

Beyond Gendered Boundaries: The Implications of Riffat Hassan and Simone de Beauvoir's Thought for Islamic Education in Indonesia

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Abstract

This article discusses the philosophical studies of feminists (Simone de Beauvoir) and Islamic feminist theology (Riffat Hassan) and their impact on gender-responsive Islamic education in Indonesia. This study integrates secular and religious frameworks in the context of inclusive and emancipatory educational reform. Hassan's rereading of Islamic texts and canons highlights the patriarchal bias of the dominant interpretation and calls for a theology of gender justice and equal values for all people. On the other hand, de Beauvoir's existentialism, particularly the idea of women as the "Other," serves as a critique of the educational philosophy of deconstruction and reconstruction of the education system that supports gender inequality. These thinkers problematize the nature and role of gender that is taken for granted, showing how these roles are constructed, maintained and, in many cases, legitimized through networks of cultural and religious practices. The use of comparative philosophical approaches and the integration of sociological and historical frameworks allows this study to illuminate the ways in which traditional education systems re-educate gender inequality in a hidden way, through formal and informal culture and institutional structures, to the curriculum. de Beauvoir's humanistic existentialism called for the liberation of the individual from social shackles, while Hassan's reformist theology articulated a radical position on equality and a moral agency grounded in faith. However, in the Indonesian context, the promotion of Gender Mainstreaming in Islamic educational institutions is still very reactive to culture and structural constraints. This article argues that education based on respect for human beings and gender-friendly is an absolute prerequisite for creating a safe learning space for women. Curriculum reform, reinterpretation of gender-biased religious teachings and strengthening critical awareness among educators are one of the many homework and strategic steps in realizing equitable and gender-friendly Islamic education.

Keywords: Educational Emancipation, Gender Bias, Islamic Education, Riffat Hassan, Simone de Beauvoir

Abstrak

Artikel ini mendiskusikan studi filosofis feminis (Simone de Beauvoir) dan teologi feminis Islam (Riffat Hassan) serta dampaknya pada pendidikan Islam responsif gender di Indonesia. Studi ini mengintegrasikan kerangka sekuler dan religius dalam konteks reformasi pendidikan yang inklusif dan emansipatif. Pembacaan ulang Hassan terhadap teks-teks dan kanonikal Islam menyoroti bias patriarkal dari interpretasi dominan dan menyerukan teologi keadilan gender dan nilai setara terhadap semua orang. Di sisi lain, eksistensialisme de Beauvoir, khususnya gagasan perempuan sebagai "Yang Lain," berfungsi sebagai kritik terhadap filosofi pendidikan dekonstruksi dan rekonstruksi sistem pendidikan yang mendukung ketidaksetaraan gender. Pemikir-pemikir ini mempersoalkan sifat dan peran gender yang dianggap remeh, hal ini menunjukkan bagaimana peran tersebut dibangun, dipertahankan dan, dalam banyak kasus, dilegitimasi melalui jaringan praktik budaya dan religius. Penggunaan pendekatan filosofis komparatif dan integrasi kerangka sosiologis serta historis memungkinkan studi ini untuk menyajikan cara di mana sistem pendidikan tradisional mereproduksi ketidaksetaraan gender secara tersembunyi, melalui budaya dan struktur institusi formal dan informal hingga kurikulum. Eksistensialisme humanistik de Beauvoir menyerukan pembebasan individu dari belenggu sosial, sementara teologi reformasi Riffat Hassan mengartikulasikan posisi radikal tentang kesetaraan dan agen moral yang berlandaskan pada iman. Namun, dalam konteks Indonesia, promosi Pengarusutamaan Gender di institusi pendidikan Islam masih sangat reaktif terhadap budaya dan kendala struktural. Artikel ini berargumen bahwa

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pendidikan berbasis penghormatan terhadap manusia dan ramah terhadap gender merupakan prasyarat mutlak dalam upaya menciptakan ruang belajar yang aman bagi perempuan (*safe-space*). Reformasi kurikulum, reinterpretasi ajaran agama yang bias gender serta penguatan kesadaran kritis di kalangan pendidik menjadi satu dari sekian banyak pekerjaan rumah dan langkah strategis dalam mewujudkan pendidikan Islam yang adil dan ramah gender.

