

Enhancing Business Sustainability through Creativity: The Role of Product Innovation and Entrepreneurial Skills

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Abstract

This study aims to analyze the effect of product innovation on business sustainability, by considering creativity as a mediating variable and entrepreneurial skills as a moderating variable on fast food MSME actors in Bekasi Regency. The research method used is a quantitative research method. The data source used is primary data by distributing questionnaires online and direct interviews. The population in the study was all fast food MSME actors in Bekasi Regency whose number is unknown. The number of samples in this study was 105 respondents obtained using Purposive sampling and the Hair et.al formula. The results showed that product innovation did not have a significant direct effect on business sustainability. The data analysis process was carried out by testing the outer model to ensure the validity and reliability of the indicators. Continued with the R Square test and path analysis to evaluate the relationship between constructs, including the mediation effect. The significance of the relationship is determined based on the probability value of the bootstrapping process. However, there is a significant indirect effect through creativity, which means that creativity mediates the relationship. Meanwhile, entrepreneurial skills do not play a significant role in moderating the relationship between product innovation and business sustainability. This research provides novelty by integrating creativity as a mediator and entrepreneurial skills as a moderator in the context of fast food MSMEs, which has been rarely examined in previous studies. The findings also carry practical implications by highlighting the importance for MSME actors to foster creativity in order to achieve business sustainability, even when product innovation alone does not guarantee success.

Keywords: Product Innovation, Creativity, Entrepreneurship Skills, Business Sustainability, Fast Food MSMEs

Introduction

Micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs) are now experiencing fierce competition between entrepreneurs, especially in the fast food sector. More than 50% of MSMEs in Indonesia fail to survive during their first three years of operation due to various challenges, such as limited access to financing, changing market conditions, and lack of human resources. The inability of business actors to adapt to changes in the business environment is the main reason for this failure. Faced with a situation like this, product innovation based on creativity is very important. This can help MSMEs survive and thrive in the midst of fierce competition. Hadiyati., MSME actors can increase their business

competitiveness by becoming more creative in making new products or changing existing products (Hadiyati, 2011).

MSMEs in the fast food industry can show innovation in various ways, such as creating unique menus, using quality but cheap local raw materials, and making dishes that are interesting and different from others. The level of sustainability of MSMEs that continue to develop new products is much higher than MSMEs that rarely develop new products. However, keep in mind that turning creative ideas into market-accepting, profitable goods requires qualified entrepreneurial skills. Moeuf et al., The benefits of product innovation to business sustainability will be even greater if it is supported by broad entrepreneurial skills, such as accurate market analysis, efficient financial management, and effective marketing strategies. As a result, to conquer market challenges and develop businesses sustainably, MSMEs need a combination of entrepreneurial skills and creativity in product innovation (Moeuf et al., 2019). However, previous studies have generally examined the role of product innovation, creativity, or entrepreneurial skills separately, and very few have tested the simultaneous interaction of these variables in one integrated model. Moreover, no prior research has explicitly focused on the fast food MSMEs in Bekasi Regency, making this study unique in addressing the gap by combining these variables in a specific local context where Bekasi is recognized as one of the largest industrial and urban centers in West Java, characterized by rapid economic growth, a dense population, and a highly competitive culinary sector that creates intense pressure for MSMEs to innovate. The region's significant contribution to the regional economy and its position as a hub for both traditional and modern food businesses provide a strong rationale for choosing Bekasi as the locus of this research.

