

# The Interplay of Socio-Cultural, Religiosity and Law Perspectives Toward Gender Role Distribution in Co-Preneurship Business Practice

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## Keywords

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## Abstract

*This study highlights the complex interplay of social, cultural, and religious factors in shaping gender roles within co-preneurial businesses in Indonesia. Using an empirical qualitative approach, the research incorporates in-depth interviews with seven co-preneurial couples from diverse cultural backgrounds i.e., Javanese, Minangkabau, and Mandarese ethnicities in Indonesia. The findings reveal that co-preneurial couples often challenge traditional gender stereotypes by establishing equitable roles based on individual capacities rather than societal norms. This flexibility is underpinned by mutual trust, effective communication, and respect, crucial for entrepreneurial endeavour. Cultural analysis shows that Javanese and Mandarese cultures, while patriarchal, allow for adaptable role distributions. Meanwhile, Minangkabau culture, which is matrilineal, is more gender-balanced. From a religious perspective, all participants view Islam as advocating for collaborative efforts between male and female in business and promoting balanced gender roles. Despite traditional biases favouring male dominance in work and industry, current trends indicate increasing female involvement in business activities, challenging long-standing stereotypes. The study identifies potential disadvantages, including conflicts arising from the overlap between personal and professional roles and underlying cultural and social biases influencing role dynamics. The study implies that advocating more intensive gender equality, establishing clearer professional boundaries, developing supportive policies and legal frameworks to foster an equitable co-preneurial environment are still needed, which should emphasize the importance of mutual respect, trust, and flexibility in creating balanced and productive business partnerships, contributing valuable insights into the intersection of law, culture, and entrepreneurship.*

## 1. INTRODUCTION

### 1.1. Background

The rationale of this study stems from the fact that several businesses are managed by couples, with motivations to maintain ownership, management, and business outcomes within personal domains. Additionally, it often leads to potential biases in gender roles, which may become a source of conflict. The concept of co-preneurship was further introduced and firstly discussed the commitment and responsibilities involved.<sup>1</sup> It was further emphasized by the dual roles that co-preneurs must navigate, in both business and family contexts.<sup>2</sup>

In Indonesia, co-preneurship is an emerging and growing phenomenon. Young entrepreneurs are adopting this model, driven by the belief that trust and tolerance are easily established with someone they personally know and trust.<sup>3</sup> This personal connection is viewed as a significant advantage in starting and managing a business, particularly concerning the division of labor, task allocation, and responsibility distribution. Trust, communication, and common goals are the predominant factors. Ensuring the legal status, ownership, and appropriate permits and licenses for the business, along with expanding and strengthening business networks and partnerships, are also viewed as critical factors for success.<sup>4</sup>

However, married couples in co-preneurship face unique challenges. Balancing attention between family and business requires a high degree of compromise and tolerance of each other's personal characteristics. For unmarried partners, the situation can be even more complex due to the lack of formal relationship ties. This can lead to significant legal vulnerabilities, especially if conflicts arise between partners. Without clear and formal legal bindings, an unmarried partner has no guaranteed protection if the other partner underperforms, engages in unethical behavior, makes serious mistakes detrimental to the business, or initiates conflicts. A current example involves a joint ownership business in the culinary sector in Padang City, which is facing bankruptcy due to personal conflicts between the two owners.

Despite these challenges, one crucial element in co-preneurship is equitable gender roles to ensure a fair distribution of tasks and responsibilities between males and females. They can serve as a basis for formal and legal standing for each party in the event of conflicts, providing a

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<sup>1</sup> Frank Barnett and Sharan Barnett, *Working together: Entrepreneurial couples* (Berkeley, CA: Ten Speed Press, 1988), 31.

<sup>2</sup> Eunice Peregrino-Dartey, "Copreneurs' Coping Strategies for Work-Family Conflict" (Doctor of Business Administration, School Management, Walden University 2018), 102.

<sup>3</sup> Purwanto, Eddy Madiono Sutanto, and Nunik Kustiningsih, "Resilience and Conflict: The Roles of Copreneurship, Transgeneration and Dark Side of Family Business," *Jurnal Manajemen dan Kewirausahaan*, 26, no. 1 (2024): 59.

<sup>4</sup> Mário Franco and Patricia Piceti, "Family Dynamics and Gender Perspective Influencing Copreneurship Practices: A Qualitative Analysis in the Brazilian Context," *International Journal of Entrepreneurial Behavior & Research* 26, no. 1 (2020): 31.

structured approach to conflict resolution and the smoother business operation.

## 1.2. Purpose/Research Problem

Various studies highlighted the imbalance in gender roles within business operations and management, particularly in SMEs in developing countries.<sup>5</sup> Women are often marginalized, perceived as contributing less to household revenue and business success. An example can be found in the region of Sukabumi in West Java, Indonesia, where women entrepreneurs face a range of challenges, including gender-based discrimination to operate their businesses.<sup>6</sup> Consequently, females are underrated and neglected, leading to uncomfortable situations in decision-making and minimal formal-legal protection to develop their potential.

Research reveals that women in Indonesia have lower productivity and tend to engage in more labour-intensive industries.<sup>7</sup> Several factors contribute to the minimal distribution of female roles and the lack of formal-legal alignment in business. These include unsupportive social mindsets,<sup>8</sup> entrenched cultural perceptions,<sup>9</sup> and religious beliefs<sup>10</sup> that perpetuate the marginalization of women. The social construction of gender further shapes women's social identity and impacts their roles in business and society and legal protection in conducting activities. From a religious perspective, women are often seen as followers of men in various rituals and ceremonies, with men receiving greater recognition.

Despite studies revealed influences of gender roles in co-preneurial endeavour from various perspectives, however, an integrative analysis that focuses on socio-legal perspectives, culture, and the perspective of religion embraced by people of a country is still lacking attention. The major question of this study, therefore, is related to how to understand gender roles in co-preneurial business practices holistically, which can ensure the rise of awareness, and most importantly, secure females' position-role in business activities.

