

Promotion Strategy of Silver Jewelry Entrepreneurs' Competency for Creating Competitive Opportunities in Marketing, Sri Satchanalai District, Sukhothai Province

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ABSTRACT

This study examines the competency development needs of silver jewelry entrepreneurs in Sri Satchanalai District, Sukhothai Province, Thailand. The objective is to formulate a promotion strategy that enhances their competitiveness in both domestic and international markets. This study employs qualitative research methods, using in-depth interviews with 43 key informants, alongside Participatory Action Research (PAR). The study identifies key entrepreneurial competencies such as crisis management, customer focus, leadership, and innovative family business management. These competencies are crucial for overcoming modern market challenges while preserving the rich cultural heritage inherent in Sukhothai's renowned silver craftsmanship. The novel contribution of this study is the proposed strategy, which integrates traditional artisanal skills with modern marketing techniques and digital tools, enabling entrepreneurs to seize emerging opportunities and strengthen their position in an increasingly competitive global marketplace. By addressing these competency gaps, the research provides valuable insights for fostering sustainable growth in heritage-based industries, contributing to the economic and cultural vitality of the region.

KEYWORDS: Promotion Strategy, Entrepreneurs' Competencies, Silver Jewelry, Cultural Heritage, Market Competitiveness.

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INTRODUCTION

The jewelry industry is one of Thailand's most significant economic sectors, ranking among the top five industries and generating over 1.2 million jobs (Bangkok Post, 2023). In 2023, the export of non-gold jewelry began to recover, reaching a value of 35.37 million USD, which marked a 27.29% increase compared to the previous year. This recovery followed the negative impacts brought about by the COVID-19 pandemic from 2020 to 2021. Key export markets showed substantial growth, with Hong Kong increasing by 204.32%, Italy by 40%, and the United Arab Emirates by 10.59%. Overall, the export volume of gems and jewelry, including silver jewelry—ranking after gold, cut diamonds, and other gemstones—also saw a notable increase. Specifically, silver jewelry exports rose by 12.61% in 2023 (Bangkok Post, 2023; GIT, 2023).

Thai silver jewelry maintains its competitive strength in global markets, particularly with major importers like China, followed by the United States. However, in Hong Kong, it faces stiff competition from rivals such as India. Therefore, Thai entrepreneurs must remain vigilant of the competition and focus on adapting their marketing strategies while enhancing the competencies of their workforce and products to improve their market position (GIT, 2023). This is especially relevant in the context of Sukhothai Province, a historical region that was once the heart of a post-classical Siamese Kingdom, founded by Si Inthathit in 1238. The provincial development goals from 2023 to 2027 emphasize upgrading industries related to the province's rich 800-year-old market, with a specific focus on the ancient silver craftsmanship of Sukhothai. By linking the silver industry with tourism—a sector where the province has long been prominent—local entrepreneurs aim to elevate the commercial value of Sukhothai silver jewelry, making it widely recognized and accepted by tourists and consumers alike (The Provincial Office, 2022). In light of these evolving trends, entrepreneurs in the region must adapt to changing service demands, management practices, and consumer attitudes, which impact all business sectors. The need for modern management tools and strategies has become increasingly apparent, especially for fostering innovation, expanding market reach, and engaging with new customer groups. Entrepreneurs are required to find innovative solutions, build networks, and integrate modern technology while preserving the local intellectual and cultural heritage that defines the identity of Sukhothai's silver industry (Choochuy et al., 2018). The silver jewelry of Sukhothai, particularly from the Sri Satchanalai District, is renowned for its distinctive patterns that embody the artistic identity of the region. These designs are often inspired by the historical monuments of the Sukhothai Historical Park, incorporating motifs from ancient temple walls and natural elements. This local wisdom has been passed down through generations, transforming into diverse, contemporary works that continue to evolve while staying true to their roots. As a result, Sukhothai's silver jewelry is widely regarded as a prominent and valuable commodity in the region (Phirasant, 2010; Inhong, 2021).

Today, entrepreneurs continue to design silver jewelry with unique, culturally rich patterns that reflect the artistic and historical legacy of Sukhothai. Many of these designs are derived from ancient sites within the Sukhothai Historical Park, such as temple wall motifs and nature-inspired elements, which have been reimaged in modern forms. Entrepreneurs are eager to develop their skills and knowledge to enhance market opportunities, improve product quality, and increase visibility among consumers and tourists. Most entrepreneurs in the region are keen to learn and welcome support from various sectors to ensure their businesses remain stable and sustainable (Chen and Chen, 2021).