Table 1. Emerging Sustainability Trends

| No. | Emerging Sustainability Trends | Percentage |
|-----|---|------------|
| 1 | Metrics for Climate Adaptation | 58% |
| 2 | Strategic Sustainability Guidance | 57% |
| 3 | Sustainability ROI | 42% |
| 4 | Supply Chain Sustainability Risk | 38% |
| 5 | Traceability and Transparency Tools | 38% |
| 6 | Regenerative Agriculture | 28% |
| 7 | Social Issues (Living Income, Gender, etc.) | 11% |
| 8 | Corporate Benchmarking Rating | 10% |
| 9 | Other Nature-Based Solutions | 3% |

Source: Committee On Sustainability Assessment (COSA), 2022

Based on table 1 on the chart that analyzes ongoing trends to provide important insights into strategic decision-making. Explaining that climate data has a percentage of 58%, sustainable alloys have a percentage of 57%, Return On Investment (ROI) sustainability has a percentage of 42%, supply chain sustainability risks have a percentage of 38%, transparency and footprint tools have a percentage of 38%, regenerative agriculture has a percentage of 28%, social issues have a percentage of 11%, corporate benchmarking has a percentage of 10%, and other nature-based solutions have a percentage of 3%.

Data shows that businesses are currently more focused on climate adaptation metrics and sustainability strategic guidance, where the social aspect lags far behind the two. This

gap shows an imbalance in a sustainability approach that should include three important aspects: economic, environmental, and social. where environmental and economic aspects receive greater attention than social aspects. Kohler et al., An effective sustainability transition requires the transformation of socio-technical systems that integrate environmental, economic, and social dimensions equally, but data show that this integration has not yet been achieved (Kohler et al., 2019). As a result, the sustainability efforts carried out are not comprehensive. Although it has succeeded in overcoming environmental and economic problems, the benefits are often not felt equally by the community. Whereas Babaee et al., emphasizing that organizations that are able to turn sustainability challenges into competitive advantages are those that successfully integrate all dimensions of sustainability into their business models Babaee et al., (2022).

Table 2. Factors Inhibiting Business Sustainability in MSMEs in Indonesia

| No | Inhibiting Factors | Percentage |
|----|---------------------------------------|------------|
| 1 | Financing | 38% |
| 2 | Market Conditions | 32% |
| 3 | Human Resources Limitations | 33% |
| 4 | The Need for Technological Adaptation | 25% |
| 5 | It takes time to learn | 26% |
| 6 | Time Limitations | 22% |
| 7 | Stock Arrangement | 5% |
| 8 | Sales Channel Requirements | 5% |

Source: Katadata Insight Center (KIC), 2023

Based on table 2 regarding the eight inhibiting factors or challenges faced in a business or project context, which are measured on a percentage scale. Explaining that there are 38% of challenges from the Financing factor, 32-33% challenges from the Market Conditions and Human Resources Constraint factors, 25-26% challenges from the Technology Adaptation and Learning Time factors, 22% challenges from the Time Constraint factor, and 5% challenges from the Stock Management and Sales Channel Requirements factors.

This is in line with a survey conducted by Annur (2023), where the challenges faced by small and medium enterprises (SMEs) in Indonesia seem to be diverse and this includes economic, environmental, and social aspects. As shown in the data visualization, financing and market conditions emerged as the most significant barriers to business sustainability. Followed by limited human resources, the need for technological adaptation, and the need for learning time are also substantial obstacles. Tambunan,. These problems form a mutually affecting cycle, where limited capital limits the ability of business actors to recruit quality human resources, while unstable market conditions add complexity in the tight business competition (Tambunan, 2019). Meanwhile, the need for technological conditions, and learning time, indicate that business actors are facing obstacles to digital transformation in operations. Syamsinar et al., Time constraints, stock arrangements, and sales channel requirements, reflect the operational complexity of day-to-day management. Given the

country's unique economic landscape and ongoing digital transformation efforts (Syamsinar et al., 2024). This pattern shows the complex interaction between financial (economic), market or environmental factors, human (social) resources, and technology that have the potential to hinder the sustainability of SMEs in Indonesia.

According to Ranjamandi & Situmorang (2024), it was found that product innovation has a significant and positive effect on business sustainability. This is in line with research conducted by Epinda & LV (2023) and Misshell Chai & Handoyo (2024) which found that product innovation has a significant and positive effect on business sustainability. Meanwhile, the results of research conducted by Novita & Shobirin (2024) found that product innovation does not have a significant effect on business sustainability, because to achieve business sustainability, it must be balanced with the right marketing strategy and other factors.

