

Leadership and Justice in Islamic Perspective: Their Relevance to Contemporary Islamic Family Law

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Abstract	<i>Leadership and justice are two fundamental concepts in Islamic teachings that are intrinsically interconnected and serve as essential foundations for the development of a just and well-ordered social and family system. In Islamic perspective, leadership is not merely understood as an exercise of authority or power, but as a moral and legal trust (amānah) that entails responsibility for upholding truth, public welfare (maṣlaḥah), and justice. Justice (‘adl) constitutes the normative core of leadership, as the absence of justice undermines the moral and spiritual legitimacy of leadership itself. This article aims to examine the concept of leadership and justice in Islamic perspective and to analyze their relevance to contemporary Islamic family law. Employing a qualitative literature-based approach through an analysis of Qur’anic verses and Prophetic traditions, this study finds that ideal leadership—particularly within the context of family governance and legal institutions—must be grounded in the principles of trustworthiness, justice, consultation (shūrā), and piety. The Qur’an emphasizes the obligation to uphold justice in all legal and social relations, including family matters, as articulated in QS. An-Nisā’ [4]: 58 and QS. An-Nahl [16]: 90. Furthermore, the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ affirmed that just leaders attain a noble status before God. Accordingly, justice-oriented leadership plays a crucial role in ensuring the protection of rights, family harmony, and the development of a responsive and equitable system of contemporary Islamic family law. This study affirms that, in Islamic thought, justice represents both the essence and ultimate objective of leadership, while leadership functions as an instrumental mechanism for realizing justice within family and social life.</i>
Keywords	<i>Leadership, Justice, Contemporary Islamic Family Law,</i>

Introduction

Leadership plays a crucial and strategic role in shaping social order and legal systems, including the regulation of family relations. The progress and stability of a

society are closely linked to the quality of leadership exercised within both public and private spheres (Kamil dkk., 2023). In the context of contemporary Islamic family law, effective leadership is required not only at the level of the state but also within the family structure itself, particularly in regulating rights, obligations, and responsibilities among family members. Similarly, justice represents a fundamental value in human life, as it ensures balance, equality, and fairness in social and family relations. Without justice, leadership—whether institutional or familial—loses its normative legitimacy and transformative capacity (Daulay, 2024).

Leadership and justice constitute two foundational concepts in Islamic teachings that significantly influence the formation of a harmonious, dignified, and prosperous social and family order. From an Islamic perspective, leadership (*al-imāmah* or *al-riyāṣah*) is not merely associated with authority or power, but is understood as a moral and legal trust (*amānah*) that must be exercised with sincerity, responsibility, and justice (Islam, 2018). In Islamic family law, leadership extends beyond political authority to encompass family governance, including the roles of spouses, parents, and legal institutions in safeguarding family welfare and rights. Thus, leadership in Islam functions as a mechanism for ensuring the realization of justice within both domestic and legal contexts.

Islam places justice (*ʿadl*) at the core of all aspects of life, including leadership and legal regulation. Justice serves as the foundation for social stability, family harmony, and the legitimacy of legal norms. In the absence of justice, leadership may lead to oppression, inequality, and structural imbalance, particularly within family relations (Fauzi dkk., 2021). The Qur'an explicitly commands the upholding of justice in all matters, as articulated in QS. An-Nisā' [4]: 58, which emphasizes the obligation to fulfil trust and adjudicate disputes fairly. This normative principle is highly relevant to contemporary Islamic family law, where legal decisions directly affect marital relations, parental authority, and the protection of vulnerable family members.

Historical Islamic practice demonstrates concrete examples of just and trustworthy leadership as exemplified by the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ and the Rightly Guided Caliphs (*Khulafā' al-Rāsyidīn*). Their leadership was characterized by consultation (*shūrā*), integrity, and concern for public and family welfare. These principles illustrate that leadership in Islam is inherently ethical and collective rather than authoritarian or individualistic. Within the framework of Islamic family law, such leadership values underscore the importance of fairness, protection of rights, and moral accountability in regulating family life and resolving domestic disputes (Manzil & Muttaqin, 2024).

