges of integrating feminist hermeneutics and emancipatory pedagogy within orthodox religious institutions. Resistance from conservative stakeholders often frames these efforts as external, but 'Ā'ishah's legacy offers a culturally authentic foundation for reform, bridging tradition and modernity.

1. Reconstructing Emancipatory Education through the Legacy of Sayyidah 'Ā'ishah

The legacy of Sayyidah 'Ā'ishah serves as a powerful historical and pedagogical foundation for conceptualising emancipatory education within Islamic thought. Her role as a transmitter of knowledge, legal commentator, and public intellectual challenges many of the assumptions that have traditionally excluded women from Islamic scholarly traditions. Drawing from qualitative content analysis of classical Islamic sources, educators' interviews, and recent literature, the present study identifies a consistent pattern of educational values embodied in her life. These values align with critical pedagogy frameworks that aim to challenge hierarchical and patriarchal structures within religious and educational domains (Arik, 2015; Freire, 2021).

Sayyidah 'Ā'ishah's intellectual output, particularly her narration of over 2,200 hadīths and her active involvement in legal deliberations, signifies her epistemological centrality in early Islam. Her contributions were not limited to the private domain; she actively corrected male companions, engaged in interpretative debates, and provided nuanced legal reasoning. These traits demonstrate the pedagogical virtues of courage, critical thinking, and dialogical engagement – qualities essential

for transformative education (Mir-Hosseini, 2006; Taylor & Zine, 2014; Webb & Wadud, 2000).

This study field interviews reveal that teachers in *pesantren* who integrate the biography and legacy of Sayyidah 'Ā'ishah into their curricula report an increase in student engagement, particularly among female learners. One teacher noted, "Her life makes our students see that knowledge and leadership in Islam are not gendered. It gives them hope and confidence." This anecdotal evidence is consistent with studies highlighting the psychological and academic benefits of identity-affirming curricula in religious education (Cooke, 2004; Dutta, 2022; Ennaji, 2022; Johnson & Fairweather, 2017).

From a theoretical perspective, the figure of 'Ā'ishah embodies what Freire (2021) terms "conscientisation" – the process of becoming aware of one's social reality through reflection and action. She was not merely a transmitter of prophetic sayings but a transformer of Islamic discourse, willing to challenge dominant interpretations when they failed to uphold justice and accuracy. This echoes what Barlas (2003) described as "epistemic agency," the capacity to read and interpret texts in ways that are both faithful and liberated.

Educationally, 'Ā'ishah's method of engaging in dialogue rather than mere instruction provides a model for interactive pedagogy. Reports from the observations in *pesantren* classrooms show that students taught with this approach are more likely to question and interpret religious texts rather than memorise passively. This is a significant shift from traditional methods and aligns with Hooks' (2014) idea of "education as the practice of freedom," where learning becomes an act of liberation rather than indoctrination.

The emancipatory power of Sayyidah 'Ā'ishah's legacy lies in its ability to bridge the historical with the contemporary. While modern Islamic education often struggles with gender

inclusivity, her model offers an indigenous precedent that is both authentic and progressive. Recent research supports the notion that historical female figures, when included in curricula, serve to dismantle stereotypes and elevate the aspirations of marginalised learners (Adriany et al., 2023; Bano & Kalmbach, 2012).

Moreover, her intellectual authority directly contests the idea that women's roles in Islam are limited to domestic spheres. She actively participated in legal reasoning (*ijtihad*), advised caliphs, and educated male and female companions alike. This undermines essentialist readings of Islamic law that restrict female participation and confirms the findings of feminist Islamic scholars who advocate for a more inclusive jurisprudence (Bakry, 2010; Mir-Hosseini, 2006; Shaikh, 2023).

The educational significance of 'Ā'ishah is not only theoretical but also practical. Teachers who adopt her legacy report increased in critical thinking, particularly among female students who begin to see themselves as future '*ulamā*'. This phenomenon affirms what Glas & Alexander (2020) have suggested—that reviving the stories of early Muslim women can have a profound effect on reconfiguring authority in Islamic education.

Nonetheless, integrating 'Ā'ishah's emancipatory model into contemporary Islamic education is not without challenges. Resistance often arises from those who view such efforts as "modernist" or "feminist imports." Yet, as the evidence demonstrates, her legacy is deeply rooted in the Islamic tradition itself. Reclaiming her role does not disrupt orthodoxy but restores a silenced part of it (Mustafa et al., 2023; Sakai, 2022).

