



The Integration of Women's Roles and Innovation Capability on Women's Creativity with Work – Family Balance as a Moderating Variable: A Study of Micro – Scale Food Vendors in Cirebon Regency

Laely Kholifah, Anna Suzana*

Universitas Swadaya Gunung Jati, Indonesia

Email: laely.122020012@ugj.ac.id, annasuzfeb@ugj.ac.id*

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Abstract

While female entrepreneurs in Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) play a strategic role in economic development, they frequently face challenges in balancing dual responsibilities between work and family. These conditions require effective role integration, innovation capability, and work–family balance to enable female MSME entrepreneurs to sustain and enhance their creativity in managing their businesses. Therefore, this study aimed to examine the influence of women's role integration and innovation capability on the creativity of female MSME entrepreneurs in Cirebon Regency, while also investigating the role of work–family balance as a moderating variable. This study employed a quantitative approach, with data collected through questionnaires. The sample consisted of 130 female entrepreneurs operating micro-scale food businesses in Cirebon Regency. Data were analyzed using regression analysis with the assistance of SPSS version 29. The findings showed that women's role integration and innovation capability had positive and significant effects on the creativity of female MSME entrepreneurs. However, the moderation analysis revealed that work–family balance did not moderate the relationship between role integration or innovation capability and women-led MSME creativity. This study demonstrated that women's ability to effectively manage multiple roles and strengthen their innovation capability significantly enhanced creativity in MSME management. By highlighting the importance of individual capabilities and human capital over contextual factors in fostering innovation among women-led MSMEs, this study contributes to the existing literature on women entrepreneurship and business creativity.

INTRODUCTION

Women's empowerment within the Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) sector continues to grow alongside economic development and digitalization. Nevertheless, a gender gap in innovation remains evident. Carpentier and Raffo (2023), in a report published by the World Intellectual Property Organization, stated that female participation in global innovation remains limited, accounting for approximately 23% of patent applications. This finding indicates that women's contributions to innovation and creativity require further enhancement. Women play a crucial role in MSME development, particularly in strengthening economic independence (Saini et al., 2024; Visiana, 2025). According to Suzana et al. (2022), empowering women through entrepreneurial activities can improve their capabilities and support business sustainability.

In Indonesia, MSMEs play a pivotal role in the national economy. The Coordinating Ministry for Human Development and Cultural Affairs of Indonesia (2023) reported that MSMEs contribute 60.5% to the national GDP, with approximately 64% of these enterprises

managed by women. These figures highlight the strategic role of women in economic activities, both as business owners and employment creators.

Female entrepreneurs in the MSME sector encounter various challenges, particularly in managing dual roles. Zastempowski and Cyfert (2021) found that although women demonstrate a higher propensity for innovation, time constraints remain a major obstacle. Research by Biswas (2021) indicated a significant positive relationship between women's business ownership and the likelihood of innovation. Similarly, Falach (2023) emphasized that knowledge sharing and social capital are essential drivers in promoting female-led innovation.

Innovation capability has become a critical factor in strengthening business competitiveness. Barney (2015) explained that innovation capability represents a strategic resource capable of generating competitive advantage. Empirical evidence from Qodriah et al. (2023) indicated that innovation capability significantly influences firm performance. Similarly, Huang et al. (2022) demonstrated that women's innovativeness positively correlates with entrepreneurial outcomes. Furthermore, Maziriri et al. (2023) highlighted that an innovation-oriented mindset is an important driver in strengthening innovation capability.

Beyond innovation capability, creativity represents an essential component of business development. Runco and Jaeger (2012) defined creativity as the ability to generate ideas that are both novel and useful. Research by Setyaningrum and Muafi (2022) showed that creativity significantly influences the competitive advantage of women-led enterprises. Likewise, Suharyati (2024) emphasized that creativity serves as a key driver of MSME success in the digital era.

Women's creativity is also influenced by their ability to manage multiple roles. Wijaya and Layman (2018) found that time management and role distribution are among the primary challenges faced by female entrepreneurs. Research by Raspati and Kadiyono (2023) indicated that pressure arising from dual roles may hinder creative expression. Similarly, Salyanty (2023) emphasized that domestic responsibilities can limit opportunities for women to develop innovation and creativity.

Work–family balance serves as an important factor in managing these dual responsibilities. Clark (2000) explained that work–family balance occurs when individuals are able to effectively manage boundaries between professional and family roles. Putro et al. (2023) indicated that work–family balance significantly influences women's work environments. Furthermore, Stefan et al. (2021) demonstrated that women's motivation to engage in entrepreneurship is closely associated with their need to achieve equilibrium between work and personal life.

