

A Review from the Malaysian Perspective on Factors Influencing Sustainable Entrepreneurship in Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises ((SMEs)

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Abstract: This investigation looked to set up the social and natural factors that impact Sustainable Entrepreneurship in Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises (SMEs). It likewise endeavored to distinguish whether the segment foundation of the business person impacts the Sustainable Entrepreneurship in SMEs of the Malaysian nourishment industry. This paper tries to investigate the writing on long haul and manageable development for SMEs and the upgraded information on this territory will be a direction to the approach producers, supporting offices, consultants, business visionaries and academicians to genuinely build up a widely inclusive model for feasible development of SMEs. This paper proposes an incorporated reasonable development model for SMEs with five components of the Sustainable Entrepreneurship variables that are leadership, network, employee management, customer orientation and marketing strategy. A blended technique approach, utilizing the utilization of surveys and meetings from an example size of around 120 members and 10 proprietor supervisors of SMEs in the nourishment industry, was utilized to gather information. Moreover, out of the five recognized elements, as indicated by the members' recognition, the most significant components towards supportable execution of SMEs in the nourishment industry are social variables, including customer direction. This exploration paper reasons that thinking about the social and natural parts of supportability and utilizing experienced staff would significantly add to the quest for Sustainable Entrepreneurship in SMEs of the nourishment industry.

Keywords: *Sustainable entrepreneurship, SME, leadership, network, employee management, customer orientation, marketing strategy.*

1. Introduction and Background of Study

Research interest in the sustainability of business has a long history (Kassarjian, 1971). To put it another way, sustainable entrepreneurship involves making money while promoting social and environmental well-being (Hossain, 2021). There is a growing body of research that has begun to look specifically at micro, small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs). The definition of SME consists of two categories which are manufacturing and services and other sectors based on SME Corporation Malaysia (2013). Sales turnover of manufacturing is not more than RM RM50 million or full-time employees not more than 200 workers. Sales turnover of services and other sectors is not more than RM20 million or full-time employees not more than 75 workers. SME development is used to balance growth and fit the creation of abundance economically, environmentally and socially and product introduction is not successful in one region, after that may be in some markets halfway around the globe. One set of players that will have a major impact on the future of business and the planet is SMEs. In fact, these organizations constitute a major element in the world economy. However, when it comes to the role of business in addressing sustainable development. SMEs have largely been left out of the picture. Labonne (2016) compare large company and small firm in their use of environmental assessment tools. The researcher found that small firm was far less likely to examine their environmental impact. Mainly because of the financial limitations and costs associated with tools designed for large firms with significant resources. Condon (2014) also noted that a lack of financial knowledge and employee resources limited SME adaptation to sustainability practices. This research is carried out to investigate factors that affect the sustainability of SMEs in Malaysia.

Research Objectives

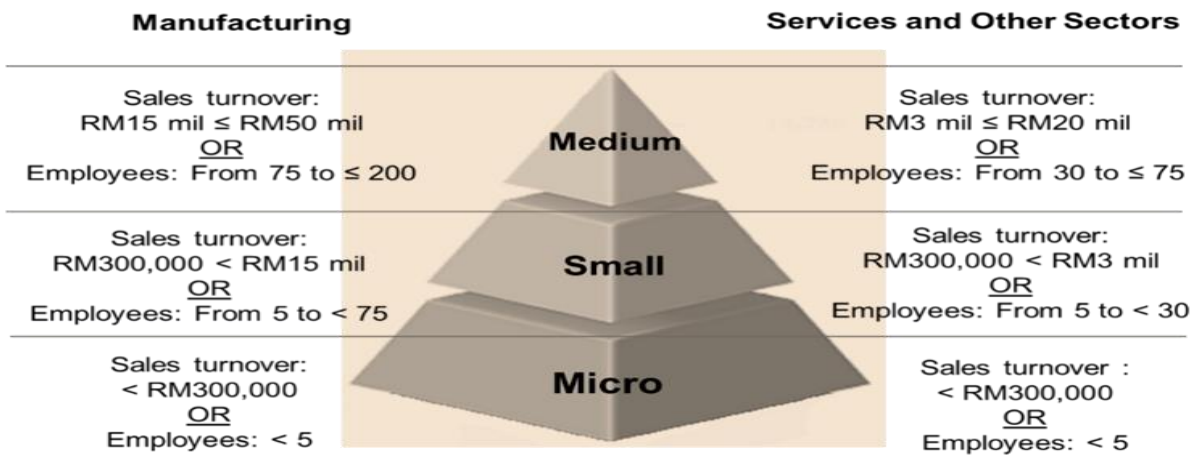
- To determine the actual factors which are affecting the sustainability of SMEs in Malaysia.
- To identify the factors (leadership, network, employee management, customer orientation and marketing orientation) that affects most in the sustainability of SMEs in Malaysia.

