

Article

# Enhancing work efficiency and the performance of export companies through competency development

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**Abstract:** This study aims to examine the influence of employee and entrepreneur competencies on work efficiency and performance of export companies at the Nong Khai border checkpoint. The research conducted is a quantitative survey. The population for this study includes employees and entrepreneurs from the cross-border export service industry, exporters, and freight forwarder agents operating at the Nong Khai border checkpoint. A non-probability sampling method was employed to select participants. The sample size was Cochran estimated using Cochran's formula. A structured questionnaire was used to collect data from 385 logistics employees and entrepreneurs selected through purposive sampling. The questionnaires were distributed to employees and entrepreneurs from the export entrepreneurial industry, cross-border export service providers, exporters, and freight forwarder agents at the Nong Khai border checkpoint. The findings revealed that employee and entrepreneur competencies have a direct influence on the work efficiency and performance of export companies. The study concludes that enhancing the competencies of employees and entrepreneurs positively impacts work efficiency and the overall export performance of the company. The research suggests that entrepreneurs should prioritize training and competency development for employees to further improve work efficiency.

**Keywords:** competency; work efficiency; export performance; international trade; export entrepreneurial industry

**JEL:** D24; M16; M53; O15

## 1. Introduction

A company is a complex system that aims to allocate resources effectively to achieve its objectives. When a company meets its established goals, it is considered effective. One key objective is to ensure that employees work efficiently and effectively. The human resource factor plays a crucial role in achieving company effectiveness, with competent employees being vital to organizational success. Research by Jafar et al. (2020) and Zaini et al. (2019) demonstrate that competence significantly influences company effectiveness. This effectiveness encompasses the entire process from inputs to outputs and reflects how well a company achieves its goals, measured by quality, quantity, and timeliness. Ultimately, effectiveness is defined by the extent to which the desired outcomes are met.

Additionally, studies by Songgor et al. (2019) show that employee efficiency impacts company performance. High-quality human resources possess the necessary skills, abilities, knowledge, and attitudes to perform well. Thus, companies must continuously invest in developing and enhancing employee competencies. Employees should be encouraged to improve their skills, knowledge, and abilities to keep up with

changing demands, thereby enhancing their efficiency. Competence, as noted by Haryono et al. (2020), refers to a set of behaviors that demonstrate the effective execution of tasks. As employees gain more experience, their skills and speed in completing tasks improve.

Moreover, research by Manik and Syafrina (2018) supports the notion that competence positively impacts company performance. Export companies, in particular, require skilled employees to ensure their operations run smoothly and efficiently, especially in a globalized and competitive market. International trade laws, such as customs regulations, have been noted as crucial for maintaining compliance in global operations (Czinkota and Ronkainen, 2010). Employees must remain vigilant about changing regulations across countries, particularly regarding customs procedures, tariffs, and sanctions (Baldwin and Venables, 2015). This knowledge extends to the effective use of Incoterms, which clearly define responsibilities in international shipping. The importance of documentation accuracy cannot be overstated, with studies by Gooley (2008) showing that errors in import/export documentation can lead to significant operational delays and financial penalties. Negotiation is a critical skill for achieving favorable terms in international trade agreements. According to Lewicki et al. (2016), negotiation competency extends beyond price discussions and includes managing relationships with international partners. Moreover, multilingual skills and cultural sensitivity are increasingly seen as key attributes in building trust with foreign suppliers and clients (Hofstede et al., 2011). The competencies highlighted above are not just technical in nature but require a comprehensive approach, involving behavioral skills, cultural understanding, and adaptability to technological advancements. By investing in these competencies, export companies can improve their operational efficiency, enhance compliance, and maintain a competitive advantage in the global market (Boyatzis, 2008; Christopher, 2016).

In addition, three key factors are commonly emphasized for their impact on employee work efficiency: work time, work quality, and work quantity. Akerstedt and Gillberg (2007) found that prolonged work hours without adequate rest negatively impact employee efficiency in the long term. Hackman and Oldham (1976), in their Job Characteristics Model, highlighted that clear goals and feedback from work contribute to improved work quality, ultimately enhancing overall performance. Smith (1998) found that managing complex workloads effectively could lead to increased productivity, especially when tasks are planned and prioritized properly.

Company export performance refers to the effectiveness and success of a firm's operations in foreign markets. It encompasses various dimensions, including sales growth, market share, profitability, and the ability to sustain a competitive advantage in international markets. Export performance is a key indicator for firms seeking to expand beyond their domestic boundaries, and it is influenced by factors such as organizational resources, export strategies, and external market conditions (Leonidou et al., 2002).

Previous research indicated that employee competencies significantly impact a company's export performance, particularly through skills in communication, problem-solving, and adaptability. Competencies related to international market knowledge, strategic decision-making, and innovation are essential for improving a firm's ability to navigate complex export environments. Additionally, employee

training and continuous development in export-specific skills could enhance both productivity and competitiveness in global markets. The alignment of employee skills with export strategies contributes to overall export success (Cunningham and Culligan, 1991).

The study on the impact of export market orientation on export performance focused on how firms that prioritize understanding foreign customers, competitors, and market trends are more successful in international markets. The study also highlighted the importance of internal organizational factors, particularly managerial capabilities, in boosting export performance (French and Cadogan, 2012). Other studies offered a comprehensive review of how export marketing strategies influence export performance. These studies examined the interaction between internal resources, external market conditions, and strategic decisions, proposing a model that links export marketing strategy with export performance, considering both controllable and uncontrollable factors (Leonidou et al., 2002).

One of the industries that drives and is very important to the Thai economy is the import and export industry. The export statistics have been increasing continuously, and the use of customs documents is considered very important. Therefore, the export industry is vital to driving the Thai economy. However, many entrepreneurs who engage in export business have never carried out the export process themselves. Instead, they choose to use the services of cross-border export service providers or export agents rather than doing it themselves. At the same time, the personnel who carry out cross-border export services are not only required to meet the professional competence standards specified by ASEAN under the framework for the movement of skilled labor, but also must possess qualifications in line with the standards specified in the ASEAN Mutual Recognition Arrangements (MRAs). They must have cross-border working skills and other competencies suitable for ASEAN cross-border trade, investment, and services, particularly at the Nong Khai border checkpoint.

