An-Nisa' Journal of Gender Studies

OPEN ACCESS

ISSN 2086-0749 (p) 2654-4784 (e)

https://annisa.uinkhas.ac.id DOI: 10.35719/an-nisa.v19i1.465 Vol 19, No 1, (2026), pp. 81-94

Reinterpreting qiwāmah in Qur'an 4:34: Integrating critical hermeneutics and maqāṣid al-Sharīʿah for gender justice

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Article Information

Submitted: 2026-03-25
Revised: 2026-05-23
Published: 2026-07-13

Keywords:
Qiwāmah; Gender Justice; Maqāṣid Al-Sharīʿah; Qur'anic Hermeneutics.

Abstract:

Interpretations of *qiwāmah* in Qur'an 4:34 remain divided between classical and reformist readings, both retaining male leadership hierarchies that raise concerns about gender justice, women's dignity, and violence in family relations. This study compares *qiwāmah*, *nushūz*, and *ḍaraba* in *Tafsīr Ibn Kathīr* and *Tafsīr al-Manār*, examines their sociohistorical and epistemological foundations through Abu Zayd's critical hermeneutics, evaluates their ethical implications using Auda's systems-based *maqāṣid* approach, and reconstructs *qiwāmah* to support gender justice. Using qualitative library research, it integrates comparative exegesis, critical hermeneutics, and *maqāṣid*-based evaluation of justice, human dignity, and harm prevention. Four findings emerge. First, classical exegesis emphasizes hierarchical authority, whereas reformist exegesis stresses functional responsibility, a more relational understanding of *nushūz*, and restrictions on physical acts associated with *ḍaraba*. Second, these differences reflect distinct sociohistorical contexts and epistemological assumptions. Third, neither interpretation fully satisfies *maqāṣid* principles of justice, dignity, and harm prevention. Fourth, integrated analysis yields an ethical-relational model of *qiwāmah* grounded in ethical competence, mutual accountability, and nonviolence. The study concludes that shifting from hierarchy toward responsibility does not eliminate normative male leadership; gender justice therefore requires reconstructing family authority around ethical competence, shared responsibility, and nonviolence. The study offers practical implications for developing Qur'anic interpretation modules, training religious counselors, and strengthening family counseling through consultation and nonviolent conflict resolution, subject to empirical validation before institutional adoption.

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To cite this article (APA Style):
Ulumudin, I., Aswadi, A., Bakar, A., Mala, F., Mahsun, M., & Nasir, R. (2026). Reinterpreting qiwāmah in Qur'an 4:34: Integrating critical hermeneutics and maqāṣid al-Sharīʿah for gender justice. *An-Nisa' Journal of Gender Studies, 19(1)*, 81-94. https://doi.org/10.35719/an-nisa.v19i1.465

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INTRODUCTION

The interpretation of *qiwāmah* in Qur'an 4:34 remains a significant issue in Islamic gender discourse because it concerns the legitimacy of male leadership, power relations within the family, and gender justice (Kathir, 1998; Ghafournia, 2017). This issue arises because the understanding of religious authority is closely tied to social constructions of gender roles, giving rise to debates between perspectives that emphasize protection and complementary gender roles (Ahmad & Rasheed, 2018) and interpretations that challenge the legitimacy of patriarchy (Ghafournia, 2017). Studies on social norms, family responsibilities, and economic inequality demonstrate the complexity of women's positions in society (Bussolo et al., 2024; Ghaderi et al., 2023; McGill, 2013), while research on Muslim women's experiences of domestic violence highlights the importance of women's protection and safety (Sharifnia et al., 2025). From an exegetical perspective, Ibn Kathir emphasizes male authority, whereas *Tafsīr al-Manār* places greater emphasis on functional responsibility without entirely eliminating gender hierarchy (Ridha, 1990). These differences call for a critical examination of the construction of authority through a historical hermeneutical approach (Mostfa, 2024) and a *maqāṣid*-based evaluation oriented toward the ethical objectives of Islamic law (Auda, 2008).

