

Improving Women Entrepreneurial Performance with Environmental Sustainability and Social Support

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Abstract

Purpose: The purpose of this study was to explore the role of environmental sustainability and social support in influencing agility towards women entrepreneurial performance of moslem women entrepreneur in Rembang Regency.

Methodology: The data collection technique implemented was a questionnaire analyzed using SEM-PLS analysis. The sample size was 140 Muslim female entrepreneurs in Rembang Regency, particularly in SMEs.

Result: The results showed that agility significantly effect women entrepreneurial performance and environmental sustainability. However, the role of environmental sustainability as a mediator and social support as a moderator was not proven.

Conclusions: The moslem women entrepreneur can improve the entrepreneurial performance by using agility. Furthermore, Research indicate that agility can booster the environmental sustainability of women entrepreneur.

Limitations: This study has a small number of variables, making it less comprehensive. Furthermore, the small number of respondents means the results cannot be generalized.

Contribution: The high number of female entrepreneurs encourages further exploration of women business conditions. However, female entrepreneurs face obstacles and patriarchy, which discourages them from pursuing careers as entrepreneurs. Therefore, solutions are needed to achieve gender equality, especially for Muslim female entrepreneurs.

Keywords: *Entrepreneurial Performance, Gender, Moslem Women Entrepreneur*

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1. Introduction

SMEs are the lifeblood of the Indonesian economy. Currently, the number of SMEs in Indonesia is experiencing a sharp increase. Research conducted by (Lutge et al., 2019) explains that women positions in business are undervalued. (Group, 2023) states that of the three SMEs, only one is led by a woman. However, in fact, the majority of business owners are women, at 65% (Muhammad et al., 2019). The high number of female entrepreneurs in developing countries faces religious barriers. These barriers stem from the rules that apply to female entrepreneurs, stemming from a society that is still patriarchal, diverse, and has conflicting ideologies (Harahap, 2022). This can lead to low self-confidence and conflict. Muslim female entrepreneurs must be able to demonstrate superior business performance to demonstrate the existence of Muslim women role as a form of gender equality. The patriarchy significantly impacts Muslim women entrepreneurs, though its effect is complex and varies by region and individual circumstances. While patriarchal structures create specific challenges related to gender roles, resource access, and social expectations, many women use their faith and community support to navigate and subvert these norms to achieve business success Challenges lead to slow sales

growth and low profits (Sugiyanto, & Wijayanti, 2023). The best way to address these challenges is to continuously develop business models based on relevant information and business concepts.

To achieve superior performance, female entrepreneurs can implement agility. Agility is a core capability for women entrepreneurs, enabling them to navigate systemic barriers, adapt to unpredictable markets, and build resilient and innovative businesses. Agility is defined by adaptability, proactivity, and resilience, significantly contributes to women's entrepreneurial performance and competitive advantage. Female entrepreneurs must behave strategically. By implementing agility, decision-making becomes more comprehensive because it involves many aspects (McKinsey & Company, 2008). Agility can create innovation and develop a competitive culture in the business world (Liliani & Urbanus, 2014) as a form of responsibility. Agility is often a necessity for women entrepreneurs who face external constraints that are different from those encountered by men. Applying the concept of agility is an effort by Muslim female entrepreneurs to improve their performance (Orozco Collazos & Botero, 2024).

Previous research has shown that Muslim women entrepreneurs who apply agility can accelerate the adaptation process by adjusting environmental changes according to the current situation. Agility skills can achieve extraordinary results in entrepreneurship (Walter, 2021). The use of more flexible agility can improve entrepreneurial performance (Yikilmaz & Cekmecelioglu, 2023; Zhen & Ali, 2024). Entrepreneurs who are not agile will be left behind and unable to adapt. The effect of agility on entrepreneurial performance, especially for women entrepreneurs, is very limited in literature reviews. Based on Resource Based Theory (RBT), agility can be applied to support organizational strategy (Roblek et al., 2022). Research conducted (Haylemariam et al., 2024; Mulyono & Syamsuri, 2023; Munawar et al., 2023; Saputra & Nasution, 2023) is able to encourage entrepreneurial performance. However, there are studies that show the opposite results (Heksarini et al., 2024; Sari et al., 2024).

