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The Influence of Women Entrepreneurial Leadership on Employee Performance with Innovative Work Behavior as an Intervening

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ABSTRACT

Employee performance is an important element that plays a role in determining the success of an organization, because the achievement of goals and the company's competitiveness are highly dependent on the quality and productivity of employees. Along with increasing competition in the global market, companies must understand and identify factors that can optimize employee performance, both in terms of motivation, leadership, and work environment. The importance of women's leadership in the business world is getting more attention, especially in the context of diversity and inclusion. This study aims to analyze the effect of women's entrepreneurial leadership on employee performance through innovative work behavior. This study uses a quantitative approach. The data collection method in this research is observation and a questionnaire. The analytical tool used is SEM PLS 4. The population subjects in this study were employees at SME of Sari Murni, Tulungagung, totaling 40 people. In the sampling technique in this study. The result of this study found that women's entrepreneurial leadership has a significant effect on employee performance. Women's entrepreneurial leadership has a significant effect on innovative work behavior. Innovative work behavior has no significant effect on employee performance. Innovative work behavior is not able to mediate the relationship between women's entrepreneurial leadership on employee performance.

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Introduction

With increasing competition in the global competition, leadership plays a central role in shaping organizational success. Effective leadership not only influences employee motivation and work environment but also directly impacts overall business performance (Siraj & Hågen, 2023a). In recent years, the concept of female entrepreneurial leadership has gained significant attention, as women leaders are often considered to bring unique perspectives in decision-making, foster innovation, and strengthen employee performance (Diamantidis & Chatzoglou, 2019). According to global data from the International Labour Organization (ILO), the participation of women in leadership positions continues to grow, reflecting their increasing role in driving organizational transformation. Today's entrepreneurial leaders, including women, are expected to seize opportunities, take calculated risks, and explore innovative strategies to achieve sustainable growth (Hartono, 2021). Therefore, entrepreneurial leadership requires a combination of entrepreneurial spirit and strong leadership attributes (Kourtesopoulou & Chatzigianni, 2021). In this concept of female entrepreneur leadership emerges as a crucial factor that can significantly enhance employee performance and overall organizational productivity.

Studies show that female leaders often take creative and collaborative initiatives, which can improve employee motivation and performance (Kourtesopoulou & Chatzigianni, 2021b). The importance of women's leadership in the business world is getting more and more attention, especially in the context of diversity and inclusion. Diversity in leadership can bring different perspectives, which in turn can improve organizational innovation and adaptability (Dolphina et al., 2023). Women's leadership is often associated with a more democratic managerial style, where employees feel heard and valued. This can encourage employees to achieve the company's targets and contribute to the innovation process, as they feel they have a role in the company's development (Li et al., 2020a). It is important to note that successful leaders build effective relationships by helping a group or organization achieve their goals. Additionally, overall leadership success depends on alignment between leaders and members regarding shared goals and values (Kourtesopoulou & Chatzigianni, 2021).

SME of Sari Murni is a trading company operating in the food industry located in Tulungagung, East Java. This company plays a crucial role in meeting the needs of both local and international markets, particularly in the provision of Tulungagung specialty food souvenirs. However, SME of Sari Murni faces various operational challenges, particularly related to consistently achieving monthly production targets, as illustrated in Table 1 below. Note that the unit was wrapped in the woven bamboo tray, called *bese*k.

Table 1 Production Quantity In 2024

Month	Target	Results	Deviation
January	41,000 besek	40,000 besek	-1.000
February	41,000 besek	42,000 besek	+1.000
March	41,000 besek	41,000 besek	0
April	41,000 besek	40,500 besek	-500
May	41,000 besek	40,870 besek	-130
June	45,000 besek	44,520 besek	-480
July	45,000 besek	45,700 besek	+700
August	45,000 besek	44,000 besek	-1.000

September	41,000 besek	40,000 besek	-1.000
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Source: SME of Sari Murni

One of the indicators of employee performance in SME of Sari Murni can meet production targets with consistent quality. As shown in Table 1, employee performance fluctuates across different months, where in some periods targets are achieved or even exceeded, while in others there is a noticeable decline. These fluctuations highlight the crucial role of women's entrepreneurial leadership in directing, motivating, and empowering employees to maintain productivity. However, this phenomenon also raises the question of whether leadership alone is sufficient to ensure sustained performance, or whether additional factors, such as innovative work behavior, are necessary to drive employees toward consistent and optimal results.

Innovative work behaviors refer to a set of actions that employees consistently undertake to improve processes, generate new ideas, and enhance overall work effectiveness (De Jong & Den Hartog, 2010a). Within the organizational context, IWB functions as an intervening variable that links women's entrepreneurial leadership to employee performance. Women leaders, who are often characterized by inclusiveness, collaboration, and empathy, create a supportive environment where employees feel valued and encouraged to express their ideas (De Jong & Den Hartog, 2010; Kourtesopoulou & Chatzigianni, 2021). This leadership style fosters trust and psychological safety, two critical conditions for employees to engage in innovative behaviors (Diamantidis & Chatzoglou, 2019). As a result, women's entrepreneurial leadership not only strengthens interpersonal relationships but also motivates employees to explore new approaches, take calculated risks, and contribute creatively to organizational growth. In this way, innovative work behavior acts as the bridge that transforms supportive female leadership into tangible improvements in employee performance (Farhan, 2022).

