

# Determinants of Starting Entrepreneurs through Non Formal Education's Professional Practice in Hangdong District, Chiangmai Province, Thailand

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*In Thailand, entrepreneurs have been paid much attention by the government. It is believed that the economy of a country is driven by entrepreneurs. The Thai government's policy is to encourage people to start their own firms. It has created an environment which entrepreneurs can thrive by supporting people in communities through training via the non-formal education centre (NFE). This study tries to answer 2 research questions; i) What are the characteristics of entrepreneurs who make use of NFE's curriculum? And ii) What factors drive entrepreneurs to start up their own businesses. The survey was conducted on through 52 entrepreneurs who passed NFE's curriculum and established their own businesses since 2011 - 2012. Interview and questionnaires were used as tools to collect data. Statistics shows that most entrepreneurs are married men between the ages of 45-50 years old or women between 30 – 50 years old, and most were not university educated. Most of their businesses are micro enterprises and are owned by single entrepreneurs. Pair sample t-testing illustrates that gender, married status, and education level were significantly related to entrepreneur starting up businesses. Furthermore, sizes of the firm, type, form of enterprise, location were also positive contributors. Moreover, Pair sample T-testing indicates that factors driving entrepreneurs running and starting up their own businesses correlated with capital, knowledge which was obtained from NFE, while personal and socio-culture factors were ignored.*

**Keywords:** Determinants, Entrepreneur, Thailand, non-formal education, Start up, Business.

## 1. Introduction

Entrepreneurship is the practice of starting a new organization, particularly new businesses which are often a difficult task, as a majority of new businesses fails. Entrepreneurial activities are substantially different depending on the type of organization that is being started. Entrepreneurship may involve in creating many job opportunities (Baycan-Levent, 2006). It is accepted that entrepreneurship plays a major role in economic development and entrepreneurs are driving the new economy (Carree & Thurik, 2002). In Thailand, entrepreneurs have been paid much attention by the government. It is believed that the economy of a country is driven by entrepreneurs (Thechatakerng, 2012, 2009; Jansen et al. 2004; Van Stel and Carree, 2002). Therefore, the Thai government policy tries to encourage people to start their own firms. It has created an environment in which entrepreneurs can thrive by supporting people in communities through training via the non-formal education centre (NFE).

Stimulating entrepreneurs and entrepreneurship is to stimulate the local people in that area who are eager and have the potential to be in starting up their own businesses,

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especially after some professional training. Taking into account the variety within the group of potential entrepreneurs, there is a need for specific insight in the factors that determine the success of starting entrepreneurs (Wasantha Sriyani, 2012; Bosma et al., 2000; Cooper et al., 1994) as well as into the characteristics of entrepreneurs which is one important factor of starting entrepreneurs (Thechatakerng, 2012; Lazear, 2003; Bosma & Al. 2000)..

This study, then tries to answer 2 research questions; i) What are the characteristics of entrepreneurs who make use of NFE's curriculum. And ii) What factors drive entrepreneurs to start up their own businesses?

In the next section of this paper, literature review, theories contrasted to the proposed hypothesize will be explained, as well as methodology used, findings, summary and conclusions respectively.

## 2. Literature Review

### 2.1 Characteristics of New Entrepreneur Starts Up and Non-formal Education Professional Practice (NFE)

There is wide variety of literature on entrepreneurship development. Chowdhury (2007) believed that most studies focus on entrepreneurship as an environmentally determined phenomenon. He contend that entrepreneurial traits are strongly influenced by infrastructure, political and economic turbulence, one's family, school and work environment. The educational system of a country has vast potential as a vehicle for helping to develop characteristics associated with entrepreneurship (Morris and Lewis, 1991). Entrepreneurial competencies may, therefore, be developed by training and education (Gibb, 1996; Romjin, 1989). Gentry and Hubbard (2001), and Fairlie (1999) summarized that liquidity constraints were a restriction to business start-up. Harris (1971), and House et al. (1993) revealed an emphasis on the importance of both the quantity and quality aspects of entrepreneurship. They particularly stress the importance of a conducive environment and the importance of quality management in entrepreneurship development. Shapero and Sokol (1982); Gnyawali and Fogel (1994) concluded that the SME sector in developing countries is subject to hordes of other hurdles like inadequate training facilities and absence of good skills require in starting and managing their business. Thus, a country with advantageous policies, organizational environments, and educational systems is expected to have a higher level or amounts of entrepreneurship.

