

Beyond economic rationality: Gendered labor, moral economy, and women's working duration in an Islamic educational institution

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Abstract:

The increasing participation of women in the labour market has not been accompanied by an adequate understanding of the factors shaping their working hours. In Islamic educational institutions, women's working hours are determined by the interaction of economic incentives, gender relations, institutional demands, and moral-religious values. This study examines the determinants of working hours and their relationship with the household well-being of female educators through the perspectives of Household Economics, Gender Studies, and Moral Economy. An explanatory sequential mixed-methods design was employed, integrating multiple linear regression, mediation analysis, and thematic analysis of survey data collected from 100 female educators and purposively selected in-depth interview participants. The quantitative findings indicate that working hours are significantly influenced by economic, institutional, and sociocultural factors, with administrative workload emerging as the strongest determinant. Flexible work arrangements and domestic support increase women's working hours, whereas gender norms constrain them. Working hours also mediate the relationships between several determinants and household well-being. The qualitative findings reveal that women's labour allocation extends beyond economic rationality, as it is continuously negotiated through institutional expectations, domestic responsibilities, gender relations, moral values, and religious commitments. This study contributes to Gender Studies by demonstrating that women's labour allocation is a gendered and socially embedded process. It also extends the Household Economics perspective by integrating Moral Economy and proposes the concept of faith-embedded labour supply to explain women's labor-supply behavior within faith-based educational institutions.

Keywords:

Women's Working
Duration; Gendered
Labor; Moral Economy;
Islamic Educational
Institution; Working
Time Allocation.



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INTRODUCTION

Women's participation in the labor market has continued to rise; however, scholarly debate persists regarding whether women's working hours are primarily shaped by economic incentives or by the interplay of gender relations, institutional demands, and social norms. Within faith-based educational institutions, increased professional engagement among women coexists with ongoing unpaid domestic responsibilities. The household economics perspective frames time allocation as a rational response to economic incentives and household conditions (Aifa & Dognon, 2023; Frederik et al., 2015), but this approach does not fully address the influence of institutional expectations, gendered divisions of labor, and moral-religious values. Feminist Political Economy highlights that labor markets reward long, inflexible work patterns, while women continue to bear a disproportionate share of caregiving and domestic work (Bolotnikova, 2016; Beckmannshagen & Schröder, 2022; Männasoo, 2022). These dynamics are further reinforced by persistent inequalities in the distribution of domestic labor (Duflo, 2011; World Bank, 2025) and the significant administrative burden associated with the teaching profession (Hochschild, 2012; Jerrim & Sims, 2020; UNESCO, 2021). At the Amanatul Ummah Foundation in Surabaya, women's working hours exemplify the complex interaction among economic pressures, institutional expectations, gender norms, and moral-religious values.

Previous studies on women's labor-force participation and household well-being can be grouped into three strands. First, research emphasizes economic determinants, such as income, education, human capital, and household decision-making, while giving limited attention to broader social and institutional influences (Blau & Kahn, 2006; Alem et al., 2023; Modiri et al., 2025; Buyukkececi et al., 2025). Second, studies explain women's working hours through the gendered division of labour, domestic responsibilities, and work-family conflict (Simulja et al., 2014; Zhang & Wang, 2021; Ervin et al., 2022; Kohara & Maity, 2021; Adisa et al., 2019). Third, research examines the influence of religion and institutional contexts, yet the role of moral-religious values in shaping women's working hours remains underexplored (Korotayev et al., 2015; Abdelhadi, 2017; Maksum et al., 2025; Begum et al., 2024; Ali et al., 2025). However, these perspectives are rarely integrated. This study addresses this gap by conceptualizing women's working hours as a gendered labour outcome shaped by the interaction of economic, institutional, domestic, and moral-economic forces within Islamic educational institutions.

This study examines the effects of economic, institutional, and socio-cultural factors on female educators' working hours, their relationship with household well-being, and the interaction between institutional expectations and domestic responsibilities. It addresses three research questions: (1) Which economic, institutional, and socio-cultural factors influence female educators' working hours at the Amanatul Ummah Foundation, Surabaya? (2) How do working hours affect household economic well-being? (3) How do institutional expectations and domestic responsibilities shape women's labor allocation? The study contributes to *Gender Studies*, particularly *Feminist Political Economy* and *Gendered Labour Studies*, by conceptualizing women's working hours as a gendered labor-market outcome shaped by economic incentives, institutional expectations, the gendered division of labor, and moral-religious values. It also provides empirical evidence to support gender-responsive employment policies in faith-based educational institutions.

