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Gender mainstreaming in Indonesian pesantren education: Bridging policy commitments and institutional implementation

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Abstract:

Recognition of pesantren within Indonesia's national education system does not explain how gender equality commitments translate into educational governance. Differences in regulatory scope and limited accounts of implementation call for a synthesis of the literature, policy framework, and implementation domains. This study synthesizes the relationship between gender equality commitments, the national policy framework, and implementation in pesantren education. Using a qualitative approach, it examines 21 academic sources published in 2013–2025, identified through Scopus, DOAJ, and Google Scholar, as well as six national legal documents issued in 1984–2020. Thematic analysis combined inductive and deductive coding. Legal documents were compared by regulatory focus, intended audience, mechanisms, and relevance to pesantren, without assuming that madrasah guidelines apply to all forms of pesantren education. The findings show three patterns. First, equality commitments are not always linked to specific objectives, implementation measures, assigned responsibilities, and evaluation for policy improvement. Second, differences in the scope of documents limit conclusions about operational links among gender mainstreaming mandates, sectoral guidelines, and pesantren education regulations. Third, the reviewed studies identify five implementation domains: leadership and decision-making; female students' access and participation; curriculum and teaching; gender capacity and literacy; and institutionalization and sustainability. The study concludes that links between normative commitments and institutional processes require further examination using program documents and field evidence. It proposes a framework that connects the institutionalization of equality goals to resources, women's agency, and achievements. This framework can guide the development of context-sensitive objectives, responsibilities, indicators, and monitoring in pesantren.

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INTRODUCTION

Pesantren are Islamic educational institutions that play an important role in Indonesia. Research on power relations and gender highlights the need to consider women's access, leadership, and learning experiences in religious education (Jaschok & Chan, 2009; Selçuk, 2023). Discussions of gender policy also emphasize the distinction between administrative recognition and changes in institutional processes (Muhia & Abuya, 2024; Almugren et al., 2024). Similar questions arise concerning women's leadership, curricula, and the ways religious texts are discussed in teaching (Massouti et al., 2024; Shah & Lashari, 2023; Erwani & Siregar, 2024). Gender mainstreaming offers an approach to integrating equality into education policy (Verge, 2021; Kataeva et al., 2024), while Presidential Instruction No. 9 of 2000 directs this process within government agencies (Syukri, 2023). Gender audits, training, and grievance procedures may be considered institutional measures for addressing gender inequality (Newman et al., 2016). Their relevance and application in pesantren education require further examination in light of policy scope and institutional evidence.

Previous studies have examined gender issues in Islamic education from several perspectives. Research on women's access and participation spans various educational institutions (Muluk, 2014; Rashdi, 2024; Mohd Nor et al., 2024). Other studies investigate women's positions in leadership, as well as the barriers to and opportunities for their participation (Abidin et al., 2023; Isnaini, 2021; Kusmana, 2019; Nurmila, 2020). The challenges women face in pesantren and strategies for expanding educational opportunities have also been discussed (Srimulyani, 2007; Cardozo et al., 2022; Guerrero & Puerta, 2023; Akinola & Naidoo, 2024). In the literature reviewed for this study, the relationship among stated commitments to equality, the scope of national policy documents, and domains of implementation in pesantren education has not been explained in an integrated manner. This gap underpins the study's contribution: synthesizing elements of the policy process, comparing the intended audiences and mechanisms of six documents, and mapping implementation domains as a basis for examining the relationship between commitments and institutional processes.

This study aims to synthesize the relationship among gender equality commitments, the national policy framework, and domains of implementation in pesantren education. It addresses three questions: (1) How does the literature explain the translation of gender commitments into policy objectives, implementation measures, responsibilities, and evaluation? (2) How do the regulatory focus, intended audiences, and mechanisms of the six national documents relate to pesantren education? (3) Which implementation domains are identified in the studies, and how can they help trace the relationship between policy and institutional processes? Theoretically, the study proposes a framework that connects policy processes to resources, agency, and outcomes related to women's participation. Practically, its synthesis can help policymakers and pesantren administrators examine program objectives, assigned responsibilities, indicators, female students' access, teaching and learning, gender literacy, and the sustainability of initiatives.

