

# DRIVING GREEN INNOVATION FOR SUSTAINABLE PERFORMANCE: AN EMPIRICAL STUDY OF MICRO ENTERPRISES IN NORTH SUMATRA, INDONESIA

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DRIVING GREEN INNOVATION FOR SUSTAINABLE PERFORMANCE:  
AN EMPIRICAL STUDY OF MICRO ENTERPRISES  
IN NORTH SUMATRA, INDONESIA

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ABSTRACT

**Objective:** This study aimed to investigate the key factors driving the adoption of green innovation and how the adoption relates to the enhancement of sustainable business performance in North Sumatra context. **Research Design & Methods:** A quantitative design was applied through structural equation modeling (SEM) with SmartPLS software, based on data previously collected from 371 Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) in food and beverage (F&B) sector. **Findings:** The results showed that organizational factors, human resources, and technology were significant drivers in implementing green innovation. The adoption of this innovation has been proven to contribute positively to the social and environmental aspects of sustainable performance, although it did not have a significant impact on the economic aspect. **Implications & Recommendations:** This study provided valuable insights on green innovation, a topic that has received limited scholarly focus in the context of North Sumatra MSMEs. It also offered more insights into previously unanswered questions regarding the determinants of green innovation adoption and their potential role in fostering sustainable performance among MSMEs. **Contribution & Value Added:** Theoretically, this study expanded the use of Resource-Based View (RBV) by emphasizing the importance of internal resource management directed toward environmentally sound innovation to achieve sustainable competitive advantage. Practically, the results provided strategic guidance for MSMEs and policymakers in designing resource-based policies to encourage transformation toward sustainability.

**Keywords:** green innovation; MSMEs; sustainable business performance; RBV theory.

**JEL codes:** M10, M21, M31

**Article type:** research paper

INTRODUCTION

In the contemporary era, the world is increasingly confronted with urgent environmental issues, particularly environmental degradation and climate change (Aboalhoool et al., 2024; Song et al., 2021). In response, businesses are being compelled to transition toward more sustainable production practices, with the goal of offering products and services that correspond with environmental stewardship. According to Baeshen et al. (2021), the adoption of green practices is becoming an unavoidable necessity for organizations aiming to achieve long-term sustainable performance (Larbi-Siaw et al., 2022; Sinaga et al., 2022). This imperative also applies to Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs), constituting an essential component of Indonesian economic structure (Prabowo et al., 2021). MSMEs dominate employment and contribute more significantly to the national Gross Domestic

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Product (GDP) than large enterprises. Furthermore, their resilience during periods of economic instability shows their strategic importance. Accordingly, Indonesian government continues to prioritize the empowerment and development of MSMEs (Putro & Ilmaniati, 2020).

Green innovation has emerged as a key strategy in the manufacturing sector, promoting sustainability through the integration of environmentally responsible practices (Shahzad et al., 2021; Somjai et al., 2020). However, a preliminary survey involving several MSMEs has shown that the adoption of green innovation remains suboptimal. A significant number still focus predominantly on profit-oriented innovations, often disregarding the long-term environmental consequences of their business activities (Baeshen et al., 2021). These tendencies pose a risk to public trust, specifically in light of the growing presence of green consumers, specifically individuals who are increasingly attentive to the environmental and health impacts of business operations (Abdou et al., 2022; Wang & Juo, 2021). This concern has become particularly salient following the Covid-19 pandemic, consequently increasing societal awareness of health and environmental sustainability.

A significant challenge to the advancement of green innovation in MSMEs is the lack of qualified human resources and inadequate technological capabilities required to facilitate environmentally sustainable transformations. In the absence of sufficient technical expertise and managerial proficiency, these enterprises struggle to incorporate sustainable practices into their core operations, particularly in areas such as energy efficiency, process innovation, and waste reduction (Baeshen et al., 2021; Jun et al., 2021). These internal limitations are often exacerbated by limited institutional support, specifically the scarcity of structured awareness programs and the inadequate provision of enabling infrastructure, such as access to clean technologies, training facilities, and green financing mechanisms (Khan et al., 2021; Zulkifli et al., 2022). As a result, MSMEs face difficulties in scaling up sustainable innovations, thereby creating a gap between national-level sustainability objectives and their realization at the enterprise level. To mitigate these challenges, scholars have advocated for the development of public-private partnerships aimed at improving knowledge exchange, fostering collaborative innovation ecosystems, and delivering customized capacity-building initiatives (Abbas & Sagsan, 2019; Shahzad et al., 2020). Furthermore, embedding sustainability education into vocational and entrepreneurial training programs is seen as a strategic long-term strategy to cultivating a skilled and environmentally conscious MSMEs workforce (Nasrollahi et al., 2020).

