



# 21<sup>st</sup> Century Entrepreneurial Skills Development of Community Enterprises Chainat Province

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## Authors' contributions

*This work was carried out in collaboration among all authors. All authors read and approved the final manuscript.*

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## ABSTRACT

**Aims:** This study intended to assess and enhance the importance of entrepreneurial skills for community enterprises in Chainat Province in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

**Study Design:** This study used a mixed method approach, combining qualitative data obtained from in-depth interviews with quantitative data gained using a questionnaire developed from the qualitative results.

**Place and Duration of Study:** A sample of 400 community entrepreneurs in Chainat Province was chosen using cluster sampling and random selection techniques, between December 2021 and November 2022.

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**Methodology:** The qualitative research tool differs from the quantitative research tool. The questionnaire in quantitative research should have an Index of Item Objective Congruence (IOC) above 0.6 and a Cronbach's alpha of 0.95.

**Results:** During the COVID-19 period, the qualitative research revealed that the majority of issues are marketing-related. Hence, they require marketing technologies. The quantitative research results indicated significant progress in two categories of entrepreneurial skills in the 21<sup>st</sup> century: innovation skills and marketing-related life and career skills. The other discoveries included educational materials tailored for modern-day business owners, catering to a range of learning styles. The text covered essential entrepreneurial skills for local businesses, sales promotion techniques, public relations strategies to acquire specific customers, sales negotiating skills, maintaining product branding, and developing new sales tactics.

**Conclusion:** The study discovered that entrepreneurs in Chainat Province aspire to enhance their entrepreneurial abilities in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, particularly focusing on developing innovative skills and life and career skills

*Keywords: Development; Entrepreneurial skills in the 21<sup>st</sup> century; Community enterprises; Chainat Province.*

## 1. INTRODUCTION

A community enterprise is a business founded within a community to produce goods or services by bringing together groups of villagers who have a common way of life. They were established as either officially recognized or unacknowledged. However, they can enhance the financial resources of their households, promoting self-reliance within families, communities, and beyond [1]. Community enterprises were established in every province to function as an economic asset, generating stable revenue and influencing the country's progress. Government and corporate institutions support community businesses to help them become self-sufficient. Thaimthong and Narot [2] pinpointed factors that promote sustainable operations, such as leadership, problem-solving, compliance with environmental and regulatory standards, efficient planning and management, and dedication to service delivery. Jintana et al. [3-6] found inconsistencies in the policies regarding the growth of community enterprises. Many community enterprises do not generate enough cash to support self-reliance due to their lack of profitability or standardized products.

Community enterprises frequently provide modest products or services that may not have a competitive advantage. Entrepreneurs need to leverage the distinctive attributes and insights of their communities to differentiate themselves in a competitive market. Swasthaisong [7] found problems with items and sales, such as unattractive packaging, inadequate brand advertising, lack of online selling skills, and absence of confirmed quality standards in many

products. Entrepreneurs lack essential entrepreneurial abilities such as knowledge management, comprehension of local wisdom, and the ability to develop initiatives and corporate strategies [3].

They focus on developing entrepreneurial skills in the 21<sup>st</sup> century highlights the importance of nurturing two groups as followings 1) innovative capabilities such as creativity, curiosity, connection: ability to combine, to see opportunities, critical thinking, ability to solve problems, promoter and relationship builder; as well as, 2) life and career skills such as ability to make decision that take into account constraints, initiative and autonomy, "time achiever": to engage and disengage, persistence/ resilience, ability to work with resources available, ability to create value [8]. Modern technology is essential for achieving a competitive advantage in today's globalized business world by facilitating operational and commercial processes. Entrepreneurs require entrepreneurial skills to successfully create products/services that are in demand in the market. It is crucial to cultivate entrepreneurial skills in the 21<sup>st</sup> century to ensure the ongoing and sustainable development of community businesses.

