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The Guidelines for Creating Innovation That Affects Organizational Success for An Entrepreneur in Nakhon Nayok Province

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to: 1) explore and understand consumers' opinions, complaints, suggestions, and feedback based on their experiences in purchasing goods and services; 2) explore the level of opinions on management factors focusing on customer responsiveness, business and service innovation development, and organizational success; 3) investigate the causal influence between management factors focusing on customer responsiveness, business and service innovation development, and organizational success; and 4) propose guidelines for creating innovations that contribute to the success of organizations for business operators in Nakhon Nayok province. This study employs a mixed-methods research design combining qualitative and quantitative methods. The qualitative research uses in-depth interviews with 30 business operators in the trade and service sectors in Nakhon Nayok province. The quantitative research uses a questionnaire to collect data from 400 business operators. The statistics used for data analysis include frequency, percentage, confirmatory factor analysis, and structural equation modeling. The findings revealed that: 1) The variables in the model can explain the variance in organizational success for business operators in Nakhon Nayok province. It was found that organizational success is directly influenced by business innovation and service innovation. 2) The approach to creating innovation that impacts organizational success for business operators in Nakhon Nayok province is based on the CIOS model, which consists of customer-focused management, innovation integration, operational excellence, and strategic synergy.

Keywords: Customer-focused management, Business innovation, Service innovation, Organizational success.

INTRODUCTION

In the first two decades of the 21st century, the global economy has entered the Fourth Industrial Revolution, marking a profound transformation in business operations through the integration of digital technology, artificial intelligence (AI), and automation (World Economic Forum, 2024). This paradigm shift has had a significant impact on small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) worldwide, particularly in developing countries that continue to struggle to escape the middle-income trap. According to the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD, 2024), investment in innovation has become a critical driver of economic growth. Countries that allocate more than 3% of their GDP to research and development (R&D) recover from economic crises up to 2.5 times faster than those that invest less. Moreover, the COVID-19 pandemic has accelerated a permanent transformation in business operations (McKinsey Global Institute, 2023), compelling organizations to adapt rapidly to technological disruptions. As a result, the ability to innovate and respond effectively to customer needs has emerged as a key determinant of organizational resilience and survival in the modern business landscape.

In the context of Thailand, a developing country with the fifth-largest economy in Southeast Asia (Nation Thailand, 2025), the business sector— small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), which account for over 99% of all enterprises and contribute approximately 35% of the national GDP—is currently facing significant

challenges. The Office of the National Economic and Social Development Council (NESDC, 2025) reported that Thailand's economic growth has shown a continuous slowdown, declining from 4.2% in 2018 to 2.4% in 2019 (World Bank, 2020), with projections indicating growth of only 2.0% in 2025.

Key factors contributing to this economic stagnation include the slow adoption of innovation in business sectors, limited technological literacy, and inefficient management systems (Office of Small and Medium Enterprises Promotion [OSMEP], 2024). Additionally, the International Institute for Management Development (IMD, 2025) ranked Thailand 30th out of 69 economies worldwide in its global competitiveness index, with notable weaknesses in innovation and technological adoption. This is consistent with the Global Innovation Index (WIPO, 2025), which placed Thailand 45th among 139 countries—an improvement from the previous year but still behind regional peers such as Singapore and Malaysia.

Although numerous studies have explored innovation and organizational success across various contexts, several critical research gaps remain. First, most prior studies have focused on large enterprises or urban-based firms, with limited attention to SMEs in provincial or resource-constrained areas, where access to technology and innovation remains limited. Second, while customer-focus management is widely recognized as a key driver of success, the mechanisms through which customer-centric management fosters both business and service innovation—and ultimately organizational success—have not been systematically examined, particularly in the Thai context. Third, previous research often treats business innovation and service innovation as separate phenomena, lacking an integrated perspective that captures the holistic nature of innovation creation. Finally, in the post-COVID-19 era, significant shifts in consumer behavior and business models have occurred, yet research on appropriate innovation strategies for this new context remains scarce.

Nakhon Nayok Province, located in central Thailand approximately 107 kilometers from Bangkok, presents an ideal setting for studying innovation development strategies among Thai SMEs. According to data from the Office of Small and Medium Enterprises Promotion (OSMEP, 2024), the province hosts a total of 1,106 SMEs, comprising 90 medium-sized enterprises and 1,016 small enterprises, along with 9,961 micro enterprises. The diversity of business sectors in Nakhon Nayok spans commerce (45%), services (30%), tourism and hospitality (15%), and agro-processing (10%) (Nakhon Nayok Provincial Commerce Office, 2024), providing a rich context for examining innovation across multiple dimensions and business environments. In addition, a survey by the National Statistical Office of Thailand (2023) revealed that 75% of enterprises in Nakhon Nayok were affected by the COVID-19 pandemic, a figure notably higher than the national average of 68%. This indicates the province's vulnerability and underscores the urgent need to strengthen the innovation capacity of its SMEs to enhance resilience and competitiveness in the post-pandemic era.

RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

This research aims to examine innovation development strategies that contribute to organizational success among entrepreneurs in Nakhon Nayok Province, with a particular focus on the role of customer-focused management as a driving force behind business and service innovation. The study employs a mixed-methods research design that combines qualitative and quantitative approaches. The qualitative phase involves in-depth interviews with 30 entrepreneurs. While the quantitative phase, the quantitative phase includes a survey of 400 business and service-sector entrepreneurs to analyze their perceptions and the causal relationships among customer-focused management, business innovation, service innovation, and organizational success.

