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An Analysis of Social, Cultural, and Community Management Factors Contributing to the Success of the Tai Phuan Community Learning Center in Ban Klang, Loei Province, Thailand

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Abstract

This study examines the social, cultural, and community management factors contributing to the success of the Tai Phuan community learning center in Ban Klang, Pak Tom Subdistrict, Chiang Khan District, Loei Province, Thailand. Adopting a qualitative research design, the study employed purposive sampling to recruit twelve key informants comprising community leaders, representatives of educational institutions, and community members with relevant knowledge and experience. Data were collected through documentary research, in-depth interviews, field surveys, and observation. SWOT analysis, supported by schematic mapping, was used to examine internal conditions and external influences on the center's development. The findings were subsequently discussed with community members and local leaders in small groups to support contextual interpretation and identify development priorities.

The findings identified six internal dimensions: organizational structure and administration, community leadership, human resources, financial resources, physical facilities and learning spaces, and community participation. Community members' cultural knowledge and active involvement emerged as central strengths, while limited financial resources constituted the principal internal constraint. Social relationships, trust, and collective decision-making supported coordination and shared ownership, whereas Tai Phuan language, traditions, beliefs, and local wisdom provided the cultural foundation for learning and intergenerational knowledge transmission. External support from educational institutions and expert practitioners complemented these capacities through academic guidance, knowledge management, and access to collaborative networks. Although no significant external threats were identified within the scope of the study, the findings underscored the importance of adaptive planning and continued resource support. Taken together, these findings suggest that the center's development depends on the interaction of social capital, cultural capital, and participatory management, with external partnerships strengthening the community's capacity to organize and transmit local knowledge. The study therefore recommends reinforcing participatory governance, developing local leadership, and sustaining community–academic partnerships to support the continuity of culturally grounded learning.

Keywords: Community learning resources, Tai Phuan people, Supporting factors, Community development

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Introduction

Community learning centers provide an important setting for connecting lifelong learning with community development. Their value lies in enabling local people to participate in identifying learning needs, organizing activities, and managing knowledge relevant to their everyday lives. However, establishing a center does not automatically ensure meaningful participation or sustained community ownership. In Cambodia, Neak and Charungkaittikul (2023) found that existing community participation in learning centers was moderate, whereas the expressed need for participation was high. Their findings emphasize the importance of explicit goals and management guidelines that strengthen community involvement. This perspective is particularly relevant to ethnic community learning centers, where educational activities also involve decisions about which cultural knowledge should be preserved, who can transmit it, and how it can remain meaningful across generations.

For Tai Phuan communities, cultural continuity involves the ongoing adaptation of language, traditions, and everyday practices to changing social conditions. Karapan and Susuwan (2021) demonstrated that Phuan cultural practices vary across settlement contexts and are shaped by their surrounding social and environmental conditions. Their research provides an important understanding of ethnic identity as a dynamic process, rather than a fixed collection of inherited characteristics. It also suggests that the management of Tai Phuan learning centers requires attention to the local conditions under which cultural knowledge is maintained and transmitted. Consequently, findings from one Phuan community cannot be assumed to explain the organization of cultural learning in another without examining its particular historical and social context.

Ban Klang, located in Pak Tom Subdistrict, Chiang Khan District, Loei Province, offers a significant setting for examining these relationships. Its documented local history connects the community with migration from the Luang Prabang area and subsequent resettlement within Chiang Khan. Distinctive cultural characteristics include a local speech variety and a traditional house form known as ruean muk (Waenlo, 2024). The community also maintains the annual Bun Liang Ban ritual, which brings households together through practices associated with communal well-being, Buddhist merit-making, and remembrance of ancestors (Saenkham & Thongkhot, 2018). These characteristics give Ban Klang analytical significance: its cultural resources encompass language, built heritage, historical memory, and collective ritual practices. The community therefore provides an opportunity to investigate how different forms of living heritage become resources for organized learning and collective management.

Existing research has already established important foundations for understanding this setting. While Karapan and Susuwan (2021) examined broader patterns of Phuan cultural adaptation, Thongmeethip et al. (2025) directly investigated the management of learning resources in Ban Klang. The latter identified five mechanisms—social, cultural and spiritual, economic, educational, and technological—and five participatory stages: information sharing, consultation, joint decision-making, collective implementation, and continuous evaluation. Thus, previous research has already documented both the principal mechanisms and the forms of participation associated with local learning-resource management. The remaining research problem should therefore be framed more specifically than a general absence of studies on Tai Phuan community learning centers.

