

Prioritizing Drivers of Sustainability in Entrepreneurship: A Strategic Perspective

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ABSTRACT

Purpose: As global community faces environmental challenges, the combination of sustainable development along with entrepreneurial practices can balance economic growth with social and environmental protection. This study aims to examine and prioritize the key factors that influence sustainable actions among entrepreneurs. The research focuses on identifying how elements related to the environment, behavior, human relations, and business activity contribute to fostering sustainability in entrepreneurial practices.

Methodology: A structured questionnaire was administered to a panel of experts in entrepreneurship and sustainability. The Analytic Hierarchy Process (AHP) was employed to systematically evaluate and rank the sustainability-related criteria based on expert responses. AHP enabled the comparison of multiple factors by assigning relative weights to each, thus identifying their importance in promoting sustainable business practices.

Findings: The results reveal that behavioral factors and business-related aspects are the most influential drivers of sustainable entrepreneurship. Among these, ethical principles, personal values, and competitive intelligence emerged as key components that significantly impact entrepreneurs' sustainable decision-making. While environmental and human-relations factors were recognized as relevant, they were assigned comparatively lower priority.

Practical Implications: The findings offer strategic insights for entrepreneurs, educators, and policymakers working to embed sustainability in business ventures. By understanding the prioritized factors, stakeholders can develop targeted training programs, support systems, and policy frameworks that reflect the most impactful elements for sustainable entrepreneurship.

Originality/Value: This study provides a distinctive contribution to prioritize sustainability drivers within the context of entrepreneurship. Unlike previous studies that explore sustainability in general terms, this research offers a structured, expert-informed ranking that enhances both theoretical understanding and practical application of sustainability in entrepreneurial ventures...

Keywords: Sustainable entrepreneurship, Business sustainability, Entrepreneurial behavior, Strategic decision-making, Sustainability drivers.

1. INTRODUCTION:

Sustainable entrepreneurship has developed as a critical idea at the crossroads of environmental stewardship, social responsibility, and financial viability. As worldwide awareness of environmental degradation and social injustices grows, the role of entrepreneurship expands beyond traditional commercial aims of profit maximisation to include sustainability as a primary goal. This change shows how businesses can be a powerful force for good, helping to address environmental challenges while also supporting fair economic growth (Wei et al., 2022).

Sustainable entrepreneurs are defined as individuals and companies that engage in business practices that contribute to sustainable development by operating

ethically and responsibly. It encapsulates business practices that proactively consider their environmental impact, social consequences, and long-term economic resilience (Galindo-Martín et al., 2020). Those entrepreneurs who are focusing on sustainability are aligning their strategy with existing regulation and society needs. In addition to this, they are adding ethical values, social equity, and environmental consciousness into their strategic decision-making processes.

In the current era when climate change and resource depletion are at its peak, sustainable entrepreneurship is facilitating an instrumental path for value creation with conservation and social protection (Shakoor & Ahmed, 2023). Entrepreneurs are instrumental in the development of innovative solutions that mitigate ecological impacts, advance the use of renewable resources, and enhance

social inclusion. Entrepreneurs can contribute to sustainable development by focusing their efforts on the behavioral, environmental and human-relations drivers in their business ideas (Tur-Porcar et al., 2018).

Sustainable entrepreneurship can be understood as the process by which entrepreneurs integrate sustainability principles into the core of their business ventures, balancing economic success with social equity and environmental stewardship. The basic concept of entrepreneurship has mostly been profit maximization but sustainable entrepreneurship prioritizes the creation of long-term value that benefits both society and the environment in addition to achieving financial returns. This becomes possible when we employ a holistic approach by combining ethical principles, responsible resource management, and innovative practices to minimize of civilization on ecology while enhancing social well-being (Singh and Indraves, 2023).

As the world is facing ecology imbalances and mushrooming environmental challenges, sustainable entrepreneurship has emerged as an innovative and need-based approach to sustainable innovations. Entrepreneurship thus play dual-role by bearing the responsibility of generating employment and contributing to economic growth and also contributing in sustainable development (Lazarte-Aguirre, 2024; Roomi et al., 2021).

