




# The Influence of Sustainable Entrepreneur Competencies on Soybean-Based MSEs Business Sustainability

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**Abstract.** This research is triggered by the low business sustainability of soybean-based MSEs in West Java. There is a decreasing number of MSEs in the soybean-based food industry, high cases of environmental pollution, and labor and industrial conflicts within the community. The COVID-19 pandemic with the policy of restricting movement resulted in reduced business activity. Sustainable entrepreneur competence is a key factor in determining business sustainability, especially during the new normal period where people need to pay more attention to their own health and environment. This study aims to analyze the influence of sustainable entrepreneur competence on business sustainability. This research was conducted by surveying 185 MSEs in West Java by collecting data using questionnaires and interviews. The results of this study indicated that sustainable entrepreneur competence had an effect on business sustainability. The results of this study can be used as basic information for the priority of developing entrepreneur competencies that are able to run a business that is not only profit-oriented, but also pays attention to business continuity by protecting the environment, and has social concern for the community.

**Keywords:** Business · Competencies · Entrepreneurship · Sustainability · Sustainable

## 1 Introduction

Soybean is one of the most important food commodities as a source of protein that can be processed into a variety of foods. Besides rice, soybeans are the main food needs of the community to obtain the second largest source of vegetable protein after animal protein derived from fish and meat by obtaining cheap prices and can also be reached by the lower class in the form of processed tofu and tempeh. Producer demand for soybeans is getting higher, but it is not balanced with the diminishing supply which causes higher prices. The soaring price of soybeans has caused difficulties for soybean-based producers. This soybean problem does not only occur in West Java, but throughout Indonesia [1, 2]. Many crafters have stopped producing, especially MSEs [2] stopped because of loss problems [3]. The increase in domestic soybean prices is an implication of low

domestic soybean production, which is still filled with soybean imports. Indonesia still has a dependence on soybean imports from abroad, apart from the problem of lacking land due to entrepreneurial competence which is still experiencing delays in technology that hinder the advancement of soybean production in Indonesia. Imported soybean production from the United States, Brazil, Argentina, or Canada has used technology and mechanization with precision farming systems to produce uniform products. Meanwhile, farmers in Indonesia still apply traditional farming systems so that the quality of soybeans produced is not standardized or different [4]. As a result of the increase in soybean prices, tofu craftsmen increase the selling price or reduce the size of the tofu until production is reduced [5]. If production is reduced, it will have an impact on reducing labor until production stops. The high cost of production causes many MSEs to close their businesses and even this problem is responded to by unethical entrepreneur behavior to reduce production costs and reduce business risks, such as using additives above the threshold using of non-food preservatives, substandard wages, and relatively minimal waste management [2], which is a problem related to business sustainability. To overcome the problems of business sustainability, there are several things that influence it, including entrepreneurial competence, creativity, business capital, and the application of product diversification [6]. For MSEs in which incidentally the main actors are entrepreneurs, the problem of business sustainability can be overcome with entrepreneurial competencies, especially sustainable entrepreneur competencies. A sustainable business ensures that all activities and production processes take into account social and environmental conditions, and still earn profits. In reality, the goal of entrepreneurs is only to enrich themselves without looking at the welfare of the workforce [6]. One of the sustainability of a business lies in its human resources (HR), therefore it is very important to pay attention to the welfare of the workforce. According to [7] welfare facilities help motivate and retain the workforce. In addition, many business actors do not pay attention to the surrounding environment. MSEs itself is a strategic step in improving the basic life of the people as a provider of employment opportunities, reducing social inequality, and poverty. However, the existence of MSEs also has a negative impact on the environment if not handled properly. These impacts result in a decrease in environmental quality in the form of air, soil, and water pollution [8]. The low concern of MSEs for the environment is due to a lack of knowledge about ecological issues, lack of awareness of the existing market potential, as well as limited financial problems to promote green products [2, 9].