Although various studies have been conducted, several research gaps remain. Specifically, Qodriah et al. (2023) focused on firm performance but did not examine the important role of creativity as an outcome variable. Setyaningrum and Muafi (2022) did not incorporate work–family balance as a moderating variable. Additionally, research focusing specifically on female entrepreneurs within the Indonesian MSME sector remains limited.

Based on these research gaps, this study aimed to examine the influence of women's role integration and innovation capability on creativity, while positioning work–family balance as a moderating variable. The findings are expected to provide theoretical contributions and practical implications for strengthening female entrepreneurship in the Indonesian context.

The urgency of this research is derived from the strategic contribution of women-led MSMEs to the Indonesian economy and the challenges they experience in managing multiple roles. With approximately 64% of MSMEs managed by women, understanding the factors that enhance creativity and innovation is essential for supporting sustainable economic development. This study aimed to provide empirical evidence regarding how women's role integration and innovation capability influence creativity and whether work–family balance moderates these relationships. The novelty of this study lies in its integrated framework, which positions creativity as the primary outcome variable, examines the moderating role of work–family balance, and focuses specifically on micro-scale food vendors in Cirebon Regency, a context that has received limited attention in previous studies.

Despite the growing literature on female entrepreneurship and Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs), several important research gaps remain. First, previous studies have predominantly focused on business performance rather than positioning creativity as the primary outcome variable. Second, although innovation capability has been widely studied, its relationship with women's creativity remains underexplored, particularly in micro-scale enterprises. Third, although work–family balance has been extensively examined, its role as a moderating variable in influencing creativity remains limited, with inconsistent empirical findings. Therefore, by integrating women's role integration, innovation capability, and work–family balance into a unified framework, this study addressed these research gaps. By examining the moderating effect of work–family balance on the relationship between role integration, innovation capability, and creativity among women-led micro-scale MSMEs, this study provides a novel contribution to the literature on female entrepreneurship and business innovation.

METHOD

Sample

This study involved female entrepreneurs operating micro-scale Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs), specifically food businesses in Cirebon Regency. Participants were selected using purposive sampling based on specific criteria: female MSME owners or key managers who had operated their businesses for at least one year and held family responsibilities, such as being married, having dependents, or managing parental households. Based on data from the Cirebon Regency Office of Cooperatives and MSMEs, the research population consisted of 306 women-led MSMEs. A total of 130 respondents who met the criteria participated in this study. The sample size was considered sufficient for regression analysis and Moderating Regression Analysis (MRA), following sample size recommendations for multivariate analysis (Ghozali, 2021).

Instrument

The research instrument consists of 30 statement items distributed across the four research variables. The research instrument utilizes a five-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree).

Table 1. Research Instrument

Variable	Dimension	Indicator	Statement items	References
Woman's Role Integration (X1)	Division Of Labor	The distribution of household chores supports the smooth operation of the business.	Sharing household duties in my family helps the performance of my food business.	(Eagly & Wood, 2012)
		Household and business activities can be scheduled concurrently.	I can coordinate my household tasks and food production/sales at the same time without any major issues.	
	Gender Role Beliefs	Gender norms do not hinder woman's roles in business.	Social norms do not prevent me, as a woman, from operating a food/culinary business.	
		Women can run a business despite having domestic roles.	I believe woman can effectively manage a food business alongside their household tasks.	
	Gender Role Influence Behavior	Woman adjust their behavior to meet social expectations.	I adjust my behavior to meet social expectations of women operating a food business.	
		Woman alter their business decisions due to their family roles.	I often postpone decision regarding food production or marketing due to demand of my domestic role as a woman.	
	Behavior Influenced by Gender Roles and Specific Roles	Women have to manage many different roles at once	I feel I must manage various roles at the same time.	
			Women feel pressured when carrying out many different at once.	
Innovations Capability (X2)	Physical Capital Resources	The availability of production equipment that supports the creation of new products.	The equipment I own enables me to create food variations or innovations.	(Barney, 2015)
		The availability of easily accessible raw materials to perform product innovation.	It is easily for me to get the raw materials to try out food innovations.	

