

RESISTANCE OF STUDENTS FROM MIGRANT WORKER FAMILIES TOWARDS THE INTERNALIZATION OF MUBADALAH VALUES IN ISLAMIC EDUCATION

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Abstract

Despite the growing emphasis on gender equality in Islamic education, limited research has examined how students from migrant worker families respond to the internalization of *Mubadalah* values. This study aims to examine the forms of resistance demonstrated by students who are children of migrant workers. Employing a qualitative approach with a case study design, the research was conducted in four Islamic educational institutions located in Jember, East Java, Indonesia. Data were collected through in-depth interviews and analyzed using the interactive model of data analysis. The findings reveal that students exhibit two forms of resistance: overt resistance and covert resistance toward gender equality practices. Overt resistance is manifested in the rejection of domestic tasks perceived as incompatible with traditional gender roles, while covert resistance appears in the form of avoidance, lack of enthusiasm, and passive participation. In conclusion, resistance to the internalization of *Mubadalah* values emerges from the interaction between educational interventions and the socio-cultural backgrounds of students. Therefore, pedagogical strategies that are context-sensitive are required, integrating gender equality values with students' lived experiences and family norms. This study contributes to the advancement of Islamic education scholarship and offers practical recommendations for strengthening gender equality education in Islamic educational institutions.

Keywords: *Santri; Migrant Worker Families; Gender Equality; Islamic Education; Educational Resistance; Cultural Barriers.*



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Abstrak

Meskipun perhatian terhadap kesetaraan gender dalam pendidikan Islam semakin meningkat, penelitian mengenai bagaimana santri dari keluarga pekerja migran merespons internalisasi nilai-nilai Mubadalah masih terbatas. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengkaji bentuk-bentuk resistensi yang ditunjukkan oleh santri anak pekerja migran. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif dengan desain studi kasus yang dilakukan di 4 lembaga pendidikan Islam yang terletak di Jember, Jawa Timur, Indonesia. Data dikumpulkan melalui wawancara mendalam, kemudian dianalisis menggunakan model analisis data interaktif. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa santri menampilkan dua bentuk resistensi, yaitu resistensi terbuka dan resistensi terselubung terhadap praktik kesetaraan gender. Resistensi terbuka ditunjukkan melalui penolakan terhadap tugas domestik yang dianggap tidak sesuai dengan peran gender tradisional, sedangkan resistensi terselubung tampak dalam bentuk penghindaran, ketidakantusiasan, dan partisipasi pasif. Kesimpulannya, resistensi terhadap internalisasi nilai Mubadalah merupakan hasil interaksi antara intervensi pendidikan dan latar belakang sosio-kultural santri. Oleh karena itu, diperlukan strategi pedagogis yang sensitif terhadap konteks dengan mengintegrasikan nilai kesetaraan gender dengan pengalaman hidup dan nilai-nilai keluarga santri. Penelitian ini berkontribusi pada pengembangan kajian pendidikan Islam serta memberikan rekomendasi praktis untuk penguatan pendidikan kesetaraan gender di lembaga-lembaga pendidikan Islam.

Kata Kunci: *Santri; Anak Pekerja Migran; Kesetaraan Gender; Pendidikan Islam; Resistensi Pendidikan; Hambatan Budaya.*

INTRODUCTION

This study is important because resistance among santri (students), particularly those from migrant worker families, is a prominent phenomenon in the global educational context (Abdusamatov et al., 2024; Agusman et al., 2024; Ghiso et al., 2024; Kofman et al., 2025; Mavroudi & Nagel, 2023; Strangfeld, 2024; Vassallo, 2024). Although resistance in education has existed for a long time, the knowledge about how children of migrant workers respond to the internalization of *Mubadalah* values in Islamic educational institutions is still very limited. This is crucial because resistance can affect educational quality and the development of character among students. A study by González (2020) mentioned that resistance often expresses dissatisfaction with systems perceived as unfair or unresponsive to the needs of students. Therefore, this research aims to fill the gap in literature regarding the resistance of migrant worker children in Islamic educational settings.

Society faces significant challenges related to inclusive education for migrant worker children, especially in the internalization of gender equality values (Bajo

Marcos et al., 2024; Düzgün, 2025; Faidin et al., 2025; Loganathan et al., 2023; Muafiah et al., 2025; Ullah et al., 2023). Santri from migrant worker families often grow up in socially challenging conditions, where inequality in various aspects of life, including education, is prevalent (Abdusamatov et al., 2024; Ang, 2026; Qiu & Liang, 2024; Suárez-Orozco & Suárez-Orozco, 2024). Research by Lertchoosakul (2021) shows that educational inequality is one of the root causes for those from migrant worker families, limiting their access to equitable quality education. This raises the need for further research on how *Mubadalah* values are received and internalized by them.