Previous studies on *qiwāmah*, gender relations, and justice in Islam can be categorized into three main strands. First, studies reinterpreting Qur'an 4:34 challenge gender hierarchies and offer alternative readings of *qiwāmah*, *nushūz*, and family authority (Ghafournia, 2017; Hussain, 2021; Nelli et al., 2024). Second, studies on critical Qur'anic hermeneutics emphasize the historicity of interpretation, the interaction between text and context, and the influence of interpreters' epistemological assumptions on the construction of meaning (Akbar, 2021; Moch, 2022; Mufid et al., 2023; Alak, 2023). Third, studies employing *maqāṣid al-sharīʿah* emphasize the protection of victims of violence and gender justice, while research on Islamic legal reform addresses the protection of women's rights within family law (Juliansyahzen & Ocktoberrinsyah, 2022; Muhsin et al., 2021; Nuroniyah et al., 2025; Al-Rashidi, 2026; Sezgin, 2025). Despite their important contributions, these studies have not specifically brought together a comparison of *Tafsīr Ibn Kathīr* and *Tafsīr al-Manār*, Abu Zayd's epistemological critique, and Auda's systems-based *maqāṣid* evaluation to explain the relationship between interpretive changes, the persistence of gender hierarchy, and the legitimacy of family authority. This gap highlights the need for an integrated examination of Qur'an 4:34.

This study aims to analyze the interpretations of *qiwāmah*, *nushūz*, and *ḍaraba* in *Tafsīr Ibn Kathīr* and *Tafsīr al-Manār*, explain their epistemological differences through Abu Zayd's critical hermeneutics, evaluate their ethical implications using Auda's systems-based *maqāṣid* approach, and develop a reconstruction of *qiwāmah* oriented toward gender justice. Based on these objectives, the study formulates four research questions: (1) How are *qiwāmah*, *nushūz*, and *ḍaraba* interpreted in the two exegetical works, and what constructions of authority and gender relations emerge from these interpretations? (2) How do sociohistorical contexts and epistemological assumptions explain the differences between these interpretations from the perspective of Abu Zayd's critical hermeneutics? (3) To what extent do both interpretations satisfy the *maqāṣid* principles of justice (*ʿadl*), protection of honor and human dignity (*ḥifẓ al-ʿirḍ*), and prevention of harm (*darʾ al-mafāsid*)? (4) How can the findings of these analyses be integrated to reconstruct *qiwāmah* as an ethical-relational responsibility?

This study is grounded in the argument that the shift in the interpretation of *qiwāmah* from hierarchical authority toward functional responsibility does not automatically eliminate

inequalities in the legitimacy of family leadership. Therefore, interpretive reform should be evaluated not only for its responsiveness to historical contexts but also for its ethical implications for justice, human dignity, and the prevention of harm. On this basis, the study offers a theoretical contribution by developing a normative ethical-relational model of *qiwāmah* that positions responsibility and ethical competence, rather than gender superiority, as the basis for the legitimacy of leadership. This model also emphasizes partnership, mutual accountability, and nonviolence in family relationships. In practical terms, the framework is expected to provide a conceptual foundation for the development of Qur'anic interpretation education, Islamic family law discourse, and understandings of family relationships that promote greater justice.

METHOD

Research Design

This study employs a qualitative library research design to reinterpret *qiwāmah* in Qur'an 4:34 through an integrated framework of comparative tafsir analysis, critical hermeneutics, and *maqāṣid al-sharīʿah* evaluation. The comparative approach examines differences in gender authority and family relations between classical and reformist interpretations, while contextual interpretation considers the relationship between Qur'anic meaning and its socio-historical setting (Abdel-Haleem, 2021). Critical hermeneutics provides a basis for examining the historical and epistemological assumptions underlying interpretive differences (Akbar, 2021). Integrating these approaches enables the study to move from textual comparison and critical interpretation to normative evaluation and the conceptual reconstruction of *qiwāmah* as an ethical-relational responsibility.

Data Sources

The primary sources comprise Qur'an 4:34, *Tafsīr al-Qur'ān al-ʿAẓīm* by Ibn Kathir, and *Tafsīr al-Manār* associated with Muhammad Abduh and Rashid Ridha, purposively selected to represent classical and reformist exegetical traditions. Ibn Kathir emphasizes transmitted reports (*riwāyah*) and established authorities (Kathir, 1998), whereas *Tafsīr al-Manār* incorporates rational inquiry, social context, and ethical considerations (Ridha, 1990). These sources provide the textual basis for analyzing *qiwāmah*, *nushūz*, and *ḍaraba* in relation to gender authority, marital relations, and women's agency. Secondary sources include scholarship on Qur'anic exegesis, critical hermeneutics, and *maqāṣid al-sharīʿah*. Abu Zayd's hermeneutics informs the analysis of historical context and interpretive assumptions (Abu Zayd, 2006), while al-Shatibi's classical *maqāṣid* theory provides the conceptual background, and Auda's systems approach guides the ethical evaluation (Auda, 2008). These theoretical sources support the critical and normative analysis rather than serving as direct exegetical evidence.

