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Flexible Occupational Skills Development for the Elderly through Empowerment to Enhance Quality of Life and Strengthen the Grassroots Economy

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Abstract

This research aimed to 1) study the potential, knowledge, and wisdom of the elderly in the area; 2) develop a flexible occupational skills learning module for the elderly; 3) experiment with a flexible occupational skills learning module for the elderly; and 4) study the quality of life and income from flexible occupational skills for the elderly. The research was conducted according to the research and development process using a mixed methodology, social phenomenological study, inductive data analysis, and local or community-based research. The target group comprised 50 elderly people from the Thanam Oi Subdistrict, Phayuha Khiri District, Nakhon Sawan Province, Thailand. The research period was 21 months, from 1 October 2023 to 30 June 2025. The researchers conducted the research in four steps as follows: Step 1: Analysis of the potential, knowledge, and wisdom of the elderly. The researchers visited the area to study the potential, knowledge, and wisdom of the elderly and their needs regarding career development. This research involved a document study, participatory observation, interviews, and focus group discussions. and brainstorming. Step 2: Development of a flexible occupational skills learning module for older adults. The researcher used the data from Step 1 to create a flexible occupational skills learning module for the elderly. This is an action research study that experiments with a learning module and conducts occupational skills training for the elderly. Data were collected both during and after the activity. The results were summarised and evaluated, and the information was returned to the communities. Finally, Step 4: Study of the quality of life and income from flexible occupational skills for the elderly. This is a career creation from occupational skills to income generation for the elderly, increasing their quality of life, self-esteem, and income from occupations.

Research Findings Revealed

1) The potential of the elderly: The Khao Mai Den Elderly Group, initiated in April 2023, consists of 50 members, including senior citizens and those aged 55–59 years from five villages. They meet monthly to participate in healthcare activities supported by public health officials. The elderly possess diverse potentials and wisdom. Most have experience in traditional handicrafts such as bamboo weaving, mats, rice baskets, and embroidery, providing a strong foundation in handicraft skills, pattern design, meticulousness, and perseverance. While bamboo and rattan are becoming increasingly rare, the elderly are considering the use of modern materials such as plastic threads instead of bamboo or rattan. They state that plastic threads are durable, come in various colours, are affordable, and can create patterns similar to traditional wisdom.

2) Development of flexible occupational skills learning modules for the elderly: The researchers created five learning modules: Understanding Materials and Equipment, Basics of Plastic Thread Weaving, Designing and Preparing for Basket Weaving, Weaving Simple Baskets, and Understanding Colours and Patterns. The quality was assessed by seven experts, and the learning modules were found to be of the highest quality.

3) The trial of the Flexible Occupational Skills Learning Module for the Elderly, which was held in a workshop for the elderly, found that participants participated in the workshop. Overall, basket-weaving skills were at the highest level.

4) Creating a career from flexible career skills for the elderly is an expansion of occupational skills training for a good quality of life and income generation for the elderly. The Elderly Club received a budget from the Elderly Fund Administration Division, Department of Elderly Affairs, Ministry of Social Development and Human Security. It was used as a cost for purchasing materials for

the production of baskets using plastic threads. After participating in the flexible career skills development activity for six months, the quality of life was found to be at its highest level.

However, longitudinal research should be conducted to evaluate the sustainability of skills, supplementary income and quality of life. Research and develop digital learning media or online media appropriate for the elderly to increase access to knowledge and promote lifelong learning for the elderly.

Keywords: Flexible Occupational Skills, Elderly, Empowerment, Quality of Life, Strengthening of the Grassroots Economy, Community-based Research, Aging Society, Handicrafts, Income Generation.

Introduction

Thailand is entering a complete aged society, with the number of older adults continuously increasing. This demographic shift has posed significant challenges in maintaining the quality of life of the elderly in terms of physical health, mental well-being, economy, and social participation. Particularly in the economic dimension, studies reveal that most older adults still wish to have an occupation or income to support themselves and their families ([HelpAge International, 2021](#)). However, health limitations, reduced mobility, and changing social roles prevent many of them from continuing full-time or physically demanding occupations.