A substantial body of literature supported the positive relationship between green innovation and sustainable business performance (Abubakar et al., 2022; Almeida & Wasim, 2023; Asadi et al., 2020; Baeshen et al., 2021; Ch'ng et al., 2024). However, these studies differ significantly in terms of sectoral emphasis and geographic context. For example, Asadi et al. (2020) investigated green innovation in Malaysian hospitality industry, emphasizing environmental awareness as a key mediator, while Baeshen et al. (2021) explored the role of green absorptive capacity and human capital in MSMEs. Almeida & Wasim (2023) adopted a comparative approach between MSMEs in Portugal and the UK, and Zhao & Huang (2022) focused on leadership and HRM in large-scale enterprises in China. Despite the growing interest in this area, most of the studies centered on manufacturing, hospitality, service industries, as well as developed or upper-middle-income economies. Only a few specifically targeted food and beverage (F&B) sector, particularly in Indonesian MSMEs context. An exception was Natalie et al. (2024) and Siagian & Siagian (2025), which analyzed green market orientation among MSMEs in Indonesia, although the studies did not explore innovation drivers in depth. Due to F&B sector's reliance on traditional production systems, limited digitization, and informal operational structures (KemenKopUKM, 2023), the adoption of green innovation presents distinct challenges. These unique sectoral features, such as resource limitations, weak regulatory oversight, and high informality, remain underrepresented in current academic discussions. Although interest in green innovation continues to expand, empirical studies focusing on its drivers and impacts in Indonesian F&B MSMEs are still insufficient.

Building on the issues outlined, this study aimed to investigate the key determinants influencing the adoption of green innovation. These determinants include external partnership and cooperation, government support, rules and regulatory factors, market and customer factors, organizational and human resource factors, as well as technological factors. Accordingly, the objective was to address this

gap by examining the key drivers of green innovation adoption and their relationship with sustainability performance, specifically among MSMEs in Indonesian F&B industry. This not only enriches the empirical discourse on sector-specific innovation practices but also offers contextually grounded insights for policymakers aiming to foster inclusive and sustainable business ecosystems. By providing empirical insights into these dynamics, this study contributed to both academic discourse and practical policymaking concerning MSMEs development in Indonesia.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

### RBV Theory

Resource-Based View (RBV) offers a theoretical framework for understanding how a business's internal resources and capabilities contribute to product innovation, and how this innovation influences the organization's overall performance (Andersén, 2021). Over the last decade, RBV theory has been widely used to examine the internal determinants of organizational success (Shahzad et al., 2021). Several studies have explored various antecedents and driving factors that contribute to business performance enhancement, drawing on RBV as a foundational framework to analyze how internal resources and capabilities shape competitive advantage (Baeshen et al., 2021; Lorenzo et al., 2018; Shahzad et al., 2021). From RBV perspective, the adoption of green innovation can create a competitive advantage that improves business performance sustainably.

### Sustainable Business Performance

Triple Bottom Line (TBL) framework delineates sustainability in business through a triadic lens, namely economic efficiency, social impact, and environmental protection, serving both as criteria for performance evaluation and as guiding principles for corporate innovation (Asadi et al., 2020). In tandem, RBV theory emphasizes that business ability to sustain competitive advantage is grounded in its capacity to exploit internal resources that are unique, valuable, and difficult for competitors to replicate (Bamey, 1991; Shahzad et al., 2020). When synthesized, these frameworks offer a multidimensional method to analyzing how internal business resources contribute to sustainable outcomes across TBL. Strategic resources such as environmental competencies, sustainability-focused human capital, and green innovation capacity enable businesses to derive value not just financially but also socially and ecologically (Nasrollahi et al., 2020; Wang & Juo, 2021). For instance, green intellectual capital can simultaneously foster environmental gains, stakeholder trust, and financial sustainability. Therefore, this study integrated TBL as its main performance metric and applied RBV as the theoretical underpinning to evaluate how internal capabilities drove green innovation and influenced comprehensive sustainability performance (Abbas & Sağsan, 2019; Muangmee et al., 2021; Zhao & Huang, 2022).

