

The Adaptation of Sport Entrepreneurs to the Transition into an Aging Society การปรับตัวของผู้ประกอบการธุรกิจกีฬาต่อการเปลี่ยนผ่านสู่สังคมสูงวัย

Onanong Wichinrotjaral¹, Hatthaya Yamchuti^{2*}, Worawan Sirichana³

อรอนงค์ วิชินโรจน์จรัล^{1*}, หัตทยา แยมชุตี^{2*}, วรวรรณ ศิริชนะ³

School of Business Administration, Bangkok University¹, General Education, Thonburi University^{2*},

Faculty of Medicine, Chulalongkorn University³

คณะบริหารธุรกิจ มหาวิทยาลัยกรุงเทพ¹, สำนักวิชาศึกษาทั่วไป มหาวิทยาลัยธนบุรี^{2*},

คณะแพทยศาสตร์ จุฬาลงกรณ์มหาวิทยาลัย³

Onanong.w@bu.ac.th¹, Hatthayam@thonburi-u.ac.th^{2*}, Wsirichana@gmail.com³

ผู้ประพันธ์บรรณกิจ (Corresponding Author)^{2*}

Abstract

This study examines how entrepreneurial resourcefulness—across personal, people, and political dimensions—supports the business adaptability of sports entrepreneurs within the context of Thailand’s rapidly aging society. Employing a qualitative methodology with in-depth, semi-structured interviews of five sports entrepreneurs, the study reveals that personal resourcefulness (e.g., strategic thinking, resilience), people resourcefulness (e.g., empathy-driven service, team collaboration), and political resourcefulness (e.g., navigating government support schemes) collectively enhance adaptability and strategy development. While personal and people dimensions are foundational across all cases, political engagement varies significantly, highlighting structural gaps in policy accessibility for SMEs. The findings contribute to entrepreneurship literature by framing resourcefulness as a multi-level construct and offer practical insights for aligning business strategies with demographic shifts.

Keywords: Entrepreneurial Resourcefulness, Aging Society, Business Adaptability, Sport Entrepreneurs

บทคัดย่อ

งานวิจัยนี้ศึกษาบทบาทของทรัพยากรเชิงผู้ประกอบการใน 3 มิติ ได้แก่ มิติด้านบุคคล มิติด้านผู้คน และมิติด้านการเมือง ที่ช่วยสนับสนุนความสามารถในการปรับตัวทางธุรกิจของผู้ประกอบการกีฬา ภายใต้บริบทของ สังคมที่ก้าวเข้าสู่ภาวะสูงวัยอย่างรวดเร็วของประเทศไทย โดยอาศัยระเบียบวิธีวิจัยเชิงคุณภาพผ่านการสัมภาษณ์เชิงลึกแบบกึ่งโครงสร้างกับผู้ประกอบการกีฬาจำนวน 5 ราย ผลการศึกษาพบว่า ทรัพยากรด้านบุคคล (เช่น การคิดเชิงกลยุทธ์ ความยืดหยุ่น) ทรัพยากรด้านผู้คน (เช่น การบริการที่ขับเคลื่อนด้วยความเห็นอกเห็นใจ การทำงานร่วมกันเป็นทีม) และ ทรัพยากรด้านการเมือง (เช่น ความสามารถในการเข้าถึงและใช้ประโยชน์จากโครงการสนับสนุนของภาครัฐ) ล้วนมีส่วนช่วยยกระดับความสามารถในการปรับตัวและการพัฒนากลยุทธ์ร่วมกัน ในขณะที่ทรัพยากรด้านบุคคลและด้านผู้คนถือเป็นรากฐานสำคัญในทุกกรณีศึกษา แต่ระดับการมีส่วนร่วมทางการเมืองกลับมีความแตกต่างกันอย่างมีนัยสำคัญ ซึ่งสะท้อนให้เห็นถึงช่องว่างเชิงโครงสร้างในการเข้าถึงนโยบายสำหรับวิสาหกิจขนาดกลางและขนาดย่อม (SMEs) ผลการวิจัยนี้มีส่วนช่วยต่อยอดองค์ความรู้ด้านผู้ประกอบการ โดยนำเสนอทรัพยากรเชิงผู้ประกอบการในฐานะโครงสร้างแบบพหุระดับ พร้อมทั้งมอบข้อเสนอแนะเชิงปฏิบัติในการกำหนดกลยุทธ์ทางธุรกิจให้สอดคล้องกับการเปลี่ยนแปลงโครงสร้างประชากร