This situation is evident in the case of the Khao Mai Den elderly group, which consists of 50 members, including both elderly persons and pre-elderly individuals aged 55–59 years. The group meets once a month to participate in health promotion activities supported by local public health officials. While these activities contribute positively to their physical and mental health, many members continue to face challenges in income generation and self-reliance. Therefore, developing occupational skills that are adaptable to their capacity and health conditions is crucial.

Flexible occupational skills have been recognised as an important approach to responding to the current needs of older adults ([Kim & Lee, 2018](#)). Such skills enable older adults to choose occupations aligned with their aptitudes, interests, health status, and living context. They also provide opportunities to work at or near home with flexible time and workload according to individual abilities ([Institute for Population and Social Research, 2022](#); [Morrow-Howell, 2010](#)). For the Khao Mai Den elderly group, developing flexible occupational skills not only helps generate income but also enhances psychological well-being, instills a sense of self-worth, provides a sense of purpose in life, and contributes to happiness in daily life ([Narushima et al., 2018](#)).

However, for older adults to genuinely benefit from flexible occupational skills, empowerment is necessary ([Zimmerman, 2000](#)). Many older people lack self-confidence, perceive themselves as a burden, or believe they have insufficient potential ([HelpAge International, 2021](#)). Empowerment fosters a mindset shift, enabling older adults to recognise their own value and potential, think, act, and make decisions with confidence, and manage barriers or limitations effectively ([Chen et al., 2014](#)). For the Khao Mai Den elderly group, systematic empowerment would allow members to change their self-perception from being dependent to being capable of supporting themselves.

When older adults can secure an occupation, earn income, and achieve self-reliance, their quality of life and that of their families improves. Simultaneously, their economic participation strengthens the grassroots economy and stimulates local economic circulation, as exemplified in the Khao Mai Den community. This reduces the burden on both families and the government, contributing to a stronger and more sustainable society for the elderly.

For these reasons, this study focuses on “Developing Flexible Occupational Skills for Older Adults through Empowerment.” This is of great importance in enhancing the elderly’s ability to live with dignity and self-reliance and in contributing to a strong and sustainable aged society. This study also seeks to identify development approaches suitable to the Thai context, particularly in local settings such as the Khao Mai Den elderly group, which can be applied in training programs, occupational promotion, and policy-making at both community and national levels.

Research Objectives

- To study the potential, knowledge, and wisdom of the elderly in the area.
- To develop a flexible occupational skills learning module for older adults.

- To pilot a flexible occupational skills learning module for the elderly.
- To study the quality of life and income from flexible occupational skills for the elderly.

Scope of Research

This research was conducted within the Research and Development process, employing a mixed methodology. This study adopted a social phenomenological approach, inductive data analysis, and community-based research. The target group comprised 50 elderly people from Thanam Oi Subdistrict, Phayuha Khiri District, Nakhon Sawan Province. The research period was 21 months, from October 1, 2023, to June 30, 2025.

Research Methodology

The researcher conducted the research in four stages.

Step 1: Analysis of the Potential, Knowledge, and Wisdom of the Elderly

The researcher visited the Thanam Oi Subdistrict, Phayuha Khiri District, Nakhon Sawan Province, to study the potential, knowledge, and wisdom of the elderly and their needs regarding career development. This study utilised document reviews, participatory observations, interviews, focus group discussions, and brainstorming sessions to identify career interests among the elderly.

The data sources included community leaders, village health volunteers, the elderly, family caregivers, and personnel from government and private agencies involved in elderly care.

The study period was from October 2023 to December 2023.

The data collection tools included observational notes, focus group discussion notes, and unstructured interviews.

