

Women Entrepreneurs, Entrepreneurial Marketing, and Business Sustainability: A Gender Perspective

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ABSTRACT

Sustainable entrepreneurship has become increasingly urgent in addressing environmental and social challenges, yet gender-specific dynamics in entrepreneurial marketing remain understudied. Understanding how women entrepreneurs apply entrepreneurial marketing is essential to strengthening inclusive and sustainable business ecosystems. This study examines the role of entrepreneurial marketing in improving sustainable business performance from a gender perspective. Using a quantitative survey approach, data were collected from 150 women entrepreneurs in Semarang who have managed environmentally friendly businesses for at least 3 years. Respondents were selected through purposive sampling, and data were analyzed using Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) with SmartPLS. The findings reveal that innovativeness, opportunity focus, and acceptable risk positively influence sustainability performance, highlighting women entrepreneurs' emphasis on social value creation, adaptability, and measured risk-taking. However, proactivity, resource leveraging, and networking show no significant impact, reflecting structural barriers, differences in strategic orientation, and networking limitations that women entrepreneurs often face. This study provides novelty by uncovering gender-specific patterns in entrepreneurial marketing and their implications for sustainability outcomes. Theoretically, it advances the discourse on gender and entrepreneurship, while, in practice, it emphasizes the need for gender-sensitive policies, entrepreneurial training, and supportive ecosystems to enhance sustainable business performance.

ABSTRAK

Kewirausahaan berkelanjutan semakin mendesak dalam mengatasi tantangan lingkungan dan sosial, namun dinamika spesifik gender dalam pemasaran kewirausahaan masih kurang diteliti. Memahami bagaimana wirausahawan perempuan menerapkan pemasaran kewirausahaan sangat penting untuk memperkuat ekosistem bisnis yang inklusif dan berkelanjutan. Penelitian ini mengkaji peran pemasaran kewirausahaan dalam meningkatkan kinerja bisnis berkelanjutan dari perspektif gender. Dengan menggunakan pendekatan survei kuantitatif, data dikumpulkan dari 150 wirausahawan perempuan di Semarang yang telah mengelola bisnis ramah lingkungan selama minimal 3 tahun. Responden dipilih melalui sampling purposif dan data dianalisis menggunakan Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) dengan SmartPLS. Temuan menunjukkan bahwa inovasi, fokus pada peluang, dan risiko yang dapat diterima secara positif memengaruhi kinerja keberlanjutan, menyoroti penekanan wirausahawan perempuan pada penciptaan nilai sosial, kemampuan beradaptasi, dan pengambilan risiko yang terukur. Namun, proaktivitas, pemanfaatan sumber daya, dan jaringan tidak menunjukkan dampak yang signifikan, yang mencerminkan hambatan struktural, perbedaan orientasi strategis, dan keterbatasan jaringan yang sering dihadapi oleh wirausahawan perempuan. Penelitian ini memberikan kontribusi baru dengan mengungkap pola-pola spesifik gender dalam pemasaran kewirausahaan dan implikasinya terhadap hasil keberlanjutan. Secara teoritis, penelitian ini memperkaya diskursus mengenai gender dan kewirausahaan, sementara secara praktis, penelitian ini menekankan perlunya kebijakan yang sensitif terhadap gender, pelatihan kewirausahaan, dan ekosistem yang mendukung untuk meningkatkan kinerja bisnis yang berkelanjutan.



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INTRODUCTION

The increasingly dynamic business environment requires entrepreneurs to adapt and innovate to survive and continue to grow. In this context, the entrepreneurial marketing approach is becoming increasingly relevant, as it combines creativity, flexibility, and an orientation toward opportunity to address market challenges (Alqahtani & Uslay, 2020; Hollensen & Saeidi, 2023; Sarwoko & Nurfarida, 2021; Widjianti & Sugiyanto, 2023b). Beyond business growth, entrepreneurial marketing can also drive sustainable business performance by integrating economic, social, and environmental dimensions (Kiranantawat & Ahmad, 2022). However, despite its potential, the impact of entrepreneurial marketing on sustainability outcomes is not uniform, indicating the need for deeper empirical testing, particularly when gender factors are considered.

Previous studies have shown that entrepreneurial marketing can improve business performance, but its effectiveness varies depending on context and implementation (Al-Shaikh & Hanaysha, 2023; Atikur Rahman et al., 2021; Bachmann et al., 2021). Theoretically, entrepreneurial marketing emphasizes innovativeness, proactiveness, opportunity recognition, networking, and resource leveraging as strategies to address uncertainty and market complexity. At the same time, research in gender and entrepreneurship reveals that women and men differ in business decision-making, innovation patterns, and responses to risk and networks (Elam et al., 2022; Sugiyanto & Wijayanti, 2023, 2024). Women entrepreneurs, for example, often prioritize social sustainability and inclusivity, which may influence how each entrepreneurial marketing dimension contributes to sustainable performance (Moletta et al., 2023; Sugiyanto & Wijayanti, 2023). These findings suggest a potential relationship between gendered entrepreneurial behavior and the impact of entrepreneurial marketing on sustainable outcomes.

