

แนวทางการจัดการกลุ่มธุรกิจเห็ดโคนน้อยจังหวัดเชียงใหม่ ด้วยสัญญาใจที่ส่งผลต่อการดำเนินงานด้านการบริหาร จัดการธุรกิจ

Guidelines for managing the Chiang Mai Inky-Cap mushroom community business group through a Gentlemen's agreement affecting business management performance

Received: June 6, 2025

Revised: July 15, 2025

Accepted: July 16, 2025

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บทคัดย่อ

การวิจัยครั้งนี้มีวัตถุประสงค์เพื่อพัฒนาแนวทางการจัดการกลุ่มธุรกิจเห็ดโคนน้อย จังหวัดเชียงใหม่ ด้วยสัญญาใจ และศึกษาผลกระทบของแนวทางดังกล่าวต่อการดำเนินงานด้านการบริหารจัดการธุรกิจของกลุ่ม โดยใช้ระเบียบวิธีวิจัยแบบผสมผสาน โดยการเก็บรวบรวมข้อมูลเชิงคุณภาพผ่านการสัมภาษณ์แบบกึ่งโครงสร้าง และการสนทนากลุ่มกับผู้มีส่วนเกี่ยวข้องในการตัดสินใจจำนวน 12 ราย ด้วยการเลือกแบบเจาะจง ประกอบด้วย ผู้นำวิสาหกิจชุมชน เจริญฤๅน และผู้ผลิตจาก 4 วิสาหกิจชุมชนใน 4 อำเภอ ได้แก่ สันทราย แม่แตง ดอยสะเก็ด และสารภี เพื่อร่วมกันร่างสัญญาใจที่เป็นข้อตกลงลายลักษณ์อักษร และเก็บข้อมูลเชิงปริมาณจากกลุ่มผู้มีส่วนได้ส่วนเสียจำนวน 1,000 ราย ด้วยการสุ่มแบบเจาะจง ประกอบด้วย หัวหน้ากลุ่ม สมาชิกวิสาหกิจชุมชน และผู้ผลิตในพื้นที่อำเภอสันทราย อำเภอแม่แตง อำเภอดอยสะเก็ด และอำเภอสารภี จังหวัดเชียงใหม่ โดยใช้แบบสอบถามแบบมีโครงสร้าง เพื่อประเมินผลกระทบของการจัดการกลุ่มธุรกิจ ใน 4 ด้าน ได้แก่ การผลิต แปรนต การตลาด และการเงิน ผลการวิเคราะห์ทางสถิติ พบว่า การจัดการด้านการผลิต การตลาด และแปรนต ส่งผลเชิงบวกอย่างมีนัยสำคัญต่อผลการดำเนินงานของการบริหารจัดการธุรกิจในขณะที่การจัดการด้านการเงิน ส่งผลเชิงลบอย่างมีนัยสำคัญ โมเดลการวิจัยมีความสามารถในการอธิบายสูง ($R^2 = 0.770, F = 75.0, p < 0.001$) ยืนยันว่า การดำเนินงานของกลุ่มตามสัญญาใจสามารถส่งเสริมความร่วมมือของกลุ่มธุรกิจ เพื่อเพิ่มประสิทธิภาพการบริหารจัดการธุรกิจ และกำหนดทิศทางการกลยุทธ์ได้อย่างชัดเจน พร้อมทั้งชี้ให้เห็นถึงความจำเป็นในการปรับปรุงแนวทางการจัดการด้านการเงินอย่างเร่งด่วน เพื่อให้เกิดความยั่งยืนของการบริหารจัดการกลุ่มธุรกิจเห็ดโคนน้อยจังหวัดเชียงใหม่