คำสำคัญ: ทรัพยากรเชิงผู้ประกอบการ, สังคมผู้สูงอายุ, ความสามารถในการปรับตัวทางธุรกิจ, ผู้ประกอบการกีฬา

Introduction

Thailand is currently shifting to an aging society. According to the Foundation of Thai Gerontology Research and Development Institute (2021), declining birth rates and increase life expectancy have influenced the country's population dynamics. By 2026, the elderly population is projected to reach 15 million, or 22.4% of the total population, and this figure is expected to rise to 20 million, or 30.4%, by 2038 (Office of the National Economic and Social Development Council, 2020). This shift leads to critical challenges in healthcare, labor, and social services, but also opens new opportunities for innovation particularly within the sports and wellness sector. A strategic response from sport enterprises to address the evolving needs of an older population is needed.

Despite growing evidence on the importance of physical activity for healthy ageing, the participation rate among Thai seniors remains relatively low, with only 19.6% participating in sports and recreational activities (National Statistical Office, 2021). Fear of injury and declining physical condition are commonly cited barriers. With the specific needs of the elderly, sports entrepreneurs must adapt and implement appropriate strategies to satisfy their requirements. Sports entrepreneurs can establish programs that encourage health, well-being, and active participation among the elderly group by fostering inclusive environments, understanding their motivations, and harnessing technology that enhances safety (Wei et al., 2023). Meanwhile, sports entrepreneurs-active in domains such as fitness centres, wellness programs, and adaptive sports equipment, have begun to recognize the ageing demographic as a potential growth market. However, the sector has yet to fully address the unique needs of this population.

This gap between market potential and current service provision points to a broader research gap in understanding how entrepreneurs within the sports industry are adapting to aging societies. While

previous studies have explored entrepreneurial innovation, adaptability, and opportunity recognition in various contexts, there is limited research on how entrepreneurial resourcefulness across personal, people, and political dimensions is leveraged to respond to demographic shifts, particularly in emerging markets like Thailand. This research will examine how sport entrepreneurs are examining their use of entrepreneurial resourcefulness and the strategies they develop in response of the demographic shift. Understanding these elements will provide valuable insights for developing sports activities and infrastructure aimed at seniors and will reveal potential growth opportunities in this emerging market.

Research Objective

This research is the study of entrepreneurial resourcefulness' impact on the adaptability of sports entrepreneurs in the context of an elderly society. It aims to explore how resourcefulness affects the ability of sports entrepreneurs to develop strategies for business adaptability in response to an ageing society

Literature Review

This study is based on entrepreneurial resourcefulness theory. The 3Ps framework: personal, people, and political represent a critical set of resources that entrepreneurs can leverage to maximize their competencies to shape their entrepreneurial activities (Quagraine et al., 2023). This study provides the principles for an investigation of how each of these variables can promote long-term success in the sports industry in the face of shifting to an aging society.

Personal Resourcefulness

Personal resourcefulness refers to an individual's traits and capabilities. It involves cognitive and emotional resources to overcome challenges and enhance well-being (Savchenko et al., 2023). The components of personal resourcefulness are diverse and can be categorized into three key areas; the metacognitive skills such as self-awareness, and stress management; the cognitive components such as analytical thinking and emotional intelligence; and the motivational aspects such as self-efficacy and positive motivation (Mazai, 2023). Leadership also plays a pivotal role in fostering an adaptable culture, with transformational leaders encouraging innovation and risk-taking among employees. These traits can be strengthened through environmental influences, such as psychological capital interventions, which foster optimism, hope, and self-efficacy, thereby improving stress management and reducing burnout. (Pérez-Marqués et al., 2023). In the context of business adaptability, psychological resources like resilience and emotional intelligence are keys to coping with changes and uncertainties (Omar et al., 2023). However, personal resourcefulness alone is not sufficient. Organizational culture and external market conditions also shape how effectively individual traits translate into business adaptability. Therefore, a holistic approach that integrates personal, organizational, and external factors is essential for achieving adaptability in business changes (Omar et al., 2023; Othman et al., 2022).

