

INFLUENCE OF THE TRIPLE BOTTOM LINE CONCEPT ON SUSTAINABILITY AND SUCCESS OF TOFU SMEs IN MAGELANG

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Abstract: Business sustainability is essential for enterprises to endure in the future and provide economic, social, and environmental opportunities for future generations. By establishing business sustainability in economic, social, and environmental aspects, a business can enhance its success. This study seeks to analyse business sustainability and success in tofu SMEs in Magelang Regency, with a focus on sustainable practices. The study was conducted using purposive sampling technique with specific criteria and considerations to determine the sample. A total of 60 participants from the tofu industry hub in Candimulyo District were included in the sample. The analysis employed quantitative methods and a descriptive analysis approach, using variables and indicators. The research findings indicate that the sustainability of tofu SMEs is influenced by economic, social, and environmental variables within the triple bottom line concept. Meanwhile, the success of small and medium-sized enterprises producing tofu is determined by economic and social factors, operating within the framework of the triple bottom line concept.

Keywords: Triple Bottom Line, Business Sustainability and Success, Smaal Business

INTRODUCTION

SMEs are a sector that plays an important role for both developed and developing countries as a fast business that responds to market dynamics and is a catalyst for business innovation (Putri et al., 2019). Referring to Minister of Cooperatives and SMEs Regulation No. 5 of 2021, SMEs in Indonesia make an important contribution to the expansion of employment opportunities and labour absorption, carry out productive economic activities for low-income people, and support the growth of household income or Gross Domestic Product (GDP). The large contribution to the economy of SMEs aims to be a sustainable business that can grow and survive for a long period of time. The effort to create a business that lasts for a long time is a form of business sustainability. Sustainability itself is a principle to ensure that actions that are performed today do not result in a shortage of economic, social, and environmental opportunities for future generations (John, 1997). Business sustainability can be interpreted as a condition where a business has the ability to manage, maintain, develop resources in order to meet the needs of a business for a long time. (Handayani, 2007). SMEs in maintaining sustainability face various challenges from economic, social and environmental aspects. SMEs' initiative, innovation, responsiveness, and solutions to economic, social, and environmental issues are their efforts to become agents in the development of sustainability. SMEs also need to have an intention to improve the encouragement to change their business policies. (Putri et al., 2019).

One of the SME sectors that has a strategic position in the Indonesian economy is tofu production. The tofu production is described by Sulaeman dan Kurniawati (2022) in their research as a business that is hereditary from generation to generation (Wahyuni, 2017),

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which involves many people and employs labour with a low level of education (Hairun et al., 2016), as a food production is considered an affordable, easy, safe, high nutritional quality food production industry and produces organic waste that is easy to manage (Supinah et al., 2020). Tofu products are also an affordable, easy, safe, and nutritious food that are enjoyed by many people. The existence of various potentials that the tofu SMEs have is a great opportunity to become a sustainable business. However, since the COVID 19 pandemic and the rising price of soybean raw materials over the past three years, it has had many negative impacts on tofu SMEs. This has greatly affected the economic and social aspects of tofu SMEs. In the economic dimension, tofu SMEs find it difficult to reduce production costs and difficult to meet market and consumer demand. Production difficulties have caused many tofu SMEs to choose to shut down their businesses, resulting in layoffs that have an impact on the increase in unemployment rates and the reduction in community welfare. In the environmental dimension, tofu SMEs are faced with waste management that has not been treated optimally. Mainly wastewater that is just simply allowed to drain into the river has an impact on the unpleasant aroma.

The development of a business with the principle of sustainability can be seen from the economic, social, and environmental aspects. There is a concept introduced by John Elkington (1997) namely the Triple Bottom Line (TBL) concept which explains that there are three interconnected dimensions, these dimensions are economic (profit), social (people), and environmental (planet). Both from the concept of business sustainability and the concept of triple bottom line, they have the same dimensional components, namely economic, social, environmental performance (Mangialardo et al., 2018). In Correia (2019), research, the triple bottom line concept can be used as a basis for achieving a competitive position and a stable business market. Achieving a competitive position in the market indicates that the business is able to compete and develop its business.

Based on several reference studies, it was found that sustainable businesses are achieved by balancing all aspects of the triple bottom line concept. Achieving a balance in the three dimensions of the triple bottom line concept, the business can be considered sustainable and able to compete for a long time in the future.