คำสำคัญ: การบริหารจัดการ ผลการดำเนินธุรกิจ เห็ดโคนน้อย สัญญาใจ

Abstract

This research aims to develop guidelines for managing the Chiang Mai Inky-Cap mushroom community business group through a Gentlemen's agreement and to examine its effects on business management performance. A mixed-methods approach was employed. Qualitative data were collected through semi-structured interviews and focus group discussions with 12 key persons through purposive sampling, including community enterprise leaders, treasurers, and producers from four community enterprises located in San Sai, Mae Taeng, Doi Saket, and Saraphi districts. The purpose was to collaboratively draft a written Gentlemen's agreement. Quantitative data were collected from 1,000 stakeholders through purposive sampling, including enterprise heads, members, and producers, in the Sansai, Mae Taeng, Doi Saket, and Saraphi districts of Chiang Mai using structured questionnaires to assess the impacts of business group management in four key areas including production, branding, marketing and finance. Statistical analysis revealed that production, marketing, and brand management had significant positive effects on business management performance, while financial management had a significant negative effect. The research model showed strong explanatory power ($R^2 = 0.770, F = 75.0, p < 0.001$), confirming that implementing

a Gentlemen's agreement enhances collaboration, improves business efficiency, and guides strategy, while highlighting the need to revise financial management for the sustainability of Chiang Mai Inky Cap mushroom community business group management.

Keywords: Management, Business Performance, Inky-Cap Mushroom, Gentlemen's agreement

Introduction

The business management performance of community enterprises plays an important role in agricultural and food-based development, supporting local economies and rural livelihoods (Zain et al., 2023). Community enterprises based on agricultural products often face long-term challenges due to weaknesses in four key areas, including production, branding, marketing, and finance. Each of these areas is important for business survival and growth. Effective production management helps ensure product quality and reliability. Strong brand management builds customer trust and helps products stand out. Marketing connects businesses with customers and improves sales. Moreover, financial management keeps the business stable and helps it grow. In Thailand, the Chiang Mai Inky-Cap mushroom community business is a successful local model that turns traditional knowledge and local resources into income for farmers. However, it still faces problems such as weak structure, unclear roles, and limited coordination (Talerngsri-Teerasuwannajak & Pongkijvorasin, 2021). Solving these issues needs a clear management approach with written agreements to guide cooperation and support business success.

The Chiang Mai Inky-Cap Mushroom community business group, formed by four community enterprises located in San Sai, Mae Taeng, Doi Saket, and Saraphi districts, faces supply chain inefficiencies, posing ongoing risks. Unlike large-scale agricultural enterprises, it relies on informal agreements and collaboration, leading to operational challenges. This decentralized and unregulated nature often creates management gaps that affect group cohesion and performance. Moreover, stakeholders such as producers, enterprise leaders, and community members may have differing goals and expectations, further complicating coordination. Business groups, composed of interconnected enterprises, enhance efficiency, market access, and financial stability. However, the absence of structured governance often results in inconsistent practices, pricing issues, and financial instability (Sinnarong et al., 2022). To remain competitive in dynamic local and regional markets, community enterprises must adopt mechanisms that balance flexibility with accountability. A Gentlemen's agreement, a documented framework of shared commitments, responsibilities, and financial rules, serves as a non-binding but formalized tool for aligning stakeholder interests. In this business, such an agreement can enhance collaboration, ensure compliance with business practices, and strengthen pricing and marketing strategies. Formalizing these agreements supports trust, reduces financial risks, and supports long-term business management performance.

This study aims to establish a Gentlemen's agreement for guiding the management of community business group and to evaluate its effects on key areas of business performance, including production, branding, marketing, and finance. It also seeks to contribute to broader efforts in community-driven economic development by providing clear and practical guidelines for managing similar enterprises in rural areas and agricultural contexts. These guidelines can support better decision-making, increase efficiency, improve accountability, and promote long-term sustainability. Based on these considerations, this study addresses the research question as to what extent does the implementation of a Gentlemen's agreement influence the business management performance of the Chiang Mai Inky-Cap mushroom community business group across production, branding, marketing, and finance.

Research Objectives

1. To create guidelines for managing the Chiang Mai Inky-Cap Mushroom community business group through a Gentlemen's agreement.
2. To evaluate the impact of Chiang Mai Inky-Cap mushroom community business group management on the business management performance.