People Resourcefulness

People resourcefulness refers to the skillset entrepreneurs need to have in order to create their networks and partnerships (Quagraine et al., 2023). It utilizes human resources, which include relationships, skills, talents and networks, to achieve goals and address economic challenges - entailing the capacity to establish and maintain networks as well as to foster collaboration and teamwork both within and beyond organizational boundaries. Identifying resourceful people within the company is crucial, as is highlighting their contribution to innovation and fostering a collaborative and inclusive culture where people feel valued and empowered to leverage their strengths. The correlation between individuals' resourcefulness and organizational adaptability is vital for successfully navigating the complexities of today's dynamic business environment (Diaconu & Diaconu, 2013). As Kodden (2020) suggests, nurturing individuals' resourcefulness is essential for building resilient and adaptable businesses in achieving sustainable success. Employability skills that prepare individuals to operate effectively in dynamic contexts such as teamwork, communication, and problem-solving further enhance adaptability (Othman et al., 2022). Strategic networks and partnerships improve access to external resources, enhance efficiency, and facilitate the exchange of knowledge. Additionally, effective human resource management significantly improves firms' capacity to adapt more proficiently to market changes (Jaafar & Abdul-Aziz, 2014; Rodrigues et al., 2021).

Political Resourcefulness

Political resourcefulness, including the strategic utilization of political influence and connections. It is conceptualized as a way to develop dynamic capabilities that enable organizations to adapt to evolving environments (Quagraine et al., 2023). Government policies, such as those promoting health and well-being among the elderly, influence entrepreneurial strategies in sports and other industries. Political connections provide accessibility to information and resources such as government support and reputation, that allow an organization to better navigate in the dynamic environments (Han-fei et al., 2007). This can lead to better business performance outlined by research showing that background political connection companies frequently receive public investments to improve their adaptability. Ganz (2000) mentions political strategic capacity enables organizations to overcome resource limitations and achieve their goals. However, an over-reliance on these political connections and accounts can lead to their downsides such as increased public debt and hindered long-term economic growth. Therefore, firms must strategically utilize political resources to address governance gaps and adapt to regulatory changes.

Business Adaptability

Business adaptability refers to an organization's ability to adjust its strategies, structures, procedures, and cultures in response to internal and external changes. Businesses will change how they operate or function to keep up with the changing markets or shifting environmental factors. This includes the adjustment of business operations, processes, and strategies to better align with the current and

competitive market (Sambasivan & Rahman, 2004). A company that is better integrated and coordinates its resources will be more adaptive to changes, fostering innovation and growth by allowing for the development of new products and services (Teece, et al, 1997). Furthermore, an adaptable culture promotes employee engagement by involving staff in decision-making processes, which increases motivation and productivity (Bakker et al., 2011). Ultimately, organizations that prioritize adaptability, in response to customers' feedback and dynamic circumstances, not only improve customer satisfaction but also build longer-term loyalty and trust (Hannan & Freeman, 1984). This not only enhances competitiveness and growth but also enables organizations to endure uncertainty and change.

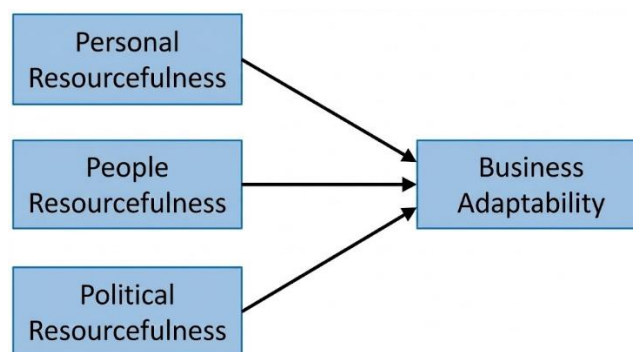


Figure 1: Conceptual Framework illustrating how Entrepreneurial Resourcefulness supports Business Adaptability in an Aging Society

The conceptual framework illustrated in Figure 1 was developed to guide the qualitative exploration of the research phenomenon, rather than to validate statistical propositions or measure causal effects. Drawing upon the theory of Entrepreneurial Resourcefulness, this framework serves as an analytical lens to investigate how the three key dimensions: Personal, People, and Political resourcefulness, interrelate and collectively function to support business adaptability.