In the contemporary era, the concepts of leadership and justice in Islam remain highly relevant in addressing complex challenges such as family disintegration, gender inequality, rising divorce rates, and the effectiveness of family law institutions. Modern social realities reveal that the misuse of authority and the erosion of justice often result in legal uncertainty and social vulnerability, particularly for women and children. Consequently, a contextual and principled understanding of leadership and justice in Islamic perspective is essential for developing a responsive and equitable system of contemporary Islamic family law that aligns normative values with lived realities.

Accordingly, the study of leadership and justice in Islamic perspective is of critical importance for restoring the ethical foundations of family governance and legal regulation. Leadership grounded in justice, trustworthiness, and piety has the potential to foster family harmony, legal certainty, and social welfare. By integrating these principles into contemporary Islamic family law, Islamic legal thought can contribute to the development of a just family system that upholds human dignity and reflects the universal objectives of Islamic law (*maqāṣid al-sharī'ah*).

Research methods

This study employs a qualitative research approach based on library research, with a particular emphasis on normative and conceptual analysis within the field of Islamic family law. A literature-based methodology is adopted because the primary objective of this article is to examine the concepts of leadership and justice in Islamic perspective and to analyze their relevance to contemporary Islamic family law (Muhadjir, 1998). The data sources consist of primary legal texts, namely the Qur'an and the Sunnah of the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ, as well as secondary sources including classical and contemporary works of Islamic jurisprudence (*fiqh al-usrah*), books on Islamic legal theory, and peer-reviewed national and international academic journals addressing leadership, justice, and Islamic family law. Accordingly, this research is categorized as qualitative descriptive library research or bibliographical research that focuses on textual and doctrinal analysis.

Library research in this study is not limited to the activities of reading and summarizing existing literature, but involves a systematic process of collecting, classifying, and critically examining normative and scholarly sources relevant to leadership and justice in Islamic family law. The analysis covers key concepts such as leadership (*al-imāmah and qiwāmah*), justice (*'adl*), and their application in family relations and family law institutions. This approach enables the study to trace the development of classical and contemporary Islamic legal thought and to assess the continuing relevance of these normative principles in addressing current challenges within Islamic family law.

Data analysis is conducted through a combination of inductive and deductive methods. The inductive approach is used to identify patterns, principles, and values of leadership and justice derived from Islamic normative sources, particularly those related to family governance and legal regulation of family relations. Subsequently, the deductive approach is applied to connect these theoretical principles with contemporary issues in Islamic family law, including family leadership, justice in spousal relations, and the role of family law institutions in protecting the rights of family members. The integration of inductive and deductive analysis aims to produce a comprehensive and coherent normative framework that is analytically rigorous and relevant to the contemporary discourse on Islamic family law (Sugiyono, 2017).

Results and Discussion

Fundamental Concepts of Leadership in the Islamic Perspective

In Islamic thought, leadership (*al-imāmah* or *al-riyāṣah*) is conceived as a profound trust (*amānah*) bestowed upon an individual to regulate, guide, and administer justice for the realization of public welfare. Leadership is not merely a position of authority or prestige; rather, it constitutes a moral and spiritual responsibility that will ultimately be accounted for before Allah SWT. This understanding places ethical integrity, accountability, and moral consciousness at the core of Islamic leadership.

An Islamic leader is entrusted with the obligation to uphold truth (*al-ḥaqq*), promote justice (*'adl*), and prevent wrongdoing (*munkar*) within society. Consequently, authentic leadership in Islam requires sincerity, honesty, wisdom, and the capacity to balance individual interests with collective welfare. Leadership is therefore inseparable from ethical conduct and social responsibility, particularly in regulating social institutions such as the family.