Research Hypotheses

H₁: The community business group management through a Gentlemen's agreement process has a positive impact on production management performance.

H₂: The community business group management through a Gentlemen's agreement process has a positive impact on brand management performance.

H₃: The community business group management through a Gentlemen's agreement process has a positive impact on marketing management performance.

H₄: The community business group management through a Gentlemen's agreement process has a positive impact on financial management performance.

Literature Review

A Gentlemen's agreement is a process used to encourage positive member behavior within an organization (เอกวิมล ภากะนิท, 2566). This process can support the development of a written agreement for the Chiang Mai Inky-Cap mushroom community business through cooperation between entrepreneurs and stakeholders in the value chain. It involves four main management areas, each related to a research hypothesis about its effect on business management performance.

Production Management integrates technology-driven production planning, transforming raw materials into value-added products (Clark et al., 2021). The societal benefit of agriculture product management is its ability to generate more employment

opportunities (Durham & Mizik, 2021). Based on this understanding, the research proposes the following hypothesis.

H₁: The community business group management through a Gentlemen's agreement process has a positive impact on production management performance.

Brand Management emphasizes building and maintaining a strong business identity, enhancing economic and social value by generating employment and income opportunities within the community (Li et al., 2022). It plays an important role in shaping consumer perceptions by connecting personal experiences and emotions to a brand (Daldanise, 2020). Building on this understanding, the research proposes the following hypothesis.

H₂: The community business group management through a Gentlemen's agreement process has a positive impact on brand management performance.

Marketing Management collaborative market share planning, promoting the product's recognition and acceptance while ensuring job creation and fair income distribution (Kareska, 2025). Business groups play a significant role in processing and marketing agricultural products, creating market competition that benefits local producers (Kalogiannidis, 2020). Based on this understanding, the research proposes the following hypothesis.

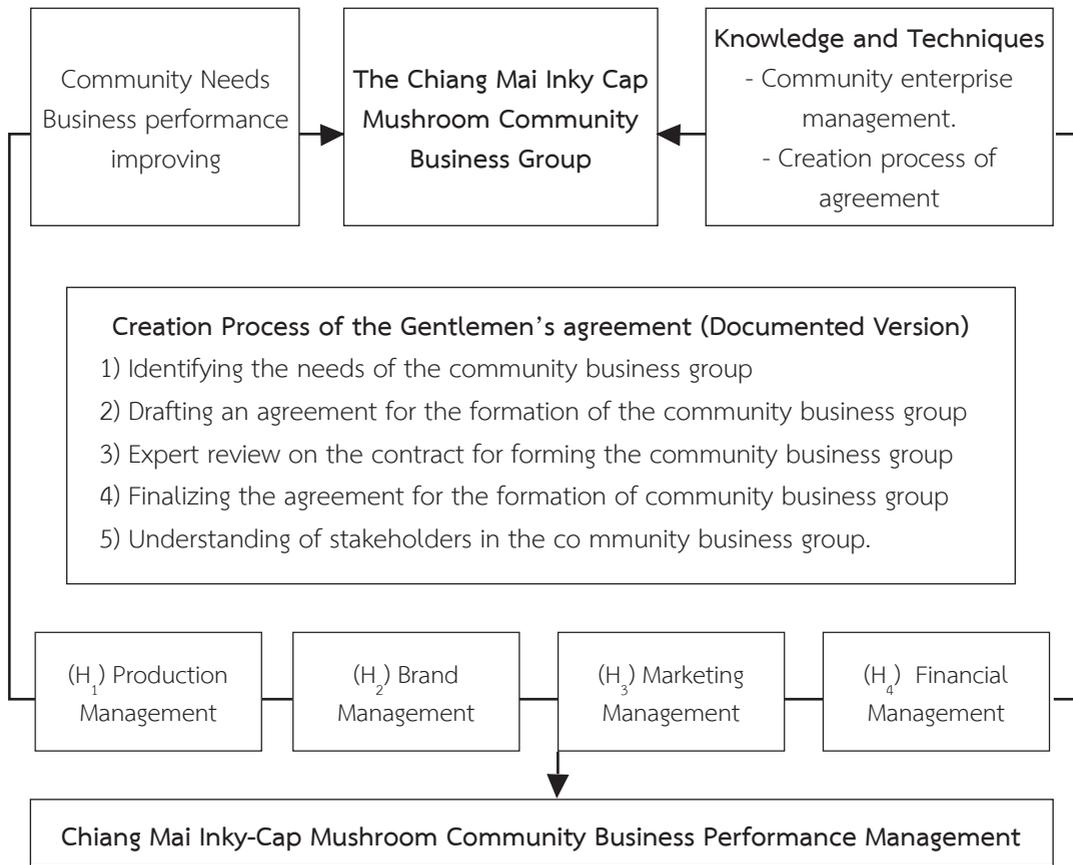
H₃: The community business group management through a Gentlemen's agreement process has a positive impact on marketing management performance.

