



WORKING WIVES, RESOLVING DYSFUNCTIONAL HOUSEHOLD HARMONY

A STUDY ON STRUCTURAL-FUNCTIONAL THEORY AND ISLAMIC LAW PERSPECTIVE

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Abstract

Wives are often the economic contributors of families, especially those with low income. They are additional income earners for the family. This phenomenon also occurs in Temanggung Regency. They work in various sectors, from the domestic to the public sector, because most men in Temanggung work as farmers and laborers, so their income does not fulfill the family's economic needs. This article examines the phenomenon of working wives in Temanggung Regency from the perspective of Islamic law and Talcott Parson's structural-functionalism theory. In the Qur'an, the husband's responsibility is to complete the family's needs according to his portion of the duties because men have physical advantages over women. Islamic law allows wives to work in Temanggung if they do not neglect their primary duties as homemakers. However, Islam is not permitted if it will cause disharmony in the family. From Parson's perspective, it has been classified that the wife's job is to work at home, and the husband's job is to work outside, so there is no competition in the household. Regardless, working wives in Temanggung help husbands fulfill family needs to overcome dysfunctional household harmony.

Keywords: *Working Wives, Islamic Law, Structural-Functional Theory, Talcott Parson.*



Introduction

Wives are like figures who are always considered objects of inequality because differences between men and women always appear as a result of the social construction of society. Not only socially, but even the media, in this case, also expresses and presents women incomprehensively, showing that a woman is related to *masak* (cooking), *macak* (dressing up), and *manak* (giving birth). In contrast, women are figures identical to the domestic world, namely their role as mother and wife, her children and husband. However, nowadays, increasing awareness and opportunities mean that women are not only housewives but must also be able to help strengthen the family economy. Therefore, wives are required to develop their potential to improve the position of homemakers.¹

The Qur'an legitimizes the husband's role as breadwinner, evidently, the word *qawwam* (Surah an-Nisa, [4]: 34). However, wives are often the rescuers of the family economy whose financial situation is relatively low because the father's income as the primary breadwinner cannot fulfill the needs of the family.²

¹ Cut Rina Maisuri, "The Role of Housewives in Helping the Family Economy in Gampong Ujong Pulo Rayeuk, South Aceh Regency," *Thesis* (Universitas Teuku Umar Meulaboh Aceh Barat, 2022), 2, <http://repositori.utu.ac.id/id/eprint/592>.

² Arsini, "The Dual Role of Women in

In Islam, the obligation to earn a living is the husband's responsibility. This is stated in Surah al-Baqarah ([2]: 233). Meanwhile, the wife must serve her husband and be *madrasatul ula* (first education) for her children. This task is no less complicated than the husband's duty as a breadwinner because in living it, a wife requires patience, tenacity, and constancy so that the ideals of the *Shekinah* family can be achieved. This task is not limited in time, even 24 hours non-stop, unlike the husband's work, which has a rest period.

It is common today that the breadwinner in the family is not only the husband but also the wife as an additional breadwinner. With the wife participating in work, she has her income, which is often more than her husband's salary; this can trigger a disrespectful attitude from the wife to the husband because he feels more able to meet the household's needs.

In addition to these impacts, it can make wives think that husbands are less reliable in meeting household needs, which can cause disharmony. It will be worse if the husband feels competitive in making a living because of the wife's income. Therefore, it is essential to

Agrarian Community Families: The Case of 10 Wives of Farm Workers in Putat Purwodadi Grobogan Village," *Sawwa* 10, no. 1 (October 2014): 4, <https://journal.walisongo.ac.id/index.php/sawwa/article/view/642/581>.

research the phenomenon of wives who work as additional breadwinners.