Chainat Province has 357 community firms registered with the Chainat Provincial Agriculture Office in 2022 [1]. In Lifestyle Post Today [9] claimed that it is a secondary tourism attraction with a maximum of 6 million people. The problem in Chainat Province is caused by a shortage of resources and a lack of tourists or consumers. Phakdiburut [10] pinpointed multiple problems in the agricultural tourism management of Ban Don

Sak, Huai Ngu Subdistrict, Hankha District, Chainat Province. The topics encompass challenges related to community tourism resources, community access, amenities, tourist certification, and overall community tourism management. However, the entrepreneurs from weaving cloth groups, Noen Kham District, Chainat Province have opportunity to develop in online marketing and they choose social media platform because there is only the costs necessary for digital marketing [11]. Hence, it is crucial to develop entrepreneurs that can effectively utilize a variety of local resources to produce efficient products or services that meet market needs. This involves crucial skill enhancement for careers in the 21<sup>st</sup> century to enable local entrepreneurs in facing upcoming problems. The scholars are interested in assessing and articulating the prerequisites for cultivating entrepreneurial skills in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

## 2. OBJECTIVES

Examine and cultivate the necessary entrepreneurship skills for community enterprises in Chainat Province in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

## 3. METHODOLOGY

This study utilizes a combination of qualitative and quantitative methods to analyze and establish the importance of entrepreneurial skills in community entrepreneurship in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

The qualitative method entails gathering documented data on entrepreneurship skills in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. The key informants for this study are community entrepreneurs in Chainat Province who will undergo in-depth telephone interviews. Three researchers divided the data collection into three equal parts among eight districts, which included 357 community enterprises. The study tool utilized was a semi-structured informal interview type. The research objectives and literature evaluation are in harmony with the triangulation of data related to concepts, theories, and data gathering.

The elements of the quantitative method are: The population consists of the members of 357 community enterprises, with the precise number being undisclosed [12]. The sample size of 400 was calculated using the Taro Yamane formula [13] at a 95 percent confidence level. Multi-stage random sampling is used. Cluster sampling was used to choose community enterprises from 8

districts in the first phase. A simple random selection strategy was used to collect 50 samples from each location. The data was collected by a questionnaire that utilized a 5-level scales system, with "1" being the lowest level and "5" representing the greatest level. Content validity was evaluated by 5 experts, and the index of item-objective congruence (IOC) varied from 0.67 to 1. Reliability was evaluated by experiments involving 30 different community enterprises. The Cronbach's Alpha coefficient was calculated as 0.95. All variables had confidence ratings of 0.7 or higher, except for the variable related to creative community enterprise management skills.

## 4. RESULTS

The samples of qualitative method are 67 community enterprises of Chainat Province providing 11 different types of products and services which are concluded into five groups; 1) original farm such as agricultural, livestock and fishery products; 2) process product such as herbal product, drink product, basketry product; 3) woodenware, furniture, 4) community savings and 5) other products and services. The results of thorough interviews can be summarized into three primary subjects:

### 4.1 Performance of Community Enterprises

#### 4.1.1 Entrepreneurs who are effective in their community ventures can skillfully and quickly tackle difficulties

They create community enterprises and employ creativity to provide high-quality products/services that fulfil consumer needs. For instance: Marketing planning skills: Assessing vegetable demand using community marketing strategies at flea markets, community markets, and marketplaces beyond the local vicinity. Vegetables can be cultivated based on market demand to enable selling at a lucrative price and reduce selling expenses. Establish community enterprises to solve issues like poor pricing by utilizing collective purchasing methods to ensure fair and consistent prices for fish. Members take turns producing chili paste in their free time. Now, these groups are successful in their operations who can solve problems appropriately and efficiently. There are innovations to help community enterprises having good products/services that meet the needs of consumers. Therefore, they are a sustainable community enterprise.

#### **4.1.2 Community enterprises may need government assistance even if they are functioning, particularly when the operator is elderly**

Senior entrepreneurs may find it challenging to adjust to technology and may not possess the same endurance as they did previously. The entrepreneurs lack interest in training since they have not seen concrete development and consistency for a long time. Various issues, such as marketing, are promoted for their products. Product sales cannot be dispersed during the Covid epidemic. Products were sold at a loss because clients considered them too expensive. Therefore, these groups are still continuous to develop especially 21<sup>st</sup> century entrepreneurial skills.