### Determinants of Green Innovation

In the process of adopting green innovation, several key factors influence its implementation. Baeshen et al. (2021) identified three key drivers in this process, namely green absorptive capacity, sustainable human capital, and organizational support. Complementing these factors, Jun et al. (2021); Rustiarini et al. (2022); Soewarno et al. (2019) expanded the perspective by outlining six critical determinants shaping the adoption of green innovation in organizations. These included external partnership and cooperation, government support, rules and regulatory factors, market and customer factors, organizational and human resource factors, and technological factors. To provide more comprehensive results regarding the determinants of green innovation, this study adopted the six determinants proposed by Jun et al. (2021).

- H1: External partnership and cooperation (EPC) have a significant influence on green innovation (GI).
- H2: Government support has a significant influence on green innovation (GI).
- H3: Rules and regulatory factors have a significant influence on green innovation (GI).
- H4: Market and customer factors have a significant influence on green innovation (GI).
- H5: Organizational and human resource factors have a significant influence on green innovation (GI).
- H6: Technological factors have a significant influence on green innovation (GI).

**Green Innovation and Sustainable Business Performance**

The concept of sustainable development is closely related to the modern, interdisciplinary perspective of green theory, which emphasizes the importance of implementing environmentally responsible management strategies and leveraging advanced technologies to produce eco-friendly goods and services (Abbas & Sağsan, 2019). In the current rapidly evolving global landscape, environmental management has become increasingly important for businesses, prompting many organizations to invest more actively in the development of green innovations (Tjahjadi et al., 2023). As a result, green innovation is widely recognized as a strategic solution that balances the often competing objectives of economic growth and environmental sustainability (Anik & Sulisty, 2021; Novitasari & Agustia, 2022).

Green innovation is regarded as a key organizational capability that improves business performance (Muangmee et al., 2021; Tjahjadi et al., 2023). It plays a transformative role by fostering the development of new technologies and processes that support both ecological responsibility and economic viability (Abbas & Sağsan, 2019; Sudirman et al., 2024). A growing body of literature has explored the positive impact of innovation on business performance (Han et al., 1998; Putro & Ilmaniati, 2020; Rajapathirana & Hui, 2018; Siagian & Siagian, 2025; Soewarno et al., 2019), with several studies specifically emphasizing the integration of environmentally conscious practices into innovation efforts, commonly referred to as green innovation, as a significant contributor to achieving sustainable business performance (Abbas & Sağsan, 2019; Asadi et al., 2020; Muangmee et al., 2021; Tjahjadi et al., 2020).

H7: Green innovation (GI) has a significant influence on economic performance (ECP).

H8: Green innovation (GI) has a significant influence on social performance (SCP).

H9: Green innovation (GI) has a significant influence on environmental performance (EVP).

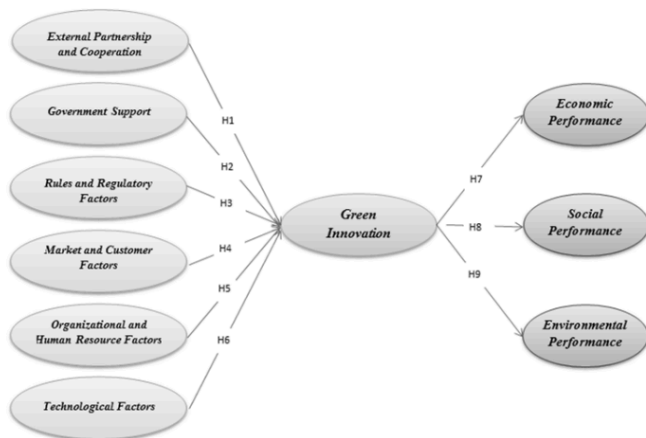


Figure 1. Conceptual Model  
 Source: Created by Authors (2025)

Figure 1 presents the proposed conceptual framework underpinning this study. The model was structured around two primary constructs, namely the antecedents or key determinants of green innovation, and the multidimensional outcomes of green innovation implementation. According to the integrative perspectives of RBV and TBL framework, the model showed that six determinant factors, namely external partnership and cooperation, government support, rules and regulatory factors, market and customer factors, organizational and human resource factors, and technological factors, were

hypothesized to significantly influence the adoption of green innovation (H1–H6) (Baeshen et al., 2021; Jun et al., 2021). In line with TBL framework (Asadi et al., 2020), the model further hypothesized that green innovation contributed to sustainable business performance across three performance dimensions, namely economic (H7), social (H8), and environmental outcomes (H9). The conceptual linkages assumed that the strategic deployment of internal and external resources could foster environmentally oriented innovation, consequently generating positive impacts on profitability, social contribution, and ecological responsibility (Abbas & Sağsan, 2019; Shahzad et al., 2020; Wang & Juo, 2021).

