Leadership of Generation Z Women: A Critical Study of Gender Equality and Islamic Perspectives

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Abstract

This study examines the topic of women's leadership, which has been a subject of discussion among classical and contemporary scholars, intellectuals, and the general public. The relevance of this discourse grows when viewed in the context of Generation Z, a generation shaped by rapid technological advancements. The study seeks to analyze the characteristics of Generation Z, the concept of women's leadership, and perspectives on this issue through the lenses of gender equality and Islamic thought. Using a library research method and secondary data sources, this study adopts a descriptive qualitative analysis approach. The findings highlight diverse scholarly views on women's leadership. While many classical scholars express reservations, some contemporary scholars adopt a more accepting stance. From a gender equality perspective, Islam emphasizes that men and women possess rights and responsibilities and upholds principles of justice for all individuals, irrespective of gender. While differing opinions persist, women today contribute actively in various fields, often based on competence rather than gender. For Generation Z, their distinctive characteristics provide potential for leadership. Leadership often starts with self-leadership, evolving gradually to encompass broader responsibilities. Effective leadership is portrayed as a developmental process rather than an immediate attainment of high-ranking roles.

INTRODUCTION

Indonesia faces numerous challenges that must be addressed, particularly in the realm of leadership (Sukmayanti et al., 2021; Yudiaatmaja, 2013). A capable leader has the potential to drive positive change and steer their community or organization in a better direction. In this evolving process, outdated leadership styles are becoming increasingly irrelevant with the passage of time. Innovation and exceptional leadership skills are essential, especially from a generation that can adapt to and balance the demands of a rapidly changing era (Hassan et al., 2018; Latifah & Asy'ari, 2024). This generation is one that was born and raised amidst the sophistication and advancement of modern times.
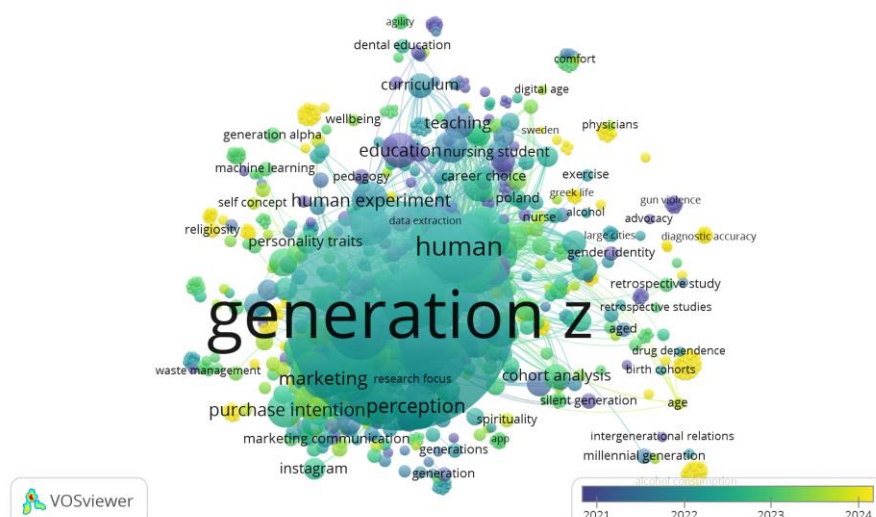
Fig 1. Divorce Database from Sciencedirect

From an Islamic perspective, the inclusion of concepts such as "religiosity" and "spirituality" in the conceptual framework highlights the potential to explore how religious values influence Generation Z women's perceptions of leadership. The novelty of this research lies in its unique synthesis of modern values, such as gender equality, with Islamic principles. It also emphasizes how Generation Z women leverage technology and social media platforms, such as Instagram, as tools to establish influence and leadership. Generation Z is predicted to be a generation capable of leading the nation toward significant change. This cohort holds substantial influence over Indonesia's progress, as they will succeed previous generations in steering the country's leadership. As Generation Z matures, they will increasingly take on leadership roles.

