

The Role Of Female Vegetable Vendors In Contributing To Household Income At The Main Market Of Wonomulyo Sub-District

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to examine and analyze the role of female vegetable vendors in increasing household income at the Main Market of Wonomulyo Sub-district, Polewali Mandar Regency. The research is based on the socio-economic reality of lower-middle-class households, where women not only fulfill domestic roles but also actively participate in income-generating activities. A qualitative descriptive approach was employed, with data collected through in-depth interviews with ten purposively selected informants. Findings indicate that the primary motivation for women to engage in vegetable trading is to support family needs due to unstable husband incomes. The average daily income of the informants was IDR 121,000, with contributions to household income ranging from moderate (30%–60%) to high (>60%). Supporting factors include the number of dependents, access to business capital, and the habit of saving as a form of financial management. These results demonstrate that female vegetable vendors play a strategic role in sustaining household economies and contribute significantly to economic resilience. Therefore, their contributions deserve recognition and support through access to capital, entrepreneurship training, and adequate social protection.

INTRODUCTION

Family needs in today's era continue to rise, covering aspects such as food, clothing, housing, education, and healthcare. The increasing cost of basic necessities, education, and the growing complexity of economic pressures compel every family member to be more adaptive and productive in seeking various means to meet daily living requirements. In this effort, people generally engage in a variety of business ventures—small, medium, or large-scale—with the main goal of earning enough income to support family welfare.

In Islam, working to provide for one's family is even considered a religious obligation. The Qur'an instructs people not to remain idle, but to continue striving after completing one task: "*Then when you are finished [with one task], strive [hard] in another.*" (Q.S. Al-Insyirah [94]: 7). This verse emphasizes the importance of continuous effort and hard work, including the pursuit of livelihood. Although providing for the family is primarily the responsibility of the male head of household, women also have the right to work in order to support and increase family income. In Q.S. Al-Baqarah [2]: 228, it is stated: "*And women have rights similar to those [of men] over them in kindness,*" which serves as theological justification for women's active participation in public life.

The phenomenon of women acting as breadwinners has become increasingly common, especially among female vegetable vendors in traditional markets. Women's economic roles are no longer supplementary but are often central to household finances. In many cases, the income earned from selling vegetables is the main source of family income and may even surpass the husband's earnings. This indicates a shift in women's roles from purely domestic to dual roles, functioning both as homemakers and economic actors. This research focuses on female vegetable vendors, as this occupation is largely

undertaken by women from lower-middle-class backgrounds who are known for their resilience and diligence, yet are rarely the subject of academic research. Their consistent work from morning until evening demonstrates a tangible contribution to household economic structures and deserves scholarly attention.

The changing paradigm of women's roles is also evident in their motivation to work—not only for economic necessity but also for personal and professional growth. Many women perceive working as a way to apply their knowledge and skills and realize their potential. Ramlatfatma, Sumarni, and Purnamasari (2020) showed that women work not only to support family finances but also to affirm their existence and agency.

Women's social attributes—such as resilience, patience, and persistence—make them well-suited for trade, especially in selling vegetables. Economic, educational, social, and cultural reasons all drive women to work. As explained by Megi Tindangen (2020), many women work as mobile vegetable vendors to support their household finances.

Trading is one of the most accessible forms of work for women. It does not require high levels of formal education and offers flexibility. In traditional markets, traders serve as intermediaries between producers and consumers. They obtain goods from suppliers or producers and sell them to end consumers. Their presence is vital in driving the local economy and reflects the social dynamics of market communities (Yusuf Makhrodin, 2024).

According to W.J.S. Poerwadarminta, a “trader” is defined as someone who sells goods, and as Rahma (2021) explains, traders may sell both primary and secondary necessities. Their income tends to fluctuate, depending heavily on sales volume, prices, and market dynamics. This motivates many women to keep working in order to stabilize household income.