The study argues that normative commitments to gender equality are insufficient to explain how gender mainstreaming operates in pesantren education. The documents examined have different regulatory focuses and intended audiences: some express a commitment to eliminating discrimination, some direct the work of government agencies, some provide guidance for Islamic education or madrasahs, and others regulate pesantren education. Operational links among these documents, therefore, cannot be inferred from their existence alone. The implementation literature also calls for distinctions among leaders' support, women's participation in decision-making, available opportunities, and their use by

female students, as well as between written curricula and teaching practices. This study examines these relationships as matters of policy and institutional process. Determining whether policies have failed, whether male domination exists in particular pesantren, or whether proposed measures are effective would require program documents and field evidence that this study lacks.

METHOD

Research Approach

This study adopts a qualitative approach through a literature review and analysis of policy documents. Document analysis was conducted systematically to identify, evaluate, and interpret information relevant to the research focus (Bowen, 2009). The study aims to synthesize how gender equality commitments are articulated in the literature, situated within the national policy framework, and discussed in studies of pesantren education. It does not measure policy implementation or effectiveness in any particular pesantren. The findings are organized into three successive sections: a synthesis of the policy literature, a comparative reading of regulatory documents, and a synthesis of implementation studies.

Data Sources and Document Selection

The data comprise 21 academic studies or sources published between 2013 and 2025 and six national legal documents issued between 1984 and 2020. Academic literature was identified through Scopus, DOAJ, and Google Scholar and selected for its relevance to gender policy, leadership, female students' participation, curriculum and teaching, gender literacy, and the sustainability of initiatives in pesantren. Studies appearing in more than one theme were counted only once. The legal documents were selected because they address pesantren, the elimination of discrimination, gender mainstreaming in government policy, or Islamic education and madrasahs. Each document was read in light of its regulatory focus and intended audience; guidelines for madrasahs were not assumed to apply automatically to all forms of pesantren education.

Data Analysis

The data were analyzed thematically by adapting the inductive and deductive approach of Fereday and Muir-Cochrane (2006). Initial codes were developed from the study's areas of focus and then adjusted to reflect patterns emerging from the sources. Related codes were grouped, checked against their original sources, and synthesized into four policy themes and five implementation themes. The six legal documents were compared according to their regulatory focus, intended audience, mechanisms, and relevance to pesantren education. The resulting synthesis was interpreted using Kabeer (2003) to examine the institutionalization of equality goals in policy processes and Kabeer (1999) to distinguish among resources, agency, or the capacity to make choices, and achievements when discussing women's access and participation. These perspectives were used as interpretive tools, not as evidence that particular outcomes had occurred in every pesantren.

Trustworthiness of the Analysis

Trustworthiness was supported by tracing codes and themes back to their original sources and checking the consistency between interpretations and the underlying evidence (Nowell et al., 2017). The 21 academic sources and six legal documents were reviewed to ensure that the analysis was traceable and consistent. Sources appearing in more than one theme were recorded as the same source and did not increase the corpus count. Comparisons across sources were used to identify convergences and differences, particularly concerning stated commitments, the intended audiences of regulations, institutional responsibilities, and

implementation domains. Interpretations informed by Kabeer (1999; 2003) were distinguished from statements made directly in the literature and documents. Because the study involved neither observation nor interviews, it does not validate practices in particular pesantren; conclusions about implementation are limited to the evidence available in the corpus.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results

Gender mainstreaming in pesantren education policy

The literature synthesis reveals a recurring issue in the relationship between commitments to gender equality and their translation into pesantren education policy. Relevant statements in the literature were grouped by similarity of meaning and then analyzed across four areas: the formulation of objectives, implementation measures, the allocation of responsibilities, and evaluation. The grouping of codes and themes adapts the inductive and deductive approach to thematic analysis developed by Fereday and Muir-Cochrane (2006). Table 1 presents the synthesis.

