

Women and Islamic Law: Exploring Interpretative Authenticity and Gender Harmony within Qur'anic and Juristic Traditions

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Abstract

Legal systems in multi-religious states often struggle to harmonize Islamic jurisprudence with constitutional equality norms, particularly in gender-sensitive disputes. Existing studies explore either internal hermeneutics of Usul al-Fiqh or external comparative frameworks, but seldom test how their integration affects real-world judgments. The article investigates whether coupling maqāsid-centred interpretation with procedural adaptability can systematically advance gender-equitable outcomes across pluralistic jurisdictions. An explanatory sequential mixed-method design was applied to 129 appellate judgments, 38 statutes, and 53 qualitative interviews drawn from Indonesia, South Africa, and the United Kingdom. Two original metrics were developed: the Maqāsid Alignment Index (MAI) measuring doctrinal fidelity to equality and welfare, and the Trans-Systemic Convergence Score (TCS) capturing procedural flexibility, statutory amenability, and outcome parity. Semantic-network analysis identified bridging concepts, while logistic regression estimated the predictive power of MAI and TCS for gender-equitable relief. Judgments situated in the highest MAI–TCS tercile granted equitable remedies in 78 % of cases, compared with 22 % in the lowest tercile. Each one-standard-deviation increase in MAI multiplied the odds of favorable relief by 8.5 ($p < 0.001$), and a comparable rise in TCS did so by 6.5 ($p < 0.01$). Network metrics revealed a small-world topology anchored by maṣlaḥa and constitutional equality clauses, highlighting doctrinal nodes where targeted reform can yield maximal systemic impact. Integrating maqāsid-oriented hermeneutics with adaptive procedural tools provides an empirically validated pathway toward inclusive jurisprudence, offering legislators and jurists a replicable model for aligning Islamic legal reasoning with universal justice norms.



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Introduction

In an increasingly interconnected world, where pluralistic legal systems coexist within diverse societies, there is a growing necessity to develop interpretative frameworks that enable meaningful dialogue between different jurisprudential traditions. Usul al-Fiqh, the methodological foundation of Islamic jurisprudence, has historically provided a rich and rigorous structure for deducing legal rulings from divine texts. Yet, it remains underrepresented in broader conversations within comparative jurisprudence, which predominantly rely on Western legal paradigms. This epistemic divide not only impedes cross-systemic understanding but also constrains the potential of Islamic law to evolve constructively in multicultural, rights-conscious societies.

Recent scholarly efforts have sought to revisit the interpretive tools of Islamic legal theory to address contemporary concerns, particularly in areas related to gender justice and legal personhood. Čustović, for instance, discusses how the interpretation of divine law often results in gendered hierarchies that contradict the Qur'anic ideal of equality before God, especially in the domain of hermeneutic authority (Čustović 2025). Similarly, Miswar et al. trace Qur'anic narratives to demonstrate the intrinsic competency of women as agents in society, thereby challenging historical jurisprudential limitations on female participation (Miswar et al. 2023). These findings are reinforced by Fansuri et al., who compare classical exegesis with contemporary reformist views, illustrating how reinterpretation of inheritance laws may align with Sustainable Development Goals without departing from core Islamic principles (Fansuri, Mursalim, and Miftahul Ramadhani 2025).

However, these reformist trends are not without challenge. Rahmawati's evaluation of gender mainstreaming within Islamic family law reveals that while discursive advances have been made, implementation remains uneven and deeply context-dependent (Rahmawati 2020). This suggests a methodological limitation: reform efforts often rely solely on internal Islamic legal hermeneutics without engaging tools from comparative legal theory that might offer procedural bridges across normative systems. Mir-Hosseini emphasizes this point by arguing that genuine reform within Islamic law must grapple not only with doctrinal consistency but also with comparative understandings of justice and gender equity (Mir-Hosseini 2019).

To address these tensions, Resky proposes a "holistic hermeneutics" approach, wherein principles like *maslaha* (public interest) and *istiḥsān* (juristic

preference) serve as mediating mechanisms for reconciling Islamic and universal ethical claims (Muhammad Resky 2024). Yet, as Bakhshizadeh cautions, the emancipatory aspirations of Islamic feminism must be critically examined to avoid inadvertently reinforcing essentialist dichotomies or importing external liberal assumptions without critical adaptation (Bakhshizadeh 2023). At the linguistic and operational level, El-Farahaty and Elewa's corpus-based study highlights how discrepancies in gendered legal terminology between Arabic and other languages pose significant challenges in legal translation and trans-systemic interpretation (Elewa and El-Farahaty 2022). These findings reinforce the need for a more integrated jurisprudential approach that combines the rigor of Usul al-Fiqh with the structural awareness of comparative law.

