The Empirical Research of Women Entrepreneurship and Sustainability Performance in the Entrepreneurship Policy Context

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Abstract: The research fills the policy research gap for the women entrepreneurship and sustainability performance for examining key successful factors. Previous women entrepreneurship research fails to offer policy recommendations. The research purpose is to investigate these factors affect women entrepreneurship capabilities and sustainability performance by using SEM analysis and making policy recommendation. This research employs online and mail survey and obtains 175 women entrepreneur sample. The study finds that family support and motivation have positive effect on women entrepreneurship capabilities and sustainability performance. Barriers have no effect on performance. Hopefully, the research can provide the guidance to contribute to women's entrepreneurship opportunities for achieving SDGs. Policy recommendation and managerial implication are discussed in the article.

Keywords: women entrepreneurship capability; sustainability performance; family support; motivation; barriers

1. Introduction

The society shows a rapid growth in the proportion of women in the top management and entrepreneurship of companies and non-profit organizations. This growth in the number of female CEO and managers attracts the research attention about its outcome and performance in the workplace. Many women continue to be under-represented as leaders and senior managers worldwide. However, the role of women entrepreneurship draws the attention of previous studies for sustainable development[1,2]. Improvement in female entrepreneurial capacities increase women's empowerment and reduce gender inequality for any entrepreneurship policy [3,4]. Female entrepreneurship is regarded as the country's sustainable economic development to achieve UN sustainable development goals (SDGs) and gender equality for empowering all women involved.

Female entrepreneurship for the food sector can achieve of goals 8 "decent work and economic growth", 9 "industry, innovation and infrastructure" and 12 "responsible consumption and production". The food sector includes food sales, fast food, coffee shops, beverages, and restaurants and possess multi-faceted and complex set of challenges from farm to fork [5,6]. Akehurst, Simarro, & Mas-Tur [7] and Mas-Tur & Ribeiro-Soriano [8] indicates that women's businesses are usually concentrated in the services sector, especially in those activities in which they have traditionally had a greater presence such as retail, education, hospitality and personal assistance. United Nation emphasizes great importance to food sector in the UN sustainable development goals (SDGs). Female entrepreneurship for the food sector achieves SDGs to promote sustainability by contributing economic growth and adequate consumption. However, there are many unanswered questions about women entrepreneurship policy instruments and empirical evidence regarding the potential for women entrepreneurship to contribute to sustainability performance.

The study observes which factors for women entrepreneurs with business success for achieving sustainable development. The factors of affecting the sustainability performance of women entrepreneurship are examined. The research aims to contribute to analyze women entrepreneurship from a gender perspective for making policy recommendation. In the sustainable development the

policy instrument can promote and support women's entrepreneurship as a means for by contributing economic growth and adequate consumption. This study fills this gap by examining what degree in a workplace affect women sustainability performance and investigating the characteristics of successful policy support.

Fernández; García-Centeno; Patier [9]and Vracheva; Stoyneva [10] compares the performance difference of businesswomen and businessmen to justify gender effect of female entrepreneurship study from the management theory. There are some economic sectors where women in management positions are usually better supported [11,12]. This study answers some research questions by investigating women entrepreneurs for the women's entrepreneurship policy recommendations. Some studies can make women assistance policy recommendation such as the financial support, and marketing skills and business knowledge training [13,14]. Some studies also examine the challenges and barriers that the women workers face [15,16]. Although the issues of female entrepreneurs gain attention from the press and social media, previous studies focusing on women entrepreneurs for achieving policy recommendation are scare. The managerial implications and policy recommendation are provided for the women entrepreneurship research for achieving sustainable development goals (SDGs).

2. Literature Review

2.1. Theoretical Background

Feminist theory states that men and women is equal opportunity, but women for difficulty work environment because of lacking access to business networks or financial resources [17–19]. Women face some barriers when they implement entrepreneurship plan or run a company. Therefore, gender differences examine economic power, social structure and class structure, but women's performance in business innovation, job creation, and economic growth is significant increase [12,20]. However, the gender heterogeneity of top management team for organizational performance findings are not conclusive [21,22].

