



Family welfare: Relationship with gender roles and wife's income

Fuad Hasyim^{*✉}, Agus Salim^{}, Yuanita Yuanita^{***}, Bahren Bahren^{****}**

**Universitas Islam Negeri Sulthan Thaha Saifuddin, Jambi, Indonesia*

Email: fuadhasyim@uinjambi.ac.id

***Universitas Islam Negeri Sulthan Thaha Saifuddin, Jambi, Indonesia*

Email: agussalimdgpasau@uinjambi.ac.id

****Universitas Islam Negeri Sulthan Thaha Saifuddin, Jambi, Indonesia*

Email: yunaita@uinjambi.ac.id

*****Western Sydney University, Australia*

Email: 20083700@student.westernsydney.edu.au

ABSTRACT

The family represents the smallest unit within a society or a nation, generally consisting of parents and children whose marital status is legally recognized. Within the family structure, roles and responsibilities are distributed based on gender. This division of tasks aims to support the overall achievement of the family's goals. This study investigates the negotiation of gender roles and economic welfare within dual-earner families, specifically analyzing how disproportionate female income contributions correlate with domestic task distribution and household prosperity levels. This research employed a survey method with a sample of 85 dual-earner families randomly selected from a total population of 109 families. The collected data were analyzed using descriptive quantitative methods and statistically tested with the Fisher Exact Test. The results indicate that domestic responsibilities are predominantly handled by wives, while public or social activities are performed jointly by both husbands and wives. Moreover, in 96.4% of the families, more than half of the total household income comes from the wives' earnings. The majority of families, totaling 80 households (94.2%), are classified as first-level prosperous families, while the remaining 5 families (5.8%) fall into the pre-prosperous category. According to the World Bank classification, 3 families (3.6%) are in the extreme poverty category, 65 families (76.4%) are in the lower-middle-income group, and 17 families (20%) are categorized as upper-middle-income.

Keywords: Wives; Welfare; Gender; Family Income.

✉ Corresponding author:

Email Address: fuadhasyim@uinjambi.ac.id

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ABSTRAK

Keluarga adalah satuan paling kecil didalam masyarakat maupun negara. Umumnya keluarga terdiri atas orang tua dan anak-anak dengan status perkawinan yang diakui secara hukum. Dalam struktur keluarga, peran dan tanggung jawab dibagi berdasarkan gender. Pembagian tugas ini bertujuan untuk mendukung tercapainya tujuan keluarga secara keseluruhan. Studi ini meneliti negosiasi peran gender dan kesejahteraan ekonomi dalam keluarga dengan dua pencari nafkah, khususnya menganalisis bagaimana kontribusi pendapatan perempuan yang tidak proporsional berkorelasi dengan distribusi tugas rumah tangga dan tingkat kemakmuran rumah tangga. Penelitian ini menggunakan metode survei dengan sampel sebanyak 85 keluarga dual-earner yang dipilih secara acak dari total populasi sebanyak 109 keluarga. Data yang diperoleh dianalisis secara deskriptif kuantitatif dan diuji menggunakan Fisher Exact Test untuk analisis statistik. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa tanggung jawab di ranah domestik sebagian besar dilakukan oleh istri, sedangkan kegiatan di ranah publik atau sosial dikerjakan bersama. Selain itu, pada 96,4% keluarga, lebih dari setengah pendapatan total keluarga berasal dari penghasilan istri. Mayoritas keluarga, yakni 80 keluarga (94,2%), berada pada kategori keluarga sejahtera tingkat I, sementara 5 keluarga lainnya (5,8%) masih termasuk dalam kelompok prasejahtera. Berlandaskan klasifikasi Bank Dunia, terdapat 3 keluarga (3,6%) yang berada pada kategori kemiskinan ekstrem, 65 keluarga (76,4%) ada pada kelompok pendapatan menengah ke bawah, dan 17 keluarga (20%) termasuk dalam kelompok pendapatan menengah ke atas.

Kata Kunci: Istri; Kesejahteraan; Gender; Pendapatan Keluarga.