Gap in This Study— Despite the rich cultural heritage and the potential for growth within the silver jewelry industry in Sukhothai, there is still a noticeable gap in understanding how to effectively integrate modern marketing strategies with traditional craftsmanship. This study aims to fill that gap by exploring the specific competency development needs of local entrepreneurs to facilitate this integration, ultimately allowing them to remain competitive in a rapidly changing global market. Further research is needed to identify the precise skills and knowledge required for these entrepreneurs to leverage emerging opportunities in both domestic and international landscapes.

In light of this gap, the following research objectives have been established

1. To identify and analyze the competency development needs of silver jewelry entrepreneurs in order to address gaps and enhance their business capabilities.
2. To develop a targeted promotion strategy aimed at strengthening the competencies of silver jewelry entrepreneurs, with a focus on creating and expanding competitive opportunities in the market.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The implication of competence in jewelry entrepreneurship

In today's competitive economic landscape, the concept of competence plays a vital role in shaping entrepreneurial strategies, particularly for local businesses such as silver jewelry enterprises. Competence, defined as the combination of knowledge, skills, attitudes, and behaviors that empower individuals to perform effectively, serves as the foundation for entrepreneurs to innovate and adapt in their respective markets. As the silver jewelry industry continues to evolve, entrepreneurs must recognize the importance of developing and leveraging their competencies to enhance their operational effectiveness, differentiate their offerings, and sustain competitive advantages. McClelland (1999) defined competency as the underlying characteristics of individuals that lead to exemplary work performance based on established standards. His definition aligns with that of Spencer and Spencer (1993), who suggested that specific personal traits can predict job performance outcomes. Parry (1997) further articulated that competencies comprise a combination of knowledge, skills, and attributes that influence job performance and can be assessed against organizational standards, with the potential for improvement through targeted training. This perspective is supported by Ratsameechot (2005) and Sakworawit (2004), who emphasized that competencies encompass personal traits such as knowledge, skills, values, ethics, and even physical characteristics, all of which should align with an organization's needs.

The relevance of competencies extends beyond basic skills, also encompassing entrepreneurial and managerial competencies. Scholars such as Kanungo and Misra (1992), Pickett (1998), McClelland (1999), Spencer (1993), and Mitchelmore and Rowley (2010) have emphasized that individual and organizational competencies consist of experience, knowledge, skills, values, and internal motivations. These competencies are crucial for fostering innovation, commitment, and ultimately contributing to the success of both individuals and organizations alike.

Sompongthum (2010) highlighted the significance of competencies in recruiting, selecting, evaluating, and developing personnel to ensure alignment with both job requirements and organizational objectives. Similarly, Sutinan (2004) regarded competencies as essential for shaping organizational culture, facilitating fair performance evaluations, preventing employee dissatisfaction, and fostering motivation. Simanan (2010) reinforced this by suggesting that competencies encourage employees to take their work seriously, promote responsibility, and support the continuous development of job-related skills and knowledge.

Suthumdee and Suthumdee (2017) explored the application of competencies in human resource development, emphasizing that organizations must clearly define the qualifications required for each position. These qualifications encompass foundational skills, knowledge, abilities, and behaviors that contribute to effective job performance. Initially adopted in the private sector, the competency concept has become a vital tool for success, with multinational corporations in Thailand embracing this model. Over time, this approach has extended into public sector agencies, highlighting the significance of competencies in individual job performance. As each employee possesses varying levels of competency, it is essential for organizations to invest in developing a diverse array of knowledge, skills, and abilities to drive performance and foster organizational growth.

The silver jewelry sector is not just a reflection of artistic craftsmanship; it is also a dynamic business environment that demands a multifaceted approach to entrepreneurship (Reddy et al, 2023). For local silver jewelry entrepreneurs, possessing a robust set of competencies is essential for navigating challenges posed by globalization, changing consumer preferences, and technological advancements (Ma et al., 2025). These competencies extend beyond traditional craftsmanship to include marketing acumen, customer relationship management, optimizing eco-friendly jewelry design through an integrated eco-innovation approach and an understanding of sustainable practices (Jiang, et al. 2025). By integrating these competencies into their entrepreneurial strategies, local artisans can not only preserve their rich cultural heritage but also position themselves as competitive players in both domestic and international markets.