Kata kunci: Bias Gender, Emansipasi Pendidikan, Pendidikan Islam, Riffat Hassan, Simone de Beauvoir

BACKGROUND

The *Education for All* initiative and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) affirm the importance of ensuring equal access to education for both men and women (Ainscow & Miles, 2008; Khan & Haneef, 2022). In the Indonesian context, gender issues in education have garnered increasing attention, both within the educational sphere and in governmental policy. Since the post-independence period, the Indonesian government has continuously sought to enhance women's participation in education through various strategic programs, aligned with Presidential Instruction No. 9 of 2000 on Gender Mainstreaming. Consequently, the gender gap in educational access has narrowed significantly, with notable improvements in women's literacy rates and school participation in recent decades (Natasha, 2013).

However, this quantitative progress has not eradicated the underlying biases and qualitative inequalities that persist within the educational environment. For instance, a report by the Ministry of Education and Culture reveals that gender bias remains deeply embedded in Indonesian school curricula and textbooks. These materials frequently depict women as passive and emotional, in contrast to men who are portrayed as active, rational, and natural leaders. Similarly, the study by Utomo et al. (2011) highlights ongoing disparities in gender representation: male characters are predominantly shown as decision-makers, while female characters are confined to domestic or secondary roles. These patterns suggest that gender issues in education are not limited to matters of access, but extend to the content, process, and culture of education itself.

Historically, gender discourse in Indonesia has often been caught in a tension between local-religious values and universal principles of equality. In the 1990s, for example, gender studies were often dismissed as a "Western agenda" seen as incompatible with Indonesian cultural and religious norms. This perception, deeply rooted in societal narratives, has led to resistance, often subtle or silent, towards efforts promoting gender equality in schools. These include enduring beliefs that women are inherently suited to the domestic sphere, or theological arguments that gender discourse runs counter to religious teachings (Lorber, 2000).

In everyday practice, gender stereotypes continue to shape interactions within educational settings, where teachers and parents may unconsciously treat boys and girls according to traditional expectations (Muafiah et al., 2025). Disparities in educational participation and achievement remain particularly pronounced at the basic education level. According to UNICEF (2021), dropout rates for girls at primary and junior secondary levels remain higher than those of boys. In higher education and STEM fields, women continue to be underrepresented, reflecting the enduring presence of a "glass ceiling" in academic and professional spaces. (Candraningrum, 2016; Siregar et al., 2023; Warsito et al., 2023) The key issue today, therefore, extends beyond access to schooling; it concerns how the education system itself may reinforce or reproduce gender inequalities. This raises critical questions: Are our curriculum, pedagogy, and institutional structures truly gender-sensitive, or do they merely replicate long-standing biases and hierarchies?

These questions now lie at the heart of academic debates and educational policy formulation in Indonesia.

This article proposes a more inclusive framework for analyzing gender issues in Indonesian education by engaging with the philosophies of Simone de Beauvoir and Riffat Hassan. These two thinkers were selected for their representation of distinct yet complementary strands of feminist thought: Beauvoir as an emblem of Western secular existentialist feminism, and Hassan as a pioneer of progressive Islamic feminist theology. Their perspectives offer dual yet interconnected lenses for examining gender dynamics in educational settings. Educational institutions, far from being neutral, often reproduce prevailing power relations, ideologies, and cultural constructions (Pestaña, 2012). Beauvoir provides critical insight into the cultural-ideological mechanisms that perpetuate inequality, especially through stereotypes and hidden curricula that subtly marginalize women. Hassan, on the other hand, offers a normative-religious framework to advocate for gender inclusivity within Islamic education in Indonesia.