Nong Khai Province is an important hub for cross-border trade between Thailand and the Lao People's Democratic Republic (Lao PDR) via the Thai-Laos Friendship Bridge, which is a key border crossing point for transporting goods to Laos and connecting to southern China. With its favorable geographical features and developed transportation infrastructure, Nong Khai has become an important land transport hub in the region. Nong Khai border trade accounts for approximately 80 percent of Thailand's international trade value with all CLM countries (Cambodia, Laos, and Myanmar). Laos is Thailand's most important export market within this group. Export statistics through the Nong Khai Customs Checkpoint in fiscal year 2023 totaled 6.6 billion baht (Nong Khai Customs Office, 2023). Thailand has the highest proportion of export value through the Nong Khai border checkpoint to Laos within the CLM group, accounting for 40 percent of the value. Popular products from Laos include consumer products such as cars, motorcycles, and beverages.

The researcher is therefore interested in studying the guidelines for developing the export competencies of employees and entrepreneurs, which affect the development of employee work efficiency and export efficiency of exporting companies located at the Nong Khai border checkpoint. The findings will serve as a guideline for improving operations in the industry, leading to increased efficiency.

## **2. Literature review**

Scholars and researchers have extensively examined both employees and entrepreneurs. They are required to possess a high level of competency to achieve organizational success. Competency, defined as the combination of skills, knowledge, abilities, and behaviors necessary to perform tasks effectively, has emerged as a critical factor influencing work efficiency and overall performance. Theories surrounding competency highlight its role in enhancing the capabilities of individuals, thereby driving productivity and innovation within organizations. Many studies have also investigated the connection between competency and work efficiency. However, the findings of these studies have often been varied.

Competency theory suggests that the competencies of employees and entrepreneurs are not just static attributes but dynamic ones that evolve with experience and continuous learning. These competencies enable individuals to adapt to changing market demands, solve complex problems, and make informed decisions that align with organizational goals. For employees, competencies such as technical skills, problem-solving abilities, and interpersonal communication are essential for executing tasks efficiently and contributing to team performance. On the other hand, entrepreneurs require a unique set of competencies, including strategic thinking, risk management, and leadership, to navigate the uncertainties of the business landscape and drive their ventures toward success.

The relationship between competency and work efficiency is well-established in the literature, with numerous studies indicating that higher competency levels lead to improved performance outcomes. Competent employees are more likely to perform their duties with greater accuracy and speed, reducing errors and enhancing the quality of work. Similarly, entrepreneurs with strong competencies are better equipped to identify opportunities, mitigate risks, and implement strategies that enhance business performance. As such, the development and enhancement of competencies among employees and entrepreneurs are crucial for achieving sustainable competitive advantage in any industry.

### **2.1. Competency of employees and entrepreneurs**

Competency in both employees and entrepreneurs plays a pivotal role in the success and sustainability of any organization. For employees, competencies encompass a combination of skills, knowledge, and behaviors that enable them to perform their roles effectively and contribute to the organization's goals. These competencies are crucial for maintaining high productivity, fostering innovation, and ensuring a competitive edge in the market. On the other hand, entrepreneurs require a distinct set of competencies, including strategic thinking, risk management, leadership, and the ability to identify and capitalize on business opportunities. These competencies enable entrepreneurs to navigate the complexities of the business environment, drive growth, and lead their ventures to success. Understanding and developing these competencies are essential for building resilient organizations capable of thriving in dynamic and competitive industries.

The Competency of Employees and Entrepreneurs refers to the combination of skills, knowledge, and abilities needed to excel at a job. It is essential for both

individuals and organizations to succeed. Several authors have extensively studied the competencies of employees and entrepreneurs, contributing significantly to our understanding of how these competencies influence organizational success and individual performance. Leadership competencies have evolved, with emotional intelligence and adaptability becoming increasingly important in contemporary business environments (Karp and Helgø, 2008). Boyatzis (2008) emphasized the significance of emotional, social, and cognitive competencies for effective management and leadership in the 21st century. These competencies were further investigated in the context of Italian organizations, identifying specific traits that distinguish effective leaders and managers (Boyatzis and Ratti, 2009). It is arguing that these skills are essential for effective management and leadership (Boyatzis, 2008). Similarly, Sandberg (2000) focused on interpretative approach to understanding human competence at work, arguing that competencies are context-dependent and should be studied within the specific work environment. Environmental competencies are also crucial, with Lambrechts et al. (2013) emphasizing the importance of employees' knowledge, skills, and environmental attitudes for environmental performance. Kaiser and Fuhrer (2003) noted that strong environmental awareness leads to behaviors supporting environmental protection.

The competitiveness of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) has been extensively studied, with a focus on entrepreneurial competencies as key factors for business success across various markets (Man et al., 2002). The concept of competence itself has been analyzed, distinguishing between technical, cognitive, and behavioral competencies and their implications for human resource development (Le Deist and Winterton, 2005).

In the context of corporate entrepreneurship, individual competencies have been identified as crucial for fostering innovation and growth (Hayton and Kelley, 2006) and the effectiveness of competency-based management systems in aligning employee skills with organizational goals (Draganidis and Mentzas, 2006). Organizations can gain a competitive advantage by integrating competencies into strategic human resource practices, as discussed in various competency frameworks (Cardy and Selvarajan, 2006).