Data from the Polewali Mandar Regency Government (2024) shows that among eight sub-districts, Wonomulyo has the highest number of traders—totaling 1,043. The Main Market in Wonomulyo is considered a strategic location due to its consistently high visitor traffic, attracting buyers not only from Sidodadi but also from surrounding areas, making it a vital hub for the local economy.

Furthermore, fluctuations in the income of female vegetable vendors between December 2024 and May 2025 show monthly earnings ranging from IDR 3,600,000 to IDR 5,400,000, totaling IDR 25,650,000 over the six-month period. This indicates that vegetable trading significantly contributes to household income, especially among lower-middle-class families (Source: paceko.com).

Structurally, markets serve as essential economic interaction spaces between sellers and buyers. Zuwardi and Sari (2023) noted that markets are not merely places of transaction but also engines of community economic growth, encompassing inflation, deflation, and price formation based on supply and demand. Traditional markets, in this context, represent a participatory people's economy and act as the backbone of household financial systems.

Given this context, it can be concluded that women play a strategic role in supporting and increasing family income. Their role is not simply additive but essential to sustaining the household economy. Thus, this study—titled “*The Role of Female Vegetable Vendors in Contributing to Household Income at the Main Market of Wonomulyo Sub-district*”—aims to provide an in-depth understanding of the economic roles of women in traditional market settings.

RESEARCH METHOD

This research utilized a qualitative descriptive approach, aimed at obtaining in-depth information regarding the role of female vegetable vendors in contributing to household income at the Main Market of Wonomulyo Sub-district. Qualitative research relies on human observation as the main instrument, is descriptive in nature, employs inductive reasoning, and is conducted in a natural setting (Sugiyono, 2022). The main goal of this approach is to present data clearly and accurately, making it accessible to those who have not directly experienced the phenomenon under study. It focuses on illustrating complex social phenomena based on real-life observations. The research object—female vegetable vendors' business activities—was analyzed in depth to uncover relevant field facts.

The research site was purposively selected: the Main Market of Wonomulyo Sub-district, Polewali Mandar Regency, West Sulawesi, known as a central hub for female vegetable traders. The key informants were female vendors who had been trading for at least one year, were heads or members of families contributing to household income, and were willing to share information openly (Sugiyono, 2022). In this

qualitative study, participants are referred to as informants rather than respondents, as in quantitative research, since the data represent specific community groups.

The sampling technique used was purposive sampling, based on predetermined criteria to ensure the quality of the data. Data consisted of both primary and secondary sources. Primary data were obtained through in-depth interviews with female vegetable vendors using semi-structured, open-ended questions. Field notes and documentation were also used to ensure data validity. Secondary data were sourced from books, journals, dictionaries, encyclopedias, and relevant documents to support the analysis.

The primary data collection technique was interviews with 10 selected female vendors at Wonomulyo Market, chosen based on variables such as age range, willingness to participate, marital status, number of dependents, and monthly trading income. Data were analyzed using the Miles and Huberman model, which includes three stages: data reduction (simplifying and focusing important data from field notes), data presentation (organizing data into structured formats for interpretation), and conclusion drawing (interpreting the overall meaning of the findings) (Sugiyono, 2021).

To measure the women's contribution to family income, the researcher calculated the average daily income from all informants using a simple tabulation formula. The contribution was then categorized into three income levels:

- < IDR 50,000/day (low, likely <30%)
- IDR 50,000–150,000/day (moderate, 30%–60%)
- IDR 150,000/day (high, >60%)

According to Raidayani et al. (2019), a contribution is considered small if it accounts for <50% of total family income and large if >50%. This method aimed to provide a comprehensive understanding of the economic role of female vegetable vendors in the household income structure.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

RESEARCH FINDINGS

This study analyzed five key indicators to assess the role of female vegetable vendors in family income: trading motivation, income factors, business capital, savings, number of dependents, and overall contribution to household finances. The results are summarized as follows:

1. Motivation for Trading

The main driver for women to enter vegetable trading was to increase family income, primarily due to insufficient and unstable husband earnings. Motivations cited by the 10 informants included:

- Assisting with daily needs (food, electricity, children's school fees)
- Ensuring education and health for children
- Maintaining household financial stability

As Informant I stated:

"It's not enough, Ma'am. I sell vegetables so I can buy rice, pay the electricity bill, and cover the kids' school expenses."