Research Questions

- What are the actual factors that affect the sustainability of SMEs in Malaysia?
- Which factors (leadership, network, employee management, customer orientation and marketing orientation) affect most in the sustainability of SMEs in Malaysia?

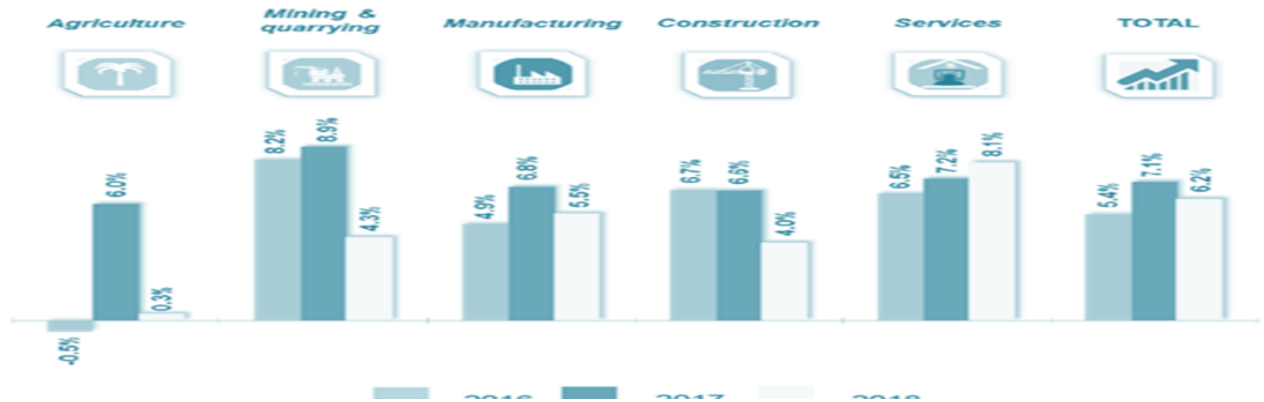
Performance of SMEs GDP of Malaysia: Malaysia’s SME GDP for the year 2018 grew at 6.2 percent as compared to 7.1 percent in 2017. This performance exceeded Malaysia’s GDP and Non-SMEs which registered 4.7 percent and 3.8 percent respectively as shown in Figure 1. The contribution of SMEs GDP to Malaysia’s GDP rose to 38.3 percent from 37.8 percent in the previous year. In nominal terms, SMEs GDP recorded RM551.7 billion in 2018 (2017: RM519.1 billion). Sales turnover and number of full-time employees are the two criteria used in determining the definition with the “OR” basis as follows: For the manufacturing sector, SMEs are defined as firms with sales turnover not exceeding RM50 million OR number of full-time employees not exceeding 200. For the services and other sectors, SMEs are defined as firms with sales turnover not exceeding RM20 million OR number of full-time employees not exceeding 75.

Figure 1: SMEs GDP of Malaysia by Sector



Source: SME Corp. Malaysia, 2020.

Figure 2: Annual Percentage Change of SMEs GDP 2016 – 2018



Source: SME Corp. Malaysia, 2020.

