Pathways to Business Success in Thailand's Personality Development and Fashion Show Industry: The Mediating Roles of Service Innovation Management and Experiential Value Creation

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Abstract.

Personality development institutes, modelling schools and fashion show organisers form a small but growing segment of Thailand's creative economy, yet the factors that sustain their business success have rarely been examined as an integrated system. Prior work has studied entrepreneurial leadership, strategic resource management, service innovation and customer experience largely in isolation and mostly in hotels, tourism, retail and other general service settings. This conceptual paper develops a causal model that explains how entrepreneurial leadership and strategic resource management influence the business success of Thai personality development and fashion show businesses, directly and through two capability mechanisms: service innovation management capability and experiential value creation capability. Drawing on the resource-based view, dynamic capabilities theory, service-dominant logic, customer experience research and the balanced scorecard, the paper defines five latent constructs measured by twenty observed indicators and derives eight hypotheses. It also sets out the mixed-methods research design through which the model will be tested: a survey of 400 owners and executives drawn from a population of 4,321 juristic-person businesses, analysed with confirmatory factor analysis and structural equation modelling, followed by in-depth interviews with 15 key informants to explain the quantitative findings. No empirical results are reported; the contribution lies in the integrated framework, the explicit mediation logic and a transparent measurement and analysis plan. The model offers researchers a testable agenda and gives entrepreneurs and policymakers a structured view of the capabilities that may convert leadership and resources into sustainable performance.

Keywords: entrepreneurial leadership, strategic resource management, service innovation, experiential value, business success, personality development and fashion show businesses

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1. Introduction

Over the past two decades the sources of economic value have shifted from physical production towards knowledge, digital technology and creativity. The United Nations Conference on Trade and Development reports that, in countries that measure it, the creative economy accounts for between 0.5 and 7.3 per cent of gross domestic product and between 0.5 and 12.5 per cent of total employment, and that world exports of creative services reached USD 1.4 trillion in 2022, an increase of 29 per cent over 2017, while exports of creative goods reached USD 713 billion, an increase of 19 per cent over the same period (UNCTAD, 2024). Thailand has positioned itself within this transition; in the Global Innovation Index 2024 the country ranked 41st in the world and third among upper-middle-income economies (WIPO, 2024). Fashion is recognised internationally as a core creative industry (UNCTAD,

2024) and is one of the creative industries promoted by Thailand's Creative Economy Agency (CEA, 2025).

Within this broad field, personality development and fashion show businesses occupy a distinctive niche. They include personality development institutes, modelling schools and agencies, fashion show and fashion event organisers, artist and model management firms and image consultancies. Their core offering is not a physical product but a transformational service: learners acquire confidence, communication skills, etiquette, catwalk technique and a professional personal image. Digital platforms have intensified public attention to personal image and personal branding, and demand for such services now extends beyond pageant and catwalk preparation to children, students, employees, executives and entrepreneurs. At the same time, these firms face new entrants, rapidly changing technology and customers who expect personalised, memorable experiences at every stage of the customer journey (Becker & Jaakkola, 2020; Lemon & Verhoef, 2016).

Under these conditions, technical expertise in grooming or modelling is no longer sufficient. Success increasingly depends on how owners lead, how they deploy scarce human, knowledge, technological and relational resources, and whether they can translate these into continuously renewed services and valuable customer experiences. Three gaps motivate this paper. First, entrepreneurial leadership (Renko et al., 2015), strategic resource management (Helfat et al., 2023), service innovation capability (Blommerde, 2023) and customer experience (Becker & Jaakkola, 2020) have mostly been studied separately, so an integrated explanation of business success is lacking. Second, few studies specify the mechanisms through which leadership and resources are converted into performance, particularly the mediating roles of service innovation and experiential value creation. Third, empirical work has concentrated on hotels, tourism, retail and generic service firms, whereas personality development and fashion show businesses have received little direct attention.

This paper addresses these gaps conceptually. It is based on the research framework of a doctoral dissertation in progress at Suan Sunandha Rajabhat University and has three objectives: to define the constructs and indicators relevant to success in this industry, to derive a set of causal hypotheses that link them, and to present the mixed-methods design by which the model will be tested. The paper does not report empirical results; data collection is scheduled to follow. Section 2 reviews the theoretical foundations and constructs, Section 3 presents the conceptual model and hypotheses, Section 4 describes the proposed research design, Section 5 discusses the expected contributions, and Section 6 concludes.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Theoretical foundations

The resource-based view holds that firms achieve sustained competitive advantage when they control resources that are valuable, rare, imperfectly imitable and non-substitutable (Barney, 1991). Recent work has renewed the view by extending it to digital and platform contexts and by emphasising how resources are orchestrated rather than merely possessed (Helfat et al., 2023). For small service firms whose main assets are trainers' expertise, accumulated know-how, reputation and networks, the resource-based view explains why the management of these intangible resources matters for performance.