Furthermore, fostering an entrepreneurial mindset that emphasizes continuous learning and adaptation is crucial for silver jewelry entrepreneurs (Perry and Woolard, 2023). By cultivating competencies that align with market demands, these entrepreneurs can enhance their creativity and innovation, ultimately leading to the development of unique products that resonate with consumers. The exploration of competence as a strategic asset, therefore, offers valuable insights into how local silver jewelry businesses can thrive amidst challenges and seize emerging opportunities.

The intersection of competence and entrepreneurial strategy is pivotal for silver jewelry entrepreneurs operating within local markets. By understanding and developing the necessary competencies, these entrepreneurs can craft effective strategies that not only elevate

their business performance but also contribute to the broader economic and cultural vitality of their communities. This research aims to explore these strategic competencies in-depth, providing a framework for enhancing the entrepreneurial capabilities of silver jewelry artisans in the local business landscape.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study employed qualitative research and Participatory Action Research (PAR) to assess the competency development needs of silver jewelry entrepreneurs and to develop a strategy that enhances their abilities to create competitive market opportunities. The methodology emphasized the involvement of various community sectors to collaboratively design strategies that strengthen the competencies necessary for business growth.

1. **In-depth Interviews:** In-depth interviews were conducted to gather qualitative data through detailed conversations with individuals and groups. The purpose of these interviews was to gain insight into participants' experiences, perspectives, and expertise concerning the silver jewelry industry. The interviews specifically focused on the competencies of entrepreneurs, including their ability to identify and capitalize on business opportunities.
2. **Focus Group Discussions:** Focus group discussions allowed the researcher to collect data through the interaction of key informants, each of whom brought diverse knowledge and experiences related to the silver jewelry sector. These individuals, identified for their attitudes and insights, provided responses and opinions on key questions and challenges faced by the industry (Survey Market, 2004).
3. **Participatory Action Research (PAR):** PAR was utilized to ensure active engagement from community members and stakeholders in the research process. This method focuses on understanding the social context and promoting the active participation of community members in driving change and development. Striger (1999) emphasized the importance of community involvement in PAR, while Creswell (2002) supported the use of this method by involving stakeholders in problem-solving processes. PAR allowed for the development of awareness, critical analysis, and collective solutions, fostering continuous improvement and progress.

Data Collection from Key Informants

This qualitative research followed structured steps to collect in-depth and accurate data from key informants (Ali et al., 2013). The key informants were selected based on their direct involvement in the silver jewelry sector and consisted of government officials, silver jewelry entrepreneurs, private sector representatives, and academics. A total of 43 individuals participated in the study, providing valuable information based on their knowledge, experience, and professional roles within the silver jewelry industry. Each informant had a minimum of five years of relevant experience, ensuring the reliability and depth of the data collected.

Table 1: Distribution of the Key Informants

NO.	Category	Averaged Years, Experiences, and Work in the Silver Jewelry Business	Methods			Total
			In-depth Interview	Focus Group Discussion	PAR	
1	The Officers, Provincial Departments					
	• Community Development	7	1	2	1	4
	• Tourism and Sport	5	1	1	1	3
	• Commercial	10.1	1	1	1	3
	• Industry	6.5	1	1	1	3
	• Municipality Sri Sat Cha Na Lai	12	1	1	1	3
2	Entrepreneurs	15	7	3	4	14
3	Persons, Private Sectors					
	• Sukhothai Chamber of Commerce	10.2	1	1	1	3
	• Industrial Council	9.5	1	1	1	3
	• Silver and Gold Business Network	15.5	2	1	1	4
4	Academics/Scholarly	5.5	1	1	1	3
	Total		17	13	13	43

Source: Author own work, 2024

ANALYSIS RESULTS

1. Analysis of the Local Context

The researcher identified that the creation of silver jewelry in Tha Chai Subdistrict, Sri Satchanalai District, has its roots in the long-standing tradition of crafting ancient gold jewelry. This tradition, passed down through generations, reflects the rich history and prosperity of early Thai culture, evolving into the intricate art of weaving, knitting, threading, and shaping silver into stunning jewelry pieces. Today, these creations not only represent Sukhothai's craftsmanship but also embody its unique cultural identity (The Provincial Office, 2022).

Many of these silver designs draw inspiration from historical landmarks within the Sri Satchanalai Historical Park, one of Thailand's most beautiful heritage parks, known for its distinctive architectural and artistic styles that are emblematic of Thai culture. Since 1953, the Fine Arts Department has worked on preserving and developing the Ancient City of Sri Satchanalai, which, along with Sukhothai and Kamphaeng Phet Historical Parks, was recognized by UNESCO as a World Heritage Site.