This study is expected to yield both theoretical and practical contributions across several dimensions. Academically, it fills a significant research gap by developing an integrated conceptual framework that links customer-focused management with both business and service innovation in the context of SMEs in a developing economy. This framework extends current knowledge in innovation management and modern business administration, providing a foundation for future research in emerging-market contexts. In practice, the findings will provide strategic guidelines for SMEs in Nakhon Nayok and other provinces with similar socio-economic conditions, helping entrepreneurs design and implement innovation strategies that align with market demands. Beyond that, the empirical evidence from this study can serve as a valuable database for government agencies and supporting organizations in formulating targeted, effective policies to promote SME innovation. Ultimately, this research aims to foster sustainable economic development at the regional and national levels by enhancing SME competitiveness and promoting value creation, recognizing SMEs as the backbone of Thailand's economy.

LITERATURE REVIEW

This study is theoretically grounded in strategic management and customer-oriented marketing theories, integrating three core perspectives relevant to innovation development in SMEs.The first is the Customer-Centric Marketing Theory, developed by Kotler and colleagues, which emphasizes creating positive customer experiences and precisely fulfilling customer needs. This theory posits that understanding and analyzing customer behavior is a critical factor enabling businesses to design products and services that genuinely meet customer expectations, thereby fostering sustainable competitive advantage and long-term success (Kotler et al., 2022; Čavlin et al., 2024). This theory highlights the importance of building sustainable relationships with customers by prioritizing customer satisfaction as the central focus, enabling businesses to create long-term value for their clients. The second theoretical foundation is the Relationship Marketing Theory, developed by Berry (1983), which emphasizes the creation and maintenance of long-term customer relationships. This theory asserts that a company's success is not solely derived from acquiring new customers, but also from continuously nurturing and strengthening relationships with existing ones (Sheth et al., 2024). The third is the Innovation Organization Concept, a contemporary framework of organizational innovation management that focuses on adapting organizational characteristics and behaviors to ensure survival and sustainable growth in the era of globalization (Bataineh et al., 2024). The integration of these three theoretical perspectives provides a comprehensive understanding of how customer-focused management drives the development of business and service innovations, ultimately leading to organizational success, particularly within the SME context in developing economies.

CUSTOMER-FOCUSED MANAGEMENT

Customer-focused management is a key concept in modern business management that emphasizes creating customer value by deeply understanding customer needs and responding to them quickly and effectively. Narver and Slater (1990) define it as an organizational culture that prioritizes superior customer value creation, while Kohli and Jaworski (1990) view it as a systematic process of generating and responding to customer needs. In addition, Primasari and Indriani (2022) emphasize that customer-oriented management encompasses employee training, the use of technology to enhance service efficiency, and customer data analysis to improve responsiveness.

In the context of SMEs, customer-focused management is increasingly vital in an era of intense competition and rapidly changing consumer behavior. The ability to truly understand and respond to customer needs not only enhances customer satisfaction but also lays the foundation for market-driven innovation (Song et al., 2022). For SMEs in developing countries, a strong customer orientation is a determinant of survival and competitiveness, enabling them to effectively compete with larger firms that possess greater resources.

Empirical evidence supports this relationship. For instance, Alipia et al. (2024) found that customer orientation significantly and positively influences SME performance in Kenya's animal feed manufacturing industry; firms that prioritize customer understanding and responsiveness perform substantially better. Similarly, Manishimwe et al. (2022) reported that entrepreneurial customer-focused marketing enabled hotels in Nigeria to recover and maintain efficient operations during the COVID-19 crisis. Moreover, Thoumrungroje and Racela (2022) examined the link between customer orientation, innovation, and business performance under different strategic conditions and found that innovation acts as a mediator in this relationship. Organizations with greater customer orientation tend to be more innovative, thereby improving performance. From a managerial perspective, Urszula and Katarzyna (2020) confirmed that customer orientation and innovation are closely intertwined, with executives recognizing customer understanding as a critical source of innovative ideas. Additionally, Dąbrowski et al. (2025) found that responsive and proactive market orientations positively affect hospital financial performance, with service innovation as the mediating factor, demonstrating the cross-industry applicability of this mechanism.

H1: Customer-focused management positively influences business innovation among commercial and service entrepreneurs in Nakhon Nayok Province.

H2: Customer-focused management positively influences service innovation among commercial and service entrepreneurs in Nakhon Nayok Province.

BUSINESS INNOVATION

Business Innovation is a broad concept encompassing systemic organizational change aimed at creating value and achieving competitive advantage. Drucker (1985) defines innovation as a process of developing new ideas or improving existing ones to enhance value and more effectively meet social or organizational needs. Similarly, Henrekson et al. (2024) describe innovation as the "engine of economic growth", driven by introducing new

production methods, creating new markets, or developing novel business models. Militaru et al. (2025) further emphasize that innovation is a key variable enabling organizations to maintain competitiveness, particularly through process improvement, product development, and customer value creation. For this study, business innovation encompasses multiple dimensions as proposed by Supatsak et al. (2020), including leadership, planning, information, human resources, processes, and product adequacy. The importance of business innovation has grown substantially in today's rapidly changing economic and technological environment. Organizations that can continuously innovate hold a competitive advantage and are better equipped to adapt to uncertainty and disruption in the business landscape (Naghibi & Valmohammadi, 2025). Empirical studies consistently demonstrate that business innovation contributes to organizational success. Ukpong et al. (2022), in their study of entrepreneurial firms in Uyo Metropolis, found a significant positive relationship between business innovation and organizational sustainability—firms investing in process, product, and management innovation showed greater resilience and long-term growth. Similarly, Quispe et al. (2024) highlighted the role of technological innovation as a crucial driver of business success, noting that organizations adopting digital technologies in innovation development achieved substantially better performance outcomes. Liu et al. (2025) found that integrating digital technologies with innovation development improves productivity and reduces long-term risks, enhancing organizational flexibility and adaptability to future changes. In the SME context, Orwa (2021) confirmed the critical role of innovation capability in determining business success, concluding that SMEs with higher levels of innovation capability are more likely to succeed. Likewise, Kiiru et al. (2023) provided empirical evidence from Kenyan SMEs showing a positive correlation between innovation and business performance, especially in process and product innovation.