The situation in Thailand is strongly affected by environmental factors (Thechatakerng, 2007). For example, McDowell (1997) reports that the lack of adequate infrastructural facilities (e.g. good telecommunications) deters access to information and opportunities for entrepreneurship. In addition, the inability and inconsistencies in enforcing laws, bureaucratic interpretation of rules, the lack of firm political commitment, the lack of accountability, hooliganism and political musclemanship, the lack of rule of law, and the lack of control of corruption which are significant discouragers to entrepreneurship development in developing countries and play a role in Thailand (Prahalad, 2004). Moreover, another important factor that obstructs growth and development of SMEs to the sustainable stage in Thailand is the severe scarcity of required capital. Limited personal and family savings and an absence of financial innovation strictly limit the growth prospects of promising start-ups in developing countries. This demonstrates that's there are several constrains from external and internal factors in entrepreneurship and doing

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businesses in Thailand, which is facing obstacles from stagnant economy, resulting in a deficit of entrepreneurial skills.

Thai government has seen an importance of entrepreneurship in driving a country's economy, and is trying to encourage people to open businesses. It has created an environment in which entrepreneurs can thrive by supporting people in communities through professional training via the non-formal education centre (NFE). The curriculums of the NFE were consistent with the demand for potential entrepreneurs in the five major areas; Thai massage, Japanese artificial clay flowers, craving crafts, clay doll sculptures and organic crops. Despite the assistance provided through the NFE, certain characteristics of the potential entrepreneurs still seem to have a major impact (Thechatakerng, 2012; Lazear, 2003; Bosma & Al. 2000). This paper focuses in these characteristics of entrepreneurs and the effects on the success of their enterprises. These characteristics include *gender, marital status, education and experience, firm size and type of a business, and urbanization*.

### ***Gender, Marital Status and the Entrepreneur***

*Gender* is known for all the entrepreneurs in the survey. Bosma et al 2000 argued that male entrepreneurs perform better than female entrepreneurs, though only when survival of the firm is addressed. The participation rate of women in the labor force is generally lower than for men. In addition, women that are a part of the labor force have a lower probability of being entrepreneur than the male part of the labor force (Verheul et al., 2001). Being *married* is found to be positively correlated with entrepreneurship. A possible explanation for this relationship is that marriage resolves the shirking problem that arises when the entrepreneur wants to hire employees: by employing their spouse, married entrepreneurs reduce the (perceived) probability of shirking behavior (Portes and Zhou, 1998). In addition, partners working in their spouses' enterprise will not always be registered (and paid) as employee, which reduces labor costs (which includes not only the wage of the employee, but also transaction costs associated with hiring a – first-time employee).

### ***Education and Experience***

Human capital and entrepreneurship are generally found to be positively correlated: the education level of new venture founders (particularly if an entrepreneur has experienced a high level of education; university or high-level vocational training) is positively related to venture performance (Bosma et al., 2000) and is positively related to be entrepreneurship (Light and Gold, 2000; Storey, 1994).

The level of human capital is often represented by the educational level of individuals. Experience is also important in determining success. Having had experience in the same sector as the newly founded business increases the probability of success in making profits and in surviving.

### ***Firm Size and Type of a business***

Size of the firm impacted behaviour of enterprise, as larger firms are likely to display different types of characteristics than smaller firms (Thechatakerng, 2007; Avermaete, 2003) in the process of establishing. There are many types of business entities defined in

the legal systems of various countries, including sole proprietorship, partnership, corporation, and cooperative. Barrett et al. (1996) observed that entrepreneurs are more likely to be established sole proprietorship than other types and smaller firms are more

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likely to be established than larger firms (Thechatakerng, 2009). Although different proxies could be considered for perceiving the size of the firm, the total number of employees or the total revenues are the most common. Furthermore, total number of employees is often highly correlated with total annual revenue. Therefore, the number of employees as a control variable is used in this paper.