Mubadalah refers to a reciprocal exchange between men and women. It embodies the values of mutual exchange, mutual respect, and cooperation between men and women in promoting gender equality within family and social life (Chuzaifah, 2022; Marhumah et al., 2025)

In the field, students from migrant worker families demonstrate distinct forms of resistance against the internalization of *Mubadalah* practices taught by educators and volunteers. This resistance often manifests in the rejection of domestic tasks perceived as inappropriate for boys and opposition to equal roles between males and females as taught by the teachers. This aligns with findings from Solorzano and Villalpando (1998), who noted that open resistance to norms seen as unjust often arises as a reaction to the dominance or inequality in social systems. This phenomenon highlights the need to address the challenges in implementing gender equality values among students from migrant worker families.

Research related to resistance among students in Islamic education, particularly among santri, has been conducted by several scholars. Muhlis et al. (2025) revealed that students in Madura resisted the Kitab Kuning reading acceleration program by negotiating with their teachers. However, there has been no study specifically examining resistance among students from migrant worker families against the internalization of *Mubadalah* values, particularly in the context of guardianship by teachers and volunteers. A study by González (2020) identified student resistance in Chile, but the context is different from the resistance observed among santri in Islamic educational institutions. Therefore, this study is essential to broaden our understanding of resistance in a more specific context.

Previous research indicates that student resistance is largely focused on opposition to formal educational policies, such as those found in protest movements in Chile and Thailand (González, 2020; Lertchoosakul, 2021). However, there is no research that focuses on resistance by migrant worker children against the *Mubadalah* values they encounter in Islamic education. Therefore, this study offers

a significant contribution by exploring how such resistance emerges and how it affects the process of internalizing educational values in these institutions.

This study brings novelty by examining the resistance of students from migrant worker families to the internalization of *Mubadalah* values in Islamic education. While much research has been conducted on student resistance to formal educational systems, this study is the first to explore how students from migrant worker families respond to the internalization of gender equality values in Islamic education. This finding is crucial because it not only enriches the literature on resistance but also introduces a new perspective in Islamic education research involving a largely underrepresented group—migrant worker children.

The primary issue addressed by this research is how students from migrant worker families resist the internalization of *Mubadalah* in Islamic education. The objective of this study is to explore the practices of internalizing and internalizing *Mubadalah* values, and to identify forms of resistance that arise among students from migrant worker families. This research argues that the resistance by students is a response to patriarchal social and cultural norms that they observe in their family environment. This study also contributes to the development of intervention strategies that are more effective for educators and volunteers in dealing with similar resistance in the future.

RESEARCH METHODS

This study adopts a qualitative research design using a case study approach to explore the resistance of students from migrant worker families towards the internalization of *Mubadalah* values in Islamic education. The case study method is chosen because it allows for an in-depth examination of this phenomenon within a specific context, namely in Taman Pendidikan Al-Qur'an (TPQ) Nuruzzahro, Madrasah Diniyah Nuruzzahro, Mengaji *Langgeran* Malam, dan Tahfiz Subuh, providing detailed insights into the students' experiences related to gender equality values taught through *Mubadalah* (Yin, 2018). The research was conducted in four Islamic education institutions located in Jember, East Java, Indonesia, chosen purposively due to their student populations from migrant worker families. The study conducted from June 2023 until September 2024.

Data were collected through in-depth interviews. Interviews were conducted with ustaz (male teacher), ustazah (female teacher), and caretaker volunteers of students from migrant worker families, selected purposively based on their relevance to the research topic. Referring to Lahman et al. (2023), all names of informants, students, and Islamic educational institutions are written using pseudonyms.

The data collected were analyzed using interactive model of data analysis (Miles et al., 2014), involving familiarization with the data, data extraction through coding, and grouping codes into broader themes. The analysis was further guided by theories of overt resistance (Solórzano & Villalpando, 1998) and everyday resistance (Scott, 1985), which helped interpret explicit and implicit forms of resistance in the students' responses to *Mubadalah* values.

