

Empowering beyond borders: the strategic roles of Indonesian women entrepreneurs in international market engagement

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Abstract

Purpose – *This study aims to examine the socioeconomic strategies used by Indonesian women entrepreneurs to enter and maintain participation in international markets.*

Design/methodology/approach – *This study uses an integrative theoretical framework combining the resource-based view, institutional theory and social identity theory. Using a qualitative design with a netnography and narrative inquiry approach, data was collected from nine publicly available YouTube interviews featuring Indonesian women entrepreneurs.*

Findings – *Four key dimensions emerge: women as agents of local-to-global transformation, resilience amid structural and gender-based barriers, digital adaptation and community-based social impact. This study revealed that many women entrepreneurs demonstrate exceptional resilience, despite facing constrained finances and limited institutional support, often as single parents or from underprivileged educational backgrounds.*

Originality/value – *This study addresses the issue of women entrepreneur leaders in Indonesia, a key global south economy.*

Keywords Gender, Indonesia, Institutional support, International markets, Local wisdom, Women entrepreneurs

Paper type Research paper

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1. Introduction

Women entrepreneurship has attracted significant attention in the international development literature, especially in emerging countries where entrepreneurial activities are linked to poverty alleviation, women's empowerment and inclusive economic growth (Chen *et al.*, 2022). Women-led micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs) in Indonesia play a crucial role in the entrepreneurship ecosystem, as many have evolved from informal, necessity-driven businesses to competitive entities in international markets. Women entrepreneurs are critical to economic success, often integrating local cultural heritage, resource-based expertise and grassroots resilience into business operations (Anggadwita *et al.*, 2017a). As global markets increasingly prioritize authenticity, sustainability and ethical production, women entrepreneurs capitalize on opportunities to grow their businesses internationally.

The internationalization of women entrepreneurs in emerging countries is frequently constrained by gender-related barriers, including limited access to capital, institutional support, export knowledge and networks (Yousafzai *et al.*, 2019). Furthermore, sociocultural expectations and gender biases within the entrepreneurial ecosystem exacerbate the challenges faced by women entrepreneurs. Despite these challenges, numerous Indonesian women demonstrate remarkable resilience and creativity in balancing domestic

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responsibilities with global entrepreneurial endeavors. Their ability to turn challenges into opportunities has been a characteristic of women's entrepreneurship in Indonesia, for example, leveraging embedded social capital and cultural values.

Recent research has highlighted that women entrepreneurs are increasingly adopting digital platforms, informal learning processes and hybrid business models to bridge institutional gaps and expand their global outreach (Anggadwita and Indarti, 2023). Technological advancements have created new opportunities for women to participate in and access global markets, including the integration of digital technologies, the increasing global demand for authentic and sustainable products and the emergence of social media platforms (Brenner, 2018). These digital tools facilitate international branding and customer engagement while serving as instruments for community-oriented education, empowerment and mobilization. Digital literacy, branding skills and informal learning through online networks have emerged as important enablers of women entrepreneurs' participation in global markets in resource-limited environments (Tizikara *et al.*, 2019). These developments indicate a shift from the traditional male-dominated international business model to a more culturally centered, inclusive and socially oriented model of international entrepreneurship.

Previous research has examined the internationalization of women entrepreneurs from multiple perspectives, including digital adoption, social capital and performance-related capabilities. Empirical evidence indicates that women entrepreneurs are increasingly using digital technologies and various forms of capital, including human, financial and intellectual, to improve business performance and expand market reach, frequently facilitated by technology adoption (Feranita and Dwimahendrawan, 2024). Social capital and knowledge-sharing networks facilitate innovation and entrepreneurial growth. However, these processes are constrained by limited access to finance, market barriers and sociocultural norms (Setini *et al.*, 2020). The current literature primarily focuses on structural barriers and economic performance outcomes, especially in emerging economies such as Indonesia, where issues related to financing, regulation and gender bias persist (Lusianawati *et al.*, 2023). Recent studies recognize the increasing significance of digital platforms. However, insufficient attention has been paid to how women entrepreneurs articulate and convey their internationalization experiences through digital narratives and socially embedded storytelling. Qualitative evidence indicates that social media functions as both a commercial tool and a platform for identity construction, culturally embedded branding and relational engagement, thereby reflecting deeper sociocultural positioning (Labrecque *et al.*, 2011; Kozinets, 2020). As a result, the functions of informal institutional navigation, identity-based entrepreneurial positioning and narrative-driven internationalization practices are insufficiently examined in the international entrepreneurship literature, especially in the context of emerging markets.

Furthermore, existing studies tend to analyze women entrepreneurship using single-theory perspectives, such as RBV or institutional theories, neglecting the complex interplay among internal capabilities, institutional contexts and the development of entrepreneurial identity (Rahim *et al.*, 2022; Saleem *et al.*, 2022). There is a lack of understanding regarding how women entrepreneurs effectively use personal resilience, social identity, digital platforms and community-based resources to support internationalization efforts in resource-constrained environments (Abdullah *et al.*, 2025; Islam and Jhumu, 2025). The significance of this gap intensifies in the digital age, as entrepreneurial narratives shared via social media and online video platforms influence business legitimacy, consumer trust and global visibility.

Hence, this study is designed to address the relevant issues by tackling the following key research questions:

- RQ1. What terms most frequently appear in discussions about women entrepreneurs in the video channels analyzed?
- RQ2. What are the key dimensions of women entrepreneurs' strategies for entering and sustaining participation in international markets?

This study uses an integrative theoretical framework combining the resource-based view (RBV), institutional theory and social identity theory. The RBV reveals how women strategically leverage intangible resources, such as social networks, adaptability and cultural knowledge, to gain a competitive advantage in international markets (Barney, 1991). Institutional theory sheds light on the formal and informal rules that shape entrepreneurial behaviors, particularly how women navigate institutional voids and gendered systems through adaptive strategies (Ejaz *et al.*, 2023). Meanwhile, social identity theory explains how Indonesian women entrepreneurs negotiate and define their entrepreneurial selves across intersecting spaces of gender roles, societal expectations and cultural values (Tajfel and Turner, 1985). These conceptual frameworks explain how Indonesian women entrepreneurs think, organize and regenerate internationalization strategies.

This study aims to examine the strategic role of Indonesian women entrepreneurs in interacting with global markets through a qualitative approach, using netnography to analyze narrative data from YouTube video interviews. It adds insight to the existing literature on gender and international entrepreneurship, as well as to how women navigate and negotiate their involvement in international trade from an emerging-market context. This study, therefore, would make key contributions to three areas: first, it enhances theoretical understanding by integrating RBV, institutional theory and social identity theory to explain how women use resources, navigate institutional constraints and develop entrepreneurial identities in global contexts; second, it presents empirical evidence regarding the experiences, language and meaning-making of women entrepreneurs as reflected in digital narratives, a perspective frequently neglected in traditional entrepreneurship research; and third, it provides practical implications for policymakers and development organizations seeking to promote inclusive internationalization strategies by acknowledging the sociocultural and digital approaches used by women in emerging countries.

2. Literature review

This study adopts an integrated theoretical framework combining the RBV, institutional theory and social identity theory to examine how Indonesian women entrepreneurs develop internationalization strategies. This approach provides a comprehensive understanding of how women use internal resources, navigate institutional barriers and shape their entrepreneurial identities within sociocultural contexts. This section reviews the relevance of each framework to the internationalization of women entrepreneurs in Indonesia.

