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Entrepreneurial and Customer Orientation Affect the Success and Sustainability of Firm Performance Through the Knowledge Creation Process

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study is to analyze the internal environment of Chinese enterprises in Thailand. Therefore, the research selects two dimensions of strategic orientation, knowledge creation process and firm performance as measurement criteria. We tested whether entrepreneurial orientation and customer orientation affect firm performance through the knowledge creation process. Research reveals new patterns of business performance success and sustainability through core factors. This study uses the structural equation modeling capabilities of Amos version 24.0 to test the model and collects questionnaires from 319 managers of Chinese-funded enterprises in Thailand. The results showed that the knowledge creation process was significantly influenced by entrepreneurial orientation and customer orientation ($p<.001$), and the mediating role of the knowledge creation process was verified. Thus, entrepreneur orientation and customer orientation significantly affect the sustainability of firm performance through the knowledge creation process. In addition, the study found that the strategic orientation of Chinese-funded enterprises in Thailand is stable, the knowledge management existed, and the firm performance is successful, which indicates that the internal environment of Chinese enterprises in Thailand is sustainable. The research results could guide the strategic planning and implementation of the start-up enterprises overseas and help the entrepreneurs who invest overseas to analyze the internal environment of their enterprises.

1. INTRODUCTION

At present, COVID-19 is continuing to spread around the world, which has seriously affected the economic and social development of all countries in the world. Therefore, all countries have taken corresponding countermeasures to prevent it, so that the spread of COVID-19 has gradually begun to be controlled. Thailand remains one of the most desirable investment locations for businessmen in the Asia Pacific region. The reason is that the Thai society is relatively stable; the prospects for sustainable economic growth are relatively good; the market potential of Thailand is very large for enterprises; Thailand is in the center of Southeast Asia, and its geographical location is very advantageous; the degree of liberalization of commercial transactions is high; which is conducive to implementation and execution; local raw material resources are relatively sufficient. After the Thai government launched the Eastern Economic Corridor (EEC) plan in 2015, the "Thailand 4.0" high value-added economic model was proposed in 2016. Chinese-funded enterprises in Thailand combine China's "going out" policy and the incentive policy of the Thai Investment Commission. According to the statistics of the Investment Commission of Thailand, for the first time in 2019, China topped the list of overseas investment countries in Thailand. Chinese-funded enterprises in Thailand may be the only ones that have maintained sustained economic growth after the COVID-19 crisis. In the future, Chinese enterprises may become one of the main drivers of Thailand's economy.

Thailand is a country of etiquette and enjoys the reputation of "the country of smiles." When meeting people, they usually put their hands together. It is also a country that believes in Buddhist culture. People's lives are relatively open, comfortable, accessible, and unconstrained. The international management activities of Chinese enterprises in Thailand affect people's daily business transactions and employees' on-the-job behavior. Therefore, senior executives of Chinese enterprises need to improve their understanding and acceptance of Thai culture. When they face the cultural conflict between China and Thailand, they must promptly adjust their behavior with an inclusive attitude. Familiar with the differences in food culture in Thailand and part of the history of Thailand will help Chinese managers better understand the Thai people's words and deeds and lay a solid foundation for subsequent management. Therefore, the study selects the mediating variable as the knowledge creation process (KCP), and then studies how entrepreneurial orientation (EO) and customer orientation (CO) affect firm performance (FP). Our sampling locations are Amata City Rayong Industrial Estate, Rojana Industry Park, Pinthong Industrial Park, and WHA, Chinese enterprises are starting businesses in Thailand and favor Thailand's machinery manufacturing, auto parts processing, new energy power and other industries. To achieve win-win cooperation between Chinese and Thai enterprises, the Thailand-China Rayong Industrial Estate is one of China's first overseas economic and trade cooperation zones, more than 180 Chinese enterprises have set up factories in the park, with an industrial value of

more than 16 billion US dollars. Rojana Industry Park was founded in 1988 by the family of Yang Jinfang. For more than 30 years, the group has focused on developing and operating international standardized industrial parks with standard industrial facilities and the Thai Government Investment Promotion Board (BOI) preferential policies. In 1995, the group officially entered the Thai stock market and was successfully listed. Now it has developed into one of Thailand's largest industrial park development operators. Pinthong Industrial Park is divided into six industrial areas and one logistics warehouse. Located in the Eastern Economic Corridor (EEC) of Thailand, Pinthong Industrial Park has a favorable geographical location, high standard infrastructure, and a strict security system. WHA is located on the east coast of Thailand and plays an essential role in Thailand's EEC plan. WHA has built petrochemical, automobile, and related industry clusters and four bonded areas.