Therefore, previous studies show mixed results regarding the effect of women's entrepreneurial leadership on employee performance. Some studies confirm a positive influence (Danisman et al., 2015; Herlina et al., 2021a; Jing et al., 2022), however, another previous study by (Musoli, 2021; Reynal et al., 2023a) found inconsistencies in the results that women's entrepreneurial leadership cannot improve employee performance. These inconsistencies indicate the presence of a research gap that needs further investigation. One possible explanation is the role of innovative work behavior (IWB) as a mediating variable. IWB refers to a set of employee actions that consistently aim to generate ideas, improve processes, and enhance work effectiveness. Previous research supports this assumption, showing that women's entrepreneurial leadership and IWB both have a positive and significant effect on employee performance (Perkasa & Abadi, 2020; Sanusi & Dibyantoro, 2022; Fitrio et al., 2020). Innovative work behaviors help employees solve problems, increase efficiency, and improve the quality of products or services, which in turn positively influence performance (Sanusi & Dibyantoro, 2022; Fitrio et al., 2020a). Therefore, from the inconsistencies of prior studies, this research aims to examine the influence of women's entrepreneurial leadership on employee performance by considering innovative work behavior as a mediating variable.

Literature Review

Employee Performance

Performance refers to the results achieved by individuals or groups in an organization, in accordance with the authority and responsibilities given (Prawirosentono & Primasari, 2015). It functions as a means of achieving organizational goals legally, in compliance with regulations, and in alignment with moral and ethical standards. Performance can be documented as the outcomes produced in a particular job function or activity within a given period (Bernardin & Russell, 2007). Employee performance is generally assessed based on productivity, efficiency, and effectiveness in carrying out their duties. Performance is

also an indicator of the extent to which an employee is able to fulfill or even exceed the tasks that have been set by the boss To assess performance, there are several main indicators, namely quality, quantity, and timeliness (Prawirosentono & Primasari, 2015;Robbins & Judge, 2016;Siraj & Hagen, 2023) At UD Sari Murni, these indicators are applied concretely to evaluate the consistency of employees in achieving production targets. Quality is assessed based on the level of perfection of the tasks completed and the accuracy of work results, while quantity reflects the number of production units achieved in a specific period. Timeliness indicates whether production activities are completed according to the predetermined schedule while ensuring efficiency in the use of resources. By focusing on quality, quantity, and timeliness, UD Sari Murni can systematically monitor employee performance and identify areas for improvement that directly impact organizational productivity.

Women Entrepreneurial Leadership

Women Entrepreneurial Leadership refers to the leadership practices carried out by women in the context of entrepreneurship, emphasizing the ability to initiate, manage, and sustain a business in dynamic environments (Eiriz & Castro, 2007). The importance of this leadership lies not only in its contribution to business growth but also in the broader economic impact of women entrepreneurs. Globally, women-owned businesses are recognized as key drivers of innovation, job creation, and economic resilience (Alkhaled & Berglund, 2018). However, women leaders often face structural barriers such as the glass ceiling, limited access to financial resources, and persistent gender bias in the business world, which shape their leadership styles in unique ways (Alvarez & Barney, 2008;Aparisi-Torrijo & Ribes-Giner, 2022) Compared to men, female leaders are often described as more collaborative, empathetic, and inclusive, which allows them to foster stronger interpersonal relationships and build organizational cultures that support innovation and trust (Asfiah et al., 2018).

Indicators of women’s entrepreneurial leadership highlight not only managerial skills but also key behavioral attributes. Motivation reflects the determination to achieve business goals, while visionary thinking emphasizes a long-term strategic orientation (Asfiah et al., 2018). Proactivity shows readiness to seize opportunities, and innovativeness underlines the ability to develop creative solutions (Gupta et al., 2013). Risk-taking represents courage in decision-making under uncertainty, while achievement orientation and persistence demonstrate the drive to meet ambitious targets and resilience in overcoming challenges (Don Y. & Erick W., 2001). In the context of developing countries such as Indonesia, these characteristics are highly relevant in the growth of micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs/UMKM), where women’s leadership plays a vital role in sustaining family livelihoods, strengthening community economies, and enhancing organizational performance.

Innovative Work Behavior

Innovation is one of the ways that companies must go through employees to survive and compete in a business competition that is very advanced in terms of technology and product innovation (Pradana & Suhariadi, 2020). Innovative work behavior is an action of an individual that leads to the interests of the company, in which employees introduce and apply their new ideas to benefit the company (De Jong & Kemp, 2003). There are four indicators of innovative work behavior as follows: a) idea exploration; employees can discover opportunities or problems b) idea generation; employees can create and suggest ideas for new processes c) championing; employees are expected to be encouraged to seek support to realize

new innovative ideas they have generated d) idea implementation; employees can create and suggest ideas for new processes.

IWB is particularly important in SMEs and other resource-constrained organizations, as it enables them to remain competitive by enhancing efficiency, solving problems creatively, and adapting to technological change (Jing et al., 2022b). Prior studies have shown that IWB is strongly influenced by leadership, intrinsic motivation, organizational climate, and work culture (Pradana & Suhariadi, 2020). In this context, women's entrepreneurial leadership becomes highly relevant. Female leaders, who are often inclusive, empathetic, and collaborative, can foster psychological safety and a supportive environment where employees feel encouraged to explore ideas, take risks, and innovate (Pinela et al., 2022). For SMEs in developing countries like Indonesia, such as SME of Sari Murni, IWB is not only crucial for maintaining short-term productivity but also for ensuring long-term competitiveness, technological adaptation, and business (Fitrio et al., 2020b). Therefore, positioning IWB as a mediating factor highlights its role as a strategic bridge between women's entrepreneurial leadership and improved employee performance.

