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

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Abstract:

Women's working hours in Islamic educational institutions reflect competing economic incentives, institutional expectations, gendered caregiving responsibilities, and religious values, yet their interrelationships and implications for household welfare remain insufficiently understood. This study examines the economic, institutional, and sociocultural factors associated with female educators' working duration, its relationship with household expenditure allocation, and women's negotiations of professional and unpaid domestic responsibilities. An explanatory sequential mixed-methods design combined surveys of 100 married female educators, regression and mediation analyses, and thematic analysis of 20 semi-structured interviews, supplemented by relevant internal institutional policy documents. Working duration was positively associated with household income, opportunity cost, flexibility, administrative burden, and domestic support, but negatively with gender norms. Administrative burden had the largest coefficient ($\beta = 0.35$; $R^2 = 0.68$). Working duration was positively associated with education and healthcare expenditure allocation after controlling for household income (coefficient = 0.41; $p = 0.001$). Mediation was reported (indirect effect = 0.21), although its predictor remained unspecified. Interviews revealed administrative pressure, gender negotiation, and religious commitment (*ikhlas*). Female educators' working duration reflects interconnected economic, institutional, gendered, and moral-religious conditions among participants. Its association with education and healthcare expenditure does not establish improved overall household welfare or causality. Faith-based educational institutions should review administrative workloads, protect reasonable working-time boundaries, provide caregiving-responsive flexibility, and ensure that ideals of sincerity and service do not justify excessive professional demands on women.

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INTRODUCTION

Women's allocation of working time in formal employment is shaped not only by economic incentives but also by gender relations and institutional demands. Within faith-based educational institutions, female educators face professional expectations alongside unpaid domestic and caregiving responsibilities. Economic perspectives emphasize the role of income and household conditions in women's employment decisions (Aifa & Dognon, 2023), while inequalities in employment opportunities and remuneration are associated with gender differences in working duration (Beckmannshagen & Schröder, 2022; Männasoo, 2022). Feminist Political Economy highlights the relationship between employment structures and inequalities in the division of productive and reproductive labor, including the domestic responsibilities that women continue to bear (Hochschild, 2012; World Bank, 2025). In the teaching profession, administrative demands further increase the complexity of professional workloads (Jerrim & Sims, 2020). These conditions underscore the importance of examining female educators' length of service in Islamic educational institutions by considering the interrelationships among economic factors, institutional demands, gender norms, and moral-religious values.

Previous studies on women's employment and household welfare can be categorized into three major research strands. First, studies have emphasized labor supply, economic incentives, human capital, childcare costs, and household decision-making in explaining women's economic participation and working-time allocation (Blau & Kahn, 2006; Attanasio et al., 2008; Blundell et al., 2016; Alem et al., 2023). Second, research has examined the gendered division of labor, domestic responsibilities, work–family imbalance, and the implications of unpaid labor for women's mental health (Simulja et al., 2014; Zhang & Wang, 2021; Kohara & Maity, 2021; Adisa et al., 2019; Ervin et al., 2022; Modiri et al., 2025; Begum et al., 2024; Ali et al., 2025). Third, studies have explored the relationships among religion, ethnoreligious identity, and women's economic participation, including the role of Islamic values in entrepreneurial activities (Korotayev et al., 2015; Abdelhadi, 2017; Buyukkececi et al., 2025; Maksum et al., 2025). Despite their important contributions, previous studies have paid limited attention to integrating economic factors, administrative burdens, gender relations, and moral-religious values to understand female educators' working duration and its relationship with household welfare. This research gap highlights the need for an analysis that connects statistical evidence with women's experiences of negotiating professional demands, domestic responsibilities, and religious commitments within Islamic educational institutions.

Against this background, this study aims to examine the associations between economic, institutional, and sociocultural factors and female educators' working duration, the relationship between working duration and indicators of household economic welfare, and women's experiences of negotiating professional and domestic responsibilities. The research was conducted at the Amanatul Ummah Foundation in Surabaya, involving madrasah teachers and lecturers at private Islamic higher education institutions affiliated with the foundation, particularly married women with children. Specifically, the study addresses three research questions: (1) How are household income, opportunity cost, work flexibility, administrative burden, gender norms, and domestic support associated with female educators' working duration? (2) How is working duration associated with household economic welfare indicators, measured by the proportion of household expenditure allocated to children's education and healthcare, after accounting for household income? (3) How do female educators interpret and negotiate institutional demands, domestic responsibilities, and moral-religious commitments in their working experiences?

