

## The Relevance of Stress Level Studies and The Hadith Regarding Women's Leadership: Hermeneutical Analysis

Ananda Prayogi<sup>1</sup>, Rosmalizawati Ab Rashid<sup>2</sup> & Wildan Ulumul Fahmi<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Ma'had Aly Hasyim Asy'ari Pesantren Tebuireng, Jombang Indonesia;

[ananda\\_prayogi@tebuireng.ac.id](mailto:ananda_prayogi@tebuireng.ac.id)

<sup>2</sup> Universiti Sultan Zainal Abidin, Terengganu, Malaysia; [rosma@unisza.edu.my](mailto:rosma@unisza.edu.my)

<sup>3</sup> Universitas Gadjah Mada, Indonesia; [wildanulumulfahmi27@gmail.com](mailto:wildanulumulfahmi27@gmail.com)

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### Abstract

Several studies indicate that women demonstrate greater leadership capabilities compared to men. Conversely, other studies present findings that contradict this assertion. This aligns with the controversy surrounding the hadith on women's leadership, which has stirred debates in society. Some interpret that the hadith is no longer relevant, while others maintain its validity and interpret it as implying destruction. This research aims to substantiate which interpretation of the hadith aligns most closely with reality. Utilizing hermeneutical analysis, the study employs a mixed-methods approach (combining field and library research) with a qualitative descriptive perspective. Data were sourced from various published research documents and 200 respondents selected through purposive sampling. The research findings reveal that the hadith on women's leadership has two alternative interpretations, stemming from various controversies. In the historical context, the hadith is interpreted to signify destruction for communities led by women. Conversely, in the contemporary context, the hadith is construed to denote pressure resulting in a significantly high level of stress for communities led by women. It is hoped that this second option can serve as an alternative reconciling both controversial perspectives, asserting its continued relevance without necessarily implying destruction.

**Keywords:** *Hadith, stress level studies, women's leadership, hermeneutics.*

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### Abstrak

Beberapa penelitian menunjukkan bahwa perempuan memiliki kemampuan kepemimpinan yang lebih besar dibandingkan laki-laki. Sebaliknya, penelitian lain menyajikan temuan yang bertentangan dengan pernyataan ini. Hal ini sejalan dengan kontroversi seputar hadis mengenai kepemimpinan perempuan, yang telah memicu perdebatan di masyarakat. Sebagian menafsirkan bahwa hadis tersebut sudah tidak relevan lagi, sementara yang lain mempertahankan keabsahannya dan menafsirkannya sebagai pertanda kehancuran. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengungkapkan penafsiran hadis yang paling mendekati kenyataan. Menggunakan analisis hermeneutik, penelitian ini mengadopsi pendekatan metode campuran (menggabungkan penelitian lapangan dan pustaka) dengan perspektif deskriptif kualitatif. Data diperoleh dari berbagai dokumen penelitian yang diterbitkan dan 200 responden yang dipilih melalui purposive sampling. Temuan penelitian mengungkapkan bahwa hadis mengenai kepemimpinan perempuan memiliki dua penafsiran alternatif, yang berasal dari berbagai kontroversi. Dalam konteks historis, hadis ini ditafsirkan sebagai pertanda kehancuran bagi komunitas yang dipimpin oleh perempuan. Sebaliknya, dalam konteks kontemporer, hadis ini dipahami sebagai tekanan yang mengakibatkan tingkat stres yang sangat tinggi bagi komunitas yang dipimpin oleh perempuan. Diharapkan bahwa opsi kedua ini dapat menjadi alternatif yang mendamaikan kedua perspektif kontroversial tersebut, menegaskan relevansi hadis tersebut tanpa harus mengindikasikan kehancuran.

**Kata kunci:** *Kepemimpinan perempuan, hadis, penafsiran, hermeneutika, kontroversi.*

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Corresponding Author:

Ananda Prayogi

Ma'had Aly Hasyim Asy'ari Pesantren Tebuireng, Jombang, Indonesia; [ananda\\_prayogi@tebuireng.ac.id](mailto:ananda_prayogi@tebuireng.ac.id)



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## Introduction

Women and men exhibit differences in leadership styles, with women often perceived as more competent than men. This assertion finds support in various studies, such as the research conducted by Joseph Folkman and Jack Zenger, which concluded that women possess significantly superior abilities across almost all domains compared to men.<sup>1</sup> Offermann and Foley corroborated this perspective through their study, affirming that women exhibit unique characteristics as leaders, capable of steering organizations toward success or substantial gains.<sup>2</sup> These findings from both studies serve as representative examples of other research highlighting the advantages of women in leadership roles compared to men.

Subsequent studies, however, yielded conclusions that contradicted the findings presented in the preceding paragraph. This is evident from the substantive findings that point towards the elevated stress levels experienced by subordinates under the leadership of women. For instance, research conducted by Marie Claire demonstrated heightened stress among subordinates led by women.<sup>3</sup> Additionally, Andrea Thompson examined various populations, reaching similar conclusions.<sup>4</sup> Crist Irvie's study on female leaders and their correlation with lower stress levels also contributed to this contrasting perspective.<sup>5</sup> Consequently, based on these studies, it can be inferred that there exists a fundamental controversy between certain research findings and others, emphasizing the nuanced nature of this discourse.

Controversies observed in prior research are mirrored in the interpretation of hadiths concerning women leaders, particularly the one asserting that if a woman becomes a leader, her followers will never achieve success.<sup>6</sup> This hadith has sparked controversy as it can be construed differently, both textually, which tends to be perceived as gender-discriminatory, and contextually, which tends to

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<sup>1</sup> Joseph Folkman and Jack Zenger, "Research: Women Score Higher than Men in Most Leadership Skills," *Harvard Business Review*, 2019, 4–8, <https://hbr.org/2019/06/research-women-score-higher-than-men-in-most-leadership-skills>.

<sup>2</sup> Lynn R Offermann and Kira Foley, "Is There a Female Leadership Advantage?," in *Oxford Research Encyclopedia of Business and Management*, 2020.

<sup>3</sup> Marie Claire, "Female Boss Equals More Stress," *Marie Claire UK*, 2008, <https://www.marieclaire.co.uk/life/health-fitness/female-boss-equals-more-stress-180833>.

<sup>4</sup> Andrea Thompson, "Stressed? Your Boss's Gender May Be to Blame" (USA, 2008), <https://www.nbcnews.com/id/wbna26630258>.

<sup>5</sup> Chris Irvine, "Women Find Working For Female Bosses More Stressful" (UK, 2008), <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/3064811/Women-find-working-for-female-bosses-more-stressful.html>.