List of Hypothesis

Women Entrepreneurial Leadership On Employee Performance

According to (Danisman et al., 2015b; Jing et al., 2022), women leadership tends to encourage employee empowerment, especially through an inclusive and collaborative approach. This leadership style is proven to improve employee performance. Women's leadership often uses a more inclusive and collaborative approach, where this leadership not only encourages employees to work better, but also develops their potential (Herlina et al., 2021c).

Through a leadership style that is full of empathy, communicative, and listens to employee needs, female leadership is proven to be able to create a work environment that supports employee productivity and performance (Alkhaled & Berglund, 2018a). Women tend to carry the values of empathy and good communication, which in turn improve the relationship between management and employees and improve the overall work climate. Furthermore, the implementation of women's leadership that prioritizes the values of openness and collaboration contributes to a more harmonious work atmosphere, reduces tensions between individuals, and improves teamwork. This has proven to be very effective in motivating employees to achieve common goals as well as improving overall performance.

H1. Women's Entrepreneurial Leadership has a significant positive effect on employee performance

Women Entrepreneurial Leadership on Innovative Work Behavior

According to (Sanusi, 2011; Hikmah Perkasa & Abadi, 2020; Fitrio et al., 2020b), the relationship between women's entrepreneurial leadership and innovative work behavior was positive and significant. Women's entrepreneurial leadership can improve employees' innovative work behaviors by increasing confidence, elasticity, and critical thinking skills. This means that under the guidance of female leaders, employees are more likely to feel valued and trusted, which fosters greater confidence in expressing their ideas and experimenting with new approaches. Confidence plays a vital role in reducing fear of failure, allowing employees to take calculated risks that are essential for innovation.

H2. Women's Entrepreneurial Leadership has a significant positive effect on innovative work behavior

Innovative Work Behavior on Employee Performance

In this case, if other factors are not optimized, even if employees exhibit innovative work behavior, this may not necessarily be able to directly improve their performance. Innovative work behavior may not always have a direct impact on performance in a short period of time. Innovative behaviors often require a process of time to develop, followed by the application of those ideas in practice, as well as support from the organization to turn those ideas into measurable results. Therefore, while it is important to promote innovative work behavior, its direct relationship with employee performance is not always significant or immediately noticeable in the short term. Overall, these results show that to improve employee performance at SME of Sari Murni requires a more comprehensive approach that involves not only the encouragement to behave innovatively, but also support for other factors that are more directly related to the achievement of goals and work performance (Reynal et al., 2023b).

H3. Innovative work behavior has a significant positive effect on employee performance

Women Entrepreneurial Leadership on Employee Performance Mediated by Innovative Work Behavior

Women's leadership, which is often inclusive and communicative, can influence performance through a variety of other channels, such as developing better interpersonal relationships, improving teamwork, or strengthening an organizational culture that supports productivity. The role of mediators in the relationship between leadership and performance does not always involve a single variable, and is often multivariate. Innovative work behavior is important because it serves as a mediating mechanism through which women's entrepreneurial leadership can influence employee performance.

When female leaders create an inclusive and supportive environment, employees are more encouraged to explore ideas, generate solutions, and implement innovations, which in turn enhance performance outcomes. Thus, IWB acts as a bridge that connects leadership characteristics to tangible improvements in employee productivity and organizational success. Overall, these findings suggest that while female entrepreneurial leadership directly influences employee performance, innovative work behaviors do not play a powerful role as a powerful intermediary in those relationships. (De Jong & Den Hartog, 2010c). Therefore, to further improve employee performance, organizations need to consider other potentially more effective pathways in connecting female entrepreneurial leadership to desired outcomes (Reynal et al., 2023b).

H4. Women's entrepreneurial leadership has a significant positive effect on employee performance mediated by innovative work behavior

Methodology

This study adopts a quantitative approach, used to test a particular theory by examining the relationship between variables (Sugiyono & Lestari, 2021). The research method used is a survey, where data is collected through a questionnaire that is distributed to employees as respondents. In this case, researchers want to know whether women's entrepreneurial leadership directly affects employee performance and whether innovative work behavior acts as a variable that mediates the relationship.

Questionnaire preparation used a Likert scale. The data used in this study consisted of primary data, obtained directly from respondents through questionnaires, as well as secondary data, collected from various literature and books related to the research variables. The data collection method includes observation and questionnaires. For data analysis, this study used path analysis with the help of SEM PLS 4 software (Sugiyono & Lestari, 2021). SEM PLS 4 can be used without a minimum sample size when the bootstrapping technique is used, where the population in this study is 40 employees. Since the number of

individuals in the population is less than 100, this study applied a total sampling technique, which means that the entire population is used as a research sample (Sugiyono & Lestari, 2021; Dellby et al., 2024)