For Indonesia to achieve better development, improving human resources becomes essential. This includes enhancing the skills and abilities required for effective leadership (Marasan et al., 2021; Nelson & Squires, 2017). Leadership should not be bound by gender discrimination; both men and women have equal rights, as guaranteed by the fifth principle of Pancasila. In contemporary times, Generation Z women actively serve as pioneers of change and progress for the nation, with many taking on leadership roles (Rochadiat et al., 2018; Skrzat-Klapaczyńska et al., 2018). However, female leadership remains a subject of debate, particularly concerning gender equality and Islamic perspectives. The situation becomes more complex when the woman in question is perceived as young or inexperienced in leading large organizations or a nation (Sarmiah & Rahman, 2023).

Several theoretical studies address these issues. For example, Kurniawati, (2022) examined Abu Bakrah's hadith on the leadership of Persian women. Additionally, studies by Firdaus et al (2023); Winda et al (2023); Hasrawi et al (2019); Muhajir & Fakhrurrazi (2020); Nopryana et al (2020) explored the pros and cons of female leadership in Islam. Research on gender equality in leadership has also been conducted by (Arianti & Fahrizal, 2023; Setyawan, 2017; Suhada, 2019; Wahyuni et al., 2020). These studies share similarities with this research, particularly in examining the pros and cons of female leadership from gender equality and Islamic perspectives. However, none of these studies specifically address the leadership of Generation Z women.

The novelty of this study lies in its focus on Generation Z women's leadership, a subject absent in previous research. This study formulates the following research questions: What defines Generation Z? What constitutes female leadership? How do gender equality and Islamic perspectives address the issue of female leadership, particularly for Generation Z?

The objectives of this research are twofold: to answer these questions and to delve deeper into the leadership of the younger generation (Generation Z), particularly women, whose leadership remains a subject of societal debate. This study aims to provide insights and encourage female members of Generation Z who aspire to become leaders, while also challenging societal taboos surrounding female leadership.

METHODS

This research is a library study that aims to explore the issue of women's leadership, particularly among Generation Z, from both gender equality and Islamic perspectives. The study focuses on reviewing a variety of secondary sources, such as articles, books, and other relevant literature, which provide insight into the topic (Mahero et al., 2022; Spagnolo et al., 2023). By synthesizing these sources, the research seeks to understand the unique characteristics of Generation Z women in leadership roles and the implications of gender equality and Islamic viewpoints in shaping their leadership practices. The research employs a descriptive qualitative analysis approach, which involves carefully analyzing the collected data to identify key themes and patterns (Atmowardoyo, 2018; Kim et al., 2017; Naeem et al., 2023; Pertiwi et al., 2017). Through this approach, the study aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of the issue without making definitive claims but rather offering valuable insights that can inform future discussions and research.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION
Generation Z

According to Kupperschmidt, as quoted by Ni Putu Depi, a generation refers to individuals who are grouped together based on the same year of birth, age, location, and significant events in their lives that influence their growth phase (Peramesti & Kusmana, 2018). Graeme Codrington and Sue Grant Marshall, as quoted by Shanty et al., discuss the theory of generations, stating that there are five human age groups based on birth year groupings: the Baby Boomer generation, born between 1946 and 1964; Generation X, born between 1965 and 1980; Generation Y or the Millennial generation, born between 1981 and 1995; Generation Z (the internet generation), born between 1996 and 2010; and Generation Alpha, born between 2011 and 2025 (Komalasari et al., 2022).

Each generation has its own advantages and disadvantages. Shanty, citing the Institute for Emerging Issues (2012), notes that Generation Z is an innovative generation. According to Dan Schawbel, Generation Z is generally more active, reliable, open-minded, and less easily persuaded by money compared to previous generations. They are also more optimistic about their work and the future. However, the Generational White Paper (2011) suggests that Generation Z tends to be more anxious when not approved, less aggressive than earlier generations, and struggles with focus. They are described as individualistic, autonomous, intense, greedy, materialistic, and feeling the most entitled (Hinduan et al., 2020; Mohr & Mohr, 2016; Ordun et al., 2021).