Previous research has identified numerous obstacles to gender-sensitive education. A study by Muafiah et al. (2025) based on a survey of 315 teachers, found that the implementation of gender equality in schools remains moderate and unsystematic. Teachers frequently encounter challenges such as entrenched stereotypes, a lack of inclusive curricula, and pervasive gendered social expectations. Other studies suggest that despite girls now outperforming boys in primary and secondary education, women continue to face limitations in their academic and career choices due to enduring gender role constructions (Syamsiah, 2020). In higher education, women remain underrepresented in leadership roles, with many institutions reflecting the "leaky pipeline" phenomenon (Clark Blickenstaff*, 2005; Resmini, 2016).

Academic approaches to gender and education often fall into two camps: empirical-descriptive studies focusing on disparities and policy analysis, and normative-religious analyses grounded in Islamic jurisprudence or traditional interpretation. Rarely are these perspectives synthesized into a cohesive analytical framework. In other words, studies explicitly integrating Islamic and Western feminist paradigms to examine the contemporary education system, particularly Islamic education, remain limited.

This article argues that the pursuit of gender equality in education need not be divided along the lines of "Western" versus "Islamic" paradigms. Rather, by synthesizing the thought of Beauvoir and Hassan, it seeks to demonstrate that emancipatory values are universal and can be contextually articulated. It aims to present an interdisciplinary discourse that bridges the gap between secular feminism and feminist theology within the framework of educational philosophy. Such an approach is not only expected to enrich academic discourse on gender, Islam, and education, but also to offer cultural and intellectual legitimacy for practical efforts to dismantle gender bias in Indonesian schools. In doing so, it envisions education as a transformative force for social justice, one that is inclusive, critical, and grounded in both universal and spiritual values, far beyond mere ceremonial rhetoric.

RESEARCH METHOD

This study uses a descriptive-analytical qualitative design with a library research method that is systematically compiled to ensure methodological accuracy and conceptual clarity. The qualitative approach is used not only to describe, but also to interpret and critically synthesize the feminist thought of Simone de Beauvoir and Riffat Hassan in the context of Islamic education in

Indonesia. Referring to Klarer (2023) literature studies can achieve depth of analysis if carried out through a systematic process, including text selection, critical interpretation, and theoretical synthesis. Therefore, this research is carried out through three main stages: identification and classification of primary and secondary sources, critical reading of the main texts, and construction of conceptual synthesis that links feminist philosophy and Islamic feminist theology with educational issues. The data corpus, for this research includes Beauvoir's classic *The Second Sex* (1949) and the writings of Riffat Hassan (1987; 1999) on gender justice and *spiritual equality* in Islam, along with academic literature and national policy documents related to *Gender Mainstreaming* in Islamic educational institutions (Ministry of PPPA, 2020; Ministry of Religion of the Republic of Indonesia, 2022). The results of the study were then synthesized to show how the two thinkers, through different epistemic traditions, met in a critique of patriarchal ideology and offered a vision of education as a transformative space for equality and emancipation. Through this framework, this study affirms the theoretical validity of literature studies as a form of qualitative research that has analytical acuity. By bridging secular philosophical criticism and Islamic theological reflection, this research produces an integrative understanding that not only enriches the discourse of feminist education, but also provides practical insights for Islamic education reform in Indonesia towards a more inclusive and just order.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

A Review of Simone de Beauvoir and Riffat Hassan's Thinking and Their Relevance to Gender-Responsive Education

This section explores efforts to deconstruct educational spaces as inherently "gendered spaces" by synthesizing the perspectives of Simone de Beauvoir and Riffat Hassan. Despite originating from distinct intellectual traditions, Beauvoir within secular existentialist philosophy and Hassan within progressive Islamic theology, both thinkers share a common objective: dismantling patriarchal constructs that sustain gender inequality. Through a critical comparative analysis of their ideas, this section aims to develop a deeper and more systematic understanding of how education can be reconstructed to be more egalitarian and gender responsive.