Most research have shown that a positive effect of EO in (FP), Yet, related analyzes which indicating the relationship between EO and FP is mediated or moderated by multiple variables [1, 2]. exploration on mediator is still few and little research on the causal mechanism of how or why entrepreneurial orientation effects other variables [3]. Formulating an effective business strategy is critical for business continuity [4]. Entrepreneurship orientation (EO) has been determined by researchers to play a crucial role in the success of entrepreneurs, and including autonomy, innovativeness, risk-taking, proactiveness and competitive aggressiveness [5-7], because of the entrepreneurial orientation grounding on early signals from the internal and external environment to promote firm operation. Grounded on knowledge creation theory, knowledge is produced by socialization, externalization, combination, and internalization (SECI) [8-10]. SECI also depicts the interaction and dynamics of explicit and tacit knowledge [8, 11]. entrepreneurial orientation is generated according to the development of new industries, new knowledge, and existing knowledge from a lot of distinct individuals can be connected and arranged through the SECI knowledge creation spiral [11-13]. Knowledge creation process can promote the transformation of entrepreneurial orientation into knowledge assets shared through organization members, thus improving FP. Even though, few empirical studies have examined how EO uses the KCP to improve FP. Before enterprises operate internally, customer orientation (CO) plays a key role, and timely response to customer needs is the foundation for enterprises to achieve good business practices [14]. Customers are critical to the survival and success of enterprises, and customer orientation can improve firm performance [15]. Thailand is a developing country, which is a good research environment for this study. During the turbulent business environment during the epidemic, enterprises can realize the survival advantage of customers based on customer orientation, and firm performance can be significantly improved [16].

Due to the epidemic, Thai enterprises have been affected to a certain extent, and some employees have lost their jobs, leading to a decline in the quality of life. Therefore, the higher the performance of a firm, the greater the opportunity to provide employment opportunities, expand production and enhance the employee's quality of life [17]. At present, FP is one of the most discussed subjects in management, it has become a relevant conception in the research of strategical management by researchers. For developing countries, firm success is a key element of national development and prosperity. Many economists see it as a similar engine that determines a country's social, economic, and political development. For purpose of maintain competitive advantages in the fierce business competition, managers should attach great importance to firm performance [18]. The concept of firm performance is not clearly defined, and different scholars have different definitions and interpretations [19]. The firm performance adopted in this study includes three aspects: efficiency, growth, and profit [20, 21].

2. RESEARCH HYPOTHESES AND MODEL

2.1 Relation between entrepreneurial orientation and knowledge creation process

According to knowledge creation theory, knowledge is generated through SECI [8, 9]. The knowledge creation process describes the spiral of interactions between explicit knowledge and implicit knowledge, including SECI. The SECI knowledge creation model permits firm to swap and transfer knowledge continuously and dynamic by a suite of processes of self-transcendence [13]. When formulating the entrepreneurial orientation, fresh businesses can take advantage of the dynamic SECI helix to make as well as enjoy together knowledge is scattered among members of the various organizations. The attitudes and behaviors of entrepreneurs are an important for fresh businesses to promote the use of fresh and current knowledge to identify mart chances [22].

Enterprises often seek out information about their industry rivals or customers. Additionally, they would like to be active competition to transcend rivals and stop competitors from entrance the same mart [6]. Therefore, fresh firms require to improve the utilization of knowledge resources and could grasp mart odds [23]. The SECI knowledge transformation will provide benefit for clienteles, and will improve market competitiveness of positioning [23]. Startups with an entrepreneurial orientation (EO) tend to follow with interest and energy on the KCP. SECI can fully exploit the power of knowledge to enhance the use and creation of SECI in order to assist in the activation and conversion of entrepreneurial orientation. Li et al. [24] pointed out that KCP has a promoting effect on FP, so the hypothesis of the study is as follows.

Hypothesis 1: knowledge creation process is positively influenced by EO.

2.2 Relation between customer orientation and knowledge creation process

The theoretical source of this study is the resource-based view theory (RBVT) and capability view, valuable, rare, inimitable and non-substitutable (VRIN), which includes all unique resources [25], and based on the dynamic VRIN resources of enterprises are reintegrated to better improve firm performance [26]. The tangible and intangible resources owned by a firm are very beneficial for implementing strategies to enhance the efficiency of firm [27-29]. Nonaka and Toyama [29] argue that the development and sale of new products requires a knowledge creation process. Organization members can use it to serve customers. Customer orientation includes the collection and using of customer information, so enterprises need to convert the knowledge of internal and external customers into valuable resources through SECI in

Thailand, so as to better understand the needs of customers. Enterprises in Thailand put resources into the knowledge creation process based on customer orientation and transform knowledge into internal valuable resources through SECI spiral, so as to carry out customer orientation firm business activities, so customer orientation can promote knowledge creation process of resource consolidation, transformation, and reconfiguration [30]. Therefore, the hypothesis proposed in this study is as follows.

Hypothesis 2: knowledge creation process is positively affected by customer orientation.

2.3 Relation between entrepreneurial orientation and firm performance

Researchers try to use the influence EO on firm performance (FP) to explain performance [22, 31, 32]. EO enables newly established or less than 10 years firms to have an advantage over their competitors on increase firm performance [22, 33, 34]. The dimension of entrepreneurial orientation provides a clearer entrepreneurial direction for firms to carry out business activities, while these activities can enable people to obtain satisfactory positions and improve firm performance [35]. An overall positive affect of EO on FP no matter what enterprises context [36], and the use of marketing mix decision information has entrepreneurial orientation can help enterprises improve performance and have a certain mediating effect [37].