From the research gaps identified, it becomes clear that product innovation is one of the important factors that can affect business sustainability. Product innovation refers to the creativity of business actors. Solikha et al., Creativity can be a driver of the success of a business to face competition, business actors must pay attention to the ability to be creative in creating an attractive product as an effort to improve marketing performance, if creativity is good, then the goals of a business will be easy to achieve (Solikha et al., 2023). This is in line with research conducted by Anggraini & Nawawi (2022) and Bado et al., (2023) which found that creativity has a positive and significant effect on business sustainability.

In addition to creativity, entrepreneurial skills are also very important to ensure the sustainability and success of the business in the long term. Because business actors who have good entrepreneurial skills are able to critically evaluate creative ideas, choose the most promising ones to be developed into innovative products, and implement them with effective strategies. This will increase the chances of innovation success and make a positive contribution to the business continuity of fast food MSMEs in Bekasi Regency in the face of market changes and business competition (Zainol & Al, 2018).

Method

This study adopts a quantitative approach that aims to determine the influence between variables. The variables to be analyzed are product innovation, creativity, entrepreneurial skills, and business sustainability. The population in this sample withdrawal is Fast Food MSMEs in the Bekasi Regency area. The researcher used the Purposive sampling technique, where the selected respondents had similar characteristics to focus on one specific group. The determination of the number of representative samples in this study is based on the formula Hair et al., al. So the number of indicators used, multiplied by a number between 5 to 10. In this study, the number of indicators was 15 multiplied by 7, so that the number of samples obtained was 108 respondents of Fast Food MSMEs in the Bekasi Regency area. The data used in this study is primary data, namely data obtained from direct interviews and from the distribution of questionnaires through social media. The questionnaire was created with a Five Likert Scale using a Google Form link. The choice of a five-point Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree) was made because it provides sufficient sensitivity to capture variations in respondents' attitudes without causing confusion or fatigue, making it easier for MSME respondents to provide consistent and reliable answers. The author processed respondent data using SmartPLS software. The data

analysis process is carried out by testing the external model to ensure the validity and reliability of the indicators. aimed to confirm construct validity, with a cut-off value greater than 0.5. This was followed by the R Square test and path analysis to evaluate the relationship between constructs, including the mediation effect. The significance of the relationship is determined based on the probability value of the bootstrapping process.

Results and Discussion

Respondent Characteristics

Table 3. Respondent Characteristics

| | | | |
|-----------------------------|-------------------------------|------------|-------------|
| Gender | Woman | 65 | 60% |
| | Male – Male | 43 | 40% |
| | Total | 108 | 100% |
| Age | < 20 Years | 21 | 19% |
| | 21 - 30 Years | 69 | 64% |
| | > 30 Years | 18 | 17% |
| | Total | 108 | 100% |
| Education | High School/Vocational School | 67 | 62% |
| | D3 | 8 | 7% |
| | S1 | 29 | 27% |
| | S2 | 4 | 4% |
| | Total | 108 | 100% |
| | | | |
| Type of Business | Food | 78 | 72% |
| | Drink | 30 | 28% |
| | Total | 108 | 100% |
| Business Address | South Tambun | 24 | 22% |
| | Cibitung | 33 | 31% |
| | West Cikarang | 16 | 15% |
| | North Cikarang | 35 | 32% |
| | Total | 108 | 100% |
| Duration of Business | 1 Year | 49 | 45% |
| | 2 Years | 26 | 24% |
| | > 2 Years | 33 | 31% |
| | Total | 108 | 100% |

Source: SmartPLS Output 3 (2025)

Based on the results of data collection, the majority of respondents in this study were women with a total of 65 people or equivalent to 60% of the total participants. Meanwhile, male respondents amounted to 43 people representing 40% of the total respondents. This gender distribution shows a fairly balanced involvement between women and men in the business activities that are the focus of the research, although there is a tendency for women's dominance in this field.