Previous research has shown inconsistent results, creating a research gap. To address this gap, the solution is to synthesize environmental sustainability and social support as a novelty in this study. Agility can encourage environmental sustainability (El-Khalil & Mezher, 2020; Rawashdeh et al., 2024). Furthermore, research shows that environmental sustainability can improve women entrepreneurial performance (Amankwah-Amoah et al., 2018; Roxas et al., 2017). Women entrepreneurs also need social support to strengthen the relationship between agility and women entrepreneurial performance. Comprehensive integration between Muslim women entrepreneurs and support from various parties in the business process facilitates achieving superior performance. Therefore, social support can bolster women foundations and boost their confidence in running their businesses (Jadmiko, 2021).

Based on the phenomena and research gaps outlined above, the purpose of this study is to explore the role of environmental sustainability and social support in effecting agility on women entrepreneurial performance. In this study, environmental sustainability serves as a mediating variable, and social support serves as a moderating variable. With this proof, we can further explore the proof of increasing entrepreneurial performance so that it can overcome the gender gap.

2. Literature Review and Hypothesis Development

2.1 Agility and Women Entrepreneurial Performance

Women entrepreneurs who adopt agile behavior characterized by iterative learning, adaptive strategy, and resourceful networking will exhibit superior performance, particularly in terms of resilience, sustainable growth, and social impact, compared to those with more rigid, traditional approaches. This performance is a function of agility's ability to help women entrepreneurs systematically navigate financial constraints and socio-cultural barriers that disproportionately affect them. Research that conduct by (Haylemariam et al., 2024; Mulyono & Syamsuri, 2023; Munawar et al., 2023; Saputra & Nasution, 2023) stated that Agile behavior that is consistently carried out by Muslim women entrepreneurs can increase the level of entrepreneurial performance. Therefore, hypothesis 1 in this research is:

H₁: Agility has a significant effect on women entrepreneurial performance

2.2 Agility and Environmental Sustainability

In an era of increasing environmental uncertainty and complexity, organizations that adopt an agile mindset characterized by adaptive planning, iterative learning, and cross-functional collaboration—will outperform those with traditional, rigid approaches by more effectively embedding sustainability into their core strategies. This superior performance is not achieved by treating sustainability as a separate, costly obligation, but by integrating it into a continuous cycle of innovation that transforms environmental challenges into competitive advantages and long-term resilience. Research that conduct by (El-Khalil & Mezher, 2020; Rawashdeh et al., 2024) stated that Agility can be a significant predictor in building business sustainability within the context of addressing environmental issues. Therefore, agility is believed to be capable of addressing environmental issues faced by businesses. Therefore, hypothesis 2 in this research is:

H₂: Agility has a significant effect on environmental sustainability

2.3 Environmental Sustainability and Women Entrepreneurial Performance

Women entrepreneurs who prioritize environmental sustainability not only achieve better non-financial outcomes, such as enhanced reputation and stronger community ties, but also ultimately realize superior long-term financial performance and resilience. This is because their deep-seated ethical motivations and holistic perspective on value creation, often driven by personal values and social awareness, allow them to navigate resource limitations and market complexities by turning environmental challenges into innovative, competitive business advantages. Research conducted (Amankwah-Amoah et al., 2018; Roxas et al., 2017) stated that environmental sustainability can create entrepreneurial performance. Therefore, hypothesis 3 in this research is:

H₃: Environmental sustainability has a significant effect on women entrepreneurial performance