Related to the above reality in Temanggung Regency, working wives earn additional income in addition to their working husbands; this female breadwinner has a vital role in maintaining the stability of the family economy. Some of the studies of the last two years on the working wife phenomenon are as follows:

Imaro Sidqi examines the wife as the backbone of the family, which takes over the husband's position as the family's leader. Some of the reasons are to alleviate family needs, economic needs, husbands who do not have a permanent job, environmental factors that dominate, many family dependents, fill spare time, and women's willingness to work.³

Muhammad Maymun and Ahmad Rezy Meidina examine the rights of women working in Pringgondani Village. Whether working women can still carry out their rights and obligations or not.⁴ Meanwhile, Aurora Talita Damara

Yahya's research, "The Role of Women Working in Child Care from a Family Law Perspective," focuses on the parenting style of mothers working on children from the perspective of family law in jurisprudence and Law No. 1 of 1974.⁵

In addition, Rizka Nasution discusses the role of career women in the family under Islam's perspective that the best women stay indoors. However, they also know how to behave as career women. Although being career women still does not reduce their duties as housewives, they also positively influence the family economy.⁶

Ade Putra Hidayat also discusses the differences in parenting patterns between working and non-working mothers. Working mothers assume multiple roles, while non-working mothers get over-objectification.⁷

Noerizka Putri Fajrin and Lusila Andriani Purwastuti, entitled "Parental

³ Imaro Sidqi, "Wife as the Breadwinner of the Family: A Sociological and Legal Study among the Muslim Community in Sikayu Village, Comal District, Pemalang Regency," *Al-Adalah: Jurnal Syariah dan Hukum Islam* 8, no. 1 (2023): 83-106, DOI: 10.31538/adlh.v8i1.3334.

⁴ Muhammad Maymun and Ahmad Rezy Meidina. "Fulfillment of the Wife's Rights as a Breadwinner in the Family Maslahah Perspective: Case Study in Pringgondani Village, Jember Regency," *Jurnal Akademika: Kajian Ilmu-Ilmu Sosial, Humaniora dan Agama* 4, no. 1 (2023): 53-74, DOI: 10.3122/jak.v4i1.58.

⁵ Aurora Talita Damara Yahya, "The Role of Women Working in Child Care from a Family Law Perspective," *Thesis* (UIN Kiai Haji Achmad Siddiq Jember, 2023), <http://digilib.uinkhas.ac.id/id/eprint/17456>.

⁶ Rizka Nasution, "The Role of Career Women in Improving Family Economy in Review Of Islamic Economics," *Sibatik Journal: Jurnal Ilmiah Bidang Sosial, Ekonomi, Budaya, Teknologi, dan Pendidikan* 1, no. 4 (2022): 393-402, DOI: 10.54443/Sibatik.V1i4.43.

⁷ Ade Putra Hidayat, "Perceptions of Working and Non-Working Mothers' Parenting Patterns: A Case Study in Gondokusuman Yogyakarta," *Jurnal Pelita PAUD* 6, no. 2 (2022): 310-320, DOI: 10.33222/Pelitapaud.V6i2.1986.

Involvement in Child Care in Dual Earner Families: A Literature Study,” discusses the parenting style of families with dual careers, that effective parenting for dual career families is to balance gender between husband and wife. Work together in caring for children and caring for homes and activities in the community.⁸

From some of the studies above, research has yet to be found on working wives analyzed from the Islamic Law and structural-functional theory in Temanggung Regency. Consequently, the research employs a sociological study enriched by interviews with informants who are working women from several sub-districts in Temanggung Regency.

Working Wives in Temanggung Regency: Resolving Dysfunctional Household Harmony

Wives working as additional breadwinners is not a new phenomenon in Temanggung Regency. They have various jobs, ranging from selling online, being tailors, Islamic extension workers, receiving cake orders, teachers, and so on. Most of the reason they work is to help their husbands meet the house

hold because of their irregular income. As revealed by Mrs. IR when asked by researchers about her reasons for working as a seamstress. It was revealed by Mrs. IR when researchers asked her about her reasons for working as a seamstress.

