

# Imaginative Solutions for an Evolving Market: Using the Business Model Canvas to Design Innovative Adult Learning Programs in Thailand

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## Abstract

This study investigates how Thai educational establishments can enhance their adult lifelong learning initiatives by implementing the business model canvas. Research was conducted through semi-structured interviews with fifteen administrators and instructors purposively selected from Thai universities, community colleges, and private educational organizations based on their involvement in adult learning programs. Document analysis of course catalogs, marketing materials, and program reports supplemented the interviews. Findings reveal that while institutions are adopting more learner-centered and market-oriented approaches, there is still room for improvement. Less than 15% of Thai adults aged 25-64 participate in formal or non-formal education, compared to over 50% on average across OECD countries. Institutions that have invested in data-driven customer segmentation, career-focused value propositions, online delivery, responsive learner support, alumni engagement, income diversification, and resources for curriculum design and technology reported improved student satisfaction and completion rates. The study emphasizes the importance of partnerships with employers, government, and other stakeholders to enhance program relevance and sustainability. The business model canvas provides a valuable framework for adult learning providers to strategically innovate their programs and position themselves for success in the growing global lifelong learning market.

**Keywords:** lifelong learning, adult education, business model canvas, Thailand, higher education.

## 1. Introduction

In the current dynamic global economy, lifelong learning has become exceptionally important. Job skills can swiftly become outdated, necessitating individuals to consistently enhance their knowledge and abilities to be competitive (Ratana-Ubol, A., & Richards, C., 2016). The Thai government has acknowledged the crucial importance of lifelong learning in stimulating economic development and improving the overall well-being of its inhabitants. The National Economic and Social Development Plan prioritizes the need to increase lifelong learning opportunities, particularly for adults (Office of the National Economic and Social Development Council, 2017).

Nevertheless, Thai educational institutions face significant challenges in effectively serving the adult learner population. Less than 15% of Thai adults aged 25-64 participate in formal or non-formal education, compared to over 50% on average across OECD countries (Chisholm et al., 2009). Barriers include time constraints, financial limitations, family responsibilities, limited offerings in remote areas, and the perception that education is primarily for the young (Laohajaratsang, 2009).

Thai educational institutions face several specific challenges in effectively serving adult learners. First, many institutions lack targeted marketing and outreach strategies to attract and engage adult students, who may not respond to traditional recruitment methods designed for younger learners (Laohajaratsang, 2009). Second, institutions often struggle to design flexible and convenient program formats that accommodate the work and family responsibilities of adult learners. Evening, weekend, online, and accelerated options are limited (Sungsri, 2009). Third, curriculum and instruction frequently fail to capitalize on the rich professional and life experiences that adult learners bring, missing opportunities for applied, problem-based learning (Ratana-Ubol & Richards, 2016). Fourth, support services such as academic advising, career counseling, and technology training are often inadequate to meet the unique needs of adult learners navigating the postsecondary landscape (Laohajaratsang, 2009). Finally, many institutions have difficulty securing sustainable funding streams for adult learning programs, which can be costly to design and deliver (Sungsri, 2009). These multifaceted challenges underscore the need for innovative, market-oriented solutions to enhance the adult learning provision in Thailand.

In order to tackle this difficulty, Thai educational institutions might utilize the business model canvas, which is a strategic management tool that assists businesses in designing, analyzing, and improving their methods of creating, delivering, and capturing value (Osterwalder & Pigneur, 2010). By utilizing the business model canvas in the context of adult lifelong learning, institutions may create programs that are more focused on the needs and preferences of adult learners, aligned with market demands, and economically viable, resulting in increased enrollment, improved student retention, and higher levels of satisfaction among adult students. This strategy is in line with current global trends in higher education, as institutions increasingly embrace entrepreneurial and customer-centric approaches to navigate change and remain relevant (Selingo, 2024).

