

Women's Cultural Capital, Care Work Burden and Career Outcomes in Vietnam's Creative Economy: A Cross-Generational Study

Quan Nguyen Van¹, Thu Nguyen Anh²

¹Academy of Policy and Development, Hanoi, Vietnam

²Hanoi Amsterdam High School for the Gifted, Hanoi, Vietnam

ABSTRACT: In Vietnam's rapidly expanding creative economy, women face unique challenges balancing professional aspirations with persistent caregiving responsibilities shaped by social and cultural norms. This study investigates the relationships between women's cultural capital, care work burden, and career progression, considering generational differences. Drawing on Bourdieu's conceptualization of cultural capital, the research examines three forms including embodied, objectified, and institutionalized and their influence on unpaid care responsibilities and professional advancement. A survey of 317 female creative professionals across Generation X, Millennials, and Generation Z was conducted, and data were analyzed using PLS-SEM and one-way ANOVA. The findings indicate that all three forms of cultural capital are positively associated with women's care work burden, which in turn significantly mediates their career progression. Generational differences further shape career outcomes, with Millennial women reporting higher progression compared with Generation X and Generation Z. These results highlight the dual role of cultural capital as both a professional resource and a gendered mechanism reinforcing care responsibilities. The study contributes to feminist applications of Bourdieu by demonstrating how capital conversion is embedded in unequal divisions of unpaid labor, and it underscores the need for policies and organizational practices that address care work burden to promote equitable career advancement in the creative economy.

KEYWORDS: Care work burden, creative economy, cultural capital, gender inequality, women's career progression.

I. INTRODUCTION

While many societies publicly espouse the principle of equal opportunities for women in education and employment, women's career trajectories continue to be shaped by deeply embedded cultural values, gendered social norms, and institutionalised expectations surrounding work and family life. These underlying cultural schemas operate not only at the macro-societal level but are also reproduced within organisational cultures and everyday workplace practices. Drawing on the cultural value framework of Norris (2023), prior studies distinguish between traditional values, which emphasise hierarchy, patriarchy, and gendered role divisions, and secular-rational values, which prioritise individual autonomy, gender equality, and merit-based advancement. These value systems provide an important analytical lens for understanding women's unequal career and leadership outcomes across different national, sectoral, and generational contexts.

In Vietnam, women's participation in economic and cultural life has long been shaped by a paradoxical coexistence of strong historical female agency and persistent contemporary gender inequalities. Vietnamese history is replete with stories of powerful women who exercised leadership and military authority, including the Trung sisters (Hai Ba Trung), General Le Chan, and General Bui Thi Xuan (Tran, 2016). This matriarchal heritage, however, contrasts sharply with the realities of women's labour market outcomes in contemporary Vietnam. Despite significant progress in female education and workforce participation—where women accounted for 47.7% of the total labour force and slightly exceeded men in university attainment in 2018 (GSO, 2018), which gendered inequalities remain deeply entrenched. Vietnamese women are disproportionately concentrated in vulnerable forms of employment including unpaid family work and own-account work without employees. Women are also markedly underrepresented in senior leadership and decision-making roles: only 27.7% of leadership and management positions nationwide are held by women, and women occupy just one cabinet position among 25 ministers (World Economic Forum, 2019). These patterns mirror global trends particularly in low- and middle-income countries.

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A growing body of scholarship indicates that this gap cannot be fully explained by individual merit or human capital alone. Liberal feminist approaches, which underpin many gender equality policies, emphasise access to education and equal treatment but often underestimate the role of non-merit factors such as inheritance, social positioning, and culturally gendered responsibilities in shaping career outcomes (Pryce et al., 2013). In Vietnam, women and men begin their careers from structurally unequal starting points due to longstanding gender norms, particularly those governing unpaid care and domestic labour. Unpaid care work represents a critical yet underexamined dimension of gender inequality that Vietnamese women, regardless of education or occupation, remain primarily responsible for childcare, elder care, and household labour, spending nearly twice as much time on unpaid work as men. This disproportionate care burden imposes significant opportunity costs, constraining women's ability to invest in education, professional development, creative work, and leadership roles, and has been identified as the missing link in analyses of gender gaps in labour market outcomes (Ferrant et al., 2014).

Despite increasing scholarly attention to women's employment in Vietnam, existing research has largely focused on specific labour segments, such as rural-to-urban migrant workers or women within the informal economy (Turner & Schoenberger, 2012). Studies examining women's leadership and professional experiences have highlighted the influence of cultural and historical factors (Do & Brennan, 2015), yet little is known about how these forces interact with women's cultural capital, care work burdens, and career outcomes, particularly within Vietnam's rapidly expanding creative economy. The creative economy encompassing fields such as design, media, arts, cultural production, and creative services relies heavily on symbolic skills, aesthetic competencies, and network-based forms of cultural capital, while simultaneously being characterised by precarious employment, blurred boundaries between work and non-work, and high demands for flexibility, making it especially sensitive to gendered care responsibilities. Moreover, Vietnam's creative workforce spans multiple generations shaped by distinct historical moments, from socialist collectivism and post-war reconstruction to market-oriented reforms and globalisation, suggesting that generational differences may further condition women's access to cultural capital, exposure to care burdens, and career trajectories. Against this backdrop, this study examines women's cultural capital, care work burden, and career outcomes in Vietnam's creative economy through a cross-generational lens. By situating women's lived experiences within broader cultural value systems and historical transformations, the study seeks to illuminate how traditional and evolving norms continue to shape gendered inequalities in creative work, thereby contributing to scholarship in gender studies, feminist theory, organisational studies, and human resource management, while offering policy-relevant insights for advancing more equitable and inclusive creative economies in Vietnam. The study is constructed with 5 main parts including (1) introduction; (2) conceptual framework and hypothesis development; (3) methodology; (4) results and discussion; and (5) implications and conclusion.

II. CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK AND HYPOTHESIS DEVELOPMENT

Cultural Capital

Cultural capital has been widely employed as an analytical concept to explain how social advantages are produced, transmitted, and reproduced across generations through access to valued forms of knowledge, skills, and competencies (Bourdieu, 1984; 1986). Early formulations linked cultural capital to processes through which individuals' social origins shape educational and occupational outcomes, particularly via institutional recognition of culturally valued dispositions and resources. However, interpretations of cultural capital have varied considerably, giving rise to ongoing debates about its scope, content, and empirical usefulness (Goldthorpe, 2007). A substantial body of scholarship has criticised overly narrow definitions of cultural capital that equate it primarily with participation in elite or "beaux arts" cultural activities. Instead, these studies argue that cultural capital should be understood more broadly as encompassing forms of knowledge, skills, and competencies that are institutionally rewarded, particularly within education systems (Sullivan, 2002). This broader interpretation highlights linguistic competencies, modes of self-presentation, styles of interaction, and familiarity with dominant evaluative standards as key components of cultural capital. While analytically productive, such an approach raises significant challenges for empirical research. If cultural capital is defined simply as any skill or knowledge rewarded by institutions, it risks becoming indistinguishable from academic ability, rendering causal explanations tautological. Consequently, researchers have emphasised the importance of specifying which forms of knowledge and skill constitute cultural capital and clarifying the mechanisms through which these resources are produced, transmitted, and recognised.