SMEs esteem included for the Services sector enlisted a development of 8.1 percent as compared to 7.2 percent in 2017 as appeared in Figure 2. The development momentum was quickened by wholesale and retail trade, food and beverages and settlement sub-sector which developed to 8.6 percent (2017: 7.5%). In the interim, the transportation and storage and data & communication sub-sector which extended to 6.9 percent (2017: 6.8%) has moreover backed the development force. In the manufacturing division, esteem included of SMEs developed to 5.5 percent (2017: 6.8%) driven by petroleum, chemical, rubber and plastic items with a

development of 5.8 percent (2017: 4.4%). Moreover, Non-metallic mineral items, fundamental metal and manufactured metal items extended to 6.9 percent from 6.1 percent in the past year, whereas the Food, beverages and tobacco sub-sector increased to 3.6 percent (2017: 11.0%). The esteem included of SMEs in the Farming segment developed imperceptibly by 0.3 percent after enlisting 6.0 percent within the going before year. This was due to the slower performance in rubber, oil palm, livestock & other agriculture sub-sectors with growth of 0.5 percent (2017: 9.0%). SMEs in the Construction, Mining & quarrying sectors eased to 4.0 percent and 4.3 percent respectively. SMEs exercises were commanded by the Services sector which contributed 62.4 percent and assembling area with a portion of 20.1 percent. The agriculture area contributed 10.1 percent to SMEs' Gross domestic product followed by the Construction sector which contributed 5.9 percent.

The structure of SMEs' Gross domestic product is practically like Malaysia's Gross domestic product structure except for the Mining and quarrying segment. In SMEs' Gross domestic product, the Mining and quarrying part contributed 0.5 percent towards the all-out SMEs' Gross domestic product when contrasted with Malaysia's Gross domestic product at 7.6 percent. This was because of auxiliary contrasts between SMEs and Malaysia's Gross domestic product whereby other mining and quarrying sub-divisions initiated the SMEs, while crude oil & condensate and natural gas were the significant contributors to Malaysia's economy. From the viewpoint of SMEs Gross domestic product commitment by sort of financial movement, all segments recorded an expansion in 2018 except the Development division. SMEs Gross domestic product was driven by the Agribusiness division with a portion of 52.8 percent. With respect to Development, the commitment of SMEs Gross domestic product posted 46.4 percent from 46.6 percent in the previous year. SMEs Gross domestic product of the Service segment extended to 42.2 percent when contrasted with 41.7 percent in 2017 which was commanded by the wholesale & retail trade, food & beverage and accommodation sub-area. SMEs Gross domestic product in the Assembling area recorded a negligible increment to 34.4 percent (2017: 34.2%) credited by petroleum, chemical, rubber and plastic items. Then, the SMEs Gross domestic product in Mining and quarrying segment recorded a portion of 2.4 percent (2017: 2.3%).

2. Literature Review

Sustainability of SMEs: According to Lackeus (2015), sustainability methodologies usage must be alert by SMEs. SMEs don't have such a great amount of mindfulness about their ecological impact and condition job; Oblivious about the significance of sustainability, critical about the advantage of evaluation apparatuses intended to improve natural execution: and difficult to accomplish, execute the exercises that are identified with the earth. Partners give a little strain to the private companies in supportability rehearses, have limited resources related assets and look the sustainability rehearses ingestion is too convolute. Indeed, the reasonable improvement as the advancement which found the interest of the present time frame. It does exclude the ability later on ages to go up against their interest. Social, financial and ecological is the three component of economic improvement that must be changed to advance reasonable advancement. Human worth, connections and the on-screen characters in the general public is the social measurement. The allotment of the rare assets is eluded to the financial measurement. The commitment of the two others to the condition is the ecologic measurement (Moldova, 2015). Human right working condition and lessening destitution is remembered for the social measurement in the past research. The activity creation and training is the issue that is remembered for social measurement with regards to SMEs. Accomplishment of SME likewise relies upon the capacity of the individual engaged with the authoritative and the board. A portion of the keys that guarantee the SMEs sustainability are the individuals engaged and workers are connected with the sustainability improvement. By incorporating sustainable development challenges, entrepreneurs will become more aware of how to incorporate sustainability practices in their company ventures, which will improve the financial and non-financial performance of SMEs (Ahmad et al., 2020).

