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# COMMUNITY MEMBERS' EXPECTATION FACTORS INFLUENCING PARTICIPATORY COMMUNITY-BASED ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT FOR SELF-RELIANCE: AN EMPIRICAL INVESTIGATION IN PHAYAO PROVINCE, THAILAND

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## ABSTRACT

*This study examined expectation factors influencing participatory economic development for self-reliance in grassroots communities, using Ban Nong Kaew, Phayao Province, Thailand as a case study. A quantitative approach was employed, utilising a questionnaire distributed to 180 community members selected through simple random sampling. Data were analysed using Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modelling (PLS-SEM). The results revealed that access to production factors ( $\beta = 0.293$ ), community marketing ( $\beta = 0.583$ ), and communication ( $\beta = -0.299$ ) significantly influenced participatory self-reliance, jointly explaining 40.6 per cent of the variance ( $R^2 = 0.406$ ). Knowledge, innovation and technology ( $\beta = -0.059$ ) and management ( $\beta = 0.150$ ) were not significant. The model demonstrated moderate predictive relevance ( $Q^2 = 0.369$ ). These findings highlight the importance of internal community strengths, particularly access to production factors and local market development, over external technological inputs. The study offers practical recommendations for government agencies and organisations to enhance self-reliance by aligning support with community needs and fostering cooperative networks for sustainable grassroots economic development.*

**KEYWORDS:** Community Self-Reliance, Production Factors, Community Marketing, Economic Development, Grassroots Development, PLS-SEM, Bottom-Up Development, Expectancy Theory, Community Development.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

The community economy in Thailand has evolved over a long period of history during the development of the country. In the past, Thai society was based on a subsistence agricultural system in which communities were able to rely on themselves through production for consumption in households, exchanging produce with each other, and providing collective assistance in various ways, which reflected the social capital and strong culture of Thai society (Chantith, 2016; Natsupha, 2011).

Major changes occurred when Thailand began using the first National Economic and Social Development Plan (1961–1966), which focused on industrial development and exports. This policy caused the economic structure of the country to change from agriculture for subsistence to production for trade, leading to a migration of labour from the countryside to the cities and increasing reliance on technology and capital from abroad (Pongjapo, 2013). "These changes fundamentally altered community livelihoods and economic systems. Capitalism-driven development pressured farmers toward monoculture production, increasing dependence on commercial inputs – technology, chemicals, and external capital – while deepening household debt burdens (Singhalert & Uthakorn, 2016)."

Thailand set the direction for long-term development of the country through the 20-year National Strategy (2018–2037) under the vision "Thailand, having stability, prosperity and sustainability, is a developed country already with the development based on the philosophy of the sufficiency economy." This development plan covers three main dimensions, namely stability, prosperity, and sustainability (Office of the National Economic and Social Development Council, 2023; Boosaparak & Putphun, 2022). "The strategy emphasises grassroots economic restructuring and agricultural sector development aligned with local community potential. Key mechanisms include promoting farmer self-management systems, expanding access to technology and innovation, and developing marketing channels and cooperative networks to elevate farmers toward entrepreneurship (Department of Agricultural Extension, 2017)."

Nonetheless, the debt situation of the household sector in 2023 reflects major challenges resulting from the expansion of household debt by 12 per cent, calculated as an average debt of 559,408 baht per household (Bank of Thailand, 2023). The Thai government supports community economies through product and marketing development,

financial assistance, skills training, and community learning centres. The Pracharat Project further integrates public-private efforts to strengthen grassroots economies, reduce inequality, and improve quality of life (Khatasombun, 2020).

