

The Perspective of Stay-at-home Moms about Consent on Equal Gender Relations in the Muslim Family

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Abstract

The concept of marriage in Muslim families in Indonesia tends to focus on the role of the husband as the family leader and the main decision-maker. Thus, the condition has caused imbalance and led to some family issues, such as, domestic violence, juvenile delinquency, and divorce. Mubadala (the theory of reciprocity) presents a more balanced and fair perspective in balancing gender relations in marriage. It highlights that men and women act as dignified beings to fully make use of all aspects of their life. In Mubadala, there are five pillars of marriage, such as, mitsaqon ghalidzan (having great (marriage) agreement), mu'asyaroh bil ma'ruf (treating one another with dignity), zawj (having spouse/partner), tarādhin min-humā (comforting one another and having consent), and musyawarah (having consensus in dealing with household issues). In this study, the researchers focus on exploring consent, for in some cases, consent is understood 'one way', from wife to husband only. The study aims to find out whether the concept of consent has been comprehended and practised in Muslim families, especially among stay-at-home moms.

The researchers started the data collection process by compiling a list of questions for interviews. Then, they collected the opinions of three stay-at-home moms who were selected purposively as the research informants. The researchers conducted online in-depth interviews and analyzed the results based on the informants' understanding of the concept of consent according to Mubadala and its practices.

Keyword : Equal gender relations, Consent, Stay-at-home Moms

A. Introduction

The role of the housewife is often underestimated, considered a passive choice and does not contribute enough to equal gender relations. However, the reality is much more complex. (Khasanah & Rosyid Ridho, 2021) A woman's decision to become a housewife, as well as her willingness to carry out this role, is the result of careful consideration and mutual agreement within the family. (Farooq, 2018) The family is central to ideal domestic territorial relations. A good relationship between husband and wife is the initial foundation for the formation of a *sakinah, mawaddah and rohmah* family. Islam itself has a message outlined in the Qur'an, containing 5 pillars in marriage which are the basis for gender equality. Namely, firstly *mitsaqon ghalidzan*, a firm agreement (an Nisa:21), secondly; *mu'asyaroh bil ma'ruf*, namely husband and wife must treat each other well and with dignity (an Nisa: 19), third; men and women in marriage (*zawj*) (ar Ruum:21), fourth; provide mutual comfort between the two of them, and there is willingness between husband and wife, fifth; deliberation, husband and wife overcome problems in the household by deliberation.

Mubadala, as an Islamic perspective that focuses on mutuality and gender justice, offers an interesting view of consent in the family. (Faqihuddin Abdul Kodir, 2019) Mubadala views husband-wife relationships as an equal partnership built based on mutual love, respect and strengthening. In Mubadala, willingness does not mean that one party has to give in or make a complete sacrifice. On the other hand, willingness is rooted in awareness of shared roles and responsibilities in building a family. Husband and wife support each other and share burdens, both in domestic matters and in achieving common goals.

The Principle of 'Al-Ma'ruf' as a Guide

The principle of *ma'ruf*, which means "goodness" or "what is known", is an important foundation in building harmony between husband and wife. This principle guides couples to interact fairly, with dignity, and in accordance with the good values recognized in society and religion. (Nur Rofiah, 2020) *Ma'ruf* teaches that husband and wife must share roles and responsibilities fairly, in accordance with respective abilities and conditions. There is no rigid division of tasks, but rather it is adjusted to mutual agreement and needs. Mubadala emphasized the importance of the principle of '*al-ma'ruf*', namely doing everything that is good, appropriate, and accepted by common sense and applicable social norms. (Juliansyahzen, 2021) In the context of consent, this principle is a guide for husbands and wives to interact fairly and with dignity. Consent must not be used as a tool to impose one's will or humiliate one party. Instead, willingness must be based on open communication, empathy and mutual respect. In this case, Mubadala firmly rejects all forms of exploitation and violence within the family. (Siti Khoirotul Ula, 2021)

Willingness as a Dynamic Process

Mubadala recognizes that consent in the family is not a static condition, but a dynamic process that continues to develop over time. The needs and aspirations of each partner can change, and willingness requires flexibility and the ability to adapt. (Dr. Inayah Rohmaniyah, 2021)

Several Applications of the Concept of Willingness in Mubadala di:

1. Fair distribution of domestic roles: Husband and wife share responsibility for taking care of the household, according to their abilities and mutual agreement.
2. Support career and education: Support each other's self-development and aspirations, both in the fields of career and education.
3. Joint decision-making: Involving both parties in the decision-making process regarding the family.
4. Provide space for self-expression: Respect and support each other's individual interests, hobbies and activities.

Equal Gender Relations: Not Just a Division of Tasks

The concept of equal gender relations in the family does not mean a rigid 50/50 division of household tasks. More than that, equal relationships are built based on mutual respect, support and understanding of each other's roles. (Foundation of Bak ti, 2020) Housewives are not the ones who are "served" by working husbands but are equal partners in building the family ark. The wife is also a central part in every decision the husband will take. Even though the wife does not work outside, the appreciation as a partner in taking care of all the family's needs must be appreciated. (Andika, 2018).