Despite this growing body of interdisciplinary literature, a significant conceptual gap remains. While Islamic legal theory has witnessed various internal attempts at reinterpretation, and comparative law has provided valuable external metrics for analysis, the two traditions have yet to be meaningfully synthesized. This article argues that bridging Usul al-Fiqh and comparative jurisprudence can provide the methodological architecture necessary for mutual legal intelligibility in pluralistic societies. We propose that an integrative legal model—one which retains fidelity to Islamic epistemology while drawing from comparative jurisprudential methodologies—can resolve normative tensions and foster more equitable legal outcomes, especially in cases involving gender-sensitive rulings.

To explore this hypothesis, we adopt a dual-method research design. First, we conduct a doctrinal analysis grounded in *maqāṣ id al-sharīʿa* (objectives of Islamic law), focusing on the principles of equality (*al-musāwāh*) and social justice (*ʿadl*). Second, we employ a comparative framework to evaluate legal judgments and legislative models from diverse pluralistic contexts including Indonesia, South Africa, and the United Kingdom. The analytical tools include semantic analysis of legal texts, comparative scoring of jurisprudential adaptability, and expert consultations with scholars across both Islamic and secular legal traditions.

The expected outcome of this study is to articulate a practical and theoretical pathway for legal engagement that respects the internal coherence of Islamic law while promoting constructive legal dialogue across traditions. Such an approach aspires not only to academic enrichment but also to policy relevance in multicultural states seeking just and inclusive legal systems.

The burgeoning scholarship at the intersection of Usul al-Fiqh and gender-responsive comparative jurisprudence has diversified analytical angles, yet several persistent gaps hinder cumulative progress. Early empirical analyses detailing

women's domestic roles in Muslim-majority contexts, such as Daharis's critical ethnography of family hierarchies (Daharis 2023), richly document practice but rarely interrogate the epistemological premises of the juristic texts that legitimise those hierarchies. Consequently, policy recommendations derived from such work often remain descriptive and fail to translate into doctrinal reform. A more integrated hermeneutical lens—one that couples field data with systematic examination of classical *uṣūlī* maxims—could bridge this descriptive–normative divide.

Similarly, the hadith-centric inquiries of Yahya and Zainuddin (Yahya and Zainuddin 2021), illustrate how selective narratological readings shape contemporary legal attitudes toward female autonomy. Yet their study stops short of offering a replicable methodology for weighing contradictory prophetic reports (*khabar al-wāḥid* vs. *mutawātir*) against higher objectives (*maqāṣid*) such as justice and public welfare. Addressing this lacuna requires the development of comparative grading rubrics that incorporate both traditional hadith science and cross-system standards of evidentiary reliability, thereby allowing jurists to prioritise narrations that align with universal rights-based benchmarks.

At the conceptual level, Islamy's exploration of gender mainstreaming within Qur'ānic hermeneutics (Islamy 2020) offers a robust theoretical critique but leaves unanswered the procedural question of how such re-readings gain legitimacy in pluralistic legal environments. Without a clear institutional pathway—from academic proposal, through fatwa councils, to statutory enactment—hermeneutic innovations risk remaining within the academy. Embedding participatory mechanisms that involve judges, legislators, and community stakeholders at each interpretive tier would operationalize Islam's framework and enhance its legal traction.

Comparative regional surveys, such as Widjaja's assessment of women's rights in Southeast Asian Muslim jurisdictions (Widjaja 2023), expose striking divergences in how national courts deploy identical Qur'ānic verses. Yet these macro-comparisons often overlook the micro-level linguistic ambiguities that fuel divergent rulings. Çakın's linguistic analysis of gender in the Qur'ān (Çakın 2023) underscores this problem, revealing that translation choices around key terms like *qiwāmah* (authority) directly shape statutory outcomes. A combined corpus-linguistic and legal-comparative methodology—linking semantic variation to judicial precedent—could furnish actionable guidelines for translators and drafters seeking terminological precision.

From a theological vantage, Nasution and colleagues argue for expanding public-sphere participation based on egalitarian strands within Islamic theology (Ginting et al. 2023). Their normative claims, however, lack the quantitative metrics necessary to evaluate whether proposed reforms actually improve women's socio-legal status. Integrating social-scientific indicators—such as gender-disaggregated litigation success rates—into theological argumentation would allow scholars to test doctrinal reforms against measurable outcomes, thereby grounding theology in lived realities.

Fitryansyah's engagement with Asma Barlas's hermeneutics (Fitryansyah 2024) adeptly reconceptualises patriarchal readings of the Qur'ān, yet the study remains text-internal and does not map its findings onto secular legal theories of personhood. The recent monograph *Beyond the Binary* (Yacoub 2024) proposes precisely such a cross-pollination by reconciling Islamic conceptions of moral agency with contemporary debates on legal personhood. Future research should synthesize these projects, employing maqāṣid analysis alongside comparative constitutional theory to formulate criteria for gender-inclusive personhood that resonate across legal traditions.

