

## **The Survey of Participation of Members in Community Enterprise Management in the Northeast of Thailand**

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**Abstract.** The purpose of this study is to investigate the level of participation and compare members' participation in the management of community enterprises in the northeast of Thailand. The 400 participants who made up the sample were chosen randomly and were asked to complete a questionnaire. The overview of the results showed that the level of participation of the members was moderate. In terms of production, the members' participation was high. With regard to organization and marketing management issues, members participated at a moderate level. In terms of financial management issues, members' participation was low. When the participation of all participants was compared, it was found that their different levels of education, occupation and income caused the differences in the level of participation.

### **1. Introduction**

When it comes to the topic of Thailand's economic development, the Thai government attaches great importance to building the stability of the local economy by strengthening the community in a balanced and sustainable way. This is seen as the cornerstone of the country's development. As a result, promoting community enterprises is one of the key policies. The definition of community enterprise is that it is an entrepreneurial organisation which is owned by the community members. It involves the production of goods, services and other activities that members of a community are involved in with the aim of making a profit, both economically and socially. It creates economic profit by making money and a career for the individual, while for the society as a whole, it enables families and the community to work together in order to share ideas, responsibilities, happiness and to encourage each other through the community entrepreneurship process [1]. Consequently, community enterprise is important for the foundation of economic and social development, and for enhancing the quality of life of the people in the community. However, although the government has continuously promoted and supported community enterprises, it has found that community enterprises still have problems and obstacles, including restrictions on operations. Good management is important and is needed for the successful development and sustainability of community enterprise.

Donkwa [2] provided a definition of management in a community business context as the limited allocation of resources to produce goods and services to meet human needs, or to achieve the intended purpose under the circumstances of risk and uncertainty. In general, the focus of community enterprise is on four key components - organization management, marketing management, production management and financial management [3]. However, the management of community enterprises must focus on the participation of members [4]. Participation in co-thinking and co-decision making makes the members feel as if they are co-owners. This will lead to the development of mutual learning and will make the community enterprise successful [5,6] and will enable sustainable development [7].

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When community members are involved, it increases efficiency and changes the organization for the better. It generates good attitudes in terms of helping the operations, and helps members to be ready to willingly participate in community activities [8]. However, if there is a lack of participation and cooperation, the activities of the group may not be successful. The operation of any project they are engaged in may be finally halted or terminated [9]. So, inviting all members to participate is a great way to make sure that everyone knows the process, because they have followed up and evaluated the activities by supporting the initiative and ideas of members, causing the group's true needs to be fulfilled. It will generate the necessary enthusiasm for members to take part in the work of the group [10].

The researcher was interested in studying members' participation in community enterprise management for all the reasons mentioned above, to find out the level of participation in terms of participation in the organization in terms of marketing, production and finance, especially in the community enterprises in the northeast of Thailand. Since the region is home to the largest number of community enterprises in the country, that is 38,575 groups from 79,601 groups nationwide [11], the researchers hoped that the results of this study would be a guideline to help to create an idea of the participation of community enterprise members in other relevant organizations that could be involved in community enterprise. This could help to promote strong growth and the sustainability of future community enterprises. This research aims to study the level of participation and compare members' participation in the management of community enterprise in the northeast of Thailand.

## **2. Methods**

This research consisted of a survey of a sample of 400 community members in the north eastern region of Thailand using probability sampling, with a stratified sampling technique set at a 95% confidence level. There were two parts to the questionnaire: the socioeconomic characteristics and the participation of members in community enterprise management. The question of the participation of members in community enterprise management was examined using a five point Likert rating scale. The Cronbach's Alpha Coefficient ( $\alpha$ ) was 0.903. The data was collected manually using the questionnaire. The questionnaires were retrieved and were then analyzed using a statistical program for descriptive statistics, which included the analysis of socioeconomic factors, using such measures as percentages, means, and standard deviation. One-way analysis of variance was by ANOVA and, if a difference was found, the Scheffe method was used to determine the correlation coefficient. The statistical significance number was determined at 0.05.

## **3. Conclusion and Discussion**

The participation of members in the management of northeastern Thai community enterprises can be summarized as follows.

1. The socioeconomic characteristics showed that most of the respondents were 75.75% female, the average age was 51-60 years (36.75%) and head of house was 37.75%. Forty-two percent of the respondents were education to a primary level, while 6.5% were educated to an undergraduate level. In terms of employment, agriculture occupied the highest proportion of people (70%), while 21.75% were traders, 6.25% were pensioners and 2.00% were civil servants. Most respondents (32.25%) had an average monthly income of 5,001 - 10,000 baht. The respondents with an income of 20,001-25,000 baht and 25,000 baht, were 7.0% and 6.5%, respectively.