The designs found in the silver jewelry, including ancient wall motifs, temple and sanctuary patterns, and natural forms such as botanical designs from Wat Nang Phaya and stucco motifs from Wat Chang Lom (Phirasant, 2010), have been crystallized into local wisdom. These traditional designs have been adapted into modern works, employing techniques such as silver threading, bead making, and the application of enamel to create pieces with enhanced charm and distinctiveness. This adaptation has contributed significantly to income generation for the Sri Satchanalai community, ensuring the continuation of this cultural craft (Choochuy et al., 2018).

2. Competency Analysis of Silver Jewelry Entrepreneurs:

The analyzed data and applied conceptual frameworks to categorize the competencies of entrepreneurs (UN-OHRD, 2010; OECD, 2018) as shown in **Figure 1**.



Figure 1: Analysis of Silver Jewelry Entrepreneurs, SriSatchanalai
Source: Author own work, 2024

According to **Figure 1**, the core values, core competencies, and managerial competencies are proposed as shown in the details below.

1. Core Values

Core values represent the fundamental beliefs and shared principles among silver jewelry entrepreneurs, reflecting their dedication to creating high-quality products with meticulous attention to detail. These values drive the creation of exquisite jewelry that consistently captures the interest of customers and tourists alike. Entrepreneurs' commitment to these values shapes the unique identity of Sukhothai's silver jewelry, as evidenced in distinct designs like temple patterns, sema leaf motifs, sanctuary motifs, celadon patterns, cosmological elements, natural patterns, and other Thai motifs that are difficult to replicate.

These foundational concepts not only provide direction and purpose behind the artisans' work but also underscore key core values such as craftsmanship, cultural heritage, sustainability, and innovation. By prioritizing these core values, the artisans ensure that each creation aligns with the cultural context of the local area and contributes to a vibrant production culture. This alignment fosters a sense of pride within the community, promotes the preservation of traditional techniques, and enhances the overall appeal of Sukhothai's silver jewelry in both local and global markets. Ultimately, these core values serve as a guiding framework for the entrepreneurs, driving their creative processes and strategic decisions while reinforcing their commitment to excellence and authenticity in their craftsmanship.

In this context, two fundamental core values that exemplify the ethos of Sukhothai's silver jewelry entrepreneurs are integrity and meticulousness. This includes:

1.1 Integrity

Integrity is a cornerstone for both personal and organizational success. In the silver jewelry business, integrity manifests through the creation of honest, high-quality products, where 99.99% pure silver is used in the production process. This value is carefully passed down from generation to generation, particularly among the pioneering entrepreneurs in the region. Interviews and discussions reveal the strength of the local network, which upholds these high standards of integrity, ensuring that silver jewelry produced in the area maintains a reputation for trust and quality.

1.2 Meticulousness

Silver jewelry produced in Sukhothai is renowned for its craftsmanship, as each piece is handcrafted with extreme care and intention at every stage of production. The meticulous artistry seen in the jewelry reflects a deep tradition of silver craftsmanship dating back

to ancient times. Individual shops blend innovation with traditional skills to create products that preserve the distinct local identity of Sri Satchanalai. Entrepreneurs pay attention to every detail in their work, producing intricate designs such as floral and tree patterns, vine motifs, Pikul flower designs, water droplet motifs, sculptural elements, and a range of other Thai patterns, all of which highlight the painstaking craftsmanship that goes into each piece.

2. Core Competencies

Core competencies refer to the key attributes that define personnel across the organization, guiding desirable behaviors and aligning with the organization's vision, mission, and strategy (OECD, 2018). These competencies encompass a range of skills, knowledge, and personal characteristics that contribute to the overall effectiveness and success of the organization. They serve as a foundation for employee performance, shaping how individuals approach their roles, collaborate with others, and contribute to the organization's goals. By clearly identifying and cultivating core competencies, organizations can ensure that their workforce is equipped with the capabilities necessary to navigate challenges and seize opportunities in a dynamic business environment. This alignment between competencies and organizational objectives not only enhances individual performance but also fosters a cohesive organizational culture that encourages collaboration, innovation, and adaptability.

In the context of silver jewelry entrepreneurship, several specific core competencies emerge as critical drivers of success, including planning, family business management, customer orientation, digital literacy, and continuous learning.