In terms of age, this study managed to reach various age groups with the main concentration in the productive age group. The majority of respondents were in the age range of 21-30 years with a significant number reaching 69 people or 64% of the total participants. The age group under 20 years old occupies the second position with a total of 21 people (19%), while respondents over 30 years old amount to 18 people (17%). This composition reflects the dominance of the young generation and early adults in running a business in the sector studied.

The level of education of the respondents describes a diverse academic background with the majority having a high school/vocational diploma as the last education, which is as many as 67 people or 62% of the total respondents. The respondents with a Bachelor's degree (S1) occupy the second position with a total of 29 people (27%), followed by 8 D3 graduates (7%), and 4 S2 graduates (4%). This data indicates that the businesses run by respondents do not require higher formal education as the main prerequisite, although there is a significant proportion of business actors with higher education backgrounds.

Regarding the type of business run, there are two main categories that are the focus of this research, namely the food and beverage business. Based on the data collected, businesses in the food sector dominated with 78 respondents or equivalent to 72% of the total participants. Meanwhile, businesses in the beverage sector were run by 30 respondents representing 28% of the total sample. This distribution shows that food businesses are more in demand than beverage businesses in the area where the research is located.

The geographical distribution of businesses run by respondents is spread across four main regions with the largest concentration being in North Cikarang with 35 respondents (32%), followed by Cibitung with 33 respondents (31%). The other two regions, namely South Tambun and West Cikarang, accommodated 24 respondents (22%) and 16 respondents (15%) respectively. This distribution reflects a fairly even business distribution pattern in the four regions, although there is a tendency for higher business concentration in North Cikarang and Cibitung.

Judging from the aspect of operational duration, most of the businesses run by respondents are relatively new with the majority only operating for 1 year, which is as many as 49 business units or equivalent to 45% of the total respondents. Businesses that have been operating for more than 2 years amounted to 33 units (31%), while businesses with an operating period of 2 years amounted to 26 units (24%). This composition indicates the high dynamics of new business establishments in the food and beverage sector in the past one year, as well as illustrating the existence of a significant proportion of businesses that have been able to survive for more than 2 years.

Outer Model

Table 4. Outer Model Results

| Variable | Outer Loading | Composite Reliability | Ave |
|-----------------|----------------------|------------------------------|------------|
| IP | 0.673 – 0.824 | 0,887 | 0,568 |
| K | 0.656 – 0.842 | 0,890 | 0,620 |
| CD | 0.744 – 0.862 | 0,895 | 0,630 |
| I | 0.669 – 0.817 | 0,891 | 0,579 |

Source: Output SmartPLS 3 (2025)

The results of the outer model analysis showed a strong relationship between indicators and hidden variables IP, K, KK, and KU, with outer loading values ranging from 0.673 to 0.824. All of these variables have excellent reliability, as evidenced by a composite reliability above 0.88. In addition, the validity of the measurement is also guaranteed with AVE values all exceeding 0.5. This indicates that the hidden variable is able to adequately explain the variance of its indicators. Overall, this model is valid and reliable for measuring relationships between variables. These results support the accuracy and strength of the model in the study.

R Square

Table 5. R Square Results

| | R Square | R Square Adjusted |
|----------|----------|-------------------|
| K | 0,485 | 0,480 |
| I | 0,549 | 0,531 |

Source: SmartPLS Output 3 (2025)

The R Square value shows that the model is able to explain 48% of the variation in Creativity (K) and 55% in Business Sustainability (KU), which means the level of explanation is quite good. R Square Adjusted corrects these values based on the number of variables used, so the results are more accurate. A stable value indicates that the model is not overfitting and remains predictively relevant. Overall, this indicates that the model is quite effective in explaining the relationships between variables.