To ensure data validity, the study employed source and technique triangulation by comparing data from various informants. Additionally, member checking was conducted by returning preliminary findings to the participants to verify that the interpretation aligned with their experiences (Creswell, 2014). Transparency in the data collection and analysis process was maintained to ensure that all data were recorded and analyzed objectively.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Result

Overt Resistance to Gender Equality in Everyday Practices

The study focuses on the resistance of students from migrant worker families against the internalization of gender equality values through *Mubadalah* practices in Taman Pendidikan Al-Qur'an (TPQ) Nuruzzahro, Madrasah Diniyah Nuruzzahro, Mengaji *Langgeran* Malam, and Tahfiz Subuh. Gender equality in this context refers to the equal distribution of roles between men and women in daily activities, both in domestic (such as washing dishes, cleaning rooms) and public (such as marching together in educational activities) spaces. This practice is carried out by ustaz, ustazah, and caretaker volunteers who accompany the students in the Islamic education institutions, aiming to internalize the understanding that both men and women have equal roles in creating justice and well-being.

In the first interview with Latvia, an ustazah involved directly in the *Mubadalah* practices, she explained the internalization process applied to the students. She stated that male students often show resistance to domestic tasks, which are typically seen as feminine roles. Tunik recounted to Latvia that Virman became upset when she encouraged him to take responsibility for personal care, folding his clothes, and washing his eating utensils. "*Virman became upset earlier when I asked him to wash his dishes and take care of himself. He also resisted when I told him to fold his clothes,*" Tunik's account was narrated by Latvia (S. Latvia, personal communication, Agustus 2024).

The authors interpret this resistance as being shaped by patriarchal norms that position domestic tasks as women's responsibilities. These norms are rooted in

the social values upheld within students' families, particularly among migrant worker households that maintain traditional views on gender roles.

Latvia further explained that Virman also rejected the advice of Badriyah, a caretaker volunteer, when she encouraged him to take responsibility for hanging his laundry. Badriyah subsequently conveyed Virman's negative response to Latvia. "*Virman refuses to hang the laundry, feeling forced to do it,*" Latvia reported (S. Latvia, personal communication, Agustus 2024).

In his previous household environment, Virman's father allowed the home to remain dirty, left eating utensils unwashed, and neglected the personal care of his children, resulting in their unkempt appearance, including Virman himself. According to Latvia, Virman perceived that activities such as cleaning the house, washing utensils, and caring for children were women's tasks, a perception shaped by his observations of his father (S. Latvia, personal communication, July 25, 2024). In short, Virman's belief that domestic responsibilities belong to women was influenced by patriarchal cultural modeling he observed from his father prior to his father's departure to work outside the island (S. Latvia, personal communication, August 2024).

The authors interpret this resistance as reflecting a strong traditional gender perception embedded in Virman, likely influenced by socialization within his home, particularly from his father, who views domestic roles as women's tasks. This perception generates mental resistance to practices that attempt to introduce gender equality.

Male students also tend to avoid domestic tasks that involve gender equality, even though they do not explicitly reject them. For example, when asked to clean a room or wash dishes, several male students appeared to avoid or only performed the tasks half-heartedly. The authors analyzed that they often only performed the tasks after repeated instructions, and sometimes did so reluctantly, even looking unwilling. This data confirms the interview findings that show covert resistance to *Mubadalah* practices.

From the data presented, it can be seen that the resistance occurring among male students to gender equality in daily practices at the Islamic education institutions, particularly in domestic tasks, stems from cultural norms that consider domestic roles to be women's responsibilities. This shows that the *Mubadalah* practice, which aims to create gender equality among students, faces significant challenges, especially for students raised in families with strong patriarchal values. Nevertheless, some students actively participate in this practice, although most male students show resistance, either openly or covertly.

Based on the findings, several patterns of resistance to the internalization of *Mubadalah*, particularly related to gender equality, can be identified. First, there is a pattern of direct rejection by male students towards domestic tasks, indicating an overt resistance to the gender equality values being taught. Second, there is a more subtle pattern of resistance, which involves avoidance of tasks related to gender equality, demonstrating a form of everyday resistance (Scott, 1985). Third, a social resistance pattern emerges, highlighting the influence of family socialization, which shapes students' perceptions of gender roles within the Islamic education institutions.