<sup>6</sup> Abu Abdillah Ahmad ibn Ahmad ibn Muhammad bin Hanbal Al-Syaibani, *Musnad Ahmad Ibn Hanbal*, 1st ed. (Beirut: Dar Ihya' al-Turats al-'Arabiyy, 2001).

be seen as a more liberal interpretation of religious understanding.<sup>7</sup> The crux of the controversy lies in one faction interpreting the hadith as applicable only to ancient times or the era of the Prophet Muhammad PBUH.<sup>8</sup> In essence, they argue that the hadith is no longer relevant when applied to the current context as it is considered factually incongruent. On the other hand, some argue that the hadith remains applicable according to its textual meaning, implying that when women lead, they bring about the destruction of their community.<sup>9</sup> The first opinion aligns with research concluding that women have the ability, and perhaps even excel, in leadership. Conversely, the second opinion is substantively akin to research demonstrating the negative aspects of women's leadership, such as inducing stress.

One of the impacts of this controversy is the proliferation of studies aimed at understanding the mentioned hadith. For instance, Sugiyanto examines this controversial hadith through various perspectives on women's leadership.<sup>10</sup> Asri and Abror also explore this hadith using the Qira'ah Mubadalah approach proposed by Faqihuddin Abdul Qodir, a model of interpretation oriented towards gender justice.<sup>11</sup> These two studies provide a preliminary overview that the interpretation of the hadith regarding women's leadership is indeed a subject of controversy.

The controversy arising from previous studies, parallel to the controversy surrounding the interpretation of hadith on women's leadership, is deemed essential for resolution. This resolution is undertaken to arrive at pertinent conclusions. Furthermore, given that hadith serves as a source of Islamic teachings, it must consistently adapt to contemporary conditions, thereby providing solutions to numerous life challenges.<sup>12</sup> It is not surprising that the

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<sup>7</sup> Abdulkadir Salaudeena & Saidu Ahmad Dukawab. "A CRITIQUE OF ABU BAKRAH'S HADITH ON WOMEN POLITICAL LEADERSHIP." *Journal of Islamic Social Sciences and Humanities* 24, no. 1 (2021): 1-19, 2. <https://abqarijournal.usim.edu.my/index.php/abqari/article/view/264>.

<sup>8</sup> Faiq Ainurrofiq, "THE USE OF HERMENEUTICS DOUBLE MOVEMENT FAZLUR RAHMAN IN COMPREHENDING HADITH OF THE UNSUCCESSFUL LEADERSHIP OF WOMEN," *Jurnal Ushuluddin* 27, no. 2 (2019): 132-44, <https://doi.org/DOI: 10.24014/Jush.v27i2.6719>.

<sup>9</sup> Syamsul Bakri, "Women's Leadership In Islam: A Historical Perspective Of A Hadith," *Indonesian Journal of Islamic Literature and Muslim Society* 5, no. 2 (2020): 219-34.

<sup>10</sup> Eviatiwi Kusumaningtyas Sugiyanto. "Women Leadership Paradigm: Pro and Contra on Women As Leaders in Various Views." *Economics and Business Solutions Journal* 4, no. 1 (2020), 37. <https://doi.org/10.26623/ebsj.v4i1.2241>.

<sup>11</sup> Yusriana Asri, Ziyen, and Indal Abror. "Hadith of Women Leadership in the Qira'ah Mubadalah Approach." *Jurnal Living Hadis* 6, no. 1 (2021): 73. <https://doi.org/10.14421/livinghadis.2021.2900>.

<sup>12</sup> H Abdul Majid Khon, *Takhrij Dan Metode Memahami Hadis* (Amzah, 2022).

interpretation of hadith will continue to evolve over time.<sup>13</sup> From this standpoint, it is understood that resolving the controversy between the two opposing opinions is crucial, especially concerning the interpretation of hadith, which forms the basis of Islamic law.

In line with this, Imtyaz and colleagues also made efforts to establish the relevance of the hadith regarding love for the Arab people in light of the current reality marked by heightened Arab fanaticism and the perception by some that the hadith is no longer relevant. Through their study, Imtyaz concluded that the hadith still holds relevance in fostering respect for the Prophet, who hailed from the Arab community, and for Islam as the doctrine he brought, without necessitating interpretations that lead to excessive fanaticism.<sup>14</sup> Taufiq and Alkholid also examined the relevance of a different hadith, namely the hadith on jihad, emphasizing that it should not be interpreted as a war against non-Muslims but rather as a struggle against contemporary challenges such as ignorance and lagging civilizations.<sup>15</sup> These two studies, at the very least, provide an illustration of the importance of studying the relevance of Prophet's hadith to ensure it is consistently understood in accordance with the evolving times.

Furthermore, Saeful and colleagues reinforce the urgency of this topic by presenting the controversy surrounding the interpretation of hadith on women's leadership through comprehensive and in-depth arguments from both proponents and opponents.<sup>16</sup> In a related context, Ainurrofiq examines the hadith narrated by Abu Bakrah using Fazlur Rahman's double movement hermeneutical approach.<sup>17</sup> However, Ainurrofiq does not focus on correlating it with stress levels, distinguishing his research from current studies. Based on a review of these literary works, this study is considered essential to provide a more nuanced contribution to the understanding of hadith on women's leadership. Additionally, such a nuanced understanding can remain relevant to the current reality, serving as both a guiding principle and a problem-solving tool

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<sup>13</sup> Baharudin Zamawi Zamawi, "Kritik Hadis Zakaria Ouzon," *Al-Mada: Jurnal Agama, Sosial, Dan Budaya* 2, no. 1 (2019): 35–48, <https://doi.org/10.31538/almada.v2i1.221>.

<sup>14</sup> Rizkiyatul Imtyas et al., "Religion Source and Politics: A Case Study on The Hadith of 'Loving The Arabs Is Faith and Hating Them Is Infidel' and It's Relevance in Indonesia Context," 2020, <https://doi.org/10.4108/eai.7-11-2019.2294558>.

<sup>15</sup> Firmanda Taufiq and Ayu Maulida Alkholid, "Kontekstualisasi Hadis Tentang Jihad Dan Relevansinya Dalam Konflik Timur Tengah," *AL QUDS : Jurnal Studi Alquran Dan Hadis* 5, no. 1 (2021): 337, <https://doi.org/10.29240/alquds.v5i1.2471>.