This study focuses on women entrepreneurs who run environmentally friendly businesses in Semarang. The selection of this object is based on two reasons. First, women entrepreneurs in developing countries, including Indonesia, play a crucial role in promoting inclusive and sustainable economic growth (Aravik et al., 2025; Sajjad et al., 2020). However, they often face structural barriers in accessing resources, networks, and markets (Jamali, 2009). Semarang has a large number of female entrepreneurs (Jawa Tengah Provincial Government, 2024), providing a relevant empirical context for researching how gender-oriented entrepreneurial marketing practices work. This makes the population particularly well-suited to representing the intersection between gender and entrepreneurship.

Despite the growing literature on entrepreneurial marketing, studies examining its impact on business sustainability remain inconclusive, with findings that vary across contexts (Atikur Rahman et al., 2021). When viewed from a gender perspective, the gap becomes more pronounced, as prior studies rarely analyze how entrepreneurial marketing dimensions operate differently for women entrepreneurs. Furthermore, while existing research recognizes that women entrepreneurs often emphasize social sustainability and inclusivity, little is known about how these orientations affect each entrepreneurial marketing dimension in achieving sustainable business performance (Peñaloza et al., 2023). This creates a gap between the theoretical claims of entrepreneurial marketing's universal applicability and the practical reality that its effects may vary with gender-specific factors. The literature indicates that gender identity influences entrepreneurial orientation and the marketing strategies chosen (Atikur Rahman et

al., 2021; Liñán et al., 2022). Women entrepreneurs, for example, more often prioritise social values and sustainability over aggressive business expansion (Laguía et al., 2022). Thus, there is a need to re-examine the claim of entrepreneurial marketing universality within a gender framework, as specific factors such as cultural norms, access to resources, and public policy can alter the way entrepreneurial marketing dimensions contribute to sustainable performance (Ahl & Nelson, 2015).

In summary, the identified gaps highlight a lack of empirical studies that integrate entrepreneurial marketing and gender perspectives in the context of sustainable business performance. The novelty of this study lies in empirically examining how each entrepreneurial marketing dimension (proactiveness, innovativeness, resource leveraging, networking, acceptable risk, and opportunity focus) affects sustainability outcomes among women entrepreneurs. The research is expected to provide both theoretical and practical benefits, expanding the discourse on gendered entrepreneurship and informing the design of gender-sensitive entrepreneurial policies and support systems. Specifically, the objective of this study is to test seven hypotheses on the relationship between entrepreneurial marketing dimensions and sustainable business performance, while offering new insights into how women's entrepreneurial characteristics shape the practice and success of entrepreneurial marketing strategies. Overall, adopting a gender perspective is essential because men and women differ in their entrepreneurial orientation, decision-making, and access to resources. Integrating gender thus enriches understanding of how entrepreneurial marketing dimensions influence sustainability outcomes and supports more inclusive, context-sensitive entrepreneurial strategies.

LITERATURE

Dynamic Capabilities Theory

Dynamic Capabilities Theory, developed by Teece, Pisano, and Shuen (1997), explains that a firm's competitive advantage depends not only on its resources but also on its ability to adapt, build, and reconfigure them in response to environmental changes (Ferreira & Coelho, 2020). In the context of entrepreneurial marketing, this theory highlights that innovative strategies rely on the entrepreneur's ability to sense market shifts, seize opportunities through effective resource allocation, and transform business models to remain relevant (Ghosh et al., 2022; Zahoor et al., 2022). These dynamic capabilities (sensing, seizing, and transforming) are essential for ensuring long-term sustainability, especially as markets increasingly demand environmentally and socially responsible practices (Bocken & Geradts, 2020). Moreover, gender plays a significant role in how these capabilities are applied, with women entrepreneurs often prioritizing social values, sustainability, and collaboration, while male entrepreneurs tend to focus on profitability and competitive expansion (Sriyani et al., 2022; Xiang et al., 2023). Therefore, this theory provides a strong conceptual foundation for understanding how gendered approaches to entrepreneurial marketing contribute to sustainable business performance.

Sustainable Business Performance

Sustainable business performance emphasizes a company's ability to achieve long-term viability by balancing economic, social, and environmental aspects (Alqahtani & Usay, 2020). It

is no longer defined solely by profitability, but also by contributions to societal well-being and environmental preservation (Alqahtani et al., 2022). Economically, it reflects a firm's capacity to create long-term value through financial stability and strategic innovation (Bassetti et al., 2021). Socially, it involves ethical practices, employee welfare, and corporate social responsibility to maintain strong stakeholder support (Feng et al., 2022). Environmentally, it refers to responsible resource management and minimizing ecological impact through green strategies such as energy efficiency, waste reduction, and the use of sustainable materials (Sugiyanto & Wijayanti, 2024; Widjajanti & Sugiyanto, 2023a). In today's business landscape, sustainability is crucial for maintaining a reputation, fostering stakeholder trust, and securing a competitive advantage.