Path Coefficients

Table 6. Path Coefficients Results

| | Original Sample (O) | Sample Mean (M) | Standard Deviation (STDEV) | T Statistics (O/STDEV) | P Values |
|-------------------------------------|---------------------|-----------------|----------------------------|--------------------------|--------------|
| IP -> K | 0,696 | 0,702 | 0,061 | 11,435 | 0,000 |
| IP -> KU | 0,246 | 0,235 | 0,138 | 1,786 | 0,075 |
| K-> KU | 0,304 | 0,311 | 0,149 | 2,048 | 0,041 |
| KK -> KU | 0,308 | 0,319 | 0,126 | 2,435 | 0,015 |
| Moderating Effect 1 -> KU | 0,042 | 0,058 | 0,083 | 0,511 | 0,609 |

Source: SmartPLS Output 3 (2025)

The table shows the direct relationship between variables, with varying strengths and significance. The relationship of $IP \rightarrow K$ had the strongest and most significant influence (coefficient of 0.696; $p = 0.000$). K and KK also had a significant effect on KU, with coefficients of 0.304 ($p = 0.041$) and 0.308 ($p = 0.015$), respectively. Meanwhile, the relationship between $IP \rightarrow KU$ was not statistically significant ($p = 0.075$), nor was the moderation effect ($p = 0.609$). This suggests that most of the main relationships are quite strong and relevant, except for the moderation effect and the direct influence of IP on KU.

Specific Indirect

Table 7. Specific Indirect Effects Results

| | Original Sample (O) | Sample Mean (M) | Standard Deviation (STDEV) | T Statistics (O/STDEV) | P Values |
|------------------|------------------------|--------------------|----------------------------------|-----------------------------|--------------|
| IP -> K -> KU | 0,212 | 0,218 | 0,107 | 1,981 | 0,048 |

Source: SmartPLS Output 3 (2025)

The results of the analysis showed that the indirect path from Product Innovation (IP) to Business Sustainability (KU) through Creativity (K) had a significant influence, with a coefficient of 0.212 and a p value = 0.048. This means that while IP does not have a significant direct impact on KU, it does have a significant impact when mediated by K. This confirms that creativity plays an important role in connecting product innovation with business sustainability, making it a key factor in strengthening innovation impact.

Discussion

The Influence of Product Innovation on Business Sustainability

Product innovation has proven to be unable to contribute significantly to business sustainability. This finding is in line with the research of Pratiwi & Setiyono (2024) who stated that innovation does not cause an increase or decrease in business sustainability. This can happen because MSMEs still lack experience and competence in carrying out their product innovations. This statement is reinforced by Nurlela et al., (2023) who affirm that Innovation is not only about creating something new, but also how the innovation is implemented. This result is in line with the theory of innovation put forward by Schumpeter (1934) which emphasizes that if the innovation carried out does not sufficiently create a meaningful difference in the eyes of consumers compared to competitors, then the innovation will not strengthen the company's competitive position in the market. Theoretically, this result contributes by highlighting that innovation alone, without adequate managerial capability and market alignment, does not always support sustainability outcomes. This extends Schumpeter's view by demonstrating that the effectiveness of innovation is highly contextual and must be linked to the absorptive capacity of MSMEs. The difference between this result and many previous studies that found a significant effect of product innovation can be explained through the local context of Bekasi, where fast food MSMEs face structural challenges such as limited access to advanced technology, high dependence on traditional markets, and a digital ecosystem that is not yet fully developed. These conditions limit the

extent to which innovation can be effectively transformed into sustainable performance, in contrast to other regions with more mature infrastructure and market opportunities.

Based on the findings that product innovation has not made a significant contribution to business sustainability, there are implications that need to be considered by MSME actors. Namely, innovation is not enough to be oriented only to the creation of new products, but must be accompanied by a targeted implementation strategy in accordance with market needs. Therefore, training and assistance in terms of planning, implementation, and evaluation of innovations are important to increase the capacity of business actors in producing innovations that are relevant and have a real impact. On the other hand, the limitations in this study lie in the lack of exploration of other factors such as managerial capabilities, local market conditions, and business ecosystem support that may also affect the effectiveness of product innovation.