<sup>16</sup> A Saeful et al., "Study of The Hadith of Female Leadership," in *ICIIS and ICESTIIS* (Jakarta: EAI - UIN Syarif Hidayatullah Jakarta, 2022), <https://doi.org/10.4108/eai.20-10-2021.2316323>.

<sup>17</sup> Ainurrofiq, "THE USE OF HERMENEUTICS DOUBLE MOVEMENT FAZLUR RAHMAN IN COMPREHENDING HADITH OF THE UNSUCCESSFUL LEADERSHIP OF WOMEN."

for various life challenges. This ensures that religious teachings continue to align with the ongoing reality.

The arguments presented in the above paragraphs provide an overview of the urgency for conducting this research. Accordingly, this study focuses on addressing six discussion points. Firstly, it introduces the controversy surrounding the interpretation of hadith on women's leadership. Subsequently, hermeneutics as an analytical technique is discussed, encompassing aspects such as definition, influential figures, and its applicative domains. Thirdly, the study delves into the interpretation of the hadith, specifically focusing on the term 'yuflih' (يُفْلِح). Moving forward, the research presents findings from stress-related studies associated with the interpretation of the hadith. The fifth point involves showcasing the results of questionnaire distribution. Finally, the research relates the outcomes of field studies and literature reviews on stress levels to the meaning of the hadith on women's leadership.

Through a descriptive qualitative approach, this literature and field research employs hermeneutical principles as its analytical framework. Data is derived from various research findings published in various journals and other electronic media. Additionally, this study gathers data from the field through a questionnaire distributed in the form of a Google Form. The questionnaire consists of five questions focusing on the respondents' perceptions of the effects when led by either a woman or a man. The questionnaire's orientation emphasizes the comparison of stress levels experienced when led by individuals of each gender. The sample comprises 200 individuals, consisting of 100 males and 100 females, selected using purposive sampling techniques.

## **Controversies in Understanding the Hadith**

The first perspective on the understanding of hadith on women's leadership emanates from feminist circles. This feminist paradigm is often intertwined with religious views, particularly within Islam, drawing values from the Qur'an and hadith. In the context of feminist paradigms closely linked to women's issues, Amina Wadud, a professor of Islamic Studies and feminist activist at Virginia Commonwealth University, employs two methodological approaches in interpreting the Qur'an known as "Monotheistic Hermeneutics."<sup>18</sup> The first approach, known as normative idealism, aligns with feminist theology, referring to norms derived from ideal Islamic teachings. In this approach, she explores how the Qur'an formulates normative principles, such as how a woman should

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<sup>18</sup> Lukman Hakim, "Mis-Interpretasi Ayat Kepemimpinan Laki-Laki Atas Perempuan (Kritik Terhadap 'Tafsir Feminis')," *Studia Quranika* 1, no. 2 (2017): 235–60, <https://ejournal.unida.gontor.ac.id/index.php/quranika/article/view/848>.

behave towards her Lord, others, and herself. The second approach is historical-empirical, examining how normative idealism in the Qur'an corresponds to the historical reality and the situation of women in Islamic society.<sup>19</sup> Thus, Wadud creates a theoretical perspective that combines normative idealism from the Qur'an with historical observations and empirical conditions of women in society.

Furthermore, Islamic feminist figures assert that there is no legitimacy in subjugating women beneath men; there exists a normative system of division of labor within the family and society. In Islam, there are no values hindering women from working and thriving in the public sphere. In Al-Maidah verse 55, which also implies four criteria for leadership, the passage does not mention or question the gender of individuals who can assume leadership roles.<sup>20</sup> The four criteria are a) faith in Allah SWT; b) performing prayers; c) paying Zakat; and d) always submitting and being obedient to Allah SWT. According to Al-Maidah verse 55, there is no prohibition for women to become leaders.

One interpretation suggests the existence of a narrative on women's leadership in Surah Al-Naml: 23-44, depicting the leadership figure of Queen Balqis. The ideal characteristics of women's leadership in Surah Al-Naml: 23-44 include wisdom, a democratic approach, diplomacy, a love for peace, intelligence, and responsibility.<sup>21</sup> Queen Balqis's leadership is characterized by democracy, where decisions are not made solely based on her own will but also consider the opinions of those involved.<sup>22</sup> This indicates that Islam provides opportunities for women to become leaders and exercise leadership according to their abilities. In Surah Al-Naml, specifically, the narrative portrays a female leader who is capable of changing people's perspectives, discouraging discrimination against women's leadership.

If a woman possesses good leadership characteristics, there is no issue with her becoming a leader, as long as she does not forget her roles as a mother and a wife and does not violate religious norms.<sup>23</sup> In connection with hadiths on women's leadership, feminists do not place heavy emphasis on what is textually evident in hadith texts; rather, they consider the broader teachings of Islam, primarily derived from the Qur'an. From this, it can be concluded that, according

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<sup>19</sup> Sugiyanto, "Women Leadership Paradigm: Pro and Contra on Women As Leaders in Various Views."

<sup>20</sup> Yunahar Ilyas, "Problem Kepemimpinan Perempuan Dalam Islam: Tinjauan Tafsir Al-Qur'an," *Tarjih: Jurnal Tarjih Dan Pengembangan Pemikiran Islam* 3, no. 1 (2002): 63–73.

<sup>21</sup> Syafieh Syafieh and Nurbaiti Nurbaiti, "Potret Karakteristik Kepemimpinan Perempuan (Analisis Semiotika Surat Al-Naml: 23-44)," *Jurnal At-Tibyan: Jurnal Ilmu Alqur'an Dan Tafsir* 3, no. 1 (2018): 42–55.

<sup>22</sup> Moch Tohet and Lathifatul Maulidia, "Kepemimpinan Perempuan Perspektif Mufassir Nusantara," *Jurnal Islam Nusantara* 2, no. 2 (2018): 211–31.

<sup>23</sup> Syafieh and Nurbaiti, "Potret Karakteristik Kepemimpinan Perempuan (Analisis Semiotika Surat Al-Naml: 23-44)."

to feminists, hadiths on women's leadership may be considered irrelevant to the current era and also to the Qur'an, which holds greater strength and more universal values.

The issue of women's leadership remains a subject of debate among critics. Yusuf (2015) elucidates that the rejection of women's leadership by some individuals is grounded in the Qur'an, specifically Surah Al-Nisa/4:34, with the translation: "...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...". The male leadership outlined in this verse becomes the basis for legitimizing men's right to lead in various domains, including worship, thus conferring upon men the privilege and authority of being leader. Consequently, women are relegated to the role of followers in all aspects of their lives.<sup>24</sup> Conversely, this perspective contrasts with the viewpoint of Bugis scholars who assert that Surah Al-Nisa was revealed in the context of family leadership rather than in other realms. This implies that women have opportunities in the public domain to assume leadership roles as long as they meet the required qualifications.<sup>25</sup> This stance aligns with the arguments presented by feminists who emphasize clearer Qur'anic evidence according to their interpretation.