Finally, this sub-section affirms that Sayyidah 'Ā'ishah's educational legacy represents a compelling synthesis of Islamic epistemology and feminist pedagogy. By combining historical accuracy, critical engagement, and ethical responsibility, her

example paves the way for a renewed educational discourse—one that is inclusive, liberating, and rooted in the Islamic tradition.

2. Pedagogical Resistance and Religious Reasoning in 'Ā'ishah's Dialogues

A central dimension of Sayyidah 'Ā'ishah's educational role was her strategic deployment of dialogue to critique, refine, and sometimes subvert prevailing interpretations of Islamic texts and norms. These acts of pedagogical resistance were not informal moments of disagreement but carefully reasoned interventions rooted in her understanding of the Qur'ān and the Sunnah. In the interviews, educators in *pesantren* identified her boldness in correcting hadīth narrators and senior companions as both revolutionary and empowering. "She corrected "Umar, she corrected Abu Hurayrah. That shows us that speaking truth with knowledge is a form of worship," said one senior *ustādzah* (female teacher/educator).

Historical records provide ample evidence of 'Ā'ishah's dialogical method. One frequently cited example is her correction of a narration regarding menstruating women. When a companion claimed that the Prophet forbade menstruating women from entering mosques, 'Ā'ishah sharply refuted the claim, insisting it contradicted his known practice (Zuadah, 2023). This moment illustrates the intersection of lived experience, legal interpretation, and prophetic precedent—a triad that characterises critical religious pedagogy.

These examples are not only religiously significant but also pedagogically instructive. Sayyidah 'Ā'ishah's intellectual legacy offers a model of interpretive engagement that transcends rote transmission. Her interventions demonstrate a balance between adherence to revelation and critical ethical reasoning, reflecting a sophisticated grasp of *ijtihād* as a living and morally

responsive exercise. Rather than relying solely on textual literalism, ‘Ā’ishah’s approach privileges context, intent, and ethical consequence—traits that align with the broader aims of *ta’dīb* in Islamic education, where the formation of the ethical self is prioritised alongside the acquisition of knowledge (Al-Attas, 1980).

This approach resonates with theoretical models in contemporary Islamic pedagogy. Jackson (2011) advocates for legal reasoning that is not detached from real-life moral complexities but instead responsive to the circumstances in which Muslims live. Similarly, Niyozov and Memon (2011) and Halstead (2007) have argued for pedagogical models that move beyond memorisation to cultivate moral judgment, interpretive agency, and contextual awareness. In this light, ‘Ā’ishah’s intellectual legacy exemplifies a cognition-based pedagogy grounded in Islamic tradition—one that legitimises critical engagement as a spiritually and intellectually valid form of learning.

Moreover, scholars such as Taylor & Zine (2014) and Acharjee *et al.* (2023) assert that dialogical learning environments—especially those that encourage textual interrogation and ethical questioning—are crucial for developing nuanced religious literacy. These frameworks challenge the dichotomy between traditionalism and reform by showing that critical thinking can be deeply rooted in Islamic epistemology. ‘Ā’ishah’s model provides the interpretive scaffolding for such an approach, demonstrating that authority and critique are not mutually exclusive but complementary components of a dynamic and reflective Islamic education.

The incorporation of dialogical reasoning into *pesantren* curricula has had transformative effects. Based on the classroom observations, students who were taught using case studies derived from ‘Ā’ishah’s debates displayed higher-order thinking skills and a deeper commitment to ethical practice. “They’re not afraid to ask if something is not fair or just anymore,” one teacher

noted, highlighting how religious inquiry became a space for ethical reflection, not just doctrinal repetition.

This method also contributes to what Palmer (2018) refers to as “the courage to teach” – the act of cultivating inner conviction in both educators and learners. By invoking 'Ā'ishah's moral courage, educators in this study reported an increase in their own sense of legitimacy and confidence. “When I teach like 'Ā'ishah, I feel like I belong in the world of Islamic knowledge,” said one female scholar.

Furthermore, Sayyidah 'Ā'ishah's critiques were not limited to legal matters. She frequently addressed ethical contradictions and misapplications of religious authority. Her ability to distinguish between the Prophet's actions in context and their universal applicability exemplifies *maqāṣid* (Islamic legal doctrine)-based thinking, an approach that aligns legal rulings with higher moral objectives (Kamali, 2019). This orientation is increasingly cited in educational discourse as essential to reforming Islamic curricula in the modern age.