Ban Nong Kaew, Mae Ka Subdistrict, Mueang District, Phayao Province has a total area of 1,350 rai, a population of 576 people from 227 households, with main occupations in agriculture, general employment, and trade (Department of Provincial Administration, 2025). Nevertheless, the community still faces problems of poverty and inequality, particularly among farmers and general labour with unstable income and a lack of access to resources and capital. From the literature review, most previous research has focused on community economy development, policy alignment, and occupational enhancement (Siriwongwan-ngarm, 2020; Singhalert & Uthakorn, 2016). However, a significant research gap exists regarding community members' expectations in the dimensions of management, marketing, access to production factors, and knowledge as drivers of participatory self-reliance (Singtanasarn, 2017; Khatasombun, 2020).

Therefore, this research has the objective to study the expectation factors of community members that affect the participatory economic development of grassroots communities for self-reliance. The findings will serve as practical guidelines for government agencies and communities to strengthen self-reliance through job creation, knowledge development, and expectation-responsive community programmes.

## 2. LITERATURE REVIEW

### 2.1. Expectancy Theory

Expectancy Theory, developed by Vroom (1964), is a motivation theory explaining that human behaviour results from deliberate choices among available alternatives with the goal of maximising pleasure and minimising pain. The theory consists of three core elements: (1) expectancy – the belief that effort leads to performance; (2) instrumentality – the belief that performance leads to outcomes; and (3) valence – the perceived value of the outcome (Lloyd & Mertens, 2018). The theory has been applied across management (Fan *et al.*, 2022; Joshi, 2023) and human resource management contexts (Fleetwood & Hesketh, 2008).

In the context of community economic development, expectancy theory is instrumental in understanding the behavioural decisions of community members (Marsal *et al.*, 2024). Expectations regarding returns from capital

investment directly affect participation levels and project success (Singtanasarn, 2017; Khatasombun, 2020). Critically, the three components of expectancy theory align directly with the five independent variables in this study: access to production factors relates to expectancy (effort–performance linkage); community marketing and communication reflect instrumentality (performance–outcome linkage); while management and knowledge, innovation and technology represent valence (perceived value of outcomes). This theoretical alignment strengthens the conceptual validity of the research framework.

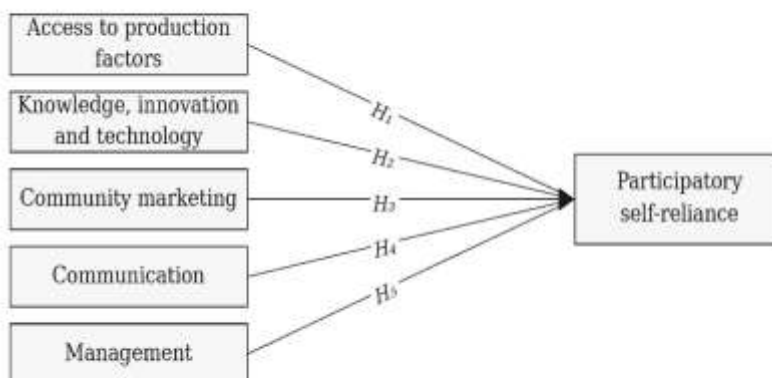
**2.2. Grassroots Economy Development**

Development of a grassroots economy focuses on improving income and quality of life for low-income populations through a bottom-up approach that strengthens local communities (Cummings, 2001; Soicjit et al., 2022; Grassroots Economy Strategy Subcommittee, 2016). Key elements include: developing human potential in knowledge, skills,

and management; promoting economic networks through community enterprises and cooperatives; ensuring access to capital and production factors; and leveraging technology and innovation for productive efficiency (Cummings, 2001; Kamnuansilpa et al., 2023).

Creating added value for community products through quality development, branding, and marketing channels plays a major role in increasing community income. Success requires multi-sector cooperation among government, private sector, educational institutions, and civil society (Siriwongwan-ngarm, 2020; Singhalert & Uthakorn, 2016). Recent evidence from Thailand indicates that community-based enterprises achieving sustainable self-reliance are characterised by strong social capital, effective internal communication systems, and access to local markets – factors consistent with the significant variables identified in this study (Kamnuansilpa et al., 2023; Serthpol, 2019).