Although much of the literature on cultural capital has focused on education, the concept is increasingly relevant beyond formal schooling, particularly in labour markets where symbolic value, creativity, and meaning-making are central. This shift is especially salient in the context of the creative economy, which has gained renewed prominence as a driver of economic recovery following the coronavirus disease pandemic (Ausat et al, 2023). The global creative industry has experienced profound

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transformations in recent years, most notably a shift in production, distribution, and consumption from offline to digital platforms (Suherlan, 2023). These changes have intensified the importance of culturally embedded skills such as creative adaptability, digital literacy, aesthetic judgement, and the ability to engage diverse audiences across online and hybrid environments.

In developing countries, this transformation has generated new inequalities within the creative economy. Structural constraints such as uneven access to digital infrastructure and limited technological competencies have posed significant challenges for creative workers and enterprises (Wardana, 2018). Evidence from Indonesia illustrates how limited digital readiness among creative economy actors threatens sectoral sustainability, with only a minority of practitioners feeling confident in their use of digital tools. At the same time, the creative economy plays a crucial role in national development, contributing substantially to GDP and employment, as reflected in Indonesia's position as one of the world's leading creative economies. Prior studies suggest that success in creative industries depends not only on entrepreneurial traits such as determination, originality, and perseverance, but also on access to and effective mobilisation of culturally valued resources (Cerisola & Panzera, 2021). Within the creative economy, cultural capital can therefore be conceptualised as a multidimensional and context-specific resource encompassing creative skills, cultural knowledge, digital competencies, embodied dispositions, and professional networks that enable individuals to generate both symbolic and economic value. Importantly, access to these forms of cultural capital is socially patterned and shaped by gendered life conditions. For women, particularly across different generations, the accumulation and conversion of cultural capital into career outcomes are often constrained by unequal care work burdens and expectations surrounding unpaid domestic and emotional labour. These constraints limit time, flexibility, and opportunities for skill development, creative experimentation, and network formation which are central processes for sustaining careers in the creative economy.

Determinants of Cultural Capital

Cultural capital is not evenly distributed but socially produced through a combination of structural conditions, cultural contexts, and individual life circumstances. A growing body of literature suggests that the formation and accumulation of cultural capital are shaped not only by family background and education, but also by broader cultural values, social environments, and everyday practices embedded within specific socio-economic contexts. While previous studies have examined a wide range of individual-level and society-level determinants including socio-economic status, institutional arrangements and social participation, relatively little attention has been paid to cultural values as foundational determinants of cultural capital, despite their central role in shaping attitudes, preferences and practices (Allik & Realo, 2004). Research on social capital provides useful insights for understanding the determinants of cultural capital, as both forms of capital derive from socially embedded attitudes and actions that vary across countries and regions. Studies analysing social capital at both societal and individual levels have demonstrated that cultural context plays a decisive role in shaping individuals' access to and accumulation of social resources (Putnam, 2015). Multilevel analyses further show that cultural context often exerts a stronger influence on individual-level capital than personal values alone. These findings suggest that cultural capital, similarly, must be understood as the outcome of interactions between individual agency and culturally structured environments, rather than as a purely individual attribute.

Within this framework, prior scholarship has distinguished between three analytically useful forms of cultural capital embodied, objectified, and institutionalized, and each of them was shaped by distinct but interrelated determinants (Burke, 2025). Embodied cultural capital refers to durable dispositions, competencies, and forms of cultural knowledge that are acquired through long-term processes of socialization and education. Empirical studies have commonly operationalised embodied cultural capital through indicators such as cultural participation and reading practices, which signal familiarity with culturally valued knowledge, tastes, and modes of expression (Sullivan, 2001). Activities such as visiting museums, attending music, dance, or theatre performances, engaging with cultural heritage sites, and regular reading are understood as manifestations of cultural knowledge and competencies that function as high-status cultural signals within specific social contexts. These practices are not merely leisure activities but reflect access to time, resources, and social environments that enable sustained cultural engagement.

The accumulation of embodied cultural capital is strongly influenced by family socialization and intergenerational transmission processes. Parental education, cultural practices, and modes of interaction play a critical role in shaping children's familiarity with culturally valued knowledge and behaviours (Lareau & Weininger, 2005). However, empirical evidence suggests that the benefits of parental cultural capital are not uniform across social groups. While some studies highlight its role in reproducing social privilege, others demonstrate that cultural resources can also function as mobility-enhancing assets,

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particularly for individuals from lower or middle socio-economic backgrounds. These divergent findings underscore the importance of contextual conditions in shaping how embodied cultural capital is converted into educational and occupational advantages.

Objectified cultural capital consists of tangible cultural goods such as books, artworks, musical instruments, and other material objects that embody cultural value (Bourdieu, 1986). Unlike embodied cultural capital, objectified cultural capital is immediately transferable in material form, though its effective use and appreciation depend on embodied competencies. Despite its conceptual significance, objectified cultural capital has received relatively limited empirical attention. Measures such as the number of books in the household have been widely used as proxies, capturing both material access to cultural resources and the cultural environments in which individuals are embedded. Objectified cultural capital occupies a distinctive position as both a commodity and a symbolic object, with its cultural value remaining partially independent from its economic value, even as economic recognition may reinforce cultural legitimacy. Its role in shaping life chances lies not only in ownership but in how these objects facilitate the development of embodied dispositions and cultural familiarity over time.

Institutionalized cultural capital refers to formally recognized credentials and qualifications, most notably educational degrees and academic titles, which confer socially sanctioned legitimacy and are often convertible into economic capital under favourable conditions (Kramer, 2011). While institutionalized cultural capital is commonly treated as an outcome of embodied cultural capital, research has emphasised the importance of distinguishing between the two analytically. Empirical studies show that institutions tend to reward students and workers whose cultural styles, communication practices, and modes of self-presentation align with dominant evaluative standards, thereby reinforcing existing inequalities. As such, institutionalized cultural capital reflects not only individual achievement but also the alignment between embodied dispositions and institutional norms.

It can be seen that prior research suggests that the determinants of cultural capital are multidimensional and context-dependent, shaped by cultural values, family socialization, material resources, and institutional structures. Importantly, these determinants are also deeply gendered. For women, particularly within creative economies characterised by precarious employment and blurred boundaries between work and non-work, unequal care work burdens can significantly constrain the accumulation of embodied cultural capital, limit access to objectified cultural resources, and disrupt pathways to institutional recognition. These constraints are likely to vary across generations, reflecting historical shifts in education, labour markets, and gender norms.

Care Work Burden

Care work refers to a broad range of paid and unpaid activities providing physical, emotional, and social support, including childcare, elder care, household maintenance, and assistance with daily living. Across societies, care work is deeply gendered, with women disproportionately engaged in both formal care occupations and unpaid domestic responsibilities. As populations age and life expectancy increases, demand for care work has expanded substantially, placing growing pressure on care systems and individuals performing care labour (The Swedish National Board of Health and Welfare, 2018). This expansion has intensified care work burden, encompassing both the volume of care tasks and their physical, emotional, and psychosocial demands. Empirical studies show that rising care needs lead to heavier workloads and poorer working conditions. Research on publicly organised home care systems indicates that increasing numbers of care recipients and greater health complexity have significantly intensified both quantitative and qualitative work demands (Szebehely et al., 2017), resulting in burnout, stress, sick leave, emotional exhaustion, and poor working environments (Skovdahl et al., 2008).

