

ผ้าทอนาหมื่นศรีและผ้าทอเกาะยอ: การประยุกต์ใช้แนวคิดเศรษฐกิจสร้างสรรค์ ในการพัฒนาผลิตภัณฑ์เพื่อพัฒนาเศรษฐกิจชุมชน*

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บทคัดย่อ

งานวิจัยครั้งนี้มีความมุ่งหมายดังนี้ 1) เพื่อศึกษาภูมิปัญญาท้องถิ่นเกี่ยวกับการผลิตผ้าทอนาหมื่นศรีและผ้าทอเกาะยอ 2) เพื่อศึกษาสภาพปัญหาและแนวทางการจัดการการตลาดผ้าทอนาหมื่นศรีและผ้าทอเกาะยอ และ 3) เพื่อศึกษารูปแบบการประยุกต์ใช้แนวคิดเศรษฐกิจสร้างสรรค์ในการพัฒนาผลิตภัณฑ์ผ้าทอนาหมื่นศรีและผ้าทอเกาะยอเพื่อพัฒนาเศรษฐกิจชุมชน ผลการวิจัยพบว่า ผ้าทอนาหมื่นศรีและผ้าทอเกาะยอ เป็นภูมิปัญญา และความสามารถที่ถ่ายทอดสืบต่อกันมา ผ้าทอนาหมื่นศรีมีลวดลายผ้าต่างๆ กว่า 30 ลาย และผ้าทอเกาะยอมีลวดลายผ้าต่างๆ กว่า 40 ลาย วัตถุดิบที่ใช้ในปัจจุบันคือ สีย้อมสังเคราะห์ ที่สั่งซื้อจากกรุงเทพมหานคร สภาพปัญหาและแนวทางการจัดการการตลาดผ้าทอนาหมื่นศรีและผ้าทอเกาะยอ ทั้ง 2 กลุ่มมีสภาพปัญหาและแนวทางการจัดการการตลาดที่เหมือนหรือคล้ายคลึงกัน รูปแบบการประยุกต์ใช้แนวคิดเศรษฐกิจสร้างสรรค์ในการพัฒนาผลิตภัณฑ์ผ้าทอนาหมื่นศรีและผ้าทอเกาะยอเพื่อพัฒนาเศรษฐกิจชุมชน มีขั้นตอนเริ่มแรกคือ สำรวจความต้องการของผู้บริโภค หลังจากสำรวจความต้องการของผู้บริโภคแล้ว ผู้วิจัยได้ทำการปรึกษากับนักเขียนแบบ เพื่อให้เขียนแบบผลิตภัณฑ์ตัวอย่าง ซึ่งนักเขียนแบบได้เขียนแบบผลิตภัณฑ์ 5 ประเภท ประกอบด้วย ชุดทำงาน กระเป๋าวิทยุทำงาน ชุดเลกกันท์ ชุดราตรียาว และชุดกระเป๋าวัยรุ่น จากนั้นผู้วิจัยจึงได้ดำเนินการจัดประชุมเชิงปฏิบัติการที่ตำบลนาหมื่นศรี เพื่อให้ที่ประชุมแสดงความคิดเห็น การพัฒนาผลิตภัณฑ์เพื่อพัฒนาเศรษฐกิจชุมชน ได้มีการออกแบบโดยคำนึงถึงผลิตภัณฑ์ที่ตรงกับความต้องการของผู้บริโภค ผลิตภัณฑ์ที่หลากหลาย มีความทันสมัย มีเอกลักษณ์เฉพาะถิ่น และอยู่บนฐานของเศรษฐกิจสร้างสรรค์ การออกแบบหรือพัฒนาผลิตภัณฑ์ตามความต้องการโดยประยุกต์ใช้แนวคิดเศรษฐกิจสร้างสรรค์ในการพัฒนาผลิตภัณฑ์ผ้าทอเพื่อให้ได้ผลิตภัณฑ์ที่มีการสร้างสรรค์ตรงกับความต้องการของตลาด มีเอกลักษณ์โดดเด่น

คำสำคัญ: เศรษฐกิจสร้างสรรค์, เกาะยอ, นาหมื่นศรี, การพัฒนาผลิตภัณฑ์, ผ้าทอ

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Nameunsi and Koh Yor woven fabric: The application of creative economy concepts to develop products for the development of community economy *

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Abstract

This qualitative research aims to study: 1) local knowledge of Namuensri and Koh Yor woven fabric production; 2) problems, conditions and guidelines for marketing management of Namuensri and Koh Yor woven fabric; and 3) application of creative economic concepts to develop Namuensri and Koh Yor woven fabric for community economic development. Research results found that Namuensri and Koh Yor woven fabrics are heritages of intellect and ability. There are more than 40 Namuensri and Koh Yor woven fabric patterns. Synthetic cotton is used as a raw material, ordered from Bangkok. There are five concerning aspects with both Namuensri and Koh Yor woven fabric products. The application of creative economic concepts was begun by surveying consumer demands and consulting with designers. Subsequently, the designers drew five products: a working dress, a working-age bag, household products, an evening dress and a bag for teenagers. The researchers then held workshops to allow respondents to comment on suitability of the creative economic concepts for product development. The product developments are based on customer demands, product variety, modernization, local identity and the creative economy. The product designs develop existing woven fabrics products to be creative products following market demand. They retain an outstanding identity and add value to the woven fabrics. Consequently, they can help increase product distribution, community revenue and development of the community economy.