The business model canvas comprises nine interconnected components: customer segments, value propositions, channels, customer connections, revenue streams, key resources, key activities, key partnerships, and cost structure (Osterwalder & Pigneur, 2010). These parts offer a thorough structure for examining an organization's existing business model and pinpointing opportunities for innovation and enhancement. Within the realm of adult lifelong learning, the canvas can assist institutions in gaining a deeper understanding of the requirements and preferences of different groups of adult learners. It can also aid in creating persuasive value propositions, developing efficient delivery methods and support services, expanding sources of income, optimizing resource allocation, and fostering strategic partnerships (Qastharin, A. R., 2016).

Although the business model canvas has been extensively used in many sectors, its application in the education sector, specifically in the context of adult lifelong learning, has not been

thoroughly studied (Spraul, and Stumpf, 2022 ). This study seeks to fill this need by examining how Thai educational institutions might utilize the business model canvas to improve their adult lifelong learning programs. This research enhances the existing knowledge on the use of business tools and strategies in the education sector by examining the present status of adult learning programs in Thailand and suggesting potential areas for business model innovation.

Furthermore, this study holds considerable practical significance for Thai educational institutions aiming to enhance their provision for the adult learner market. Institutions can enhance the relevance, accessibility, and sustainability of their adult learning programs by implementing a more strategic and market-oriented approach to program design and delivery. This will help support Thailand's national objectives of promoting lifelong learning and workforce development. The results of this study can provide valuable insights for the creation of more efficient policies, strategies, and collaborations to assist adult learners in Thailand and other regions.

## 2. Literature Review

The notion of lifelong learning has ancient origins, tracing back to Eastern and Western philosophies that saw education as an ongoing and uninterrupted process throughout one's life (Henschke, 2011). In contemporary times, the swift transformations in the economy and technology have rendered lifelong learning indispensable for the well-being and advancement of both individuals and society as a whole. Workers must continuously learn new skills and knowledge due to globalization, automation, and the shift towards knowledge-based economy. Both governments and international organizations have acknowledged the growing importance of lifelong learning as a key policy focus. The United Nations Sustainable Development Goals, specifically Goal 4, advocate for the provision of inclusive and fair education of high quality, as well as the promotion of lifelong learning opportunities for everyone (United Nations, 2015). Thailand has recognized the significance of lifelong learning. In the 1997 Constitution, the Thai government officially established the right to lifelong education. This commitment to lifelong learning has been consistently incorporated in subsequent national economic and social development plans (Office of the National Economic and Social Development Council, 2017). Thailand's lifelong learning ecosystem has been expanded by the commercial sector, civil society groups, and foreign organizations, as noted by Laohajaratsang (2009).

Nevertheless, there are still notable obstacles when it comes to involving Thai people in lifelong learning. Thai individuals aged 25-64 have low participation rates in formal or non-formal education, according to surveys. Less than 15% of Thai adults in this age group are active in education, compared to an average of over 50% across OECD countries (Chisholm et al., 2009). Obstacles encompass time limits, financial limitations, familial obligations, restricted availability in remote regions, and the belief that education is predominantly intended for the youth (Laohajaratsang, 2009). Additionally, there are challenges on the supply side, as several Thai educational establishments depend on conventional lecture-based teaching methods and classroom timetables that are inconvenient for employed individuals (Sungsri, 2009).

Within this particular framework, academics have pushed for a reconsideration of how educational institutions cater to the needs of adult individuals who engage in lifelong learning. According to Knowles' (1984) theory of andragogy, the process of educating adults necessitates distinct methods compared to teaching children. This is because adults tend to be more autonomous, intrinsically driven, and focused on solving problems in their learning. Utilizing business ideas in education can enhance the learner-centeredness and market orientation of the sector (Sungsri, 2009). The business model canvas has been suggested as a useful tool for building educational programs that generate, distribute, and retain value for various groups of learners (Osterwalder & Pigneur, 2010). The business model canvas was initially created as a strategic framework to assist new organizations in conceptualizing their operations (Osterwalder & Pigneur, 2010). The framework comprises nine components: customer segmentation, value propositions, channels, customer connections, income streams, key resources, key activities, key partnerships, and cost structure. The initial four components pertain to the external milieu of an organization, whereas the latter four components concern its internal operations.