An example of this in our study was the use of 'Ā'ishah's method to challenge rigid gender segregation norms. “If 'Ā'ishah taught men in the mosque, why should we be confined to private rooms?” asked a student during a classroom dialogue. Such questions demonstrate the empowering effects of dialogical pedagogy and its ability to foster ethical agency among learners.

In summary, Sayyidah 'Ā'ishah's resistance was neither rebellious nor reactionary. It was pedagogical, principled, and deeply rooted in scriptural engagement. Her model illustrates that Islamic education, when grounded in dialogue and critical thought, becomes a site of intellectual liberation. These findings reaffirm that incorporating 'Ā'ishah's dialogical practices into Islamic pedagogy is not an innovation but a return to one of its foundational expressions.

3. Educational Transformation and the Reclamation of Female Islamic Authority

The cumulative impact of Sayyidah ‘Ā’ishah’s intellectual contributions has prompted a rethinking of educational authority within Islamic pedagogy. The findings of this study demonstrate that when her legacy is centred in classroom discourse, it catalyses a shift in both student perception and institutional structure. Students and teachers alike begin to recognise women as legitimate interpreters of religious knowledge, effectively challenging centuries of male-dominated epistemology (Barlas, 2019; Mir-Hosseini, 2021). “When I teach about ‘Ā’ishah, I feel like I am reclaiming my right to be both pious and powerful,” shared one senior female teacher.

This reclamation is not merely symbolic but functional. Several *pesantrens* in this study have begun assigning female teachers to lead Qur’an interpretation sessions and train junior male teachers, reversing traditional hierarchies. Such role reversals are often inspired by the example of ‘Ā’ishah, who was known to teach male companions, including renowned scholars like al-Zuhrī and Ibn ‘Abbās. Her authority was rooted not only in her knowledge but also in the ethical consistency and clarity of her reasoning (Barnett, 2009; Brunović, 2017; Srimulyani, 2007).

The transformative effect of these changes is multidimensional. First, there is a notable psychological shift in female learners. Interview data indicate that students exposed to ‘Ā’ishah’s biography report increased confidence in pursuing higher Islamic education. This affirms Bandura’s (1999) theory of self-efficacy, where belief in one’s capacity to succeed is shaped by visible role models. The presence of ‘Ā’ishah in the curriculum provides just such a model.

Second, institutional reform begins to manifest. Some *pesantrens* have developed elective modules focusing on women in Islam, centred not only on ‘Ā’ishah but also other historical

figures such as Nusaybah bint Ka'b and Rābi'ah al-'Adawiyyah. This diversification marks a curriculum-wide embrace of inclusive Islamic history, indicating that pedagogical transformation is not limited to individual classrooms but system too (Wathani et al., 2022).

This process aligns with the broader theory of critical curriculum transformation, which suggests that education becomes transformative only when it reorients epistemological foundations (Freire, 2021). By foregrounding 'Ā'ishah's interpretive agency, educators in this study are reconfiguring what counts as authoritative knowledge in Islam.

However, such transformations do not occur without contestation. As with all paradigm shifts, the repositioning of female authority has drawn resistance. Several teachers reported institutional pressures to scale back or "reframe" lessons on 'Ā'ishah's jurisprudence. Despite this, many remain committed. "We are not breaking tradition; we are fulfilling it," stated one *pesantren* headmaster, reinforcing the idea that centring women's voices is a return to the prophetic model, not a deviation from it.

The strategic invocation of 'Ā'ishah's legacy thus functions as what Butler (2021) calls a performative act—repetition with a difference—that both affirms tradition and unsettles its patriarchal configurations. Female educators are not abandoning religious norms but reinscribing themselves into them, creating a more inclusive tradition in the process.

Furthermore, the curricular innovations observed in this study echo global movements in gender-sensitive religious education. Research by Florea (2023) and Hunter (2014) supports the notion that reclaiming classical female scholars leads to deeper engagement with religious texts and fosters inclusivity without theological compromise. The educators in this study mirror this strategy, embedding inclusivity within the interpretive tradition rather than as an external demand.

Importantly, these developments have implications beyond the *pesantren*. As alumni move into broader society, they carry with them a vision of Islam that affirms female agency and interpretive authority. This phenomenon has been documented in other regions, such as Morocco and Pakistan, where female religious scholars are increasingly shaping public discourse (Bano & Kalmbach, 2012; Dutta, 2022; Johnson & Fairweather, 2017).

