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Perspectives from Resilient Community Enterprise Leaders: Post-Transformation Food Product Innovation Management in Kalasin Province

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Abstract

Aim/Purpose: In the context of post-pandemic economic recovery and escalating market competition, community enterprises in Thailand have encountered pressing demands to improve their operational resilience and competitiveness. Food product innovation has become essential for maintaining local economies and ensuring long-term growth. Notwithstanding its significance, there has been limited research on how community enterprises navigate innovation processes in changing contexts. This study sought to identify and analyze the essential elements of food product innovation management as perceived by resilient community enterprise leaders in Kalasin Province, Thailand.

Introduction/Background: The conversion of community enterprises into sustainable and competitive organizations requires incorporating innovation throughout the food production value chain. The paper examined this issue using the Resource-Based View (RBV) paradigm, which asserts that firms can achieve persistent competitive advantage by strategically utilizing valuable, rare, inimitable, and non-substitutable resources. In such settings, internal capabilities—such as knowledge, leadership, cooperation, and localized expertise—are crucial for augmenting product innovation. This research examined how effective community enterprise executives utilize these talents to oversee food product innovation in the post-pandemic period.

Methodology: A qualitative research methodology was utilized to obtain comprehensive perspectives from seasoned practitioners. Fifteen leaders of community enterprises were intentionally chosen for their exceptional practices in food product processing and their registration with the Department of Agricultural Extension. Semi-structured interviews were conducted in the local Lao dialect, audio-recorded with permission, subsequently transcribed, and back-translated into Thai to guarantee linguistic and contextual precision. Thematic content analysis was employed to analyze this data, encompassing coding, categorization, interpretation, and validation via triangulation and member checking to improve dependability and trustworthiness.

Findings: Eight interconnected elements of food product innovation management were identified. First, research and design include market study, creative conceptualization, product appropriateness, safety, aesthetic appeal, and consultation with external specialists. Secondly, new product development entails methodical planning, differentiating tactics, alignment with trends, and preparedness for resources and labor. Third, existing product improvements involve refining flavor, packaging, quality, and nutritional value in accordance with changing consumer preferences. Fourth, value enhancement concentrates on cultivating product distinctiveness, identity, perceived worth, and strategic resource allocation. Fifth, the innovation process involves use of novel technologies, optimized workflows, digital assimilation, and process re-engineering. Sixth, collaboration emphasizes shared responsibility, collective motivation, internal coordination, and reciprocal advantages among organizational members. Seventh, work support encompasses internal consultation, mentoring, opportunity discovery, and procedures for organizational learning. Finally, transportation and supply chain management encompass logistics optimization, quality control in distribution, customer service, and punctual delivery. The effective amalgamation of these elements allows community firms to

maintain agility, responsiveness to customers, and competitive differentiation in a swiftly evolving business landscape.

Contribution/Impact on Society: This study enhances the growing dialogue on grassroots innovation and community-oriented enterprise growth. This expands the resource-based view theory by situating it inside a rural micro-enterprise context, demonstrating how internal capabilities and locally embedded resources can be utilized for strategic innovation. The practical ramifications encompass food security, sustainable livelihoods, and decentralized economic growth. The results emphasize that innovation does not require advanced technology to be effective; instead, contextual relevance, stakeholder involvement, and adaptive leadership can produce similarly significant results.

Recommendations: Practitioners ought to prioritize knowledge enhancement, market-oriented innovation, and collaborative platforms that promote idea generation and capability exchanges. Government and affiliated agencies are urged to furnish technical training, marketing assistance, and logistical infrastructure to support local innovation ecosystems. Academics should employ mixed method approaches in future investigations to quantify the causal links between innovation components and corporate performance metrics. Cross-regional comparisons can yield more generalizability and insights into inventive scalability. The principal limitation of this study lies in its qualitative approach and limited geographical reach. Although the purposive sample provided extensive contextual insights, the findings may not be indicative of all community companies or relevant to other industries or regions. Moreover, the analysis of interview data may be influenced by researcher bias or constraints in participant memory and expression.

Research Limitation: Subsequent investigations should analyze the individual traits, organizational dynamics, and environmental elements that influence food product innovation in community companies. Utilizing quantitative or mixed-method research methodologies, such as confirmatory factor analysis, would facilitate the validation of the eight components identified in this work, permit regional comparisons, and elucidate the evolution of innovation capacity under varying policies or market situations. Consideration must also be afforded to the influence of digital technology, sustainability practices, and leadership styles in driving corporate transformation within the post-transformation economy. These methodologies would augment the legitimacy, applicability, and practical significance of findings, providing essential recommendations for policymakers and practitioners to fortify robust and adaptive community enterprises.