2.1 Planning

Planning is a fundamental competency that involves analytical thinking, resource allocation, and anticipating future needs. Entrepreneurs in the silver jewelry sector leverage their planning skills to make informed decisions in a dynamic environment, such as Thailand's slow-growing economy and reduced consumer spending. By conducting market research and analyzing industry trends, these entrepreneurs can identify potential opportunities and challenges ahead. They apply strict cost controls and focus on delivering high-quality service to both existing and new customer segments to maintain and grow their market share. Additionally, effective planning enables them to allocate resources efficiently, ensuring that production processes are optimized and that they can respond swiftly to market demands. This proactive approach not only helps in navigating economic uncertainties but also positions their businesses for sustainable growth.

2.2 Family Business Management

Approximately 80% of silver jewelry businesses are family-owned, with more than half of the business shares held by family members or passed down through generations. These businesses prioritize economic stability within the family while operating with agility and close-knit collaboration. Family business management fosters an environment where swift decision-making is essential, as operations often rely on established relationships and trust. The emphasis on collaboration enables family members to bring diverse perspectives into the decision-making process, enhancing creativity and innovation in product design and marketing strategies. The remaining 20% of businesses are community enterprises formed by local groups, which emphasize collective goals and shared responsibilities. Both types of businesses are small, with fewer than 20 employees and capital not exceeding 550,138 USD, which allows them to remain nimble and responsive to market changes. Effective family business management focuses on resilience, fostering long-term sustainability, and ensuring a competitive advantage that allows these businesses to thrive in a challenging marketplace.

2.3 Customer Orientation

Entrepreneurs in the silver jewelry sector are deeply customer-focused, producing products that reflect the unique identity of Sukhothai while catering to modern customer needs. These entrepreneurs strive to deliver high value by carefully considering design aesthetics, material quality, and customer preferences in their offerings. By building customer loyalty, they ensure repeat business and positive word-of-mouth referrals, which are crucial for expanding market reach. Continuous engagement with their customer base allows them to gather feedback and insights into changing tastes and trends. In addition to product quality, these entrepreneurs emphasize convenience and service quality, ensuring that their products resonate with consumers. This customer-centric approach helps minimize errors and complaints, strengthens trust, and fosters long-term relationships. Ultimately, being attuned to customers' evolving needs contributes to differentiation in a competitive market, enhancing the brand's overall appeal.

2.4 Digital Literacy

While most entrepreneurs in the silver jewelry sector are aged between 45 and 60 and may lack digital skills, the shift in consumer behavior post-COVID-19 has highlighted the urgent need for digital engagement. Younger individuals within the workforce are seen as potential leaders in bridging this gap by driving the digital transformation of the business. Digital literacy has become essential for improving operational efficiency, expanding market reach, and maintaining competitiveness in an increasingly online world. Entrepreneurs need to embrace technologies such as e-commerce platforms, social media marketing, and digital payment systems to engage consumers effectively and adapt to their purchasing habits. Furthermore, investing in digital skills training for the workforce can help build a culture of innovation and responsiveness to emerging trends, ensuring that silver jewelry businesses remain relevant and are well-positioned to take advantage of new market opportunities.

2.5 Continuous Learning

Silver jewelry entrepreneurs benefit from local wisdom passed down through generations, providing them with a rich source of cultural and technical knowledge. This accumulated knowledge, combined with over 20 years of experience in the industry, has led to the development of advanced production techniques, including melting pure silver, rolling it into sheets, applying enamel, and shaping it into intricate designs. Continuous learning is vital for business growth, as it allows entrepreneurs to stay updated with the

latest trends, techniques, and market demands. There is a critical need for government-supported training programs and workshops to ensure that these entrepreneurs remain competitive in the ever-evolving silver jewelry market. Additionally, fostering partnerships with educational institutions and industry organizations can facilitate knowledge sharing and resource acquisition. By prioritizing continuous

3. Managerial Competencies

Managerial competencies are essential traits that enable entrepreneurs to effectively manage resources, including assets, personnel, and business opportunities, to support business growth. These competencies encompass a wide range of skills, including strategic planning, decision-making, financial management, and effective communication, all of which are critical for navigating the complexities of running a successful business. By leveraging these competencies, entrepreneurs can optimize resource allocation, ensuring that both financial and human capital are utilized efficiently to maximize productivity and profitability. Furthermore, strong managerial competencies allow entrepreneurs to identify and seize new business opportunities while mitigating risks, adapting to market changes, and responding to customer demands swiftly. Effective leadership, a vital component of managerial competencies, fosters a positive organizational culture that motivates employees, enhances teamwork, and encourages innovation. Ultimately, the cultivation of managerial competencies not only drives operational efficiency but also lays the foundation for long-term sustainability and competitive advantage in the marketplace.