**METHODS**

This study used a quantitative cross-sectional survey method to examine the primary determinants influencing green innovation and to assess the impact on sustainable business performance. This study was conducted in Pematangsiantar City, North Sumatra, targeting MSMEs operating in F&B sector. The selection of this sector and location was based on the strategic relevance in Indonesian urban economic structure, where environmental sustainability was an emerging concern but remained underexplored in academic research. A total of 371 MSMEs were recruited through purposive sampling, with inclusion criteria comprising (1) active operation in F&B sector, (2) legal registration with the Ministry of Cooperatives and MSMEs (KemenKopUKM, 2023), and (3) a minimum operational duration of one year, ensuring that businesses had sufficient exposure to green innovation challenges.

Table 1. Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

Category	Items	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	130	35.04
	Female	241	64.96
Age (years)	17-30	111	29.92
	31-40	103	27.76
	41-50	91	24.53
	51-60	42	11.32
	>60	24	6.47
Education Stage	Primary School	41	11.05
	Junior High School	40	10.78
	Senior High School	231	62.26
	Diploma	19	5.12
	Bachelor's Degree	37	9.97
	Master's Degree	2	0.54
	Doctorate	0	0.00
Long Time in Business (years)	No Formal Education	1	0.27
	<1	15	4.04
	1-5	128	34.50
	6-10	97	26.15
	11-15	57	15.36
Net Worth	16-20	32	8.63
	>20	42	11.32
	≤ IDR 50,000,000	235	63.34
Annual Sales	IDR 50,000,000 – IDR 500,000,000	107	28.84
	IDR 500,000,000 – IDR 10,000,000,000	29	7.82
	IDR 300,000,000 – IDR 2,500,000,000	107	29.11
	IDR 2,500,000,000 – IDR 500,000,000,000	22	5.93

Source: Data processing results

Data were collected using a structured questionnaire, adapted from validated instruments in previous studies (Baeshen et al., 2021; Jun et al., 2021; Shahzad et al., 2020). The questionnaire comprised measurement items for six antecedents of green innovation, namely external partnerships and cooperation (4 items); government support (5 items); regulatory factors (4 items); market and customer orientation (4 items); organizational and human resource factors (5 items); and technological capabilities (4 items). It also included items for green innovation (5 items) and sustainable business performance, measured across three dimensions, namely economic (3 items), social (3 items), and environmental (5

items). Responses were rated using a 5-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree).

Table 2. Validity and Reliability Test

Variables	Item	Loading Factor	Average Variance Extracted (AVE)	Composite Reliability	Cronbach's Alpha
External Partnership and Cooperation (EPC)	EPC1	0.817	0.676	0.893	0.839
	EPC2	0.881			
	EPC3	0.845			
	EPC4	0.740			
Government Support (GS)	GS1	0.762	0.609	0.886	0.840
	GS2	0.802			
	GS3	0.802			
	GS4	0.791			
	GS5	0.744			
Rules and Regulatory Factors (RR)	RR1	0.740	0.591	0.852	0.774
	RR2	0.751			
	RR3	0.799			
	RR4	0.782			
Market and Customer Factors (MC)	MC1	0.737	0.594	0.854	0.772
	MC2	0.759			
	MC3	0.781			
	MC4	0.804			
Organizational and Human Resource Factors (OH)	OH2	0.821	0.627	0.834	0.702
	OH3	0.749			
	OH4	0.803			
Technological Factors (TF)	TF1	0.733	0.615	0.864	0.792
	TF2	0.803			
	TF3	0.791			
	TF4	0.769			
Green Innovation (GI)	GI1	0.705	0.569	0.868	0.810
	GI2	0.789			
	GI3	0.738			
	GI4	0.802			
	GI5	0.734			
Economic Performance (ECP)	ECP1	0.950	0.866	0.928	0.848
	ECP3	0.911			
Social Performance (SCP)	SCP1	0.866	0.721	0.886	0.807
	SCP2	0.813			
	SCP3	0.868			
Environmental Performance (EVP)	EVP2	0.809	0.634	0.874	0.807
	EVP3	0.751			
	EVP4	0.830			
	EVP5	0.791			

Source: Smart-PLS data processing results

Data were analyzed using Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) with SmartPLS 3.0 software. According to Hair et al. (2023), the analysis included two primary stages, namely evaluation of the measurement model (outer model) and the structural model (inner model).