Keywords: *Food product innovation management, communal enterprise, post-transformation*

Introduction

Community enterprises are one example of ventures that can generate returns for local individuals and society. Government support for these enterprises has facilitated business expansion in various forms. In the post-COVID-19 economic climate, community enterprises must adapt rapidly to recover. This can be achieved by prioritizing environmentally friendly products, waste reduction, resilience building, and network development. Furthermore, an innovative management plan for products is essential, and crucial for transforming crises into opportunities and ensuring future sustainability.

For Kalasin, a province located in the northeastern part of Thailand, its community enterprises also need to enhance their products and create differentiation to increase income and operational potential (Hanifah et al., 2019). Moreover, to establish sustainability and advance to a higher level of business, products need to have value added (Parinyasutinun, 2019). The current challenge for community enterprises in Kalasin Province is managing products that are not in demand (Jintana & Puripanik, 2020). The ramifications of this issue extend beyond economics, encompassing food security, household incomes, and sustainable livelihoods. These findings emphasize that tackling insufficient market demand via systematic innovation not only reinstates competitiveness but also safeguards household incomes and fortifies communal food security over time.

When items fail to generate market demand, revenue-generating potential declines and competitiveness wanes. Establishing a food product innovation management framework helps improve competitiveness by explicitly associating innovation with economic and social value. Product development and customer base expansion are essential for community enterprises to attain sustained growth (Hyytinen et al., 2015). This is particularly true in relation to the Resource-Based View (RBV) theory, which underscores the importance of leveraging valuable and distinctive resources to innovate and enhance products, thereby differentiating them from competitors and strengthening competitive advantage for sustainable customer base growth.

This study employs the term "post-transformation" to characterize the social and economic landscape following the COVID-19 pandemic, when community companies faced challenges related to economic recovery, as well as significant structural transformations in production, marketing, and leadership. This stage involves long-term adaptation techniques to enhance the capabilities and competitiveness of community enterprises, highlighting the essential role of adaptive leadership in accordance with local development conditions. Since 2021, this era has marked a gradual shift towards more sustainable and innovative commercial methods among communities.

The RBV philosophy underscores the strategic use of valuable and distinctive resources to create a competitive advantage. This entails advancing creative production methodologies (Barney, 1991) and applying novel management strategies (Ng et al., 2020) within the food sector, which is vital for human existence and significantly impacts the economy and society. Efficient food product management is essential for guaranteeing food security, reducing shortages, enhancing hygiene, and the quality of life. Consequently, it is imperative to develop a sustainable and balanced food system for the future, especially in managing food product innovations, which is currently a salient area of focus.

Prior research has concentrated on formulating culinary recipes, package aesthetics, and incorporating indigenous ingredients. Sahdev et al. (2022) underscored the significance of product innovation, whereas Vassallo et al. (2023) examined the amalgamation of traditional knowledge with innovation to improve sustainability across economic, social, and environmental dimensions. The elements of food product innovation management encompass developing novel products, formulating new production processes, building new organizations, implementing innovative management practices, and enhancing current products (Chiffoleau & Dourian, 2020).

Research on food product innovation management in community companies is insufficient, despite its significance for local economic development and business expansion. Nonetheless, comprehending and investigating the intricate details of food product innovation management in community enterprises, as well as advancing sustainable business practices within the community, is essential (Community Enterprise Promotion Division, 2022). Continuous development and promotion are vital for the effective management of food goods. This entails developing new products and evaluating production methods prior to market launch to guarantee consumer acceptability (Sethi et al., 2012).

Despite growing academic interest in community enterprises, research examining the perception and implementation of specific components of food product innovation management in rural contexts remains limited, particularly in the post-transformation period. Most existing research has focused on financial outcomes or general innovation frameworks, leaving unanswered questions about the strategic practices that community enterprise leaders employ to build resilience and sustainability.

Research Question

What are the components of food product innovation management in the post-transformation period, and how are they perceived and integrated by community enterprise leaders in Kalasin Province to enhance resilience and competitiveness?

This study focused on analyzing the components of food product innovation management, focusing on the perspectives of resilient community enterprise leaders. These elements serve as support mechanisms that enable community enterprises to add value to their local food products and enhance their long-term management capabilities, while also being linked to the sustainability of their communities. The findings provide insights into how leaders can turn crises into opportunities, foster adaptive leadership, and achieve sustainable progress during uncertain times.