This study argues that female educators' working hours are shaped not only by economic rationality but also by the interaction of economic factors, institutional demands, gender relations, and moral-religious values. In Islamic educational institutions, moral responsibility, *ikhlas* (sincerity), and steadfastness constitute a moral economy influencing

women's allocation of working time. Using a mixed-methods design combining multiple regression, mediation analysis with PROCESS Macro Model 4, and Braun and Clarke's reflexive thematic analysis, the study finds that administrative workload is the strongest determinant of working hours, whereas gender norms reduce them. Qualitative findings further reveal that extended working hours are understood as expressions of moral responsibility and religious commitment. The study contributes to *Gender Studies* and *Feminist Political Economy* by conceptualizing women's labor allocation as a gendered outcome shaped by organizational demands, the gendered division of labor, and moral-religious legitimation rather than individual economic decision-making alone.

METHOD

Research Approach

This study employed an explanatory sequential mixed-methods design (Plano Clark & Ivankova, 2016; Östlund et al., 2011), in which quantitative data collection and analysis were conducted first, followed by a qualitative phase to provide a deeper interpretation of the statistical findings. This design was selected to identify the determinants of female educators' working hours while also exploring the institutional mechanisms, gender relations, and moral values underlying these relationships. The two phases were integrated through a connecting strategy, whereby the quantitative findings informed the purposive selection of interview participants, while the qualitative findings were used to explain and contextualize the quantitative results.

Research Setting, Participants, and Sampling

The study population comprised married female educators employed at the Amanatul Ummah Foundation in Surabaya, including both schoolteachers and university lecturers. Participants were selected through purposive sampling based on the following inclusion criteria: being married, having at least one child, and having at least 2 years of work experience. Following Green (1991), a minimum sample of 98 respondents ($N \geq 50 + 8m$) was required for a multiple regression model with six independent variables. Accordingly, the sample of 100 respondents was considered adequate. The Amanatul Ummah Foundation in Surabaya was selected because it integrates madrasah and higher education within a religiously grounded institutional context, providing a relevant setting to examine how economic, institutional, gender, and moral factors shape women's allocation of working time. Data were collected between November 2025 and March 2026.

Variables and Measurement

To address the research objectives, two multiple regression models were employed. The first model examined the determinants of female educators' working hours, while the second analyzed the effect of working hours on household economic well-being, controlling for household income. All variables were operationalized on the basis of well-established theoretical foundations and supported by relevant prior studies. The operational definitions, measurement indicators, and measurement scales for each variable in both models are presented in Tables 1 and 2.

Table 1

Operational Definitions and Measurements of Variables in the Working Duration Model

Category	Variable	Operational Definition	Measurement Indicator	Scale
Dependent	Actual Working Duration (Becker, 1993)	Total time allocated to professional and domestic responsibilities in one	Total weekly hours devoted to formal teaching, administrative duties, and domestic	Ratio

		week.	responsibilities.	
Independent	Household Income (Mincer, 1962)	Total household income earned per month.	Monthly household income (IDR/month).	Ratio
	Opportunity Cost (Goldin, 2021)	Economic value of time allocated between paid work and unpaid domestic work.	Ratio of hourly earnings to estimated value of unpaid domestic work.	Ratio
	Work Flexibility (Chung, 2022)	Perceived institutional flexibility in balancing professional and domestic responsibilities.	Mean score of five-point Likert items on schedule flexibility, workload adjustment, and institutional support.	Interval
	Administrative Burden (Jerrim & Sims, 2021)	Time devoted to administrative responsibilities beyond teaching.	Weekly hours spent on reporting, documentation, meetings, and administrative tasks.	Ratio
	Gender Norms (Görge, 2021)	Perceived influence of traditional gender-role expectations.	Mean score of five-point Likert items on household gender roles.	Interval
	Domestic Support (Cieplinski et al., 2023)	Household assistance received in carrying out domestic responsibilities.	Weekly hours of assistance from spouses, relatives, or paid helpers.	Ratio

Source: Processed by the Researcher (2026).

Table 1 presents the operationalization of the variables used in the first regression model, with Actual Working Duration specified as the dependent variable. The independent variables comprise Household Income, Opportunity Cost, Work Flexibility, Administrative Burden, Gender Norms, and Domestic Support, representing economic, institutional, sociocultural, and family-related dimensions that are theoretically expected to influence female educators' allocation of working time. All variables were measured using ratio or interval scales, depending on the characteristics of each construct.