Simone de Beauvoir's Perspective: The Construction of Women as 'Others'

Beauvoir's seminal work, *The Second Sex*, a cornerstone of second-wave feminism, critiques the patriarchal social structures that position women as "the Other" or the subordinate "second sex" under male dominance. Her famous declaration; "One is not born, but rather becomes, a woman", underscores that femininity is not a biological given, but a product of social and cultural construction shaped by patriarchal norms. Across patriarchal societies, Beauvoir argues, women are relegated to the position of objects within a male-centric worldview, thereby losing their freedom to define their own existence. (de Beauvoir, 1949)

She deconstructs widely held myths of femininity, such as gentleness, emotionality, and maternal devotion as ideological tools used to perpetuate women's subordination. Women's liberation, according to Beauvoir, requires dismantling these myths and transforming women's material conditions. Equal access to education and employment are, for her, essential conditions for women to transcend their socially imposed roles and achieve autonomy. Beauvoir's philosophy provides a critical foundation for understanding the role of education in shaping gender identity.

Education, in her view, should be a transformative space where women come to recognize the social constructs that constrain them and gain the agency to move beyond traditional roles (Aragonés-González et al., 2020).

Beauvoir employs phenomenological and historical analysis to trace how scientific, literary, moral, and religious traditions in Europe have shaped the contradictory and unattainable "feminine ideal." This ideal, she argues, presents women as biologically and ontologically inferior—an ideological construction used to justify their exclusion from transcendence and public life. Within this framework, education plays a critical role in reproducing gender stereotypes. From an early age, girls are socialized into culturally defined gender roles, expected to be passive, emotional, and domestically oriented, through curricula, teaching practices, and everyday school interactions. These roles function like "costumes" or "masks" that women are compelled to wear, reinforcing their subordinate position.

Crucially, Beauvoir rejects any justification for inequality based on biological difference. While she acknowledges anatomical distinctions, she argues that these should not serve as a rationale for denying women access to knowledge, power, or autonomy. In educational contexts, this view affirms the principle that all individuals, regardless of gender must be afforded equal opportunities to pursue knowledge and self-actualization.

Riffat Hassan's Perspective: Spiritual Equality and Normative-Theological Interpretation

In contrast, Riffat Hassan's normative-theological approach offers a compelling framework for addressing gender bias within religious societies such as Indonesia. As a pioneering Muslim feminist theologian, Hassan seeks to reformulate Islamic understandings in alignment with gender justice. She critiques patriarchal interpretations of Islamic texts, arguing that these do not stem from the Qur'an itself, but rather from male-dominated classical exegesis and cultural traditions.

Hassan identifies three key theological misconceptions that underpin patriarchal interpretations: (1) the notion that Eve was created from Adam's rib, implying women's derivative status; (2) the belief that Eve was solely responsible for humanity's fall; and (3) the view that women are spiritually inferior to men (Hassan, 1987).

Hassan proposed a rereading of the concept of "*nafs wāḥidah*" (one soul) mentioned in the Qur'an. An-Nisā' [4]:1, Al-A'rāf [7]:189, and Az-Zumar [39]:6 as the foundation of spiritual equality between men and women. He asserts that the term *nafs* in Arabic is gender-neutral, suggesting that human beings, regardless of gender, come from the same spiritual substance. Thus, this concept not only rejects the hierarchical narrative of creation, but also affirms equal moral and existential responsibilities before God.

From this view, Hassan asserts that there is no theological basis for denying women the right to education and intellectual leadership. Interpretation of verses such as *qawwamun* (QS. An-Nisā' [4]:34) must be understood in a socio-economic context, not an ontological one.

الرِّجَالُ قَوَّامُونَ عَلَى النِّسَاءِ بِمَا فَضَّلَ اللَّهُ بَعْضَهُمْ عَلَى بَعْضٍ وَبِمَا أَنْفَقُوا مِنْ أَمْوَالِهِمْ ۚ فَالصَّالِحَاتُ حَفِظْنَ لِلْغَيْبِ بِمَا حَفِظَ اللَّهُ وَالَّتِي تَخَافُونَ نُشُوزَهُنَّ فَعِظُوهُنَّ وَاهْجُرُوهُنَّ فِي الْمَضَاجِعِ وَاضْرِبُوهُنَّ فَإِنْ أَطَعْتَكُمْ فَلَا تَبْغُوا عَلَيْهِنَّ سَبِيلًا ۗ إِنَّ اللَّهَ كَانَ عَلِيمًا كَبِيرًا .

