



# **SOCIAL SUPPORT IN CHILDCARE: A CASE STUDY OF FEMALE EMPLOYEES AT THE MINISTRY OF RELIGIOUS AFFAIRS, MAKASSAR**

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## **ABSTRACT**

This study explores the forms of childcare and the social support received by female employees at the Ministry of Religious Affairs in Makassar. Utilizing a descriptive qualitative method with a sociological approach, the research draws upon both primary sources—interviews and observations—and secondary sources, including literature and scripture. The findings indicate that parenting styles adopted are primarily authoritarian and democratic. Moreover, female employees receive both moral and caregiving support from colleagues and family members.

**Keywords:** Childcare; social support; female employees

## **1. INTRODUCTION**

Technological and cultural progress has significantly influenced societal development, including advancing women's access to education and employment. Women now participate in public life more freely, sharing equal rights and responsibilities with men. In Islam, equity is foundational—neither gender nor lineage determines human worth.

Women today often pursue careers not only to achieve personal aspirations but also to contribute economically to their households. As career women, they must manage dual responsibilities—maintaining their roles as both wives and mothers. Parsons (as cited in Ahmadi, 2020) classifies parental roles into instrumental (traditionally male, breadwinner) and expressive (traditionally female, caregiving). Balancing these roles demands institutional and social support.

Preliminary observation showed that many female employees at the Ministry of Religious Affairs (MORA) Makassar bring their children to work or rely on family, babysitters, or daycare facilities. The absence of institutional childcare support often forces working mothers to balance professional duties with childcare on their own.

### *Literature Review*

Prior studies have examined various dimensions of parenting and social support. Mohzana et al. (2024) studied the effect of parents' educational level on early childhood parenting styles. Sene (2024) explored parenting's impact on academic achievement, while Oktaviana and Hardew (2024) analyzed democratic parenting among students. These studies highlight the relevance of parenting styles but differ in scope from this research, which focuses specifically on the institutional and familial support received by female civil servants.

### *Theoretical Framework*

Parsons' AGIL framework—Adaptation, Goal Attainment, Integration, and Latency—serves as the theoretical foundation. Female employees must adapt to the dual demands of work and family; set goals related to both domains; integrate various social supports; and institutionalize norms that sustain balanced living.

Social support, as categorized by House (in Wahyuningsih, 2022), includes emotional, informational, instrumental, and appraisal support. Parenting styles are grouped into authoritarian, democratic, and permissive (Mutia, 2021). This study primarily examines how authoritarian and democratic parenting function alongside workplace and familial support.

## **2. METHODS**

This study applies a qualitative methodology with a sociological lens. Data were collected through observation, in-depth interviews, and documentation at the Ministry of Religious Affairs office in Makassar. Informants included female employees and their colleagues. The data were processed through reduction, presentation, and conclusion stages. This research specifically focused on how social support is integrated into the parenting practices of working mothers.

## **3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

Parenting styles among MORA's female employees are predominantly authoritarian and democratic. Indah, one of the respondents, expressed a preference for authoritarian parenting to maintain order among her young children. However, she still provided moral reasoning and guidance, reflecting a hybrid approach. Another informant, Ayu Wahyuni Bahri, demonstrated democratic parenting through open communication and mutual respect, although firm boundaries were maintained. Some employees combined both styles, adjusting according to the child's developmental stage. For instance, Iramadayanti employed authoritarian strategies for religious and educational discipline but allowed autonomy in play, fostering creativity. No permissive parenting styles were observed, possibly reflecting bureaucratic work cultures that value discipline and structure.

Support from colleagues was vital, as also documented in studies examining workplace social support and employee well-being (Brough, Dollard, & Tuckey, 2014). Employees like Siti Fatimah received emotional support and understanding from peers, who tolerated disruptions and assisted during peak workloads. Nurwahida, a colleague, confirmed the team's willingness

to help, especially when children were sick or irritable. Male staff like Tejo Sutejo Rahman also supported parenting efforts by playing with and comforting children, reinforcing an inclusive work environment.

Family support proved equally important, echoing findings from World of Science-indexed research showing that extended family involvement significantly boosts working mothers' psychological well-being and job performance (Kim, Lee, & Lee, 2021). Ayu Wahyuni Bahri reported receiving help from her parents, husband, and younger sister, who sometimes accompanied her to work. This assistance enabled her to focus on professional tasks while fulfilling her maternal role.

These findings align with Parsons' AGIL theory. Female employees adapted to workplace constraints, maintained family-career goal alignment, integrated support systems, and contributed to institutional continuity through shared norms and informal caregiving practices.

#### 4. CONCLUSION

Female employees at the Ministry of Religious Affairs in Makassar predominantly apply democratic and authoritarian parenting approaches, depending on situational needs. Support from colleagues and family members plays a crucial role in enabling them to fulfill both professional and maternal responsibilities. Institutionalizing such support through formal policy—such as on-site childcare or flexible scheduling—could be significantly strengthened by adopting best practices from global organizations, where family-supportive workplace initiatives have been shown to enhance employee retention and well-being

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