One of the critical aspects of managerial competencies is the ability to create a compelling vision for the future of the organization, which serves as a cornerstone for strategic development and long-term planning.

3.1 Creating Vision

Entrepreneurs possess the ability to collectively envision the future of their organization, planning how the business can develop over the next 5–10 years. In the case of Sukhothai's silver jewelry industry, the vision is to integrate the business into the province's cultural tourism, leveraging its status as a UNESCO World Heritage Site to attract tourists. A key part of this vision includes establishing a silver jewelry sales center and organizing cultural walking streets to enhance visibility and promote the industry both locally and internationally.

3.2 Leadership Skill

Leadership is crucial for motivating employees to express creativity and contribute to the unique designs of Sukhothai's silver jewelry. Entrepreneurs foster a family-like work atmosphere, which enhances collaboration and trust. For instance, the Lamtad store, established in 1994, transitioned from gold to silver jewelry to broaden its customer base. By sharing the challenges and successes with employees, entrepreneurs build confidence and trust, ensuring organizational sustainability and growth.

3.3 Trust Building Skill

Trust is a key component of the silver jewelry industry, built through high-quality products and excellent customer service. Entrepreneurs aim to foster trust over the long term, which in turn leads to repeat purchases and customer loyalty. By maintaining strong relationships with their customers, entrepreneurs ensure that their businesses remain sustainable and well-regarded.

3.4 Problem-Solving Skill

Entrepreneurs frequently collaborate within their network to resolve challenges effectively. Problem-solving involves analyzing issues, developing alternatives, and implementing solutions based on careful planning. For instance, during the COVID-19 pandemic, entrepreneurs adapted by rotating staff, switching to online sales, and managing inventory more efficiently, enabling the business to continue its operations.

3.5 Marketing Management

Effective cost management is critical in the silver jewelry business, as entrepreneurs often import raw materials like silver for better quality. The challenge of non-standardized pricing is addressed by continuously improving product quality and adapting designs to meet both traditional and modern fashion trends. Moreover, entrepreneurs are encouraged to explore synergies between silver jewelry and other local products, such as uniquely patterned Thai fabrics, to expand their market.

3.6 Human Resource Management

Human resource management is essential for maximizing organizational efficiency. Entrepreneurs play an active role in decision-making related to staffing, compensation, and training, particularly during challenging times like the COVID-19 pandemic. By continually updating their teams with new skills, entrepreneurs ensure job satisfaction and align the workforce with the company's goals, fostering long-term business success.

3.7 Building Network

Entrepreneurs benefit from sharing knowledge and ideas with peers and external organizations. Meetings and forums provide opportunities to discuss the silver jewelry market, consumer behavior, and digital trends. By collaborating with public and private sector entities, such as Provincial Industry Offices and Chambers of Commerce, entrepreneurs can develop their skills, upgrade product standards, and integrate digital technology into their businesses.

Based on the analysis of core values, core and managerial competencies and their impact on the silver jewelry industry, a SWOT analysis can be constructed to identify the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats faced by entrepreneurs in this sector, as illustrated in the table below.

Table 2: SWOT Analysis (Source: Author own work, 2024)

Strength	• Transmission of local wisdom from generation to generation, excellent design, and production of silver jewelry. • Silver craftsmen possess high expertise in producing Sukhothai-style silver jewelry. • Strong silver jewelry network collaborating effectively with various organizations. • Entrepreneurs possess leadership skills and can solve problems promptly. • Entrepreneurs are based in a strong community with historical and cultural significance.
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Key areas: Business owners in Sukhothai's silver jewelry industry benefit from several key strengths that enhance their competitive advantage. The transmission of local wisdom enriches the design and production quality, producing high-quality Sukhothai-style jewelry that appeals to customers. Artisans possess significant expertise, while a strong network among stakeholders fosters collaboration and innovation, enhancing market presence. Entrepreneurs' leadership skills enable them to address challenges effectively, ensuring resilience in a dynamic environment. Additionally, the historical and cultural significance of the community adds intrinsic value to their products, making them more appealing to both local and international markets. Overall, these strengths provide a solid foundation for growth in the silver jewelry sector.

Weakness	• Entrepreneurs lack digital marketing skills and technology to expand to new customer groups and markets. • Entrepreneurs lack knowledge of management and database creation.
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Key areas: Business owners in the silver jewelry sector face weaknesses due to a lack of digital marketing skills and technology, limiting their ability to reach new customer groups and markets effectively. Additionally, their insufficient knowledge of management practices and database creation restricts operational efficiency and data-driven decision-making. Addressing these gaps is essential for enhancing competitiveness and fostering growth in a rapidly evolving market.