This study explores the distribution of gender roles in co-preneurship business by considering the nature of the Indonesian social environment,

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<sup>5</sup> Zitha Ngulube, "The Influence of Traditional Gender Roles and Power Relations on Women and Girls' Education and Health in Northern Ghana," *Education Studies of University of Iceland School of Education*, (2018): 153

<sup>6</sup> Feb Amni Hayati and Rani Eka Arini, "Exploring the Challenges and Opportunities Faced by Women Entrepreneurs in Sukabumi District: A Qualitative Study," *West Science Interdisciplinary Studies* 1, no. 5 (2023): 220.

<sup>7</sup> Rahmasari Istindari and Muhammad Rizqy Anandhika, *The Role of Gender in Micro and Small Enterprises in Indonesia: A Firm-Level Analysis*, Asia-Pacific Foundation of Canada, 2019: 23

<sup>8</sup> Chris Brickell, "The Sociological Construction of Gender and Sexuality," *The Sociological Review* 54, no. 1 (2006): 91.

<sup>9</sup> Elena Bardasi, Shwetlana Sabarwal, and Katherine Terrell, "How do Female Entrepreneurs Perform? Evidence from Three Developing Regions," *Small Business Economics* 37, no. 4 (2011): 417, 441.

<sup>10</sup> Fons J.R. van de Vijver, "Cultural and Gender Differences in Gender-Role Beliefs, Sharing Household Task and Child-Care Responsibilities, and Well-Being Among Immigrants and Majority Members in The Netherlands," *Sex Roles* 57 (2007): 816.

culture, Islam as the major religion and legal framework in Indonesia. It contributes to the discussion on gender roles in entrepreneurship, offering a nuanced understanding of how co-preneurial couples should better manage their business.

### 1.3. Method/Research Outline

The study is empirical qualitative, designed to uncover intricacies of co-preneurship business practices within the specific context of the study. Following an inductive approach, data and analysis were used to deepen understanding of gender roles in co-preneurship, viewed through social, cultural, and religious lenses. Overview from legal perspectives related to this issue is also added. In-depth interviews were chosen as the primary data collection method and meticulously prepared to gather comprehensive insights from the study participants. Interviews were conducted in bahasa Indonesia and later translated into English for analysis and presentation in the paper, and were held in participants' business places, by using easy-to-understand questions. The study focused on seven male-female couples with joint business ownership, who are closely related to the members of the researcher (friends, relatives). The participants' details are in the table below:

Table 1  
 Detail of Study Participants

No.	Identification	Name of couple participants	Age	Ethnicity	Type of Business	Name of the Business	Age of Business (years)
1.	Couple 1	Dodi Indra Zurmi Yetti	58 57	Minangkabau of West Sumatra	Fashion (Adult)	Zetye Fashion	7
2.	Couple 2	Arif Mukhlis Metti Dwi Listianti	33 33	Minangkabau of West Sumatra	Fashion (Kids)	Kids Diary	7
3.	Couple 3	Yuda Fajrin Marsha Natika	33 28	Minangkabau of West Sumatra	Culinary	Sataykatokopi	5
4.	Couple 4	Eka Kuswara Nofi Agustina	26 24	Javanese of Java Island	Photography	Kano.Project	1.5
5.	Couple 5	Abdu Alat sari Dini Aryanti	23 23	Mandarese of West Sulawesi/Celebes	Vendor of Wedding Decoration	Pinjamkursi	2
6.	Couple 6	Reza Fachrevy Rosiana Shalma Hasanah	25 25	Javanese of Java Island	Fashion (High End Stuff)	Baba.Supply	2
7.	Couple 7	Muhammad Sidqy Prasana Rizkiani Utami	25 24	Javanese of Java Island	Fashion (Thrifting)	Juba.needs	3

Source: the interview conducted by the author<sup>11</sup>

<sup>11</sup> Dodi Indra, Zurmi Yetti, Arif Mukhlis, Metti Dwi Listianti, Yuda Fajrin, Marsha Natika, Eka Kuswara, Nofi Agustina, Abdu Alat Sari, Dini Aryanti, Reza Fachrevy, Rosianna Shalma Hasanah, Muhammmad Sidqy, "Detail of Study Participants" Interview by Rifa Cantika Wulandari, Jakarta, June – July 2024.

The operational definition of study constructs referring to the following table.

Table 2.  
Operational Definition of the Construct of the Study

No	Constructs and Definition	Parameters
1	Gender roles based on social perspective de Bruin A. & Lewis, K (2004) Co-preneurship practice, one should look at the co-preneurs as the couple and as a whole interdependent system, and not just as two separate people who happen to be married and working together	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Couple relationship</li> <li>• Individual's positions in couple relationship</li> </ul>
2	Gender roles based on cultural perspective Myers (1995) Gender role is a set of attitudes expected from males and females which is set up based on norms and using femininity and masculinity consideration.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Role differences</li> <li>• Attitudes</li> <li>• Mentality</li> <li>• Emotional character</li> <li>• Norms</li> </ul>
3	Gender roles based on religious perspective Jugovic & Ancic (2014) Gender role in social environment varies according to the religious perspective embraced by certain community. Non-religious non-spiritual individual were more egalitarian in gender role beliefs, while the religious individuals tend to be more dogmatist.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Egalitarian gender role beliefs</li> <li>• Dogmatist gender role beliefs</li> </ul>

Source: the authors, adopted from<sup>12,13</sup>

Thematic data analysis was employed to analyze the verbatim interview transcripts, following these steps:

1. Understanding the data: engaging in interactive data analysis and continuously revisiting the data until saturation
2. Coding: assigning labels to significant features from the interview results. The coding process includes two stages:<sup>14</sup> first cycle coding and second cycle coding, facilitating data categorization for easier conclusion drawing.
3. Elaborating the themes: analyzing themes by examining responses to each question, which were further interpreted.

## 1.4. Theoretical Framework/Literature Review

### 1.4.1. Co-preneurship

The term 'co-preneur' refers to couples who share the ownership, commitment, and responsibilities to operate and manage a business.<sup>14</sup> The discussion regarding co-preneurship is usually found in three big themes:

<sup>12</sup> Anne de Bruin and Kate Lewis, "Toward Enriching United Career Theory: Familial Entrepreneurship and Copreneurship," *Career Development International* no. 9 (2004): 1108.