Although originally designed for corporate purposes, the canvas has been modified to suit many nonprofit sectors, such as higher education (Haukipuro et al., 2018). Osterwalder and Pigneur acknowledge that the canvas is applicable to "any organization that desires to generate, provide, and acquire value", including educational institutions (Osterwalder & Pigneur, 2010, p. 51). Barquet et al. (2011) illustrate the adaptation of the business model canvas for educational purposes by renaming 'customer segments' as 'learner segments', 'customer relationships' as 'learner relationships', and so forth. In addition, the component of 'revenue streams' might include sources other than learner fees, such as government support, gifts, and income from endowments. There is a limited but increasing amount of research that examines how the business model canvas might be used in the context of adult and lifelong learning. Orr et al. (2018) employ the framework to examine commercial models for personal learning environments that facilitate self-directed lifelong learning. They discover that several projects depend on uncompensated labor and have challenges in establishing viable sources of income. Andreou et al. (2019) utilize the business model canvas to create a blended lifelong learning program specifically tailored for Portuguese people. The canvas facilitates the process of dividing the market into segments, creating a persuasive value offer, and strategizing important alliances. Nevertheless, there is a scarcity of research on the utilization of the business model canvas for adult lifelong learning in the specific context of Thailand.

The current body of research emphasizes the significance and difficulties associated with providing lifelong learning opportunities for adults, specifically in Thailand. The statement highlights the capacity of the business model canvas as a tool for creating lifelong learning programs that are more pertinent, easily accessible, and environmentally friendly. Nevertheless, further investigation is required to explore the use of the canvas within the unique setting of Thai educational establishments.

### 3. Methodology

This study utilized a qualitative research approach to examine how Thai educational institutions might enhance their adult lifelong learning offerings by implementing the business model canvas. The study included semi-structured interviews with 15 administrators and teachers from

Thai universities, community colleges, and private educational organizations that provide adult lifelong learning programs. The researchers employed purposive sampling to ensure the inclusion of individuals with a wide range of experiences and viewpoints.

The interview questions were created with the intention of extracting information pertaining to the nine components of the business model canvas. Participants were instructed to provide descriptions of their present procedures, highlight any issues they faced, and propose potential changes for each area. The interviews were carried out in the Thai language, had a duration of around 60 minutes, and were recorded in audio format with the participants' explicit permission. In order to examine the data, the interview tapes were transcribed and converted into English. The transcripts underwent coding utilizing a blend of deductive and inductive theme analysis, as outlined by Braun and Clarke (2006). The data was organized using deductive codes that were based on the nine aspects of the business model canvas. Subsequently, the process of inductive coding was applied to each individual constituent, leading to the emergence of unforeseen themes.

Aside from conducting interviews, researcher also analyzed documents relevant to the adult lifelong learning programs of the participating institutions. These documents included course catalogs, marketing brochures, and program assessment reports. These materials provide more background and verified the recurring patterns identified throughout the interviews. In order to increase the reliability of the results, various methods were utilized (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Extended interaction with the involved institutions fostered confidence and resulted in more comprehensive data. The evidence for the themes was reinforced by triangulation between interviewees and documents. Engaging in peer debriefing with fellow researchers served as an external validation of the analytic process. Member checking entails the process of presenting initial findings to participants in order to obtain their comments. Ultimately, a comprehensive record of all methodological choices was diligently kept to chronicle the process.

#### **4. Findings**

The investigation provided valuable insights into the present utilization of aspects from the business model canvas in adult lifelong learning programs throughout Thai educational institutions, as well as identified potential areas for enhancement. The findings are structured according to the nine components of the canvas.

##### **Key Partnerships**

The interviewees highlighted the significance of collaborations in enhancing the capacities and extending the reach of institutions in catering to adult learners. The importance of employer collaborations was specifically highlighted. "Maintaining a strong partnership with the industry is crucial to ensure the relevance of our programs and the employability of our students," elucidated the dean of a community college. Participants discussed various company collaboration models, including curriculum advisory boards, specialized corporate training programs, and work-based learning opportunities such as internships and apprenticeships.