Leadership: One of the sustainability dimensions of SMEs is leadership and planning. SMEs owners, operators or managers are responsible for letting SMEs operate well toward sustainability. When coping with uncertain business conditions, SME owners should lead with vision, passion, integrity, and confidence (Yadegaridehkordi et al., 2023). The SMEs owners, operators and managers should have the capability to give instructions and can have a well communication with everyone (Diehl, 2016). An enterprise can achieve sustainability under three situations including the leadership position and the proper market. The Honeybee,

an enterprise in Thailand, the enterprise is called Rhineland before this used a framework that related to sustainability leadership which contributed to the sustainability of the enterprise. There are three 23 leadership elements which are divided into three stages of practice foundation practice, high-level practice and key performance driver. The element in foundation practices are developing the people, labor relationship, retaining the staff, succession planning, valuing the staff, CEO and top team, ethical behavior, long term or short-term perspective, organization change, financial market orientation, responsibility for the environment, social responsibility, stakeholder and vision's role in the business. The elements in high-level practices are decision-making, self-management, team orientation, culture, knowledge sharing, retention and trust. The elements in key performance drivers are innovation, staff engagement and quality.

Network: SMEs should have the network as the element to ensure the development of the strategies. SMEs create the network to have the sustainability of competitive advantages in the sustainable market space, which the Multinational Enterprise is less sustains. Networking SME marketing has been acknowledged, but the connection toward SME's sustainability is not famous (Gilmore et al., 2001). The position where business activities occur is called the network Business connection and many of the related parties are included in the network. The marketing competence exists from the network in SMEs. Competence is related to the skills and learning in networking. Investment of the time and the resources can be developed to suit the networking. Social capital is viewed as the individual relationship in a network. It gives benefits to individual actions. The example of the individual action is learning and the business chances. Social capital is a resource for individuals and enterprises.

This is because the social capital is beat into the individual relationship. Networks in the firms in SMEs can bring sustainability to the firm. For example, here are the tourism networks in Finland, YSMEK-Network for Developing Environmentally Friendlier Tourism (Diehl, 2016). The Finnish Tourist Board YSMEK established the network in 1993 and plays the role to introduce sustainability to the Finnish tourism enterprises. The management group of the YSMEK forms the informal coordination group with various parties in the network such as the Ministry of Trade and Industry, Finnish Tourist Board, Ministry of the Interior, Department of the Environment, Hotel and Catering Committee, Association of Hotel and Catering Personnel, Finnish Nature Protection Association, Travel Agency Association and so on. SMEs can exchange information, gain knowledge and new experiences from the members of the network. This study shows that proof of SMEs sustainability depends on the enterprise network. It also shows that development in the network has a relation with the sustainability of SMEs. The findings recommend that social capital and network learning can make sure the network develops to a better stage.

Employee Management: The sustainability-focused strategy for small businesses allows alluring and keeping the employees in the long period in the SMEs. Based on the interview carried out by Gareth Bell Jill Miller (the research adviser of the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development) said that she believed the sustainability of an organization, is from the excellent employees. The Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development is the human resource management profession. The headquarters of the institute is in London. This study stated that the managers in the SMEs have to always remind the staff or employees about the vision and value of the SMEs. Learning and development is one of the obstacles in HR practices but it is the efficient method to train the employees or the staff to fulfill the SMEs' current needs. When the formal management structure is introduced. Management training has been an important element in SMEs which has to be implemented in SMEs to let them SMEs grow to a further stage. Jill said that the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development would help the SMEs to identify the current growth stage of the SMEs and after that, pinpoint the employee management obstacles and chances that SMEs have to keep an eye on. This will assist SMEs toward sustainability. The institute also will check the smoothness of people management (employees) practices toward the SMEs vision.