Literature Review

The post-transformation period after the COVID-19 crisis has profoundly influenced the world economy (Rintanalert & Sirisunhirun, 2021). These impacts span all facets of human existence, particularly regarding health, travel limitations, lockdowns, and numerous other measures (Saputra & Herlina, 2021). Many firms are confronting survival issues, while various community enterprises are attempting to adjust to their altered environments, hence experiencing pressure in multiple operational domains (Zaverzhenets & Łobacz, 2021).

Kalasin Province, abundant in cultural diversity and natural resources, is predominantly dependent on agriculture, yielding a range of crops and fishery products. (Kalasin Provincial Agricultural Office, 2023). Moreover, agriculture can bolster local economies and create products that are aligned with market demands, thus guaranteeing future sustainability. Numerous studies in Thailand have emphasized community enterprises in the Northeast, especially in Kalasin Province, where local resources facilitate food processing that embodies cultural heritage and sustains livelihoods.

Contemporary leaders utilize indigenous knowledge and resources, such as wild fish, to develop distinctive products that satisfy current market requirements. Integrating online and offline marketing strategies enhances competitiveness while maintaining local identity (Intalar et al., 2018). Resilient leadership is an essential element in fostering organizational and community resilience, particularly during crises. Previous studies have demonstrated that resilient leaders promote adaptability via effective decision-making, emotional intelligence, and social mobilization. In community enterprises, such leadership fosters collaboration, information exchange, and collective action, thus promoting innovation and sustainability (Dodds et al., 2018; Jintana & Puripanik, 2020; Sihvola et al., 2022).

These findings correspond with paradigms like shared leadership and complex adaptive leadership, which highlight distributed responsibility and adaptability to dynamic situations. Previous studies have repeatedly highlighted that a robust food product innovation management framework, comprising eight elements, is essential for bolstering resilience in community companies (Hanifah et al., 2019; Ng et al., 2020; Parinyasutinun, 2019). The components of research and design, new product creation, existing product enhancement, value addition, innovation processes, collaboration, functional support, and logistics and supply chain management synergistically enhance adaptability and long-term sustainability. Studies have indicated that research and design, in conjunction with new product development, improve agility in adapting to evolving market expectations (Hyytinen et al., 2015). Enhancing products and adding value sustain competitiveness while safeguarding cultural identity (Delgado et al., 2023). Innovation processes and collaboration facilitate knowledge dissemination and community empowerment, which are crucial for resilience in times of crisis (Leonidou et al., 2020). Functional support offers organizational stability, while logistics and supply chain management aid uninterrupted market access, even with external disturbances like COVID-19 (Sudan & Taggar 2021).

Collectively, these eight factors constitute a cohesive framework that enhances competitiveness while directly associating innovation with resilience, food security, and sustainable livelihoods in community enterprises. Community enterprises can attain long-term resilience and sustainability by integrating effective research and product design (Ng et al., 2020), diversifying new products (Hyytinen et al., 2015), enhancing existing products (Hanifah et al., 2019), adding value through quality and eco-friendly practices (Delgado et al., 2023), fostering collaboration (Jintana & Puripanik, 2020), providing functional support (Intalar et al., 2018), and strengthening logistics (Leonidou et al., 2020).

The Resource-Based View paradigm is a crucial notion in organizational product creation, particularly in its emphasis of cultivating innovative concepts to direct strategic initiatives (Porter, 1990). This corresponds with Barney's (1991) theory, which underscored the need to use existing resources to generate value and competitive advantages, especially in the development of goods that satisfy customer demands and contemporary management practices. Moreover, it recognizes as crucial the ability to conduct research management in the innovation of quality food products. Recent research by Kariv et al. (2024) highlighted the imperative of enabling emerging entrepreneurs in product creation and innovation, aligning with the RBV philosophy. Furthermore, research conducted by Salim et al. (2020) revealed that advantageous enhancements can be realized by methodically

evaluating the potential of green product innovations in conjunction with green process innovations to achieve enhanced efficiency in a swiftly evolving technological landscape.

The integration of viewpoints inside the RBV theory suggests that it can function as a fundamental framework for subsequent research on innovation management. Alongside the RBV framework, the literature illustrates that food security and sustainable livelihoods are pivotal in the integration of food product innovation management across multiple dimensions, such as product development, local resource utilization, and the establishment of product identity for enterprise sustainability.