EO is one of the important performances that is generally recognized. EO in developed countries and the relationship between FP in developed countries [38] and developing countries. Anwar and Shah [39], Jiang, et al. [40] often analyzed by researchers. EO is positively correlated with FP, more and more positive results found in international Settings. Galbreath et al. [41], Hina, et al. [42] concluded that firm performance is positively correlated with EO. Lumpkin and Dess [33] investigated the correlation between EO and FP through a sample of 94 US companies and found that more excellent initiative was associated with better firm performance. In addition, Richard et al. [43] studied 579 American banks they found EO is positively correlated with firm performance. Keh et al. [37] studied 294 enterprises in Singapore and found positively correlated with firm performance. Similarly, a meta-analysis by Rauch et al. [44] concluded that positively correlated with firm performance. So entrepreneurial orientation seems to explain changes in firm performance. Therefore, effective EO maybe a good factor of FP. Therefore, this study proposes the following hypothesis.

Hypothesis 3: Success of firm performance is positively impacted by the entrepreneurial orientation.

2.4 Relation between customer orientation and firm performance

CO refers to an enterprise's analysis of customer needs and its response to these needs [45]. Avnet and Higgins [46] raised the question whether customer orientation can improve performance. FP is one of the most important variables and is utilized as a dependent variable in not the same areas. In the area of management, much research has concentrated on middle and senior management [47-49].

There have been many studies on the relationship between customer orientation and performance in previous literatures [50, 51], that is, customer orientation can positively affect FP [30, 52]. Therefore, the hypothesis proposed in this study is as follows.

Hypothesis 4: Success of firm performance are positively influenced by customer orientation.

2.5 Relation between knowledge creation process and firm performance

The resource advantage theory expounds the importance of knowledge as a strategic tool for enterprises [53, 54]. The talent of enterprises to build and use knowledge makes firms to gain a steady stream rival vantage since it is heterogeneous, unique, and immobile [27, 55, 56]. SECI knowledge creation model will get commercial meaning or can improve product creation or circuit [13, 57]. This knowledge transfer integrates emerging it and get strategical significance [8], and firms produce fresh knowledge or develop new low-cost things or faster than opponent [58], businesses need knowledge creation to improve work efficiency and gain more opportunities. Li et al. [24] confirmed that firm performance and knowledge creation process are positively correlated. In summary, when enterprises create knowledge better by the SECI knowledge creation process, enterprises are more tended to realize working speed, growth, or profits. The knowledge creation process is considered crucial due to it is positively correlated with FP. Therefore, the hypothesis proposed in this study is as follows.

Hypothesis 5: knowledge creation process has a positive impact on the success of firm performance.

2.6 Knowledge creation process acts as the mediator between entrepreneurial orientation and firm performance

Previous literatures showed that the correlation between EO and FP could be the main effect is more intricacy [2, 6, 22, 41]. Li et al. [24] found that when the indirect impact of EO through the KCP was included in the total effect model, the direct influence of EO on FP was significantly reduced. Therefore, entrepreneurial orientation is positively correlated with FP: the KCP acts as a mediator [59].

The KCP mediates the relationship between EO and FP. In the relationship between entrepreneurial orientation to realize the interests of the provides the basic elements of the knowledge creation process will be content of entrepreneurial orientation into shared knowledge assets, in order to realize the FP. Therefore, the hypothesis proposed in this study is as follows.

Hypothesis 6: knowledge creation process acts as the mediator between entrepreneurial orientation and firm performance.

2.7 knowledge creation process acts as the mediator between customer orientation and firm performance

The current research program uses the classification SECI [8], Socialization processes transform individually owned tacit knowledge into new tacit knowledge by experience sharing and activity syndication - interaction between members of apprenticeships or social organizations. The socialization process can extend beyond the firm, with learning via external networks and forming alliances or outsourcing. Communities of social interaction may cross organizational boundary and involve supplier, customer, distributor, and competitor;

Externalization expresses tacit knowledge in a form that is more easily know and accepted by others. Externalization can see in the process of conceptual expression, triggered through metaphor, analogy, or dialogue; The combination process collects explicit knowledge from internal or external the organization and transforms it into more intricate and systemic explicit knowledge. For example, in this study, Enterprises in Thailand combined with Thai culture use web-based data access and use databases such as information repository, best practices repository and lessons learned repository to store knowledge; Internalization process refers to the process of transforming explicit knowledge into tacit knowledge. In the process of internalization, individuals can get and assimilate knowledge by demonstration or other ways. For example, in this study, Chinese enterprises in Thailand used on-the-job training and learning-by-doing methods to absorb knowledge.

The fusion of internal capabilities and knowledge absorbed from outside the enterprises is an important way for the dynamic capabilities perspective to improve firm performance [60], can provide better service than competitors, provide guidance for enterprises to carry out business activities in the future and improve firm performance [61]. This means that the knowledge creation process can guide customer-oriented enterprises to carry out normal business activities to improve firm performance [30]. Therefore, the hypothesis proposed in this study is as follows.

Hypothesis 7: knowledge creation process acts as the mediator between customer orientation and firm performance

It is understood that short-term profits in corporate performance are not the only and ultimate condition of its success. Instead, work on building a sustainable strategic plan to continually improve FP through KCP. The purpose of this section is to provide a new model for identifying efficient factors for FP success. The proposed research model is shown in Figure 1. Although the hypothesized relationships are indicated by the arrows, the letter H indicates each of the hypotheses. In order to examine the relationship between the framework components, Table 1 presents seven hypotheses.