Entrepreneurial Marketing

Entrepreneurial marketing is a strategic approach that combines entrepreneurial principles with innovative, flexible, and opportunity-driven marketing practices, particularly suited for SMEs and emerging businesses with limited resources (Guerola-Navarro et al., 2024). Unlike traditional marketing, it emphasizes creativity, risk-taking, rapid market adaptation, and proactive exploitation of opportunities (Hamzah et al., 2023). Core characteristics include value-driven innovation, experimental strategies, and close customer relationships to build loyalty and gather market insights (Onobrakpeya, 2024). In the context of sustainable business performance, entrepreneurial marketing supports long-term resilience by enabling firms to address economic, social, and environmental challenges through value-based and socially responsible marketing (Tolossa et al., 2024b). Gender also shapes its application, with women entrepreneurs often favoring relationship-oriented, socially inclusive strategies, while men tend to pursue risk-heavy, expansion-focused approaches (Kothari & Roldan, 2022). Thus, entrepreneurial marketing reflects not just a set of tactics but an adaptive mindset that empowers businesses to survive, grow, and thrive sustainably in dynamic markets.

Relationship between Proactiveness and Sustainable Business Performance

Proactiveness in entrepreneurial marketing plays a crucial role in enhancing sustainable business performance by enabling firms to swiftly adapt to market changes and seize new opportunities ahead of competitors (Gliga & Evers, 2023). In the context of sustainability, a proactive approach encourages the development of marketing strategies that balance short-term profits with social and environmental considerations (Kumar & Shukla, 2022). By initiating eco-friendly product innovations, strengthening customer relationships, and anticipating sustainability trends, businesses can boost competitiveness, manage risks more effectively, and improve stakeholder trust, thereby supporting long-term growth and stability.

H1: Proactiveness influences Sustainable Business Performance.

Relationship between Innovativeness and Sustainable Business Performance

Innovativeness in entrepreneurial marketing is essential for enhancing sustainable business performance, as it drives firms to continuously create and adopt efficient, value-added, and environmentally friendly solutions (Al-Shaikh & Hanaysha, 2023). Through innovation, businesses can develop products and services that not only meet market demands but also integrate sustainability principles, such as eco-friendly materials and socially responsible business models (Ingaldi & Ulewicz, 2024). This capability also helps companies respond swiftly

to changing regulations and rising consumer awareness of environmental and social issues, thereby boosting competitiveness and ensuring long-term operational sustainability (Al-Shaikh & Hanaysha, 2023).

H2: Innovativeness influences Sustainable Business Performance.

Relationship between Resource Leveraging and Sustainable Business Performance

Resource leveraging in entrepreneurial marketing is vital for improving sustainable business performance by enabling firms to use limited resources more efficiently and strategically (Al-Shaikh & Hanaysha, 2023). This approach allows businesses to optimize existing assets, such as social networks, strategic partnerships, or technology, to create added value without incurring high costs. In the context of sustainability, resource leveraging supports waste reduction, operational efficiency, and the adoption of environmentally friendly practices. By tapping into external resources through collaboration and open innovation, companies can develop more sustainable solutions and enhance long-term competitiveness (Alqahtani et al., 2022), ensuring responsible growth across economic, social, and environmental dimensions.

H3: Resource Leveraging Influences Sustainable Business Performance.

Relationship between Networking and Sustainable Business Performance

Networking in entrepreneurial marketing plays a critical role in enhancing sustainable business performance by enabling entrepreneurs to build and leverage strategic networks that support long-term growth (Alqahtani & Usley, 2020). A strong focus on business networks provides access to vital information, market opportunities, and resources that drive innovation and competitiveness (Alqahtani et al., 2022). In the context of sustainability, well-developed networks help businesses adapt to environmental changes, adopt more responsible practices, and strengthen collaboration with stakeholders, including customers, partners, and communities (Tura et al., 2019). Through effective network attention, firms can create value, mitigate risks, and ensure long-term operational sustainability.

H4: Networking influences Sustainable Business Performance.

Relationship between Acceptable Risk and Sustainable Business Performance

Acceptable risk in entrepreneurial marketing is crucial for enhancing sustainable business performance, as it reflects an entrepreneur's ability to manage and take calculated risks to achieve long-term growth (Sadiku-Dushi et al., 2019). In dynamic business environments, wise risk-taking enables innovation, market expansion, and the development of more effective marketing strategies without compromising business stability (Dzogbenuku & Keelson, 2019). From a sustainability perspective, acceptable risk enables businesses to balance the exploration of opportunities with social and environmental responsibility. Strategic risk management supports adaptive decision-making, maintains competitiveness, and ensures long-term relevance in changing markets (Peng, 2024).