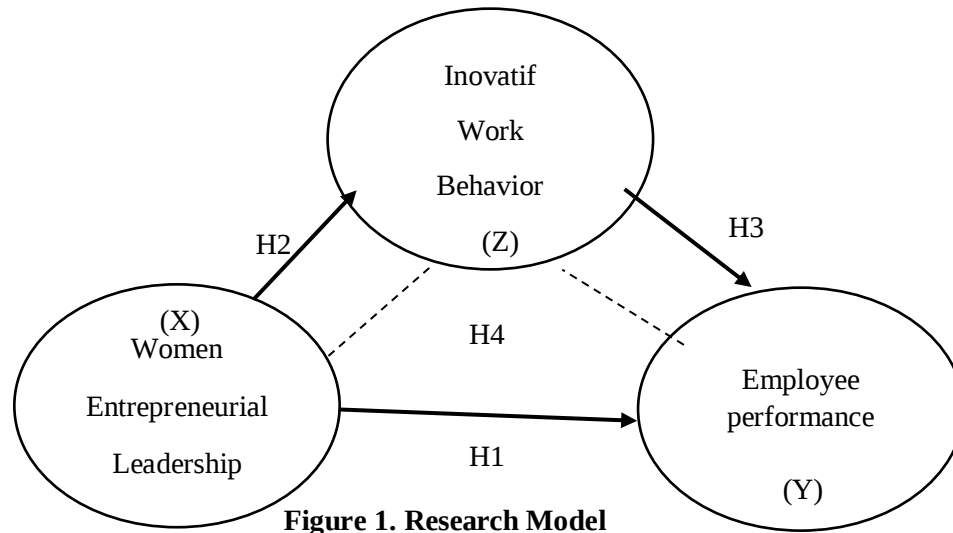


Figure 1. Research Model

Source: Author (2025)

Table 2. Definition of Variables

Variable	Operational definition of variables	Indicator	Source
<i>Women entrepreneurial leadership (X)</i>	All individual abilities to influence subordinates through the implementation of changes that enhance the growth of the company SME of Sari Murni	a. Motivate b. Visionary c. Proactive d. innovativeness e. Risk Taking Achievement f. Oriented g. Persistence	(Don Y. & Erick W., 2001)
<i>Innovative work behavior (Z)</i>	Innovative work behavior includes the process by which employees demonstrate creativity and innovation in their work at SME of Sari Murni .	a. exploration idea b. generation idea c. champion idea d. implementation idea	(De Jong & Den Hartog, 2010b)
<i>Employee performance (Y)</i>	Employee performance includes measurable results, such as the effectiveness and efficiency of an employee's work at SME of Sari Murni .	a. quality b. quantity c. timeliness	(Robbins & Judge, 2016)

Source: Author (2025)

Results and Discussion

Table 3. Characteristics of respondents

No	Gender	Total	Percentage
1	Man	14	35%
2	Woman	26	65%
3	Total	40	100%
No	Age	Total	Percentage
1	18-25	13	32%
2	26-35	24	60%
3	>36	3	8%
4	Total	40	100%
No	Final Education	Total	Percentage
1	Senior High School	24	60%
2	Bachelor	16	40%
3	Total	40	100%
No	Working Time	Total	Percentage
1	<1 Year	5	13%
2	1-3 Years	27	67%
3	>3 Years	8	20%
4	Total	40	100%

Source: Research results processed (2025)

The results of the description of the characteristics of respondents indicate that the majority of employees at SME of Sari Murni is female (65%). This is in accordance with the characteristics of jenang, a traditional dish of Indonesia which resembles a thick, sweet porridge made from coconut milk and palm sugar. The production work of Jenang requires precision and high manual skills, so the company recruits more female workers. In terms of age, most respondents are in the 26 to 35-year range (60%), which is within the productive age range, thus supporting optimal performance in the production process. In terms of education, most employees have a high school education (60%), while the rest have a bachelor's degree (40%). This indicates that although the majority have a secondary education, they can carry out their duties according to established standards. Meanwhile, most respondents have worked between 1–3 years (67%), indicating that employees already have sufficient work experience to support smooth production.

Table 4. Description of respondents' answers

Variable	Respond	Score	Information
Women Entrepreneurial Leadership	40	166	Keep
Employee Performance	40	173	Very high
Innovative Work Behavior	40	225	Very high

Source: Research results processed (2025)

Shows the description of respondents' answers to the three research variables. The Women Entrepreneurial Leadership variable obtained a total score of 166 from 40 respondents, which is in the

"Keep" category, although the lowest score obtained for women's leadership in this organization is already running well and needs to be improved. The Employee Performance variable obtained a score of 173 with the "Very High" category, which indicates that employee performance is already at an optimal level. Meanwhile, the Innovative Work Behavior variable recorded the highest score of 225 and is also in the "Very High" category, which indicates that employee innovative behavior at work is very prominent.

Table 5. Values Loading Factor

Variabel	Item	Z			information
Women's entrepreneurial leadership	X1.2	0,772	0,763	0,763	Valid
	X1.3	0,876	0,880	0,880	Valid
	X1.4	0,864	0,882	0,881	Valid
	X1.6	0,733	0,738	0,737	Valid
	X1.7	0,717	0,709	0,712	Valid
	X1.8	0,896	0,902	0,902	Valid
	X1.9	0,874	0,886	0,885	Valid
	X1.10	0,820	0,832	0,831	Valid
	X1.11	0,940	0,955	0,954	Valid
	X1.12	0,947	0,958	0,958	Valid
Employee performance	X1.14	0,605	0,617	0,619	Valid
	Y1.2	0,876	0,879	0,879	Valid
	Y1.3	0,713	0,711	0,709	Valid
	Y1.4	0,776	0,796	0,797	Valid
	Y1.5	0,744	0,742	0,742	Valid
	Y1.6	0,822	0,804	0,805	Valid
Innovative work behavior	Z.1	0,908	0,917	0,902	Valid
	Z.3	0,901	0,909	0,882	Valid
	Z.4	0,803	0,834	0,868	Valid
	Z.6	0,675	0,734	0,789	Valid
	Z.7	0,818	0,832	0,856	Valid
	Z.8	0,890	0,904	0,924	Valid