Entrepreneurial competencies, including opportunity recognition, strategic thinking, and risk management, have been recognized as critical contributors to business success (Mitchelmore and Rowley, 2010). The importance of these competencies has led to calls for their inclusion in entrepreneurship education to better prepare future business leaders (Morris et al., 2013). The importance of competencies extends to various industries. In logistics and supply chain management, the CSCMP (2020) defines logistics competencies as crucial for efficient product movement and customer satisfaction. In the export sector, Francis and Collins-Dodd (2004) found that government export promotion strategies can enhance SMEs' competencies in international markets. In addition, Mitroussi (2013) highlighted the importance of competencies in transportation management for safety and effectiveness. In quality management, Dhar et al. (2021) found that competencies in quality assurance and safety compliance enhance export potential.

A 10-step paradigm for success in EU export operations, emphasizing various competencies throughout the export process was proposed (Darling and Seristo, 2004).

Similarly to Holmberg (2000) who explored organizational development within strategic management, focusing on performance measurement and organizational advancement. Finally, Pornchanit Leenarat (2017) identified digital competencies as essential skills, knowledge, and attitudes in information technology and communication, including critical thinking, analytical skills, and social skills.

Consequently, these studies underscore the critical role that competencies play in both individual and organizational success. They provide a robust foundation for understanding how competencies can be developed, assessed, and applied in various contexts, from entrepreneurship to corporate management.

Competency development is widely recognized as a key driver of organizational success, especially in industries that operate within global markets. Competency encompasses the combination of knowledge, skills, and behaviors necessary to perform tasks effectively and adapt to changing conditions (Boyatzis, 1982). Over the past few decades, research has increasingly focused on how competencies contribute to enhanced work performance and efficiency in the workplace. Several scholars have explored how competency frameworks are used in organizational settings to align employee capabilities with business goals, ultimately improving organizational outcomes (Le Deist and Winterton, 2005).

## **2.2. Efficiency of employees and entrepreneurs**

The efficiency of employees and entrepreneurs is a crucial determinant of organizational performance and success. Recent research has explored various factors contributing to this efficiency, focusing on competencies, social capital, and training. Na-Nan et al. (2018) developed the Employee Job Performance questionnaire, a versatile tool for assessing employee efficiency across different industries. This instrument evaluates performance in key areas such as work time, quality, and workload, providing valuable insights from the employees' perspective. The factor analysis results indicate that the Employee Job Performance scale can be adapted to various industries and settings, making it a versatile tool for assessing employee behavior. This questionnaire offers valuable empirical data from the employee's perspective on performance outcomes. The role of social capital in enhancing employee performance was examined by Türkmen et al. (2021). Their study revealed a statistically significant positive correlation between social capital and work quality, quantity, and timeliness. These findings suggest that fostering social capital within organizations can lead to improved employee efficiency, benefiting both employees and entrepreneurs. Yumhi et al. (2021) investigated factors influencing performance in Indonesian higher education institutions. Their research highlighted the importance of training and personality in boosting work motivation, which in turn positively impacts employee performance. This underscores the value of ongoing training and development programs in enhancing the efficiency of both employees and entrepreneurs. Their findings support the hypotheses that training and personality have a direct and positive effect on work motivation, which in turn positively influences employee performance. The study also revealed that both training and personality directly contribute to improved employee performance, underscoring the importance of these factors in driving organizational success. The alignment of competencies with

organizational goals has also been identified as a key factor in improving efficiency. Dhar et al. (2021) found that quality management practices, particularly in quality assurance and safety compliance, significantly enhance export potential. This finding directly links the efficiency of employees and entrepreneurs in the export industry to specific competencies and practices.

The efficiency of employees and entrepreneurs is a cornerstone of organizational success, influencing productivity, profitability, and overall business performance. Numerous studies have examined the factors that contribute to efficiency, highlighting the importance of competencies, social capital, training, and organizational alignment.

### **2.2.1. Competencies and efficiency**

Competencies are foundational to enhancing the efficiency of both employees and entrepreneurs. Na-Nan et al. (2018) developed the Employee Job Performance (EJP) questionnaire to measure various dimensions of employee performance, including work time, quality, and workload. Their findings suggest that the alignment of competencies with job requirements significantly improves efficiency. The EJP serves as a valuable tool for assessing and enhancing employee performance across various industries.

Türkmen et al. (2021) explored the impact of social capital on employee performance, finding that it positively influences the quality, quantity, and timeliness of work. Social capital, comprising networks, relationships, and shared values within an organization, fosters collaboration and trust, thereby enhancing efficiency. By building and leveraging social capital, organizations can boost the efficiency of both employees and entrepreneurs.

### **2.2.2. Training and development**

Training and development are essential for improving efficiency. Yumhi et al. (2021) studied the factors influencing the performance of higher education institutions in Indonesia, focusing on the role of training and personality. They found that training and personality traits, such as motivation, directly contribute to enhanced employee performance. Their research underscores the importance of continuous learning and development programs in fostering efficiency among employees and entrepreneurs.

Dhar et al. (2021) emphasized the significance of quality management practices in enhancing efficiency, particularly in industries like manufacturing and export. Their study on quality assurance and safety compliance in Bangladesh's export sector demonstrated that effective quality management practices lead to higher efficiency levels among employees and entrepreneurs, thereby improving the organization's overall export potential.

### **2.2.3. Organizational alignment**

Efficiency is closely linked to the alignment between individual competencies and organizational goals. Cardy and Selvarajan (2006) discussed various competency frameworks that organizations can use to gain a competitive advantage, emphasizing the need for strategic alignment. When employee and entrepreneur competencies are aligned with organizational objectives, it leads to improved efficiency as individuals are better equipped to meet the demands of their roles and contribute to the organization's success.

In the increasingly globalized economy, the ability of businesses to succeed in international markets has become a vital determinant of overall organizational performance. Export performance, in particular, is a key measure of a company's success in penetrating and sustaining a presence in foreign markets. One of the most critical factors influencing export performance is the competency of both employees and entrepreneurs within the organization. Competency, which encompasses a combination of skills, knowledge, behaviors, and attitudes, plays a pivotal role in determining how effectively an organization can navigate the complexities of exporting.