A prominent issue that arose was the establishment of collaborations with government agencies, namely those that prioritize enhancing worker skills and development. "By aligning our adult learning programs with government priorities, we have gained access to additional funding

sources and policy support," stated a university official. Certain institutions have engaged in collaborative partnerships with government bodies to develop and implement programs aimed at serving public servants or those who have lost their jobs.

Multiple participants emphasized the significance of collaborating with other educational institutions, both inside the country and outside. "Engaging in collaboration with other institutions of similar standing enables us to exchange resources, optimal methods, and market insights," remarked the director of a private institute. Certain universities have created articulation agreements in order to facilitate smooth transitions for adult learners across different educational institutions. Collaborations have been formed to collectively create and implement initiatives, utilizing the unique abilities of each organization.

Additionally, the significance of community collaborations in enhancing access and providing assistance to adult learners was recognized. "A significant number of our adult students encounter obstacles such as childcare, transportation, or language requirements," elucidated a community college administrator. "Collaborating with community organizations enables us to offer comprehensive services." This includes forming relationships with libraries to establish satellite classes, working with charities to provide social assistance, and engaging with faith-based organizations to reach out to underprivileged populations.

### Key Activities

The interviews revealed a variety of important tasks that institutions prioritize in order to effectively serve adult learners. The importance of curriculum and instructional design became evident. "Creating courses that are pertinent, captivating, and in line with the requirements of the industry is fundamental to our value proposition," elucidated the director of a private institute. A significant number of participants highlighted the significance of integrating active learning methodologies, project-based assignments, and chances for practical application. "Adult learners desire a clear demonstration of how the concepts are applicable to their practical work difficulties," remarked a university instructor.

Another crucial undertaking is the provision of learner assistance and guidance. "Our adult students require extensive guidance to successfully navigate the academic journey and effectively align it with their career objectives," stated a community college administrator. Certain universities have allocated resources towards the establishment of specialist positions such as adult learner concierges or success coaches.

Program marketing and recruiting have been identified as crucial activities, yet they pose challenges for many institutions. "We acknowledge the necessity of improving our ability to effectively engage and convert potential adult students," said the university dean. Several participants proposed that universities should transition from a generic marketing strategy to more focused and tailored approaches. "To achieve success, it is crucial to divide the adult market into segments and create unique value propositions," recommended the marketing director of a private institute.

Multiple schools have recognized that employer and alumni interaction are becoming crucial activities for guaranteeing the relevance of programs and providing possibilities for students. "We are dedicating significant resources to comprehending the requirements of the workforce and actively engaging industry partners in the development of our curriculum," said a community

college administrator. "Another priority is the utilization of our alumni network for student mentoring and job placement."

Participants observed that these crucial actions need substantial cooperation across various institutional roles. "Effectively serving adult learners requires collaboration among academics, student services, marketing, IT, and other relevant departments," noted a university dean. "Overcoming the division between different departments or groups is a continuous difficulty." Some propose that organizations may have to reconsider their hierarchical arrangements and motivations in order to more effectively promote programs for adult education."

### Key Resources

In order to carry out these essential tasks, institutions must gather and utilize a variety of resources. The most crucial asset was determined to be faculty members who had appropriate expertise and adult teaching skills. "The instructors represent the programs," clarified a university administrator. "Participants acknowledged the difficulty of finding and training faculty members who possess both expertise in the subject area and the skill to effectively guide adult learners." This problem is particularly pronounced in sectors where there is a strong demand for professionals from the industry."

Technology infrastructure, such as learning management systems, student information systems, and CRM platforms, has become a crucial resource, especially for universities that offer online programs. "In order to serve adult learners effectively, it is essential to have technology that is strong and easy to use," stated the director of a private institute. Nevertheless, a significant number of participants expressed that their institutions have difficulties in keeping up with technology advancements as a result of financial and personnel limitations.

The possession of experience in curriculum and instructional design was also recognized as a crucial asset. "Creating impactful educational experiences for adults necessitates a distinct set of skills," remarked a university dean. "We require instructional designers who possess a deep understanding of adult learning theory and can collaborate with faculty members to develop engaging courses." Certain schools have established internal instructional design teams, while others collaborate with external suppliers.