H3: Business Innovation positively influences the organizational success of commercial and service-sector entrepreneurs in Nakhon Nayok Province.

SERVICE INNOVATION

Service Innovation refers to the development of distinctive service models that create added value for customers through continuous improvement and innovation. Lusch and Nambisan (2015) define service innovation as the creation or enhancement of service offerings that meet customer needs in new ways, which may involve technology, processes, or customer interactions. Similarly, Den Hertog et al. (2010) conceptualizes service innovation as encompassing multiple dimensions of change, including new service concepts, new customer interaction models, new value systems, and new organizational capabilities. Gallouj and Weinstein (1997) propose that service innovation can take various forms, ranging from incremental improvements to radical transformations that significantly differentiate the organization. In the Thai context, Rujira (2020)—drawing from Bettencourt (2010); Biemans, Griffin, & Moenaert (2016); and McDermott & Prajogo (2012)—identified six key dimensions of service innovation: Customer participation willingness, Network collaboration capability, Knowledge-sharing readiness, Proactive service improvement, Service delivery advantage, Achievement of service satisfaction outcomes. A review of prior research highlights the positive influence of service innovation on organizational success. For instance, Sahibzada et al. (2023) found that service innovation serves as a mediator between market orientation and organization performance—organizations that consistently develop innovative services are better able to meet customer needs and achieve superior financial outcomes. Likewise, Kitsios (2022) examined new service development strategies among entrepreneurs and identified customer participation, technology utilization, and managerial capability as key factors for success. Businesses that effectively integrate these factors are more likely to achieve success in new service development. Furthermore, Suardana (2024) studied the relationship between innovation and business growth and found that personality, sociological, and environmental factors among entrepreneurs influence service innovation development—entrepreneurs who are open to new ideas and possess strong social networks are more likely to develop innovative services. In the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, Manishimwe et al. (2022) demonstrated that service innovation played a crucial role in helping hotels recover and adapt during the crisis; those that introduced new service models aligned with health measures and evolving consumer behavior achieved better performance. Additionally, Tayyebirad and Alroaia (2020) found that service innovation is positively related to sustainable competitive advantage through knowledge management in clean production processes.

H4: Service Innovation has a positive influence on the organizational success of commercial and service-sector entrepreneurs in Nakhon Nayok Province.

ORGANIZATIONAL SUCCESS

Organizational Success is a multidimensional concept encompassing various aspects of performance. Kaplan and Norton (1992) introduced the Balanced Scorecard, which evaluates organizational success through four perspectives: financial, customer, internal process, and learning and growth. Similarly, Venkatraman and Ramanujam (1986) classified organizational performance into three levels—financial performance, business performance, and organizational effectiveness. Murphy et al. (1996) further argued that organizational success should be measured through both monetary outcomes (e.g., revenue and profit) and non-monetary outcomes (e.g., customer satisfaction and corporate image). For this study, organizational success is conceptualized through two primary dimensions:Financial performance, assessed by revenue, profit, and customer retention capability; and Operational performance, assessed by organizational image, service reputation, market share, and the ability to attract new customers. Measuring organizational success across multiple dimensions provides a comprehensive understanding of both efficiency and effectiveness, especially in the context of SMEs, which must ensure short-term survival while pursuing sustainable long-term growth. A review of related literature examining the determinants of organizational success, particularly the role of innovation, reveals several key findings. Alwiyah and Lyraa (2024) investigated the role of innovation in the success of modern entrepreneurs and found that innovation is a crucial factor directly influencing both short- and long-term success. Entrepreneurs with strong innovation capabilities are more likely to achieve sustainable growth. Shahzad et al. (2021) studied the factors affecting entrepreneurial intention and found that entrepreneurial skills, risk-taking propensity, and open business model innovation are positively associated with the success of start-up ventures. Likewise, Ukpong et al. (2022) reported a positive relationship between business innovation and organizational sustainability, one of the key indicators of long-term success. In exploring the relationship between innovation and performance, Thoumrungroje and Racela (2022) demonstrated that innovation acts as a mediator between customer orientation and organizational performance across different business strategies, suggesting that organizational success depends not only on innovation itself but also on the strategic context in which it operates. Furthermore, Beikzad and Mokhtari (2024) examined the influence of entrepreneurial thinking and positive organizational behavior on collaborative performance, finding that employees' willingness to cooperate serves as a key mediator enabling organizations to achieve higher levels of success.

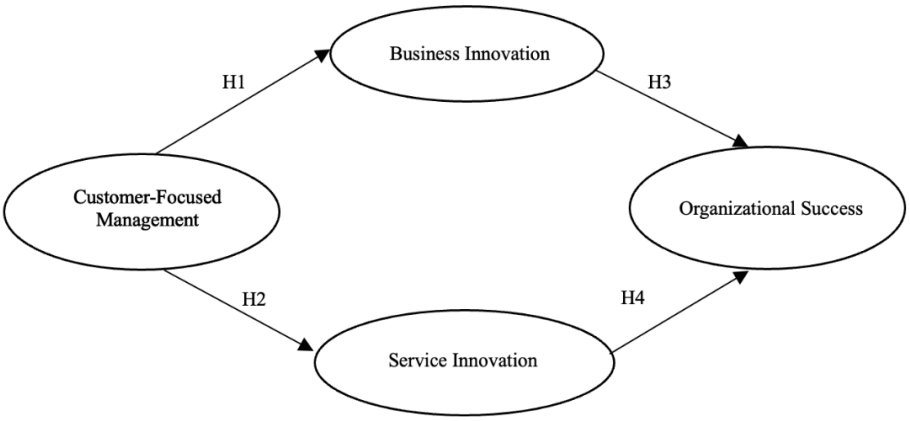

Figure 1. Theoretical framework.