Keywords: Creative Economy, Koh Yor, Nameunsi, Product Development, Woven Fabric

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Introduction

Currently, every part of the world is geared towards finding economic advantages and uses these advantages to negotiate with other countries. Developing countries cannot negotiate their economy position and trade with developed countries. Thus the countries of Southeast Asia realized the necessity of an economic union. Consequently, they established the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN). ASEAN was formed to promote political and economic cooperation and regional stability. The ASEAN Declaration in 1967 was a document that formalized the philosophy and purpose of ASEAN, establishing a legal identity as an international organization. The ASEAN Community is comprised of three ‘pillars’, one of which is an economic community. This economic community helps to drive trade in the area and established the ASEAN Free Trade Area (AFTA) to promote trading. Thai businesses should adjust to these larger changes by standardizing product development, so that it is effective and increases the ability to compete (Somtrakul, 2012).

According to these recommendations, Thailand must be more awake and reconsider traditional business practices, especially in those industries related to Thai lifestyle and traditional agriculture. In the past products were produced and used in the families by using local wisdom to exploit local raw materials and increase income in the communities. Moreover, local industries were expanded widely and became an important source of work, income and industrial development. Traditional knowledge became a way of supporting the Thai economy by adjusting to global economic change and sustainable market demand (Phocharoen, S. 1999).

Namuensri and Koh Yor woven fabrics are part of the Thai community economy. Currently, weavers cope with many problems, such as a lack of development and promotion from participants. This includes development of knowledge, sales promotion, research and expertise. Especially problematic is the lack of a survey to assess consumer demand and the knowledge of woven fabric business management. For these reasons, the woven fabric industry is in decline. Therefore, the a development and promotion system based on creative economy should be created for Namuensri and Koh Yor woven fabrics in order to increase economic value and also develop the economic community. Moreover, Namuensri and Koh Yor woven fabrics can be promoted to be important parts of national economic rehabilitation that preserve Thai identity, reduce the need for immigrated workers, increase community income and improve the quality of people’s lives. Besides, they are as essential bases of national sustainable development.



Due to the problems outlined above, the researchers were interested in studying the employment model of creative economic concepts in product development of Nameunsi and Koh Yor woven fabrics.

Literature Review

Thai handicrafts have been of particular interest to domestic and international scholars on a number of fronts. At the domestic level, handicrafts have been espoused by the National Commission for Social and Economic Development as a true and viable source of sustainable income generation for local communities. The majority of domestic studies in this field have been case analyses to identify current problems with handicraft production and management and ways to bring these cottage industries in line with modern society (Wannajun, Chantachon & Laoakka, 2011). These types of analysis have commonly identified lack of systematic management, quality control, resourcing, design skill and budget as the primary problems facing local artisans (Duangbubpa, Chantachon & Pratumnet, 2015; Kaewpradit, Keeratiburana & Janta-po, 2013). There are two additional incentives for both handicraft communities and the academic study of handicraft communities. The first has been recognition for indigenous art and knowledge by the royal family. His Majesty King Bhumibol Adulyadej has specifically identified these types of industry as integral to the success of his 'sufficiency economy', an economic philosophy that has become a core part of the Thai identity (Piboolsravut, 2004). Additionally, the local entrepreneurship stimulus program entitled One Tambon (Sub-District) One Product, or OTOP, has created both awareness and benefits for local producers and their wares (Takei, 2007). The second factor that has increased academic and public interest in local handicraft products in recent years has been the strengthening of the ASEAN Economic Community, one of the three pillars of the economic and political union of 10 Southeast Asian countries (Siricharoen & Siricharoen, 2014). The reason the implementation of a single market across Southeast Asia has effected local businesses is because of the geopolitical alliance diluting or weakening traditional practices. A greater focus has thus been placed on preparing local businesses for the implementation of the community in 2015 and enabling traditional Thai manufacturers to compete in the larger market (Yodthong, Chutikorntaweessin, Ladnongkun, Chanchoenrob & Preeprem, 2012). Therefore, academic literature in the field has primarily been concerned with the development of cottage industries to make communities more self-sufficient and to allow their products to compete on the international stage.