The institute will take action on the further development of the skills and capabilities if it is needed. People issues have been the top priority in SMEs in HRM. Potential employees always are the target of sustainable development companies. The hazards of sustainability of employment and sustainability and low productivity are issues that happen in SMEs. Even the job quality, working hours and conditions for SMEs employees are also important issues to discuss. The operating hours become the rule at the national stage. Working Time Directive is used by all European Union countries; however, the particular national law and

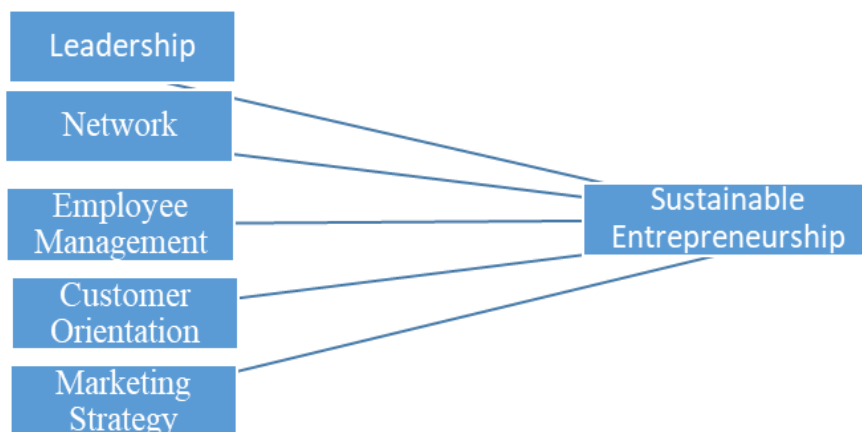
collective rule affect the working time practice in the workplace. The outcome prioritizes the favorable liaison between the company size and operating time. The favorable liaison between establishment size and the use of working time design seems to increase the operating hours. For example, shift work and weekend work. The simple working time evaluation is different from the operating hours. It does not have a favorable relation to the operating hours. Even managerial strategy in SMEs has a relation with the reliance on overtime, but it is limited of the way because the tiny effect is on the operating hours when compared to shift work. The effect of the national rule of working design and working time norms affects the approach used to extend operating hours.

Customer Orientation: The small firms and other firms must maintain the existing customers when the competition becomes greater. There will be a weakness of the SMEs if the customer orientation is not prioritized because it can make sure the SMEs have sustainable competitive advantages. Customer orientation is the stage in which customer information is gathered and applied to the business unit. The requirements for people's actions can enhance the worth of the buyers due to the best organizational culture. The trust that shows the customer's enthusiasm is the main factor as well as the stakeholders such as the enterprises' owners, managers and employees so that a sustainable profit can be maintained. Normally, uncomplicated organizational structure and more concrete cultures are the characteristics of small and medium-sized enterprises; therefore an effective customer orientation concept lacks advantages. Small and medium-sized businesses are also identified by a restricted ranking of products and customers, due to this fact, formal approach improvement on decision-making for acquired customer information and market information is minimal. These facts actually can encourage the capability of smaller firms to dominate the customer orientation culture. Small and medium-sized business research states confidently that internal organizational factors and external forces give effect to the SMEs business performance due to the minimum boundary of the customers' orientation. Customer orientation is the main reason SMEs has a deficiency of the long rank of attention in strategic orientation and proper decision-making (Diehl, 2016).

Marketing Strategy: The part of a marketing plan that is anticipated after a thorough study of the market is carried out the marketing strategy (Amin, 2021). It helps SMEs to be more focused and the most effective task to increase sales. A market that is established in SMEs is important to confront the demands, desires and sense to survive in the future. A suitable marketing strategy eventually assists the firm toward sustainability. Restricting resources is the reason that SMEs cannot do conventional marketing based the research. Another reason is the manager or the owner in SMEs does not do and think the same as the large companies. Large companies execute marketing practices that can influence others well. Next, marketing practices and decisions affect the sales orientation and the personal contact network. The marketing decision is accurate and can make a revolution in the marketing practice in the SMEs. The significance of effective marketing strategies which include elements like product, promotion place and price as well as tactical operations and service enhancement for the sustainability of small enterprises in developing nations.

3. Research Methodology

Figure 3: Theoretical Framework



Hypotheses Development: SMEs sustainability can be achieved when the SMEs owners, operators or managers have the responsibility for the SMEs operation because leadership and planning is one of the sustainability dimensions. The ability of the SMES owners, operators or managers is required for them to be able to give orders and communicate well with everyone involved in the SME's operation. Therefore, hypothesis one which is leadership will affect the SMEs sustainability is developed. SMEs create the network to have the sustainability of competitive advantages in the sustainable market space, which the Multinational Enterprise arc less sustain. On the other side, the sustainability of SMEs comes from the network. Therefore, hypothesis two; the Network will affect the SMEs sustainability is developed. A survey of successful SMEs in the UK shows that the individual characteristic of employees is important in the business toward the strategy.