H5: Acceptable Risk influences Sustainable Business Performance.

Relationship between Opportunity Focus and Sustainable Business Performance

Opportunity focus in entrepreneurial marketing plays a vital role in enhancing sustainable business performance by enabling entrepreneurs to identify and seize opportunities that

support long-term growth proactively (Tolossa et al., 2024a). This orientation allows businesses to adapt quickly to market changes, develop innovative products or services, and implement more effective marketing strategies (Jones et al., 2013). In the context of sustainability, focusing on opportunities also facilitates the integration of environmentally and socially responsible practices, such as adopting circular business models or targeting eco-conscious market segments (Bocken & Geradts, 2020). Thus, opportunity focus not only strengthens competitiveness but also ensures business relevance and responsibility in the long term (Bamidele Micheal Omowole et al., 2024).

H6: Opportunity Focus influences Sustainable Business Performance.

Relationship between Entrepreneurial Marketing and Sustainable Business Performance

Entrepreneurial marketing and sustainable business performance are closely linked, particularly through innovation and adaptability to market changes. By combining flexible, creative, and opportunity-driven marketing strategies, entrepreneurial marketing enables firms to respond effectively to consumer needs and industry trends (Jones et al., 2013). This approach fosters sustainable innovation, allowing businesses to develop environmentally and socially responsible products and services that support long-term performance (Al-Shaikh & Hanaysha, 2023). It also enhances competitive advantage, strengthens customer relationships, and creates long-term value (Alqahtani et al., 2022; Elgarhy & Abou-Shouk, 2023). Over time, this contributes to business outcomes that are not only economically profitable but also socially and environmentally sustainable.

H7: Entrepreneurial Marketing influences Sustainable Business Performance.

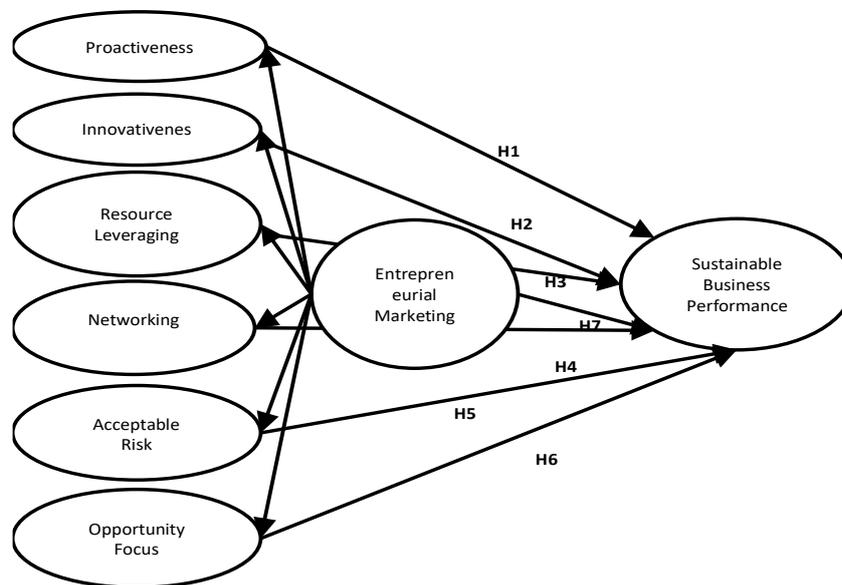


Figure 1 Research Framework

RESEARCH METHODS

This study employs a quantitative approach using a survey method to examine the relationships between variables. The research design is explanatory, as it seeks to explain how independent variables influence the dependent variable. This study involves 150 women entrepreneurs in Semarang City, selected using purposive sampling to ensure the respondents

met specific criteria relevant to the research objectives. The average age of respondents is 23 years, reflecting the growing participation of young women in sustainable entrepreneurship and their openness to innovation and adaptation. All participants have been running their businesses for more than 3 years, ensuring business stability and sufficient experience to apply entrepreneurial marketing strategies. Semarang City was chosen as the research location because it is a growing urban center with a growing number of women-led, environmentally friendly businesses, making it a strategic context for studying the intersection of gender, entrepreneurship, and sustainability.

The instrument used in this study is a questionnaire developed based on indicators of each research variable (See Appendices). Each item in the questionnaire is measured using a 5-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). The data analysis method used for hypothesis testing is Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) with the SmartPLS software. Using the PLS method, model testing will be conducted, including both the Outer Model and the Inner Model.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results

Respondent Characteristics

The respondents in this study comprise 150 women entrepreneurs based in Semarang City, representing a young demographic with an average age of 23 years. Most are aged 20–25 years, with a smaller portion aged 26–30 years, indicating that the majority belong to the early adulthood group. All respondents have been operating their businesses for at least three years, with approximately 60% managing their enterprises for 3–5 years and 40% sustaining operations for more than five years, reflecting both business maturity and resilience in maintaining entrepreneurial activities. In terms of educational background, most respondents are university graduates or active students, showing that formal education contributes to their entrepreneurial orientation.