METHODOLOGY

This study employed a mixed-method research design using an Explanatory Sequential Approach, which integrated quantitative and qualitative methods in two consecutive phases. The rationale for selecting this design is threefold. First, qualitative data were used to deepen the interpretation of the quantitative findings. While the Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) analysis in the quantitative phase identifies causal relationships among variables, it cannot fully explain the underlying context, mechanisms, or reasons behind those relationships. Second, the qualitative phase aimed to validate and interpret the results within the specific context of entrepreneurs in Nakhon Nayok Province, ensuring that the findings reflect local business realities. Third, this sequential approach facilitates the development of practical and actionable recommendations for business innovation improvement.

In Phase 1, quantitative data were collected through a structured questionnaire administered to 400 entrepreneurs, representing both commercial and service sectors. The data were analyzed using descriptive statistics and Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) to examine the causal relationships among Customer-focus

management, Business Innovation, Service Innovation, and Organizational Success. In Phase 2, the results from the first phase were used to guide in-depth interviews with 15 entrepreneurs from the commercial sector and 15 from the service sector. The qualitative data were analyzed using Content Analysis and the TOWS Matrix framework, allowing the study to propose strategic and contextually relevant innovation development guidelines consistent with the findings from both research phases.

SAMPLE

The quantitative sample group in this study comprised entrepreneurs from the commercial and service sectors in Nakhon Nayok Province. The sample size was determined based on the criteria for Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) as suggested by Hair et al. (2010), which recommend a minimum of 20 samples per observed variable. Since this study included 19 observed variables, a minimum of 380 samples was required. To minimize sampling error, the researcher collected data from 400 participants. A purposive sampling technique was employed to ensure the selection of appropriate respondents. To reduce selection bias, the researcher established the following preventive measures: Clear inclusion and exclusion criteria, Diverse sample distribution across business types and locations, Data collection through multiple channels, Data quality validation, and Comparison of sample characteristics with the overall population profile. For the qualitative phase, 30 key informants were selected based on Nastasi and Schensul (2005). The group consisted of 15 commercial entrepreneurs and 15 service entrepreneurs, chosen to ensure diversity in business types, firm sizes, years of operation, and geographical locations, thereby capturing a comprehensive range of perspectives and experiences.

Inclusion criteria: Participants must be entrepreneurs operating in the commercial or service sectors in Nakhon Nayok Province. Participants must have experience in managing commercial or service businesses. These criteria ensured that all respondents possessed relevant knowledge and experience to provide valuable insights for the study.

Exclusion criteria: Entrepreneurs in Nakhon Nayok who were unavailable or unwilling to provide information. Entrepreneurs outside Nakhon Nayok Province. These exclusion criteria ensured that data collection adhered to ethical standards and focused on a clearly defined target group within the study's geographic context. Establishing precise inclusion and exclusion criteria helped minimize selection bias, thereby enhancing the credibility, validity, and contextual applicability of the research findings. Applying consistent criteria across all respondents further prevented researcher-induced bias and ensured the robustness of the sampling process.

STATISTICAL ANALYSIS

Data analysis was conducted in two phases. For the quantitative research, the researcher employed descriptive statistics, including frequency, percentage, mean, and standard deviation, to describe the general characteristics of respondents and their levels of opinions toward various variables. In addition, Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) was utilized to examine the causal relationships among the variables. The model fit evaluation was assessed using multiple goodness-of-fit indices, including: Chi-Square (χ^2), CMIN/df (< 2), GFI and AGFI (> 0.90), TLI and IFI (> 0.90), and RMSEA (≤ 0.08), following the recommendations of Hair et al. (2010) and Hu and Bentler (1999). To test the mediation effects, the bootstrapping procedure with 5,000 resamples and 95% bias-corrected confidence intervals was employed, following the recommendations of Hayes (2018) and Preacher and Hayes (2008). For the qualitative research, the researcher employed Content Analysis to analyze data obtained from the in-depth interviews. The data were categorized according to emerging key themes. Additionally, the TOWS Matrix analysis was used to identify strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats. The data integration process followed Creswell and Clark et al. (2018) framework, consisting of three key strategies: Connecting – using quantitative results to develop interview questions; Building – using quantitative findings as the foundation for qualitative discussions; and Merging – integrating and interpreting both quantitative and qualitative results to present a comprehensive understanding of the research findings.

MEASURES

The research instruments consisted of two main components.For the quantitative research, the researcher developed a five-part questionnaire:Part 1 — General Information (12 items), Part 2 — Customer-Focus Management (30 items), divided into six dimensions, adapted from Akkaraborwon and Srithanyarat (2015) and Serirat et al. (2010), Part 3 — Business Innovation (25 items), divided into five dimensions, adapted from Supatsak Kamsamarn et al. (2020), Part 4 — Service Innovation (34 items), divided into seven dimensions, adapted from

Rujira Luangsakdaphich (2020), Part 5 — Organizational Success (10 items), divided into two dimensions, adapted from Kaplan and Norton (1992) and Marcu (2020) The questionnaire's reliability was assessed using Cronbach's Alpha Coefficient from a pilot test of 30 respondents, yielding values between 0.73 and 0.84, indicating high to very high reliability. For the qualitative research, the researcher used a semi-structured interview guide developed from theoretical frameworks and quantitative findings. The instrument was designed based on Joungtrakul (2010) and Patton (1990) and consisted of five parts: Personal information, Innovation capability, Service delivery, Continuous improvement, Innovation development strategies. Additionally, field notes were taken to record key observations and contextual insights during the interviews.

Table 1. Demographic Characteristics.

