

Generative AI and Islamic Family Law: Normative Framing of Marital Relations

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ABSTRACT

This study examines how GPT frames authority, responsibility, reciprocity, and shared agency in controversial Islamic family law issues. The study used qualitative thematic analysis, descriptive quantitative mapping, and cross-question consistency analysis of 32 GPT responses obtained through independent sessions with standardized prompt protocols. The results showed that relational framing was the dominant orientation (20/32; 62.5%), followed by contextual (25%) and mixed (12.5%) framing, with no predominantly hierarchical responses. Qiwamah tended to be framed as functional responsibilities that resulted in limited authority, rather than unlimited unilateral authority. Fixed alimony was primarily positioned as the husband's responsibility, but the wife's economic contribution was recognized in the practical family setting. Decision-making was increasingly geared towards consultation, participation, and negotiation. The findings resulted in the Relational Normative Reconciliation Model (RNRM), which links differentiated roles, functional responsibility, limited authority, reciprocal accountability, shared agency, and relational decisions. The research confirms that the normative coherence of AI outputs is not the same as legal validity, so human verification of Islamic sources and positive laws remains necessary.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Generative artificial intelligence (GenAI) has evolved from a language aid to a technology capable of generating explanations, arguments, and answers that resemble professional reasoning. In the field of law, this development is important because large language models (LLMs) can be used for information retrieval, document drafting, legal education, and reasoning support. GPT-4, for example, shows high performance on a number of professional and academic tasks, including advocate exam simulations, although this ability does not eliminate its factual and epistemic limitations [1]. Studies of LLMs in law also show that this technology has the potential to transform legal practice while presenting issues regarding accuracy, data, interpretability, and human responsibility [2].

The problem becomes more complex when GenAI is used to generate legal-religious discourse. The answer to AI is not simply the reproduction of information, but can form a normative framing: choosing a particular concept, connecting obligations with rights, defining the limits of authority, and offering ways to reconcile seemingly conflicting norms. Therefore, an eloquent output should not be treated automatically as a source of law. Dahl et al. show that LLMs can generate legal hallucinations, accept erroneous legal assumptions, and are not always able to recognize their own faults [2]. In a legal context, this issue demands verification of legal sources and a clear division of responsibility between AI systems and humans [3].

Islamic family law is a relevant arena for examining these issues because it contains debates about *qiwāmah*, alimony, husband leadership, obedience, reciprocal rights and obligations, and family decision-making. In classical literature, *qiwāmah* is often associated with economic responsibility and family protection, but these constructions develop in specific social and institutional contexts. Contemporary literature shows a tendency to associate *qiwāmah* with responsibility, accountability, partnership, deliberation, and gender justice [4], [5], [6], [7]. The *maqāṣid al-sharīʿah* approach also provides a framework for reading the law contextually by emphasizing the goals of justice, benefit, rights, and balance [8].

In the Indonesian context, the relationship between husband and wife is not only shaped by *fiqh*, but also by positive law, especially the Marriage Law and the Compilation of Islamic Law (KHI). KHI maintains a differentiation of the roles of husband and wife, but also places marriage within a framework of interrelated rights and obligations [9], [10]. Social change—including the increasing economic participation of women—raises new questions about the relationship between economic responsibility and family authority. Recent Indonesian literature shows that *qiwāmah* is increasingly discussed as functional, participatory, and accountable leadership, rather than as absolute authority [4], [11], [12], [13], [14].

In the midst of these developments, there is still limited research that systematically examines how generative AI frames controversial questions of Islamic family law. This gap is important because AI can be a new mediator in the production of digital religious law-legal knowledge. This research therefore does not aim to determine whether GPT's answer is the most correct *fiqh*. The focus is on identifying normative patterns that arise when GPT answers questions about authority, responsibility, reciprocity, and agency in marriage.

The research questions are formulated as follows: How does GPT frame and reconcile authority, responsibility, reciprocity, and shared agency in controversial issues of Islamic family law? The novelty of the research lies in three aspects. First, the object of the study is the normative discourse generated by AI, not just the accuracy of legal answers. Second, the research combines thematic analysis with descriptive mapping and cross-question consistency tests. Third, the research produces a Relational Normative Reconciliation Model (RNNRM) as an analytical model to explain how role differentiation can be maintained while being limited by shared responsibility, accountability, and agency.