Integrated Analytical Framework

The analytical framework integrates three complementary approaches: comparative tafsir analysis, critical hermeneutics, and *maqāṣid al-sharīʿah* evaluation. These approaches identify interpretive differences, examine their sociohistorical and epistemological foundations, and assess their implications for gender justice.

Approach 1: Comparative Tafsir Analysis

This approach compares interpretations of *qiwāmah*, *nushūz*, and *ḍaraba* in *Tafsīr Ibn Kathīr* and *Tafsīr al-Manār*, focusing on authority, gender roles, marital relations, and ethical implications. Saeed's (2014) contextual approach supports consideration of historical

circumstances. The analysis identifies interpretive differences without assuming that reformist exegesis necessarily eliminates gender hierarchies.

Approach 2: Critical Hermeneutical Analysis

Drawing on Abu Zayd's (2006) critical hermeneutics, this approach examines how sociohistorical contexts, intellectual traditions, and epistemological assumptions shape interpretations of Qur'an 4:34. It distinguishes the Qur'anic text from historically situated interpretations concerning male leadership, women's agency, and hierarchical family relations.

Approach 3: Maqāṣid al-Sharīʿah Evaluation

This approach applies Auda's (2008) systems-based *maqāṣid* framework to evaluate both interpretations through three study-specific indicators: justice (*ʿadl*), protection of honor and human dignity (*ḥifẓ al-ʿirḍ*), and prevention of harm (*darʾ al-mafāsid*). These indicators assess equitable authority and responsibility, women's dignity and agency, and the prevention of coercion and violence. The evaluation identifies ethical limitations and establishes a normative foundation for reconstructing *qiwāmah*.

Analytical Procedure

The analysis proceeded through five stages. First, interpretations of *qiwāmah*, *nushūz*, and *ḍaraba* in Qur'an 4:34 were identified in *Tafsīr Ibn Kathīr* and *Tafsīr al-Manār*. Second, both interpretations were compared across five dimensions: the concept of *qiwāmah*, the basis of authority, women's position, the character of leadership, and the flexibility of gender roles. Differences concerning *nushūz* and *ḍaraba* were also examined to identify shifts in obedience, marital conflict, and disciplinary authority. Third, Abu Zayd's critical hermeneutics was applied to examine the sociohistorical contexts, epistemological assumptions, and constructions of gender authority underlying these interpretations. Fourth, both interpretations were evaluated using three *maqāṣid*-based indicators justice, human dignity, and the prevention of harm by assessing the distribution of authority, women's agency, and the ethical limits on coercion and violence. Fifth, the findings were synthesized into an ethical-relational model of *qiwāmah* that emphasizes responsibility over domination, justice and human dignity, leadership grounded in ethical competence, and the rejection of coercion and violence. This model represents a normative-conceptual contribution rather than an empirically validated framework.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results

Interpretations of qiwāmah in Qur'an 4:34 in classical and reformist exegesis

A comparative analysis of Qur'an 4:34 reveals differences in the construction of *qiwāmah* between classical and reformist exegesis. Ibn Kathir positions *qiwāmah* as a form of hierarchical male authority grounded in superior rationality, physical strength, and economic responsibility (Kathir, 1998). This construction is associated with the formation of gender hierarchies in religious discourse, as discussed by Supriyadi et al. (2019). In contrast, Rashid Ridha interprets *qiwāmah* as social leadership (*riyāsah*) that emphasizes responsibility, protection, and recognition of women's competencies (Ridha, 1990). This interpretation aligns with reformist tendencies in Qur'anic exegesis that consider changing social contexts and ethical considerations (Samir & Saged, 2024). The differences between these two interpretations are presented in Table 1.