Care workload is thus understood as a multidimensional construct comprising quantitative demands related to workload volume and pace, and qualitative demands related to task difficulty, responsibility, and emotional intensity (Marsh et al., 2022). Extensive evidence links high care-related workload to negative health outcomes, including reduced job satisfaction, poor mental well-being, depression, distress, fatigue, and physical symptoms, affecting both paid care workers and women combining paid work with extensive unpaid care responsibilities. Health-related quality of life (HRQoL) has been used as an integrative indicator of the effects of sustained exposure to heavy care workloads on physical and mental well-being (Taylor, 2000). Studies in Greece and China demonstrate a clear association between high workload and poor HRQoL among nurses, with similar dynamics likely operating in informal and unpaid care contexts that remain largely invisible in labour statistics. The job demand–control–support (JDC) model explains how high demands combined with low control and limited social support generate the most harmful effects on well-being, described as isolation strain (Ilies et al., 2024). As care workloads increase, workers' autonomy often declines, intensifying stress, while the buffering roles of social support and autonomy remain insufficiently examined. Importantly, care work burden also shapes women's career outcomes. Persistent high care demands restrict time,

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energy, and cognitive resources for skill development, networking, and career advancement. In creative economies characterised by project-based work, blurred work–life boundaries, and expectations of flexibility the unequal distribution of care work can disproportionately constrain women's ability to accumulate cultural capital and sustain creative careers. Despite extensive research on workload and occupational stress, the interaction between care work burden, gendered cultural expectations, and career outcomes remains underexplored (Mauno et al., 2023). Against this backdrop, examining care work burden as a structural and gendered constraint is essential for understanding women's career trajectories in Vietnam's creative economy, where paid and unpaid care responsibilities intersect with cultural norms and labour market conditions to shape opportunities and outcomes across generations.

Career Progression

Career outcomes may refer to the cumulative results of individuals' work-related experiences over time, encompassing both objective achievements and subjective evaluations of career success (Arthur et al., 2005). In empirical research, these outcomes are commonly operationalised through career progression, which captures advancement, role mobility, hierarchical attainment, and employment continuity across the life course. Career progression therefore provides a longitudinal and measurable indicator of how structural conditions, organisational practices, and personal circumstances shape career trajectories (Tomlinson et al., 2013). Evidence from gendered professions demonstrates that career progression is unevenly distributed, even within female-dominated occupations. Nursing illustrates this pattern clearly: although women comprise the majority of the workforce (Information Services Division (ISD, 2009), they remain underrepresented in senior positions. In Scotland, women accounted for nearly 90% of full-time and over 97% of part-time nursing staff, yet men representing just over 10% of the workforce which held more than a quarter of senior nurse manager roles. Such disparities highlight career progression as a critical indicator of unequal career outcomes.

Prior research has extensively examined the effects of gender, working hours, career interruptions, and family responsibilities on women's career progression. A substantial body of evidence links motherhood to constrained career outcomes (Fisher et al., 2024). McQuaid & Lindsey (2005) demonstrate that the organisation of work and the practical difficulties of combining paid employment with motherhood directly shape women's access to, and continuity within, career-advancing roles. Waldfogel (2007) conceptualises these disadvantages as the "penalties of motherhood," arguing that women's careers are disproportionately disrupted by childcare responsibilities, while men's careers are largely unaffected by family formation. Importantly, these penalties persist beyond periods of active childcare, producing long-term and cumulative disadvantages. Longitudinal evidence from the Scottish national nursing database confirms that dependent children particularly younger children and the cumulative length of career breaks significantly and negatively affect women's career progression, with no comparable effects observed for men. These findings underscore career progression as a gendered mechanism through which care work burden translates into unequal career outcomes. Alongside structural constraints, contemporary career research highlights the importance of individual adaptability in navigating increasingly non-linear career paths (Biemann et al, 2012). Career adaptability such as concern, control, curiosity and confidence has been shown to positively influence outcomes such as career satisfaction, job search success, salary, and performance (Koen et al., 2010). However, most studies focus on stable inter-individual differences, overlooking the role of situational and contextual dynamics. Emerging research suggests that adaptability fluctuates in response to changing demands and resources, aligning with interactionist perspectives and career construction theory (Savickas, 2013). In contexts characterised by high care work burden such as women's participation in Vietnam's creative economy career progression is shaped not only by individual capabilities, but also by care responsibilities and organisational constraints. Examining career progression therefore provides a robust analytical lens for understanding cross-generational differences in women's career outcomes within Vietnam's creative economy.

The context of Vietnam's creative economy

Vietnam's creative economy has attracted growing policy and academic attention due to its potential contribution to economic growth and social development. The National Strategy for the Cultural Industries (2016) sets ambitious targets to increase the sector's economic contribution by 2030, reflecting a global consensus that creative industries are key drivers of development, innovation, and competitiveness (Fancourt et al., 2021). This significance is evident not only in advanced economies but also in developing and transitional contexts such as Vietnam (Kukreja, 2022).

Beyond economic outcomes, creative industries generate important social and cultural value (Lüdeke-Freul et al., 2024). However, realising this multifaceted value requires policies attuned to the sector's distinctive characteristics, including small firm size, project-based work, informal labour relations, and reliance on individual creativity and networks. In Vietnam, these challenges are intensified by unequal resource access, generational skill gaps, and gendered divisions of labour, particularly

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unpaid care work. Digital transformation has therefore emerged as a key mechanism for enhancing productivity, market access, and resilience in creative enterprises. It enables organisations to leverage new technologies, optimise processes, innovate management systems, digitise products and services, and improve customer experience (Onețiu, 2020). Prior studies highlight its strategic importance and relevance to creative industries, where digital platforms increasingly shape production, distribution, and consumption. Research on technology adoption commonly employs frameworks such as the TOE model (Tornatzky & Fleischer, 1990) and TAM (Davis, 1989), identifying demographic characteristics as potential moderating factors. However, empirical findings remain mixed (Chau et al., 2020; Trawnih et al., 2021), suggesting that demographic effects are highly context-dependent. In Vietnam's creative economy, where informal learning, embodied cultural knowledge, and individual capabilities are central, gender and generational differences may shape access to digital skills, time, and professional networks. Women's disproportionate responsibility for unpaid care work further complicates engagement with digital transformation, which may function both as an opportunity for advancement and a new source of inequality. Accordingly, viewing digital transformation solely as a technical process risks overlooking its broader social implications. Situating it within Vietnam's socio-cultural context allows a more nuanced understanding of how gender and generation intersect with cultural capital and care burdens to shape career trajectories (Qin, 2024). Digital transformation is thus a socially embedded process whose implications for women's long-term career outcomes across generations warrant careful examination.