2. METHOD

2.1. Research Design

The study used qualitative design with thematic analysis as the main strategy, complemented by descriptive quantitative mapping and cross-question consistency analysis. Thematic analysis was chosen because it allowed the researcher to identify patterns of meaning that are repeated in the corpus of texts while maintaining theoretical flexibility [15]. The principle of analytical rigor is carried out through the process of coding, categorization, theme review, and documentation of analytical decisions [16], [17]. Quantitative mapping is not intended as statistical inference, but rather to clarify the distribution of patterns in the corpus.

2.2. Data and Collection Protocols

The research data consisted of 32 GPT responses collected through 32 independent sessions. Each question was asked in English, through a new conversation, using a prompt that was neutral, without advanced conversations, and using the first response as the unit of analysis. The web was not used during data collection so the analysis was directed at the output of the model under standardized conditions. The protocol is intended to reduce the influence of the context of previous conversations and allow cross-question comparison.

Questions were grouped into four analytical clusters. Q01–Q08 focused on *qiwāmah*, leadership, and the relationship of authority to responsibility. Q09–Q16 expanded the issue to mutual obligations, rights, and accountability. Q17–Q24 examined the relationship between alimony, economic contribution, and authority, including the conditions when wives earned higher incomes. Q25–Q32 focused on family decision-making, parenting, employment, relocation, and the formulation of a normative synthesis of marriage as a partnership.

2.3. Analytical and Coding Framework

The analytical framework is constructed from four dimensions: (1) authority, (2) responsibility, (3) reciprocity, and (4) shared agency. These dimensions translate into conceptual mechanisms such as "limited authority", "mutual accountability", "shared agency", and "negotiated responsibility". Coding is done deductively based on these dimensions and inductively to capture previously unpredicted themes. The encoding procedure follows the principles of qualitative coding that emphasizes the consistency of categories and analytical memos [18].

At the normative level, responses are classified into five orientations: hierarchical (H), functional (F), reciprocal (R), egalitarian (E), and reconciliatory-relational (C). For the primary mapping, F, R, and C are compared as dominant patterns that maintain or alter role differentiation. Category R is used when the answer emphasizes obligations and reciprocal rights; C when the answer explicitly reconciles the differentiation of

responsibility with shared agency; whereas H is used when the husband's authority is treated as broad primary authority. Context/mixed categories are used when two or more normative orientations arise without a single clear orientation.

In addition to the normative orientation, the coding takes into account: (a) qiwamah status; (b) authority limits; (c) alimony and protection responsibilities; (d) accountability; (e) consultation and consent; (f) participation in decisions; (g) economic autonomy; and (h) the normative basis used. The normative basis is divided into Qur'an/Sunnah (G1), classical fiqh (G2), Indonesian marriage law (G3), KHI (G4), maqāsid or contemporary approach (G5), and other Indonesian laws (G6).

2.4. Cross-Query Consistency Analysis

Consistency is tested at three levels: conceptual consistency, normative consistency, and consistency of application. Conceptual consistency assesses whether the definitions of authority and responsibility remain relatively stable. Normative consistency assesses whether the principles stated on a single question are maintained when the context changes. Consistency of application assesses whether the same principles are applied coherently to the case of economics, parenting, employment, and family decisions. Changes in responses due to changes in context are indirectly categorized as inconsistencies; changes are considered problematic only when they conflict with previously stated principles.

2.5. Validity of Analysis and Ethics

The validity of the analysis is maintained through protocol transparency, categorical auditability, cross-question comparison, and negative case analysis. This approach is in line with the principle of trustworthiness in qualitative research that emphasizes process documentation and traceability of analytical decisions [17]. Ethically, GPT is treated as an object of discourse production, not as an authority of Islamic law. Because LLM can generate convincing but erroneous answers [2], the interpretation of research results should not turn AI output into a stand-alone legal source.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

3.1. Descriptive Quantitative Mapping

Mapping of 32 responses showed that relational orientation was the dominant pattern. A total of 20 of the 32 questions (62.5%) were classified as R, 8 questions (25%) as C, and 4 questions (12.5%) as mixed. There were no responses with H as the dominant orientation. This distribution shows that GPT does not consistently construct qiwamah as a hierarchy of authority, but more often associates it with responsibility and reciprocal relationships.

Table 1. Dominant normative orientation distribution in Q01–Q32.

