Using a Social Enterprise Organizational Development Intervention Approach in Developing Organizational Structure and Processes for Start-up Social Enterprise: A Case Study of Trendy Village

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Abstract

The growth of social enterprises worldwide has initiated innovative and sustainable solutions for a variety of economic, environmental and human development challenges. This social approach has been seen as a new way to add more social value for existing organizations and to generate much more meaningful workplaces for young people who seek greater purpose in their work. Furthermore, with its approach of generating resources through partnerships, this could open up possibilities for an organization that is resource-starved to recognize the value of partnership with other organizations. This article refers to the case of Trendy Village, a business-oriented organization, which was in a negative financial and resource-starved situation. This research focuses on the initial impact of a social enterprise Organization Development Intervention (ODI) approach in generating necessary resources through partnerships with social organizations thus improving its existing condition. The participants are one executive, a team of five members, and 25 vendors in Trendy Village. This study involves action research with qualitative and quantitative components and the steps taken to measure outcomes before and after ODI. The result indicates that ODI could change the stakeholders' perceptions positively and generate resource support from social organizations. The study concludes that the social enterprise ODI approach brought about a positive impact on the target organization's organizational structure and processes.

Keywords: organizational structure; organizational process; social enterprise approach

Introduction

In modern society, three actors, namely: public, private, and NGOs have significant roles to make the world a better place. Ironically, the demographic and natural resource challenges confronting many countries all over the world make the government sector increasingly unable to guarantee some services they once provided to their population. Their enormous responsibilities, limited resources, and above all, the issue of corruption often lead them to failure in pursuing the public mission of eliminating negative externalities in order to improve societal wellbeing (Santos, 2001). While in the private sector, some manufacturing processes and business operations generate negative effects on the environment and gigantic destruction of natural resources. Balancing between

economic opportunity and environmental health is a highly discussed topic among companies around the world (Miller, 2009). On the other hand, the non-government organizations (NGOs), are facing high competition for fundraising and also their services provided to the public are often seen as inefficient and ineffective. With these traditional organizational circumstances, a new kind of organization called "social enterprise" sees the gap and attempts to offer a new approach.

Social enterprise (SE) has gained interest from many practitioners, policy makers, business schools, and mainstream media especially those who deal with social issues (Brainard & Siplon, 2004; Thompson, 2002). Korosec and Berman (2006) view social enterprises as "individuals or private organizations that take the scheme to discover and address important social problems in their communities" and developing new programs, specific activities such as raising awareness, identifying resources, coordinating actions with other organizations which operating consistent with modern management strategies (Korosec & Berman, 2006). Many European countries increasingly adopt this new approach for their economic development through various forms such as employee development trusts, social firms, intermediated labor market organizations, or charities' trading arms (OECD, 2003). To promote the concept of social enterprise, many social sectors and institutions offer a start-up grant and provide relevant training to support the new young innovative social enterprises. Moreover, corporations are becoming more strategic in terms of their philanthropy, employee volunteering and corporate social responsibility models, aligning these more closely to their core business purpose and competencies.

Social enterprise can offer soft power through its unique approach. The uniqueness of social enterprise is its ability in partnering with other sectors, and leveraging ability in their capabilities and enabling solutions. The concept of social enterprise could open up opportunities for resource-starved organizations. In this study, the researcher attempts to implement organizational development interventions to a case study of business-oriented organization namely, Trendy Village, which facing business challenges by developing its organizational structure and processes to become a start-up social enterprise.

Background

Trendy Village (TV) is a retail rental space located at Siam Square that is positioned as the "Modern Fashion Street of Bangkok". The target customers are teenagers. The project space is divided into 100 small retail units with 2.4 square meters (1.2 x 2 meters).

Situational Problems

From the start, Trendy Village's rental ratio was less than 30% occupancy (with less than 30 vendors). TV was managed by hiring a team of five persons with no specific job titles and job descriptions. The organizational structure was not presented clearly. The owner had no experience and lacked the understanding of how to operate rental space. Without vision and mission, no one in the team knew what to do and what to achieve without direct supervision. There have been a tremendous growth of rental spaces in Siam Square—ranging from shopping malls to discount stores, the fast-moving trend in the eat-

shop-play concept, consumer's changing habits and so on. TV, a small shopping arcade situated amid Siam Square was facing high competition more than ever.