Convergent validity was confirmed through factor loadings above 0.49 and Average Variance Extracted (AVE) values exceeding 0.50. Meanwhile, discriminant validity was evaluated using the Fornell-Larcker criterion and cross-loading assessments. Internal consistency was established through composite reliability and Cronbach's alpha, both surpassing the threshold of 0.70. Hypothesis testing was conducted through bootstrapping with 5,000 resamples, and significance was determined at the  $p < 0.05$  level.

**FINDINGS**

The questionnaire was distributed offline by surveyor, specifically college students supporting Kampus Merdeka program, resulting in 371 valid responses. The majority of respondents were female (64.96%), predominantly in the age ranges of 17–30 years (29.92%) and 31–40 years (27.76%). Most respondents had completed secondary education, with 62.26% holding a senior high school qualification. Regarding businesses, the majority had been operating for 1–5 years (34.50%) and 6–10 years (26.15%). The survey also showed most of these enterprises were categorized as micro-enterprises, with 63.34% reporting a net worth  $\leq$  IDR 50,000,000 and 64.96% reporting annual sales of  $\leq$  IDR 300,000,000. See details in Table 1.

**Table 3. Discriminant Validity and Heterotrait-Monotrait Ratio (HTMT) Test**

	ECP	EVP	EPC	GS	GI	MC	OH	RR	SCP	TF
<i>Discriminant Validity</i>										
ECP	0.931									
EVP	0.059	0.796								
EPC	-0.106	0.457	0.822							
GS	-0.066	0.521	0.688	0.780						
GI	-0.048	0.660	0.573	0.641	0.754					
MC	0.071	0.580	0.438	0.589	0.625	0.771				
OH	0.046	0.538	0.509	0.610	0.676	0.624	0.792			
RR	0.099	0.447	0.221	0.515	0.410	0.582	0.495	0.769		
SCP	0.074	0.566	0.353	0.516	0.617	0.565	0.524	0.461	0.849	
TF	0.022	0.618	0.409	0.537	0.697	0.613	0.623	0.503	0.586	0.784
<i>Heterotrait-Monotrait Ratio (HTMT)</i>										
ECP										
EVP	0,080									
EPC	0,135	0,546								
GS	0,086	0,628	0,812							
GI	0,090	0,810	0,697	0,773						
MC	0,089	0,733	0,542	0,730	0,786					
OH	0,070	0,710	0,665	0,791	0,893	0,842				
RR	0,129	0,557	0,265	0,614	0,489	0,743	0,663			
SCP	0,091	0,700	0,429	0,625	0,757	0,714	0,689	0,580		
TF	0,057	0,770	0,497	0,651	0,864	0,782	0,828	0,634	0,735	

Source: Smart-PLS data processing results

Both convergent and discriminant validity tests were conducted to assess the validity and reliability of the measurement model (Table 2). Convergent validity was confirmed as most item loadings exceeded the recommended threshold of 0.70, and AVE values were above 0.50 for all constructs (Hair et al., 2023). However, several indicators, specifically OH1 (Organizational and Human Resource Factors), ECP2 (Economic Performance), and EVP1 (Environmental Performance), were removed from the final model. These items were excluded due to factor loadings below 0.70, confirming insufficient contribution to the respective latent constructs. The removal of low-loading indicators improved the internal validity of the model by ensuring that only statistically reliable and conceptually sound items contributed to construct measurement (Hair et al., 2023). Furthermore, the elimination of these items did not compromise the overall construct validity, as reflected in strong composite reliability values (all  $> 0.70$ ) and acceptable Cronbach's alpha coefficients. This adjustment improved measurement precision without affecting the conceptual integrity of the constructs. Discriminant validity was also established, with all cross-loading values exceeding 0.70, confirming that each construct measured a distinct concept.