Research purposes

This research is based on the importance of achieving business sustainability and to increase business success. This research was conducted to analyze the effect of efforts to implement the triple bottom line concept carried out by tofu SMEs to achieve business sustainability and increase business success. Therefore, the researcher conducted a study with the title Influence of the Triple Bottom Line Concept on Sustainability and Success of Tofu SMEs In Magelang.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Triple Bottom Line Concept

John Elkington developed the Triple Bottom Line (TBL) concept in 1994. The triple bottom line concept is presented in his book *Cannibals with Forks: The Triple Bottom Line of 21st Century Business*. John Elkington (1997) summarized that there are three main dimensions in establishing sustainable behavior, which are: (1) economic prosperity; (2) environmental quality; (3) social justice. The economic bottom line emphasizes that the element of profit is the most important thing and the main goal of every activity carried out by business people. As time goes by, the main objective of the business on the element is considered less relevant so that the economic dimension also refers to the economic value that aims to contribute to the economic system around it (Alhaddi, 2015; Alhammadi & Alayed, 2022). The social bottom line emphasizes human resources and the community in which the

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business is located. It is important for companies to have a commitment to provide great benefits to society. The social dimension can be measured in terms of labor health and safety, business involvement in social activities to the surrounding community, good relationships with stakeholders (Soto-Acosta et al., 2016; Alhammadi & Alayed, 2022). The social principle in the triple bottom line concept is also an indicator of fair and civilized business practices (Alhaddi, 2015; Alhammadi & Alayed, 2022). The environmental bottom line in business activities is to show that a business has an awareness of the surrounding environmental issues. The environment can be the most vital support or the most crucial threat to the business depending on how the business treats it. In this scope, environmental principles are reflected in business involvement in practices that do not cause environmental damage to support resilience for future generations (Alhaddi, 2015; Alhammadi & Alayed, 2022).

Triple Bottom Line and Business Sustainability

The purpose of the economic aspect in the triple bottom line concept is to achieve sustainability in business. Research by Sulaeman and Kurniawati (2022) shows that the application of the economic bottom line concept results in economic consistency and sustainability as indicated by the ability to reduce production costs, the ability to increase profits, and the level of employment. Business sustainability conditions are also created by business efforts to produce products that benefit the surrounding and participation in business networks to achieve broad economic goals (Soto-Acosta et al., 2016).

Social bottom line emphasizes the importance of maintaining the balance of social aspects, especially the individuals involved in the business, namely employees and the surrounding community. According to Alhaddi (2015) in Alhammadi & Alayed (2022), the social dimension of the triple bottom line concept is an indicator of fair and civilized business practices that aim to achieve overall business sustainability. Business sustainability from the social dimension (people) in the triple bottom line concept can be shown by fair employee wages, application of work safety, use of safe resources, participation in community activities (Hosseinia & Ramezani, 2016; Sulaeman & Kurniawati, 2022). Research by Soto-Acosta et al. (2016) shows business sustainability from the social bottom line dimension with the ability of businesses to cooperate in the long term with partners in the market, contribute to the welfare of the workforce, and be active in developing the surrounding community.

Sustainability in the environmental dimension is assessed as the ability of a business to conduct business operations that do not increase environmental degradation and preserve the environment. According to Hosseinia & Ramezani (2016) in Sulaeman and Kurniawati (2022) business sustainability efforts are to preserve the environment which consists of energy, waste, and raw material management. Energy management consists of the level of ability to save energy and reduce CO₂ emissions from business activities. Waste management is indicated by the level of waste management capabilities, the level of use of recyclable products, and safely licensed materials or resources. Soto-Acosta et al. (2016) assesses the ability of businesses in environmental sustainability as seen from the ability of businesses to account for the application of the environmental bottom line in the form of material and energy use, company operations that are not harmful to the environment, and the use of environmentally friendly technology. Based on Maria Salome's research (2019), the triple bottom line concept (profit, people, planet) is a concept that affects business sustainability and there is a positive relationship between the implementation of sustainability strategies and business performance seen from economic, social, and environmental aspects.