SWOT Analysis

SWOT analysis is used as a means of scanning the internal and external environments that influence the organization's decisions and actions. The summary of SWOT of this study is shown in Table 1 below.

Table 1.
SWOT analysis of Trendy Village

Strengths	Weaknesses
1. Located in the prime area of Bangkok 2. Cheaper rental fee	1. Lack of vision & mission & goal– unclear direction & goals 2. Lack of effective internal communication – low participation/satisfaction/morale/enthusiasm/awareness 3. Lack of identified roles and responsibilities – no job description/title resulting to job confusion between team members and vendors 4. Lack of attractive cultural artifacts – no cultural identities/un-friendly atmosphere resulting to low satisfaction & low morale 5. No working process – resulting to duplicated job & low satisfaction 6. Lack of external communication – resulting to low awareness
Opportunities	Threats
1. Trend of desired for new hanging out places 2. Social trend & CSR 3. Wider opportunities in using new media	1. Highly competitive situation & new entrants

The Need for an ODI

TV required many more resources, time, and energy to implement the needed changes to be more competitive in the retail market. However, it was in a critical and urgent resource-starved situation. Therefore, to provide solutions to TV situation, this study aims to apply a social enterprise ODI approach in developing organizational structure and processes for TV to become a start-up social enterprise.

Review of Literature
Social Enterprise

Social enterprise is the integration of two concepts of entrepreneurship and social (Mair & Marti, 2006; Martin & Osberg, 2007). It addresses a dual purpose in their mission, both economic and social solutions which meet a social demand (Simms & Robinson),

pursuit of social profit, rather than business profit which need a combination of opportunism, optimism and resourcefulness of business entrepreneurs (Bornstein, 2004). Their bottom line is "social value creation" through their new ideas, products and services, methodologies and attitudes changing. (Schwab, 2006). The way they stimulate empowerment of actors outside the organizational boundaries, beneficiaries, users, or partners to tackle the social problems is dramatically powerful. Social enterprise will live up to its promise if the outcomes show more improved economic and social circumstances for individuals and communities rather than organizational growth (Gray, et al., 2003). Chertok, Hamaoui, and Jamison proposed that all organizations fall along a continuum from social to financial returns of investment (as shown in Figure 1). For effectively perform to be social enterprise, they need to use blended value, earning profit enough to pursuing social mission, is a key component (Chertok, Hamaoui, Jamison, 2008).
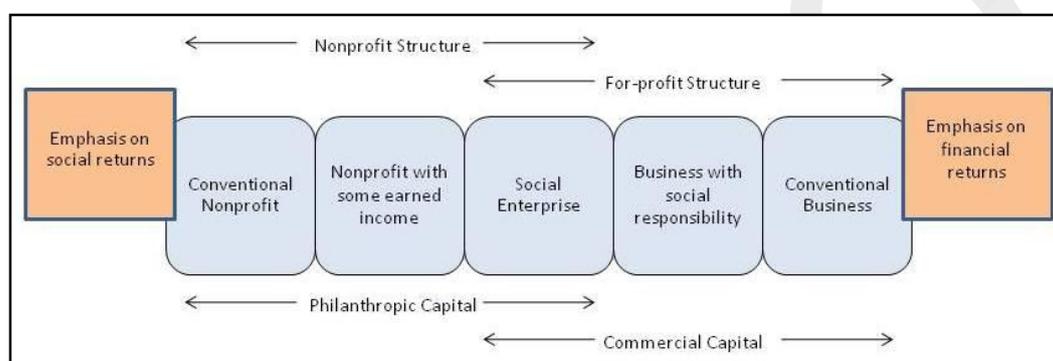

Figure 1. Spectrum of Social and Financial Return (Chertok, Hamaoui, & Jamison, 2008)