Variable	Dimension	Indicator	Statement items	References
Female Creativity (Y)	Organizational Capital Resources	Access to simple technology (Smartphone, internet, apps) for developing innovative ideas or promotions.	Digital tools (smartphone, internet, and apps) help me generated new food product ideas or culinary promotions.	(Runco & Jaeger, 2012)
		Support from family and the environment to try out new ideas in the food business.	My family or the surrounding environment supports me in trying out new ideas or menus for my food business.	
		Good customer relations that offer feedback for developing new food business ideas.	Customer feedback helps me create innovations in taste, packaging, or food presentation.	
		MSME social networks and communities that provide access to new ideas and knowledge.	MSME networks and communities assist me in gaining new ideas to grow my food business.	
	Human Capital Resources	The ability to learn new things to improve the quality or variety of food products.	I quickly learn new ways to improve food quality or create product variations.	
		the capacity to resolve production-related issues through innovative approaches.	I am capable of developing innovative solutions to address challenges within the food production process.	
		The capacity to generate innovative ideas for business management and operations.	I often generate innovative ideas related to menus, flavors, or food concepts.	
	Effectiveness	The ability to creatively modify products and services to meet market demands.	I have the capacity to modify my food enterprise to enhance its appeal to customers.	
		The capacity to identify non-traditional approaches and strategies for the business.	I employ non-traditional approach to foster the development of my culinary enterprise.	
		Creative ideas can provide added value.	My creativity provides added value to the food products I sell.	
		Ideas can be implemented to	The ideas I generate can be implements to	

Variable	Dimension	Indicator	Statement items	References
Work-Family Balance (Z)	Domain (Work vs Family)	resolve business problems.	solve problems in my food business.	(Clark, 2000)
		Creativity improves the quality of product or services.	My creativity contributes to the improvement of taste, appearance, or food packaging quality.	
		The balance of time allocated between business operations and family obligations.	I have the capability to allocate my time proportionately between my culinary business and family responsibilities.	
	Borders (Flexibility & permeability)	The capacity to effectively distribute focus between both work and family domains.	I can provide adequate attention to both my food business and my family.	
		Flexibility in managing the boundaries between work and family time.	I possess the operational flexibility to align my food production or sales schedule with my family's requirements.	
		Minimal cross-domain interface.	I rarely experience family-related interruptions while managing my food business.	
		Borders Keepers (Support/Control family and others)	My family helps me maintain a balance my food business and my family life.	
		Family understanding of business needs.	My family understands when I need focus on food production or marketing.	
	Border crossers (Individual ability to manage roles)	The ability to transition between roles without conflict.	I am able to transition from family matters food business without conflict.	
		The ability to set priorities between domains.	I can set priorities when family and business needs at the same tie.	

Data Collection

Data collection was conducted by distributing questionnaire to respondents who are female MSME entrepreneurs in micro-sector of food trading within Cirebon Regency. The questionnaires were administered directly to respondents who met the research criteria. Prior to completing the survey, the researches provided an explanation regarding the research

objectives and instructions for filling out the questionnaire. Respondents were then asked to complete the questionnaire based on their experiences and perceptions of running their businesses. Once all questionnaires were collected, the data were reviewed to ensure completeness and consistency of responses before proceeding to the data processing stage.

Data Analysis

The collected data were then analyzed using Statistical Package for the Social Science (SPSS) software. The data analysis stages in this study include descriptive statistical analysis to describe respondent characteristics, validity and reliability tests to evaluate the quality of the research instrument, and classical assumption test consisting of normality, multicollinearity, and heteroskedasticity tests. Furthermore, regression analysis was performed to examine the influence of women's role integration and capability innovation on the creativity of female MSME entrepreneurs. Additionally, moderation analysis was conducted to determine whether work-family balance serves to strengthen or weaken the relationship between the independent and dependent variables in this study.

This study's use of a quantitative approach is deemed appropriate since it makes it possible to measure the interactions between variables in an organized and impartial way. While Moderating Regression Analysis (MRA) makes it possible to identify interaction effects across variables, regression analysis is especially useful for looking at the direct impacts of independent factors on the dependent variable. The ability of SPSS version 29 to carry out thorough statistical analysis effectively is the basis for its selection. Additionally, purposive sampling was used to make sure that the respondents fulfilled particular requirements pertinent to the study's goals, strengthening the validity of the results.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Respondent Characteristics

The characteristics of the respondents in this study describe the profile of the female MSME entrepreneurs who served as the research subjects. This information includes age and business tenure. These data are utilized to provide a general overview of the background of the respondents participating in this study.

