

STRENGTHENING THE BRANDING OF COMMUNITY PRODUCTS TO BOOST SUSTAINABLE COMPETITIVENESS

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Abstract

The objectives of this research are twofold: (1) to enhance the identity of community products to increase sustainable competitiveness, and (2) to test the market for community product identity of Nakhon Wang Yai, Udon Thani Province. The samples utilized in this research include (1) an analysis of packaging demand; (2) an evaluation of packaging prototypes conducted by three experts using assessment forms; and (3) market testing of community product identity with consumer groups. Data was collected from 100 individuals using questionnaires as a research tool. The findings indicated that (1) both the community and consumers expressed a desire for their identity to be designed in a way that reflects the narrative of Wang Sam Mo, which features Thai women sitting on the back of a large crocodile, symbolized by the phrase "NAANG KHAM BANG NANG BON LANG BAK HAO" The design evaluations conducted by experts were deemed to be of good quality, and (2) market tests based on consumer opinions regarding the identity of Nakhon Wang Yai community products were generally very satisfactory.

Keywords: Branding, Community Products, Competitiveness

Introduction

The tourism characteristics of the Wang Yai group are highlighted in this section. Wang Sam Mo Community, Udon Thani Province, is a community model that is a beautiful ecotourism destination and is becoming popular today. From the survey of the Wang Sam Mo community, there are 3 types of products: (1) handicrafts, wicker, traditional woven fabrics, and fabric processing (2) Tourism and Agriculture and (3) Food Souvenirs, which are based on the product classification according to the Bureau of Promotion of Local Wisdom and Community Enterprises (2020) and the overall problem conditions and demand for logos and product packaging of the 9 occupational groups in the area. In the post-COVID-19 pandemic situation. In 2022, Wang Sam Mo district received support from the government agencies of Udon Thani province. In promoting the natural tourism site "Wang Yai Rafting" at Lampan Chad Reservoir. Wang Sam Mo District, Udon Thani Province, which has an increase in the number of tourists. Therefore, the community group has set up a community market to sell handicraft products. Agricultural products are supported as souvenirs for tourists and generate income for people in the community. With this increase in the number of tourists, it is necessary to have branding play a greater role in the community. To ensure the credibility of the product to consumers and also to tell consumers the details of the use of the product.

Community marketing by developing branding is an important strategy that helps build brand loyalty. Strengthen customer retention and foster strong relationships between the organization and customers. Engaging with community members allows brands to build a loyal

customer base and turn regular customers into active advocates. Create meaningful interactions with consumers and leverage consumer feedback. The goal is to promote a supportive and inclusive community environment continuously. (Hannah Wesson. 2024)

Based on the origin and importance of the problem mentioned above, the research on strengthening the branding of community products to boost sustainable competitiveness has led to the enhancement of branding. Logos and packaging that promote market competition It also helps the Nakhon Wang Yai group in Udon Thani province, who cannot access the support of government agencies, to receive assistance. The project will send experts to consult on the branding development of Nakhon Wang Yai Group, Udon Thani Province, so that it can be used to promote commercial competition and can add more value to the group's products. This led to an increase in product sales. As a result, there will be more income from higher profits, which will strengthen and sustain the tourism group.

Research Objectives

1. To develop the branding of community products to enhance sustainable competitiveness. The Nakhon Wang Yai Group is in Udon Thani Province.
2. To test the market for the product identity of the developed Nakhon Wang Yai community, Udon Thani province.

Hypothesis of Research

Market test results using consumer satisfaction with the product branding of the Nakhon Wang Yai community in Udon Thani Province are at a higher level.

Scope of Research

1. Population Scope
 - 1.1 Samples used to analyze the problem conditions and product branding needs of the tourism group. Simple random sampling was conducted through in-depth interviews with the research population, which includes manufacturers and consumers of tourism products. in Udon Thani Province.
 - 1.2 The Print and Packaging Design Specialists Group consists of professors from educational institutions and specialists who work in the field of print and packaging design. Purposive Sampling for 3 People.
 - 1.3 The sample used in the market test was a consumer of the tourism group's products. In Udon Thani Province, a total of 100 people selected a sample by accidental sampling using a 5-level questionnaire as a tool. in Udon Thani Province.
2. Variable Scope
 - 2.1 The independent variable is the branding of products of the Nakhon Wang Yai Group, Udon Thani Province.
 - 2.2 The dependent variable is the result of a market test using consumer satisfaction in using the products of the Nakhon Wang Yai Group, Udon Thani Province.