Organizational Structure

Organizational structure is focused on how the organization is divided into parts and how the parts are coordinated, in order to achieve the organization's goals. Goals are specific, straightforward statements of expectations, be relatively short-term and help motivate participants. Organizational structure can be viewed as the way responsibility and power are allocated inside the organization and procedures are carried out by organizational members (Gerwin & Kolodny, 1992). Organizational structure is the result of managerial decisions concerning the five major attributes of the organization: the division of labor, unity of command, the bases for departmentalization, the span of control, and the delegation of authority and responsibility. The structure of an organization is the formal system of working relationships that both divide and coordinate the tasks of multiple people and groups to serve a common purpose (Hodge, 1996). Organizational structure is defined as "the network of relationships and roles existing throughout the organization" (Goldhaber, 1984). Typically, the structure of an organization is represented in the form of an organizational chart.

Organizational Process

According to Deming, if you can't describe what you are doing as a process, you don't know what you are doing". A process defines "what" needs to be done and which

roles are involved. A process consists of the following: roles and responsibilities of the people assigned to do the work; appropriate tools and equipment to support individuals in doing their jobs; and procedures and methods defining "how" to do the tasks and relationships between the task (Mike, 2007). Organizational processes are the flow of activities that must be linked together for supporting organizational purpose. The concept is built on the underlying human behavior, and human communication. The communication process underlies common aspects of organizational behavior, ranging from management and leadership to teamwork and organizational design (Charles & Gary, 2002). The structure in an organization defines clearly the various roles and functions, whereby the organizational member's behaviors are governed by sets of organizational processes. Personnel from all levels of the organization who have participated in the plan process become more receptive and less pessimistic about the plan and more motivated to make the plan a success (Keith & Cynthia, 2010).

Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework of this study was derived by assessing organizational problems through the Pre ODI Stage. Seven variables appeared to affect performance of Trendy Village. These include two variables which are found to be rooted on organizational structure: (1) direction and goals, (2) roles and responsibilities and five variables reflected problems in organizational process: (1) participation, (2) satisfaction, (3) awareness, (4) morale, and (5) enthusiasm. For the purpose of transforming the business-oriented organization, TV, into a start-up social enterprise, the researcher attempts to instill social value into existing organizational structure and processes. The desired outcomes of this study was to enable Trendy Village to become a start-up social enterprise with support from social partners. This framework was used as a guideline to develop ODI in this study. The conceptual framework of this study is shown in Figure 2 below.
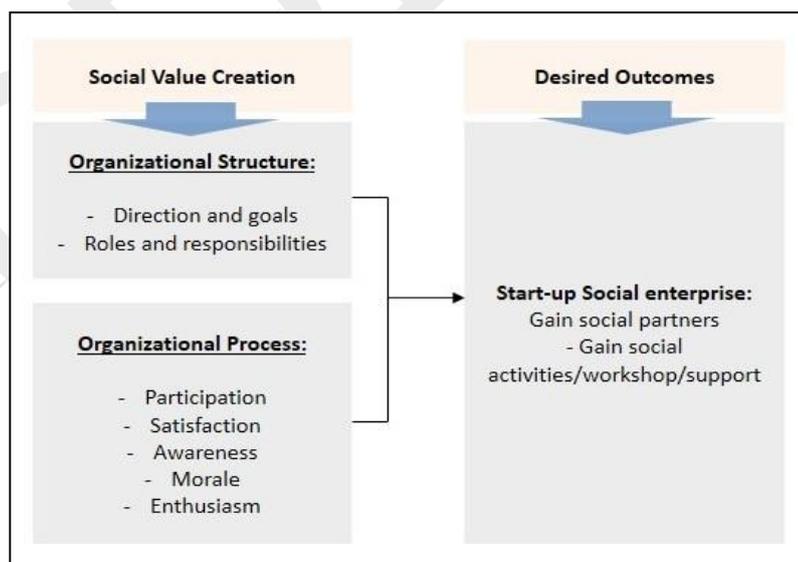

Figure 2. Conceptual framework

Research Method

This research utilizes action research framework. The action research framework was divided into three phases: Phase I, the Pre ODI stage, where the researcher assessed the current situation by employing a combination of qualitative and quantitative approaches. The qualitative approach involved an in-depth interview with the executive. The quantitative approach was conducted by collecting data through questionnaires with 30 respondents, including five members of the team and 25 vendors at TV. Phase II, the ODI stage, the researcher designed and implemented ODI activities by using social enterprise ODI approach to solve TV's existing problems. Phase III, the Post ODI stage, all the data were gathered, analyzed and demonstrated empirical results of the key findings.