Table 2
Impacts on Household Welfare

Category	Variable	Operational Definition	Measurement Indicator	Measurement Scale
Dependent	Household Economic Welfare (Duflo, 2011)	Household capacity to allocate financial resources for long-term family investment.	Percentage of household expenditure allocated to children's education and health.	Ratio
Main Independent	Working Duration (Becker, 1993)	Total time allocated to professional and domestic responsibilities in one week.	Total weekly hours devoted to professional and domestic responsibilities.	Ratio
Control	Household Income (Mincer, 1962)	Total household income earned per month.	Monthly household income (IDR/month).	Ratio

Source: Processed by the Researcher (2026).

Table 2 presents the operationalization of the variables included in the second regression model, which examines the effect of Working Duration on Household Economic Welfare, with Household Income included as a control variable. Household economic welfare was operationalized as the household's capacity to allocate economic resources to long-term investment, measured by the proportion of household expenditure devoted to

children's education and healthcare. All variables in this model were measured on a ratio scale, making them appropriate for multiple regression analysis.

Research Model

Based on the operationalization of the variables, this study developed two multiple linear regression models. Model 1 examined the determinants of Working Duration by assessing the effects of Household Income, Opportunity Cost, Work Flexibility, Administrative Burden, Gender Norms, and Domestic Support. Model 2 analyzed the effect of Working Duration on Household Economic Welfare, with Household Income included as a control variable. In addition, mediation analysis was conducted using PROCESS Macro Model 4 (Hayes, 2022), with bias-corrected bootstrapping based on 5,000 resamples, to examine the mediating role of Working Duration in the relationship between the determinant factors and household economic welfare.

Model 1: Determinants of Working Duration

$$WD_i = \beta_0 + \beta_1 HI_i + \beta_2 OC_i + \beta_3 WF_i + \beta_4 AB_i + \beta_5 GN_i + \beta_6 DS_i + \varepsilon_i$$

where:

WD = Working Duration
HI = Household Income
OC = Opportunity Cost
WF = Work Flexibility
AB = Administrative Burden
GN = Gender Norms
DS = Domestic Support
E = error term

Model 2: Household Welfare

$$HW_i = \beta_0 + \beta_1 WD_i + \beta_2 HI_i + \varepsilon_i$$

where:

HW = Household Welfare
WD = Working Duration
HI = Household Income (control variable)

Data Collection

Research data were collected using three complementary methods: a structured questionnaire, semi-structured interviews, and document analysis of the foundation's internal policies. The questionnaire comprised four items measuring Work Flexibility and two items each measuring Gender Norms, Administrative Burden, and Domestic Support. All perception-based indicators were adapted from instruments validated in previous studies and contextualized to reflect the characteristics of a religiously affiliated educational institution.

Because the study employed previously validated instruments, no separate pilot study was conducted. Instead, instrument quality was assessed through Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) prior to hypothesis testing. Indicators with standardized factor loadings of ≥ 0.70 were retained, while Composite Reliability (CR) values exceeding 0.70, Average Variance Extracted (AVE) values exceeding 0.50, and Cronbach's alpha coefficients exceeding 0.70 were used as criteria for assessing reliability and convergent validity (Green, 1991). Constructs that met these criteria were subsequently included in the regression analysis.

Semi-structured interviews were conducted with 20 participants, purposively selected from survey respondents, to capture variations in working duration, household economic

welfare, age, occupational category (madrasah teachers and lecturers at private Islamic higher education institutions), and length of service. Interviews continued until thematic saturation was reached, that is, when no new themes emerged from subsequent interviews. In addition, document analysis of the foundation's internal policies was conducted to provide an institutional context for interpreting both the quantitative results and the qualitative findings.

Data Analysis

Quantitative and qualitative data were analyzed sequentially in accordance with the explanatory sequential mixed-methods design. The quantitative analysis included descriptive statistics, assessments of instrument validity and reliability using Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA), classical assumption tests covering normality, multicollinearity, linearity, and heteroscedasticity, and multiple linear regression analysis. Model 1 examined the determinants of Working Duration, whereas Model 2 analyzed the effect of Working Duration on Household Economic Welfare, with Household Income included as a control variable. The mediating role of Working Duration was assessed using PROCESS Macro Model 4 (Hayes, 2022) with bias-corrected bootstrapping based on 5,000 resamples, and the results were subsequently confirmed using the Sobel test. All quantitative analyses were conducted using IBM SPSS Statistics version 28.