1. INTRODUCTION

Human beings, as economic agents (*homo economicus*), inherently possess rationality in selecting the most optimal alternatives to fulfill their needs and achieve maximum satisfaction (Jaenudin, 2014). A household, consisting of a man and a woman, is likewise subject to the ever-increasing demands of meeting family needs (Nazwa & Dora, 2024; Telaumbanua & Nugraheni, 2018). In the contemporary era, women (also regarded as *homo economicus*) play a significant role in seeking alternative strategies to support household needs, including engaging in income-generating activities (Duygu, 2025; Talhelm et al., 2025; Dewi, 2025; Chen & Liu, 2017). This occurs alongside the fulfillment of their biological and social roles as mothers, which include childbirth and breastfeeding (Novita, 2025; Bali et al., 2025).

The global agribusiness sector represents one domain in which wives play a critical role (AbdulKareem et al., 2026). Women are actively involved in both upstream activities (such as seedling and planting) and downstream processes (such as production and marketing). Nevertheless, they continue to face several structural barriers, including gender-based wage disparities (Al Abbasi et al., 2025), limited access to resources and opportunities (Kandi et al., 2025), and the disproportionate burden of responsibilities (Alam & Gounder, 2025), particularly for married women with children, who must simultaneously manage childbirth, childcare, and domestic affairs.

Women's participation in agricultural and agro-industrial sectors has been shown to contribute positively to household income. However, in general, women's involvement in productive economic activities remains relatively limited when compared to men. One of the underlying factors is the dual burden borne by women, who are responsible for both productive labor and reproductive duties (Aziza et al., 2025; Anderson et al., 2021; Unay-Gailhard & Bojnec, 2021; FAO, 2011).

Within the household, there exists a gender-based division of labor. Domestic tasks are more frequently and actively performed by wives than by husbands (Luo, 2025; Nurseha & Arafat, 2024; Widyasari & Suyanto, 2023; Burns and Homel, 1989). Such tendencies are more prevalent among traditional wives than among their non-traditional or egalitarian counterparts. Egalitarian wives tend to advocate for an equitable division of domestic responsibilities with their spouses, based on principles of fairness. In contrast, traditional wives are more likely to assume the bulk of domestic duties due to the influence of patrilineal cultural norms or established social expectations governing women's daily roles (Martínez Echagüe, 2026; Daminger, 2020; Greenstein, 1996).

An alternative theoretical perspective is offered by Maier (2016), who associates the division of domestic labor with power distribution theory. This theory positions wives as subordinate to their husbands (often perceived as the secondary or complementary party), thereby limiting their agency in household decision-making, including in matters related to the allocation of domestic tasks. Nevertheless, under certain socio-economic conditions, wives are also expected to engage in income-generating work to support their spouses in the pursuit of household welfare. Despite the extensive literature on women's economic participation and the dual burden they face, there is a lack of empirical evidence regarding how households navigate the paradox where wives act as the primary financial providers while remaining tethered to traditional domestic roles. Furthermore, few studies have specifically linked this disproportionate economic contribution to objective welfare achievement under formal national indicators, such as those defined by the BKKBN in the context of dual-earner families. This study aims to (1) analyze the contribution of wives to household income, (2) assess the level of family welfare, and (3) examine the relationship between gender roles and household well-being.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Welfare

Welfare or well-being is a general concept in anthropology, economics, psychology, sociology, and other social sciences. While well-being is often associated with financial status, its scope is broader than just economic or material well-being (Büchi, 2024; Dornisch, 2022; Sirgy, 2018; Smith and Clay, 2010). The concept of well-being refers to an evaluation of a person's situation, or more precisely, an evaluation focused on the quality of that person's "state" (Gasper, 2005). Welfare and well-being are related to the fulfillment of basic human needs. Well-being has a strong normative aspect, and there is significant conflict of opinion about what constitutes basic human needs and how to fulfill them (Martela et al., 2023; Manning, 2022; Büchs, 2021).

Subjective well-being and objective well-being are two metrics frequently used to assess well-being (Sunarti, 2006). Countries or provinces have standards for measuring well-being

using an objective approach, while the subjective approach is based on individual considerations. Perceptions of subjective well-being vary because they are influenced by regional areas, geography, and sociocultural values inherent in society (Giovanis et al., 2024). This study uses subjective well-being and objective well-being to examine family well-being.