Dominant orientation	Quantity	Percentage
Relasional (R)	20	62,5%
Contextual/Reconciliatory (C)	8	25,0%
Campuran (Mixed)	4	12,5%
Hierarchies (H)	0	0%

Additional mapping showed that 19 responses (59.4%) used a normative-propositional orientation, while 13 (40.6%) strongly emphasized exclusion or context. No directive dominant responses were found. In gender framing, 22 responses (68.8%) used a framework that did not explicitly subordinate one gender (U), 6 (18.8%) showed gender differentiation (S), and 4 (12.5%) showed a more asymmetrical orientation (A). This distribution reinforces the conclusion that gender differentiation does not disappear, but tends to be reconstructed into functional differentiation.

In terms of normative base, Qur'an/Sunnah references appear in 28 responses, KHI in 29, Marriage Law in 27, classical fiqh in 20, maqāsid/contemporary approaches in 20, and other Indonesian legal sources in 13 responses. The multi-source pattern suggests that GPT tends to construct family law discourse through a combination of several normative registers, rather than through a single source. This finding is important because the use of multiple registers allows models to link religious norms with positive law and contemporary justice values.

3.2. Development of Themes Q01–Q32

In Q01–Q08, the response shifted from recognition of role differentiation to authority restraint. Q01 and Q03 still maintain a fairly clear differentiation, but Q02 and Q06 began to associate leadership with responsibility. Q04 and Q05 show a stronger emphasis on responsibility and relational equality. Q07–Q08 makes it clear that qiwamah is not synonymous with absolute authority. Thus, the initial theme that emerged was "functionalization of qiwamah".

In Q09–Q16, the discussion shifted from the status of the husband to the relationship of rights and obligations. The response more often emphasized that the husband's obligations should be followed by the protection of the wife's rights and that decisions that affect both spouses require mutual consideration. Here the theme of "mutual accountability" emerges. *Qiwāmah* has not disappeared, but the legitimacy of its authority depends on the fulfillment of responsibilities and respect for the spouse.

In Q17–Q24, economic issues became a more severe normative test. The response-maintained maintenance as the husband's primary responsibility, but at the same time recognized the wife's economic autonomy, her financial contribution, and the possibility of negotiated burden-sharing. The condition of the higher-income wife did not automatically result in a hierarchical reversal. Instead, economic contributions were separated from normative authority. The emerging theme was "differentiation of responsibilities without domination".

In Q25–Q32, joint agency became increasingly explicit. Decisions about employment, relocation, parenting, and the division of household duties tended to be positioned as joint decisions. Q31–Q32 specifically produced a synthesis of marriage as a partnership with differentiated responsibilities, equal dignity, equitable burden, and shared decision-making. Thus, the Q01–Q32 series shows a progression from restriction of authority to "relational decision-making".

3.3. Sintesis Thematic

3.3.1. Functionalization of *Qiwāmah*

The first theme is the functionalization of *qiwāmah*. In GPT discourse, *qiwāmah* is more often positioned as a mandate related to maintenance, protection, maintenance, and family responsibilities than as an intrinsic advantage of men. These findings are close to contemporary Indonesian literature that links *qiwāmah* with functional and accountable leadership [4], [13]. He is also in line with studies that emphasize that the reading of *qiwāmah* can take into account changes in the socio-economic capacity of the couple [12], [14].

However, the results of the study do not show that GPT removes the concept of *qiwāmah*. Instead, *qiwāmah* is maintained through a process of restricting meaning. This distinguishes the findings of the research from the egalitarian model which assumes that justice can only be achieved if all roles are made identical. The discourse found is closer to the idea that role differences can be maintained as long as the differences have a basis for accountability that can be accounted for.

3.3.2. Restricted Authority

The second theme is limited authority. GPT's response repeatedly rejects the implication that *qiwāmah* gives the husband unlimited authority to determine all family matters. The distinction between responsibility and authority becomes a key mechanism. Within this framework, a person can assume certain responsibilities without automatically gaining the right to decide everything unilaterally. This reading is in line with the criticism of the overly broad construction of authority in the Muslim legal tradition [5], [7].

In the Indonesian context, the restriction can also be read side by side with the KHI and the Marriage Law which places the husband and wife as parties who have obligations in domestic life [9], [19]. Thus, the AI discourse shows a tendency to bridge the concept of *qiwāmah* with the structure of national family law, rather than simply repeating the formulation of *fiqh* textually.

3.3.3. Reciprocal Accountability

The third theme is reciprocal accountability. When the husband is positioned as a party with certain responsibilities, that responsibility is at the same time the basis for assessing whether the authority exercised is justifiable. At the same time, the wife is not reduced to a decision-maker. She is positioned as a party who has the right, interests, and capacity to participate. This structure results in a relationship that is not entirely symmetrical in function, but symmetrical in accountability demands.