The debate about women as leaders arises from the evaluation of stereotypes within a particular group. Conclusions drawn from these stereotypes result in prejudices against individuals within that group. The incongruence between stereotypes and associated attributes tends to lead to discrimination.<sup>26</sup> The misalignment between expectations of women and expectations of leaders highlights biases against women's leadership. Stereotypes regarding women's roles in the public sphere existed long before the advent of Islam, especially in ancient Arabian Peninsula, where women were considered second-class citizens after men.<sup>27</sup> The laws of that time were a combination of inherited values from Mesopotamia and religious values drawn from sacred texts such as the Old Testament, New Testament, particularly in historical books, and more detailed in the Talmud. All information in these texts tends to depict women as second-class citizens who must submit to male authority. Sayid Qutb in "Hakim"<sup>28</sup> explains that men also possess specific attributes, equipped with courage, less

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<sup>24</sup> M Afif Anshori, "Perempuan: Perspektif Filsafat, Tasawuf Dan Fiqih," *Al-Adyan: Jurnal Studi Lintas Agama* 10, no. 1 (2015): 1–18.

<sup>25</sup> Muhammad Yusuf, "Kepemimpinan Perempuan Dalam Perspektif Kearifan Lokal: Pemikiran Ulama Bugis Dan Budaya Bugis," *Journal of Social Science and Religion* 22, no. 1 (2015): 69–81.

<sup>26</sup> Alice H Eagly and Linda L Carli, "The Female Leadership Advantage: An Evaluation of the Evidence," *The Leadership Quarterly* 14, no. 6 (2003): 807–34.

<sup>27</sup> Wahyudi Wahyudi and Nur Fadilah, "Tinjauan Hermeneutis Terhadap Hadis Kepemimpinan Perempuan Dalam Islam," *FIKRI: Jurnal Kajian Agama, Sosial Dan Budaya* 3, no. 2 (2018): 277–88.

<sup>28</sup> Hakim, "Mis-Interpretasi Ayat Kepemimpinan Laki-Laki Atas Perempuan (Kritik Terhadap Tafsir Feminis)."

sensitivity and reactivity in their emotions, and always use deliberation and thought before acting and reacting. Therefore, these specific traits make them more capable of leadership and more deserving of development as leaders.

Some groups reject women's leadership based on the history of Islamic propagation; this argument spans from the time of Prophet Adam to Prophet Muhammad and the leaders chosen by scholars, all of whom were men. They also refer to hadiths discussed in this research.<sup>29</sup> In essence, the issue of women as leaders in Islam, referencing these hadiths, has both proponents and opponents with varying perspectives.

Issues related to controversy and differing opinions concerning women's leadership stem from varying perspectives. For instance, the Bugis scholars' viewpoint explains that Surah Al-Nisa was revealed in the context of family leadership rather than in other domains, implying that women have opportunities in the public sphere to assume leadership roles as long as they meet the necessary qualifications.<sup>30</sup> However, some argue that Surah Al-Nisa serves as the basis for legitimizing men's right to lead in various fields, elucidating that interpretations derived from religious texts with a hermeneutical approach are relative and not entirely objective.

Based on the exposition above, the controversy surrounding the understanding of hadiths on women's leadership, particularly in connection with the universal concept of women's leadership, can be categorized into two groups. The first group asserts that hadiths on women's leadership are considered irrelevant to the present time and advocate a review of stronger sources such as the Qur'an, seen as a more universal concept. Meanwhile, the second group interprets the hadiths in a more literal manner while still adhering to the evidence from the Qur'an, albeit with differing interpretations. This group contends that female leaders are in accordance with the Qur'anic evidence stating that men are leaders over women, besides considering that women possess many negative aspects or shortcomings in terms of leadership.

### **Review of Hermeneutical Analysis of the Hadith**

Hermeneutics, according to Richard E. Palmer, can be simply defined as a method of interpreting foreign and ancient texts to make them familiar, relevant, or contemporary.<sup>31</sup> This method delves into the meanings of a text beyond what

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<sup>29</sup> Ahmad Adnan, "Pendapatan Kritis Terhadap Pendekatan Feminis," *El-Hikmah* 8, no. 3 (2016): 80.

<sup>30</sup> Yusuf, "Kepemimpinan Perempuan Dalam Perspektif Kearifan Lokal: Pemikiran Ulama Bugis Dan Budaya Bugis."

<sup>31</sup> Richard E. Palmer, *Hermeneutics: Interpretation Theory in Schleiermacher, Dilthey, Heidegger, and Gadamer (Studies in Phenomenology and Existential Philosophy)* (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1969), <https://www.amazon.com/Hermeneutics-Studies-Phenomenology-Existential-Philosophy/dp/0810104598>.



the original author understood, influenced by socio-historical contexts at that time.<sup>32</sup> This concept can be realized by introducing the current reality as the object interpreted by the text. The interpretive technique with hermeneutics can begin with reading the current reality, then presenting the text from the past, and finally bringing it back to the current reality.<sup>33</sup> In essence, hermeneutics is a method for interpreting texts from the context when the text emerged to the present context by examining the current reality.

In the context of hadith, hermeneutics has been widely employed by scholars to interpret the meanings contained within hadiths. Among them, as articulated by Sahiron Syamsuddin, are Fazlur Rahman, Muhammad al-Ghazali, Syuhudi Ismail, Muhammad Syahrur, Khaled M. Abou El Fadl, and Yusuf al-Qardawi.<sup>34</sup> Some of them, while not explicitly stating the use of hermeneutical methods, fundamentally apply them in their interpretations.

Fazlur Rahman and Khaled M. Abou El Fadl are two figures who can be represented as users of hermeneutical analysis emphasizing historical aspects. Rahman examines hadith texts through a situational or historical setting approach in which the text emerges.<sup>35</sup> However, he does not generalize the entire hadith corpus; rather, he contends that some can be understood with historical aspects, while others cannot. From this argument, he suggests that hadiths can be divided into two categories: historical and normative.<sup>36</sup> On the other hand, Abou El Fadl does not solely focus on historical aspects but considers all elements involved in interpreting the hadith from its inception to the present. In hermeneutics, this method, through its triadic nature, is referred to as negotiative hermeneutics.<sup>37</sup> Both figures are robust proponents of using hermeneutics, particularly in historical aspects.