#### **4.1.3 Some community enterprises have ceased operations, either temporarily or permanently**

All meetings have been cancelled temporarily due to the recent increase in Covid cases. They are not currently involved in the manufacturing or marketing of any products. Permanently cease business to establish their own company. Therefore, these groups should encourage and help be create their jobs.

### **4.2 Significance of Obtaining Development Skills for Community Enterprises**

The study showed that most community enterprises received products/services training as part of government policy support during the year.

In summary, Mahidol University offered training for small and medium-sized firms. The Community Development Department was trained in developing a variety of products, focusing on creating high-quality items and selling them through online platforms. Attended yearly training workshops offered by Community Development and Non-formal Education. The Department of Commerce supports and enhances OTOP products and their packaging. The Ministry of Science and Rajamangala University offer year-round training to prepare individuals for marketing products in Japan.

**Skills needed for community entrepreneurs can be summarized as follows:**

Marketing topics offer sales skills training for elderly individuals focusing on e-commerce

product marketing, establishing markets to support products, online marketing across various platforms, customer conversion, confidence in product sales, and seeking online marketing training.

Using internet communication applications in technology.

Production-related issues include constraints on production capacity, challenges for purchasers when acquiring large quantities of goods, and difficulty in producing packaging.

Opting to invest in further packaging development rather than outsourcing the packing process due to issues such as a lack of independent problem-solving skills in product design, faulty equipment, the use of a solar oven, the processing aspect, and the machinery employed in producing different wooden items.

Community enterprises may face obstacles mostly related to marketing and product development. Therefore, they must enhance their skills in various areas, including distribution and production. Amid the COVID-19 epidemic, marketing strategies must depend on technology for sales and other operations. The project is using marketing content to educate on entrepreneurial skills, emphasizing the improvement of 21<sup>st</sup> century competences.

### **4.3 Results from a Questionnaire can be Analyzed as Follows**

#### **4.3.1 Analyzed the training needs of different groups in chainat province for 21<sup>st</sup> century entrepreneurship skills and presented the findings in Table 1**

Table 1 indicates that the demand for entrepreneurial skills training in the 21<sup>st</sup> century was considerable, with a mean of 3.86 and a S.D. of 0.92. Each group had a high degree of proficiency: the life and professional skills group had a mean of 3.87 and a S.D. of 0.89, while the developing innovative skills group had a mean of 3.86 and a S.D. of 0.96. This means both of the 21<sup>st</sup> century entrepreneurial skills are important.

#### **4.3.2 Examine every subset of entrepreneurial abilities in community enterprises in Chainat Province in Table 2 and Table 3 of the 21<sup>st</sup> century**

Table 2 shows that the need for training to enhance innovative skills had a high degree of proficiency in the group's innovations skill and

sub-skills group. It means that is significant, with a mean of 3.86 and a S.D. of 0.96. The five sub-skill groups are rated as follows: Skills of public relations and building relationships in business ( $\bar{x}$  =3.95, S.D.=0.93); Skills in networking, gathering information, identifying opportunities, and critical thinking ( $\bar{x}$  =3.86, S.D.=0.87); Proficient in overseeing community enterprises with enthusiasm and curiosity ( $\bar{x}$  =3.85, S.D.=0.99); Skills in managing creative community enterprises ( $\bar{x}$ =3.84, S.D.=1.00); and problem-solving abilities ( $\bar{x}$ =3.76, S.D.=0.97).

Table 3 shows a significant requirement for training in life and professional skills has a high degree of proficiency in the group's life and career skill and sub-skills group, with an average of 3.87 and a standard deviation of 0.89. The five sub-skill groups are: Creative initiative and individuality skills ( $\bar{x}$  =3.95, S.D.=0.86);

Proficiency in decision-making under limitations ( $\bar{x}$  =3.94, S.D.=0.88); Proficiency in delivering timely outcomes while demonstrating the capacity to engage and disengage, exhibit patience, and adaptability ( $\bar{x}$ =3.84, S.D.=0.77); Proficiency in efficiently using existing resources ( $\bar{x}$  =3.81, S.D.=0.84); and Proficiency in generating more worth ( $\bar{x}$ =3.79, S.D.=1.02).