<sup>13</sup> Ivana Pikić Jugović, & Ančić, Branko, "Effects of religiosity and spirituality on gender roles and homonegativity in Croatia and Slovenia," In Nada Furlan Štante, Harcet Marjana (eds), *Spirituality of Balkan Women Breaking Boundaries: the Voices of Women of ex-Yugoslavia* (Univerzitetna Založba Annales, 2014), 14

<sup>14</sup> Johnny Saldaña, *The Coding Manual for Qualitative Researchers* (London: SAGE Publications, Inc., 2015), 10.

<sup>14</sup> Barnett and Barnett, *op.cit.*, 42.

[a] description, [b] antecedent, and [c] the outcome.<sup>15</sup> Co-preneurs are a unique firm team of couples who share goals, dreams, and ideals and make joint decisions recognizing the influence of each couple member on firm outcomes.<sup>16</sup> There is also freedom of doing business as the major motivation for couples in establishing co-preneurial business.<sup>17</sup> The legal status of this type of business/firm is usually in the form of a jointly owned sole proprietorship. Couples in this kind of business may be considered as having dual careers, between being a core family member and being an entrepreneur who shares the ownership of entrepreneurial venture. Consequently, co-preneurship business has some issues regarding the blurred work-life boundaries between partners/couples, and psychological difficulties in detaching from each partner's jobs, duties, and tasks.

Couples, either married or partners are usually motivated to choose jointly owned business form because of several reasons, such as: [a] limited chances to have suitable jobs for both, [b] excessive economic and financial situations which lead to the principle to localize that excessiveness in self-possession, [c] to improve the productivity of each partner, and [d] having a deep interest to undertake similar activities together.<sup>18</sup> Couples would voluntarily start their venture together because of economic and non-economic reasons.

#### **1.4.2. Advantages and Disadvantages of Co-preneurship**

Studies have indicated that success, financial performance, growth performance, and shared dreams are the major advantages for couples who undertake their business together<sup>19</sup> which can be further classified into two broad advantages, i.e., [a] those which are related to the co-preneurial business operation, and [b] individual and psychological situation of the couples who run the business. In a more detailed exposition, the major advantages, and disadvantages,<sup>20</sup> are:

1. To avoid fraudulently, cheaters and manipulation in business operation
2. Commitment to the development of the business
3. Smoother communication
4. Better working performance and be able to find solutions to problems.

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<sup>15</sup> Aliaa El Shoubaki, Joern Block, and Frank Lasch, "The Couple Business as a Unique Form of Business: A Review Of The Empirical Evidence," *Management Review Quarterly* 72 (2022): 121.

<sup>16</sup> Patricia Hedberg and Sharon Danes, "Explorations of dynamic Power Processes within Copreneurial Couples," *Journal of Family Business Strategy* 3 (2012): 226.

<sup>17</sup> Norashmah Othman, Suzana Mohamed and Salpiah, "Motivating Factors of Couple Involvement in Copreneurship Businesses in Malaysia," *International Journal of Industrial and Systems Engineering* 10, no. 1 (2016): 259.

<sup>18</sup> Michael S Dahl, Mirjam van Praag, and Peter Thompson, "Entrepreneurial couples," 75<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting of the Academy of Management, AOM 2015, 8186, 799.

<sup>19</sup> Olufemi Aladejebi, "Copreneurs: The Impact of Spousal Relationship on Business Success in Nigeria," *Archives of Business Research* 8, no. 2 (2020): 73.

<sup>20</sup> Ondřej Machek, Jiří Hnilica, Daniela Kolouchová and Martin Machek, "Are Couple-Run Companies More Profitable than Professionally Managed Firms?" *International Advances in Economic Research, International Atlantic Economic Society* 21, no. 3 (2015): 356.

5. Emotional support
6. Have unified goals in doing the business.

However, there are also several possible disadvantages of businesses that are run in co-preneurial model, namely:

1. Vulnerability in mixing individual problems & performance in business.
2. Family conflicts may interfere with the business.
3. Un-professional in conducting tasks.

Despite the disadvantages identified above, however, many couples tend to prefer choosing this kind of business practice. There are several dimensional advantages surrounding co-preneurial businesses, namely: [a] the structural dimension which would initially encourage partnerships, gaining possible access to customers and building capacities of the individual, [b] the cognitive dimension, which lets each partner contribute to co-constructing a new interpretive framework, specific to the partnership, with the alliance partner.<sup>21</sup> Another advantage is related to the relational aspects, particularly through the improvement of trust as the result of professional demand in competencies, encouraging improvement in individual communication, and the rise of personal integrity.

#### **1.4.3. Reason for and Motivation in Co-preneurship**

Study findings show that the major motivation for individuals to enter co-preneurial business is related to efforts and strategies to manage tensions and to balance performance between demand at work, and demand at home.<sup>22</sup> From many major literatures, employees may quit their jobs because of this reason.<sup>23</sup>

Hobbies and other non-economic factors are the stimuli to co-preneurial business formation. Co-preneurial business may be also used by females to become free from their traditional gender roles, which clearly separates roles between males and females. Reasons and motivation to establish co-preneurial business may be identified as follows:

1. Limited choice & opportunity to get and to have a job by each of couple.
2. Excessive economic conditions have made them decide to maintain that excessiveness to be still in their possession.
3. Improving productivity possessed by each couple.
4. Has the interest to conduct the same activities with the partner.

Motivations to start co-preneurial business have raised understanding that each partner has economic-business motives (such as improving financial welfare, joint ownership of the business and assets, etc.) as well as

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<sup>21</sup> Patricia Doyle Corner and Kathryn Pavlovich, "Entrepreneurship Research: Follow the Yellow-Brick Road?," *Journal of Management & Organization* 13, no. 4 (2007): 291.

<sup>22</sup> Laura Galloway, Laura, John W. Sanders, Jo Bensemann and Alexei Tretiakov, "Social Networks and Relationships in Copreneurial Firms: An International Study," *Journal of Family Business Management* 12, no. 4 (2021): 912.

<sup>23</sup> Brownhilder Ngek Neneh, "Role Saliency and the Growth Intention of Women Entrepreneurs: Does Work-life Balance Make a Difference?," *The Spanish Journal of Psychology* 24, no. 4 (2021): 8.

psychological motives (such as togetherness with partners, lifestyle, freedom to do things in business, etc.), when they decided to conduct this business.