Muhammad al-Ghazali and Syuhudi Ismail also exhibit distinctive characteristics in employing hermeneutics to interpret the meanings of hadiths. Al-Ghazali places more emphasis on the conformity of hadith meanings with the interpretation or stronger evidence, namely the Quran. This is evident when he interprets hadiths on women's leadership, seemingly conflicting with the Quranic explanation of Queen Bilqis's leadership.<sup>38</sup> In hermeneutics, an

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<sup>32</sup> Michael Crotty, *The Foundations of Social Research: Meaning and Perspective in the Research Process* (London; Thousand Oaks, Calif: SAGE Publications, 1998).

<sup>33</sup> Kurdi, *Hermeneutika Al-Qur'an & Hadis* (Yogyakarta: elSAQ Press, 2010), [http://senayan.iain-palangkaraya.ac.id/index.php?p=show\\_detail&id=9528&keywords=](http://senayan.iain-palangkaraya.ac.id/index.php?p=show_detail&id=9528&keywords=).

<sup>34</sup> Kurdi.

<sup>35</sup> Fazlur Rahman, *Islamic Methodology in History* (Pakistan: Islamic Research Institute Press, 1965).

<sup>36</sup> Fazlur Rahman, *Islam*, ed. Senoaji Saleh (Jakarta: Bumi Aksara, 1987), 85.

<sup>37</sup> Kurdi, *Hermeneutika Al-Qur'an & Hadis*.

<sup>38</sup> Muhammad Al-Ghazali, *Al-Sunnah Al-Nabawiyah Bain Ahl Al-Fiqh Wa Ahl Al-Hadis* (Kairo: Hadza Dinuna, 1989).

interpretive model like this is referred to as "pre-understanding." On the other hand, Ismail has a characteristic that emphasizes the linguistic aspect of the interpreted hadiths. Additionally, he does not negate the historical aspect by distinguishing between hadiths that have universal and local-temporal meanings.<sup>39</sup> When connected to hermeneutics, this aligns with the triadic principle of hermeneutics, which states that the author-text-reader, separated by time and language, serves as a cultural product used as a tool.<sup>40</sup> From this perspective, it can be understood that although both figures use hermeneutics to interpret hadiths, at a more nuanced level, each has its own tendencies.

In this research, the tendency employed revolves around the historical aspect, distinguished by the contemporary context based on the prevailing reality. This aligns with the fundamental principles of hermeneutics discussed earlier, emphasizing that this interpretive model involves bringing the historical context into the current reality.<sup>41</sup> In other words, if the past, as indicated by the text, unfolded in a certain manner, then the present is adjusted to the prevailing reality. Certainly, this does not deviate from the principle of interpreting hadiths historically, extracting their values and aligning them with the potential dangers or meanings conveyed in the hadith texts.<sup>42</sup> Therefore, this research formulates its own distinctiveness in interpreting the hadiths on women's leadership as an alternative meaning amid the various controversial interpretations that have existed thus far.

To achieve this, the research formulates four hermeneutic interpretation steps. Firstly, a linguistic study is conducted on the text that needs interpretation using this method, particularly focusing on specific controversial phrases. Secondly, examining the historical aspects of the hadith used to interpret it at the time of its revelation. Thirdly, observing or analyzing the present conditions most relevant to the textual meaning of the hadith. Fourthly, contextualizing the meaning of the hadith by making it relevant to the current reality based on the historical values of the hadith itself.

### **Interpretation of the Word 'Yuflih' in Hadith**

Before delving further into the meaning of 'yuflih' and hermeneutical analysis, this section elucidates the hadith on women's leadership in question and its analysis in terms of language and the context at the time the hadith emerged.

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<sup>39</sup> M. Syuhudi Ismail, *Hadis Nabi Yang Tekstual Dan Kontekstual Telaah Ma'ani Al Hadis Tentang Ajaran Islam Yang Universal, Temporal, Dan Lokal* (Jakarta: Bulan Bintang, 2009).

<sup>40</sup> Kurdi, *Hermeneutika Al-Qur'an & Hadis*.

<sup>41</sup> Crotty, *The Foundations of Social Research : Meaning and Perspective in the Research Process*.

<sup>42</sup> Kurdi, *Hermeneutika Al-Qur'an & Hadis*.

The following is the hadith narrated by Abu Bakrah as documented in Sahih al-Bukhari, specifically in the book of *al-fitan*, number 7099.

حدثنا عثمان بن الهيثم، حدثنا عوف، عن الحسن عن أبي بكره قال: لقد نفعني الله بكلمة أيام الجمل لما بلغ النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم أن فارسا ملكوا ابنة كسرى، قال: [لَنْ يُفْلِحَ قَوْمٌ وَلَوْ أَمَرَهُمْ إِمْرَأَةٌ].<sup>43</sup>

The above hadith is narrated by Al-Bukhari in his book *Sahih*, specifically in the *kitab al-fitan* or the chapter on the collection of tribulations. Since this hadith is recorded by Al-Bukhari, it is considered authentic because he is a renowned hadith narrator, and Sahih al-Bukhari is one of the most authentic books after the Quran. This perspective is reinforced by Jonathan A.C. Brown in his study, stating that Sahih al-Bukhari is a canonical book with extremely high authenticity in Islam.<sup>44</sup> This makes the book a primary foundation in assessing the validity of a hadith, alongside Sahih Muslim.<sup>45</sup> Therefore, with external criticism, this hadith can be deemed highly authentic, serving as a cornerstone or foundational teaching in Islam.

From the perspective of *asbab al-wurud* and historical context, the hadith on female leadership is associated with the historical events near the Battle of Jamal, where the Prophet Muhammad declared that a state led by a woman would not achieve success. This hadith emerged during the time when a woman was crowned as queen in Persia, an unusual occurrence given the prevailing policy of having men in leadership roles. The event unfolded amidst political turmoil, involving rebellions and power struggles among the descendants of Kisra, culminating in the ascent to the throne of a woman named Buwaran binti Syairawaih bin Kisra bin Barwaiz.<sup>46</sup> Buwaran's leadership as a woman contradicted Persian traditions that were traditionally led by men. The context of this hadith's emergence was when the Prophet's letter, initially rejected and torn by the reigning king, was received, and upon learning of the woman's ascension to the throne, he uttered this hadith.<sup>47</sup> This background provides a comprehensive understanding of how the hadith originated and gained popularity during the time of the Battle of Jamal.