This study is grounded in the argument that female educators' allocation of working time cannot be adequately understood through individual economic considerations alone but must be situated within the interrelationships among institutional structures, the gendered division of labor, and moral-religious values. Feminist Political Economy is employed to understand the relationship between organizational demands and women's working conditions, while the Gendered Division of Labor perspective explains how gender norms and the distribution of domestic responsibilities shape the allocation of professional working time. Meanwhile, Moral Economy (Thompson, 1971) serves as the primary interpretive framework for understanding how sincerity (*ikhlas*), dedication, and religious responsibility give meaning to professional commitment. Through an explanatory sequential mixed-methods design, this study integrates statistical associations with female educators' subjective experiences to develop a more contextualized understanding of working-time allocation and its relationship with household economic welfare. The study makes a conceptual and integrative contribution by bringing together economic, institutional, gendered, and moral-religious dimensions in the analysis of women's working duration, while providing empirical considerations for the development of gender-responsive employment policies within faith-based educational institutions.

METHOD

Research Approach

This study employed an explanatory sequential mixed-methods design (Plano Clark & Ivankova, 2016; Östlund et al., 2011) to examine the economic, institutional, sociocultural, and moral-religious dimensions of female educators' working duration and its association with household economic welfare. The quantitative phase used a cross-sectional survey to identify statistical associations among the study variables, followed by qualitative interviews to explore institutional expectations, gendered domestic responsibilities, and moral-religious commitments. Integration occurred through the purposive selection of interview participants based on survey characteristics and the subsequent interpretation of quantitative findings through qualitative themes. This approach provided a contextual understanding of women's allocation of working time without implying causal relationships.

Research Setting, Participants, and Sampling

The study was conducted at the Amanatul Ummah Foundation in Surabaya, Indonesia, between November 2025 and March 2026. The quantitative phase involved 100 married female educators recruited through purposive sampling, comprising 60 madrasah teachers and 40 lecturers at affiliated private Islamic higher education institutions (PTKIS). Participants were required to have at least one child and at least 2 years of professional experience. The sample size satisfied Green's (1991) preliminary regression heuristic ($N \geq 50 + 8m$), which requires at least 98 observations for six predictors, although this criterion does not independently establish statistical power. For the qualitative phase, 20 participants were purposively selected from survey respondents to capture variations in working duration, household welfare indicators, age, professional category, and length of service. Given the non-probability sampling approach and single institutional setting, the findings were interpreted as context-specific rather than statistically generalizable.

Variables and Measurement

The quantitative component examined eight variables across two regression models. Model 1 assessed the associations between economic, institutional, and sociocultural factors and female educators' Working Duration (WD). Model 2 examined the association between

Working Duration and the Household Economic Welfare indicator (HW), controlling for Household Income (HI). Operational definitions and measurement indicators are presented in Table 1.

Table 1
Operational Definitions and Measurements of Research Variables

Variable	Measurement indicator	Reported scale
Working Duration (WD)	Weekly hours allocated to teaching, administrative responsibilities, meetings, and related professional activities	Ratio
Household Income (HI)	Total monthly household income in Indonesian rupiah	Ratio
Opportunity Cost (OC)	Ratio of estimated hourly earnings to the estimated monetary value of unpaid domestic work	Ratio
Work Flexibility (WF)	Mean score of four five-point Likert items measuring scheduling and workload flexibility	Composite Likert
Administrative Burden (AB)	Weekly hours devoted to reporting, documentation, meetings, and related administrative tasks; two questionnaire items were also reported	Measurement requires verification
Gender Norms (GN)	Mean score of two five-point Likert items assessing traditional gender-role expectations	Composite Likert
Domestic Support (DS)	Weekly hours of domestic and caregiving assistance from spouses, relatives, or paid helpers; two questionnaire items were also reported	Measurement requires verification
Household Economic Welfare (HW)	Percentage of total household expenditure allocated to children's education and healthcare	Ratio

Source: Adapted from the reported operationalization of research variables (2026).