Building on these findings, the present study focuses on a more specific explanatory question: how do social relationships, cultural commitments, and community management practices interact to support the functioning of the Ban Klang learning center? Identifying mechanisms and participatory stages provides a foundation, but further analysis is needed to explain the conditions under which these elements reinforce one another. For example, the

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existence of shared traditions does not, by itself, explain how cultural attachment becomes sustained involvement in learning activities. Similarly, identifying community participation does not fully explain how leadership, coordination, and relationships with external organizations help maintain that participation. The contribution proposed here is therefore an integrated explanation of the relationships among these factors, grounded in the particular context of Ban Klang.

Accordingly, this study aims to analyze the social, cultural, and community management factors that support the Tai Phuan way-of-life community learning center in Ban Klang, Pak Tom Subdistrict, Chiang Khan District, Loei Province. It examines how these factors operate together in organizing learning, transmitting local knowledge, and sustaining community involvement. By connecting the community's distinctive cultural resources with the practices through which those resources are managed, the study seeks to extend existing knowledge from the identification of mechanisms toward an explanation of their operation. The resulting insights are intended to inform context-sensitive recommendations for ethnic community learning centers, with their relevance to other communities assessed in relation to comparable social, cultural, and organizational conditions.

Research Objectives

This research aims to analyze the factors that support and contribute to the success of the community learning center showcasing the Tai Phuan way of life in Ban Klang community, Pak Tom Subdistrict, Chiang Khan District, Loei Province.

Literature Review

Concepts and Theories of Social Capital

The concept of social capital has been widely employed in research on community development, community management, and area-based development, emphasizing the significance of social relationships, networks, trust, and shared norms that facilitate collective action within society. Putnam (2000) defines social capital as a set of features embedded in social relationships that enable coordination and cooperation for mutual benefit. In the community context, social capital is manifested through patterns of interpersonal relationships, social cohesion, mutual assistance, and participation in public activities, all of which constitute fundamental conditions that enable communities to manage resources and collective initiatives autonomously (World Bank, 2002). A high level of social capital contributes to the reduction of conflict, the enhancement of mutual trust, and the continuity and sustainability of community-driven activities.

With regard to community learning centers, the social capital framework suggests that success does not depend solely on physical resources or external support. Rather, it is grounded in the quality of relationships among community members, the presence of legitimate and trusted leadership, cooperation among community groups and organizations, and networks with external factors such as educational institutions, government agencies, and civil society organizations (Putnam, 2000). In the case of ethnic way-of-life community learning centers—such as the Tai Phuan Ban Klang Community—social capital plays a particularly crucial role, as the transmission of knowledge and culture relies primarily on trust, voluntarism, and active participation. When a community possesses strong social ties and systematic collective management, community learning centers are more likely to endure and develop sustainably.

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Concepts and Theories of Cultural Capital

Pierre Bourdieu's theory of cultural capital provides another important analytical framework for understanding the role of culture in social development processes. Bourdieu (1986) conceptualizes cultural capital as non-material resources, including knowledge, language, skills, values, beliefs, and cultural practices, which can be transmitted across generations and mobilized to create social value and status. Within the community context, cultural capital is reflected in ways of life, local wisdom, traditions, language, and ethnic identity, all of which form the foundational basis of community learning.

Nakabut (2015) emphasizes that community culture is not merely a form of social heritage but also a form of capital that can be strategically utilized for development across educational, economic, and cultural tourism dimensions. Consequently, the effective management of community learning centers requires the meaningful integration of cultural capital into both learning content and learning processes. This involves enabling community members to serve as primary knowledge holders and transmitters, drawing upon lived experience while contextualizing cultural knowledge within contemporary realities (UNESCO, 2017). The concept of cultural capital thus helps explain why ethnic community learning centers hold distinctive value as alternative learning spaces, differentiated from formal mainstream education systems.

In the case of the Tai Phuan Ban Klang Community, cultural capital—such as the Tai Phuan language, traditions, belief systems, and everyday practices—constitutes the core foundation of learning center management. The mobilization of these cultural resources in knowledge transmission fosters a strong sense of identity and pride, rendering the learning center deeply meaningful and relevant to community members.

Related Studies

Areekul (2023) conducted a study entitled Models for the Development of Cultural Learning Centers and Learning Networks: A Multi-Case Study and Participatory Action Research. The study aimed to examine processes of developing cultural learning centers within communities and the formation of collaborative learning networks. The findings indicate that the success of cultural learning centers is driven by key factors, including active community participation, strong and capable leadership, the use of cultural capital as the foundation of learning, and the establishment of networks with external organizations.

This research highlights that the sustainable development of community learning centers requires the integration of social capital and cultural capital alongside participatory community management. These findings are highly consistent with the case of the Tai Phuan way-of-life community learning center in Ban Klang, Loei Province. As such, this body of research provides a critical empirical foundation supporting the conceptual framework of the present study.