For data collection, the researcher coordinated with the Subdistrict Administrative Organization and the Elderly Club to hold a meeting to understand and communicate the findings of the study. The researcher visited the area to study the potential, knowledge, and wisdom of the elderly and their needs regarding career development in the post-retirement period. This study utilised participatory

observation of community activities, unstructured interviews, group discussions, and brainstorming sessions.

Data Analysis: The document study conducted content analysis, analysed and synthesised data from observations and interviews, and presented them descriptively.

Step 2: Development of a Flexible Occupational Skills Learning Module for the Elderly

The researcher used data from Phase 1 to develop a flexible occupational skills learning module for the elderly in Tha Nam Oi Subdistrict, focusing on the plastic basket weaving. This module is aligned with their way of life, using local wisdom to develop their skills.

Regarding Data Sources, there were Two Groups

- A workshop was conducted to develop the learning module. The members included occupational group members, local wisdom, and elderly club committee members. The participants were purposively selected for this study.
- A minimum bachelor's degree in a related field, or at least three years of experience teaching or training in basket weaving, or as a teacher of arts and crafts, occupational work, non-formal education, occupational work, and technology.

The data collection tools included meeting minutes and interviews. The content validity was verified by three experts, with an item-objective congruence (IOC) of 1 for all items.

Data collection consisted of a workshop to draft the learning module. The workshop consisted of five occupational group members, three local wisdom members, three elderly club committee members, and the researcher. The participants were purposively selected.

The workshop, which consisted of 12 participants, was held over a three-day period at the Nong Mai Den Elderly Club, Tha Nam Oi Subdistrict, Phayuha Khiri District, Nakhon Sawan Province, between 1-3 March 2024, presented the draft learning module to experts for suggestions and to assess the quality. The quality of the learning module was analysed using the mean and standard deviation.

Step 3: Experimental Use of Flexible Occupational Skills Learning Modules for the Elderly

This step involved action research. The experiment involved a learning module on plastic fibre basket weaving, which is a flexible occupational skill for the elderly. Occupational skills training was conducted voluntarily for the elderly. Data were collected both during and after the activity. The results were summarised and evaluated, and feedback was provided to the community.

Variables: The independent variable was the plastic fibre basket weaving learning module. The dependent variables were basket weaving skills and satisfaction with training.

The target group consisted of 50 elderly people from the Thanam Oi Subdistrict, Phayuha Khiri District, Nakhon Sawan Province. The participants were recruited voluntarily for the study.

The research instruments included the following:

The learning module on plastic fibre basket weaving was quality-checked by seven experts and was found to be of the highest quality.

The researcher assessed basket weaving skills using a 5-point rubric and a 5-item structured observation form. The content validity was assessed by three experts. The IOC was 1.00 for all the items. The reliability was 0.91

The satisfaction assessment form for participating in the skills training consisted of a 5-point rating scale with eight items. Three experts assessed the content validity. The IOC was 1.00 for all items, with a reliability of 0.92

Data Collection: Interested elderly participants were recruited to participate in an occupational skills training module on plastic basket weaving. The workshop was held from May 10-13, 2024, at the Nong Mai Den Elderly Club, Thanam Oi Subdistrict, Phayuha Khiri District, Nakhon Sawan Province. The researcher observed basket weaving skills through participatory observation, surveyed satisfaction with the training, analysed basket weaving skills, and observed the behaviour of the elderly during the occupational skills training. Means and standard deviations were used to analyse the data.

Step 4: Study of Quality of Life and Income from Flexible Occupational Skills for the Elderly

This step involves creating careers from occupational skills, extending the results of occupational skills training to generate income for the elderly, and enhancing their quality of life, self-esteem, and income from their occupations. The project will be conducted between August 2024 and May 2025, a period of 10 months. The Elderly Club managed the production of plastic baskets. The researcher served as a facilitator at every step, from sourcing production costs, purchasing materials and equipment, creating product labels, calculating sales prices, preparing income and expenditure accounts, and planning and implementing the distribution channels. This ensured that the elderly could produce and sell products systematically and with standards, generating a sustainable income and confidence in their careers.