Brush & Cooper [23] recognize the need for a theoretical framework to examine women entrepreneurship and leadership. Some business model encompasses the ability of the women entrepreneurship [24,25]. Research progresses towards equality opportunities between men and women, but women is regarded as to take care of family and housework [7,26]. Women's entrepreneurship involves a complex process and challenge. In general, women entrepreneurship growth is especially high in developed countries if a government has adequate entrepreneurship assistance program and policy [3,9]. Therefore, there is no empirical study that examines whether women entrepreneurship has an impact on sustainability performance from the policy perspective.

2.2. Barrier and women entrepreneurship capabilities

Entrepreneurship can help alleviate poverty, reduce environmental destruction and enhance education [27,28]. Women in the organization suffer from the glass ceiling level and major barriers to advance to the entrepreneurship management [29–31]. Women entrepreneurship is important for economic growth [32–34] and sustainable development [25,35]. Women entrepreneurship issues include gender differences, motivation and barriers for business start-up [9,14,36] and examine success factors for women entrepreneurs [37,38].

Barriers obstruct women entrepreneurship, so the examination of women entrepreneurship's barrier is important in the women entrepreneurship research [39,40]. Entrepreneurship capabilities are essential function of management for women. Women entrepreneurship capabilities can be developed in the process of entrepreneurship training and learning [41]. Women entrepreneurship capabilities refers to develop the capabilities of detecting business opportunities, acting in uncertain environment and solving problem [41,42]. Female entrepreneurs can overcome some barriers for establishing their own firm and develop their capabilities. Therefore, it is important to identify the extent and context of barrier in women entrepreneurship research. To understand the barriers factors

for women entrepreneurship is a research gap to be explored for implementing policy recommendation. Therefore,

H1: Barrier has a negative effect on women entrepreneurship capabilities.

2.3. Family support and women entrepreneurship capabilities

Gender is an important performance difference variable for the women entrepreneurship research [43,44]. Although some progress of gender equality in business environment, it is important to examine gender performance differences for women entrepreneurship research [10,40]. The theoretical background relates to family researches such as the work–family balance perspective [20,41], the work–family interface perspective [21,46] and family support [48,49].

Women entrepreneurs may face some additional challenges such as family support and work–family responsibility [46,49]. Thus, women make efforts to enhance family support for entrepreneurship capabilities improvement. Many of the research focuses on female entrepreneurship, but there is a paucity of family support research in this women entrepreneurship area. Female entrepreneurs are engaged in work and family [50,51]. Female entrepreneurs may obtain family support that improve female entrepreneurship capabilities. For a better understanding of how family support affects women entrepreneurship capabilities, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H2: Family support has a positive effect on women entrepreneurship capabilities.

2.4. Motivation and women entrepreneurship capabilities

Women entrepreneurs are motivated by economic factors, and they often adopt entrepreneurship for opportunities development [45,52]. To understand the motivation factors for women entrepreneurship is a research agenda to be explored for implementing policy recommendation. The motivation research construct can drive different women entrepreneurship capabilities [53,54]. In general, motivation can positively influence women entrepreneurship capabilities. Women entrepreneurs with high level of motivation may become more confident in develop or enhance women entrepreneurship abilities [55,56]. Ultimately, motivation may increase women entrepreneurship capabilities to make strategic decisions, and obtain desired performance. However, few studies examine whether motivation enhance women entrepreneurship and sustainable performance from a gender perspective. Therefore,

H3: Motivation has a positive effect on women entrepreneurship capabilities.