2.1 Resource-based view theory

The RBV emphasizes that sustainable competitive advantage arises from the possession and strategic utilization of internal resources that are valuable, rare, inimitable and nonsubstitutable (VRIN; Barney, 1991). Focusing on internal strengths rather than market position, RBV is particularly relevant for examining how Indonesian women entrepreneurs navigate institutional constraints by leveraging intangible, locally embedded resources.

Despite limited access to formal finance, export infrastructure and training, many Indonesian women build competitive enterprises using local knowledge, cultural values, resilience and community-based trust (Tambunan, 2007). Physical and nonphysical assets can be either strengths or weaknesses, depending on how companies integrate them into their routines and objectives (Barney, 1991). In environments with limited resources, nonphysical assets such as determination, inventiveness and social acceptance often become the most dependable and expandable resources.

Empirical studies confirm the relevance of RBV to women's entrepreneurship in under-resourced contexts. Boso *et al.* (2019) found that internal capabilities, such as proactive market orientation and entrepreneurial resourcefulness, drove export performance in sub-

Saharan Africa. [Pergelova et al. \(2019\)](#) showed that leadership and entrepreneurial orientation outweighed institutional support for women-owned firms in Eastern Europe. [Anggadwita et al. \(2017b\)](#) also demonstrated how Indonesian women entrepreneurs build trust and value through the integration of religious and cultural aspects.

Moreover, [Pergelova et al. \(2019\)](#) emphasized that competitive advantage in small businesses, especially those owned by women, often comes from a personalized business approach, deep customer relationships and locally embedded practices rather than scale or formal structures. [Fortunato and Alter \(2015\)](#) noted that entrepreneurs can begin by leveraging existing personal or communal assets and reconfiguring them into new forms, serving as a springboard for future development or international expansion. These findings are confirmed by [Boso et al. \(2016\)](#), who found that small- and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in Ghana drew upon cultural capital and local grassroots innovation as adaptation tactics to meager institutional infrastructure, a finding highly relevant in the Indonesian context.

This study uses the RBV framework to explain how Indonesian women entrepreneurs develop internationalization strategies by leveraging context-specific internal resources. These include intangible resources such as trust, embedded cultural knowledge and learning by experience, which become essential even without formal institutional support.

2.2 Institutional theory

External institutional conditions are critical in shaping entrepreneurial behavior, especially in emerging countries. Institutional theory provides a framework for understanding how both formal structures (e.g. financial systems and policy interventions) and informal social norms (e.g. cultural beliefs, gender expectations and trust networks) influence enterprise strategies and performance ([Campbell, 2007](#); [Wang et al., 2014](#)). Institutions are defined as “rules, norms and belief systems that organize human interactions” ([Hodgson, 2006](#)) and act as enablers and constraints in entrepreneurship.

For women entrepreneurs, systemic gender disparities amplify institutional barriers, such as limited access to finance, export education and international networks ([Ahmad and Muhammad Arif, 2015](#); [Yousafzai et al., 2019](#)), restricting their internationalization potential ([Bruton et al., 2010](#)). In contexts where formal institutions are weak, known as institutional voids ([Webb et al., 2020](#)), entrepreneurs engage in “institutional work” to create alternative support mechanisms ([Lawrence and Suddaby, 2006](#)). In Indonesia, women often rely on trust-based networks rooted in family, religion and community to access resources and legitimacy ([Anggadwita and Dhewanto, 2016](#)).

Recent studies have highlighted how women entrepreneurs in emerging countries are increasingly using digital platforms as institutional substitutes. Platforms like Instagram, WhatsApp and YouTube provide access to business knowledge, promotional tools, peer support and customer feedback, effectively replacing functions typically served by export promotion agencies or business incubators ([Alhakimi and Albashiri, 2023](#); [Nahid and Amir, 2024](#)). [Anggadwita and Indarti \(2023\)](#) indicated that Indonesian digital ecosystems have successfully lowered barriers to entry for women entrepreneurs by facilitating access to markets, suppliers and transnational communities, particularly in rural and peri-urban settings. By leveraging digital innovation and informal networks, women entrepreneurs transform institutional voids into platforms for differentiation, resilience and global opportunity.

2.3 Social identity theory

Social identity theory ([Tajfel and Turner, 1985](#)) explains how individuals form identities through group affiliations and social roles, which are shaped by cultural, religious and

societal contexts (Hogg, 2016; Morris and Webb, 2022). For women entrepreneurs, identity is multifaceted, combining roles as mothers, cultural preservers and business leaders. Entrepreneurship becomes a vehicle for fulfilling both economic and moral obligations (Lau et al., 2012; Krueger et al., 2013). Indonesian women entrepreneurs often integrate Islamic values, community development and cultural authenticity into their ventures (Anggadwita et al., 2017b), creating a hybrid identity that resonates with ethical and authenticity-seeking global consumers. Identity-driven branding, such as halal, handcrafted or locally sourced products, helps these businesses differentiate themselves internationally (Sood et al., 2025).

An entrepreneurial identity grounded in ethics and heritage can foster consumer trust and community support (Poblete et al., 2025). This identity not only enhances market legitimacy but also builds resilience and loyalty across borders. Empirical studies demonstrate that cultural and familial integration in business enhances international orientation and relational branding, particularly in emerging markets. Maden (2015) found that women entrepreneurs in Turkey integrated their familial roles and cultural heritage into their business vision, thereby increasing community support and sustainable growth. Similarly, Brush et al. (2019) emphasized that gendered entrepreneurial identity in emerging countries plays a critical role in shaping international orientation, product authenticity and relational branding, areas that are often underexplored in traditional international business theories.

Religious identity and social values play a significant role in public life in Indonesia, where entrepreneurial identity is closely tied to conceptions of legitimacy and purpose. Women entrepreneurs often use identity-based strategies to build credibility with local stakeholders and international customers. By selling goods made from indigenous materials, telling stories of social contribution or practicing inclusive employment practices, these women export more than commodities; they export culture, values and identity. Social identity theory thus provides a critical account of how deeply rooted social norms and memberships guide the internationalization of women-owned firms.

2.4 Women entrepreneurs and internationalization

The internationalization trajectories of women entrepreneurs are complex and multifaceted, embodying a synthesis of academic frameworks, including the RBV, institutional theory and social identity theory. In contrast to conventional international growth models, such as the Uppsala model, which emphasizes gradual, experiential learning (Vahlne and Johanson, 2017), women entrepreneurs often use informal networks, digital platforms and identity-driven branding to engage in cross-border business (Terjesen et al., 2016).

Research indicates that women are more likely to mobilize tight-knit, trust-based relational networks, including family support, diaspora ties and community connections, to overcome the structural barriers to internationalization (Kontinen and Ojala, 2011). These networks serve as sources of social capital and methods for resource acquisition, illustrating the RBV's emphasis on leveraging intangible resources to achieve a competitive advantage (Barney, 1991). In contexts like Indonesia, where formal support is limited, women turn to community-based networks and digital ecosystems (Rosen and Olsson, 2013).

The increasing access to digital platforms has gradually reduced the barriers for women-owned businesses seeking to reach global markets. Social media platforms, including WhatsApp, Instagram, Shopee and TikTok, provide tools for marketing, customer interaction and informal learning (Du et al., 2016). These platforms enable direct access to global markets and niche audiences, bypassing traditional trade structures.

Women's internationalization is often mission-driven, reflecting social identity and cultural values. Most women entrepreneurs view export business as a form of cultural expression and empowerment, not merely a commercial act (Anggadwita et al., 2017a). This "cultural diplomacy through entrepreneurship" integrates local heritage, Islamic values and

community goals into business strategies (Dabić *et al.*, 2022). Ramadani *et al.* (2015) asserted that women-owned enterprises emphasize inclusive methods, ethical production and community partnerships, reconciling financial objectives with social responsibility.

