

THE PRINTING OF THE QUR'AN, GENDER ISSUES, AND THE COMMODIFICATION OF RELIGION: A Case Study of *Mushaf for Muslimah*

Fathurrosyid

Annuqayah University, Sumenep, Indonesia

✉ fathurrosyid090381@gmail.com

Fairuzah

Annuqayah University, Sumenep, Indonesia

✉ fairuzah78@gmail.com

Wardatun Nadhiroh

School of Philosophy, Theology, and Religion University of Birmingham, United Kingdom

✉ wns129@bham.ac.uk

Abstract

The Mushaf for Muslimah printing, an innovation in religious publishing in Indonesia, has garnered attention for presenting the Qur'an with translations and content markers adapted explicitly for women. This research aims to investigate the potential of this publication as an agent of women's empowerment in the religious context while also exploring the challenges and risks associated with patriarchal ideology and the commodification of religion. Through the theoretical frameworks of religious commodification and feminism, this study will analyze how *Mushaf for Muslimah* uses religious symbols as commodities and responds to gender issues inherent within it. This research is a case study with primary data collected through observation, documentation, and interviews with the publisher, subsequently analyzed using content analysis approaches. In the context of commodification and feminist theories, this research identifies the complexities in efforts to empower women through religion while highlighting the challenges in maintaining a balance between the sacredness of religion and gender inclusion. These findings enrich our understanding of the dynamics of contemporary Qur'anic printing and the role of religion in shaping gender identities and roles in society.

Keywords: Qur'an and Tafsir Printing, Gender Issues, Religious Commodification, *Mushaf for Muslimah*.

Pencetakan Al-Qur'an, Isu Gender, dan Komodifikasi Agama: Studi Kasus Muşhaf for Muslimah

Abstrak

Pencetakan Muşhaf for Muslimah, sebuah inovasi baru dalam dunia penerbitan agama di Indonesia, telah menjadi subjek perhatian karena menghadirkan Al-Qur'an dengan terjemahan dan tanda konten yang diadaptasi secara khusus untuk perempuan. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menyelidiki potensi penerbitan ini sebagai agen pemberdayaan perempuan dalam konteks agama, sekaligus mengeksplorasi tantangan dan risiko yang terkait dengan ideologi patriarki dan komodifikasi agama. Melalui pendekatan teori komodifikasi agama dan feminis, penelitian ini akan menganalisis bagaimana Muşhaf for Muslimah menggunakan simbol-simbol agama sebagai komoditas, serta merespons isu-isu gender yang terkandung di dalamnya. Penelitian ini merupakan studi kasus dengan data primer yang dikumpulkan melalui observasi, dokumentasi, dan wawancara dengan penerbit, kemudian dianalisis menggunakan pendekatan konten analisis. Dalam konteks teori komodifikasi dan feminis, penelitian ini mengidentifikasi kompleksitas dalam upaya pemberdayaan perempuan melalui agama, sekaligus menyoroti tantangan dalam menjaga keseimbangan antara sakralitas agama dan inklusi gender. Temuan ini memperkaya pemahaman kita tentang dinamika percetakan Al-Qur'an kontemporer dan andil agama dalam membentuk identitas dan peran gender dalam masyarakat.

Kata kunci: *Pencetakan Al-Qur'an dan Tafsir, Isu-Isu Gender, Komodifikasi Agama, Muşhaf for Muslimah.*

Muşhaf for Muslimah: دراسة حالة لـ: تسليع الدين، وقضايا النوع الاجتماعي، وتسلية القرآن، وطباعة القرآن، وقضايا النوع الاجتماعي، وتسليع الدين: دراسة حالة لـ: *Muşhaf for Muslimah*

ملخص

أصبحت طباعة *Muşhaf for Muslimah* (المصحف للمسلمة)، وهي ابتكار جديد في عالم النشر الديني في إندونيسيا، موضع اهتمام لأنها تقدم القرآن الكريم بترجمات وعلامات محتوى مخصصة للنساء. يهدف هذا البحث إلى استكشاف إمكانات هذا المنشور كعامل لتمكين المرأة في سياق ديني، مع استكشاف التحديات والمخاطر المرتبطة بالأيديولوجية الأبوية وتسليع الدين. من خلال منهج نظرية التسليع الديني والنسوية، يحلل هذا البحث كيفية استخدام المصحف للمسلمة للرموز الدينية كسلع، ويستجيب لقضايا النوع الاجتماعي الواردة فيه. هذا البحث عبارة عن دراسة حالة مع بيانات أولية تم جمعها من خلال الملاحظة والتوثيق والمقابلات مع الناشرين، ثم تحليلها باستخدام منهج تحليل المحتوى. في سياق التسليع والنظرية النسوية، يحدد هذا البحث مدى تعقيد الجهود المبذولة لتمكين المرأة من خلال الدين، مع تسليط الضوء على التحديات في الحفاظ على التوازن بين القداسة الدينية وإدماج الجنسين. تثرى هذه النتائج فهمنا لديناميات طباعة القرآن المعاصرة ودور الدين في تشكيل الهويات والأدوار الجنسية في المجتمع.

الكلمات المفتاحية: طباعة المصحف وتفسيره، قضايا النوع الاجتماعي، تسليع الدين، المصحف للمسلمة

Introduction

The publication and printing of the Qur'an specifically for women, containing translations—hereafter referred to as *Muṣḥaf for Muslimah*—is a new religious phenomenon in Indonesia. The presence of *Muṣḥaf for Muslimah* is visualized with structures, designs, characteristics, and motifs adapted to the female figure. What makes it interesting is that this gender-specific Qur'an includes content marked with colored signs on Qur'anic verses and interpretations that are relevant to gender issues. Such models and forms position the Qur'an not only as a guidebook but also as a “body” of everyday life for women in their interactions with the Qur'an, which, according to Endy Saputro, is referred to as “embodied practices” (Saputro 2015: 180-200).