From a business perspective, the majority manage micro-scale enterprises, while a smaller group operates small-sized businesses. Their ventures span diverse sectors, with food and beverage the most prominent, followed by fashion, crafts, and services. This distribution highlights the significant role of women entrepreneurs in creative and consumer-oriented industries within urban areas. Furthermore, their entrepreneurial practices are characterized by a commitment to sustainability. Many of them consciously adopt environmentally friendly practices, such as minimizing plastic use, using recyclable or biodegradable materials, and promoting eco-friendly products to their customers. This illustrates a combination of economic motivation with social and environmental responsibility, aligning their businesses with the principles of sustainable entrepreneurship. Overall, these characteristics demonstrate that young women entrepreneurs in Semarang not only contribute to economic development but also actively advance environmentally and socially responsible business practices.

Outer Model Test Results

The outer model testing is conducted to assess the validity and reliability of the constructs. The testing stages include outer loading, construct reliability, validity, and discriminant validity. Running Model 1 showed that one indicator (ACC3) needed to be removed because its loading

was below 0.7. After removing this indicator, Model 2 was run. The results of Running Model 2 indicated that all remaining indicators met the criteria for convergent validity, with loading values above 0.70. The outer model testing results for Model 2 are as follows.

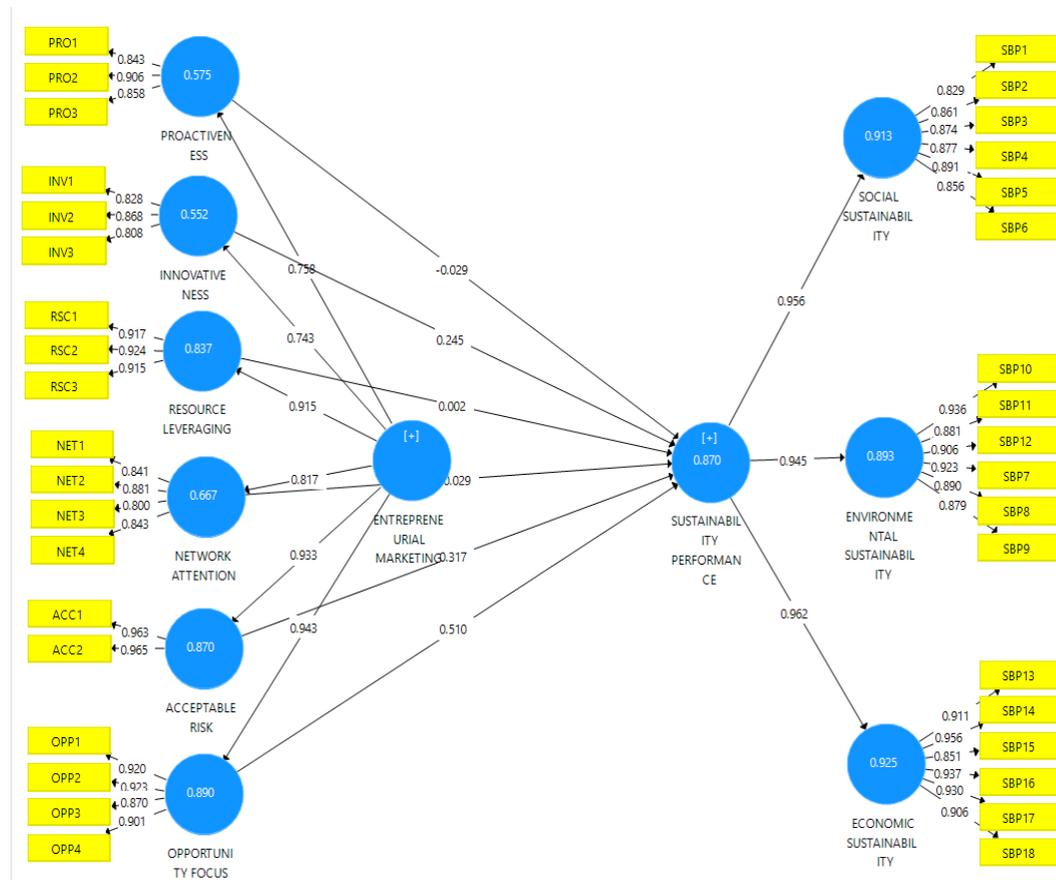


Figure 2. Outer Loading

Reliability and construct validity were assessed using Composite Reliability (CR), Average Variance Extracted (AVE), Fornell-Larcker, and Cross-Loadings. All constructs have Cronbach's alpha > 0.70, CR > 0.70, and AVE > 0.50 (Table 1).

