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**The Role of the Community in Entrepreneurship –  
The Case of Vietnam**

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**Abstract**

*Communities play an essential role in entrepreneurship development. More specifically, communities not only contribute to maintaining, but also to promoting and supporting entrepreneurship development. Therefore, it makes sense to enhance the role of the community in entrepreneurship. However, the influence of each community is different in impact on entrepreneurship. This study aimed to explore the assessments of the community's role in supporting and developing entrepreneurship. From there we can have a concrete perspective on the relationship between the role of the community and entrepreneurship. The study was carried out based on an online questionnaire survey with 201 community members in Vietnam. The Importance-Satisfaction Analysis was used to analyse the influence of community roles. The results show that Support in promoting products or services is a role that is assessed as important and needs to be developed. The roles of the community in Support for business knowledge and information, Financial support or loan giving, Support for relationships, and Space for exchange and development should be maintained and steadily developed. Community roles in Using services or buying goods and Support for labour need development restrictions. Finally, communities should reduce their investment in Participating in events and exchange activities organised by enterprises, and regularly encourage enterprises. These results contribute to a better understanding of the role of the community in entrepreneurship. Through this article, stakeholders, such as communities, local managers, and policymakers, will have solutions to improve the role of the community. The paper ends with a discussion of the results and implications of the study.*

**Keywords:** community, community role, Importance-Satisfaction Analysis, entrepreneurship, Vietnam.

**JEL Classification:** L26, M10.

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## **1. Introduction**

Community is people who live within a geographically defined area and who have social and psychological ties with each other and with the place where they live (Mattessich, Monsey, 2004). Furthermore, communities have long been identified as having a role in and influencing entrepreneurship (Lyons et al., 2012) alongside other surrounding factors (Welter, 2011). Besides, many studies have determined that communities are not only resource-rich, but also an effective foundation for business (Martin et al., 2013). Thus, the community is a solid foundation for enterprises to grow stronger (Lyons et al., 2012). Furthermore, Hindle and Moroz (2010) determined that many aspects of the community have an impact on any entrepreneurial process and entrepreneurship of entrepreneurs and business start-ups. On the other hand, Korsching and Allen (2004) considered the support from the community as a catalyst for business projects.

More specifically, communities provide vital services that support entrepreneurship (Darwish, Van Dyk, 2018) through various measures and subsidies (Prijon, 2012). Lyons et al. (2012) determined that communities also engage in activities that facilitate investment and are effective for entrepreneurship. The more supportive the community, the greater the number of potential entrepreneurs who will start new businesses (Gruidl, Markley, 2014). Therefore, building the right environment and community characteristics and promoting entrepreneurship is a significant task for the governments of countries. From there, communities can create the best environment for entrepreneurship and contribute to supporting, sustaining, and promoting the development of entrepreneurship.

The article that attempts to supplement an empirical study on the influence of community roles on entrepreneurship in a particular case is in Vietnam. This study uses the Importance–Satisfaction Analysis (ISA) method for 201 samples collected from community members in Vietnam. From there, the paper aims to present the actual effects of community roles on entrepreneurship. Implications are also provided for the community and local managers to improve the efficiency and quality of community roles, as to well as improve satisfaction and engage more people in starting a business. The paper is organised into the following sections: the first section provides a brief literature review of community role studies for entrepreneurship. In the second part, the research methods used by the authors are provided. The third part covers the research results. Then, the last part is the conclusion and discussion of the research results of the paper, establishing future research directions as well as limitations of the study.

## **2. Problem Statement**

### ***The Role of the Community in Entrepreneurship***

The enterprise is a sociocultural phenomenon, and its establishment and operation (success or failure of enterprises) are linked and dependent on the environment in which the enterprise operates (Păunescu et al., 2018; Păunescu, Mátyus, 2020;

Păunescu, Molnar, 2020; Doan, 2022). The surrounding environment can stimulate or promote the operation of enterprises. It is an essential factor in determining the conditions under which the enterprises will operate. Shane (2003) explained that the entrepreneurship phenomenon cannot be explained by environmental forces or by individual factors without the other. This view is based on much scholarly research. They observe that culture, local and state policies, social and physical infrastructure, and even the degree of social interaction profoundly influence entrepreneurial behaviour (Fortunato, Alter, 2015). With different environments, circumstances, and times, entrepreneurial behaviour and intentions will differ (Maresch et al., 2016). Herein, community as a consideration affects all forms and processes of entrepreneurship (Lyons et al., 2012; Doan, 2023).