Finally, the findings confirm that reclaiming ‘Ā’ishah’s legacy offers a viable model for Islamic educational reform that is both theologically grounded and socially transformative. It situates women not as exceptions but as integral participants in the intellectual and moral development of the *ummah* (community). In doing so, it redefines religious authority as an inclusive space, where knowledge is not bound by gender but guided by sincerity, intellect, and justice.

4. Emancipatory Praxis through Religious Moderation and Rationality

Sayyidah ‘Ā’ishah’s educational legacy is inseparable from the Islamic concept of *wasāṭiyyah* (moderation), which has become central to contemporary discourses on reformist religious education. Her legacy resists both rigid literalism and unbounded liberalism. In her debates with senior companions such as ‘Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb and Abū Hurayrah, she did not hesitate to challenge claims she deemed contextually inaccurate or morally unbalanced (Kamali, 2006). This resistance was grounded not in personal opinion but in deep knowledge and ethical reasoning, which made her critiques both authoritative and pedagogical.

Sayyidah ‘Ā’ishah’s educational legacy is grounded in the Islamic concept of *wasāṭiyyah* (moderation), central to contemporary religious reform. Her challenge to rigid literalism

and unbounded liberalism, especially in debates with figures like 'Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb and Abū Hurayrah, highlights her commitment to contextual and ethical reasoning (Kamali, 2019). This approach made her critiques both authoritative and pedagogical.

In modern Islamic pedagogy, moderation is both doctrinal and methodological. Al-Attas (Al-Attas, 1980) views *ta'dīb* (Islamic concepts for moral and ethical formation) as a balanced form of education integrating intellectual, spiritual, and ethical growth. 'Ā'ishah exemplified this balance, offering a "compass" for moral decision-making, particularly regarding gender and authority in the classroom.

Her emphasis on contextualising religious rulings, like those on menstruation or purity, challenged static jurisprudence. A teacher in Surabaya noted, "When I explained 'Ā'ishah's disputes over fatwās, students were inspired." This method mirrors Freire's (Freire, 2021) critical pedagogy, where students are encouraged to question knowledge. Haqqani (2018) confirms that incorporating female figures like 'Ā'ishah enhances cognitive diversity, helping students engage with Islam more critically. Female students in our study reported feeling empowered by her example, realising it's okay to question, regardless of age or gender.

'Ā'ishah's pedagogical model also promotes balanced gender dialogue. Teachers observed that her story encouraged more respectful communication between male and female students. This aligns with the *muwāzanah* (comparison) ideal of Islamic education, where justice is found in engaging with difference (Al-Alwani, 2011). In conclusion, 'Ā'ishah's legacy offers a transformative model for integrating religious commitment with intellectual freedom, making her an enduring figure in modern Islamic education.

5. The Role of 'Ā'ishah in Religious Critique: Towards a Feminist Qur'anic Hermeneutics

Sayyidah 'Ā'ishah is increasingly acknowledged as a precursor to feminist Qur'anic hermeneutics. Her persistent questioning, correction of ḥadīth transmissions, and defence of ethical integrity position her as an early voice of interpretive resistance. Barlas (2019) describes such efforts as "Qur'anic anti-patriarchy," a mode of reading that challenges gendered hierarchies without dismissing textual fidelity. This framework closely aligns with our findings, where educators view 'Ā'ishah not just as a transmitter of knowledge but as a challenger of dominant male voices within Islamic tradition.

Classroom observations and interviews revealed that when students were introduced to 'Ā'ishah's critiques, particularly of Abū Hurayrah's narrations and her legal opinions on women's rights, they began adopting a more analytical posture towards scriptural texts. One teacher explained, "After that lesson, my students asked why certain ḥadīth about women's deficiency are still repeated without context." This shift from passive acceptance to critical reflection is a hallmark of feminist pedagogy (Apple, 2018).

Educators often used 'Ā'ishah as a "safe entry point" into feminist hermeneutics. Unlike modern reformers, who might be perceived as radical, 'Ā'ishah's authority is firmly rooted in the Islamic tradition. As one female lecturer noted, "She's part of our tradition, so there's no excuse to ignore her critiques." This approach reflects Mir-Hosseini's (2013) concept of "internal critique" within Islamic feminism.

Furthermore, 'Ā'ishah's emphasis on *'illa* (legal reasoning) rather than strict textual literalism aligns with *maqāṣid al-sharī'ah* (Islamic law purposes), focusing on purpose and ethics. Students taught using her methods developed a deeper understanding of the rationale behind laws, supporting Kamali's (2005) argument

that values-based jurisprudence enhances ethical maturity in learners.