2.5. Barrier and sustainability performance

Wood,Ng, Bastian[57] develops sustainability performance dimensions and indicators for organizations' sustainable policy implementation. Sustainable performance consists of environmental and financial performances [58–60]. Previous study composes sustainable performance frameworks including environmental and social performance to increase market share, enhance brand image, foster the quality of the product or service and drive financial performance [61]. However, corporate sustainable performance is hardly assessed in practice [59,62]. Sustainability performance is increasingly becoming a hot topic in the field of service industry [63,64]. Sustainability performance includes national economic growth, global environmental protection and social responsibility [65–67]. The research examining whether women entrepreneurship have contributed to achieving sustainability performance. Therefore, this study considers sustainability performance dimensions of women entrepreneurship for the food sector to achieve SDGs including female entrepreneurship can achieve of goals 8 "decent work and economic growth", 9 "industry, innovation and infrastructure" and 12 "responsible consumption and production".

Examining the role of women entrepreneurship is increasing, but barriers research on women entrepreneurs assistance program and policy is scarce [18,68]. Performance difference in companies exists between women and men [36]. Watson [69] find that women's job performance tends to underperform from revenues, profitableness and sales in comparison to men's job performance. Langowitz & Minniti [70] examine the performance differences in women entrepreneurship and finds

mixed results on performance difference with barriers in entrepreneurship. Barriers may hinder women entrepreneurs from becoming more performance [71,72]. This issue implies that women have less access to entrepreneurial capital, knowledge and networks to conduct their businesses, which results in under-performance. However, previous studies concern with the role of women entrepreneurship for sustainability development [2,30,31], but few studies examine barriers for women entrepreneurship issues. Therefore,

H4: Barrier has a positive effect on sustainability performance.

2.6. Family support and sustainability performance

Family support is very an important factor for enhancing better performance [29]. Women entrepreneurship with family support are regarded as business-to-family interference[74]. In general, women entrepreneurs often need to deploy their energy and time into several roles, which reduces the possibility to succeed in a company [75,76]. Therefore, women entrepreneurship with family support can achieve a competitive advantage[49,77]. The role of family support affects the business skills, education, and performance of women entrepreneurship. The family support may strengthen the women's sustainable performance.

H5: Family support has a positive effect on sustainability performance.

2.7. Motivation and sustainability performance

The previous literature finds the relationship between motivation and performance [78,79]. Motivation are the most significant considerations for the performance of women entrepreneurs. Despite the growth in entrepreneurship research about women, few studies examine whether motivation enhance sustainable performance from a gender perspective. Previous research has identified motivation drives women entrepreneurship towards the role of sustainable development [9,14,80]. Motivation boosts the level of positive performance. The positive motivation can help women entrepreneurs cope with better performance. As a result, positive motivation may have better performance consequences.

H6: Motivation has a positive effect on sustainability performance.

2.8. Women entrepreneurship capabilities and sustainability performance

Green entrepreneurship drives a company to create business competitive advantage [81]. Policy recommendation for women entrepreneurs is to help more women engage in entrepreneurial activity for achieving the sustainability performance. However, entrepreneurship policy instruments may be biased and do not take into consideration women face in different entrepreneurial environment contexts [4,15]. However, many countries fail to implement women entrepreneurship policy and offer few or no programs that operationalize their policy. Policy are identified as an important research of the entrepreneurial ecosystem [10,82–84] Hopefully, the research purpose of women entrepreneurship policy can offer valuable insights from policy perspectives to offer potential policy solution and link policy recommendation instruments for women entrepreneurial ecosystem.

Women entrepreneurship capabilities play an important role in ensuring business success [85,86]. Despite many problems, women entrepreneurship capabilities have become imperative for the sustainability performance. Women entrepreneurs with entrepreneurship capabilities can attain high market value and business growth [87,88]. Women entrepreneurs are more in innovative concept by enhance entrepreneurship capacities to develop sustainable business[89]. Women entrepreneurs needs to develop entrepreneurship capabilities to identify new market opportunities and seek recognition for better performance [90,91]. Thus, women entrepreneurship capabilities may affect the performance positively. Therefore,

H7: Women entrepreneurship capabilities have a positive effect on the sustainability performance.