Islamic leadership is fundamentally service-oriented and aligns closely with the concept of servant leadership rather than domination or authoritarian control (Hasra

dkk., 2024). The Prophet Muhammad ﷺ consistently emphasized that leaders are servants of the community, not rulers to be served. This principle highlights humility, empathy, and accountability as defining characteristics of Islamic leadership.

The concept of leadership in Islam is firmly grounded in the Qur'an, which repeatedly emphasizes trust, justice, and consultation as essential principles of governance. First, leadership as a trust (*Amānah*), "Indeed, Allah commands you to render trusts to whom they are due and, when you judge between people, to judge with justice" (Qur'an, Q. *al-Nisā'* [4]: 58). This verse underscores that leadership is a trust that must be entrusted to competent individuals and exercised with justice (al-Qurtubi, 2010). Leadership that is devoid of trustworthiness inevitably gives rise to oppression, inequality, and social disorder, including within the sphere of family relations. Second, leadership based on consultation (*Shūrā*), "And those who respond to their Lord, establish prayer, and whose affairs are conducted by mutual consultation among them..." (Qur'an, Q. *al-Shūrā* [42]: 38). This verse demonstrates that Islamic leadership is inherently participatory rather than authoritarian (Hariadi dkk., 2025). Consultation (*shūrā*) serves as a normative mechanism to ensure inclusivity, fairness, and collective responsibility, principles that are equally relevant in the governance of family life and family law institutions. Third, obedience to just leadership, "O you who believe, obey Allah, obey the Messenger, and those in authority among you..." (Qur'an, Q. *al-Nisā'* [4]: 59). This verse clarifies that obedience to leadership constitutes part of obedience to Allah and His Messenger, provided that leadership upholds justice and adheres to the principles of the *Shari'ah* (Ismail et al., 2021). In the context of Islamic family law, this obedience is conditional upon the realization of justice and the protection of rights (Ismail dkk., 2021).

The Prophet Muhammad ﷺ further elaborated the ethical dimensions of leadership through numerous prophetic traditions. First, leadership is fundamentally a responsibility. The Prophet stated: "Each of you is a shepherd, and each of you will be questioned concerning those under his care" (Reported by al-Bukhārī and Muslim) (al-Bukhari, 2010; al-Hajaj, 2010). This hadith establishes that leadership responsibility applies to all levels of social organization, including family leadership (*qiwāmah*) (al-'Aini, 2010). Second, leadership is a form of service. The Prophet stated: "The best of your leaders are those whom you love and who love you; they pray for you and you pray for them" (Reported by Muslim) (al-Hajaj, 2010). This narration portrays the ideal leader as one who maintains mutual respect, affection, and moral responsibility toward those under his or her authority (al-Nawawi, 2010). Third, Islam discourages the pursuit of leadership for personal ambition. The Prophet warned: "Do not ask for leadership, for if it is granted to you because of your request, you will be left to bear it alone..." (Reported by al-Bukhārī and Muslim) (al-Bukhari, 2010; al-Hajaj, 2010). This hadith underscores that leadership is a heavy trust rather than a means of self-interest (al-Asqolany, 2010).

Based on the Qur'an and Sunnah, several foundational principles of Islamic leadership can be identified, including *amānah* (trustworthiness), *ādil* (justice), *shūrā* (consultation), *ikhhlās* (sincerity), *ḥikmah* (wisdom), and accountability before both society and Allah SWT (Jamil, 2015). The primary objective of leadership in Islam is the realization of public welfare (*maṣlahah al-āmmah*) and the establishment of *tawḥīd*-based values in social life. Leadership functions to balance rights and obligations, protect the vulnerable, and ensure equitable distribution of welfare (Madhi, 2011).

Accordingly, leadership in Islam is inseparable from the concept of *khalīfah* (vicegerency). As stated in the Qur'an: "Indeed, I will place upon the earth a vicegerent" (Qur'an, Q. *al-Baqarah* [2]: 30). This verse affirms that leadership entails the

responsibility to preserve balance, justice, and moral order in human civilization (Qutub, 2013).