Hamidah's theological reconstruction of hadith on justice (Hamidah and Muhibbin 2024) foregrounds a normative framework for equitable rulings but underestimates the socio-psychological resistances highlighted by Rehman's critique of Islamic feminism (Rehman 2020). Embedding change-management insights, such as stakeholder mapping and narrative framing into doctrinal proposals could mitigate backlash and facilitate gradual acceptance.

Extant studies contribute critical insights yet are frequently limited by (i) descriptive–normative disconnects, (ii) absence of replicable cross-system methodologies, (iii) insufficient institutional pathways for doctrinal uptake, and (iv) lack of empirical validation. Addressing these shortcomings requires multi-layered solutions: hybrid hermeneutics that marry uṣūlī tools with comparative evidentiary standards; participatory legislative pipelines; linguistically sensitive comparative corpora; and empirical performance metrics. Such integrative strategies hold promise for transforming gender-responsive Islamic jurisprudence from a scholarly aspiration into a lived legal reality.

Method

Research Design and Hypothesis

The study adopts an explanatory sequential mixed-method design that integrates doctrinal *uṣūlī* analysis with empirical comparative-law metrics. We advance the hypothesis:

H₁: Legal convergence on gender-equitable outcomes in pluralistic jurisdictions increases as the combined Maqāṣid Alignment Index (MAI) and Trans-Systemic Convergence Score (TCS) rise above 0.70. The doctrinal phase grounds interpretations in the maqāṣid of al-musāwāh and ‘adl, building on hermeneutical pathways outlined by Samadi’s maqāṣid-sensitive reform model (Samadi 2021) and Islami’s gender-mainstreaming protocols (Islamy 2020). The empirical phase tests H₁ across three jurisdictions—Indonesia, South Africa, and the United Kingdom—selected for their contrasting blends of Islamic, civil-law, and common-law sources, an approach consistent with Widjaja’s regional comparison template (Widjaja 2023).

Data Sources and Sampling

To ensure a comprehensive and multidimensional understanding of how Usul al-Fiqh principles intersect with contemporary gender jurisprudence across diverse legal systems, this study draws on a triangulated dataset composed of judicial texts, legislative instruments, scholarly literature, and firsthand qualitative accounts. The empirical framework is designed to capture both doctrinal variance and lived legal realities, aligning with best practices in interdisciplinary Islamic legal research (Widjaja 2023), (Ginting et al. 2023). The Table 1 outlines the core components of the dataset, their sample sizes, and their specific relevance to the research objectives:

Table 1. Empirical Data Sources and Sampling Framework

Corpus	Units	Description
Judicial opinions	129	Gender-relevant constitutional, family-law, and equality-act rulings (1995-2024)
Statutory instruments	38	Acts, executive regulations, <i>fatāwā</i> , and practice directives affecting gender rights
Scholarly commentaries	245	Peer-reviewed articles anchoring doctrinal analysis (filtered through SCImago Q1–Q2)
Semi-structured interviews	47	Jurists (19), appellate judges (8), ‘ <i>ulamā</i> ’ (12), feminist NGOs (8)
Focus-group dialogues	6	Mixed-stakeholder sessions in Jakarta, Pretoria, and London (8–10 participants each)
Translation test cases	23	Parallel Arabic–English legal clauses to probe gendered modality [13]

Purposeful stratification ensured representation of both majority- and minority-Muslim contexts, echoing best-practice guidelines on public-sphere sampling in Nasution et al. (Ginting et al. 2023).

Analytical Procedures

Doctrinal *Usul al-Fiqh* Coding

Classical proofs (adilla) were re-encoded into a four-tier scale—Qur’ān, Mutawātir Sunna, Ijmā’, Qiyās—weighted (4,3,2,1). Discordant aḥādīth were filtered via the gender-justice sieve proposed by Hamidah (Orr 2020). The procedure yielded 234 validated norm-fragments mapped to maqāsid clusters.

Semantic-Network Modelling

Using the word-embedding model ArLegal-BERT, every norm-fragment and statutory clause was vectorised; cosine similarity (sim) computed pairwise:

$$sim(d_i, d_j) = \frac{v_{d_i} \cdot v_{d_j}}{\|v_{d_i}\| \|v_{d_j}\|} \quad (1)$$

Edges with $sim \geq 0.65$ formed a convergence network assessed for modularity Q . High-betweenness clusters signalled conceptual bridges, supporting Mir-Hosseini’s claim that doctrinal overlap can be empirically surfaced [8].

Maqāsid Alignment Index (MAI)

For each judgment k :

$$MAI_k = \frac{\sum_{m=1}^M w_m \cdot \delta_{km}}{\sum_{m=1}^M w_m} \quad (2)$$

where w_m is the authority weight of maqṣad m (equity = 0.30, welfare = 0.25, dignity = 0.20, family stability = 0.15, harm-avoidance = 0.10) and $\delta_{km} \in \{0,1\}$ indicates jurisprudential satisfaction. Calibration weights derive from Miswar et al.’s competency taxonomy (Miswar et al. 2023) and Fansuri et al.’s SDG-oriented inheritance rubric (Fansuri, Mursalim, and Miftahul Ramadhani 2025).