Research shows women frequently adopt hybrid business models, blending digital tools, social missions and informal learning (Suseno and Abbott, 2021). Terjesen *et al.* (2016) found that women's participation in global entrepreneurship is often enhanced by nonmarket strategies, such as storytelling, role modeling and community mobilization, all of which are tied to their identity and values. In Indonesia, women entrepreneurs transform traditional products into globally competitive brands by imbuing them with meaning, trust and culture. Their success stems not only from product quality but from a unique blend of RBV, adaptive institutional navigation and identity-based differentiation. Their global pathways challenge conventional economic theories and call for a more holistic understanding of internationalization rooted in strategic capabilities and social embeddedness.

3. Methodology

3.1 Research design

This study uses an exploratory qualitative design to develop a deeper understanding of how Indonesian women entrepreneurs construct and communicate their internationalization experiences. Specifically, it adopts a netnographic narrative inquiry approach, combining netnography and narrative analysis to capture digitally mediated entrepreneurial practices. Netnography, developed by Kozinets (2020), adapts ethnographic methods to online environments and is particularly suitable for examining naturally occurring digital data. Platforms such as YouTube provide access to public, self-generated narratives in the form of interviews, where entrepreneurs actively present their experiences, identities and strategies to wider audiences. This makes YouTube a relevant and valid data source for analyzing entrepreneurial self-representation and meaning-making processes, beyond researcher-induced interactions. In line with prior studies (Bartl *et al.*, 2016; Lange, 2019), this approach enables the analysis of videos as cultural texts, including verbal accounts, visual cues and contextual elements that reflect entrepreneurial behavior and positioning.

Narrative inquiry complements netnography by focusing on storytelling as a means by which individuals interpret and construct their lived experiences (Creswell and Poth, 2016). In the context of entrepreneurship, narratives reveal underlying motivations, sensemaking processes and culturally embedded meanings that are often not accessible through structured methods (Rae, 2005; Radu-Lefebvre *et al.*, 2021). Furthermore, this approach is particularly relevant for examining gendered and socially embedded entrepreneurial journeys, as it captures how women entrepreneurs negotiate identity, norms and expectations (Essers and Benschop, 2009).

The integration of netnography and narrative inquiry is therefore methodologically appropriate for this study, as it allows for the examination of authentic, nonreactive data while maintaining sensitivity to context, identity construction and sociocultural dynamics. This design is particularly aligned with the study's objective to move beyond outcome-based explanations and instead develop a process-oriented and narrative-driven understanding of internationalization among women entrepreneurs.

3.2 Sample and data collection

This study uses primary data from nine publicly accessible video interviews featuring Indonesian women entrepreneurs collected from various YouTube channels showcasing entrepreneurial journeys and international market engagement. The videos capture narratives in which entrepreneurs share their experiences of establishing and expanding

their businesses, particularly in relation to internationalization processes. The videos were selected using purposive sampling based on the following criteria:

- the subject is a woman entrepreneur who owns or leads the business;
- the business demonstrates engagement in international markets (e.g. exports, foreign partnerships or cross-border branding); and
- the entrepreneur has an active and verifiable digital presence across platforms.

To mitigate selection bias, cases were drawn from diverse sectors and varying levels of visibility, rather than focusing solely on highly popular or viral content.

Although the study draws on a relatively small sample of nine videos, this is consistent with its exploratory, qualitative and theory-building purpose, where the aim is not statistical generalization but the development of in-depth, contextually grounded insights. Qualitative research prioritizes analytical depth over breadth, particularly in constructivist and narrative approaches, where even small samples or single cases, can generate meaningful theoretical contributions (Boddy, 2016). Furthermore, the adequacy of sample size in qualitative research is commonly determined by the principle of thematic saturation, defined as the point at which no new themes emerge from additional data (Sharma *et al.*, 2024). In this regard, netnography and narrative approaches emphasize contextual richness and meaning-making processes, making smaller, information-rich samples methodologically appropriate for theory development.

All the videos were accessed via open-source digital tools, and each video's content was in Bahasa Indonesia. The nonverbal content, including tone, emotional expression and gestures, was also captured to contextualize the verbal reports. Transcripts were transcribed cautiously into English to minimize confusion and inconsistencies during coding and thematic analysis. The procedure draws on the postulates of digital ethnography (Varis, 2015; Caliandro, 2018), enabling online, publicly disseminated narrative material to access lived experience in its digital habitat. Because the interviews took place beyond the researcher's control, they maintained the participants' spontaneity, authenticity and voice agency.

All videos were accessed via open-source digital tools, and the content, originally in Bahasa Indonesia, was carefully transcribed and translated into English to ensure consistency during analysis. The procedure draws on the principles of digital ethnography (Varis, 2015; Caliandro, 2018), which enable the use of naturally occurring online data to capture lived experiences in their native digital context. As the interviews were not researcher-induced, they preserve a higher degree of spontaneity, authenticity and participant agency, making them particularly suitable for examining entrepreneurial self-representation and narrative construction.

The characteristics of the nine selected videos are presented in Table 1.

4. Data analysis

This research used theme analysis to identify patterns, strategies and processes for creating meaning in the recorded stories (Braun and Clarke, 2006). The coding technique followed is an inductive approach, facilitating the emergence of themes directly from participants' narratives. The analysis was performed in multiple stages: thorough reading of the transcripts to ensure a deep understanding of the data, initial open coding to highlight significant statements, categorization of codes into preliminary thematic groups and refinement and development of themes through theoretical alignment.

In line with the Gioia method (Gioia *et al.*, 2013), this study applied a structured qualitative coding process, starting with first-order codes (informant-centric terms), progressing to

Table 1 Video characteristics

No.	Video theme	Year	Channel	Views (May 20, 2025)	Comments
1	Tempe export entrepreneur	2020	Papi Bayu TV	2,285	6
2	Broom export success story	2022	Export Expert Indonesia	19,115	108
3	Macrame entrepreneur expansion	2022	Tribunnews	3,332	5
4	Young fashion export entrepreneur	2021	SemogaSukses	4,926	6
5	Fried onion export business	2022	Fauzie Channel	24,133	49
6	Former SPG becoming an entrepreneur	2022	CapCapung	102,701	123
7	Coconut briquette export business	2021	CapCapung	3,347,747	4,565
8	Coffee export SME	2021	Aspenku	13,735	65
9	Mosque dome export business	2021	PecahTelur	215,546	357

Source(s): Table by authors

second-order themes (researcher-centric concepts) and culminating in aggregate dimensions that offer a conceptual framework grounded in participants' lived experiences. This systematic procedure helped to ensure analytic rigor and traceability from raw data to theoretical observation. Biblioshiny, a web interface for the bibliometric R package (Aria and Cuccurullo, 2017), was also used in this research to generate a word cloud from the video transcripts. These visual displays provided additional observations on the most cited concepts.

To enhance the credibility and trustworthiness of the findings, this study used multiple rigor strategies. First, data triangulation was conducted across cases and industries, as well as through secondary sources (e.g. company websites, social media accounts and online business profiles) to verify key claims and entrepreneurial activities. Second, peer debriefing during the coding process and reflexive journaling were used to ensure analytical consistency and to critically reflect on the researcher's positionality, particularly in acknowledging the dual role as an academic engaged in women's entrepreneurship research.