Triple Bottom Line and Business Success

A number of studies have been conducted to determine and investigate the influence between the triple bottom line concept and small business success. Some studies found the benefits of the triple bottom line concept and managed to find the influence of the triple

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bottom line concept in measuring business success. Research by Boley & Uysal (2013) in Alhammadi & Alayed (2022) found several benefits of the triple bottom line concept, including; improving the quality of life of employees, improving corporate image, reducing costs, good market position, and good relationships with stakeholders (consumers, government, and social institutions). This logically shows that the triple bottom line concept contributes to business success. Syamsuri & Mashudi's (2022) research also shows that SMEs' perceptions of the triple bottom line concept profit indicators are considered important to apply to achieve sustainable economic goals and success that can be sustained for future generations. All of these explanations lead to efforts to apply the triple bottom line concept, especially the economic dimension, which can encourage the achievement of business success. The findings in Alhammadi's research (2022) show that people factors in business in the form of employee safety and health, employee training, social activities, and building good relationships with stakeholders have a positive influence on business success. Based on the opinion of Alhammadi (2022), businesses that implement social responsibility are considered best practices that result in improvements in business performance. According to Al-Tit et al., (2019) in Alhammadi (2022) the importance of implementing environmental policies will create long-term sustainability. The environment is an important factor in human life including in the business sector. As a provider of resources and a place to conduct business, the environmental bottom line aspect will encourage business actors to pay attention to and protect the environment in order to maintain their business success in the future.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This research uses quantitative methods with a descriptive analysis approach. Descriptive research is conducted by collecting data to test and determine the existence of independent variables, either one or more variables without making comparisons and looking for correlations between these variables and other variables (Sugiyono, 2019). The variables under study are the three aspects of the triple bottom line concept (economic, social, environmental) as independent variables (X) and business sustainability and success as dependent variables (Y). Quantitative research methods are research conducted with numerical data-based data collection and analysis to explain, control, predict observed phenomena (Leo, 2013).

The data collection method used the survey method. According to Sugiyono (2019), research using the survey method is research that collects basic data with a questionnaire given and filled out by a sample of a research population. This basic data will then be processed and analyzed with the help of the IBM SPSS version 26 statistical processing application. This research was conducted with causal research. Causal research according to Sugiyono (2019) is a research design used to analyze the relationship between one variable and another, or to find out how one variable affects another. The causal research design aims to determine the cause and effect relationship, so it is hoped that this research will be able to know the effect of efforts to implement the triple bottom line concept (economic, social, environmental) on the sustainability and success of SMEs..

Data collection was carried out using literature study, observation, and questionnaire methods. Literature study was carried out by collecting and studying several literature references related to the subject, object, and research problems. Observation was conducted directly at the research location to see the current conditions of tofu SMEs in terms of economic, social, and environmental aspects regarding the production process, processing of raw materials and resource use, product marketing, and waste management generated during the production process. Primary data collection from this study used a questionnaire given to respondents. The population of this study was the owners of tofu SMEs located in Magelang Regency. The sample in this study was 60 owners of tofu SMEs who were sent to fill out the

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questionnaires distributed. Considerations in sampling in this study were entrepreneurs and owners of tofu SMEs in Candimulyo District who were still actively operating until the research was carried out. The reason for choosing Candimulyo Subdistrict as a sampling site is because the tofu industry is mostly located in the area. Candimulyo sub-district is also famous for having a tofu industry center that has been established for a long time from the 1990s, so the majority of tofu SME owners have faced various economic, social and environmental problems in maintaining their business sustainability. The variables that used in this research are:

| Variables | Indicator | Items/Statements | |
|----------------------------------|---|---|---|
| <i>Economic Bottom Line</i> | <i>Profit Benefits</i> | Business products and services have brought economic benefits to the wider community (Cohen & Winn, 2007; Gerlach, 2003) | |
| | | The business is able to meet the needs and wants of consumers | |
| | <i>Profit Networks</i> | Enterprises operate within a networks of businesses to achieve long-lasting economic goals. (Woolthuis, 2010) | |
| | | <i>Profit Efficiency</i> | Efficient use of raw materials |
| | | | Cost reduction is important in the business |
| | Minimum profit for the business has been achieved | | |
| <i>Social bottom line</i> | <i>People workforce</i> | Businesses contribute to the prosperity of the workers (Gerlach, 2003; Perrini, 2005) | |
| | | Paying attention to the health and safety of the workers | |
| | <i>People community</i> | Actively involved in community development activities (Martínez-Ferrero & García-Sánchez, 2015; Schaltegger & Wagner, 2011) | |
| | | Good community relations | |
| | <i>People partners</i> | Long-term cooperative relationships with market partners (Fink et al., 2008) | |
| | | Customer opinions are important for customer satisfaction | |
| <i>Environmental bottom line</i> | <i>Planet environment</i> | Products and services are environmentally non-threatening (Bell & Stellingworth, 2012) | |
| | | Recycling is a key activity | |
| | <i>People resources</i> | Businesses are responsible in their use of material and energy resources (Crowther & Aras, 2008) | |
| | <i>People technologies</i> | Businesses now rely on environmentally friendly technologies as much as possible (Kirkwood & Walton, 2010) | |