The growing global urgency toward sustainable development has propelled sustainable entrepreneurship into a critical strategic focus for modern business practices. Integrating sustainability into entrepreneurship is rising because of many reasons. Firstly, entrepreneurs who adopt sustainable practices actively contribute to the reduction of environmental degradation by developing eco-friendly products, processes, and business models. These initiatives are closely aligned with global sustainability objectives, including climate change mitigation and resource conservation (Sreenivasan & Suresh, 2023). Secondly, sustainable entrepreneurship fosters ethical business conduct and responsible leadership by prioritizing personal values and community welfare. This approach enhances corporate reputation, builds trustworthiness, and secures a social license to operate (Chreif & Farmanesh, 2022).

Third, sustainable businesses are better positioned to adapt to changing regulatory environments, consumer demands, and stakeholder expectations (Henry et al., 2022). Customers today are actively looking for products and services that are sustainable and environment friendly. Fourth, embedding sustainability ensures that businesses remain not only profitable but also resilient against future risks linked to environmental and social challenges, thereby supporting sustainable growth and stable stakeholder relationships. Sustainable entrepreneurship exerts a significant influence on broader economic and social ecosystems by promoting ethical standards, fostering collaborative human interactions, and cultivating sustainable innovation networks (Egieya et al., 2023). Additionally, it plays a pivotal role in guiding policymakers and educators in the development of targeted programs and support systems that nurture and advance sustainable ventures.

This strategic perspective on sustainability drivers highlights the primacy of behavioral and business-related factors, such as ethical principles and personal values, in shaping sustainable entrepreneurial actions. Although environmental and human-relations factors remain significant, their relative importance suggests that sustainability in entrepreneurship is fundamentally a strategic, value-driven process rather than merely an ecological or social obligation.

The global business landscape is undergoing a profound transformation driven by increasing awareness of environmental, social, and economic challenges. Sustainable development, as defined by the Brundtland Commission, emphasizes meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own. This principle is rapidly permeating the ethos of business practices worldwide, signaling a pivotal shift from traditional profit-centric models to more inclusive frameworks that prioritize sustainability (Cerf, 2023).

Growing environmental crises such as climate change, resource depletion, and biodiversity loss have heightened the urgency for businesses to operate responsibly. Simultaneously, consumers, investors, and regulatory bodies are increasingly demanding greater accountability and transparency regarding the social and environmental impacts of corporate activities (Iizuka & Hane, 2021). These pressures necessitate that enterprises, particularly entrepreneurial ventures, align their strategies with the Sustainable Development Goals (Gionfriddo & Piccaluga, 2024). The entrepreneurs are bearing the dual responsibility of achieving financial success while remaining accountable to both society and the environment (Mishra & Kiran, 2023; Rosário et al., 2022).

Incorporating sustainability into their business strategies allows entrepreneurs to instigate systemic change that goes beyond just financial success, encompassing environmental conservation and social fairness (Rosário et al., 2022). This approach is not only a moral and regulatory obligation but also a strategic chance to access new markets, enhance risk management, and build long-term resilience (Plečko & Bradač Hojnik, 2024).

Moreover, the global shift towards sustainability in business practices has catalyzed the evolution of new frameworks and tools that help measure and manage sustainability outcomes. These frameworks guide entrepreneurs in balancing the triple bottom line — economic, environmental, and social performance — thus enabling more informed and responsible decision-making (Hussain et al., 2016) .

The emphasis on sustainability is also reshaping how entrepreneurs behave and the culture within organizations. Ethical principles, engaging with stakeholders, and fostering collaborative human relationships are increasingly becoming crucial elements driving sustainable entrepreneurship. These shifts in behavior complement technological and operational advancements, collectively boosting companies' capacity to contribute to sustainable development (Egieya et al., 2023) .