Theoretical frameworks on competency suggest that the specific abilities of employees and entrepreneurs are fundamental to achieving successful export outcomes. For employees, competencies such as understanding international market dynamics, cultural awareness, negotiation skills, and foreign language proficiency are essential for managing the operational challenges of exporting. These competencies enable employees to effectively communicate with international clients, adapt products to meet foreign market requirements, and ensure compliance with international regulations, thereby enhancing the company's ability to perform well in export activities.

Entrepreneurs, on the other hand, require a distinct set of competencies to drive export success. Strategic vision, risk management, innovation, and leadership are crucial competencies that enable entrepreneurs to identify and exploit international opportunities. Entrepreneurs with strong competencies are better equipped to make strategic decisions that align with global market trends, manage the risks associated with entering new markets, and inspire their teams to pursue ambitious export goals. The entrepreneurial mindset, characterized by a willingness to take calculated risks and innovate, is particularly important in navigating the uncertainties of international trade.

The impact of competency on export performance is well-supported by research, which indicates that higher competency levels among employees and entrepreneurs correlate with greater export success. Organizations that invest in developing these competencies are more likely to achieve sustained competitive advantage in the global marketplace. By enhancing the competencies of their workforce, businesses can improve their export strategies, increase their market share, and ultimately achieve better financial performance in international markets.

This introduction provides a foundation for further exploration of how the competencies of employees and entrepreneurs influence export performance. Understanding the critical role of competency in exporting can help organizations develop more effective strategies for international expansion and long-term success in the global economy. This introduction sets the stage for a deeper exploration of how employee and entrepreneurial competencies directly impact work efficiency and performance. By understanding and leveraging these competencies, organizations can foster a more productive, innovative, and resilient workforce, ultimately leading to superior business outcomes.

Work efficiency, particularly in international trade, is directly influenced by the competencies of employees and entrepreneurs. A study by Kane (1997) highlighted that competency-based frameworks increase productivity and ensure tasks are



completed with greater accuracy and speed, reducing operational costs and enhancing overall business performance. Further, the dynamic nature of competencies allows for continuous improvement, enabling individuals to adapt to evolving business environments and market demands. This adaptability is crucial for industries like logistics and international trade, where rapid decision-making and technical expertise are required to handle complex cross-border transactions.

### **2.3. Export performance**

Export performance is a critical measure of a firm's success in international markets and has been the subject of extensive research in international business and marketing. Various studies have explored the determinants, measurement, and implications of export performance.

A comprehensive review of the literature on export performance, identifying key internal and external determinants was conducted (Sousa et al., 2008). They found that factors such as firm size, international experience, market orientation, and product quality significantly influence export performance. Additionally, they highlighted the importance of export marketing strategy in mediating the relationship between these determinants and export performance.

Zou and Stan (1998) earlier provided a review and integration of empirical literature on export performance. They categorized determinants into internal (e.g., firm characteristics, competencies) and external factors (e.g., industry characteristics, domestic and foreign market characteristics). Their work emphasized the need for a more unified theoretical framework in export performance research.

In terms of measurement, Katsikeas et al. (2000) examined the conceptualization and measurement of export performance in empirical research. They identified three main categories of export performance measures: economic (e.g., sales, profits), non-economic (e.g., product and market-related), and generic measures (e.g., perceived success, achievement of objectives). Their study underscored the multidimensional nature of export performance and the importance of using multiple measures.

More recently, the impact of export market orientation on export performance, considering the moderating role of competitive intensity and technological turbulence is investigated (Chen et al., 2016). Their findings suggest that export market orientation positively influences export performance, but this relationship is moderated by the competitive and technological environment. Moreover, Leonidou et al. (2002) focused on the impact of marketing strategy determinants on export performance. They found that product quality, pricing strategy, dealer support, and advertising were particularly influential in determining export success.

In the context of small and medium-sized enterprises, Stoian et al. (2011) examined the determinants of export performance. They highlighted the importance of managerial characteristics, firm attributes, and export marketing strategy in driving small and medium-sized enterprises.

The role of entrepreneurial orientation in export performance. Their study revealed that entrepreneurial orientation positively influences export performance, but this relationship is moderated by environmental turbulence and competitive intensity was explored (Cadogan et al., 2009). Additionally, the relationship between export

market information use, export knowledge, and export performance was suggested (Morgan et al., 2004) investigated. They found that both export market information use and export knowledge contribute significantly to export performance.

More recently, Pla-Barber et al. (2021) examined the impact of digital technologies on export performance. Their study suggests that digital capabilities can enhance export performance by facilitating market intelligence gathering, customer relationship management, and value creation in international markets.

Beleska-Spasova (2014) posits that export performance serves as a critical indicator of an organization's success in utilizing resources and operational capabilities in international markets. This performance is evaluated through two primary dimensions: 1) financial outcomes resulting from effective export operations, and 2) non-financial outcomes reflecting the broader impact of export activities (French and Cadogan, 2012; Leonidou, et al., 2002). According to Leonidou et al. (2002), export performance can be categorized into three key areas: financial performance, non-financial performance, and composite performance.

**Financial Performance:** This dimension of export performance is measured through indicators such as export sales, profits derived from exports, and the growth of export-related business activities. These metrics directly reflect the financial success of the organization's export endeavors.

**Non-Financial Performance:** Non-financial performance indicators assess the success of export operations beyond mere financial gains. These include metrics related to export satisfaction, the achievement of strategic goals, and the implementation of operational plans aimed at enhancing export activities.

**Composite Performance:** Composite performance refers to a holistic assessment that combines both financial and non-financial metrics. This approach provides a more comprehensive view of export success, incorporating numerical indicators that capture the overall effectiveness of export operations in achieving set objectives.

Further expanding on these concepts, Zou et al. (1998) identified three specific areas for measuring export performance:

**Financial Export Performance:** This area focuses on traditional financial metrics such as profits, sales, and the growth of the export business, providing a direct measure of financial success in international markets.