Hypothesis Development

Embodied Cultural Capital

Cultural capital operates not only through formal qualifications or material resources, but also through deeply internalised dispositions that shape how individuals perceive, interpret, and respond to institutional expectations. Among its forms, embodied cultural capital is particularly salient, as it is expressed through practical reasoning, communicative norms, and role-oriented behaviours within specific institutional and professional fields. These embodied dispositions reflect not only learned competencies, but also taken-for-granted assumptions about responsibility, appropriate conduct, and the pursuit of valued outcomes within a given social context (Byrd, 2019). Within institutional settings such as higher education, individuals internalise communicative codes and normative expectations that simultaneously enable certain forms of action while constraining others, producing both productive and limiting effects on behaviour and reasoning. Embodied cultural capital is developed through socialisation processes that align individuals' conduct with perceived rewards and sanctions within a field. Prior research suggests that individuals often come to view institutional participation as homologous to future professional life, believing that success in the present field will translate into enhanced career opportunities. This orientation encourages calculative, strategic, and risk-averse forms of action aimed at maximising symbolic and material returns, including employment prospects and social recognition. Importantly, these patterns of behaviour are not merely individual choices, but are structured by institutional membership and broader socio-economic expectations (Vryonides, 2007).

For women, the acquisition and enactment of embodied cultural capital are shaped by gendered norms that link professionalism with availability, emotional engagement, and relational labour. In Vietnam's creative economy, women operate within flexible yet demanding work contexts that valorise continuous presence, responsiveness, and affective competence (McRobbie, 2016). These expectations closely align with the behavioural and communicative dimensions of embodied cultural capital, through which women adapt their conduct to institutional norms in order to secure professional legitimacy and future rewards. At the same time, women remain subject to persistent gendered expectations of caregiving within the household, positioning them at the intersection of paid work and unpaid care. As professional and domestic demands overlap, the mobilisation of embodied cultural capital may intensify women's care work burden by extending work-related emotional and organisational labour into the private sphere. Women's efforts to meet institutional expectations can thus require additional time, emotional energy, and coordination, often absorbed into caregiving and household responsibilities (Craig & Mullan, 2010; Sullivan, 2011). Embodied cultural capital therefore functions simultaneously as a resource facilitating participation in creative work and as a constraint that shapes women's unequal allocation of responsibilities across work and family domains. Building on this perspective, the present study conceptualises embodied cultural capital not merely as a facilitator of career advancement, but as a gendered and socially embedded disposition closely intertwined with women's care work burden in the creative economy. Based on the above arguments, the study proposes the following hypothesis:

H1: Embodied cultural capital is significantly associated with women's care work burden in Vietnam's creative economy.

Objectified Cultural Capital

Objectified cultural capital operates not merely as the possession of cultural goods, but as a socially legible signal that mediates institutional judgment and shapes subsequent opportunities across the life course. In the Japanese context, parental

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investment in culturally valued objects and activities has been shown to support children's educational trajectories indirectly, particularly at critical selection points where subjective evaluation by institutional actors plays a decisive role (Kan et al., 2022). At such junctures, objectified cultural capital supplements embodied forms of learning by providing observable cues about the home environment, learning orientation, and social positioning of students, which are interpreted by teachers and incorporated into guidance and selection processes. Research further highlights that objectified cultural capital becomes particularly influential where formal evaluation intersects with informal judgment, as teachers' interpretations of domestic cultural environments can shape educational placement and long term outcomes (Okano, 2020). In this sense, objectified cultural capital functions as a bridge between private household practices and public institutional assessment, affecting trajectories not through direct skill acquisition but through processes of social interpretation and legitimation.

For women, the accumulation and mobilisation of objectified cultural capital are often inseparable from domestic and caregiving responsibilities. Within Vietnam's creative economy, objectified cultural capital is frequently embedded in women's everyday household practices, where the acquisition, maintenance, and display of culturally valued goods such as creative tools, digital devices, books, or educational resources for children serve as visible markers of professionalism and cultural competence in work contexts with fluid boundaries between home and creative production (McRobbie, 2016). These material investments, however, are not cost neutral. They require sustained time, emotional labour, and organisational effort, which are disproportionately absorbed by women as part of unpaid care work. As a result, objectified cultural capital may function simultaneously as a resource that supports women's long term career trajectories and as a mechanism that intensifies their care work burden, thereby reinforcing gendered inequalities within the creative economy (Duffy, 2011). Objectified cultural capital is conceptualised in this study as a materialised form of cultural investment that links women's household practices with external evaluation and opportunity structures, while also shaping their care responsibilities within the family. Based on the above arguments, the study proposes the following hypothesis:

H2: Objectified cultural capital is significantly associated with women's care work burden in Vietnam's creative economy.

Institutionalized Cultural Capital

Institutionalised cultural capital, including formal degrees, credentials, and recognised qualifications, plays a central role in shaping individuals' sense of belonging, expectations, and capacity to navigate complex institutional environments. Evidence from studies on first generation students shows that individuals whose parents lack higher education credentials experience persistent disadvantages in educational participation, academic performance, and retention, despite holding comparable aspirations (Chen, 2005). These disadvantages stem not from individual ability alone, but from the absence of institutionalised cultural capital within the family, particularly limited familiarity with institutional norms, procedures, and evaluative criteria. Empirical research further indicates that individuals from less credentialed backgrounds face difficulties not only in accessing institutional pathways but also in adapting to the implicit cultural codes embedded within institutional settings. Domina et al. (2017) demonstrate that families with greater educational privilege are better positioned to support decision making through access to information and confidence in engaging institutional actors. By contrast, individuals from families with weaker institutionalised resources often lack guidance in navigating formal systems, even when emotional support is available. After entering institutional environments, these individuals may continue to experience cultural dissonance, as they must acquire new styles of communication, presentation, and taste aligned with dominant institutional cultures.

For women, these dynamics are further shaped by gendered expectations regarding responsibility, care, and relational labour. Within Vietnam's creative economy, institutionalised cultural capital, such as formal qualifications, professional certifications, and recognised credentials, structures women's access to professional opportunities while simultaneously positioning them as key intermediaries between institutional systems and the household. Women who lack such capital, or who come from families with limited institutionalised resources, often engage in compensatory strategies that extend into unpaid domestic and caregiving labour, including investing substantial time and emotional effort in supporting family members' educational and institutional participation. Even when women themselves possess institutionalised cultural capital, normative expectations that they mobilise these resources on behalf of dependents may further intensify their care work burden (Craig & Mullan, 2010). In this sense, institutionalised cultural capital functions not only as an individual professional resource but also as a gendered mechanism through which women absorb institutional risks and responsibilities at the household level (Duffy, 2011). By mediating access to formal systems for both themselves and others, women's institutionalised cultural capital may inadvertently deepen their care work burden within the creative economy. Based on the above arguments, the study proposes the following hypothesis:

H3: Institutionalized cultural capital is significantly associated with women's care work burden in Vietnam's creative economy.

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The Role of Care Work Burden

Burnout and care work burden are closely related constructs, both capturing sustained physical, emotional, and mental exhaustion arising from prolonged engagement in emotionally demanding care situations (Costello et al., 2019). Empirical evidence across care contexts consistently shows that heavy care workloads are associated with emotional distress, reduced sense of control, diminished job satisfaction, and impaired mental health. Research on migrant and institutional care workers further demonstrates that long working hours, blurred boundaries between professional and private roles, limited autonomy, and exposure to emotional or verbal abuse intensify care burden and undermine sustained performance and well being (van Hooren, 2012). For women, care work burden extends beyond formal care roles and is embedded in everyday life through the unequal distribution of unpaid domestic and caregiving responsibilities. These cumulative demands generate chronic time scarcity and exhaustion, limiting women's capacity to maintain work continuity, invest in career development, and respond to professional opportunities. In Vietnam's creative economy, characterised by project based work and expectations of flexibility and continuous availability, care work burden thus operates as a gendered structural constraint on women's career progression. Based on the above arguments, the study proposes the following hypothesis:

H4: Care work burden is significantly associated with women's career progression in Vietnam's creative economy.