As sustainable development becomes a more prominent focus in global business agendas, entrepreneurial ventures encounter the intricate task of incorporating various, often conflicting, sustainability drivers into their strategies and operations. These components—ranging from environmental responsibility and ethical behavior to stakeholder engagement and market competitiveness—are crucial for effectively embedding sustainability. Nonetheless, the complex nature of these aspects often leads to uncertainty and limited resources for entrepreneurs, especially during the initial phases of developing a venture (Tur-Porcar et al., 2018; Daradkeh, 2023).

Focusing on sustainability drivers is crucial for entrepreneurs to allocate their limited resources and decision-making abilities to the most significant aspects. Without a well-defined hierarchy, sustainability efforts may become disjointed, ineffective, or superficial, which can hinder the potential for substantial and enduring contributions to sustainable development.

The need for prioritization also arises from the diverse and dynamic entrepreneurial ecosystem, where contextual factors such as industry characteristics, market demands, and regulatory environments influence the relevance and weight of different sustainability drivers (Watson et al., 2022; Belitski et al., 2021). By creating a systematic method to assess and prioritize these elements, entrepreneurs can adapt their strategies to enhance sustainability results while ensuring they remain competitively viable.

Furthermore, prioritizing sustainability drivers aids in strategic clarity and operational effectiveness. It allows entrepreneurs to integrate their personal values, ethical standards, and business practices with specific sustainability objectives, promoting consistent decision-making processes (Avelar et al., 2023). Aligning these factors is essential, as behavioral and business-related elements have been recognized as key drivers of sustainable entrepreneurship, influencing not only the actions of entrepreneurs but also their motivations.

From a practical perspective, understanding the relative importance of various sustainability drivers provides valuable insights for educators, policymakers, and support organizations. It guides the creation of targeted training initiatives, reward systems, and policy structures that tackle the most pressing issues, thereby strengthening the support network for sustainable entrepreneurship (Suguna et al., 2024). Similarly, factors related to business such as competitive intelligence, strategic decision-making, and market orientation have been demonstrated to have a significant impact on sustainability outcomes (Yasir et al., 2023). While environmental concerns and human relations are essential, they may not always receive immediate focus, underscoring the importance of adopting a strategic approach to effectively balance these aspects (Vuorio et al., 2017).

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

The literature reviewed for this study consists of researches having entrepreneurship orientation as well as sustainable orientation. Sustainable entrepreneurship has

garnered considerable attention in academic and industry research due to its implications for limiting climate change, balancing ecosystem, and societal protection (Usman et al., 2022; Wei et al., 2022; Yasir et al., 2021). Studies highlight that despite numerous challenges, sustainable entrepreneurs are performing significantly well in sustainable innovation and financial performance (Binder, 2017; Chahal et al., 2024; Du et al., 2024).

Due to increasing environmental concerns and ecological imbalances, sustainable entrepreneurship is gaining its popularity and significance. The transition towards sustainability in new ventures requires changes in supply chain, raw material, production and even consumption (Poojari, 2024; Odeyemi, 2023). Markets also are demanding more and more products which are eco-friendly and do not harm the nature (Anant, 2025).

Sustainable entrepreneurship has been recognized as a valuable tool to address social problems in addition to contributing to economic growth (Gerlich, 2025; Islam et al., 2024). Maspul (2024) has suggested that the resource-based view (RBV) and stakeholder theory both are significant as they are based on optimum resource utilization and stakeholder involvement in creating a sustainable future (Maspul, 2024). Rovira and Urbano (2023) had proposed a model that focuses on three phases: opportunity recognition, development, and persistence, which are crucial for integrating sustainability into entrepreneurial venture. This model emphasizes the hybrid nature of sustainable entrepreneurship, which seeks to achieve both environmental and economic goals through participatory governance and strong social networks (Rovira & Urbano, 2023).