**Strategic Export Performance:** This dimension is evaluated through market share, strategic positioning, and competitive adaptation in the international market. It reflects the organization's ability to leverage strategic capabilities to improve its competitive stance.

**Satisfaction with Export Ventures:** This area measures the satisfaction derived from export operations, including the perceived success of these operations and the degree to which export outcomes meet or exceed expectations.

Together, these frameworks offer a nuanced understanding of export performance, emphasizing the importance of both financial outcomes and strategic achievements in assessing the success of international business activities.

The literature on export performance underscores the multifaceted nature of the factors that contribute to success in international markets. Firm capabilities, market orientation, innovation, external support, and quality management practices are all critical components that influence a firm's ability to perform well in export markets.

By leveraging these factors, firms can enhance their export performance, achieve sustainable growth, and gain a competitive edge in the global marketplace. These insights provide a comprehensive understanding of the strategies and resources necessary for achieving strong export performance, serving as a guide for firms seeking to expand their international reach.

The connection between competencies and export performance has been the subject of significant academic attention. Export performance, a key measure of a firm's success in international markets, is influenced by several internal and external factors, including competency development. Zou and Stan (1998) conducted an extensive review of the determinants of export performance, identifying both firm characteristics and external market factors as critical influencers. Among these determinants, managerial and employee competencies were identified as major drivers of export success, as they enable firms to respond to market changes and engage effectively with international partners.

The importance of entrepreneurial competencies has also been emphasized in the context of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs). Man et al. (2002) argue that entrepreneurial competencies, such as strategic thinking and risk management, are essential for identifying opportunities in the global market and navigating the uncertainties of international trade. Furthermore, Cadogan et al. (2009) emphasize the role of export marketing strategies, which are closely linked to the competencies of entrepreneurs and employees, in enhancing export performance. Their study revealed that firms with highly competent managers and employees are more likely to develop and implement successful export strategies.

Competencies also play a crucial role in quality management, which has a direct impact on export performance. Dhar et al. (2021) found that in industries like manufacturing and export-oriented sectors, competencies in quality assurance and safety compliance significantly enhance a company's ability to perform well in international markets. This finding underscores the need for companies to invest in competency development programs, particularly in areas related to quality management and regulatory compliance, to ensure their success in global trade.

Another important factor influencing work efficiency and export performance is social capital. Research by Türkmen et al. (2021) highlights that social capital, defined as the networks and relationships within an organization, enhances work performance by fostering collaboration and trust. This study suggests that social capital can complement competency development, leading to more efficient work processes and better export outcomes. The integration of social capital and competency frameworks can, therefore, provide a comprehensive approach to improving both work efficiency and export performance.

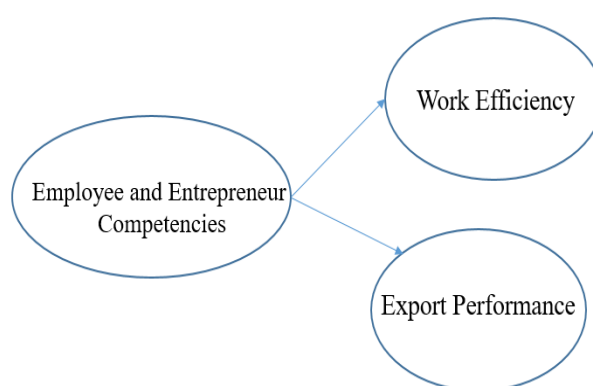
In conclusion, the literature demonstrates that competency development is integral to achieving high levels of work efficiency and export performance. Competencies enable employees and entrepreneurs to navigate complex business environments, improve productivity, and respond effectively to international market demands. The relationship between competency development and export performance has been well established, with numerous studies showing that firms that prioritize competency development are more likely to succeed in global markets. However, there is still a need to explore how these competencies can be systematically developed and

implemented within organizations to maximize their impact on work efficiency and export success.

1) Research Objectives

- a) To examine the influence of employee and entrepreneur competencies on work efficiency of export companies.
- b) To examine the influence of employee and entrepreneur competencies on the performance of export companies.

The synthesis of extant literature has informed the development of a theoretical framework that underpins this investigation. The conceptual framework for this research was derived from multiple sources, specifically Beleska-Spasova (2014), Boyatzis and Ratti (2009), Hayton and Kelley (2006), Na-Nan et al. (2018), and Sousa et al. (2008), as illustrated in **Figure 1**.



**Figure 1.** Conceptual framework

Based on the literature review, the study proceeds to test the following hypotheses, which are designed to address the research questions formulated:

Hypothesis 1: Employee and entrepreneur competencies have a positive effect on work efficiency of export companies.

Hypothesis 2: Employee and entrepreneur competencies have a positive effect on the performance of export companies.

2) Methodology

The population for this research included employees and entrepreneurs from the export entrepreneurial industry, cross-border export service providers, exporters, and freight forwarder agents at the Nong Khai border checkpoint. A non-probability sampling method was employed to select the participants. The sample size was estimated using Cochran's formula (Cochran, 1977). A structured questionnaire was used to collect data from 385 logistics employees and entrepreneurs, selected through purposive sampling. Additionally, the researcher determined the sample size based on the requirements for conducting confirmatory factor analysis (CFA), which generally necessitates a sample size of approximately 10–20 participants per parameter. The sample consisted of individuals working in the entrepreneurial industry, cross-border export service providers, import and export businesses, or freight forwarding professionals involved in cross-border exports.