Furthermore, to strengthen the validity and robustness of the findings, the resulting conceptual model was subjected to expert validation. Two Indonesian women entrepreneurs, one in the handicraft sector and one in the fashion industry, both with established internationalization experience, were invited to review the model. Their feedback confirmed the relevance, clarity and practical applicability of the identified dimensions, thereby reinforcing the study's credibility, external validity and empirical grounding.

5. Discussion

Table 2 below provides brief profiles of nine Indonesian women entrepreneurs highlighted in the nine YouTube videos examined in this study. The videos were obtained from other YouTube channels showcasing interviews and narratives of entrepreneurial experiences. In each video, the women entrepreneurs articulate their experiences of establishing and expanding their enterprises, including the strategies they use to manage internationalization. The profiles are compiled from the entrepreneurs' narrative presentations in the videos and include information on the name, business name, product type, business location, year of establishment, brief description and international market coverage for each business.

This profile shows the diversity of business types, export market coverage and geographic locations across the nine cases. While the original analysis highlights variation descriptively, a cross-case comparison reveals several consistent patterns. Across all cases, entrepreneurs leverage locally embedded resources (e.g. raw materials and cultural identity) while simultaneously adopting globally oriented strategies, such as digital marketing and export compliance. However, differences emerge in the pathways to internationalization: for example, digitally native businesses (e.g. Myfashiongrosir) rely more heavily on platform-based scaling, whereas product-based SMEs (e.g. ATTEMPE and Coco Mandar) emphasize product innovation and supply chain adaptation.

Table 2 A brief overview of women entrepreneurs from the video channel

No.	Name	Description
1	Nungki	Business name: ATTEMPE (instant processed tempeh) – Established in 2018, this innovative instant tempeh product is made from locally sourced non-GMO soybeans for the export market. It is in Yogyakarta and has international market coverage in Korea, Taiwan, London and Turkey
2	Sadariah	Business name: CV. Coco Mandar Indonesia (Broomstick) – Exporting broomsticks after self-learning through YouTube; established in 2017; located in Polewali Mandar, West Sulawesi; international market coverage: India
3	Triyana	Business name: Paritali (Macramé) – Handmade crafts using manual knotting techniques, without looms or sewing machines; established in 2019 in Yogyakarta; international market coverage: Malaysia, Singapore and the Philippines
4	Ni Putu Elvian Andriani	Business name: MyRama.id – Fashion retail and crafts; initially a family business since 2005, continued independently since 2018; located in Jimbaran, Bali; international market coverage: New Zealand and Australia
5	Dini Windu Asy	Business name: Brebes Mili Food – Fried Shallots is a home-based business that grew into a national brand. It was established in 2017 and began exporting in 2020. It is located in Depok. Its international market coverage is New Zealand, Malaysia and Australia
6	Catherine Gunardi	Business name: Myfashiongrosir (MFG) is a digital fashion platform and dropshipping system for entrepreneurs with no capital. It was established in 2013 and is located in Tangerang. Its international market coverage includes Malaysia, Singapore and Taiwan
7	Istikanah	Business name: CV. Indo-Arab Enterprise – Producer of premium charcoal briquettes for the export market; established in 1999; located in Central Java; international market coverage: Azerbaijan, Saudi Arabia, the Middle East and Europe
8	Helly Maidislina	Business name: PT. Lentera Internasional Jaya – Civet coffee; partner of local coffee farmers, exporting with certification and quality testing processes; established in 2013; located in Jakarta; international market coverage: Malaysia and China
9	Reni Rahmawati	Business name: PT Anugrah Kubah Indonesia – The largest mosque dome manufacturer in Southeast Asia; established in 2016; located in Kediri, East Java; international market coverage: Malaysia and the Philippines
Source(s): Narrative script of nine videos on YouTube channel		

A key cross-case insight is that resource constraints do not uniformly limit internationalization; instead, they trigger adaptive strategies, such as self-learning, informal networking and incremental export engagement. This suggests that internationalization is not solely resource-dependent (as the traditional RBV suggests) but is also shaped by entrepreneurial agency and contextual improvisation.

The establishment years of most firms range from 2013 to 2019. Some are family business developments, such as MyRama.id. In contrast, others result from individual initiatives that use digital technology, online communities or self-learning to develop export businesses, as demonstrated by CV. Coco Mandar Indonesia and Brebes Mili Food. The variety of products produced also reflects the diversity of women's roles in the industry: from locally produced food products (instant tempeh, civet coffee and fried onions) and handicrafts (macrame and broomsticks) to heavy manufacturing (mosque domes and charcoal briquettes). Cultural values, local raw materials and branding strategies prioritizing authenticity and sustainability all contribute to the uniqueness of their products.

These businesses' international market coverage covers various regions of the world, including Southeast Asia (Malaysia, Singapore and the Philippines), East Asia (China and Taiwan), the Middle East (Saudi Arabia, Azerbaijan), Europe and Oceania (Australia and New Zealand). The evidence suggests that women entrepreneurs can effectively penetrate regional markets and position their products in a broader global segment by leveraging innovation, digital networks and personal resilience.

5.1 Word cloud analysis

This study uses a word cloud to provide an exploratory overview of the most frequently occurring terms related to women entrepreneurs in the analyzed video narratives. Rather than serving as a primary analytical tool, the word cloud is used as a descriptive

visualization to identify initial patterns, which are then further interpreted through thematic and cross-case analysis.

According to the findings from the word cloud analysis in Figure 1 and Table 3, the most frequent terms include “raw materials” (17 occurrences); “TikTok shop” (11 occurrences); “fried shallots” (10 occurrences); “civet coffee” and “job opportunities” (9 occurrences each); “charcoal briquettes” and “Middle East” (7 occurrences each); and “green beans,” “local soybeans,” and “overseas customers” (6 occurrences each).

While the word cloud highlights frequently mentioned terms, it is important to note that frequency does not necessarily reflect conceptual importance or strategic relevance. Several high-frequency terms (e.g. “fried shallots” and “civet coffee”) represent product-specific contexts rather than generalizable entrepreneurial strategies. Therefore, these results should be interpreted with caution and in conjunction with deeper qualitative analysis.

“Raw materials” emerged as the most frequently cited term in the narratives, underscoring their critical role in the entrepreneurs’ business models. Cross-case analysis indicates that this reflects a broader strategic concern with supply chain reliability, product authenticity and cost management, rather than merely a product-level issue. For example, Nungki (ATTEMPE) stressed the importance of using local soybeans for product authenticity, despite their lower market visibility compared to American soybeans. Similarly, Sadariah (CV. Coco Mandar) highlighted difficulties sourcing raw materials for broomstick production, citing cost variability and supply inconsistency. These insights suggest that

Figure 1 Word cloud analysis

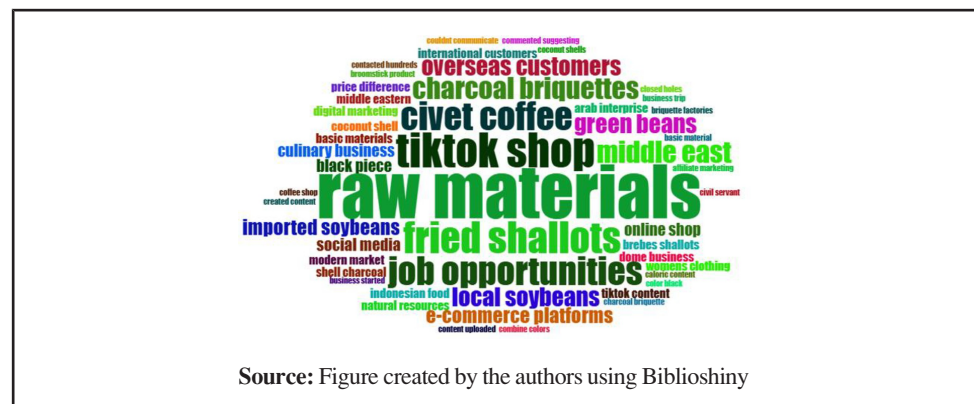


Table 3 Word frequency

Keywords	Freq.
Raw materials	17
TikTok shop	11
Fried shallots	10
Civet coffee	9
Job opportunities	9
Charcoal briquettes	7
Middle east	7
Green beans	6
Local soybeans	6
Overseas customers	6

Source(s): Table by authors

resource management is a recurring theme across cases, aligning with broader discussions on capability development.