Many studies have shown that we cannot assume that the impact of community on entrepreneurship is the same because entrepreneurial ability is not just an individual quality. It must include their response to opportunities that appear to be exploited for profit (Lichtenstein, Lyons, 2010). As mentioned above, inherent community factors, such as favourable natural resources, population size, geographical features, etc., can determine how well a business operates. In this situation, the community and entrepreneurship are mutually beneficial, and both reap benefits from the interaction (Lyons et al., 2012).

In effect, the community's role in supporting entrepreneurship is provided by creating culturally supported relationships to share information and opportunities, collaborate for the benefit of the community or region, and create an ecosystem that supports enterprises (Fortunato, Alter, 2011). In addition, communities support entrepreneurs and entrepreneurship not only at the functional level (e.g., access to capital through banks, local taxation, land use policy, and availability of financing options), but also at the relational level (Wilkinson, 1991). From there, the community helps promote an enabling environment that supports entrepreneurs and entrepreneurship (Wilkinson, 1991).

Korsching and Allen (2004) saw entrepreneurship from a broader perspective than community development. They considered community support as a catalyst for entrepreneurial projects (Korsching, Allen, 2004). Additionally, the community provides significant services aimed at supporting startups (Darwish, Van Dyk, 2018) through various measures and grants for entrepreneurship (Priyon, 2012). Lyons et al. (2012) determined that communities also carry out activities that facilitate surplus, savings, investment, and effects on entrepreneurship. However, community developers and leaders should keep in mind that community support makes all the difference. The more supportive the community, the greater the number of potential entrepreneurs who will start new businesses (Gruidl, Markley, 2014).

The role of the community in entrepreneurship is demonstrated through: support through networks (Manyara, Jones, 2007); funding and financial resources (Giudici et al., 2012); creating spaces that foster creativity, innovation, and entrepreneurship (Rieken et al., 2019); support training and skills development (Torri, 2010); participate in business activities (Lyons et al., 2012); provision of natural resources, labor (Lyons et al., 2012); providing important services aimed at supporting

entrepreneurship (Darwish, Van Dyk, 2018); positive impact between social and cultural norms on entrepreneurship (Barazandeh et al., 2015), etc.

However, in addition to positive issues, communities can have a negative impact on enterprise success and entrepreneurship (Lyons et al., 2012). In particular, the lack of incentives to create new entrepreneurs in the community will damage the sustainability of business activities and the business development process in the community (Lyons et al., 2012). It will also hurt communities because entrepreneurship is correlated with economic growth and community development (Lyons et al., 2012).

In summary, the nature and role of any relevant community as an influential factor in entrepreneurship is an issue that should be examined in studies and assessments of factors influencing entrepreneurship (Hindle, Moroz, 2010). In addition to being equipped with useful raw materials, many communities do not fully understand how to support entrepreneurs' start-ups and promote business activities. Communities can engage in activities that have little or no impact on entrepreneurship (Lyons et al., 2012). Therefore, it is necessary to identify and evaluate the roles of the community in entrepreneurship.

### **3. Aims of the Research**

This study aims to identify the role of the community in entrepreneurship in Vietnam. In particular, this paper has attempted to detail the influence of community roles using survey data collected from community members. Additionally, specific assessments of how community roles affect entrepreneurship give community leaders and policy makers a more detailed view of community roles in Vietnam. The research questions in this study are as follows.

1. How important are community roles in entrepreneurship in Vietnam?
2. How satisfied are community members with the community roles?
3. What are the different impacts of the community role in entrepreneurship?