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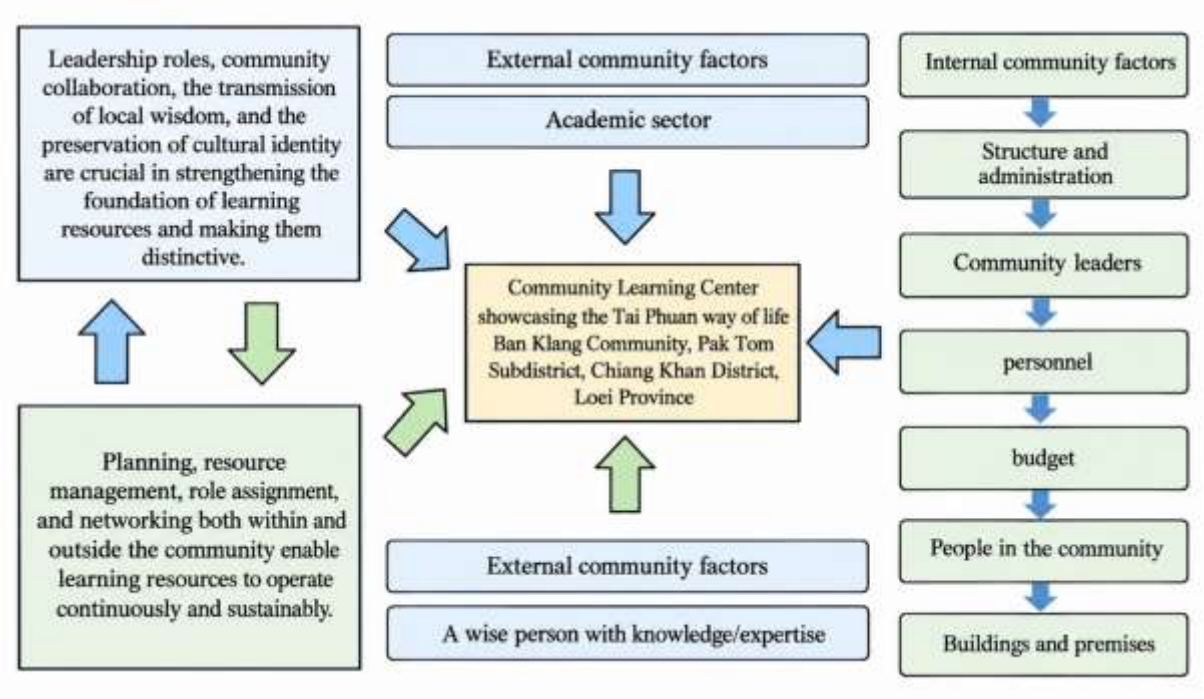


Figure 1 Research Framework (Source: Analysis by Dr. Kitisak Thongmeethip)

Conceptual Framework of the Research

The development of the Tai Phuan way-of-life community learning center necessitates an integrated analysis of key social, cultural, and community management dimensions, all of which contribute to the strength and sustainability of Ban Klang Community, Pak Tom Subdistrict, Chiang Khan District, Loei Province. From a social perspective, interpersonal relationships and social structures within the community facilitate collective learning processes. From a cultural perspective, elements such as community history, traditions, and local wisdom form the bedrock of Tai Phuan identity. From a community management perspective, factors including participation, resource management, and knowledge transmission systems function as critical mechanisms for sustaining and advancing the learning center.

These dimensions are interrelated and mutually reinforcing, collectively generating the conditions that underpin the success of the Tai Phuan Ban Klang Community Learning Center. To provide a clearer picture, the research framework can be summarized In Figure 1

Methodology

This research, "An Analysis of Social, Cultural, and Community Management Factors Contributing to the Success of the Tai Phuan Community Learning Center in Ban Klang, Loei Province, Thailand," aims to achieve its stated objectives. Therefore, this study employs a qualitative research method. This method seeks to find answers based on rational principles, addressing weaknesses in different approaches by reinforcing strengths. It has one or more objectives (Sarrattana, 2002; Prasithrathsint & Sukkasem, 2004), whether it be complementing the research, examining overlapping or differing aspects of the studied phenomena, initiating the search for unusual, contradictory, or novel perspectives, developing the research by applying the results from one stage to another, or expanding the scope of the research. The research design is a phenomenological research model. (Phenomenological Research) Primary data, primarily qualitative data, will be collected as the main method for the second phase of data collection, along with field data collection. In addition, documentary research will be used as secondary data for reference and literature review. The research methodology and procedures are defined as follows:

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Population

The population of this study consisted of residents of Moo 3 and Moo 8 in Ban Klang Community, Paktom Subdistrict, Chiang Khan District, Loei Province, Thailand. These communities represent a culturally distinctive Tai Phuan settlement with well-established community practices and local knowledge systems.