**3. CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK AND HYPOTHESES.**



*Figure 1: Conceptual framework of expectation factors and participatory self-reliance*

**3.1. Hypotheses**

- H1: Expectations regarding access to factors of production have an influence on participatory self-reliance.
- H2: Expectations regarding knowledge, innovation, and technology have an influence on participatory self-reliance.
- H3: Expectations regarding community marketing have an influence on participatory self-reliance.

- H4: Expectations regarding communication have an influence on participatory self-reliance.
- H5: Expectations regarding management have an influence on participatory self-reliance.

**3.2. Materials and Methods**

**3.2.1. Population and Sample**

The population comprised 576 community members of Ban Nong Kaew, Mae Ka Subdistrict, Mueang District, Phayao Province (Department of

Provincial Administration, 2025), who were literate and volunteered to participate. Sample size was determined using Yamane's (1973) formula at 95% confidence level, yielding a required sample of 237. A total of 300 questionnaires were distributed using simple random sampling, with 180 valid responses returned (response rate = 60%), which exceeded the minimum threshold of 10 observations per indicator recommended for PLS-SEM (Hair et al., 2017).

### 3.2.2. Development of Research Tools

This research employed a questionnaire adapted from prior research, consisting of three parts: (1) demographic data using close-ended checklist items; (2) expectation factors for grassroots community economic development (access to production factors, knowledge innovation and technology, community marketing, communication, and management), adapted from the Committee on Commerce and Industry (2022); and (3) participatory self-reliance, adapted from Singtanasarn (2017). Parts 2 and 3 used a 5-point Likert scale (1 = least, 5 = most). Content validity was assessed by three subject-matter experts (Index of Item-Objective Congruence, IOC > 0.67 for all items), and reliability was confirmed via pilot testing with 30 non-sample participants (Cronbach's  $\alpha$  > 0.70 for all constructs).

### 3.2.3. Statistics and Data Analysis

Descriptive statistics were used to profile respondents. Hypothesis testing employed PLS-SEM using SmartPLS 4.0, following the two-stage analytical procedure: (1) measurement model assessment (reliability and validity); and (2) structural model evaluation (path coefficients and predictive relevance). Bootstrapping with 10,000

resamples was used to generate bias-corrected confidence intervals (Hair et al., 2017).

## 4. RESULTS

### 4.1 General Information of the Respondents

The majority of respondents were female (54.40%), had primary school education (35.70%), had household heads employed as general labour (39.00%), and had a monthly income below 15,000 baht (51.60%). Monthly expenditure profiles indicated that food (91.21%), utilities (93.96%), miscellaneous (90.66%), healthcare (82.42%), and other expenses (78.57%) were predominantly below 15,000 baht. These socioeconomic characteristics are consistent with the profile of grassroots communities in lower-northern Thailand and confirm the relevance of the study context (Serthpol, 2019; Kamnuansilpa et al., 2023).

### 4.2. Measurement Model

Factor loadings ranged from 0.724 to 0.941, all exceeding the recommended threshold of 0.70 (Hair et al., 2017). Cronbach's alpha values ranged from 0.880 to 0.937, and composite reliability (CR) values ranged from 0.883 to 0.968, confirming internal consistency. Additionally, HTMT (Heterotrait-Monotrait) ratios were below 0.85 for all construct pairs, providing supplementary evidence of discriminant validity beyond the Fornell-Larcker criterion (Henseler et al., 2015). AVE values ranged from 0.625 to 0.810, all exceeding 0.50, confirming convergent validity. Discriminant validity was supported as  $\sqrt{\text{AVE}}$  values exceeded inter-construct correlations (Fornell & Larcker, 1981), as shown in Tables 1 and 2.