<sup>43</sup> Muhammad ibn Isma'il Al-Bukhari, *Al-Jami' Al-Sahih Al-Musnad Min Hadis Rasul Allah Wa Sunanibi Wa Ayyamibi*, 1st ed. (Beirut - Lebanon: Dar al-Fikr, 2006).

<sup>44</sup> Jonathan A.C. Brown, *The Canonization of Al-Bukhārī and Muslim: The Formation and Function of the Sunnī Ḥadīth Canon*, 1st ed. (Leiden: Brill, 2007).

<sup>45</sup> Mochamad Ismail Hasan, "Kanonisasi Jonathan Brown Atas Shahih Al-Bukhari," *Living Islam: Journal of Islamic Discourses* 2, no. 1 (2019): 35–54.

<sup>46</sup> Nawir Yuslem, "Kontekstualitas Pemahaman Hadis," *MIQOT: Jurnal Ilmu-Ilmu Keislaman* 34, no. 1 (2010): 1–22, <http://jurnalmiqotojs.uinsu.ac.id/index.php/jurnalmiqot/article/view/182/281>.

<sup>47</sup> Hana Rizayanti, Jannatul Husna, and Waharjani, "Studi Ma'anil Hadis: Analisis Kontekstual Makna Hadis Tentang Kepemimpinan Wanita The," *Kontemplasi: Jurnal Ilmu-Ilmu Ushuluddin* 10, no. 1 (2022): 60–79, <http://jurnalmiqotojs.uinsu.ac.id/index.php/jurnalmiqot/article/view/182/281>.

Furthermore, the significance of 'yuflih' (يُفْلِحُ) in the hadith on female leadership is crucial to understand both linguistically and contextually, encompassing a variety of potential meanings derived from this term. This is essential due to its relevance to the current reality, specifically concerning an individual's psychological state, rather than just a general notion of success. The term 'yuflih' itself can be interpreted as victory, success, good fortune, and happiness. Some closest synonyms for this word include 'faza' (فَازَ) meaning victory, 'najaha' (نَجَحَ) meaning success, 'rabiha' (رَبِحَ) meaning good fortune, and 'sa'ida' (سَعِدَ) meaning happiness.<sup>48</sup> Al-Fairuzabadi in *al-Qamus al-Muhith* provides similar definitions for this term.<sup>49</sup> As seen in the context of the call to prayer (azan), 'yuflih' is often translated not only as success or good fortune but also as happiness.

When the concept of happiness is applied to understand the term 'yuflih' in the discussed hadith on female leadership in this study, the implication of the interpretation is that when women assume leadership in a society, that society will not achieve happiness. This interpretation aligns with several studies mentioned in the introduction regarding the high stress levels among subordinates when led by women. This is attributed to the psychological aspect of women, which tends to be more emotional than men, thus influencing their leadership style and behavior towards their subordinates.

The exposition in the previous paragraph forms a new argument that the term 'yuflih' in the hadith may be interpreted as 'happiness.' This is because the concept of happiness in the field of psychology can be explored through various methods, one of which is the Depression Anxiety Stress Scale (DASS). DASS is a method used to measure an individual's level of depression, anxiety, and stress based on a specific scale. One of the variables measured in this scale is the stress variable, which can be correlated with the findings of studies indicating that subordinates led by women feel more stressed compared to when led by men.<sup>50</sup> This idea can then be connected to the interpretation of the hadith on female leadership when the term 'yuflih' is understood as happiness. Thus, the hadith remains relevant based on recent studies on stress levels. In essence, this argument provides an understanding that there is a correlation between the perceived negative meaning of the hadith on female leadership and the lack of happiness, as measured by the high levels of stress.

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<sup>48</sup> Arabnesia, "Aflaha - Yuflihu," ◉ *Kamus Online Arab - Indonesia*, 2023, <https://arabnesia.com/أَفْلَحَ-يُفْلِحُ/>.

<sup>49</sup> Muhammad ibn Ya'qub Al-Fairuzabadi, *Al-Qamus Al-Muhith*, ed. Muhammad Na'im Al-'Iraqsusi, 2nd ed. (Beirut - Lebanon: Muassasah al-Risalah, 2005), 234.

<sup>50</sup> Luke Parkitny and James McAuley, "The Depression Anxiety Stress Scale (DASS)," *Journal of Physiotherapy* 56, no. 3 (2010): 204.

In addition to the term 'yuflih,' the word 'qoum' (قوم) can be interpreted as a community or a group of people living under one system headed by a leader. The term 'amra' (أمر) can be understood as ruling or exercising authority within that system. Meanwhile, the word 'imra'ah' (امرأة) can be interpreted as a woman in a general and absolute sense.

### Mapping of Stress Level Studies

The following presents the mapping results of this study on several research works examining the relationship between gender differences in leadership and the stress levels experienced by subordinates. The mapping is displayed in **Table 1**.

**Table 1. List of Stress Level Studies**

No	Study Titles		Institutions (Countries)	Results
1	Boss' Gender Impacts Employee Stress Levels		American Sociological Association (USA)	Female leaders are significantly more likely to increase stress among their subordinates compared to their male counterparts. <sup>51</sup>
2	Female Equals More Stress	Boss	Marie Claire (UK)	Women experience considerably more stress when led by a female leader than when led by a male leader. <sup>52</sup>
3	Stressed? Your Boss's Gender May be to Blame	Your Gender	NBC UNIVERSAL (USA)	A study conducted at the University of Toronto indicates that women tend to experience more stress than men when led by a female superior. <sup>53</sup>
4	Women Find Working For Female Bosses More Stressful	Find For Bosses	Telegraph Media Group (UK)	Women report higher stress levels than men when working under the leadership of another woman. <sup>54</sup>
5	The Tyranny of the Queen Bee		The Wall Street Journal (USA)	A survey of 1000 female subordinates by the American Sociological Association revealed that 95% of them are inclined to

<sup>51</sup> American Sociological Association, "Boss' Gender Impacts Employee Stress Levels" (USA, 2008), <https://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2008/09/080908125150.htm>.

<sup>52</sup> Claire, "Female Boss Equals More Stress."

<sup>53</sup> Thompson, "Stressed? Your Boss's Gender May Be to Blame."

<sup>54</sup> Irvine, "Women Find Working For Female Bosses More Stressful."

		feel stressed, with their careers being hindered when their superior is also a woman. <sup>55</sup>
6	Why We Don't Like Women Bosses (and Why It Matters)	The Business Times (Singapore)
		Female leaders have a higher potential to generate stress among their subordinates in the workplace due to their greater propensity for being judgmental. <sup>56</sup>
7	Etc.	