Dynamic capabilities theory complements this static perspective. Teece (2007) describes the capacities to sense opportunities, seize them and transform the organisation's resource base, and later argues that dynamic capabilities underpin the design and renewal of business models and, ultimately, firm performance (Teece, 2018). Service innovation management and experiential value creation can be understood as such capabilities: they are the routines through which a firm reconfigures resources into new services and new customer experiences.

Service-dominant logic provides the customer-side foundation. Vargo and Lusch (2016) argue that value is always co-created with the beneficiary and is determined phenomenologically by that beneficiary. Customer experience research builds on this view by treating experience as the customer's cognitive, emotional, sensory, social and behavioural responses across all touchpoints of the journey (Lemon & Verhoef, 2016; Becker & Jaakkola, 2020). Finally, the balanced scorecard (Kaplan & Norton, 1992) and research on the measurement of organisational performance (Richard et al., 2009) support a multidimensional view of business success that goes beyond financial results.

2.2 Entrepreneurial leadership

Entrepreneurial leadership is a style of influence directed at recognising and exploiting entrepreneurial opportunities to achieve organisational goals (Renko et al., 2015). In this study it is defined as the executive's ability to set a vision and strategy, seek and exploit opportunities, encourage creativity and innovation, and make decisions under risk. Four indicators are proposed: entrepreneurial vision, opportunity recognition and exploitation, innovation encouragement, and risk management with strategic decision-making. Reviews link entrepreneurial leadership to organisational performance (Herlina et al., 2021), and empirical research shows that entrepreneurial leaders stimulate employees' innovative behaviour by building an innovation climate (Malibari & Bajaba, 2022). In personality development and fashion show businesses, where the owner is often also the lead trainer or creative director, such leadership is expected to shape both the renewal of services and the quality of customer experience.

2.3 Strategic resource management

Strategic resource management refers to the organisation's ability to plan, allocate, develop and use its resources in support of strategy and competitive advantage. Consistent with the resource-based view (Barney, 1991; Helfat et al., 2023), four indicators are proposed: strategic human resource management, knowledge management, technology and digital resource management, and strategic partnership management. Trainers, choreographers and consultants embody the firm's core competence; codified curricula and teaching know-how constitute its knowledge base; digital tools support learning, promotion and administration; and relationships with event organisers, media, brands and educational institutions provide access to stages, clients and opportunities.

2.4 Service innovation management capability

Service innovation capability concerns a firm's capacity to develop and manage new or improved services on a continuing basis. A systematic review by Blommerde (2023) conceptualises it as a set of dynamic capabilities that enable service organisations to sense customer needs, generate and develop service concepts and deploy them. Building on this work and on Teece (2007), service innovation management capability is defined here as the ability to continuously develop, improve and manage service innovation, measured by new service development, service process innovation, technology-enabled service innovation and customer-oriented innovation. For firms in this industry, examples include new course formats for different age groups, blended online and on-site training, and show concepts tailored to corporate or community clients.

2.5 Experiential value creation capability

Because the offering of a personality development or fashion show business is essentially an experience of personal transformation, the firm's ability to design and deliver valuable experiences is central. Following Lemon and Verhoef (2016) and Becker and Jaakkola (2020), experiential value creation capability is defined as the ability to design and deliver memorable, valuable and engaging experiences that build satisfaction, loyalty and long-term relationships. Four indicators are proposed: memorable experience creation, perceived value creation, customer engagement, and long-term customer relationship. In line with service-dominant logic, these experiences are co-created with learners, parents, models and audiences rather than delivered to them (Vargo & Lusch, 2016).

2.6 Business success

Business success is treated as a multidimensional outcome reflecting the attainment of organisational goals. Drawing on the balanced scorecard (Kaplan & Norton, 1992) and on methodological guidance that performance should be captured through several complementary dimensions (Richard et al., 2009), four indicators are proposed: financial performance, customer performance, operational and innovation performance, and growth and sustainability performance. Table 1 summarises the five latent constructs and their twenty observed indicators.