Dialogue and Mutual Agreement

Willingness to carry out the role as a housewife must be based on open communication and mutual agreement within the family. Couples need to discuss each other's expectations, needs and aspirations. With healthy dialogue, the decision to become a housewife will be a choice that is appreciated and supported by all family members. (Nigora & Viloyat, 2022)

Society needs to provide support and appreciation to housewives. This can be done through: (Desminar, 2021)

1. Increased access to education and training: Opening opportunities for housewives to develop themselves and their potential.
2. Home-based business development: Provides opportunities for housewives to become entrepreneurs and contribute economically.
3. Building community: Creating space for housewives to share, learn, and support each other.

B. Method

To understand housewives' perspectives on consent and equal gender relations in the family, several research methods can be used. The choice of method used in this research is a qualitative method. (Iverson & Dervan, n.d.) First, the researcher determined the number of participants who would be the research object, namely 3 participants. Then, determine the participant criteria and schedule interviews with the participants. The criteria for housewives selected were Muslim women, married, and working as housewives. Researchers conducted in-depth interviews and analyzed the interview results. The results of the interviews were analyzed based on the informant's understanding of the concept of willingness in Mubadala theory.

Participants

In research on housewives' perspectives on consent and equal gender relations, participant selection is a crucial step that will influence the quality and credibility of research results. (Noeng Muhajir, 2000) The right participants will provide rich and in-depth data, and help researchers understand the complexity of the issue being researched.

Participant Selection Criteria:

1. Status as a Housewife: The main participants in this research are women who identify themselves as housewives and have experience in carrying out this role.
2. Age and Life Stage: Researchers can choose to focus on certain age groups or life stages, such as young housewives with toddlers, housewives with teenage children, or housewives who have entered retirement.
3. Socioeconomic Background: Taking into account the variations in participants' socio-economic backgrounds to gain a broader understanding of how consent and gender relations are constructed in different contexts.
4. Geographic Location: Select participants from various geographic locations, such as urban, rural, or remote areas, to understand the influence of culture and environment on the views and experiences of housewives.
5. Experiences and Views on Consent: Select participants with a variety of experiences and views on consent, both those who feel satisfied and happy with their role as housewives and those who feel burdened or have other aspirations.
6. Openness and Willingness to Share: Select participants who are open and willing to share their experiences and views honestly and in depth.

The method used in this research is purposive sampling, namely a non-probability sampling technique used when researchers want to select participants based on certain criteria that are relevant to the research objectives. In research on housewives' perspectives on consent and equal gender relations, purposive sampling can be an appropriate method for selecting key informants who have rich experience and views regarding the research topic. (Iverson & Dervan, n.d.) The number of participants used in this research The third 3 women housewives do not work outside the home.

C. Results and Discussion

In understanding the complexity of housewives' perspectives regarding consent and equal gender relations, (Asman et al, 2022) the following is a discussion with three participants who have different backgrounds and experiences:

Participant 1: Mrs. Nikmatur R, 40 years old, housewife with teenage children

Background: Mrs. Nikmah decided to become a housewife after giving birth to her first child. He feels happy and proud to be able to focus on taking care of his children and household.

Views on Willingness: Mrs. Nikmah feels that her willingness to become a housewife is the right choice for her family. She feels satisfied being able to support her husband

and provide the best for her children. In his interview, he said that he had also sacrificed something for his partner, but he did not specify the form of sacrifice.

Gender Relations in the Family: Mrs. Nikmah and her husband share responsibility for taking care of the household. Her husband helps with housework after coming home from work. Mrs. Nikmah feels appreciated and supported by her husband.

Participant 2: Mrs. Siska, 23 years old, housewife with no children

Background: Mrs. Siska has been a housewife for only 10 months. He worked before getting married, but decided to stop after getting married because he wanted to focus on home and having children.

Views on Willingness: Siska's mother initially had doubts about becoming a housewife, but ultimately decided to focus on her family. She feels that there are times when she misses the world of work, but she is still proud of her role as a mother and wife.

Gender Relations in the Family: Mrs. Siska feels that the distribution of roles in her family is unfair. She is responsible for most of the household work, while her husband focuses on work. Siska's mother hopes that her husband will be more involved in domestic affairs.

Participant 3: Mrs. Agustiatu Sa'adah, 52 years old, housewife with adult children

Background: Mrs. Agusti has been a housewife all her life. He never worked outside the home.

Views on Willingness: Mrs. Agusti is satisfied with her choice to become a housewife. She feels she has succeeded in raising her children and supporting her husband.

Gender Relations in the Family: Mrs. Agusti feels respected and appreciated by her husband and children. Even though the relationship and division of domestic tasks are still somewhat lacking, if reminded, the husband is still willing to share housework after work.