Food product innovation management encompasses the marketing and communication of novel products and services, with the objective of fostering beneficial societal transformations. Vassallo et al. (2023) defined innovation as the amalgamation of old knowledge and modern techniques, with the objective of promoting long-term sustainability and generating favorable economic, social, and environmental results. Misra and Mention (2022) defined food innovation as incorporating customers into the innovation process, advancement of the food value chain, and administration of food research and development. Food product innovation entails the development of food items using creativity and advanced technology to improve value and quality, meet customer demands, and yield beneficial results for the economy, society, and the environment. Leonidou et al. (2020) contended that research and design, product development, and improvement of existing products are critical processes bolstered by collaboration and implementation of innovations. The augmentation of value and efficiency in operations promotes good product management, encompassing transportation and supply chain management (Intalar et al., 2018). The literature underscores the need to analyze how community entrepreneurs oversee several facets of food product innovation.

Methodology

Research Design

Overseeing food product innovation within community enterprises necessitates a systematic strategy that addresses the intricacies of leaders' viewpoints (Blumenthal & Jensen, 2019). This study employed a qualitative research methodology, utilizing semi-structured interviews to facilitate an in-depth examination of attitudes, experiences, and decision-making processes (Bell et al., 2022). This method was particularly suitable, given the study's emphasis on resilience and adaptive leadership. The interview technique was established based on prior research and enhanced with feedback from three academic experts to enhance content validity. Open-ended inquiries addressed essential subjects including product creation, cooperation, innovation processes, and leadership adaptability (Table 1). Participants were urged to expand upon and clarify their comments to enhance the acquisition of varied and contextually relevant data.

Rigorous ethical standards were maintained. The interview process received approval from the Human Ethics Committee at Kalasin University (HS-KSU 001/2021, Exemption Review). Participants were thoroughly informed of the study's objectives, methodologies, and their rights, including the ability to withdraw at any moment. Informed consent was acquired in writing, and confidentiality was preserved by ensuring the anonymity of all participants. Each interview lasted roughly 20 minutes and was conducted in the local tongue to foster a natural environment and reduce potential language prejudice. The interviews were transcribed and translated into Thai by a bilingual expert utilizing a back-translation method (Brislin, 1970) to verify accuracy. Data triangulation was employed by comparing interview data with community enterprise papers and government reports, thereby augmenting the reliability and credibility of the research findings.

Sample and Scope

Fifteen community enterprise leaders in the food product sector in Kalasin Province participated in the interviews. These leaders were from community enterprises registered with the Department of Agricultural Extension (Community Enterprise Promotion Division, 2022). They were purposively selected based on their exemplary practices and proven track records in food business management. The selection included 15 community enterprise groups operating food processing, dried food, and fresh food businesses to ensure diversity in product types and operating environments.

Purposive sampling was appropriate for this study because the objective was not to draw general statistical conclusions, but to gain insights from a rich case study. The study focused on leaders recognized for their effective and innovative practices to ensure that the data collected reflected real-world experiences, successful strategies, and challenges associated with managing food product innovation. This approach highlighted best practices and provided a comprehensive understanding of how community enterprises in Kalasin Province build resilience and sustainability. Furthermore, the purposeful sampling enhanced the findings' credibility, as the selected leaders were well-positioned to provide reliable and contextual perspectives. They are acknowledged for their exemplary operational procedures.

The scope criteria encompassed essential qualifications: (a) firstly, official registration and operation for a minimum of three years; (b) secondly, prominence in food processing, specifically fish processing, a traditional practice rooted in local knowledge; and (c) lastly, the capacity to generate income for the community and enhance food product security. The selection of these groups enabled the research to concentrate intensively on Kalasin's economically significant villages, especially those adjacent to Lam Pao Dam, which are engaged in fishing and fish processing. All responders manufactured processed fish products, encompassing fermented fish, fermented fish cakes, and dried fish. These goods embody local knowledge and identity while significantly contributing to food security and sustainable revenue for the community. This connection facilitated the administration of food product innovation across economic, social, and cultural aspects.

Data Analysis

Step 1: Transcription—Convert the audio of the interview into text for analytical purposes, ensuring that the material is precise and comprehensive.

Step 2: Categorization and Coding—Segment the acquired data into categories (themes) to enhance analysis.

Step 3: Content Analysis—Examine the data through interpretative procedures (interpretation and conclusion), with an emphasis on identifying trends seen in the responses.

Step 4: Data Validation—Examine the data with the group to confirm the information's accuracy prior to advancing to the outcomes.