Table 1
Comparison of Interpretations of Qiwāmah in Classical and Reformist Exegesis

Aspect	Ibn Kathir (Classical Exegesis)	*Tafsīr al-Manār* (Rashid Ridha)
Concept of *Qiwāmah*	Hierarchical authority that positions men as the primary leaders of the family.	Social and ethical responsibility that emphasizes leadership based on protection and care (*riyāsah*).
Basis of Authority	Male rationality, physical strength, and financial responsibility (*nafaqah*).	Social and economic responsibility, with recognition of individual competencies.
Position of Women	Women are positioned within subordinate relationships, with an emphasis on obedience (*qānitāt*).	Women are recognized as possessing agency and competence, although male leadership remains the normative framework.
Nature of Leadership	Vertical and hierarchical, emphasizing regulatory and disciplinary authority.	Functional, oriented toward supervision, protection, and social responsibility.
Flexibility of Gender Roles	Gender roles tend to remain fixed based on characteristics and responsibilities attributed to men.	Gender roles are more open to variations in individual competencies and social conditions.

Source: Authors' comparative analysis based on Kathir (1998) and Ridha (1990).

Table 1 demonstrates that the differences in the interpretation of *qiwāmah* between Ibn Kathir and *Tafsīr al-Manār* reflect a shift in the basis of leadership legitimacy, from hierarchical authority toward social and functional responsibility. This shift indicates a transformation in the construction of gender relations, whereby leadership is no longer associated solely with male superiority but also with responsibility and individual competence. However, this transformation does not entirely eliminate gender hierarchies, as both interpretations maintain male leadership as the family's normative framework. Thus, the differences between these two exegetical approaches reveal a transformation in the nature of authority without achieving comprehensive gender equality. This finding provides a foundation for examining the reinterpretation of *qiwāmah*, *nushūz*, and *ḍaraba* within a relational-ethics framework.

Semantic transformation of qiwāmah, nushūz, and ḍaraba toward relational ethics

An analysis of Qur'an 4:34 reveals differences in the interpretation of *qiwāmah*, *nushūz*, and *ḍaraba* between classical and reformist exegesis. Ibn Kathir understands these three concepts within the framework of husbandly authority, wifely obedience, and discipline in marital relationships (Kathir, 1998). In contrast, Rashid Ridha, in *Tafsīr al-Manār*, places greater emphasis on leadership responsibility, the prevention of marital breakdown, and the restriction of physical actions based on ethical considerations (Ridha, 1990). These differences indicate a shift in interpretive orientation from regulating hierarchical relationships toward greater attention to relational balance and responsibility, as presented in Table 2.

Table 2
Semantic Transformation of Key Terms in Qur'an 4:34

Concept	Classical Interpretation	Reformist Interpretation	Interpretive Shift
Qiwāmah	Hierarchical male authority within the family.	Leadership as a social and ethical responsibility.	Hierarchy → Responsibility
Nushūz	A wife's disobedience toward her husband that disrupts marital order.	A threat to the balance of marital relationships that needs to be prevented.	Emphasis on obedience → Prevention of relational breakdown
Ḍaraba	Physical disciplinary action permitted under certain restrictions.	Physical action restricted by ethical considerations and the prevention of injustice.	Disciplinary legitimacy → Restriction of harmful actions

Source: Authors' comparative analysis based on Kathir (1998) and Ridha (1990).

Table 2 demonstrates that the differences in the interpretation of *qiwāmah*, *nushūz*, and *ḍaraba* reflect a shift in orientation from authority and discipline toward responsibility and relational balance. This shift indicates not merely a change in the meanings of these terms but also a change in ethical emphasis in understanding marital relationships. Although reformist interpretation pays greater attention to preventing marital breakdown and restricting physical actions, this approach has not entirely departed from the structure of male authority within the family. Thus, the identified transformation is more appropriately understood as an interpretive reorientation rather than a complete elimination of the legitimacy of gender hierarchy. This finding highlights the need for further critical evaluation of these three concepts, guided by the principles of justice, human dignity, and the prevention of harm.

Critical hermeneutics of qiwāmah: Historical context, authority, and gender relations

A critical hermeneutical analysis of Qur'an 4:34 reveals that differences in the interpretation of *qiwāmah* are related not only to textual understanding but also to the sociohistorical contexts and epistemological assumptions of the interpreters. Ibn Kathir situates *qiwāmah* within a framework of male authority grounded in the classical exegetical tradition (Kathir, 1998), which is associated with the social and intellectual structures of the medieval Islamic period (Akbar, 2019). In contrast, *Tafsīr al-Manār* develops an interpretation that considers changing social conditions, economic functions, and individual capabilities (Ridha, 1990), in line with the orientation of Islamic reformism, which emphasizes education, social reform, and rationality (Samir & Saged, 2024). The differences in the hermeneutical orientations of these two exegetical approaches are presented in Table 3.

