

DEVELOPMENT OF AN ELEARNING MODEL IN SMEs MANAGEMENT SKILLS FOR THAI FOOD CLUSTERS

Patarakit Phisarnchananan¹, Pornpop Saengthong², Chitapa Ketavan³

Abstract: *The main objective of the study was to develop a web-based learning model in Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) management skills for Thai Food Clusters called MONARCHIST model. The model was conducted based on the needs of learners and experts' recommendations by using Learning Management System (LMS) to facilitate an online course. The efficiency of the eLearning model developed was analyzed as well as the satisfaction of the Thai Food Industrial entrepreneurs towards the LMS. This study assesses the utility of mixed methods designs that integrate qualitative (In-Depth Interviews) and quantitative (Sample Survey) approaches. The data were collected from the entrepreneurs, who were working in five sectors of food production areas. This study used descriptive statistics, paired t-test, and correlation to measure the importance of satisfaction components. Research findings were that the MONARCHIST model met the 80/80 efficiency criterion. Additionally, participants showed significant improvement in their knowledge in business management after course completion ($p < 0.01$). Furthermore, the satisfactory score of learners towards the MONARCHIST model was high (4.38 out of 5.00). These results conclude that the MONARCHIST model was effective and practical for implementation.*

Keywords: *Web-based learning model, Small and Medium Enterprises, Thai Food Cluster, Management Skills.*

INTRODUCTION

Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) have had a significant impact on industrial sectors in Thailand since the late 1990s, both entrepreneurially and financially. A report conducted by the Office of Small and Medium sized Enterprise Promotion or OSMEP showed that SMEs constituted almost 40 per cent of GDP by value (OSMEP, 2017). As proposed by the Ministry of Industry, Thailand in 2002, the definition of SMEs in Thailand was classified into 4 sectors, namely Manufacturing, Service, Wholesale and Retail sector, by using both the number of employees and the value of total fixed assets (excluding land) as the main consideration (OECD, 2016).

SMEs in the manufacturing sector, which is the sector that all Thai food companies belong to, possess the highest level of capital investment, and consistently act as the main driver for exports in Thailand (Dhanani and Scholtès, 2002). More than 90 percent of the total firms are SMEs. Within the manufacturing sector, the Thai Food Industry was the largest industry which was the main target group to be promoted by the Government (Thailand Investment Review, 2017).

However, Thai entrepreneurs are still confronted with the problems of material price, wages, transportation, and energy costs as well as the pressure from high potential competitors like China and Vietnam. Therefore, Thai entrepreneurs are required to improve their quality and standards to achieve world recognition along with the attempt to export to the new markets in order to avoid the price war.

Due to the financial crisis in Thailand, in 1997 and 2008, these events have caused the country to lose a lot.

¹Patarakit Phisarnchananan, Graduate School of eLearning, Assumption University, Thailand.

²Pornpop Saengthong, Ph.D., Institute for Research and Academic Services, Assumption University, Thailand.

³Chitapa Ketavan, Ph.D., Graduate School of eLearning, Assumption University, Thailand.