3. Research Methodology

The research tests an empirical model on the basis of research variables and constructs by employing SEM approach. The research objective is to develop an empirical model to study and measure research constructs in women entrepreneurship and sustainability performance from entrepreneurship policy perspectives. Personal interviews are conducted with a convenient sample of 20 participants of women entrepreneurs in Taiwan. Through this step, participants are ensured of personal anonymity and confidentiality of the information shared during voluntary interviews.

After finishing personal interview, an integrative model draws on these sets of sustainability performance antecedent factors including barriers, family support, motivation and women entrepreneurship capabilities from policy perspective. The research purpose is to examine the characteristics of successful women entrepreneurship policy and to develop an empirical model to measure variables relative to the sustainability performance of women entrepreneurship for implementing policy support and recommendation. Questionnaire is designed after personal interview, literature review and pilot study. The questionnaires are pre-tested composed of women entrepreneurs to clarify or eliminate misleading or ambiguous questions before final distribution, which is modified. This study collects data from women entrepreneurs in Taiwan for engaging in food industry. Women entrepreneurs are surveyed by using online questionnaire containing items dealing with barriers, family support, motivation, entrepreneurship capabilities, and performance. All questionnaire items measure women entrepreneurs' perceptions on seven-point scale. The study employs SEM to test hypotheses. After reviewing the management literature and conducting a preliminary pre-test study with 20 participants, this study examines five groups of research constructs: barriers, family support, motivation, entrepreneurship capabilities, and performance. (please see Figure 1).
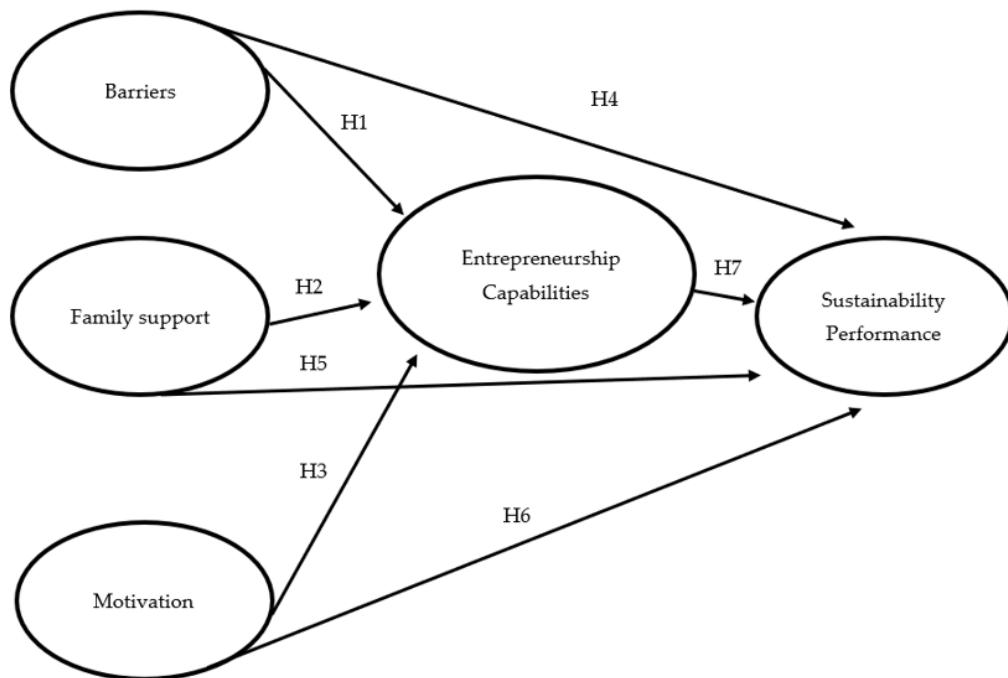
Figure 1. Research framework.