Thus, Generation Z is a generation born during an era of increasingly sophisticated development. They grew up during a time of significant technological and informational progress (Husna, 2023). Generation Z is unique in their ability to multitask, meaning they can perform multiple tasks simultaneously. Some other characteristics of Generation Z include: first, improved access to information technology compared to previous generations. Social media is a vital part of their daily lives, and for them, the internet is a vast repository of facts and knowledge. Whatever information they need is primarily obtained from the internet and social media. Second, Generation Z is more ambitious when it comes to innovation. They

are eager to create companies and startups, as challenges like these drive their motivation. Third, Generation Z values autonomy and independence. This need for independence stems from the lifestyle of the previous generation, who were more self-reliant in their endeavors. Fourth, Generation Z prefers things that are instant and practical (Agustin & Nuha, 2024; Aly, H. N. et al., 2023; Saenko et al., 2020).

Women's Leadership

In general, leadership is a process in which an individual leads, guides, influences, or controls the thoughts, feelings, and behavior of others. Leadership in the Qur'an is described as a task that must be carried out by the most qualified person based on the necessary characteristics, such as psychological, educational, financial, and experiential qualifications (Muhajir & Fakhrurrazi, 2020). Good leadership is believed to be able to unite, harmonize, and encourage the potential of organizational resources to compete effectively. Several definitions of leadership have been put forward by experts based on their respective perspectives. According to Nurkolis, as quoted by Annisa Fitriani, leadership is the process of influencing or setting an example for followers to achieve organizational goals. A simpler definition is presented by Mullins, who emphasizes the concept of "relationships," through which an individual influences the behavior or actions of others. Leadership in this definition can apply to formal, informal, or non-formal organizations. In any group, leadership will be present to direct and guide the members (Situmorang, 2011).

In Arabic, the word for leader is "*imamah*," meaning a leader or leadership in general. In Islam, a leader is a representative of the people who has a very heavy responsibility, taking on a role similar to the prophetic task of organizing life and ensuring the welfare of the people. Over time, the study of leadership has evolved, signaling that women as leaders is not an uncommon concept. This shift is due to the recognition that women, traditionally more focused on household matters, can also serve as capable leaders (Arianti & Fahrizal, 2023). The terms leader and leadership are often confused, but they have distinct meanings. A leader refers to an individual who holds the authority to lead and influence others due to their power or position. Leadership, however, refers to the ability and qualities inherent in the leader, as well as the skills needed to motivate, influence, organize, support, give orders, and provide guidance to individuals and groups in order to achieve desired goals (Adawiyah et al., 2023).

According to Griffin and Ebert, as quoted by Suhada, leadership is a series of processes aimed at influencing others. AM Mangunhardjana argues that the core of leadership lies in its tasks or functions. The primary task of leadership is serving the community by solving the challenges they face to achieve collective goals. According to Syaiful Sagala, good leadership is effective leadership that inspires and secures commitment. Ayub Ranoh presents a definition that distinguishes leadership from authority, stating that leadership is more concerned with the function and role of providing influence, while authority is rooted in recognition, legitimacy, and special qualities inherent in a leader (Suhada, 2019).

Women's leadership refers to the ability and expertise possessed by a woman to lead a group, society, institution, or specific community. Looking back at the history of women's leadership in Islam, we find traces of Aisyah ra's leadership as a mufti and a commander in the Jamal War (Putri et al., 2024). During the time of Caliph Umar ibn Khattab, there was also a woman named al-Syifa, who was skilled at writing and was entrusted with managing the market in the city of Medina. Additionally, during the time of Prophet Sulaiman AS, Queen Balqis is known for her leadership, successfully making the country of Saba' flourish, as described in the Qur'an, Surah an-Naml, verse 23 (Adawiyah et al., 2023).

The progress of women's leadership in Indonesia is equally remarkable. Long before Indonesia's independence, pioneering women leaders included Queen Kalinyamat of Jepara and four Sultanahs from Aceh (Ramadhani et al., 2024).

Indonesia also boasts female national heroes such as RA Kartini and Megawati Soekarno Putri, the first and only female president of Indonesia. Another notable female leader is Sri Mulyani Indrawati, the Indonesian Minister of Finance, who has held the position since 2005 under President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono. On a smaller scale, Prof. Martin Kustati currently serves as the Chancellor of Imam Bonjol State Islamic University Padang, further demonstrating successful female leadership in Indonesia. Despite this progress, traditional cultural norms in Indonesia often associate leadership with men, while women are historically viewed as weak, less logical, and reliant on instinct. This perception has led to fewer women being placed in leadership roles (Khoiroh et al., 2022).