Relevance of Leadership and Justice to Contemporary Islamic Family Law

The conceptual linkage between leadership and justice in Islam finds its most concrete and transformative relevance within the domain of contemporary Islamic family law. While leadership (*al-imāmah*, *al-riyāsah*, or *qiwāmah*) is often discussed in the context of political authority and public governance, Islamic legal tradition recognizes that the family constitutes the most fundamental unit of social order. Consequently, the ethical quality of leadership and the realization of justice at the family level directly determine the moral stability, legal effectiveness, and social resilience of Muslim societies.

In Islamic legal thought, the family is not merely a private institution but a normative space governed by legal, ethical, and spiritual principles. Leadership within the family, particularly through the concept of *qiwāmah*, represents a form of delegated responsibility rather than unrestricted authority. This leadership model draws its normative legitimacy from the Prophetic example (*uswatun ḥasanah*), in which authority was exercised through service, moral integrity, and justice rather than coercion or domination (Islam, 2018).

The leadership of the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ demonstrates that authority within social institutions—including the family—must be rooted in truthfulness (*ṣiddīq*), trustworthiness (*amānah*), intellectual competence (*faṭānah*), and communicative responsibility (*tablīgh*). These four attributes provide a normative framework for understanding leadership in contemporary Islamic family law, where legal decisions and domestic authority significantly affect marital harmony, parental responsibility, and child protection.

In the context of family governance, *ṣiddīq* manifests as honesty and transparency in marital relations, financial responsibilities, and legal testimony. Family leadership devoid of truthfulness often results in manipulation, concealment of obligations, and legal disputes that undermine justice. Similarly, *amānah* underscores that family leadership—whether exercised by spouses, parents, or legal guardians—is a trust accountable before Allah SWT. When *amānah* is neglected, leadership degenerates into domination, neglect, and structural injustice, particularly toward women and children.

Faṭānah becomes increasingly relevant in contemporary Islamic family law due to the complexity of modern family issues, such as economic dependency, psychological harm, domestic violence, and child custody disputes. Legal authorities and family leaders are required to exercise discernment and contextual understanding to ensure that legal norms achieve substantive justice rather than rigid formalism. Meanwhile, *tablīgh* obliges both family leaders and legal institutions to actively promote awareness of rights and responsibilities, challenge unjust cultural practices, and uphold the ethical objectives of Islamic law (*maqāṣid al-sharī'ah*). Thus, leadership inspired by the Prophetic model serves as the ethical backbone of Islamic family governance, ensuring that authority remains aligned with justice, compassion, and accountability.

Justice (*ʿadl*) occupies a central and non-negotiable position within Islamic legal philosophy. In the realm of family law, justice is not an abstract moral ideal but a concrete legal requirement that shapes marital rights, parental authority, inheritance distribution, and dispute resolution (Prasetya and Muhamad Hasan Sebyar, 2024). The Qur'anic mandate to uphold justice, as articulated in Q. *al-Nisā'* [4]: 58, establishes justice as the core criterion for leadership accountability, including within family-related adjudication.

Islamic family law directly regulates intimate aspects of human life, making justice essential for safeguarding dignity and preventing abuse. Decisions concerning marriage, divorce, maintenance, child custody, and inheritance inevitably involve power asymmetries (Rivaldi, 2024). Without justice, these asymmetries may legitimize inequality, exploitation, and structural violence. Consequently, justice functions as the normative safeguard that transforms legal authority into a means of protection rather than oppression.

Justice in Islamic family law also encompasses balance (*tawāzun*) between rights and obligations. As noted by Kamil et al. (2023) and Khadduri (1999), justice entails placing matters in their proper context (*wad‘ al-shay’ fī maḥallih*), ensuring proportionality, and harmonizing individual and collective interests. This principle is especially significant in regulating spousal relations, where reciprocal rights and duties must be interpreted in light of social realities and ethical objectives. The Qur’anic command in Q. *al-Naḥl* [16]: 90 reinforces justice as a divine mandate that transcends legal formalism. Al-Ṭabarī (2010) emphasizes that justice reflects faith and piety, making it inseparable from religious commitment. Within family law, this means that legal compliance without justice fails to fulfill the ethical purpose of Shari‘ah.