**Table 1: Evaluation Results of the Measurement Model.**

| Variables                                  | Items | Factor loading | Cronbach's $\alpha$ | CR    | AVE   |
|--|-------|----------------|---------------------|-------|-------|
| Access to production factors (INP)         | INP1  | 0.872          | 0.909               | 0.915 | 0.733 |
|  | INP2  | 0.879          |                     |       |       |
|  | INP3  | 0.843          |                     |       |       |
|  | INP4  | 0.860          |                     |       |       |
|  | INP5  | 0.826          |                     |       |       |
| Knowledge, innovation and technology (KIT) | KIT1  | 0.894          | 0.921               | 0.951 | 0.806 |
|  | KIT2  | 0.900          |                     |       |       |
|  | KIT3  | 0.912          |                     |       |       |
|  | KIT4  | 0.885          |                     |       |       |
| Community marketing (CMK)                  | CMK1  | 0.867          | 0.892               | 0.896 | 0.756 |
|  | CMK2  | 0.844          |                     |       |       |
|  | CMK3  | 0.870          |                     |       |       |
|  | CMK4  | 0.895          |                     |       |       |
| Communication (COM)                        | COM1  | 0.919          | 0.881               | 0.883 | 0.810 |
|  | COM2  | 0.935          |                     |       |       |
|  | COM3  | 0.842          |                     |       |       |

|                                   |      |       |       |       |       |
|-----------------------------------|------|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| Management (MGT)                  | MGT1 | 0.837 | 0.937 | 0.968 | 0.795 |
|                                   | MGT2 | 0.875 |       |       |       |
|                                   | MGT3 | 0.915 |       |       |       |
|                                   | MGT4 | 0.941 |       |       |       |
|                                   | MGT5 | 0.887 |       |       |       |
| Participatory self-reliance (DEP) | DEP1 | 0.815 | 0.880 | 0.891 | 0.625 |
|                                   | DEP2 | 0.755 |       |       |       |
|                                   | DEP3 | 0.810 |       |       |       |
|                                   | DEP4 | 0.724 |       |       |       |
|                                   | DEP5 | 0.830 |       |       |       |
|                                   | DEP6 | 0.806 |       |       |       |

Note. Factor loadings all  $\geq 0.70$ ; Cronbach's  $\alpha$  and CR  $\geq 0.70$ ; AVE  $\geq 0.50$  (Hair et al., 2017). INP = access to production factors; KIT = knowledge, innovation and technology; CMK = community marketing; COM = communication; MGT = management; DEP = participatory self-reliance.

Table 2: Discriminant validity  $\sqrt{AVE}$  and correlation coefficient.

| Variables | INP          | KIT          | CMK          | COM          | MGT          | DEP          |
|-----------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|
| INP       | <b>0.856</b> |              |              |              |              |              |
| KIT       | 0.774***     | <b>0.898</b> |              |              |              |              |
| CMK       | 0.732***     | 0.787***     | <b>0.869</b> |              |              |              |
| COM       | 0.702***     | 0.786***     | 0.861***     | <b>0.900</b> |              |              |
| MGT       | 0.637***     | 0.672***     | 0.639***     | 0.695***     | <b>0.892</b> |              |
| DEP       | 0.559***     | 0.493***     | 0.588***     | 0.467***     | 0.462***     | <b>0.791</b> |

Note. \*\*\*  $p < 0.001$ ; diagonal values =  $\sqrt{AVE}$  (bold). All  $\sqrt{AVE} >$  inter-construct correlations, supporting discriminant validity (Fornell & Larcker, 1981). INP = access to production factors; KIT = knowledge, innovation and technology; CMK = community marketing; COM = communication; MGT = management; DEP = participatory self-reliance.