For qualitative approach, data were derived from the in-depth interviews included field notes, photograph, VDO recorder, field observations and review of documents.

For quantitative approach, the information collected by the questionnaires consisted of closed questions. The first part contained personal information of the target respondents, using categorical choice items. The second part was formulated to assess the opinions of team members and vendors, using a Likert scale from 1 to 5, where (1) refers to 'strongly disagree' and (5) 'strongly agree'. The questionnaire was reviewed for its validity. Additionally, the reliability was tested using Cronbach's alpha and the reliability score was 0.80 which was considered a sound questionnaire instrument.

In terms of data analysis, quantitative approach made use of several statistical tools including frequency, percentage, and standard deviation to analyze data from the questionnaire. T-test was used to test the hypothesis. The statistical analysis was set at 0.05 level of significance.

Action Research Framework

The action research framework of the study is shown in Figure 3 below.

Figure 3. Action Research Framework

Pre ODI Stage:

After assessment, two main organizational problems of TV were identified: 1) organizational structure and 2) organizational process.

After the assessment, two organizational problems of TV were identified, namely organizational structure and organizational process. For TV's organizational structure, the following issues were apparent: no clear direction and specified goals and no clear roles and responsibilities of team and vendors.

For TV's organizational process, the following problems exist: low level of participation, low morale resulting in dissatisfaction of team and vendors, low level of awareness of organizational value, and low enthusiasm among team and vendors.

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Organization Development Intervention (ODI) Stage:

ODI for Organizational Structure

Due to lack of direction and goals, the researcher first held an informal meeting to discuss with executive, team members, and vendors to ensure that the concept of social enterprise is widely acknowledged. After that, several meetings were later conducted to stimulate open communication which created confidence and sense of shared goals among executive, team members, and vendors. Later on, the social vision, mission, and goals were co-designed. As the key integration of social enterprise focused on both business and social purpose simultaneously, the new vision and mission were revised by attempting to demonstrate both business and social purposes. The revised vision statement was *"The best space for good shopping, good dreaming, and good sharing"* and the mission statement became *"Connecting good vendors, good activities, and good people"*. The new vision and mission attempted to communicate the new direction of organization which concentrated on both business purpose, providing good shopping experience, and selecting good vendors for customers. Meanwhile, the social purpose stimulated stakeholders to participate and share with the community through social activities. Furthermore, the name was changed from "Trendy Village" to *"BEST WALK" to make it* more relevant to the new vision and mission. A proper slogan was also developed *"Make a dream and sharing"* to communicate how the space was designed to draw stakeholders who were interested to participate in social activities. The logo was re-designed and the new vision and mission were established to serve as a guide for the executive, team members, and vendors in all actions. Furthermore, the intended goals for TV were to integrate both business and social goals. As a result, five organizational goals were aimed as indicators for start-up social enterprise: 1) at least 10 % of the rental space (10 rental units) were occupied by social enterprises; 2) at least 10 social activities were organized in the space throughout the year; 3) increasing visitors by 10% ;4) increasing vendor sales by 10%; and 5) increasing social awareness both internal and external through productive media.

To clarify new roles and responsibilities, a series of internal meetings were held to educate the concept of successful social enterprises to the executives, team members and vendors. This step was essential for raising awareness of the value of the social enterprise among the participants. After these meetings, it was anticipated that the executive would be motivated to increase downward communications and participate in all activities during the change. For team members, specific job titles and job descriptions were assigned, and vendors were requested for increased cooperation in promoting the new concept of TV to customers as well as participating in social duties such as social workshops, donations to nonprofits and so on. Furthermore, a new organizational chart with clear work flow was redesigned to help clarify the roles and responsibilities of team members and vendors.