Instead of treating these dimensions as independent variables with a linear impact, the framework directs the inquiry into the dynamic interplay between them. It guides the investigation into how sports entrepreneurs leverage their internal cognitive traits (Personal), mobilize social networks and customer relationships (People), and navigate external policy environments (Political) to construct comprehensive adaptation strategies. By framing the study in this manner, the research focuses on uncovering the underlying mechanisms and processes that enable entrepreneurs to sustain their businesses amidst the complex transition to an aging society.

Research Methodology

The study implements a qualitative methodology, inductive methodology using semi-structured interviews to explore how entrepreneurial resourcefulness influences the adaptability of sport entrepreneurs in an aging society. Guided by 3Ps framework: personal, people, and political resourcefulness (Quagraine et al., 2023). The interview guide was designed with open-ended questions

targeting participants' personal experiences, stakeholder interactions, and policy engagement. This approach captures diverse insights across sport sectors and supports the conceptual refinement of entrepreneurial adaptability (Yin, 2009).

Sampling and sample size

The study employed a purposive sampling method to select participants who could provide rich, relevant insights into the phenomenon of business adaptation. To ensure the reliability and validity of the data, specific inclusion criteria were established. First, entrepreneurs were required to have been operating their businesses in the sports sector for over four years. Based on Bann (2007), this timeframe ensures the stability of the venture, considering that a significant portion of startups fail within their first four years.

Crucially, to directly address the research context of the aging society, a second criterion was applied: participants must have demonstrable experience in serving elderly clients or have actively initiated specific business adaptations (e.g., service modification, facility design, or specialized programs) to accommodate the aging demographic. This criterion ensured that all selected key informants possessed the specific experiential knowledge required to answer the research questions.

The final sample consisted of five sports entrepreneurs. While this sample size is small for statistical generalization, it was deemed appropriate based on the principle of 'information power' in qualitative research (Malterud et al., 2016), which suggests that a smaller sample is sufficient when the participants hold high specificity and expertise relevant to the study's aim. The rationale for selecting this specific group was to ensure a diverse range of experiences across various sports types, enabling a meaningful cross-case analysis. Data revealed that the businesses had been in operation for an average of 16.2 years (ranging from 7 to 40 years) and employed an average of 19.4 individuals, categorizing them as small enterprises.

Table 1: Key Adaptations for Elderly Clients

Profile of Sport Entrepreneurs and Key Business Adaptations for Elderly Clients

Business code (BS)	Gender	No. of employees	Age of business (Yrs)	Type of sport	Key Adaptations for Elderly Clients
1	F	23	7	Swimming	Offers hydrotherapy and low-impact aqua aerobics classes specifically designed for seniors.
2	F	35	40	Sport equipment	Distributes ergonomic rehabilitation equipment and home-exercise gear suitable for older adults.
3	F	30	10	Sport equipment	Focuses on importing joint-support accessories and health-monitoring wearables for active aging.
4	M	6	9	Badminton Court	Installed shock-absorption flooring to reduce injury risks and hosts "Morning Senior Leagues".
5	M	3	15	Tennis Court	Provides "Soft Tennis" programs using low-compression balls to reduce joint strain for elderly players.

Data collection

Semi-structured interviews were conducted, lasting 60–80 minutes. The interview guide was specifically designed to explore entrepreneurial resourcefulness and uncover specific business adaptation strategies in response to the demands of the aging society. All interviews were audio-recorded and transcribed verbatim to ensure data accuracy. Data collection adhered to rigorous qualitative standards (Yin, 2009), ensuring respondent confidentiality and fostering a safe environment for open-ended discussions. Trust and rapport were established with participants to encourage deep reflection on their experiences regarding elderly customers.

Data analysis

Thematic analysis was employed using a hybrid approach. First, a deductive analysis was conducted based on the 3Ps conceptual framework (Personal, People, Political) to categorize core resourcefulness traits. Subsequently, an inductive analysis was performed to identify emerging sub-themes related to specific adaptation strategies. Cross-case analysis was then used to compare patterns and distinguish between common practices and unique approaches across the different sport enterprises (Eisenhardt, 1989). A comparative matrix was created to synthesize findings, enhancing the trustworthiness and conceptual robustness of the results rather than statistical generalizability.

Results

The findings are structured around key themes identified in the data.

1. Personal Resourcefulness

Within Case Analysis:

Case BS1: BS1 emphasized self-efficacy, effective communication, active observation, and adaptability as essential skills which enabled more accurate strategy development and business adaptation in an age-shifted market. Prior experience in the sports industry also added to a deeper understanding of senior customers' needs, enabling the organization to provide a greater degree of tailored and credible services.