The ideal target for the publication and printing of *Muṣḥaf for Muslimah*, one of the emerging issues, is as an empowering agent for women in the context of religion. This is because religion holds significant potential in promoting and providing space for gender equality (Akeyla and Fadhilah 2023: 1-25). Conversely, interpretations of religion in shaping intolerant and extremist mindsets also have a considerable influence (Fauzi et al. 2023: 2774-6585). Therefore, the publication of *Muṣḥaf for Muslimah* is expected to serve as a public forum and an open platform to promote inclusive religious understanding for women, enabling them to actively engage in religious practices as well.

Moreover, in the social, cultural, and educational contexts, gender inequality in some societies is an undeniable fact, particularly regarding access to education for women (Ratnawati 2019: 10123). As a result, it is understandable if women are then pushed towards early marriage (Hermambang et al. 2021: 1-12) which can have fatal consequences for their future, such as cases of domestic violence (Alimi and Nurwati 2021: 20-27). The publication and printing of *Muṣḥaf for Muslimah* ideally can help overcome barriers to women's access to education. Additionally, it can motivate women's participation in religious learning and enhance their understanding of the messages of the Qur'an (Aji et al. 2022: 1-32).

Similarly, the printing and publication of *Muṣḥaf for Muslimah* are expected to accommodate the need for a more sensitive interpretation concerning the social context and experiences of women (Rifa'at 2019: 175-190). However, the target and idealization are far from reality. The presence of *Muṣḥaf for Muslimah* actually becomes an instrument in patriarchal and stereotypical spaces. An indicator is the explanation of verse an-Nisā' (4): 34 in the *Muṣḥaf Aisyah*, which has solidified and reinforced the inferiority of women (Penyusun 2010), as this verse is translated to legitimize male

superiority. Furthermore, viewed from the aspect of commodification of religion, the printing and publication are feared, according to Nugraha citing Pattana Kitiarsa, to give birth to a generation of fundamentalists (Nugraha 2015: 301-320).

Based on this reality, the printing and publication of *Muşhaf for Muslimah* represent a phenomenon with the potential to empower women in the religious context, yet it also faces challenges and risks in terms of patriarchal ideology and the commodification of religion. Therefore, this research is intriguing, especially if focused on two aspects: the forms and models of the commodification of religion, and the gender issues it addresses within. The aim is not only to gain a comprehensive understanding of how this mushaf utilizes religious symbols as a form of religious commodification but also to analyze its response to gender issues.

This research constitutes a case study that will focus on primary data sources in the form of printed *Muşhaf for Muslimah* explicitly designated for gender-specific use.¹ These data will be obtained through observation and documentation techniques of the circulation of women-specific Qur'ans and the gender issues contained within them. Additionally, to reinforce the data, the author conducted interviews and online correspondence with one of the publishers of *Muşhaf for Muslimah* in June-July 2023. The data will be analyzed using a content analysis approach.

The theories utilized to dissect the research problem above include the theory of commodification and feminist theory. The use of Greg Fealy's theory of the commodification of religion (Sally 2008: 1-295) will examine the process of commodifying the Qur'an in the context of the production and distribution of *Muşhaf for Muslimah*. It will seek to understand the practices of Qur'an printing and sales influenced by commercial interests, ideologies, and specific social dynamics. Meanwhile, the use of feminist theory involves the ideas of Aminah Wadud (Wadud 2008: 32-50) emphasizing the importance of rereading the Qur'anic text while considering different social and historical contexts, and advocating for equality in religious practices, including in the printing of the Qur'an.

Academic discussions related to *Muşhaf for Muslimah*, the commodification of religion, and women's issues within these Qur'ans have been extensively conducted. Writings by Muhammad Dluha Luthfillah (Luthfillah 2019: 281-301), Wida Hikmatul Lisa (Lisa 2019: 168-183), Muhammad Imdad Ilhami Khalil (Khalil 2019: 1-112), Eva Nugraha (Nugraha 2014: 741-760), Ali Akbar (Akbar 2015: 271-287), Hamam Faizin (Faizin 2018:

1 Such as *Mushaf Dalayah: Al-Qur'an, Terjemah, dan Tafsir untuk Wanita*, *Mushaf Raihan: Al-Qur'an, Terjemah, dan Tafsir untuk Wanita*, and *Al-Qur'an Karim: Special for Muslimah*

286-293), dan Fitriatus Shalihah (Shalihah 2022: 301-327), are among the scholars who have focused on examining *Muṣḥaf for Muslimah*.

The research results above extensively highlight the design, ideology, characteristics of the Qur'an, students' reception of the use of the Qur'an globally, and the commodification behavior of the Qur'an. Thus, several studies aim to affirm the same fact, namely that *Muṣḥaf for Muslimah* is one of the contemporary trends in Qur'an printing that is widely sought after and has become a commodity tool under the guise of religious sacredness. Unlike some of these writings, this research develops findings from previous research, particularly demonstrating models and forms of religious commodification utilized as commodities, and revealing women's issues present in *Muṣḥaf for Muslimah* that ostensibly disseminate sensitive gender ideas but are actually involved in reinforcing patriarchal and stereotypical cultural practices.

The Construction of Religious Commodification

Religious commodification is a combination of two words composed of the elements "commodification" and "religion". Commodity has two meanings, namely a product or material that can be bought and sold and something that has utility value (Bull 1948: 289). Meanwhile, religion, as Tylor puts it, is a belief in something spiritual (Pals 2018: 45). Therefore, religious commodification is understood as the transformation of spiritual values into commercial values that can be consumed by the public (Baharun and Niswa 2019: 81) to adapt to human needs regarding their religion (Mughtar 2022: 269). In line with this definition, Kitiarsa reveals that religious commodification is the process of marrying religion with things within the market (Kitiarsa 2008: 03).

The process of merging religion and business has been increasingly rampant in recent weeks. In such a context, Islam is noted as a business-friendly religion (Akyol 2014: 222) as part of religious pluralism in Indonesia. Therefore, it is not surprising that launching and promoting a transaction relying on the name of Islam in Indonesia is not difficult. The commodification of Islam then undergoes a very rapid transformation, especially since the political reform in 1998, which successfully formed new decentralized regions (Pribadi 2019: 84).