Table 1 *Framework of Interview Inquiries*

Structure	Questions	References
Food Product Innovation Management	PI1. How does the enterprise develop new products that are completely different from the current ones? PI2. How does the enterprise innovate its current products? PI3. How does the enterprise engage in research, innovation, design? PI4. What are the procedures and guidelines for the enterprise in developing new products? PI5. How does the enterprise conduct research to plan for product improvement? PI6. How does the enterprise currently enhance the value of existing products? PI7. How does the enterprise improve existing products through changes such as appearance, packaging, and volume? PI8. How does the enterprise promote teamwork and collaborative efforts? PI9. How has the enterprise undergone changes in management processes that are innovative? PI10. How does the enterprise apply modern management principles within the organization, such as in production and marketing? PI11. How does the enterprise manage the transportation of products safely and punctually?	Zahay et al. (2018), Makanyeza et al. (2022), Apanasovich et al. (2016), Bourke and Roper (2017)

Results

The research findings revealed that while all Community Enterprise Leaders functioned within the fish processing sector, their innovative techniques differed based on the specific products that they oversee. This diversity offers significant insights into the various tactics that affect the resilience of community enterprises in Kalasin Province, as delineated in Table 2. The producers of fermented fish emphasized the transmission of traditional knowledge and quality assurance to guarantee cultural preservation and household food security. Producers of sour fish implemented contemporary packaging and sanitary requirements to satisfy evolving consumer preferences, enhance reputation, and ensure ongoing revenue. Fish cake producers prioritized diversification, value-added production, and digital marketing to improve competitiveness and engage younger demographics. Desiccated fish producers prioritized effective storage and strong logistical systems to maintain long-term market stability and minimize waste.

The varying methods illustrate that community enterprise resilience is not founded on a singular strategy, but rather on context-specific innovations that cater to both cultural traditions and market demands.

Table 2 *Types of Processed Fish Products, Principal Innovation Practices, and Impact on Resilience*

Category of Product	Fundamental Innovation Strategies	Influence on Resilience
Fermented Fish (Pla Ra)	– Transmission of traditional fermenting expertise – Mobilization of community labor – Rigorous quality assurance	– Maintains cultural identity – Guarantees food safety – Enhances domestic food security
Fermented Fish (Pla Som)	– Diversification of products and enhancement of value – Implementation of novel processing techniques – Advancement via digital marketing	– Broadens market accessibility – Enhances competitive edge – Fosters young engagement and innovation
Desiccated Fish	– Effective conservation methods – Enhanced logistics and distribution systems – Emphasis on product shelf stability	– Ensures consistent market access – Minimizes spoilage and waste – Guarantees long-term income stability

The interview data analyzed indicated that the primary components and sub-components of food product innovation management were as follows.

1) Research and Design: The sub-components encompassed the quest for information, necessity for innovation, creation, appropriateness, convenience, coherence, aesthetic cleanliness, safety, expert counsel, and networking (93.33%). The process of food product innovation commenced with research, conception, and redesign, focusing on consumer expectations and market trends, including flavor and nutritional content. The process of innovation and development may entail the utilization of novel components or technologies, as demonstrated in the subsequent interviews.

We send members to participate in training, exchange knowledge, and observe new markets in order to develop along the pathways that are deemed successful, but we must consider the market to see how many buyers there are. (CEO1)

We produce new products without building on existing ones, using new raw materials and following customer trends, with support from the government. (CEO15)

We must start by clearly exploring the market to identify any gaps or problems that we can address. Only then can we plan the development of a product that is not only different but also meets the needs more effectively than before. (CEO8)

2) New Product Development: The sub-components encompass the creation of new items, innovation, differentiation, enhancement of existing products, strategic planning, market exploration, readiness, and manpower (86.67%). New product development commences with market research to identify distinguishing factors and potential areas for improvement. This entails enhancing the quality of existing items and integrating innovative features, as demonstrated in the interview excerpts.

We continually have plans to develop new products by leveraging our expertise and establishing connections with both the public and private sectors, as well as planning to test new products. (CEO4)

The new product should arise from creative thinking that leads to differentiation and adds value to the market. Prepare the necessary resources and a capable team to drive the project to success in accordance with its objectives. (CEO9*)*

3) Existing Products Improvement: The sub-components are market demand and increased options (100%). The improvement of aligning existing products with market demands provides consumers with more options by enhancing the quality or characteristics of the original products. This includes adjustments to taste, development of packaging, or increasing nutritional value, as demonstrated in the interviews below.

We have modernized the appearance of the original product to enhance marketing opportunities. (CEO7)

Improving existing products should focus on enhancing quality, reducing costs, or aligning with current consumer demands. (CEO10)

4) Value Enhancement: The sub-components comprise uniqueness, value, popularity, and adequate resources (73.00%). Augmenting product value underscores the enhancement of distinctiveness and the elevation of worth across multiple dimensions.