Two variables were studied: 1) Quality of Life, comprising 1.1) Confidence in new occupational skills, 1.2) Acceptance from family and community, and 1.3) Valuable participation in society, and 2) Monthly income of the elderly from selling products after occupational skills training.

The target group consisted of 50 elderly people in Thanam Oi Subdistrict, Phayuha Khiri District, Nakhon Sawan Province. Occupational skills training participants were selected through purposive sampling.

The data collection tools included a 9-item, 5-point rating scale quality-of-life questionnaire. Content validity was assessed by three experts, with an IOC of 1.00 for each item, a reliability scale of 0.89, and an income summary form.

Data collection included older adults who completed a quality-of-life questionnaire. The researcher collaborated with the Elderly Club to obtain information on the income from product sales for the elderly. Data were collected between June 10-20, 2025, and then analysed for quality of life and income using means and standard deviations.

Review of Literature

The findings of financial inclusion literature indicate that the access to training and credit designed considering the characteristics of marginalized

populations, designed flexibly to meet certain socio-economic and gender-specific barriers, may promote a sustainable socio-economic development (Buvinic & O'Donnell, 2019; Mishra et al., 2024). In the case of older communities, competence, self-determination, and sense of meaning as the ICT-based empowerment activities are determined as essential factors that assist in individual and community empowerment, enhance psychological well-being and involvement (Hur, 2016).

Flexibility and empowerment skill development programs should address various aspects (such as diminishing work stress and encouraging work empowerment as well as providing social support to maintain sustained engagement and improvements in the quality of life in older adults) (Singh et al., 2020). Moreover, economic empowerment interventions based on peer support and financial capabilities development and management in overcoming social determinants point to the necessity of comprehensive interventions combining skill-building activities with facilitating settings (Jimenez-Solomon et al., 2016).

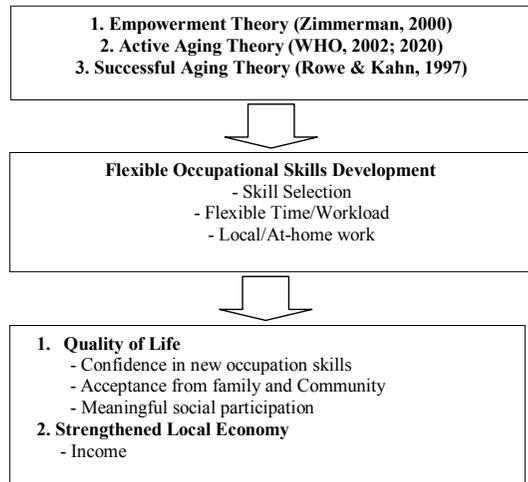
The focus of national policies on skill development also insists on the significance of the inclusion models that cater to the needs of the socio-political barriers and assist marginalized demographic groups, such as the elderly, by enabling them via empowerment and promoting entrepreneurship (Shaikh and Ganesh, 2024). Critical thinking and collaboration that are part of 21st-century competency-based learning are holistically assessed and developed alongside flexible competency-based pedagogy to create lifelong learning and adaptability necessary in the growth of elderly occupational skills (Long et al., 2024).

Skills training coupled with social empowerment and financial inclusion can therefore be used to improve the quality of life of the elderly people and help in strengthening the grassroots economies through enlarging their involvement in labor and entrepreneurial activities that would lead to greater economic independence and social cohesion (Arbesman and Logsdon, 2011; Meager, 2009).

