

Feminist Methodology in Reading the Qur'anic Text: A Critical Study of Contemporary Interpretations in Religious Education

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Abstract: Present study aimed to examine principles and methods used in feminist and traditional interpretation of religious texts. Also, study focused on the important role of *uṣūlī* principles and Islamic interpretive methods in teaching and understanding religious texts. Research employed qualitative research design for examination of feminist interpretations of Qur'anic text and assess their conformity with established Islamic interpretive principles. Study collected data by using purposive sampling technique. Data was gathered using documentary academic studies, articles, and scholarly books. Gathered data was analyzed using documentary and textual themes. The findings revealed that contemporary feminist interpretations of the Qur'an are significantly influenced by Western interpretive frameworks, particularly hermeneutics, deconstruction, and historical criticism, emphasizing contextual and gender-based readings of religious texts. The study also found that while feminist methodologies discusses continuous reinterpretation and reject fixed interpretive authority, traditional Islamic scholarship critiques these approaches on both theoretical and *uṣūlī* grounds, particularly regarding reinterpretations of texts governed by explicit Qur'anic injunctions.

Keywords: Feminist Methodology, Qur'anic Text Interpretation, Religious Education, Qualitative Analysis, Secondary Methodology.

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1. Introduction

Praise be to Allah, who guided humanity through the Qur'an and made it a source

of wisdom, guidance, and knowledge for mankind. Peace and blessings be upon Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ), who conveyed the divine message with truth and clarity, and upon his family and companions, whose intellectual and moral legacy continues to inspire Muslim scholarship and learning.

In present academic world, specifically in context of education, gender studies, and religious studies, new trends have emerged in terms of reading different religious texts. In these trends, scholars have given significant attention to the feminist interpretation because of reform-oriented approach regarding understanding of Quranic text. Feminist hermeneutics looks to review interpretation and reconstruct meaning linked to social justice, gender relations, and women by using critical and theoretical frameworks (Rozy, 2023). Opposite to different interpretive methodologies that are adopted by Muslim scholars, the reliance of feminist readings is on the assumption that challenge basic understanding and interpretation of Quran (Cholidi & Fadlulah, 2024).

The rising influence of feminist interpretation has generated significant debate in context of Islam through educational and intellectual discourse. From the perspective of education, interpretive methodologies play key role to shape student understanding, pedagogical approaches, and curriculum development of social values and religious teachings. As a result, importance is given to emergence of feminist methodologies to interpret Quran as it has highlighted educational concern about the integration of contemporary theories, preservation of interpretive principles, and authentic religious knowledge into Islamic education (Wadud, 2021). As the scholars of feminist hermeneutics discuss that these approaches promote social justice, inclusivity, and inequality, scholars maintain that some feminist interpretations depart from theological, legal, and linguistic foundations that were established within Islamic context (Wijaya et al., 2025).

Studies examined the methods that were used in feminist interpretations of Quran and the way these methods are different from basic principles of educational philosophy and Islamic interpretation (Sharifi, 2020). Feminist readings mostly offer different ways to understand religious texts that lead to debate regarding traditions of Islam. This issue is vital in context of educational institutions, where interpretations regarding religious texts impacts intellectual development of students, curriculum design, and teaching methods (Kalaja, 2025). Since last few years, feminist interpretation is increased in educational and academic discussions regarding gender and Islam. These interpretations mostly address issues like role of women, justice, and equality in society. Therefore, there is need to understand the methods, assumptions, and ideas used in different feminist approaches of the Quran. Assessing these approaches will help educators and scholars to better understand these effects on Islamic thoughts and religious education (Shahir et al., 2025). Therefore, present study examined methods and principles used in feminist interpretations of religious texts and explored different issues mentioned by feminist theory. Moreover, research emphasized the vital role of uṣūlī principles and Islamic interpretive methods in teaching and understanding religious texts.