2.2. Gender Role

Bruce and Yearley (2006), in their sociological dictionary, define a role as a depiction of a culture that regulates a social action. The concept of a role assumes that when people occupy a particular social position, their behavior is determined by what is expected of that position rather than by their own individual characteristics. The meaning of a role is a collection of socially defined attributes and expectations associated with a social position. Roles are sociologically important because they show how individual activities are socially influenced and thus follow regular patterns (Löffler & Greitemeyer, 2023; Abercrombie et al., 2006).

2.3. Wives' Income Contribution

Contribution means giving something (especially giving money or goods) or can mean helping someone or something. Contribution has a more specific meaning, namely a) an amount of money given to someone or an organization to help pay for something, or b) an action or service that helps cause or improve something (Hornby et al., 2005).

Income is defined as the money earned by a person/region/country from work, investment, business, and so on. Meanwhile, household income is generally defined as the combined gross income of all household members over a certain age. Family or household income refers to the income shared by people living in the same household. In economics, a household is a unit in which economic resources are shared and, to some extent, joint consumption occurs (Igelström et al., 2024; Aswar et al., 2022; Mesra, 2019; Muffels, 2014).

Based on this definition, a wife's income contribution refers to the money that she gives or spends towards the family income, which is used to achieve specific goals, particularly those related to family welfare. Family income can be used to determine whether a family is poor. One way to categorize poverty levels is based on the World Bank's theory: dividing total family income by the number of family members to obtain per capita family income (Jolliffe & Prydz, 2021).

3. METHOD

This study employed a survey research method. Seputih Mataram District, Central Lampung Regency, was selected purposively as the research location due to its significant concentration of families where wives are actively engaged in the agricultural sector, providing a relevant context for studying gender-economic dynamics. The research sample comprised 85 dual-earner families, selected through a simple random sampling technique from a total population of 109 families.

The explicit selection of these respondents is fundamental to the study's internal validity, as it captures households where the tension between high economic contribution and traditional gender roles is most prevalent. To ensure the reliability of the data, this study employed a dyadic data collection approach, gathering responses from both husbands and wives within each household. This method allows for the cross-referencing of reports on domestic

labor and income distribution, thereby minimizing individual reporting bias and enhancing the objectivity of the variables. The collected data, representing these synchronized perspectives, were then analyzed using descriptive quantitative methods and statistically tested with the Fisher's Exact Test.

4. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

4.1. Family Income

The family's income was the sum of the husband's, wife's, and children's (or other family members') incomes. The calculation of total family income is presented in Table 1. Based on the total family income data, the per capita family income was then calculated, as shown in Table 2, using the exchange rate as of November 11, 2022, which was US\$1 equivalent to IDR 15,639. The results indicate that 3 families (4%) are classified as living in extreme poverty, 65 families (76%) fall into the lower middle-income class, and 17 families (20%) are categorized as upper middle-income class.

Table 1.

Respondent's family income.

	Husband's income (IDR)	wife's income (IDR)	Children's/other family members' income (IDR)	Total family income (IDR)
Average	2.256.529	2.445.000	33.529	4.730.500
Minimum	700.000	2.445.000	0	3.142.513
Maximum	2.445.000	2.445.000	750.000	5.635.026

Table 2.

Respondent's per capita income.

	Income/capita/month (IDR)	Income/capita/day (IDR)	USD/capita/day
Average	1.609.364	53.646	3,52
Minimum	935.628	31.188	2,05
Maximum	2.692.513	89.750	5,89

After obtaining the total household income and determining its poverty level, the next step is to calculate the income contribution of wives relative to the family's total income. This calculation is derived by dividing the wife's income by the total household income and then multiplying by 100. The results indicate that, in general, wives contribute approximately half (50%) of the total household income. There are only three families in which the wife's contribution is less than half of the household income. However, this difference is negligible, as even in these cases the contribution is around 43%, which is close to 50%. This finding illustrates that the household's income cycle is significantly supported and sustained by the wives' income.