Financial Management focuses on effective financial management for planning, execution, and monitoring business operations among entrepreneurs (Rahim, & Balan, 2020). Working capital investment positively impacts profitability by providing financial stability for business expansion (Anton & Afloarei Nucu, 2020). Building on this understanding, the research suggests the following hypothesis.

H₄: The community business group management through a Gentlemen's agreement process has a positive impact on financial management performance.

Related research shows that a documented commitment framework improves agreement adherence, efficiency, and business performance. While participants recognized both benefits and limitations, they emphasized the need for community participation in its development (Halewood et al., 2021). The framework strengthens relationships among stakeholders, encourages the use of local resources, and promotes social and economic value. It also supports planning, fair employment, and income distribution. As agricultural entrepreneurship evolves, success increasingly depends on innovation, opportunity identification, and market expansion (Cheriet et al., 2020). In the case of Chiang Mai Inky-Cap mushroom community business, these elements improve management, strengthen collaboration and governance, and support competitiveness and sustainable local economic development.

Figure 1
Conceptual Framework



Research Methodology

This study used a mixed-methods approach to examine the Chiang Mai Inky-Cap mushroom community business group’s performance under a Gentlemen’s agreement across four areas, including production, marketing, branding, and finance, with data collected from 1 March 2024 to 1 February 2025.

Qualitative research collects the experiences and views of 12 key persons through semi-structured interviews and focus group discussions. Key persons include leaders, treasurers, and producers from four Inky-Cap mushroom community enterprises in Chiang Mai, including the Sustainable Agriculture Community Enterprise in Ban Sob Faek in Sansai District, the Agro-Tourism Community Enterprise in Mae Ho Phra Sub-district in Mae Taeng District, the Local Agriculture Community Enterprise in Samran Rat Sub-district in Doi Saket District, and the Sustainable Agriculture Farmers Group in Ban Nong Faek in Saraphi District. The goal is to create a Gentlemen’s agreement to guide group management and improve performance.