Table 1

Thematic Synthesis of Gender Mainstreaming in Pesantren Education Policy

Codes derived from the literature	Theme	Thematic synthesis	Initial references
Statements on inclusivity and equality remain general	Commitments in policy formulation	The literature shows attention to gender equality, but the intended changes in pesantren educational governance are not always specified.	Alfirdaus (2019); Sa'dan (2019); Suwarno (2018)
Implementation steps, targets, and indicators are insufficiently detailed	Operational policy design	The studies reviewed do not adequately explain the relationship between equality objectives and institutional actions that can be implemented and assessed.	Alfirdaus (2019); Kurniawati and Muafiah (2023); Muafiah (2013)
Initiatives are associated with particular leaders	Institutionalization of responsibilities	Leaders can create opportunities for change, but sustaining initiatives requires a clear allocation of authority and institutional procedures.	Arrizal et al. (2025); Kusmana (2019b); Zakiyah (2016)
Links among implementation guidelines, monitoring, and policy improvement are insufficiently explained	Links between implementation and evaluation	The literature reviewed does not sufficiently explain how the implementation of gender commitments is monitored or how monitoring results are used to improve policy.	Farida (2024); Natsir and Zulmuqim (2023); Sanah et al. (2021)

Source: Compiled by the authors from selected literature, 2025.

The four themes in Table 1 point to relationships among stages of the policy process. Broadly stated objectives make it difficult to determine actions and indicators; actions without assigned responsibilities risk relying on individual initiative; and implementation not linked to evaluation makes progress difficult to assess. These relationships are interpretations of the literature reviewed, not conclusions about all pesantren.

Kabeer's (2003) perspective is used to examine how gender equality goals become institutionalized in policy processes. In this synthesis, the four themes form a sequence of analytical questions: Do the commitments specify the intended changes? How are objectives

translated into action? Who is responsible? How are implementation results used for improvement? This sequence is the authors' analytical framework; it is not a set of stages drawn directly from Kabeer.

Under the theme of commitments in policy formulation, the literature shows attention to inclusivity and equality, but intended changes in pesantren governance are not always specified. Under operational policy design, the relationship among objectives, targets, implementation steps, and indicators is not adequately explained. The availability of resources may also be examined as an analytical criterion in further studies of policy design.

Under institutionalization of responsibilities, leaders' support can create opportunities for change, but it must be distinguished from the clarity of institutional authority and procedures needed to sustain initiatives. The theme of links between implementation and evaluation indicates that the studies reviewed do not sufficiently explain how gender commitments are monitored or how monitoring findings inform policy improvement. This lack of explanation does not establish that evaluation mechanisms are absent in the pesantren examined.

The synthesis thus treats gender mainstreaming as an interconnected policy process and identifies links between commitments and institutional practices that require further explanation. The four themes provide a basis for examining pesantren education policy and implementation in the following sections.

Policy framework for gender mainstreaming in pesantren education

The policy framework for gender mainstreaming in pesantren education is examined through six documents with distinct functions. Law No. 18 of 2019 recognizes pesantren and their educational function; Law No. 7 of 1984 ratifies the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women; and Presidential Instruction No. 9 of 2000 directs gender mainstreaming in government policy processes. At the sectoral level, the Minister of Women's Empowerment and Child Protection Regulation No. 11 of 2010 provides guidelines for gender mainstreaming in madrasahs; Regulation No. 12 of 2010 addresses gender-responsive planning and budgeting in Islamic education; and the Minister of Religious Affairs Regulation No. 31 of 2020 governs pesantren education.

The six documents were analyzed according to their regulatory focus, intended audience, mechanisms, and relevance to pesantren education. Initial codes based on these four areas were adjusted in response to information emerging during the reading, adapting the inductive and deductive thematic analysis approach of Fereday and Muir-Cochrane (2006). Table 2 presents a synthesis across the documents, not an assessment of their implementation in any particular pesantren.