Entrepreneurs play a role in determining the success of MSEs. Thus, sustainable entrepreneur competencies are expected to make the business more successful and lead to a sustainable competitive advantage. The importance of the role of human resources, especially sustainable entrepreneur competencies, is based on the theory of Resource Based Value [10] which shows that human resources are the most important resources for sustainable competitive advantage. Based on several studies, entrepreneurship and sustainability are two different things. Entrepreneurship is related to one's way of thinking in obtaining profit by prioritizing innovation, the ability to take risks, and being proactive. On the other hand, sustainability is related to efficiency, fairness, and concern for future generations. Sustainability is socially oriented and the welfare of the next generation. The high role of MSEs in the economy in large numbers requires entrepreneurial behavior that cares about social and environmental conditions while trying hard to maintain

business and earn profits. The issue of environmental degradation, the lack of energy availability, the scarcity of non-renewable resources, and the decline in the quality of human life, are the background for the efforts of business actors to jointly maintain the quality and carrying capacity of the environment and develop the concept of business sustainability which emphasizes business operations that care about the environment. Due to this debate, research on the issue of sustainability and entrepreneurship, especially entrepreneurial competence, needs to be carried out in order to strengthen the findings that form the basis for developing MSEs, especially entrepreneurial competencies. Environmental issues among MSEs are dominated by entrepreneurs as the main control of the business, so the issue of sustainable entrepreneurship has developed. Sustainable entrepreneurship is focused on nature conservation, by supporting life and community [11]. Sustainable entrepreneurship is a business approach in which a business engages in sustainable business practices to achieve efficiency and competitiveness by balancing the impact of this environmental business and social activities. To build business performance, it is necessary to have entrepreneurial competence. Thus, entrepreneurial competencies affected business performance [12, 13]. Another study also showed that competency was related to superior performance in any given circumstances [14] and successful businesses are led by competent owners [15]. Sustainable entrepreneurship consists of five aspects including (1) normative and strategic action competence, (2) diversity competence, (3) system thinking competence, (4) foresight thinking competence, and (5) interpersonal competence. Based on this theory, this study aims to determine the effect of sustainable entrepreneur competencies on business sustainability. This research was conducted by surveying soybean-based MSEs in West Java.

## 2 Method

This research was conducted using a quantitative approach with an exploratory survey method to the sample, namely the owners of soybean-based MSEs in West Java amounted to 184 MSEs. The data were collected using questionnaires, interviews, and observations. The data that has been collected was then processed with data processing devices. The data processing technique used in this study was Structural Equation Modeling (SEM). Data processing in this study used partial least squares because it aims to develop theory. PLS-SEM is a powerful analytical method and is often referred to as soft modeling because it eliminates OLS (Ordinary Least Squares) assumptions. Data processing consists of examining data, testing the validity and reliability of instruments and testing hypotheses. The research instrument test was carried out by testing the convergent validity and reliability with the second-order confirmatory technique from the Smart PLS output. Meanwhile, hypothesis testing was carried out by calculating and bootstrapping PLS-SEM.

### 3 Result and Discussion

Based on the figure, there are 2 latent variables, namely sustainable entrepreneur competencies which are thought to affect business sustainability. Sustainable entrepreneur competencies consist of 17 indicators and business sustainability consists of 9 indicators. Variable operationalization which includes the concept of variables, sub-variables, indicators, and symbols used as displayed in Table 1.

After obtaining the data, the data were categorized descriptively as shown in Table 2.

#### 3.1 Business Sustainability

Business sustainability consists of 3 sub-variables, namely economic sustainability, social sustainability, and environmental sustainability. Overall, the criteria for business sustainability are high and medium. The results of business sustainability research conducted on 184 soybean-based SMEs are shown in Table 3.

Based on the research results, MSME business sustainability is relatively good in terms of economic sustainability but relatively low in environmental sustainability. Each sub-variable is explained as follows.