Variables	Frequency	%
Gender		
Male	190	47.50
Female	210	52.50
Total	**400**	**100.00**
Age		
≤ 30 years	104	26.00
31 – 50 years	182	45.50
51 – 60 years	83	20.75
>60 years	31	7.75
Total	**400**	**100.00**
Education		
Below bachelor's degree	162	40.50
Bachelor degree	201	50.25
Higher than bachelor's degree	37	9.25
Total	**400**	**100.00**
Address		
Bangkok	44	11.00
Nakhon Nayok	243	60.75
Others	113	28.25
Total	**400**	**100.0**
Organization Age		
≤ 1 years	109	27.30
2 – 5 years	96	24.00
6 – 10 years	97	24.30
<10 years	98	24.50
Total	400	100.00
Numbers of Employees		
≤ 30	312	78.00
31 – 50	72	18.00
51 – 100	13	3.25
<100	3	0.75
Total	**400**	**100.00**
Investment		
>1,000,000 baht	163	40.75
1,000,001 – 3,000,000 baht	222	55.50
3,000,001 – 5,000,000 baht	13	3.25
>5,000,001 baht	2	0.50
Total	**400**	**100.00**
Type of Business		
Wholesale	34	8.50
Retail	180	45.00
Service	164	41.00
Manufacture	22	5.50
Total	**400**	**100.00**

The study found that among the 400 respondents, the majority were female (52.50%), aged 31–50 years (45.50%), held a bachelor's degree (50.25%), and were originally from Nakhon Nayok Province (60.75%). Regarding business characteristics, most enterprises had been in operation for one year or less (27.30%), employed

30 or fewer employees (78.00%), and had an investment capital between 1,000,001 and 3,000,000 Thai Baht (55.50%). The largest proportion of businesses operated in the retail sector (45.00%).

RESULTS

The discriminant validity analysis revealed that the square root of the AVE for each latent variable was greater than the correlations between that latent variable and all other latent variables in the model. In addition, the cross-loading values of each observed variable were highest with their corresponding latent construct, compared to their loadings on other constructs. Therefore, it can be concluded that all latent variables in the model demonstrated adequate discriminant validity and were accurately measured by their respective observed variables (Fornell & Larcker, 1981; Hair et al., 2014), as shown in Table 2.

Table 2. Discriminant Validity.

	Fornell-Larcker Criterion			
	CTFM	**BIZI**	**SEVI**	**ORGS**
CTFM	.753			
BIZI	.697**	.789		
SEVI	.646**	.604**	.790	
ORGS	.745**	.700**	.744**	.753

Note: p < .01; CTFM = Customer-Focused Management, BIZI = Business Innovation, SEVI = Service Innovation, ORGS = Organizational Success.

Based on the results of the causal relationship model analysis using the Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) technique to identify the causal influence paths among variables, the model fit between the hypothesized model and the empirical data was evaluated. According to Wheaton et al. (1977), when the Chi-square test of the Maximum Likelihood (ML) estimation yields a p-value less than 0.05, the relative Chi-square (CMIN/DF) should be considered instead. Additional fit indices such as RMR, GFI, AGFI, and PGFI are also recommended for comprehensive assessment (Hu & Bentler, 1995). In this study, the Chi-square test produced a p-value of 0.00. The results of the model fit analysis revealed that the model achieved a Chi-square value of 202.73, with 131 degrees of freedom, CMIN/df = 1.543, GFI = 0.938, AGFI = 0.901, SRMR = 0.033, and RMSEA = 0.040. These values indicate that the proposed model demonstrates a good fit and is highly consistent with the empirical data. Although GFI (0.938) and AGFI (0.901) fell slightly below the stringent threshold of 0.95, they exceeded the acceptable threshold of 0.90 recommended by Hair et al. (2010) and are considered acceptable for complex models with large sample sizes. The convergence of multiple fit indices (CMIN/df, SRMR, RMSEA) consistently indicated good model fit. (Kline, 2016)

HYPOTHESIS TESTING RESULTS

The structural equation modeling analysis revealed significant relationships among the variables, as shown in Table 3. All four hypotheses were supported at the p < .001 significance level.

Table 3. Direct Effects, Indirect Effects, and Total Effects on Organizational Success.

Path	**β**	**SE**	**t**	**p**	**Result**
Direct Effects					
H1: CTFM → BIZI	0.859	0.079	12.935	< .001***	Supported
H2: CTFM → SEVI	0.818	0.073	10.528	< .001***	Supported
H3: BIZI → ORGS	0.617	0.055	6.259	< .001***	Supported
H4: SEVI → ORGS	0.566	0.074	8.017	< .001***	Supported
Indirect Effects					
CTFM → BIZI → ORGS	0.53	-	-	< .001***	Significant
CTFM → SEVI → ORGS	0.463	-	-	< .001***	Significant

Note: **p < .001; CTFM = Customer-Focused Management; BIZI = Business Innovation; SEVI = Service Innovation; ORGS = Organizational Success,

Table 3 presents the results of hypothesis testing through structural equation modeling. All four hypothesized direct paths were statistically significant at $p < .001$. Among the direct effects, business innovation exerted the strongest influence on organizational success ($\beta = .617$, $t = 6.259$, $p < .001$), followed by service innovation ($\beta = .566$, $t = 8.017$, $p < .001$). Customer-focused management demonstrated substantial direct effects on both business innovation ($\beta = .859$, $t = 12.935$, $p < .001$) and service innovation ($\beta = .818$, $t = 10.528$, $p < .001$).

Regarding indirect effects, customer-focused management influenced organizational success through two pathways: (1) via business innovation ($\beta = .530$, $p < .001$), and (2) via service innovation ($\beta = .463$, $p < .001$). The total effect of customer-focused management on organizational success was .993, indicating that its influence is fully mediated through innovation processes. These findings confirm that customer-focused management does not directly impact organizational success but rather operates through the development of both business and service innovations, which collectively explained approximately 68% of the variance in organizational success ($R^2 = .68$).