### **Urbanization**

Verheul et al. (2001) report mixed findings on the relationship between the degree of urbanization and the rate of entrepreneurship. On the one hand, a high population density in urban areas is found to stimulate the start-up of new firms, especially in the services sector. This suggests that individuals living in large cities are more likely to be entrepreneurs than those living in less urbanized places. On the other hand, population density and urbanization can lead to the pursuit of economies of scale, which has a negative effect on the rate of entrepreneurship. Moreover, thinly populated areas with many dispersed small villages often have many small retail stores, indicating that population density can have a negative effect on the level of business ownership (Bais et al., 1995). Generalizing this assumption, it is proposed that:

***Hp1:** Characteristics of entrepreneurs who underwent professional training from NFE and the characteristics of their enterprises are likely to be different in starting entrepreneurs*

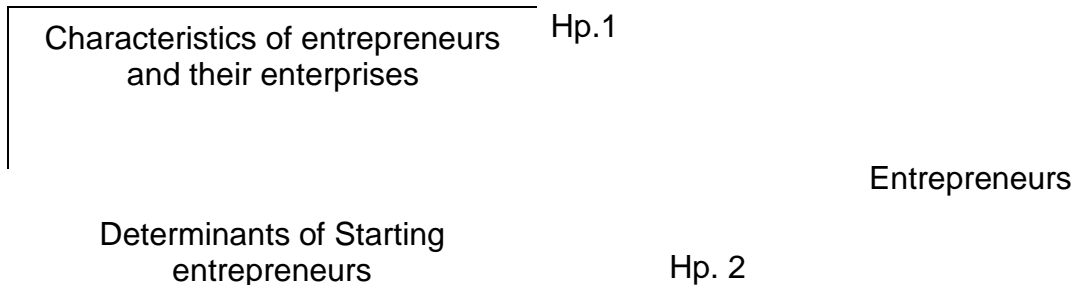
## **2.2 Determinants of Starting Entrepreneurs**

The determinants identified from the survey are classified in a framework that distinguishes the different resources from which the starting entrepreneur can draw. These relate to human capital, knowledge, financial capital and social capital. Additionally, the strategies of the entrepreneur to keep up with the business as well as some control variables are identified (Bosma et al. 2000). Cooper et al. (1994) specify initial conditions in terms of four groups of initial capital. The first, general *human capital* concerns knowledge that could lead to higher productivity and access to network resources due to the general background of the entrepreneur. The second, management know-how, focuses on the entrepreneur's previous *experience* with general management tasks. This is mainly a question of tacit knowledge acquired through vicarious learning or by actually performing management tasks. The third factor, *industry-specific know-how*, may play an important role in the understanding of "how business is done" in a specific context of suppliers, competitors and customers. This knowledge is mostly tacit and costly to build up if the entrepreneur has no previous experience from the industry where the new business is established. The fourth group, *financial capital*, is probably the most tangible form of capital, acting as a buffer and giving greater freedom in exploring different strategies. These four categorization of human capital have been examined again by Cooper & et al. (1997) who explored more in term of social capital; the influence of other entrepreneurs in the family is negatively related to profit making. Having contact with other entrepreneurs in networks is positively related to the amount of employment created. Emotional support from the spouse influences profitability and duration in a positive way. If the entrepreneur delegates out activities to other parties, this can be seen as an indication of success regarding generated employment which is consistent with the previous explanation (Wasantha Sriyani, 2012). Hence, we propose that

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**Hp2:** Core determinants, including human capital, knowledge, financial capital and social capital are likely to be influenced in starting up a new venture for entrepreneurs.

**Figure 1: Conceptual Framework**



### 3. Methodology

In order to test our hypothesis, we have conducted an empirical study with 52 entrepreneurs who undergone professional training from NFE between 2011 and 2012. This entrepreneur group answered questions face-to-face relating to characteristics of themselves and their firms. In addition, they were asked about determinants of starting entrepreneurs. This study focuses specially on entrepreneurs in Hangdong District, Chiangmai Province, which consists of 11 subdistricts; Hang Dong, Nong Kaeo, Han Kaeo, Nong Tong, Khun Khong, Sop Mae Kha, Ban Waen, San Phak Wan, Nong Khwai, Ban Pong, and Nam Phrae.