**Table 1.** Operationalization of Variables.

Variables	Dimensions	Symbol
Business Sustainability	Economic Sustainability	E1, E2, E3
	Social Sustainability	S1, S2, S3, S4
	Environmental Sustainability	V1, V2, V3, V4, V5
Sustainable Entrepreneur Competencies	Strategic action competences	C1, C2, C3
	Diversity Competence	G1, G2, G3
	Foresighted thinking competence	O1, O2, O3
	Interpersonal Competence	R1, R2, R3, R4
	Normative competencies	T1, T2, T3, T4

**Table 2.** Score Criteria.

Laten Variables	Score	Criteria
Business Sustainability Sustainable Entrepreneur Competencies	1216–1473	Very high
	958–1215	High
	700–957	Middle
	442–699	Low
	184–441	Very Low

**Table 3.** Business Sustainability Criteria.

Descriptive Statistics							
Indicator	N	Min	Max	Sum	Mean	Std. Deviation	Criteria
E1	184	3,00	7,00	1192,00	6,4783	,78201	High
E2	184	1,00	7,00	916,00	4,9783	1,42175	Middle
E3	184	High	7,00	1206,00	6,5543	,74459	High
Average	1104,60						High
S1	184	3,00	7,00	947,00	5,1413	1,12423	Middle
S2	184	3,00	7,00	1142,00	6,2065	,94132	High
S3	184	2,00	7,00	995,00	5,4076	1,31496	Middle
S4	184	2,00	7,00	945,00	5,5707	1,22604	Middle
Average	1005,00						Middle
V1	184	1,00	7,00	931,00	5,0598	1,37173	Middle
V2	184	1,00	7,00	864,00	4,6957	1,52745	Middle
V3	184	1,00	7,00	924,00	5,0217	1,52199	Middle
V4	184	1,00	7,00	729,00	3,9620	1,72531	Middle
V5	184	1,00	7,00	912,00	4,9565	1,54292	Middle
Average	872,00						Middle

### 3.2 Economics Sustainability

Economic sustainability is the best ability compared to the ability to achieve social sustainability and environmental sustainability. Economic sustainability is indicated by the ability to get consumers (E1), the ability to gain profitable market share (E2), and the ability to reduce production costs (E3). Based on the score criteria that they have, on average MSEs are in the high category. MSEs have a relatively better ability to reduce production costs but are relatively poor in gaining market share. This is because the market share for soybean-based products is relatively low, or there are many sellers of similar products that result in high competition. The low ability to gain profitable market share requires a better competitive advantage strategy, and high competition often leads to unethical business behavior, so a strategy of cooperation between similar producers is better to be done so that each producer benefits from the advantages it has. The ability to earn high profits in soybean-based SMEs is due to long experience in business and having loyal customers to producers.

### 3.3 Social Sustainability

Social sustainability is a measure of human well-being, where it aims to maintain or improve welfare, security, health, food security, responsibility, and social justice. Social

sustainability in this study was measured by the ability to provide fair wages (S1), the ability to provide employment for the surrounding community (S2), the ability to participate in community activities (S3), and the ability to produce goods that do not contain harmful additives (S4). Based on the results of the study, the ability to provide employment for the surrounding community is better than other indicators, this can be due to the soybean-based MSEs being able to accommodate workers with low levels of education, without the needs for special skills, and work that is labor intensive. While the ability to produce goods that do not contain harmful additives is a relatively low achievement for MSE actors, which causes soybean-based preparations to use harmful additives.

### **3.4 Environmental Sustainability**

Environmental sustainability is the rate of renewable resource harvest, pollution creation, and non-renewable resource depletion that can be sustained continuously. If they cannot be continued, then they are not sustainable [16]. Environmental sustainability includes the intensity of saving energy (V1), the intensity of managing waste (V2), the intensity of using environmental-friendly goods (V3), the intensity of saving raw materials (V4), and the intensity of using environmentally friendly raw materials (V5). Overall, the achievement of environmental sustainability performance is relatively low compared to other business sustainability performance achievements. Based on the research result on the achievement of environmental sustainability, compared to other indicators, MSEs' owners are able to save energy in the production process.