The second most frequent term was “TikTok Shop,” reflecting its growing role in digital platforms. Rather than indicating platform preference alone, cross-case comparison shows that digital tools function as mechanisms for market access, branding and customer engagement, particularly in resource-constrained environments. For instance, Triyana (Paritali) highlighted its effectiveness in reaching new audiences, while other entrepreneurs used similar platforms to support international outreach.

The term “job opportunities” appeared nine times, indicating a shared emphasis on social impact. Across cases, this reflects a broader pattern of community-oriented entrepreneurship, where business growth is linked to employment generation and local empowerment. Catherine Gunardi (Myfashiongrosir) and Triyana (Paritali–Makrame) emphasized training and inclusion, suggesting that social value creation is embedded within their internationalization strategies, rather than being a secondary outcome.

This study used Biblioshiny mainly for showing term frequencies and enhancing theme analysis, hence offering contextual interpretation and theoretical insights. This integrated methodology guaranteed that the study transcended superficial frequencies, leading to a substantive, contextually grounded comprehension.

5.2 Identified dimensions

This section presents four dimensions from the narrative analysis: women as agents of local-to-global economic transformation, resilience and toughness as key gender roles in internationalization, leveraging technology and innovation as a pathway to globalization and community empowerment and social responsibility. Each dimension reflects how Indonesian women entrepreneurs leverage personal agency, embedded cultural values and informal systems to access international markets.

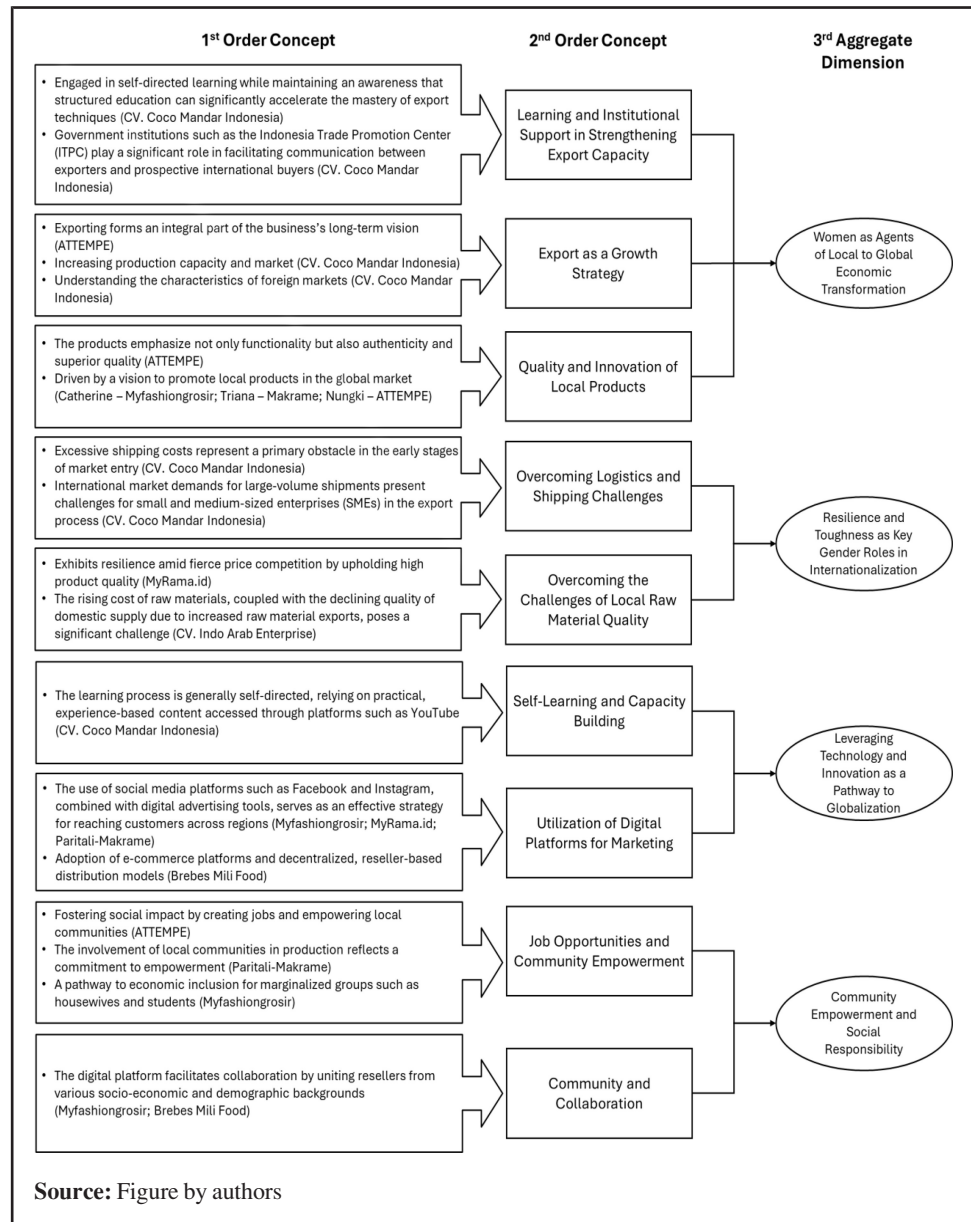
The four dimensions in the case studies do not function separately; rather, they mutually support one another. Digital platforms (Dimension 3) enhance identity-based branding (Dimension 2), while community empowerment (Dimension 4) strengthens social capital that underpins export activities (Dimension 1). The cross-case patterns indicate that internationalization is optimally comprehended as a configurational process, wherein multiple aspects interact rather than operate independently. [Figure 2](#) illustrates the cumulative dimensions derived from thematic mapping with Gioia’s methodology.

5.2.1 Women as agents of local to global economic transformation. This study found that Indonesian women entrepreneurs are key drivers of economic transformation from local to international markets, supported by three main dimensions: access to export education, strategic export orientation and innovation rooted in local products.

Learning and institutional support in strengthening export capacity. Access to information and formal education emerges as a significant enabler for women entrepreneurs to engage in international trade. While most informants were self-educated, they also expressed knowledge of the value addition that could be gained from formal instruction. As Sadariah explains, “Even though we can learn and understand on our own, having a class or a teacher would make the process faster and more effective.” Institutions like the Indonesia Trade Promotion Centre (ITPC) also play a vital role, acting as intermediaries and language bridges in connecting local businesses with international buyers. Sadariah described this: “We usually connect with potential buyers through ITPC and hold Zoom meetings. It is helpful because they communicate in English and then translate it into Indonesian for us.”