#### 3.1 Validity

Several validity issues were inherent within this paper. The first issue was in the small sample size being used. We involved only entrepreneurs who were professionally trained between 2011 and 2012 through NFE in Hangdong, Chiangmai. In addition, the study relied on the co-investigator's personal contacts as an initial source for NFE experts as well as participants in NFE in Hangdong. This may have limited the generalizability of the findings.

#### 3.2 Methods of Data Analysis and Interpretation

Documentary analysis, information synthesis, and interviewed targets have been relied upon in the study. In addition, target entrepreneurs were asked to answer thorough questionnaires.

Once we obtained all the data from the mentioned resources above, then a member of our research team analysed the data by classifying it through a social statistic programme. After that, all information was interpreted in order to test our hypothesis.

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## 4. The Findings

The following descriptive Information of Interviewed Micro-entrepreneurs was obtained:

### 4.1 Characteristics of the Respondents and Characteristics of their Businesses

This section provides some background information of the micro-entrepreneurs interviewed, including the demographical characteristics of the entrepreneurs.

#### 4.1.1 Characteristics of Respondents

52 entrepreneurs were interviewed and filled the questionnaire. Of the 52 entrepreneurs, 35 (67.31%) were men and 17 (32.69%) were women. Including men and women, 43 were married (82.7%). This is consistent with the perception that married entrepreneurs reduce the (perceived) probability of shirking behavior (Portes and Zhou, 1998). They had vocational level of education (61.5%), high school (28.8%) and university (9.7%). Table 1 shows the distribution of entrepreneurs interviewed by gender, status, and education level.

**Table 1: Characteristics of Entrepreneurs: Gender, status and education level**

Description		amount		Total
		N	%	%
Gender	Man	35	67.31	100
	Woman	17	32.69	
Status	Single	1	1.9	100
	Married	43	82.7	
	Divorce	8	15.4	
Education	Primary school	15	28.8	100
	Vocational	32	61.5	
	University	5	9.7	

#### 4.1.2 Characteristics of Enterprises

Most of the enterprises owned by interviewees were micro-enterprises, with between 5-6 (46.2%) or 3– 4 (28.8%) employees, including family members who worked with them. They were in production businesses (69.2%), and were in the form of sole proprietorship, which is believed that this form encouraged starting up venture (Barrett et al., 1996). In addition, micro firms located in Ban wan, Kun Dong and Ban Pong which were close to city as Verheul et al. (2001) explained that individuals living in large cities are more likely to be entrepreneurs than those living in less urbanized places.

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**Table 2: Characteristics of enterprise beaked by size, Type & Form of enterprise and location**

Description		Amount		
		N	%	
Size	>5 employee	24	46.2	Demonstrated only first 2 ranking from 5
	5 or <5 employee	15	28.8	
Type of Business	production	36	69.2	100%
	Service	16	30.8	
Form of enterprise	Sole proprietorship	43	82.7	Demonstrated only first ranking from 3
Location	Ban wan	14	26.9	Demonstrated only first 2 ranking from 11
	Kun Dong	11	21.2	
	Ban Pong	8	15.4	

### 4.2. Determinants of Starting Entrepreneurs

This part presents factors influencing an individual's decision to become an entrepreneur. These include variables such as, human capital, knowledge, financial capital and social capital. The study shows in regards to finance capital that 42.31% of entrepreneurs have obtained loan from financial institution such as bank and their families (38.46%) respectively. In term of knowledge, entrepreneurs mostly received training from private sector institutes and government agencies (63.46%). Furthermore, social capital was an important factor in starting entrepreneurs, as more than 80% of entrepreneurs accessed network resources due to the general background of the entrepreneur. Human capital, especially experience of entrepreneurs from families played an important role in starting entrepreneur, 76.92% of entrepreneurs have gained experience from their families and were encouraged by their families.

**Table 3: Determinants of starting entrepreneurs**

Factors		Amount		
		N	%	
Finance	Financial institute	22	42.31	Demonstrated only the first 3 ranking from 5
	family	20	38.46	
	Own finance	4	7.69	
knowledge	Trained	33	63.46	100%
	Non	19	36.54	
Social	Network with other	42	80.7	100%
	less	4	19.3	
Human capital	Experienced from family	40	76.92	Demonstrated only the first 2 ranking from 5
	non	6	11.53	

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## 4.3 Hypotheses

### 4.3.1 Characteristics of entrepreneurs who underwent professional training from NFE and the characteristics of their enterprises are likely to be different in starting entrepreneurs

In this study, the impact of the following variables was analysed: gender, status and education level, size of the firm, type & form of enterprise and location.

