

Creative Entrepreneurship: Background and Characteristics of Advertising Business Entrepreneurs in Chiang Mai Province, Thailand

Rotchanakorn Baengthit

Faculty of Management Sciences, Chiang Mai Rajabhat University, Thailand

E-mail: rotchanakorn_bae@cmru.ac.th

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Abstract

The advertising business, one of Thailand's key creative industries, has a strong economic and social impact. Hence, researches on this topic have mainly focused on the organizational structure and operation process of advertising agencies in Bangkok, the center of the industry, while studies on that of local are limited. However, knowledge on such topic is undoubted essential; local agencies can serve the needs of various local advertisers, they support national agencies in penetrating local markets, they also contribute to the strengthening of Thailand's creative industries as most employment and commercial activities take place within small businesses. Considering the aforementioned reasons, this study intends to answer the following research questions: 1. When and how did local advertising business start? 2. What creative entrepreneurship characteristics does an advertising business entrepreneur have?

The purposes of this article were to explore background of advertising business and to clarify creative entrepreneurship characteristics of advertising business entrepreneurs in Chiang Mai Province, Thailand. The study was based on qualitative research methodology by using in-depth interviewing and self-assessment form to analyze the characteristics of eight entrepreneurs who were selected by specific qualifications. The results found that advertising businesses in Chiang Mai Province were established around 1985, they had primarily produced advertisements according to clients' orders, especially for radio broadcasting and outdoor signage. At the present, they flexibly offer both advertising and non-advertising services. In addition, it revealed that the advertising business entrepreneurs were motivated to start their own businesses by both internal and external factors. Besides, it appeared that they clearly demonstrated excellent creative entrepreneurship characteristics, respectively: inventing himself/herself, endless learning, exploiting fame and celebrity, defining himself/herself by thinking or doing activities, having fun, being very ambitious, being kind, putting the priority on ideas, not on data, openly admiring success, being nomadic, and treating the virtual as real and vice versa. The findings indicated that the entrepreneurs actively evolved their business models according to local environment and technological changes while personal characteristics and experiences were the fundamental factors to run a successful business. Nevertheless, in the digital economy era, they do need to improve their competitiveness. Creative Economy Agency should support and develop the digital potential of entrepreneurs both using in operations and providing digital media services. Expanding domestic markets, by encouraging small and medium local enterprises to realize the importance of advertising and marketing communication, will increase demand for advertising business services as well.

Keywords: Creative entrepreneurship, Advertising business, Characteristic

Introduction

Chiang Mai Province, a hub of Northern Thailand, is attractive to various businesses: service sectors, industrial sectors, real estate sector, and tourism sectors. As a result, the advertising business has been growing steadily because of rising demand of advertisers; they widely use advertising as a marketing communication tool to reach target consumers and to compete with their competitors. Apparently, the number of advertising media and specialized advertising services are increasing.

There are more than 141 advertising agencies in Chiang Mai Province, they have generated income of 500-800 million baht per year in the past 10 years. There are 17 large companies with annual income of 10 million baht and over (Class A), 59 medium-sized with income of 1-10 million baht (Class B), and 65 small-sized with income less than 1 million baht (Class C). Both advertising services and non-advertising services are provided. However, some businesses permanently closed down in consequence of undercut and high competition (Baengthit, 2018).