#### **1.4.4. Proposition Development**

The research direction as well as major theoretical underpinnings regarding co-preneurship are used as the major conceptual foundation to formulate a proposition for this study. Align with the Indonesian legal regime regarding women's protection and gender equality, the propositions in this study are arranged the following.

**Proposition 1.** Gender roles in co-preneurship business practices are majorly distributed based on the position of gender within the community and social environment. National legal frameworks align the real life of the communities and social environment.

**Proposition 2.** Gender roles in co-preneurship are majorly divided based on the social, cultural, and religious background of each couple.

**Proposition 3.** Distribution of gender roles in co-preneurship business practice can be drawn based on three perspectives, i.e., social, cultural, and religiosity.

The propositions of this study are being used as the guidelines that give direction to analysis in this study.

## **2. RESULT AND ANALYSIS**

### **2.1. Gender Role Distribution from the Religious Perspective**

The study firstly elaborates on gender role distribution from the perspective of Islam as the religion embraced by study participants. The religious perspective in this study focuses on Islam as it is the major religion embraced by the Indonesian population. From the Islamic perspective, gender role distribution between males and females is considered equal, i.e., as the servant of the God, and as the ruler/leader, who have equally accepted the same primordial agreement, and who have equal potential to perform. Those principles are clearly explained and detailed in Al-Quran as the holy book of Muslims.

Several verses and paragraphs in Al Quran clearly define and explain the position of males and females. Al Quran Surah/QS An-Nisa': 35 states that males are given advantages over females, in terms of physical and mental ability and performance, so it is reasonable that males are positioned as the leader of females. However, this difference is not aimed to benefit male only and in reverse, to detriment female. The different positions between males and females are, in fact, to achieve and perform harmonic relationships which are based on feelings of care and love in the family (QS Ar-Rum:31) and as an embryo to materialize an ideal community in one place (QS As-Saba:15). Also, Islam has defined the specific obligation which should be embraced by husband and wife and ask them to commit to undertaking their roles. The husband's role is mainly to work for a living and earn income, while the wife is obliged to take care of the children, to love and care, take care of the education for the children, take care of the



house, and every kind of specific women's domestic task and duty (QS. An-Nisa': 34 and QS. At Tahrim: 6).

Despite the clear role, however, there are still parties in Indonesia who misplace females/women as weak and fragile human beings and consequently restrict them from undertaking activities outside of the house. Females are requested to be accompanied and guided by their male relatives wherever they want to go.<sup>24</sup> This male relative guide is called *mahram*, which refers to a person with whom marriage is prohibited because of their close blood relationship, because of breastfeeding, or because of being related by marriage. Another view in Islam also states that women/females are not allowed and not obliged to have jobs, but rather to stay at home and take care of the house, the husband, and children.<sup>25</sup>

The different interpretations of the Al Quran have raised consequences in the unequal practice of gender roles, which creates a misconception that males and females in Islam have totally different positions, and roles. The reasons vary, starting from misinterpretation to the history, cultural environment, and patriarchal tradition embraced by communities.

## **2.2. Gender Role Distribution from the Social Perspective**

Discussions regarding gender roles are deeply intertwined with social realities, revealing that gender role distribution often results in unequal circumstances. Among the study participants, who largely adhere to paternalistic kinship systems, males occupy superior positions, marginalizing the power and influence of females, even in moral and ethical decision-making within families.

In these paternalistic systems, dominated moral values are often developed based solely on male interests. This dynamic is evident in the family unit, the smallest social community, where males typically serve as the head of families, thereby marginalizing female influence, even in the realm of moral guidance. The social perspective that prioritizes male interests and domination over females has led to significant consequences, particularly in the perceptions and mindsets related to role distribution in the workplace and male-female relationships. There is a prevalent stereotype that men should be the primary earners, responsible for working and securing jobs, while women should focus on domestic tasks such as taking care of the house, children, cooking, washing, and serving all family members. This stereotype fosters a common perception that women's tasks and responsibilities are inherently limited. The nature of the patriarchal system is viewed to contribute to this perceptual stereotype.

Similar to this, patriarchal societies in other countries are also practicing the same tendencies. Men in India for example, tend to have a more traditional gender role attitude which views that men/husbands should lead the family in financial matters and the wife's sole job is taking

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<sup>24</sup> Manjur Hossain Pattoari, "The Rights of Women in Islam and Some Misconceptions: An Analysis from Bangladesh Perspective," *Beijing Law Review* 10, (2019): 1216.

<sup>25</sup> Dwi Edi Wibowo, "Peran Ganda Perempuan dan Kesetaraan Gender," *Muwazah* 3, no. 1 (2012): 362.

care of the house and children.<sup>26</sup> Despite 54% of the Indians view that men and women in the family should be equally responsible and has rights in earning money for the family, but in fact, 64% including 61% of women of the Indians completely believe that a wife should always oblige to obey her husband.<sup>27</sup> Consequently, most women are simply undertaking domestic roles, rather than involving in more productive roles. It is evident that this stereotype has made women underperform in owning and managing businesses (in terms of size, growth, and efficiency).<sup>28</sup>

There are also existing misinterpretations regarding suitable types of work and jobs for women. Females are often viewed as only capable of handling tasks related to emotions and senses, such as public relations and marketing, and often not allowed to become leaders due to the perception that they are relatively irrational. This lack of female leadership in business and industry exacerbates inequality and discrimination, which can be seen in salary disparities, where women typically earn less than male.

Despite most ethnicities in Indonesia embracing patriarchal kinship system (such as Bugis in South Sulawesi Province, Acehese in Aceh Province, and Melayu in Riau Province), the Minangkabau ethnic is different. Minangkabau ethnic embraces a matrilineal kinship system, which recognizes a person as the descendant of his/her mother. In matrilineal society, the management of family properties is inherited through female lineage and so as various important decisions regarding the future of the ethnic and within members of the ethnic. Minangkabau ethnic gives more and higher appreciation to the existence of females in their social and cultural systems, as well as in the decision-making process, including in business operations. The nature of its kinship system has made Minangkabau people described as having spacious thinking, freedom of life to change fate, and to reach knowledge and wealth more rationally.<sup>29</sup>

### **2.3. Gender Role Distribution from the Cultural Perspective**

Study participants who took part in this study have Javanese culture (which originated from Java Island, in particular provinces of Yogyakarta Special Region, Central Java, and East Java), Minangkabau culture (originated from West Sumatra Province), and the Mandarese culture (from West Sulawesi/West Celebes). The Javanese and Mandarese cultures

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<sup>26</sup> Surbhi Pareek and Ruby Jain, "Traditional or Modern, Where Does India Stand on Gender Role Attitude Scale?" *International Journal of Scientific and Technology Research* 8, (2019): 1032.