A Critical Review of Gender Equality

Gender refers to the social and cultural differences between men and women, distinct from biological aspects. It is a difference in behavior between men and women, shaped by social and cultural processes. With these differences come disparities in rights and opportunities. Gender equality means providing both men and women the same opportunities and rights, enabling them to play an active role in politics, law, economics, education, socio-culture, and development outcomes. Gender equality arises from the belief that while men and women are different, they have the same rights to social justice. A small example of gender discrimination can be seen when electing leaders in campus organizations. Women rarely serve as chairpersons or representatives; they are often relegated to roles such as secretaries or treasurers. In fact, Indonesia adheres to the Pancasila ideology, which emphasizes "justice for all Indonesian people" in its fifth principle. Therefore, every Indonesian citizen, regardless of gender, has the same rights, and there should be no discrimination. As outlined by the Ministry of Women's Empowerment & Child Protection of the Republic of Indonesia in Law No. 39 of 1999 concerning Human Rights, "Women, as humans, have the same (equal and fair) rights as men in all areas of life" (Firdaus et al., 2023).

Discrimination against women has been ongoing since the 1920s and continues to require efforts to achieve gender equality, especially in terms of leadership roles for women. In fact, leadership should not be determined by sex or gender. Based on research by Cahayaningsih, (2020) opinion, female leadership offers several advantages over male leadership, including: first, women are often more successful in motivating subordinates and groups. Second, women are more open and receptive to input. Third, women are more sensitive to the needs of their subordinates. Fourth, women tend to be more accepting of differences and have high tolerance. Fifth, women tend to have more accurate problem identification and resolution skills. Sixth, women find it easier to express work expectations and receive feedback.

The ongoing debate about who is more suited to leadership often involves gender-related arguments. For instance, men tend to view themselves as more suitable due to the traditional associations of strength, authority, and influence with their gender. This view is influenced by the patriarchal system still prevalent in Indonesian society (Shafira et al., 2024). Additionally, stereotypes contribute to the perception that women are not suited to leadership. Such stereotypes suggest that politics is a harsh world, requiring tough thinking, which is often seen as a male domain (Malihah et al., 2024). Although many women are stronger and more successful than men, men still dominate leadership roles. According to KH Husein Muhammad in his book *Fiqh Wanita*, many scholars still hold the view that men are inherently superior to women, especially in leadership. People generally perceive women as weak, emotional, and gentle, while men are viewed as strong, rational, and rough (Alawiyah et al., 2020; Sholihah, 2020).

Zamakhsyari also argued that men are superior to women, citing advantages such as greater reasoning ability, decisiveness, strength, and courage. Based on this,

he claimed that roles such as prophethood, religious leadership, high public leadership, and jihad were exclusively reserved for men (Hamdi & Maulidi, 2023). However, this perception is not universally accepted. In his book *When Fiqh Defends Women*, challenges the idea of male superiority in intelligence. He notes that while genetics plays a role in human development, intelligence and consciousness are also influenced by environmental factors (Al-Faruq et al., 2024).

Based on this perspective, there is no inherent limitation preventing women from becoming leaders. In fact, women are often more collaborative in decision-making and more participative (Siahaan et al., 2024). The prohibition of women in leadership roles contradicts the core mission of Islam, which upholds the dignity and honor of women. It also goes against the principles of Islam and the facts on the ground, where many women possess superior abilities to men. This is evident in the achievements of women who have risen to positions of power, demonstrating their competence. Additionally, the precision women bring to their work makes them highly effective in completing tasks (R, 2018). From this comparison of gender advantages and disadvantages in leadership, it becomes clear that the success of an institution is not determined by whether it is led by a man or a woman, but by the skills, expertise, and abilities of the leader (Wahyuni et al., 2020).