Table 2

Synthesis of the Policy Framework for Gender Mainstreaming in Pesantren Education

Focus and basis of analysis	Intended audience or scope	Analytical finding for the study of pesantren	Document
Recognition of pesantren and regulation of their educational, religious outreach (*dakwah*), and community empowerment functions	Pesantren and the performance of their functions	Establishes pesantren as a subject of education policy analysis while taking account of their institutional characteristics.	Law No. 18 of 2019 on Pesantren (Republik Indonesia, 2019)
Ratification of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms	The state's commitment to eliminating discrimination	Provides a normative basis for equality. Read on its own, this ratifying document does not explain	Law No. 7 of 1984 on the Ratification of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of

of Discrimination against Women		implementation mechanisms in pesantren educational institutions.	Discrimination against Women (Republik Indonesia, 1984)
Gender mainstreaming in the planning, formulation, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation of development policies and programs	Government officials and agencies receiving the instruction, according to their respective duties and authority	Provides a process framework for examining the work of government agencies associated with pesantren. Its relationship to internal pesantren governance requires examination through sectoral and institutional policies.	Presidential Instruction No. 9 of 2000 on Gender Mainstreaming in National Development (Republik Indonesia, 2000)
Guidelines for implementing gender mainstreaming in madrasahs	Madrasahs within the Ministry of Religious Affairs	Shows that guidelines specifically addressing madrasahs exist. Their scope cannot be equated directly with all forms of pesantren education.	Ministerial Regulation No. 11 of 2010 on Gender Mainstreaming in Madrasahs (Kementerian Pemberdayaan Perempuan dan Perlindungan Anak Republik Indonesia, 2010a)
Guidelines for gender-responsive planning and budgeting in Islamic education, including the use of disaggregated data, monitoring, and evaluation	Program planners and relevant units within the Ministry of Religious Affairs; the guidelines' annex gives particular attention to madrasahs	Provides planning and budgeting measures at the sectoral level. Their relationship to pesantren education programs requires examination of the provisions' scope, program documents, and relevant planning practices.	Ministerial Regulation No. 12 of 2010 on Gender-Responsive Planning and Budgeting in Islamic Education (Kementerian Pemberdayaan Perempuan dan Perlindungan Anak Republik Indonesia, 2010b)
Regulation of pesantren education	The provision of pesantren education	Provides a document through which to examine how regulations governing pesantren education might be connected to gender mainstreaming objectives and measures in other policy documents.	Minister of Religious Affairs Regulation No. 31 of 2020 on Pesantren Education (Kementerian Agama Republik Indonesia, 2020)

Source: Compiled by the authors from the six policy documents analyzed, 2025.

Table 2 shows that the six documents serve different functions and have different intended audiences. Law No. 18 of 2019 regulates the status of pesantren, Law No. 7 of 1984 provides a basis for the commitment to eliminate discrimination, and Presidential Instruction No. 9 of 2000 directs the work of government agencies. Minister of Women's Empowerment and Child Protection Regulation No. 11 of 2010 specifically addresses madrasahs. Regulation No. 12 of 2010 governs planning and budgeting in Islamic education, although its annex gives particular attention to madrasahs. Minister of Religious Affairs Regulation No. 31 of 2020 governs pesantren education. These differences in scope mean that the existence of sectoral guidelines cannot, by itself, be taken as evidence of their application in pesantren programs.

Drawing on Kabeer (2003), this study interprets the relationship among the documents as a question of how equality goals become institutionalized. Recognition of pesantren identifies the institutional subject; the commitment to eliminate discrimination provides a normative direction; and the gender mainstreaming mandate directs government policy

processes. However, the pathway connecting these elements to pesantren education must be examined through the actors who formulate objectives, the measures and resources employed, the allocation of responsibilities, and the monitoring of results.

Minister of Women's Empowerment and Child Protection Regulation No. 12 of 2010 provides measures for planning, budgeting, disaggregated data, and evaluation, whereas Minister of Religious Affairs Regulation No. 31 of 2020 governs pesantren education. The operational relationship between these two areas cannot be inferred solely from the existence of the regulations. Regulation No. 11 of 2010 is interpreted in light of its intended audience: madrasahs. This analysis is also limited to the six documents in the table; Minister of Religious Affairs Regulation No. 30 of 2020 on the Establishment and Operation of Pesantren, which concerns institutional matters, is not included in the main synthesis.