Tur-Porcar et al. (2018) has used AHP analysis to identify factors driving sustainability. They have identified behavioral, environmental, business activity and human relations elements crucial for sustainable entrepreneurship. Additionally, the concept of green entrepreneurship, which focuses on innovation and sustainability to address environmental issues, is gaining worldwide popularity (Manoharan et al., 2024). Entrepreneurs not only contribute to green future but also influence other business acumen and society to focus on processes and products that are eco-friendly (Odeyemi, 2023; Rosário et al., 2022). Incorporating circular economy principles, which suggest substituting linear economic models with circular systems, is essential for sustainable entrepreneurship as it encourages efficient resource use and long-term sustainability (Munoz and Cohen, 2018). Additionally, the interpretive structural modeling (ISM) method highlights sustainability culture, legal mandates, and resource conservation as key elements, while social justice and economic gains are considered the ultimate objectives of sustainable entrepreneurship (Kazemi et al., 2020). These theoretical frameworks and models collectively underscore the strategic necessity of sustainable entrepreneurship in addressing global challenges and fostering long-term business success (Egieya et al., 2023; Yaslioglu and Yaşlıoğlu, 2020).

Rosário et al. (2022) have conducted systematic literature review in their research and conclude that the sustainability can be accelerated by increasing collaborations between all stakeholders. Sustainable entrepreneurship is increasingly recognized as a solution to environmental degradation, with entrepreneurs leveraging social and environmental assets to generate financial gains while being accountable to the community and the environment (Mishra & Kiran, 2023). The transition towards sustainable entrepreneurship is driven by the need to align social, economic, and ecological objectives, which requires collaboration among all stakeholders to achieve desired sustainability levels (Rosário et al., 2022). However, existing institutional structures often favor unsustainable business practices, necessitating entrepreneurs to initiate institutional changes to support sustainable business models (Rosário et al., 2022). The Theory of Planned Behavior and Shapero's Entrepreneurial Event Model are often used to understand the determinants of sustainable entrepreneurial intentions, emphasizing the importance of ecological considerations in entrepreneurial decision-making (Usman et al., 2024).

Usman et al. (2024) suggests that theory of planned behavior and shapero's entrepreneurial event model also be used to identify factors affecting sustainable entrepreneurial behavior. The mindset of entrepreneurs towards green practices has a significant positive impact in promoting sustainable entrepreneurial ecosystems. It also influences youth in recognizing opportunities and resources driven by sustainability, so that they contribute to sustainable business practices (Tass and Malik, 2024). The behavior of entrepreneurs is also influenced by micro factors such as work behavior, which is particularly significant for women entrepreneurs entering green entrepreneurship. These behavioral aspects, along with organizational support and government policies, contribute to the success of sustainable entrepreneurial ventures (Sugiyanto and Wijayanti, 2024).

Among business acumen, growing preference is seen towards service-oriented business models that supports the growth of sustainable entrepreneurship (Odeyemi, 2023; Rosário et al., 2022). Although the existing business system follow profit orientation and hardly care for ecological imbalances, the first mover entrepreneurs towards sustainability can provide path for future entrepreneurs to focus on green practices. The essential role of entrepreneurs in sustainable entrepreneurship is highlighted by their proactive and innovative approaches, characterized by a readiness to embrace risks and create solutions that yield both environmental and economic advantages (Rosário and Raimundo, 2024). Expertise in customer-service, proficiency in identifying and resolving social problems have also been identified as significant for entrepreneurship towards sustainability (Silvestri and Veltri, 2020). Odeyemi (2023) states that businesses that incorporate sustainable practices have better probability to meet the evolving expectations of consumers. When consumer expectations are fulfilled, it results in stronger brand loyalty and an increased market share.

Interpersonal factors consisting of several components, including leadership, social engagement, collaboration with stakeholders, which have stated as prime factors for

successful sustainable entrepreneurship (Kazemi et al., 2020; Tass and Malik, 2024). Silvestri and Veltri (2020) conclude that there is a strong positive impact of leadership and environment factors on sustainable entrepreneurship. Incorporating elements of human relations is crucial for harmonizing social, economic, and environmental goals, which are fundamental to sustainable entrepreneurship (Odeyemi, 2023; Rosário et al., 2022). It is also highlighted that interpersonal factors play a crucial role in shaping sustainable entrepreneurial intentions. Leadership and social engagement can act as catalysts for business to embrace sustainable business practices. (Usman et al., 2024; Mittal et al., 2024).