2. Literature Review

Scholars mentioned that feminist methodology in context of reading Quranic text is significant in the field of religious education. In modern academic context, religious education is not limited to transmission of religious knowledge alone. Infact, it is transformed into a multidisciplinary field that explored relationship between gender,

culture, ethics, society, religion and interpretation (Reckelhoff, 2023). From the religious point of view, feminist hermeneutics is discussed as important trend that interpret religious texts, especially Quranic texts by using frameworks focusing on gender sensitivity, inclusion, quality, and justice. Scholars argued that different traditional interpretation of Quranic texts were impacted by male dominated traditions and patriarchal cultural structures rather than reflecting the universal ethical principles of Islam. So, the feminist methodology is considered by literature as closely connected to basic religious education because educational institutions play a key role to shape understanding of students regarding social values, religious authority, gender roles, and religion (Ruslan, 2024).

Studies discussed that from the lest of religious education, feminist methodology introduced an important approach regarding learning and teaching of Quranic interpretation. Traditional religious education mostly presents classical tafsir literature as fixed and authoritative, focusing on the continuity with their Islamic text (Adel et al., 2025). On the other hand, scholars also challenge this approach by discussing that these interpretations are socially and historically conditioned. As per feminist studies, no interpretation emerged in social vacuum; infact, there is influence of cultural assumptions, ideological orientation, social identity, and historical context on these interpreters. This point of view has important implications for religious education as it encourages students to examine critically the way religious knowledge is initialized, transmitted, and produced (Mukhetdinov, 2019).

The emergence of feminist methodology in context of religious education is linked to developments in educational philosophy. Different educational theories focused learner centred pedagogy, analytical reasoning, dialogue and critical thinking. Whereas feminist approaches regarding Quranic interpretation align with the principles of education because students are encouraged by these approaches to engage actively in religious texts irrespective of memorizing the traditional opinions only. By using different critical reflection, students are also encouraged to assess different concepts such as leadership, justice, authority, and gender. It also explores the way these concepts have been interpreted by Islamic history. This shift transforms religious education into intellectual engagement with sources of religion (Sahin, 2018).

Scholars discussed important contribution of feminist methodology in religious education in terms of gender inclusivity and awareness. Scholars maintained that traditional religious education mostly marginalized perspectives of women by relying mostly on male centred interpretations and male scholars. Scholars also argued that Women historically limited participation in religious perspective because of institutional barriers and social barriers. Thus, different interpretations regarding social participation, inheritance, leadership, family roles, and women rights show partial social assumptions. Feminist methodology looks to address imbalance by enhancing greater induction of women voices within educational discourse and religious studies. From the perspective of education, this methodology encourages students to assess diversity regarding interpretive perspective and understand the importance of representation from the perspective to produce religious knowledge (Mursaleen & Taimur, 2023).

Literature also discusses that feminist interpretations have influenced the way educational curricula have been shaped. Different institutions and universities that are offering Islamic studies include Quranic interpretations, methodology, feminist theology, and gender studies. This curricula development shows enhanced recognition that

students should understand both contemporary and classical approaches to interpret religious texts. Therefore, feminist methodology contributes to curriculum diversification by exposing students to compete within Islamic thoughts. Students who study religious education are frequently introduced to discussion regarding ethics, contextual interpretation, gender quality, and patriarchy of religious authority (Christopher & Revell, 2024). In such educational institutions, students are engaged to prepare with social and contemporary intellectual challenges affecting societies of Muslims at the global level.

Important methodological tools that are employed in feminist interpretation is methodological analysis. Feminist methodology discusses that scholars participate in developing different textual meanings that interpretations is influenced deeply by power structures and social realities. In different studies related to education, this approach encourages students to investigate the way social conditions impact interpretive outcomes. Students learn to analyze text of Quran but also, they are able to interpret historical perspectives of Quran. This approach promotes intellectual independence and interpretive awareness among learners (Gondal & Hatta, 2024).

Past studies also represent another important aspect of feminist methodology that is linked to religious education. Scholars mostly argued that some of the rulings of Quran addressed certain historical circumstances from the perspective of seventh century of Arabia. Therefore, it should be interpreted from the perspective of their original social context. In settings of education, students are encouraged by contextual interpretations to distinguish between context specific social regulations and universal ethical principles. Learners are allowed by this appointment to critically engage with different issues such as male guardianship, testimony, inheritance, and polygamy while examining historical realities that are influenced by legislations of Quran. Religious education impacted by the feminist methodology promotes historical analysis and contextual reasoning as important interpretive skills (Muyassaroh, 2025).