Source: Research results processed (2025)

Based on the results of the convergent validity test in the table above, it can be seen that in the initial data, there are several indicators that have values below 0.6, so that elimination is carried out. After elimination 1, there are also still several indicators that have a value below 0.6, so elimination 2 is carried out. After elimination 2, all instruments have met the criteria and are considered valid because they have a loading factor exceeding 0.6.

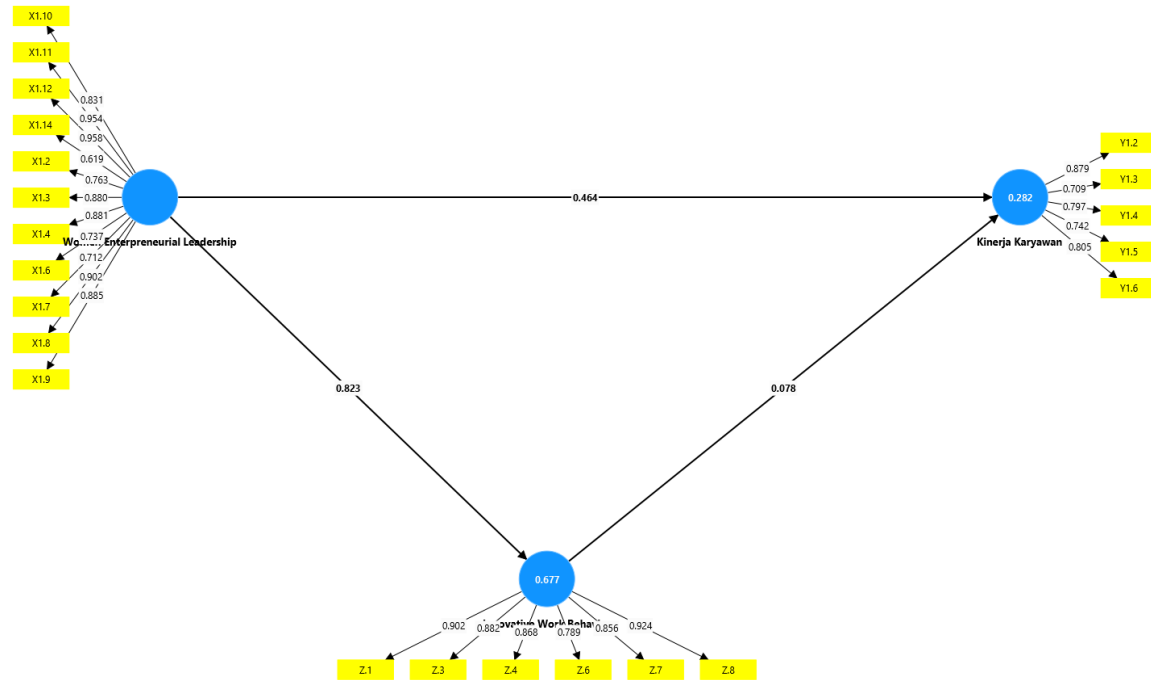


Figure 2 Outer Model after Elimination 2

Source: Research results processed (2025)

Table 5. Values Average Variance Extracted (AVE)

Average Variance Extracted (AVE)	
Innovative Work Behavior	0,759
Employee Performance	0,622
Women Entrepreneurial Leadership	0,698

Source: Research results processed (2025)

Based on Table 5, the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) value shows that all variables in this study meet the convergence validity standard, with an AVE value above 0.5. This indicates that each variable has a fairly high variance compared to error measurement, so it can be said that the indicator used is quite capable of explaining the construct being measured.

Table 7. Values Cross-Loading

	Innovative Work Behavior	Employee Performance	Women Entrepreneurial Leadership
X1.10	0,558	0,461	0,831
X1.11	0,713	0,485	0,954
X1.12	0,761	0,504	0,958
X1.14	0,498	0,270	0,619
X1.2	0,683	0,409	0,763

X1.3	0,880	0,459	0,882
X1.4	0,745	0,411	0,881
X1.6	0,656	0,407	0,737
X1.7	0,634	0,407	0,712
X1.8	0,671	0,524	0,902
X1.9	0,668	0,477	0,885
Y1.2	0,400	0,879	0,512
Y1.3	0,286	0,709	0,307
Y1.4	0,404	0,797	0,491
Y1.5	0,392	0,742	0,366
Y1.6	0,307	0,805	0,347
Z.1	0,902	0,445	0,817
Z.3	0,882	0,459	0,880
Z.4	0,868	0,347	0,612
Z.6	0,789	0,171	0,537
Z.7	0,856	0,422	0,627
Z.8	0,924	0,473	0,723

Source: Research results processed (2025)

Based on Table 6, the Cross Loading value shows that the Innovative Work Behavior (Z) indicator has the highest loading value in the corresponding construct, with the highest value in the Z.8 indicator (0.924) compared to other variables. This shows that the indicator is stronger in explaining the Innovative Work Behavior variable compared to other variables. Similarly, the indicator for the variable Women Entrepreneurial Leadership (X1) had a higher cross-loading value in its construct compared to other variables. For example, the X1.12 indicator has a loading value of 0.958 for Women Entrepreneurial Leadership, which is much higher than the loading value for other variables. Meanwhile, the Employee Performance (Y) variable also showed good discriminant validity, with the Y1.2 indicator having a loading value of 0.879 in the construct, which is higher than the loading value in other variables. Overall, the results of this cross-loading indicate that each indicator has the greatest contribution to the latent variable measured, so that the discriminant validity in this model has been met.