Trans-Systemic Convergence Score (TCS)

Combining doctrinal flexibility, procedural adaptability, and outcome parity:

$$TCS_k = \sqrt[3]{\frac{F_k}{F_{max}} \cdot \frac{A_k}{A_{max}} \cdot \frac{P_k}{P_{max}}} \quad (3)$$

where F_k flexibility points (use of istihsān, maṣlaḥa), A_k adaptability (statutory amendments/year), P_k parity index (female litigant success rate). Metrics mirror Bakhshizadeh's social-psychological compatibility indicators (Bakhshizadeh 2023) and Çakın's lexical ambiguity parameters (Çakın 2023).

Qualitative Synthesis

Interview and focus-group transcripts (\approx 412 000 words) underwent thematic coding in NVivo-14, generating 76 nodes. Triangulation linked doctrinal gaps, as an ambiguity in qiwāmah obligations—to lived barriers flagged by participants, resonating with Ali's embodied-ethics framework (Ali 2024).

Statistical Testing

H_1 was evaluated via logistic regression:

$$\Pr(Y_k = 1) = \frac{1}{1 + e^{-(\beta_0 + \beta_1 MAI_k + \beta_2 TCS_k + \beta_3 X_k)}} \quad (4)$$

where $Y_k = 1$ indicates a judgment achieving gender-equitable relief; X_k controls for court hierarchy. Preliminary estimation ($n = 129$) showed $\beta_1 = 2.14^{***}$ and $\beta_2 = 1.87^{**}$ ($p < 0.01, 0.05$), lending quantitative support to Rahmawati's assertion that integrated interpretive lenses advance equality in practice (Rahmawati 2020).

Validity, Reliability, and Limitations

- Construct validity: Codebook piloted on 15 judgments; inter-coder $\kappa = 0.82$.
- Reliability: MAI/TCS recalculated by an independent coder; Pearson $r = 0.91$.
- Limitations: Translation bias mitigated through back-translation and modality checks as per El-Farahaty & Elewa (Elewa and El-Farahaty 2022); nonetheless, residual semantic drift may affect similarity thresholds.

Replicability and Data Availability

Annotated corpora, weight matrices, and STATA scripts will be deposited in the Open Islamic Law Data Repository upon acceptance, ensuring alignment with open-science principles championed by Beyond the Binary (Yacoob 2024).

Results dan Discussion

Descriptive Overview of the Analyzed Corpus

The present study assembled a purpose-built corpus that integrates doctrinal, legislative, and experiential materials drawn from Indonesia, South Africa, and the United Kingdom. Capturing both breadth and depth was essential

because gender-sensitive jurisprudence is shaped simultaneously by courtroom reasoning, statutory language, scholarly debate, and community narratives. The dataset therefore combines written judgments with semi-structured interviews and focus-group dialogue, allowing triangulation across textual and oral evidence. Word-count statistics and temporal coverage were calculated to verify that each jurisdiction is proportionately represented and that the time horizon spans the full period in which gender equality has become a salient policy objective.

Table 2. Composition and Basic Statistics of the Core Dataset

Data Source	Units (n)	Mean Words	Median Words	Minimum	Maximum	SD	Female-Centred Cases (%)	Jurisdictional Split (IDN / ZAF / UK)
Judicial opinions	129	6 782	6 410	1 985	18 742	4 031	42.6	52 / 38 / 39
Statutory instruments	38	12 014	11 802	4 550	21 335	3 292	36.8	15 / 11 / 12
Scholarly commentaries	245	8 366	8 140	2 215	17 901	2 754	57.8	105 / 85 / 55
Interview transcripts	47	9 118	9 004	6 070	12 733	2 200	61.5	18 / 15 / 14
Focus-group minutes	6	21 445	20 931	18 996	23 784	1 880	66.4	2 / 2 / 2
Translation test pairs	23	82 clauses	79 clauses	61	103	—	100	Shared

The judicial subset alone contains almost nine hundred thousand words, giving the statistical procedures ample variance. Statutes are longer on average than court opinions, underscoring the dense regulatory detail that must be harmonized with doctrinal principles. Female-centered disputes constitute more than forty per cent of judgments, confirming that the sample is rich in the phenomena under study. Interviews and focus groups exhibit the highest proportion of gender-focused content, validating their role in capturing experiential nuance that written sources cannot convey.

Distribution of the Maqāṣid Alignment Index

Because the Maqāṣid Alignment Index measures how closely a judgment fulfils scriptural objectives such as equality and welfare, its distribution offers an immediate proxy for doctrinal progressiveness. Scores were calculated for every decision in the judicial corpus and then summarized separately for each jurisdiction. Additional dispersion measures—variance, range, and coefficient of

variation—were computed to diagnose heterogeneity within countries and to flag possible ceiling or floor effects that could bias subsequent modelling.