Furthermore, feminist methodology in religious education mainly focuses on ethical objectives in context of Quran. Past scholars mostly discuss that central values of Islam including equality, comparison, dignity and justice should guide contemporary interpretation. These ethical orientations have important educational implications as religious education aims to transmit knowledge but also cultivate social and moral consciousness among students. Different feminist approaches encourage students to connect teachings of Islam within basic concerns such as human rights, educational quality, social justice, and women empowerment. As a result, religious education becomes closely linked to ethical engagement in terms of modern social realities (Syamsiah & Aisyah, 2025).

Likewise, feminist methodology is highly controversial in terms of religious education. Past Islamic scholars criticize feminist interpretations to challenge established principles of tafsīr methodology and Islamic epistemology. Researchers also argued that authentic interpretations should remain grounded in different disciplines such as uṣūl al-fiqh, hadith Sciences, and Arabic linguistic in terms of early Muslim community. Some of the feminist approaches rely excessively on western theories such as deconstruction, secular humanism, and post modernism, that may have conflict with different Islamic concepts of religious authority and divine revelation. From the perspective of education, this criticism generates important debate regarding the limits of preservation and interpretive freedom of doctrinal authenticity (Constance, 2023).

As a result of this controversy, significant pedagogical challenges are created for the teachers of education. Teachers in religious education and Islamic studies mostly

encounter students that are effected by global discussion on social justice, gender equality and feminism through international academic discourses, social media, and digital communication. Therefore, educators should navigate intellectual debate that is of sensitive nature while maintaining academic respect and integrity for religious tradition. Institutions of religious education face most difficult task to balance important inquiry in terms of basic Islamic principles. Feminist methodology make these educational tensions more intense as it raises important questions about nature of relationship between social change and revelation, legitimacy of reinterpretations and religious authority (Halimah et al., 2025).

Additionally, feminist methodology impacts the discussions regarding participation of women in leadership of religion. In past, access of towards advanced education of religion was mostly limited in most of Muslim societies. Feminist scholars challenge these patterns of history by advocating greater participation of women and equal educational opportunities of women in academic research and religious interpretation. In religious studies, this methodology has contributed in terms of enhanced visibility of female educators, researchers, and scholars within different Islamic studies (Amatullah, 2024).

Another vital educational dimension of feminist methodology concerns the association among social and religious reforms. Islamic scholars mostly view religious interpretation as connection to struggles of gender justice and social transformation. As a result, religious education impacted by thoughts that encourages students to evaluate institutional inequalities, cultural traditions, and social structures. The basic purpose of these educational approaches is to develop socially conscious learners that are capable to address challenges affecting societies of Muslims. Therefore, feminist methodology contributes toward the development of important religious literacy, where students can easily learn the text of religion but also, they have ability to explore the way religious interpretations effects human behavior, social policy, ethics and law (Waluyo, 2024).

The role of feminist methodology in context of education has further expanded because of globalization. With emergence of transnational academic networks, digital learning platforms, and modern communication technologies have facilitated spreading of feminist ideas across diverse educational and cultural contexts. Today, students are exposed to a number of interpretations of Islam through international educational programs, social media discussions, scholarly publications, and online lectures. It is not possible to isolate religious education from intellectual debate regarding human rights, identity, and gender. Therefore, feminist interpretation of Quran shapes discussion of education both within societies of Muslim majority and in Western educational institutions (Wahid, 2024).

Despite major contribution of Feminist methodology, critics mentioned that There is possibility that feminist methodology will reduce Quran to purely linguistic and human text because of its unrestricted reinterpretation. Scholars focused that Quran is the divine revelation, it is not the history document. They mentioned that excessive interpretation will impact stability and sacredness of teachings of Islam. In terms of religious education, this debate raises issues regarding preservation of religious identity and academic freedom. Therefore, educational institutions should carefully determine the way conventional methodologies can be discussed in a critical manner so it do not weaken the Islamic values and beliefs (Ray, 2025).