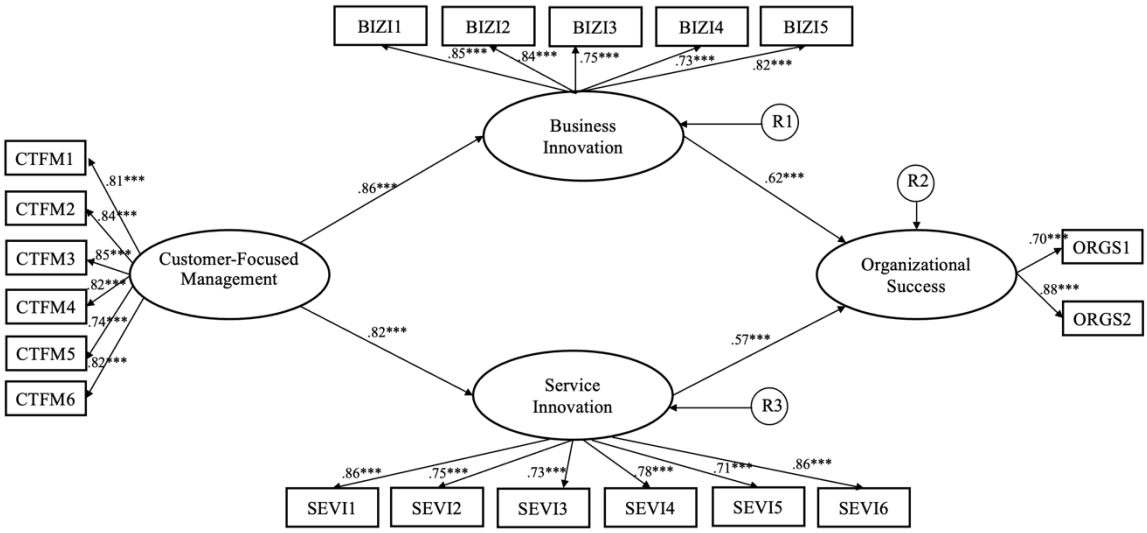

Figure 2. Structural Equation Structure for Organizational Success.

CONCLUSION

The qualitative findings revealed that entrepreneurs in Nakhon Nayok Province have made significant efforts to integrate technology and innovation into their business development. Many participants reported regular employee training, the use of chatbots for customer interaction, and the implementation of Customer Relationship Management (CRM) systems to enhance service efficiency. Several key informants also indicated the adoption of information technology to improve responsiveness to customer inquiries and complaints. The quantitative results strongly supported these findings. The overall mean score for business innovation was 4.11 (high level), with leadership showing the highest mean score (4.60) and information management at 3.87. Furthermore, business innovation was found to have the strongest direct effect on organizational success with a path coefficient of 0.617, which was statistically significant. Regarding service innovation, qualitative data showed that entrepreneurs actively encouraged customer participation in service development, established collaborations within their networks, and continuously improved services to align with evolving customer needs. The quantitative analysis was consistent with these results, revealing a mean score of 4.14 and a direct influence on organizational success of 0.566. The convergence of these two research strands confirms that the integration of business and service innovation is a key driver enabling entrepreneurs to gain competitive advantages and achieve organizational success. Additionally, the SWOT analysis from the qualitative phase identified both strengths and weaknesses of Nakhon Nayok entrepreneurs. The main strengths include the strategic location near Bangkok and the Eastern Economic Corridor (EEC), the potential for eco-tourism, and clear business management strategies. Conversely, the notable weaknesses are the shortage of skilled labor, limited knowledge in value-added production, and restrictions imposed by urban planning regulations.

The quantitative findings reinforced these insights, showing that organizational success is influenced both directly and indirectly by customer-focus management, business innovation, and service innovation. The structural model demonstrated that customer-focus management exerts an indirect influence on organizational success through business innovation, with a path coefficient of 0.467. Integrating both sets of findings led to the formulation of innovation strategies using the TOWS Matrix, which outlines four strategic directions: SO Strategy

– Developing entrepreneurs toward an innovation-driven economy; ST Strategy – Focusing on measuring innovation outcomes and impacts; WO Strategy – Enhancing value-added products and services; WT Strategy – Encouraging collaboration and business clustering for innovation creation. These strategies not only align with both the qualitative and quantitative findings but also provide a practical roadmap for entrepreneurs in Nakhon Nayok to strengthen their competitiveness and achieve sustainable organizational success.

DISCUSSION

Understanding Customer Voice (Questions, Complaints, Suggestions, Feedback)

The qualitative results show that entrepreneurs in Nakhon Nayok systematically prioritize the "voice of the customer," not only by listening but by converting feedback into concrete service and product improvements. This finding accords with studies in Thai SME contexts reporting that closed-loop feedback (listening → analysis → corrective action → communication back to customers) produces distinctive organizational outcomes and reduces expectation gaps. In the present setting, customer input functions as innovation raw material, feeding continuous improvement cycles rather than serving merely as a satisfaction checkpoint. This helps explain why firms that better "understand needs" deliver higher perceived value and responsiveness in day-to-day operations.

However, a critical insight emerges from the SEM analysis: customer voice alone proves insufficient without transformation capabilities. CTFM exerts no direct effect on organizational success; rather, its impact operates entirely through business innovation (indirect effect $\beta = 0.530$) and service innovation (indirect effect $\beta = 0.463$). This complete mediation aligns with the Knowledge-Based View, treating customer data as raw input requiring systematic processing before yielding business outcomes. The paradox observed qualitatively—high emphasis on "customer voice" (4.60) yet lower overall CTFM implementation—reflects precisely this gap: many entrepreneurs possess robust listening mechanisms but lack organizational infrastructure to convert insights into innovations. Merely collecting feedback through CRM systems, surveys, or social media yields minimal returns without parallel investment in innovation capabilities—the "transformation engine" that converts customer intelligence into value creation. These finding challenges simplistic prescriptions for "customer centricity" by highlighting that listening capacity differs fundamentally from transformation capability.