Heterotrait-Monotrait Ratio (HTMT) analysis showed that all inter-construct values were below the threshold of 0.90, confirming adequate discriminant validity (Table 3). The highest value was recorded between Green Innovation and Technological Factors (0.864), which remained in acceptable limits. Some pairs of constructs, such as Economic Performance and Technological Factors (0.057), showed low correlation, providing stronger evidence of conceptual differentiation between constructs. Generally, the results supported that each construct in the model measured an empirically distinct concept. In terms of explanatory power, R-square value for green innovation was 0.653, confirming that the six determinants accounted for approximately 65.3% of the variance in green innovation. R-square values for social and environmental performance were 0.380 and 0.435, respectively, confirming moderate explanatory strength (Table 4). However, the model's predictive power for economic performance was negligible ( $R^2 = 0.002$ ), potentially due to the short-term financial burdens of implementing green practices among MSMEs.

Table 4. R-Square Test

	R-square	R-square Adjusted
Green Innovation	0.653	0.647
Economic Performance	0.002	0.000
Social Performance	0.380	0.379
Environmental Performance	0.435	0.434

Source: Smart-PLS data processing results

Significance testing was conducted to examine the relationships between the exogenous and endogenous variables to evaluate proposed hypotheses. The analysis focused on the p-values as the key criterion for significance. At a 5% significance level, a p-value less than 0.05 confirmed a statistically significant influence of the exogenous variable on the endogenous variable, while a p-value greater than 0.05 showed no significant influence. The detailed results of the hypothesis testing are presented in Table 5.

Table 5. Hypothesis Result

Path	B	t-Statistics	P-Value	Result
EPC -> GI	0.154	2.980	0.003	Supported
GS -> GI	0.159	2.921	0.004	Supported
RR -> GI	-0.087	2.032	0.043	Supported
MC -> GI	0.155	2.828	0.005	Supported
OH -> GI	0.224	4.292	0.000	Supported
TF -> GI	0.358	6.443	0.000	Supported
GI -> ECP	-0.048	0.675	0.500	Not Supported
GI -> SCP	0.617	17.490	0.000	Supported
GI -> EVP	0.660	20.627	0.000	Supported

Source: Smart-PLS data processing results

The hypothesis testing (H1–H6), examining the influence of various determinant factors on green innovation, showed that all proposed relationships were statistically supported, as confirmed by p-values less than 0.05. These results reinforced the theoretical premise that internal and external drivers, such as external partnerships, government support, market pressure, organizational capabilities, and technology, played a significant role in fostering green innovation among MSMEs. Furthermore, hypotheses H8 and H9, which tested the impact of green innovation on social performance and environmental performance, were also supported, as evidenced by highly significant p-values (< 0.05). In contrast, hypothesis H7, postulating a positive relationship between green innovation and economic performance, was not supported ( $p = 0.500$ ), showing that economic gains from green innovation might not be immediately realized in the context of MSMEs.

## DISCUSSION

This study found that among the various factors investigated, organizational and human resource aspects, along with technological readiness, emerged as the most influential in promoting green innovation in MSMEs in Indonesian F&B industry. This result was consistent with previous studies (Baeshen et al., 2021; Jun et al., 2021), identifying internal organizational capabilities and human capital as primary enablers of eco-innovation, specifically in small enterprise contexts. Drawing upon RBV,

elements such as organizational design, employee skills, leadership commitment, and access to appropriate technologies constituted strategic internal assets for improving business potential to innovate sustainably. These resources, being unique and difficult to replicate, offered a foundation for achieving long-term competitive advantage (Yang et al., 2023). Therefore, MSMEs that effectively utilized their human capital by fostering environmental awareness, technical competencies, and proactive leadership tended to be better equipped to adopt eco-innovative practices, even when faced with resource limitations (Asadi et al., 2020; Zulkiffli et al., 2022). This study also showed that regulatory and policy-related factors negatively affected the adoption of green innovation. This contradicted the original hypothesis, where regulations were assumed to function as facilitators of innovation. In the specific context of MSMEs in Indonesian F&B sector, regulations are frequently viewed as complex, vague, and challenging to implement, specifically by businesses with limited institutional and administrative capacity. This regulatory ambiguity tends to increase uncertainty and compliance burdens, typically discouraging businesses from initiating proactive environmental measures (Kania & Bukhori, 2025). Theoretically, while regulatory pressure is often expected to stimulate innovation, as suggested by Porter's Hypothesis, this relationship is contingent on the design and applicability of the regulations. In environments where regulatory systems are fragmented or not corresponding with MSMEs' operational realities, the systems may act as institutional lock-ins that restrict flexibility and impose high compliance costs (Miyamoto, 2015; Mohammad & Wasiuzzaman, 2021).