2.4 The Role of Environmental Sustainability in Mediating The Effect of Agility on Women's Entrepreneurial Performance

For women entrepreneurs, agility is not merely a tool for speed and adaptation, but a critical enabler for effectively pursuing environmental sustainability. Environmental sustainability, in turn, mediates the relationship between agility and entrepreneurial performance by providing a purpose-driven framework that amplifies the benefits of agility, such as enhanced resilience, amplified customer trust, and diversified revenue streams, particularly in contexts where traditional resources are limited. Agility can encourage environmental sustainability (El-Khalil & Mezher, 2020; Rawashdeh et al., 2024). Furthermore, research shows that environmental sustainability can improve women entrepreneurial performance (Amankwah-Amoah et al., 2018; Roxas et al., 2017). Therefore, hypothesis 4 in this research is:

H₄: Environmental sustainability mediates the effect of agility on women entrepreneurial performance

2.5 The Role of Social Support in Moderating the Effect of Agility on Women's Entrepreneurial Performance

Social support acts as a crucial moderator for women entrepreneurs, transforming agility from a demanding survival strategy into a reliable driver of high performance. In the presence of strong social support, women can leverage their agile behavior to innovate and grow, while in its absence, agility may become a draining coping mechanism, diminishing overall entrepreneurial performance. The integration between Muslim women entrepreneurs and social support from various parties in the business process facilitates achieving entrepreneurial performance. Therefore, social support can increase women foundations in running their businesses (Jadmiko, 2021). Social support is crucial for Muslim women entrepreneurs as it helps them navigate gender-specific barriers, balance competing roles, overcome psychological and resource constraints, and leverage their agile behaviors for sustainable business growth. This support can come from family, community, religious organizations, and wider professional networks. Therefore, hypothesis 5 in this research is:

H₅: Social support moderates the effect of agility on women entrepreneurial performance

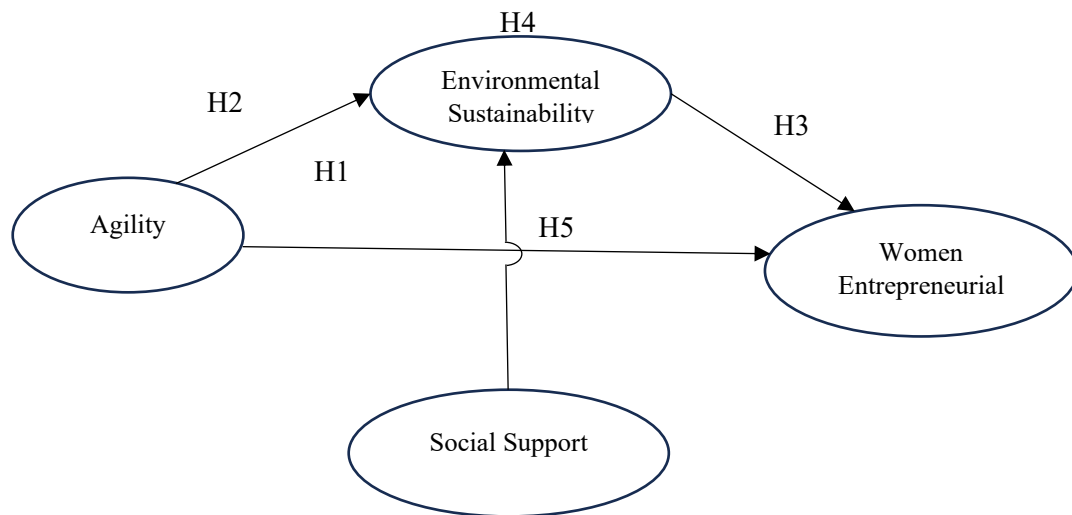


Figure 1. Research Model

3. Research Methods

This research is a quantitative study. Based on the research objectives achieved, this study falls into the explanatory research category through hypothesis testing. Data sources in this study include primary and secondary data. Primary data is data obtained directly through questionnaires distributed to research respondents (Sugiyono, 2013). Primary data was obtained from respondents' responses to the variables of agility, environmental sustainability, social support, and women entrepreneurial performance. Secondary data is data obtained not directly from the data collectors but through documents or other individuals. Secondary data includes journals, books, and other data as supplements to the research process.