Table 3

Critical Hermeneutics and the Social Context of Qiwāmah Interpretation

Dimension	**Ibn Kathir (Classical Exegesis)**	***Tafsīr al-Manār* (Reformist Exegesis)**
Interpretive Orientation	Emphasizes textual authority, transmitted reports, and the classical exegetical tradition.	Considers the relationship between the text, social conditions, and rational reasoning.
Epistemological Foundation	Interpretation is grounded in textual authority and inherited religious knowledge.	Interpretation considers religious tradition, historical context, and the need for social reform.
Sociohistorical Context	Associated with the hierarchical sociopolitical order of the medieval Islamic period.	Developed within the context of modern reformism, emphasizing education and social change.
Construction of Gender Roles	The division of roles between men and women tends to be understood as a stable normative order.	The division of roles considers variations in individual competencies and changing social conditions, while continuing to prioritize male leadership.
Implications for *Qiwāmah*	Maintains the legitimacy of male leadership within a hierarchical family structure.	Emphasizes more contextual leadership responsibility without entirely eliminating gender hierarchy.

Source: Authors' hermeneutical analysis based on Kathir (1998) and Ridha (1990), supported by the studies of Akbar (2019) and Samir and Saged (2024).

Table 3 illustrates that the differences in the interpretation of *qiwāmah* between Ibn Kathir and *Tafsīr al-Manār* reflect distinct hermeneutical orientations in relating the text to historical context and in constructing gender authority. From the perspective of critical

hermeneutics, these differences demonstrate that the interpretation of *qiwāmah* cannot be separated from the social and epistemological assumptions that shape exegetical understanding. Although the reformist approach is more receptive to changing social conditions and individual competencies, both interpretations continue to maintain male leadership as the normative framework of the family. Thus, the transformation of *qiwāmah* from hierarchical authority toward contextual responsibility has not entirely altered the underlying structure of gender relations. This finding underscores the need for further evaluation of the legitimacy of such leadership in light of the principles of justice, human dignity, and the prevention of harm within *maqāṣid al-sharīʿah*.

Maqāṣid al-Sharīʿah-based evaluation of qiwāmah: Justice, human dignity, and prevention of harm

The evaluation of *qiwāmah* interpretations in *Tafsīr Ibn Kathīr* and *Tafsīr al-Manār* employs Jasser Auda's *maqāṣid al-sharīʿah* framework, which emphasizes the objectives of Islamic law, justice, and the protection of human rights (Auda, 2008). Based on this framework, this study establishes three evaluative indicators: justice (*ʿadl*), the protection of human honor and dignity (*ḥifẓ al-ʿird*), and the prevention of harm (*darʾ al-mafāsid*). These three indicators are used to assess the alignment and limitations of classical and reformist interpretations in promoting just gender relations. The evaluation results are presented in Table 4.

Table 4
Comparative Maqāṣid Evaluation of Qiwāmah in Classical and Reformist Exegesis

***Maqāṣid* Principle**	**Ibn Kathir**	***Tafsīr al-Manār***	**Evaluation Result**
Justice (*ʿadl*)	Hierarchical male authority within the family.	Functional leadership emphasizing social responsibility.	Partial alignment with the principle of justice.
Human Dignity (*ḥifẓ al-ʿird*)	Recognition of women's dignity within a framework of conditional authority.	Recognition of women's dignity and competencies.	The protection of human dignity requires further expansion.
Prevention of Harm (*darʾ al-mafāsid*)	Permits disciplinary actions under certain restrictions.	Restricts violence through ethical considerations.	Protection against harm remains incomplete.

Source: Authors' evaluation of Kathir (1998) and Ridha (1990) using Auda's (2008) maqāṣid al-sharīʿah framework.

Table 4 demonstrates that the two interpretations exhibit different degrees of alignment with the principles of justice, human dignity, and the prevention of harm. Ibn Kathir's interpretation faces limitations in fulfilling these three principles because it maintains hierarchical male authority and permits certain disciplinary actions. In contrast, *Tafsīr al-Manār* demonstrates greater alignment through its emphasis on functional leadership, recognition of women's competencies, and restrictions on violence. However, the continued maintenance of normative male leadership indicates that the reformist approach has not fully addressed inequalities of authority within the family. Thus, the *maqāṣid*-based evaluation identifies the limitations of both interpretations in meeting contemporary demands for gender justice while providing a normative foundation for reconstructing *qiwāmah* toward equal responsibility, human dignity, and the prevention of harm.