<sup>27</sup> Jonathan Evans, Neha Sahgal, Ariana Monique Salazar, Kelsey Jo Starr, and Manolo Corich, "How Indians View Gender Roles in Families and Societies: Indians Accept Woman as Political Leader, but many Favor Traditional Gender Roles in Family Life," Pew-Templeton Global Religious Futures, Pew Research Center, 2022.

<sup>28</sup> Kausik Chauduri, Subash Sasidharan and Rajesh Seethamma Natarajan Raj, "Gender, small firm ownership, and credit access: some insights from India," *Small Business Economics* 54, (2020): 1172.

<sup>29</sup> Alexander Stark, "The Matrilineal System of the Minangkabau and its Persistence Throughout History: A Structural Perspective," *Southeast Asia: A Multidisciplinary Journal* 13, (2013): 7.

embrace the patriarchate system, while the Minangkabau culture is rooted in matrilineal system. Those two different cultures bring advantages as they can enrich and broaden discussions and understanding from two different kinship perspectives.

### **2.3.1. Gender role in Javanese culture**

The Javanese patriarchate system has generated expression which implies the inferiority of Javanese females. Unconsciously, this has been further voluntarily accepted by the Javanese social system. The Javanese embrace the principle that wives are the '*kanca wingking*' – can simply be meant as 'the rear-end friend' who will manage the family affairs, especially the children, cooking, washing, and any other domestic matters.<sup>30</sup> Another Javanese expression to clarify the role of wives is '*suwarna nunut neraka katut*' simply meant as 'the husbands are parties who can decide whether their wives will go to heaven or hades/hell. The roles of wives are focused on giving descendants, should always be presentable in front of their husbands, and should always be available to cook for the husbands.<sup>31</sup> The strengths of those conceptions in Javanese culture have further evoked treatments that limit females' flexibility, movement, and space. This can be seen in the concept of '*pingitan*' which prohibits females from having activities freely. This still provides a current perspective that females' role is to serve, take care of, and be responsible for family affairs, while the role of men is given the task of the main source of income and being responsible for family needs. This value in vice versa, creates stereotypes in Javanese patriarchal kinship system.

On the other side, the figure of ideal males in Javanese culture are those who are good-looking, have wives, always win in every battle, and always win the female's heart. The role of males in Javanese culture is as the figure who should always be served by females. Therefore, for the Javanese culture, the female's role and position are rather as the property that belongs to the males, and they are equal to '*bondo*' (assets), '*griyo*' (the palace), '*turonggo*' (vehicle), '*kukilo*' (pets), and '*pusoko*' (weapon).<sup>32</sup>

### **2.3.2. Gender Role in Minangkabau Culture**

Minangkabau culture, which is embraced by most West Sumatran people is unique, as it has matrilineal kinship system, in which females are put in a very special position and have an important portion in the decision-making process within the clan, especially if the decisions are related to cultural and traditional issues (the legacies, assets of the clan, cultural ceremonies, etc.). A consequence of this kinship system is shown for

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<sup>30</sup> Dhian Lestari Hastuti, Imam Santosa, Achmad Syarief and Pribadi Widodo, "The Meaning of Women as Kanca Wingking in Javanese House Organization of Pura Mangkunegaran," *Proceedings of the 2<sup>nd</sup> International Conference on Interdisciplinary Arts & Humanities (ICONARTIES)* (2020), 8.

<sup>31</sup> Yunus Khoirul Amal, Prasetyo Adi Wisnu Wibowo, and Titis Srimuda Pitana, "Dadi Lemek Dadi Gandhek" in Javanese Cultural Perspective," *International Journal of Multicultural and Multireligious Understanding* 10, no. 11 (2023): 299.

<sup>32</sup> Benedict Richard O'Gorman Anderson, "*The Idea of Power in Javanese Culture. Culture and Politics in Indonesia*" (Cornel University, 2019), 46.

example, in the recognition of a person as the descendant of his/her mother, in the management of family properties such as land and houses, which are inherited through female lineage, and in the control system of various decisions within the ethnic.<sup>33</sup>

Minangkabau females are called '*bundo kanduang*' – meant as a figure of 'mother' in every important positive meaning, who is always positioned as a non-formal leader for every member of the family and the descendants.<sup>34</sup> The existence of *Bundo Kanduang* as a figure of the mother in Minangkabau culture has further implied that Minangkabau females should be well educated and should reach a high education level, equal to males. Females should involve in solving important and strategic problems, and circumstances within the clan and their social environment. *Bundo Kanduang* strategically decides and will give green or red lights to every decision regarding the clan and the future of their big family. Given the important and strategic roles of females in the Minangkabau cultural order, however, the figure of *Bundo Kanduang* can only be acquired by females once they have married, or become a wife or mother of the child. Single-unmarried females cannot bear to hold that figure.

The position and role of females in Minangkabau culture have brought direct consequences to the roles of males. Males, husbands, fathers, or brothers in a family do not have a major/important position over females. The future of the children becomes the responsibility of their uncles and not their father. Males/fathers are only limited by the culture to protect and nurture their children and earn for living. Therefore, the position and role of males and females are relatively equal – as both genders are simultaneously empowered by their culture.

### **2.3.3. Gender Role in Mandarese Culture**

The Mandarese ethnic inhabits West Sulawesi Province in Sulawesi/Celebes Island, which is one of the tribes living in that area. To especially look at the gender role perspective from the culture of Mandarese people, the study considered a specific principle and activity, well known as '*Salibaparri*', embraced by this clan. *Salibaparri* is a principle, that encourages the couple husband and wife as well as the children to work together hand in hand to earn a daily living and to ensure the sustainability of harmony in the family in the longer term.<sup>35</sup> As its philosophical foundation, *Salibaparri* views that the Mandarese females are very loyal/faithful wives but flexible, and can simultaneously position themselves either as a woman or a wife for their husband.