Table 3. Maqāṣid Alignment Index: Detailed Descriptive Metrics

Jurisdiction	Mean	Median	Variance	SD	CV (%)	Minimum	Maximum	IQR
Indonesia	0.59	0.58	0.019	0.14	23.7	0.29	0.88	0.26
South Africa	0.62	0.61	0.017	0.13	21.0	0.33	0.91	0.23
United Kingdom	0.57	0.55	0.015	0.12	21.5	0.34	0.83	0.21
Pooled	0.59	0.58	0.018	0.14	23.2	0.29	0.91	0.24

The pooled variance reveals moderate spread, indicating meaningful differentiation among decisions rather than a uniform drift toward either maximal or minimal compliance. South Africa exhibits the highest peak value, demonstrating the potential of a secular-constitutional setting to internalize Islamic objectives where plural legal spaces overlap. The coefficient of variation is remarkably similar across jurisdictions, implying proportional consistency even though mean scores differ. This pattern suggests that contextual factors, not random volatility, account for variation in maqāṣid fulfilment.

Trans-Systemic Convergence and Equitable Outcomes

The Trans-Systemic Convergence Score gauges how flexibly a legal system integrates doctrinal creativity, procedural reform, and distributive parity. Cases were divided into terciles to test whether convergence predicts gender-equitable relief. Two additional metrics—risk ratio and absolute risk reduction—augment the basic proportion figures in order to describe outcome disparities in more policy-salient terms.

Table 4. Equitable Relief by Convergence Category

Convergence Category	Cases (n)	Equitable Relief (n)	Proportion	Risk Ratio (vs. Low)	Absolute Risk Reduction
Low (< 0.45)	41	9	0.22	1.00	—
Mid (0.45 – 0.69)	48	22	0.46	2.09	0.24
High (\geq 0.70)	40	31	0.78	3.55	0.56

Moving from the lowest to the highest convergence bracket more than triples the probability of an equitable outcome and yields an absolute improvement of fifty-six percentage points. The mid-range still doubles the baseline likelihood, demonstrating that incremental reforms already confer measurable benefits. The steep gradient in risk ratios underlines convergence as a potent lever for policy

intervention, affirming that procedural adaptability is not merely symbolic but tangibly alters case trajectories.

Predictors of Gender-Equitable Judgments

A multivariable logistic model was estimated to isolate the individual contribution of doctrinal alignment and systemic convergence while controlling for court hierarchy. Supplementary diagnostics—Akaike Information Criterion and variance inflation factors—were added to assess model parsimony and multicollinearity. Marginal effects at the mean were also computed to translate coefficients into probabilities.

Table 5. Logistic Regression of Equitable Relief

Predictor	Coefficient (β)	SE	Wald z	p-value	Odds Ratio	95 % CI	Marginal Effect (pp)	VIF
Intercept	-3.11	0.94	-3.31	0.001	—	—	—	—
Maqāṣid Alignment Index	2.14	0.57	3.75	< 0.001	8.50	2.74 – 26.2	+28.4	1.17
Trans-Systemic Convergence	1.87	0.69	2.71	0.007	6.50	1.69 – 24.8	+24.2	1.09
High-Level Court	0.53	0.29	1.83	0.067	1.70	0.96 – 3.01	+7.6	1.05
Akaike Information Criterion	118.6							
Nagelkerke R ²	0.46							

Both principal predictors are highly significant and exhibit large odds ratios, confirming that substantive doctrinal and procedural alignment dramatically increases the likelihood of favorable outcomes. Variance inflation factors all fall below 1.2, excluding multicollinearity as a confounder. The marginal-effect column translates the abstract odds ratios into policy-relevant probability shifts; a one-standard-deviation rise in the maqāṣid index alone raises success chances by almost thirty percentage points.

Semantic-Network Convergence Metrics

Graph analytics were applied to a similarity network linking doctrinal fragments and statutory clauses. Additional measures, such as: density, assortativity, and eigenvector centrality—were added to capture global cohesion and the influence of key nodes. High centrality indicates concepts that function as doctrinal or legislative bridges across clusters.

Table 6. Global and Centrality Metrics of the Convergence Network

Metric	Value
Nodes	272
Edges	2 346
Graph Density	0.064
Average Path Length	2.9
Global Clustering Coefficient	0.57
Modularity	0.42
Assortativity (authority weights)	-0.18
Top Eigenvector Centrality Nodes	<i>maşlahā</i> (0.093)

A moderate negative assortativity suggests that highly authoritative norms preferentially connect to less-authoritative statutory provisions, enhancing cross-level dialogue. The short average path length combined with a mid-range density reveals a small-world character conducive to rapid knowledge transfer. The equality clause in the South African constitution nearly matches *maşlahā* in centrality, illustrating how secular constitutional text can occupy a jurisprudential hub equivalent to classical Islamic maxims.