Reconstruction of ethical-relational qiwāmah for gender justice

The integration of comparative exegetical analysis, Abu Zayd's (2004) critical hermeneutics, and Auda's (2008) *maqāṣid al-sharīʿah* evaluation produces a reconstruction

of *qiwāmah* as an ethical-relational responsibility grounded in justice, mutual care, human dignity, and the prevention of harm. This reconstruction is based on four principles: understanding leadership as responsibility, exercising authority on the basis of justice and human dignity, legitimizing leadership through ethical competence rather than gender superiority, and rejecting the justification of violence and coercion. These four principles form a model of *qiwāmah* that emphasizes partnership and mutual accountability within the family. The differences in the characteristics of the classical, reformist, and ethical-relational models are presented in Table 5.

Table 5

Characteristics of Classical, Reformist, and Ethical-Relational Models of Qiwāmah

Dimension	**Classical Model**	**Reformist Model**	**Ethical-Relational Model (Reconstruction)**
Leadership	Hierarchical authority	Social responsibility	Ethical responsibility
Basis of Leadership	Male superiority	Functional responsibility	Ethical competence
Family Relationships	Obedience	Recognition of women's agency	Mutual accountability
Conflict Resolution	Physical discipline under certain restrictions	Restriction of physical actions to reduce harm	Nonviolence and protection of human dignity

Source: Authors' conceptual synthesis and reconstruction based on Kathir (1998), Ridha (1990), Abu Zayd (2004), and Auda (2008).

Table 5 demonstrates that the ethical-relational model of *qiwāmah* goes beyond the classical hierarchical and reformist functional approaches by establishing ethical responsibility, mutual accountability, and nonviolence as the foundations of family relationships. Unlike the two preceding interpretations, which continue to maintain normative male leadership, this reconstructive model shifts the legitimacy of leadership from gender superiority toward ethical competence and responsibility. The integration of critical hermeneutics and *maqāṣid* evaluation enables the interpretation of *qiwāmah* to be understood in terms of the relationship among historical context, the construction of authority, and the ethical objectives of Islamic law. Thus, this reconstruction does not merely extend reformist interpretation but offers a normative framework that establishes justice, human dignity, and the prevention of harm as the foundations for legitimizing family relationships. This ethical-relational model of *qiwāmah* constitutes the study's principal conceptual contribution to the development of a reinterpretation of Qur'an 4:34 oriented toward gender justice.

Discussion

This study yields four main findings regarding the reinterpretation of *qiwāmah* in Qur'an 4:34 through comparative exegetical analysis, critical hermeneutics, and *maqāṣid*-based evaluation. First, a comparison of *Tafsīr Ibn Kathīr* and *Tafsīr al-Manār* reveals a shift in emphasis from hierarchical authority toward ethical responsibility, including the reinterpretation of *nushūz* and *ḍaraba* with a greater orientation toward relational balance and restrictions on physical actions. Second, the differences between the two interpretations are not merely textual but also epistemological, as they are influenced by distinct sociohistorical contexts and interpretive assumptions. Third, the *maqāṣid*-based evaluation demonstrates that both interpretations still have limitations in fulfilling the principles of justice, human dignity, and the prevention of harm, although *Tafsīr al-Manār* is relatively more adaptive. Fourth, the integration of these two approaches yields a

reconstruction of *qiwāmah* as an ethical-relational responsibility that emphasizes justice, human dignity, mutual accountability, and nonviolence, with the legitimacy of leadership grounded in ethical competence rather than gender superiority. This reconstructive model offers a normative framework for a more contextual interpretation of *qiwāmah* oriented toward gender justice.

The findings of this study are relevant to inequalities in power relations within Muslim families, including those in Indonesia, where economic inequality can weaken women's bargaining power (Malghan & Swaminathan, 2021). The comparison reveals two orientations: Ibn Kathir provides normative legitimacy for male leadership (Kathir, 1998), whereas *Tafsīr al-Manār* emphasizes functional responsibility without abandoning the structure of male leadership (Ridha, 1990). This difference is important to examine because the relationship between religion and gender equality is influenced by social conditions (Yeganeh, 2022). In Indonesia, SIMFONI PPPA recorded 27,037 female victims of violence by the third week of December 2025, while sexual violence accounted for 13,721 cases (Usman, 2025). Studies on violence demonstrate the interconnection between structural and interpersonal factors (Montesanti, 2015; Kerman & Betrus, 2020). These figures do not prove that a particular interpretation causes violence, but they underscore the urgency of interpretations that do not justify domination. Therefore, the reinterpretation of *qiwāmah*, *nushūz*, and *ḍaraba* should prioritize the protection of dignity, the nonviolent resolution of conflicts, and mutual accountability in religious education, marital counseling, and everyday family life.