The use of electricity in tofu and tempeh MSEs is mostly for lighting purposes and water suction, so its use is relatively low. In addition, MSEs' owners use environmental-friendly raw materials in the sense that they are easy to recycle. In this case, the main raw materials used are soybeans, yeast, and other spices such as turmeric, sugar, and salt. However, this has an impact on the difficulty of saving raw materials. Likewise, the MSEs rate is relatively low in waste management. Waste in the form of tofu dregs and soybean skin is usually sold as animal feed. Liquid waste in the form of washing water and boiled soybeans used to wash furniture is often disposed of to the drain with a simple filtering process, which often causes unpleasant odors.

### **3.5 Sustainable Entrepreneur Competencies**

Sustainable entrepreneur competencies are the development of entrepreneurial competencies that have emerged since the issue of sustainability in the business area is carried out. Entrepreneur competencies are basic such as general and specific knowledge, motives, self-images, social roles, and skills that will guide the birth, survival, and growth of a business. Entrepreneurial competencies are owned by individuals called "the entrepreneurs" who start or transform an organization and generate added value through the resources and opportunities of the organization [17]. Entrepreneurial competence that specializes in competencies that pay attention to the needs of current and future generations, and care about social welfare, ethics, image, and reputation is the basic concept of sustainable entrepreneurial competence. According to [18] sustainable entrepreneurship consists of entrepreneurial action to improve the environment, advance

social well-being and generate profit. Sustainable entrepreneur competencies consist of 6 competencies [18] namely (1) strategic action competence, (2) system thinking competence, (3) embracing diversity and interdisciplinary competence, (4) foresight thinking competence, (5) normative competence, and (6) interpersonal competence. The research results on sustainable entrepreneur competencies are shown in Table 4.

Table 4 shows sustainable entrepreneur competencies in soybean-based SMEs in West Java based on sub-variables [18]. In general, the sustainable entrepreneur competencies of MSME actors are in the medium category. The highest competence is normative competence while the lowest competence is interpersonal competence. The explanation of each competency is as follows

**Table 4.** Sustainable Entrepreneur Competence Score.

Descriptive Statistics							
Indicators.	N	Min	Max	Sum	Mean	Std. Deviasi	Criteria
C1	184	1	7	802	4,3587	1,63688	Middle
C2	184	1	7	818	4,4457	1,48482	Middle
C3	184	1	7	917	4,9837	1,6644	Middle
				845			Middle
G1	184	1	7	698	3,8478	1,69818	Low
G2	184	1	7	837	4,5489	1,59843	Middle
G3	184	1	7	855	4,6467	1,51502	Middle
				797			Middle
O1	184	1	7	783	4,2554	1,72572	Middle
O2	184	1	7	832	4,5217	1,67252	Middle
O3	184	1	7	983	5,3424	1,21788	High
				866			Middle
R1	184	1	7	830	4,5109	1,5646	Middle
R2	184	1	7	586	3,1848	1,74262	rendah
R3	184	1	7	839	4,5598	1,39739	Middle
R4	184	2	7	865	4,5761	1,13786	Middle
				780			Middle
T1	184	2	7	995	5,4076	1,21563	High
T2	184	1	7	557	3,0272	1,58694	Low
T3	184	2	7	997	5,4185	1,09339	High i
T4	184	2	7	1033	5,6141	1,20019	High
Valid N (listwise)	184			895,5			Middle

### 3.6 Strategic Action Competencies

Strategic action competencies are the ability to arrange tasks, people and other resources, inspire, motivate others, evaluate projects and take action [18]. Strategic action competencies are measured by (1) the ability to develop business strategies (C1) (2) the ability to motivate employees to achieve business goals (C2) (3) the ability to optimize resource utilization (C3). Of the three sub-variables, the ability to optimize resource utilization is relatively higher than other sub-variables. Whereas, the ability to develop business strategies is relatively low compared to other sub-variables. This shows that MSEs are less capable of formulating business strategies, but they are good at utilizing resources.