Key Informants

Key informants were selected using purposive sampling, with an emphasis on identifying information-rich cases (Patton, 2015). Informants were individuals with substantial experience, active involvement, and in-depth knowledge of Tai Phuan community life, cultural practices, and community learning processes. A total of 12 key informants were recruited from three major stakeholder groups: 1) community leaders, 2) representatives of educational institutions, and 3) community members. This selection strategy ensured data saturation while capturing diverse perspectives and enhancing analytical depth.

Research Instruments

This study employed a qualitative research design, integrating documentary research, in-depth interviews, and both participatory and non-participatory observation to comprehensively explore the context, conditions, and community management mechanisms of the Tai Phuan community learning center in Ban Klang.

Documentary research involved the systematic review and synthesis of primary and secondary sources to construct a foundational conceptual and contextual framework. In-depth interviews were conducted to elicit participants' perspectives, lived experiences, and participatory processes related to community leadership, cultural transmission, and learning management. Observational methods provided empirical insights into social interactions, everyday practices, and the operational dynamics of the community learning space.

To ensure methodological rigor, all research instruments were assessed for content validity by a panel of experts using the Index of Item–Objective Congruence (IOC) prior to field deployment.

Data Collection

Data collection aimed to identify and analyze factors contributing to the success of the Tai Phuan community-based learning center in Ban Klang Community. A triangulated data collection strategy was employed through three complementary methods:

In-depth interviews (structured questions) were used to obtain detailed and systematic information on leadership roles, participatory mechanisms, management structures, belief systems, cultural practices, and forms of social capital supporting the development of the learning center. The interviews emphasized causal explanations across social, cultural, and organizational dimensions.

Field surveys were conducted to examine the physical environment, spatial organization, community resources, and patterns of learning space utilization. This method served to validate supporting factors such as infrastructure readiness, accessibility of learning areas, and the extent of community participation in learning activities.

Non-participatory observation was employed to document naturally occurring behaviors and processes within the community, including social interactions, daily routines, knowledge transmission practices, and activity arrangements within the learning center. This approach enabled the researcher to capture dynamic success factors without interfering with the authentic community context.

The integration of these three methods enhanced data credibility, methodological triangulation, and analytical robustness.

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Data Analysis

Data were analyzed using the SWOT Analysis framework in combination with visual schematic mapping. This analytical approach facilitated the identification of community strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and constraints, as well as development needs and latent capacities. The analyzed findings were subsequently reflected back to community members and local leaders through small-group discussions. This participatory feedback process promoted shared understanding, collective reflection, joint planning, and collaborative decision-making, ultimately supporting the concrete and sustainable development of the community-based learning center.

Results

Factors Contributing to the Success of the Tai Phuan Community-Based Learning Center. The study on success factors of the Tai Phuan community-based learning center in Ban Klang Community, Paktom Subdistrict, Chiang Khan District, Loei Province, was conducted through extensive fieldwork in which the researcher adopted an immersive role comparable to that of a community member. In-depth interviews served as the primary data collection method, engaging community leaders, representatives from educational institutions, Tai Phuan cultural groups, and general community members. This approach enabled the researcher to access diverse perspectives, rationales, and lived experiences that reflect the underlying factors contributing to the success of the learning center.

Based on the analysis of field data, the researcher identified key factors influencing the success of the learning center, which were systematically categorized into internal community factors and external community factors. This analytical framework provides a comprehensive explanation of the learning center's institutional strength, cultural vitality, and developmental sustainability.

Internal Community Factors

Internal factors supporting the success of the Tai Phuan community-based learning center in Ban Klang Community can be classified into six major dimensions as follows:

1) Structural and Administrative Factors

Effective organizational structures and administrative mechanisms were evident, including short-term and long-term planning, systematic monitoring and evaluation processes, efficient communication and public relations, and a committee-based management model composed of community members. These elements collectively ensured strategic direction, operational coherence, and sustained institutional support. In an in-depth interview, Ms. Sorarat Kaewsa (Phai), the village head of Village No. 3, Ban Klang community, stated:

"Planning and management are extremely important. If our village, the Tai Phuan people, are efficient in their management, it will lead to the operation of our learning center, attracting interest and confidence from visitors, and ultimately achieving success."