Table 1 Construct Reliability and Validity

	Cronbach's Alpha	Composite Reliability	AVE
Acceptable Risk	0.925	0.963	0.929
Economic Sustainability	0.961	0.969	0.839
Entrepreneurial Marketing	0.962	0.967	0.708
Environmental Sustainability	0.954	0.964	0.815
Innovativeness	0.786	0.874	0.697
Network Attention	0.865	0.907	0.709
Opportunity Focus	0.925	0.947	0.817
Proactiveness	0.841	0.903	0.756
Resource Leveraging	0.907	0.942	0.844
Social Sustainability	0.933	0.947	0.748
Sustainability Performance	0.978	0.980	0.728

Discriminant validity was assessed using Fornell-Larcker and Cross-Loadings, with results indicating that each construct can be clearly distinguished, as its square root of AVE exceeds the correlations with other constructs. The overall results show that the constructs in the model meet the criteria for convergent validity, reliability, and discriminant validity, making them suitable for further analysis to test the inner model.

The results of the outer model testing confirm that the measurement instruments used in this study are both valid and reliable. The high outer loading values indicate that each indicator strongly reflects its respective construct, while Cronbach's alpha and Composite Reliability values above the required threshold ensure that the items are internally consistent and stable. The AVE values further strengthen the evidence that the constructs capture the variance in the indicators well.

In addition, the results of the Fornell-Larcker criterion indicate that the square roots of the AVE (diagonal values) exceed the correlations with other constructs, confirming adequate discriminant validity. Entrepreneurial Marketing shows strong associations with its dimensions, particularly Resource Leveraging (0.91), Networking (0.82), and Opportunity (0.84), while Sustainability Performance demonstrates high correlations with its pillars of Economic (0.85), Environmental (0.85), and Social Sustainability (0.86). These findings confirm that the measurement model fulfills both convergent and discriminant validity, allowing further analysis of the structural model.

Inner Model Test Results

Inner model testing is conducted to examine the relationships among constructs and the strength of the independent variable's influence on the dependent variable. Hypothesis testing uses the p-value. The results show that H2, H5, H6, and H7 are accepted, while H1, H3, and H4 are rejected. The rejection of H1, H3, and H4 indicates that these dimensions do not significantly influence sustainable business performance. This may occur because their effects are relatively weak compared to other dimensions that play a more dominant role. In practical terms, it shows that not all aspects of entrepreneurial marketing directly contribute to sustainability outcomes, and only certain dimensions are truly relevant in this context.

Table 2 *Hypothesis Testing*

	Original Sample (O)	T Statistics (O/STDEV)	P Values	Conclusion
Acceptable Risk → Sustainability Performance (H5)	0.317	2.731	0.007	Accepted
Innovativeness → Sustainability Performance (H2)	0.245	1.710	0.049	Accepted
Networking → Sustainability Performance (H4)	-0.029	0.276	0.783	Rejected
Opportunity Focus → Sustainability Performance (H6)	0.510	4.827	0.000	Accepted
Proactiveness →	-0.029	0.314	0.754	Rejected

Sustainability Performance (H1)				
Resource Leveraging → Sustainability Performance (H3)	0.002	0.014	0.989	Rejected
Entrepreneurial Marketing → Sustainability Performance (H7)	0.914	27.314	0.000	Accepted

Proactiveness and Sustainable Business Performance

The results showed that proactiveness has no significant effect on sustainable business performance in women entrepreneurs. This can be explained from a gender perspective. Women entrepreneurs are generally more cautious, focusing on stability and social impact rather than aggressive expansion. (Gupta & Etzkowitz, 2021). In addition, limited access to resources and the burden of multiple roles limit their scope to implement proactive strategies consistently (Kakeesh, 2024). Despite their initiative, women's proactive actions often do not directly impact business performance, especially if success is measured in economic terms alone (Sugiyanto et al., 2024; Sugiyanto & Wijayanti, 2023). This suggests that women entrepreneurs' sustainability approach is more focused on social and relational sustainability than on market growth.

This finding contrasts with many studies that link proactiveness to competitive advantage and growth (Atikur Rahman et al., 2021; Morris et al., 2006). In this context, women entrepreneurs' proactive efforts appear more oriented toward maintaining customer trust, building relationships, or engaging communities, which contribute to social and relational sustainability but do not directly translate into economic outcomes. By comparison, male entrepreneurs often associate proactiveness with aggressive market expansion and competitive positioning, which more visibly impact financial performance (Ogundana et al., 2021). These differences suggest that gender may shape how proactiveness is enacted and evaluated, with women's proactive strategies emphasizing stability and inclusivity, while men's approaches more often emphasize growth and competition.