On one hand, local advertising agencies offer expert assistance to local advertisers (Arens et al., 2009). On the other hand, they support national agencies in penetrating unique local markets. They also contribute to the strengthening of creative industries as most employment and commercial activities take place within small businesses (Rae, 2004). Nonetheless, a small amount of research focused on local advertising business, especially the organizational structure and operation process. Inta (2014) and Piromnum (2011) revealed that most of them were full-service agencies and set up organizational structure under department system, which creative and production department were the heart of the company. Due to the various needs of provincial clients, they were forced to offer a wide range of advertising services, including other marketing communication tools such as special event and exhibition, public relations, sales promotion, video presentation, and so on (Prommee, 2003; Tanratanakul, 2007). From the perspective of clients, despite it was found that they believed in the effectiveness of advertising; better reached customers and increased sales and profits, a small advertising budget was allocated (Kosai, 2009; Promsaen, 2012; Sinpo, 2008). The clients usually chose particular advertising agency based on personnel skills, previous creative performances, and internal management system (Kosai, 2009; Promsaen, 2012; Sweatpatanayotin, 2011). The advertising business in Chiang Mai was very competitive due to the large number of advertising agencies, some researchers then suggested that they should prioritize the quality of their performances with reasonable cost over lower bids (Inta, 2014). In addition, they should standardize organization management as well as working process to make clients trust (Sweatpatanayotin, 2011). Nonetheless, they simultaneously supposed to be prepared in changing world.

Advertising business entrepreneurs in Chiang Mai Province require to sustain their business, be competitive, and seek for different development approaches to increase competitiveness in order to enter a new economy that focuses on increasing the value of products or services with creativity – creative economy. The concept of “creative economy” was firstly proposed by Howkins in 2001. It is about the relationship between creativity and economics; they are perfectly combined to create extraordinary value and wealth. UNCTAD (UNCTAD & UNDP, 2008), thereafter, defines the “creative economy” as an evolving concept based on creative assets potentially generating economic growth and development. The essence of the creative economy is to drive an economy based on knowledge, education, creativity and

intellectual property, which link to cultural foundation, knowledge accumulation of society, and cutting edge technology and innovation (NESDB & TCDC, 2009).

Creative entrepreneurs has been found to play a vital role in creative economy by encouraging innovation, dynamic market competition and the protection of intellectual property, which then benefit economic revival and development (Chen, Chang, & Pan, 2018; Henry, 2007; Howkins 2007). Creative entrepreneurship is the practice of setting up a business or becoming self-employed in the creative industries. First and foremost, the creative entrepreneurs concern with the creation and exploitation of creative or intellectual capital. Originally, creative entrepreneurs are investors in their own talent or other people's (Santos et al., 2021). Additionally, creative entrepreneurs are also emerging to characterize successful and talented entrepreneurial people able to transform ideas into creative products or services for society (UNCTAD & UNDP, 2008). To become a successful creative entrepreneur, person must cope not only with the normal challenges that typical businesses face, such as to manage financial and cash flow, to manipulate human resources, to develop business strategies, but also deeply understand intellectual property, talents and creative processes (Bujor & Avasilcai, 2016, Henry, 2007).

Although the phenomenon of creative economy and industries has generate great interest among scholars, creative entrepreneurship is a subject still under-explored (Chapain, Emin, & Schieb-Bienfait, 2018; Santana & Silveira, 2019). Bujor and Avasilcai (2016) made a comparative analysis between Gordon's eleven essential entrepreneurial skills and Howkins' eleven characteristics for successful creative entrepreneurs; nine characteristics were found associated. They concluded that some different characteristics had appeared between the creative entrepreneurs and other traditional entrepreneurs because the first were most concerned with creating and exploiting intellectual or creative capital, being investors in their own talent or others. While Patten (2016) indicated that the creative entrepreneurs did not align themselves with traditional entrepreneurship discourses; they needed to balance creative and business activities at the same time. Suwala (2015) conformed that a creative entrepreneur prioritized self-fulfillment and independence, rather than generating profits. In addition, successful creative entrepreneurs needed to invent themselves and stand out in the crowd, prioritize ideas over data, balance between isolation and socializing, learn endlessly and, most importantly, have fun in order to realize a creative flow of ideas. Santos et al. (2021) concurred with previous researchers, the creative entrepreneur focused on generating cultural value instead of revenue but both of them need innovation, good planning and organizing for running a successful business. The study of Werthes, Mauer, & Brettel (2018) highlighted the important of an entrepreneurial identity among creative entrepreneurs. They had to develop an entrepreneurial identity and perceive the need to earn money, they concurrently retained their core values and creative principles. Chen, Chang, & Pan (2018) shed new light on the current research stream in creative entrepreneurship, the creative entrepreneurs were categorized into four types: creative constructionists, creative opportunists, creative designers, and creative producers. Their study implied that the ability to recognize opportunity may be even more critical to creative entrepreneurs' career success. They suggested a creative entrepreneur to balance creative achievement and opportunity exploitation.