In short, the evidence indicates that the development of flexible occupational skills among the elderly is most appropriate when it is designed

to empower them, both psychologically and economically, involve peer and social networks, respond to gender and socio-political limitations, exploit the ICT platform, and be consistent with the inclusive national policy frameworks, which in turn, increases the quality of life and the economic power of the grassroots (Buvinic & O'Donnell, 2019; Hur, 2016; Mishra et al., 2024; Shaikh & Ganesh, 2024)

Research Framework



Research Results

Study of the Potential, Knowledge, and Wisdom of the Local Elderly

The study revealed that a group of 50 elderly people from Ban Khao Mai Den was established in April 2013 in the multipurpose building of the Ban Khao Mai Den School. The group comprises 50 members, including elders and those aged 55–59 years, from five villages around the Tha Nam Oi and Muang Hak sub-districts. They meet monthly to participate in health care activities, supported by public health officials. Most elderly people have experience in traditional handicrafts, such as bamboo weaving, mat making, rice basket making, and embroidery, which have provided them with a strong foundation in handicrafts, pattern design, meticulousness, and patience. Many are knowledgeable about material management and the application of local resources in construction. Although bamboo and rattan are becoming increasingly rare, the elderly are exploring the use of modern materials, such as plastic threads, as substitutes for bamboo or rattan. They cite plastic

threads as durable, colourful, affordable, and capable of creating patterns that closely mirror traditional wisdom.

Interviews and brainstorming sessions revealed that older adults were most interested in weaving baskets using plastic threads. This is because the work is light, does not require much energy, and can be done at home or in groups at senior centres. They also see plastic baskets as an easy-to-sell product that is practical for everyday use, with markets both within their communities and online.

Development of a Flexible Occupational Skills Learning Module for the Elderly

The researcher used data from Phase 1 to develop a flexible occupational skills learning module for the elderly in the Tha Nam Oi Subdistrict. This module focuses on plastic basket weaving, aligning with their way of life and using local wisdom to develop skills. The workshop consisted of five occupational group members, three local wisdom members, three senior citizen club committee members, and the researcher. The 12 participants were purposively selected over a three-day period at the Nong Mai Den Senior Citizens Club in the Tha Nam Oi Subdistrict of the Phayuha Khiri District in Nakhon Sawan Province.

The learning module was then presented to seven experts for their evaluation. The module’s quality was found to be of the highest quality as follows:

Table 1 Results of the Quality Assessment of the Learning Module on Weaving Baskets from Plastic Threads by Experts (N=7)

Evaluation list	Mean (M)	S.D.
Content Accuracy - The content is accurate and in accordance with academic principles and the steps for basket weaving.	4.71	0.49
Content Completeness - It covers the objectives and skills to be taught.	4.66	0.48
Content Clarity and Explanation - It is easy to understand and appropriate for the learner	4.74	0.45

Appropriateness of Learning Activities - It aligns with the content and learning objectives.	4.69	0.47
Appropriateness of Images, Diagrams, or Supporting Media: It is clear and helps improve the understanding of the content.	4.76	0.44
Appropriateness of Language: It is correct according to Thai grammar and communicates to the point.	4.68	0.45
Sequentially - The content is organized systematically and appropriately for learning.	4.73	0.46
Appropriateness for Learners - It is appropriate for the learner's age, ability, and background.	4.70	0.45
Practical Application - The learner can apply the knowledge in practical applications.	4.75	0.43
Interest and motivation for learners.	4.72	0.45
Total	4.71	0.46

As shown in Table 1, the overall quality of the learning module had an average value of 4.71, with a standard deviation of 0.46, which was at the highest level. When considering each issue, it was found that all issues received the highest and high average values, especially the issues of appropriateness of images, diagrams, or accompanying media (M = 4.76) and practical application (M = 4.75), indicating that the module was complete in terms of content and practical application. Next were the issues of clarity of content and explanation (M = 4.74) and sequentially (M = 4.73), which were at a very good level, reflecting the systematic, easy-to-understand, and appropriate content organisation for learners.