The qualitative data were analyzed using Braun and Clarke's (2021) six-phase thematic analysis, comprising data familiarisation, coding, theme development, theme review, theme definition, and report production. The analysis was informed by the Moral Economy perspective (Thompson, 1971) to explain how moral values, social norms, and perceptions of fairness shape women's allocation of working time. Coding was conducted manually using analytical categories encompassing moral responsibility, religious commitment, institutional loyalty, and fairness. Data credibility was ensured through the triangulation of interview and documentary evidence, the maintenance of an audit trail, and the provision of contextualized descriptions. The qualitative findings were subsequently integrated with the quantitative results through a connecting strategy during the interpretation stage.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results

Respondent characteristics

This study involved 100 married female educators, comprising madrasah teachers and lecturers at private Islamic higher education institutions (PTKIS) affiliated with the Amanatul Ummah Foundation in Surabaya. All respondents had at least one child and at least 2 years of professional experience. These criteria were established to ensure that each respondent had experience in balancing professional responsibilities with family obligations. The demographic characteristics of the respondents are presented in Table 3.

Table 3

Respondent Characteristics

Characteristic	Category	n (%)
Age	25–35 years	42 (42%)
	36–45 years	38 (38%)
	>45 years	20 (20%)
Number of Children	1–2	55 (55%)
	3–4	35 (35%)
	>4	10 (10%)

Profession	Madrasah Teacher	60 (60%)
	PTKIS Lecturer	40 (40%)
Education	Bachelor's Degree	40 (40%)
	Master's Degree	50 (50%)
	Doctoral Degree	10 (10%)

Source: Research data processed by the author (2026).

Table 3 shows that most respondents were aged 25–35 years (42%), had one or two children (55%), and worked as madrasah teachers (60%). In terms of educational attainment, half of the respondents held a master's degree (50%), followed by those with a bachelor's degree (40%) and a doctoral degree (10%). Overall, the respondent profile reflects a group of experienced female educators who remain actively engaged in their professional roles while simultaneously fulfilling family responsibilities.

Descriptive statistics

Descriptive statistics were used to provide an overview of the characteristics of each study variable prior to inferential analysis. The results of the descriptive statistical analysis are presented in Table 4.

Table 4

Descriptive Statistics of Study Variables

Variable	Mean	Std. Dev.	Min	Max
Working Duration hours/week)	56.30	8.50	40	75
Household Income (IDR)	5,200,000	1,200,000	3,000,000	8,000,000
Work Flexibility	3.80	0.70	2	5
Gender Norms	3.20	0.80	2	5
Household Welfare	28.50	7.30	15	45

Source: Data Processed Using SPSS 28.0.

Table 4 presents the descriptive statistics for all study variables. Respondents' average Working Duration was 56.30 hours per week (SD = 8.50; range = 40–75). Mean Household Income was IDR 5,200,000 (SD = IDR 1,200,000). Work Flexibility and Gender Norms had mean scores of 3.80 (SD = 0.70) and 3.20 (SD = 0.80), respectively, while Household Economic Welfare averaged 28.50 (SD = 7.30). Overall, the observed variation across variables indicates sufficient heterogeneity to support subsequent multiple regression and mediation analyses.

Data quality assessment

Validity, reliability, and construct validity

Before hypothesis testing, the quality of the research instrument was evaluated through item validity, reliability, and construct validity assessments. Item validity was examined using item total correlation, reliability was assessed using Cronbach's Alpha coefficient, and construct validity was evaluated through *Confirmatory Factor Analysis* (CFA). A summary of the assessment results is presented in Table 5.

Table 5

Summary of Data Quality Assessment

Test	Criterion	Results	Conclusion
Item Validity	Item-total correlation (r) > 0.30	$r = 0.69\text{--}0.85$	Valid
Reliability	Cronbach's Alpha > 0.70	$\alpha = 0.79\text{--}0.91$	Reliable
Construct Validity (CFA)	Loading Factor > 0.70	0.76–0.88	Valid

Source: Data Processed Using SPSS 28.0.

Table 5 indicates that all questionnaire items satisfied the recommended validity criterion, with item total correlation coefficients ranging from 0.69 to 0.85. The reliability assessment also demonstrated satisfactory internal consistency, as Cronbach's Alpha coefficients ranged from 0.79 to 0.91. Furthermore, the CFA results showed that all indicators achieved loading factors between 0.76 and 0.88, exceeding the recommended threshold of 0.70. These findings confirm that the research instrument possesses adequate validity and reliability and is therefore suitable for subsequent regression and mediation analyses.

Classical assumption tests

Classical assumption tests were conducted to verify whether the regression model met the assumptions of multiple linear regression. The results are presented in Table 6.