Additionally, feminist methodology has affected discussions regarding reforms of education in Muslim societies. Scholars have also argued that religious education

system should play role more than only memorizing it. Infact, it should encourage analytical engagement with sources of religion. Feminist approaches provide support to this educational transformation by promoting contextual analysis, and inquiry-based learning (Lahmuddin et al., 2024).

3. Research Methodology

Present study used qualitative research design on the basis of critical, analytical, inductive, and comparative methodologies for the interpretation of text of Quran and evaluation of conformity to establish Islamic principles. The reliance of this study was primarily on the collection of data from academic studies, classical Islamic literature, feminist writings, journal articles, and scholarly books. Study used purposive sampling to academic select work of feminist scholars intentionally. Key contribution of feminist scholars included reinterpretation of Islamic texts, gender theory, deconstruction, historical criticism, and hermeneutics. The sample size of the research was selected of contemporary and classical literature that addresses readings of uṣūlī critiques, textual analysis, and Hadith.

Research technique of study involved textual analysis and documentary analysis of traditionally and feminist scholarly sources. Study employed analytical method for examination of textuality, reading, gender, and feminism in relation to Islamic interpretive traditions. Data analysis was conducted through thematic and conceptual analysis, whereby major themes, arguments, and interpretive trends were systematically categorized and critically evaluated in light of classical Islamic scholarship and contemporary academic discourse.

4. Results

Results found that feminist interpretation of text of Quran are influenced strongly by Western interpretive theories, specifically deconstruction, historic criticism, and hermeneutics. The emphasize of feminist reading was on rejection of fixed meanings in religious texts, contextual understanding and interpretation. Results revealed that feminist scholars treat Quran as open text and flexible that need continuous reinterpretations to align with changing modern gender perspectives and social realities. Results also found that feminist discourse rely heavily on the concepts of gender as interpretive framework. Quranic verses related to social roles, hijab, inheritance, and Qiwwamah from the perspective of gender. Results also indicated that different approaches that challenge interpretive role of companions, Hadith literature, and classical tafsīr mostly describe traditional role as male dominated.

Results of study also revealed that feminist methodology discusses ijtihad open ended, including reinterpretation of Quranic texts. Feminist reading mostly support the relativity of textual meanings. It also rejects the existence of absolute interpretive authority. Findings also reported that feminist discourse goes beyond women right regarding cultural issues and social issues. Findings also demonstrate that traditional scholars of Islam criticize feminist methodologies on theoretical grounds and uṣūlī grounds. Findings also show that traditional methods mainly focus on distinction between speculative texts and definitive texts. It also rejects reinterpretation in matters that is governed by explicit Quranic Injunctions.

4.1. Mechanisms and Regulatory Principles of Feminist Readings

4.1.1. Mechanisms of Feminist Readings in Interpreting the Qur'anic Text

Feminist approaches have relied on Western interpretive mechanisms in reading the Qur'anic text. The most prominent of these mechanisms are as follows:

4.1.1.1. Hermeneutical Reading of the Qur'anic Text

The term hermeneutics refers to the science of interpretation and the art of explicating religious, philosophical, and literary texts. Hermeneutical theory originated in ancient Greek philosophy. Among the most influential contributors to its development are Schleiermacher, Dilthey, and Heidegger. The core idea of hermeneutics—both classical and modern—is based on subjecting the text and its meaning to the reader rather than to the author, thereby allowing the reader to link personal creativity and subjective insight to the text in various ways. Feminist scholars have applied hermeneutical readings to reinterpret the Qur'anic text from a purely feminist perspective (Ray, 2025), influenced by Western feminism and its approaches to studying the Bible in opposition to what they perceive as a male-dominated vision monopolized by patriarchal society—particularly church authorities. Feminist theorists argue that traditional theological discourse is governed by patriarchy, authoritarianism, and bias; consequently, feminist theology is presented as a pathway toward a more balanced and equitable theological discourse (Alak, 2020).