“I work selling online, take goods from wholesalers. I advertise on WhatsApp and Facebook, and then I pick it up when there is an order. The reason I work is to help the children's father buy salt.”⁹

It also was expressed by Mrs. EE, who has a business making birthday cakes, wet cakes, and various snacks. “To help my husband, make schoolchildren's pocket money. It just so happens that I can make cakes, someone likes my cooking, thank God, I can make money, I am diligent, I am grateful.”¹⁰

Helping her husband meet the family's needs is a strong encouragement for the wife of two because considering her husband's income, who works as an *angkot* (public transport) driver, is uncertain, and her two children are still in school. “A little bit to help my kitchen needs because my husband works as an *angkot* driver, so I do not have to get money; it is not lonely. So by making this cake, you can help your husband

⁸ Noerizka Putri Fajrin, and Lusila Andriani Purwastuti, “Parental Involvement in Parenting in Dual Earner Families: A Literature Study,” *Jurnal Obsesi* 6, no. 4 (2022): 2725-2734, DOI: 10.31004/Obsesi.V6i4.1044.

⁹ IR, Interview by author, Temanggung, June 23, 2023.

¹⁰ EE, Interview by author, Temanggung, June 23, 2023.

when your husband is deserted by his *angkot*.”¹¹

In addition to helping husbands meet needs, the reason wives work is as a means to express themselves, their ideals, and talents (skills). It was revealed by a person who works as an Islamic Extension Counselor, Mrs. SB. "Because I had the opportunity to register for Religious Counseling at that time. My diploma was linear with the job, so I applied. First, I can achieve my dream of becoming a civil servant by working; we refresh my brain, not stressed by the hustle and bustle of domestic life."¹²

It was also expressed by Mrs. WL, who works as a religious counselor and sometimes sews clothes in order. "To fill my spare time, so the Counsellor does not fill in at the majlis ta'lim [Islamic forum] every day, because I have sewing skills, I just casually open a sewing service; it turns out that I like it. Sost enjoy living it so that free time is not wasted."¹³

Mrs. LW, a kindergarten teacher, also revealed that one of her reasons for working was to realize her dreams. "From the beginning, my dream was to become an employee; besides that, I can also help my husband meet his daily

¹¹ EE, Interview.

¹² SB, Interview by author, Temanggung, June 23, 2023.

¹³ WL, Interview by author, Temanggung, June 23, 2023.

needs. I am happy to be able to work as a teacher. The teacher's job is noble. Although the yield is not much."¹⁴

Although the wives who act as additional breadwinners work daily, they are also burdened with household chores like housewives. It is expressed by Ms. UN, "Even though I work, I still do my housework, take care of my husband and three children, and clean up the house all I do."¹⁵

Few wives working outside the home have to get up early to finish this housework before they go to work, as Mrs. MA did. "I work at PAUD from Monday to Thursday, from 7.30–11.00 am, so before 07.00, I have to prepare all the needs of school children and my husband's needs for work, so I wake up relatively early."¹⁶

It was also conveyed by Mrs. SN, who also works in PAUD [Early Childhood Education and Development (ECED)], "I woke up very early to clean up the house, prepare the needs of my children and husband, so when I went to work, everything was settled. My work does not interfere with my duties at home."¹⁷

¹⁴ LW, Interview by author, Temanggung, June 23, 2023.

¹⁵ UN, Interview by author, Temanggung, June 23, 2023.

¹⁶ MA, Interview by author, Temanggung, June 23, 2023.

¹⁷ SN, Interview by author, Temanggung, June 23, 2023.