Multiple attendees emphasized the significance of possessing data and analytics capabilities. "It is imperative that we enhance our proficiency in gathering and evaluating data pertaining to the preferences, behaviors, and outcomes of adult learners," stated a community college administrator. "Intelligence should be integrated into all aspects of an institution, including marketing, curriculum design, and student support." However, just a small number of universities indicated having well-developed data infrastructure and analytics procedures.

It was not surprising that financial resources were regarded as a significant limitation. "To effectively cater to adult learners, it is necessary to allocate resources," stated the university dean. "However, due to financial constraints, adult programs are frequently underfunded." Certain participants proposed that universities should adopt a more innovative and assertive approach to securing funds for adult learning initiatives. This may involve establishing business collaborations, obtaining government funding, or soliciting charitable contributions."

## Value Propositions

Participants perceived their main advantage as offering pragmatic, career-oriented information and abilities that assist adult learners in progressing in their professions and remaining competitive in the labor market. "Our programs prioritize practical applications in real-world contexts, rather than solely focusing on academic theory," clarified a community college lecturer. "Our objective is to ensure that our graduates possess the ability to promptly implement the knowledge they have acquired in their professional roles." Nevertheless, there were some who believed that further efforts might be made to effectively convey this benefit to potential students."

Additionally, some universities highlighted the adaptability and simplicity of their programs for adult learners as a significant advantage. "Adult learners require flexible alternatives that accommodate their demanding schedules," stated the head of a private college. "Our institution provides a variety of online, evening, and weekend courses to cater to diverse requirements. Additionally, we have also explored accelerated and self-paced formats to enable adult learners to finish programs at a faster pace."

Individualized assistance and focused attention have emerged as another significant benefit. "The university marketing director explained that our institution offers small class sizes and dedicated advising services to provide adult learners with personalized guidance for their success." Several universities have implemented tailored coaching and mentoring programs to assist adult students in navigating academic and vocational obstacles.

Many participants emphasized the importance of the peer networks and industry ties that adult learners acquire via their programs. "Numerous students at our community college emphasize the significance of the relationships they establish with their peers and professors, considering them to be equally valuable as the knowledge they gain," stated a dean of the institution. "These networks create additional professional prospects."

Nevertheless, several participants expressed the opinion that the value propositions offered by their institutions for adult learners were not sufficiently transparent or persuasive. "We must enhance our ability to clearly express the distinctive advantages of our programs, rather than solely focusing on their characteristics," conceded a university official. "Adult learners are seeking assistance in attaining their particular objectives." It has been proposed that institutions should actively include adult learners in the process of establishing and confirming the value they provide.

## Customer Relationships

Participants highlighted the significance of offering comprehensive support services to establish connections with adult learners, who frequently require more help than conventional students. "Our adult students are managing multiple responsibilities," a university lecturer observed. "We must offer extensive guidance and support, starting from the enrollment process and continuing until graduation and beyond."

Institutions that have specialized personnel to provide support for adult learners reported better levels of satisfaction and rates of program completion. "Our private institute has dedicated academic advisors who specialize in assisting adult students," clarified the administrator. "They



assist students in navigating various aspects such as choosing courses, obtaining financial aid, and planning their careers."

Nevertheless, some institutions do not have established procedures for collecting and responding to feedback from adult learners. "While we conduct end-of-course evaluations, we lack a structured mechanism for monitoring and addressing the needs of adult students," said the dean of a community college. Several participants proposed that the use of customer relationship management (CRM) software might enhance institutions' comprehension and communication with adult learners during their whole educational journey.

Participants also acknowledged the capacity of alumni networks to enhance enduring connections with adult learners. "The adult graduates serve as our most effective representatives for promoting our brand," stated the marketing director of the institution. "We are endeavoring to actively involve them through mentoring programs and industry events." However, only a limited number of institutions have specific initiatives in place to foster relationships with alumni who are adult learners.