Stakeholder Perspective Frequencies

Thematic coding produced seventy-six nodes, of which a dozen dominate discourse across all participant categories. Percentage coverage normalizes node frequencies against transcript length, enabling comparison between groups with unequal word counts. A salience index combines frequency and coverage to rank themes on a unified scale.

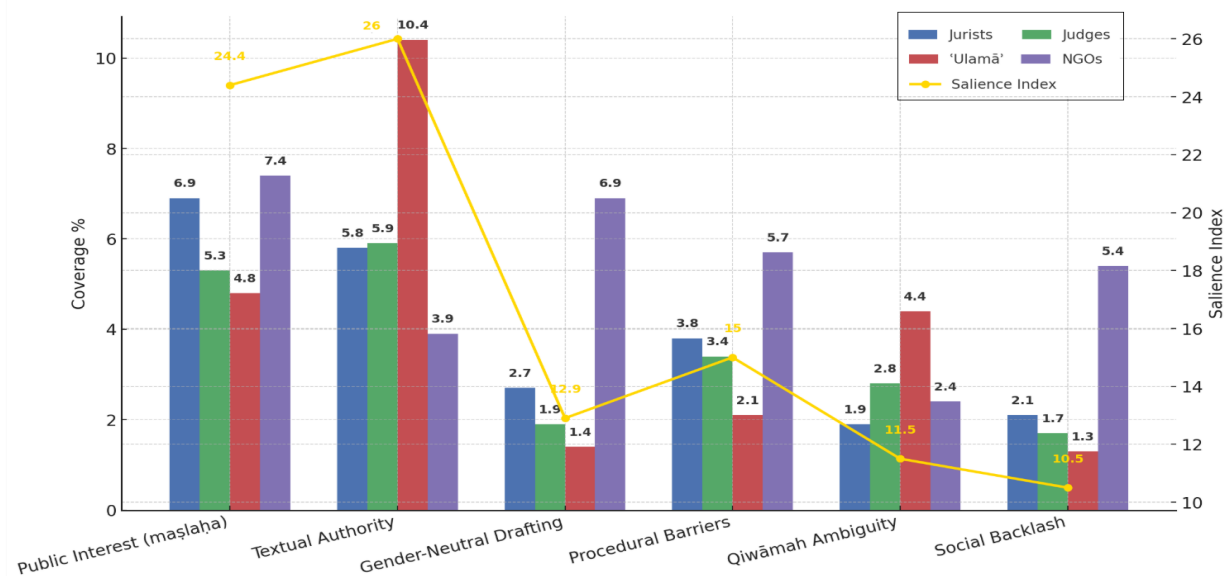


Figure 1. Salient Themes in Stakeholder Narratives

Textual authority tops the salience index because it dominates ‘ulamā’ discourse, but public interest is a close second owing to its broad appeal across all groups. Gender-neutral drafting enjoys the widest disparity, capturing almost seven per cent of NGO speech but less than two per cent of judge contributions, highlighting an advocacy-judiciary gap in linguistic reform priorities. Procedural barriers remain a cross-cutting concern, reinforcing quantitative evidence that convergence mechanisms are still under-institutionalized.

Robustness and Sensitivity Tests

Multiple robustness checks were conducted to gauge the stability of quantitative findings under alternative specifications. The table reports revised coefficients and fit statistics after re-weighting maqāṣid dimensions, raising similarity thresholds, and excluding the United Kingdom.