The sustainability focus strategy for small businesses gives the opportunity to allure and keep the employees in the long period in the SMEs. Unproductive employee management led to the failure of small firms. Therefore, hypothesis three (Employee management will affect the SMEs sustainability) is developed. There will be a weakness of the SMEs if the customer orientation is not prioritized because it can make sure the SMEs have sustainable competitive advantages. Hypothesis four is customer orientation will affect the SMEs sustainability. The sustainability of the small business is affected by marketing according to the Australian small firm study. In the study. The importance of marketing is 40 percent whereas human resources are 15 percent, general management is 14 percent and production operations is 9 percent. Therefore, Hypothesis Five is marketing strategy will affect the SMEs sustainability.

Method: The quantitative method will be used in this research to collect the related data. The meaning of quantitative is something that can be calculated, it is applied in statistical analysis due to the ability to provide digits. The qualitative method is always used in big size of surveys. Since quantitative data uses the number, it is not difficult to show the data on a chart or graph. The questionnaires will be distributed to the SMEs in Malaysia to get feedback on the factors that affect the sustainability of SMEs in Malaysia.

4. Analysis and Discussion

Table 1 presents mean and standard deviations for the entire study variable.

Table 1: Descriptive Analysis

Factors	Mean	Standard Deviation
Employee Management	3.7227	.64373
Leadership styles	3.1511	.61822
Network	3.3439	.66063
Customer Orientation	3.4286	.59801
Marketing Strategy	3.6242	.62867

Referring to the table above, the mean for all the variables ranges from 3.1511 to 3.7227. The mean and standard deviation for independent variables measures leadership, network, employee management, customer orientation and marketing strategy. For the first variable which is leadership styles, the mean is 3.1511 while the standard deviation for the first variable is 0.61822. Besides that, comes the second independent variable which is a network, it shows that the mean for this variable is 3.3439 and the standard deviation is 0.66063. The third independent variable is customer orientation, the mean show 3.4286 while the standard deviation for the third variable is 0.59801. Marketing strategy is the fourth independent variable that shows the mean is 3.6242 and the standard deviation is 0.62867. The last is the dependent variable which is employee management, for this dependent variable, the mean show 3.7227 and the standard deviation is 0.64373. In conclusion, based on this section what can be concluded is the dependent variable which is employee management has the highest mean which is 3.7227 while the second independent variable network has the highest standard deviation which is 0.66063.

The sample profile of the questionnaire is shown in Table 2. There are 150 questionnaires were distributed to SMEs. 120 questionnaires were collected and could be used for the analysis. The response rate of the questionnaires was 80%. The data was analyzed in Statistical Package for Social Sciences

(SPSS) Version 20. There were gender, age, race, education level and working period in the demographic section. There were 100 percent (120 female) filled in the questionnaires. There were 12 respondents below 20 (10%), 58 respondents between 20-30 years old (48.3%), 43 respondents between 31-50 years old (35.8%) and 7 respondents above 50 years old (5.8%). Race consisted of Malay, Chinese, Indian, and others. 65 respondents (54.2%) were Malay, 35 respondents (29.2%) were Chinese, 15 respondents (12.5%) were Indian and five respondents (4.2%) were others. There were U PSR, PMR/SRP, SPM, Diploma, Master and PhD in the education level. The respondent of UPSR was 1 person (0.8%), PMR/SRP was 4 persons (3.3%), SPM was 52 persons (43.3%), Diploma was 26 persons (21.7%), Degree was 28 persons (23.3%), Master was 6 persons (5%), and Ph.D. was 3 persons (2.5%). Working experiences were below one year, one to three years, four to six years, and above six years. There were 28 respondents (23.3%) who worked below one year, 40 respondents (33.3%) worked from one to three years, 19 respondents (15.8%) worked from four until six years and 33 respondents (27.5%) worked above than six years.