Perceived Importance of CTFM, Business/Service Innovation, and Organizational Success

Quantitatively, respondents (i) weighted customer-focused management (CTFM) most heavily on "customer voice," (ii) emphasized visionary leadership as the prime driver within business innovation, and (iii) highlighted customer participation within service innovation. On outcomes, non-financial service performance (image, reputation, retaining customers) received the highest emphasis for organizational success. This pattern is consistent with research showing that forward-looking leadership and systematic attention to customer needs catalyze product/service innovation and market performance in resource-constrained SMEs. In Balanced Scorecard (BSC) terms, customer and internal-process indicators operate as leading indicators that precede and enable financial results. The evidence here supports that view: customer centricity and innovation lift non-financial performance first, then translate into financial gains.

The integration of qualitative SWOT findings with SEM results illuminates a transformation challenge. While Nakhon Nayok possesses strategic assets—geographical capital (proximity to Bangkok/EEC), natural and cultural capital (eco-tourism drawing 800,000+ visitors annually), and policy capital (Thailand 4.0 support)—these resources do not automatically confer success. The SEM model showing business innovation's dominant direct effect ($\beta = 0.617$) signals that success hinges not on resource possession but on transformation capabilities that convert static assets into dynamic competitive advantages. Analyzing resources through the VRIN framework (Barney et al., 2021) reveals differential sustainability. Intangible resources—eco-tourism reputation, local culture, indigenous knowledge—exhibit strong Inimitability and Non-substitutability due to social complexity and path-dependent accumulation over decades. The qualitative finding emphasizing "service advantage through local distinctiveness" confirms entrepreneurs recognize these intangibles as key differentiators. Conversely, tangible resources (geographic location, tourism infrastructure), while Valuable and Rare, face erosion risks as neighboring provinces develop comparable facilities and digital commerce reduces location dependence.

The critical gap surfaces in human capital: SWOT analysis identified shortages of skilled labor, limited innovation knowledge, and weak technological capabilities. This deficit directly constrains business and service innovation development (per the SEM mediation structure). Without human capital to identify opportunities and execute strategies, even valuable geographic and cultural resources cannot be fully exploited. The imperative is developing specialized, context-specific capabilities—training that integrates eco-tourism management with cultural preservation, digital marketing with community storytelling, quality management with traditional craft

techniques. Such context-embedded knowledge creates causal ambiguity and social complexity, raising imitability barriers and generating sustainable competitive advantages (de la Torre & De la Vega, 2025).

Causal Effects (SEM) among CTFM → Innovation → Organizational Success

Business Innovation → Organizational Success

The structural model indicates that business innovation exerts the strongest direct effect on organizational success (e.g., $\beta \approx 0.62$, $p < .001$). Mechanistically, firms deploy digital tools, automation, CRM, and complaint-handling systems to upgrade core processes, converting static resources into value via resource-to-value transformation. This aligns with the Resource-Based View (RBV) and with arguments that innovation capabilities evolve toward dynamic capabilities suited to high-velocity markets. The differential strength of business innovation ($\beta = 0.617$) versus service innovation ($\beta = 0.566$) suggests a hierarchical relationship: organizational-level innovation provides foundational infrastructure for operational-level innovation. Business innovation—comprising leadership ($\lambda = 0.89$), processes ($\lambda = 0.85$), planning ($\lambda = 0.83$), people ($\lambda = 0.78$), and information ($\lambda = 0.69$)—creates the enabling environment. Visionary leadership sets innovation direction: systematic planning allocates resources; robust information systems support decision-making; effective people management ensures capability development; streamlined processes facilitate implementation. These organizational capabilities cascade downward, enabling service innovations such as customer co-creation, proactive improvement, and differentiation.

This accords with Dynamic Capabilities Theory (Gohr & Rodrigues, 2025; Hanelt et al., 2021), which emphasizes that organizations must first develop higher-order capabilities—capacities to sense opportunities, seize them, and reconfigure resources—before effectively implementing specific operational innovations. The qualitative data support this interpretation: entrepreneurs identified "visionary leadership" as most critical (4.60), recognizing that leader commitment enables downstream capabilities. However, a gap emerges: while possessing basic operational competencies (ordinary capabilities), Nakhon Nayok entrepreneurs have not yet developed dynamic capabilities for sensing, seizing, and transforming in response to environmental flux. Practically, this hierarchical structure implies that capability development must follow sequence: attempting service innovations without first establishing business innovation foundations yields unsustainable improvements. Short-term enhancements may occur, but without leadership commitment, systematic processes, and organizational infrastructure, these cannot be maintained or scaled. Intervention strategies should thus prioritize building organizational capabilities—innovation leadership, systematic processes, information systems—before expecting sustained service innovation outcomes. The synergistic effects observed ($R^2 = 0.68$ suggesting multiplicative relationships) further underscore this: business innovation amplifies service innovation impact, while service innovation feedback refines business innovation, creating virtuous cycles consistent with Systems Theory (Von Bertalanffy, 1968).

Service Innovation → Organizational Success

The model also shows a significant direct effect of service innovation on success. Key mechanisms include customer co-creation, proactive, continuous service improvement, and service advantage. These convert local, intangible assets (eco-tourism identity, community culture) into inimitable differentiation and sustained competitiveness.

Theoretical implication. CTFM shows no direct path to success; instead, its impact is fully mediated by business and service innovation. This coheres with the Knowledge-Based View: customer information and insights must be transformed through innovation processes before they materialize as business outcomes. Overall model fit was good (e.g., $\chi^2 = 202.73$, $df = 131$, $CMIN/df = 1.543$, $GFI = 0.938$, $AGFI = 0.901$, $SRMR = 0.033$, $RMSEA = 0.040$), and the model explained about 68% of the variance in organizational success. The remaining variance (~32%) plausibly reflects exogenous shocks (natural hazards, macroeconomic volatility, zoning constraints), underscoring the need for dynamic capabilities to strengthen resilience.