2) Community Leadership Factors

Community leaders played a pivotal role in initiating and advancing the establishment of the learning center. Their active participation in community activities and their function as coordinators across multiple stakeholders fostered collective momentum and facilitated collaborative action toward shared developmental goals. In an interview with Mr. Thanusilp Inda (Kamnan Suea), the village headman of Moo 3, Ban Klang community, a key figure in developing the livelihoods of the Tai Phuan ethnic group in Ban Klang, he stated:

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"First and foremost, we must prioritize and recognize the benefits of developing this learning center. I see several important aspects, one of which is that this center will help preserve knowledge about the Tai Phuan ethnic group for those interested. Furthermore, this comprehensive learning center will contribute to improving the quality of life for people in the Ban Klang community. This initiative, resulting from good coordination from all sectors, makes me very confident in the success of establishing this learning center."

3) Human Resource Factors

Based on fieldwork and interviews with elderly Tai Phuan ethnic group members, including Khun Sai Damphim, the researchers discussed the personnel factors contributing to the success of the learning center. He stated:

"Since the learning center is a novel concept currently emerging in our community, I believe its success depends on the individuals involved in its operation. They must possess a level of knowledge about Tai Phuan culture and way of life that they can effectively share with visitors and those seeking advice. This will demonstrate its true potential as a learning center. Furthermore, coordination and collaboration among various sectors are crucial to motivating the learning center. Simply put, this learning center cannot succeed without the support of coordinated efforts from all sectors to contribute ideas, implementation, and development."

Which is consistent with Personnel within the learning center possessed substantial knowledge of Tai Phuan culture, which enabled accurate, credible, and meaningful knowledge transmission. This capacity contributed to the preservation, continuity, and intergenerational transmission of local wisdom, thereby strengthening the learning content and its cultural legitimacy.

4) Financial Factors

Although financial resources constituted a significant constraint, the community adopted adaptive financial management strategies, including community-based fundraising, support from government agencies, and income generation through the sale of community products. These approaches enhanced financial resilience and supported the continuous operation of the learning center.

An in-depth interview with Mr. Thanusilp Inda, the village headman of Village No. 3, Ban Klang community, revealed the following:

“Regarding funding for the operation of the community learning center showcasing the Tai Phuan way of life in Ban Klang community, Pak Tom Subdistrict, Chiang Khan District, Loei Province, it's quite difficult to find assistance from any organization. Therefore, we believe that in the future we will need to sell some kind of product to generate income for the development of the learning center.”

5) Physical Facilities and Spatial Factors

The learning spaces, such as traditional Tai Phuan wooden houses and communal activity areas, were culturally appropriate and effectively reflected local identity. These spaces facilitated experiential learning activities and served as culturally meaningful venues that enhanced both educational value and visitor engagement.

6) Community Participation Factors

Community members demonstrated a high level of participation through engagement in activities, collaborative planning, and resource contribution. This collective involvement fostered a strong sense of ownership, which constitutes a core foundation for the sustainable development and long-term viability of the learning center.

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In-depth interviews were conducted with Yai Noonin, a member of the general public in Ban Klang community, regarding the factors supporting and contributing to the success of the Tai Phuan way of life learning center in Ban Klang, Pak Tom Subdistrict, Chiang Khan District, Loei Province. She stated:

"I believe that the key factor supporting and contributing to the success of the learning center is that all of us who contribute to its construction must possess accurate knowledge of traditional wisdom management. This is a very important factor."

External Community Factors

1) Educational Institution Support

Ban Klang Community received substantial academic and technical support from educational institutions, which contributed to strengthening the management of local wisdom and cultural resources. This support provided clear direction and systematic guidance for the development of the learning center. In particular, Loei Rajabhat University played a significant role in collaborative planning, coordination, and facilitation of participatory processes within the community. An in-depth interview with Assistant Professor Dr. Wich Maliton revealed that:

"Success emerges from the collaboration of all stakeholders—universities, community leaders, and community members—through shared thinking, collective action, and joint development of the learning center."

This perspective underscores the critical role of academic support as a key enabling condition for the learning center's coherence, effectiveness, and sustainability.