### **4. Research Methods**

#### ***4.1 Data Collection***

The survey subjects here are members of the Vietnamese community. To ensure the accuracy of the data we collect, we believe it is important that community members know their communities well. Data were collected using an online questionnaire. The structure of the questionnaire consists of three parts: the first part is the participation of the respondents in the community, the second part is the assessment of the relationship between the community and entrepreneurship, and the last part is some personal information of the respondents.

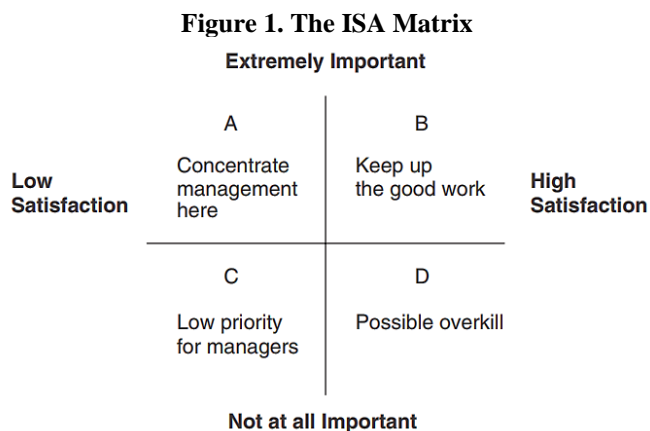
The questionnaires were sent by email or Facebook to community members in rural areas and small towns. The interviewees were randomly selected regardless of gender, age, and region of origin. The survey was conducted in November and December 2022 for members of the community in Vietnam. The sampling method

is convenient, not probabilistic. Finally, 201 complete and valid samples were used to perform the analysis.

To capture quantitative information on stakeholders' perceptions of how the community's impact, role, and influence on their decision-making, a 6-point Likert questionnaire (1 = very disagree to 6 = strongly agree, or 1 = least affect to 6 = most influential, etc.) was used in most of the questionnaire. The 6-point Likert question is suggested as an alternative that will eliminate respondents choosing a central score (Gwinner, 2006).

## 4.2 Data Analysis

This study uses the Importance–Satisfaction Analysis method. The ISA method is based on the Importance-Performance Analysis of Martilla, James (1977), excluding satisfaction instead of performance (Tonge, Moore, 2007). The means of importance and satisfaction for each attribute provided coordinates for the position in a two-dimensional grid, where each quadrant could be summarised as a specific implication for management (see Figure 1).



*Source: Tonge, Moore, 2007.*

- Quadrant A (focus on development): High importance, low satisfaction. The attributes in this quadrant are considered very important to the customer, but the satisfaction is poor.

- Quadrant B (continue to maintain): High importance, high satisfaction. The attributes in this quadrant are considered essential for customers, and satisfaction is very well.

- Quadrant C (development constraints): Low importance, low satisfaction. The attributes located in this quadrant are considered low satisfaction and not important.

- Quadrant D (reducing investment): Low importance, high satisfaction. The attributes in this quadrant are considered unimportant to the customer, but satisfaction is reasonable.

The ISA model has become a suitable method for understanding and assessing the satisfaction and importance of organisational characteristics (Tonge, Moore, 2007). By examining the points in each quadrant in the matrix, managers can infer attributes that organisations, customers, etc. feels the highest and lowest priority should be given to improving its characteristics. From there, it is often used to provide solutions to strategic-level decisions for your organisation.

## 5. Findings

### 5.1 Description of the Samples

The statistical results on the demographic characteristics of the respondents who are members of the community are shown in Table 1. The observations include 23.9% males and 76.1% females. In general, the gender distribution among community members in this study is female. The age of the community members surveyed is between 20 and 60 years of age in the community. The proportion of community members aged 20 to 30 years old accounted for the highest proportion of the sample with 81.1%, followed by 30-50 years old with 17.4%, and older than 50 years old with 1.5%. This disparity is due to the fact that the questionnaire was conducted using the Google Forms tool, so young people are more tech-savvy than the rest. Additionally, the study also focused on young community members to assess the current state of the community's influence on stimulating entrepreneurship.