Tables 1 to 3 show that entrepreneurs' community enterprises in the 21<sup>st</sup> century require training in entrepreneurial skills, specifically in marketing, at a high level for both groups. The group concluded that the highest score in producing innovation capabilities was attributed to public relations skills and building contacts in company. The group achieved the highest mark for abilities and personality. Both sub-skill groups have identical scores.

**Table 1. Demand for entrepreneurial skills training in the 21<sup>st</sup> century**

<b>Entrepreneurial talents for the 21<sup>st</sup> century</b>	$\bar{x}$	S.D.	<b>Training requirements level</b>
Group focused on developing innovative skills	3.86	0.96	high
Group focused on life and professional skills	3.87	0.89	high
<b>Total</b>	3.86	0.92	high

**Table 2. Training needs assessment for a group focused on developing innovation skills**

<b>Group Focused on Developing Innovative Skills</b>	$\bar{x}$	S.D.	<b>Training Requirements Level</b>
<b>1. Skills in managing creative community enterprises</b>			
1.1 Developing new internet company promotions, including discounts, exchanges, gifts, and freebies.	3.84	0.97	high
1.2 utilizing creative media for doing online commercial activities, such as photo editing and video clips.	3.84	1.04	high
<b>Total</b>	3.84	1.00	high
<b>2. Proficient in overseeing community enterprises with enthusiasm and curiosity.</b>			
2.1 Organizing digital promotions to boost revenue	3.90	0.96	high
2.2 Thorough internet-based sales procedure	3.85	1.00	high
2.3 Online sales management	3.81	1.01	high
<b>Total</b>	3.85	0.99	high
<b>3. Skills in networking, gathering information, identifying opportunities, and critical thinking</b>			
3.1 Capable of evaluating strengths and flaws in sales through many ways.	3.90	0.82	high
3.2 Capable of evaluating circumstances and potential needed for e-commerce	3.82	0.90	high
<b>Total</b>	3.86	0.87	high
<b>4. Problem-solving abilities</b>			
4.1 Addressing issues stemming from e-commerce transactions	3.72	0.96	high
4.2 utilizing diverse sales strategies to meet objectives.	3.79	0.97	high
<b>Total</b>	3.75	0.97	high
<b>5. Skills of public relations and building relationships in business</b>			

<b>Group Focused on Developing Innovative Skills</b>	$\bar{x}$	<b>S.D.</b>	<b>Training Requirements Level</b>
5.1 Promoting through several methods to accomplish objectives, like internet sales and offering products/services to tourists visiting the area.	3.92	1.00	high
5.2 Strategies for promoting products/services to reach specific customers	3.97	0.88	high
5.3 Utilizing sales strategies that are mutually advantageous, including offering discounts for bulk purchases or free shipping.	3.88	0.92	high
5.4 Acquiring skills in establishing a business network	4.02	0.93	high
<b>Total</b>	3.95	0.93	high
<b>Total of the group's innovative skills</b>	3.86	0.96	high