The increasingly consumptive behavior of Muslim communities demands that trading companies provide the best services. The diverse needs make the market arena akin to a competition and contestation platform, in line with the concepts and strategies of society to harmonize and adapt to consumer needs (Yustati 2017: 308). These diverse needs then

become the driving force behind the commodification of religion. Indicators that demonstrate the presence of models and forms of religious commodification in Indonesia include the widespread popularity of Islamic fashion (Santoso 2015: 299), halal food and beverages, lectures (Saudi 2018: 41), Shariah branding (Baharun 2019: 88) and, including among them, the printing and publishing of contemporary Qur'ans.

Commodification of Religion: Exploring Benefits and Pitfalls in Religious Life

Commodification of religion is a serious attempt to fundamentally and totally change religious aspects into commodities that can be traded in the economic market or integrated into specific industries. This means that commodification seeks to commercialize religious aspects for the purpose of financial gain or power. Therefore, in this commodification process, besides having positive implications, the negative implications cannot be underestimated.

Positive implications of religious commodification: *First*, Alleviating the Burden of the Community. Religious commodification helps minimize the difficulties experienced by Muslims. A tangible example can be seen in the case of ONH-Plus services (Azra 2008). A Muslim who chooses ONH-Plus for the pilgrimage, during the pilgrimage, prioritizes comfort and adequate facilities, distinguishing it from regular ONH services. *Second*, Fulfilling Spiritual Needs. The presence of religious commodification in the public space serves as a remedy for the thirst of Muslims. All religious needs are readily available and easily accessible (Sauki 2021: 153).

Unlike the positive implications, religious commodification activities also have negative implications, including: *First*, Reduction of Spirituality. The presence of religion in the marketplace is a strategy to “capture the attention” of society. Therefore, religious commodification attempts to transform the spiritual intelligence of the community into emotional spiritual marketing (Suradji 2021). *Second*, Egoism and Collective Fanaticism. Religious commodification also plays politics for the sake of business interests framed within the identity of the Muslim community. The politicization of religious trade indirectly creates market competition, egoism (Nugraha 2015: 301-321), and even excessive attitudes towards certain products or companies. *Third*, Triggering Religious-based Violence as it can take refuge and fortify itself behind the name of religion. Therefore, it is not surprising that many actions seeking sympathy or support rely on religious commodification, which often ends in clashes (Kompas.com 2010).

Muṣḥaf for Muslimah: Design and Characteristics

Feminine Design

Muṣḥaf for Muslimah has various names. The majority of the *Muṣḥaf* names are inspired by Islamic female names that carry positive meanings,² such as *Nafisah*, *Daliyah* (Penyusun 2010), and *Yasmina* (Penyusun 2009). Additionally, names of Muslim women who played active roles in prophetic history are also adopted as prominent titles for *Muṣḥaf for Muslimah*, such as *Aisyah* (Penyusun 2010), *Halimah* (Penyusun 2009), and *Shaftiyah* (Kreatif, n.d.). However, there are also *Muṣḥaf for Muslimah* that only mention special user information without including specific names.³ As the only Qur'an manuscript representing a gendered perspective (Saputro 2019: 254), the *Muṣḥaf for Muslimah* presents itself with a design that tends towards the feminine. This is evident in the choice of colors, embellishments, predominantly small size, and even the coloring of verses about women to differentiate them from others, such as cases of nusyuz, polygamy, and even verses narrating women's stories.⁴ Similarly, the thick block format of the verses concerning women has seemingly become an identity when defining the *Muṣḥaf for Muslimah* (Faizin 2017: 291).



Figure 1. (From left to right) The *Muṣḥaf for Muslimah* by Cordoba, secured with a zipper; *Shaftiyah*; the *Women's Translation of the Quran* published by Sabbaha adorned with flower images, lace, and protected with magnets; *Muṣḥaf Aisyah*, published by Jabal Bandung; Form and Model of blocks for verses concerning women in *Muṣḥaf Aisyah*, published by Jabal Bandung.

Additional Features

The development of the *Muṣḥaf for Muslimah* printings has become fertile ground for inserting specific ideologies through gender-based content,

2 Correspondence with Jabal Publisher, Bandung, June 13, 2023.

3 Like Al-Qur'an and its translation *Special for Woman* published by Syaamil Quran, *Al-Qur'an Cordoba Special for Muslimah* printed by Cordoba, and *Al-Qur'an al-Karim; Azzikru* for women produced by Wali Oasis Terrace Resident.

4 Correspondence with Jabal Publisher, Bandung, June 13, 2023.

which ultimately adds to the commodification of religion within these mushafs. Vincent Mosco subsequently classified them into the category of content commodification (Baharun and Niswa 2019: 79). The variety of content included in the *Muşhaf for Muslimah* encompasses:

a. Exegesis of Verses and Asbāb an-Nuzūl

An additional feature found in the *Muşhaf for Muslimah* is the exegesis of Quranic verses, especially those relevant to women's themes. The majority of the exegesis used are *Tafsīr Ibnu Kaşīr*, *Tafsīr at-Ṭabarī*, and occasionally *Tafsīr al-Qurṭubī*. These exegeses are provided beneath the translation of the verses, and sometimes they are placed alongside the verses and their translations. The selection of these exegeses, besides being based on the popularity of their authors, is also due to their authoritative-objective nature as they are based on the understanding of Prophet Muhammad. However, it is often found in the *Muşhaf for Muslimah*, for example in the introductions of *Muşhaf Raihan* (Penyusun 2009), and *Muşhaf Halimah* (Penyusun 2009), that the use of these exegeses refers to their summarized versions, namely the *Mukhtasar Ibnu Kaşīr Exegesis*.

In addition to the exegesis of verses, the *Muşhaf for Muslimah* also accommodates the inclusion of *asbāb an-nuzūl* as an additional content feature. The importance of including *asbāb an-nuzūl* lies in its role as an instrument for understanding the universal messages of the Quran, assuming that this study dissects the historical background factors behind the revelation of Quranic verses. Therefore, in the introduction of the *Muşhaf for Muslimah*, it is explained that the *asbāb an-nuzūl* used to understand the meanings of Quranic verses are based on the book *Lubāb an-Nuqūl fī Asbāb an-Nuzūl* by Imam Jalāluddīn as-Suyūṭīy. The position of *asbāb an-nuzūl* is usually placed alongside the verses, together with their translations (Penyusun 2017).

b. Translation of Selected Hadiths, Tajwid Science, Collection of Dhikr, and Supplications

The Muşhaf for Muslimah also includes translations of selected hadiths. The inclusion of translated hadiths in the *Muşhaf for Muslimah* is placed in the bottom corner of the mushaf sheet and mentioned after the verses that are the focus of discussion (Penyusun 2017). However, there are also hadith studies positioned at the end pages of the mushaf, such as hadiths about women classified according to themes of the Prophet's testament (Penyusun 2017) and his advice to women (Penyusun 2016).