ODI for Organizational Process

To increase interactive participation, the researcher emphasized and promoted horizontal and upward communication among the executive, team members, and vendors. They were encouraged to propose meetings with the executive, raised issues and generate discussions. A Facebook page was used as an open communication channel for sharing

opinions and updating new ideas during the change stage. Moreover, many suggestion boxes were placed throughout the shopping space and social activities space to collect feedbacks and comments. Most importantly, the team members and vendors assumed their new 'social' roles where they have to spend some time to work with social partners to co-create social activities and workshops.

To solve the problem with low satisfaction and to improve morale, a new organizational chart with clear work flow was given to team members and vendors which aimed at decreasing their work confusion. The renovation of the project to display new cultural artifacts, tables and chairs was approved by the executive. With the new workshop space, the activities stage was installed, decorative items such as inspiring photos, goodwill and wisdom quotes were seen throughout the space to reflect the social value within organization.

To increase public awareness of TV and its newly renovated space, POP media, leaflet, poster, VTR were used. The expected outcome of these media was to promote TV as the 'social enterprise space' in the mind of all stakeholders, including team members and vendors, as well as, customers, volunteers, and the public.

To increase enthusiasm, the researcher suggested that the team members and vendors work along with social partners to share ideas and co-create social workshop and activities from the start. The executive, team members, and vendors were stimulated to engage with social partners throughout several meetings and workshops. As a result, twelve social partners were established and committed to co-host social workshops and activities at TV such as 'economy family workshop' by Por-Paeng Family Foundation, 'eco-living and organic workshop' by Suan-Gnuen Mee Ma, 'how-to become social enterprise workshop' by TSEO, 'plastic bag recycle workshop' by Simply, 'art for healing activities' by Children Mind, and so on.

Post ODI Stage

Following the intervention stage, the researcher gathered opinions from five team members and 25 vendors using questionnaires, and conducted one in-depth interview with the executive. All the data collected was analyzed and the empirical results are reported as the findings of the study.

Findings

The findings of the study derived from quantitative data are summarized below in Table 2:

Table 2.
Mean statistics of Organizational Structure and Organizational Process

Factors	Pre-ODI		Post-ODI	
	Mean	**Meaning**	**Mean**	**Meaning**
Organizational Structure:				
- **Direction and Goals**	2.20	Disagree	3.61	Agree
- **Roles and Responsibilities**	1.79	Strongly Disagree	2.68	Uncertainty
Organizational Process:				
- **Participation**	1.30	Strongly Disagree	2.90	Uncertainty
- **Satisfaction**	1.79	Strongly Disagree	3.21	Uncertainty
- **Awareness**	1.73	Strongly Disagree	4.24	Strongly Agree
- **Morale**	1.61	Strongly Disagree	2.75	Uncertainty
- **Enthusiasm**	1.50	Strongly Disagree	3.30	Uncertainty

Table 2 shows that OD interventions could change the respondents' opinion in a positive way for all factors: direction and goals factors changed from 'Disagree' to 'Agree' (with the mean statistics of 2.20 to 3.61); roles and responsibilities factors changed from 'Strongly disagree' to 'Uncertainty' (with the mean statistics of 1.79 to 2.68); participation factors changed from 'Strongly disagree' to 'Uncertainty' (with the mean statistics of 1.30 to 2.90); satisfaction factors changed from 'Strongly disagree' to 'Uncertainty' (with the mean statistics of 1.79 to 3.21); awareness factors changed from 'Strongly disagree' to 'Strongly agree' (with the mean statistics of 1.73 to 4.24); morale factors changed from 'Strongly disagree' to 'Uncertainty' (with the mean statistics of 1.61 to 2.75); and enthusiasm factors changed from 'Strongly disagree' to 'Uncertainty' (with the mean statistics of 1.50 to 3.30). Comparing the Pre-ODI and Post-ODI data above shows a significant shift in the response of the respondents. ODI had the greatest impact on organizational process in terms of awareness from 'Strongly disagree' to 'Strongly agree'.