Research Methodology

This study used the Research and Development (R&D) model to develop branding for community products to improve the long-term competitiveness of the Nakhon Wang Yai Group in Udon Thani Province, following the steps of Poon Kong Charoenkiet and Somporn Kong Charoenkiet (1999: 78-83) and Jam & Co Design (2017). The research is divided into two phases, as follows:

1. Phase 1: Product Branding Development by Nakhon Wang Yai Group, Udon Thani Province. Details are as follows:

1.1 Went to the area to collect data on the issues faced by the Nakhon Wang Yai Group and their branding needs in Udon Thani Province. The data was gathered through a focus group discussion with a sample of ten people, and the results were analyzed to determine the framework for the development of product branding for the Nakhon Wang Yai Group in Udon Thani Province to increase competitiveness.

1.2 Designing and developing product branding for the Nakhon Wang Yai Group in Udon Thani Province, based on the previous stage's analysis of problems and needs.

1.3 Evaluate the Nakhon Wang Yai Group's (Udon Thani Province) product branding prototype created by design experts. The data was collected from the Likert Scale's 5-level feedback packaging prototype assessment form, and the quality was analyzed and evaluated using mean ($\bar{x}$) and standard deviation (S.D.) and corrected in accordance with the recommendations. To use the assessment results to determine the feasibility of implementing it in actual distribution.

2. Phase 2: Testing the Branding Market for Community Products in Nakhon Wang Yai Group, Udon Thani Province. Details are as follows:

2.1 After revising the branding model based on expert feedback.

2.2 Developed a research tool to be used to collect market test data by determining consumer satisfaction with the branding of community products in Nakhon Wang Yai Group, Udon Thani Province, using a 5-level opinion evaluation questionnaire by creating and determining the quality of the questionnaire by finding the accuracy from the IOC (Index of Item Objective Congruence) calculated from expert consideration to obtain a consistency index of 0.50 or more. It demonstrates that the generated questionnaire can be used as a research tool (Kaemkate, 2012: 219-234).

2.3 The survey was used to assess satisfaction with the branding of community products of the Nakhon Wang Yai Group, Udon Thani Province, and data was collected from the population in the study, namely consumers of Nakhon Wang Yai Group products, Udon Thani Province, who were chosen at random from a sample of 100 people. Using the mean ($\bar{x}$) and standard deviation (S.D.) to analyze the degree of satisfaction. (Sudsawart, J et al. 2019: 106-110)

Research Results

The research results are divided into two parts, as follows:

1. Results of product branding development at Nakhon Wang Yai Group, Udon Thani Province

This section consists of two parts, as follows:

1.1 Analysis of the problem and product branding needs of Nakhon Wang Yai Group After going to the site to collect data with a sample of stakeholders in the group's products. The small number of handicraft products and manufacturers makes it impossible to produce enough to meet market demand, and the lack of promotional packaging prevents setting appropriate prices for marketing these products. In addition, the products do not convey the image of the community and lack diversity. Finally, there is a need for the "Nakhon Wang Yai" emblem, which conveys the identity of the community through local stories.

1.2 Product Branding Design and Development Results of the Nakhon Wang Yai Group

After gathering information on the area's conditions, problems, and packaging requirements, the researcher moved on to the brand development process. The researcher created branding around the "Nakhon Wang Yai" logo. The color of the crocodile (BAK HAO) is brown. NAANG KHAM BANG Wearing a green Thai dress and a pink bag cloth, and using the orange color of the sun, which is the name of Udon Thani province, which is a design from the story of Wang Sam Mo Palace, where there is a Thai woman sitting on the back of a big crocodile named " NAANG KHAM BANG sitting on the back of a BAK HAO ". Crocodile with a wide mouth awaiting fortune (Sukpat. 2019). The data is then analyzed to create a branding model aimed at increasing competitiveness, with expert evaluation scores indicating a very high level of quality. ($\bar{x}$ = 4.24, S.D.= 0.58) are shown in Figures 1 and 2.