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<sup>33</sup> Hafiz Rahman, Sri Oktavia, and Eri Besra, "Psycho-Cultural Perspective on the Formation of Entrepreneurial Culture of Minangkabau Tribe in West Sumatra Indonesia," *Udayana Journal of Law and Culture* 3, no. 1 (2019): 56.

<sup>34</sup> Sismarni, "Perubahan Peranan Bundo Kanduang dalam Kehidupan Masyarakat Minangkabau Modern," *Kafa'ah: Journal of Gender Studies* 1, no. 95 (2011): 12.

<sup>35</sup> Mahyuddin, Muhammad Wahyuddin, and Wahyuni, "Keluarga Nelayan dan Budaya Sibaliparri: Menyingkap Relasi Kesetaraan Gender dalam Masyarakat Mandar," *Al-Maiyyah: Media Transformasi Gender dalam Paradigma Sosial Keagamaan* 13, no.1 (2020): 83.

*Salibaparri* of the Mandarese people embraces the principle of obliging females or wives to assist in the activities of their husbands. It is reasonably clear that the roles and positions of wives and husbands are considered equal. The husband in principle should always be ready and available to act as the leader of the family and to take the biggest responsibility to ensure the financial welfare of the family. Meanwhile, the wives are also considered equal to be responsible for the life and sustainability of the family, especially matters which are related to the values of life, and religiosity.

*Salibaparri* has consequently valued some simple expressions such as “*di battu ummandeang nandiang tia mauang lao piapi anu*” and “*tikai puka,na nandiang ma,uang i'o anu ondongo, naung disease*” which are philosophically meant as the awareness and initiative to jointly undertake important tasks and activities in the family. *Salibaparri* has successfully created a perception in Mandarese females, that they should be active in acting as the assistants of their husbands in securing the financial welfare of the family without neglecting their main task as the major figure in educating their children. Therefore, *Salibaparri* can be understood as the philosophy of shared responsibility between males and females, equality, cooperation, sincerity, and helping and assisting each other.

#### **2.3.4. Findings and Results from the Study Participants**

The study has found some very interesting results to answer the major questions related to its topic. The interview results of the study participants found the following:

##### **2.3.4.1. Social Perspectives, Roles, Conflict**

Each couple of participants revealed that they have clear roles and a detailed distribution of tasks and responsibilities in their co-preneurial business activities. There is an equal and fair role distribution, by considering capacities owned by each partner individually. Participants also strongly expressed that they are not influenced by stereotypes and perspectives that evolve within their social environment. One study participant revealed they believe they are both capable of running the business.<sup>36</sup> There are rules for operating, conducting, and controlling the business, which are set up together. Study participants revealed that they can maintain their business running smoothly since there are rules in their business. The relationship status is set up as a business colleague, rather than a husband and wife or partner. Therefore, there are no role differences between males and females in managing the operation of the business.

Study participants also reveal that stereotypes regarding the inferior roles of females should not exist in business anymore. Role distribution should be clear and should be adjusted based on capabilities to avoid conflicts. Couples should have mutual trust, openness, and one direction to run the business, by trying to communicate with each other and asking for insights. Conflicts are always there, but there should be a discussion to solve the conflicts, challenging the arguments and different opinions. In the

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<sup>36</sup> Dodi Indra from Zetye Fashion, “Defining Roles in Co-preneurship, interview by Rifa Cantika Wulandari, Jakarta, July 6, 2024.

end, agreement and decision could be more effective as they have mutual trust, open to hearing, and believe that both are in the same direction in running this business.<sup>37</sup>

#### **2.3.4.2. Cultural Perspectives and Gender Roles**

The study participants revealed the occurrence of lowering egoistic feelings, which can be seen in the willingness to combine specific gender tasks and responsibilities either in business or family. Both can manage their ego, raise the synergy, and become more relaxed in deciding things in business and domestic matters. There is freedom for females (given by males) to stipulate their roles in business. Males have the freedom to stipulate exact roles and tasks that they want to do. In the end, either husband or wife or partner respects whatever kind of status and position in their business. In terms of respect for female potential and abilities, study participants reveal that they always respect and encourage females to have roles and tasks in the business. A comfortable feeling when doing business is an aim.<sup>38</sup>

*“In my culture, respecting women is one of our concerns. In my culture, females are not only demanded to become a wife or housewives but rather should have an extra role. This role, of course, may be implemented in various matters, including in business. So, for me and my own culture, whatever kinds of tasks that should be undertaken by females, they should be highly respected because it is the way for them to feel comfortable in the business.”<sup>39</sup>*

#### **2.3.4.3. Religious Perspectives and Gender Roles**

Related to religious perspectives regarding gender roles, there is no such very strict burden that limits the roles of each gender in business. However, males tend to have more active roles compared to females. Based on Islam as the participants' religion, they viewed that Islam tends to be moderate by letting females undertake activities and tasks in businesses if the business is run together with their husbands. The expression of study participants can show this.

*“I and my wife have Minangkabau ethnicity from West Sumatra as our background, which is honoured and respected Islam in every daily life activity. It can be said from our ethnic point of view that Islam has become our major and important foundation in our daily life. It is very important that we have a saying that says *adat basandi syara', syara' basandi kitabullah'* which means that our culture is founded upon Islam, and Islam is founded upon Al Quran*

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<sup>37</sup> Abdu Alatsari, “The stereotype of the roles of females in Co-preneurship, interview by Rifa Cantika Wulandari, Jakarta, July 8, 2024.

<sup>38</sup> Nofi Agustina from KanoProject, “Freedom of females in Co-preneurship, interview by Rifa Cantika Wulandari, Jakarta, June 22, 2024.

<sup>39</sup> Reza Fachrevy from Baba Supply, “Respect for female potentials in Co-preneurship, interview by Rifa Cantika Wulandari, July 15, 2024.