Table 8. Values Composite Reliability

	Composite reliability (rho_a)	Composite reliability (rho_c)
Innovative Work Behavior	0,954	0,950
Employee Performance	0,871	0,891
Women Entrepreneurial Leadership	0,962	0,962

Source: Research results processed (2025)

Based on table 7 have a high degree of reliability, according to Table 7 Composite Reliability score. With a Composite Reliability rating of 0.950, the Innovative Work Behavior variable demonstrates that its indicators measure its constructs with high consistency. The variable Women Entrepreneurial Leadership exhibits similar characteristics, with a Composite Reliability value of 0.962, suggesting exceptional reliability. In the meantime, the Employee Performance variable also shows strong dependability with a Composite dependability score of 0.891. All things considered, these findings attest to the high degree of reliability and adequate measurement standards of every construct in the study.

Table 9. Cronbach's Alpha

	Cronbach's alpha
Innovative Work Behavior	0,937
Employee Performance	0,848
Women Entrepreneurial Leadership	0,955

Source: Research results processed (2025)

Based on Table 9, Cronbach's Alpha value shows that the Innovative Work Behavior variable has a value of 0.937, which reflects a very high level of reliability. The variable Women Entrepreneurial Leadership also showed excellent reliability with a value of 0.955. Meanwhile, the Employee Performance variable has a Cronbach's Alpha value of 0.848, which is still classified as reliable. Thus, all constructs in this study have an excellent level of reliability and can be used for further analysis.

Table 10. R Square Value

	R-square	R-square adjusted
Innovative Work Behavior	0,677	0,668
Employee Performance	0,282	0,243

Source: Research results processed (2025)

Table 10 shows that the Innovative Work Behavior variable has an R-Square of 0.677, which means that 67.7% of the variation is explained by independent variables in the model, while the remaining 32.3% is influenced by external factors that are not included in the model. Meanwhile, the Employee Performance variable had an R-Square of 0.282, indicating that only 28.2% of the variation was explained by independent variables in the study. The slightly lower R-Square Adjusted value than R-Square indicates an adjustment to the number of independent variables in the model to reduce bias in the estimates. Therefore, this research model has a fairly good predictive ability in explaining Innovative Work Behavior, but is still limited in explaining Employee Performance.

The GoF value in PLS-SEM must be calculated manually as follows:

$$\text{GoF} = 1 - \{() \times (1 -)\} 1 - R_1^2 R_2^2$$

$$\text{GoF} = 1 - \{() \times (1 - 0.282)\} 1 - 0,677$$

$$\text{GoF} = 1 - \{0.323 \times 0.718\}$$

$$\text{GoF} = 1 - 0,231914$$

$$\text{GoF} = 0,768086$$

Based on manual calculations carried out by the researcher, the results showed that the GoF value was 0.768086, which means that the value is in the moderate range. The large score in the GoF indicates that the research model conducted has a moderate level of model feasibility of 76.80%. The 76.80% value obtained from GoF indicates that the model has a moderate level of feasibility. This means that more than half of the variation in the data can be explained by the model.

Table 10 Path Coefficient Test

	Original sample (O)	Sample mean (M)	Standard deviation (STDEV)	T statistics (O/STDEV)	P values
Women Entrepreneurial Leadership -> Employee Performance	0,529	0,553	0,094	5,643	0,000

Women Entrepreneurial Leadership -> Innovative Work Behavior	0,823	0,829	0,052	15,950	0,000
Innovative Work Behavior -> Employee Performance	0,078	0,097	0,280	0,280	0,779

Source: Research results processed (2025)

Based on the results of the Path Coefficient Test, the relationship between Women Entrepreneurial Leadership and Employee Performance (H1) shows a coefficient of 0.529, which indicates a significant and positive influence. This means that women's entrepreneurial leadership directly contributes to improving employee performance. Next, the relationship between Women Entrepreneurial Leadership and Innovative Work Behavior (H2) obtained a coefficient of 0.823, which demonstrates a strong, significant, and positive effect. In other words, female entrepreneurial leaders are able to encourage employees to engage more actively in innovative behaviors.

Meanwhile, the effect of Innovative Work Behavior on Employee Performance (H3) shows a coefficient of 0.078, which is very weak and statistically insignificant. This suggests that in the case of SME of Sari Murni, innovative work behavior does not substantially improve employee performance. Consequently, the mediating role of Innovative Work Behavior in the relationship between Women Entrepreneurial Leadership and Employee Performance (H4) is not supported. Overall, these findings indicate that Women Entrepreneurial Leadership has a direct and significant influence on both Innovative Work Behavior and Employee Performance, but Innovative Work Behavior itself does not serve as a meaningful intermediary in this relationship. Overall, it can be concluded that Women Entrepreneurial Leadership has a significant and strong influence on Innovative Work Behavior and Employee Performance, while Innovative Work Behavior does not show a significant influence on Employee Performance.