Similarly, there is also a *Muṣḥaf for Muslimah* that specifically includes a collection of translations of al-Bukhari's hadiths regarding guidance for menstruating women. These include translations of hadiths such as menstruation being Allah's decree upon women, engaging in foreplay with a menstruating wife, menstruating women not fasting, the seclusion of menstruating women during iktikaf, menstruating women not praying, sleeping with a menstruating wife, menstruating women attending the mosque, slightly yellowish discharge outside the menstrual period, menstruation during the tawaf *ifāḍah*, praying for women in childbirth, women sleeping in the mosque (Penyusun 2010). Additionally, there are additional features translating hadiths speaking about women in general, such as inheritance for daughters, sanctions for adulterers, prohibition of disobedience to mothers, women being prohibited from being alone with non-mahrams, and the prohibition of plucking eyebrows and straightening teeth (Penyusun 2012).

Other additional features also include the science of tajwid, a collection of dhikr (remembrance of Allah) and prayers. The content of tajwid is placed at the end or beginning pages of the *Muṣḥaf*, and often serves as content on Quranic reading dividers as well. The discussion of tajwid includes understanding, various types of waqf (stopping points), the rules of reading *nūn sukūn* (*tanwīn*), and *mīm sukūn* (Penyusun 2012). Meanwhile, the feature of a collection of dhikr and prayers is presented in the form of classification and various types of dhikr, recitations, and their application written in Arabic and translated. Additionally, the virtues of supplication and remembrance of Allah are included along with an overview of the ethical guidance in supplication based on the book *al-Aẓkār* by Imam an-Nawāwī (Penyusun 2010).

c. Fiqh Studies and Studies on the Identity of Muslim Women

Muṣḥaf for Muslimah is also equipped with studies of fiqh (Islamic jurisprudence) and studies on the identity of Muslim women, which are included at the beginning or end of the *Muṣḥaf*. Fiqh studies are commonly known as "*Fiqh Wanita*" (Women's Jurisprudence), which present various themes regarding worship fiqh, transactional fiqh, marriage fiqh (*munākahah*), and social fiqh (*ijtimā'iyah*). The explanatory model used by *Muṣḥaf for Muslimah* in elaborating on the legal status of women's fiqh is presented in the form of definitions accompanied by the basis of its legal rulings based on hadiths or direct reference to verses from the Quran.

The discussion on worship fiqh in *Muṣḥaf an-Nisa'; Al-Qur'an for Ladies dan Fiqih Wanita* (Penyusun 2012: 7) only mentions three themes.

Firstly, Taharah (Purification). There is no discussion on this theme. *Secondly*, Menstruation and Postpartum Bleeding. This theme is only presented in the form of definitions. *Thirdly*, Prohibitions During Menstruation and Postpartum Bleeding. This discussion is explained in a table stating that women are prohibited from praying based on hadiths from al-Bukhari and Muslim, prohibited from fasting based on a hadith from al-Bukhari, women are prohibited from marital relations based on surah al-Baqarah (2): 222, and prohibited from divorce based on a hadith from al-Bukhari. *Fourthly*, Permissible Acts During Menstruation and Postpartum Bleeding. This theme is also presented similarly in a table with explanations stating that postpartum women may marry after their waiting period is over, women may delay menstruation to perform Hajj, women may engage in routine dhikr (remembrance of Allah), such as prayers before and after meals, morning and evening remembrances, and women may read the Quran for learning and teaching purposes.

Similarly, the explanatory model in the form of definitions accompanied by hadiths as the basis for explaining the legal status of shaking hands, in *Mushaf Annisa* (Penyusun 2012: 27), is presented as follows:

“Shaking hands is the act of handshaking between a woman and a strange man (non-mahram) or the handshaking between a man and a strange woman. Shaking hands involves bodily contact that can certainly lead to sexual arousal. Even though it may only be a low level of sexual arousal, anything related to sex will arouse curiosity and addiction. This can lead to further actions. Aisha said, “The hand of the Prophet Muhammad saw never touched the hand of a woman except for those who are his wives”.

While the explanation related to the identity of a righteous Muslimah, *Muşhaf for Muslimah* delineates the character and traits of Muslim women also based on hadiths. The identity of a righteous Muslimah, even though permitted to appear in public spaces, has boundaries that must not be violated, namely having an appearance that is pleasing to Allah Swt., not excessive and wearing non-fragrant perfume, and must cover the aurah. Aurah is the parts of the body that must not be seen by others. The boundaries of a man’s aurah are the parts of the body between the navel and the knees. Whereas the aurah of a woman is her entire body, except for the face and palms of the hands (narrated by Abu Dawud) (Penyusun 2012: 77).

d. The content of Beauty and Health Care Tips

The additional content feature in *Muşhaf for Muslimah* not only provides

empowerment in the psychological-spiritual aspect but also demonstrates concern for the physical-biological aspect of women. This is evidenced by the presence of content providing tips for maintaining beauty and a healthy lifestyle specifically for women. These tips offer comprehensive beauty treatments outlined in 9 (nine) routine care steps, both with external body care, such as washing the face (Penyusun 2016: 16) and using facial masks, as well as internal body care, such as increasing water consumption and vitamin intake (Penyusun 2016: 19-20).

Interestingly, the additional feature of beauty tips in *Muṣḥaf for Muslimah* also includes descriptions of several food and beverage menus that women should consume to maintain vitality and charm. Some of the recommended menus include leafy vegetables, grains, legumes, yogurt, and berries. Additionally, it also includes explanations of the benefits, timing, and portions of consuming food (Penyusun 2016: 19-20).