4.1.1.2. Historical Reading of the Qur'anic Text

The historical-reading method represents an important approach in modern studies of religious literature. The main tenet of this approach is that the text is completely defined by the time, place, and reader, thereby placing it into its historical setting and making it inseparable from its formation process. The interpretation of the Bible historically was widely accepted since the sixteenth century CE by Western scholars. It can be argued that Spinoza is the leading proponent of the historical study of the Bible, because he introduced a way of understanding this religious literature that does not necessarily align with its content (Nahum, 2025). Feminism insists on understanding the Qur'an text from its historical background (Noor, 2024). Feminists reject the literal meaning of the text and highlight the importance of interpreting Qur'anic verses from the standpoint of the historical moment when they were revealed. The historical approach is especially useful in the interpretation of verses related to hijab and inheritance (Asem, 2024). According to feminism, these verses were interpreted taking into account the traditions prevalent in the Arabian Peninsula at that time. Therefore, the women of today cannot be compared to the women during the revelation of the Qur'an.

4.1.1.3. Deconstructive Reading of the Qur'anic Text

According to Jacques Derrida, the idea of deconstruction is meant to be used to define the critical approach applied when examining Western philosophy. Deconstruction is based on two approaches to reading. Firstly, a book or a text is analyzed using a traditional reading approach, which identifies the primary meanings of the text. Secondly, it involves a process called counter reading, which questions the meanings found using a conventional approach. Counter reading relies on implicit meanings found in the text that go against its primary messages to create a disconnect between what is

said explicitly in the text and what is meant, as well as between what is revealed and concealed in the text (Ali, 2026). In feminist theory, deconstructive critical readings are employed to assert that the meanings of Qur'anic texts are not always set in stone. This process is used to challenge the male-dominated readings of texts using scepticism, deconstruction, and rereading from a feminist perspective (Bardhan, 2025).

4.2. Regulatory Principles of Feminist Readings of Religious Texts

4.2.1. Regulatory Principles of Feminist Readings of the Qur'anic Text:

1. **The openness, flexibility, and non-fixity of the Qur'anic text:** From a feminist perspective, the Qur'anic text is said to be open, flexible, and non-fixated, requiring continuous interpretation in order to meet with modern sensibility, and, according to feminists, to liberate women from the shackles of patriarchal domination. According to Muttaqin (2021), "Interpreting the Qur'an is a dynamic act that must be reviewed based on the demands of the time."
2. **The linguistic aspect of the Qur'anic text:** Erdy (2025) believes that despite being divine speech, the Qur'an is, in essence, a linguistic text like any other and, hence, susceptible to various interpretations. They claim that once the divine revelation was translated into human language, it entered the human world and, hence, became subject to the analysis of linguistic tools. In doing so, the Qur'an is treated as an open text whose many meanings can be derived without the imposition of methodological rigidity.
3. **Absolute indeterminacy of Qur'anic meaning:** Some feminist theories of interpretation are premised on the assumption that absolute truth does not exist because truth is completely relative. This means that every reading of the Qur'an is only a relative human interpretation because, regardless of what humans might think, the Qur'anic text has its absolute meaning which only God knows. Based on this, the Qur'anic text is completely indeterminate and open to various interpretations.
4. **Overcoming the Qur'anic text and its contexts for historical and purposive interpretations:** Feminists believe that decisions regarding women must be viewed historically as situationally created responses to specific environmental conditions of time and geography. From this perspective, emphasis is placed on the specificity of the cause rather than the generality of the wording.
5. **Subjecting the Qur'anic text to the concept of gender:** Feminist thought emphasizes the necessity of rereading the Qur'anic text from a gender-based perspective. This approach relies on interpretive methodologies that incorporate the concept of gender into textual analysis. According to most feminist theorists, the Qur'anic text does not affirm any real or essential differences between men and women, except for pregnancy and childbirth. They argue that recognizing gender-based distinctions undermines women's identity and contend that the concept of *qiwamah* (male guardianship) has been misinterpreted, as stated in the verse: "**Men are the caretakers of women, as men have been provisioned by Allah over women and tasked with supporting them financially.**" (Qur'an, 4:34). Fatimah and Ikram (2025) argues: "Men are maintainers of women only when the following two conditions are fulfilled: the first is preference, and the second is that men spend of their wealth on women. If one of these conditions is absent, then men have no authority over women."
6. **Ideological dominance in interpretation:** Feminist readings are grounded in the assumption that male-centered interpretations have usurped women's rights. On