Opportunity	• Opportunity to be recognized as a member network of UNESCO's creative cities for crafts and folk art. • Silver jewelry products included in the Sukhothai province development plan (2023-2027). • Sukhothai province is a global historical and cultural tourist destination.
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Key areas: Business owners in the silver jewelry sector have significant opportunities for growth, including the potential recognition as a member of UNESCO's creative cities for crafts and folk art. Furthermore, the inclusion of silver jewelry products in Sukhothai's development plan for 2023-2027 offers support for expansion and innovation. Additionally, as Sukhothai is a global historical and cultural tourist destination, entrepreneurs can tap into a diverse market of tourists seeking authentic local craftsmanship.

Threat	• The slowing economy of Thailand affects growth. • The high cost of imported silver granules as raw materials. • The provincial government agencies lack product promotion, and a plan to develop community tourism routes connected with Sukhothai's tourist paths,
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Key areas: Business owners in the silver jewelry sector face threats from Thailand's slowing economy, which hinders growth, as well as rising costs of imported silver granules needed for production. Additionally, a lack of proactive product promotion and an absence of plans from provincial government agencies to develop community tourism routes connected to Sukhothai's attractions further limit market opportunities.

Table 3: Strategic Plan for Enhancing the Competencies of Sukhothai Silver Jewelry Entrepreneurs (Source: Author own work, 2024)

Strategic Plan for Enhancing the Competencies of Sukhothai Silver Jewelry Entrepreneurs								
Mission								
1. Elevate the Sukhothai silver jewelry business. 2. Develop a strong and sustainable community economy. 3. Increase the competitive potential both domestically and internationally.								
Vision								
Sukhothai silver jewelry to be the hub of creative craftsmanship artistry.								
Strategies								
Elevating the Silver Jewelry Business			Developing a robust and sustainable community economy			Enhancing competitive capabilities.		
Strategies	Activities/Projects	KPI	Strategies	Activities/Projects	KPI	Strategies	Activities/Projects	KPI

Promotion Strategy of Silver Jewelry Entrepreneurs' Competency for Creating Competitive Opportunities in Marketing, Sri Satchanalai District, Sukhothai Province

1. Sourcing high-quality raw materials	Collaboration in sourcing foreign raw materials.	1 MOU	1.Integration of operations with all organizations	Promoting the integration of operations between entrepreneurs and all organizations.	1.time/year	1.Knowledge management in silver jewelry.	Creating a database.	1 time/year
2.Developing operational center capabilities	Establishment of a product exhibition center and a silver jewelry learning center.	1 center	2. Promoting a learning community for silver jewelry	Creating a learning center for silver jewelry.	1 center	2. Research and development.	Raw materials Design Production Marketing Human resources	3.research/year
3. Enhancing the capabilities of entrepreneurs	1. Training and development of silver jewelry craftsmen.	1time/year	3. Encouraging Silver Jewelry community	Community involvement activities.	1 time/year	3. Network building.	Networking meetings both domestically and internationally	1 time/year

Strategies (cont.)								
Elevating the Silver Jewelry Business			Developing a robust and sustainable community economy			Enhancing competitive capabilities		
Strategies	Activities/Projects	KPI	Strategies	Activities/Projects	KPI	Strategies	Activities/Projects	KPI
3.Enhancing the capabilities of entrepreneurs (Cont.)	2. Training in Silver Jewelry Design.	1 time/year	4. Promoting employment in the silver jewelry business	Training on Silver Jewelry Business	1 time/year	4. Intellectual property management development	Training on intellectual property	1 time/year
	3.Training in Safety and Quality of Work Life		5. Managing community capital and resources	Promotion of Community Management, Capitals of Social, Economics, Nature, Culture, Technology		5. Foreign language skills development	Training in English, Chinese, and Arabic languages	
	4. Training in Safety and Quality of Work Life							

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

The growth and export of the silver jewelry industry play a crucial role in Thailand's economy, ranking among the top five industries. Silver jewelry holds competitive potential in both domestic and international markets, with key factors contributing to its success, including continuous improvement, high product quality and service standards, and strong customer relationships. Enhancing the competencies of entrepreneurs is essential for further growth, particularly in preserving the unique identity rooted in the cultural and historical richness of Sri Satchanalai, Sukhothai. The exquisite craftsmanship showcased in silver jewelry appeals to customers and tourists alike, resonating with Muriog (2020), who emphasized that local culture and history play vital roles in shaping a nation's identity and adding cultural value, ultimately leading to customer satisfaction.