Working Duration was defined as weekly professional working time, although the available measurement documentation also included domestic responsibilities. Consequently, whether domestic working hours were included in the analyzed variable requires verification against the original questionnaire and dataset. Administrative Burden and Domestic Support were described as time-based variables in the operational table but were also represented by multi-item questionnaire measures. Their final analytical metrics therefore require confirmation. Moreover, because administrative hours may be part of the total working duration, the association between these variables should be interpreted with caution due to potential measurement overlap. Household Economic Welfare was operationalized through expenditure on children's education and healthcare rather than through overall household welfare, economic security, or quality of life. Higher expenditure shares were not assumed to indicate improvements in comprehensive household well-being.

Research Model

Two multiple linear regression models were specified to examine factors associated with female educators' weekly working duration and its relationship with the household economic welfare indicator. Model 1 estimated the associations between Working Duration (WD) and six explanatory variables: Household Income (HI), Opportunity Cost (OC), Work Flexibility (WF), Administrative Burden (AB), Gender Norms (GN), and Domestic Support (DS). The model was specified as follows:

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

Model 2 examined the association between Working Duration (WD) and the Household Economic Welfare indicator (HW), controlling for Household Income (HI):

$$HW_i = \gamma_0 + \gamma_1 WD_i + \gamma_2 HI_i + u_i$$

In these equations, β_0 and γ_0 represent intercepts, β_1–β_6 and γ_1–γ_2 denote regression coefficients, and ε_i and u_i represent error terms. Household Income was included as a control variable in Model 2 to estimate the association between working duration and the household welfare indicator conditional on income.

An additional mediation analysis was reported using PROCESS Macro Model 4 (Hayes, 2022), with 5,000 bootstrap resamples and 95% confidence intervals. Working Duration was specified as the mediator (M), and the Household Economic Welfare indicator as the outcome (Y). However, the available analytical documentation identifies the predictor (X) only as a set of determinants, without specifying any individual explanatory variable or a constructed composite. Consequently, the reported indirect association requires verification against the original PROCESS output before its statistical interpretation can be considered complete. Given the cross-sectional design, the regression and mediation estimates were treated as statistical associations rather than evidence of causal effects.

Data Collection

Quantitative data were collected from 100 female educators using a structured questionnaire that covered demographic characteristics, years of employment, economic conditions, institutional factors, gender norms, domestic support, and household expenditure. Work Flexibility was measured using four items, while Gender Norms, Administrative Burden, and Domestic Support each comprised two items. Perception-based measures used five-point Likert scales, whereas economic and time-related variables were recorded in monetary or temporal units. The correspondence between questionnaire items and time-based measures requires verification. No separate pilot study was conducted.

Qualitative data were obtained through semi-structured interviews with 20 purposively selected respondents to explore institutional demands, domestic responsibilities, household support, and moral-religious commitments. Internal institutional documents supplemented the interview findings.

Instrument quality assessment showed item–total correlations of 0.69–0.85 and Cronbach's alpha coefficients of 0.79–0.91, exceeding the respective thresholds of 0.30 and 0.70. Reported factor loadings ranged from 0.76 to 0.88, providing preliminary evidence of construct measurement quality. However, the absence of CFA model specifications and fit indices prevents confirmation of overall model fit.

Data Analysis

Quantitative data were analyzed using IBM SPSS Statistics 28 through descriptive statistics, instrument quality assessment, regression diagnostics, and multiple linear regression. Diagnostic tests included Kolmogorov–Smirnov, tolerance and VIF, Glejser, and deviation-from-linearity tests, with a 5% significance level. Model 1 examined six predictors of Working Duration, while Model 2 assessed the association between Working Duration and the household welfare indicator, controlling for Household Income. Mediation analysis employed PROCESS Macro Model 4 with 5,000 bootstrap resamples and a supplementary Sobel test. However, the indirect effect remained provisional because the predictor was not clearly specified. All statistical relationships were interpreted as associations rather than causal effects.

Qualitative data were examined using Braun and Clarke's (2021) six-phase reflexive thematic analysis with a hybrid inductive–deductive approach. Three themes emerged: Institutionalized Administrative Pressure, Negotiated Gender Roles, and Moral Legitimacy as a Source of Work Commitment. Moral Economy (Thompson, 1971) provided the primary interpretive framework, complemented by Feminist Political Economy and Gendered

Division of Labor. Analytical rigor was supported by an audit trail, participant quotations, and institutional documents.

Quantitative and qualitative findings were integrated through participant selection and interpretive comparison. Survey results informed the selection of interview participants, while qualitative themes contextualized statistical associations and illuminated how institutional expectations, gendered responsibilities, and religious values shaped women's working-time experiences without establishing causality.