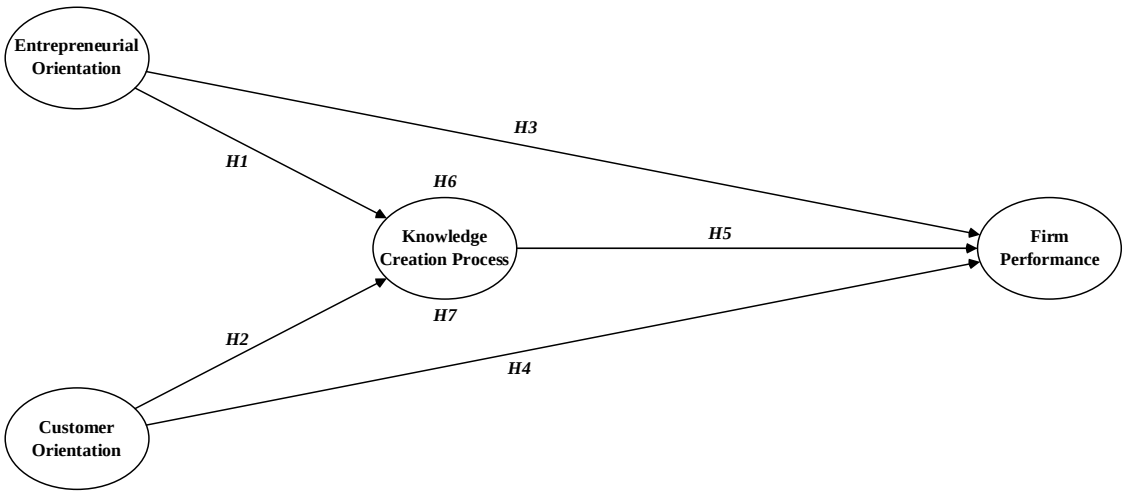

Figure 1. Research model

Table 1. The summary of research hypotheses

H1	Knowledge creation process is positively influenced by entrepreneurial orientation.
H2	Knowledge creation process is positively affected by customer orientation.
H3	Success of firm performance is positively impacted by the entrepreneurial orientation.
H4	Success of firm performance are positively influenced by customer orientation.
H5	Knowledge creation process has a positive impact on the success of firm performance.
H6	Knowledge creation process acts as the mediator between entrepreneurial orientation and firm performance.
H7	Knowledge creation process acts as the mediator between customer orientation and firm performance.

3. MATERIALS AND METHODS

This section describes data collection and program measurement. The initial factors are shown in Figure 1. The questionnaire consisted of 47 items on a five-point Likert scale: 1 = strongly disagree, 2 = disagree, 3 = neutral, 4 = agree, and 5 = strongly agree.

3.1 Participants

This study selected Chinese enterprises in Thailand and distributed 379 questionnaires (379 enterprises) to investigate the senior managers of the enterprises. 319 valid questionnaires were retained, and the recovery rate was 84.17%.

Among them, males accounted for 53.9% and females accounted for 46.1%. Samples from companies of different sizes, 6.6% for companies with 20-50 employees, and 6.6% for companies with 51-100 employees 46.1%, 101-250 employees accounted for 40.4%, and 251 employees or more accounted for 6.9%, 4-6 years accounted for 34.2%, and the participants were all under 45 years old.

3.2 Measures

The study structure was assessed using an authoritative scale. Investigators responded to questions based on a five-point Likert scale, and the study averaged the responses to determine the overall score for the variable, with higher scores representing higher status on that dimension [62].

3.2.1 Entrepreneurial orientation measure

The 15 items about for entrepreneurial orientation were obtained from [6, 33], Composite reliability (CR) for this study was 0.964. The sample item includes, “My firm's top manager tends to emphasize research and development, technology”, etc. The study used confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) to test the multidimensionality of EO in the Thai context, and explored a one-factor EO model, which found that a single-factor approach was appropriate in the Thai context (χ^2/df=3.410, NFI = 0.930, IFI = 0.949, TLI = 0.941, CFI = 0.949, RMSEA = 0.087, SRMR = 0.0336). Therefore, the study tested and retained the FP of the single factor and the Cronbach's alpha coefficient of the scale was 0.964, which showed good reliability.

3.2.2 Customer orientation measure

For customer orientation the scale originally consists of 9 items so were obtained from Deshpandé, et al. [63], This scale was adapted in this study and previously tested in prior studies such as Tajeddini [52], Tajeddini et al. [64] studies. Using maximum likelihood estimation and setting the variance maximum rotation method, the customer-oriented structure consists of (CO1 to CO6 and CO8), the factor loadings are all above 0.5, and the tested Cronbach alpha value is 0.931 and exceeded 0.70, determining the reliability of the construct [65]. Bartlett's test of sphericity is significant and Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin's test has a value of 0.874.

3.2.3 Knowledge creation process measure

For knowledge creation process the scale consists of 16 items so were obtained from Sabherwal and Becerra-Fernandez [66]. The model includes SECI [8, 13]. This study uses a single dimension to construct KCP and uses maximum likelihood estimation and variance maximum rotation method, which consists of 16 items (KCP1 to KCP16), and the factor loadings are all higher than 0.5. The Cronbach's alpha of the knowledge creation process construct was 0.979 and exceeded 0.70, determining the reliability of the construct [65]. Bartlett's test of sphericity is significant and Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin's test has a value of 0.965.