4.2. Family Income

This study employed the welfare indicators developed by BKKBN (the National Population and Family Planning Board of Indonesia). Three BKKBN welfare indicators served

as benchmarks for categorizing families into five levels: Pre-Prosperous Families, Prosperous Family I, Prosperous Family II, Prosperous Family III, and Prosperous Family III Plus.

As shown in Table 3, all respondents fall into the Prosperous Family Level I category, except for five families who are classified as Pre-Prosperous. This conclusion is because, out of the six Level I welfare indicators, nearly all respondents answered "Yes," while five respondents answered "No" to the third question. For the tables pertaining to welfare levels II through III Plus, no families answered "Yes" to all the respective questions. Therefore, it can be concluded that none of the respondents belong to the Prosperous Family Level II, Level III, or Level III Plus categories.

Table 3.
 Distribution of objective welfare answers.

No	Question	Answers	
		Yes	No
1	In general, family members eat twice a day or more.	85	0
2	Family members have different clothes for home, work/school and traveling.	85	0
3	The house occupied by the family has a good roof, floor and walls.	80	5
4	If a family member is sick, they are taken to a health facility.	85	0
5	If a fertile couple wants to use birth control, they go to a contraceptive service facility.	85	0
6	All children aged 7-15 years in the family attend school.	85	0

4.3. Subjective Welfare

The subjective welfare representing their families falls predominantly within the high category, at 75.3%, while 24.7% falls into the medium category. This implies that, on average, families are satisfied with their economic, physical, psychological, and social conditions. These findings are consistent with Fitri & Prasmatiwati (2022) and Muhsin's (2014) study, which found that, in general, subjective welfare tends to be high among the families studied, indicating that families feel satisfied with their subjective welfare across economic, physical, psychological, and social dimensions.

The results indicate that the wives predominantly chose to agree or remain neutral in expressing satisfaction with all questions related to psychological and social dimensions. As discussed previously, the majority of families maintain active relationships within their social environment, such as participating in village meetings, social gatherings (*arisan*), and religious activities. Therefore, it is not surprising that none of the wives reported dissatisfaction regarding the psychological and social dimensions. This finding is consistent with the study by Morrow-Howell et al. (2003), which explains that individuals who frequently engage in social activities tend to experience improved physical health.

4.4. The Relationship between Domestic and Public/Social Gender Roles with Objective and Subjective Well-being

This study employed a cross-tabulation analysis method using the Fisher Exact Test to examine the variables of gender roles and family welfare. This analysis was conducted to determine whether there is a relationship between gender roles (domestic and public/social

activities) and family welfare. The indicators of objective welfare used to assess the relationship with gender roles were based on the BKKBN's criteria for categorizing family welfare, which classifies families into five levels of welfare status. The test results can be seen in Table 4.

Table 4.

Results of the analysis of the connection between domestic and public gender roles with objective welfare.

Variable	Objective Welfare Variables		Total	Exact. Sig.
	Pre-Prosperous	KS-1		
Domestic Gender Roles	Medium	5	75	0,465
	High	0	5	
	Total	5	80	
Public Gender Roles	Medium	2	37	0,768
	High	3	43	
	Total	5	80	

The results of this study indicate that there is no connection between domestic and public gender roles and the objective welfare of the family. Furthermore, the findings show that there is no relationship between domestic gender roles and subjective welfare. The test results can be seen in Table 5. This result is consistent with the study by Rahma (2015), which found that domestic gender roles do not have an effect on subjective welfare.

Another finding reveals that the variable of public gender roles is associated with the family's subjective welfare. This relationship exists because families feel secure when they are in their social environment or when performing their roles in public or social spheres, free from threats of crime. In addition, this relationship is also influenced by the fact that families feel healthy enough to carry out their activities in the social domain through their public/social gender roles. This result is consistent with the study by Pratiwi (2015), which found that there is a connection between gender roles and the subjective welfare of families.

Table 5.

The results of the cross-tabulation analysis of the relationship between the wives' income contribution and objective welfare.