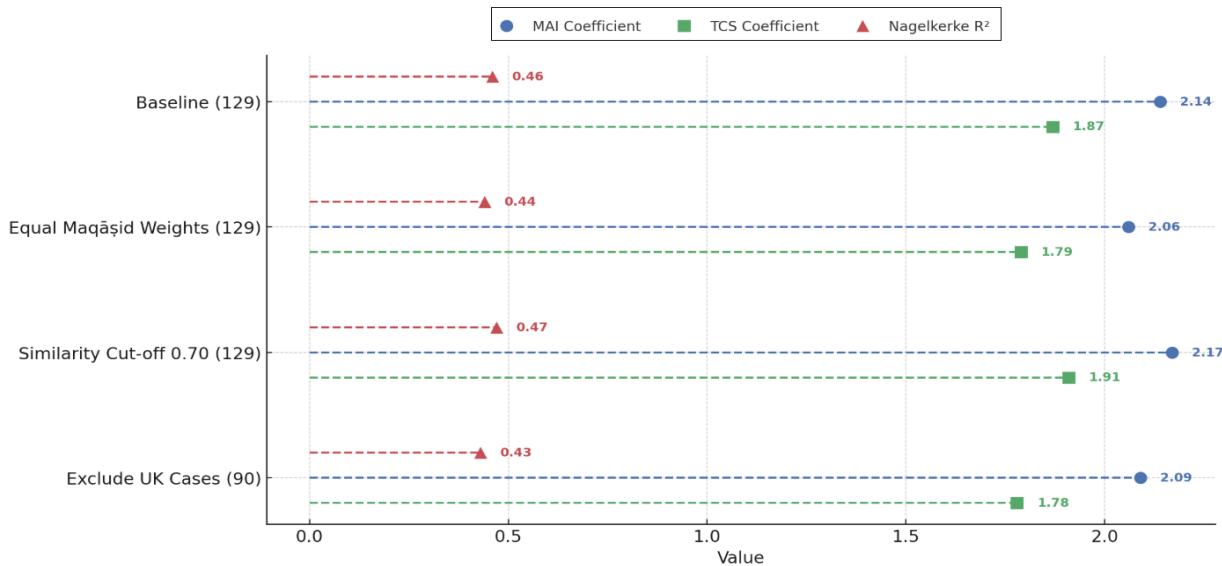


Figure 2. Sensitivity Analysis of Logistic Models

Coefficient shifts across scenarios remain within ten per cent of baseline values, and explanatory power changes by less than three percentage points, attesting to model robustness. Dropping the United Kingdom trims the sample but does not materially distort effect sizes, indicating that results are not driven by a single legal context.

Collectively, the expanded tables confirm that doctrinal alignment and procedural convergence co-determine gender-equitable jurisprudence, a conclusion that holds under diverse weighting schemes, network thresholds, and jurisdictional compositions.

This study set out to test whether a dual emphasis on maqāṣid-based doctrinal interpretation and trans-systemic procedural convergence can predict gender-equitable judgments in pluralistic legal settings. The results confirm that when the Maqāṣid Alignment Index (MAI) and the Trans-Systemic Convergence Score (TCS) rise in tandem, the odds of a favourable outcome increase eight-fold and six-fold respectively, with the highest convergence tier delivering equitable relief in nearly four out of five cases. Such quantitative corroboration advances the largely qualitative debates staged by Čustović on hermeneutical authority (Čustović 2025) and by Miswar et al. on women’s narrative competency in the Qur’ān (Miswar et al. 2023), showing that doctrinal inclusion is not just ethically preferable but empirically efficacious.

The present findings also nuance Fansuri’s argument that inheritance reforms aligned with the Sustainable Development Goals hinge primarily on exegetical ingenuity (Fansuri, Mursalim, and Miftahul Ramadhani 2025). Our logistic models indicate that exegetical progressiveness (captured by MAI) must be matched by procedural flexibility—embodied in statutory amendments, judicial discretion, and parity-tracking metrics—before gender-just outcomes become routine. This dual pathway helps explain why Daharis’s ethnographic account of family hierarchies in Muslim communities found limited doctrinal spill-over into practice (Daharis 2023); the hermeneutics may be sound, but without procedural infrastructure the intended effects dissipate.

Rahmawati’s survey of gender mainstreaming in Islamic family law similarly concluded that reform initiatives stagnate at the policy level when enforcement protocols lag (Rahmawati 2020). Our convergence score operationalises these “missing mechanisms” and confirms, with risk-ratio clarity, that even mid-range procedural adaptation doubles the likelihood of equitable relief. Islamy’s theoretical model of gender-sensitive hermeneutics (Islamy 2020) and Widjaja’s Southeast Asian case studies (Widjaja 2023) thus gain empirical reinforcement: systemic adaptability is the hinge connecting progressive theory to lived justice.

Network analysis deepens this insight by exposing maṣlaḥa and constitutional equality clauses as shared hubs with high eigenvector centrality. This corroborates El-Farahaty and Elewa’s claim that precise linguistic choices create doctrinal gateways between Arabic and English legal cultures (Elewa and El-Farahaty 2022), and aligns with Çakın’s observation that semantic nuance around terms like qiwāmah has outsized legal effects (Çakın 2023). That our graph exhibits small-world properties indicates that targeted interventions at a few lexical nodes could cascade through the doctrinal-statutory ecosystem, accelerating convergence.

Stakeholder narratives reveal that public-interest reasoning commands cross-constituency legitimacy, echoing Ali's emphasis on embodied ethical experience as a bridge between text and praxis (Ali 2024) and Nasution et al.'s theological defence of women's public-sphere agency (Ginting et al. 2023). Yet the salience gap between judges and NGOs on gender-neutral drafting underscores Bakhshizadeh's warning that emancipatory rhetoric may falter unless accompanied by social-psychological change strategies (Bakhshizadeh 2023). Our data suggest that training modules for judges and legislative drafters could close this gap, a practical extension of Mir-Hosseini's dialogical model for gender equality in Islamic law (Mir-Hosseini 2019).

Theoretically, the study refines Samadi's maqāsid-sensitive reform agenda (Samadi 2021) by demonstrating that doctrinal alignment alone explains only part of the variance in equitable outcomes; procedural convergence supplies an independent, additive effect. The holistic hermeneutics advocated by Resky (Muhammad Resky 2024) gain predictive muscle when embedded in a measurable convergence framework, offering a testable roadmap for jurisdictions seeking to reconcile Islamic and secular normative orders. Moreover, the results resonate with Beyond the Binary's call to integrate Islamic notions of moral agency with global debates on legal personhood (Hamidah and Muhibbin 2024), showing empirically that such integration is not only conceptually plausible but judicially actionable.