In terms of work experience, respondents with less than five years of work experience also accounted for the highest proportion (79.1%), and those with more than five years of work experience (20.9%). Besides, unmarried people account for a large percentage (81.1%) compared to married people (18.9%). Regarding residence, 63.2% of the respondents are currently in urban areas and 36.8% are in rural areas.

**Table 1. Sociodemographic data in the samples**

		N	Percent (%)			N	Percent (%)
<b>Age</b>	<30 years old	163	81.1	<b>Marital status</b>	Married	38	18.9
	30-50 years old	35	17.4		Not married	163	81.1
	>50 years old	3	1.5	<b>Work experience</b>	< 5 years	159	79.1
<b>Location</b>	Rural area	74	36.8		≥ 5 years	42	20.9
	Urban area	127	63.2	<b>Gender</b>	Male	48	23.9
<b>Total</b>		<b>201</b>	<b>100</b>		Female	153	76.1

Source: Author's own research result.

### 5.2 The Importance of Community Role

Communities often take steps and activities to provide support for entrepreneurship. To meet the community members' expectations of these support activities, communities must understand the importance of each of these activities in the opinion of community members. Thus, the individual opinion of community

members about the importance of each activity and the role of the community must be clearly defined. Through the analysis of the importance of community roles, this study hopes to provide valuable information for community managers in order to enhance the community role and to be more in line with the needs of community members.

In the significance analysis, a reliability test with the Cronbach alpha coefficient is performed in the significance analysis. After assessment, Cronbach's Alpha of variables is above 0.90, which means that the variables are valid for further analysis (Taber, 2018).

Taking the six answerability levels as an interval scale, more detailed results are visible. Table 2 also shows that the role of the community in Support for relationships has the highest level of agreement compared to the rest of the community roles. Furthermore, the results show that all mean scores for community roles in terms of importance are higher than 4.00, which is a value of slightly high importance. Therefore, it can be concluded that the nine community roles are important in supporting entrepreneurship and local development.

**Table 2. The importance of community role**

<b>Criteria</b>	<b>Rank</b>	<b>Mean*</b>	<b>Std. Deviation</b>
Using services or buying goods	9	4.13	1.387
Support for labor	6	4.22	1.492
Support in promoting products or services	3	4.24	1.422
Support for business knowledge and information	4	4.23	1.418
Financial support or giving loan	4	4.23	1.399
Support for relationships	1	4.29	1.489
Participate in events and exchange activities organised by enterprises	8	4.20	1.432
Space for exchange and development	2	4.27	1.459
Regularly encourage enterprises	6	4.22	1.425

*\*: 1 very unimportant – 6: very important*

*Source: Author’s own research result.*

### **5.3 Satisfaction with Community Role**

In this section, an evaluation of the level of satisfaction with the roles of the community is presented. Similarly, the Cronbach’s Alpha coefficient is used in the reliability assessment. In this study, the value of Cronbach's Alpha for each variable above 0.90 indicates that the variables are reliable (Taber, 2018).

Considering the six levels of responsiveness as an interval scale, Table 3 presents the mean satisfaction values of the community member. Two attributes, Space for exchange and development, and Regularly encouraged enterprises, are highly rated by community members with a mean value of 3.99. Meanwhile, community members rate using services or buying goods as the least satisfactory.

**Table 3. Respondent’s satisfaction with community role**

Criteria	Rank	Mean*	Std. Deviation
Using services or buying goods	9	3.84	1.309
Support for labor	8	3.90	1.375
Support in promoting products or services	7	3.91	1.342
Support for business knowledge and information	6	3.96	1.399
Financial support or giving loan	5	3.97	1.378
Support for relationships	4	3.97	1.382
Participate in events and exchange activities organised by enterprises	3	3.98	1.365
Space for exchange and development	2	3.99	1.398
Regularly encourage enterprises	1	3.99	1.395

\*: 1 very unsatisfied – 6: very satisfied

Source: Author’s own research result.