Women's careers are shaped not only by skills and qualifications but also by gendered expectations that assign primary responsibility for care and domestic labour to women. These expectations generate cumulative constraints on time, energy, and availability, forming the everyday conditions under which women accumulate and convert cultural capital into career outcomes. Bourdieu's relational perspective highlights how power operates through ordinary organisational practices rather than explicit exclusion (Ozbilgin & Tatli, 2005). Feminist applications of Bourdieu further demonstrate that cultural capital is not gender neutral, as its mobilisation depends on embodied dispositions and implicit norms of availability and commitment (Samdanis et al., 2020). For women, these norms often conflict with care responsibilities, positioning care work burden as a key intervening mechanism. In Vietnam's creative economy, embodied cultural capital may facilitate women's professional recognition, yet its conversion into career progression often requires sustained presence, networking, and informal engagement. When women shoulder disproportionate care work, their capacity to mobilise embodied cultural capital for career advancement is constrained (Iellatchitch et al., 2003). Similar mediating dynamics apply to objectified and institutionalised cultural capital, whose acquisition and deployment frequently increase women's unpaid organisational and caregiving labour within the household. Taken together, care work burden functions as a gendered mediating mechanism through which women's cultural capital is translated into career progression. Based on the above arguments, the study proposes the following hypotheses:

H5a: Care work burden mediates the relationship between embodied cultural capital and women's career progression.

H5b: Care work burden mediates the relationship between objectified cultural capital and women's career progression.

H5c: Care work burden mediates the relationship between institutionalised cultural capital and women's career progression.

Generation as The Control Variable

Career progression is not only shaped by individual resources and organisational conditions, but also by cohort-specific socialisation and life course positioning. From a gendered life course perspective, women from different generations experience distinct structural opportunities and constraints, shaped by changing labour markets, family norms, and care expectations over time. Generation X, Millennials, and Generation Z women have entered the workforce under different institutional arrangements regarding education, employment stability, and gendered divisions of care, which may lead to systematic differences in career trajectories. In Vietnam, Generation X women often developed their careers under more rigid organisational structures and stronger normative expectations of women's primary caregiving roles, reflecting persistent gender inequalities embedded in labour regulations and institutional practices (Dang, 2025). Millennial women have navigated periods of economic transition, expansion of higher education, and growing participation in the creative economy, yet continue to face intensified work-family tensions and uneven enforcement of gender equality provisions. Generation Z women, while benefiting from digitalisation and more flexible creative work opportunities, encounter increased precarity, project-based employment, and heightened expectations of self-investment and continuous availability within regulatory frameworks that only partially address gendered labour vulnerabilities. These generationally differentiated contexts shape women's access to opportunities, capacity to sustain career continuity, and likelihood of upward career progression within the creative economy. Accordingly, career progression among women is expected to vary systematically across generations, reflecting cohort-specific configurations of cultural capital, care work burden, and institutional conditions. Based on this reasoning, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H6: Generation is significantly associated with women's career progression in Vietnam's creative economy.

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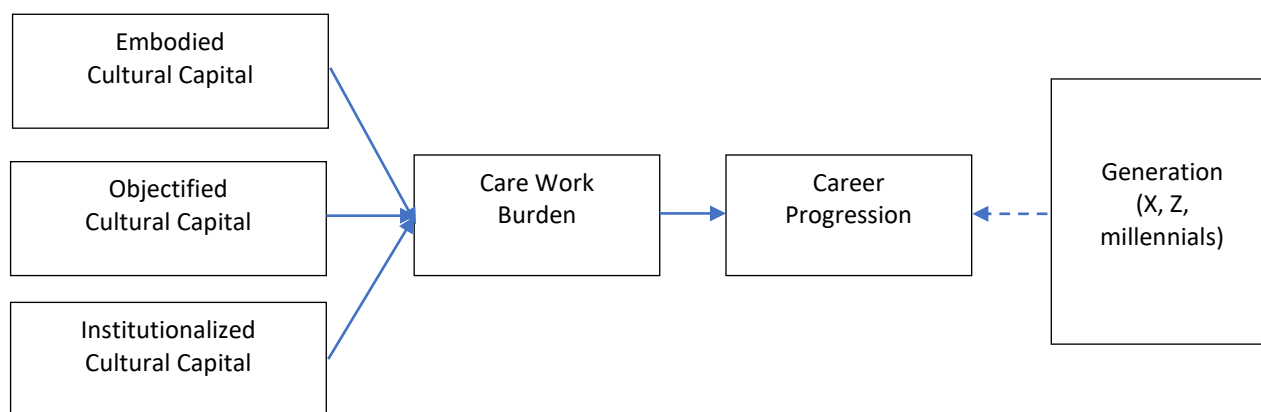


Figure 1. Research Model

III. METHODOLOGY

Measurement and Questionnaire Design

The measurement instrument was designed to examine cultural capital, care work burden and career progression among women in Vietnam's creative economy, incorporating generational differences. All constructs were measured using previously validated scales and adapted to the Vietnamese context, with items rated on a five-point Likert scale from 1 - Strongly disagree to 5 - Strongly agree. Embodied Cultural Capital (ECC) was measured with 4 items adapted from Byrd (2019) and Vryonides (2007), Objectified Cultural Capital (OCC) with 4 items from Kan et al. (2022), and Institutionalized Cultural Capital (ICC) with 4 items adapted from Domina et al. (2017). Care Work Burden (CWB), the mediating variable, was assessed using 5 items adapted from Costello et al. (2019), while Career Progression (CP) was measured with 4 items adapted from Biemann et al. (2012). Generation was included as a categorical variable distinguishing Generation X, Millennials, and Generation Z based on year of birth following Dang (2025). The questionnaire was reviewed by experts and pre-tested to ensure clarity, cultural relevance, and measurement validity.

Sample and Data Collection

This study surveyed 327 female respondents working in or closely associated with Vietnam's creative economy to investigate the relationships between women's cultural capital, care work burden, and career outcomes across different generations. A stratified sampling approach was employed to ensure adequate representation of key demographic and socio-economic characteristics that shape women's career trajectories and life-course experiences. The sample comprised women from three generational cohorts, including Generation Z (born 1997–2012), Millennials/Generation Y (born 1981–1996), and Generation X (born 1965–1980). This cross-generational design enables systematic comparison of how cultural capital accumulation and care responsibilities vary among women who entered the creative economy under different historical, institutional, and socio-cultural conditions in Vietnam. With respect to marital status, respondents were categorized as single, married, or divorced, capturing variations in family roles and unpaid care responsibilities that are particularly salient for women's career development. These distinctions allow the study to assess how differing levels of care work burden intersect with women's professional advancement. In terms of educational attainment, respondents reported a range of qualifications, including no formal schooling, high school and below, college or university degrees, and postgraduate education. Educational level was treated as a core dimension of women's cultural capital, influencing access to creative occupations, professional recognition, and long-term career outcomes. Regarding occupational status, the sample included women employed as private sector employees, government or public sector staff, self-employed individuals or entrepreneurs, and those engaged in other creative-related occupations. This diversity reflects the fragmented and flexible employment structures characteristic of the creative economy, where women often combine multiple roles. Monthly income, measured in million Vietnamese dong (VND), was grouped into four categories: under 5 million VND, 5–15 million VND, 16–30 million VND, and 31 million VND and above. Income level served as an objective indicator of career outcomes, complementing subjective assessments of career progression and success. Data were analysed using a mixed analytical approach. PLS-SEM was employed to evaluate the measurement and structural models and to test the hypothesised relationships among cultural capital, care work burden, and career progression. In addition, one-way ANOVA in SPSS was used to examine differences in career progression across Generation X, Millennials, and Generation Z women.