Synthesizing findings, organizational success operates through a three-layer mechanism. Layer 1 Customer Intelligence; captures customer data via CRM systems and multiple feedback channels; the strong CTFM effects on business innovation ($\beta = 0.859$) and service innovation ($\beta = 0.818$) confirm this layer's criticality, though qualitative evidence revealed gaps in analytics capabilities. Layer 2 Innovation Transformation; converts intelligence into innovations through two pathways: business innovation ($\beta = 0.617$ to success) transforming insights into organizational-level changes (leadership vision, strategic planning, systems, HR, processes), and service innovation ($\beta = 0.566$) translating needs into operational changes (co-creation, network collaboration, proactive improvement, differentiation). The complete mediation structure underscores that customer data create no value until transformation occurs—

aligning with Knowledge-Based View treating knowledge as a production factor requiring processing. Layer 3 Business Outcomes; translates innovations into measurable success through operational excellence (value-added products, community brands, quality upgrades) and strategic synergy (entrepreneur clustering, partnerships, shared resources—currently underdeveloped per SWOT but high-potential). The 68% explained variance, with 32% attributable to external factors (natural hazards, economic volatility, regulatory constraints per SWOT), emphasizes the imperative of developing dynamic capabilities and resilience to buffer uncontrollable environmental turbulence.

Implications

Based on the analysis and synthesis of the research findings, the researcher proposes a CIOS Model as a framework for fostering innovation that drives organizational success among entrepreneurs in Nakhon Nayok Province. The model comprises four key components: Customer-Focused Management (C) – Customer-centered management that emphasizes responsiveness to customer needs; Innovation Integration (I) – Integration of innovation processes across the organization; Operational Excellence (O) – Pursuit of efficiency and quality in business operations; Strategic Synergy (S) – Creation of collaborative power through strategic partnerships.

The details of each component are as follows.

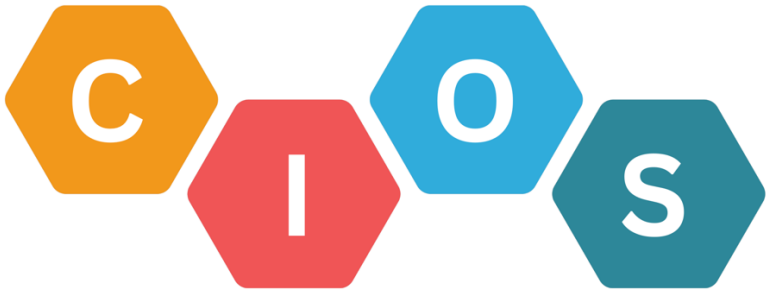

Figure 3. Model of Innovation Development for Organizational Success.

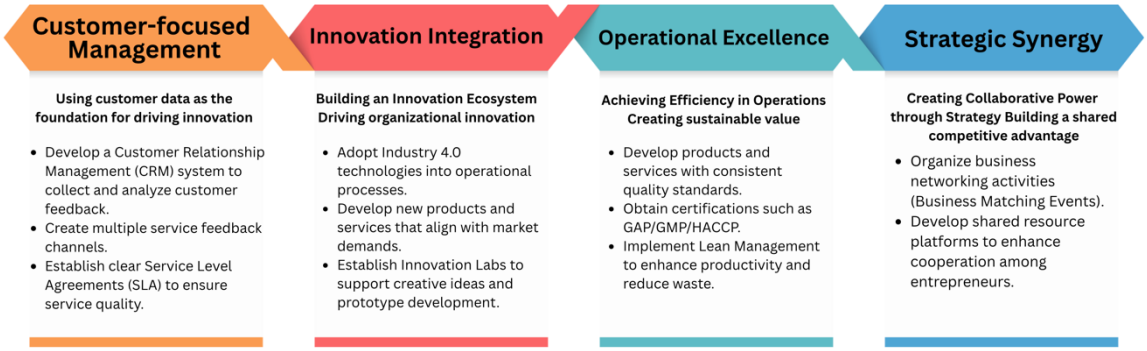

Figure 4. Guidelines for Developing Innovations that Contribute to Organizational Success among Entrepreneurs.

From the organizational innovation model for success, the researcher proposes a practical framework that can be applied to guide innovation development among entrepreneurs in Nakhon Nayok Province. The process begins with customer-focused management, which utilizes customer data as the foundation for driving innovation through Customer Relationship Management (CRM) systems and multiple customer feedback channels. This leads to innovation integration, encompassing both business and service innovation, by incorporating Industry 4.0 technologies into processes and engaging customers in co-creation and product/service development. Subsequently, innovation is translated into tangible outcomes through operational excellence, by adding value to local products, developing community-based brands, and upgrading standards to international levels. The process is further reinforced by strategic synergy, which emphasizes collaborative networks, entrepreneurial clustering, and shared resource platforms to strengthen competitiveness. Therefore, the relationship among the four components of the model is synergistic in nature: Customer-focused management stimulates innovation; innovation integration requires operational excellence to yield real outcomes; and strategic synergy amplifies these effects, ensuring sustainability and long-term organizational success.

The mechanism of the innovation development framework for organizational success among entrepreneurs in Nakhon Nayok Province operates as a continuous cyclical process. It begins with Customer Input, which serves as the core raw material for innovation creation. The data collected from customers are then analyzed and transformed into innovation concepts through the Innovation Process, covering both business innovation and

service innovation. The developed innovations are subsequently implemented in practice during the Operational Implementation stage, with an emphasis on efficiency and value creation. This is followed by Strategic Integration, where organizations leverage collaborative networks and strategic partnerships to scale up outcomes and build a sustainable competitive advantage. Ultimately, these processes lead to Organizational Success, as measured by both financial performance and operational effectiveness. Importantly, the outcomes from this stage are fed back into the system as new input for future innovation cycles, thereby creating a continuous loop of learning, improvement, and sustainable development.

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