4. Results

4.1. Sample characteristics

The study obtains 175 usable questionnaires from online survey. Married status (60%) outnumber Single (38%), and 35% are between the ages of 41 to 50. For the education status of respondents, 49% of respondents have undergraduate degrees and 31% of respondents have a master's degree or higher and 15% of respondents have a senior high school degree. Regarding to

respondents' entrepreneurship experience, 41% of respondents have 5 to 10 years; 37 % of respondents have 6 to 9 under 5 years and 16% of respondents have 11 to 15 years. 46% of women entrepreneurs manage coffee shop followed by managing beverage(26%). Most company size are under 10 employees (58%) and 11-50 employee (20%). Table 1 presents the demographic characteristics of the women entrepreneur sample.

Table 1. Demographic characteristics of the sample (n=175).

Married status	Responses	Percentage
Married	105	60%
Single	66	38%
Other	4	2%
Total	175	100%

Age	Responses	Percentage
21-30	25	14%
31-40	57	33%
41-50	62	35%
51-60	27	15%
61+	4	2%
Total	175	100%

Education	Responses	Percentage
Below high school	6	3%
High School	27	15%
Bachelor's degree	85	49%
Master's degree	54	31%
PhD. degree	3	2%
Total	175	100%

Entrepreneurship experience	Responses	Percentage
Under five years	64	37%
5-10 years	72	41%
11-15 years	28	16%
16-20 years	8	5%
21+ years	3	2%
Total	175	100%

Company Type	Responses	Percentage
Fast food	22	13%
Coffee shop	81	46%
Restaurant	19	11%
Beverage	46	26%
Food sales	7	4%
Total	175	100%

Company Size	Responses	Percentage
Under 10 employee	102	58%
11-50 employee	35	20%
51-100 employee	18	10%
101-150 employee	11	6%

151-200 employee	7	4%
Above 201 employee	2	1%
Total	175	100%

4.2. Measurement Model

Table 2 provides the questionnaire items, mean value, and standard deviations of research constructs in the measurement model outputs. The measurement model shows that 24 standardized loadings are high and have t-values with significant ($p < 0.01$).

Table 2. Measures used with mean and standard deviation, and measurement model.

Construct and scale items	mean	SD	standardized loadings
Barriers (seven-point scales anchored from low to high)			
1. Lack of business training	2.86	1.92	0.78
2. Difficulty in obtaining financing	3.92	1.56	0.82
3. Difficulty in obtaining subsidies	2.97	2.01	0.82
4. Gender discrimination	2.48	1.57	0.85
5. High level of competition	4.15	1.55	0.87
Family Support(Seven-point scales anchored from low to high)			
1. Family organizational support	5.26	1.99	0.86
2. Family moral support	5.27	2.01	0.83
3. Family financial support	6.93	2.19	0.87
Motivation (seven-point scales anchored by strongly disagree and strongly agree)			
1. I develop my business capabilities	5.89	2.17	0.86
2. I want professional independence and to be my boss	6.05	2.18	0.82
3. I take on the risks and challenges that go with running a business	4.96	2.27	0.87
4. The encouragement of government.	6.51	2.17	0.82
5. I want to contribute something useful to society	5.15	2.50	0.78
6. I seek greater recognition	5.29	2.11	0.85
Entrepreneurship Capabilities (seven-point scales anchored from low to high)			
1. Ability to detect business opportunities	5.92	2.02	0.77
2. Ability to act in uncertain environments	5.58	2.04	0.84
3. Ability to solve problems	5.92	2.12	0.85
4. Leadership ability	5.86	2.02	0.88
5. Communication ability	6.07	2.12	0.79
6. Ability to manage	6.14	2.15	0.84
Sustainability Performance (Seven-point scales anchored from low to high)			
1. To increase decent work for food sustainable development	3.49	1.88	0.76
2. To create value for food sustainable development	3.18	1.92	0.91
3. To enhance the rapid innovation for food sustainable development	3.33	1.95	0.87
To ensure responsible consumption and production	3.25	1.86	0.82

The adequacy of the measurement model tests reliability (Cronbach's alpha), convergent validity, and discriminant validity.   This study examines a confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) and reliability analysis for all the constructs (barriers, family support, motivation, women entrepreneurship capabilities, and sustainability performance).   The empirical results indicate that composite construct reliability values and composite reliabilities exceed the threshold of 0.70 with adequate composite reliability. Average variance extracted (AVE) values shows indicators' degree of

shared representation with the constructs. The lowest value for average variance extracted is 0.63 with the convergent validity of the measures.   The convergent validity of and discriminant validity for all research constructs are shown in Table 3.