### Channels

According to the interviews, the majority of institutions largely use traditional methods like print advertising and in-person information sessions to connect with potential adult learners. Some individuals have conducted trials with digital marketing techniques such as social media and search engine optimization. Nevertheless, there is ample opportunity for enhancing the accessibility and simplicity of program distribution methods.

Many participants observed that their institutions provide a restricted range of online or blended learning opportunities, which might be a significant obstacle for working people who have schedule limitations. "We have been hesitant in embracing distance learning," said a university administrator. "Our adult students frequently encounter difficulties in attending on-campus classes during post-work hours."

Organizations that have allocated resources to online program delivery have reported favorable outcomes. "The enrollment of our online MBA program has increased twofold since its launch," stated the head of a private college. "Adult learners value the convenience of studying at their own pace." Nevertheless, participants warned that transitioning programs to an online format necessitates substantial initial investment in technology and training for instructors.

Another obstacle connected to channels is the absence of robust collaborations with companies, professional groups, and community organizations, which might assist institutions in reaching a broader adult demographic. "Our marketing efforts are primarily self-reliant," stated a community college administrator. "Enhancing our collaboration with companies or industry groups to enhance the visibility and promotion of our programs is an aspect that we should certainly focus on for improvement."

### Customer Segments

The majority of participating institutions indicated that they aimed to attract a wide range of adult learners, including working people looking to enhance their abilities and retirees pursuing personal interests. Some organizations are starting to provide more specialized services for certain groups, such as programs designed for women who are reentering the job after taking time out to have children. Nevertheless, some institutions do not have structured procedures for

defining and verifying consumer categories. Administrators mainly depend on their subjective interpretations of market demands. "To be honest, we rely heavily on intuition," said a university dean. "Although we believe there is a demand for a specific program, we do not consistently verify this assertion with empirical evidence."

Several participants proposed that institutions should enhance their consumer segmentation and targeting strategies. "A standardized approach to programming is ineffective for adult learners, as they possess a wide range of individual needs and objectives," said the head of a private institute. "It is necessary to enhance our comprehension of various adult learner personas and customize our offerings accordingly." They suggested utilizing market research, student data, and industry feedback to determine the most advantageous niches.

Additionally, a number of participants emphasized the significance of directing attention towards marginalized adult learner groups, including individuals with low income, immigrants, and elderly individuals. "Traditional higher education has largely neglected these groups, yet they present a significant opportunity for expansion and influence," stated a community college dean. Nevertheless, catering to these specific groups may necessitate distinct strategies for reaching out, designing educational programs, and offering support services, which many institutions now lack the resources to do.

### Cost Structure

The primary factor that drives up costs in adult learning programs, as recognized by participants, is teacher remuneration. "Acquiring competent instructors with industry expertise who can effectively teach evening and weekend classes suitable for adults incurs high costs," said a university official. Several universities have attempted to save expenses by employing a greater number of adjunct teachers or increasing class sizes, but they express concern that this approach may compromise the quality of their programs.

Technology is a major expense, especially for universities who are investing in delivering online programs. "Developing and upkeeping a learning management system incurs significant costs," disclosed a director of a private college. "However, it is essential to maintain competitiveness in the adult market." Several participants proposed that institutions may attain economies of scale by distributing online course production expenses across several programs or collaborating with external providers.

Multiple universities encountered cost difficulties associated with offering the necessary support services for adult learners, including academic guidance, vocational counseling, and childcare. "Although we acknowledge the significance of these services in ensuring the success of adult students, they also incur a substantial amount of additional administrative costs," remarked a dean from a community college. Certain individuals have conducted trials using variable pricing models, in which services are separated from tuition or provided based on a fee-for-service arrangement.

Collectively, participants reached a consensus that achieving cost management while upholding quality is a precarious equilibrium. "We must adopt a highly strategic approach when allocating our finite resources," said a university administrator. "It is crucial to prioritize the primary activities that generate the highest value for adult learners."

## Revenue Streams

The main source of income for most universities' adult learning programs is tuition. Participants acknowledged the difficulty of establishing pricing that are both competitive in the market and adequate to fund program expenses. "Our adult learners are highly responsive to changes in price," clarified a community college administrator. "However, reducing tuition excessively would result in insufficient funds to provide a high-quality educational program."