Figure 1: The logo of the Nakhon Wang Yai Group



Figure 2: Example of Identity logo on a product

2. Results of the Branding Market Test of Community Products of the Nakhon Wang Yai Group

After completing the branding development of community products, the Nakhon Wang Yai Group in Udon Thani Province finalized the branding process. The research team has produced a prototype for distribution to be tested in the market. It was assessed based on satisfaction with the branding of Nakhon Wang Yai community products that were sold using a satisfaction assessment questionnaire. The sample was 100 consumers from random randomization, and the results of the market test are shown in Table 1.

Table 1: Satisfaction with Branding of Community Products, Nakhon Wang Yai Group

Items	$\bar{X}$	S.D.	Satisfaction Level
The branding is appropriate for the product.	4.33	0.47	High
The branding is beautiful.	4.00	0.00	High
The branding is user-friendly and appropriate for the product.	4.33	0.47	High
The branding is international and contemporary.	3.66	1.24	High
Overall	4.08	0.54	High

Table 1 shows that consumers were overall highly satisfied with the results of the market testing for the branding of community products developed by the Nakhon Wang Yai Group. The branding is highly suitable for the product, easy to use, and meets consumer expectations. The average value of 4.33 is very beautiful. The average rating is 4.00, indicating a contemporary international standard.

Discussion

This study, Enhancing Community Product Branding to Increase Long-Term Competitiveness in Udon Thani Province: A Case Study of Wang Sam Mo District, Udon Thani Province, examined community product branding through field visits to assess challenges and packaging demand among nine community product groups. Following support from Udon Thani Province in 2022 to promote the natural tourism attraction “Wang Yai Rafting,” tourist numbers increased, leading to the establishment of a community market selling handicrafts and agricultural products as souvenirs. With growing tourism activity, branding has become essential for distinguishing community products and ensuring their reliability and credibility for consumers, which aligns with evidence from service quality studies emphasizing clear procedures, responsive services, and effective communication channels in shaping user satisfaction (Kritsanakarn & Thumcharoensathit, 2024)..

Therefore, the research team uses the principle of branding from the concept of the community to summarize (1) story creation, (2) shapes that convey stories, and (3) color theory. The most important rule for creating a community-based tourism brand is storytelling in the present era, including using semiotics analysis based on the concepts of Charles Sanders Peirce (1839-1914). Peirce expanded on Saussure's ideas, complicating them. Peirce challenged the notion that a sign is formed by three factors, including (Pattanophas. n.d., Dahlstrom and Somayaji, 2003). (1) Symbols, (2) Interpretation, and (3) Objects designed the brand identity. The community responded to the emblem because it was designed in accordance with the honest brainstorming of the community by the Wang Yai group. The design conveys the story of Wang Sam Mo. A Thai woman sits on the back of a large crocodile. ""NAANG KHAM BANG NANG BON LANG BAK HAO." Crocodiles open their mouths wide to receive wealth and fortune. Mrs. Kambang maintains a straight face. The overall composition is considered beautiful and proportionate, in line with the concept of Tuchu, and Indrason (2016) says that in designing a logo to make the product or company unique, it will help to be credible and recognizable to consumers. It is also related to the research of Simsiri et al. (2017), who found that diversity in tourism forms is still an attraction and popular for tourists today. An important element that occurs with tourism is the trading of products produced in tourist destinations as a symbol of the place. At the same time, it studies the factors that affect the attractiveness and purchasing decisions of consumers. As a result, the evaluation of community branding by consumers is at a high level. (4.08)

Recommendations

The results of this research can only be applied to a part of the area. An in-depth study should be conducted on each factor involved in the design of the packaging emblem for each area, including aspects such as arts, culture, and various local wisdoms.

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