Appropriates Knowledge Management Model for Community Enterprises: A Case Study of "Pan-Mai" A Rural Community Enterprise in Thailand

Tassanee Buarapha

Abstract: Problem statement: Pan -Mai is a hand weaving community enterprise in the northeast rural area of Thailand which has typical community enterprise characteristics, self-employed and collaborative management. Its also has a home-based production system, utilizing local resources and knowledge. The objectives of this research were :(1) to study a present time of knowledge management practices of the community enterprise (2) to find an appropriate Knowledge Management model for community enterprises. **Approach**: The research area has done in "Thung Kula Rong Hai" the northeastern Thailand for 3 provinces including: Roi –Ed, Surin and Sri-Saket. The samples as informants were selected by Purposive Sampling including 18 experts, 10 committee members, 45 Pan-Mai members, an advisory committee member and office staff members. The instruments for collecting data consist of the structured interview and non-structured interview, participatory observation and non-participatory observation, focus group discussion and conference. Data were classified into groups based on the studied issues. They were investigated by triangulation technique and analyzed based on the specified objectives. The findings were presented by descriptive analysis.

Results: The findings of this research expose that, at the present time although community members would not be aware of Knowledge Management practice, Pan-Mai managed its knowledge through informal educational activities such as learning by doing and observation and work processes concerned with collaboration and informality. The current Knowledge Management practice of Pan-Mai entails three processes: basic skill development, competence building and new knowledge creation through construction, capture, sharing, transferring, verification, utilization and codification. Significantly for this study, Knowledge Management of Pan- Mai focuses on organizational knowledge creation and indigenous knowledge systems. The current Knowledge Management of Pan- Mai also has four other components. Its knowledge resources come from members, other villagers, other hand weaving groups, support organizations' and markets. Most of the knowledge is tacit and indigenous. The operation and management systems determine the knowledge processes and provide supportive and incentive systems. The organizational culture and resources, including funding, social capital and appropriate technologies, also provide supportive and incentive systems. The resources are also the tools that facilitate the knowledge processes. The knowledge assets encompass actual assets such as products, cloth designs, techniques, and operation and management systems and competencies including members' skills and abilities, social capital, and shared values, which are not registered as intellectual properties but are in the forms of organizational memories. The traditional Knowledge Management practice of Pan Mai can be possibly strengthened by integrating modern Knowledge Management concepts, including knowledge resources from academic and government agencies, appropriate technologies to facilitate knowledge codification and knowledge transfer, extrinsic reward and incentive systems, and facilitators or consultants to enhance members' communities of practices (CoPs). The findings of this study and the Knowledge Management model contribute to both community enterprise development and further research on Knowledge Management in a community enterprise context and indigenous Knowledge Management.

Keywords: community enterprise, knowledge management (KM), communities of practices (CoPs). , organizational knowledge creation, indigenous knowledge, appropriate model

Researcher: The Research Institute of Northeastern Art and Culture, Maha-Sarakham University, Maha-Sarakham, 44000 Thailand. e-mail address: tassanee.bb@hotmail.com