Like Mrs. NL, who also works as a Madrasah Aliyah [Islamic Senior High School] teacher, "Even though I do not have children yet, I also wake up very early to clean up the house and take care of my husband going to work. I was uncomfortable if the house was messy, so I left that the house must be clean neatly."¹⁸

Although most of these wives' incomes tend to be lower than the husbands' incomes, this is not an obstacle for them. They lived it sincerely to help their husbands and intended worship. The following is the researcher's interview with Mrs. RK. "The salary is much bigger than my husband's. Because of that, my husband is not fully sincere; I work. While still young and able, I have been schooled by my parents to undergraduate, so I want to practice the knowledge I have gained so severely in the field of work. From the beginning, I knew that if the salary was small, I would consider worship, bismillah, and I like to live it."¹⁹

The same thing was admitted by Mrs. SN, who works sewing shoe holders, "My salary is small, only enough for food needs. My husband's salary is much greater. However, even though the salary is small, I still devote it to daily expenses,

so my husband's income can be saved for bigger needs such as renovating the house we are dreaming of."²⁰

This income factor puts the wife at the level of the additional breadwinner. Because, in essence, the husband still bears most of the household needs, and the wife helps with the ability to make money to help meet the needs of the household that have not been met with the husband's income, as revealed by LW below. "Used for daily needs. Because my husband is a farmer, the harvest is once a year, so when there is building project work, it is not bad for our addition."²¹

An identical statement was conveyed by Mrs. NL, "For my daily needs, because my husband's income is uncertain, sometimes there is no project, my husband joins my sister's work in the agricultural machinery department."²²

Wives whose husbands earn more than enough can set aside their income for future needs, which can be used when needed. Mrs. RK revealed this. "Usually, I use my salary to meet my personal needs if the needs of the children and housing needs have been handled by all with my husband. However, the trade name is sometimes quiet, so

¹⁸ NL, Interview by author, Temanggung, June 23, 2023.

¹⁹ NL, Interview.

²⁰ NJ, Interview by author, Temanggung, June 23, 2023.

²¹ LW, Interview.

²² NL, Interview.

yes, sometimes I use my money. The point is for the family."²³

The complicated experience faced by wives who act as additional breadwinners is the hassle of dividing time between being a housewife and a worker. As revealed by the following UN, "There are many problems, especially about time and especially concerning children. So, my children are still small; there are three of them. Sometimes, if my activities are until the afternoon, the children have returned home from school, and no one is home. Finally, the second child is entrusted to the grandfather/grandmother; the third child is entrusted to the *rewang* (babysitter), and the first child I invite my activities to my activities."²⁴

Another difficulty for Mrs. RK was, "Actually, my husband has enough salary to meet my family's needs, but I really want to work. Yes, sometimes my husband likes to make insinuations like that to be told to resign because he knows I am happy to work. Ultimately, he still allowed it, but with a return time of no later than 4.00 pm."²⁵

On the other hand, Mrs. MA who at work encountered obstacles, "If I stay outside for a long time, I often think of my child at home. Kasian, I stayed

around. Sometimes there are meetings or trainings like that, I also take up college again so it's even more time-consuming."²⁶

However, most interviewees did not make the above an obstacle because they considered it natural and claimed to enjoy and be grateful for their work, as expressed by UN. "I am happy to live it; my husband is also supportive; every time there is a task related to IT, my husband is always at the forefront for me. So I considered the obstacles I experienced as a natural thing and art of working women."²⁷

Furthermore, most working wives help their husbands meet household needs, achieve goals, and self-actualize. They also do housework. They work around this by doing homework in the morning before they leave for work. So, they got up relatively early. As well as they do homework at night. Their work must not interfere with their primary duties as mothers and wives. For children's problems, sometimes they leave their children at their grandmother's house when they want to leave work.

Most wives' income is also lower than the husband's income, and this is due to the level of skills and abilities possessed. Another thing that is also very influential is the intensity of work that needs to be fixed and erratic.

²³ RK, Interview by author, Temanggung, June 23, 2023.

²⁴ UN, Interview.

²⁵ RK, Interview.

²⁶ MA, Interview.

²⁷ UN, Interview.