Current research on entrepreneurship is not limited to economic growth; it has stretched its horizon to environmental awareness, self-regulation, sustainable innovation and intrinsic motivation for sustainable growth (Abdelwahed et al., 2022). The literature also suggests that sustainable entrepreneurship should prioritize human relations aspects, such as collaboration and stakeholder engagement, to better prepare entrepreneurs for sustainability challenges (Rosário and Raimundo, 2024).

Filser et al. (2019) states that there is an urgency to provide an institutional framework for aligning entrepreneurship with sustainability since there are entrepreneurial frameworks at present which do not care for sustainability and societal protection. The move towards service-oriented business models can contribute to elevating the growth of sustainable entrepreneurship leading to minimization of ecosystem-imbalance (Chang et al., 2023). This transformation necessitates cooperation among all stakeholders to reach the desired levels of sustainability.

There are numerous challenges faced by entrepreneurs who align their business towards sustainable intention such as regulatory complexities, limited resources, and a lack of awareness (Egieya et al., 2023). Due to these problems many ventures refrain themselves from moving into sustainable drive along with business growth. Thus, there is a need to relaxed environmental policies and regulation, self-awareness and motivation (Sugiyanto and Wijayanti, 2024). Rosário et al. (2022) also states that institutional structures often favor unsustainable business practices, posing a barrier to the prioritization of sustainability drivers and necessitating institutional changes initiated by entrepreneurs.

Sustainable entrepreneurship is influenced by various business activity factors that facilitate aligning economic, social, and environmental objectives. Moreover, sustainable entrepreneurship practices enhance long-term business viability by improving financial performance, market positioning, and employee satisfaction (Egieya et al., 2023). New trends like using technology and following circular economy principles are creating chances for sustainable entrepreneurship. This shows that ongoing learning, working with others, and coming up with sustainable ideas can prove to be useful in sustainable entrepreneurship (Binder, 2017).

Sustainable entrepreneurship is an ethical path towards protection of global environment and social conditions (Gerlich, 2025). But such entrepreneurs will be able to

give their positive output in sustainable direction when they are able to acquire stakeholder engagement and job satisfaction of employees. Even if corporate entrepreneurship try to venture in sustainability, there is an absence of a thorough framework to assist established firms in embedding sustainability into their business strategies (Gerlich et al., 2025). The existing literature also highlights the necessity for further investigation into specific areas such as green start-ups, eco-centric models, and financing partnerships, which could offer valuable insights into prioritizing sustainability drivers in various entrepreneurial scenarios (Jindal et al., 2025). Addressing these gaps demands a unified effort to create theoretical frameworks and models that can guide the prioritization of sustainability drivers across diverse entrepreneurial environments, thereby improving the success of sustainable entrepreneurship in reaching its objectives (Mishra & Kiran, 2023; Usman et al., 2024).

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research objectives

To determine factors influencing sustainable actions among entrepreneurs.

To prioritize the factors influencing sustainable actions among entrepreneurs.

Research Design

The objective of this study is to identify and prioritize the factors that contribute to sustainability. The review of literature and critical examination of theoretical models gave in-depth knowledge of factors contributing to sustainable actions among entrepreneurs. After literature review four factors influencing sustainable actions among entrepreneurs were identified as behavioral factors, interpersonal factors, environmental factors, and business-related factors. Behavioral factors include intrinsic motivation, selflessness, self-regulation, empathy and business intelligence (Tur-Porcar et al., 2018; Usman et al., 2024; Tass and Malik, 2024). Interpersonal factors include social engagement, collaboration and leadership (Odeyemi, 2023; Rosário et al., 2022; Tur-Porcar et al., 2018). Environmental factors comprise environmental policies and regulations, environmental stewardship (Rosário & Raimundo, 2024; Mishra & Kiran, 2023). Business activity factors comprise stakeholder engagement, sustainable business innovation, profit, job satisfaction (Egieya et al., 2023; Tur-Porcar et al., 2018). Figure 1 shows these factors that have been taken under this study after extensive literature review and critical examination of theoretical models.