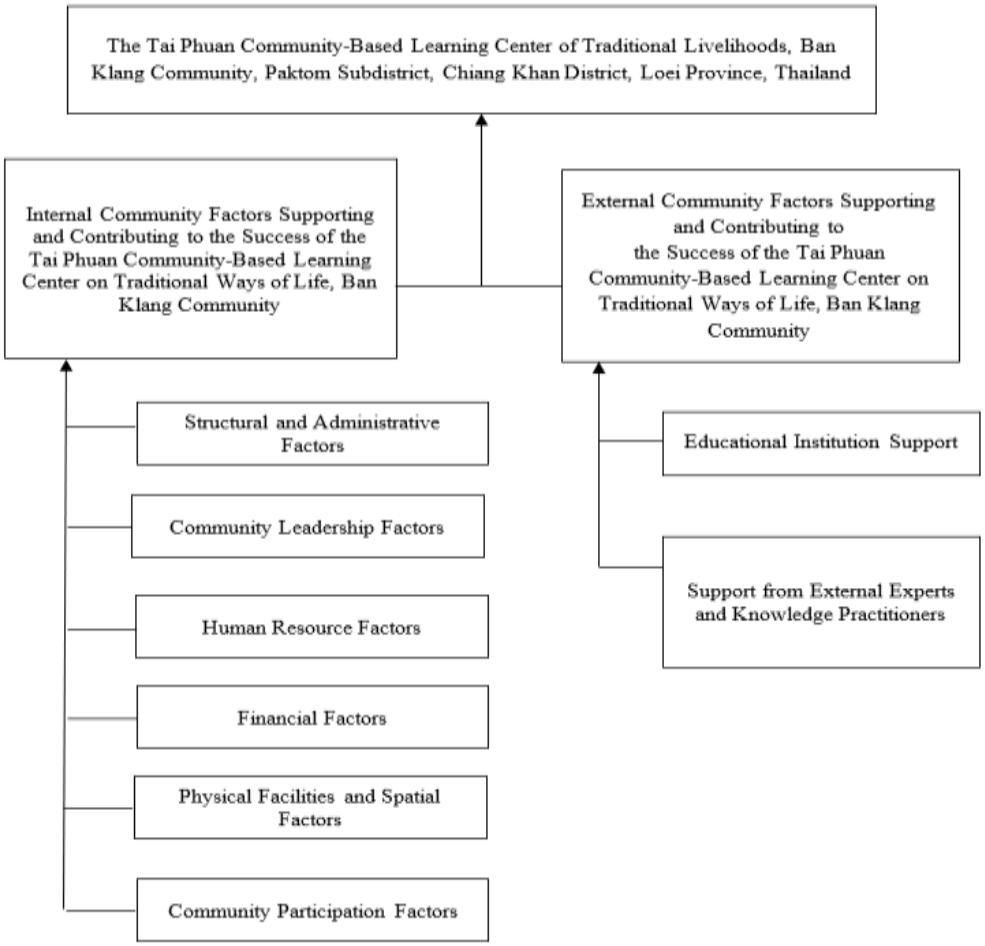


Figure 2 Factors Supporting and Contributing to the Success of the Tai Phuan Community-Based Learning Center, Ban Klang Community (Source: Analysis by Dr. Kitisak Thongmeethip)

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2) Support from External Experts and Knowledge Practitioners

External agencies and expert practitioners contributed significantly to the development of the Tai Phuan learning center across multiple dimensions, including:

2.1) knowledge transfer, academic consultation, and support for translating local wisdom into forms compatible with contemporary contexts;

2.2) systematic development of the learning center's structure through knowledge management processes, database development, and the production of modern learning media;

2.3) networking and resource linkage among communities, government agencies, and private sectors to support development initiatives such as cultural tourism; and

2.4) promotion of lifelong learning through training programs, vocational skill development, and the integration of local wisdom with innovation.

These external contributions reinforced the learning center's institutional stability and enhanced its capacity for sustainable development over the long term. To clearly illustrate the interrelated internal and external factors that support and contribute to the success of the Tai Phuan community-based learning center in Ban Klang Community, Paktom Subdistrict, Chiang Khan District, Loei Province, the findings are synthesized and presented in the schematic diagram below.

3) SWOT-Based Prioritization of Success Factors

Nevertheless, the researchers prioritized the factors that supported and contributed to the success of the Tai Phuan lifestyle community learning center in Ban Klang community, Pak Tom sub-district, Chiang Khan district, Loei province, using SWOT analysis. SWOT analysis, or environmental and potential analysis, is a tool for evaluating the situation for various activities, helping to identify strengths and weaknesses from the internal environment, see opportunities and threats from the external environment, and assess the impact on all types of development activities.

Strengths

The identified strengths comprised structural and administrative factors, community leadership, human resources, community participation, and physical facilities. These factors were considered highly significant, representing key advantages derived from the internal community context. The strengths reflected the favorable internal environment of Ban Klang Community, characterized by a committed management team, proactive community leaders, and strong community engagement. Collectively, these internal assets contributed to the effective operation and advancement of the Tai Phuan community-based learning center in a systematic and goal-oriented manner.

Weaknesses

The principal weakness identified was the financial factor, which constituted the most prominent limitation affecting the operation of the Tai Phuan community-based learning center in Ban Klang Community. This disadvantage stemmed from internal community conditions. However, through joint analysis conducted by the researcher in collaboration with community members, it was found that financial constraints did not critically impede daily operations. Nevertheless, external financial support from relevant agencies would significantly enhance operational liquidity and strengthen the overall sustainability of the learning center.