Table 6

Results of Classical Assumption Tests

Type of Test	Indicator	Result	Criteria	Conclusion
Normality	Sig. Kolmogorov-Smirnov	0.200	> 0.05	Data are normally distributed
Multicollinearity	Tolerance	0.45 – 0.78	> 0.10	No multicollinearity
	VIF	1.28 – 2.10	< 10	No multicollinearity
Heteroscedasticity	Sig. Glejser	0.112 – 0.658	> 0.05	No heteroscedasticity
Linearity	Sig. Deviation from Linearity	0.287	> 0.05	Linear relationship

Source: Data Processed Using SPSS 28.0

Table 6 shows that all regression assumptions were satisfied. The Kolmogorov–Smirnov significance value (0.200) exceeded 0.05, indicating normally distributed residuals. Tolerance values ranged from 0.45 to 0.78 and VIF values from 1.28 to 2.10, confirming the absence of multicollinearity. The Glejser test produced p-values between 0.112 and 0.658, indicating no heteroscedasticity. Furthermore, the deviation-from-linearity significance value (0.287) confirmed a linear relationship between the independent and dependent variables. Overall, the model met all regression assumptions and was suitable for subsequent regression and mediation analyses.

Regression analysis results

Model 1: Determinants of women's working duration

Multiple linear regression analysis was conducted to examine the effects of economic, institutional, and socio-cultural factors on female educators' working duration. The results are presented in Table 7.

Table 7

Model 1: Determinants of Working Duration

Variable	Coefficient (β)	Sig.
Household Income	0.25	0.02
Opportunity Cost	0.30	0.01
Work Flexibility	0.28	0.03
Administrative Burden	0.35	0.00
Gender Norms	-0.22	0.04
Domestic Support	0.27	0.02
R ²	0.68	

Source: Data Processed Using SPSS 28.0

Table 7 shows that the regression model explained 68% of the variance in female educators' working duration ($R^2 = 0.68$). All independent variables exerted statistically significant effects at the 5% significance level. Administrative burden demonstrated the strongest positive effect ($\beta = 0.35$), followed by opportunity cost ($\beta = 0.30$), work flexibility ($\beta = 0.28$), domestic support ($\beta = 0.27$), and household income ($\beta = 0.25$). In contrast, gender norms had a significant negative effect on working duration ($\beta = -0.22$), suggesting that stronger adherence to traditional gender norms was associated with shorter working hours among female educators. Overall, these findings indicate that women's working duration is jointly influenced by economic, institutional, and socio-cultural factors.

Model 2: Effect of working duration on household welfare

The second regression model examined the effect of women's working duration on household welfare while controlling for household income. The results are presented in Table 8.

Table 8

Model 2: Effect on Household Welfare

Variable	Coefficient	Sig.
Working Duration	0.41	0.001
Household Income	0.38	0.002
R^2	0.61	

Source: Data Processed Using SPSS 28.0

The regression model explained 61% of the variance in household welfare ($R^2 = 0.61$). Women's working hours had a positive, statistically significant effect on household welfare ($\beta = 0.41$, $p = 0.001$). Household income also exerted a positive and significant effect ($\beta = 0.38$, $p = 0.002$). These findings indicate that longer working hours among female educators are associated with higher household welfare, even after controlling for household income.

Mediation analysis

To examine whether women's working duration mediates the relationship between the determinants and household welfare, a mediation analysis was performed using the PROCESS Macro Model 4. The significance of the mediation effect was evaluated using bootstrapping and the Sobel test. A summary of the mediation analysis is presented in Table 9.

Table 9

Summary of Mediation Analysis

Effect	Coefficient (β)	95% Confidence Interval	p-value	Conclusion
Determinants of Working Duration	0.52	–	<0.001	Significant
Working Duration to Household Welfare	0.41	–	0.001	Significant
Direct Effect	0.21	0.05–0.37	0.032	Significant
Indirect Effect	0.21	0.09–0.34	0.003	Significant
Total Effect	0.42	0.28–0.56	<0.001	Significant
Sobel Test	Z = 2.87	–	0.004	Mediation Confirmed

Source: Data processed using IBM SPSS Statistics 28 and PROCESS Macro (Hayes), 2026.

The results indicate that women's working duration partially mediates the relationship between the determinant factors and household welfare. The indirect effect was statistically

significant ($\beta = 0.21$, $p = 0.003$), and the 95% bootstrap confidence interval (0.09–0.34) did not include zero, confirming a significant mediation effect. The direct effect also remained significant ($\beta = 0.21$, $p = 0.032$), indicating that the determinant factors influenced household welfare both directly and indirectly through women's working duration. Furthermore, the Sobel test confirmed the mediation effect's significance ($Z = 2.87$, $p = 0.004$), providing additional evidence that women's working duration partially mediates the relationship between the determinants and household welfare.