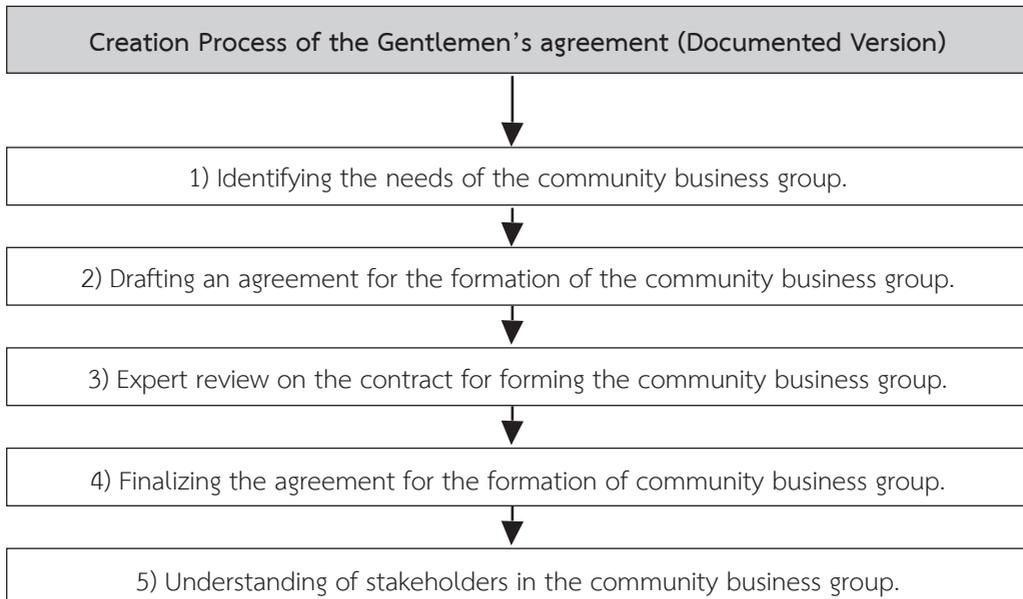
Quantitative research employed structured questionnaires to collect data from 1,000 stakeholders, based on Yamane's formula with a 95 percent confidence level and 5 percent margin of error (Yamane, 1973). Purposive sampling focused on key persons in four Chiang Mai districts. The questionnaire assessed business performance in production, branding, marketing, and finance. It was developed through literature review, expert input, and pre-testing. Three experts confirmed content validity, with IOC values between 0.70 and 1.00. A pilot test with 50 participants showed item-total correlations from 0.35 to 0.81 and a Cronbach's Alpha of 0.88, confirming tool reliability.

Experimental Results

The creation process of the Chiang Mai Inky-Cap mushroom community business group through a Gentlemen's agreement (Documented Version) for community business management performance involves five stages in the agreement creation process, as shown in figure 2 below.

Figure 2

The Creation Process of Gentlemen's Agreement (Documented Version)



1) Identifying the needs of the community business group.

The Chiang Mai Inky-Cap mushroom community business brings together four local enterprises from San Sai, Mae Taeng, Doi Saket, and Saraphi to enhance product quality, create jobs, and support vulnerable groups. Through advanced technology, training, and

standardized production, the group ensures high-quality mushrooms that meet market needs. Strong stakeholder cooperation supports marketing, branding, and knowledge sharing. With a focus on sustainability, the initiative emphasizes efficient resource use, financial transparency, market expansion, and skill development to drive long-term business success.

2) Drafting an agreement for the formation of the community business group.

The Chiang Mai Inky-Cap mushroom community business agreement strengthens efficiency and performance through a transparent framework co-developed by entrepreneurs, stakeholders, and researchers. It promotes knowledge sharing, market integration, and community participation in three key areas: enhancing stakeholder relationships to improve engagement and product quality as supporting a shared business culture to align goals; and providing economic incentives for ethical production and fair pricing. This structured approach boosts competitiveness, productivity, and long-term resilience of the inclusive community business group in Chiang Mai.

3) Expert review on the contract for forming the community business group.

The Chiang Mai Inky-Cap mushroom community business agreement was reviewed by experts to ensure fairness, inclusivity, and feasibility. Input from the Northern Regional Research Chair guided improvements in collaboration and risk management. The review emphasized group formation, participatory processes, and risk reduction. Expert feedback enhanced trust, member engagement, and sustainability. This structured, inclusive framework supports stakeholder cooperation, transparency, and resilience for long-term growth and effective business performance management of the community enterprises.

4) Finalizing the agreement for the formation of community business group.

The Chiang Mai Inky-Cap mushroom community created a documented agreement to boost employment and income distribution. Through collaboration in financial, brand, marketing, and production management, the agreement improves cash flow, business value, market reach, and efficiency. It supports unity, accountability, and stakeholder relationships while promoting sustainability. By using local resources and generating social and economic value, the initiative supports inclusive growth and long-term success, as part of a research project to strengthen the local economy.