To explain the characteristics of firm that were associated with the entrepreneur starting up the venture, we divided them into two groups of firm size that impacted the establishing of the enterprises. Size was group into less than 5 employees and more than 5 employees. Form of enterprise was further classified into 2 groups; sole proprietorship and others, and location was also considered.

Table 4 explains characteristics of entrepreneurs and their enterprises, and the subsequent influence of the starting entrepreneurs. This study discovered significant relationship between gender, status, education level, size of the firm, type, form of enterprise, location and entrepreneurship, Pair simple t-test was used to analyse the variables. Using entrepreneur theory, we contrasted with previously mentioned variables, the research assumed that; men are likely to be entrepreneurs than woman; married participants are more likely to be entrepreneurs than others ; men with higher education levels are more likely to be entrepreneurs than the ones with lower education levels; smaller firms are more likely to be established than larger firms; the entrepreneur is more likely to established his or her firm in the form of sole proprietorship than other forms; location which are closes to city are likely to have entrepreneurs than those living in less urbanized places.

**Table 4: Characteristics of entrepreneurs and enterprises influencing to starting entrepreneurs**

Variable	Paired Differences					t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference				
				Lower	Upper			
g Gender	-.212	.457	.063	-.339	-.084	-3.335	51	.002
Status	-1.058	.639	.089	-1.236	-.880	-11.935	51	.000
e Education	-.596	.634	.087	-.772	-.419	-6.777	51	.000
Size	-1.808	.864	.120	-2.048	-1.567	-15.086	51	.000
Form	-.500	.852	.118	-.737	-.263	-4.233	51	.000
Location	-4.231	3.154	.437	-5.109	-3.353	-9.674	51	.000

The study shows H1 is accepted. Pair sample t-testing illustrates that gender, married status, education level were significantly related to entrepreneurs starting up (.002, .000, .000) respectively. Furthermore, sizes of the firm, type, form of enterprise, location were also manifested positive sign (.000). We point out that the testing results completely support all Hypotheses 1.



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### 4.3.2 Core Determinants; Human Capital, Knowledge, Financial Capital and Social Capital are Likely to Influence Starting up New Ventures for Entrepreneurs.

According to the entrepreneur theory, this research assumed that financial support from financing institution is more likely to influence starting entrepreneurs than other sources, professional training is more likely to influence entrepreneurs than non training, wide social networks are likely to influence starting entrepreneurs than smaller networks, and experience from family is more likely to influence starting entrepreneurs than non-experienced from family.

To explain the determinants of starting entrepreneurs we divided them into two groups of finance: financial institutes and other sources; knowledge: trained and non-trained; social: wide networks and smaller; human capital: experience and non-experience from family.

**Table 5: Determinants of starting entrepreneurs**

Variable	Paired Differences					t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference				
				Lower	Upper			
Finance	.942	.998	.138	.664	1.220	6.807	51	.000
Knowledge	-1.615	1.301	.180	-1.978	-1.253	-8.954	51	.000
Social	0.000	.396	0.055	-.110	.110	.000	51	1.000
Human capital	-2.000	1.414	.707	-4.250	.250	-2.828	3	.066

The first two sub-hypotheses show significant evidence in terms finance and knowledge. These positives were related to starting entrepreneurs (.000). The results confirm that finances especially from financial institutions were significantly influenced to starting entrepreneurs, as well as knowledge gained from being professionally trained by NFE and other institutes. Nevertheless, the last two sub-hypotheses have not confirmed (1.00 and .006) that human capital and social support starting entrepreneur (Table 5).

### 4.3.3 Summarization of Hypotheses Analysis

Table 6 summarizes the outcomes of hypotheses analysis. The results allow us to preserve the theoretical model of considering the determinants of starting Thai entrepreneurs via professional training through government agency: the non-formal education in Hangdon, Chiangmai. Our theory is that entrepreneurial concepts in professional training via NFE in Hangdong shows a great theoretical frame work for analysing determinants of entrepreneurs' start up firms.