Ethical Considerations

This study followed established ethical principles throughout the research process. Official research permission was obtained from the Amanatul Ummah Foundation in Surabaya, and written informed consent was secured from all participants before data collection. Participation was voluntary, and participants were informed of their right to withdraw without negative consequences. Confidentiality and anonymity were protected by removing personally identifiable information, using participant codes, and securely storing research data for academic purposes. Particular attention was given to minimizing coercion and potential risks associated with participants' professional and domestic responsibilities. Institutional religious and cultural values were respected, and research objectives and procedures were communicated transparently to participants. These measures supported voluntary participation, confidentiality, fairness, and research integrity.

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 two years of professional experience. These inclusion criteria were intended to identify female educators with both professional and family responsibilities. The demographic and professional characteristics of the respondents are presented in Table 2.

Table 2
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 authors (2026).

Table 2 shows that the largest proportion of respondents was aged 25–35 years (42%), followed by those aged 36–45 years (38%) and over 45 years (20%). More than half of the respondents had one or two children (55%), 35% had three or four, and 10% had more than four. Regarding professional background, madrasah teachers accounted for 60% of the

sample, compared with 40% who were PTKIS lecturers. In terms of educational attainment, half of the respondents held master's degrees (50%), followed by bachelor's degrees (40%) and doctoral degrees (10%). These findings describe the demographic, family, and professional composition of the female educators included in the study.

Descriptive Statistics

Descriptive statistics were calculated to summarize the distribution and variability of the reported study variables. Table 3 presents the mean, standard deviation, minimum, and maximum values for working duration, household income, work flexibility, gender norms, and the household welfare indicator.

Table 3

Descriptive Statistics of Study Variables

Variable	Mean	SD	Min	Max
Working duration (hours/week)	56.30	8.50	40	75
Household income (IDR/month)	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 indicator	28.50	7.30	15	45

Source: Data processed using IBM SPSS Statistics 28.

Table 3 shows that respondents reported an average working duration of 56.30 hours per week (SD = 8.50), ranging from 40 to 75 hours. The mean monthly household income was IDR 5,200,000 (SD = IDR 1,200,000), with values ranging from IDR 3,000,000 to IDR 8,000,000. Work flexibility recorded a mean score of 3.80 (SD = 0.70), while gender norms had a mean score of 3.20 (SD = 0.80), with both variables ranging from 2 to 5. The household welfare indicator had a mean of 28.50 (SD = 7.30), ranging from 15 to 45. Overall, these descriptive findings provide an overview of the observed distributions of working duration, household income, institutional flexibility, gender norms, and the household welfare indicator among the respondents.

Data quality assessment

Validity, reliability, and construct validity

The quality of the research instrument was assessed through item validity, internal consistency reliability, and construct validity tests. Item validity was examined using item-total correlations, while internal consistency was evaluated using Cronbach's alpha coefficients. Construct measurement quality was assessed using the reported factor loadings from Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA). The results are summarized in Table 4.

Table 4

Summary of Data Quality Assessment

Test	Criterion	Result	Assessment
Item validity	Item-total correlation ® > 0.30	0.69–0.85	Above threshold
Internal consistency reliability	Cronbach's alpha > 0.70	0.79–0.91	Above threshold
Construct validity (CFA)	Factor loading > 0.70	0.76–0.88	Above threshold

Source: Data processed using IBM SPSS Statistics 28.

Table 4 shows that the reported item-total correlation coefficients ranged from 0.69 to 0.85, exceeding the specified threshold of 0.30. Cronbach's alpha coefficients ranged from 0.79 to 0.91, with work flexibility recording the highest reliability coefficient (α = 0.91),

followed by domestic support (α = 0.85), administrative burden (α = 0.82), and gender norms (α = 0.79). These values indicate satisfactory internal consistency according to the specified criterion. The reported factor loadings ranged from 0.76 to 0.88, exceeding the 0.70 threshold. Collectively, these results provide preliminary evidence of satisfactory item performance, internal consistency, and construct measurement quality for the indicators assessed.

Classical assumption tests

Diagnostic tests were conducted to assess selected assumptions relevant to multiple linear regression, including normality, multicollinearity, heteroscedasticity, and linearity. The results are presented in Table 5.