5) Understanding of stakeholders in the community business group.

Understanding entrepreneur and stakeholder perspectives is vital to the Chiang Mai Inky-Cap mushroom community business. Shared awareness promotes agreement adherence, efficiency, and sustainability. Key goals include building relationships, encouraging participation, and aligning producers through a unified agreement. This participatory approach enhances cooperation, resilience, and long-term performance growth of the community business.

The impact of Chiang Mai Inky-Cap mushroom community business group management on the business performance management.

1) Analysis of Chiang Mai Inky-Cap mushroom community business group affecting the business performance management is shown in table 1 below.

Table 1

The Mean and Standard Deviation of Chiang Mai Inky-Cap Mushroom Community Business Group Management Affecting the Business Management Performance.

The impact of Chiang Mai Inky-Cap mushroom community business group management on the business management performance.	\bar{X}	S.D.	Interpretation
Production management	4.62	0.30	Very High
Brand management	4.12	0.45	High
Marketing management	4.28	0.39	High
Financial management	3.81	0.50	High
Average	4.21	0.41	High

Table 1 shows that the key persons see the Chiang Mai Inky-Cap mushroom community business group as having a strong overall effect on business performance (average score = 4.21). Production management ranks highest (4.62, SD = 0.30), showing it is viewed as the key driver of success. Marketing (4.28, SD = 0.39) and brand management (4.12, SD = 0.45) also receive high scores, while financial management scores lowest (3.81, SD = 0.50) but is still considered important. The small standard deviations mean most people gave similar ratings, confirming that all four areas matter, though to different degrees.

2) The relationship between variables was tested using the Pearson Correlation Coefficient (PCC) to identify significant correlations at the 0.05 level. Only variables with significant correlations were included in the Multiple Linear Regression analysis.

Table 2

The Correlation Coefficients between the Dependent Variable and the Independent Variables.

Variables	Y (Business performance management)
(X1) Production management	0.820**
(X2) Brand management	0.460**
(X3) Marketing management	0.580**
(X4) Financial management	-0.710**

**The statistical significance level is 0.01.

Table 2 shows the Pearson correlation coefficients between each management area and business performance management. All four links are significant at the 0.01 level. Production management shows the strongest positive relationship with performance (0.82), followed by marketing management (0.58) and brand management (0.46), which both indicate moderate positive effects. In contrast, financial management has a strong negative relationship (-0.71), suggesting that the way finances are currently managed may hinder overall success. These results echo Table 1, confirming that better production, marketing, and branding support higher performance, while financial practices require careful review.

3) Testing the relationships between independent variables to ensure they do not cause multicollinearity problems by analyzing Tolerance values and VIF values.

Table 3

Tolerance Values and VIF Values Analysis.

Predictive variables	Tolerance	VIF
(X1) Production management	0.720	1.390
(X2) Brand management	0.650	1.540
(X3) Marketing management	0.680	1.480
(X4) Financial management	0.700	1.430

Table 3 shows that multicollinearity is not a concern for the four predictors. All tolerance values are comfortably above the 0.10 threshold (0.65 – 0.72), and all VIF values are well below the critical value of 5 (1.39 – 1.54). Production management has the lowest

VIF (1.39), while brand management has the highest (1.54), both remain in the safe range. Marketing (VIF 1.48; tolerance 0.68) and financial management (VIF 1.43; tolerance 0.70) meet accepted standards. These figures confirm that each management area adds distinct information to the model, allowing them to be analyzed together without inflating error estimates.

4) Using the variables that affect the business performance management to perform Multiple Regression Analysis.

Table 4

The Multiple Regression Analysis of the Independent Variables Affecting the Business Performance Management.