3.2.4 Firm performance measure

For firm performance the scale consists of 9 items so were obtained from Li et al. [24]. This study uses a single dimension to construct FP and uses maximum likelihood estimation and variance maximum rotation method, which consists of 9 items (FP1 to FP9), and the factor loadings are all higher than 0.5. The Cronbach's alpha of the firm performance construct was 0.966 and exceeded 0.70, determining the reliability of the construct [65]. Bartlett's test of sphericity is significant and Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin's test has a value of 0.942.

4. RESULTS

For this study, we found no outliers and missing values. We investigated the correlation between the variables and the results showed a strong correlation between them, r = 0.809 (between entrepreneurial orientation and knowledge creation process), r = 0.811 (between entrepreneurial orientation and customer orientation), and r = 0.817 (between entrepreneurial orientation and firm performance) at $p < 0.01$. so, the mediation assumption is satisfied. The mean value of EO was = 3.2782 showing entrepreneurial orientation is above average for the majority of respondents. We tested the research model using structural equation modeling (SEM) and maximum likelihood estimation (MLE). According to Anderson and Gerbing [67], we used a total of two phases of analysis, first running the measurement model, and then testing the structural model.

4.1 Common method deviation test

The study used a model for univariate confirmatory factor analysis to test for common method bias, which was based on Harman's univariate method [68], and all measurement items are fixedly loaded on a common latent factor, and the results of the study show extremely poor model fit (χ^2=4417.929, df=945, χ^2/df=4.675, GFI=0.494, AGFI=0.446, PGFI=0.451, CFI=0.796, NFI=0.754, RFI=0.743, IFI=0.796, TLI=0.786, CFI= 0.796 RMSEA=0.108, SRMR=0.0546), the findings of this study suggest that no methodological factor can explain most of the variation. Therefore, this suggests that the common method bias of this study is not serious [69].

4.2 Measurement model

Using SPSS version 23.0, we examined the reliability of all 47 measurement items. Cronbach's value of 0.987 indicates a good score of reliability.

Then we used CFA to test the model, which is to test the convergent and discriminant validity of the instrument. We then evaluate the extracted mean variance (AVE) and composite reliability (CR), which can help us test the reliability of the latent variables [70].

The AVE values of the study were greater than 0.5 and the CR values were greater than 0.7, both are within the acceptable range, see Table 2. In addition, we used Cronbach's a to assess the reliability of internal consistency. The results are all greater than the threshold of 0.70, we also tested the correlation coefficient between the four variables, and the results show that they are highly correlated, see Table 4.

At the second stage, the discriminant validity is considered. Table 2 shows that the factor loading coefficients of all items are greater than 0.6. Therefore, to preserve the integrity of the items as much as possible, this study adopts the HTMT method (heterogeneous-single-prime ratio) to verify the discriminant validity. Research has shown that the value for testing the validity of discriminant values is less than 0.9 [71]. The results of the study showed that all HTMT values were below 0.9, indicating that all indicators based on heterotrait-single-trait ratios were valid, see Table 3.

4.3 The structural model

4.3.1 Structure model 1

We test all hypotheses individually to avoid performance overlap, and this allows for valid insights and saves results. Therefore, first, we tested the impact of entrepreneurial orientation on firm performance, and then entrepreneurial orientation effect on knowledge creation process and finally, knowledge creation process effect on firm performance. We used Amos software with 95% bias-corrected confidence intervals and bootstrapping (5000 resampling) to test for mediation effects.

Table 2. Reflective indicator loadings and convergent validity

	Items	Standardized factor loadings	Cronbach's *a*	CR	AVE
EO	EO1	0.744	0.964	0.965	0.648
	EO2	0.645			
	EO3	0.715			
	EO4	0.735			
	EO5	0.769			
	EO6	0.783			
	EO7	0.808			
	EO8	0.862			
	EO9	0.855			
	EO10	0.875			
	EO11	0.884			
	EO12	0.833			
	EO13	0.840			
	EO14	0.862			
	EO15	0.822			
CO	CO1	0.888	0.931	0.941	0.699
	CO2	0.934			
	CO3	0.947			
	CO4	0.670			
	CO5	0.630			
	CO6	0.873			
	CO7	0.856			
KCP	KCP1	0.835	0.979	0.979	0.742
	KCP2	0.867			
	KCP3	0.901			
	KCP4	0.815			
	KCP5	0.909			
	KCP6	0.873			
	KCP7	0.908			
	KCP8	0.904			
	KCP9	0.903			
	KCP10	0.886			
	KCP11	0.849			
	KCP12	0.849			
	KCP13	0.848			
	KCP14	0.809			
	KCP15	0.866			
	KCP16	0.750			
FP	FP1	0.864	0.966	0.966	0.762
	FP2	0.795			
	FP3	0.845			
	FP4	0.885			
	FP5	0.921			
	FP6	0.905			
	FP7	0.866			
	FP8	0.889			
	FP9	0.880			

Table 3. HTMT

	1	2	3	4
1. Entrepreneurial Orientation				
2. Customer Orientation	0.860			
3. Knowledge Creation Process	0.834	0.896		
4. Firm Performance	0.847	0.879	0.898	