Qualitative findings

The moral economy of female educators' working duration

The qualitative findings complement the quantitative results by explaining why female educators continue to maintain long working hours despite substantial professional and domestic responsibilities. Following Braun & Clarke's (2021) six-phase thematic analysis, interview transcripts were systematically coded, grouped into conceptually related categories, and subsequently refined into overarching themes.

Table 10

Thematic Mapping of Female Educators' Working Duration

Analytic Phase	Initial Codes	Category	Theme	Interpretation
Initial coding of institutional responsibility narratives	"administrative workload", "reporting obligations", "institutional meetings", "additional assignments"	Institutional expectations	Institutionalized Administrative Pressure	Administrative responsibilities extend beyond classroom teaching and contribute to longer working hours through institutional expectations.
Initial coding of productive and domestic responsibility narratives	"childcare responsibilities", "household management", "balancing work and family roles", "spouse support"	Gendered domestic responsibilities	Negotiated Gender Roles	Women's working duration is continuously negotiated between professional responsibilities and unpaid domestic work.
Initial coding of moral commitment narratives	"responsibility", "sincerity (<i>ikhlas</i>)", "religious commitment", "service", "educational mission"	Moral values and work commitment	Moral Legitimacy as a Source of Work Commitment	Female educators interpret their work as a moral and religious responsibility, strengthening their commitment beyond economic incentives.

Source: Authors' analysis of interview data (2026).

Table 10 presents the progression of the thematic analysis from the initial coding stage to the development of broader categories and overarching themes. Following Braun and Clarke's (2021) reflexive thematic analysis, interview data were coded inductively and iteratively refined into conceptually related categories before being synthesized into three interrelated themes. These themes explain the mechanisms underlying female educators' working hours by illustrating how institutional expectations, gendered domestic responsibilities, and moral work commitment interact to shape women's time allocation at work. Collectively, the findings demonstrate that female educators' working duration is influenced not only by organizational demands but also by domestic responsibilities and moral legitimacy derived from religious values within Islamic educational institutions.

Institutionalized administrative pressure

This theme emerged from the institutional expectations category, developed from recurring initial codes related to *administrative workload, reporting obligations, institutional meetings, and additional assignments* (Table 10). Together, these codes indicate that institutional responsibilities consistently extend beyond classroom teaching, giving rise to institutionalized administrative pressure as a defining feature of female educators' working duration.

Interview data revealed that administrative responsibilities frequently extended beyond instructional activities. Reporting requirements, institutional meetings, committee assignments, and documentation often prolonged working hours beyond formal schedules.

"Sometimes it is not the teaching that feels exhausting, but the reports and paperwork that consume all the time." (Participant 7)

This finding is consistent with the quantitative results, which identified administrative burden as the strongest determinant of working duration ($\beta = 0.35$). From the perspective of Feminist Political Economy, administrative work serves as an institutional mechanism through which organizational expectations shape women's labor allocation. Rather than being perceived merely as bureaucratic requirements, these responsibilities become internalized as indicators of professionalism, commitment, and institutional loyalty. Consequently, prolonged working duration reflects not only formal workload but also the institutional values embedded in everyday work practices.

Negotiated gender roles

This theme emerged from the gendered domestic responsibilities category, which was developed from initial codes on *childcare responsibilities, household management, balancing work and family roles, and spouse support* (Table 10). These recurring codes illustrate how female educators continuously negotiate productive and reproductive responsibilities in their everyday lives.

The interviews revealed that although respondents actively participated in formal employment, responsibility for household management and caregiving remained largely under their control.

"As a mother, there is still an expectation to take care of the household, so sometimes I have to reduce my working hours even though I could actually work more." (Participant 12)

Several respondents also emphasized the importance of family support in enabling them to sustain their professional careers.

"Without my husband's help, I would never be able to work this much." (Participant 18)

These findings reinforce the quantitative evidence indicating that gender norms constrain women's working duration, whereas domestic support facilitates greater labor participation. Consistent with the Gendered Division of Labor perspective, women's labor allocation is shaped not only by economic considerations but also by unequal productive and reproductive responsibilities. The findings further demonstrate that domestic support functions as a compensatory mechanism that partially mitigates the constraints imposed by traditional gender expectations.

Moral legitimacy as a source of work commitment

This theme emerged from the moral values and work commitment category, developed from recurring initial codes on *responsibility, sincerity (ikhlas), religious*

commitment, service, and educational mission (Table 10). These codes indicate that female educators interpret their work not merely as paid employment but also as a moral and religious obligation.

The interviews consistently showed that professional commitment was closely associated with sincerity (*ikhlas*), responsibility, religious devotion, and service to education rather than with economic rewards alone.