International academic literature meanwhile has continued to focus on the cultural significance of traditional Thai handicrafts and their intricacies (Cohen, 2000). The international academic community has often treated Thai handicraft production in comparison to local artisan crafts in other countries (Yukimatsu, Chantachon, Pothisane & Kobsiriphat, 2008). The Thai handicrafts on the international academic stage are put in a much more global context. Common themes in international literature have been the place of local handicrafts in the tourist industry (Cohen, 1995), the exploitation of traditional knowledge and skilled craftsmen and safety and sustainability (Tangkittipaporn & Tangkittipaporn, 2006). However, there has been minimal scholarly reference or investigation into the Nameunsi and Koh Yor woven fabric of Thailand. For this reason, the researchers are confident that this paper can make a significant contribution to the international debate.

Research Aims

This research aims to study: 1) local knowledge of Namuensri and Koh Yor woven fabric production; 2) problems, conditions and guidelines for marketing management of Namuensri and Koh Yor woven fabric; and 3) application of creative economic concepts to develop Namuensri and Koh Yor woven fabric for community economic development.

Research Methodology

This qualitative investigation was conducted in July 2014. The research area was purposively selected from provinces in the South of Thailand and the two weaving communities chosen for further in-depth investigation were the Namuensri weaving community at Namuensri Sub-district, Nayong District, Trang Province and Koh Yor weaving community at Koh Yor Sub-District, Muang District, Songkhla Province. Data collection was performed by both document and field studies (Trumbull, 2005). Research tools were observation, interview, focus group discussion and workshop (Strauss and Corbin, 1990). The data were collected from a purposively selected research sample, composed of 11 key informants, 10 casual informants and 16 general informants, totaling 37 people. Observation was conducted in two ways: 1) participant observation - the research team entered the sample communities to experience their everyday lives and work habits; 2) non-participant observation - the research team made observations from watching the communities in their daily lives and at work. Numerous rounds of interviews were arranged, both structured and unstructured. The structured interview questions were designed

in five categories, which were personal information, social context and culture, community history, product design and production and problems and obstacles. The obtained data were verified using a triangulation technique and analyzed using proposal analysis (Jick, 1979). Finally, the results are presented here as a descriptive analysis. The framework for the investigation is outlined below in Figure 1.