In conclusion, 'Ā'ishah's interpretive practices bridge faithfulness and reform. Her critiques offer a model for ethical reading and gender-inclusive theology, making her an indispensable figure in contemporary Islamic education reform.

6. Sayyidah 'Ā'ishah as a Pedagogical Model in Contemporary Madrasah Education

The educational influence of Sayyidah 'Ā'ishah is most clearly seen in her reemergence as a pedagogical model within modern *pesantren* and *madrasah* education. Teachers in this study reported integrating her biography, jurisprudential legacy, and dialogical style into modules across various disciplines, including ḥadīth, fiqh, and akhlāq. Feedback indicated that her inclusion enriched classroom engagement and diversified interpretive authority.

A notable impact was observed in girl-only *pesantren*, where a teacher from East Java shared that before studying 'Ā'ishah's fatwā(s), many students could not envision themselves in roles as 'ulamā'. After the study, however, the students began to write their own fatwās. This shift aligns with Bandura's (1999) findings on the influence of role models, showing that visibility of female intellectuals raises students' aspirations and self-expectations.

Ethnographic research by Ma'ruf (2018) supports this pattern, finding that *pesantren* incorporating 'Ā'ishah's pedagogy saw increased student participation, especially in *munaqashah* (thesis defence) sessions, where students debate ethical dilemmas. These interactions reflect 'Ā'ishah's own pedagogical approach: dialogical, reflective, and rooted in lived experience.

Educators also adopted teaching methods that mirrored ‘Ā’ishah’s dialectical style. For instance, a *pesantren* in Aceh implemented a “ḥadīth review circle,” where students critique narrations for context and ethical coherence, directly reflecting ‘Ā’ishah’s method of verifying ḥadīth content. This serves as a foundation for critical religious reasoning (Amin, 2013; Hart et al., 2021; Misbah, 2022).

Some *pesantrens* restructured their curricula to emphasise women’s contributions to Islamic civilisation, leading to increased class interest and greater cross-gender respect. Teachers observed that boys no longer viewed girls merely as students but recognised them as leaders, signifying a shift towards co-educational equity within gender-segregated systems.

The impact extended beyond academic knowledge. Students showed increased moral responsibility, empathy, and respect, with improved conflict resolution and a stronger commitment to community service. These outcomes align with *akhlaq* (moral)-based goals in Islamic education, integrating moral character with intellectual growth (Halstead, 2007; Muhajir, 2021).

Teachers also used ‘Ā’ishah’s pedagogy to counter extremism. One instructor noted that by showing how a companion of the Prophet could disagree yet remain righteous, students learned that dissent does not equate to disbelief. This approach aligns with global efforts to combat extremism through critical thinking and historical contextualisation (Arik, 2015; Taylor & Zine, 2014).

Finally, students began to identify with ‘Ā’ishah. Many female students wrote in reflective journals that they felt “seen” and “strengthened” by her example. This affective engagement is vital for character education, where values must resonate emotionally, not just intellectually (Andre, 1986; Buchanan et al., 2022; Drozenová, 2018). In summary, the reintroduction of Sayyidah ‘Ā’ishah into *madrasah* education is both pedagogically

effective and spiritually resonant, as her legacy becomes a living text that is read, interpreted, and embodied by a new generation of learners.

C. Conclusion

This study highlights that Sayyidah 'Ā'ishah's legacy is more than a historical example of piety; it provides a living pedagogical model with significant implications for contemporary Islamic education. The marginalisation of women's voices in religious interpretation has long contributed to an imbalance in educational authority. However, 'Ā'ishah's intellectual courage, dialogical method, and ethical reasoning offer a transformative framework for gender-equitable, critically engaged, and theologically sound education.

Her interventions in ḥadīth transmission, emphasis on contextual reasoning, and challenge to androcentric authority create what this paper terms 'Ā'ishahic pedagogy—marked by rationality, moderation, and spiritual integrity. Integrating her model into pesantren and madrasah education not only elevates women as religious authorities but also nurtures moral agency and critical thinking in students. In a time when Islamic education faces challenges such as extremism and gender bias, 'Ā'ishah's example is both relevant and enduring.

Future research could compare Southeast Asian and Middle Eastern educational reforms incorporating female models like 'Ā'ishah and examine the long-term impact of such pedagogies on institutional policies, classroom dynamics, and student identity formation across gender lines.

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