### 3.7 Diversity Competences

Diversity competence is the ability to build structural relations, issue and recognize the legitimacy of the viewpoint in business decision-making. Diversity competencies are measured from (1) the ability to build good relationships with profitable suppliers (G1) (2) the ability to cooperate with similar businesses (G2) (3) the ability to establish good relationships with consumers (G3). Of the three sub-variables, MSEs are competent in establishing relationships with consumers but relatively low in terms of establishing profitable relationships with suppliers. A good relationship with consumers will build loyal consumers, so that MSMEs have a definite market but MSEs do not have profitable suppliers.

### 3.8 Foresight Thinking Competences

Foresight thinking competence is the ability to collectively analyze, evaluate, and fit a picture of the future which give an impact on local and/or short-term decisions. Foresight thinking competence is measured by the ability to predict the business risks that will be faced (O1), the ability to predict the business uncertainty that will be faced (O2), and the ability to predict the technical risks that will be faced (O3). Table 2 shows that of these three competencies, the ability to face business risks is the best competency for MSME actors. This can be due to the characteristics of soybean-based SMEs, which are businesses that have been operating for a long time and have been passed down from generation to generation. Technical risks, which are mostly in the form of production problems, are relatively more manageable than business risks and business uncertainties which are mostly caused by factors beyond control.

### 3.9 Interpersonal Competence

Interpersonal competence is the ability to motivate, enable, and facilitate collaboration and participation. In this study, interpersonal competence was measured by the ability to interact in social activities (R1), the ability to participate in efforts to reduce waste/environmental pollution (R2), and the ability to motivate employees to save energy (R3), and the ability to communicate with employees (R4). Of these four competencies, communication skills with employees are relatively good for MSME owners. This often



occurs in micro and small businesses because of the close relationship between leaders and subordinates, being in the same workspace, and meeting face-to-face every day. Meanwhile, the abilities to reduce waste/environmental pollution are relatively low. This can be caused by limited knowledge of sewage treatment, limited ownership of filtering equipment, and limited costs.

### 3.10 Normative Competences

Normative competence is the ability to map and apply the reconcile sustainability value, principles, and targets [19]. Normative competencies can be measured by understanding the principles of fair wages (T1), being able to produce safe products for employees (T2), providing a healthy work environment for employees (T3), and understanding a safe work environment for employees (T4). Of the four competencies, the competence indicated by an understanding of a safe working environment is relatively good. This can be due to the fact that entrepreneurs have long been engaged in the business sector and know the ins and outs of production operations. While the indicator of producing products that are safe/without containing substances is relatively lower than other indicators. This shows that in some MSMEs some substances are still seen as being used primarily as preservatives that do not cause changes in color and texture.

### 3.11 Hypothesis Test

Hypothesis testing on the sample was based on the results of the bootstrapping compilation of the overall model. The value used to test the hypothesis was the path coefficient and the value of R<sup>2</sup> (coefficient of determination) of the endogenous construct which was also used to evaluate the model with a significance of p-value. These two coefficients are shown in Table 5.

The value of R<sup>2</sup> was used to evaluate the structure of the model as a measure of the prediction accuracy of the model. Overall, the value of R<sup>2</sup> on the endogenous construct of Business Sustainability is moderate (R<sup>2</sup> = 0.793), so the equation model built in this study is 'medium' [20] in predicting business sustainability. Thus, 79.3% is a moderate influence in determining business sustainability. In this case, 79.3% of business sustainability is built by sustainable entrepreneur competencies. The overall results of the final data processing can be seen in Fig. 1.

The above model obtained valid and reliable indicators that were used in the further data processing. The research hypothesis was carried out using the p-value as the basis for decision-making.

The results of testing the hypothesis through the bootstrapping process can be seen in Table 6.