The data were analyzed using confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) to validate the measurement model, followed by structural equation modeling (SEM) to test the

hypothesized relationships between competencies, work efficiency, and export performance. The CFA model was evaluated based on goodness-of-fit indices, including the comparative fit index (CFI), goodness-of-fit index (GFI), and root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA). The SEM was used to test the following hypotheses:

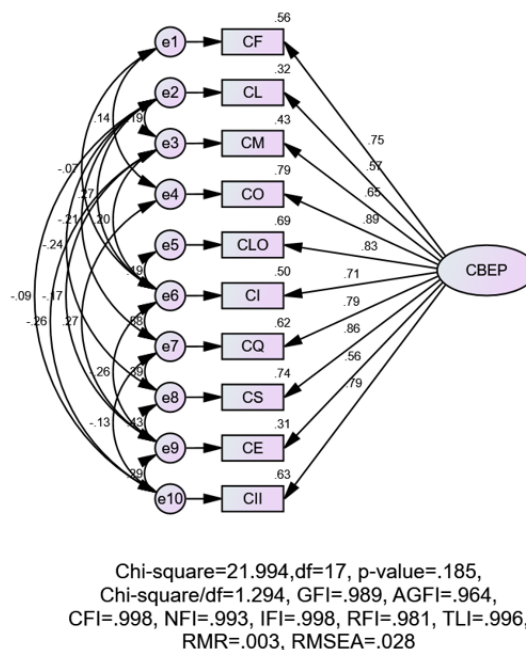
Hypothesis 1: Employee and entrepreneur competencies have a positive effect on work efficiency of export companies.

Hypothesis 2: Employee and entrepreneur competencies have a positive effect on the performance of export companies.

### 3) Results

The consistency index (CI) is a measure used to evaluate the consistency of judgments in decision-making models, such as those used to assess the competency of employees and entrepreneurs. When analyzing the main component model of competency, the consistency index helps determine how consistent the judgments or evaluations are within the model.

From **Table 1**, it can be observed that the consistency indices for the model assessing employee and entrepreneur competencies demonstrate strong alignment with the empirical data. The statistical analysis yielded a Chi-square value ( $\chi^2$ ) of 21.99, which is not statistically significant at the 0.18 level ( $p$ -value = 0.18). The relative Chi-square value ( $\chi^2/df$ ) is 1.29. Additionally, the Comparative Fit Index (CFI) is 0.98, the Goodness of Fit Index (GFI) is 0.96, and the Adjusted Goodness of Fit Index (AGFI) is 0.96. The Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA) is 0.02. All these values meet the required thresholds, indicating that the model is consistent with the empirical data and is therefore appropriate for component analysis. The details are illustrated in **Figure 2**.



**Figure 2.** Results of the analysis of main components of the consistency index for the employee and entrepreneur competency model\*\*.

**Table 1.** The consistency index of the main component model of employees and entrepreneurs competency.

Statistics used for verification	Criteria used in consideration	Calculated value	Consideration results
$\chi^2$	Not statistically significant at the $> 0.05$ level.	21.99	-
df	-	17	-
$p$ -value	$p > 0.05$	0.18	-
$\chi^2/df$	$\chi^2/df < 2$	1.29	Passed the criteria
CFI	$\geq 0.95$	0.98	Passed the criteria
GFI	$\geq 0.95$	0.96	Passed the criteria
AGFI	$\geq 0.95$	0.99	Passed the criteria
RMSEA	$< 0.05$	0.02	Passed the criteria

As shown in **Table 1**, the consistency index for the main competency model of employees and entrepreneurs was thoroughly examined using various statistical measures. The Chi-square value ( $\chi^2$ ) was found to be 21.99, with no statistical significance at the 0.18 level ( $p$ -value = 0.18). The relative Chi-square value ( $\chi^2/df$ ) was calculated at 1.29. Additionally, the Comparative Fit Index ( $CFI$ ) was 0.98, the Goodness of Fit Index ( $GFI$ ) was 0.96, and the Adjusted Goodness of Fit Index ( $AGFI$ ) was 0.96. The Root Mean Square Error of Approximation ( $RMSEA$ ) was 0.02. All these indices meet the required thresholds, indicating that the model is well-aligned with the empirical data. Consequently, it is appropriate for use in component analysis. The specific details of the main components of export performance for employees and entrepreneurs are depicted in **Figure 2**.

From **Figure 2**, the Chi-square value shows the competency model aligns well with the actual performance data of employees and entrepreneurs. The dimension of competency is essential, as it reflects skills and knowledge without major deviations from expectations and providing a balanced and practical framework for understanding employee and entrepreneur competencies.

The high  $CFI$  value indicates a near-perfect fit between the hypothesized competency model and the observed data. This suggests that each competency dimension (such as skills, knowledge, attitudes, and behaviors) is well-integrated and performs strongly in contexts, ensuring that competencies directly correlate with employee and entrepreneur performance.

Both  $GFI$  and  $AGFI$  are reflecting that the competency model is highly accurate in representing the observed data. This underscores the importance of the different competency dimensions, as the model successfully captures their true value and application for both employees and entrepreneurs.

The  $RMSEA$  value being close to zero indicates that the model has an excellent fit with minimal error. This suggests that the competency model's dimensions, including various competencies like decision-making, leadership, innovation, and problem-solving, are accurately represented and show minimal deviation when applied to different scenarios involving employees and entrepreneurs.

Hypothesis 1: Employee and entrepreneur competencies have a positive effect on work efficiency of export companies.

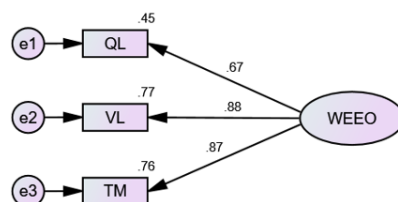
The research was conducted a confirmatory factor analysis to assess the consistency of the model's key components related to employee and entrepreneur

work efficiency against the empirical data. The detailed results of this analysis are presented in **Table 2**.