Table 10: Total Value Of Indirect Effect

	Original sample (O)	Sample mean (M)	Standard deviation (STDEV)	T statistics (O/STDEV)	P values
Women Entrepreneurial Leadership -> Employee Performance	0,064	0,083	0,237	0,271	0,786

Source: Research results processed (2025)

Based on the results of the Total Indirect Effect in Table 10, the Original Sample (O) value for the influence of Women Entrepreneurial Leadership on Employee Performance is 0.064. The statistical t-value calculated as 0.271 and the P value 0.786 showed that the effect was not statistically significant, because the P value was greater than the significance limit of 0.05. This indicates that although there is a relationship between Women Entrepreneurial Leadership and Employee Performance through indirect channels, the influence is very weak and insignificant.

Discussion

The Influence of Women's Entrepreneurial Leadership on Employee Performance

The results of hypothesis testing show that women's entrepreneurial leadership affects employee performance. According to (Danisman et al., 2015; Jing et al., 2022a; Herlina et al., 2021b) in their research, there are findings that female leadership tends to encourage employee empowerment, especially through

an inclusive and collaborative approach. This leadership style is proven to improve employee performance. This leadership not only encourages employees to work better, but also develops their potential. Through a leadership style that is full of empathy, communicative, and listens to employee needs, female leadership is proven to be able to create a work environment that supports employee productivity and performance(Jing et al., 2022b).

Women tend to carry the values of empathy and good communication, which in turn improve the relationship between management and employees and improve the overall work climate. Furthermore, the implementation of women's leadership that prioritizes the values of openness and collaboration contributes to a more harmonious work atmosphere, reduces tensions between individuals, and improves teamwork. This has proven to be very effective in motivating employees to achieve common goals as well as improving overall performance. With the majority of respondents being women, this characteristic also creates stronger synergy within the team and improves alignment among members. Therefore, women's entrepreneurial leadership is not only important in motivating employees but also plays a crucial role in creating a productive, results-oriented, and improved work culture.

The Influence of Women's Entrepreneurial Leadership on Innovative Work Behavior

The results of the hypothesis test showed that women's entrepreneurial leadership affects Innovative Work Behavior. This means that the higher the female entrepreneurial leadership, the more innovative work behavior at SME of Sari Murni . According to Sanusi, 2011; Hikmah Perkasa & Abadi, 2020;Fitrio et al., 2020b) in their research, there were findings that the relationship between women's entrepreneurial leadership and innovative work behavior was positive and significant.

Women's entrepreneurial leadership can improve employees' innovative work behaviors by increasing confidence, elasticity, and critical thinking skills. Women's entrepreneurial leadership can have a strong positive impact on improving employees' innovative work behaviors. One way is to increase employee confidence, which is an important factor in encouraging them to dare to take risks and explore new ideas. In addition, inclusive women's leadership and support for flexibility also play a role in improving employee elasticity(Rahayu Ghozali & Hadi, n.d.,2016). Their ability to adapt to new changes and challenges. Critical thinking skills also develop well under female leadership, which encourages employees to not only follow instructions but also actively seek creative solutions in their work(Li et al., 2020b). Thus, women's entrepreneurial leadership not only affects increased motivation but can also create a work environment that supports innovation. Leadership based on empathy, open communication, and employee self-development has proven to be very effective in motivating employees to develop new ideas that can bring benefits to the company(Pinela et al., 2022). Therefore, strengthening women's entrepreneurial leadership at SME of Sari Murni can be an important strategy in improving innovative work behavior which in turn will improve the company's performance and competitiveness.

In the context of SME of Sari Murni , the role of women's entrepreneurial leadership becomes even more crucial. As a small and medium enterprise (SME), SME of Sari Murni relies heavily on the active participation and creativity of its employees to maintain competitiveness in the market. Female leadership in this company not only guides operational activities but also encourages workers to be more adaptive in facing limited resources, dynamic consumer demands, and the need for product innovation. Through empathetic leadership styles and inclusive communication, leaders at SME of Sari Murni can build employees' confidence and resilience, motivating them to continuously generate new ideas and improve work processes. Therefore, strengthening women's entrepreneurial leadership at SME of Sari Murni can be an important strategy in improving innovative work behavior, which in turn will enhance the company's performance and competitiveness.

The Effect of Innovative Work Behavior on Employee Performance

The results of the hypothesis test showed that innovative work behavior did not affect employee performance. So innovative work behavior does not have a significant impact on employee performance. This means that even though employees' innovative work behavior has increased, this has not necessarily impacted employee performance at SME of Sari Murni . This phenomenon may occur because innovative work behavior focuses on the creative and innovative aspects of work, which are not always directly proportional to employee performance measured based on more measurable indicators of work output, such as productivity, efficiency, or the achievement of certain targets. The results of this study are in line with research from (Sanusi & Dibyantoro, 2022b) which also shows that IWB does not affect employee performance.