Table 4. Correlation matrix with descriptive statistics

Variable	M (SD)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1.EO	3.278 (.509)	**.964**						
2.CO	3.254 (.504)	.811**	**.931**					
3.KCP	3.323 (.513)	.809**	.852**	**.979**				
4.FP	3.294 (.548)	.817**	.829**	.873**	**.966**			
5.Gender	n/a	.028	.037	.030	.033	-		
6.Age	n/a	-.084	-.083	-.039	-.056	.123*	-	
7.Education level	n/a	.041	.051	-.019	.029	-.111*	.050	-

Note. N = 319. [s] Values on the diagonal represent reliabilities Cronbach's Alpha (a). Significance levels are flagged at ** p. < 0.01

Table 5. Model's fitness

Models	χ^2/df	IFI	CFI	TLI	RMR	RMSEA
Research model 4	2.722	0.902	0.902	0.897	0.013	0.074
Model 1	2.851	0.926	0.926	0.920	0.014	0.076
Model 2	2.766	0.914	0.914	0.909	0.012	0.075
Model 3	4.394	0.884	0.883	0.874	0.016	0.103
Acceptance range	1–5	>.80	>.90	>.90	<.09	<.08

Hypothetical models were tested using structural equation modeling in Amos. We included gender, age, and education level in the analysis and found that these factors did not affect the hypothesis. (See Table 4). Therefore, for parsimony reasons, these variables were excluded from the final model. Since our model includes mediation, we first examined the direct relationship of estimating Model 1 without knowledge creation process. The results showed that entrepreneurial orientation (β=.390, BC95% [0.190; 0.590] p < .001), customer orientation (β = .535, BC95% [0.335; 0.743] p < .001) were significantly related to firm performance, and H3 and H4 is verified. In addition, Model 1 shows a good model fit, see Table 5.

4.3.2 Structure model 2

This structure model 2 shows that knowledge creation process partially mediates the relationship between entrepreneurial orientation and firm performance, the model fitness is χ^2/df = 2.766, GFI = 0.722, IFI = 0.914, CFI = 0.914, TLI = 0.909, NFI = 0.872, RMR = 0.012, RMSEA = 0.075. According to the standard of a good model fitness recommended by Hu and Bentler [72], So it turns out that model 2 has a good fitness as all values are above 0.90. RMR = 0.012 and RMSEA = 0.075 values are less than the acceptable number 0.08 [65]. Model 2 indicates the indirect effect of EO on FP through KCP. In addition, the results show that indirect effect of entrepreneurial orientation on firm performance is significant (β = .533, BC95% [0.403; 0.663] p < .001), and direct effect of entrepreneurial orientation on firm performance is also significant (β = .314, BC95% [0.171; 0.467] p < .001), which postulates that knowledge creation process partially mediates the relationship between entrepreneurial orientation and firm performance. Hence, Hypothesis 6 is supported. Because entrepreneurial orientation has a positive and significant effect on knowledge creation process (β = 0.840, BC95% [0.780; 0.882] p < 0.001), Hypothesis 1 is supported. And KCP has direct effect on FP (β= 0.635, BC95% [0.482; 0.771], p < 0.001) and Hypothesis 5 is supported.