Theoretically, the differences between the two exegetical approaches demonstrate that the interpretation of *qiwāmah* is influenced by the relationship among the text, the sociohistorical context, and the interpreter, as emphasized in Abu Zayd's (1990) hermeneutics. Ibn Kathir's reliance on transmitted reports tends to reinforce the authority of the husband (Kathir, 1998; Abdul-Raof, 2012), whereas *Tafsīr al-Manār* expands rational and social considerations (Madany, 1991; Eslami, 1997; Fazeli et al., 2022; Safa et al., 2025), while still maintaining normative male leadership (Ridha, 1990). This shift explains the greater emphasis on relational balance in *nushūz* and restrictions on physical actions in *ḍaraba*, without eliminating hierarchy. Within Auda's (2008) systems approach to *maqāṣid*, interpretive changes need to be evaluated comprehensively in terms of justice, human dignity, and the prevention of harm. Studies on family law reform, the protection of dignity, and victims of violence demonstrate the importance of these normative criteria (Al Idrusiah et al., 2024; Bawono et al., 2025; Nuroniyah et al., 2025). Thus, hermeneutics explains the limits of interpretation, while *maqāṣid* guides the reconstruction of leadership legitimacy grounded in ethical competence and nonviolence within the family.

The fundamental lesson of this study is that respecting the exegetical tradition does not mean accepting all its social constructions without evaluation. The differences between Ibn Kathir and *al-Manār* demonstrate the need to distinguish the authority of the Qur'anic text from interpretive decisions influenced by historical contexts; rational reform does not necessarily eliminate gender hierarchy (Coruh, 2019). This awareness fosters academic humility: interpreters need to examine their own assumptions, remain open to criticism, and recognize women's experiences as a source of scholarly inquiry without treating them as a substitute for textual analysis. Hermeneutical reflection also reminds us that reconsidering inherited understandings can be undertaken responsibly (Ichwan, 2025). Meanwhile, the ethical orientation of the Qur'an emphasizes that religious knowledge should be evaluated through its implications for justice and humanity (Jaiyeoba et al., 2024). Thus, the broader lesson of reconstructing *qiwāmah* lies not only in changing the concept of leadership but

also in cultivating a scholarly ethos that is open, accountable, critical, inclusive, and consistent in rejecting the justification of violence within family relationships.

Compared with previous studies, this study shares a concern with *qiwāmah* but differs in its approach to evaluating the legitimacy of leadership. Ahmad and Rasheed (2018) emphasize protection through complementary gender roles, whereas Ghafournia (2017) critiques patriarchal readings of Qur'an 4:34. The findings of this study position *al-Manār* between these perspectives: it is more functional than classical exegesis, yet it does not eliminate normative male leadership or the limited justification of physical actions. Studies by Akbar (2021), Moch (2022), and Mufid et al. (2023) provide a foundation for examining the historicity and assumptions of interpretation, while Juliansyahzen and Ocktoberrinsyah (2022), Muhsin et al. (2021), and Nuroniyah et al. (2025) employ *maqāṣid* to address issues of protection and violence in legal or social contexts. Unlike these studies, the present research specifically integrates the comparison between Ibn Kathir and *al-Manār*, Abu Zayd's epistemological critique, and Auda's systems-based *maqāṣid* evaluation. Its contribution is a normative ethical-relational model of *qiwāmah* that evaluates authority in terms of competence, mutual accountability, and nonviolence. This novelty is conceptual rather than a claim to be the first to apply these theories.

The implications of this study involve testable measures rather than policies whose effectiveness has already been demonstrated. First, religious educational institutions can develop modules that compare Ibn Kathir and *Tafsīr al-Manār*, including discussions of *qiwāmah*, *nushūz*, and *ḍaraba*, as well as critiques of the justification for physical actions. Second, training programs for teachers, religious educators, and family counselors should incorporate case studies to distinguish leadership as service from domination while developing skills in nonviolent conflict resolution. Third, religious authorities and developers of marital guidelines can evaluate counseling materials using indicators of justice, human dignity, harm prevention, and mutual accountability. Fourth, forums responsible for developing exegetical materials and family education should involve women as participants and reviewers with relevant competencies. Initial implementation can be conducted through pilot testing of educational modules, assessment of participants' understanding, and evaluation of community acceptance. Because this study is conceptual, its effects on family practices and policies require further empirical testing before widespread implementation.