Table 1: Latent constructs and observed indicators of the proposed model

Construct (role)	Definition	Observed indicators
Entrepreneurial leadership, EL (exogenous)	Ability to set vision and strategy, exploit opportunities, foster innovation and decide under risk	Entrepreneurial vision; opportunity recognition and exploitation; innovation encouragement; risk management and strategic decision-making
Strategic resource management, SRM (exogenous)	Ability to plan, allocate, develop and use resources to support strategy	Strategic human resource management; knowledge management; technology and digital resource management; strategic partnership management
Service innovation management capability, SIM (mediator)	Ability to continuously develop, improve and manage service innovation	New service development; service process innovation; technology-enabled service innovation; customer-oriented innovation
Experiential value creation capability, EVC (mediator)	Ability to design and deliver memorable, valuable and engaging customer experiences	Memorable experience creation; perceived value creation; customer engagement; long-term customer relationship
Business success, BS (endogenous)	Attainment of goals across financial, customer, operational and growth outcomes	Financial performance; customer performance; operational and innovation performance; growth and sustainability performance

Source: Authors' synthesis of the literature and the dissertation research framework (2026)

3. Conceptual Model and Hypotheses

The model positions entrepreneurial leadership and strategic resource management as antecedents, service innovation management capability and experiential value creation capability as mediating capabilities, and business success as the outcome. The logic follows the resources–capabilities–performance chain implied by the resource-based view and dynamic capabilities theory (Barney, 1991; Teece, 2007, 2018): leaders and resources create the conditions for innovation, innovation renews the experiences offered to customers, and valuable experiences are converted into financial, customer and growth outcomes.

Entrepreneurial leaders articulate opportunities and encourage experimentation, which should raise the firm's capacity to renew its services (H1). By emphasising customer needs and creative risk-taking, they should also strengthen the firm's ability to design valuable experiences (H2), and their strategic decisions should affect business success directly (H3), consistent with evidence linking entrepreneurial leadership to performance and innovative behaviour (Herlina et al., 2021; Malibari & Bajaba, 2022). Well-managed human, knowledge, digital and partnership resources provide the inputs for service innovation (H4) and for high-quality experiences (H5), and valuable, hard-to-imitate resources are expected to contribute directly to success (H6), as the resource-based view predicts (Barney, 1991; Helfat et al., 2023). Service innovation provides new content and delivery formats through which experiences are created, so service innovation management capability is expected to enhance experiential value creation capability (H7) (Blommerde, 2023). Finally, memorable and valuable experiences build satisfaction, engagement and loyalty, which should translate into business success (H8) (Becker & Jaakkola, 2020; Lemon & Verhoef, 2016).

Table 2 lists the eight hypotheses. Taken together, the hypothesised paths imply that service innovation management capability and experiential value creation capability transmit part of the influence of leadership and resources to business success. In the model, service innovation is linked to success through experiential value creation rather than directly, so the effect of innovation on success is expected to operate through the experiences it makes possible. These indirect relationships will be examined as part of the structural model.

Table 2: Research hypotheses and their main theoretical grounding

Hypothesis	Proposed relationship	Main grounding
H1	EL has a positive direct influence on SIM	Renko et al. (2015); Malibari & Bajaba (2022)
H2	EL has a positive direct influence on EVC	Renko et al. (2015); Becker & Jaakkola (2020)
H3	EL has a positive direct influence on BS	Herlina et al. (2021)
H4	SRM has a positive direct influence on SIM	Helfat et al. (2023); Teece (2007)
H5	SRM has a positive direct influence on EVC	Barney (1991); Vargo & Lusch (2016)
H6	SRM has a positive direct influence on BS	Barney (1991); Helfat et al. (2023)
H7	SIM has a positive direct influence on EVC	Blommerde (2023)
H8	EVC has a positive direct influence on BS	Lemon & Verhoef (2016); Becker & Jaakkola (2020)

Note: EL = entrepreneurial leadership; SRM = strategic resource management; SIM = service innovation management capability; EVC = experiential value creation capability; BS = business success.

4. Proposed Research Design

4.1 Design, population and sample

The study will use a mixed-methods embedded design in which the quantitative strand is primary and a qualitative strand helps to explain its results (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). The population consists of owners, executives and managers of juristic-person personality development and fashion show businesses in Thailand, numbering 4,321 businesses according to Creative Economy Agency data used as the sampling frame. The target sample is 400 respondents. This figure follows the guideline of twenty cases per observed variable for twenty observed variables, which lies within the range commonly recommended for structural equation models of moderate complexity (Hair et al., 2019; Kline, 2016; Wolf et al., 2013). Respondents will be selected purposively from businesses that meet the industry definition, and the research is scheduled to run from January 2026 to March 2027.