Table 1. Data on Resistance to Gender Equality in Daily Practices

Informant	Interview Excerpt	Indicator
Latvia (Ustazah) recounting Tunik's complaint (Caretaker Volunteer)	"Virman gets angry when asked to wash dishes or fold clothes."	Emotional rejection and avoidance of domestic tasks
Latvia (Ustazah) recounting Tunik's complaint (Caretaker Volunteer)	"Virman refuses to hang the laundry, feeling forced to do it."	Resentment towards the internalization of domestic tasks

From the table, patterns of resistance observed in male students towards the internalization of *Mubadalah* are evident. Indicators such as explicit rejection, emotional resistance, and avoidance of domestic tasks demonstrate the tension between the gender equality values taught in the Islamic education institutions and the social norms accepted in the home. This reflects both overt and covert resistance, influenced by the gender perceptions ingrained in the students, particularly those coming from families with a patriarchal culture.

Everyday Resistance to Gender Equality in Daily Practices

Everyday resistance refers to forms of rejection that are indirect, such as avoidance, inactivity, or non-involvement in tasks that promote gender equality. The students do not explicitly reject the tasks, but show silent or unenthusiastic attitudes towards the internalization of these practices.

Latvia, the *ustazah* who taught him, explained that on another occasion Virman carried out the task while glaring sharply, frowning, and displaying body language that conveyed anger and rejection (S. Latvia, personal communication, July 25, 2024).

Farinda, a caretaker volunteer, also reported that Virman once complained to her when Latvia encouraged him to sweep and mop his room, saying he "*did not*

want to, felt sad, refused, and was forced". Virman further confided to her that he was reluctant whenever he was expected to perform domestic tasks, particularly cleaning his room (Farinda, personal communication, September 5, 2024).

From this data, it can be understood that the resistance shown by Virman reflects discomfort with the internalization of gender equality, even though he does not openly reject it. Virman feels compelled to perform the task, as it seems inconsistent with the norms at home, where domestic roles are predominantly performed by women.

Tunik also observed that Virman often secretly avoided washing his clothes every two days and instead only did the laundry once a week. Despite having been accustomed by Tunik to wash them regularly. (personal communication, September 3, 2024). This finding shows that the student also display resistance to gender equality internalization, even though they do not reject it outright.

The data shown that the everyday resistance exhibited by male students often involves avoiding tasks that emphasize gender equality. For instance, when asked to share domestic tasks such as cleaning rooms or washing dishes, some students appeared unenthusiastic or avoided direct involvement. The authors analyzed that while these student did perform the tasks, they did so reluctantly, only after repeated instructions. This reflects invisible resistance, where students do not explicitly reject the task but choose not to engage actively.

From the data presented, it can be analyzed that resistance to gender equality internalization in daily practices at Islamic education institutions tends to take the form of everyday resistance. The students show reluctance to participate in the equal division of domestic tasks. This indicates that resistance to gender equality does not always manifest in open rejection but often in avoidance and inactivity. This resistance is harder to recognize but still indicates opposition to the gender equality values taught in Islamic education institutions.

Table 2. Data on Resistance to Gender Equality

Informant	Interview Excerpt	Indicator
Ustazah (Latvia).	Virman carried out the task while glaring sharply, frowning, and displaying body language that conveyed anger and rejection.	Performing domestic tasks with reluctance, accompanied by frowning and resistant body language.
Caretaker Volunteer (Tunik)	Virman often secretly avoided washing his clothes every two days and instead only did the laundry once a week, despite having been accustomed by Tunik to wash them regularly.	Performing domestic tasks but covertly abandoning them (no longer carrying them out as expected).

From this table, it can be seen that resistance to gender equality internalization is primarily demonstrated by male student through avoidance of domestic tasks that involve equal roles between men and women. The student also show inactivity or reluctance to actively participate in the distribution of tasks that should be equal. This suggests that everyday resistance often manifests in avoidance, inactivity, and half-hearted involvement in *Mubadalah* practices. However, this resistance reflects the tension between the gender equality values introduced in Islamic education institutions and the social norms already accepted at home.

Discussion

The findings of this study indicate that resistance to the internalization of gender equality values, particularly through the *Mubadalah* practices in the Islamic education institutions, is more complex and varied compared to existing literature. This study found that resistance to gender equality values among students from migrant worker families is more often in the form of everyday resistance (Scott, 1985), although there are also instances of overt resistance in some cases. The less apparent rejection, such as task avoidance or inactivity in activities involving gender equality roles, aligns with findings noted by Solórzano and Villalpando (1998) who stated that resistance is often unseen but still impacts the acceptance of new values. This finding is consistent with Scott's theory of everyday resistance, where opposition to dominant values or power systems typically manifests in indirect and subtler forms.