The Analytic Hierarchy Process (AHP) was chosen as the main approach for prioritizing the factors influencing sustainable actions among entrepreneurs. The Analytical Hierarchy Process (AHP) is well-known decision-making tool developed by Saaty (Saaty, 1980, 1996). AHP facilitates the comparison of various criteria by assigning relative weights derived from expert opinions (Saaty, 2008). For this research, pairwise comparison scale designed by Saaty (1980, 2008) was used to determine the

preference of each factor identified for this study. This scale establishes how many times an item is more significant than the other components being examined. It compares components in pairs to determine their relative significance. A scale of 1 to 9 is used to score each combination, with 1 denoting equal significance and 9 denoting that one factor is significantly more significant than the other. The weight or importance of each component in the decision-making process may be ascertained using the ratios that are produced by these comparisons.

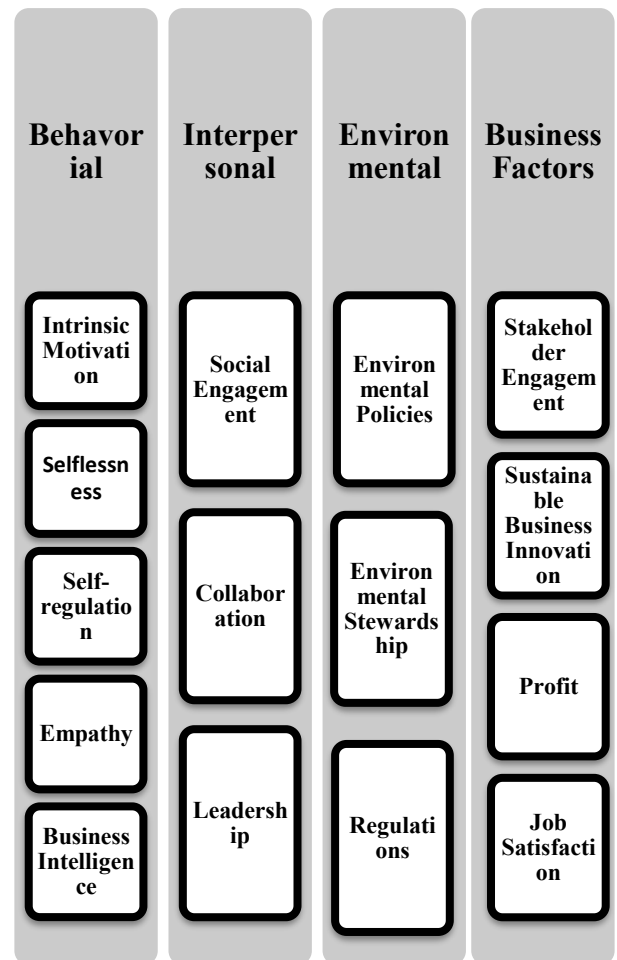


Figure 1: Factors Influencing Sustainable Actions among Entrepreneurs

Source: Authors

Application of AHP with small samples have been shown in previous research (Tur-Porcar et al., 2018; Cheng and Li, 2001; Castrogiovanni et al, 2016; Aliabadi, 2019). To ensure the rigor and relevance of the study, the selection of experts was guided by a set of carefully defined criteria. The criteria were established to ensure the panel was composed of individuals possessing extensive and authoritative expertise in sustainable entrepreneurship. For this study, 13 experts in the field of sustainability and entrepreneurship were approached from industry and academia. Two experts did not respond and two experts response were incomplete. Hence, these four experts were removed from this study. Finally, responses from 9 experts were taken into consideration for this study. All these 9 experts were from Delhi and Haryana having more

than 15 years of experience. Out of these 9 experts, four were academicians from Universities with expertise in entrepreneurial theory and practice. Rest five experts were entrepreneurs running innovative businesses (Small and Medium Enterprises) in the fields associated with environmental sustainability.