Innovativeness and Sustainable Business Performance

Innovativeness in entrepreneurial marketing is important for improving sustainable business performance, as it drives the creation of efficient, value-added, and environmentally friendly solutions (Al-Shaikh & Hanaysha, 2023). Innovation enables the development of products and services that fulfil market needs while integrating sustainability principles, such as ecological raw materials and socially responsible business models (Chen & Liu, 2020; Ingaldi & Ulewicz, 2024). In addition, innovation helps companies adapt to environmental and socially conscious regulations and consumer preferences. Innovative women entrepreneurs tend to be more adaptive to changing trends and more sensitive to social and environmental issues (Sugiyanto et al., 2024; Sugiyanto & Wijayanti, 2023). Women entrepreneurs typically direct innovation towards social solutions and sustainability, such as community-based or environmental products, while men tend to emphasize efficiency and market expansion (Ogbari et al., 2024). This difference reflects women's unique contribution to creating inclusive and sustainable business value.

Women entrepreneurs tend to direct innovation toward socially responsible, community-based products, reflecting their sensitivity to social and environmental issues and their

adaptability to changing consumer preferences and regulations (Ingaldi & Ulewicz, 2024; Sugiyanto & Wijayanti, 2023). By contrast, previous studies on male entrepreneurs often highlight innovation outcomes related to efficiency gains and market expansion (Suseno & Abbott, 2021). Showing that gendered orientations may shape the strategic direction of innovativeness. This suggests that while both women and men engage in innovative practices, their emphases differ: women contribute more to inclusivity and sustainability, while men focus more on competitiveness and growth.

Resource Leveraging and Sustainable Business Performance

The finding that resource leveraging does not have a significant effect on sustainable business performance in women entrepreneurs can be explained through a gender perspective. Women entrepreneurs often face limited access to networks, capital, and strategic resources, which limits their ability to maximize and leverage resources optimally (Kakeesh, 2024; Ogbari et al., 2024; Sugiyanto & Wijayanti, 2024). In addition, women's tendency to manage their businesses independently and carefully makes leveraging strategies less optimally applied (Anita et al., 2024). As a result, despite the potential for high creativity, the impact of resource leveraging on business performance is not evident among women entrepreneurs. By contrast, studies on male entrepreneurs often show resource leveraging as a driver of growth and competitiveness because men are generally more integrated into formal networks and capital access (Kwapisz, 2022). These differences suggest that gendered contexts shape how resource leveraging translates into performance outcomes. While men may gain direct economic benefits, women's ability to leverage resources tends to remain limited, highlighting the need for inclusive support systems that enable women to harness strategic resources for sustainable business growth fully.

Networking and Sustainable Business Performance

The insignificance of network intention on sustainable business performance in women entrepreneurs can be explained from a gender perspective. Despite having the intention to network, women entrepreneurs often face structural barriers such as time constraints, multiple roles, and a lack of access to strategic business networks (Christodoulou et al., 2024; Constantinidis, 2021). In addition, women tend to build networks based on social proximity, rather than market orientation or expansion. As a result, networking intentions are not enough to have a direct impact on improving sustainable business performance (Hassan et al., 2024). In contrast, male entrepreneurs are more frequently embedded in formal, market-oriented networks that provide easier access to capital and market opportunities. These gendered differences indicate that the impacts of networking are context-dependent and highlight the importance of creating inclusive, strategic networking platforms that enable women's intentions to translate into measurable performance outcomes.

Acceptable Risk and Sustainable Business Performance

Acceptable risk in entrepreneurial marketing plays an important role in improving sustainable business performance, as it reflects the entrepreneur's ability to take measured risks that drive long-term growth (Sadiku-Dushi et al., 2019). Prudent risk enables innovation, market expansion, and effective marketing strategies without compromising stability (Dzogbenuku &

Keelson, 2019). In the context of sustainability, acceptable risk helps balance the exploration of new opportunities with social and environmental responsibility (Peng, 2024). For women entrepreneurs, the ability to strategically manage risk is important for facing multiple challenges arising from market dynamics and resource limitations (Kitole & Genda, 2024). This attitude helps them make adaptive decisions, maintain business continuity, and increase their contribution to sustainable development. In the context of gender, women entrepreneurs tend to be more cautious yet strategic in taking risks, considering the impact more broadly than men, who are generally more aggressive in pursuing rapid expansion (Darnihamedani & Terjesen, 2022). This difference highlights how gendered approaches to risk-taking shape diverse pathways toward sustainable development, where women's cautious yet strategic risk orientation may enhance resilience and social value. At the same time, men's aggressive strategies may accelerate market growth.