The Forms and Models of Religious Commodification in *Muṣḥaf for Muslimah*: Dilemma between Piety and Interests

The presence of *Muṣḥaf for Muslimah* holds significant urgency in the life of a Muslim woman specifically. Its existence is not only deeply involved as a source of spirituality but also tangibly felt as a practical guide in daily worship activities. However, in a context dominated by consumerism and materialism, *Muṣḥaf for Muslimah* is not immune from the trap of religious commodification. Luxurious and aesthetic designs, addition of fashion accessories, and sophisticated marketing strategies often tempt Muslim women to view this *Muṣḥaf* as a luxury item and lifestyle, rather than as a sacred source of spirituality. In this atmosphere, Muslim women are faced with a dilemma between maintaining spiritual righteousness and being tempted by the allure of the commodified world, as elaborated below:

Firstly, the commodification of religion in the additional features of interpretation and the reasons for revelation (*asbab an-nuzūl*). This can be evidenced by the selection of interpretations based on the popularity of the author, such as Ibn Kaṣīr and aṭ-Ṭabariy, as evidenced by correspondence with the publisher Jabal.⁵ Such patterns certainly reflect a commercial approach to the development of religious products. This is because the publisher prioritizes the popularity of the author over the accuracy or relevance of the text to women's needs. Furthermore, the publisher's reasons for selecting these interpretations because they are more in line with the interpretation of the Prophet Muhammad also indicate a strategy to provide authority and legitimacy to the product. Without strong scientific

5 Correspondence with Jabal Publisher, Bandung, July 21, 2023.

evidence, such claims could simply be an attempt to increase consumer trust in the product.

Furthermore, the use of interpretations based solely on the *Summary of Ibn Kaṣīr's Tafsīr*, as seen in *Muṣḥaf Halimah* and *Raiḥan*, can also be viewed as a strategy to make the product more easily consumable and understandable for readers. In the context of religious commodification, such summaries can also be interpreted as an effort to package religion in a more “user-friendly” format to enhance market appeal. Additionally, emphasis on aspects related to women cannot be denied as a marketing strategy targeting a specific market segment, namely Muslim women. Thus, gender aspects have become commodities exploited to increase sales considering that women are a gender that never ceases to inspire and a source of endless money (Faadhilah, Aliazzra, and Tsany 2022: 199-207).

Secondly, the commodification of religion in the additional features of selected hadiths from al-Bukhari and Muslim. The use of these additional features in *Muṣḥaf for Muslimah* is part of the systemic entanglement of religious commodification. Indications that can be shown in this context include the presentation of hadiths related to prohibitions against menstruating women, except for the hadith prohibiting touching and carrying the Quran for women. These hadiths in *Muṣḥaf Ummul Mu'minin Salsabil* 620 and *Muṣḥaf Aisyah* 745 are censored so they are not covered in both of those mushafs. The censorship of these hadiths is certainly a strategy to enhance the marketing of *Muṣḥaf for Muslimah*. Because the legal status of touching and carrying the Quran for menstruating women, scholars unanimously agree, both among commentators and jurists, is forbidden and not allowed (Taqiyuddin 1422: 545).

The additional feature of hadiths found in *Muṣḥaf for Muslimah* is more influenced by considerations of popularity than the need to provide a comprehensive understanding of the role and rights of women in Islam. Thus, the use of supplementary hadiths is merely part of the commodification of religion, which utilizes religious traditions for commercial and marketing purposes. The additional feature of hadiths could indeed be justified as long as it does not sacrifice the totality of understanding about gender issues in Islam, including the issue of menstruating women. Because the addition of supplementary hadith features, besides being textual messages, also constitutes semiotic messages of visual communication, and visual design content with specific codes and messages (Piliang 2012: 339).

Thirdly, the commodification of religion in the additional features of fiqh knowledge and the identity of the righteous Muslimah. This is

evidenced by the status of the prohibition of shaking hands in *Muṣḥaf for Muslimah*, which relies on the authority of the hadith narrated by Aisha. This reality reflects a rigid interpretation of the rules of interaction between genders. Because the ruling on shaking hands, the majority of scholars from the four schools of thought declare it as forbidden, except for scholars affiliated with the Hanafi school of thought who explain its prohibition applies to young women who can arouse desire (Al-Islamiyyah 1417: 359). Thus, the ideological reasoning of fiqh built by *Muṣḥaf for Muslimah* represents the reasoning of the Shafi'i school of thought, considering that within this school, the prohibition of shaking hands with women, even if they are elderly, is stated, unless a barrier is used, such as gloves (al-Zuhayli 1405: 567).

Fourthly, the commodification of religion in beauty tips lies in the packaging of products with health and beauty issues. Additional content in *Muṣḥaf for Muslimah* focusing on beauty tips and healthy lifestyles utilizes these issues to attract readers. This reflects an effort to incorporate religious elements into products related to health and beauty, making them more appealing to specific target markets. Additionally, the form of religious commodification in beauty tips lies in offering solutions deemed in line with religious teachings. Content providing beauty tips and healthy lifestyles for Muslim women is structured in such a way that it aligns with the values and principles of Islam. For example, increasing water consumption and recommended healthy foods are also linked to religious teachings about taking care of the body as a trust from Allah Swt.

The Response of *Muṣḥaf for Muslimah* to Gender Issues: Analysis and Critique

When faced with verses discussing gender issues, the response of *Muṣḥaf for Muslimah* can be classified into two main categories. First, providing a negative response in the form of arguments reinforcing and solidifying women as second-class figures. *Second*, disregarding issues related to women altogether. These two models of response further emphasize that despite being labeled specifically for women, the presence of *Muṣḥaf for Muslimah* is actually trapped in the currents of stereotypical and patriarchal ideologies, as elaborated in the following analysis:

The Reinforcement and Solidification of Women's Powerlessness

a. Women as the Majority of Hell's Inhabitants: Tracing Misunderstandings of the Meaning of Surah al-Hashr (59): 20.

The Holy Quran explains the position and inhabitants of paradise and hell with different criteria and characteristics. This is elaborated in surah al-Hashr (59): 20:

لَا يَسْتَوِي أَصْحَابُ النَّارِ وَأَصْحَابُ الْجَنَّةِ أَصْحَابُ الْجَنَّةِ هُمُ الْفَائِزُونَ

Tidak sama para penghuni neraka dengan para penghuni surga. Penghuni-penghuni surga itulah orang-orang yang memperoleh kemenangan.