Based on the data presented in **Table 1**, it can be observed that there are numerous studies supporting the potential stress induced by female leaders. This indicates that the on-the-ground reality aligns with the fact that subordinates tend to feel more stressed when led by women compared to men. However, several factors may underlie this fact, as other studies suggest that women excel in leadership compared to men.<sup>57</sup> Female leaders are also inclined towards democratic leadership, actively engaging and monitoring their subordinates, whereas male leaders tend to assert authority at the beginning of work and then allow their subordinates to complete their tasks.<sup>58</sup>

Lydia Smith explains that one of the contributing factors to this difference is the deeply rooted stereotypes in society, leading to different standards being applied to men and women.<sup>59</sup> These studies acknowledge the positive aspects of women in leadership compared to men. However, when viewed from the perspective of the stress levels experienced by their subordinates, this conclusion is still considered a factual reality based on the aforementioned studies.

### Results of Survey Distribution as Reality

There are several tentative assumptions drawn from observations and interviews with individuals encountered by the researchers regarding their

<sup>55</sup> Peggy Drexler, "The Tyranny of the Queen Bee," *The Wall Street Journal*, 2013, <https://www.wsj.com/articles/SB10001424127887323884304578328271526080496>.

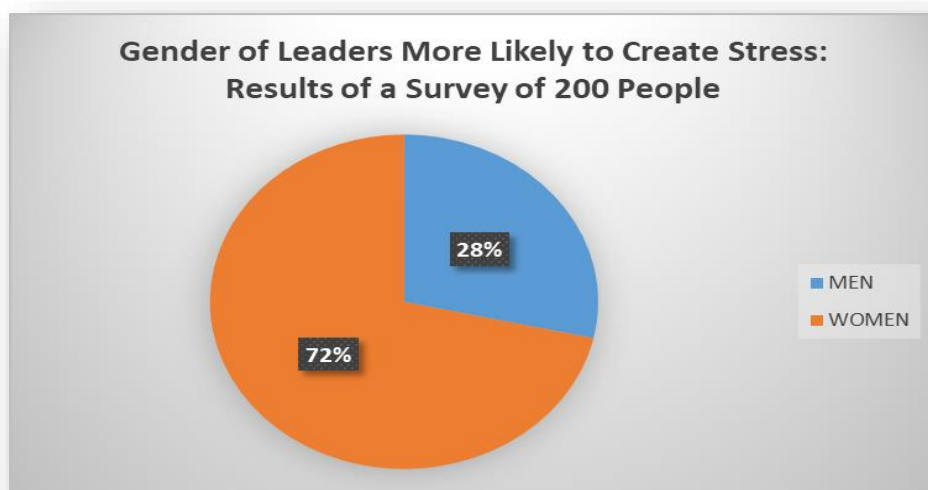
<sup>56</sup> Vivien Shiao, "Why We Don't Like Women Bosses (and Why It Matters)" (Singapore, 2016), <https://www.businesstimes.com.sg/opinion-features/columns/why-we-dont-women-bosses-and-why-it-matters>.

<sup>57</sup> Folkman and Zenger, "Research: Women Score Higher than Men in Most Leadership Skills."

<sup>58</sup> Alice H Eagly and Blair T Johnson, "Gender and Leadership Style: A Meta-Analysis," *Psychological Bulletin* 108, no. 2 (1990): 233.

<sup>59</sup> Lydia Smith, "Why We Dislike Criticism When It's given by a Woman Boss" (UK, 2020), [https://uk.finance.yahoo.com/news/why-we-dislike-criticism-when-its-given-by-a-woman-boss-060040190.html?guccounter=1&guce\\_referrer=aHR0cHM6Ly93d3cuZ29vZ2xlLnNvbS8&guce\\_referrer\\_sig=AQAAANb2mhcEHF-02k\\_ATp0eSLMOFnpY64ozRYmGUbOwpVq7\\_4H-1Kemvw0IWLZB0Gte4yZt](https://uk.finance.yahoo.com/news/why-we-dislike-criticism-when-its-given-by-a-woman-boss-060040190.html?guccounter=1&guce_referrer=aHR0cHM6Ly93d3cuZ29vZ2xlLnNvbS8&guce_referrer_sig=AQAAANb2mhcEHF-02k_ATp0eSLMOFnpY64ozRYmGUbOwpVq7_4H-1Kemvw0IWLZB0Gte4yZt).

perceptions of gender differences in their leaders and the influence on them. These assumptions are based on various studies that indicate differences in leadership patterns between women and men.<sup>60</sup> However, the interview results reveal that a majority of them prefer being led by men rather than women because they perceive that women tend to utilize their emotional side more in leadership compared to men.<sup>61</sup> Furthermore, some expressed that they would experience stress more frequently when led by women. This reality is reinforced by the following survey distribution results, focusing on stress levels.

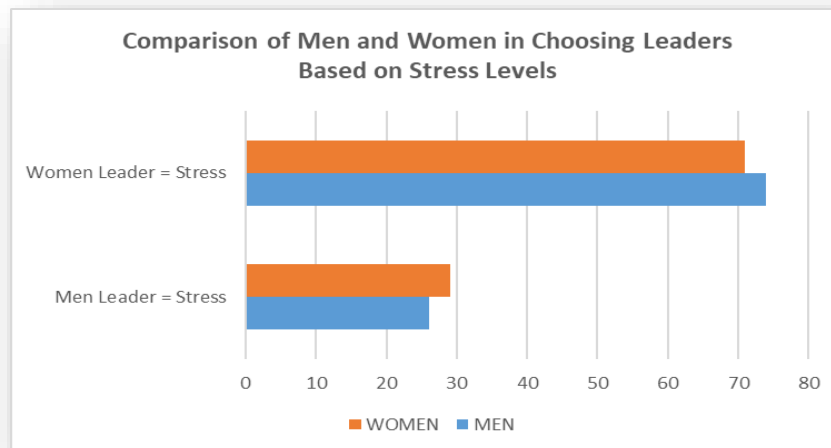


**Figure 1. Gender of Leaders Considered More Likely to Create Stress**

After conducting a survey with a questionnaire among 200 individuals, both males and females, whom the researcher encountered, 143 of them (72%) selected women as leaders perceived to create more stress compared to men, while the remaining 28% responded otherwise [See **Figure 1**]. This data indicates a significant gap in public perception regarding the difference in the pressure or stress they experience when led by men or women. Based on this data, more than two-thirds of respondents claim to experience more stress when led by women than by men. In other words, according to some segments of society, a majority of women (based on respondents encountered by the researcher through purposive sampling deemed representative) as leaders may be more likely to trigger stress.