In Thailand, advertising industry, one of major creative industry, plays a significant role in economic growth. Besides generating more than one hundred thousand million baht a year, its value chain also involves many sectors which contribute to employment and economic value creation. According to Creative Industries Development Report: Advertising 2022 (CEA, 2022), on the contrary, it has been found that the weaknesses of the industry are the shortage of young talents, the personnel quality as well as the collection of the industry knowledge. Therefore, to fill this gap, this research paper aimed to explore background of advertising

business and to identify creative entrepreneurship characteristics of advertising business entrepreneurs in Chiang Mai Province, Thailand. The Howkins' eleven characteristics for successful creative entrepreneurs was mainly used to analyze. It will be beneficial to the entrepreneurs in assessing their own capabilities and as a guideline for the business development. It is also fruitful to young entrepreneurs who want to develop their potential in accordance with the creative economy era. Furthermore, Creative Economy Agency may provide specific support programs to empower entrepreneurs.

Methodology

This study implemented qualitative research methodology by using in-depth interviewing and entrepreneurs' self-assessment form to analyze the creative entrepreneurship characteristics of advertising business entrepreneurs. From a total of 141 populations, the purposive random sampling method was employed according to the criteria that: 1) a company must be registered in Department of Business Development, Ministry of Commerce, 2) a company must be operated continuously, and its financial statements must be reported annually, 3) a company provides advertising services or other marketing communication tools for at least 5 years, and 4) an entrepreneur who is ready to provide information as founder, co-founder or executive. There were eight entrepreneurs who met the specified criteria.

Following Patten (2016), in-depth interviewing was adopted for data collection to draw out individual experiences and aspects of entrepreneurs in advertising business. The unstructured interview form focused on education and working experiences background of the entrepreneurs, agency expertise, motivation, and business initiation. The questions could be modified or added; it depended on the situation at the time of the interview and the answer of the interviewees in order to obtain complete information according to the objectives of the study. The interviewing was conducted at the participants' workplaces; the non-participant observation occurred simultaneously.

The researcher additionally applied the concept of eleven characteristics for successful creative entrepreneurs proposed by Howkins (2007) to analyze their creative entrepreneurship characteristics. This concept could be compared with essential entrepreneurial skills (Bujor & Avasilcai, 2015), it is also a basic personality set that every creative entrepreneurs should have (Suwala, 2015). The conceptual framework was principally defined by this key concept, the entrepreneurs' background data, at the same time, would highlight the creative entrepreneurial attributes (Figure 1). To determine the relative priority of characteristics, a sorting method was also applied to allow the participants to self-assess their distinctive characteristics. For the self-assessment form, they were asked to rank each characteristic in priority order in term of which characteristic stood out the most (from 1 to 11) and clarified more about such characteristics. Each characteristic was later scored by 10-point scale (from 0 to 10: 1=10, 2=9, 3=8, ..., 11=0) and sum up to summarize the overall characteristics of the samples.

The collected data was recorded, transcribed, and coded. The background data was triangulated with information on the companies' background and activities on the internet (Werthes, Mauer & Brettel, 2016). While the characteristic sorting was verified for reliability by a thorough review of the interviews. The individual entrepreneur's explicit statements were analyzed.

The analysis followed the principles of Analytic Induction to synthesize, interpret, and analyzed the data based on the theoretical concepts used in the research: the creative entrepreneurship characteristics. The materials were subsequently transcribed and edited into Descriptive Narration style.