Experimental use of a Flexible Occupational Skills Learning Module for Older Adults

This phase involved an action research study. This study piloted a learning module on plastic basket weaving, which is a flexible occupational skills training program for older adults. Occupational skills training was conducted for voluntary elderly participants over a five-day period. Data were collected both during and after training. The results were as follows:

Table 2 The Results of the Assessment of Basket Weaving Skills of the Participants, Assessed by the Trainer (N=50)

Evaluation list	Mean (M)	S.D.
Understanding the basic principles of basket weaving	4.56	0.50
Proper selection of materials and equipment	4.62	0.48
Ability to shape basket frames	4.50	0.53
Ability to weave basic patterns (plain weave)	4.58	0.51
Ability to shape basket edges	4.48	0.55
Ability to finish edges and finish neatly	4.60	0.49
Creating stable basket handles	4.54	0.52
Creativity in designing patterns/colors	4.66	0.47
Dedication and perseverance in working	4.70	0.46
Working collaboratively with group members	4.68	0.45
Total	4.59	0.50

From Table 2, when considering each item, it was found that the item with the highest mean value was “intention and patience in working” (M = 4.70), indicating true intention and patience in practising new skills. The items with the next highest mean values were “working with friends in a group” (M = 4.68) and “creativity in designing patterns/ colors” (M = 4.66), reflecting good cooperation and creativity among the elderly.

Based on observations and interviews with the workshop participants, the following conclusions can be drawn:

Understanding of Basic Basket Weaving Principles

Most elderly people understood the principles of plastic basket weaving in general and were able to explain the frame construction and weaving process. Some had prior experience weaving rattan baskets or mats, which allowed them to quickly grasp the principles. However, some students were confused about the placement of vertical and horizontal lines, requiring repeated practice and real-world examples to support their learning.

Correct Material and Equipment Selection

Most were able to correctly select plastic lines according to the instructor’s instructions, prioritising the colour and width of the plastic line appropriate for the application. Some expressed a desire to learn how to purchase materials at wholesale prices to reduce costs and sought additional recommendations from

retailers or online channels for easier procurement.

Basket Frame Construction Skills

Initially, most elderly people found basket frame construction quite difficult, requiring concentration and meticulous attention to aligning the lines with equal spacing. After several practice sessions with the instructor, their confidence increased, and they were able to construct the basket frame themselves, although some required time and assistance in aligning the lines.

Basic Weaving Skills (Smooth Weaving Pattern)

All participants successfully created a smooth weaving pattern. Although they were initially confused about the up-and-down thread insertion, they were able to perform it correctly with continued practice. Many feel proud of being able to make baskets by hand and are interested in learning more innovative patterns.

I Believe that this Skill can be used to Generate Additional Income

Most elderly people believe that weaving plastic baskets is a skill that can truly generate additional income because the materials are inexpensive and there is a market for it, both within the community and through online sales through their children. Some say that selling baskets provides them with a small income without having to rely heavily on their children. They also feel proud that they can earn their own income and support their families.

Table 3 The Results of the Evaluation of Satisfaction with the Participation of the Elderly in the Workshops (N=50)

Evaluation list	Mean (M)	S.D.
The training content was easy to understand and appropriate.	4.72	0.45
The instructor explained clearly and was friendly.	4.80	0.40
The training duration was appropriate.	4.60	0.50
The training location was suitable and comfortable.	4.66	0.48
The knowledge and skills gained met expectations.	4.74	0.44
There were sufficient practical activities.	4.70	0.46
I am confident in applying the knowledge in practice.	4.68	0.47
Overall, I am satisfied with this training.	4.78	0.42
Total	4.71	0.45

The data in the table indicate that the training participants were at a very good level of satisfaction in all aspects, especially the instructor’s clear and friendly explanations, which had the highest mean score of 4.80. This was followed by overall satisfaction with the training (M = 4.78) and the knowledge and skills gained as expected (M = 4.74). This indicates that the design of the training content and activities appropriately responded to the needs of older adults.