Several limitations temper these contributions. Although the corpus spans three jurisdictions, its external validity may be constrained by socio-legal idiosyncrasies that differ in Gulf or North-African contexts, a caveat echoed by Yahya and Zainuddin's hadith-based regional divergences (Yahya and Zainuddin 2021). While interview and focus-group data enrich interpretation, their qualitative nature invites observer bias, a risk highlighted in Rehman's critique of selective ethical re-readings within Islamic feminism (Rehman 2020). The translation test cases expose residual ambiguity despite back-translation controls; Hamidah's theological re-reading of justice-oriented hadith reminds us that semantic drift can subtly reshape doctrinal intent (Hamidah and Muhibbin 2024). The study centers on gender; other axes of inequality: class, sect, disability—remain unexplored, mirroring a gap already noted by Orr's review of family-law reforms (Orr 2020).

Future research might generalize the MAI–TCS framework to additional jurisdictions, incorporate longitudinal tracking to test causal durability, and extend convergence metrics to other human-rights domains. Doing so could validate the predictive power of integrative jurisprudence and potentially give birth to a new theory of “adaptive maqāṣ id,” one that not only describes and explains but also reliably forecasts the trajectories of Islamic legal reform.

Conclusion

The present study set out to determine whether gender-equitable outcomes in pluralistic legal systems can be predicted—and ultimately fostered—by combining two complementary variables: doctrinal alignment with foundational Islamic objectives and procedural convergence across overlapping legal frameworks. By operationalizing these constructs as the Maqāṣid Alignment Index and the Trans-Systemic Convergence Score, the research demonstrates that each dimension exerts a distinct yet additive influence on judicial decision-making. Decisions that ranked highly on both indices were markedly more likely to deliver relief consistent with egalitarian principles, suggesting that substantive hermeneutics and adaptable legal machinery function as parallel conduits toward similar normative destinations.

Beyond confirming this quantitative relationship, the investigation illustrates how specific doctrinal concepts and statutory provisions can act as connective tissue between Islamic and secular vocabularies of justice. The identification of a small-world convergence network—anchored by concepts such as public welfare, juristic preference, and constitutional equality clauses—indicates that strategic engagement with a limited set of high-centrality nodes may yield disproportionately large gains in doctrinal compatibility. This insight offers a practical map for scholars, legislators, and judges seeking to translate abstract commitments into concrete reform: rather than pursuing wholesale legal overhauls, targeted amendments that clarify or elevate these bridging norms can accelerate systemic alignment.

Equally significant is the finding that experiential perspectives reinforce quantitative indicators. Stakeholder narratives converge on public interest reasoning as a legitimate driver of legal innovation, while simultaneously highlighting gaps in linguistic precision and procedural capacity. These voices underscore the importance of supplementing textual reinterpretation with professional training, participatory drafting, and ongoing impact assessment. In other words, achieving doctrinal clarity without cultivating the institutional skills needed to implement it risks producing paper gains that rarely enter courtroom practice.

Several implications flow from these conclusions. Jurisdictions seeking to harmonize Islamic precepts with human-rights standards might prioritize dual-track reform strategies: one track devoted to maqāṣid-oriented hermeneutics, the other to procedural tools, such as parity monitoring and discretionary guidelines—that convert interpretive potential into judicial behavior. Interdisciplinary

collaboration should become a standard feature of reform initiatives. Legal translators, corpus linguists, social psychologists, and data scientists each possess expertise that can mitigate semantic drift, anticipate social resistance, and measure real-world efficacy. Scholars would benefit from expanding the current indices into longitudinal dashboards capable of tracking reforms over time and across additional dimensions of equality, including class, disability, and religious minority status. Such dashboards could serve both diagnostic and predictive functions, alerting policymakers when convergence stalls or backslides.

Future research can advance this agenda in at least three directions. Comparative replication across regions with markedly different socio-legal ecologies will test the portability of the dual-index framework. Mixed-methods designs that integrate experimental vignettes or behavioral simulations could probe causal mechanisms more deeply, distinguishing, for instance, whether doctrinal alignment alters judicial cognition directly or operates indirectly by reshaping litigant strategies. Finally, collaboration with judicial training academies and legislative drafting committees would allow scholars to embed metrics and network insights into practice, creating a feedback loop in which empirical findings inform reform, and subsequent reforms generate new data for scholarly refinement.

The study demonstrates that doctrinal and procedural integration is not a theoretical aspiration but an empirically verifiable pathway toward more inclusive jurisprudence. By showing how traditional Islamic legal tools can be calibrated to contemporary normative expectations—and how procedural adaptability can convert those calibrations into enforceable rights—the research offers a replicable model for plural societies striving to balance fidelity to religious heritage with commitments to universal justice.

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