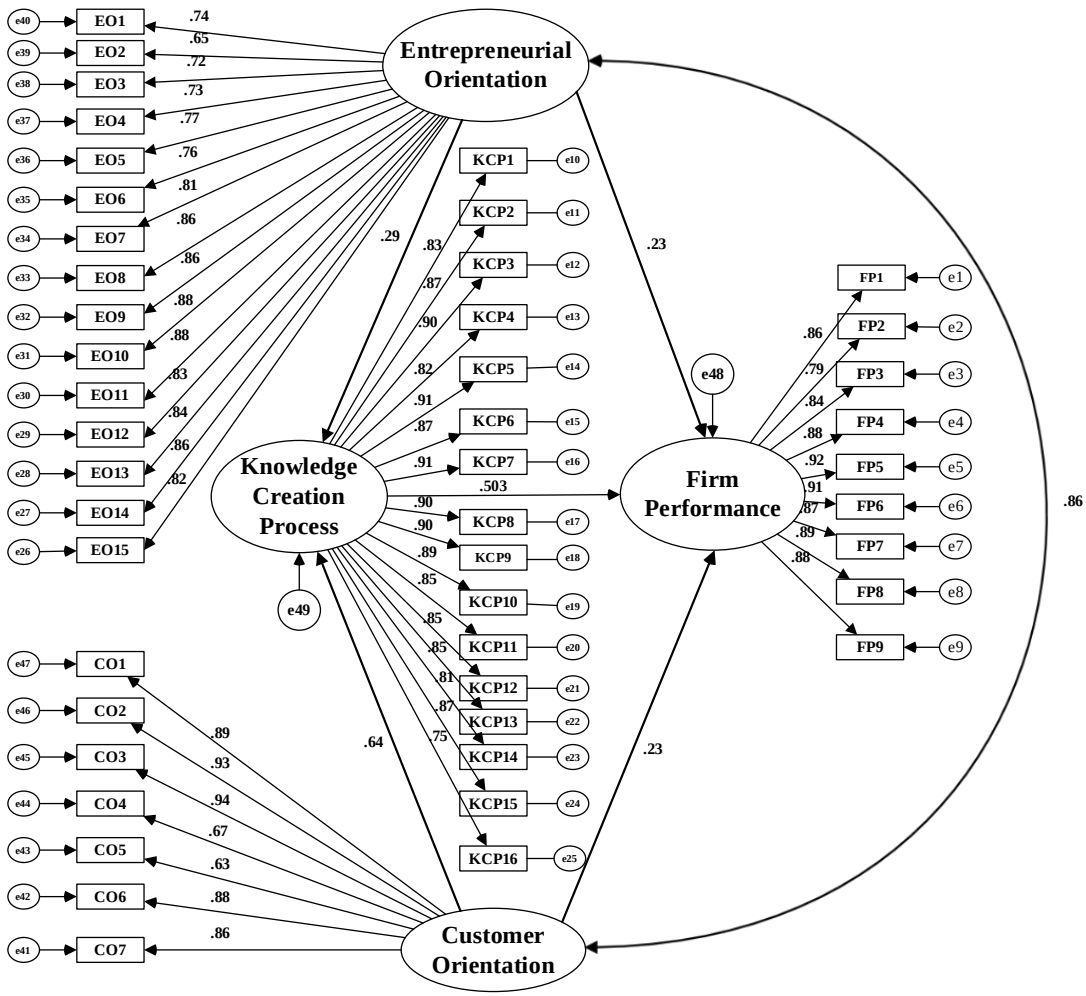

Figure 2. Research model and regression weights

Table 6. The results of the mediation effect of Research model

	Path	Estimation	BC 95% CI		P	Result
			Lower	Upper		
Direct effect	EO→FP	.226	.104	.387	.000	Supported
Indirect effect	EO→KCP→FP	.145	.035	.314	.003	Supported
	CO→KCP→FP	.323	.208	.500	.000	Supported

Note: BC = bias corrected; CI = confidence interval. Entries represent standardized coefficients. N = 319. EO, entrepreneurial orientation; KCP, knowledge creation process; CO, customer orientation; FP, firm performance

4.3.3 Structure model 3

The current model 3 also suggests that CO influences FP through KCP, which shows the indirect effect of CO on FP (β = 0.525, BC95% [0.299; 0.695], p < 0.001), and customer orientation has direct effect on firm performance is (β = 0.346, BC95% [0.146; 0.624] p < 0.001). customer orientation has direct effect on KCP is (β = 0.888, BC95% [0.827; 0.937] p < 0.001), and Hypothesis 2 is supported. Hence, it shows that KCP partially mediated the relationship between CO and FP. In addition, Part of the fit of Model 3 is up to standard, see Table 5. Therefore, hypothesis 7 is also supported.

4.3.4 Structure research model

Finally, according to the research framework, this study uses Amos 24.0 version to construct a structural equation model diagram (Figure 2). The resultant model yielded a good fit (χ^2/df = 2.734, CFI = 0.902, IFI = 0.902, SRMR = 0.08, and RMSEA = 0.074, SRMR = 0.0380), Hypotheses were tested by running a structural model. Figure 2 represents the mediation results of the hypothesized model for the relationship between EO, CO, KCP and FP. Structural model also yielded a good fit with χ^2/df = 2.734, CFI = 0.902, IFI = 0.902, SRMR = 0.0380, and RMSEA = 0.074. The results of the mediation effect test of the research model are shown in Table 6. This confirms that KCP plays a powerful and important role in these factors.

5. CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

5.1 Summary of findings

This study investigated the link between entrepreneurial orientation (EO), customer orientation (CO), knowledge creation process (KCP), and firm performance (FP). This study proposes two mediating pathways for KCP, linking EO to its FP outcomes and customer orientation to its firm performance outcomes. A survey of 319 samples from Chinese enterprises in Thailand was conducted to test the research model.

A noteworthy finding and theoretical implication of this study is that KCP mediates not only between EO and FP, but also between CO and FP. The KCP partially mediates the EO on FP relationship and partially mediates the CO on FP relationship. Similar results for knowledge creation process with two relationships confirm and strengthen the argument that knowledge creation process (whether entrepreneurial orientation or customer orientation) links them and positively affects firm performance.

Furthermore, these findings reveal key new research dimensions for future efforts. Since its inception, the relationship between EO and CO and FP have been generally studied among practitioners, and few attempts have been made to study knowledge creation process as a structure between these two strategic orientations and firm performance. The present findings may provide a solid theoretical basis for studying these two types of mediating pathways.

This study empirically examines the positive association between EO, CO, KCP, and FP in the context of Thailand. The relationship between entrepreneurial orientation and firm performance is mediated by knowledge creation process, and the relationship between customer orientation and firm performance is also mediated by knowledge creation process. Surviving in today's volatile job market requires a higher firm performance and a more active role for the knowledge creation process. Entrepreneurial orientation facilitates the development of high knowledge creation process. Startups with knowledge creation capabilities will force them to develop positive business performance. Businesses that pursue knowledge creation and customer orientation both drive and enhance the formation of core business values and the development of performance. Different strategic orientations and continuous knowledge management skills development will help them achieve higher firm performance goals.

