

Empowering Knowledge of Women's Blood Jurisprudence through the Mosque as a Shared Responsibility: An Analysis of Educators' Understanding

Hannan Fatini Md Reshad¹, Siti Fatimah Salleh²

¹Postgraduate Candidate, Faculty of Islamic Contemporary Studies, Universiti Sultan Zainal Abidin (UniZA), Gong Badak Campus, 21300 Kuala Nerus, Terengganu, Malaysia, ²Assoc. Professor, Faculty of Islamic Contemporary Studies, University Sultan Zainal Abidin (UniZA), Gong Badak Campus, Kuala Nerus Terengganu, Malaysia
Email: ecahamad@gmail.com
Corresponding Author Email: sitifatimah@unisza.edu.my

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Abstract

This study aims to analyze the level of basic understanding of fiqh (Islamic jurisprudence) concerning women's blood among educators and the necessity for empowerment in this knowledge. Issues related to women's blood, such as menstruation, istihadah (irregular bleeding), and nifas (postnatal bleeding), are critical topics in fiqh as they affect personal acts of worship, family life, and various social activities, including mosque activities. This study employs a qualitative approach through a survey distributed to educators from various educational institutions in Malaysia. The data obtained were analyzed using descriptive statistics to determine their level of knowledge and understanding of this fundamental subject. The study found that educators' understanding of basic fiqh concerning women's blood remains at a low level. These findings underscore the need for empowerment in this area of fiqh as a shared responsibility across all levels and sectors of society, and they support the development of effective programs, camps, workshops, training, or courses to collectively enhance knowledge.

Keywords: Women's Blood Fiqh Education, Teacher Knowledge, Menstruation, Nifas, Istihadah.

Introduction

Today, society still places high expectations on teachers who educate their children in schools (Hussin, Sapar & Tamuri, 2017). Zahid (2003) also emphasized that the role of teachers in realizing Islamic Education is significant and critical, as the success or failure of implementing the National Education Philosophy rests on their shoulders. However, teachers often face

recurring issues that challenge their success and credibility (Hasan, 2007). This matter requires the attention of every member of society to achieve effective education.

Education, as defined in the Kamus Dewan Fourth Edition, is divided into three aspects. First, it refers to the process of educating; second, it encompasses the knowledge and methods of teaching; and third, it involves training or instruction. Education plays a crucial role in the development of a nation (Mariam et al., 2012). The importance of education is evident in its contribution to providing a quality workforce (Yusof et al., 2011), boosting economic progress (Amza, 2016), reducing crime rates, strengthening social stability, and nurturing responsible leadership. Additionally, quality education allows a country to cultivate a knowledgeable, critical, and creative society (Ayob et al., 2018). According to Norshyahman et al. (2023), disparities in educational levels have a negative impact on educational investments.

Thus, this study aims to examine the role and function of the mosque as an educational medium for women's blood jurisprudence among educators. The Islamic Education curricula in KBSR and KBSM are designed with the goal of producing faithful, righteous, and morally upright Muslim individuals (Salleh et al., 2017). The topic of women's blood jurisprudence is a branch of knowledge within Islamic Education and serves as an essential element in imparting understanding to students, especially at the school level, whether primary or secondary. The study findings highlight the necessity of empowerment through various media to provide continuous understanding of women's blood jurisprudence.

Background

Understanding women's blood jurisprudence, which encompasses menstruation, postpartum bleeding, and irregular bleeding, is a critical component in Islamic education facilitated through mosque institutions (Moksin et al., 2022). This knowledge is not only relevant to the daily lives of Muslim women but also serves as a critical aspect in their acts of worship and religious practices (Moksin et al., 2021). In Malaysia, women's blood jurisprudence is taught as part of the Islamic education curriculum in schools. However, the level of understanding and knowledge on this topic is frequently questioned.

Islamic education teachers play an essential role in conveying knowledge of women's blood jurisprudence to students (Nurkasanah & Fathurahman, 2022). Teachers' profound understanding and confidence in teaching this topic are crucial to ensuring that students acquire accurate and comprehensive knowledge (Fadhilah, 2022). Unfortunately, various challenges can hinder the delivery of this knowledge, including limited reference materials, the sensitivity of the topic, and time constraints within teaching schedules (Saleh et al., 2020).