The money from the work of these wives is also used for domestic purposes and is not only used for themselves as the term is known in society in general: "wife's money, wife's money, husband's money, wife's money."

The obstacles encountered by wives who act as additional breadwinners are the hassle of dividing time and the burden of mind on the family when left to work outside the home. Nevertheless, most claim to be unencumbered and simultaneously enjoy their role as homemakers and workers.

Analysis of Islamic Law on the Phenomenon of Working Wives in Temanggung Regency

In Islam, everyone, including women, has the right to do good and to be rewarded for the work done. While work is a man's duty as head of the family, Islam allows women to work to help their husbands in certain circumstances.

Particular conditions that must be fulfilled must not harm religion and honor and must not cause slander or moral corruption.²⁸ Muhammad Talib further explained that women working outside the home must meet the following requirements for specific reasons and circumstances:²⁹

²⁸ Sheikh Mutawalli as-Sya'rawi, *Muslim Women's Jurisprudence* (Jakarta: Amzah, 2009), 142.

²⁹ Muhammad Thalib, *Islamic Solutions to*

1. The work needs women's treatment, so it should not mix with men.
2. The husband, responsible for providing for his wife, cannot take care of the family, so the wife works outside to help support the family.
3. The working time that women have to work outside the home does not neglect their primary duty of taking care of the family because taking care of the house and children is the obligation of married women.
4. There is a husband's contract because, according to Islam, a woman is not responsible for her livelihood, but the one who bears it is her husband, father, or brother. That is, every woman who works outside the home is not a basic need of life but a secondary need.

Mia Siti Aminah added several situations that allow women to work and find work outside the home, including:³⁰

1. He must maintain his manners in dressing, walking, talking, and acting.
2. The profession chosen must be based on Sharia law and the nature of women.

the Career Women's Dilemma (Yogyakarta: Wihdah Press, 1999), 108-109.

³⁰ Mia Siti Aminah, *Muslimah Career: Achieves Highest Career Before Allah, Family, Work* (Yogyakarta: Pustaka Ghratama, 2010), 34-35.

3. Should avoid being alone with men (alone).

According to data obtained by researchers, women in Temanggung Regency meet the above requirements. The detailed explanation is as follows:

1. The main reason for working wives, in general, is to help meet the family's needs because the husband's income is uncertain, so the family's needs have not been fulfilled.
2. The work they do does not contradict Islamic law; it follows their identity as women, and their participation is needed by society. For example, female kindergarten and early childhood teachers will be better able to handle and teach young children than men because women are more patient and compassionate—religious extension officers who can provide spiritual enlightenment for the community through the *majlis ta'lim*.
3. Most wives who work in Temanggung Regency continue to carry out their work as housewives by being tricked into helping each other between family members; it is done before work or sometimes between work hours.
4. Wives who work in Temanggung Regency get permission and support from their husbands. Slightly different from the case of Mrs. RK,

the husband is enough to meet the household's needs, so the husband only partially supports her.

5. Wives who work in Temanggung Regency wear clothes that cover their *aurat*.
6. The work done does not cause these working wives to be alone with a man.

From the explanation above, it can be concluded that according to Islam, the law of women working in Temanggung is permissible because it meets the requirements for wives to work determined by Islamic law, except in the case of Mrs. RK, whose husband is less pleased if he works. In this case, the law is forbidden because it brings prosperity to his family. By the rules of fiqh, preventing harm takes precedence over attracting benefits. Thus, Mrs. RK's role as an additional breadwinner causes harm and is not under Islamic law.

Structural-Functional Analysis on the Working Wives

In the structure-function theory, developed by Talcott Parson, there is a need to divide roles between men and women to establish social order. Talcott Parson argues that husbands develop their careers outside the home and wives work at home. It is a clear rule that is likely to eliminate competition between husband and wife because it causes dis-

harmony in married life. Thus, this theory argues that women should stay at home because it is the most favorable rule and for good in the household.³¹

Parson's theory is different from the situation experienced by researchers in Temanggung Regency. Researchers who interviewed 11 informants found that wives in Temanggung have dual roles. Apart from the domestic sector, they also play a role in the public sector as earners of additional income for their families.