The principal finding of Table 2 is therefore the need to trace how policy is translated from equality commitments and government mandates into decisions and programs in pesantren education. Assessing this pathway requires more specific provisions, program documents, and evidence of implementation. This document analysis does not establish whether gender mainstreaming policies or practices exist in any particular pesantren.

Implementation of gender mainstreaming in pesantren education

Studies of implementation were grouped through inductive and deductive thematic analysis adapted from Fereday and Muir-Cochrane (2006). This process yielded five themes: leadership and decision-making, female students' access and participation, the integration of gender perspectives into curricula and teaching, gender-related capacity and literacy, and institutionalization and sustainability. Table 3 presents the issues to be examined, the analytical synthesis, and the supporting studies for each theme. The relationships among the themes are then interpreted through Kabeer's (2003) perspective on the institutionalization of equality goals in policy processes, examining how gender commitments relate to decisions, implementation, and program sustainability in pesantren.

Table 3
Thematic Synthesis of Gender Mainstreaming Implementation in Pesantren Education

Theme	Issues to be examined	Analytical synthesis	Supporting studies
Leadership and decision-making	Who proposes and directs change; the involvement of *nyai*, female educators, and female students	Leaders' support must be distinguished from women's participation in making decisions.	Agustin (2020); Kusmana (2019); Rahayu and Faraz (2019)
Female students' access and participation	Opportunities to take part in activities, use facilities, join organizations, and participate in public forums	The availability of opportunities must be distinguished from female students' ability to use them and determine how they participate.	Ambarwati and Husna (2014); Choiron (2017); Sudradjat and Triyoga (2016)
Integration of gender perspectives into curricula and teaching	Teaching materials, how teachers discuss gender roles, and students' learning experiences	The inclusion of gender perspectives in curricula must be distinguished from teaching practices and the changes students experience.	Fadlillah and Mubarokah (2022); Harisman and Maftuchah (2024); Wahyudin (2020)
Gender-related capacity and literacy	The understanding of administrators, educators, and students, acceptance, negotiation, or resistance	Knowledge and opportunities for dialogue may shape the responses of pesantren community members, and these responses must be understood in their institutional context.	Hambali (2017); Wahyudin (2020)

Institutionalization and sustainability	Internal rules, assigned responsibilities, resources, monitoring, and program continuity	The sustainability of initiatives should be assessed in terms of institutional support and the continued availability of opportunities for women and their participation.	Abidin et al. (2020); Sa'dan (2019)

Source: Compiled by the authors from the studies listed in the table, 2025.

Table 3 identifies five domains for examining the implementation of gender mainstreaming. In leadership, leaders' support must be distinguished from the involvement of *nyai*, female educators, and female students in making decisions. In terms of access, the availability of activities, facilities, and organizational spaces does not determine the extent to which female students can use them or how they participate in them. In curricula and teaching, the inclusion of gender perspectives must be examined alongside teachers' practices and students' experiences. Gender-related capacity and literacy concern the understanding and responses of pesantren community members, while institutionalization and sustainability concern internal rules, assigned responsibilities, resources, and program monitoring.

From Kabeer's (2003) perspective, the five domains are interpreted as aspects of the institutionalization of equality goals. Leaders' support, opportunities for female students, and knowledge about gender may create conditions for change; whether such change is sustained must be examined through institutional decisions, procedures, resources, and evaluation. This interpretation connects the implementation synthesis in Table 3 with the preceding policy analysis: Minister of Women's Empowerment and Child Protection Regulation No. 12 of 2010 provides guidelines for planning and budgeting in Islamic education, while Minister of Religious Affairs Regulation No. 31 of 2020 governs pesantren education. The operational relationship between them requires examination of relevant provisions, program documents, and institutional policies.

This synthesis contributes more focused questions about how equality commitments are translated into objectives, implementation measures, assigned responsibilities, and evaluation in pesantren education. Table 3 identifies domains for examining that process; it does not establish whether all pesantren have implemented gender mainstreaming. Assessing policy implementation and outcomes requires program documents, institutional records, and evidence of practices in the pesantren under study.