Entrepreneurial competencies—encompassing skills, knowledge, and positive attitudes—are critical in the production processes, which include melting, molding, designing, knitting, weaving, embossing, enameling, and shaping. These processes result in a wide variety of products, such as necklaces, bracelets, rings, earrings, brooches, belts, and bags, inspired by the historical and architectural designs of Sri Satchanalai National Park. Elements such as churches, Sema stones, walls, roofs, doors, windows, and intricate patterns of flora and fauna serve as design inspiration. Entrepreneurs, operating within a strong network, emphasize core values such as honesty and meticulous craftsmanship, ensuring that every step in the production process meets the highest standards. This aligns with Kintu and Venter (2019), who found that core values significantly impact employee motivation and work intention, contributing to the successful operations of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in Uganda.

The analysis also highlights core competencies, such as planning, family business management, customer orientation, and continuous learning, which are vital for business sustainability, especially in a challenging economic environment marked by slow growth and shrinking consumer spending. These findings are consistent with insights from Pickett (1998), McClelland (1999), Sompong (2010), and the OECD (2018, 2022), which emphasize that core competencies positively influence organizational performance. Each organization defines these competencies to guide personnel development in alignment with its goals.

Managerial competencies are critical for ensuring effective operations within the silver jewelry business. These competencies include creating a vision, leadership, trust-building, problem-solving, human resource management, and networking, all of which are essential for maintaining competitiveness and effectively marketing the business. This is consistent with the work of Kanungo (1992), McClelland (1999), Parry (1997), Sahworawit (2004), Sidak (2014), OECD (2018, 2020), and Chen (2021), who emphasize the importance of managerial skills in fostering a successful business environment.

According to the 2023 strategy for the Thai silver jewelry industry, as outlined by the Exporters' Association, the focus continues to be on promoting the development of human resource competencies, particularly in areas such as production, design, marketing, and digital technology. This ensures that entrepreneurs are equipped with the necessary skills and knowledge to adapt to changing market demands and contribute to the industry's real development. The synthesized key strategies—business enhancement, community economic development, and increasing competitive capabilities—align with strategic planning insights from Brachir et al. (1988), Kraus et al. (2014, 2017), and O'Ragam (2019). Strategic planning, a critical skill, provides a clear direction for long-term business operations and unites all sections of an organization toward a common goal, facilitating continuous improvement and development.

LIMITATION OF RESEARCH

Despite the insights provided in this research, several limitations must be acknowledged. Firstly, the focus on the silver jewelry industry in Thailand, particularly in Sri Satchanalai, may limit the generalizability of the findings to other regions or industries. The unique cultural and historical context of this area, while enriching the study, may not be applicable to the silver jewelry sectors in different countries or locales with distinct market dynamics. Secondly, the reliance on existing literature and secondary data may restrict the depth of analysis, as local insights and contemporary business practices may not be fully represented. This could potentially lead to biases in understanding the competencies necessary for success in the silver jewelry industry. Additionally, while the research highlights key competencies for entrepreneurial success, it does not delve into external factors such as economic fluctuations, regulatory environments, and global market trends that may significantly impact the industry. The dynamic nature of consumer preferences and technological advancements could also evolve, affecting the relevance of the findings over time.

FUTURE RESEARCH

Future research should seek to address these limitations by expanding the scope of the study to include a more diverse range of regions and sectors within the jewelry industry. Comparative studies could be conducted across different cultural contexts to identify universal competencies and strategies that contribute to business success. Moreover, primary research methods, such as surveys and interviews with entrepreneurs, could provide richer, firsthand insights into the current challenges and opportunities in the industry. This would help capture evolving practices and competencies essential for adaptation in a rapidly changing market. Investigating the impact of external economic conditions, regulatory frameworks, and global trends on the silver jewelry industry could also be beneficial. This analysis would offer a more comprehensive understanding of how external factors interplay with managerial competencies and core values to influence entrepreneurial success. Furthermore, research could explore the role of digital transformation in the silver jewelry sector, particularly post-COVID-19, to identify how digital literacy and e-commerce strategies are shaping business practices and consumer engagement. By addressing these aspects, future studies can contribute to the development of robust strategies that support the sustainable growth of the silver jewelry industry while ensuring alignment with market demands and consumer expectations.

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