### **2. Participation of members in community enterprise management.**

Overall, the participation of members in community enterprise management was at a moderate level ( $\bar{X}$ =2.93). In terms of production, participation was at a high level ( $\bar{X}$ = 3.42). Organizational and marketing management saw a moderate level of engagement ( $\bar{X}$  = 2.94 and  $\bar{X}$  = 2.84 respectively). With regard to finance management, participation was at a low level ( $\bar{X}$ =2.52) as shown in Table 1.

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Table 1: Mean, standard deviation and participation levels of members in community enterprise management.

Item	$\bar{X}$	S.D	Meaning
<b>1. Organization Management</b>	<b>2.94</b>	<b>0.87</b>	<b>Moderate</b>
1.1 Plan and prepare a general plan for the group	3.06	0.95	Moderate
1.2 Define group rules of practice	3.01	0.90	Moderate
1.3 Selection of Group Management Committee	3.08	0.98	Moderate
1.4 Allocation of dividends or other benefits	2.88	1.17	Moderate
1.5 Evaluate and improve the performance of the group	2.66	0.99	Moderate
<b>2. Production Management</b>	<b>3.42</b>	<b>0.76</b>	<b>High</b>
2.1 Determine the volume of production and procurement of raw materials used in production	3.53	0.84	High
2.2 Production and Quality Control of Planned Products	3.55	0.90	High
2.3 Develop and improve production	3.54	0.87	High
2.4 Design and development of goods or packaging	3.34	0.89	Moderate
2.5 Prepare production reports and evaluate production performance	3.13	0.94	Moderate
<b>3. Marketing Management</b>	<b>2.84</b>	<b>1.03</b>	<b>Moderate</b>
3.1 Target marketing	2.94	1.12	Moderate
3.2 Sales and delivery	3.09	1.17	Moderate
3.3 Publish products	2.87	1.11	Moderate
3.4 Collection of sales data.	2.72	1.11	Moderate
3.5 Report and evaluate the marketing performance.	2.60	1.07	Low
<b>4. Financial Management</b>	<b>2.52</b>	<b>1.04</b>	<b>Low</b>
4.1 Estimated budget required for operation	2.58	1.04	Low
4.2 Seek and allocate operating expenses.	2.61	1.02	Low
4.3 Prepare financial statements	2.50	1.23	Low
4.4 Check financial statements	2.52	1.13	Low
4.5 Apply financial accounting information to planning or decision-making.	2.37	1.03	Low
<b>Total</b>	<b>2.93</b>	<b>0.81</b>	<b>Moderate</b>

Boomvut [12] explained that members would take part in the very early stages of the founding of the group, when selecting the person to serve as Chairman and Group Director, by selecting people who had enough knowledge about the operation of community enterprises. Therefore, some group members understood that community enterprise management is the sole responsibility of the Chairman and the Board. In addition, most of the members were farmers who were less educated and of an older generation who did not have basic knowledge of enterprise management, some enterprise activity and management activities. Thus, the members had a lack of interest in attendance [13].

For production management, the reason why members participated at a very high level and were more involved in other areas may be because the income of most members was derived from the quantity of goods produced. The members that produce more or produce better quality goods, will receive more dividends [7]. Members may produce at home or produce as part of a group. However, when the production is completed, it must be grouped together for further distribution. Therefore, the members have to determine the quantity, production and supply of raw materials used in production. Co-production and quality control develop and improve production at a very high level.

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3. The results of the comparison of participation levels found that the variance in education, occupation and income varied because the participation of different members differed at the 0.05 significance level.

Community enterprise group members with different levels of education revealed different levels of participation in community enterprise. The members with a bachelor's degree participated more than members with an elementary level of education. Kongkapan and Thongprasert [14] argued that it is possible that members who are more highly educated are more knowledgeable and have better social and living conditions, so they have more interest in participation.

Turning to the occupation variable, the members who had different occupations had different levels of participation. The members of the agricultural profession contributed less overall than the trade professional members. This may be due to members having different occupations which have different responsibilities and working hours especially in the agricultural sector, which requires careful attention and more time to take care of the land depending on each season [14]. It is not conducive to joining and contributing to the participation of members.

Lastly, it was found that members with different levels of income had different levels of participation. The results of the study suggest that lower income level members had a higher level of engagement. This may be because low income members are interested in attending or have a need to participate. In order to obtain income after the agricultural season, lower income members had a greater degree of participation in community enterprise management [15].

#### **4. Recommendations**

This study of the participation of members in community enterprise management in the northeast region of Thailand has the following suggestions:

1. The overall participation of members was only at a moderate level, with the exception of the production side with regard to which members participated at a high level. All participants, especially the heads of particular groups and the government officials, should organize meetings to help understand the role of the members.

2. To promote the participation of members, they should be allowed to participate in all activities. Members should have the opportunity to participate equally and to organize activities that meet the needs of the members. This is an incentive for members to participate in the community enterprise operations.

3. Group activities must be consistent with the lifestyle of the members, especially that of members who work in the agricultural sector. This is because their free time may be limited compared with other career groups. As a result, this would allow members to have time to participate in group activities.

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