**Table 2.** Conformity index values of the main component model of employee and entrepreneur work efficiency.

Statistics used for verification	Criteria used in consideration	Calculated value	Consideration results
$\chi^2$	Not statistically significant at the $> 0.05$ level.	0.54	-
df	-	1	-
$p$ -value	$p > 0.05$	0.46	-
$\chi^2/df$	$\chi^2/df < 2$	0.54	Passed the criteria
CFI	$\geq 0.95$	1.00	Passed the criteria
GFI	$\geq 0.95$	0.99	Passed the criteria
AGFI	$\geq 0.95$	0.99	Passed the criteria
RMSEA	$< 0.05$	0.00	Passed the criteria

From **Table 2**, it is evident that the consistency index of the main component model for employee and entrepreneur work efficiency aligns well with the empirical data. The statistical values obtained are as follows: the Chi-square value ( $\chi^2$ ) is 0.54, with a  $p$ -value of 0.46, indicating no statistical significance at this level. The relative Chi-square value ( $\chi^2/df$ ) is also 0.54. Additionally, the Comparative Fit Index ( $CFI$ ) is 1.00, the Goodness of Fit Index ( $GFI$ ) is 0.99, and the Adjusted Goodness of Fit Index ( $AGFI$ ) is 0.99. The Root Mean Square Error of Approximation ( $RMSEA$ ) is 0.00. All these indices meet the required criteria, indicating that the model is consistent with the empirical data. Therefore, it is suitable for use in component analysis. The details of the main components of work efficiency for employees and entrepreneurs are illustrated in **Figure 3**.



Chi-square=.542,df=1, p-value=.461,  
 Chi-square/df=.542, GFI=.999, AGFI=.994,  
 CFI=1.000, NFI=.999, IFI=1.001, RFI=.997, TLI=1.003,  
 RMR=.006, RMSEA=.000

**Figure 3.** Results of the analysis of main components of the work efficiency of employees and entrepreneurs.

**Table 3.** summarizes the main components of employee and entrepreneur work efficiency.

Employees and entrepreneurs work efficiency	internal components	Element weight value	Priority	Average variance extracted AVE	Confidence value of the measurement model CR
WEEO	QL	0.67	3	0.85	0.90
	VL	0.88	1		
	TM	0.87	2		

From **Figure 3** and **Table 3**, it is observed that the work efficiency of employees and entrepreneurs (*WEEO*) consists of three sub-components: 1) Quality of Work (*QL*), which has an element weight value of 0.67; 2) Workload (*VL*), with an element weight value of 0.88; and 3) Working Time (*TM*), with a component weight value of 0.87. Each internal component, with a variable weight greater than 0.40, meets the appropriate criteria (Hair et al., 2010).

Furthermore, the Average Variance Extracted (*AVE*) for the work efficiency of employees and entrepreneurs is 0.85, which is considered appropriate ( $AVE \geq 0.50$ ) (Fornell and Larcker, 1981; Hair et al., 2010). The reliability of the composite measure is 0.950, also deemed appropriate ( $CR \geq 0.70$ ) (Bagozzi and Yi, 1988; Hair et al., 2010). Therefore, it can be concluded that all variables of the main components of work efficiency for employees and entrepreneurs exhibit reliable results from the confirmatory factor analysis. Among the key components, the analysis revealed that Workload (*VL*) is the most significant sub-component, followed by Working Time (*TM*) and Quality of Work (*QL*), respectively.

Hypothesis 2: Employee and entrepreneur competencies have a positive effect on the performance of export companies.

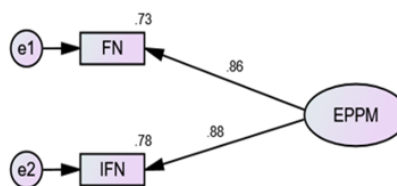
The performance of export companies with empirical data Details are shown in **Table 4**.

**Table 4.** Conformity index values of the main component model of the performance of export companies.

Statistics used for verification	Criteria used in consideration	Calculated value	Consideration results
$\chi^2$	Not statistically significant at the $> 0.05$ level.	0.54	-
df	-	1	-
<i>p</i> -value	$p > 0.05$	0.18	-
$\chi^2/df$	$\chi^2/df < 2$	1.29	Passed the criteria
CFI	$\geq 0.95$	0.99	Passed the criteria
GFI	$\geq 0.95$	0.98	Passed the criteria
AGFI	$\geq 0.95$	0.96	Passed the criteria
RMSEA	$< 0.05$	0.28	Passed the criteria

From **Table 4**, it is evident that the consistency index of the main component model for the performance of export companies aligns well with the empirical data. The statistical analysis revealed the following values: the Chi-square value ( $\chi^2$ ) is 0.54, with a *p*-value of 0.18, indicating no statistical significance at this level. The relative Chi-square value ( $\chi^2/df$ ) is 1.29. Additionally, the Comparative Fit Index (*CFI*) is 0.99, the Goodness of Fit Index (*GFI*) is 0.98, and the Adjusted Goodness of Fit Index (*AGFI*) is 0.96. The Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (*RMSEA*) is 0.28. All these indices meet the required criteria, indicating that the model is consistent with the empirical data. Therefore, it is deemed suitable for use in component analysis. The specific details of the main components of the performance of export companies are illustrated in **Figure 4**.





Chi-square=.542,df=1, p-value=.185,  
 Chi-square/df=1.294, GFI=.989, AGFI=.964,  
 CFI=.998, NFI=.993, IFI=.998, RFI=.981, TLI=.996,  
 RMR=.003, RMSEA=.028

**Figure 4.** Results of analysis of main components of the performance of export companies.

**Table 5.** Summarizes the main components of the performance of export companies.

The performance of export companies	internal components	Element weight value	Priority	Average variance extracted AVE	Confidence value of the measurement model CR
EPPM	FN	0.86	2	0.95	0.98
	IFIN	0.88	1		

From **Figure 4** and **Table 5**, it was found that the results of export operations (*EPPM*) consist of two sub-components: 1) Financial Export Performance (*FN*), which has a component weight value of 0.86, and 2) Non-Financial Export Performance (*IFN*), which has a component weight value of 0.88. Each internal component, with a variable weight greater than 0.40, meets the appropriate criteria (Hair et al., 2010).