Leadership and justice operate as interdependent principles within Islamic family law. Leadership provides the institutional mechanism through which justice is realized, while justice legitimizes leadership morally and spiritually. This interdependence becomes evident in the functioning of family law institutions, such as religious courts, mediation mechanisms, and state regulatory frameworks.

Just leadership ensures that family law institutions function transparently, impartially, and responsively to social needs. Arifin and Nurjaman (2022) argue that leadership grounded in justice promotes equitable distribution of welfare and legal protection. Conversely, unjust leadership erodes public trust, fuels social conflict, and weakens family law institutions, resulting in legal uncertainty and social vulnerability.

The Prophetic hadith reported by Muslim—“Indeed, those who act justly will be seated upon pulpits of light before Allah...” (al-Ḥajjāj, 2010)—establishes justice as the highest moral standard of leadership. Al-Suyūṭī (2010) further underscores that justice determines a leader’s ethical and spiritual standing. In the context of family law, this principle demands that judges, mediators, and policymakers prioritize substantive justice over procedural convenience or political pressure.

The interdependence of leadership and justice also highlights the necessity of ethical governance in family law reform. Contemporary challenges—such as rising divorce rates, gender inequality, and child neglect—cannot be addressed solely through legal codification. They require leadership committed to justice, capable of interpreting legal norms in light of evolving social realities while remaining faithful to Islamic ethical foundations.

Justice serves as the cornerstone of social order, and its relevance becomes particularly pronounced within family institutions. Al-Māwardī’s assertion that justice is a prerequisite for unity and prosperity underscores its foundational role in preventing societal collapse (Fikhriyah, 2025). Injustice, by contrast, leads to moral corruption and disintegration of social bonds, beginning at the family level. The Indonesian philosophical framework of Pancasila reinforces this understanding by placing justice at the heart of social life. Principles such as “just and civilized humanity” and “social justice for all” resonate strongly with the Islamic concept of *maṣlahah*, which prioritizes public welfare and social harmony. Islamic family law, therefore, operates within a broader ethical ecosystem that values justice as a condition for sustainable community life.

Justice within families nurtures affection, trust, and emotional security. When family leadership is exercised justly, spouses experience mutual respect, children receive protection, and conflicts are resolved constructively. Conversely, injustice breeds resentment, fear, and instability, often manifesting in domestic violence, neglect, and legal disputes. In legal contexts, justice strengthens public trust in family law institutions. Leaders who uphold justice earn legitimacy, while unjust practices undermine the credibility of the legal system. This dynamic reaffirms that justice is not merely a legal requirement but a social necessity that sustains institutional integrity.

Leadership in Islamic family law must adapt to contemporary realities without compromising ethical principles. Modern societies face complex family challenges, including economic inequality, shifting gender roles, and legal pluralism. Addressing these challenges requires leadership that embodies *amānah*, *faṭānah*, and moral courage. Amiruddin and Setiadi (2022) and Yusuf and Saputri (2022) emphasize that justice-oriented leadership prioritizes fairness and proportionality, even when such commitments conflict with personal or group interests. In family law, this means resisting cultural biases that perpetuate inequality and ensuring that legal interpretations protect vulnerable family members.

Justice-oriented leadership also requires transparency and resistance to abuse of power. Family law authorities must ensure that legal procedures do not become instruments of domination or exclusion. Instead, they should function as mechanisms for restoring balance, dignity, and social welfare. Islam positions justice as the soul of leadership, while leadership serves as the vehicle for realizing justice. This relationship underscores that ethical leadership is indispensable for translating Islamic legal ideals into lived realities. Without justice, leadership devolves into tyranny; without leadership, justice remains an unimplemented ideal.