Case BS2: Strategic planning, growth mindset, analytical skills and domain knowledge in the sports industry are critical to consideration for organizational adaptability and strategy development. BS2's ability to provide services more focused on adult health; by utilizing existing capabilities to respond to new opportunities showed adaptability and entrepreneurial agility.

Case BS3: Adaptability, rapid and effective problem-solving, growth mindset, strong observational skills and time management, are valuable considerations for organizational adaptability and strategic development. Prior experience in sports was useful but not considered a necessity.

Case BS4: Analytical skills, basic business knowledge, listening skills and emotional intelligence are all added value to enhance operational effectiveness and customer service and contributed to

developing resilience strategies as the organization faced demographic change. A service-oriented mindset, passion, and empathy are crucial and often outweigh prior experience in the sports industry.

Case BS5: Interpersonal, leadership, communication, and problem-solving skills, are essential for adaptability. Understanding both customer and employee needs is crucial, with management competencies such as team coordination and conflict resolution driving long-term preparedness.

Cross-Case Analysis: Personal resourcefulness plays a fundamental role in supporting adaptability and strategy development, particularly for catering to the ageing society. Several key themes consistently appeared: strategic thinking, interpersonal and communication skills, experiential insight, and service-oriented leadership.

Strategic Thinking Skills: All cases highlighted strategic and analytical thinking as essential for adaptability. BS2 and BS3, entrepreneurs used their domain knowledge and analytical skills to respond to the growing health concerns of older adults. While BS1 and BS5 demonstrated adaptability through strategic planning to personalize service adjustments, resource alignment, and tactful strategy execution.

Interpersonal Communication Skills: All cases mentioned effective communication as a critical component to building trust with clients and teams. BS1 and BS4 specifically highlighted communication as tools for inclusivity, which were particularly valuable when working with elderly clients. BS5 noted interpersonal skills and helped create a workplace culture that could strategize business strategy in adapting to customer needs. **Resilience Skills:** Adaptability, effective problem-solving, active observation, and a strong growth mindset are vital. While prior experience in the sports industry was beneficial, BS4 illustrated how passion and empathy outweighed when it came to customer service and long-term business resilience. **Leadership Skills:** BS4 and BS5 particularly stressed the importance of motivating and leading both employees and customers in the dynamic context, which enabled businesses to remain agile and customer focused.

2. People resourcefulness

Within Case Analysis:

Case BS1: Open-mindedness and listening skills are required in handling partnerships and customers of different ages. Encouraging inclusiveness and input from employees and customers allows flexibility through client satisfaction and knowledge sharing.

Case BS2: Alignment of internal and external partnerships are mainly dependent on effective communications, negotiations, and collaboration. The listening capability of the company and the ability to communicate the capability of the product help establish trust and strategy alignment with market requirements and thereby adaptability.

Case BS3: Customer-focused approaches, people skills, cooperation, and communication are the main sources of flexibility. The firm customizes products like enhancing insoles for the wellness of elderly customers, enhancing both functionality and emotional fulfilment.

Case BS4: Customer orientation, communications skills, and managerial skills are essential in business adaptation and strategy making. Through teamwork and response to customer strategy, this firm is responsive to changing market needs.

Case BS5: Openness, communication, and optimism are foundational elements of customer relations. Through building strong client service and ensuring a welcoming atmosphere, the organization fosters customer loyalty and its sensitivity to demographic change.

Cross-Case Analysis: People resourcefulness is identified as a key driver for adaptability and strategy formulation, especially in relation to responding to an aging population. A series of core themes recurred repeatedly: communication, customer-centric approach, team collaboration, and Inclusivity.

Communication Skills: All five cases demonstrate the importance of effective communication such as active listening, clear talking, and negotiating. These allow internal and external alignment, create customers' trust, and enable responsiveness to evolving needs. **Customer-centric approach:** All companies continuously modified services to cater to the functional and emotional needs of the aged. BS3 and BS4 customized offerings according to customer feedback, while BS2 focused on the articulation of value propositions according to customer expectations. **Team collaboration:** Team collaboration also played a pivotal role in the development of adaptability. BS2 and BS4 displayed how enhanced internal coordination facilitated inclusive strategies and consistency of services which enabled firms to deliver consistent and adaptable customer experience. **Inclusivity:** There was evidence in some cases (BS1, BS4) of a strive to create an inclusive environment, not only engaging older clients and networks as active stakeholders but also as active contributors instead of passive consumers. This change in attitude promotes broader strategic responsiveness by reframing services towards demographic realities.