Critical Review of Islamic Glasses

Talking about women's leadership in Islam, women's participation in the public sphere has been evident since the early days of Islam, when the Prophet was still alive. During the time of the Prophet, women played an important role in influencing decisions or public policies of the Islamic community, including Khadijah, Fatimah, Aisha, and others. They are seen as ideal women with certain capacities. Their opinions and thoughts were considered equal to those of men. They held important positions in the early development of Islam. The participation of women in Islamic history has been recorded since the first appearance of Islam in the 7th century (Khoiroh et al., 2022).

However, women's leadership remains a subject of debate among scholars. Among those who prohibit women from becoming leaders is Imam ar-Razi, who believes that men hold a higher position than women, and thus women should not lead society. He based his opinion on the interpretation of the Qur'an, Surah an-Nisa, verse 34:

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ٱلرِّجَالُ قَوَّٰمُونَ عَلَى ٱلنِّسَآءِ بِمَا فَضَّلَ ٱللَّهُ بَعْضَهُمْ عَلَىٰ بَعْض وَبِمَآ أَنفَقُواْ مِنْ أَمْوَٰلِهِمْ ...

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Meaning: Men (husbands) are the protectors of women (wives), because Allah has made some of them (men) excel others (women), and because they (men) provide for them from their wealth (QS an-Nisa: 34).

According to al-Razi, men possess superior knowledge and physical abilities; men's reason and knowledge exceed those of women, and men are physically stronger. On the other hand, contemporary Indonesian scholars, such as M. Said, interpret the word "*qawwamun*" as "responsibility," while the Indonesian Department translates it as "leader." If we examine the context of the verse's revelation, the term "responsible" is considered more appropriate, so that the position of women is not regarded as lower than that of men. Quraish Syihab explained that the perception of women being lower than men comes from a hadith that suggests women's reasoning is less developed compared to men's, and this applies to religion as well. However, he further clarified that the phrase *ar-rijaal qawwamun 'ala an-nisa* does not refer to men in general but rather to husbands, as the continuation of the verse addresses household life. According to al-Quthubi's interpretation of the verse, men are granted leadership rights because they have the obligation to provide for women. In addition, men also serve as judges, rulers, and participate in wars, roles that women do not engage in.

Siti Juria Arianti quoted Abdul Wahab Khallaf's opinion that any text or *nash* with a clear meaning should be interpreted according to its apparent meaning, and it

is invalid to interpret a text in any other way unless supported by evidence. Therefore, this verse should be understood according to the *zohir* (apparent) meaning of the verse itself. According to Tamyis Muharrom, even though Surah an-Nisa, verse 34, relates to family law, applying the *mafhum aulawi* principle, women are still not allowed to lead, since they are prohibited from leading their families, let alone leading an institution or a country (Arianti & Fahrizal, 2023).

Regarding women's leadership, it is also mentioned in a hadith, which reads:

حدثنا عثمان بن الهيثم: حدثنا عوف، عن الحَسَنِ، عَنْ أَبِي بَكْرَةَ قَالَ لَقَدْ نَفَعَنِي الله بكلمة سَمِعْتُهَا مِنْ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ صلى الله عليه

وسلم أيام الجمل، بعد ما كدت أن ألحق بأصحاب الجمل فأقاتل معهم، قال: لما بلغ رسول الله صلى الله وسلم عليه

أن أهل فارس قد ملكوا عليهم بنت كِسْرَى، قَالَ: (لَنْ يُفْلِحَ قَوْمٌ وَلَّوْا أَمْرَهُمُ امرأة)

Meaning: From Uthman bin Haitsam from Auf from Hasan from Abi Bakrah said: 'Allah gave me benefit with a sentence that I heard from the Messenger of Allah SAW on the day before the Battle of Jamal, after I almost justified them (Ashabul Jamal) and fought with them. When news reached the Messenger of Allah SAW that the Persians appointed the daughter of Kisra as a leader, he said 'A people who entrust their affairs to women will not be successful (HR Al-Bukhari).