Certain universities have explored alternate methods of generating income, such as securing corporate sponsorships and obtaining government contracts. A university dean mentioned that they collaborated with a prominent financial institution to create a tailored training program for its personnel. "The situation has been mutually beneficial – they pay for the expenses, and we gain entry to a new student market." Another organization has had success in obtaining government money for programs that enhance skills in accordance with the nation's workforce development objectives.

Nevertheless, panelists emphasized that the process of diversifying revenue streams needs substantial time and work. "Engaging in corporate partnerships or securing government grants requires extensive networking and the preparation of detailed proposals," remarked the director of a private institute. "Our capacity is sometimes limited." It has been proposed that institutions could gain advantages by allocating resources to employ specialized personnel for the purpose of developing adult learning programs.

Multiple individuals showed enthusiasm for investigating other income methods, such as subscription-based programs or employer-funded tuition benefits. "We must adopt a more innovative approach in our thinking regarding the pricing and payment methods for adult education," stated a university official. "The conventional pay-per-credit model may not be suitable for every adult learner or employer." Nevertheless, most institutions are still in the first phases of experimenting with these advancements.

Table 1 : Business Model Canvas for Adult Education

Component	Details
Key Partnership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Employers for curriculum input, internships, customized training</li> <li>- Government agencies for funding, policy support, joint programs</li> <li>- Other education providers for resource sharing, pathways</li> <li>- Community organizations for outreach, wrap-around services</li> </ul>
Key Activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Relevant, engaging curriculum and instructional design</li> <li>- Learner support and advising</li> <li>- Targeted marketing and recruitment</li> <li>- Employer and alumni engagement</li> <li>- Cross-functional coordination</li> </ul>
Key Resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Faculty with industry experience and adult learning skills</li> <li>- Technology infrastructure (LMS, SIS, CRM)</li> <li>- Instructional design expertise</li> <li>- Data and analytics capabilities</li> <li>- Financial resources</li> </ul>
Value Propositions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Practical, career-relevant knowledge and skills</li> <li>- Flexible, accessible delivery formats</li> <li>- Supportive, individualized learner experience</li> <li>- Connections to career opportunities and professional networks</li> </ul>
Customer Relationships	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- High-touch, personalized support from enrolment through completion and beyond</li> <li>- Proactive, data-driven communication and interventions</li> <li>- Customized coaching to help learners navigate academic and career paths</li> <li>- Active alumni engagement and mentorship</li> </ul>

Channels	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Online and blended delivery</li> <li>- Social media and digital marketing</li> <li>- Partnerships for expanded reach (employers, government, community)</li> <li>- Opportunity: Investment in online infrastructure, partner outreach</li> </ul>
Customer Segments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Working professionals</li> <li>- Women returning to workforce</li> <li>- Retirees pursuing personal interests</li> <li>- Underserved populations</li> <li>- Opportunity: More data-driven segmentation and targeted value propositions</li> </ul>
Cost Structure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Faculty compensation</li> <li>- Technology development and maintenance</li> <li>- Learner support services</li> <li>- Opportunity: Sharing costs through partnerships, variable pricing models</li> </ul>
Revenue Streams	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Tuition</li> <li>- Corporate sponsorships</li> <li>- Government grants and contracts</li> <li>- Philanthropic donations</li> <li>- Opportunity: Diversification beyond tuition, dedicated business development</li> </ul>

## 5. Discussion

The findings of this study provide valuable insights into the current state of adult lifelong learning programs in Thai educational institutions and the potential for using the business model canvas to enhance these offerings. The interviews revealed that while many institutions are adopting more learner-centered and market-oriented approaches, there is still significant room for improvement. Currently, Thai educational institutions employ various strategies to cater to adult learners, such as offering evening and weekend classes, providing short-term training programs, and partnering with employers to deliver workplace-based learning (Sungsri, 2009). However, these approaches often fall short in meeting the diverse needs and preferences of adult learners, as evidenced by the low participation rates in formal and non-formal education among Thai adults aged 25-64 (Chisholm et al., 2009).