However, a significant difference in the context of Islamic education institutions should be noted. While previous studies, such as those conducted by Lertchoosakul (2021) in Thailand or González (2020) in Chile, have highlighted overt resistance to gender equality educational values in larger socio-political contexts, in the context of Islamic education institutions, resistance is more frequently seen in the form of avoidance of domestic tasks and inactivity in the equal distribution of roles in the classroom or community spaces within the Islamic education institutions. The strong influence of patriarchal culture, particularly in migrant worker families, plays a significant role in shaping students' perceptions of gender roles, which exacerbates resistance to the gender equality values being taught in Islamic education institutions.

The theoretical implications of this finding suggest that to understand resistance within the context of Islamic education, it is important to integrate an understanding of family socialization and the social norms that have been established within the community. Gender equality education taught in Islamic education institutions not only faces challenges from external gender norms but

must also overcome barriers originating from within the students' families, which reinforce traditional gender patterns. Solórzano and Villalpando (1998) emphasize that resistance to gender equality-based learning can be influenced by students' lived experiences, which are internalized within their families and cultures. Therefore, educational approaches teaching gender equality need to be more sensitive to the cultural and social contexts of students to be more effectively received and impactful in promoting change.

Practically, the findings suggest that educators in Taman Pendidikan Al Qur'an, Madrasah Diniyah, and nonformal Islamic education need to develop teaching strategies that are more responsive to the social and cultural context of students. This approach should include more sensitive communication, open dialogue on gender equality, and the instillation of values that do not contradict the social norms within students' families. For example, inclusive education on gender equality should be carried out in a way that blends religious values with principles of social equality, while minimizing the gap between the values taught in the institutions and the values held by the students' families. By doing so, the internalization of *Mubadalah* in the Islamic education institutions will not only be a theoretical concept accepted within the Islamic education institutions environment but also applied in the students' real-life experiences outside of the Islamic education institutions.

Finally, the social implications of this finding suggest the need for closer collaboration between the Islamic education institutions and local community groups, including students' families. Initiatives to introduce gender equality should involve the family community in the educational process. This community-based approach is expected to reduce resistance to change and integrate gender equality education into the daily lives of students. Additionally, Taman Pendidikan Al Qur'an, Madrasah Diniyah, and nonformal Islamic education institutions can collaborate with non-government organizations, Islamic higher education institutions, and Islamic organisations to design *Mubadalah* learning module that are more suited to local culture, while still maintaining the fundamental principles of gender equality. With these steps, it is hoped that gender equality values will be more widely accepted and effectively implemented, both in the informal and non-formal Islamic education institutions and in the broader society.

CONCLUSION

This study found that resistance to the internalization of *Mubadalah* values among students from migrant worker families in Taman Pendidikan Al Qur'an, Madrasah Diniyah, and nonformal Islamic education institutions is heavily

influenced by social and cultural factors. Students often display two main forms of resistance: overt resistance and everyday resistance. Overt resistance is more clearly seen in the rejection of domestic tasks that are considered inconsistent with traditional gender roles, while everyday resistance appears in the form of avoidance or inactivity towards practices that involve gender equality. These findings suggest that the gender equality values introduced in Islamic education institutions often conflict with the norms accepted in the students' homes, where traditional gender roles are more dominant.

From an academic perspective, this research contributes significantly to the study of Islamic education and educational resistance, particularly related to the internalization of gender equality values in the Islamic education institutions context. By identifying the forms of resistance among students from migrant worker families, this study expands our understanding of the social and cultural challenges in Islamic education, especially in internalizing gender equality values. It also offers a new perspective on educational resistance, which has previously focused primarily on resistance to formal educational policies, and provides further insights into how such resistance can emerge in nonformal and informal Islamic educational settings.

However, this study also has limitations, such as being confined four Islamic education institutions in Jember, East Java, Indonesia, which may not represent the broader context of Islamic education in Indonesia. Further research could be conducted by involving Islamic education institutions from various regions with different social, cultural, and economic characteristics to gain a more comprehensive understanding of this resistance. Additionally, future studies would benefit from exploring more deeply the intervention strategies that educators can use to reduce resistance to *Mubadalah*, as well as strengthening the role of family, extended family, and non-government organisation, Islamic higher education institutions, and Islamic organisations, in supporting the internalization of these values in non-formal and informal Islamic education institutions.

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