Predictive variables	B	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.
Constant	-0.100	0.150	-	0.670	0.505
(X1) Production management	0.650	0.080	0.450	8.130	0.000
(X2) Brand management	0.320	0.010	0.200	3.200	0.002
(X3) Marketing management	0.480	0.090	0.300	5.330	0.000
(X4) Financial management	-0.550	0.070	-0.400	-7.86	0.000

$R = 0.880$, $R^2 = 0.770$, $F(4, n-5) = 75.0$, $p < 0.001^{**}$

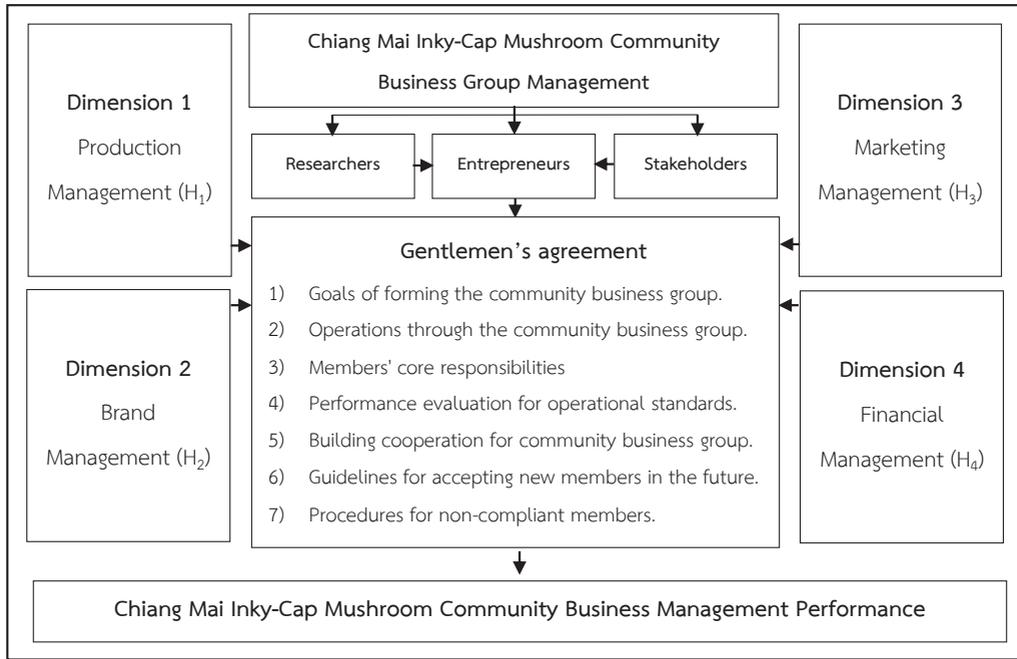
Table 4 shows that the regression model is strong, explaining 77 percent of the variation in business performance ($R^2 = 0.770$, $F = 75.0$, $p < 0.001$). Production management has the largest positive influence (Beta = 0.45, $t = 8.13$, $p < 0.001$), followed by marketing management (Beta = 0.30, $t = 5.33$, $p < 0.001$) and brand management (Beta = 0.20, $t = 3.20$, $p = 0.002$), both of which add smaller but still significant gains. In contrast, financial management shows a significant negative effect (Beta = -0.40 , $t = -7.86$, $p < 0.001$), indicating that financial practices reduce overall performance. These results confirm that strong production, marketing, and branding practices boost success, while financial management needs improvement.

Discussion

The Chiang Mai Inky-Cap mushroom community business group management through a Gentlemen's agreement for business performance management as outlined in figure 3 below.

Figure 3

Chiang Mai Inky-Cap Mushroom Community Business Group Management



This study shows that implementing a Gentlemen's agreement enhances overall business performance in the Chiang Mai Inky-Cap mushroom community, especially in the areas of production, marketing, and branding, while highlighting weaknesses in financial management that need urgent attention.