(Not equal are the companions of the Fire and the companions of Paradise. The companions of Paradise - they are the attainers [of success]).

The verse above describes the characteristics and facilities that Allah will provide to the inhabitants of hell and paradise. Ibn Kaşir asserts that on the Day of Judgment, Allah will give appreciation and honor to the inhabitants of paradise. Conversely, to the inhabitants of hell, Allah will disgrace them (Kaşir 1420: 338). Similarly, al-Qurṭubiy adds that the positions of the inhabitants of hell and paradise will not be the same. The inhabitants of paradise will succeed in obtaining fortune and honor (Al-Qurṭubiy 2006: 976). Meanwhile, aṭ-Ṭabariy elaborates that the inhabitants of paradise are those who will obtain what they desire and will be saved from what they fear (Jarir 1415: 721-722).

However, in the annotation of *Muṣḥaf for Muslimah*, the above verse is instead directed towards gender issues that corner women by arguing that hell will be crowded with women. This interpretation, in Al-Qur'an Cordoba, is based on two hadiths of the Prophet Muhammad, which are provided in the form of Indonesian translations as follows:

1. From Ibn Abbas. Rasulullah saw. once delivered a sermon during an eclipse. He said, "I saw hell, and most of its inhabitants were women".
2. As reported by Abu Sa'id al-Khudri, Rasulullah saw. said, "O women, give charity! Indeed, I saw that most of the inhabitants of hell are you." Then a woman asked, "Why is that, O Messenger of Allah?" He replied, "Because you curse a lot and are disobedient to your husbands". (Penyusun 2017:548).

The annotation in the *Muṣḥaf for Muslimah's* interpretation certainly requires correction or even revision. This is due to two considerations: First, the aspect of interpretive consistency. In the commentary notes of aṭ-Ṭabarī and Ibn Kaṣīr, which are branded in the *Muṣḥaf for Muslimah* as authoritative interpretations, there is not a single interpretation explaining that the majority of hell's inhabitants are women, except only explaining Allah's appreciation for the inhabitants of paradise. Second, the aspect of gender issues. The use of legitimacy from the above hadiths constitutes patriarchal and stereotypical interpretations. Because these hadiths are misogynistic, portraying women as cursed and disobedient to their spouses or husbands (Elviandri 2019: 243-257, Sauda' 2014: 293-308). Yet, these two negative behaviors are not impossible for husbands to engage in. Therefore, the two hadiths above can also be interpreted for husbands who are prone to cursing, behaving improperly, and enjoying "playing with fire" behind their wives' backs (Kodir 2019: 279). Thus, the annotations and commentary notes in the *Muṣḥaf for Muslimah* reinforce and solidify the hegemony of patriarchal interpretations and are not friendly to women.

b. Domestic Violence and its Legality: Revisiting Surah an-Nisā' (4): 34. Issues surrounding domestic violence (KDRT) are often brought to the public using arguments and legitimizations based on surah an-Nisā' (4): 34 as follows:

الرِّجَالُ قَوَّامُونَ عَلَى النِّسَاءِ بِمَا فَضَّلَ اللَّهُ بَعْضَهُمْ عَلَى بَعْضٍ وَبِمَا آتَفَقُوا مِنْ
 أَمْوَالِهِمْ ۗ فَالْصَّالِحَاتُ قَنَاطٌ حَفِظَتْ لِّلْغَيْبِ بِمَا حَفِظَ اللَّهُ ۗ وَالَّتِي تَخَافُونَ
 نُشُوزَهُنَّ فَعِظُوهُنَّ وَاهْجُرُوهُنَّ فِي الْمَضَاجِعِ وَاضْرِبُوهُنَّ ۗ فَإِنِ اطَّعَنَكُمْ
 فَلَا تَبْغُوا عَلَيْهِنَّ سَبِيلًا ۗ إِنَّ اللَّهَ كَانَ عَلِيمًا كَبِيرًا

Laki-laki (suami) adalah penanggung jawab atas para perempuan (istri) karena Allah telah melebihkan sebagian mereka (laki-laki) atas sebagian yang lain (perempuan) dan karena mereka (laki-laki) telah menafkahkan sebagian dari hartanya. Perempuan-perempuan saleh adalah mereka yang taat (kepada Allah) dan menjaga diri ketika (suaminya) tidak ada karena Allah telah menjaga (mereka). Perempuan-perempuan yang kamu khawatirkan akan nusyuz, berilah mereka nasihat, tinggalkanlah mereka di tempat tidur (pisah ranjang), dan (kalau perlu,) pukullah mereka (dengan cara yang tidak menyakitkan). Akan tetapi, jika mereka menaatimu, janganlah kamu mencari-cari jalan untuk menyusahkan mereka. Sesungguhnya Allah Mahatinggi lagi Mahabesar.

(Men are in charge of women by [right of] what Allah has given one over the other and what they spend [for maintenance] from their wealth. So righteous women are devoutly obedient, guarding in [the husband's] absence what Allah would have them guard. But those [wives] from whom you fear arrogance - [first] advise them; [then if they persist], forsake them in bed; and [finally], strike them. But if they obey you [once more], seek no means against them. Indeed, Allah is ever Exalted and Grand).

The verse above describes the strategies and solutions offered by the Quran when there is disharmony in the family due to disobedience and rebellion by the wife. In such context, the husband can attempt three attitudes: *First*, giving advice. *Second*, separate sleeping arrangements. *Third*, resort to physical discipline (ar-Rāziy 1981: 457). However, the annotations and translations of the concept of *nusyuz* in *Muṣḥaf for Muslimah* do not receive comprehensive and total coverage. The discussion is prioritized on defining *nusyuz* and persuading the husband's obligation to behave kindly towards his wife (Penyusun 2017: 84). However, the prevalence of cases of domestic violence in society is partly due to misinterpretation of the moral message of the verse (Fikriyati 2018: 265) reinforced by the hegemony of patriarchal traditions (Arifin 2022: 18-31).