"Men (husbands) are in charge of women (wives) because Allah has given some of them (men) more than others (women) and because they (men) have provided for part of their wealth. Righteous women are those who are obedient (to Allah) and take care of themselves when (their husbands) are not there because Allah has taken care of (them). Women whom you are worried about, give them advice, leave them on the bed, and (if necessary,) beat them (in a painless manner). However, if they obey you, do not seek to trouble them. Indeed, Allah is the Most High and the Greatest. (QS. An-Nisā' [4]:34)"

In this perspective, education for women is not just a social right, but a spiritual obligation to actualize their human potential. Thus, Hassan's hermeneutics bridges Islamic values and the principle of modern equality, in line with the spirit of Pancasila and Indonesia's religious pluralism. Though distinct in methodology, Hassan and Beauvoir share an epistemological foundation: both locate the roots of women's marginalization in social constructions—whether secular or religious—rather than in any essential, divine, or biological truth. Hassan, in particular, proposes three core methodological steps:

1. *Teleological-Normative-Empirical Synthesis*

Hassan approaches Islamic texts with an ethical vision aligned with divine justice, while remaining attentive to historical context. This dual perspective enables reinterpretation that is neither ahistorical nor bound to patriarchal traditions that contradict Islamic moral principles.

2. *Reconstruction of Patriarchal Paradigms*

She challenges classical interpretations and hadiths that legitimize male dominance. For instance, she refutes the narrative that Eve's creation from Adam signifies inferiority, arguing instead that both genders were created from the same soul, implying ontological equality. She also critiques cultural practices such as honor killings and polygyny as distortions of Qur'anic ethics.

3. *Development of an Egalitarian Religious Framework*

Hassan advocates for theological interpretations and educational policies that affirm gender equality. She identifies fundamental human rights in the Qur'an—such as the right to knowledge, justice, and dignity—as applicable to all people, regardless of gender. However, she also acknowledges the disjunction between religious ideals and lived realities in many Muslim communities.

Hassan's work deconstructs patriarchal religious discourse while offering a liberating and inclusive reinterpretation. Her core concept of *spiritual equality* affirms that both men and women possess equal dignity and potential before God. This principle has significant implications for gender-responsive education in religious societies: if both genders are spiritually equal, then no moral or theological argument can justify restrictions on women's access to education or leadership. Hassan envisions the formation of a new cadre of educated Muslims who understand Islam as a faith rooted in justice and compassion.

In this regard, formal and informal education becomes a critical site for correcting theological misconceptions and promoting egalitarian interpretations. Hassan emphasizes the importance of integrating narratives of gender justice into religious curricula, highlighting the egalitarian nature of creation, the contributions of women in Islamic history, and the contextual reading of scripture. She calls upon educational institutions not to remain neutral in the face of patriarchal norms, but to proactively instill values of spiritual equality and critical consciousness.

Gender Construction Problems in Islamic Education in Indonesia

The issue of gender in Islamic education in Indonesia is not a new discourse. Historically, the development of Islamic education—through institutions such as *pesantren* (Islamic boarding schools), *madrasah*, and *surau*—has been shaped by deeply entrenched patriarchal values. From their inception, these institutions have tended to construct gender roles that marginalize women. Access to religious education for women was historically limited, with formal institutions for female

students only emerging in the early 20th century. A notable milestone was the founding of *Diniyyah Puteri* in Padang Panjang by Rahmah El Yunusiyah in 1923, the first Islamic religious school for women in Indonesia (Alfian, 2012; Rodin & Huda, 2020; Yusutria et al., 2021).

Women's education during this period was often viewed as secondary, intended to support domestic responsibilities. The popular adage of women as "the first educators of their children" served as a justification for female education, yet implicitly reinforced traditional domestic roles. Consequently, the Islamic education system frequently reproduced norms that positioned men as dominant subjects and women as subordinate "Others"—a pattern that closely aligns with Simone de Beauvoir's theory of gendered othering within patriarchal societies.