Table 5
Results of Classical Assumption Tests

Type of test	Indicator	Result	Criterion	Assessment
Normality	Kolmogorov–Smirnov significance value	0.200	p > 0.05	No significant deviation detected
Multicollinearity	Tolerance	0.45–0.78	> 0.10	Within acceptable range
	Variance inflation factor (VIF)	1.28–2.10	< 10	Within acceptable range
Heteroscedasticity	Glejser test significance values	0.112–0.658	p > 0.05	No significant evidence detected
Linearity	Deviation-from-linearity significance value	0.287	p > 0.05	No significant deviation detected

Source: Data processed using IBM SPSS Statistics 28.

Table 5 presents the results of the regression diagnostic tests. The Kolmogorov–Smirnov test yielded a reported significance value of 0.200, exceeding the 0.05 threshold. Tolerance values ranged from 0.45 to 0.78, while variance inflation factor (VIF) values ranged from 1.28 to 2.10, indicating no substantial multicollinearity according to the specified criteria. The Glejser test produced significance values between 0.112 and 0.658, providing no statistically significant evidence of heteroscedasticity. Furthermore, the deviation-from-linearity test yielded a significance value of 0.287, indicating no statistically significant departure from linearity in the reported test. Collectively, these findings provide preliminary diagnostic evidence regarding the assumptions examined in the regression analysis.

Regression analysis results

Model 1: Determinants of women's working duration

Multiple linear regression analysis was conducted to examine the associations between economic, institutional, and sociocultural factors and female educators' years of experience. The results are presented in Table 6.

Table 6
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 6 shows that the regression model explained 68% of the observed variance in women's working duration (R^2 = 0.68). All six explanatory variables showed statistically significant associations at the 5% level. Positive coefficients were reported for household income (β = 0.25), opportunity cost (β = 0.30), work flexibility (β = 0.28), administrative burden (β = 0.35), and domestic support (β = 0.27). In contrast, gender norms were negatively associated with working duration (β = −0.22, p = 0.04). These findings indicate that women's working duration was associated with a combination of economic resources, institutional conditions, and sociocultural characteristics within the study sample.

Model 2: Effect of working duration on household welfare

A second multiple linear regression model examined the association between women's working duration and the household welfare indicator, controlling for household income. The results are presented in Table 7.

Table 7

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

Table 7 shows that the regression model accounted for 61% of the observed variance in the household welfare indicator (R^2 = 0.61). Working duration was positively associated with the indicator (reported coefficient = 0.41, p = 0.001), after controlling for household income. Household income also demonstrated a positive association (reported coefficient = 0.38, p = 0.002). These findings suggest that both working duration and household income were positively associated with the measured household welfare indicator. However, the results should be interpreted as statistical associations rather than causal effects.

Mediation analysis

Mediation analysis was reported using PROCESS Macro Model 4, with 5,000 bootstrap resamples and an additional Sobel test. The analysis examined an indirect association between the reported predictor and the household welfare indicator through women's working duration. The results are summarized in Table 8.

Table 8

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.

Table 8 shows a positive indirect effect estimate of 0.21, with a 95% bootstrap confidence interval of 0.09–0.34. Because the interval excluded zero, the reported estimate supports a statistically significant indirect association within the specified model. The direct effect was also positive (coefficient = 0.21, 95% CI: 0.05–0.37, p = 0.032), while the total effect was 0.42 (95% CI: 0.28–0.56, p < 0.001). The Sobel test yielded a statistically significant result (Z = 2.87, p = 0.004). These findings are consistent with a partial statistical mediation pattern, conditional on verification that the reported path estimates and effects were obtained from the same mediation model. Given the cross-sectional design, the results do not establish a causal mediation mechanism.

Qualitative findings

The moral economy of female educators' working duration

The qualitative findings provide contextual insights into how female educators negotiate professional demands, domestic responsibilities, and moral-religious commitments in allocating their time. Drawing on Braun and Clarke's (2021) thematic analysis approach, the interview data were organized into conceptually related codes, categories, and overarching themes. Three themes were identified: institutionalized administrative pressure, negotiated gender roles, and moral legitimacy as a source of work commitment. The thematic mapping is presented in Table 9.