4.2 Instrument

Data will be collected with a structured questionnaire in three parts. Part 1 contains five items on the respondent and the business (gender, age, education, current position and years in operation). Part 2 contains 100 items, five for each of the twenty indicators, rated on a five-point scale. Part 3 invites open-ended suggestions. Questionnaires will be distributed on paper and online through entrepreneur networks, professional associations, institutes and modelling schools, with an assurance of confidentiality, and returned questionnaires will be screened for completeness before analysis.

4.3 Validity and reliability

Content validity will be assessed by five experts, who will rate each item for its congruence with the intended indicator; items with an index of item–objective congruence above 0.50 will be retained. The revised questionnaire will then be pretested with 50 business owners who are not part of the main sample, and internal consistency will be examined with Cronbach's alpha. In the main study, composite reliability of at least 0.70 will be required for each construct (Hair et al., 2019). The planned criteria are summarised in Table 3.

Table 3: Planned measurement and analysis criteria

Stage	Procedure	Planned criterion
Content validity	Item–objective congruence rated by 5 experts	IOC > 0.50
Pretest	Try-out with 50 business owners; Cronbach's alpha	Internal consistency examined before fieldwork
Construct reliability	Confirmatory factor analysis	Composite reliability ≥ 0.70
Model fit	Relative chi-square (χ^2/df)	< 2.00
Model fit	RMSEA; RMR	≤ 0.05
Model fit	GFI; NFI; CFI	≥ 0.90
Model fit	PGFI; PNFI	≥ 0.50
Qualitative strand	In-depth interviews with 15 key informants; content analysis	Data saturation; triangulation

Source: Research design of the dissertation (2026), with fit criteria following Hair et al. (2019) and Kline (2016)

4.4 Data analysis

Descriptive statistics (means and standard deviations) will be used to assess the level of each construct. Confirmatory factor analysis will then evaluate the measurement model, after which the structural model will be estimated to test the eight hypotheses and to examine the indirect effects implied by the model. Model fit will be judged against the criteria in Table 3 (Hair et al., 2019; Kline, 2016). Where fit is inadequate, modifications will be considered only when they are theoretically defensible.

4.5 Qualitative strand

To explain and enrich the quantitative results, semi-structured in-depth interviews will be conducted with 15 key informants: entrepreneurs, executives and experts in Thai personality development and fashion show businesses, selected purposively and through referrals. Each interview is expected to last 45–60 minutes and will continue until saturation. Transcripts will be analysed by content analysis, and credibility will be supported through triangulation across informant groups and against the quantitative findings (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Denzin, 1978; Lincoln & Guba, 1985). The two strands will be integrated to confirm, explain and extend the structural model (Creswell & Creswell, 2018).

5. Discussion

The proposed model makes three contributions. Theoretically, it brings together leadership, resource and capability perspectives with service-dominant logic and customer experience research in a single causal structure. Rather than treating service innovation and customer experience as outcomes in their own right, it positions them as the capabilities through which leadership and resources become performance, in line with the argument that dynamic capabilities link strategy to results (Teece, 2018). The model also specifies a sequence in which service innovation matters for success because it enables better experiences, a proposition that can be tested directly.

Contextually, the model addresses a creative service industry that has attracted little systematic research despite its growing social and economic visibility. Personality development and fashion show businesses combine education, performance and personal branding, and their value depends heavily on the customer's sense of transformation. Applying experience-centred and resource-based reasoning to this setting may reveal success conditions that differ from those in hotels or retail.

Practically, the framework offers entrepreneurs a diagnostic structure. Owners can assess whether their vision and risk-taking are matched by systematic management of trainers, knowledge, digital tools and partnerships, and whether these resources are being converted into renewed services and memorable learner experiences. For government agencies, professional associations and the Creative Economy Agency, the model suggests that support programmes should build capabilities, such as service design and customer experience management, rather than focusing only on promotion or funding.

6. Conclusion

This paper has developed a conceptual model of business success for Thai personality development and fashion show businesses in which entrepreneurial leadership and strategic resource management influence success directly and through service innovation management capability and experiential value creation capability. Five constructs, twenty indicators and eight hypotheses were specified, and a mixed-methods design combining a survey of 400 business owners and executives with 15 in-depth interviews was set out to test the model.

The paper is limited by its conceptual nature: the relationships proposed here have not yet been tested, and no empirical findings are claimed. The planned survey relies on self-reported data from a single respondent per firm, and purposive selection may limit generalisation. Future work will report the measurement and structural results, compare subsegments such as modelling schools and event organisers, and examine whether the proposed mechanisms hold in other creative service industries.

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