Export as a growth strategy. The women entrepreneurs in this study demonstrated a high growth orientation through targeting export strategies. Exporting is not a side activity but a core growth strategy. It is viewed as a means for extended operations and transcends

Figure 2 Aggregate dimensions of Indonesian women in international market engagement



geographic limits. As proposed by Nungki, the businessperson behind an instant tempeh business, export is directly embedded in her entrepreneurial vision: “I have a big dream [...] I believe that one day this innovative product will go global and reach several countries.” Exporting also offers broader market access and highlights the strategic importance of global integration, particularly for SMEs seeking to scale up. Sadariah, a broomstick exporter from West Sulawesi, revealed her business scale, “75 tons. 3 packs, three containers” and stressed the need to meet international standards, including cleanliness, mold prevention and precise sizing. Her experience reflects how export strategies are forward-looking and tailored to global market demands.

Quality and innovation of local products. Innovation rooted in local wisdom is a characteristic strength for women entrepreneurs seeking to access global markets. Authentic, high-quality

problem-solving products are emphasized to position them competitively globally. Nungki, owner of ATTEMPE, developed an instant tempeh product with a longer shelf life when canned, thereby facilitating successful international distribution. She informed us: “We had high demand and put in significant effort to innovate tempeh production for international markets. That led us to create canned tempeh with a one-year shelf life, making it suitable for global shipping. We have already tried marketing it in London, Taiwan, and Korea.”

Beyond technical innovation, women entrepreneurs also articulated a clear vision to introduce and elevate Indonesian products globally. Catherine, founder of Myfashiongrosir, stated: “Myfashiongrosir aims to be a solution for fashion players both in Indonesia and globally.” Istikanah, owner of the charcoal briquettes business, has been actively expanding into foreign markets. She recalled how foreign parties disproportionately exploited resources and described her driving force to turn the tables: “Foreign companies operate in our country, processing our resources. Now, I am turning the tables by building my own international marketing and distribution channels. I have started in Azerbaijan and am preparing to expand into Saudi Arabia.” Product authenticity is further reflected in sourcing practices. As Nungki added: “ATTEMPE is unique [...] we use only locally sourced, non-genetically modified organism (GMO) Indonesian soybeans.”

5.2.2 Resilience and toughness as key gender roles in internationalization. In the context of export, the women entrepreneurs in this study exhibited strong resilience by overcoming structural and technical challenges through persistence, adaptability and strategic responses. Catherine, founder of Myfashiongrosir, shared her journey of perseverance in entering the global market: “Starting a business from scratch is never easy, but I believe determination will eventually pay off [...] and whenever I feel like giving up, I always remember Kartini (Indonesian woman heroes).” She further emphasized women’s inner strength by stating, “[...] Women’s greatest fear often comes from within. We must never give up. God has entrusted women with incredible strength; they can bear children and endure challenges that men may not be given.” These considerations highlight psychological resilience, cultural role models and confidence and self-belief, all of which contribute to fostering resilience. We found that resilience was evident across the analyzed cases, leading women entrepreneurs to demonstrate determination and adaptability in overcoming barriers to international market entry, highlighting resilience as a vital entrepreneurial asset.

Overcoming logistics and shipping challenges. Both low production levels and high logistics costs are significant challenges women entrepreneurs face when they first begin to engage in export enterprises. Sadariah, an exporter of West Sulawesi broomsticks, highlighted shipping costs as one of the most pressing immediate challenges: “The main challenge for exporters lies in the upfront cost of expensive shipping, which was one of the first difficulties we faced.” Moreover, foreign market demands for bulk shipments add complexity to the export process for SMEs. As Sadariah noted: “Exports require large quantities due to high shipping costs – small shipments are not feasible because the expenses outweigh the returns.”

Despite these challenges, the women entrepreneurs in this study demonstrated adaptability and resourcefulness in responding to logistical constraints. They implemented steps such as establishing local production networks, participating in collective production activities and adopting a phased approach to increase export quantities. These coping mechanisms allowed them to minimize cost-related risks and gradually expand their operations for global trade.

Overcoming the challenge of local raw material quality. The quality and availability of local raw materials remain critical challenges for women-led export businesses. Despite intense price competition, Elvian (MyRama.id) maintained her product standards, stating, “If we keep fearing competitors, how can we ever move forward?” A similar sentiment was expressed by Istikanah, founder of CV. Indo Arab Enterprise. She noted how rising raw

material costs and declining domestic quality, exacerbated by the export of raw coconuts, create significant operational hurdles: “One of our main obstacles is the rising cost and declining quality of raw materials. Previously, poor shipping conditions worsened the issue. Now, raw material prices have reached 800, which remains a significant challenge.” She highlighted the irony of Indonesia exporting raw coconuts, which become high-quality in foreign markets: “This briquette factory might not represent the best of Indonesian production, as the coconuts it uses are actually exported from Indonesia and processed elsewhere.” Similarly, Dini Windu Asy (Brebes Mili Food) continues to innovate and uphold quality despite capital and supply constraints. These cases illustrate how perseverance, innovation and a commitment to quality serve as key strategies for overcoming structural barriers and sustaining global competitiveness.

5.2.3 Leveraging technology and innovation as a pathway to globalization. Adaptability to technology and innovation is vital for the internationalization of women-led enterprises. This study identifies two primary mechanisms enabling this: self-directed learning and the strategic use of digital platforms for global marketing.

Self-learning and capacity building. Many informants began their export journeys without formal training, instead relying on self-learning through digital platforms. Sadariah, a broomstick exporter, noted, “Everything I know about exporting, I learned online. I have never taken a formal class, but it was enough to start exporting broomsticks.” Nungki (ATTEMPE) credited her children’s self-taught design skills for enhancing product visuals, while Triyana (macrame business) developed her product variations by drawing inspiration from social media. These examples illustrate how digital platforms offer practical alternatives for acquiring knowledge and technical skills, particularly in resource-constrained environments.

Using digital platforms for marketing. Digital tools not only aid learning but also expand market access. Social media and e-commerce platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, TikTok Shop, Shopee and Tokopedia were widely used by participants to build visibility and connect with international consumers.

Catherine from Myfashiongrosir explained, “We started with Facebook, then moved to Instagram, using both Facebook and Instagram ads, which have been very helpful for our marketing.” She also emphasized the accessibility of her business model through a digital dropshipping system: “Myfashiongrosir uses a digital dropshipping system, allowing even those without capital to start a business. This approach has enabled us to reach markets in Malaysia, Taiwan, and Singapore.” Ni Putu Elvian Andriani of MyRama.id also shared how she uses digital channels to boost product visibility: “To get MyRama.id products, just follow our Instagram page where we frequently run promotions. We’re also available on Shopee, Tokopedia, and other marketplaces.”

ATTEMPE actively engages media and social platforms to strengthen brand presence: “Our marketing strategy focuses on branding and media presence, especially through social media. We have been featured by national media, and YouTubers visit us every two months, helping spread the word. Today, marketing is inseparable from social media.” Similarly, Tryana, owner of Paritali, shared her success in using TikTok Shop as a sales channel: “TikTok Shop has been very effective. After learning how it works from a friend, we started creating and posting content. It paid off, many people made purchases, and our fourth post even went viral with thousands of views, significantly expanding our marketing reach.”

Catherine highlighted that digital platforms play a crucial role in bringing Indonesian women’s fashion products to international markets such as Malaysia, Singapore and Taiwan. She demonstrated how digital connectivity enables women to tap into global opportunities, supported by online marketplaces and reseller-based distribution systems. Dini Windu Asy, founder of Brebes Mili Food, noted the export opportunities that emerged through marketplace presence: “My husband initially created a Tokopedia account, but it

wasn't actively managed. Now, with our dedicated marketing and admin team, we're listed on various marketplaces, and thankfully, many exporters have since reached out to us."