Table 9

Thematic Mapping of Female Educators' Working Duration

Narrative focus	Illustrative initial codes	Category	Theme	Interpretation
Institutional responsibilities	Administrative workload; reporting obligations; institutional meetings; additional assignments	Institutional expectations	Institutionalized Administrative Pressure	Administrative responsibilities were described as extending beyond classroom teaching and adding to educators' professional workload.
Professional and domestic responsibilities	Childcare responsibilities; household management; balancing work and family roles; spouse support	Gendered domestic responsibilities	Negotiated Gender Roles	Female educators described negotiating their professional commitments alongside unpaid domestic and caregiving responsibilities.
Moral and religious commitments	Responsibility; sincerity (*ikhlas*); religious commitment; service; educational mission	Moral values and work commitment	Moral Legitimacy as a Source of Work Commitment	Professional commitment was associated with moral responsibility, religious values, and dedication to education beyond financial considerations.

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

Table 9 summarizes three interrelated themes identified in the interview data. First, institutionalized administrative pressure reflects how reporting requirements, meetings, and additional assignments contribute to educators' professional responsibilities beyond classroom teaching. Second, negotiated gender roles highlight the continuing need to balance institutional demands with domestic and caregiving responsibilities, including the importance of spousal support. Third, moral legitimacy as a source of work commitment illustrates how sincerity (*ikhlas*), religious commitment, and dedication to education inform

participants' understandings of their professional roles. Taken together, these themes suggest that female educators' allocation of professional and domestic time is embedded in institutional expectations, gendered responsibilities, and moral-religious values. These qualitative findings provide a contextual basis for interpreting the statistical associations reported in the quantitative analysis.

Institutionalized administrative pressure

This theme emerged from the institutional expectations category and encompassed recurring codes related to administrative workload, reporting obligations, institutional meetings, and additional assignments (Table 9). These codes reflect how female educators experience organizational responsibilities extending beyond their primary teaching duties.

Interview findings indicated that reporting requirements, institutional meetings, committee assignments, and documentation contributed to additional professional demands. As Participant 7 explained, "Sometimes it is not the teaching that feels exhausting, but the reports and paperwork that consume all the time." This statement illustrates how administrative responsibilities were experienced as a substantial component of educators' workloads, sometimes overshadowing their instructional responsibilities.

These qualitative findings are consistent with the positive association between administrative burden and working duration reported in the regression analysis ($\beta = 0.35$). From a Feminist Political Economy perspective, administrative responsibilities can be understood as part of the institutional conditions shaping women's allocation of working time. The findings suggest that professional commitment is negotiated within organizational expectations that extend beyond classroom teaching, potentially contributing to prolonged working hours and additional pressures on female educators.

Negotiated gender roles

This theme was developed from the gendered domestic responsibilities category and incorporates codes related to childcare responsibilities, household management, work–family balance, and spousal support (Table 9). The findings highlight how female educators negotiate professional commitments alongside expectations concerning domestic and caregiving responsibilities.

Participants described the continuing influence of traditional gender expectations on their allocation of working time. Participant 12 stated, "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." This account illustrates how perceived maternal responsibilities can constrain women's time allocation for professional work despite their willingness to increase their working hours.

Conversely, domestic support was described as an important resource for sustaining professional engagement. Participant 18 explained, "Without my husband's help, I would never be able to work this much." This statement highlights the role of spousal assistance in facilitating women's participation in professional activities while managing household responsibilities.

These findings correspond with the regression results indicating a negative association between gender norms and working duration ($\beta = -0.22$) and a positive association between domestic support and working duration ($\beta = 0.27$). Viewed through the Gendered Division of Labor perspective, the interview accounts suggest that women's working time is negotiated within unequal domestic expectations, while spousal support may help reduce some constraints associated with unpaid household and caregiving responsibilities.

Moral legitimacy as a source of work commitment

This theme reflects how responsibility, sincerity (*ikhlas*), religious commitment, and educational service shape female educators' professional dedication beyond economic considerations (Table 9). Participant 20 stated, "I continue to increase my working hours not only because of economic needs, but also because I feel a responsibility as an educator." This illustrates how moral responsibility informs the allocation of working time alongside financial motivations.

Institutional and religious expectations further reinforced professional commitment. Participant 9 recalled, "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." Similarly, Participant 15 explained, "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." These accounts illustrate how institutional authority, religious devotion, and expectations of spiritual reward inform participants' understandings of professional dedication.

From a Moral Economy perspective, these findings suggest that the allocation of working time is embedded in shared moral values and religious obligations rather than in economic incentives alone. While these commitments may strengthen professional dedication, they may also normalize extended working hours when additional responsibilities are framed as expressions of sincerity, loyalty, and service.