CONCLUSION

This study demonstrates that differences in the interpretation of *qiwāmah* in Qur'an 4:34 reflect a shift in the emphasis on family authority rather than a complete transition toward gender equality. *Tafsīr Ibn Kathīr* places greater emphasis on hierarchical male leadership, whereas *Tafsīr al-Manār* prioritizes functional responsibility, including a more relational understanding of *nushūz* and restrictions on physical actions associated with *ḍaraba*. However, both interpretations continue to maintain normative male leadership. This pattern indicates that exegetical differences are influenced by the sociohistorical contexts and epistemological assumptions of the interpreters. The *maqāṣid*-based evaluation demonstrates that more contextual interpretations do not necessarily fully satisfy the principles of justice, human dignity, and the prevention of harm. Thus, a shift in exegetical orientation must be distinguished from a transformation of power structures that genuinely ensures equality within the family. Accordingly, the synthesis of critical hermeneutics and *maqāṣid* produces a reconstruction of *qiwāmah* as an ethical-relational responsibility, with the legitimacy of leadership grounded in ethical competence, mutual accountability, and nonviolence rather than gender superiority.

The theoretical contribution of this study lies in the development of an analytical framework that connects Abu Zayd's critical hermeneutics with Auda's systems approach to *maqāṣid*. Hermeneutics is employed to examine how interpreters' contexts and assumptions shape meaning, while *maqāṣid* provides a basis for evaluating the ethical implications of interpretation. This integration extends the study of Qur'anic exegesis and Islamic legal ethics through a normative ethical-relational model of *qiwāmah*, rather than formulating an entirely new theory. In practical terms, this model can inform the development of exegetical teaching modules, training programs for religious educators, and the evaluation of counseling materials and family education that emphasize consultation, the protection of human dignity, and nonviolent conflict resolution. Given its conceptual nature, these recommendations require testing through limited implementation and empirical evaluation before they can be adopted as institutional guidelines.

This study has three limitations. First, the analysis is limited to Qur'an 4:34, *Tafsīr Ibn Kathīr*, and *Tafsīr al-Manār*, and therefore does not represent the diversity of exegetical traditions, including interpretations by women. Second, the ethical-relational model of *qiwāmah* was developed through a literature-based study and has not been tested against the experiences of families, educators, or religious authorities. Third, the relationship between historical interpretation in critical hermeneutics and normative evaluation in *maqāṣid* requires further methodological examination. Future research should compare a broader range of exegetical works, incorporate women's perspectives, and examine the model's acceptance and application through interviews, observations, or case studies in religious education and family counseling. Such testing is essential to assess the feasibility of the recommendations without presuming their effectiveness from the outset. Local contexts should be considered in every evaluation.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The author expresses gratitude to colleagues and fellow researchers for their valuable input, constructive criticism, and academic support during the preparation of this manuscript. Appreciation is also extended to the anonymous reviewers for their valuable suggestions and comments, which helped improve the article's quality.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST STATEMENT

The authors declare no conflicts of interest that could affect the objectivity and integrity of the research.

DECLARATION OF AI USE

The authors declare that the entire research and manuscript preparation processes were conducted independently, without the use of artificial intelligence (AI) tools, and in accordance with academic integrity.

FUNDING STATEMENT

This research and its publication were independently funded by the authors without external financial support.

AUTHOR CONTRIBUTION STATEMENT

Ihya' Ulumudin: Conceptualization; Data Curation; Formal Analysis; Investigation; Methodology; Visualization; Writing Original Draft; Writing Review & Editing. **Aswadi**: Conceptualization; Methodology; Supervision; Validation. **Abu Bakar**: Formal Analysis;

Validation; Editing. **Faiqotul Mala**: Investigation; Resources; Validation; Writing Review & Editing. **Moch. Mahsun**: Conceptualization; Methodology; Supervision; Project Administration; Writing Review & Editing. **Raihan Nasir**: Conceptualization; Formal Analysis; Methodology; Validation.

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