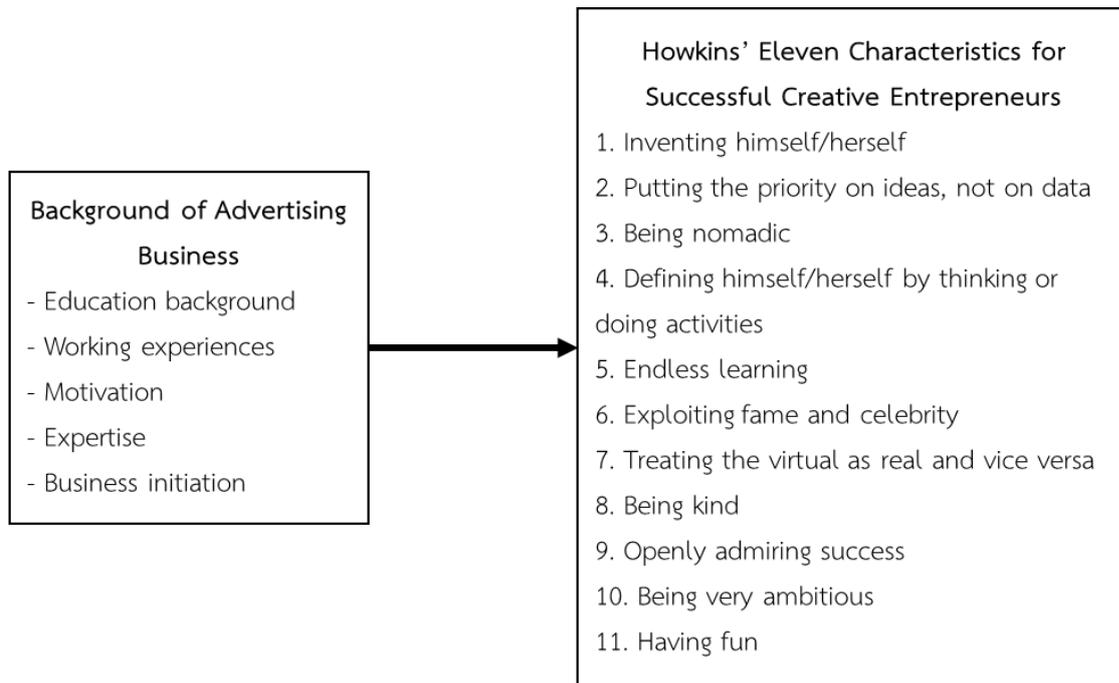


Figure 1 Conceptual framework (Researcher, 2023)

Results

The study explored background of advertising business and identified creative entrepreneurship characteristics of advertising business entrepreneurs in Chiang Mai Province, Thailand. The findings were divided into two parts and presented in order from the oldest to the most recent company. To emphasize meaningful information, illustrative quotes of the entrepreneurs were provided.

Background of the company

Results indicated that advertising businesses in Chiang Mai Province provided both advertising and non-advertising services. They specialized in local popular advertising media such as billboard, radio, and marketing events. Most of entrepreneurs had educational backgrounds and working experience related to mass communications, marketing, and business administration. Their motivation and business initiation, however, were different (Table 1).