Source: adapted from Soto-Acosta et al. (2016); Alhammadi & Alayed (2022); Basar et al. (2023)

| Variables | Indicator | Items/statements |
|-------------------------|--------------------------------|--|
| Business Sustainability | <i>Economic sustainability</i> | Ability to reduce production costs. Ability to increase sales. Ability to meet market needs. |
| | <i>Social Sustainability</i> | Implementation of a fair pay system for workers. |

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| Variables | Indicator | Items/statements |
|------------------|-------------------------------------|--|
| | | Attention to labor health and safety. Value addition to products. Participation in community activities. |
| | <i>Environmental Sustainability</i> | Ability to save energy. Ability to reduce carbon emissions from business operations. Ability to process failed products and solid and liquid waste. Ability to effectively utilize resources. |

Source: adapted from pengkajian teoritis Peter (2010), Sachs & Ban (2015), Hosseininia & Ramezani (2016), Sulaeman & Kurniawati (2022)

| Variables | Indicator | Items/Statements |
|------------------|---------------------------------|---|
| Kesuksesan usaha | <i>Business profitability</i> | The business has been profitable for the business owner (Soto-Acosta et al., 2016) |
| | <i>Business effectiveness</i> | The business has been effective in attracting customer attention to its products (Soto-Acosta et al., 2016) |
| | <i>Business competitiveness</i> | In the market competition, the business has a competitive position (Soto-Acosta et al., 2016) The business owner is satisfied with the achievement of business success. Customers are satisfied with the product. The business has a good relationship with stakeholders (employees, community, consumers, business partners, suppliers, government). Concern for social and environmental activities makes the business more successful (Alhammadi & Alayed, 2022) |

Source: adapted from Soto-Acosta et al. (2016); Alhammadi & Alayed (2022); Basar et al. (2023)

RESULTS AND ANALYSIS

This study shows the results of the influence between the application of the economic bottom line concept on the creation of business sustainability can be accepted. Based on the theory of John Elkington, it is stated that sustainable behavior can be fulfilled by realizing the economic dimension of the triple bottom line concept. This study shows that the economic bottom line is still valid and influential to realize business sustainability. Edeigba & Arasanmi's research (2022) also shows that business owners who apply the economic bottom line concept can effectively improve business sustainability over time. Tofu SMEs in Candimulyo District, which are hereditary businesses, are able to produce products that are of economic value to the wider community. Tofu SMEs have been able to meet consumer demand, this indicates the rise of tofu SMEs from the downturn due to the COVID 19 pandemic and the increase in raw materials. Profit from the business has also been achieved as capital and as a business engine to maintain its sustainability.

This study states that there is an influence between the application of the social bottom line concept on the creation of business sustainability. Tofu SMEs almost entirely contribute to providing welfare to the surrounding community. The majority of the tofu SME workforce are residents around the business location. The absorption of labor indicates a reduction in the

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level of community unemployment. Tofu SMEs contribute to the fulfillment of the welfare of the surrounding community. Tofu SMEs already have regular customers and partners in the market that support SMEs to maintain the distribution of their products. The business community has been formed and acts as an accommodator of aspirations from tofu SMEs regarding innovations, suggestions, constraints and concerns from business owners. This community is also a link between SMEs and the government.

This study shows the results that the hypothesis stating that there is an influence between the application of the environmental bottom line concept on the creation of business sustainability can be accepted. Tofu SMEs process solid waste which is usually resold for animal feed and reprocessed into other food products. These efforts are made to preserve the environment for business sustainability. In the research of Soto-Acosta et al. (2016) assessing the ability of businesses in business sustainability can be seen from the ability of businesses to account for the application of the environmental bottom line in the form of material and energy use, company operations that are not harmful to the environment, and the use of environmentally friendly technology.