Taken together, the three qualitative themes provide contextual insights into the statistical associations reported in the quantitative analysis. Institutionalized administrative pressure illustrates the professional demands associated with working duration, while negotiated gender roles highlight the influence of domestic responsibilities and spousal support. Moral legitimacy further reveals how religious values and institutional expectations inform educators' understandings of professional commitment. Collectively, these findings suggest that female educators' allocation of working time is embedded in organizational conditions, gendered domestic responsibilities, and moral-religious meanings, extending the interpretation of women's labor beyond individual economic considerations.

Discussion

Based on the quantitative and qualitative analyses, this study identified three main findings. First, female educators' working duration was positively associated with household income, opportunity cost, work flexibility, administrative burden, and domestic support, whereas gender norms were negatively associated. Administrative burden had the largest reported positive coefficient ($\beta = 0.35$), and the regression model explained 68% of the variation in working duration ($R^2 = 0.68$). Second, working duration was positively associated with the measured household welfare indicator after controlling for household income (coefficient = 0.41; $p = 0.001$). The reported mediation analysis also indicated a positive indirect association via working duration (effect = 0.21; 95% CI: 0.09–0.34), although the specification of the predictor requires clarification. Third, interview findings showed that female educators negotiated professional expectations and unpaid domestic responsibilities while interpreting their work through moral commitment, sincerity (*ikhlas*), and religious devotion. Together, these findings highlight how employment experiences are embedded in economic, institutional, gendered, and religious contexts within faith-based educational institutions.

Female educators' allocation of working time in faith-based educational institutions reflects broader social issues, including inequalities in the division of domestic labor and the expansion of professional demands. Caregiving responsibilities disproportionately assigned to women may constrain their autonomy in determining working hours (Lightman & Kevins, 2021; Kabeer, 2025). In this study, gender norms were negatively associated with working duration, whereas domestic support and work flexibility were positively associated with working duration. These relationships highlight the importance of family support and institutional arrangements, although they do not necessarily indicate that flexibility itself leads to longer working hours. Flexible working arrangements still require clear boundaries between professional responsibilities and family life (Shanker, 2022). The largest positive coefficient for administrative burden underscores the importance of organizational demands, while interview findings indicate that sincerity (*ikhlas*) and dedication provide meaning to professional work. In the context of contemporary Indonesian education, these issues highlight the importance of working-time allocation, caregiving support, and protection against excessive workloads for female educators' well-being (Astuty et al., 2025).

From a theoretical perspective, the associations of household income and opportunity cost with working duration demonstrate that economic considerations remain relevant to understanding time allocation (Kirchberger, 2020), but are insufficient to explain the full range of female educators' experiences. The Gendered Division of Labor perspective helps interpret the negative association between gender norms and working duration, as well as the positive association involving domestic support, as reflections of the socially structured distribution of family responsibilities (Akerlof & Kranton, 2000; He & Noussair, 2023). Feminist Political Economy directs attention to organizational structures: administrative burden exhibited the largest positive coefficient, suggesting that working duration should be understood in relation to institutional demands rather than individual preferences alone. Meanwhile, Moral Economy (Thompson, 1971) interprets narratives of sincerity and dedication as sources of meaning and professional legitimacy, which, under certain conditions, may normalize additional responsibilities. Together, these three perspectives complement economic explanations and offer an integrative interpretation of women's labor, without suggesting that interactions among variables or causal relationships have been statistically established, particularly within faith-based educational institutions.

A fundamental insight from this study is that longer working hours cannot automatically be equated with greater household well-being. The positive association between working duration and the proportion of household expenditure allocated to children's education and healthcare reflects a specific economic dimension but does not measure time adequacy, caregiving quality, or overall household welfare. The literature on time use and the distribution of caregiving responsibilities highlights that contributions from paid employment can coexist with inequalities in unpaid labor (Cieplinski et al., 2023; Sihto & Zechner, 2025). The interviews further suggest that sincerity and dedication may serve as sources of professional dignity while also requiring critical reflection to ensure that they do not obscure boundaries of responsibility. Within the Moral Economy framework, moral values should be considered alongside questions concerning the reasonableness of work demands and fairness in their distribution (Thompson, 1971). Accordingly, this study advocates a more time-sensitive and relational understanding of welfare without claiming that a trade-off has been directly tested.