Table 2: Demographic Profile of Respondents

VARIABLES	CATEGORIES	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE (%)
	Total	120	100
	Below than 20	12	10.0
	20-30	58	48.
		43	35.8
	Above than 50	7	5.8
	Total	120	100
ACE	Malay	65	54.2
	Chinese	35	29.2
	Indian	15	12.5
	Others	5	4.2
	Total	120	100
EDUCATION LEVEL	UPSR	1	4
	PMR/SRP	0.8	3.3
	SPM	52	43.3
	Diploma	26	21.7
	Degree	28	23.3
	Master	6	5.0
	PhD	3	2.5
	Total	120	100
WORKING EXPERIENCES	Below than 1 year	28	23.3
	1 -3 years	40	33.3
	4-6 years	19	15.8
	Above than 6 years	33	27.5

Regression Analysis: Regression analysis is used to determine the relationship between the dependent variable with more independent variables. Other than that, it can also help to understand how the typical value of the dependent variable is affected by the changes in value when one of the independent variables is varied while the independent variables are held as fixed.

Table 4: Results of Regression Analysis

	Unstandardized Coefficients B	Standardized Coefficients Std. Error	Beta		Sig.
(Constant)	.349	.328		1.065	.289
Leadership	.255	.087	.245	2.921	.004
Network	-.019	.091	-.020	-.211	.83
Customer	.416	.082	.387	5.103	.000
Orientation					
Marketing	.333	.089	.325	3.764	.000

Strategy					
Employee	.222	.078	.214	2.653	.000
Management					
R square =	.511				
Durbin Watson =	2.056				
F =	27.410				
Sig. F =	.000				

Based on the regression analysis result shown in Table 4.6, the variation of Sustainable Entrepreneurship shows 51.1% are affected by the leadership style, reward, workload and workplace environment. The value of beta present positive rates changed by dependent variables (0.245, 0.387 and 0.325) with three of the independent variables found to have a positively correlated and highly significant relation (0.004 , 0.000 and $0.000 < 0.05$). In section 2, we assumed that hypothesis 1 state leadership style has a significant impact on Sustainable Entrepreneurship. Since the significant relation is 0.004 , which means less than 0.05 , therefore the hypothesis is accepted. Then for hypothesis 2, the researcher states that reward has a significant impact on Sustainable Entrepreneurship. Refers to the significance for this is 0.833 , which is more than 0.05 , thus hypothesis 2 is rejected. After that, we also assumed that hypothesis 3 states that workload has a significant impact on Sustainable Entrepreneurship. By referring to the significant relation at 0.000 , in other words, it means less than 0.05 , therefore the hypothesis is accepted. Lastly in hypothesis 4, the researcher states that the workplace environment has a significant impact on employee performance. By referring to the significance for this is 0.000 , which is again less than 0.05 , thus hypothesis 4 is also accepted.

5. Conclusion

SMEs bring economic development to Malaysia. Malaysia has to make sure the SMEs can achieve sustainability on a few levels which are SMEs start-up, growth, expansion and maturity. The research is carried out in Malaysia. The SMEs in Malaysia also bring a lot of contributions to the Malaysian economy. The research shows that the sustainability of SMEs is affected by leadership, network, employee management, customer orientation and marketing strategy. So, the government gives more attention to the SMEs in Malaysia so that the SMEs can be sustainable and give more contribution to the economic development in Malaysia. The government can assist SMEs by giving adequate leadership training to the SMEs. The government also can assist the SMEs by recommending the best suppliers from the other states and countries. Recommends the customers from the other states or other countries to the SMEs in Malaysia. This is also one way SMEs in Malaysia can create networking. Then when the networking is stable, SMEs in Malaysia can achieve sustainability. After that, it can help the government to improve the economic development. Lastly, this paper proposes an incorporated reasonable development model for SMEs with five components of the Sustainable Entrepreneurship variables that are leadership, network, employee management, customer orientation and marketing orientation. SME owners need to understand that while investing in sustainability initiatives might not increase profits right now; doing so will have long-term benefits and improve economic performance (Yadegaridehkordi et al., 2023).

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