- c. Women as a Source of Temptation: Surah Āli 'Imrān (3): 14. Women, under certain circumstances, are often stereotyped as a source of temptation and chaos. This perception is based on surah Āli 'Imrān (3): 14 as follows:

زَيْنَ لِلنَّاسِ حُبُّ الشَّهَوَاتِ مِنَ النِّسَاءِ وَالْبَنِينَ وَالْقَنَاطِيرِ الْمُقَنْطَرَةِ مِنَ
الذَّهَبِ وَالْفِضَّةِ وَالْخَيْلِ الْمُسَوَّمَةِ وَالْأَنْعَامِ وَالْحَرْثِ ذَلِكَ مَتَاعُ الْحَيَاةِ
الدُّنْيَا وَاللَّهُ عِنْدَهُ حُسْنُ الْمَاِبِ

Dijadikan indah bagi manusia kecintaan pada aneka kesenangan yang berupa perempuan, anak-anak, harta benda yang bertimbun tak terhingga berupa emas, perak, kuda pilihan, binatang ternak, dan sawah ladang. Itulah kesenangan hidup di dunia dan di sisi Allahlah tempat kembali yang baik.

(Beautiful for people is the love of that which they desire - of women and sons, heaped-up sums of gold and silver, fine branded horses, and cattle and tilled land. That is the enjoyment of worldly life, but Allah has with Him the best return).

The verse describes that the first detailed object of human pleasure mentioned is women. However, the ideological reasoning built within *Muṣḥaf for Muslimah* is patriarchal in nature. Thus, the annotated

interpretation presented explains that this is because women are influenced by the greater temptation they pose compared to the temptation arising from various other pleasures mentioned after women (Penyusun 2010: 51). This argument is based on an understanding of the Prophet's hadith which is included in the following translation:

*"There is no affliction after me that is more harmful to men than women."*⁶

The choice of *Muṣḥaf Aisyah* to utilize such gender-biased interpretations is due to its reliance on misogynistic hadiths that portray women as the root cause of men's downfall, thus trapping its tafsir annotations in stereotypical reasoning. The wording found in Surah Āli 'Imrān (3): 14 above, which mentions women as the first detail of various desires, is not about gender per se but rather a construct of how women are positioned. The term "syahwat" (desires) that can bring pleasure does not solely refer to women, but encompasses all forms of gratification that may lead to procrastination, such as positions or others. These are also included in the category of various desires (Muqtada 2014: 88-98). Similarly, the reason for not explicitly mentioning women's desires to men is to preserve women's feelings of modesty (Shihab 2007: 25-26). Instead of using the hadith about women as a source of temptation as justification, it is argued that men's desires for women are mentioned first to maintain women's emotional purity.

Ignoring Central Issues of Women's Potential in the Public Sphere

a. Public Role: Surah at-Taubah (9): 71.

The debate surrounding the legality of women's activity in both public and private domains begins with surah at-Taubah (9): 71 as follows:

وَالْمُؤْمِنُونَ وَالْمُؤْمِنَاتُ بَعْضُهُمْ أَوْلِيَاءُ بَعْضٍ يَأْمُرُونَ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ وَيَنْهَوْنَ
عَنِ الْمُنْكَرِ وَيُقِيمُونَ الصَّلَاةَ وَيُؤْتُونَ الزَّكَاةَ وَيُطِيعُونَ اللَّهَ وَرَسُولَهُ أُولَئِكَ
سَيَرْحَمُهُمُ اللَّهُ إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَزِيزٌ حَكِيمٌ

Orang-orang mukmin, laki-laki dan perempuan, sebagian mereka menjadi penolong bagi sebagian yang lain. Mereka menyuruh (berbuat) makruf dan mencegah (berbuat) mungkar, menegakkan salat, menunaikan zakat, dan taat kepada Allah dan Rasul-Nya. Mereka akan diberi rahmat oleh Allah. Sesungguhnya Allah Mahaperkasa lagi Mahabijaksana.

6 Correspondence with Jabal Publisher, Bandung, July 21, 2023.

(The believing men and believing women are allies of one another. They enjoin what is right and forbid what is wrong and establish prayer and give zakah and obey Allah and His Messenger. Those - Allah will have mercy upon them. Indeed, Allah is Exalted in Might and Wise).

The verse above, particularly in the grammatical form of “*auliya*,” which means encompassing cooperation, assistance, and authority, followed by the command to enjoin what is right and forbid what is wrong, serves as concrete evidence regarding the legality of women’s involvement in activities within the public domain (Shihab 2013: 271). Furthermore, the moral message in this verse indicates that women are legally allowed to actively engage in providing education that leads to the prevention of corruption and disasters (Al-Fansuriy 1410: 199). Both men and women are equally capable of providing protection in all fields, including in the context of politics and leadership (Hamka 2015).

However, it is regrettable that the verse above, in the annotation of *Muṣḥaf for Muslimah*, has no space at all except merely depicting discussions about the characteristics of those who will receive Allah’s mercy (Penyusun 2010: 383). Yet, in essence, this verse is worthy of gender-based analysis as an effort to empower women’s potential to actively participate in the public sphere, rather than confining and domesticating women. Consequently, if this verse is interpreted solely based on a specific gender, it will undoubtedly suppress women’s rights and potential (Kodir 2019: 413).

- b. Polygamy Issue: Surah an-Nisā’ (4): 3. The controversy surrounding the issue of polygamy actually originates from surah an-Nisā’ (4): 3 as follows:

وَأِنْ خِفْتُمْ أَلَّا تُقْسِطُوا فِي الْيَتَامَىٰ فَانكِحُوا مَا طَابَ لَكُمْ مِنَ النِّسَاءِ مَثْنَىٰ
وَتِلْثًا وَرُبْعًا فَإِنْ خِفْتُمْ أَلَّا تَعْدِلُوا فَوَاحِدَةً أَوْ مَا مَلَكَتْ أَيْمَانُكُمْ ذَلِكَ آدُنِي
أَلَّا تَعُولُوا

Jika kamu khawatir tidak akan mampu berlaku adil terhadap (hak-hak) perempuan yatim (bilamana kamu menikahinya), nikahilah perempuan (lain) yang kamu senang: dua, tiga, atau empat. Akan tetapi, jika kamu khawatir tidak akan mampu berlaku adil, (nikahilah) seorang saja atau hamba sahaya perempuan yang kamu miliki. Yang demikian itu lebih dekat untuk tidak berbuat zalim.