Therefore, mosque activities that incorporate educational elements can help restore the mosque's function as it was during the golden era of Islam (Ibrahim et al., 2021). Kamaruddin & Muhammad (2019) also highlighted that mosque institutions should serve as an open platform for community activities and programs. Programs such as women's study circles (dauroh) can aid in enhancing women's understanding of jurisprudential rulings on women's blood.

Research Objectives

1. To assess educators' level of understanding regarding the jurisprudence of women's blood.
2. To identify the challenges educators face in understanding the topic of women's blood in jurisprudence.
3. To provide recommendations to improve educators' understanding and knowledge of women's blood jurisprudence through training programs or courses.

Literature Review

Exploring previous studies reveals both similarities and differences among Islamic jurists when discussing women's blood and its related rulings. al-Bugha (1996) in *Fiqh al-Manhaji*, Yusof (2002) in *al-Kafi fi Fiqh Ahlu Madhinah al-Maliki*, and Burhanuddin (2018) in *Al-Mubdi' Syarah al-Muqni'* address issues related to women's blood namely menstruation, postpartum bleeding, and irregular bleeding. For instance, the Hanafi school defines menstruation as blood that flows from a woman's uterus, unrelated to postpartum bleeding, occurring at specific times (Al-Kasani, 2002). Meanwhile, the Maliki school views menstruation as occurring when a woman of childbearing age bleeds regularly (Ibnu Juzai', undated). The Hanbali and Shafi'i schools offer similar views, defining menstruation as natural blood flowing from a woman's vagina under healthy conditions within a specific time frame, not related to childbirth (Muhammad, 1997; Al-Kasani, 2002).

Rahmatullah's (2013) study, based on hadith, describes menstruation as a natural occurrence for women, allowing them to engage in specific practices despite being in a state of major ritual impurity. Contrastingly, Salleh et al. (2018) approached menstruation from a medical perspective and through the lens of the Quran, examining its creation. Another study by Nukman et al. (2022) explored the jurisprudential methods in discussing menstrual jurisprudence, focusing on *al-Ibanah wa al-Ifadhah fi Ahkam al-Haid wa al-Nifas wa al-Istihadah 'Ala Mazhab al-Imam al-Syafi'i*. This study identified at least ten fiqh principles applicable to the legal discourse on menstrual jurisprudence according to the Shafi'i school, recommending that future research explore similar principles in the context of postpartum and irregular bleeding.

Ismail's (2010) research provides a comprehensive discussion on women's blood, covering menstruation, postpartum bleeding, and irregular bleeding. The study addresses numerous questions and issues commonly encountered by women, such as determining the timing of menstruation and irregular bleeding when bleeding persists beyond 15 days. Studies by Usamah (2019) and Syah (2017) also focus on Q&A about women's blood jurisprudence from the Shafi'i perspective. In contrast, Muttaqin's (2019) research analyzes irregular menstrual cycles due to contraceptive use, incorporating both Islamic and scientific perspectives. Contraceptive methods like injections, implants, or pills can cause side effects, such as prolonged or lighter bleeding (Setiawan, 2019).

A study conducted in primary schools in Kuala Nerus, Terengganu, by Razak & Mohamad (2019), explored primary-level students' initial knowledge of menstruation basics. The study revealed that primary students' knowledge of basic menstruation is low. Another study by Abdullah & Sulaiman (2021) on secondary school students' understanding of women's blood found that their knowledge of menstruation and irregular bleeding is moderate, indicating limited understanding of these characteristics. This study suggests that schools and relevant

bodies should take assertive steps to enhance students' knowledge of basic menstruation laws.

Methodology

A Google Forms survey was distributed to 64 randomly selected Islamic Education teachers across the state. Data was then analyzed using Microsoft Excel.