The present findings suggest that the research model is generally reasonable as the five provided relationships among the constructed concepts show significant positive coefficients. The proposed model shows that the success of firm performance increases with knowledge creation process. Furthermore, it was significantly and positively affected by EO (Table 6). Given that knowledge creation process was positive, the findings were consistent with those of previous studies. The present findings suggest that knowledge creation process may also be affected by customer orientation implemented by enterprises, which in turn affects the success and sustainability of firm performance. KCP is positively correlated with EO and CO, and they have a very positive effect on knowledge creation process. The results show that the success of firm performance is positively and significantly affected by knowledge creation process. The study found a significant and positive association between EO, CO, and success in FP, and we found evidence to support a partial mediating effect of KCP between EO and FP, and CO and FP success.

However, many researchers have highlighted mediating factors between EO, CO, and FP.

This work highlights the importance of KCP and recommends the KCP in knowledge management as a keyway to achieve sustainable business performance. This study shows that KCP is an intermediary between EO, CO, and FP success. Furthermore, statistics show that, despite a significant link between strategic orientation and the success of business performance, optimal knowledge processes increase the sustainability of business performance.

5.2 Theoretical and practical implication

The purpose of this study is to examine the factors that influence the success of firm performance, including EO, CO, and KCP. The contribution of this study is to propose a

theoretical framework for knowledge creation process in the sustainability of business performance. The present findings provide enterprise entrepreneurs and managers with a practical concept of strategic planning to improve the success or sustainability of business performance. It should be noted that knowledge creation process, because of entrepreneurial orientation and customer orientation, is related to the sustainability of firm performance.

In undertaking a series of entrepreneurial activities, enterprises improve firm performance by combining entrepreneurial orientation, customer orientation, and knowledge creation. Enterprises establish their knowledge storage database, invite experts to impart knowledge and training, and construct knowledge brochures. Each newly hired employee can carry on the preliminary study. The employees also can be generated through a series of learning knowledge brainstorming, which may bring new opportunities for enterprises. At the same time, Enterprises can purchase knowledge management and multi-user collaboration software. The employees of enterprises can watch and learn the videos saved by the knowledge taught by the experts in the previous training. The knowledge can be copied and transformed into tacit personal knowledge, so the employees' cognition of the work can be provided. Enterprises are customer-oriented to display and share products and real-time information to customers on web pages so that customers can better understand products and indirectly build customer loyalty. Employees and management personnel of enterprises can take the way of learning while working to make up for the gaps in their work. In general, Enterprises' management costs are relatively reduced, and the differentiation is improved to improve the firm performance.

The knowledge creation process is one of the most important factors for the success of firm performance, it enables the sharing, collection, classification and storage of useful information and experiences within an organization and serves as a strategically oriented bridge to provide sustainable competitive advantage. Entrepreneurial and customer-oriented widespread success can lead to a competitive advantage. A new model is proposed to determine the success factors of firm performance. The purpose of this study is to investigate the factors that influence the performance success of enterprises. It also examines the relationship between internal variables (FP and KCP) and external variables (EO and CO), and the structured equation modeling method used.

The knowledge creation process enables organizations to capture better and apply knowledge. It collects all relevant internal company knowledge and experience to accelerate Internet-based systems and create internal knowledge sharing and storage tools to improve business processes and management decisions. While it indirectly updates firm performance. Entrepreneurial orientation, as a strategy formulation process to create sustainable competitive advantages for enterprises, is essential in integrating existing internal and external resources, grasping market opportunities, and occupying market positions. In the context of the international entrepreneurship of enterprises, knowledge sharing between overseas and local employees is an essential means to improve firm performance. From the survey results, the KCP is influenced by EO in the context of enterprises. The knowledge creation process affects the success of firm performance. It is also found that customer orientation is closely related to the success of the firm performance and is also strongly related to the knowledge creation process. The results show that the sustainability of the knowledge creation process and strategic orientation to the success of firm performance cannot be ignored. From the results, customer orientation emphasizes the need to be customer-centric and helps improve firm performance. Furthermore, performance and knowledge creation processes are positively influenced by CO. The improvement of the KCP directly affects the sustainability of firm performance. Furthermore, considering the management results of this study, we can affirm that the interrelationship between the KCP and strategic orientation is one of the critical factors in the success of firm performance. The results show that the KCP is positively affected by EO and CO. In contrast, the KCP directly affects the sustainability of FP. The KCP of an organization plays a crucial role in the success of the FP, so the critical factors for successful relationships and performance are entrepreneurial orientation and customer orientation. Both CO and EO have played an essential role as important aspects of strategic orientation. The study suggests that enterprises can find a balance between EO and CO. Meet the needs of local customers and improve customer satisfaction. Localizing and customizing products and services needed by local customers, sharing, collecting, and organizing real-time information and information on the entrepreneurial market, and establishing internal knowledge-sharing channels and databases, can effectively promote the improvement and sustainability of firms' performance.

5.3 Limitations and future research

Several research limitations were noted in this study. First, there are only two independent variables, including those that are time- and resource-constrained. Second, the source of data is limited to Thailand. Future studies may gather data from other regions and collect additional samples to validate the findings. Moreover, future research may include other variables that influence the knowledge creation process and the sustainability of firm performance. This study used quantitative analysis, and future studies could add mixed methods or meta-analytical results. Furthermore, the study can be expanded by improving this model. Additional latent variables can be investigated to gain greater insight into the model. Future research on this issue can be used for current research implications.

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