Table 2. Respondent Characteristics

Business Tenure		Age Group	
1-3 Years	41,5%	20-29 Years	25,4%
4-6 Years	31,5%	30-39 Years	33,8%
>6 Years	26,9%	40-49 Years	30,8%
		>50 Years	25,4%

The majority of the female respondents in this study possess relatively adequate business experience. Consequently, they are considered capable of providing relevant insights into women's roles, innovation, creativity, and the balance between work and family. This age composition indicates that majority of respondents are within their productive age. They are considered to possess adequate capability and experience in operating a business while simultaneously managing both domestic and professional roles.

Validity and Reliability Testing

Table 3. Validity & Reliability

Variable	Items	Loading Factor	p-value	Cronbach's Alpha	Interpretation
Woman's Role Integration	X1.1	0,698	0,001	0,808	Valid & Reliable
	X1.2	0,545	0,001		Valid & Reliable
	X1.3	0,596	0,001		Valid & Reliable
	X1.4	0,649	0,001		Valid & Reliable
	X1.5	0,749	0,001		Valid & Reliable
	X1.6	0,750	0,001		Valid & Reliable
	X1.7	0,647	0,001		Valid & Reliable
	X1.8	0,703	0,001		Valid & Reliable
Innovation Capability	X2.1	0,786	0,001	0,843	Valid & Reliable
	X2.2	0,727	0,001		Valid & Reliable
	X2.3	0,727	0,001		Valid & Reliable
	X2.4	0,771	0,001		Valid & Reliable
	X2.5	0,767	0,001		Valid & Reliable
	X2.6	0,77	0,001		Valid & Reliable
	X2.7	0,789	0,001		Valid & Reliable
	X2.8	0,676	0,001		Valid & Reliable
Female Creativity	Y1	0,791	0,001	0,843	Valid & Reliable
	Y2	0,787	0,001		Valid & Reliable
	Y3	0,697	0,001		Valid & Reliable
	Y4	0,786	0,001		Valid & Reliable
	Y5	0,829	0,001		Valid & Reliable
	Y6	0,766	0,001		Valid & Reliable
Work-Family Balance	Z1	0,759	0,001	0,909	Valid & Reliable
	Z2	0,814	0,001		Valid & Reliable
	Z3	0,788	0,001		Valid & Reliable
	Z4	0,798	0,001		Valid & Reliable
	Z5	0,795	0,001		Valid & Reliable
	Z6	0,757	0,001		Valid & Reliable
	Z7	0,762	0,001		Valid & Reliable
	Z8	0,788	0,001		Valid & Reliable

Based on the test results, all statement items yielded calculated r-statistic greater than the r-table critical value and the Cronbach's Alpha coefficients exceeded 0.70. these findings indicate that the research instrument is declared valid and reliable, thus making it suitable for use in this study.

Hypothesis Analysis

Hypothesis testing was conducted using regression analysis to determine the influence of women's role integration and capability innovation on the creativity of female MSME entrepreneurs. In addition, moderating testing was performed to determine the role of work-family balance in the relationship between the independent and dependent variable.

Table 4. Multiple Linear Regression

Variable	B	r-statistic	p-value
Woman's Role Integration	0.204	3.293	0.001
Innovation Capability	0.190	2.420	0.017
Work-Family Balance	0.381	6.201	0.000

Based on the results of the regression analysis, the women's role integration variable has a significance value of 0.001 ($p < 0.05$) with a coefficient value of 0.204. This indicates that women's role integration has a positive and significant effect on the creativity of female MSME entrepreneurs. Consequently, the first hypothesis (H1) is accepted.

The statistical analysis reveals that innovation capability exerts a positive and significant impact on the creativity of female MSME owners ($\beta = 0.190$, $p = 0.017$). the results provide sufficient evidence to accept the second hypothesis (H2).

Table 5. Moderating Regression Analysis

Variable	B	r-statistic	p-value
Woman's Role Integration $\times$ Work-Family Balance	0.024	1.481	0.141
Innovation Capability $\times$ Work-Family Balance	-0.020	-1.394	0.166

To test moderating effects, an interaction analysis was conducted between the independent and moderating variables. The results indicate that the interaction term Woman's Role Integration $\times$ Work-Family Balance yielded a significance value of 0.141 ($p > 0.05$), while Innovation Capability $\times$ Work-Family Balance resulted in 0.166 ($p > 0.05$). These findings demonstrate that work-family balance does not moderate the relationship between either women's role integration or innovation capability and the creativity of female MSME entrepreneurs. Consequently, the third and fourth hypotheses (H3 and H4) are statistically rejected.