This study shows the results that the hypothesis stating that there is an influence between the application of the economic bottom line concept on the increasing success of SMEs can be accepted. SMEs have met consumer needs for tofu products for many years, indicating that SMEs are able to run their businesses stably. The stability of this production process indicates that the business has fulfilled the minimum profit to continue driving the business operational process. The survival of tofu SMEs to date shows that the business has attracted and maintained loyal customers.

In addition, there is an influence between the application of the social bottom line concept on the increasing success of SMEs. The market position of tofu SMEs has a competitive position, most tofu SMEs already have a fixed market. Customer satisfaction is the most important thing for tofu SMEs so that products are always maintained in quality to maintain customer loyalty. This is an effort made to continue to maintain the success of tofu SMEs. This is in accordance with Okanga & Groenewald's research (2017) which states that the application of people indicators that are committed to maintaining good relationships with stakeholders can improve market position and be able to compete in market competition.

However, the environmental dimension in this study found that there was no influence between the application of the environmental bottom line concept on increasing success. According to Al-Tit et al., (2019) in Alhammadi (2022) the importance of implementing environmental policies will create long-term sustainability. Based on the explanation of the findings of previous research, there are inconsistencies in this study. This can be seen from the research results that the majority of respondents from tofu SME owners rejected that the application of environmental bottom line aspects increased their business success. The lack of awareness of tofu SMEs of environmental damage due to industrial waste is still often found. The SMEs' perception of the environment towards success is also still low. Meanwhile, the triple bottom line concept simultaneously affects business sustainability and increases SME success. Efforts to implement the three main dimensions in the triple bottom line concept can realize business sustainability which has the opportunity to increase business success.

CONCLUSION

This study aims to determine the effect of the triple bottom line concept (economic, social, environmental) both independently and simultaneously on the sustainability and success of tofu SMEs. Based on the results of data analysis from this study, the following conclusions were obtained: (1) efforts to apply the economic bottom line concept affect business sustainability for tofu SMEs; (2) efforts to apply the social bottom line concept affect business sustainability for tofu SMEs; (3) efforts to apply the environmental bottom line

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concept affect business sustainability for tofu SMEs; (4) the economic bottom line concept affects the increase in business success in tofu SMEs; (5) the social bottom line concept has an effect on increasing business success in tofu SMEs; (6) the environmental bottom line concept has no effect on increasing business success in tofu SMEs; (7) the triple bottom line concept affects business sustainability for tofu SMEs; (8) the triple bottom line concept affects increasing business success in tofu SMEs.

It can be seen that most aspects of the triple bottom line concept affect business sustainability and business success, so it would be good for tofu SMEs to increase the application of the triple bottom line concept in their business. The thing that needs to be managed properly on an ongoing basis is the application of the economic bottom line to the business. Therefore, the owners of tofu SMEs should have a deep understanding of skilled financial management to maintain business sustainability. In the social aspect, tofu SME players need to maintain good relationships with human resources and surrounding community groups. Through social empowerment measures by tofu SMEs such as involving the surrounding community as employees, it shows that there is a sustainable relationship. The establishment of good relations and the fulfillment of employee welfare will increase employee motivation and performance at work so as to support business sustainability and success. In the environmental aspect, tofu SMEs need to know and understand waste management. The government plays an important role in supporting tofu SMEs in efforts to mitigate environmental damage due to waste.

The research has been conducted by following existing scientific procedures. However, this study still has limitations, including the variables used in the analysis of the influence on business sustainability and business success in tofu SMEs only consist of three variables, namely economic, social, environmental in the concept of triple bottom line, while outside this study there are still many other variables that can affect business sustainability and success in tofu SMEs, the object of research is only in a limited area, namely only in one of the tofu SME centers in Magelang Regency, the range of research objects can be expanded again to obtain more accurate data, the questionnaire distributed only to tofu SME owners as respondents so that it can only be seen by one perspective.

Based on the limitations of the study, several suggestions can be considered for future research. The suggestions include that further research can add independent variables in analyzing business sustainability and success such as applicable government policies, employee performance quality, SME size, SME commitment, and so on. Future research can expand the range of research areas to obtain more accurate data and results that show a broader picture. Respondents can be added to owners, employees, consumers, and the surrounding community so that the participation and perceptions of each respondent can be known in achieving business sustainability and success.

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