The approach can be attributed to the concept *Mu'asharah bi al-ma'ruf* and a relational reading of marital obligations. In the framework of *mubādalāh*, justice does not demand mechanical equality, but a reciprocal relationship that allows both partners to be seen as moral subjects [6]. Amina Wadud's perspective is also important because it shifts the reading of gender texts from hierarchy to ethical principles that consider equality, dignity and responsibility [7].

3.3.4. Joint Agency and Negotiated Responsibilities

The fourth theme is shared agency. The more concrete the issues that affect both couples, the stronger the tendency of GPT to advocate consultation, participation, and negotiation. This pattern can be seen in issues of work, relocation, parenting, and the division of domestic tasks. Shared agency does not mean that both partners have to make identical decisions in all circumstances, but both must have substantive space to influence decisions that impact their lives.

In the economic context, for example, a higher-income wife does not automatically become the party who has *qiwamah*. On the contrary, an increase in economic contribution can affect the division of practical responsibilities. This distinction is important because it avoids two reductionisms at once: patriarchal reductionism which assumes that the status of the husband determines all authority and economic reductionism which considers the higher-income party to automatically become the holder of authority.

3.4. Cross-Question Consistency as a Normative Test

Cross-question analysis shows four relatively consistent principles. First, *qiwamah* tends to be retained as a responsibility related to maintenance and protection. Second, such responsibility does not automatically translate into absolute authority. Third, decisions that directly impact both partners are increasingly strongly directed to consultation and participation. Fourth, economic contributions influence practical arrangements but do not mechanically determine the status of authority.

Such consistency can be referred to as a "normative stress test" because the same principle is tested through a change in context. When the question moves from *qiwamah* to alimony, then to higher-income wives, and then to employment and relocation, the underlying principle is relatively persistent. The difference in response is more indicative of context sensitivity than of a change in principle. This reinforces the interpretation that the model produces a conciliatory pattern, rather than a stand-alone set of answers.

3.5. Relational Normative Reconciliation Model (RNRM)

Thematic synthesis and cross-question consistency resulted in the Relational Normative Reconciliation Model (RNRM). This model is a conceptual contribution of research to explain how AI discourse relates role differentiation with more participatory relationships. RNRM is not a new fiqh rule and is not a claim that GPT invented a new theory of Islamic law. This model is an intermediate-level abstraction of the observed discourse pattern.

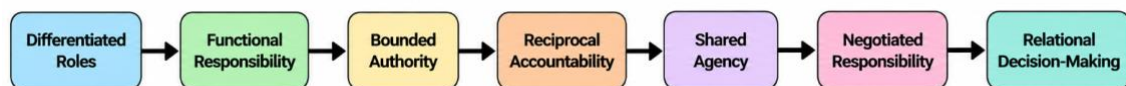


Figure 1. Relational Normative Reconciliation Model (RNRM)

The first stage is "differentiated roles", i.e. the recognition that husbands and wives can have non-identical functions. The second stage, "functional responsibility", requires that each differentiation has a relationship to the real needs of the family. The third stage, "restricted authority", limits authority to the legitimate space of responsibility. The fourth stage, "reciprocal accountability", requires that the use of authority can be accountable to the couple. The fifth stage, "shared agency", maintains the capacity of both partners as decision-making subjects. The sixth stage, "negotiated responsibility", allows the division of tasks to change according to abilities and circumstances. The final stage is "relational decision-making", which is a decision that considers the impacts, interests, and agency of both partners.

RNRM can be summarized through two principles: "differentiation without domination" and "reciprocity without forced symmetry". The first principle means that differences in responsibility should not automatically turn into dominance. The second principle means that the reciprocal relationship does not demand that both partners do the same but demands that both be treated as subjects who have dignity, interests, and the capacity to participate.

3.6. Discussion and Theoretical Implications

These findings show that GPT does not simply reproduce the construction of *qiwamah* but performs a relational reconstruction. The reconstruction is not completely egalitarian and not completely hierarchical. It works through normative compromises: maintaining the functional differences known in the family law tradition, while reducing the consequences of unlimited authority. This pattern is close to the development of contemporary *qiwamah* studies in Indonesia that link leadership with responsibility, partnership, and justice [4], [11], [12], [13], [14].