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IV. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Descriptive Statistic Results

The demographic characteristics of the 317 female respondents indicate a diverse yet analytically meaningful sample for examining women's cultural capital, care work burden, and career outcomes in Vietnam's creative economy. Regarding generational composition, Millennials / Generation Y represented the largest cohort with 178 respondents (56.2%), followed by Generation X with 92 respondents (29.0%), and Generation Z with 47 respondents (14.8%). This distribution reflects the dominance of mid-career women in the creative economy, while still capturing perspectives from both younger entrants and more experienced cohorts, enabling meaningful cross-generational comparison. In terms of marital status, more than half of the respondents were married (179 respondents, 56.5%), while 119 respondents (37.5%) were single and 19 respondents (6.0%) were divorced. This variation highlights differing levels of family and care responsibilities among women, which is central to understanding disparities in career outcomes.

Table 1. Demographics of respondents

Demographics		Frequency	Percent (%)
Generation	Gen Z (born 1997–2012)	47	14.8
	Millennials / Gen Y (born 1981–1996)	178	56.2
	Gen X (born 1965–1980)	92	29.0
Marital status	Single	119	37.5
	Married	179	56.5
	Divorced	19	6.0
Educational Level	No schooling	5	1.6
	High school and below	71	22.4
	College/University	186	58.7
	Postgraduates	55	17.3
Occupation	Private sector employee	121	38.2
	Government / Public sector	54	17.0
	Self-employed / Entrepreneur	109	34.4
	Others	33	10.4
Monthly Income (million VND)	Under 5	42	13.2
	5–15	124	39.1
	16–30	103	32.5
	31 and above	48	15.1
Total		317	100

With respect to educational attainment, the majority of respondents held a college or university degree (186 respondents, 58.7%), followed by those with postgraduate qualifications (55 respondents, 17.3%). A smaller proportion reported high school education or below (71 respondents, 22.4%), and only 5 respondents (1.6%) reported no formal schooling. These results suggest relatively high levels of educational and cultural capital among women engaged in creative and cultural occupations. Regarding occupational status, private sector employees constituted the largest group (121 respondents, 38.2%), closely followed by self-employed individuals or entrepreneurs (109 respondents, 34.4%). Women working in the government or public sector accounted for 17.0% (54 respondents), while 10.4% (33 respondents) were classified under other creative-related occupations. This occupational pattern reflects the flexible and hybrid employment structures characteristic of the creative economy. In terms of monthly income, the largest share of respondents earned 5–15 million VND per month (124 respondents, 39.1%),

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followed by those earning 16–30 million VND (103 respondents, 32.5%). Lower-income respondents earning under 5 million VND accounted for 13.2% (42 respondents), while 15.1% (48 respondents) reported incomes of 31 million VND and above. These income differences indicate heterogeneity in women's career outcomes within the creative economy, potentially linked to variations in cultural capital and care work burden. Overall, the revised demographic profile demonstrates a well-balanced and analytically relevant sample, supporting robust investigation into cross-generational inequalities in women's career outcomes within Vietnam's creative economy.

Reliability and Validity Assessment

Table 2 shows that all constructs exhibit strong internal consistency and satisfactory convergent validity. Cronbach's Alpha, rho_A, and Composite Reliability values for Career Progression, Care Work Burden, and the three dimensions of women's cultural capital including Embodied Cultural Capital, Objectified Cultural Capital, and Institutionalized Cultural Capital all exceed the recommended threshold of 0.70, while Average Variance Extracted values range from 0.673 to 0.834, confirming adequate convergent validity. Institutionalized Cultural Capital demonstrates the highest reliability and explanatory power, underscoring the importance of formal qualifications and institutional recognition in shaping women's career progression in the creative economy. The gender variable shows perfect reliability as it is measured as a single item and the analysis focuses exclusively on female respondents. Overall, the measurement model is reliable and valid, providing a solid foundation for subsequent structural model analysis examining the relationships between women's cultural capital, care work burden, generational differences, and career outcomes in Vietnam's creative economy.

Table 2. Reliability and Convergent Validity of Constructs

	Cronbach's Alpha	rho_A	Composite Reliability	Average Variance Extracted (AVE)
CP	0.881	0.883	0.919	0.739
CWB	0.910	0.913	0.933	0.736
ECC	0.845	0.888	0.891	0.673
Gender	1.000	1.000	1.000	1.000
ICC	0.934	0.934	0.953	0.834
OCC	0.896	0.905	0.928	0.763

Source: Data analysis by SmartPLS

Table 3 reports the results of discriminant validity assessment using both the Fornell–Larcker criterion and the Heterotrait–Monotrait ratio. The square roots of the AVE values shown on the diagonal of the Fornell–Larcker matrix are higher than the corresponding inter-construct correlations for all constructs, indicating that each construct shares more variance with its own indicators than with other constructs. In addition, all HTMT values are below the conservative threshold of 0.85, confirming satisfactory discriminant validity among Career Progression, Care Work Burden, the three dimensions of women's cultural capital, and the gender variable. These findings suggest that the constructs are empirically distinct and that the measurement model adequately differentiates between women's cultural capital, care responsibilities, and career outcomes, thereby supporting the robustness of subsequent structural model analysis.

Table 3. Fornell-Larcker Criterion and Heterotrait-Monotrait Ratio (HTMT)

		CP	CWB	ECC	Gender	ICC	OCC
Fornell-Larcker	CP	0.859					
	CWB	0.647	0.858				

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Criterion	ECC	0.463	0.521	0.820			
	Gender	-0.142	-0.068	-0.114	1.000		
	ICC	0.617	0.489	0.477	-0.085	0.913	
	OCC	0.630	0.546	0.521	-0.096	0.635	0.874
Heterotrait-Monotrait Ratio (HTMT)	CP						
	CWB	0.720					
	ECC	0.521	0.558				
	Gender	0.152	0.091	0.122			
	ICC	0.680	0.526	0.511	0.088		
	OCC	0.708	0.599	0.572	0.128	0.695	

Source: Data analysis by SmartPLS

Structural Measurement Assessment and PLS-SEM Result Discussion

The model shows adequate explanatory power. The adjusted R^2 value of 0.425 for career progression indicates that women's cultural capital, care work burden, and related factors explain 42.5% of the variance in career progression in Vietnam's creative economy. In addition, the adjusted R^2 value of 0.385 for care work burden suggests that embodied, objectified, and institutionalized cultural capital account for 38.5% of the variance in women's care responsibilities. These results confirm that the proposed model sufficiently captures the relationships between cultural capital, care work burden, and career outcomes among women.