The population in this study were Muslim women entrepreneurs who run SMEs in Rembang Regency. This indicates that the population size is undefined. The secondary technique used in this study was purposive sampling because there are specific criteria in accordance with the research objectives. In determining the number of samples, the formula from (Hair et al., 2019) can be used, which suggests that the number of research samples for which the exact population size is unknown must be at least 5 times the number of variables or indicators. In this study, the number of indicators was 28 indicators, resulting in the calculation of 140 Muslim women entrepreneurs in SMEs in Rembang Regency. The respondent criteria in this study were female, Muslim, have been operating for at least 1 year, have at least 3 employees, use technology in business processes, and apply environmental sustainability to business processes in a simple manner. Data collection will be carried out using questionnaires. The variable measurements are presented in Table 1 below:

Table 1. Variable Measurement

Variable	Indicator	Reference
Agility	1. Competency	(El-Khalil & Mezher, 2020; Walter, 2021)
	2. Material handling	
	3. Process planning	
	4. Responsiveness	
	5. Work Place & People	
Environmental Sustainability	1. Knowledge about environmental sustainability	(Amankwah-Amoah et al., 2018; Roxas et al., 2017)
	2. Environmentally sustainable practices	
	3. Commitment to environmental sustainability	

Social Support	1. Instrumental support	(Prabawanti & Rusli, 2022)
	2. Informational support	
	3. Emotional support	
	4. Positive assessment	
Women Entrepreneurial Performance	1. Business growth	(Prabawanti & Rusli, 2022; Qodriah et al., 2021)
	2. Increasing operating profit	
	3. Business Assets	

To test the novelty of the environmental sustainability and social support research model, Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) with a variance-based SEM-PLS approach was used. The selection of SEM-PLS was chosen because of the small sample and the nature of the indicators used in the study. In SEM-PLS testing, two model evaluation techniques are used, namely the inner model and outer model, as well as hypothesis testing techniques. Empirical testing was conducted on the role of environmental sustainability as a mediator and social support as a moderator in the effect of agility on women entrepreneurial performance among Muslim women entrepreneurs in Rembang Regency.

4. Results and Discussion

4.1 Convergent Validity

A high validity value inherent in a construct is reflected in the Average Variance Extraction (AVE) value, which must be greater than 0.5 (Sekaran & Bougie, 2016). Based on the results of the data processing, it is clear that all variables proposed in the research model are valid. Researchers can conclude that the data processing value is greater than 0.5, indicating that all constructs in the study have met all validity requirements and are considered valid.

Table 2. Average Variance Extracted

Variable	AVE
Agility	0.726
Environmental Sustainability	0.825
Social Support	0.820
Women Entrepreneurial Performance	0.832

Source: Primary Source (Processed data, 2025)

4.2 Reliability

The reliability level of a research construct can be determined by adopting the obtained values from Cronbach's alpha and composite reliability. The research construct must meet reliability assumptions if the obtained Cronbach's alpha is ≥ 0.7 and the composite reliability is ≥ 0.8 (Sekaran & Bougie, 2016). The variable values obtained for reliability are as follows:

Table 3. Obtained Values for Reliability Testing

Variable	Cronbach Alpha	Composite Reliability
Agility	0.957	0.964
Environmental Sustainability	0.957	0.960
Social Support	0.968	0.971
Women Entrepreneurial Performance	0.975	0.975

Source: Primary Source (Processed data, 2025)

Table 3 shows the Cronbach alpha and composite reliability values for each research construct. Referring to this table, it can be seen that all constructs have met the standards and can therefore be declared reliable.

4.3 Coefficient of Determination

The coefficient of determination serves to identify the extent to which the exogenous constructs can robustly explain the endogenous constructs in the research model. Table 4 explains the adjusted R-Square values obtained from data processing.