From the perspective of Islamic legal theory, these findings reinforce the importance of distinguishing "authority" from "responsibility". In classical construction, the two are often discussed intertwined with the division of maintenance and the role of the household. However, as social conditions change, the *maqāṣid* allows for a re-evaluation of how the goals of justice and benefit are realized [8]. RNRM shows one of the ways in which AI discourse conducts such evaluations: not by removing the husband's responsibility, but by limiting the consequences of the authority that can be drawn from that responsibility.

From a gender perspective, the findings also show that equality is not always framed as equality of roles. Justice is more often constructed as equality of dignity, the right to participate, and accountability. This is close to contemporary criticism of *qiwamah* readings that place men as holders of absolute power and with approaches that see leadership as a functional mandate [5], [6], [7], [12], [14].

From an AI and legal perspective, the results show the importance of distinguishing "normative coherence" from "legal validity". GPT can produce synthesis that appears consistent and argumentative, but internal consistency does not guarantee the correctness of sources or conformity with applicable legal doctrine. Research on legal hallucinations empirically demonstrates such risks [2]. Conversely, experience using LLMs in a court environment suggests that the quality of reasoning can be improved when the model is provided with verifiable legal sources and humans remain in control of the references used [3].

Thus, the contribution of this research is not the claim that AI can replace Islamic scholars, judges, or family law experts. Rather, its contribution lies in the understanding that AI becomes a "normative mediator" that can influence the way users view legal-religious issues. In the digital space, the ability to string together several normative sources into a single answer can shape new expectations regarding what is considered a reasonable legal answer. Therefore, AI literacy for law and Islamic studies needs to include the ability to examine sources, distinguish fiqh opinions, and test the suitability of answers with positive law [20], [21].

The practical implications cover three groups. For Islamic law academics, AI outputs can be used as research objects regarding normative discourse changes, but not as a substitute for primary source analysis. For educators and students, AI can be used to test arguments and compare normative frameworks with verification requirements. For system developers, legal-religious questions require a stronger design in terms of source transparency, uncertainty marking, and linkage to a verifiable legal basis [2], [3].

3.7. Research Limitations

The study has several limitations. First, the corpus consists of only 32 responses from one type of model under certain collection conditions so that the results cannot be generalized to all LLMs. Second, the output of the model is temporal; changes in models, systems, and prompts can produce different patterns. Third, the study assesses the resulting discourse, not the validity of each fiqh proposition contained in it. Fourth, frequency mapping is descriptive and is not intended to deduce the probability of model behavior outside the corpus. This limitation actually confirms that RNRM should be treated as an analytical model that can be retested through different corpuses, models, languages, and contexts.

4. CONCLUSION

This study shows that GPT tends to frame Islamic family law through a relational orientation rather than an infinite hierarchy. Of the 32 questions, 20 (62.5%) showed a dominant relational orientation, 8 (25%) were contextual/conciliatory, 4 (12.5%) were mixed, and none of the responses were predominantly hierarchical. The pattern shows that *qiwamah* is still maintained, but mainly as a functional responsibility that limits the scope of authority.

The main conclusion of the study is that authority in GPT discourse tends to be legitimized through responsibility, limited by mutual accountability, and implemented within the framework of shared agency. Fixed alimony is primarily placed as the responsibility of the husband, but the economic contribution of the wife is recognized in burden-sharing and the practical arrangement of the family. A wife's higher income does not automatically remove *qiwamah* or reverse the hierarchy; rather, it becomes a test for distinguishing economic contribution from normative authority.

Based on these findings, the study proposes a Relational Normative Reconciliation Model (RNRM): "Differentiated Roles → Functional Responsibilities → Authority Are Constrained → Mutual Accountability → Shared Agency → Responsibilities Negotiated → Relational Decisions". This model offers an intermediate-level framework for understanding how GenAI reconciles classical norms, *maqāsid*, Indonesian family law, and contemporary relational values.

Theoretically, the study proposes two concise principles, namely "differentiation without domination" and "reciprocity without forced symmetry". Methodologically, the study shows the benefits of cross-question consistency analysis as a normative stress test on LLM outputs. Practically, the study emphasizes that the normative coherence of AI outputs is not the same as legal or theological validity. Human verification of Islamic sources, jurisprudence, KHI, and laws and regulations remain a prerequisite.

Further research can compare several language models, prompt languages, fiqh traditions, and AI outputs with the opinions of scholars, judges, and family law practitioners. Such comparisons are important to know whether the relational patterns found are common characteristics of generative AI or part of a broader transformation in contemporary Islamic family law discourse.

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