3. Political resourcefulness

Within-Case Analysis:

Case BS1: Governments play a significant role in sports funding with varying levels of financial support from multiple administrations affecting athlete training and participation. Training of athletes, typically financed by government grants lasting two years, depends on levels of funding that also affect athlete commitment.

Case BS2: Supportive governments, through taxation, registration, and trade privileges, are crucial for achieving positive business goals and adapting strategies in response to the demographic shift. For long-term business success, coordination with governments is vital.

Case BS3: The government's support for SMEs, particularly through proactive minimum wage policies and taxation laws, is vital. Collaboration with the government is crucial to scaling business successfully, maintaining credibility, ensuring project facilitation, reducing processes, and providing access to financial support.

Case BS4: The entrepreneur is unclear about how current policies affect them and does not see a clear connection between their situation and these policies. They believe that the collaboration with government has no significant impact on their circumstances.

Case BS5: The owner is aware of policies in relation to their business, but such issues do not have a significant impact on their business operations. They prefer not to be involved with political connections and influence.

Cross-Case Analysis: This analysis reveals a range of perspectives regarding the role of the government in setting the strategic direction and viability of sports-related businesses. Four themes are identified: regulatory and funding dependence, strategic collaboration, policy awareness, and limited perceived impact. **Basis of dependence on financing and regulation:** BS1 indicates how the fluctuations in government funding affect directly the training and commitment of athletes, highlighting a structural dependency on state support for performance continuity and program viability. **Strategic collaboration:** BS2 and BS3 highlight the government's role as a partner in business expansion through tax incentives, legal support, and trade privileges. BS3 also mentions the role of SME policies can enhancing business efficacy. **Policy awareness:** Some entrepreneur is unaware of how government policy affects their business. This disengagement signifies a gap in communication or insufficient policy clarity for small businesses. **Limited perceived impact:** BS4 and BS5 are both aware of policy settings but perceive minimal relevance to their daily operations. They would prefer business autonomy and avoid engagement in broader political collaborations.

Conclusions

This study explores the entrepreneurial resourcefulness role in people, political, and personal aspects of influencing the ability of sports entrepreneurs to adjust to an ageing society and develop successful strategies. **Personal resourcefulness** enhances the capacity for adaptability and strategy formation. Essential traits and capabilities for entrepreneurs include strategic thinking, interpersonal communication, resilience, and leadership skills. These helped them to succeed in climates of uncertainty, bridge services with elders' needs, and forge adaptive solutions that were sustainable and socially significant. This is backed by previous research indicating the requirement of such traits to succeed as an entrepreneur (Omar et al., 2023). Also, such resourcefulness—motivation, competence, and growth mindset—places entrepreneurs in a position not only to respond to market evolution but to evolve with society (Mazai, 2023; Savchenko et al., 2023). **People resourcefulness**, defined by good communication, team collaboration, customer-centric approach, emotional intelligence, and inclusive leadership, was no less vital. People skills were an area of interest for entrepreneurs to develop strong client relationships, and team cohesion, and deliver services that were functionally suitable as well as emotionally satisfying for older persons. This is in agreement with Diaconu & Diaconu (2013), who emphasize human flexibility and relational capital as central to enhancing organizational responsiveness and innovativeness. **Political resourcefulness** was more heterogeneous. Government support—through funding, taxation, or SME schemes—was in some cases a determinant of business

development and legitimacy. Entrepreneurs who engaged actively with policy structures had better access to resources and institutional legitimacy. This is consistent with Han-fei et al. (2007) that political resourcefulness can be a powerful bargaining tool if entrepreneurs can effectively engage and use institutional affiliations. Others, however, expressed limited awareness or perceived minimal relevance of policy to their operations, revealing a disconnect that may hinder long-term strategic alignment.