The findings reveal that woman's role integration has positive and significant effect on the creativity of female MSME entrepreneurs. This suggest that women who can effectively balance their domestic and productive roles tend to possess a greater capacity for generating creative ideas in their business operations. These results align with social role theory, suggesting that gender-based behavior variations are constructed by the prevailing social role divisions in society (Eagly and Wood, 2012). The ability to successfully balance domestic and entrepreneurial demands allows women to better integrate these roles, which in turn boosts their creativity capacity within their business. The study aligns with the work-family of Bahrami et al. (2023), highlighting that effective multi-role management serves as a critical

factor in enhancing work-family balance and psychological well-being among women in entrepreneurship.

Innovation capability is proven to have a positive and significant effect on the creativity of female MSME entrepreneurs. This indicates that female business owners with strong innovation capabilities are better equipped to generate novel ideas, develop products, and align business strategies with market demands. This finding is aligned with the Resource-Based View (RBV) perspective, which posits that competitive advantage is derived from the utilization of internal resources that valuable, rare, inimitable, and non-substitutable (Barney, 2015). In the context of female MSME entrepreneurs, innovation capability is understood as an internal competency that serves as a strategic resource in creating added value for their business operations. The results corroborate the findings of AlNuaimi et al. (2021), which identify innovation capability as a critical internal resource for enhancing organizational performance and creating a sustainable competitive advantage.

The adaptability of female entrepreneurs in micro-scale enterprises may also be shown in the substantial impact of women's role integration on creativity. MSMEs, in contrast to large firms, frequently need flexible role management, where people manage family duties, marketing, and production all at once. This illness promotes the growth of multitasking skills, which can improve creative thinking. In their business endeavors, women who effectively integrate these roles are more likely to spot possibilities and come up with creative solutions. In a similar vein, innovation capability is a cognitive process that allows people to constantly explore new ideas in addition to being a technical competence. Innovation frequently appears in product diversity, packaging design, and marketing strategies in the context of micro food enterprises. Therefore, since people are better able to turn ideas into useful results, stronger innovation potential directly contributes to the emergence of creativity.

The study's findings show that the relationship between the integration of women's roles and capabilities innovation on the inventiveness of women micro food entrepreneurs in Cirebon Regency is not moderated by work-family balance. This result implies that women's ingenuity in running their enterprises is not primarily determined by work-family balance. This condition may occur because women micro-entrepreneurs are accustomed to simultaneously managing domestic responsibilities and business activities, making dual roles no longer perceived as pressure but rather as part of their daily routines. In addition, women's creativity in micro food businesses is more strongly influenced by market demands, business sustainability needs, and the ability to create product innovations than by work-family balance conditions. The flexible nature of micro-enterprises also enables women to independently manage their work and family responsibilities, thereby reducing work-family conflict. These findings are consistent with previous studies indicating that moderating variables do not always produce significant strengthening effects depending on the research context. Putri et al. (2025) found that family-supportive supervisor behavior did not significantly moderate the relationship between workload and work-family balance. Similarly, Putri and Muafi (2025) emphasized that the effectiveness of moderating variables is highly context-dependent. Therefore, the insignificant moderating effect identified in this study is considered reasonable, particularly because creativity in micro-scale enterprises tends to be driven more by individual adaptive capabilities and innovation capacity than by external balance conditions.

Limitations & Future

There are a number of limitations to this study that should be noted. First, the results may not be as broadly applicable as they may be because the sample is restricted to female MSME owners in Cirebon Regency's micro food industry. Second, the cross-sectional approach used in this study only records data at one particular moment in time and does not account for dynamic changes over time. Third, answer bias could be introduced by using self-reported questionnaires.

It is advised that future studies broaden the study's focus by incorporating various industries and regions. Deeper understanding of the dynamics of role integration and innovation across time may also be possible with longitudinal techniques. To further enhance the research model, future studies can think about adding additional moderating variables, including organizational support or digital capacity.

CONCLUSION

This study demonstrated that women's role integration and innovation capability had positive and significant effects on the creativity of female MSME entrepreneurs. These findings indicated that women's ability to effectively manage domestic and business responsibilities, combined with their capacity to generate and develop innovative ideas, were critical factors in enhancing creative performance within their business operations. Nevertheless, the study revealed that work–family balance did not have a moderating effect on the relationship between role integration, innovation capability, and creativity. This finding suggested that, among female MSME owners, creativity was primarily driven by individual competencies in role management and innovation capability, rather than the moderating influence of work–family balance.

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