The Influence of Product Innovation on Creativity

Product innovation has been proven to be able to contribute significantly to creativity. This finding is in line with research by Munthe & Rahadi (2021) which states that in addition to product innovation, creativity is also needed in an entrepreneur in order to achieve a goal, namely business sustainability. This statement is strengthened by research by Poerwanto et al., (2013) which shows that product innovation is related to the growth of the creative industry. These results are in line with the theory of innovation put forward by Schumpeter (1934), which emphasizes that innovation is the core of entrepreneurship and the driving force of economic development. Innovation includes the creation of new products, new production methods, new markets, and new resources and organizations. This finding contributes theoretically by reinforcing the notion that innovation not only produces tangible outcomes but also stimulates the cognitive and creative capacities of entrepreneurs, thereby extending the role of Schumpeterian innovation into the micro-foundations of entrepreneurial behavior.

Based on the findings that product innovation is able to contribute significantly to creativity, it shows that the innovation process not only produces updates to the product, but also encourages business actors to think more creatively in responding to market dynamics. Therefore, companies, especially MSMEs, need to create an environment that supports the exploration of new ideas, both in terms of product design, function, and marketing strategies. By instilling an innovative culture, business actors will be more motivated to create unique and valuable solutions, thereby increasing business competitiveness in a sustainable manner. However, the limitation of this discussion lies in the lack of thorough identification of external factors that can affect the relationship between innovation and creativity, such as access to technology, regulatory support, or cross-sector collaboration.

The Influence of Creativity on Business Sustainability

Creativity has been proven to be able to contribute significantly to business sustainability. This finding is in line with research by Afrinaldi et al., (2025) which states that business actors who are able to create new ideas, develop unique products, and implement creative marketing strategies have a greater chance of surviving and developing. This statement is reinforced by Hamka et al., (2021) who emphasized that the more creative an entrepreneur is, the better the business sustainability. This result is in line with the theory

of creativity put forward by Schumpeter (1934), which emphasizes that the essence of entrepreneurship lies in the ability of business actors to innovate and think creatively in the face of market dynamics. Theoretically, this study strengthens the argument that creativity is not merely an auxiliary skill but a core capability that links innovation with long-term sustainability, thereby providing empirical support for integrating creativity as a central construct in entrepreneurship theory.

Based on the findings that creativity can make a significant contribution to business sustainability, there are implications that need to be considered by MSME actors. Namely, business actors need to be facilitated in training in idea development, innovative problem solving, and the implementation of creative marketing strategies to create products that are unique and relevant to market dynamics. In addition, support from external environments such as training institutions, business incubators, and access to information technology is key in encouraging the creativity of business actors to adapt and survive in increasingly complex market competition. On the other hand, the limitations in this study lie in the lack of coverage of other external factors that also affect business sustainability, such as government regulations, macroeconomic conditions, and limited capital and resources.

The Influence of Creativity as a Mediation of Product Innovation and Business Sustainability

Creativity can play a role in mediating the relationship between product innovation and business sustainability. These findings are in line with the research of Marfuah et al., (2022) which states that increasing employee creativity can encourage sustainable product innovation and is essential for the sustainability of SMEs. This statement is reinforced by Sobriyah et al., (2023) who affirm that the integration between creativity and product innovation is a strategic key in realizing a business that not only survives, but also grows and develops sustainably in the midst of local and global economic challenges. This result is in line with the theory of creativity put forward by Schumpeter (1934) which emphasizes the importance of creativity as the main trigger of economic dynamics, where business actors are required to create new combinations in production to maintain the sustainability of their business.