Opportunities

Opportunities primarily derived from external factors, particularly support from educational institutions and expert knowledge practitioners affiliated with external support agencies. These opportunities were considered to be as significant as internal strengths, as they arose from the external environment surrounding the Tai Phuan community-based learning

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center and directly facilitated community development initiatives. Unlike strengths, which are rooted in internal conditions, opportunities emerge from the broader external context. The findings indicated that effective management teams and community leaders must continuously seek and capitalize on such opportunities by systematically monitoring changes in the external environment, including economic, social, political, and technological dynamics, and strategically leveraging these conditions for development.

Threats

With regard to threats, the researcher found that neither the community nor the research process identified significant external constraints that adversely affected the operation of the Tai Phuan community-based learning center in Ban Klang Community. Nonetheless, the management team of the learning center is required to continuously adapt its operational strategies to ensure contextual alignment and to proactively plan preventive measures to mitigate potential threats that may arise in the future.

Analytical Synthesis

To enhance clarity in illustrating the factors supporting and contributing to the success of the Tai Phuan community-based learning center on traditional ways of life in Ban Klang Community, Paktom Subdistrict, Chiang Khan District, Loei Province, the researcher presents a synthesized schematic diagram below.

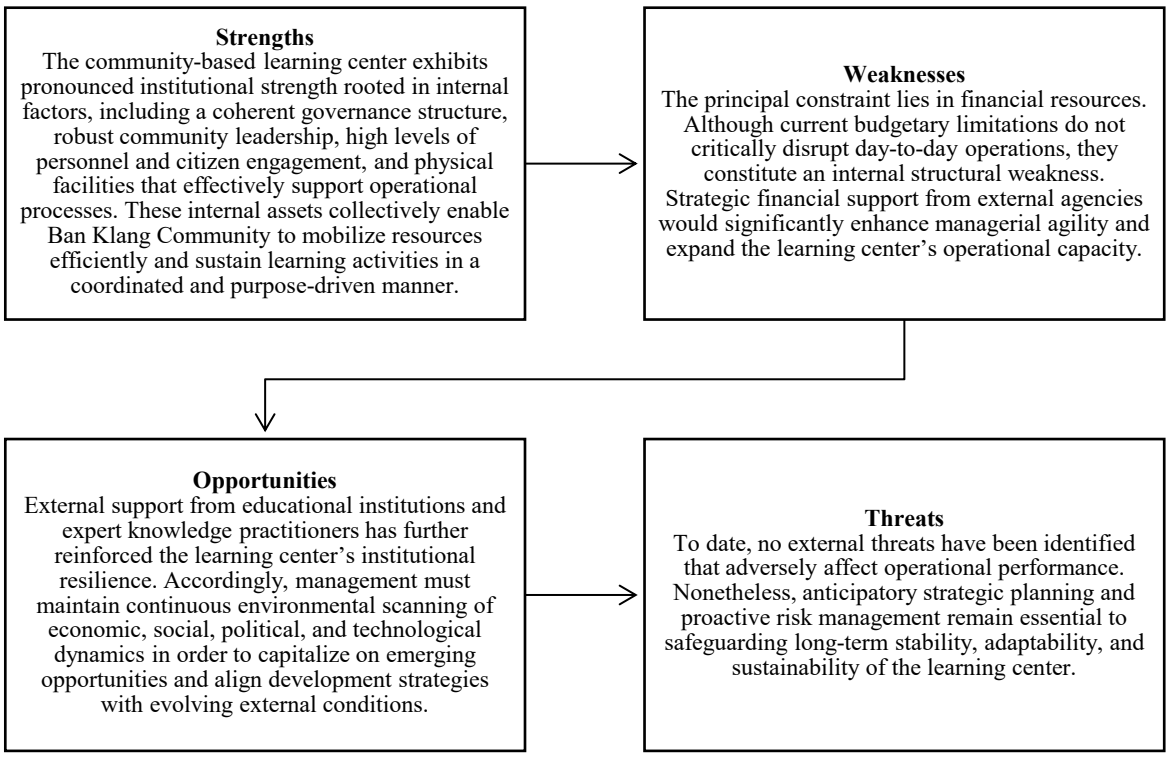


Figure 3 SWOT Analysis of Factors Contributing to the Success of Learning Resources (Source: Analysis by Dr. Kitisak Thongmeethip)

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Discussions

Based on extensive fieldwork examining the factors contributing to the success of the Tai Phuan community-based learning center on traditional ways of life in Ban Klang Community, Paktom Subdistrict, Chiang Khan District, Loei Province, the findings indicate that the most critical internal factors are community members and participation. Community members demonstrate strong collective organization and multidimensional interactions across occupational, economic, social, and recreational domains, reflecting a high level of community cohesion and resilience. Moreover, active participation by both community members and relevant organizations fosters pride, a sense of ownership, and collective agency, which function as key driving forces sustaining the long-term development of the learning center.