(And if you fear that you will not deal justly with the orphan girls, then marry those that please you of [other] women, two or three or four. But if you fear that you will not be just, then [marry only] one or those your right hand possesses. That is more suitable that you may not incline [to injustice]).

The issue of polygamy remains a reality, with its permissibility still sparking controversy from various quarters, especially among women (Hikmah 2012: 2). The evidence considered relevant to the law of practicing polygamy is the wording of surah an-Nisā' (4) verse 3. This is based on the phrasing indicating the number of wives, namely *mašnā* (two), *šulās* (three), and *rubā'* (four). M. Quraish Shibab analogized these counts to saying, "If you fear getting sick from eating this food, finish other food that is in front of you." Thus, the verse emphasizes the importance of heeding the prohibition against such actions (Shihab 2016: 410), hence, the above verse also contains advice and a message to husbands to remain committed to one wife.

The verse above needs to be understood by applying three reciprocal concept proposals (Kodir 2019: 421):

- 1) Patience Demand. The demand for patience in the case of polygamy is not only applicable to the wives. Husbands as practitioners of polygamy are also required to exercise patience in choosing fidelity.
- 2) Rejecting Polygamy. As the one who first established the marriage commitment with the husband, the first wife has full authority to reject the practice of polygamy in order to maintain the integrity of the established household.
- 3) Seeking Divorce. In the event of a husband's failure to exercise patience and showing symptoms of polygamy, a wife is permitted to seek divorce. Such action is an initial effort to avoid physical and psychological disturbances to the wife.

In *Muṣḥaf for Muslimah*, conflicts and issues related to women regarding polygamy as mentioned above are not addressed by the publisher. In fact, some editions of the mushaf only provide explanations about fairness and polygamy practiced by Prophet Muhammad (Penyusun 2017: 77). However, this verse is important to discuss in order to provide an understanding that the practice of polygamy is not mandatory, especially when it is driven solely by desire.

c. Issues of “*Pelakor*”: Surah Yusuf (12):28.

The controversy surrounding issues of women labeled as home-wreckers or popularly known as “*pelakor*” (a term for women who pursue married men) often bases its argument on surah Yusuf (12):28.

فَلَمَّا رَأَى قَمِيصَهُ قُدَّ مِنْ دُبُرٍ قَالَ إِنَّهُ مِنْ كَيْدِكُنَّ إِنَّ كَيْدَكُنَّ عَظِيمٌ

Maka, ketika melihat bajunya (Yusuf) koyak di bagian belakang, dia (suami perempuan itu) berkata, “Sesungguhnya ini adalah tipu dayamu (hai kaum wanita). Tipu dayamu benar-benar hebat.

(So when her husband saw his shirt torn from the back, he said, “Indeed, it is of the women’s plan. Indeed, your plan is great).

The verse above explains the scandal of Zulaikha’s love for Prophet Yusuf which ended in disaster. The case of Zulaikha’s adultery was caught red-handed by her husband, Qiṭfir. Witnessing such a phenomenon of deception, the husband vented his emotions with the expression “inna kaidakunna ‘aẓīm”, meaning “truly, your scheming is great”. This claim of “your deception is truly great” in the exegesis books (Kaṣīr 1420: 762, al-Qurṭubiy 2006: 1487, az-Zamakhsyariy 1998: 976) is produced and disseminated as a justification to accuse women as temptresses. This patriarchal exegesis is eventually consumed by society and stereotyped and adapted, leading to the emergence of the term “*pelakor*”.

Nevertheless, accusations regarding the ‘*pelakor*’ issues do not receive serious attention and examination within the *Muṣḥaf for Muslimah*. The reason is that not all translations of Quranic verses require further explanation. The presence of the *Muṣḥaf for Muslimah* as an empowerment space for women can be used as a medium to delegitimize stereotypical issues. This is because the phrase ‘inna kaidakunna ‘aẓīm’ is an expression of disappointment over the adultery committed by her beloved, Zulaikha, making it clear that this verse cannot be generalized to all women (Shihab 2016: 66) considering that this incident is personal and case-specific.

Conclusion

Based on the findings of this research, the two main issues that are the focus of the study can be summarized as follows:

Firstly, Muṣḥaf for Muslimah is a product that combines religious dimensions with elements of gender and commercialism. Its feminine design and various additional features embedded within it, such as exegesis, hadith, jurisprudence, the identity of Muslim women, as well as beauty and

health tips, reflect efforts to target the specific market of Muslim women. However, a dilemma arises regarding the commodification of religion in *Mushaf for Muslimah*. The luxurious design, addition of accessories, and selection of exegesis and hadith more based on the popularity of the author rather than the relevance or accuracy of the text raise questions about the religious integrity of this product. Additionally, the absence of hadith or legal status of menstruating women in the features of jurisprudential studies, as well as rigid interpretations of gender interaction rules, create tension between religious tradition and the need for a more inclusive understanding of gender issues. The existence of *Mushaf for Muslimah* is a complex product, reflecting the dynamics between spiritual piety, commercial interests, and gender identity.

Secondly, the responses of *Mushaf for Muslimah* to gender issues can be mapped as follows: a) There is a tendency in *Mushaf for Muslimah* to reinforce patriarchal and stereotypical views of women. This is evident in interpretations that portray women as the majority inhabitants of hell, legitimize domestic violence, and view women as sources of temptation. These interpretations are based on misogynistic hadith interpretations that are not in line with gender equality principles; b) There is reluctance in *Mushaf for Muslimah* to address important issues regarding women's potential in the public sphere. Issues such as women's roles in social, political, and economic activities, as well as controversies surrounding polygamy and 'pelakor', are not adequately addressed in the exegesis and explanations within *Mushaf for Muslimah*. Thus, *Mushaf for Muslimah's* responses to gender issues indicate a constraint on patriarchal views and a lack of concern for women's empowerment in the public sphere. []

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