Based on the findings that creativity plays a role in mediating the relationship between product innovation and business sustainability, there are implications that need to be considered by MSME actors. Namely, the development of the creativity of employees or the business community, especially in coming up with innovative ideas for products, is very important to encourage business sustainability. In practice, business actors need to be facilitated with training, space for exploring ideas, and marketing system support so that product innovations are not only born, but also able to compete in the market. Community empowerment programs can adopt a participatory and local potential-based approach to ensure the active involvement of participants and the relevance of products to market needs. On the other hand, the limitations in this study lie in the relatively short duration of implementation and the limited resources of follow-up assistance. Without continuity of coaching, the creativity that has been built is at risk of not developing optimally. In addition, if the market is not concretely connected with the results of product innovation, then business sustainability still faces great challenges.



The Influence of Entrepreneurial Skills as a Moderation of Product Innovation and Business Sustainability

Skills do not play a role in moderating the relationship between product innovation and business sustainability. These findings are in line with Riyanto & Heriyanti's (2024) research which states that entrepreneurial skills acquired through training do not necessarily strengthen the relationship between product innovation and business sustainability. This statement is reinforced by Ranjamandi & Situmorang (2024) who assert that entrepreneurial skills may not always moderate the relationship between product innovation and business sustainability. These results are in line with the theory of Theory of Achievement Motivation put forward by David McClelland (1961) which emphasizes that entrepreneurial motivation is not only determined by skills acquired through training, but is also strongly influenced by internal motivation, business environment, and practical experience. In other words, skills alone are not enough if they are not supported by other conditions that support the effective implementation of innovation. Theoretically, this result contributes by questioning the assumed universal role of entrepreneurial skills as a moderator, suggesting that their impact may be contingent upon context-specific conditions such as market maturity, digital readiness, and institutional support. This nuance refines entrepreneurship theory by emphasizing the conditional effectiveness of skills.

Based on the findings that entrepreneurial skills have not been able to moderate the relationship between product innovation and business sustainability, there are implications that need to be considered by MSME actors. Namely, in practice, technical skills training alone is not enough to encourage business sustainability if it is not followed by a mature innovation implementation strategy, market readiness, and business ecosystem support. On the other hand, the limitation in this study lies in the possibility that entrepreneurial skills have not been seen to play a role due to the lack of optimal duration and quality of training, or because the resulting product innovations have not been commercially tested in the market. In addition, local contexts such as limited capital, market access, and digital literacy can also be an obstacle to the success of innovation.

Conclusion

This study shows that product innovation does not have a significant direct influence on the sustainability of Fast Food MSMEs in Bekasi Regency, but is proven to encourage an increase in the creativity of business actors which significantly contributes to the sustainability of the business. Creativity is an important element in connecting innovation with long-term business success, because it allows MSME actors to create added value and adjust business strategies to market needs. Meanwhile, entrepreneurial skills have not been able to strengthen the relationship between innovation and sustainability in a real way, indicating that technical skills need to be accompanied by more comprehensive business environment support. Theoretically, these findings refine the understanding of innovation–sustainability linkages by positioning creativity as a mediating mechanism, while questioning the universal moderating role of entrepreneurial skills. Practically, the results recommend that policymakers and business development agencies focus on structured creativity training, experiential innovation programs, and the creation of supportive ecosystems that integrate financial access, digital literacy, and market connectivity. The practical implication of these findings is the need to facilitate MSMEs in developing creativity and innovation


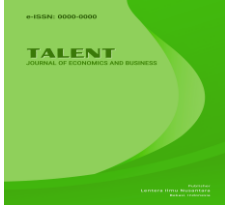
implementation capabilities through practice-based training, intensive mentoring, and market access support. Business sustainability is not only determined by the creation of new products, but also by the ability of business actors to translate creativity into adaptive business strategies. For future research, it is recommended to expand the model by incorporating external variables such as government policy interventions, macroeconomic stability, and digital transformation readiness, as well as applying longitudinal and cross-regional approaches to capture dynamic changes over time. This agenda will enrich the theoretical discourse and provide more robust evidence for strategies that strengthen MSME resilience in competitive markets.

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