Innovative behaviors, while essential for creating change and development in an organization, may take time to be able to translate into concrete results that have a direct impact on performance (Fitrio et al., 2020b). In addition, employee performance is also influenced by various other factors besides innovative behavior, such as effective leadership, interpersonal relationships between colleagues, employee training and development, and supportive working conditions (Reynal et al., 2023b). In this case, if other factors are not optimized, even if employees exhibit innovative work behavior, this may not necessarily be able to directly improve their performance. The type of work involved in producing jenang emphasizes consistency, precision, and manual skills more than exploring new ideas. Employee innovation may be more visible in daily work practices, but it is not always implemented as real changes in production processes. Overall, these results show that to improve employee performance at SME of Sari Murni requires a more comprehensive approach that involves not only the encouragement to behave innovatively, but also support for other factors that are more directly related to the achievement of goals and work performance.

Although H3 was rejected, it actually made an important contribution because it showed that IWB does not always directly affect performance, especially in the traditional MSME sector, such as SME of Sari Murni . Therefore, the company needs to provide mechanisms to ensure that employees' innovative ideas are not only limited to creativity but can also be realized, for example, through training programs, reward systems, or strong managerial support.

The Influence of Women Entrepreneurial Leadership on Employee Performance Mediated by Innovative Work Behavior

The results of the hypothesis test revealed that innovative work behaviors did not mediate the influence of female entrepreneurial leadership on employee performance. These findings confirm that innovative work behaviors do not serve as mediators in the relationship between female entrepreneurial leadership and employee performance. In other words, while female entrepreneurial leadership directly influences employee performance, innovative work behaviors do not play a significant role in channeling that influence. The results of this study are in line with research from (Reynal et al., 2023b), which also shows that IWB does not mediate the relationship between women's entrepreneurial leadership and employee performance.

Several factors may be the cause of this phenomenon. One possibility is that while women's entrepreneurial leadership can motivate and inspire employees to behave innovatively, the innovative behavior itself does not directly contribute to measurable performance improvements (Eiriz & Castro, 2007). Employees' innovative behaviors often take time to develop and implement in practice, and in some cases, don't always directly impact a more tangible and measurable improvement in work outcomes ("Advancing Women in Leadership (DOJ)," 2024). Additionally, other factors that affect employee performance, such as training, available resources, and managerial support, may also play an important role in improving performance (Reynal et al., 2023b). Without sufficient support or in the absence

of a clear strategy to implement innovative ideas, employees' innovative behaviors may not be able to manifest in outcomes that can be assessed as performance improvements.

In terms of women's leadership, although women's entrepreneurial leadership is effective in increasing motivation and encouraging innovative work behavior, the direct influence on employee performance may be more complex. Women's leadership, which is often inclusive and communicative, can influence performance through a variety of other channels, such as developing better interpersonal relationships, improving teamwork, or strengthening an organizational culture that supports productivity (Wells & Fleshman, 2020).

Based on the theoretical framework of entrepreneurial leadership, innovative work behavior is expected to serve as a bridge that connects leadership styles with improved employee performance (De Jong & Den Hartog, 2010c). However, the findings of this study indicate that innovative work behavior does not significantly mediate the effect of women's entrepreneurial leadership on employee performance at SME of Sari Murni. This result aligns with research by (Musoli, 2021b; Reynal et al., 2023b), which also reported non-significant mediation effects. On the other hand, several studies (Danışman et al., 2015; Herlina et al., 2021a; Jing et al., 2022b) found the opposite, showing that women's leadership can enhance employee performance through innovative behaviors. These mixed findings suggest that the mediating role of IWB may be highly context-dependent.

In the case of UD Sari Murni, the organizational culture and leadership patterns may explain why IWB does not act as a strong intermediary. Although the company demonstrates high employee performance, the structured routines and production-oriented nature of the business may limit opportunities for employees to fully implement innovative ideas. A supportive leadership style from female leaders may improve motivation and performance directly, without necessarily requiring innovation as a mediating factor. This condition highlights that in SMEs with a more rigid production structure, innovation does not always translate into measurable improvements in performance, which contrasts with findings in more dynamic sectors such as startups or education.

Conclusion

Based on the results of the research and discussion, it can be concluded that female entrepreneurial leadership, innovative work behavior, and employee performance at SME of Sari Murni is in excellent condition. Women's entrepreneurial leadership has been proven to have a significant influence on employee performance and innovative work behavior. However, innovative work behavior does not directly affect employee performance and does not play a mediator in the relationship between women entrepreneurial leadership and employee performance at SME of Sari Murni.

This research has several limitations, so the result may not be generalized to other SMEs. The method used is quantitative, so it does not capture the long-term relationship between variables. In addition, the intervening variables only include innovative work behavior, whereas other factors such as motivation or work culture also have the potential to influence (Aparisi-Torrijo & Ribes-Giner, 2022b). Further research is recommended to expand the object, use a longitudinal approach, and explore other variables as mediators or moderators. Companies are advised to strengthen women's entrepreneurial leadership through training and leadership development programs for women, as well as create a work environment that supports innovation in a structured manner so that employees can be more productive and creative. Employees are also expected to be more active in implementing innovative behaviors in their work, while companies need to provide greater support so that innovative ideas can be implemented in real terms and contribute to performance improvement. In addition, further research is recommended to explore other variables that can mediate the relationship between women's entrepreneurial leadership and employee performance. Further

studies on the long-term impact of innovative work behavior on employee performance in various industry sectors may also be the focus of future research.

Author's Contribution

All authors have contributed to the final manuscript. The following are the contributions made by each author: Naf is in charge of gathering information, writing papers, creating illustrations, and formulating important conceptual concepts. Mas is given great advice and offers insightful article modifications. Each author contributed to the final manuscript and discussed the findings.

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