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**Table 6: The Results of Hypothesis Analysis**

Hypotheses	Results
<p>Hp1 Characteristics of entrepreneurs who underwent professional training from NFE and the characteristics of their enterprises are likely to be different in starting entrepreneurs</p> <p>1.1 Gender; men are more likely to be entrepreneurs than women</p> <p>1.2 Marital status: <i>married</i> persons are more likely to be entrepreneurs than others</p> <p>1.3 Education level: Persons with higher education levels are more likely to be entrepreneurs than those with lower education levels</p> <p>1.4 Size of the firm: Smaller firms are more likely to be established than larger firms</p> <p>1.5 Form of enterprise: Sole proprietorships are more likely to result in entrepreneurship than other forms</p> <p>1.6 Location; locations which are closed to cities are more likely contribute to entrepreneurship than those in less urbanised places</p>	<p>Supported</p> <p>Supported</p> <p>Supported</p> <p>Supported</p> <p>Supported</p> <p>Supported</p>
<p>Hp2 Core determinants: human capital, knowledge, financial capital and social capital are likely to influence starting up new ventures for entrepreneurs.</p> <p>2.1 Human capital: experience from family is more likely to influence starting entrepreneurs than non-experienced from family</p> <p>2.2 Knowledge: professional training is more likely to influence starting entrepreneurs than non training</p> <p>2.3 financial capital: assistance from financial institutions is more likely to influence starting entrepreneurs than other sources</p> <p>2.4 Social capital: wide social networks are more likely to influence starting entrepreneurs than smaller networks</p>	<p>Un-supported</p> <p>Supported</p> <p>Supported</p> <p>Un-supported</p>

## 5. Conclusions and Discussion

On the whole the empirical evidence revealed in this study found important insights regarding determinants exploited by entrepreneurs, in the area of characteristics of professional trained entrepreneurs via NFE and enterprises of those entrepreneurs, as well as, determinants of starting entrepreneurs including human capital, knowledge, financial capital and social capital.

This paper revealed that the results of the study point out the necessity to pay greater attention to what characteristics influence micro-entrepreneurs starting up ventures, and in what determinants of starting entrepreneurs. Entrepreneurs reported the significance of the support from the government via NFE in encourage local people in starting entrepreneurship and to start up ventures proposes, which allow for new opportunities for growth. The results indicate that most of entrepreneurs may be considered the results of the determinants they were affected by in starting up their ventures.

Male micro-entrepreneurs still play a dominant role in businesses growth, in contrast with the prediction from prior research (Thechatakerng, 2008; 2003) that the role of women in business was increasing rapidly in Thai businesses. Educational level may contribute to entrepreneurial success (Bosma et al., 2000). The findings supported this argument (Light

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and Gold, 2000; Storey, 1994). Human capital, especially when local people were professional trained via NFE relates to the intrinsic qualities and is thought to have a positive influence on the success of starting entrepreneurs (Sorensen & Chang, 2006).

The study also explains the experience from family sustained starting entrepreneurs which is consistent with Bosma et al., 2000, in that experience (knowledge) is important in determining entrepreneurship. Having had experience in the same sector as the newly founded business is especially influential. Moreover, having contact with other entrepreneurs in networks helps to cultivate the idea of being an entrepreneur and finally to establish one's own business (Aldrich & Zimmer, 1986).

This paper examined the determinants of starting entrepreneurs via NFE in Chiangmai, Thailand. Moreover, in regards to integrated characteristics and entrepreneurs, the evidence indicates the appropriate characteristics maintained entrepreneurs starting up their own venture and it is suggest that individuals living in large cities are more likely to be entrepreneur than those living in less urbanized places (Bosma et al., 2000). All the hypotheses are confirmed except the two sub-hypotheses: human capital and social capital.

The limitation of this study is mainly to the nature of the information. The information involving determinants is quite limited in terms of the actual features of the selected factors. This paper would have benefited from more detailed descriptions of the terms of the other areas of determinants, such as business and management, sociology, psychology, economics, finance, and public policy to make sure that the coding of each dependent variable was the correct one. However, this paper expects that the groundwork evidences presented in this study will encourage future efforts to collect more data and verify the robustness of the results.

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