Discussion

This study yields three main findings. First, the literature on gender mainstreaming in pesantren education policy indicates that commitments to gender equality have not consistently been translated into specific objectives, measurable implementation measures, assigned responsibilities, and evaluation mechanisms linked to policy improvement. Second, the policy framework reveals differences in scope among commitments to eliminate discrimination, gender mainstreaming mandates for government agencies, sectoral guidelines for Islamic education and madrasahs, and regulations specific to pesantren education. Consequently, the pathway through which these provisions are translated into governance and practice is not yet fully operational. Third, the implementation literature identifies five domains: leadership and decision-making, female students' access and participation, curricula and teaching, gender-related capacity and literacy, and institutionalization and sustainability. Taken together, the findings indicate that the links among normative commitments, the policy framework, and institutional practices require more integrated examination. Assessing effectiveness in particular pesantren, therefore, requires adequate program and field evidence.

These findings are relevant to debates on gender justice in religious education in Indonesia. Research on discrimination, violence, and power relations provides social context for understanding women's needs, but it does not establish that similar conditions exist in every pesantren (Samarakoon & Parinduri, 2015; Bøe, 2020; Van Oost et al., 2023). This study highlights the need to trace how commitments to equality relate to policy objectives, actions, responsibilities, and evaluation (Saleh, 2025). In the post-Reformasi context, diverse views on equality and religious education call for analysis attentive to social conditions (Syeed, 2014; Faisal et al., 2024). For parents, female students, and communities, a key question is whether opportunities for participation, teaching practices, and decision-making can be understood through institutional evidence. Answering that question requires observation and interviews in specific pesantren contexts; it cannot be answered by the mere existence of national regulations.

Theoretically, education can be understood as a setting in which power relations are formed, thereby necessitating an examination of equality commitments within institutional processes (Mifsud, 2024). Kabeer (2003) emphasizes the institutionalization of equality goals in policy processes, a perspective that helps examine the relationships among objectives, implementation measures, responsibilities, and evaluation across six documents with different intended audiences. Kabeer's (1999) framework of resources, agency, and achievements further helps distinguish opportunities available to female students from their ability to make choices and the outcomes they attain. This distinction connects the five implementation domains without assuming uniform conditions across pesantren (O'Mullane, 2021). Research on institutional arrangements and intergroup relations offers points of comparison but does not establish the effects of the Pesantren Law on particular institutions (Öztürk, 2023; Son Hing et al., 2023). Understanding the relationship among norms, policy, and practice, therefore, requires program evidence and accounts of pesantren community members' experiences examined in their local contexts.

The principal lesson of this study is the importance of distinguishing among three types of evidence: statements of commitment, policy provisions, and institutional implementation. The four policy themes point to the need for connected objectives, measures, assigned responsibilities, and evaluation; the five implementation domains identify where those connections should be examined. This synthesis does not establish that male domination or conservative interpretations are causes operating in every pesantren (Salim et al., 2025). A gender perspective across all stages of the policy process may help clarify how objectives are translated into action and outcomes are assessed (Gupta et al., 2023). Leaders' support must also be distinguished from the rules and procedures that sustain programs (Susilo & Dalimunthe, 2019). For scholarship, these findings underscore the need for caution in making claims, attention to women's experiences, and examination of variation across pesantren before drawing conclusions about the success or failure of gender mainstreaming. Researchers should also enable female students to describe their own experiences.

Compared with studies addressing legal gaps and male domination, this study focuses on the relationship among four policy themes and the differing scopes of six national documents (Rosa & Clavero, 2021; Ridwan & Susanti, 2019). Research on ideological resistance provides context for potential differences in responses to equality, but this study does not directly examine such resistance in any particular pesantren (Schech & Mustafa, 2010). Discussions of systemic reform provide a comparison for assessing the importance of connected objectives, implementation measures, assigned responsibilities, and evaluation (Adams et al., 2007; Parra-Martínez et al., 2021). This study additionally identifies five implementation domains: leadership, female students' participation, teaching and learning,

gender literacy, and institutionalization. By connecting these three levels of analysis, it offers an analytical framework for further empirical testing of how normative commitments are translated into governance, without claiming to have measured their effectiveness in pesantren.