We must consider both the market demand and the potential of the available resources. Good management will enable us to develop sustainably. (CEO11)

It is important to create a clear identity for the product so that customers feel we are unique and truly fulfill their needs. (CEO1)

5) Innovation Process: The components encompass the addition of steps, the reduction of work processes, the utilization of new tools, and the implementation of new technologies (93.00%). The revised procedure emphasizes improving operational efficiency through the modification of manufacturing phases, accelerating processes, and eliminating errors, as illustrated in the subsequent interviews.

Workers must have discipline and responsibility in their work, be willing to learn, and share tasks among themselves. (CEO1)

The changes in circumstances, such as COVID-19, have resulted in a shortage of skilled labor; however, we have shifted to selling online more extensively. (CEO3)

6) Collaboration: The components include motivation, encouragement, advancement, support, advice, teamwork, and mutual advantages (80%). Collaboration is prioritized, concentrating on the distribution of duties among group members to attain shared objectives. Encouraging and boosting members are essential measures to harness their full potential. The assistance and direction offered by the staff improved overall work efficiency, as demonstrated in the subsequent interviews.

Members are assigned tasks according to their strengths and collaborate in the same area. (CEO5)

We distribute dividends to members from sales by accumulating funds from investments. (CEO12)

7) Work Support: The sub-components encompass consultation, support, opportunity identification, and problem-solving (86.67%). Work support entails offering guidance and aid to the team in pursuing new prospects, while also facilitating seamless communication and improving work processes, as demonstrated in the subsequent interviews.

We produce goods every day to ensure there is no shortage, even with stock production during the COVID period. (CEO8)

We must be ready to listen to problems and seek appropriate solutions in order to ensure smoother and more effective operations. (CEO6)

The important aspect of assisting in work is the pursuit of new opportunities that allow everyone to develop together. It is not merely about solving existing problems, but also about collectively looking ahead to create progress in our attempts. (CEO12*)*

8) Transportation and Supply Chain Management: The sub-components encompass procedures, management, control, addressing needs, services, and transportation (66.67%). Transportation and supply chain management involves overseeing and regulating the transportation of goods and raw materials from production sites to sales locations. This is motivated by the necessity to guarantee that management is executed efficiently, promptly, and securely, in a timely and comprehensive manner, as demonstrated in the subsequent interviews.

Transportation according to the purchase order includes free shipping services for bulk orders, while customers are responsible for shipping costs for smaller orders. (CEO11)

Product transportation management must ensure that every process from the origin to the destination is conducted safely and with quality. (CEO6)

An analysis of the eight components of food product innovation management demonstrates the mechanisms through which community enterprises in Kalasin Province strengthen their resilience and sustainability. Research and design, particularly the development of new products, reflect the strong internal capabilities of these enterprises, enabling them to respond effectively to dynamic consumer demands and evolving market conditions. This capacity is reinforced by product improvement and value addition, which strategically employs local resources to enhance competitiveness while safeguarding cultural identity.