*as the book of Islam. Based on what we have been through as practicing Muslims, we don't have any major burden which is sourced from our religion, in conducting our business together. Yaaa...even though I must admit that as a husband, I always have bigger roles, especially if the matters are related to customers, suppliers, etc. (especially those who are males). There is a tiny limitation, but it should not influence the operation of our business."*

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Despite the phenomenon in Indonesia showing that males still have major priority in work and industry (to lead, manage, and decide) the current trends also prove that females tend to have bigger and bigger roles in various activities. A clear example can be found the growing involvement of women in small-medium scale enterprises/SMEs. In the past, a more positive stereotype was embedded in males – as a figure who is more direct, rational, logical, and therefore, can make proper and correct decisions in many situations. Consequently, males dominated the work and industry while females found it very difficult to become excellent in their jobs and careers.

This stereotype has further brought consequences that females will consider underperforming once they have bigger roles, tasks, and responsibilities. A negative justification then arises, saying that females are not capable. The types of this burden are various, such as gender bias, stereotypes, and discrimination, but in the end, they will consequently hamper opportunities and possibilities for females and minorities to reach the top achievements in their jobs. Especially for females, there is also a burden regarding the perception from our social environment that females should specifically undertake domestic tasks. A glass-ceiling phenomenon can be found in many daily and business activities that are related to females' roles.

Taking Indonesia as the major Muslim population country as the context (according to the Indonesian Ministry of Religion, in 2023 the population was around 229,62 million or around 87,2% of the Indonesian population), this situation also happened in the past. Females' position has been viewed as bring disadvantage for businesses. The stereotype of gender roles between male and females which is sourced from Islam as the major religion of Indonesian people, in general, has made females face double obstacles once they want to be involved in business activities, i.e., domestic and family affairs, and social perception, which in the end, has made females seldom involved in the decision-making process of the business.

The stereotype of male superiority which is based on the religious background of the society is also found in India, where Muslims are often viewed and found as the least egalitarian in their attitudes, when they need to distribute equal gender roles in various activities compared with other religions.<sup>41</sup> Muslims are found as much less likely to view that earning money for the family as a shared responsibility between husband and wife

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<sup>40</sup> Dodi Indra from Zetye Fashion, "Religious perspectives regarding gender roles in Co-preneurship, interview by Rifa Cantika Wulandari, July 6, 2024.

<sup>41</sup> Evans et.al, *op.cit.*, 31.

(37% respectively) and most Indian Muslims say these roles should fall to men and sons. As a consequence, females are viewed as non-productive figures who can contribute to the family earnings, and therefore, they are just being given more domestic roles compared with males.

On the contrary, despite gender bias, negative stereotypes regarding female roles, and discrimination, co-preneurship practices in the context of the study can perform well, and have no significant negative acceptance either from cultural, social, or religious perspectives. The negative perception regarding gender roles is minimized, in which males and females can share ownership, commitment, trust, tasks, and responsibilities equally. Co-preneurship practices are identified as having odd task distribution between genders, but amazingly, couples can manage their professional relationship by separating their domestic and business affairs. The essence of respect and the recognition of gender existence are the other two most prominent reasons why co-preneurship practices are well accepted, not only by the couples themselves but also by the social environment at large.

In the case that co-preneurship practice involves a couple of courted/partners, the study found that it is viewed as the media to improve a more productive and beneficial relationship. Both partners (either male or female) can contribute positively to the operation of the business, such as in the design of job descriptions, decision-making processes, tackling problems, etc. Therefore, the study argues that the stereotype regarding the limitation of gender roles (especially females' roles) which may be sourced from social, cultural, and religious perspectives, does not have a significant influence on the distribution of roles between male and female.

An interesting finding that has consistently been found in the participants of the study showed that the distribution of roles between genders is purely based on the following reasons: [a] abilities, potentials, and capabilities, [b] collaboration to achieve success, [c] flawless communication and interaction, [d] more productive time usage, and [e] trust. Regarding trust, this study also supports that partnership between males and females will have more advantages in business performance because they can make full use of trust and propinquity which is applied in their business.<sup>42</sup>

Another important finding of the study is related to conflict, discrimination, and equality in distributed roles. The study argues that respect from partners is also useful to reduce the possibility of conflict in managing the business. Openness in another way is also viewed to reduce discrimination and at the same time, improve equal roles between them. The study strongly argues that co-preneurship practice may improve the possibility of applying the principle of professionalism in business. For a couple of husbands and wives, co-preneurship practice can be used to separate between family and business affairs, while for a couple of courted/partners, it can be used as the recognition of personal/individual

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<sup>42</sup> David L. Brannon, Johan Wiklund, and Michael Haynie, "The Varying Effects of Family Relationships in Entrepreneurial Teams," *Entrepreneurship Theory and Practice* 37, (2013): 115.



capacities, competencies, abilities, and potentials of each partner, especially the female. There is no evidence showing that there are pressures to apply the stereotype from the past regarding the distribution of gender roles in co-preneurship practice. Applying professionalism in business is viewed as the major reason why the obsolete stereotype regarding gender role distribution is no longer applied in co-preneurship business practice.

#### **2.4. Law Perspectives on Gender Role Distribution in Indonesia**

Gender roles and women's protection always become an important issue in business. The rationale lies in the fact that immobility, poor societal support, and ethnic influences negatively affect the performance of women in business.<sup>43</sup> In Indonesia, females/women are protected through various legal frameworks either at national or local levels, as well as based on sector of activities. From a legal perspective, the movement toward gender equality saw early momentum with the foundational human rights treaties of 1966, which called for non-discrimination based on sex and obligated signatory countries to uphold equal rights for men and women.

Despite these advances, by 1979, UN Member States acknowledged that discrimination against women remained prevalent necessitating a specialized treaty focused on women's rights—the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW). CEDAW addresses deeply ingrained stereotypes that have historically positioned men as superior and women as inferior within many cultural and religious frameworks.<sup>44</sup> Although CEDAW is among the most widely endorsed of the UN's key human rights treaties, it faces an exceptionally high number of reservations from participating countries in the United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights. This resistance often stems from fears around altering traditional gender roles, as CEDAW's preamble highlights the need for both men and women's roles to evolve within society and family life to achieve genuine equality.<sup>45</sup>

The latest research demonstrates the promise of equal rights for women and the reality remains significant even at international levels, yet these laws hold the potential to drive progress by addressing national resistance. Serving as role models, international and supranational laws are less influenced by individual societies' cultural and religious traditions, though this detachment can sometimes reduce their perceived legitimacy. For lasting impact, solutions must be persuasive rather than imposed, demonstrating that gender discrimination limits talent and creates competitive disadvantages for societies.