External factors primarily include support from educational institutions and expert knowledge practitioners, which significantly facilitate the development of knowledge management. This process encompasses the systematic collection, creation, organization, exchange, and application of knowledge within the learning center, thereby transforming raw information into meaningful knowledge accessible to diverse target groups. Effective knowledge management, however, requires appropriate resource allocation and strong coordination between the community and supporting agencies—conditions that are essential for ensuring the sustainable success of the Tai Phuan community-based learning center in Ban Klang Community.

Content analysis of field data further reveals that the success of the learning center results from the integration of social, cultural, and participatory community management factors. Rather than relying solely on formal structures or physical resources, the learning center is sustained through continuous and systematic collaborative processes embedded within the community's social fabric. The findings highlight the pivotal roles of community leadership, citizen participation, and inclusive management practices that enable community members to engage in collective decision-making. These mechanisms collectively generate trust, social cohesion, and a shared sense of ownership, aligning closely with Putnam's (2000) concept of social capital, which emphasizes social networks and relationships as foundational resources for effective collective action.

Furthermore, strong social capital has been shown to mitigate constraints related to limited financial and material resources, supporting the World Bank's (2002) assertion that communities endowed with high levels of social capital possess enhanced capacity for sustainable self-governance and resource management. From a cultural perspective, the analysis indicates that the Tai Phuan language, traditions, beliefs, lifestyles, and local wisdom are centrally integrated into both the content and processes of the learning center. Culture thus functions as a form of social resource that generates value and meaning, consistent with Bourdieu's (1986) concept of cultural capital.

The use of authentic community spaces—such as traditional wooden houses and communal activity areas—as experiential learning environments further connects past and present, reinforcing ethnic identity and cultural pride. This finding aligns with the perspectives of Nakabutr (2015) and UNESCO (2017), which emphasize the role of community culture as a foundation for learning and sustainable development. In comparison with related studies, the findings of this research are consistent with those of Areekul (2023), who similarly identified the success of cultural learning centers as stemming from the integration of community participation, strong leadership, the strategic use of cultural capital, and external network linkages—particularly the role of educational institutions in strengthening knowledge systems and management processes. Such partnerships reflect a development-oriented collaborative model that enhances the institutional robustness and long-term sustainability of community-based learning centers.

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Conclusion and suggestions

This qualitative study demonstrates that the success of the Tai Phuan community-based learning center in Ban Klang Community is primarily driven by the integration of social, cultural, and participatory processes rather than by physical infrastructure alone. Internal factors—particularly community members and their active participation—constitute the core foundation of sustainability. Strong leadership, inclusive management practices, and collective decision-making foster trust, social cohesion, and a shared sense of ownership, reflecting the critical role of social capital in sustaining collective action.

External support from educational institutions and expert knowledge practitioners significantly enhances the community's knowledge management capacity by facilitating the systematic creation, organization, and application of local knowledge. Cultural elements, including language, traditions, beliefs, and local wisdom, function as cultural capital that adds value, meaning, and identity to the learning center, while experiential learning spaces rooted in authentic community contexts reinforce cultural pride and intergenerational continuity.

Based on these findings, community-based learning centers should prioritize participatory governance, leadership development, and community ownership. Policymakers and educational institutions are encouraged to establish long-term collaborative partnerships that strengthen knowledge management and resource support. Future development strategies should emphasize adaptive planning and proactive risk management to ensure the long-term resilience and sustainability of community-based learning centers.

New knowledge and the effects on society and communities

This study provides new insight by demonstrating that the sustainability of community-based learning centers is fundamentally driven by social and cultural processes rather than physical infrastructure alone. The findings reveal that social capital, cultural capital, and participatory community management function as interconnected mechanisms that transform local culture into a dynamic and resilient learning system. Community members and their active participation emerge as the core drivers of knowledge creation, ownership, and continuity, while external academic support plays a critical role in strengthening community-based knowledge management through systematic organization, interpretation, and application of local wisdom.

At the societal and community levels, this model enhances social cohesion, trust, and collective identity, reinforcing community capacity for self-organization and long-term development. By embedding cultural practices and lived experiences into learning processes, community-based learning centers become inclusive platforms for lifelong learning, intergenerational knowledge transmission, and culturally grounded innovation. The study highlights the broader potential of community–academic partnerships to empower local actors, mitigate resource constraints, and promote sustainable development pathways rooted in community values and cultural identity.

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and local wisdom, and opening their community learning space. This was a crucial factor in enabling the research to proceed fully and achieve its objectives. The researcher sincerely hopes that the value and benefits derived from this research will serve as a guideline for the development of knowledge and sustainable community development in the future.

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