Table 1 Background of advertising business entrepreneurs

Entrepreneur	Year of Est.	Expertise	Education background	Working experience	Motivation	Business initiation
Simon	1985	Billboard producing/ space rental for outdoor ads	Vocational Certificate in Automotive Mechanic	Sawmill worker Draftman Signage art maker	Being hired to design and create signage art	Producing and installing hand-drawn artistic billboards
Kathie	1992	Radio station management/ advertising media planning/ sound recording/ marketing event management	Studied in Journalism and Public Relations	Apprentice at a radio station Copywriter Radio program host	Having passion for being a DJ	Hosting radio program all by herself including seeking for new clients
Penny	2000	Radio program production/ radio advertising planning/ PR consulting/ live streaming	Studied in Communication Arts	PR officer apprentice First prize DJ Junior contest (Northern)	Being banned to host radio program by the competition organizer	Hosting radio program in open area at a shopping mall
Anna	2002	Special event organizing/ light and sound management/ technical equipment providing	Studied in Marketing	Working with national event organizer	Perceiving opportunity of MARCOM business	Coordinating with clients and doing creative works all by herself
Natasha	2004	Radio advertising planning and programming/ special events planning	Studied in Economics, minoring in Mass Communication	Working as a part-time radio host while studying 10 years of working as full-time DJ	Running export business along with advertising business as a secondary business	Buying air-time from an autonomous radio station to host radio programs
Charlie	2004	Marketing events organizing/ sale promotion management	Studied in Communication Arts	Working with event organizer company	Being persuaded by friends	Using personal connections to attract clients from the former company
Adrian	2012	Special events planning/ PR planning/ contest organizing	Studied in Business and Management, Communication Arts, and Development Administration	Modeling agency Beauty contest organizer 10 years of working as marketing activities manager	Being eager in organizing creative activities	Seeking jobs through the government's procurement and bidding system

Entrepreneur	Year of Est.	Expertise	Education background	Working experience	Motivation	Business initiation
Sunny	2012	Marketing events and exhibitions organizing/ advertising and public relations planning	Studied in Communication Arts	Journalism internship at entertainment company 6 years working as assistant and A.E. in event organizer company	Desiring to run the own boutique organizer	Using personal connections to attract clients and being supported by seniors in the industry

Simon appeared to be the only one who had neither educational background nor working experience directly related to advertising. Relying massively on the artistic skills, he created fascinated hand-drawn billboards using simple equipment. Whereas Kathie, Penny, and Natasha took advantage of the skills gained from their studies to host radio program. Anna, Charlie, Adrian, and Sunny discovered their passions through creative works:

Simon: Starting with just a can of paint, I did artworks. Once the sign was done at the shop, the staff installed it at the site.

Kathie: For years of working at radio station, I decided to buy air-time and manage the entire program by myself. At the beginning, there were only three persons; one coordinated with clients, another was at the office, and I was a radio host and also seek for new clients.

Penny: Even though I won the first prize of the North in DJ Junior Contest, I was rejected to host its radio program because of my unique personality with high self-confidence. That cruel disappointment inspired me to dare to do something different.

Natasha: After being full-time DJ for nine years, I realized that it's time for me to operate radio program all by myself. I made a big decision to buy air-time from an autonomous radio station.

Anna: With the fact that I was involved in event organizer business for a long time, I perceived the opportunity of marketing communication business in Chiang Mai Province while at that time there was no company that provided this kind of services.

Charlie: After graduating, I got a job in a wonderful event organizer. It made me felt alive and I really enjoyed it. When one of my friend persuaded me to run the business, I didn't hesitate at all.

Adrian: It started when I was in university, I loved creative works. Working on various types of contests made me realized my potential in this field.

Sunny: Studying, doing internships, and working, all these gave me experiences in the event organizer. I was so fascinated. When the opportunity came, I started my own business.

These statements revealed the motivation for starting the advertising business of the eight entrepreneurs. Although most of them graduated in related fields, relevant experience played a vital role in incubating the motivation for business initiatives.

Creative Entrepreneurship Characteristics

Eight entrepreneurs were asked to assess their characteristics as creative entrepreneurs. The characteristics were sorted in order of the most outstanding features to the least (1-11) (Table 2). Each characteristic was scored by 10-point scale, the first-ranked got the highest score in descending order of the lowest score (10-0). Mean score of creative entrepreneurship characteristics were shown in Table 3.