"I continue to increase my working hours not only because of economic needs, but also because I feel a responsibility as an educator." (Participant 21)

Another respondent stated:

"Abah Yai always says, 'Be a good teacher, or do not be one at all.' That sentence stays in my mind constantly, so when I work, it feels impossible to do it half-heartedly." (Participant 9)

Similarly, respondents frequently viewed educational work as a form of religious devotion.

"The leader often reminds us that educating other people's children must be done wholeheartedly. God willing, if we sincerely educate others' children, Allah will provide goodness for our own children in the future." (Participant 15)

These findings illustrate the concept of Moral Economy, in which labor allocation is embedded within shared moral values and religious beliefs rather than determined solely by financial incentives. Moral legitimacy encourages organizational commitment and strengthens intrinsic motivation. At the same time, it may normalize excessive workloads by framing them as expressions of devotion and service rather than as organizational demands.

Taken together, the qualitative findings complement the quantitative results by explaining the mechanisms through which administrative burden, work flexibility, gender norms, and domestic support shape female educators' working duration. While the regression analysis identifies these variables as significant determinants, the interview findings reveal how institutional expectations, gendered domestic responsibilities, and moral commitment influence women's allocation of working time in everyday practice. Consequently, women's working duration should be understood not merely as an economic decision but as a gendered and morally embedded labor outcome produced through the interaction of organizational culture, religious values, and unequal productive and reproductive responsibilities. These findings extend the literature on Gender Studies by demonstrating how institutional structures and faith-based values jointly shape women's labor experiences within Islamic educational institutions.

Discussion

Based on the quantitative and qualitative analyses, this study yielded three main findings. First, economic, institutional, and socio-cultural factors jointly shaped female educators' Working Duration. Household Income and Opportunity Cost had positive effects on Working Duration, whereas Administrative Burden emerged as the strongest determinant. Working Duration was also supported by Work Flexibility and Domestic Support, but limited by Gender Norms. Second, Working Duration affected Household Economic Welfare and partially mediated the relationships between the determinant factors and household economic welfare. Third, female educators continuously negotiated professional demands and domestic responsibilities when allocating their working time. In religiously affiliated educational institutions, extended working hours were shaped not only by economic reasons but also by institutional expectations, moral values, and religious commitment, leading to work being understood as a form of dedication and devotion. Thus,

women's allocation of working time was simultaneously determined by economic incentives, institutional structures, gender relations, and religious morality.

These outcomes illustrate the complexity of women's participation in formal employment in Indonesia, where increasing economic engagement coexists with an unequal distribution of unpaid care work and the persistence of gender norms. Consistent with previous studies ([Lightman & Kevins, 2021](#); [Kabeer, 2025](#)), women continue to bear a disproportionate share of domestic responsibilities, which constrains their participation in formal employment. This situation has become progressively pronounced in the post-COVID-19 era, as flexible working arrangements tend to blur the boundaries between work and family life, therefore extending women's working hours ([Shanker, 2022](#)). The present findings show that work flexibility does not necessarily reduce women's workload but may instead increase the time they allocate to work. In the Indonesian context, this condition further indicates that women's allocation of working time results from an ongoing negotiation among professional demands, family responsibilities, and institutional expectations ([Astuty et al., 2025](#)). Therefore, efforts to increase women's labor force participation must be accompanied by institutional transformation and the advancement of more gender-responsive social norms.

The findings provide a theoretical understanding of women's allocation of working time by demonstrating that decisions regarding working duration are determined not only by economic considerations but also by identity, social norms, and institutional values ([Akerlof & Kranton, 2000](#); [He & Noussair, 2023](#)). From a Household Economics perspective, the higher the expected economic returns, the greater women's tendency to allocate their time to productive activities ([Kirchberger, 2020](#)). However, this study extends this framework by showing that the effects of economic incentives operate through their interaction with institutional expectations and moral commitments. From a Gender Studies perspective, women's working duration reflects the outcome of negotiations among economic conditions, the gendered division of labor, and institutional demands, rather than merely individual utility-maximizing behavior. This interpretation is consistent with Feminist Political Economy, which emphasizes that productive labor is shaped by both organizational and gender structures. Thus, women's allocation of working time in religiously affiliated educational institutions is a social construction shaped by the interaction of economic incentives, institutional norms, and moral-religious values.