According to Imam Sawqani, this hadith means that women are not experts in governance and should not be made leaders. Ibn Jarir also stated that women have less-than-perfect reasoning, especially when compared to men. According to Yusuf al-Qaradawi, this hadith is authentic because it was narrated by Imam Bukhari. Regarding its meaning, it can be understood both textually and contextually. Textually, it is clear that women becoming leaders is *haram*. However, if understood contextually, this hadith is related to the appointment of Persian women as leaders, even though there were many other more qualified leadership candidates around them (Masyitoh, 2020; Muktamar et al., 2024). However, the hadith applies temporally and casuistically, specifically to the Persian nation at the time when the Prophet uttered it, as society was indeed chaotic. If understood contextually, it is clear that the law states that women are allowed to become leaders, provided they are competent and worthy of leadership, and no other candidates are more qualified than they are. Meanwhile, the majority of scholars agree that it is forbidden for women to become the highest leader in a large area, especially in government. This opinion is based on the words *wallu amrakum*, which means "to rule you all," referring to becoming a caliph in Islamic politics. Scholars who forbid this include al-Ghazali, Ibn Khaldun, Ibn Taymiyyah, and al-Mawardi (Pirmasari, 2021; Soon-Yong, 2006).

Based on research by Tusman Tangngareng, Yusuf al-Qaradawi cites several reasons for the prohibition of women becoming leaders in public matters. These reasons are: first, physical and instinctive factors. Women's nature is to be mothers and raise children, and therefore, they are more emotionally sensitive. With these traits, they tend to emphasize emotions rather than logic and wisdom. Second, natural factors such as menstruation, pregnancy, childbirth, and breastfeeding cause physical and psychological changes, making it difficult for women to handle tasks outside their household. Al-Razi further strengthened this argument by highlighting men's advantages, including their knowledge and physical abilities. According to him, men's will and knowledge exceed those of women, and in some difficult jobs, men are better able to perform them. Al-Zamakhshari stated that men have advantages in reason, assertiveness, determination, physical strength, and better writing skills than women. Additionally, al-Tabatabai noted that men's ability to think leads to courage, strength, and the ability to deal with difficulties, while women tend to be more sensitive and emotional (Albrecht et al., 2022; Firdaus et al., 2023; Stromquist, 2015).

Islam views women as noble creatures. Sometimes Islam acknowledges women's unique experiences, such as menstruation, pregnancy, breastfeeding, and

nurturing children with love. However, at other times, Islam recognizes women as human beings without differentiating them from men, as shown in the obligations to pray, pay zakat, perform Hajj, behave well, and consume halal food and drink, and others. This view signifies women as noble individuals. In essence, there is no fundamental difference between the status of a man and a woman. The Qur'an mentions that men and women have equal status, as stated in many verses, including in Surah Al-Hujurat, verse 13.

In the current context, everyone has the right to achieve their hopes and success, especially in leadership, regardless of age. Likewise, women have the same rights in the public sphere, such as serving as regional heads or leaders of a country. There is evidence from other Muslim countries led by women, such as Benazir Bhutto in Pakistan, and in Indonesia, there was once a presidential office led by a woman, namely the fifth president of the Republic of Indonesia, Megawati Soekarnoputri.

Thus, as long as women are capable and strong enough to run or carry out government administration properly and professionally, they have the right to become leaders. According to Imam al-Mawardi, as quoted by Abror (2020), a leader must meet several requirements: 1) Fairness, 2) Solid knowledge of religion, 3) Physical and spiritual health, 4) Courage, 5) Ability to carry out jihad against the enemies of the state, and 6) Descent from the Quraysh.

There are several views on women's leadership in Islamic jurisprudence: first, the view of classical scholars. The majority of scholars hold the opinion that women have no rights in politics, and it is forbidden to appoint women as heads of state, court judges, or in various other positions. Among the arguments supporting their opinion are the provisions that men are leaders, as stated in QS An-Nisa verses 32 and 34, as well as the hadith of Abu Bakrah. The prohibition of women becoming leaders is often attributed to the interpretation of some scholars based on the text of the Qur'an, Surah an-Nisa, which states that men are leaders for women. The elements of leadership during the time of the Prophet included leadership of the state, leadership in prayer, and military command, while women could not fulfill the three elements of leadership (Said, 2020).