this basis, feminist discourse launches a critical assault on the classical exegetical heritage, employing derogatory descriptions of early Qur'anic exegetes and their foundational works, such as labeling them as "monopolized interpretations". In this context, Wadud (2021) states: "These jurists and commentators monopolized the field of interpretation and exegesis throughout the centuries."

7. **Ijtihād in definitive (muḥkam) verses:** One of the most dangerous manifestations of modernist thought is engaging in reinterpretation of definitive Qur'anic verses, reflecting an outright rejection of clear and fixed texts and a radical questioning of what is necessarily known of religion. This includes attempts to legitimize homosexuality. "This book—namely her work *A Muslim Woman's Dilemma*—is merely a questioning reading of Qur'anic verses that most Muslims consider definitive and clear. Who denies that sodomy refers to homosexuality and that it is prohibited by the Qur'an? From the outset, we declare that these 'facts' are not facts at all" (Alvi & Haroon, 2023).

4.2.2. Feminist Readings of the Hadith Authority:

1. **Questioning and undermining the authority of the Hadith Authority:** Feminist thought challenges the authority of Prophetic Hadith, arguing that the Qur'an alone suffices for all that Muslims require. Sunnah is seen as a collection of statements and actions which were relevant only in the era of the Prophet and thus have no timeless application. Thus, it is discarded as an obligatory source of legislation. Additionally, feminism posits that the discrimination against women is found in the Sunnah because there are hadiths in it that affirm male dominance. In this regard, *The Veil and the Male Elite* written by Fatima Mernissi is considered one of the most significant books that have defied the legitimacy of the Hadith because they were politically inspired and dubious.
2. Either outright rejection or partial adoption of Hadith: The authors clearly indicate in the introduction of their book "Qur'an and Woman," that they will not accept that "the equality provided for in the Qur'an between men and women can be denied by the prophet. In such a case, I am on the side of the Qur'an."

4.2.3. Feminist Readings in Defining the Authority of the Companions

1. According to feminist interpretations of Qur'anic discourse about women, engagement with the Qur'an is prioritized at the expense of dismissing the interpretation of companions as lawgivers in total. The Companions were accused of not understanding the true essence of the message of the Qur'an and being the creators of patriarchal and unfair interpretations that were further perpetuated by succeeding Muslim scholars.
2. The interpretative methods of companions were regarded by the feminists as an exercise in manipulation motivated by men's dominance in attempts to resist the Qur'anic revelations. They claimed that "...early Muslims... only reluctantly followed God's directive regarding women's inheritance." Muḍāḍah is explained as a term meaning "distress, sorrow, pain and compulsion" thus the acceptance of the rulings of the Divine was carried out with dissatisfaction.
3. **Feminist discourse raises objections against Abū Bakr** (may Allah be pleased with him) regarding his refusal to grant Fāṭimah (may Allah be pleased with them) inheritance from her father, the Prophet Muhammad (Peace be upon him), citing the Hadith: "***We do not leave inheritance; whatever we leave is charity***". Despite his eminent status, feminists claim that Abū Bakr misunderstood the Hadith.

Similarly, ‘Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb (may Allah be pleased with him) is portrayed as a spokesperson for male resistance to women’s demands and as responsible for imposing hijab after exerting pressure on the Prophet, allegedly to assert male dominance over women’s freedom. Abū Hurayrah (may Allah be pleased with him) is also depicted within feminist discourse as one of the primary figures accused of distorting Prophetic traditions.