Opportunity and Sustainable Business Performance

Opportunity focus in entrepreneurial marketing plays an important role in driving sustainable business performance, as it enables entrepreneurs to identify and capitalize on opportunities for long-term growth proactively (Tolossa et al., 2024b, 2024a). This approach supports adaptation to market changes, product innovation, and the development of effective marketing strategies. In the context of sustainability, opportunity orientation promotes the integration of social and environmental values through practices such as circular business models and targeting sustainability-minded consumers (Bocken & Geradts, 2020), thereby maintaining business competitiveness and relevance (Bamidele Micheal Omowole et al., 2024). In the context of gender, women entrepreneurs show opportunity focus characteristics that tend to be inclusive and oriented towards social sustainability (Hasan Emon & Nisa Nipa, 2024; Rosca et al., 2020). Unlike male entrepreneurs, who are generally more aggressive in pursuing opportunities focused on expansion and short-term profits, women are more likely to capitalize on opportunities that support social values, community empowerment, and environmentally friendly products. Despite facing limited access to capital and networks, women entrepreneurs can turn these challenges into strategic opportunities. Thus, an opportunity focus among women entrepreneurs not only enhances innovation and competitiveness but also strengthens their contribution to more sustainable and equitable business development. These findings highlight how gendered opportunity orientations contribute differently to sustainable business development, combining economic competitiveness with social and environmental responsibility.

Entrepreneurial Marketing and Sustainable Business Performance

Entrepreneurial marketing is closely linked to sustainable business performance, particularly through innovation and adaptation to market changes. With a flexible, creative, and opportunity-oriented approach, companies can develop products or services that are environmentally and socially friendly, thus supporting business sustainability (Al-Shaikh & Hanaysha, 2023). This approach also builds competitive advantage, strengthens customer relationships, and creates long-term value (Alqahtani et al., 2022; Elgarhy & Abou-Shouk, 2023). From a gender perspective, women entrepreneurs tend to utilize entrepreneurial marketing to create business solutions that are not only innovative but also socially impactful (Rosca et al.,

2020). Compared to men, women are more focused on long-term sustainability and social values in their marketing strategies, thus playing an important role in driving inclusive and sustainable business practices.

While the literature often associates women with a stronger social orientation and men with efficiency and rapid expansion, this study highlights the importance of understanding these patterns in sustainability contexts rather than assuming fixed gender traits. Thus, the contribution lies in illustrating how entrepreneurial marketing practices can be shaped by gendered approaches, offering new insights for advancing inclusive and sustainable business strategies.

CONCLUSION

This study shows that not all dimensions of entrepreneurial marketing significantly influence sustainable business performance among women entrepreneurs. Dimensions such as innovativeness, opportunity focus, and acceptable risk have been shown to contribute positively to business sustainability by aligning with women's tendency to develop businesses grounded in social values, environmental sustainability, and adaptability to market changes. In contrast, dimensions such as proactiveness, resource leveraging, and network intention had no significant effect, reflecting structural barriers, resource limitations, and differences in strategic orientation between women and men entrepreneurs. This finding answers the research question by showing that the entrepreneurial marketing approach must be understood in context, particularly with respect to the role of gender in sustainable entrepreneurial practices.

This study contributes to entrepreneurial marketing theory by revealing that not all dimensions equally affect sustainable business performance, particularly for women entrepreneurs. The findings show that women tend to rely on innovation, opportunity recognition, and calculated risk-taking, while other dimensions, such as aggressiveness or resource leveraging, have less influence. This highlights the need for gender-sensitive approaches in both theory and practice. Practically, the study suggests that tailored capacity-building programs should strengthen women's unique strengths in sustainability and social value creation. Policymakers and support institutions can play a crucial role by ensuring inclusive access to capital, digital literacy training, and incentives for green businesses. At the same time, gender-responsive policies and mentorship models are necessary to empower women-led enterprises in facing both market and environmental challenges. Overall, the study offers theoretical insights and practical recommendations for entrepreneurs, business incubators, and governments to foster inclusive and sustainable entrepreneurial ecosystems.

This study is limited by its exclusive use of a quantitative approach, which may not fully capture the personal, social, and cultural dynamics that influence women entrepreneurs in managing sustainable businesses. The absence of mediation or moderation analyses—such as the roles of institutional support, digital literacy, or adaptive capacity—also limits understanding of the underlying mechanisms that strengthen or weaken the impact of entrepreneurial marketing. Furthermore, the study focuses on a specific demographic and geographic context, reducing the generalizability of the findings.

Future research is recommended to further explore the role of mediation or moderation, such as institutional support, digital literacy, or adaptive capacity, in strengthening the influence of entrepreneurial marketing on sustainable business performance in women entrepreneurs. In

addition, a qualitative or case-study approach can be used to explore the personal, social, and cultural dynamics that influence women's strategies for managing their businesses sustainably. It is also important to develop policy-based interventions or gender-sensitive entrepreneurship training to strengthen dimensions that have not optimally impacted business performance.

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