Table 3. Construct measures in the study.

Measures construct	Cronbach's α	AVE
Barriers	0.78	0.64
Family Support	0.88	0.68
Motivation	0.77	0.63
Marketing and entrepreneurship capabilities	0.97	0.74
Sustainability performance	0.91	0.64

Abbreviation: AVE, average variance extracted.

A confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) assesses the good-of-fit of the measurement. As a result, CFA is a good fit for the data collection(($\chi2$ = 459.47, df = 174, p = 0.000, RMSEA = 0.055, CFI = 0.92, NFI = 0.93 , GFI = 0.91). Overall fit indices for the models show in Table 4. The chi-squared test yields values of 459.47 for samples with 74 degrees of freedom, p = .00. Chi-squared values, root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA) (0.055), goodness of fit index(GFI)(0.91), comparative fit index (CFI) (0.92) and normed fit index (NFI) (0.93) is adequate to assess model fit. Fit indices yield values that support a good model fit for the dataset.

Table 4. Overall model fit.

Chi-square	759.47
d.f.	232
p-value	0.000
RMSEA	0.055
CFI	0.92
NFI	0.93
GFI	0.91

Abbreviations: CFI, comparative fit index; GFI, goodness of fit index; NFI, normed fit index; RMSEA, root mean square error of approximation.

4.3. Structural Model

The result of each research hypothesis examines the causal relationship among research constructs is presented in Fig. 1. Table 5 presents results of analyses of the SEM path coefficients in the structural model describing the relationships among constructs. Research results support 5 hypotheses: barrier has a negative effect on entrepreneurship capabilities(H1)((β = -0.47, t = 5.84, p = 0.000); family support has a positive effect on entrepreneurship capabilities (H2)(β = 0.76, t = 7.47, p = 0.000); family support has a positive effect on performance(H5) (β = 0.37, t = 4.15, p = 0.000); motivation has a positive effect on performance (H6) (β = 0.72, t = 7.34, p = 0.000) and entrepreneurship capabilities have a positive effect on the performance (H7) (β = 0.78, t = 6.72, p = 0.000). Motivation has a positive effect on entrepreneurship capabilities (H3) and barrier has a negative effect on performance (H4) is not supported from the research.

Table 5. Path analysis results.

Path		path estimate	t-value	Significant
H1:	barriers →entrepreneurship capabilities	-0.47**	5.84	s
H2:	family support →entrepreneurship capabilities	0.84**	9.25	s
H3:	motivation→ entrepreneurship capabilities	0.45	2.35	ns
H4:	barriers →performance	-0.27	3.75	ns
H5:	family support → performance	0.37**	8.94	s

H6:	motivation → performance	0.72**	7.34	s
H7:	entrepreneurship capabilities→ performance	0.78**	6.72	s

ns= not significant; s= significant; t values .   *significant at p < 0.05, **significant at p < 0.01

5. Discussion

This study proposes as a foundation for a conceptual model of women entrepreneurship capabilities and sustainability performance in the food sector for achieving achieve policy recommendation. The results of this study show that family support and motivation have a significantly positive effect on female entrepreneurship capabilities while barrier has a significantly negative effect on women entrepreneurship capabilities. The research finds that family support and motivation have positive and significant effects on sustainability performance while barrier has no significant effect on sustainability performance. Thus, women entrepreneurship capabilities have a positive and significant effect on sustainability performance.