Career Creation from Flexible Occupational Skills for the Elderly

This step involves creating careers through occupational skills and expanding occupational skills training to improve the quality of life and generate income for the elderly. Between August 2024 and May 2025, the Elderly Club received a budget of 50,000 baht from the Elderly Fund Administration Division, Department of Older Persons Affairs, Ministry of Social Development and Human Security in fiscal year 2024. This funding will be used to purchase materials for the production of plastic baskets, create product labels, and identify distribution channels in stores, flea markets, and online markets. Results are as follows:

Table 4 The Results of the Quality of Life of the Elderly After Participating in Flexible Occupational Skills Development Activities (N=50)

Evaluation list	Mean (M)	S.D.
Aspect 1: Confidence in New Career Skills	4.65	0.48
I am confident that I can weave baskets myself.	4.66	0.48
I can explain the basket-weaving process to others.	4.58	0.51
I believe that I can use this skill to generate income.	4.70	0.46
Aspect 2: Acceptance from Family and Community	4.65	0.48
My family supports me in this career.	4.62	0.49
The community recognizes my ability to weave baskets.	4.60	0.50
I feel proud when people in the community talk about my work.	4.72	0.45
Aspect 3: Valuable Social Contribution	4.69	0.46
I feel that I am still valuable in society.	4.68	0.47
I can share my basket-weaving skills with others.	4.64	0.48
I feel happy when I participate in activities with others.	4.76	0.44
Total	4.66	0.48

Table 4 shows an overall mean score of 4.66, which is considered to be very good. Considering each aspect, the third aspect, Valuable Social Participation, had the highest overall mean score ($M = 4.69$), particularly the item “I feel happy when participating in activities with others” ($M = 4.76$), indicating that this training helped build happiness, relationships, and a sense of social worth among the participants.

A study of the income of elderly people from selling products revealed that 30 elderly people who produced plastic baskets for sale earned a minimum monthly income of 800 baht and a maximum of 5,250 baht per month. This income depends on the number of products produced and sold each month. The club invests in purchasing materials and equipment for production, while the elderly are responsible for producing the products. Once finished, the club committee calculates the ticket selling price. They assigned group representatives to take products to sell at the market every Saturday, as well as to sell them at various events as appropriate, to create a continuous income for the elderly.

Discussion of Research Results

The research results indicate that the learning module on plastic basket weaving was appropriate in all dimensions. The content accuracy and completeness were highly evaluated, demonstrating their reliability and academic validity. The highest score was also given for practical application, aligning with constructivism, which emphasises hands-on learning to foster understanding and sustainable application (Piaget, 2002; Vygotsky, 1980). Furthermore, the module’s interest and motivation were high, demonstrating that the module design met the needs of older adults and fostered learning motivation.

The research results indicated that older adults were able to effectively develop their plastic basket weaving skills, particularly in areas such as creativity, determination, and teamwork, which are crucial for career development and meaningful social coexistence. This result is consistent with the World Health Organization’s Active Aging Theory (WHO, 2002), which emphasises creating opportunities for older adults to continuously participate in economic

and social activities to promote long-term well-being and quality of life, as well as Zimmerman’s Empowerment Theory (2000), which emphasises developing potential and self-confidence through authentic learning and participation. Furthermore, the research results are consistent with those of previous study on occupational skills development in older adults. The authors found that participatory workshops increased both confidence and the intention to pursue additional careers. Furthermore, a study conducted in Vietnam confirmed that handicraft training helped older adults feel proud of themselves, reduced feelings of burden, and contributed meaningfully to society. The elderly’s basket weaving skills showed a very good average across all dimensions, indicating that the learning process and training format appropriately responded to the potential and aptitudes of older adults, including content, training techniques, and close supervision of the training process. This resulted in increased confidence among older adults. Skills can be applied to create jobs, additional careers, and income, and to enhance self-worth (Zimmerman, 2000; WHO, 2002).