<sup>60</sup> Sanghee Park, "Gendered Leadership During the COVID-19 Pandemic: How Democracy and Representation Moderate Leadership Effectiveness," *Public Management Review* 24, no. 11 (2022): 1802–23, <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/14719037.2021.1937294>.

<sup>61</sup> Data diambil dari hasil wawancara pribadi peneliti terhadap sejumlah orang yang ditemui di lingkungan peneliti.



**Figure 2. Comparison of Men and Women in Choosing Leaders Based on Stress Levels**

This study also categorized respondents into women and men, and surprisingly, no significant differences were found in this categorization. The survey results indicate that out of 100 women, 71 of them chose women as leaders more likely to cause stress, while men also showed little difference, with 74 out of 100 men [See **Figure 2**]. The visualization of this data reveals a relatively small gap between men and women regarding their choices. This evidence contradicts some initial assumptions stating that female voters tend to feel stressed when led by fellow women, while men do not have an issue with it. In contrast, this data shows no significant difference between men and women in determining their preferences.

### Relevance of Stress Level Studies to the Hadith

Based on the exposition in the previous sub-discussion, studies conducted by various institutions, both from the media and research agencies, demonstrate the significant impact of female leaders on the stress levels of their subordinates compared to male leaders. Although, according to some of these studies, the notable difference is mainly observed among women towards female leaders,<sup>62</sup> men also exhibit a tendency that is not significantly different.<sup>63</sup> This conclusion

<sup>62</sup> Irvine, "Women Find Working For Female Bosses More Stressful"; Thompson, "Stressed? Your Boss's Gender May Be to Blame"; Claire, "Female Boss Equals More Stress."

<sup>63</sup> Shiao, "Why We Don't Like Women Bosses (and Why It Matters)"; American Sociological Association, "Boss' Gender Impacts Employee Stress Levels."



is supported by the initial data presented in the previous sub-discussion, indicating that there is no significant difference between men and women. Therefore, it can be concluded that both men and women are equally likely to experience higher levels of pressure or stress when their leader is female.

In relation to the hadith on female leadership, through hermeneutical analysis, the fact that there is a higher level of stress when led by women can be correlated with the meaning of the word 'yuflih,' which translates to happy. In other words, the stress level becomes one of the crucial indicators to assess whether someone is happy or not,<sup>64</sup> so the statement in the hadith that a female leader will not create happiness can be interpreted as not creating an environment with a low level of stress. The existence of a relationship between a low level of stress and happiness is reinforced by the findings of a study conducted by Schiffrin and Nelson in the *Journal of Happiness Studies*, demonstrating the alignment between the happiness level and the stress experienced by an individual.<sup>65</sup>

Furthermore, when examined from a historical perspective, it turns out that the hadith is closely related to the meaning of destruction intended by the Prophet Muhammad SAW for a specific kingdom. The value of this historical interpretation is consistent when the word 'yuflih' is understood as success or the opposite of destruction or failure. However, the current reality is different. The reality in question is the result of studies on stress levels, which are significantly influenced by the gender of female leaders. If we hermeneutically connect this stress level with the meaning of 'yuflih,' interpreted as happiness in the hadith, there is a strong alignment, especially considering the initial data presented above, which has been supported by various studies conducted in the United Kingdom, United States of America, and Singapore. Additionally, the field data obtained in the previous sub-discussion further strengthens the existing reality, namely the stress levels experienced by subordinates when led by women.

The final stage of hermeneutical analysis applied here, after the previous three steps of linguistic, historical, and current reality exploration, is contextualization. The contextualization of the meaning of the hadith, as an alternative interpretation offered by this study, presents two conditions. First, when the hadith is interpreted in the context of its initial appearance, the

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<sup>64</sup> Sari Yunita Sidabalok and Andita Sayekti, "Pengaruh Kebahagiaan Dan Manajemen Stres Terhadap Kinerja Perawat Rawat Inap ( Studi Kasus Di RSUD Dr . Djasamen Saragih Pematangsiantar , Sumatera Utara ) The Effect of Happiness and Stress Management on Inpatient Nurse Performance ( Case Study : RSUD Dr.," *Socia: Jurnal Ilmu-Ummu Sosial* 17, no. 1 (2020): 57–70, file:///C:/Users/Windows 10/Downloads/26608-108730-1-PB.pdf.

<sup>65</sup> Holly H. Schiffrin and S. Katherine Nelson, "Stressed and Happy? Investigating the Relationship between Happiness and Perceived Stress," *Journal of Happiness Studies* 11, no. 1 (2010): 33–39, <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10902-008-9104-7>.

intended meaning is success. Second, if interpreted in the current context, the hadith signifies happiness, not success.

The second point introduces a controversial interpretation of the hadith that remains unresolved, namely the debate between the textual group that maintains success as the interpretation and the contextual group that considers the hadith only applicable in the past. In other words, the textual group interprets that if a community is led by women, its destruction is inevitable. Meanwhile, another group interprets that this hadith is no longer relevant for various reasons. From this, it can be concluded as an alternative that the meaning of the hadith on female leadership remains applicable but is interpreted not as destruction but as unhappiness marked by high stress levels.

## **Conclusion**

The hadith on female leadership is understood to some extent by at least two opposing or controversial parties. The first party claims that the hadith on female leadership is no longer relevant, while the second party, conversely, adheres to the literal or textual meaning. Both parties still use their respective Qur'anic evidence but with different interpretations. Hermeneutics here then comes into play to offer a new interpretation of the hadith to address this controversy. Hermeneutics, defined as an interpretative method that focuses on the historical aspects surrounding the author of the text, the text itself, and also the reader.

The hadith on female leadership can be understood as a hadith that is inseparable from the contextual framework of its time and can be interpreted linguistically to yield various other meanings. One highlighted meaning in this study is the interpretation of 'yuflih,' which can be understood not only as success or good fortune but also as happiness. This interpretation is supported by numerous studies on the relationship between gender differences in leadership and the level of stress experienced by subordinates. These studies provide a significant depiction of the current factual scenario. Furthermore, the field data directly collected by the researcher serves as robust evidence indicating the presence of stress levels influenced by gender differences in leadership.

This study concludes that the hadith on female leadership can be interpreted in two contexts: the historical context, understood as destruction, and the contemporary context, signifying unhappiness. This interpretation is crucial to propose an alternative or middle ground for the controversy surrounding the meaning of the hadith that has existed for some time.

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