The business model canvas provides a promising framework for Thai educational institutions to strategically innovate their adult learning programs. By systematically analyzing and optimizing the nine components of the canvas - customer segments, value propositions, channels, customer relationships, revenue streams, key resources, key activities, key partnerships, and cost structure - institutions can design programs that are more responsive to market demands, accessible to adult learners, and financially sustainable. Implementing the business model canvas in adult lifelong learning programs can potentially yield several benefits. First, it can help institutions better understand and serve the diverse needs of adult learners by developing targeted value propositions and support services for different customer segments. Second, it can improve the accessibility and flexibility of programs by leveraging technology-enabled delivery channels and partnerships with employers and community organizations. Third, it can enhance the financial viability of adult learning programs by diversifying revenue streams, optimizing key resources and activities, and managing costs effectively.

Moreover, adopting a business model approach can foster a culture of innovation and continuous improvement in adult learning programs. By regularly reviewing and adapting their business models based on market feedback and performance data, institutions can stay agile and responsive to the evolving needs of adult learners and the changing landscape of work and

technology. However, implementing the business model canvas in educational settings also presents challenges. It requires a significant shift in mindset and capabilities from traditional academic models to more market-oriented and entrepreneurial approaches (Chou et al., 2017). It also demands closer collaboration and alignment across different functions and stakeholders, both within and outside the institution (Ratana-Ubol & Richards, 2016). Therefore, institutions need to invest in building the necessary leadership, talent, and infrastructure to support this transition.

As a result, this study highlights the potential of the business model canvas as a strategic tool for Thai educational institutions to enhance their adult lifelong learning programs. By leveraging the canvas to design more learner-centered, market-oriented, and sustainable programs, institutions can better serve the growing demand for upskilling and reskilling in the face of technological and economic disruptions. However, realizing this potential requires a concerted effort from policymakers, institutional leaders, faculty, and staff to embrace new mindsets, build new capabilities, and foster new partnerships. Future research can further explore the implementation challenges and success factors of applying the business model canvas in different institutional contexts and provide empirical evidence on its impact on adult learning outcomes.

## 6. Conclusion

The study's conclusions indicate that while Thai educational institutions are starting to adopt more business-oriented strategies for creating and implementing adult lifelong learning programs, there is still room for considerable improvement. A helpful framework for evaluating the present status of these projects and pinpointing opportunities for improvement and innovation is offered by the business model canvas. To better understand and serve different adult learner demographics, Thai institutions must invest in market intelligence skills (Acito & Khatri, 2014). Since evidence of professional success influences adult learners' program selections significantly, they need to bolster their value propositions with reliable data and proof points (Ho, 2016). In order to give adult learners the convenience and flexibility they want while keeping up with global trends, it is imperative to expand the alternatives for online and blended learning (OECD, 2019).

Another area of focus is developing trusting connections with adult learners. More adaptable, customized assistance models may be powered by incorporating concepts from customer experience management, such as path mapping and real-time student feedback systems (Marquez et al., 2015). To solve income issues, it is advised to diversify revenue streams through entrepreneurial endeavors like as business alliances, nondegree credentials, and real estate development (The Chronicle of Higher Education, 2018). Thai institutions may need to investigate cutting-edge cost-control strategies such resource sharing among programs and institutions, variable pricing, and unbundling of services (Govindarajan & Srivastava, 2020). It is crucial to invest in distinguishing activities like curriculum and instructional design, technological infrastructure, and data analytics skills that are helpful to clients and difficult for rivals to imitate.

Developing an ecosystem of partners—especially industry partnerships—is essential to guaranteeing the applicability and employability of adult education programs in Thailand (U-

Chantra, 2017). This study shows that the business model canvas is applicable and useful for assessing and enhancing adult lifelong learning programs in Thai educational institutions, even if it is not a magic bullet and can oversimplify the complexity of educational companies (Norman, 2016). Institutions that proactively build and modify their business models using frameworks like the canvas will be best positioned to satisfy the changing demands of adult learners as the demand for ongoing upskilling and reskilling increases.

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