The satisfaction assessment of the elderly who participated in the plastic basket weaving workshop found that the overall mean score was 4.71, and the standard deviation was 0.45, which is considered very good. When considering each item, the instructor’s explanation was clear and friendly, with the highest mean score (4.80). This indicates that the training was able to create a friendly, easy-to-understand learning atmosphere and inspire the elderly to learn. This is consistent with Knowles’ (1984) learning theory, which emphasises that adult learning (andragogy) requires friendliness, the exchange of experiences, and mutual respect to stimulate intrinsic motivation. Overall satisfaction with the training averaged 4.78, reflecting that most participants were satisfied with the content, learning process, and results. This is consistent with previous study, which found that occupational workshops increased satisfaction, confidence, and readiness for employment among the elderly. Other aspects, such as easy-to-understand content, sufficient hands-on activities, and expected knowledge, were also very good. This indicates that the content and activities were designed to meet

the learners' needs, particularly the systematic, hands-on approach, enabling the elderly to follow along. This is consistent with [Zimmerman's \(2000\)](#) Empowerment Theory, which emphasises learning through action and achieving small successes to build confidence and inner power. This is also consistent with the [WHO's \(2002\)](#) Active Aging Theory, which encourages older people to participate in economic and social activities to enhance their value and become stronger community members. In addition, the evaluation results are consistent with qualitative data from interviews, where most older people stated that this activity meets their daily needs, can generate additional income, and makes them feel valuable. This supports previous research showing that training in weaving skills helps generate income and self-esteem among older people in Northeastern Thailand.

The quality of life research findings reflect that the workshop process not only developed new occupational skills but also built confidence, self-worth, and social acceptance among older adults. The high average score for occupational skills confidence indicates that the elderly believe in their abilities. This aligns with [Zimmerman's \(2000\)](#) Empowerment Theory, which emphasises the development of a sense of inner power (psychological empowerment) and acceptance from the family and community. This aligns with [Rowe and Kahn's \(1997\)](#) Successful Aging concept, which points to social interaction and acceptance as integral parts of successful aging and valuable social participation. This aligns with the [WHO's \(2002\)](#) Active Aging Theory, which emphasises engaging the elderly in economic and social activities to promote quality of life and mental well-being. Furthermore, the average score was very good across all dimensions, indicating that the workshop addressed the needs of the elderly in terms of occupational skills, confidence, and social value. This can be applied as a tangible approach to promoting careers and improving the quality of life of the elderly at the local level, as follows:

From the implementation of the research, the following limitations were identified:

Short Research Duration: The follow-up period after participation in the activities lasted only a few months, which makes it difficult to confirm the long-

term sustainability of skills, supplementary income, and quality of life among the elderly.

Health and Physical Limitations of the Elderly: Although basket weaving is considered light work, some elderly participants faced health or physical constraints that prevented them from fully engaging in the activity.

Technological and Digital Media Limitations: This study did not develop online or digital learning media specifically tailored for the elderly, resulting in limited access to learning that relied primarily on face-to-face activities.

Recommendations

Suggestions for Implementing the Research Results

Agencies caring for the elderly, such as local administrative organisations and elderly quality of life development centres, should implement the plastic basket weaving learning module into workshops to build occupational skills and generate additional income, boosting the confidence and self-esteem of the elderly in a concrete manner.

Curriculum designers should apply Knowles' constructivism and andragogy learning theories in training activities, emphasising hands-on practice, exchanging experiences, and creating a friendly atmosphere to stimulate intrinsic motivation among older adults.

Educational institutions or occupational training organisations should design learning processes that emphasise Empowerment Theory and Active Aging to encourage the elderly to play a role in the economy and society, reduce feelings of burden, and enhance self-worth.

The public and private sectors should collaborate to develop markets for handicraft products for the elderly, particularly plastic basket weaving, to enable them to generate additional income continuously.

Recommendations for Future Research

Conduct short-term follow-up studies (within 1–3 months after training) to assess immediate outcomes, such as the application of newly acquired skills, confidence in self-reliance, and the ability to generate supplementary income among older adults.

Long-term follow-up studies are recommended.

(Longitudinal Research) to assess the persistence of skills, additional income, and quality of life after 3, 6, and 1 years of training.

Research and develop digital learning media or online media appropriate for the elderly to increase access to knowledge and promote lifelong learning.

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