### 5.4 Important - Satisfaction Matrix

The comparison evaluation between the results of the importance rating and the satisfaction rating provides valuable information. All nine attributes of the community roles received low ratings from visitors in terms of satisfaction (see Table 4). More specifically, the most negative gap lies in the attributes of Support in promoting products or services (0.33). Furthermore, Table 4 shows that all nine gaps are statistically significant (p-value<0.05).

These findings illustrate that the community still has many problems to solve, such as improving communication activities of products and services, supporting labour resources for the community, promoting the introduction of relationships in the community, etc. Community members have many reasons to feel unsatisfied with the role of the community in Vietnam in stimulating entrepreneurship.

**Table 4. Performance gaps between “Important” and “Satisfaction” respondents**

Criteria	Importance *	Satisfaction **	Gap	P value ***
Using services or buying goods	4.13	3.84	-0.29	<b>0.000</b>
Support for labor	4.22	3.90	-0.32	<b>0.000</b>
Support in promoting products or services	4.24	3.91	-0.33	<b>0.000</b>
Support for business knowledge and information	4.23	3.96	-0.27	<b>0.001</b>
Financial support or giving loan	4.23	3.97	-0.26	<b>0.002</b>
Support for relationships	4.29	3.97	-0.32	<b>0.000</b>
Participate in events and exchange activities organised by enterprises	4.20	3.98	-0.22	<b>0.004</b>
Space for exchange and development	4.27	3.99	-0.28	<b>0.001</b>
Regularly encourage enterprises	4.22	3.99	-0.23	<b>0.002</b>

\*: 1 very unimportant – 6: very important

\*\* : 1 very unsatisfied – 6: very satisfied

\*\*\*: Results from Pair Sample T-Test

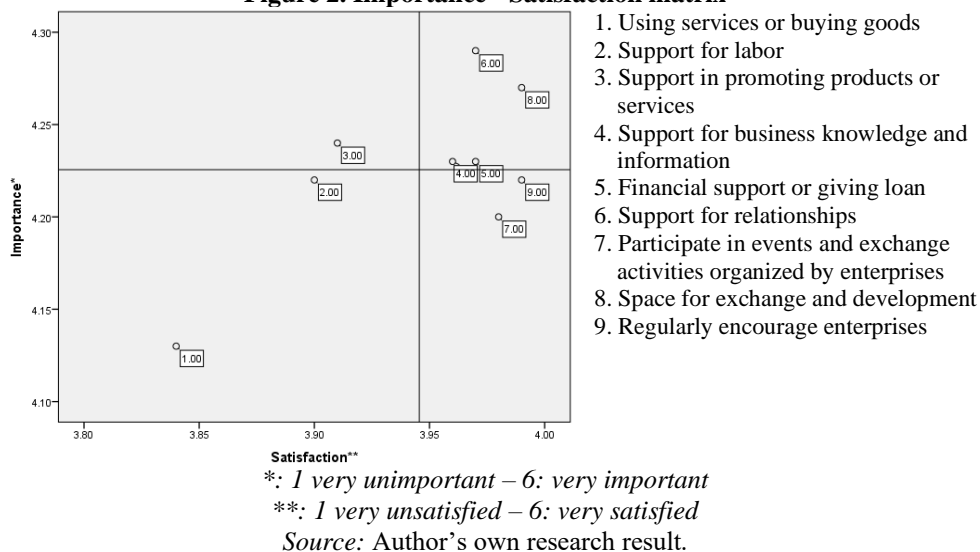
Source: Author’s own research result.



The average satisfaction for all attributes of community roles in Vietnam and the average importance of these attributes are calculated for the sample population. The position of each attribute on the importance-satisfaction grid was determined using the mean scores of importance and satisfaction as coordinates (Ryan, Cessford, 2003). After these calculations are done, they are plotted on a two-dimensional grid. The general mean score for importance and satisfaction was used to determine the position of the axes on the grid (mean importance score = 4.226 and mean satisfaction score = 3.946). Then each property in the grid is then analysed by finding the appropriate quadrant in which it is located (Figure 2).