Table 4. Coefficient of Determination Values

Variable	Adjusted R-Square
Women Entrepreneurial Performance	0.926
Environmental Sustainability	0.880

Source: Primary Source (Processed data, 2025)

The results in Table 4 show that 93% of the women entrepreneurial performance variable can be explained by environmental sustainability, while the remaining 7% is explained by variables outside the model. Furthermore, environmental sustainability can be explained by agility, with 88% of the model's performance explained by other variables. Referring to the calculations above, the research model has a positive value, thus confirming its fit with the available data.

Table 5. T-Statistic and P-Value

Relationship	Coefficient	T-Statistic	P-Value	Decision
Agility → Women Entrepreneurial Performance (H1)	0.277	2.309	0.021	Accepted
Agility → Environmental Sustainability (H2)	0.409	3,300	0.001	Accepted
Environmental Sustainability → Women Entrepreneurial Performance (H3)	0,078	0,739	0,460	Rejected
Social Support x Agility → Women Entrepreneurial Performance (H5)	-0.069	0.196	0.845	Rejected

Source: Primary Source (Processed data, 2025)

Table 6. Results of the Path Analysis Model

Path Analysis	Coefficient	T-Statistic	P-Value	Decision
Agility → Environmental Sustainability → Women Entrepreneurial Performance (H4)	0.026	0.747	0.455	Rejected

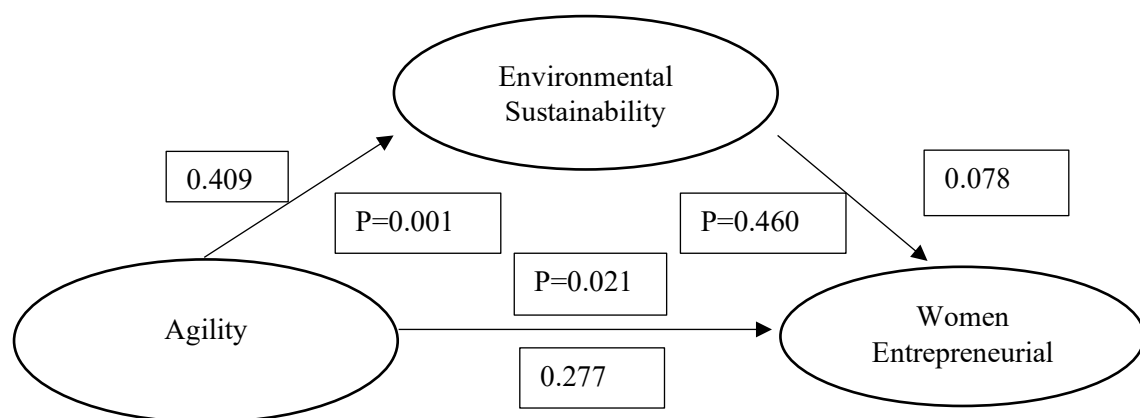


Figure 2. The Role of Environmental Sustainability in Mediating the Effect of Agility on Women Entrepreneurial Performance

Source: Primary Source (Processed data, 2025)

The table 3 and 6 and also based on the coefficient values and p-values, reveals several findings. A hypothesis is said to meet the requirements for a hypothesis to be accepted if it has a coefficient value greater than 1.96 and a p-value listed in the SMARTPLS output which is greater than 0.05. The findings

indicate that two hypotheses are accepted and three hypotheses are rejected. The results indicate that agility significantly effects women entrepreneurial performance and environmental sustainability. Furthermore, environmental sustainability was not found to significantly effect women entrepreneurial performance. Other findings indicate that environmental sustainability does not act as a mediating variable, and social support does not act as a moderating variable in the effect of agility on women entrepreneurial performance. Based on Figure 2, it can be seen that only the effect of agility on environmental sustainability and women's entrepreneurial performance shows a significant value, while the effect of environmental sustainability on women's entrepreneurial performance is not significant. Therefore, in this study, the role of environmental sustainability in mediating the relationship between agility and women's entrepreneurial performance is examined.