### 4.3. Evaluation of Structural Modelling and Hypothesis Testing

The structural model was evaluated using bootstrapping with 10,000 resamples. Results indicated that access to production factors ( $\beta = 0.293$ ,  $t = 2.545$ , 95% CI [0.079, 0.527]), community marketing ( $\beta = 0.583$ ,  $t = 5.185$ , 95% CI [0.344, 0.793]), and communication ( $\beta = -0.299$ ,  $t = 2.486$ , 95% CI [-0.539, -0.068]) had statistically significant influences on participatory self-reliance. Together, these three predictors explained 40.6% of variance ( $R^2 = 0.406$ ). The negative coefficient for communication ( $\beta = -0.299$ ) warrants specific attention: this finding suggests that higher expectations of communication may paradoxically reduce perceived self-reliance, possibly reflecting respondents' frustration with information overload or distrust of external communications, a pattern consistent with social capital theory in low-income rural communities (Putnam, 2000). Knowledge, innovation and

technology ( $\beta = -0.059$ ,  $t = 0.534$ ) and management ( $\beta = 0.150$ ,  $t = 1.534$ ) did not reach statistical significance. Predictive relevance was moderate ( $Q^2 = 0.369$ ), as shown in Table 3.

Table 3. Hypotheses testing results.

| Hypothesis     | Path      | $\beta$  | t-statistic | LCI    | UCI    | Result   |
|----------------|-----------|----------|-------------|--------|--------|----------|
| H <sub>1</sub> | INP → DEP | 0.293*   | 2.545       | 0.079  | 0.527  | Accepted |
| H <sub>2</sub> | KIT → DEP | -0.059   | 0.534       | -0.276 | 0.160  | Rejected |
| H <sub>3</sub> | CMK → DEP | 0.583*   | 5.185       | 0.344  | 0.793  | Accepted |
| H <sub>4</sub> | COM → DEP | -0.299** | 2.486       | -0.539 | -0.068 | Accepted |
| H <sub>5</sub> | MGT → DEP | 0.150    | 1.534       | -0.030 | 0.352  | Rejected |

Note. \*\*  $p < 0.05$  (two-tailed); bootstrapping  $n = 10,000$  resamples. INP = access to production factors; KIT = knowledge, innovation and technology; CMK = community marketing; COM = communication; MGT = management; DEP = participatory self-reliance. LCI/UCI = lower/upper 95% bias-corrected confidence interval.  $f^2$  effect sizes: CMK = 0.214 (medium-large); INP = 0.052 (small); COM = 0.053 (small).

### 4.4. Discussion

#### 4.4.1. Hypothesis 1: Access to Factors of Production

Expectations regarding access to factors of production significantly influence participatory self-reliance ( $\beta = 0.293$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ). This finding aligns with Vroom's (1964) expectancy component: when community members believe their effort in accessing resources will translate into productive outcomes, motivation to participate increases. This is consistent with resource mobilisation theory (McCarthy & Zald, 1977), which posits that access to tangible resources

is a prerequisite for collective action. The result is also supported by Thititananont (2013), who found that resource access enables sustainable community enterprise development, and by Jungell-Michelsson and Heikkurinen (2022), who linked sufficiency-based resource access to community agency. Practically, the moderate effect size ( $f^2 = 0.052$ ) suggests that while resource access is significant, its impact on self-reliance is mediated by other community capabilities, implying that resource provision alone is insufficient without accompanying capacity-building programmes.

#### **4.4.2. Hypothesis 2: Knowledge, Innovation and Technology**

Expectations regarding knowledge, innovation and technology did not significantly influence participatory self-reliance ( $\beta = -0.059$ ,  $p > 0.05$ ). This null finding is theoretically important and consistent with technology acceptance literature suggesting that perceived complexity and lack of contextual fit reduce technology adoption in rural communities (Davis, 1989; Venkatesh *et al.*, 2003). The result also aligns with Rogers' (2003) diffusion of innovation theory, which identifies compatibility with existing values and practices as a critical adoption determinant. Chambers (1983) similarly emphasised that bottom-up development prioritises local wisdom over externally-imposed technological solutions. Furthermore, the negligible negative coefficient may reflect technology anxiety – a documented barrier in communities with limited prior technology exposure (Compeau & Higgins, 1995) – where high expectations create performance pressure rather than motivation. Future research should investigate the moderating role of digital literacy on this relationship. Contextually, Ban Nong Kaew community in Phayao Province is characterised by limited digital infrastructure and low prior technology exposure among its predominantly agricultural workforce (Department of Provincial Administration, 2025). This socioeconomic profile is consistent with findings from Kamnuansilpa *et al.* (2023), who similarly documented that rural communities in lower-northern Thailand exhibit low technology adoption rates due to insufficient digital literacy and inadequate supporting infrastructure. The cultural dimension is equally pertinent: community members in this context tend to rely on inherited agricultural knowledge and peer-to-peer learning rather than formal technology training, a pattern consistent with Thailand's collectivist cultural orientation (Serthpol, 2019). These contextual factors collectively explain