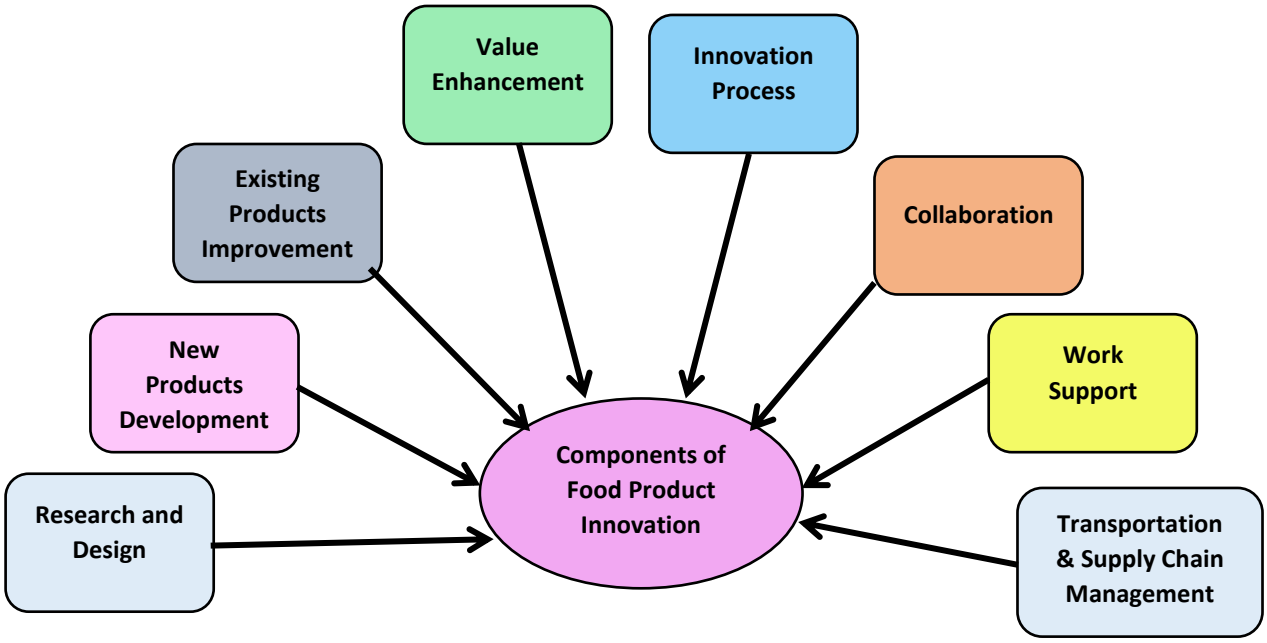
In parallel, the implementation of innovation processes and the promotion of collaboration highlight the importance of adaptive leadership, whereby community leaders consolidate knowledge, encourage collective problem-solving, and establish networks both within and across communities. These networks are crucial in facilitating resource sharing, knowledge exchange, and risk reduction, thus fostering a culture of mutual empowerment.

Complementing these aspects, work support and the effective management of transportation and supply chains ensure production stability, minimize losses, and secure sustainable access to markets, thereby strengthening food security and supporting long-term community livelihoods. Findings from interviews further reveal that community enterprise leaders prioritize food security across all eight components by setting quality standards, enhancing product nutrition, mitigating production risks, and fostering collaborative networks. Resilient leadership practices were also evident, enabling enterprises to adapt successfully to shifting economic and social contexts.

Collectively, the eight interconnected components—(a) research and design, (b) new product development, (c) improvement of existing products, (d) value enhancement, (e) innovation processes, (f) collaboration, (g) work support, and (h) transportation and supply chain management—form a comprehensive system that not only enhances internal capabilities but also aligns with the Resource-Based View (RBV). This alignment underscores the strategic importance of unique, valuable, and inimitable resources in establishing long-term competitiveness and resilience for community enterprises.

Thus, the components of food product innovation management research design include new product development, existing product improvement, value enhancement, innovation processes, collaboration, support work, and transportation and supply chains, as illustrated in Figure 1.

Figure 1 *The Components of Food Product Innovation Management*



Discussion

The administration of food product innovation encompasses essential elements such as research design, new product development, existing product improvement, value enhancement, innovation processes, collaboration, work support, transportation, and supply chain management (Hanifah et al., 2019; Ng et al., 2020; Parinyasutinun, 2019). Interviews with 15 leaders of community enterprises in Kalasin Province validated the practical implementation of all eight components within their local environment. Leaders indicated that training, expert consultation, and direct market observation were crucial in informing product creation, as articulated by one CEO: “We must begin by thoroughly examining the market to identify any gaps or issues we can address” (CEO8).

Leaders modify research and design to address consumer requirements, create new products utilizing local resources, and enhance existing products for safety and competitiveness (Hyytinen et al., 2015) . This illustrated responsiveness to consumer desires while upholding nutritional and safety criteria. Leaders promoted value enhancement through sustainable packaging and the preservation of cultural identity (Parinyasutinun, 2019; Delgado et al., 2023). For instance, certain executives emphasized the modernization of packaging and the development of distinctive product identities to both maintain cultural traditions and improve competitiveness (CEO7; CEO11). They underscored the importance of community collaboration and information exchange, alongside supply chain support and management, which are vital for food security and sustained market access (Intalar et al., 2018; Leonidou et al., 2020). During the COVID-19 pandemic, leaders indicated a transition to online sales and a reallocation of responsibilities among team members, demonstrating flexibility and adaptive leadership ability (CEO3; CEO5; CEO12).

This research illustrates that community enterprise resilience is not solely a theoretical notion but a pragmatic strategy that amalgamates local knowledge with contemporary market requirements (Jintana & Puripanik, 2020; Sihvola et al., 2022). The term *Resilient Community Enterprise Leaders* in this study highlights how leaders' adaptive practices—such as active learning, collaborative problem-solving, and rapid crisis response—enable enterprises to endure external shocks and convert challenges into opportunities for sustainable development. This application demonstrates the incorporation of resilience principles into leadership and innovation management approaches revealed in the interviews.