Table 4. Structural Equation Modelling Results

Path	Original Sample (O)	Sample Mean (M)	Standard Deviation (STDEV)	T Statistics (O/STDEV)	P Values
ECC -> CWB	0.291	0.299	0.050	5.822	0.000
OCC -> CWB	0.288	0.279	0.083	3.473	0.001
ICC -> CWB	0.167	0.171	0.075	2.239	0.026
CWB -> CP	0.641	0.645	0.043	14.858	0.000
ECC -> CWB -> CP	0.187	0.193	0.037	5.038	0.000
OCC -> CWB -> CP	0.185	0.181	0.057	3.266	0.001
ICC -> CWB -> CP	0.107	0.110	0.049	2.171	0.030
Gender -> CP	-0.099	-0.097	0.044	2.277	0.023
Adjusted R^2 : CP = 0.425; CWB = 0.385					

Source: Data analysis by SmartPLS

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The results indicate that embodied cultural capital has a positive and statistically significant association with women's care work burden ($\beta = 0.291$, $t = 5.822$, $p < 0.001$), providing strong support for H1. This finding is consistent with theoretical accounts that conceptualise embodied cultural capital as internalised dispositions, communicative styles, and behavioural orientations developed through prolonged socialisation within institutional and professional fields (Byrd, 2019; Vryonides, 2007). In Vietnam's creative economy, women's embodied competencies such as emotional regulation, relational skills, and a heightened sense of responsibility facilitate professional participation and recognition. However, these same dispositions also align closely with dominant gender norms that position women as primary caregivers and managers of household wellbeing. As a result, women's embodied cultural capital extends beyond the workplace into domestic spheres, intensifying their unpaid care responsibilities. This finding highlights how embodied cultural capital functions as a gendered mechanism that simultaneously enables professional legitimacy while reinforcing care work burden.

The findings show that objectified cultural capital is positively and significantly associated with women's care work burden ($\beta = 0.288$, $t = 3.473$, $p = 0.001$), thereby supporting H2. This result is consistent with prior research demonstrating that material cultural investments are deeply embedded within domestic labour and caregiving practices, particularly for women (Kan et al., 2022). In the context of Vietnam's creative economy, objectified cultural capital such as creative equipment, digital technologies, books, and educational resources is often located within the household and requires ongoing maintenance and organisation. Women are typically responsible for acquiring, managing, and mobilising these resources for both professional and family purposes. Consequently, objectified cultural capital not only enhances women's visibility and legitimacy within creative fields but also increases the volume and intensity of unpaid care work. This dual role underscores the gendered costs attached to material cultural investment.

The results indicate that institutionalized cultural capital has a positive and statistically significant association with women's care work burden ($\beta = 0.167$, $t = 2.239$, $p = 0.026$), providing empirical support for H3. This finding extends prior work showing that credentials structure access to institutional pathways while reproducing social inequality (Domina et al., 2017). Within Vietnam's creative economy, formal qualifications and recognised credentials enhance women's employability and professional credibility. However, women who possess institutionalized cultural capital are also frequently expected to mobilise these resources on behalf of family members, particularly children and other dependents, by managing educational decisions and institutional interactions. Even when women themselves benefit professionally from credentials, gendered expectations surrounding caregiving transform institutionalized cultural capital into an additional source of unpaid labour. Thus, institutionalized cultural capital operates simultaneously as a professional asset and as a mechanism reinforcing women's care work burden.

The results indicate that care work burden has a strong and positive association with career progression ($\beta = 0.641$, $t = 14.858$, $p < 0.001$), providing strong support for H4. This finding aligns with existing evidence linking sustained care demands to long term career outcomes, including interrupted career trajectories, limited advancement opportunities, and reduced occupational mobility (Costello et al., 2019; Biemann et al., 2012). In Vietnam's creative economy, where employment is often informal, project based, and dependent on continuous availability, high care work burden constrains women's capacity to maintain career continuity and accumulate professional capital. Care responsibilities reduce the time and energy available for networking, skill development, and participation in career enhancing projects. Consequently, care work burden emerges as a central structural factor shaping women's career progression rather than a purely personal circumstance.

The mediation analysis provides strong support for H5a, H5b, and H5c, indicating that care work burden significantly mediates the relationships between all three forms of cultural capital and women's career progression. The indirect effects of embodied cultural capital ($\beta = 0.187$, $t = 5.038$, $p < 0.001$), objectified cultural capital ($\beta = 0.185$, $t = 3.266$, $p = 0.001$), and institutionalized cultural capital ($\beta = 0.107$, $t = 2.171$, $p = 0.030$) on career progression through care work burden are all statistically significant. These findings demonstrate that women's cultural capital does not translate directly into improved career outcomes but is filtered through gendered care responsibilities that absorb time, emotional energy, and cognitive resources. This result reinforces feminist interpretations of Bourdieu, highlighting that capital conversion processes are embedded within unequal divisions of unpaid labour rather than operating as neutral mechanisms.

The results indicate that generation is significantly associated with women's career progression ($\beta = -0.099$, $t = 2.277$, $p = 0.023$), providing support for H6. This finding reflects cohort specific differences in labour market conditions, family norms, and care expectations experienced by women across Generation X, Millennials, and Generation Z. Consistent with Dang (2025), gendered responsibilities continue to shape women's career outcomes despite formal commitments to gender equality in Vietnam's labour law. Older cohorts often encountered more rigid organisational structures and stronger expectations of women's caregiving roles, while younger cohorts face increased labour market precarity and heightened demands for flexibility

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and self investment. These generational differences result in systematic variation in women's career progression within Vietnam's creative economy.