Table 2 Creative entrepreneurship characteristics: Participants' self-assessment

Entrepreneur/ Characteristics	Simon	Kathie	Penny	Anna	Natasha	Charlie	Adrian	Sunny
1. Inventing himself/herself	1	1	1	6	1	5	1	1
2. Putting the priority on ideas, not on data	7	9	5	8	7	9	7	6
3. Being nomadic	10	10	10	10	4	10	3	9
4. Defining himself/herself by thinking or doing activities	4	2	2	5	6	8	4	5
5. Endless learning	2	4	7	1	2	1	5	2
6. Exploiting fame and celebrity	5	3	3	7	3	2	2	10
7. Treating the virtual as real and vice versa	11	11	11	11	8	11	11	11
8. Being kind	6	5	9	2	11	6	10	8
9. Openly admiring success	8	8	8	4	10	7	6	7
10. Being very ambitious	3	7	4	9	9	4	8	3
11. Having fun	9	6	6	3	5	3	9	4

Table 3 Creative entrepreneurship characteristic mean score

Creative Entrepreneurship Characteristics	Mean Score
Inventing himself/herself	7.10
Endless learning	6.40
Exploiting fame and celebrity	5.30
Defining himself/herself by thinking or doing activities	5.20
Having fun	4.30
Being very ambitious	4.10
Being kind	3.10
Putting the priority on ideas, not on data	3.00
Openly admiring success,	3.00
Being nomadic	2.20
Treating the virtual as real and vice versa	0.30

The top three characteristics with the highest averages were: inventing himself/herself, endless learning, and exploiting fame and celebrity. Six out of eight: Simon, Kathie, Penny, Natasha, Adrian, and Sunny listed the first as their most outstanding characteristic. While Anna and Charlie considered the most remarkable attribute to be their ability to learn endlessly. Exploiting fame and celebrity was one of the excellent feature found in the samples; they rated it as their top distinguished characteristic:

Adrian: My company would be the first choice if clients want to organize a contest or various traditional events because of the outstanding and recognizable performances.

Charlie: Regular clients still trust my company on a regular basis and have recommend to others. Most clients, 90 percent, choose my company because of me, myself, I am well-known in event organizer.

Kathie: Most of our clients are agencies from Bangkok which we have been working for more than twenty years, while in the local, some clients rely on my own connection, some know us through our radio programs. The company's reputation have also made the DJs popular which have brought in new clients.

It was worth noting that the characteristics at the end of the table were those that the majority considered to be less prominent. According to Howkins (2007), treating the virtual as real and vice versa is a practice of balancing cyberspace with humanity and truth; the latter two should be more importance. It might not be so obvious among advertising business entrepreneurs who must regularly keep up with changes in communication technology.

Simon: I had to deal with the drastic changes when the popularity of hand-drawn artistic billboards had shifted to modern large-format printed advertisement. I am early-adopter, so I have an advantage over competitors.

Penny: Changes in communications technology have had a profound effect on our business; I have to keep up. My company, which focuses mainly on radio programs, has to embrace modern technology such as live streaming.

As for the other two less notable features: putting the priority on ideas, not on data and openly admiring success, it might be because their work involved creating intangible products; concerning in protecting intellectual property was therefore low. For praising their success openly, they rarely showed it. On the other hand, they often demonstrated their humility and enthusiastic.

However, there were distinctive characteristics by which each of entrepreneur evaluated himself/herself differently from others. In the case of Anna, kindness was her second most exceptional attribute. She placed great emphasis on building relationships within the team. Even though some of them started their own company, pragmatically a competitor, she was still willing to give advice and work with them wholeheartedly. Adrian and Natasha considered their top characteristic to be nomadic. Adrian loved socializing yet, at the same time, liked living in solitude. When he created some new idea, he needed to spend time thinking alone then shared with his colleagues. Similarly, Natasha was responsible for all management and operation of the company, like marketing, pitching, dealing with clients, planning and implementing. Most of her work would be done through the internet and telephone so she could be anywhere. While Simon and Sunny ranked being very ambitious as their third terrific trait. As mentioned above, Simon, who had never studied or had any experience in the advertising industry, was able to build a successful local advertising business, from a small hand-drawn billboard maker to a distinguished outdoor media and space rental service company. For Sunny, a fantastic young blood entrepreneur, although he had credibility issues at the start because of his childish personality, his commitment and hardworking had been reflected through superior quality and success of the performances which satisfied bossy clients.