4.4 Discussion

4.4.1 The Relationship Between Agility and Women Entrepreneurial Performance

The research findings demonstrate that agile behaviors adopted by Muslim women entrepreneurs significantly contribute to high female entrepreneurial performance. This finding aligns with previous research (Alkandi & Helmi, 2024), which suggests that agility can contribute to improved entrepreneurial performance. The maximization efforts undertaken by Muslim women entrepreneurs facilitate the development of new strategies that can be implemented in their businesses, thereby improving performance. Through agile behaviors, innovative and unique products can be realized to meet market demands (Amajouyi et al., 2024). Agile behavior improves entrepreneurial performance by enabling rapid adaptation, fostering innovation, enhancing customer satisfaction, and mitigating risk in unpredictable market environments. The core benefit lies in its iterative, responsive approach, which is far more effective for modern enterprises than rigid, traditional methods. Furthermore, agile behaviors are believed to make organizations more adaptive and flexible to change, which ultimately improves the performance of women entrepreneurs (Lungu, 2020). Muslim women entrepreneurs demonstrate agile behavior by leveraging core Islamic principles, prioritizing adaptability, and embracing digital technology to improve business performance and navigate complex challenges. Their agility is characterized by a blend of religious values, proactive strategies, and communal support, which enables resilience and innovation in dynamic markets.

4.4.2 The Relationship Between Agility and Environmental Sustainability

Research findings indicate that agility significantly impacts environmental sustainability. This finding aligns with research by (Rawashdeh et al., 2024). Agility demonstrated by Muslim women entrepreneurs plays a crucial role in addressing environmental issues related to pollution and waste from SMEs. Agility fosters adaptive attitudes and a strong sustainability orientation through new environmentally friendly behaviors (Kwasek et al., 2025). Muslim women entrepreneurs also undertake environmental efforts to enhance their business reputation and increase public trust in their products (Abdelwahed et al., 2022). Agile behavior improves environmental sustainability by promoting waste reduction, enhancing resource efficiency, and fostering a culture of continuous improvement focused on eco-friendly outcomes. Its iterative and adaptive nature is particularly well-suited for addressing complex, dynamic environmental challenges (Hasibuan et al., 2024). Agility is highly supportive of handling environmental issues, especially in the context of business. The core agile principles of adaptability, iterative progress, and continuous learning are well-suited for addressing complex, dynamic environmental challenges like climate change, waste management, and resource efficiency.

4.4.3 The Relationship Between Environmental Sustainability and Women Entrepreneurial Performance

The results of this study indicate that environmental sustainability does not significantly impact women entrepreneurial performance. This finding contradicts other research (Amankwah-Amoah et al., 2018). Therefore, the implementation of environmental sustainability by Muslim women entrepreneurs is unable to enhance their entrepreneurial performance. Muslim women entrepreneurs face limitations in access, experience, personality, and external recognition of the role, potential, and impact of sustainable businesses (Chinsya, 2024). This discourages women entrepreneurs from focusing on environmental issues due to low societal recognition. Furthermore, the high costs of implementing environmental sustainability discourage many entrepreneurs due to limited resources. Consequently, women

entrepreneurs do not prioritize environmental sustainability as a strategic step for superior entrepreneurial performance. However, when women entrepreneurs do not focus on sustainability, it is not for lack of interest. It is most often due to systemic barriers and resource constraints that disproportionately affect them, diverting their attention and resources toward more immediate business survival issues

4.4.4 The Role of Environmental Sustainability in Mediating the Effect of Agility on Women Entrepreneurial Performance

Research results show that environmental sustainability does not mediate the effect of agility on women entrepreneurial leadership. This suggests that agility behavior is not oriented toward improving performance but rather toward sustainable behavior to maintain the business (Bekos et al., 2025). Muslim women entrepreneurs consider other strategies to improve business performance. Furthermore, agility only impacts environmental sustainability (Kwasek et al., 2025). Muslim women entrepreneurs focus more on implementing agility to resolve and address environmental issues rather than as a means of improving entrepreneurial performance (Dote-Pardo et al., 2025). The effect of agility on environmental sustainability and women's entrepreneurial performance shows a significant value, while the effect of environmental sustainability on women's entrepreneurial performance is not significant. Therefore, in this study, the role of environmental sustainability in mediating the relationship between agility and women's entrepreneurial performance is examined.