The study confirms research hypothesis (H_1), indicating that production management is the strongest contributor to business performance. With the highest mean score of 4.62 (SD = 0.30) and the strongest positive correlation ($r = 0.820$, $p < 0.01$), production plays a foundational role. Regression analysis (Beta = 0.450, $p < 0.001$) further confirms this influence. These findings suggest that well-organized scheduling, the use of modern production techniques, and strict quality control not only improve product consistency but also reduce production risks. This aligns with Clark et al. (2021), who noted that effective production strategies improve resilience and add value in community-based agricultural models.

For hypothesis (H_2), brand management shows a moderate yet important impact on business performance. It received a mean score of 4.12 (SD = 0.45) and a significant correlation ($r = 0.460$, $p < 0.01$), with regression results confirming its effect (Beta = 0.200, $p = 0.002$). These results indicate that a clear and trusted brand helps the business attract repeat customers, maintain market presence, and differentiate itself from competitors.

A well-positioned brand also contributes to customer loyalty and price stability that consistent with the view that that brand equity improves long-term market viability and economic sustainability, particularly for small enterprises in rural areas (Li et al., 2022).

Hypothesis (H₃) is also supported. Marketing management emerges as the second-strongest factor, with a mean of 4.28 (SD = 0.39), a significant correlation ($r = 0.580$, $p < 0.01$), and regression results (Beta = 0.300, $p < 0.001$). These findings suggest that strategic marketing practices, including digital promotion, customer engagement, and diversified sales channels, have helped the community business expand its customer base and increase income. Additionally, community involvement in marketing boosts social capital and trust among buyers. This confirms Cheriet et al. (2020), who emphasized that opportunity identification and market development are key elements of sustainable agricultural entrepreneurship.

In contrast, hypothesis (H4) is rejected, as financial management shows a significant negative impact on business performance. It has the lowest mean score (3.81, SD = 0.50), a strong negative correlation ($r = -0.710$, $p < 0.01$), and a negative regression coefficient (Beta = -0.400, $p < 0.001$). These results suggest that limited financial planning, informal budgeting, and unclear financial roles may weaken overall performance. This aligns with Rahim and Balan (2020), who emphasized that financial literacy and structured systems are vital for small business stability. The study recommends improving financial literacy, adopting transparent budgeting, clarifying roles, and regularly monitoring financial activities to enhance sustainability and support long-term growth of the community business group.

Overall, the documented Gentlemen's agreement contributes positively to business performance by enhancing collaboration, setting clear roles, and aligning stakeholder goals in production, branding, and marketing. However, for the agreement to achieve full impact, financial practices must be urgently improved. Strengthening financial literacy and governance will ensure that community enterprises not only survive but thrive sustainably in the long term.

Conclusion and Recommendation

The Chiang Mai Inky-Cap mushroom community business showcases how a Gentlemen's agreement enhances collaboration, trust, and shared objectives among stakeholders. The model significantly boosts production, marketing, and branding performance, while financial management remains a major weakness. Based on the findings, production should be supported through technology and training, while branding needs development through storytelling and packaging. Marketing performance can be improved with digital tools and online market access. Financial issues must be addressed by offering financial literacy programs and transparent budgeting systems to reduce risk and enhance sustainability.

Using mixed methods, the study surveyed 1,000 stakeholders and conducted interviews with 12 community leaders across four Chiang Mai districts. The results confirm that structured agreements positively impact business performance, offering a practical model for other rural enterprises. Future research should assess long-term impacts of such agreements, compare regions with and without formal frameworks, and include stakeholder perspectives. This study contributes to rural development by linking local entrepreneurship, resource mobilization, and inclusive governance to sustainable economic growth. It offers a strategic framework for community-based business models in Thailand and similar contexts.

Funding Acknowledgement

This research article is part of the research project titled “การสร้างศูนย์สร้างงานและกระจายรายได้ให้แก่เศรษฐกิจฐานรากผ่านธุรกิจการเพาะเห็ดโคนน้อย”. The authors gratefully acknowledge the financial support provided by “หน่วยบริหารและจัดการทุนด้านการพัฒนาระดับพื้นที่ (บพท.)”.

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