Discussions

1. The advertising business in Chiang Mai Province were established around 1985, they had mainly produced advertisements according to clients' orders, especially for radio broadcasting, outdoor sign and special events. At the present, they offer both advertising and non-advertising services, such as public relations, event marketing, video production, exhibition, and marketing promotion (Baengthit, 2018; Prommee, 2003; Tanratanakul, 2007). Most of the founders had graduated in communication arts, mass communication, marketing, or business administration with working experiences in this field, while one of them relied solely on the craftsmanship to initiate business. However, they were motivated to start their own businesses by both internal factors such as personalities, preferences, passions as well as external factors such as business opportunities and market gaps (Chapain et al., 2018). The advertising business entrepreneurs were consequently influenced by sociocultural factors and changes in communication technology (Patten, 2016).

2. The discussion with the advertising business entrepreneurs, definitely, each of them exposed distinctive creative entrepreneurship characteristics of Howkins (2007); it depended upon what they had experienced and how they interacted with the surroundings. The self-assessment of eight entrepreneurs also clearly revealed their most excellent characteristics respectively: inventing himself/herself, endless learning, exploiting fame and celebrity, defining himself/herself by thinking or doing activities, having fun, being very ambitious, being kind, putting the priority on ideas, not on data, openly admiring success, being nomadic, and treating the virtual as real and vice versa. According to Howkins' eleven characteristics for successful creative entrepreneurs, it appeared that "creative identity" was emphasized more than "entrepreneurial identity". The first was emphasized by most characteristics while the latter was explained by only one attribute, putting the priority on ideas, not on data.

The results of this study were compatible with the findings of Werthes, Mauer, and Brettel (2018) which indicated that cultural and creative entrepreneurs initiated an entrepreneurial identity and comprised their cultural and creative identity into that entrepreneurial identity while self-reflection played important role in the improvement. In addition, creative businesses have demonstrated their abilities to adapt to social and technological advancement, intense competition, and uncertain relationship with stakeholders. For this reason, the creative entrepreneurs need to have some distinguished characteristics that are different from traditional entrepreneurs. This was consistent with Patten (2016) who indicated that creative industry entrepreneurs were not following the typical entrepreneurial path yet they had balanced the need for creative expression and profitability. Nevertheless, the comparative analysis between eleven essential entrepreneurial skills and eleven rules for successful creative entrepreneurs additionally revealed that many characteristics were found to be similar except being nomadic and having fun. It could be said that the creative entrepreneurs should have such characteristics because their jobs involved the pursuit of fresh ideas and having fun at the same time (Bujor & Avasilcai, 2016).

Nonetheless, there were five attributes that were assessed as being less prominent: treating the virtual as real and vice versa, being nomadic, openly admiring success, putting the priority on ideas, not on data, and being kind. The first one involves linking cyberspace and virtual world to everyday life but humanity and truth should be more important. Amidst the changing trends in the economy, society, and technology, the entrepreneurs tended to pursue modern technology to gain a competitive advantage. The second one relates to sociability and

solitude, and also included the ability to enjoy working in any location. Because Chiang Mai is a creative city (UNDP, 2013) which facilities are well-equipped and demand of the advertising business is quite high, the entrepreneurs therefore have an advantage in terms of their workplace. The third characteristic comprehend learning from both successes and failures. In one way, the entrepreneurs thought that they should not be fixated on success, on the contrary, they should be more curious about failure, of course, it is similar to ability to learn endlessly. In other way, most of them projected themselves as budding entrepreneurs because they needed to improve their skills and abilities to keep up with the changes. The fourth one focuses on intellectual capital; patents, copyright, trademarks, and other intellectual property protection were not mentioned. According to Pholphirul (2012), it was found that Thai small and medium enterprises were not yet aware of the benefits of registering intellectual property; it is not worth the extra cost. The last one describes kindness and gentleness; it leads to networking opportunities. It was found in a few entrepreneur who had worked together before.