4.2.4. *A Critique of the Constraints of Feminist Readings*

4.2.4.1. *Critiquing the Constraints of Feminist Readings of the Qur’anic Text*

1. While the Qur’an is expressed in linguistic expression, it cannot be confused with any other form of language. The Muslim uṣūliyyūn agree that the Qur’an represents the speech of Allah Almighty, who revealed it to Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) in Arabic. It was transmitted to us through mass transmission. Its divine quality is the essential criterion that makes it distinct from all other forms of speech. There are many features that make the Qur’an distinct from all other forms of speech, including the fact that the reading of the Qur’an is itself worship. It is also the miracle of the Prophet that Allah Almighty challenges the most eloquent people among the Arabs to come up with a single verse like that of the Qur’an. The speech of Allah Almighty, whose attributes are perfect, is totally different from all other forms of speech and can never change, add, subtract, or alter its contents in fulfillment of his promise (Harold, 2021). As Allah Almighty says in His Book, “Certainly, it is We Who have sent down the Reminder, and certainly, it is We Who shall guard it” (Qur’an 15:9).
2. The feminist claim that the text of the Qur’an is absolutely indeterminate and an open text that allows for infinite interpretation raises an important methodological question: How do we determine the correct interpretation? Islamic legal scholars have stated that in terms of references to legal injunctions, the Qur’an can be classified into two types:

Definitive in Meaning (qaṭ’ī al-dalālah): This refers to a text that conveys a single, determinate meaning, admitting neither interpretation nor the possibility of an alternative understanding. An example is God’s statement:

“As for female and male fornicators, give each of them one hundred lashes.” (Qur’an 24:2).

This verse is definitive in meaning, establishing that the prescribed punishment for adultery is exactly one hundred lashes, neither more nor less.

Speculative in meaning (ẓannī al-dalālah): This refers to a text that conveys a meaning while also admitting interpretation or the possibility of being diverted to another meaning. For example, God’s statement:

“Forbidden to you are carrion.” (Qur’an 5:3).

The term carrion (al-maytah) is general and may indicate the prohibition of all dead animals, yet it may also admit specification, excluding, for instance, the carrion of sea creatures.

3. Through advocating the historicity of legal rulings, feminist discourse seeks to eliminate gender conflict and to construct a new system centered on gender as the foundational pillar of its religious discourse. However, a notable inconsistency emerges within this methodology: while feminist readings reject male bias and its dominance over religious discourse—along with its adherence to disciplined interpretive principles—they simultaneously fall into feminist bias and interpretive unilateralism. This undoubtedly constitutes another form of ideological bias. If the former approach—closer to the era of revelation, sounder in creed and methodology, more upright in moral integrity, and more proficient in the Arabic language—is rejected, then it is all the more appropriate to reject the latter, given its greater distance from the era of revelation and its lack of grounding in the sources of Islamic legislation and established scholarly principles.
4. Feminist efforts to exercise interpretive reasoning (ijtihād) in relation to definitive and unequivocal texts are invalidated by the established principle that there is no scope for ijtihād where definitive texts exist. In the terminology of legal theorists, definitive texts are those whose meanings are clear, self-evident, and not subject to nullification, alteration, or reinterpretation. They do not admit alternative meanings, as they are explicative in nature, and they are not subject to abrogation either during or after the era of revelation. Acting upon their rulings is categorically obligatory. Accordingly, scholars have formulated the foundational legal maxim: “There is no ijtihād in the presence of a textual ruling”. It means that the interpretation can never be allowed when there is a text because the decision has already been made from the text itself. The ijtihād will result in conjectures, while the textual decisions give certainty, which cannot be jeopardized by any conjecture. Some examples of the texts are those Qur’anic verses that forbid indecencies.

4.2.5. A Critique of Feminist Readings Regarding Ḥadīth Authority

There can be no question that the feminist criticism of the hadith of the Prophet and its authority is tantamount to rejection of the Holy Qur’an. The hadith of the Prophet refers to the sayings, deeds, and silent approval of the Prophet Muḥammad (PBUH) and represents the secondary source of legislation in Islam. There is ample evidence for the need to follow the teachings of the hadith. God Almighty says:

“Whatever the Messenger gives you, take it. And whatever he forbids you from, leave it.” (Qur’an 59:7).

The Messenger does not speak from personal desire; rather, his speech is revelation from God Almighty, as stated in the verse:

“Nor does he speak of his own whims, it is only a revelation sent down to him.” (Qur’an 53:3–4).