In efforts to acknowledge the laws for preventing discrimination against women, Indonesia ratified CEDAW.<sup>46</sup> In Indonesia's context, gender equality

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<sup>43</sup> Deogratius Sangu, "Cultural Factors and Women SMEs Performance." *International Journal of Business, Law, and Education* 6, no.1 (2025): 22.

<sup>44</sup> Dragica Vujadinović, Mareike Fröhlich, Thomas Giegerich (eds), *Gender-Competent Legal Education* (Cham: Springer Textbooks in Law, Springer, 2023), 5.

<sup>45</sup> Frances Raday, "Gender and democratic citizenship: the impact of CEDAW," *International Journal of Constitutional Law* 10, no. 2 (2012): 516.

<sup>46</sup> Law No. 7 of 1984 concerning Convention on The Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women, Art. 1.

and the protection of women's rights within co-preneurship—where spouses or family members share business responsibilities—are influenced by a range of laws designed to foster balance and mutual respect. These legal frameworks intersect with cultural and religious values that underscore shared responsibility and harmonious partnerships, making the legal system a critical support in promoting equitable gender roles in business<sup>47</sup>.

At the core, Article 46 of Law No. 39 of 1999 concerning Human Rights establishes the rights of all Indonesian citizens, including women, to participate equally across political, economic, social, and cultural spheres.<sup>48</sup> This law is a cornerstone in promoting gender equality, which directly impacts the dynamics of co-preneurship by affirming that both partners have an equal right to contribute and lead within a business. This alignment of law with principles of fairness encourages women to exercise agency and take on significant roles in business, moving beyond traditional expectations of supportive roles only.

Furthermore, Indonesia grants women who already have legal capacity before the law, including those who are married, the right to engage in legal actions independently, unless restricted by their religious laws. This provision is crucial for co-preneurship as it enables women to make legal and financial decisions in their business partnerships without dependence on their spouses. It empowers them to take active roles in business operations, strengthening the legal foundation for equitable co-leadership within family-run enterprises. To this extent, Indonesian human rights law has acknowledged the rights of women conducting such actions to the extent of the religious laws. Further reinforcing this is the law on domestic violence, which protects individuals from physical, psychological, and economic abuse, particularly within households especially for women.<sup>49</sup>

This law plays a vital role in co-preneurship by criminalizing coercive control within domestic settings, thereby discouraging abusive behaviors that could impact shared business responsibilities. It mandates protective measures for victims, fostering an environment where each partner's voice holds equal weight in decision-making, free from fear of abuse or dominance. The law's inclusion of economic abuse acknowledges the impact of financial control in domestic abuse, empowering both partners to manage resources equitably and ensuring financial autonomy within the partnership. Furthermore, its emphasis on rehabilitation and restorative justice provides pathways for resolving conflicts respectfully, enabling co-preneurs to rebuild trust and collaborate on shared goals without the effects of unresolved abuse. This stipulation creates a framework for balanced, respectful co-preneurial relationships, allowing both partners to thrive in a supportive and safe business environment.

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<sup>47</sup> Nur Hidayah, "Gender, Economy, and the Law: Women Entrepreneurs in Indonesian and Islamic Legal Perspectives." *Samarah: Jurnal Hukum Keluarga dan Hukum Islam* 9, no. 2 (2023): 1126.

<sup>48</sup> Law No. 39 of 1999 concerning Human Rights, Art. 46.

<sup>49</sup> Law No. 24 of 2004 concerning Domestic Violence, Arts. 2, 5, 6 and 8.

The law on the eradication of human trafficking addresses economic vulnerabilities that expose women to exploitation, emphasizing financial independence as a form of protection. It encourages economic empowerment to reduce dependency, aiming to prevent exploitation within various contexts.<sup>50</sup> By supporting women's ability to manage resources and contribute economically, this law promotes balanced partnerships and seeks to mitigate financial manipulation risks, reinforcing gender equity principles within legal protections.

Meanwhile, the law on citizenship strengthens gender equality by ensuring that women have equal citizenship rights,<sup>51</sup> empowering them to retain their nationality in cross-national marriages and to pass it on to their children. This provision is crucial for co-preneurship, as it allows women to engage in cross-border business without nationality-based legal restrictions, strengthening their active role in partnerships.

By ensuring that a woman's citizenship does not limit her business participation, the law promotes an equitable framework aligned with Indonesia's gender equality goals. This support for seamless, unrestricted co-preneurial operations underscores the legal system's commitment to gender-equitable partnerships in an increasingly globalized business environment. These laws acknowledge and protect women's rights, reinforcing the importance of women's voices in Indonesia's legal landscape. By mandating at least 30% representation of women in political parties and legislative bodies,<sup>52</sup> explicitly recognize women's potential and contributions in leadership roles. This framework encourages balanced power-sharing, supporting the presence of women not only in public office but also in co-preneurial settings, where both partners can take active roles. Such laws underscore Indonesia's commitment to gender inclusivity, fostering an environment where women's rights are respected, their leadership capabilities acknowledged, and their participation actively encouraged, thereby reinforcing mutual respect and collaboration within both public and private sectors.

### **3. CONCLUSION**

The study implies new perspectives regarding the philosophical perspectives of co-preneurship business practice which are sourced from religious, cultural, social, and legal frameworks as foundations in Indonesia. The combination and holistic integration between those foundations have successfully brought and created awareness regarding the co-preneurship business practice, equality of gender role distribution in business activities, as well as attention to the rights and legal-social protection for women at work. By using social, cultural, and religious perspectives as the cornerstone to analyzing the distribution of gender roles, the study further argues that in the study context, co-preneurship practice does not collide with social, cultural, and religious values and norms embraced by the study

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<sup>50</sup> Law No. 21 of 2007 concerning Human Trafficking, Art. 1.

<sup>51</sup> Law No. 12 of 2006 concerning the Citizenship, Art. 4.

<sup>52</sup> Law No. 2 of 2008 concerning Political Party, Art. 20 and Law No. 7 of 2017 concerning General Election, Art. 245.

participants. Conversely, it can boost professionalism between males and females in business. However, the current legal framework should be developed better to create more assurance and protection for women who are entering business practice and operation.

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