why expectations regarding knowledge, innovation, and technology failed to generate significant motivational effects on participatory self-reliance in this setting.

#### **4.4.3. Hypothesis 3: Community Marketing**

Community marketing expectations had the strongest significant influence on participatory self-reliance ( $\beta = 0.583$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ), with a medium-to-large effect size ( $f^2 = 0.214$ ), making it the most practically significant predictor in the model. This aligns with Vroom's (1964) instrumentality construct: when community members perceive clear linkages between their participation and market outcomes, engagement intensifies. The result is consistent with Pattanvongngam (2017), who demonstrated that community market development fosters product confidence and cooperative participation, and with Pikul and Puchthonglang (2018), who linked marketing expectations to stakeholder cooperation. This finding has particular significance for Phayao Province, where handicraft and agricultural product markets along the Ing River basin represent untapped commercial potential (Serthpol, 2019). Policy interventions should prioritise market infrastructure development, community branding, and digital commerce capacity-building as primary levers for enhancing grassroots self-reliance.

#### **4.4.4. Hypothesis 4: Communication**

Communication expectations significantly influenced participatory self-reliance ( $\beta = -0.299$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ). The negative direction of this coefficient presents an important and nuanced finding that distinguishes this study from prior research. Rather than indicating that communication harms self-reliance, this result likely reflects the "communication burden" phenomenon documented by Serthpol (2019) in Phayao communities, whereby excessive external communication demands from government agencies create dependency and reduce autonomous decision-making capacity. This interpretation aligns with Singtanasarn (2018), who noted that quality rather than quantity of communication is paramount for community empowerment. Future research should distinguish between intra-community communication (expected positive effect) and external communication (potentially negative effect) to clarify this relationship. This negative effect can be further explained through information overload theory (Eppler & Mengis, 2004), which posits that when individuals receive more information than they can process, decision-making capacity and motivation

decline rather than improve. Applied to the community development context, when government agencies and external organisations intensify communication channels – through meetings, directives, and reporting requirements – community members may experience cognitive overload that erodes their sense of self-efficacy and autonomous agency. This theoretical interpretation is reinforced by social capital theory (Putnam, 2000), which distinguishes between bonding capital (intra-community trust and communication) and bridging capital (external communication links); an imbalance favouring external over internal communication can displace organic community networks, thereby reducing self-reliance. These findings collectively suggest that redesigning communication strategies from top-down information provision toward participatory, community-led dialogue frameworks would better support grassroots self-reliance.

#### 4.4.5. Hypothesis 5: Management

Management expectations did not significantly influence participatory self-reliance ( $\beta = 0.150$ ,  $p > 0.05$ ). This finding challenges managerial approaches to community development and aligns with Ostrom's (1990) seminal work on common pool resource management, which demonstrated that communities develop effective self-governance systems through organic collective action rather than imposed management frameworks. Singtanasarn (2018) and Klantoop and Lawbaumrung (2013) similarly found that intrinsic motivations and organic learning processes drive participation more than formal management structures. The non-significant result may also reflect a temporal dimension: management structures may only become significant predictors of self-reliance at later stages of community development, once foundational elements (resources and markets) are established. This suggests a sequential development model worthy of longitudinal investigation. From a cultural perspective, the non-significant effect of formal management expectations is particularly coherent within the Thai community context. Ban Nong Kaew, like many rural communities in Phayao Province, operates through traditional collective action systems rooted in Buddhist social values and customary reciprocal labour practices (lhong-khaek), in which community coordination emerges organically through social norms and relational trust rather than through formalised management structures (Singhalert & Uthakorn, 2016). Consequently, when community members evaluate their expectations regarding formal management,