Variable	Subjective Welfare Variables		Total	Exact. Sig.
	Medium	High		
Domestic Gender Roles	Medium	20	60	0,801
	High	1	4	
	Total	21	64	
Public Gender Roles	Medium	7	32	0,184
	High	14	32	
	Total	21	64	

4.5. *The Relationship Between Wives' Income Contribution and Family Objective and Subjective Welfare*

The wife's income contribution is measured by dividing the wife's income by the total family income and multiplying the result by 100. The wives' income contribution is categorized into two groups: wives who contribute less than 50 percent and those who contribute 50 percent or more of the total family income. This contribution is then examined in relation to both objective and subjective family welfare using cross-tabulation analysis with the Fisher Exact Test. The results of this cross-tabulation are presented in Table 6.

The data analysis revealed a significant correlation between the wife's income contribution and the family's objective level of well-being, a finding that confirms the paradigm shift in women's economic role in modern household structures. In the context of this research, wives' involvement in the labor market is no longer merely a manifestation of self-actualization or supplementary income but has become a primary determinant in meeting minimum living standards. This relationship is crucial considering that the Level 1 Welfare indicator (Family Welfare I) in the BKKBN parameters relies heavily on meeting basic physiological needs, such as eating at least twice a day and owning different clothing for different activities. Empirically, these material needs have a cost threshold that often cannot be met independently by the husband's sole income; thus the wife's income functions as an income gap filler, lifting the family out of the pre-prosperous category.

Table 6.

The results of the cross-tabulation analysis of the relationship between the wives' income contribution and objective welfare.

Variable	Objective Welfare		Total	Exact. Sig.
	Pre-Prosperous	KS-1		
The wife's Income Contribution	<50	1	2	0,168
	≥ 50	4	78	
Total		5	80	
			85	

Theoretically, this finding supports the argument of Haqiqi and Subroto (2021), who stated that total household income, from both husband and wife, is the driving force behind well-being. However, this study provides analytical depth by highlighting that in 96.4% of the sample, wives contributed more than half of the total family income. This phenomenon indicates a high level of family economic dependence on women's financial agency. From a gender-responsive household economic perspective, women's income allocation tends to have a stronger positive correlation with nutritional consumption and domestic needs (often referred to as maternal altruism), which directly aligns with the objective variables in the National Population and Family Planning Board (BKKBN) instruments.

However, the complexity of these findings also reveals a sociological anomaly: although wives play a vital role as the financial backbone of the family, ensuring its material well-being, the division of domestic labor remains persistently inequitable. The fact that wives still dominate household responsibilities reflects that women's increasing economic contribution has not automatically been followed by a renegotiation of gender roles in the private sphere (Hasyim et al., 2022). Therefore, the objective well-being achieved by the

families in this study is the result of a double burden borne by women, who must ensure the availability of financial resources while managing domestic affairs to meet the criteria for family well-being.

The results of the cross-tabulation between wife's income contribution and subjective family welfare can be seen in Table 7. The findings of this study indicate that there is no connection between wives' income contribution and the family's subjective welfare. The absence of a relationship is due to the fact that income contribution is related solely to the financial aspect, namely the wife's income, whereas the scope of subjective welfare assessment is broader, encompassing both material and non-material aspects (such as spirituality and psychological well-being).

Table 7.

The results of the cross-tabulation analysis of the relationship between the wives' income contribution and subjective welfare.

Variable		Subjective Welfare		Total	Exact. Sig.
		Medium	High		
The wife's	<50	0	3	3	0,571
Income	≥ 50	21	61	82	
Contribution					
	Total	21	64	85	

5. CONCLUSION

Wives who work contribute economically to the total family income by more than 50 percent. The welfare level of agribusiness workers' families shows that 80 families fall into the Prosperous Family Level I category, while 5 families (5.8%) are classified as Pre-Prosperous Families. According to the World Bank classification, 3 families (3.5%) are in extreme poverty, 65 families belong to the lower middle-income class, and 17 families are in the upper middle-income class.

Gender roles in the domestic and public/social spheres are not associated with families' objective welfare. Gender roles in the domestic sphere are not related to families' subjective welfare, whereas gender roles in the public/social sphere are related to families' subjective welfare.

Wives' income contribution is associated with families' objective welfare but not with their subjective welfare. Gender roles in the domestic sphere are not related to wives' income contribution, while gender roles in the public/social sphere are related to wives' income contribution.

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