**Table 3. Training needs assessment for life and professional skills**

<b>Life and professional skills Group</b>	$\bar{x}$	<b>S.D.</b>	<b>Level of training needs</b>
1. Proficiency in decision-making under limitations.			
1.1 Addressing current sales issues	3.93	0.89	high
1.2 Adjusting to the current sales promotions	3.95	0.88	high
<b>Total</b>	3.94	0.88	high
2. Creative initiative and individuality skills			
2.1 Training the next generation to uphold and protect traditional knowledge that is applicable to your business.	4.05	0.82	high
2.2 Preserving the integrity of product sales	4.02	0.86	high
2.3 Develop novel sales strategies like utilizing automated machines to address inquiries and offering tours to visitors to showcase production processes.	3.79	0.88	high
<b>Total</b>	3.95	0.86	high
3. Proficiency in delivering timely outcomes while demonstrating the capacity to engage and disengage, exhibit patience, and adaptability.			
3.1 Developing successful sales procedures involves interacting with consumers, adjusting to various scenarios, and displaying patience.	3.83	0.76	high
3.2 Developing the ability to set marketing goals through various methods.	3.86	0.78	high
<b>Total</b>	3.84	0.77	high
4. Proficiency in efficiently using existing resources			
4.1 Looking for innovative technologies for marketing management	3.85	0.82	high
4.2 Optimising resource allocation for increased efficiency in e-commerce.	3.78	0.85	high
<b>Total</b>	3.81	0.84	high
5. Proficiency in generating more worth			
5.1 Developing unique innovations to differentiate from competition and enhance value.	3.94	0.95	high
5.2 Enhancing the aesthetic appeal of online stores to draw in customers.	3.69	1.06	high
5.3 Enhancing creativity and finding inspiration for e-commerce.	3.72	1.04	high
<b>Total</b>	3.79	1.02	high
<b>Total of the group life and career skills</b>	3.87	0.89	high

## 5. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

The study discovered that entrepreneurs in Chainat Province aspire to enhance their entrepreneurial abilities in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, particularly focusing on developing innovative skills and life and career skills. Qualitative results found that There are received to support improved their potential continuously from government and private agencies; as well as [14,15]. Moreover, the findings was the fundamental marketing problems of community enterprises that produce products but were unable to sell them. Especially during Covid that need to rely on technology in sales, etc. The quantitative results are guided by qualitative results, so this research focuses on marketing areas in 21<sup>st</sup> century entrepreneurial skills by utilizing digital innovation; namely online commercial activities, digital promotions, online sales management etc which corresponds to Wirata et al. [4] indicate the development of digital innovation to make a profit. This aligns with Thongeam and Sapsanguanboon [16] who identified two main groups of skills: innovation skills such as marketing strategies, technological media usage, human resource management, problem-solving, decision-making, business knowledge, communication, negotiation, and financial management; and life and career skills including interaction, adaptability, teamwork, and risk-taking. It aligns with Chaisri et al. [17] in developing innovation skills related to online marketing, marketing communications, prototype creation, modern product design, and product quality concerning community product standards.

Entrepreneurs learning was applied by various theories to gain understanding and practice; therefore entrepreneurs continually accumulate knowledge by open approach through experience and social interaction [18]. In addition, researchers such as Zahra et al. [19] have noted that the ability to acquire and transfer knowledge plays an important role in exploiting entrepreneurial opportunities. In a study conducted by Thongeam et al. [16], it was discovered that the application of a learning kit for 21<sup>st</sup> century entrepreneurial skills in community enterprises in Chainat Province yielded positive results.

## 6. SUGGESTIONS

### 6.1 Practice Recommendations

1. The content of the 21<sup>st</sup> century entrepreneurial skills can be created the

variety of short training courses in marketing area to other community enterprises or companies or individuals interested in becoming entrepreneurs in the future.

2. The content of 21<sup>st</sup> century entrepreneurial skills can be integrated into one part of the entrepreneurship courses for higher education.
3. The content of 21<sup>st</sup> century entrepreneurial skills can be adjusted for Primary and secondary education for preparing the young entrepreneurs.

### 6.2 Recommendations for Future Research

This research focuses on community enterprises in marketing areas for entrepreneurial skills in the 21<sup>st</sup> century in Chainat Province. First point of view, the content for entrepreneurial skills in the 21<sup>st</sup> century should cover all necessary abilities inside a single organization. The content of the entrepreneurial skills for the 21<sup>st</sup> century has been developed by a single business encompassing all necessary abilities. The content for entrepreneurial abilities in the 21<sup>st</sup> century focuses on subjects such as production management, financial management, and accounting. Other point of view, the researchers can select other countries, and other types of organizations.

### DISCLAIMER (ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE)

Authors hereby declare that NO generative AI technologies such as Large Language Models (ChatGPT, COPILOT, etc) and text-to-image generators have been used during writing or editing of manuscripts.

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### COMPETING INTERESTS

Authors have declared that no competing interests exist.

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