For using this pairwise comparison, each of the experts is asked about the relative importance of each factor as compared to other variables within the same construct. Once all factors have been compared, the comparison matrices of all the experts are aggregated to yield the relative weights of the sub-factors.

Analysis and Discussion

Table 1 shows the key results of the pairwise comparison analysis. Behavioral factors scored highest weight (48.4%) emerging as prime factors in influencing sustainable actions among entrepreneurs. This shows that behavioural factors are important because they align with the broader goals of sustainable entrepreneurship, which facilitates in balancing ecological, social, and economic objectives. Business factors had second highest score of

30.7%, which shows that these factors play a significant role in the expansion and success of sustainable entrepreneurship (Anant, 2025). Interpersonal and environmental factors obtained 11.6% and 9.6% respectively depicting that are not always the primary focus compared to more immediate behavioral and business concerns (Abdelwahed et al., 2022).

The weights of sub-factors are also shown in Table 1. The most important sub-criteria in the behavioural category, which makes up 48.40% of the overall weight, are intrinsic motivation (12.92%), self-regulation (8.66%), and empathy (13.75%). This implies that the key components that propel entrepreneurial sustainability are self-control, emotional intelligence, and internal drives. The relevance of altruistic behaviours and the capacity to use business knowledge successfully are highlighted by the following: selflessness (7.21%) and business intelligence (5.86%). This shows that successful entrepreneurs are more likely to promote sustainable practices if they emphasize on empathy, emotional self-control, and intrinsic motivation.

Table 1: Ranking of Factors Influencing Sustainable Actions among Entrepreneurs

Factors		Components		Weighted Sub-Criteria
Behavioral	48.40%	Intrinsic Motivation	26.70%	12.92%
		Selflessness	14.90%	7.21%
		Self-regulation	17.90%	8.66%
		Empathy	28.40%	13.75%
		Business Intelligence	12.10%	5.86%
Interpersonal	11.60%	Social Engagement	15.50%	1.80%
		Collaboration	17.80%	2.06%
		Leadership	66.70%	7.74%
Environmental	9.30%	Environmental Policies	20.90%	1.94%
		Environmental Stewardship	61.50%	5.72%
		Regulations	17.60%	1.64%
Business Factors	30.70%	Stakeholder Engagement	16.90%	5.19%
		Sustainable Business Innovation	42.60%	13.08%
		Profit	14.90%	4.57%

		Job Satisfaction	25.60%	7.86%
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Source: Authors

Table 2: Ranking of Sub-Factors

Ranking	Sub-Factors	Weighted Sub-Factors
1	Empathy	13.75%
2	Sustainable Business Innovation	13.08%
3	Intrinsic Motivation	12.92%
4	Self-regulation	8.66%
5	Job Satisfaction	7.86%
6	Leadership	7.74%
7	Selflessness	7.21%
8	Business Intelligence	5.86%
9	Environmental Stewardship	5.72%
10	Stakeholder Engagement	5.19%
11	Profit	4.57%
12	Collaboration	2.06%
13	Environmental Policies	1.94%
14	Social Engagement	1.80%
15	Regulations	1.64%

Source: Authors

In the Interpersonal category (11.60%), Leadership emerges as the dominant factor, contributing significantly to sustainability, with a weight of 7.74%. Weights of collaboration (2.06%) and social engagement (1.80%) are relatively low, indicating that while interpersonal relationships are important, they are not as critical as leadership in driving sustainability. The Environmental category (9.30%) shows that Environmental Stewardship (5.72%) plays a more significant role than Environmental Policies (1.94%) or Regulations (1.64%), reflecting the importance of proactive environmental management over compliance-based actions. Finally, in the Business Factors category (30.70%), Sustainable Business Innovation (13.08%) and Stakeholder Engagement (5.19%) are crucial, whereas Profit (4.57%) and Job Satisfaction (7.86%) are less emphasized. This suggests that long-term innovation and stakeholder relations are prioritized over immediate financial gains or employee satisfaction in the context of sustainability.