Theoretically, this research contributes to entrepreneurship literature by positioning resourcefulness not only as an individual trait but as a dynamic, multi-level construct. It identifies how entrepreneurial resourcefulness collectively shapes business adaptability in the environment of the demographic shift. These findings align with and extend existing scholarship by contextualizing resourcefulness within the sports industry and the challenges of an ageing society. Practically, the study offers actionable guidance for both entrepreneurs and policymakers. Entrepreneurs are encouraged to develop internal competencies and people-centred practices, while policymakers should develop frameworks that support exercise promotion, SME development, and cross-sector collaboration. Alignment of entrepreneurial goals with public health policies can yield benefits that extend beyond economic performance into societal well-being.

Overall, the findings demonstrate that entrepreneurial adaptability in an ageing society is not a one-dimensional capacity but a multi-aspect construct shaped by internal capacities, social relationships, and political engagement. Entrepreneurs who invest in their own growth, prioritize meaningful relationships, and remain open to policy-level collaboration are better positioned to turn demographic change into a landscape for sustainable innovation. While ageing populations are generally perceived as being detrimental to traditional business models, the study proves that entrepreneurs who create multi-dimensional resourcefulness can make this change a driver of innovation, service, and growth strategy.

Recommendations

Based on the findings regarding the three dimensions of entrepreneurial resourcefulness, the following recommendations are proposed:

1. Policy Recommendations: The study reveals that political resourcefulness varies significantly among entrepreneurs, with some lacking awareness of government support. Therefore, government agencies should establish targeted funding and tax incentive programs specifically for sports SMEs that modify their facilities or services for the elderly. Furthermore, proactive communication channels should be developed to bridge the gap between policy availability and entrepreneurial awareness, ensuring that small business owners can easily access subsidies for "Silver Economy" adaptations.

2. Practical Recommendations: For sports entrepreneurs, the findings on personal and people resourcefulness highlight the critical role of soft skills and trust. Entrepreneurs should prioritize training programs for their staff focused on 'Geriatric Sports Care' and communication psychology. Since elderly clients value safety and empathy, businesses should strategically invest in redesigning service touchpoints—from non-slip flooring to personalized health monitoring—to build long-term trust and loyalty with this demographic.

Limitations of the Study

Limitations and Future Research While this study offers a detailed analysis of sports entrepreneurship in Thailand, certain limitations must be acknowledged. First, as a qualitative inquiry, the small sample size of five entrepreneurs limits the statistical generalizability of the findings. Second, the study primarily focused on entrepreneurial perceptions, meaning the views of other key stakeholders, such as senior customers, employees, and policymakers were not directly included.

To address these limitations, future research should expand the scope to a larger, more varied group of entrepreneurs across different geographical areas to enhance the comprehensiveness of the results. Additionally, incorporating the perspectives of elderly consumers and employees would provide a more balanced view of the ecosystem. Finally, the inclusion of quantitative approaches alongside qualitative methods in future studies would enhance the robustness of results and enable the statistical validation of the key themes identified in this research.

References

- Bakker, A. B., Albrecht, S. L., & Leiter, M. P. (2011). Key questions regarding work engagement. *European Journal of Work and Organizational Psychology*, 20(1), 4-28. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1359432X.2010.485352>
- Bann, C. L. (2007). *Entrepreneurial lives: A phenomenological study of the lived experience of the entrepreneur* Doctoral dissertation. Capella University.
- Diaconu, L., & Diaconu, D. (2013). Human Resource Flexibility and Organizational Adaptability. *Procedia Economics and Finance*, 6, 235-243. <https://doi.org/10.37476/presed.v2i1.56>
- Eisenhardt, K. M. (1989). Building theories from case study research. *Academy of Management Review*, 14(4), 532-550. <https://doi.org/10.5465/amr.1989.4308385>
- Foundation of Thai Gerontology Research and Development Institute (TGRI). (2021). *Situation of the Thai older persons (2021)*. Nakhon Pathom: Institute for Population and Social Research, Mahidol University.
- Ganz, M. (2000). Resources and resourcefulness: Strategic capacity in the unionization of California agriculture, 1959-1966. *American Journal of Sociology*, 105(4), 1003-1062. <https://doi.org/10.1086/210398>
- Han-fei, L., Tan, J., & Tan, D. (2007). Market-oriented dynamic capabilities and firm performance in a Chinese transitional economy. *Journal of Business Research*, 60(1), 11-17. <https://doi.org/10.1142/S0217590823500236>
- Hannan, M. T., & Freeman, J. (1984). Structural inertia and organizational change. *American Sociological Review*, 49(2), 149-164. <https://doi.org/10.2307/2095567>
- Jaafar, M., & Abdul-Aziz, A.-R. (2014). Resource-Based View and Critical Success Factors: A Study on Small and Medium Sized Contracting Enterprises (SMCEs) in Malaysia. *The International Journal of Construction Management*, 5(2), 61-77. <https://doi.org/10.1080/15623599.2005.10773075>
- Kodden, C. (2020). *Mental resources and adaptability: Key factors for achieving sustainable outcomes*. Springer.