This study demonstrates that women's working duration cannot be understood solely as a rational economic choice but rather as the outcome of an ongoing negotiation among economic demands, family responsibilities, institutional expectations, and moral values ([Gimenez-Jimenez et al., 2025](#)). The findings confirm that women's working lives are shaped by the interaction of multiple, mutually reinforcing factors. In the context of religiously affiliated educational institutions, religious values not only strengthen women's commitment to their work but also provide moral legitimacy for their professional roles ([Anas et al., 2025](#); [Okur et al., 2025](#)). Furthermore, the finding that working duration contributes positively to household economic welfare suggests a potential trade-off between improved material well-being and the availability of time for family life. Although this dimension was not measured directly, the findings underscore the importance of conceptualizing household well-being not only in economic terms but also in relation to its relational and temporal dimensions ([Cieplinski et al., 2023](#); [Sihto & Zechner, 2025](#); [Thompson, 1971](#)).

The findings of this study are consistent with previous research showing that greater economic returns encourage women's participation in the labor market ([Blau & Kahn, 2006](#);

Jang & Yum, 2022) and support evidence that administrative work constitutes a major source of hidden workload among educators (Jerrim & Sims, 2021; Morris, 2015; Shen et al., 2025). However, this study extends the existing literature by demonstrating that economic incentives do not operate in isolation but interact with institutional norms and moral commitments in shaping women's Working Duration. Unlike previous studies, which have generally treated labor force participation or income as the primary indicators of women's economic contribution, this study shows that Working Duration serves as a mediating mechanism through which economic, institutional, and sociocultural factors influence household economic welfare. Thus, this study makes a conceptual contribution by positioning Working Duration both as an outcome of structural conditions and as a mechanism explaining how these conditions affect household economic welfare within the context of religiously affiliated educational institutions (Andrew et al., 2024; Kabeer, 2025; Mu et al., 2025).

This study offers several recommendations. First, improving the well-being of female educators requires policies that not only promote labor force participation but also address the quality and distribution of working time. Second, educational institutions should reduce non-essential administrative burdens, establish clear boundaries between working and personal time, and strengthen gender-responsive employment policies. Third, institutional mechanisms are needed to prevent the normalization of excessive working hours and to ensure that the values of dedication and service are not used to legitimize disproportionate workloads. Fourth, improvements in women's well-being should be supported by a more equitable distribution of unpaid household care responsibilities. Finally, stronger synergy between institutional and domestic support is expected to facilitate a more balanced and sustainable allocation of time, enhance household well-being, and safeguard the quality of life of female educators.

CONCLUSION

This study demonstrates that female educators' Working Duration is determined not only by economic considerations but also by the interaction of economic factors, institutional expectations, gender relations, and moral-religious values within religiously affiliated educational institutions. Women's working duration should therefore be understood not merely as an economically rational employment decision, but as the outcome of an ongoing negotiation between productive work and unpaid domestic responsibilities. At the same time, Working Duration serves as a mechanism through which these determinants affect household welfare by shaping women's allocation of time to work.

This study makes a theoretical contribution to Gender Studies by demonstrating that women's allocation of working time is a gendered and socially embedded process rather than merely an individual economic choice. The findings show that women's Working Duration is shaped by the interaction among institutional expectations, the gendered division of labor, and moral-religious legitimation. By integrating the perspectives of Gender Studies, Household Economics, and Moral Economy, this study provides a conceptual foundation for developing a faith-embedded labor-supply perspective to explain women's labor-supply behavior in religiously affiliated educational institutions. In practical terms, the findings highlight the importance of gender-responsive employment policies, including reducing administrative burdens, establishing clear boundaries around working time, strengthening institutional support, and ensuring a more equitable distribution of unpaid care responsibilities.

This study has several limitations. First, it was conducted within a single religiously affiliated educational institution and involved a relatively limited sample, requiring caution in generalizing the findings to other institutional contexts. Second, the cross-sectional design does not capture changes in women's allocation of working time over time. Third, household welfare was measured primarily through education- and health-related indicators and therefore did not encompass broader dimensions such as work-life balance, the quality of family relationships, and psychological well-being. Future research should therefore examine a wider range of institutional contexts, compare religiously affiliated and non-religious educational institutions, employ longitudinal or causal research designs, and incorporate non-material indicators of well-being to provide a more comprehensive understanding of the relationships among the variables.

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AUTHOR CONTRIBUTION STATEMENT

Rahma Sandhi Prahara: Conceptualization; Methodology; Investigation; Formal Analysis; Data Curation; Writing Original Draft. **Farida Ulvi Na'imah:** Conceptualization; Methodology; Supervision; Writing Review & Editing. **Diah Syifaul A'yuni:** Formal Analysis; Validation; Writing Review & Editing. **Sundari:** Investigation; Data Curation; Writing Review & Editing. **Aulia Herdiani:** Validation; Visualization; Writing Review & Editing. **Salshabila Syifa Nurendra:** Methodology; Validation; Writing Review & Editing.

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