This study further confirmed that green innovation had a positive and significant influence on sustainable business performance, particularly in the environmental and financial dimensions. These results were consistent with previous studies (Abbas & Sağsan, 2019; Asadi et al., 2020; Khan et al., 2021; Muangmee et al., 2021), emphasizing the important role of eco-innovation in advancing broader sustainability outcomes. According to RBV, green innovation is not merely a functional improvement but represents a strategic resource that is valuable, rare, inimitable, and non-substitutable (Yang et al., 2023). It enables businesses to integrate social and environmental values into core operations, thereby strengthening competitive positioning. For MSMEs, cultivating eco-innovative competencies supports organizational differentiation and resilience, particularly as markets shift toward sustainability-conscious consumer preferences (Siska et al., 2025; Zulkiffli et al., 2022).

The relationship between green innovation and economic performance was confirmed to be negative and statistically non-significant, diverging from Muangmee et al. (2021), which reported a positive impact. A plausible result lay in the substantial costs involved in implementing green innovation, which could temporarily reduce profitability, specifically for small enterprises. In the context of developing economies, MSMEs often operate with limited financial and structural resources, making it difficult to absorb these costs or to realize immediate financial returns. Therefore, the absence of a significant economic effect does not diminish the potential value of green innovation but emphasizes the pressing need for supportive mechanisms such as subsidies, green financing, and technical guidance to ensure sustainability efforts translate into long-term economic benefits.

This study provided meaningful implications for both MSMEs practitioners and policymakers in F&B industry. It emphasized the strategic value of green innovation in improving sustainable outcomes, particularly in response to increased consumer demand for ethical and environmentally responsible products. The pandemic has also reinforced consumers' digital orientation and raised expectations for social and environmental accountability (Baeshen et al., 2021). Therefore, businesses that embed sustainability into their core operations stand to benefit from stronger customer loyalty and market differentiation. In response, policy initiatives should prioritize the development of practical support systems such as simplified regulatory procedures, targeted funding schemes, and sustainability-driven training to foster an ecosystem that enables MSMEs to adopt green practices effectively.

## CONCLUSION

In conclusion, from a theoretical standpoint, this study extended existing knowledge on MSMEs by explicitly applying RBV to examine how internal resources such as technological capabilities, green knowledge, and human capital contributed to the adoption of green innovation. It also advanced the

RBV discourse by showing eco-innovation could function as a strategic intangible asset that was valuable, rare, inimitable, and non-substitutable, thereby corresponding with the core tenets of Barney's RBV. Unlike previous studies that examined RBV in large-business contexts, this study adapted the framework to a small business environment, showing its relevance in resource-constrained settings such as Indonesian MSMEs in F&B sector.

On a practical level, the results provided actionable insights for both MSMEs owners and policymakers. For MSMEs practitioners, the results emphasized the need to invest in internal capabilities such as employee training, leadership in sustainability, and the adoption of green technologies, as these factors were central to driving eco-innovation. For policymakers, this study showed the importance of simplifying regulatory mechanisms and expanding access to green finance and technical support, particularly for small businesses often lacking the institutional capacity to navigate complex sustainability mandates. Tailored policy interventions, such as tax incentives for eco-friendly practices or green innovation incubators, could significantly lower entry barriers and improve innovation diffusion among MSMEs. Despite the significant contributions, this study was subject to certain limitations. Its exclusive focus on F&B sector in a single urban area (Pematangsiantar City) could limit the generalizability of the results to other sectors or geographic regions. Therefore, future studies were recommended to conduct comparative sectoral analyses, specifically between resource-intensive industries and service-based MSMEs, and examine whether the influence of internal drivers on green innovation varied across different industrial structures. Longitudinal designs could also be used to observe how green innovation evolved over time in response to internal capability development and external policy shifts.

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#### CONFLICT OF INTEREST STATEMENT

The authors declare that there is no conflict of interest regarding the publication of this research. All data collection, analysis, and interpretation were conducted independently and objectively, without any commercial, financial, or personal relationships that could be perceived to influence the findings of this study.

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