Although Howkins (2007) did not specify exactly which characteristics were the most important characteristic, it could be inferred that he placed special emphasis on the creation of the identity of the creative person because it would actively remain in a person while entrepreneurial characteristics could be improved later. Werthes et al. (2018) concluded that cultural and creative industry entrepreneurs were able to develop an entrepreneurial identity, which allowed them to act entrepreneurially and to stand up for their values, through support training programs.

Conclusion and suggestions

This study explored background of advertising business entrepreneurs in Chiang Mai Province, Thailand and clarified their creative entrepreneurship characteristics. It was based on qualitative research methodology. In-depth interviewing and entrepreneurs' self-assessment were adopted for data collection to draw out individual experiences, aspects and creative characteristics of entrepreneurs in advertising business. Howkins' concept of eleven characteristics for successful creative entrepreneurs was used to scrutinize creative entrepreneurship characteristics. The finding showed that the advertising business in Chiang Mai Province was established around 1985. They mainly focused on the production of advertising media on radio broadcasting, outdoor signs and special events. At the present, they adaptively provide both advertising and non-advertising services, corresponding with changes in communication technology and the needs of local advertisers. The findings also revealed that the entrepreneurs were motivated to start their own advertising business by both internal and external factors. It indicated that education background, working experience, and awareness of business opportunities played a vital role in business initiation. In addition, these elements contributed a great influence on cultivating creative entrepreneurship characteristics. The most noticeable characteristic found in this study, inventing himself/herself, lead to the implication that entrepreneurs highly engaged in creating their own identity; it was considered an origin for the development of subsequent attributes. The "creative entrepreneurship" characteristics should be more evidently developed, especially recognizing the value of intellectual property. They should understand patents, copyright, trademarks and intellectual property laws to protect their ideas which add value to the business. Above all, they should balance creative achievement and business opportunity exploitation because they are the foremost competence of a creative entrepreneur (Bujor & Avasilcai; Chen et al., 2018; Henry, 2007).

This study generates understanding of individual within local advertising business, a small fraction of creative industry, which is the basis for adopting a social constructionist aspect of entrepreneurship (Patten, 2016). However, there are some limitations in this study, which point to some directions for further research. Firstly, the sample size for the study is small, increasing the number of samples will draw more definitive conclusions. Secondly, although the self-assessment sorting method of entrepreneurs in this study reveals their most prominent characteristics, explaining each attribute in short sentence will help them understand each one better. Thirdly, the study mainly emphasized on creative entrepreneurship characteristic which filled the gap on individual lives. Further research would ideally include their interactions with stakeholders, it would be possible to understand them more deeply. Fourthly, Howkin's concept of creative entrepreneurship characteristic strongly affirmed “creative identity”, the concept of entrepreneurship characteristics should be assembly utilized to evidently uncover their “entrepreneurial potential”. Lastly, this study was conducted in Chiang Mai Province where the advertising business had a relatively high locality. Due to the differences of background and experiences may lead to impressive findings, therefore, future research is regarded to determine others in Bangkok, the advertising business center of Thailand, for verifying the consensus of the conclusion.

New knowledge and the effects on society and communities

The current study provides practical knowledge of the characteristics of creative entrepreneurs. It will be useful to other entrepreneurs to take advantage of this study as a guide to self-assessment to refine defective characteristics. It may also inspire a new generation of entrepreneurs who wish to initiate their own boutique advertising business. Educationally, it can be discussed as a case study in entrepreneurship of advertising business classes. Furthermore, Creative Economy Agency can design support programs to develop the potential of advertising business entrepreneurs, especially digital technology literacy both using in operations and providing digital media services. Raising awareness of the importance and management of intellectual property should be provided. Cultivating both “creative” and “entrepreneurial” identity among youth should be additionally included in the plan. Expanding domestic markets, by encouraging small and medium local enterprises to realize the importance of advertising and marketing communication, will increase demand for advertising business services as well.

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