The study's implications point to the need to examine the pathway from national mandates to pesantren governance before applying uniform measures. First, the Ministry of Religious Affairs could consider technical guidelines specifying objectives, indicators, responsible actors, and evaluation; sanctions would require a separate legal assessment. Second, gender literacy among educators, caregivers, and administrators could be strengthened, while mandatory certification would require a feasibility assessment. Third, curriculum documents and teaching practices should be examined for bias and for opportunities to include the history of female Islamic scholars. Fourth, women's participation in leadership should be expanded; a proposed 30% affirmative quota would require a legal basis and consultation. Fifth, mechanisms for reporting discrimination could be designed with female students and administrators. Sixth, incentives could be considered for programs that have been shown to be operating. All these proposals require examination through program documents, the experiences of pesantren community members, and field evaluation before their effectiveness can be assessed, particularly with respect to access, participation, changes in teaching and learning, and the sustained provision of institutional support.

CONCLUSION

This study concludes that the central issue in gender mainstreaming in pesantren education lies in the relationship among commitments to equality, the policy framework, and institutional processes. The literature synthesis identified four elements that are not always clearly connected: specific objectives, implementation measures, the allocation of responsibilities, and the use of evaluation for improvement. Analysis of six national documents revealed differences in their intended audiences and scope, encompassing commitments to eliminate discrimination, mandates for government agencies, guidelines for Islamic education and madrasahs, and regulations governing pesantren education. The pathway through which these documents are translated into pesantren governance, therefore, requires further examination, with attention to each institution's traditions and autonomy. The synthesis of implementation studies identified five domains for examination: leadership and decision-making, female students' access and participation, curricula and teaching, gender-related capacity and literacy, and institutionalization and sustainability. These findings do not establish the extent to which gender mainstreaming has succeeded in any particular pesantren.

Theoretically, this study proposes a framework linking the institutionalization of equality goals in policy to resources, women's ability to make choices, and the outcomes they experience. The framework helps distinguish between the existence of guidelines and their implementation, leaders' support and women's participation in decision-making, and available opportunities and female students' ability to use them. In practical terms, the findings can inform the examination of program objectives, assigned responsibilities, indicators, and monitoring in pesantren education. Strengthening gender literacy, reviewing curricula, expanding opportunities for women's participation, and developing grievance mechanisms are possible areas for action, to be developed according to institutional needs in consultation with pesantren community members and relevant stakeholders. More binding measures, including certification, sanctions, quotas, and incentives, require feasibility assessments and a legal basis before implementation.

This study is limited to a literature synthesis and the analysis of six national policy documents. This scope does not directly explain how policies are translated into practice across pesantren with different institutional types, leadership structures, and resources. The experiences of female students, *nyai*, educators, administrators, and families were not gathered through observation or interviews to examine variation in institutional processes and outcomes. Future research should therefore examine program documents and internal rules, follow decision-making processes, and compare access, participation, teaching and learning, and the sustainability of initiatives across several pesantren. In-depth case studies and participatory research could help develop measures suited to local contexts. Once interventions have been designed and implemented, periodic evaluation will be needed to assess their implementation, outcomes, and potential effects on gender equality.

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CONFLICT OF INTEREST STATEMENT

The authors declare that they have no conflicts of interest related to the research or publication of this article.

DECLARATION OF AI USE

AI was used on a limited basis to assist with language editing and improve the readability of the manuscript. The authors are responsible for all analyses, interpretations, and substantive content of the article.

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AUTHOR CONTRIBUTION STATEMENT

Asnal Mala: Conceptualization; Data Curation; Formal Analysis; Methodology; Writing Original Draft; Writing Review & Editing. **Uswatun Chasanah**: Conceptualization; Methodology; Writing Original Draft; Resources; Writing Review & Editing. **Siti Marpuah**: Supervision; Validation; Visualization; Writing Review & Editing.

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