**Table 5.** Determinant Coefficient of Endogenous Construct.

Endogenous Construct	R <sup>2</sup>	P Value
Business Sustainability	0.793	0.000

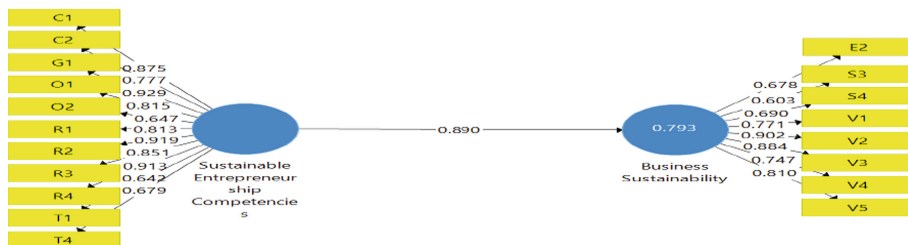


Fig. 1. Path Diagram of the Sustainable Entrepreneur.

Table 6. Path Estimation Results and Research Hypotheses.

Path	Coeff	R2	F2	P value	Hipotesis	Criteria Ho
Sustainable Entrepreneur Competencies → Business Sustainability	0,890	0,793	3,837	0,000	H1	Rejected

The influence of Sustainable Entrepreneur Competencies on business sustainability in the SEM- PLS analysis was carried out by comparing the t-value of the coefficient of p with 0.05. The hypotheses in this study are:

H0:  $0 = 0$ : Sustainable Entrepreneur Competencies have no effect on Business Sustainability

H1:  $1 \neq 0$ : Sustainable Entrepreneur Competencies have an effect on Business Sustainability

The magnitude of the path coefficient is 0.890 and the coefficient of determination is 0,793, while the probability value is 0.00 and the t-value (2.533) >  $t_{tab.1.97}$ . Based on the test results, Ho is rejected. Thus, it is concluded that sustainable entrepreneur competencies have an effect on business sustainability. Business sustainability in the economic dimension is especially influenced by strategic action competencies indicators, understanding the principles of developing business strategies, and being skilled in optimizing the use of resources. From the dimensions of diversity competencies, entrepreneurs are able to establish good relationships with consumers, especially order fulfillment, service, accuracy, and honesty. From the economic dimension, business sustainability is also influenced by foresight thinking competence, especially understanding the technical risks that will be faced. The dimensions of social business sustainability are influenced mainly by interpersonal competencies and diversity competencies, and normative competencies. Interpersonal competencies that contribute to social business sustainability are indicators of being skilled in interacting with community activities and being skilled in communicating with employees. From normative competencies, social business sustainability is influenced by understanding the principles of fair wages for employees and producing safe products and a safe work environment for employees. The dimensions

of the business sustainability environment are mainly influenced by interpersonal and normative competencies. Indicators of interpersonal competencies are being skilled in reducing waste and motivating employees to save energy. The normative competencies that affect the environmental dimensions of business sustainability are producing safe products and a healthy work environment for employees.

## 4 Conclusion

Business sustainability in soybean-based MSEs was influenced by sustainable entrepreneur sustainability. The description of business sustainability can be seen from the economic, social and environmental dimensions. From the economic dimension, the ability to reduce production costs was relatively better for MSEs compared to other indicators. From the social dimension, MSEs were relatively capable of providing jobs for the surrounding community. The existence of MSMEs contributed to the surrounding community. From the environmental dimension, MSEs were relatively more capable of using environmental-friendly goods. In addition, sustainable entrepreneur competencies were seen from 5 dimensions, namely strategic action competencies, diversity competencies, foresight thinking competencies, interpersonal competencies, and normative competencies. Of the overall competencies, normative competencies were indicated by the ability to interact with the community and provide work facilities that were relatively better than other competencies. Meanwhile, the diversity competencies shown by the ability to partner with external parties were relatively lower than other competencies. The results of this study also revealed that competence had an effect on business sustainability.

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**Author Contribution.** Author 1 is a party that contributes to the formulation of research ideas in outline, together with author 2, composes research instruments, collects data and processes data. Research results were reported and published in this international conference.

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