Some wives who act as additional breadwinners in Temanggung Regency choose to open businesses at home, such as cake-making businesses by order. The reason is that besides earning money from his work, he does not have to leave the house so that homework can be done.

In addition, many wives work outside the home, such as teachers, religious counselors, tailors, online traders, and others. These working wives help meet the family's needs and employ it as self-expression, reaching their goals and channeling their talents. As for household chores and taking care of children, they can work around them in various

ways, for instance, doing it before going to work or paying money and being assisted by other family members, such as their grandmothers.

The structural-functional theory explains that society consists of inter-related parts, where the parts have their roles and tasks that influence each other and are interconnected, taking the fundamental premise that each system structure is social and functional to the other.³²

Just as a woman acts as an additional breadwinner, she also plays a role in her relationships with her family and the community around her. They work to support the family financially. It naturally relieves the husband, and they can earn their income. In addition, they serve the local community; for example, when a teacher or religious counselor carries out his duties, the community in need will feel satisfied. Some educate and guide their children in school, and an extension worker can enlighten the community (*majlis ta'lim*, religious forum).

Even when wives work outside the home, their role in society is evident by their participation in community activities, such as *majlis ta'lim*. It means their

³¹ Aida Sri Rahayu, "The Role of Farmer Wives in Increasing Household Income in Bojonggenteng Village, Sukabumi, West Java," *Undergraduate Thesis* (Universitas Islam Negeri Syarif Hidayatullah Jakarta, 2017), 59, <http://repository.uinjkt.ac.id/dspace/handle/123456789/33703>.

³² Nunung Sri Rochaningsih, "Impact of Shifting Roles and Family Functions on Adolescent Deviant Behavior," *Jurnal Pembangunan Pendidikan* 2, no. 1 (2014): 67, DOI: 10.21831/jppfa.v2i1.2618.

work allows them to remain active in the community.

The above shows that although they work outside the home, their primary role as housewives is still well carried out (except for Mrs. RK). This situation does not cause dysfunction in the family because other factors influence it; the family is not rigid but flexible. It is because there is mutual understanding between family members and agreement between family members for the continuity and harmony of the family.

As for the particular problems that occur in Mrs. RK, the role of the wife as an additional breadwinner has a malfunctioning impact on her family. It is because the husband's income is sufficient or even more to meet household needs that the husband is not fully pleased if Mrs. RK works, so it often provokes anger from each other.

According to structural-functional theory, the role of women as additional breadwinners in Temanggung Regency is functional towards the family and community. Specifically related to the problem of Mrs. RK, her role as an additional housewife is dysfunctional according to structural-functional theory with her family

Conclusion

Homemakers, who were previously thought only to have a domestic role, have now changed their understanding

of where they can enter the public sector because more and more job vacancies require female workers. Homemakers are taking advantage of this to participate in work to help the family economy. According to Islam, the practice of wives working in Temanggung Regency is permissible because it does not cause the wife to shirk her obligations, even if it benefits herself and her family. Except in some instances, such as Mrs. RK, it is prohibited in Islamic law because it causes disharmony in her family. Meanwhile, according to structural-functional theory, the practice of wives working in Temanggung is functional to help family income. Except for Mrs. RK's problem, her role as a working wife is dysfunctional towards her family.

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Interview

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SB. Interview by author, Temanggung,
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Wl. Interview by author, Temanggung,
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LW. Interview by author, Temanggung,
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UN. Interview by author, Temanggung,
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MA. Interview by author, Temanggung,
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SN. Interview by author, Temanggung,
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Nl. Interview by author, Temanggung,
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NJ. Interview by author, Temanggung,
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RK. Interview by author, Temanggung,
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