Gender bias is evident not only in historical access but also in the content of Islamic education. Curricula and teaching materials, particularly the *kitab kuning* (classical Islamic texts), often carry normative biases that affirm male superiority. A study of *'Uqud al-Lujain* by Nawawi al-Bantani—widely taught in *pesantren* as a reference on marital rights and obligations—reveals a doctrinal bias that legitimizes women's subordination, reinforcing stereotypes of passive obedience to male authority (Alma'arif & Muhajir, n.d.; Yusutria et al., 2021). Similarly, in the formal education sector, Islamic Religious Education (IRE) textbooks across various educational levels display unequal gender representation. Research has found that male figures are disproportionately depicted in visual and textual materials, often portrayed as scholars, heroes, or leaders, while female figures remain peripheral (Kholiza & Fadhilah, 2021; Murfi, 2014; Rasyidin, 2010; Selfira et al., 2021; Setianingsih & Nugroho, 2021). These representations socialize students from an early age into a worldview in which men dominate Islamic knowledge and public life, and women are relegated to supporting roles.

The structural organization of Islamic education in Indonesia further contributes to maintaining gender hierarchies. In the formative decades of Islamic educational institutions—including *madrasah*, *pesantren*, and Islamic schools—women were scarcely represented in decision-making roles. Low levels of female participation in higher education historically led to male dominance in leadership positions, from curriculum developers to school heads and *pesantren* caretakers. Women's participation has been largely confined to early childhood education (*Taman Kanak-kanak*), reinforcing gender stereotypes that associate caregiving and teaching young children with women's "natural" roles.

This male dominance in educational authority has shaped the policies and pedagogies of Islamic education, often turning schools into agents of gender socialization rather than transformation. In *pesantren*, the figure of the *kiai* (male religious leader) remains central to epistemic authority, while the roles of *nyai* (wives of *kiai*) or *ustadzah* (female teachers) are typically informal, symbolic, or peripheral. Such hierarchical patterns reinforce male hegemony and limit women's influence over curriculum design, institutional governance, and pedagogical development.

Nevertheless, the post-independence era marked a significant turning point in promoting gender equality. The Indonesian government formally recognized education as a right for all citizens, regardless of gender, leading to increased female participation in *madrasah* and Islamic higher education. Within Muslim civil society, the Islamic reform movement in the early 20th century also played a vital role. Organizations such as Muhammadiyah and its women's wing, *Aisyiyah*, were pioneers in establishing schools for girls and training female teachers as early as the 1910s. (Syamsiyatun, 2007) Similarly, Nahdlatul Ulama (NU) gradually established women's

pesantren and promoted the regeneration of female scholars. For instance, the leadership of *Pondok Pesantren Denanyar* by Nyai Khoiriyah Hasyim in the 1940s exemplifies the emergence of women in authoritative educational roles (Agustina, 2021; Badrah Uyuni, 2023; Srimulyani, 2008). Prominent figures such as Nyai Siti Walidah, Rahmah El Yunusiyah, and a host of contemporary Muslim women scholars have contributed not only to educational leadership but also to the reinterpretation of classical Islamic texts and the advancement of the women's movement in Indonesia (Azis & Zaini, 2024; Pratiwi et al., 2024).

In addition to grassroots movements, institutional reforms have further supported gender equality within Islamic education. Over the past two decades, the Ministry of Religious Affairs has introduced gender mainstreaming (*Pengarusutamaan Gender* or PUG) as a policy framework. A significant milestone was Government Regulation No. 11 of 2010, which established guidelines for gender mainstreaming in *madrasah*. The policy seeks to integrate gender perspectives into all aspects of Islamic education: curriculum, textbooks, pedagogy, staff recruitment, and budgeting. It also encourages the formation of gender task forces, the collection of sex-disaggregated data, and the training of educators on gender sensitivity. Some State Islamic Universities have incorporated courses on Gender and Islamic Studies, providing students with critical tools to challenge biased religious discourse and reinterpret scriptural texts.