Figure 2 shows the community member's overall rating of importance and satisfaction with the community's role attributes. On the basis of this visual analysis, four groups of attributes are distinguished:

**Figure 2. Importance - Satisfaction matrix**



- Quadrant A should be immediately reviewed by community managers. It is easy to visually see that “3. Support in promoting products or services” is the most important feature of the community in Vietnam that needs to be immediately improved.

- Quadrant B can satisfy community stakeholders, these attributes in this quadrant are important to community members, and they also meet most community member expectations, especially “6. Support for relationships”.

- Quadrant C has a lower priority. These attributes are of low level of relevance, so the low satisfaction will not create a significant negative impact on the role of the community in Vietnam.

- Quadrant D has a positive effect on future development because these characteristics are pleasing to the community members, although it is given little attention. In which, “7. Participate in events and exchange activities organised by

enterprises”, “9. Regularly encouraging enterprises” can strengthen the enthusiasm of the community in Vietnam.

## **6. Conclusions**

The community plays an essential role in supporting and developing entrepreneurship. These community roles promote entrepreneurship and local development, contributing to community development in general. These communities support all stages of business development from the start of the business to the growth of the enterprises. This article has provided an assessment of the role of the community in entrepreneurship development in Vietnam. From the research results analysed above, these communities have a significant contribution to entrepreneurship development. In general, the assessment of the community roles for entrepreneurship, and the level of satisfaction for the nine community roles, is not commensurate with their importance. The satisfaction average rating values are all lower than their importance. The characteristics with a high gap between importance and satisfaction are Support in promoting products or services, Support for labor, and Support for relationships.

Furthermore, the results show that the support to promote products or services is an important role that should be focused on development. In fact, Supporting the promotion of products and services has always been the most important to promote entrepreneurship, especially for new enterprises. Currently, in Vietnam, there have been many policies and solutions to support the government in promotion and advertising. However, the capacity of communities is still limited. In addition, at the local community level, this problem is weak because there are not many mechanisms, policies, and supports. The community roles of Support for business knowledge and information, Financial support or lending loans, Support for relationships, and Space for exchange and development should continue to be maintained and steadily developed when appreciated for their importance and satisfaction. Communities should continue to enhance their policies and supporting roles for entrepreneurship, focussing on activities that support knowledge, information, and finance for community members; continue to maintain and expand networks and relationships that support community entrepreneurship and enhance space for exchange and development in the community.

Community roles in Using services or buying goods, Support for labor need to be limited in development. Finally, Vietnamese communities should reduce their investment in Participating in events and exchange activities organised by enterprises, and Regularly encourage enterprises. These show that these community roles are not yet necessary for the current entrepreneurship in Vietnam. Also, it also shows that community members need more practical roles for the entrepreneurial activities of the community (it has a high level of satisfaction, but the importance level is lower than the mean value). Therefore, it is necessary to avoid the inefficient activities and roles that take place today. Therefore, community managers should have solutions to improve the community's role and ability to enhance the effective operation of their community. The findings of this study contribute to existing

knowledge and practice on research on the influence of the community on entrepreneurship in Vietnam, in particular, and research on the community role in general.

In addition, the research still has some limitations. The first limitation of the study is the application of the convenience sampling method, often criticised for the representativeness of the collected data. Furthermore, the number of research samples collected is limited, with 201 observations. The third limitation is related to the subjects interviewed in this study from different community groups. Therefore, there is a comparison in the assessment between many community groups in future studies. From there, it is possible to examine differences in the influence of community roles on entrepreneurship. The number of samples and the number of communities surveyed can be increased to ensure generalisability and representativeness of the research. Furthermore, it can be studied on each supporting behaviour of the community role for entrepreneurship using specific scales, and other analytical methods can be combined with the characteristics of local people and entrepreneurs in the area.

From the above research results, we can see that the community has activities that play a role and make significant contributions to entrepreneurship in Vietnam. Therefore, when understanding the factors that affect the development of entrepreneurship, the community is one of the factors that should be taken into consideration. This study serves as a reference to provide a practical outcome of the relationship between community and entrepreneurship in a developing country.

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