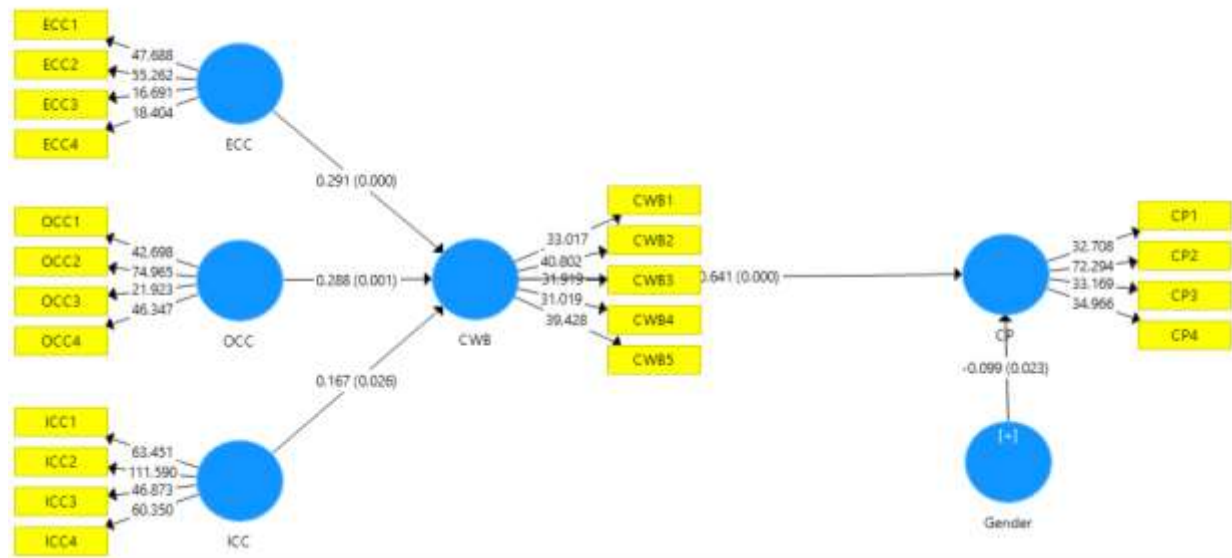


Figure 2. PLS Bootstrapping Model

Source: Data analysis by SmartPLS

The one way ANOVA results indicate a statistically significant difference in career progression across generational groups ($F = 49.278$, $p < 0.001$). The assumption of homogeneity of variances was satisfied, as indicated by Levene's test ($p = 0.152$), confirming the robustness of the ANOVA results. Descriptive statistics reveal that women belonging to the Millennial generation report the highest level of career progression ($M = 4.025$, $SD = 0.769$), compared with Generation X ($M = 3.266$, $SD = 0.501$) and Generation Z ($M = 3.201$, $SD = 0.697$). This pattern suggests that Millennial women experience more advanced career outcomes within Vietnam's creative economy, likely reflecting their position at a more mature stage of the career life course, greater accumulation of cultural capital, and more stable labor market attachment. Overall, the ANOVA findings provide strong empirical support for H6, demonstrating that generational differences are significantly associated with women's career progression. These results highlight the importance of a life course and cohort perspective when examining gendered career outcomes in the creative economy.

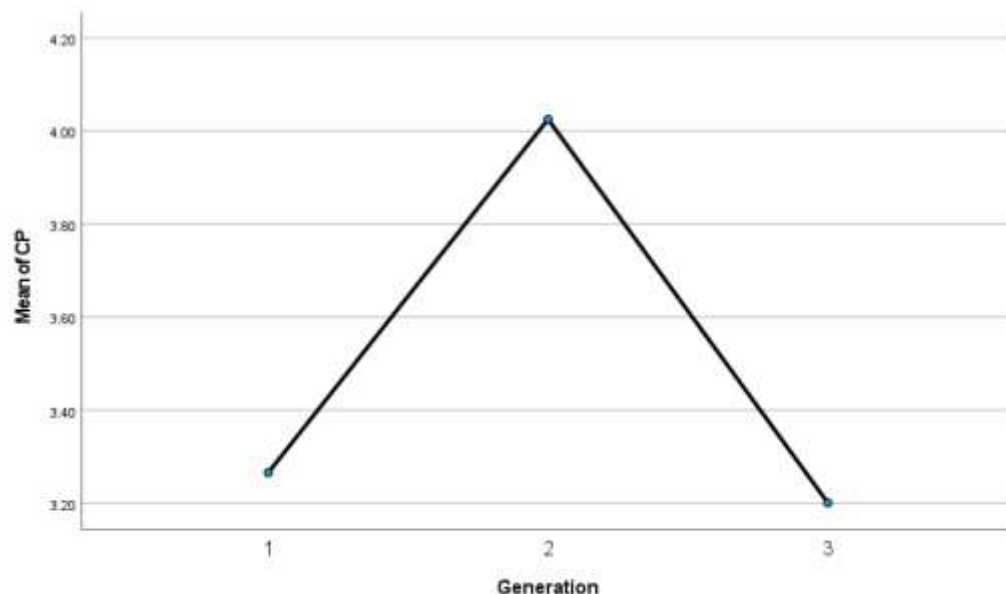


Figure 3. Mean Plots of Generation Variable

Source: Data analysis by SPSS

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V. IMPLICATIONS AND CONCLUSION

Theoretical Contributions

This study advances the understanding of women's career dynamics in the creative economy by integrating Bourdieu's concept of cultural capital with a gendered perspective on care work. Firstly, it demonstrates that embodied, objectified, and institutionalized cultural capital are not merely professional resources but are deeply intertwined with gendered domestic responsibilities. Women's competencies, material resources, and credentials enhance professional legitimacy while simultaneously increasing care work burden, highlighting the dual and gendered nature of cultural capital. Secondly, the research provides empirical evidence for the mediating role of care work burden in translating cultural capital into career progression. This finding underscores that the conversion of cultural capital into tangible career outcomes is filtered through unpaid domestic and caregiving labor, emphasizing that professional success is not solely a matter of skill or qualification but is socially structured by gendered expectations. Thirdly, the study incorporates a generational lens, revealing that career outcomes are shaped by cohort-specific labor market conditions, institutional norms, and evolving family responsibilities. Millennials, situated at a more mature career stage, demonstrate the highest progression, while Gen X and Gen Z experience structural constraints linked to both historical and emerging workplace expectations.

Practical Implications

The findings of this study offer several practical implications for policymakers, organizations, and women themselves within Vietnam's creative economy. Firstly, the study highlights the need for organizational policies that address the gendered distribution of care work. Since embodied, objectified, and institutionalized cultural capital all contribute to women's care work burden, organizations should implement flexible work arrangements, support mechanisms for caregiving, and equitable workload distribution to prevent the dual demands of professional and domestic responsibilities from hindering career progression. Initiatives such as remote work options, flexible hours, and project timelines that account for caregiving responsibilities can help women mobilize their cultural capital more effectively without being overburdened.

Secondly, the research underscores the importance of recognizing and valuing the invisible labor embedded in cultural capital. Women's emotional regulation, relational skills, and management of material resources not only enhance workplace performance but also extend into household labor. Organizations and industry stakeholders should acknowledge these contributions through mentorship programs, professional development opportunities, and recognition systems that reward both formal achievements and the broader competencies women bring to the workplace.

Thirdly, the study emphasizes the role of generational differences in shaping career trajectories, suggesting that interventions should be tailored to cohort-specific needs. For example, Generation X women may benefit from targeted programs addressing long-term career advancement and care support, Millennials may require strategies to balance career growth with ongoing family responsibilities, and Generation Z entrants may need guidance navigating precarious and flexible creative work environments. A life-course perspective can help organizations design policies and professional support that account for these generational variations. Finally, at the societal level, the findings highlight the need for broader structural reforms to reduce gendered care burdens, such as accessible childcare services, supportive educational programs, and policies promoting shared domestic responsibilities. By reducing the disproportionate care demands placed on women, these measures can enhance women's ability to translate cultural capital into sustainable career advancement.

Limitation and Future Research Directions

This study has several limitations. The cross-sectional design limits the ability to infer causal relationships between cultural capital, care work burden, and career progression. Besides, the sample is restricted to women in Vietnam's creative economy, which may limit the generalizability of findings to other sectors or cultural contexts. Moreover, self-reported measures may be subject to social desirability or recall bias. Future research could employ longitudinal designs to capture the dynamic interplay between cultural capital and career trajectories over time. Comparative studies across different industries or countries could examine how institutional and cultural contexts shape the gendered translation of cultural capital. Additionally, exploring interventions or organizational policies that mitigate care work burden would provide actionable insights for promoting gender equity in career advancement.

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