Hypothesis Testing

Table 3 shows comparison of main factors and results of hypothesis testing. For direction and goals, the statistical mean increased from 2.20 to 3.61. The difference of the statistical mean factor is -1.41 with the t-statistics is -9.59. For roles and responsibilities, the mean statistic increased from 1.79 to 2.68. The difference of this factor is -0.89 with the t-test is -12.04. For participation, the mean statistic increases from 1.30 to 2.90. The difference of this factor is -1.59 with the t-test is -26.81. For satisfaction, the statistical mean increased from 1.79 to 3.21. The difference of this factor is -1.42 with the t-test is -19.60. For awareness, the mean increased from 1.73 to 4.24. The difference of this factor is -2.52 with the t-test is -18.58. For morale, the mean increased from 1.61 to 2.75. The difference of this factor is -1.14 with the t-test is -20.65. For enthusiasm, the mean increased

from 1.50 to 3.30. The difference of this factor is -1.80 with the t-test is -24.81. The results of the hypothesis testing indicated that all main factors showed a significant t-test at the 5% level. It suggests that the respondents' opinion significantly improved after the ODI regarding organizational structure (direction and goals, roles and responsibilities) and organizational process (participation, satisfaction, awareness, morale, enthusiasm) by social enterprise ODI approach.

Table 3.
Comparison of Main Factors

Factors	Mean			
	Before	After	Difference	t-test
Organizational Structure:				
- **Direction and Goals**	2.20	3.61	-1.41	-9.59**
- **Roles and Responsibilities**	1.79	2.68	-0.89	-12.04**
Organizational Process:				
- **Participation**	1.30	2.90	-1.59	-26.81**
- **Satisfaction**	1.79	3.21	-1.42	-19.60**
- **Awareness**	1.73	4.24	-2.52	-18.58**
- **Morale**	1.61	2.75	-1.14	-20.65**
- **Enthusiasm**	1.50	3.30	-1.80	-24.81**

Note: ** 1% level of significance

Qualitative Analysis of the In-Depth Interviews

From the interview with the executive, positive change was noticeable. The social enterprise ODI approach positively affected overall TV's performance. The new social vision, mission, and goals helped to guide TV's direction and its team to move forward to achieve their organizational goals. Integrating social enterprise into ODI with clearly specified social vision, mission, and goals helped to lead where organizational direction were heading. Meanwhile, these also helped to keep reminding the team members and vendors to operate on both business and social purpose. The workflow allowed the team members to work more efficiently and also reduced job duplication between team members and vendors. Moreover, job titles and job descriptions were helpful for the team members to classify their business roles and responsibilities; while having social roles created more participation and more emotional involvement of all the stakeholders. Overall, horizontal, downward, and upward communication increased satisfaction, morale, and participation. Maintaining congruent internal and external communication helped TV to express social value efficiently and increased awareness of the public, at the same time, attracted more customers, volunteers, as well as media. Working and engaging with social partners at the early stage enabled the executive, team members and vendors to recognize the importance of blending the social value with the organizational value. The project's renovation with changing cultural artifacts fit well with the new organizational direction, and supported

well with the ongoing social activities. Attractive cultural signs also positively enhanced social values. Additionally, the renovation helped increase overall satisfaction and morale as it became apparent how the organization took part in improving the situation. As a result, participation and enthusiasm of the team members and vendors highly increased due to closed working relationship and active engagement with social partners.

Social enterprise is a relatively new approach, thus there is a need to develop new structure and processes.   Particularly for a start-up social enterprise, generating social support from social partners for organizing social workshop and activities have proved to be vital to success. For TV, working and engaging with social partners provided the opportunities to work to achieve beyond business profit, but also social rewards, trust and commitment. After the intervention process, it is apparent that all stakeholders had positive perception toward social enterprise ODI approach.

Conclusion

This study demonstrates that the implementation of social enterprise ODI approach on organizational structure and organizational processes could result in a positive impact on target organization. Open opportunity to co-create new vision and mission stimulated participation among the executive, team members, and vendors. The executive's willingness to adopt new model, in hope that it would solve the business situation, was one of the factors that pulled tremendous support from both the team members, vendors and social partners through empowerment. Not only for internal stakeholders (team members and vendors), but also external stakeholders (volunteers and social partners) who had seen positive change. Furthermore, customers stated that they were willing to support the project by donation, workshop participation, and re-visit the space for future shopping.

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