Data Analysis and Discussions

This study's analysis is based on a Google Forms survey distributed randomly to Islamic Education teachers, with questions focused on basic knowledge of women's blood jurisprudence. The results show that 9.4% (6 respondents) stated that menstrual blood is only red in color. While this is a small percentage, it highlights gaps in fundamental knowledge. About half (50%) of the respondents, or 30 teachers, believe that menstrual blood has four characteristics, while only 34.4% correctly identified three characteristics. This basic question reflects an initial measure of understanding among Islamic Education teachers. According to Abdullah and Suhaimi (2021), many women are unaware that menstrual blood can appear in five colors: black, red, brown, yellow, and murky. This lack of understanding can lead to confusion in distinguishing between menstruation and irregular bleeding.

Furthermore, Hasim et al. (2016) discuss the common issue women face in determining their menstrual cycle. A study by Arif (2021) among students at Darul Quran Wal Hadith As-Sofa in Ampang found that students struggle to differentiate between menstrual and irregular bleeding. Some students believe that menstruation must last a full 15 days, even if bleeding stops earlier, though the duration of menstruation and purity differs for each woman (al-Bujairimi, 2007; Hasan, 2003; Ramzi, 2020; An-Nawawi, 1992). An initial survey also reveals that 82.8% of respondents 53 Islamic Education teachers struggle to determine menstrual cycles accurately.

The survey also found that 75% of Islamic Education teachers are unsure about calculating the actual duration of menstruation. Additionally, 83.9% of respondents believe that postpartum washing is obligatory after childbirth, and 23.4% agree that women should wait 24 hours after menstruation stops before performing ritual bathing. Such misconceptions highlight ongoing confusion about women's blood laws, an issue often overlooked. Usamah (2019) also emphasizes that this issue is disregarded by modern Muslim society, regardless of age or gender. Studies by Arif (2021) and Abdullah & Suhaimi (2021) indicate that both male and female students are unclear on how menstruation and irregular bleeding impact obligatory and recommended prayers.

Recognizing the importance of understanding women's blood jurisprudence, this study suggests prioritizing education on this topic at the school level. Exposing students and society to related issues and rulings is essential (Abdullah & Suhaimi, 2021). However, Islamic Education textbooks provide only indirect discussions, typically under fasting and bathing topics (Salleh et al., 2020). The curriculum for elementary and secondary education in Malaysia shows limited coverage, with topics on menstruation, postpartum bleeding, and childbirth only briefly mentioned in information sections. Secondary textbooks similarly lack in-depth coverage of these topics (Hamzah et al., 2011; Ariffin et al., 2017; Yahya et al., 2016).

In Islamic Education classes, each period lasts 30 minutes, with six periods allocated weekly. The syllabus includes Quran studies, Islamic studies, and Jawi, with Quran lessons allocated three periods per week. Islamic studies are divided into four sections: creed, worship, history, and ethics with two periods per week, while Jawi receives one period per week (Malaysian Ministry of Education, 2021). Salleh et al. (2021) argue that the limited class time affects students' comprehension of women's blood topics. The teaching method, often one-sided, also disrupts understanding (Nurkasanah & Fathurahman, 2022), calling for a reassessment of teaching methods in schools (Ismail et al., 2016).

These challenges emphasize the need for teachers' knowledge, comprehension, and skills to facilitate learning effectively (Rosli et al., 2019). Teachers play a crucial role in menstrual education, fostering a supportive environment for young people to learn and share experiences about menstruation (Brown et al., 2022). This need for teacher training and confidence aligns with recommendations from Ismail et al. (2016), suggesting that all involved in Islamic Education should strengthen their knowledge in this area.

Today, learning about women's blood jurisprudence often depends on community awareness (Salleh et al., 2020). Empowering mosques as a center for disseminating knowledge about women's blood is essential. This study highlights the urgent need to design more effective and comprehensive training programs to enhance educators' knowledge in this area, including the provision of comprehensive reference materials, workshops, seminars, and specific teaching modules on women's blood jurisprudence. Collaboration between mosque institutions and educators can ensure accurate and profound understanding, aligning with the teachings in traditional Islamic texts.

Conclusion

In conclusion, this study emphasizes the need for mosque institutions to enhance their efforts in empowering educators with accurate knowledge of women's blood jurisprudence. These efforts should be continuous and holistic to achieve this goal. With improved understanding and knowledge among educators, it is hoped that future generations will better comprehend and apply the principles of women's blood jurisprudence in daily life.

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