Additionally, the Average Variance Extracted (*AVE*) for the performance of export companies was found to be 0.95, which is considered appropriate ( $AVE \geq 0.50$ ) (Fornell and Larcker, 1981; Hair et al., 2010). The reliability of the component measure was 0.98, also deemed appropriate ( $CR \geq 0.70$ ) (Bagozzi and Yi, 1988; Hair et al., 2010). Therefore, it can be concluded that the reliability of all variables within the main the performance of export companies was confirmed through the confirmatory factor analysis.

The results detailed in **Table 6**. offer strong support for both Hypothesis 1 and Hypothesis 2. In particular, they validate the positive influence of employee and entrepreneur competencies on both work efficiency and performance outcomes within export companies. The conclusion of the Hypothesis testing results are illustrated in **Table 6**.

**Table 6.** Results conclusion.

Hypothesis	Result
Hypothesis 1: Hypothesis 1: Employee and entrepreneur competencies have a positive effect on work efficiency of export companies.	accepted
Hypothesis 2: Employee and entrepreneur competencies have a positive effect on the performance of export companies.	accepted

### **3. Discussion**

The research revealed that the competencies of employees and entrepreneurs are pivotal in driving the export success of Thai companies. This finding aligns with Beleska-Spasova's (2014) research, which identified export performance as a key indicator of an organization's ability to effectively utilize resources and operational capabilities in international operations.

Besides, the results revealed that employee and entrepreneur competencies have a direct and significant influence on work efficiency, underscoring the critical importance of all aspects of competency in optimizing employee and operator performance. This finding aligns with previous research, particularly in the context of Italian organizations, where specific traits were identified as distinguishing effective leaders and managers (Boyatzis and Ratti, 2009). Boyatzis (2008) argued that such competencies are essential for effective management and leadership, reinforcing the idea that these skills are crucial across various organizational contexts.

Additionally, Sandberg (2000) highlighted the importance of understanding human competence through an interpretative lens, suggesting that competencies are highly context-dependent and should be studied within the specific work in which they are applied. This perspective is further supported by research on the competitiveness of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) has been extensively studied, with entrepreneurial competencies identified as key factors for business success in diverse markets (Man et al., 2002). The broader concept of competence has been analyzed by distinguishing between technical, cognitive, and behavioral competencies and exploring their implications for human resource development (Le Deist and Winterton, 2005).

In the realm of corporate entrepreneurship, individual competencies have been recognized as vital for fostering innovation and driving business growth (Hayton and Kelley, 2006). The effectiveness of competency-based management systems in aligning employee skills with organizational goals has also been highlighted (Draganidis and Mentzas, 2006). Furthermore, integrating competencies into strategic human resource practices can provide organizations with a competitive advantage, as discussed in various competency frameworks (Cardy and Selvarajan, 2006). These insights collectively reinforce the significance of competencies in enhancing work efficiency and achieving organizational success. Furthermore, this aligns with research on understanding company performance through financial statements, budget reviews, and analyses of import and export profits and costs, as explored by Saaree (2015). Competition forces businesses to improve the quality of their employees as intellectual resources, leading to the achievement of financial performance. Accurate and timely delivery of relevant information to employees and operators, as studied by Dhar, Uddin, and Nielsen (2021) in their research on quality management, quality assurance, and safety compliance in processing plants and exporters in Bangladesh, fosters an increase in pangasius and tilapia export potential through the performance of export companies.

## **4. Conclusion**

The objectives of this study are twofold: to examine the impact of employee and entrepreneur competencies on work efficiency in the context of international trade in Thailand, and to assess how these competencies influence the performance of export companies engaged in international trade within the country. The findings indicate that employee and entrepreneur competencies have a significant positive impact on work efficiency and the performance of export companies in Thailand.

Further exploration of the export competencies of employees offers multiple avenues for future research, which could significantly contribute to the field of international business. For instance, future studies could investigate how specific export competencies of employees correlate with firm-level performance metrics. Additionally, exploring the role of cross-cultural competence as a crucial export competency and its influence on international business success would be valuable. Evaluating the effectiveness of various training and development programs designed to enhance employees' export competencies, as well as examining the relationship between employee motivation, job satisfaction, and engagement in the development and utilization of export competencies, are also promising areas for further investigation.

In addition, future research could explore the development and implementation of targeted training programs aimed at enhancing specific competencies among employees and entrepreneurs. Understanding these dynamics will be crucial for Thai companies seeking to sustain and improve their export performance in an increasingly competitive global market.

### **4.1. Economic significance**

The findings from this study highlight the critical role of employee and entrepreneur competencies in enhancing work efficiency and the performance of export companies in Thailand. As international trade is a key driver of Thailand's economy, improvements in work efficiency directly contribute to higher productivity and competitiveness in the global market. The positive impact of competencies suggests that companies with a more skilled and competent workforce are better equipped to adapt to the complexities of international trade, manage export processes effectively, and maintain a competitive edge. This, in turn, can lead to higher export revenues, increased foreign investment, and stronger economic growth for Thailand, especially in sectors where export activities dominate.

Moreover, with the globalization of trade, fostering high competency levels can help Thai businesses navigate the ever-changing international regulations, market dynamics, and technological advancements, allowing them to expand their market reach and solidify their position in global value chains. Therefore, improving workforce skills not only enhances individual company performance but also strengthens the overall economic resilience of Thailand.

### **4.2. Policy recommendations**

- 1) The Thai government should implement policies that promote workforce training and development, focusing on enhancing competencies in international trade-

related skills such as logistics, compliance with trade regulations, market analysis, and intercultural communication. These initiatives can be facilitated through public-private partnerships, with government subsidies provided for employee training programs aimed at boosting export efficiency.

- 2) Government programs and agencies like the Department of International Trade Promotion (DITP) should offer specialized entrepreneurial development programs. These could include mentorship, workshops, and access to international trade experts to equip entrepreneurs with the necessary skills to compete in global markets.
- 3) Policies should be designed to provide export companies, especially small and medium enterprises (SMEs), with easier access to advanced technologies and digital platforms that streamline international trade processes. This could include the establishment of government-funded innovation hubs that promote the use of digital tools and automation to enhance work efficiency.

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