Affirmative actions have also expanded women's access to leadership in education, with more women being appointed as *madrasah* principals, university rectors, and high-level officials. These developments signal an evolving precedent that women's leadership is not only acceptable but essential in Islamic education.

However, these institutional changes have yet to fully dismantle the structural and cultural barriers that persist. Evaluative studies show that many Islamic educational institutions have yet to internalize or implement gender mainstreaming principles effectively. For instance, a study in Riau Province revealed that nearly a decade after the enactment of PP 11/2010, many *madrasah* had limited awareness and weak application of gender policies (Abidin et al., 2022; Kertati, 2019; Martiany, 2011). Implementation across national education standards remains inconsistent. These findings highlight enduring resistance, both cultural and structural. Some stakeholders continue to perceive gender issues as foreign or secondary concerns, while others prefer to maintain the status quo. In more conservative *pesantren*, discussions on Islamic feminism or critiques of classical texts are often taboo, preserving curricula rooted in patriarchal interpretations.

This ongoing resistance underscores that gender emancipation within Islamic education is a long-term endeavor, requiring not only policy but a foundational paradigm shift. Transformation must begin at the level of discourse, interpretation, and institutional ethos if Islamic education is to become a truly inclusive and egalitarian space.

Blending Perspectives on Gender Criticism by Rifat Hassan and Simone de Beauvoir in the Context of Islamic Education in Indonesia

Although arising from different intellectual traditions, the thoughts of Simone de Beauvoir and Riffat Hassan provide complementary frameworks for deconstructing gender constructs in education. Both thinkers agree that patriarchy, whether rooted in secular ideology or derived from misinterpreted religious teachings, has historically constrained women's roles and potential. Beauvoir exposes the mechanisms of secular patriarchy, revealing how hidden curricula in modern educational systems socialize women into second-class citizenship through the internalization of

gender stereotypes from early childhood. Hassan, by contrast, highlights how similar biases persist within theological discourses, necessitating a critical reinterpretation of religious texts to dismantle the patriarchal foundations embedded within them.

Together, Beauvoir and Hassan offer a dual analytical lens through which education can be critically examined, not only for its socio-cultural content but also for its religious-theological underpinnings. This synthesis enables the recognition, critique, and potential transformation of structural gender biases in educational systems.

Deconstructing Socio-Cultural Constructs: Beauvoir's Contribution

Beauvoir's framework serves as a critical foundation for analyzing the socio-cultural constructions embedded in education. She emphasizes that gendered differences in the treatment of male and female students are not natural or inevitable but are the result of historical and ideological engineering. Her analysis encourages educators and policymakers to reflect critically on whether curricula, textbooks, and teaching methods perpetuate gender bias. For instance, science and technology are often associated with masculinity and framed as male domains. Through Beauvoir's lens, such associations must be deconstructed to ensure that women are no longer positioned as the "Other" in these fields.

Practical implications of this approach include revising educational content to highlight women's contributions in science, history, and intellectual traditions, as well as implementing teacher training to counteract implicit biases; for example, the common assumption that boys are naturally better at mathematics and conceptual subjects. Beauvoir's perspective insists that formal education should not reinforce patriarchal myths but rather become a transformative arena that challenges and transcends them.

Normative-Theological Reconstruction: Hassan's Contribution

Hassan's normative-theological critique is especially pertinent in religious societies like Indonesia, where cultural norms are often deeply entwined with religious beliefs. While state education policies may strive for gender neutrality, religiously motivated biases can persist in educational settings due to literalist and scripturalist interpretations. Here, Hassan's work becomes vital: she offers theological justification for gender equality, grounding the call for educational reform in spiritual values that resonate with the broader religious community.

For example, where resistance exists against co-educational models or women occupying leadership roles in schools, Hassan's emphasis on *spiritual equality* and the Islamic imperative to seek knowledge can serve as authoritative counter-narratives. Religious education curricula, when informed by Hassan's reinterpretation of Islamic texts, can promote the idea that Islam inherently upholds women's right to knowledge and intellectual agency. In doing so, her approach helps bridge the perceived divide between secular notions of equality and religious commitments, ensuring coherence between values taught in general and religious classrooms.