2. Income Factors

All informants revealed that their husbands' income was irregular and dependent on seasonal or informal labor (farmers, fishermen, etc.). Hence, women actively supported the household income.

Informant II said:

"My husband's income goes up and down. During harvest season it's okay, but usually I earn more from selling vegetables."

3. Business Capital

Capital sources varied among informants:

- a. 4 used personal savings
- b. 3 borrowed from family

- c. 2 received support from cooperatives
- d. 1 sold other people's goods without capital

Informant III shared:

"I started selling vegetables for someone else. Slowly I saved profits, bought a scale, tarp, and could start buying my own stock."

4. Savings

Six out of ten informants regularly saved, despite inconsistent income. Savings were used for:

- a. Emergencies
- b. Children's education
- c. Home repairs
- d. Urgent needs

Informant IV stated:

"If there's leftover money, I save it in a piggy bank or through the savings group, just in case."

The other four struggled to save as earnings only covered daily needs.

5. Number of Dependents

Number of family dependents also influenced the decision to trade:

- a. 3 had 2–3 dependents
- b. 5 had 4–5 dependents
- c. 2 had 6 or more

Informant V said:

"Selling helps increase income, at least for school fees."

6. Contribution to Household Income

Women's contributions were measured using the following scale:

Daily Income	Contribution (%)	Role Assumption
< IDR 50,000	<30%	Complementary
IDR 50,000–150,000	30%–60%	Additional
> IDR 150,000	>60%	Primary

Average daily income across all informants: Rp 1,210,000 / 10 = IDR 121,000
 Monthly (26 working days): 121,000 × 26 = IDR 3,146,000

Summary Table:

No	Informant	Daily Income (IDR)	Dependents	Contribution	Role
1	II	200,000	4	High	Primary

2	I2	50,000	2	Moderate	Additional
3	I3	50,000	3	Moderate	Additional
4	I4	400,000	5	High	Primary
5	I5	70,000	4	Moderate	Additional
6	I6	50,000	3	Moderate	Additional
7	I7	200,000	5	High	Primary
8	I8	50,000	3	Moderate	Additional
9	I9	40,000	4	Low	Complementary
10	I10	100,000	7	Moderate	Additional

DISCUSSION

1. Women's Motivation in Increasing Income

Findings indicate that women are motivated primarily by the need to support their families covering basic needs, education, and more. In some cases, women even act as the main breadwinners. The number of dependents also plays a significant role in their decision to engage in trading.

Limited capital did not hinder their determination. Most women adapted well using available resources and social support. Saving habits though modest demonstrate financial awareness and future planning, further emphasizing women's dual role as earners and financial managers.

2. Factors Influencing Income Contribution

Key influencing factors include:

- Economic Needs:** Rising household expenses
- Unstable Husband Income:** Seasonal and informal jobs
- Capital Access:** Personal savings or small-scale loans
- Financial Management:** Ability to save despite low income
- Family Dependents:** More dependents, higher motivation

Women's roles in Wonomulyo Market clearly go beyond supplementary earners—they are vital contributors to both family and local economies.

CONCLUSION

Based on interviews with ten female vegetable vendors in the Main Market of Wonomulyo, it can be concluded that women play a significant role in enhancing household income. Their trading activities are not merely complementary but have become primary or secondary sources of household financial support.

Most informants showed considerable income contributions, with daily earnings ranging between IDR 50,000 and IDR 150,000 or more. These figures suggest that women contribute between 30% and over 60% to family income, proving the importance of their participation in informal economic sectors.

Additional factors such as marital status, number of dependents, and trading experience also influenced their contribution levels. Therefore, female vegetable vendors should not be overlooked—they are economic agents who ensure the sustainability of their families through daily earnings.

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