These experiences demonstrate how women entrepreneurs leverage digital platforms for marketing, customer engagement and scalable distribution, highlighting technology's transformative role in supporting women's participation in global markets.

5.2.4 Community empowerment and social responsibility. Amid the success of women entrepreneurs in global markets, their roles extend beyond profit to include a strong commitment to empowerment and social responsibility. This study highlights two key aspects of this function:

1. creating jobs and empowering local communities; and
2. fostering collaboration among local stakeholders.

Job opportunities and community empowerment. Many informants highlighted that their businesses were not only built for personal gain but also to create social impact through local empowerment and inclusive employment. Nungki, an instant tempeh entrepreneur, shared her commitment to supporting local agriculture: "We support local soybean farmers by exclusively using locally produced non-GMO soybeans; it is my way of contributing to the country." Sadariah, a broomstick entrepreneur from Sulawesi, stressed the importance of empowering communities through shared knowledge and profit: "[...] we help communities learn to export, and as they earn income, we share the profits or outcomes with them." Dini Windu Asy, who runs a fried onion business, stated: "My goal is to build a business that empowers the community and creates jobs. Thankfully, through this venture, I have started hiring staff to assist with the frying." Likewise, Istikanah, a coconut charcoal briquette entrepreneur, expressed her aim to support farmers through value-added initiatives: "Empowering farmers [...] so that all strata of society can benefit from our natural resources."

These entrepreneurial practices reflect a broader commitment to social inclusion, where women-led enterprises function not just as economic actors but as catalysts for grassroots transformation, enhancing livelihoods, reducing inequality and empowering local communities.

Community and collaboration. Beyond direct empowerment, informants emphasized fostering collaboration through formal and informal partnerships. Catherine of Myfashiongrosir described her website as a social ecosystem connecting resellers: "From Facebook, I also recruit several resellers." Similarly, Dini Windu Asy of Brebes Mili Food invited broader participation: "You can become our reseller and register through our website." These collaborative efforts strengthen business networks and function as platforms for mutual learning and the equitable distribution of economic opportunities. They enable women entrepreneurs to establish support systems that extend beyond their direct businesses.

5.3 A proposed integrated capability–institutional–identity framework for women entrepreneur internationalization

Based on a narrative synthesis of YouTube video interviews featuring nine Indonesian women entrepreneurs, this study proposes an integrated conceptual framework that explains how women entrepreneurs can build export capacity and generate socioeconomic impact through a combination of internal resources, institutional support, social identity and strategic capabilities. This model integrates three main theories: RBV, institutional theory and social identity theory. The proposed model has been further validated by two women entrepreneurs with internationalization experience, strengthening its practical relevance and empirical grounding. Notably, both women entrepreneurs emphasized that effective export strategies require careful market mapping to identify countries that align with specific product characteristics, as consumer preferences vary across markets. They also highlighted the importance of adaptive pricing strategies that account for differences in

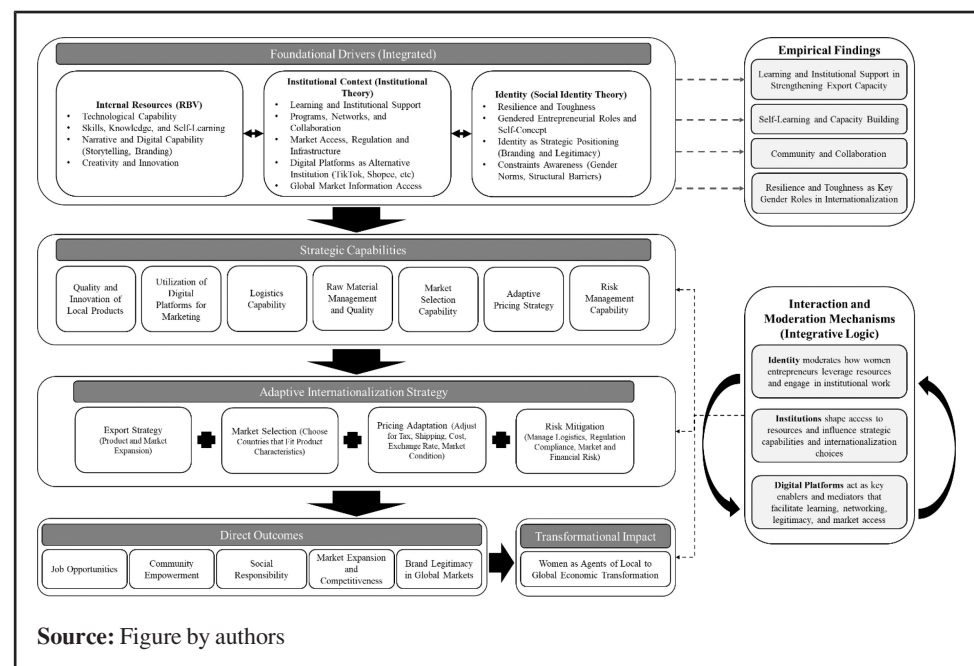
taxes and shipping costs across countries, as well as the need to incorporate risk management practices, which were underdeveloped in the proposed model during validation. [Figure 3](#) illustrates the final conceptual model, refined through empirical analysis and practitioner validation.

The foundational drivers (integrated) section comprises three primary foundations. Initially, internal resources (RBV) encompass technological capabilities, skills, knowledge and self-learning. These also include narrative and digital capabilities, such as storytelling and branding, which are increasingly critical in digital and global market contexts. The RBV posits that competitive advantage is derived from internal resources that are valuable, unique and challenging to replicate ([Barney, 1991](#)). Second, the institutional context, as outlined in institutional theory, encompasses training support, government programs, community engagement, collaboration, market access, regulatory frameworks and infrastructure. In addition, digital platforms (e.g. TikTok Shop, Shopee and Instagram) function as alternative or complementary institutions that facilitate market access, learning and legitimacy in international markets. Institutional theory posits that the institutional environment plays a crucial role in shaping organizational behavior and strategy ([Scott, 2005](#)). Third, identity, as outlined in social identity theory, illustrates the significance of resilience, toughness and the gender role of female entrepreneurs in influencing their motivation and business behavior ([Tajfel and Turner, 1985](#)). Identity is also strategically constructed and communicated through branding and digital narratives, while being shaped by structural constraints such as gender norms and unequal market access.

These three foundational elements do not operate independently but interact dynamically, where identity shapes how resources are mobilized, institutional contexts influence access to resources and digital platforms mediate these relationships.

The three foundations collectively establish strategic capabilities, including local product innovation, the use of digital platforms for marketing, the capacity to address logistical challenges and the quality of local raw materials. In line with practitioner validation, these

Figure 3 Integrated capability–institutional–identity framework for women entrepreneur internationalization



Source: Figure by authors

capabilities are extended to include market selection (mapping product–country fit), adaptive pricing (considering taxes, logistics and purchasing power) and risk management (addressing logistics, regulatory and market uncertainties). The strategic capabilities underpin the implementation of an adaptive internationalization strategy, positioning exports not only as a growth mechanism but also as a context-sensitive and flexible process. This supports the perspective that international orientation and digital adaptability are essential elements for enhancing the competitiveness of MSMEs in the global market (Knight and Cavusgil, 2004; Teece, 2018).

The export strategy generates direct outcomes such as job creation, community empowerment and social responsibility. It also contributes to market expansion, competitive positioning and brand legitimacy in global markets. In the long term, these impacts lead to transformative outcomes, with women serving as agents of economic transformation at both local and global levels. The empirical findings presented in Figure 3 indicate that self-directed learning, institutional support, community collaboration and women's resilience are critical factors in enhancing export capacity and the process of business internationalization.