Research on female labor supply emphasizes economic incentives and wage responsiveness (Blau & Kahn, 2006; Jang & Yum, 2022). The present study intersects with this literature by examining the associations between household income and opportunity

cost and working duration, but focuses on the working hours of already employed women rather than on decisions to enter the labor market. Studies of educators' workloads have examined professional and administrative demands (Jerrim & Sims, 2021; Shen et al., 2025). In the present study, administrative burden had the largest positive coefficient, although potential measurement overlap should be acknowledged. Literature on paid employment, caregiving, and gender inequalities (Andrew et al., 2024; Kabeer, 2025; Mu et al., 2025) provides a comparative perspective for interpreting the associations involving gender norms and domestic support. The principal contribution of this study lies in integrating regression findings with female educators' experiences of sincerity, dedication, and institutional demands within faith-based educational settings. Its scholarly contribution is therefore contextual and integrative; the mediation analysis cannot yet be interpreted as establishing a definitive mechanism until the predictor is clearly specified in the reported model.

The practical implications of this study focus on improving the governance of female educators' working time rather than merely increasing their labor force participation. First, institutions should systematically assess teaching hours, reporting requirements, meetings, and additional assignments to identify administrative responsibilities that can be simplified. This measure deserves particular attention because administrative burden exhibited the strongest positive association with working duration. Second, flexible working policies should establish clear boundaries for work-related communication, meeting schedules, and procedures for approving assignments outside regular working hours. Third, institutions may provide transparent scheduling adjustments for educators with caregiving responsibilities while recognizing that women's individual needs and circumstances differ. Fourth, institutional leaders should emphasize that the values of sincerity and dedication do not justify disproportionate workloads. Fifth, periodic evaluations should incorporate educators' perspectives on professional demands, family support, and personal time. Given the study's cross-sectional design, these recommendations remain proposed institutional measures whose implementation and effectiveness require further evaluation through longitudinal monitoring and the active participation of educators.

CONCLUSION

Taken together, the findings suggest that female educators' working duration is associated with economic resources, institutional demands, and gendered household arrangements, while interviews reveal moral and religious meanings. Household income, opportunity cost, flexibility, administrative burden, and domestic support were positively associated with working duration, whereas gender norms were negatively associated with working duration. Administrative burden had the largest reported positive coefficient, highlighting institutional workload as an important dimension of the observed pattern. Working duration was positively associated with the measured household welfare indicator after adjustment for income, although this indicator captured expenditure on children's education and health rather than overall well-being. Interviews illustrated how educators negotiated professional duties and unpaid care while interpreting commitment through sincerity and service. The reported indirect association remains provisional because the mediation predictor requires clarification, and the cross-sectional evidence cannot establish causation.

The study contributes a context-specific, integrative interpretation of women's working time by bringing economic associations into dialogue with the Moral Economy, Feminist Political Economy, and Gendered Division of Labor perspectives. Rather than establishing a new theory, it shows how moral commitments, organizational expectations,

and domestic responsibilities can enrich explanations centered on individual economic choice. The findings also identify practical priorities for religiously affiliated educational institutions: reviewing administrative workloads, establishing reasonable working-time boundaries, providing flexible arrangements that are responsive to caregiving needs, and preventing the ideals of sincerity and service from legitimizing excessive duties. These proposals follow from observed patterns and participants' accounts, but their effectiveness has not yet been systematically evaluated in practice.

Several limitations qualify these conclusions. The study involved 100 survey respondents and 20 interview participants within a single institutional setting, which limits its transferability to other educational contexts. Its cross-sectional, non-probability design precludes causal inference and does not capture changes in working time or family circumstances. The welfare indicator reflected spending allocations for education and health, rather than broader aspects of well-being. Potential measurement overlap between working duration and administrative burden, together with reliance on self-reports, calls for cautious interpretation and improved measurement. Future studies should compare religious and non-religious institutions, employ longitudinal designs and validated measures, investigate unpaid care and time-related well-being, and rigorously evaluate proposed workplace policies across diverse settings and samples.

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CONFLICT OF INTEREST STATEMENT

The authors declare no personal, professional, or financial conflicts of interest that could influence this study or its findings.

DECLARATION OF AI USE

The authors conducted the research and prepared this manuscript independently, without AI assistance, while upholding academic honesty and integrity throughout.

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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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