4.4.5 The Role of Social Support in Moderating the Effect of Agility on Women Entrepreneurial Performance

Research findings indicate that social support does not act as a moderating variable in the effect of agility on women entrepreneurship. This suggests that social support, both from family and the surrounding environment, is suboptimal for women entrepreneurs (Gashi Nulleshi, 2024). The agility implemented does not depend on social support because agile behavior in Muslim entrepreneurs is oriented towards the needs and desires of organizational improvement (Huang et al., 2024). Thus, social support is unable to strengthen or weaken the relationship. Critiques often focus on the limitations or potential negative effects of the support received, rather than suggesting it is entirely unnecessary. Not all support is equally helpful, and relying on limited social circles can prevent growth. In some cases, social support networks can unintentionally reinforce cultural norms that may limit entrepreneurial activity.

5. Conclusions

5.1 Conclusions

Based on the research results, it can be concluded that the muslim women entrepreneur can improve the entrepreneurial performance by using agility. Furthermore, research indicate that agility can booster the environmental sustainability of women entrepreneur. Through this improvement, the gender gap can be overcome by proving an increase in entrepreneurial performance. Agility can significantly effect women entrepreneurial performance and environmental sustainability. Furthermore, environmental sustainability was not found to significantly effect women entrepreneurial performance. Other research findings indicate that environmental sustainability does not act as a mediating variable, and social support does not act as a moderating variable in the effect of agility on women entrepreneurial performance. the effect of agility on environmental sustainability and women's entrepreneurial performance shows a significant value, while the effect of environmental sustainability on women's entrepreneurial performance is not significant. Therefore, in this study, the role of environmental sustainability in mediating the relationship between agility and women's entrepreneurial performance is examined.

5.2 Suggestions

The implications of the research findings indicate that Muslim women entrepreneurs must consistently practice agile behaviors to improve their entrepreneurial performance. Furthermore, high levels of agile behavior can also facilitate businesses in implementing environmental sustainability, thereby increasing public trust and concern for the environment, as well as increasing purchasing power and trust, which will ultimately improve entrepreneurial performance. Women entrepreneurs can apply agile behavior

in various aspects of their businesses, from product development and marketing to finance and overcoming social barriers. This flexibility and adaptive mindset allows them to manage limited resources, respond to market shifts, and build resilient businesses. Instead of a single, large product launch, agile women entrepreneurs build products and services iteratively, using customer feedback to guide each step. Agile marketing involves responding to changes, experimenting with new ideas, and prioritizing campaigns that deliver the best results, often through digital channels. Agility helps women entrepreneurs manage financial resources and operational complexities in the face of limited access to traditional capital. Thus, through these findings, female SME entrepreneurs in Rembang Regency can improve their performance. The results of this study can also contribute to the theoretical aspects of scientific development related to the gender gap, especially for Muslim women entrepreneurs, by implementing agile behavior so that performance can improve and demonstrate existence in business.

Future research can add other variables to the model that can address gender equality issues in the business context to make the model more comprehensive and more factually useful in addressing gender issues because this research lack of variables. Furthermore, researchers can increase the sample size to generalize the results because this research used small number of respondents. Furthermore, researchers can also classify larger businesses so that the implementation of environmental sustainability can be carried out more optimally. Thus, the research results can be carried out in large industries to improve the performance of entrepreneurs who have been involved.

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