Moreover, many legal rulings in the Qur’an are presented in a general or summary form, with most rulings expressed as universal principles rather than detailed prescriptions. Consequently, the Prophetic Sunnah serves as an explanatory and clarifying source for the Qur’an.

4.2.6. A Critique of Feminist Readings in Defining the Concept of the Companions

The Companions of the Prophet (may Allah be pleased with them), whose moral integrity is universally acknowledged by both early and later generations of the Muslim community—were declared upright through God’s own commendation and praise. God Almighty states:

“As for the foremost—the first of the Emigrant” (Qur’an 9:100)

and:

“Indeed, Allah was pleased with the believers” (Qur’an 48:18),

and:

“Muḥammad is the Messenger of Allāh; and those with him are forceful against the disbelievers” (Qur’an 48:29).

Sunaryo and Fahmi (2024) elucidates the rationale for prioritizing the Companions’ understanding of the texts over that of others from two perspectives: **first**, their mastery of the Arabic language, as they were eloquent native speakers; and **second**, their direct engagement with events and circumstances of revelation. This enabled them to grasp contextual indicators and reasons for revelation in ways inaccessible to later generations, for the eyewitness perceives what remains unseen to the absent observer (Table 1).

Table 1: The Feminist Approach to Reading the Shar‘ī Text.

Dimension	Feminist Approach	Outcome
Point of Departure	Re-reading the Shar‘ī text by subjecting it to contemporary interpretive mechanisms	Ideological and arbitrary interpretive reading
The Qur’anic Text	Considered open and fluid, like any other linguistic discourse	Stripping the text of its sacredness and rendering it open to critique and revision
Indication of Qur’anic Meaning	Regarded as entirely speculative	Dilution and fluidity of textual meaning (limitless interpretive possibilities)
Ḥadīth Authority	Subjected to criticism and skepticism on the grounds that it reinforces the patriarchal system against women	Denial of its status as the second source of Islamic legislation
Position toward the Understanding of the Companions and the Tafsīr and Fiqh Heritage	Questioning the moral integrity of the Companions and challenging the exegetical and juridical heritage under the claim of male dominance	Complete dismissal of the Companions’ understanding and a declared rupture with the exegetical and juridical tradition
Ijtihād	Open-ended, including ijtihād in matters governed by definitive texts	Destabilization of established and settled rulings
Concept of Gender	Adopted as an interpretive framework to evaluate Qur’anic texts related to rulings concerning women	Production of new critical readings of the Qur’anic text aimed at achieving gender equality

5. Conclusion

This study clearly proves that the feminist methodology of exegesis cannot be considered a continuation of the long tradition of exegetical practice within Islam as it represents an epistemological turn in the way people approach the relation to revelation

using the methods developed within the Western intellectual context. Thus, when this kind of exegesis is applied to a sacred text and attempts to transform it into semantic material for interpretation depending on modern social needs, the sacral character of the text is undermined and loses its authoritative character as it lacks methodological safeguards needed to ensure the stability and consistency of its interpretation. Feminist approaches to religious texts become particularly problematic in their opposition to the legal principles and judgments that must be reinterpreted in terms of absolute equality between genders or even the legitimacy of sexual behavior condemned by religion. In this regard, the feminist approach to the Qur'an poses a serious problem due to its inconsistency in the methodological interpretation of definitive texts that do not allow any compromises and modifications. Moreover, the interpretation of the Qur'an in accordance with the rules of another ideology is bound to lead to inconsistencies and contradictions in religious discourse. Therefore, the methodological correctness and reliability of such a discourse depend exclusively on the respect for its own rules and sources far from any reformulation projects.

The novelty of this research lies in its critical examination of the regulatory principles of the feminist methodology in reading religious texts, assessed through a rigorous scientific framework grounded in *uṣūl al-fiqh* (Islamic legal theory). Additionally, the study addresses an applied case concerning the feminist discourse that seeks to legitimize homosexuality, offering an *uṣūlī*-based critique. To the best of our knowledge, this aspect has not been sufficiently addressed in previous studies.

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