Toward a Gender-Responsive Framework for Liberation

Both Beauvoir and Hassan converge in advocating for a gender-responsive, liberatory educational framework. Beauvoir theorizes that education must liberate individuals from what she describes as the "collective bad faith" that treats traditional gender roles as unquestionable truths. Hassan enriches this vision with the argument that such liberation aligns not in opposition to faith, but with its deepest ethical and spiritual imperatives. For both thinkers, human rationality and

spiritual values converge in rejecting gender-based oppression. As such, gender deconstruction in education must operate on two interrelated levels: the cognitive-intellectual and the ethical-spiritual.

1. Cognitive-Intellectual Level

This involves interrogating assumptions, curricula, teaching content, and educational practices that are logically or empirically biased. Here, Beauvoir's critical perspective is especially relevant. For example, the pervasive portrayal of men as "leaders" and women as "helpers" must be challenged. Educators must examine whether student achievement disparities arise from internalized stereotypes that undermine girls' confidence. Deconstructive efforts might include eliminating sexist language, fostering equal participation in classroom discussions, and asserting that intelligence and leadership are not gender-determined attributes.

2. Ethical-Spiritual Level

This level involves confronting the moral and theological legitimacy of gender inequality. Hassan's insights are crucial in this context. School missions, value statements, and religious education must affirm that gender discrimination contradicts divine justice and human dignity. The principle of *spiritual equality* should be mainstreamed across educational environments. Schools, *madrasah*, and *pesantren* can host discussions on the roles of exemplary women in Islamic history, or critically examine Qur'anic verses and prophetic traditions that emphasize the right of women to seek knowledge, such as the well-known hadith: "Seeking knowledge is an obligation upon every Muslim man and woman." Such curricular and extracurricular efforts cultivate students' moral and spiritual consciousness, framing gender egalitarianism not as a foreign concept, but as an intrinsic part of religious morality.

CONCLUSION

The ideal education in the ideas of Simone de Beauvoir and Riffat Hassan is reflected in a paradigm that education should not lead students to mere traditional roles, but rather encourage them to become autonomous subjects. Efforts to reconstruct the gender paradigm in the world of education, for example, can begin with efforts to review textbooks, historical representations, and role models that have been centered on men, so that women are no longer seen as secondary figures. The reformulation of gender education means an effort to erode patriarchal myths and dismantle social constructions that diminish women's potential, so that women and men can be present equally as full subjects in the classroom and socio-cultural context of society.

Considering the ideas of Beauvoir and Hassan means considering serious efforts in educational transformation that touch on aspects of the curriculum, pedagogy, and culture of educational institutions themselves, especially in Islamic education. Education based on the principle of spiritual equality in Islam, as Hassan believes, is to reject gender hierarchies and affirm human dignity before God. By synergizing Beauvoir's thought and Hassan's progressive interpretation, education in Indonesia can be directed to build a generation that is no longer shackled in a mere gender dichotomy. Classrooms and curricula should be a field where the narrative of freedom, equality, and respect for human autonomy is put forward, eroding latent biases that have been invisible but systematic. Education without gender bias does not simply

eliminate visible discrimination but dismantles the fundamental logic that has shaped injustice itself.

The great task of Indonesian education today is to free women and men from the traps of social representation that seem to be becoming obsolete, equip them with the capacity for critical thinking towards identity construction, as well as create a space where all individuals can become full subjects in shaping themselves and the world around them. This is the substance of emancipatory education: it is not only educating, but also liberating. This study recommends several concrete steps. Academically, a series of further studies is needed on gender bias in curricula, textbooks, and learning practices in Islamic schools and universities. Interdisciplinary studies of philosophy, theology, and critical pedagogy also need to be developed to enrich the discourse on inclusive education. Practically, it is important to train teachers and educators in gender-just pedagogical perspectives, develop equality-based curricula, and strengthen Gender Mainstreaming (PUG) policies in Islamic educational settings. Through these steps, education can function not only as a means of teaching but also as a tool for independence and the formation of equal and capable humanity.

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