The findings of the study have several implications for women entrepreneurs in the food sector for policy support. The research finds that family support and motivation affect women entrepreneurship capabilities and sustainability performance. Family support includes family organizational support, family moral support and family financial support. Motivation reflects to develop my business capabilities, to be professional independence from my boss, to take on the risks and challenges, to be encouragement of government, to contribute something useful to society and to seek greater recognition.   Accordingly, women entrepreneurs in the food sector have higher family support and motivation with high possibility of success.   Particularly, women with higher entrepreneurship capabilities have better sustainability performance. Women entrepreneurship capabilities, family support and motivation are important determinant of success in the food sector. In terms of managerial practice, the finding suggests that government or firm should overcome the barrier and stimulate the motivation for the women entrepreneurs.   Significantly, government should have policy operations in stimulating the women motivation and enhance the women entrepreneurship capabilities for achieving better performance.

Barrier has a negative effect on women entrepreneurship capabilities including ability to detect business opportunities, ability to act in uncertain environments, ability to solve problems, ability to be leadership, ability to communication and ability to manage, which suggests that barriers including lacking of business training, difficulty in obtaining financing, difficulty in obtaining subsidies, gender discrimination and high level of competition affect the women entrepreneurship capabilities in the food sector. The research results confirm and extend Shen, Sha and Wu[22] and Costache et al's[39] results. These studies claim that barrier has a negative effect on women entrepreneurship capabilities. When women will start new business or implement entrepreneurship plan to overcome the barriers under policy support.

Family support has a positive effect on women entrepreneurship capabilities, which poses that family support has a positive effect on women entrepreneurship capabilities in a different way including family organizational support, family moral and financial support because women and men have different roles in the family [48,49].   Additionally, the results indicate that women tend to start business have barriers including lacking of business training, difficulty in obtaining financing, difficulty in obtaining subsidies, gender discrimination and high level of competition.   Women actively seek family support and overcoming barriers for entrepreneurship. The results indicate that gender equality policies can be working but still are not enough for developing women entrepreneurship abilities.

Women entrepreneurship policy is recommended to provide more business training, offer some finance support or subsidies, give incentives for women entrepreneurs. The policy support also can offer some family financial or non-financial support for women entrepreneurs. Government can be recommended to encourage women entrepreneurs' motivation to develop some entrepreneurship motivation such as offer some women entrepreneurship training courses, financial support, child care program. The research aims to contribute to analyze women entrepreneurship from a gender perspective for making policy recommendation for women entrepreneurship assistance program. In

the sustainable development the policy tool can promote and support women's entrepreneurship as a means for by contributing decent work and economic growth, creating industry, innovation and infrastructure and guaranteeing responsible consumption and adequate production. The research results are consisted with the previous studies that women entrepreneurship growth is especially high if a government has adequate entrepreneurship assistance program and policy [3,9,71].

6. Conclusions and research limitations

The research fills the research gap for the women entrepreneurship and sustainability performance for examining key successful factors for the women entrepreneurship. The research purpose is to investigate these factors affect women entrepreneurship capabilities and sustainability performance by using SEM analysis. This research employs online and mail survey and obtains 175 women entrepreneur sample. The study finds that family support and motivation have positive effect on women entrepreneurship capabilities and sustainability performance. Barriers have no effect on performance. Hopefully, the research can provide the guidance to contribute to women's entrepreneurship opportunities for policy support.

Although contributing the existing sustainability literature, this study has several research limitations. First, his study surveys only female entrepreneurs in the food sector in Taiwan, and the findings may be not generalizable to other countries and industries. Further research can test other research constructs of female entrepreneurs in other countries and various industries. Second, the size of the women entrepreneurship sample is small. Further women entrepreneurship research for policy development needs more resources to increase the sample size for various firms or industries. Third, women entrepreneurship may be observed on the long-term strategic behavior to sustainability performance changes over a one-year period, so future research should adopt a longitudinal design to test the causal relationship for women entrepreneurship in the policy support issues. Finally, not at all research variables and construct are measured and conceptualized in the research model, further research should explore the effect of other external and internal factors of women entrepreneurs for policy instrument evaluation.

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