This study infers that entrepreneurs who focus on emotional intelligence and self-regulation are better positioned to navigate the complexities of sustainability. Leadership is also a key interpersonal factor, indicating

that strong leadership drives the direction towards sustainable business practices, although collaboration and social engagement are secondary. Environmentally, the research highlights the need for proactive stewardship, which suggests that sustainability efforts should extend beyond regulatory compliance and aim at meaningful environmental impact. On the business side, innovation remains a central priority, suggesting that sustainability in entrepreneurship thrives on forward-thinking, rather than traditional profit-driven models.

Table 2 shows the ranking of all 15 sub-factors taken under study. Among all the sub-factors, empathy, sustainable business innovation, motivation, self-regulation, leadership, job satisfaction, business intelligence and selflessness. The results show that empathy and sustainable innovation have achieved top two ranks with overall weights of 13.75% and 13.8% respectively (Table 1). This reflects the need for policymakers, educators, and business leaders to adapt sustainability frameworks in diverse entrepreneurial areas, taking into account the current threats and opportunities in various sectors (Hajli et al., 2025). This finding also emphasize on the importance of aligning entrepreneurial activities with the social and

environmental needs of the society. Intrinsic Motivation factor is also ranked third with a weight of 12.92% depicting that intrinsic motivation are more likely to achieve long-term sustainability. High ranking of these variables infers that human-centric approach to entrepreneurship, together with a strong dedication to innovation and motivation, is crucial in promoting sustainability.

Table 2 also shows that factors like social participation, environmental policies, and laws appear at the bottom of this ranking, suggesting that although they are still significant, they may take a backseat to more inventive and intrinsic facets of entrepreneurship. Profit (4.57%) and regulations (1.64%) are ranked low, indicating that businesses may view them as results of a sustainable strategy rather than as the main motivators.

4. CONCLUSION AND LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

This study concludes that both behavioral and business elements play a vital role in promoting sustainability within entrepreneurship. This study also suggests that behavioral aspects, including empathy, intrinsic motivation, and self-regulation, are significant contributors, underscoring the role of emotional intelligence and self-discipline in establishing sustainable enterprises. On the other hand, business related factors such as sustainable innovation and stakeholder involvement are equally important, suggesting that progressive business strategies are crucial for enduring sustainability. The research indicates that for entrepreneurs and policymakers, it is imperative to prioritize both intrinsic characteristics, such as empathy

and motivation, and progressive business strategies, including innovation and stakeholder engagement, to cultivate sustainable enterprises. By emphasizing both behavioral development and business acumen, entrepreneurs can establish ventures that are not only innovative but also ethically and socially responsible. Educational programs and policy frameworks should incorporate both behavioral and strategic components to facilitate the advancement of sustainable entrepreneurship.

While this study contributes significantly to the understanding of sustainable entrepreneurship, it also has some limitations. Since, this study used small sample of experts for AHP analysis, this limits generalization of findings of this study. The Analytic Hierarchy Process (AHP) incorporates expert judgment, which inherently introduces subjective biases. Despite efforts to assemble a diverse panel of experts, the subjective nature of their evaluations may have influenced the results. Furthermore, conclusions of this study are restricted to expert viewpoints rather than the actual experiences of business owners. To make sure that the results can be more generalized, it is suggested to conduct comparable study with a wider range of participants, such as entrepreneurs actively involved in sustainable practices. Future research can also be conducted through longitudinal studies to examine how sustainability priorities evolve. Such research could explore how sustainability progresses in response to market shifts, technology, and consumer preferences, revealing long-term impacts on business outcomes

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