D. Discussion and Analysis:

From discussions with the three participants, it appears that housewives' perspectives on consent and equal gender relations vary greatly. There are those who feel satisfied and happy with their role as housewives, there are those who feel doubtful and have other aspirations, and there are also those who feel burdened by the unfair distribution of roles. (Noviani et al., 2022)

Factors influencing this perspective may include:

- Socio-cultural background
- Education and work experience
- Family economic conditions
- Personality and values
- Support from partner and family

It is important to understand this diversity of perspectives to build more equal gender relations in the family. (L. Alfons, 2017) Open dialogue, empathy and mutual

respect between family members is the key to creating a harmonious and happy family. From the participants' explanations above, it can be seen that there are several factors.

Building on the discussion with the three previous participants, let's dig deeper into the meaning of consent and equal gender relations in the family through questions that inspire reflection:

1. What does "willingness" mean to you in the context of being a housewife?

Mrs. Nikmatur: For me, consent is a choice based on love and commitment to family. I am willing to sacrifice my career to focus on taking care of my children and household because I believe this is the best for our family.

Mrs. Siska: Willingness for me is accepting my role as a housewife, even though sometimes I feel that something is missing in my life. I want to have the opportunity to develop myself and pursue my interests outside the home.

Mrs. Agusti: For me, dedication is dedication and devotion to my family. I feel happy and proud to be a housewife and support my husband and children.

2. How do you view the distribution of roles and responsibilities in your family? Is it fair?

Mrs. Nikmatur: I feel that the division of roles in our family is quite fair. My husband helps with housework and babysitting after work. We support and respect each other.

Mrs. Siska : I feel that the distribution of roles in our family is not fair. I am responsible for most of the household work, while my husband focuses on work. I want him to be more involved in domestic affairs.

Mrs. Agusti: I feel that the division of roles in our family is in accordance with our traditions and culture. My husband is the head of the family who is responsible for earning a living, while I take care of the household and children.

3. What do you expect from your partner and family to support your role as a housewife?

Mrs. Nikmatur: I hope that my husband will continue to support and respect my role as a housewife. I also wish he was more involved in parenting.

Mrs. Siska : I hope my husband understands and appreciates my role as a housewife. I want him to share responsibilities in domestic affairs and give me time for myself.

Mrs. Agusti : I hope my children appreciate the sacrifices I have made for them. I also hope they can live happily and successfully.

4. How do you think equal gender relations can be realized in the family?

Mrs. Nikmatur: Equal gender relations can be realized by mutual respect, support and sharing responsibilities within the family.

Mrs. Siska: Equal gender relations can be realized by providing equal opportunities for women to develop themselves and pursue their aspirations, both inside and outside the home.

Mrs. Agusti: Equal gender relations can be realized by carrying out each other's roles well and respecting each other.

This in-depth discussion reveals the complexity of the meaning of consent and gender relations from the perspective of housewives. (Salsabila, 2022) Consent does not always mean satisfaction or happiness, but can also be colored by feelings of doubt, burden, and desire for change. It's important to remember that every family has unique dynamics and challenges. There is no one ideal gender relations model for all families. (Indah Listyorini & Ali Hamdan, 2024)

By building healthy and equal relationships, the family can become a comfortable and supportive place for all its members to grow and develop. Following Mubadala which is applied in Islamic teachings, the concept of willingness which is part of Mubadala is certainly very useful to be implemented in family life. (Imtihanah, 2020)

E. Conclusion

Through in-depth discussions with three housewife participants, we can draw several important conclusions regarding consent and equal gender relations in the family. Associated with Mubadala, as an Islamic perspective that emphasizes gender reciprocity and justice, offers valuable guidance in understanding consent and building equal gender relations in the family.

Consent is a complex concept and has multiple interpretations: For some housewives, consent means a choice based on love and commitment to the family. Meanwhile, for others, willingness can be coloured by doubt, burden, and desire for change. Equal gender relations are not just about a 50/50 division of tasks: More than that, equal relations are built based on mutual respect, appreciation and support for the roles and contributions of each family member.

Some steps you can take:

1. Open a space for open and honest dialogue and communication between family members.
2. Appreciate the role and contribution of each family member.
3. Share household responsibilities and tasks fairly.
4. Provide space and support for each family member's self-development.
5. Create a family culture that respects gender equality and justice.

Building healthy and equal relationships in the family requires effort and commitment from all family members. By understanding, respecting and supporting each other, the family can become a comfortable and loving place for each member to grow and develop. By applying the principles of Mubadala, families can build relationships that are harmonious, fair and dignified. Willingness in the family is not just obedience or sacrifice, but rather a form of partnership that strengthens and empowers each other. Through open communication, mutual respect, and a commitment to justice, the family can become a comfortable and supportive place for all its members to grow and develop.

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