such expectations may appear incongruent with their lived experience of community governance, leading to low perceived instrumentality and thereby failing to motivate participatory self-reliance. This culturally embedded pattern of self-governance is consistent with the sufficiency economy philosophy promoted by the Thai government, which prioritises community-driven, moderation-based development over top-down managerial control (Boosaparek & Putphun, 2022).

## 5. THEORETICAL CONTRIBUTIONS

This research makes three substantive theoretical contributions. First, it extends expectancy theory (Vroom, 1964) to the context of grassroots community economic development, demonstrating that the theory's three components – expectancy, instrumentality, and valence – map differentially onto community development factors, with instrumentality-related variables (community marketing, communication) showing the strongest effects. This extension advances expectancy theory beyond its original organisational behaviour context into community development literature, bridging two previously separate streams of scholarship.

Second, the study contributes to grassroots economy theory by providing empirical evidence that market-based expectations (community marketing) constitute the primary driver of participatory self-reliance, superseding technology and management expectations. This challenges the prevailing technology-centric development paradigm and reinforces market-embedded approaches advocated by Cummings (2001) and Kamnuansilpa et al. (2023).

Third, the negative communication effect introduces a theoretically novel paradox for community empowerment literature, extending beyond what Discussion 6.4 established empirically. Future frameworks should operationalise this distinction through communication audit tools that classify intra-community versus external communication flows.

### 5.1. Practical Contributions

The findings offer actionable guidance for policymakers and community development practitioners. Given the primacy of community marketing ( $\beta = 0.583$ ), investment in community market infrastructure, product branding, and digital commerce platforms should be prioritised. The One Tambon One Product (OTOP) programme could be enhanced through targeted market linkage support specific to Ban Nong Kaew's agricultural and

handicraft products.

Regarding production factors access ( $\beta = 0.293$ ), microfinance schemes, community land banks, and cooperative tool-sharing arrangements could enhance perceived resource accessibility without creating financial dependency. These mechanisms should be designed with community ownership to maximise motivation effects consistent with self-determination theory (Deci & Ryan, 2000).

The negative communication effect ( $\beta = -0.299$ ) indicates a need to restructure government-community communication. Concretely, the Sub-district Administrative Organisation (SAO) of Mae Ka could pilot a community communication committee – a resident-led body that filters, prioritises, and contextualises external information before dissemination – reducing overload while preserving relevant inputs.

For knowledge, innovation and technology, a contextually-adapted digital literacy programme co-designed with community members is recommended. In the Ban Nong Kaew context specifically, integrating smartphone-based agricultural advisory applications – piloted through the local farmers' cooperative – would align technology adoption with existing social structures and demonstrated community needs.

## 5.2. LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH

This research has several limitations. First, the single-community, cross-sectional design limits generalisation. The findings are contextually grounded in Ban Nong Kaew, and replication across diverse communities – including urban, peri-urban, and communities with different ethnic compositions – is necessary to establish broader applicability. Second, the 60% response rate, while acceptable, introduces potential non-response bias; future studies should employ follow-up procedures and compare respondent and non-respondent profiles to assess this threat.

Third, the cross-sectional design cannot capture temporal dynamics. A longitudinal panel study tracking expectation changes and self-reliance outcomes over a 3–5 year development cycle would provide insight into causal sequencing and the developmental stage hypothesis suggested by the management findings.

Fourth, the negative communication finding requires deeper investigation through qualitative methods – specifically focus groups and participatory action research – to distinguish between empowering and dependency-inducing communication types. Fifth, future research should incorporate moderating variables such as social capital, community leadership quality, and digital literacy to build a more comprehensive model of grassroots economic self-reliance.

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