The relevance of leadership and justice to contemporary Islamic family law extends beyond theoretical discourse. It carries profound implications for legal reform, institutional design, and judicial practice. Integrating Prophetic leadership values into family law promotes a holistic approach that balances legal certainty with ethical sensitivity. Such integration supports the protection of women's and children's rights, enhances mediation and dispute resolution mechanisms, and fosters family harmony. It also aligns Islamic family law with universal justice values while preserving its normative identity. Ultimately, leadership grounded in justice fulfills the higher objectives of Islamic law (*maqāṣid al-sharī'ah*), safeguarding religion, life, intellect, lineage, and property. By upholding justice within family institutions, Islamic family law contributes to human dignity, social stability, and spiritual well-being.

The relevance of leadership and justice to contemporary Islamic family law is both normative and practical. Drawing from the Prophetic model, leadership in Islam is defined by moral integrity, accountability, and service, while justice functions as its ethical essence. Together, these principles shape family governance, legal institutions, and social order. In a rapidly changing world, reaffirming leadership and justice as foundational principles enables Islamic family law to remain responsive, humane, and ethically grounded. Through just leadership, family law becomes not merely a regulatory framework but a means of realizing compassion, dignity, and social harmony in accordance with the universal objectives of Islamic law.

Conclusion

From an Islamic perspective, leadership (*al-imāmah*) constitutes a profound trust (*amānah*) that entails moral, social, and spiritual responsibility. Leadership is not merely

the exercise of authority, but a form of ethical stewardship aimed at safeguarding human dignity and realizing public welfare (*maṣlaḥah*). Within the framework of Islamic family law, leadership extends beyond public governance to encompass family governance, particularly in regulating marital relations, parental responsibilities, and the role of legal institutions in ensuring justice and protection for family members. Consequently, leadership in Islam must be grounded in *tawḥīd*, justice (*‘adl*), consultation (*shūrā*), and trustworthiness, as derived from the Qur’an and the Sunnah of the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ. Justice emerges as the central pillar of Islamic leadership and serves as the normative foundation of Islamic family law. The Qur’anic command to render trusts to those entitled to them and to adjudicate disputes with justice (Q. al-Nisā’ [4]: 58) affirms that justice is inseparable from the exercise of authority, including authority within family institutions and family law adjudication. In the context of contemporary Islamic family law, justice must be understood not only in a formal-legal sense but also as substantive justice that ensures balance between rights and obligations, protects vulnerable family members, and prevents domination and discrimination within familial relationships.

This study demonstrates that Islamic leadership is inherently non-authoritarian and participatory, emphasizing consultation, wisdom, and moral accountability. Such leadership is essential for addressing contemporary family law challenges, including marital conflict, gender inequality, child protection, and the effectiveness of family law institutions. Leadership that prioritizes justice enables family law to function as an instrument of protection and reconciliation rather than control, thereby reinforcing family harmony and social stability. Accordingly, leadership and justice in Islam operate as interdependent and complementary principles. Leadership without justice risks devolving into oppression, while justice without effective leadership remains an abstract ideal without institutional realization. In Islamic family law, just leadership provides the ethical and structural framework necessary for implementing legal norms that reflect the higher objectives of Shari’ah (*maqāṣid al-shari’ah*), namely the protection of religion, life, intellect, lineage, and property. In conclusion, the integration of just leadership principles into contemporary Islamic family law is imperative for ensuring legal legitimacy, social trust, and family welfare. Leadership grounded in justice, trustworthiness, and moral integrity enables Islamic family law to respond constructively to modern social realities while remaining faithful to its normative foundations. Through such leadership, Islamic family law can fulfill its role as a means of realizing compassion, dignity, and justice, thereby contributing to a civilized and equitable social order in accordance with the Islamic vision of *raḥmatan lil-‘ālamīn*.

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