Second, the view of contemporary scholars. Most contemporary scholars assert that women have the same political rights as men, based on the belief that men and women have the same rights and obligations in Islam, as stated in QS Al-Baqarah: 228, Al-Hujurat, Al-Taubah: 71, and Al-Nur: 31-32. The basis for this opinion is that women have participated in the political sphere, such as the success of Queen Bilqis, who ruled Saba (Al-Naml: 32-34). The Prophet also recognized political asylum from women, such as Umm Hani during the Fath of Mecca incident, and he accepted the allegiance of women. Additionally, the spread of Islamic preaching by Muslim women, such as Aisyah (ra), further supports this (Muhajir & Fakhrurrazi, 2020).

Contemporary scholars argue that women have the right to participate in politics just like men, including becoming president. They interpret the Hadith of Abu Bakrah specifically in relation to the Persian empire at that time, which was led by a woman (Bintu Kisra), who succeeded her father as leader. There are also arguments drawn from the success story of Queen Bilqis, as recounted in the Qur'an (QS An-Naml: 32-34), as well as the success of female leaders such as Margaret Thatcher, Indira Gandhi, and the Aceh kingdom, which was once led by a woman.

Qardhawi's opinion is that women have the right to nominate themselves as members of the Shura assembly or as candidates for legislative and judicial positions tasked with overseeing the government. There is no text that prohibits women from holding positions in government, and in certain fields, women are particularly needed, such as in tasks related to women and children, which are not typically handled by men. During the time of the Prophet, a woman named Salma gave an opinion to the Prophet, and it was not a problem for women to be appointed as judges in family matters, provided they did not handle *jinayat* (criminal) cases.

Women can be trained to carry out justice gradually, starting from the position of a judge (Meirison, 2019).

Similar to the above opinion, the Hanafiyah Ulama, as quoted by Fithriyatus Sholihah, believe that a woman is allowed to be a judge in matters related to property or civil law, because they are permitted to give testimony in the field of *muamalat* (transactions). However, for matters related to *hudud* (fixed punishments) and *qishas* (retaliatory punishments) or criminal law, women are not allowed to become judges because they are not permitted to give testimony regarding *jinayah* (criminal matters). Meanwhile, according to Ibn Jarir at-Thabari, a woman is allowed to be a judge in all matters, just as a woman can be a *mufti*, and therefore, she too can become a judge (Sholihah, 2020).

The role of women in the public sphere is slowly but surely progressing in the millennial era. In the context of Indonesia, in line with the era of openness, upholding democratic values, and the increasing acceptance of moderate religious interpretations and values of equality, the public role of many women is recognized by society, and many women occupy important positions in public institutions. Therefore, this change should be appreciated and continuously fought for (Muhajir, 2018).

Based on several opinions above, this study tends to align with the views of contemporary scholars: women can be leaders as long as they have the ability to carry out their duties as leaders. However, it is important to remember that women must know their limitations and still prioritize the public interest. In terms of gender equality, even though they are relatively young, Generation Z women can become leaders if they possess skills, abilities, authority, uphold deliberation, act fairly, prioritize reason over emotion, and understand the nuances of leadership, considering that Sayyidah Aisyah also became a *mufti* to the leader of the Jamal War when she was still young. From an Islamic perspective, Generation Z women may become leaders as long as they do not neglect their primary natural obligations as women, and there are no other candidates more qualified than them. However, it is not easy to become a leader, especially when leading an institution or even a country. But there is nothing wrong with starting from the smallest steps in life, such as learning to control and lead oneself, especially when one's responses to problems may still be unstable, or starting to participate in social activities that can train concern for others. In other words, if Generation Z women aspire to become leaders, they do not have to immediately become the highest leaders. It all starts with leading oneself.

CONCLUSION

Based on the research aims, it can be concluded that Generation Z, especially women, has the potential to play a role in leadership, alongside advances in technology and information that enhance their ability to innovate and make decisions. Although women's leadership is still debated among scholars, there are viewpoints that support women's participation in leadership, provided they possess adequate competence. From an Islamic perspective, the principle of equality between men and women provides a foundation for women to engage in leadership, while considering their limitations and responsibilities. Therefore, Generation Z women have the opportunity to begin developing their leadership abilities, starting with small steps such as leading themselves and participating in social activities that can hone their leadership skills.

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