6. Implications

In this section, we highlight the key implications for theoretical development, policy and practices. We also address several research limitations and outline future research directions.

6.1 Implications for theoretical development

The findings of this study suggest that women entrepreneurs' internationalization is best understood as a configurational and processual phenomenon, rather than a linear or resource-driven outcome. The four identified dimensions, local-to-global transformation, resilience, digital leverage and community empowerment, do not operate independently but interact dynamically across cases, shaping diverse pathways to international market engagement. This cross-case pattern indicates that internationalization emerges from the interplay between resources, institutions and identity, rather than from any single factor.

This study offers several theoretical contributions by integrating the RBV, institutional theory and social identity theory to explain how Indonesian women entrepreneurs navigate internationalization in resource-constrained environments. By synthesizing these three frameworks, the study challenges traditional, capital-centric and linear models of internationalization. It demonstrates that women entrepreneurs in emerging economies succeed through cultural embeddedness, digital literacy and social legitimacy, thereby calling for the development of more inclusive internationalization models that foreground the intersections of gender, culture and digital ecosystems (Brush *et al.*, 2019).

These interconnected findings provide a strong basis for engaging with and extending these theoretical perspectives. First, the findings support the RBV (Barney, 1991), which emphasizes that sustainable competitive advantage stems from the strategic use of VRIN resources. This study demonstrates that women entrepreneurs leverage intangible and socially embedded resources, such as cultural identity, creativity, digital knowledge and narrative capital, as key drivers of global competitiveness (Kumra and Vinnicombe, 2010; Zhu *et al.*, 2023). For instance, Nungki's innovation in canned tempeh and Triyana's adaptation of macrame crafts illustrate how locally embedded knowledge and authenticity function as global differentiators. Similarly, Sadariah's self-taught export capabilities, acquired through YouTube, highlight how capabilities can be developed informally with minimal resources (Autio *et al.*, 2011). Thus, while the findings support RBV, they also extend it by showing that strategic resources are not always preexisting within firms but are often constructed through digital engagement and self-directed learning, particularly in resource-constrained contexts.

Second, from the lens of institutional theory (Scott, 2005), the findings reveal how entrepreneurs operate within and respond to institutional constraints, such as high logistics costs, limited export training and inconsistent raw material supply. Consistent with Bruton *et al.* (2010) and Webb *et al.* (2020), the study shows that women entrepreneurs actively engage in institutional work (Lawrence and Suddaby, 2006), leveraging platforms such as ITPC, digital marketplaces and informal networks to bridge institutional voids. Importantly, the findings extend institutional theory by illustrating that entrepreneurs do not merely respond to institutional environments but adaptively reconfigure them through hybrid practices. For example, platforms such as TikTok Shop, Shopee and Instagram function not only as marketing tools but also as alternative institutional mechanisms, enabling access to markets, knowledge and networks (Hu *et al.*, 2024; Li, 2024). This reflects a more dynamic interplay between actors and institutions, particularly in emerging market contexts.

Third, the findings reinforce and extend social identity theory (Tajfel and Turner, 1985), which explains how entrepreneurial motivations are shaped by gender, culture and social roles. The cases illustrate that entrepreneurship serves as a form of identity expression, social contribution and value alignment (Jennings and Tonoyan, 2022; Brush *et al.*, 2019). For example, Catherine's digital dropshipping model empowers homemakers and students, while Nungki's use of non-GMO (Genetically Modified Organism) local soybeans reflects religious and national values. These practices align with the concept of hybrid entrepreneurship, where economic and social identities intersect (Ramadani *et al.*, 2015; Yousafzai *et al.*, 2019). This study extends social identity theory by demonstrating that identity is not only internally held but also strategically constructed and communicated through digital narratives and branding, particularly in global market contexts.

6.2 Implications for policy and practices

The findings of this study offer several practical implications for policymakers, entrepreneurship educators and development organizations. Given that many women entrepreneurs in emerging economies rely on self-education through platforms such as YouTube, there is a need for structured and accessible digital export training programs, particularly those that are low-cost, modular and tailored to women-led MSMEs. These programs should integrate digital literacy, cross-border e-commerce skills and export readiness, enabling women entrepreneurs to transition from informal learning to more strategic internationalization pathways.

Public agencies, such as the ITPC, play a significant role in linking local entrepreneurs with international buyers. Therefore, policymakers should strengthen these institutions by incorporating gender-sensitive export facilitation policies, including mentorship schemes, language support and targeted market intelligence services for women entrepreneurs. In addition, stronger public–private partnerships are needed to support women entrepreneurs in leveraging digital platforms (e.g. TikTok Shop, Shopee and Instagram) not only for sales but also for branding, storytelling and global customer engagement. Governments and industry actors can collaborate to provide platform-based training, digital marketing support and access to international logistics networks.

This research also highlights entrepreneurial models that prioritize empowerment and social inclusion beyond profit-making. Development programs should therefore introduce incentive schemes, grants or recognition systems that support hybrid business models combining economic and social value creation. Finally, given the high reliance on local raw materials, policymakers should design supportive regulatory frameworks, including subsidies, quality standardization programs and supply chain development initiatives, particularly in nonmetropolitan and remote areas. Strengthening these upstream systems will enhance product quality, consistency and global competitiveness, ensuring that women entrepreneurs can sustainably participate in international markets.

6.3 Limitations and future research

This study has several limitations that should be acknowledged. First, relying solely on publicly available YouTube video interviews may limit the depth and diversity of insights, particularly by excluding women entrepreneurs who lack digital visibility or present alternative perspectives. Second, the qualitative design and focus on the Indonesian context limit the generalizability of the findings.

Building on these limitations, future research should expand the empirical scope by incorporating cross-country comparative studies to capture diverse institutional contexts and longitudinal approaches to examine how internationalization strategies evolve over time. The use of mixed-methods designs would also be valuable for assessing performance outcomes and strengthening empirical robustness. In particular, future studies should incorporate failure cases and quantitative data (e.g. export statistics) to provide a more comprehensive and balanced understanding of internationalization processes and to extend the findings through comparative and mixed-methods approaches.

In addition, further research is needed to explore the role of digital ecosystems and platform economies in shaping women's entrepreneurial pathways, as well as how policy interventions and gender-focused initiatives can better support inclusive internationalization. Greater attention should also be given to how local institutions enable or constrain women-led ventures, particularly in emerging markets. Advancing these areas will contribute to a more context-sensitive, inclusive and gender-aware understanding of women's trajectories in global entrepreneurship.

7. Conclusion

This study offers insight into how Indonesian women entrepreneurs strategically navigate their paths toward international market engagement. By addressing the two key research questions, namely, the terms most frequently appear in discussions about women entrepreneurs in the video channels analyzed and the key dimensions of women entrepreneurs' strategies for entering and sustaining participation in international markets, this study has provided insight regarding the language and narratives that shape public discourse on women's international entrepreneurship, as well as the strategic, institutional and identity-based factors that influence their global expansion. Furthermore, the information extracted from these digital narratives can be synthesized into valuable insights that inform both academic understanding and practical approaches to supporting women entrepreneurs in emerging markets.

Through the lens of the RBV, institutional theory and social identity theory, four interconnected dimensions emerged from the narrative data:

1. women as agents of local-to-global transformation;
2. resilience amid structural and gendered challenges;
3. digital adaptation and informal learning; and
4. social responsibility and community empowerment.

These findings extend the literature on gender and international entrepreneurship in emerging market contexts.

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