The results of the essential elements correspond with the RBV theory posited by Barney (1991), as community enterprises exhibited a flexible management framework that enables leaders to engage

directly with members, promoting comprehension and transparent practices (Jintana & Puripanik, 2020). Ordonez-Ponce et al. (2021) further illustrated that the RBV framework underscores the incentives and values linked to sustainable resource utilization. Furthermore, research conducted by Gibson et al. (2021) indicated that the geographical positioning of a community constitutes a significant, unique, inimitable, and indispensable resource. Furthermore, Somwethee et al. (2023) asserted that leadership and management, proactive learning, and analysis contribute to sustainable development. Transportation and supply chain management facilitate operations to comprehensively meet demands (Intalar et al., 2018; Leonidou et al., 2020). Interview data corroborated that effective logistics and daily production plans were essential for maintaining food availability, especially amid such crises (CEO8; CEO11). This underscores the significance of logistics in ensuring food security and stable household finances. Moreover, a study by Delgado et al. (2023) in Colombia revealed that a majority of nations in the Americas and the Caribbean depend on the advancement of agricultural products.

Prior studies have predominantly concentrated on domains such as new product development, innovation processes, organizational culture, leadership, creativity, dynamic capacities, business model innovation, research and development, and green innovation (Tuan et al., 2016). This study contributes to the existing literature by illustrating the practical application of the eight components in fostering resilience, agility, and flexibility among community companies. Each component—spanning research and design to logistics—exerts a unique influence: research and design augment agility; product enhancement and value addition sustain competitiveness while safeguarding cultural identity; collaboration and innovation processes cultivate adaptive leadership; and logistics and support functions ensure food security and long-term sustainability. This research reveals novel insights from community enterprises in Kalasin Province. It enhances understanding by contextualizing the eight components of innovation management, illustrating their overall impact on food security, household income, and sustainable lives. The findings indicate that adaptive leadership, based on community participation and resource utilization, is essential for improving resilience. These contributions correspond with the RBV framework, highlighting the significance of utilizing important and inimitable local resources to maintain long-term competitiveness and community welfare.

Conclusion, Practical Implications, and Future Research

Conclusion

This study, based on the Resource-Based Perspective, emphasizes that community enterprise resilience and sustainability depend on effectively integrating eight key elements of food product innovation management. Research and design, coupled with new product development, enable companies to rapidly respond to changing consumer demands while enhancing existing products to ensure sustainability in a competitive marketplace. Adding value through premium local ingredients and sustainable packaging reinforces cultural identity and consumer appeal. Innovation and collaboration processes cultivate adaptive leadership and knowledge sharing, fostering shared potential for risk reduction. Supporting work, coupled with efficient logistics and supply chain management, ensures production stability, minimizes losses, and maintains reliable market access. By leveraging these eight interconnected elements, community enterprises can transform their internal knowledge and resources into valuable, rare, and inimitable assets, leading to sustainable growth, sustainable competitiveness, and adaptability in a post-transformation context.

Practical Implications

The findings of this research offer actionable strategies for community enterprises and policymakers. Adding value to products through the integration of premium, locally sourced ingredients and sustainable packaging can enhance market attractiveness and consumer trust. Fostering collaboration and teamwork accelerates innovation and knowledge exchange, while adopting digital technologies improves operational efficiency by improving task organization and data management. Furthermore, strengthening transportation and supply chain systems ensures timely

and reliable deliveries, enhancing both market stability and competitiveness. Collectively, these practices enable community enterprises to be agile enough to address emerging challenges and maintain their competitive position in an ever-changing marketplace.

Future Research

Future research should prioritize analysis of the individual traits that influence food product innovation and the effects of innovation management strategies on community business members. To do this, it is recommended to utilize quantitative or mixed-method study methods to discover appropriate management techniques, enable comparisons with businesses in other locations, and examine management approaches in the post-transformation. Qualitative research, reliant on interviews and observations, may be susceptible to interpretations shaped by research bias and limited by the researchers' experiences and perspectives.

This study offers qualitative insights into the eight elements of food product innovation management; however, subsequent research should prioritize statistical validation, specifically employing confirmatory factor analysis to verify the eight components of the conceptual framework. This quantitative validation would enhance the credibility and relevance of the research findings across various community enterprise contexts, thereby augmenting the potential for policy and practical implications.

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