- Malterud, K., Siersma, V. D., & Guassora, A. D. (2016). Sample size in qualitative interview studies: guided by information power. *Qualitative Health Research*, 26(13), 1753-1760. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1049732315617444>
- Mazai, L. (2023). The internal factors of stress resistance as elements of future psychologists' professional resourcefulness. *Personality and Environmental Issues*, 2(5), 35-44. [https://doi.org/10.31652/2786-6033-2023-3\(5\)-35-44](https://doi.org/10.31652/2786-6033-2023-3(5)-35-44)
- National Statistical Office. (2021). *Population and housing census 2020: Births and deaths*. National Statistical Office, Thailand.
- Office of the National Economic and Social Development Council. (2020). *Population estimates for Thailand*, National Statistical Office, Thailand.
- Omar, M. K., Romli, A. H., Azeem, N., & Zakaria, A. (2023). Relationship between career adaptability and employability skills: Towards engineering graduates' career development. *International Journal of Academic Research in Business and Social Sciences*, 13(12), 5026-5039. [https://doi.org/10.31652/2786-6033-2023-3\(5\)-35-4410.6007/IJARBSS/v13-i12/20351](https://doi.org/10.31652/2786-6033-2023-3(5)-35-4410.6007/IJARBSS/v13-i12/20351)
- Othman, R., Alias, N. E., Mohd Nazir, S. S. A., & Koe, W. L. (2022). The influence of employability skills toward career adaptability. *International Journal of Academic Research in Business and Social Sciences*, 12(7), 2035-2046. <https://doi.org/10.6007/IJARBSS/v12-i7/14445>
- Pérez-Marqués, M., Letona-Ibañez, O., Amillano, A., Carrasco, M., & Martínez-Rodríguez, S. (2023). Effects of three personal resources interventions on employees' burnout. *Scientific Reports*, 13(1), 21530. <https://doi.org/10.1038/s41598-023-49000-9>
- Quagrainie, F.A., Kabalan, A.A.M., Adams, S., & Dankwa, A.D. (2023). 3Ps model of entrepreneurial resourcefulness among micro-youth entrepreneurs. *Journal of Entrepreneurship in Emerging Economies*, 15(5), 1194-1214. <https://doi.org/10.1108/JEEE-07-2021-0276>
- Rodrigues, M., Franco, M., Silva, R., & Oliveira, C. (2021). Success Factors of SMEs: Empirical Study Guided by Dynamic Capabilities and Resources-Based View. *Sustainability*, 13(21), 12301. <https://doi.org/10.3390/su132112301>
- Sambasivan, M., & Rahman, A. (2004). The influence of organizational culture on attitudes toward organizational change. *Leadership & Organization Development Journal*, 25, 161-179. <https://doi.org/10.1108/01437730410521831>
- Savchenko, O., Vasiliev, A., & Dovgalyuk, N. (2023). *Resourcefulness as an important indicator of personal well-being*. In Well-being across the globe: New perspectives - Concepts, correlates and geography.
- Teece, D. J., Pisano, G., & Shuen, A. (1997). Dynamic capabilities and strategic management. *Strategic management Journal*, 18(7), 509-533. [https://doi.org/10.1002/\(SICI\)1097-0266\(199708\)18:7<509::AID-SMJ882>3.0.CO;2-Z](https://doi.org/10.1002/(SICI)1097-0266(199708)18:7<509::AID-SMJ882>3.0.CO;2-Z)
- Wei, X., Wang, T., Chen, Y., Lyulyov, O., & Pimonenko, T. (2023). The Effects of Population Aging on Sports Industry Development: The Mediating Effect of Technological Innovation. *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health*, 20(3), 2085. <https://doi.org/10.3390/ijerph20032085>
- Yin, R. K. (2009). *Case Study Research: Design and Methods*. Sage Publications, Thousand Oaks CA.