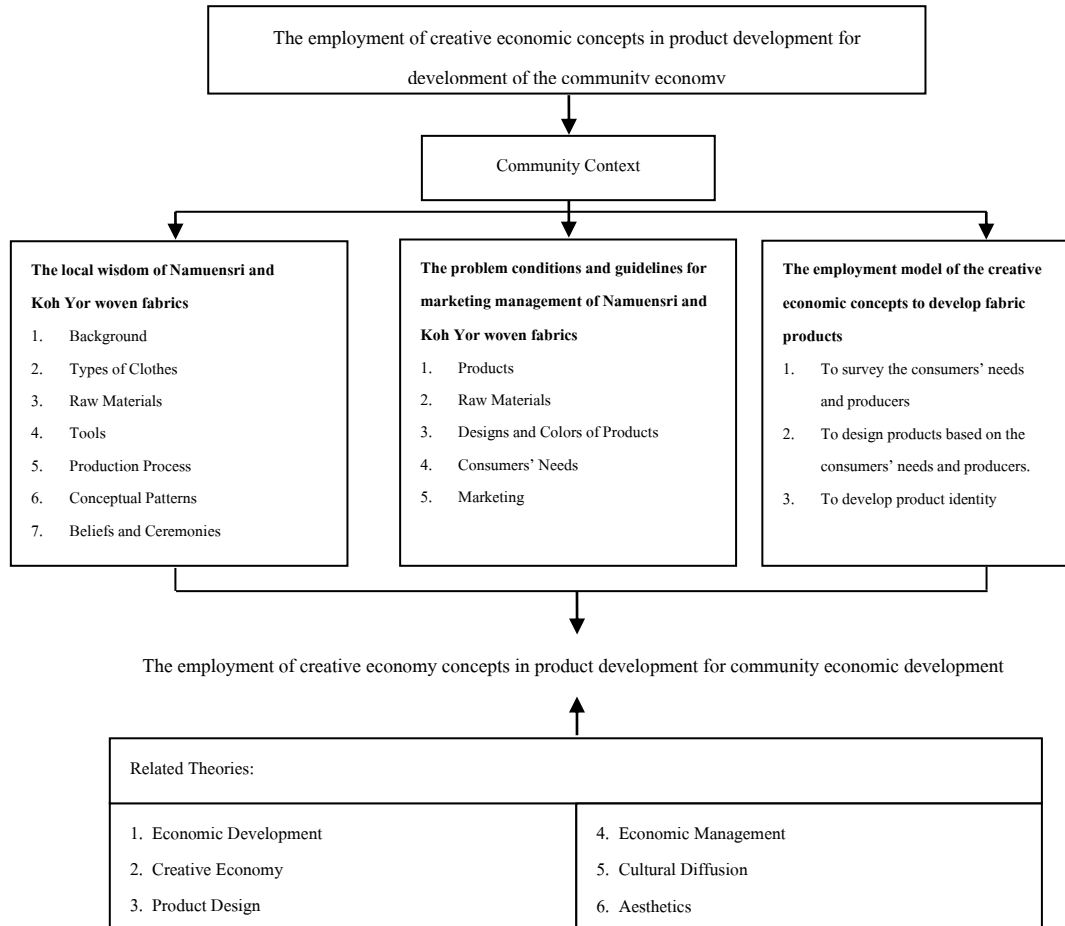


Figure 1: Research Framework

Research Results

Research results found that Namuensri and Koh Yor woven fabrics are heritages of intellect and ability. There are more than 40 Namuensri and Koh Yor woven fabric patterns. Synthetic cotton is used as a raw material, ordered from Bangkok. Looms are used as weaving machines for both types of fabric. Pattern design is still based on previously inherited patterns and weavers also use a process of

trial and error until they settle on new patterns and modifications. Some patterns are purely conceived by the weavers. The product design originally focused on cloth, but later on various transformed products.

There are five concerning aspects with both Namuensri and Koh Yor woven fabric products:

- 1) raw material orders are delayed and inconsistent, which results in different color shades of cotton;
- 2) product designs are repeated without variety, modernization or response to the actual demand of customers and local identity;
- 3) there is a lack of experienced draftsmen and tailors;
- 4) customers demand variety, modernization and evidence of local identity, including female clothes, working clothes for women, bags for teenagers and household products; and
- 5) marketing and distribution is limited to the villages, group offices or OTOP centers, external distribution is insufficient. There are few exhibition fairs and dissemination of product knowledge.

The application of creative economic concepts was begun by surveying consumer demands and consulting with designers. Subsequently, the designers drew five products: working dresses (figure 2), working-age bags (figure 3), household products (figure 4), evening dresses (figure 5) and bags for teenagers (figure 6). The researchers then held a workshop at Namuensri Sub-District to allow respondents to comment on suitability of the creative economic concepts for product development. The meeting results were questioned again at Koh Yor in order to conclude the application of creative economic concepts and compare the results of both groups.

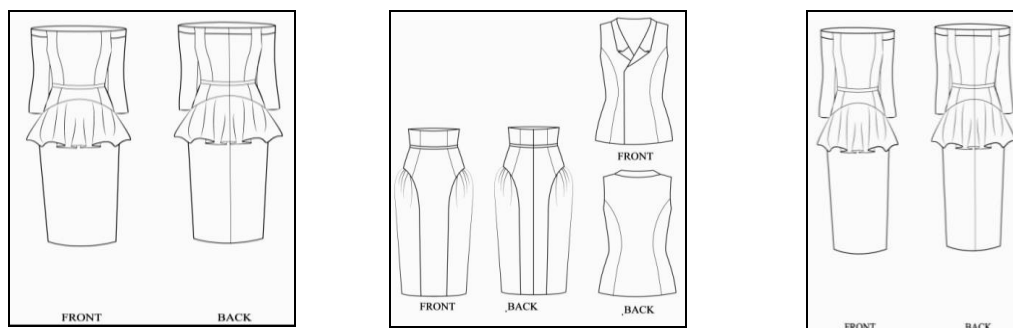


Figure 2: Dresses designed for working women

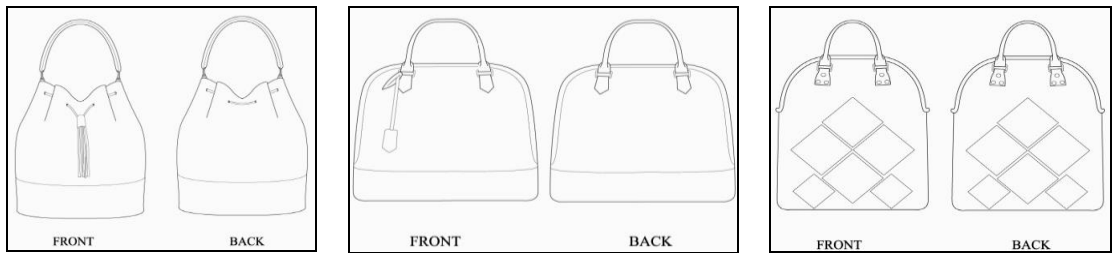


Figure 3: Bags designed for working women

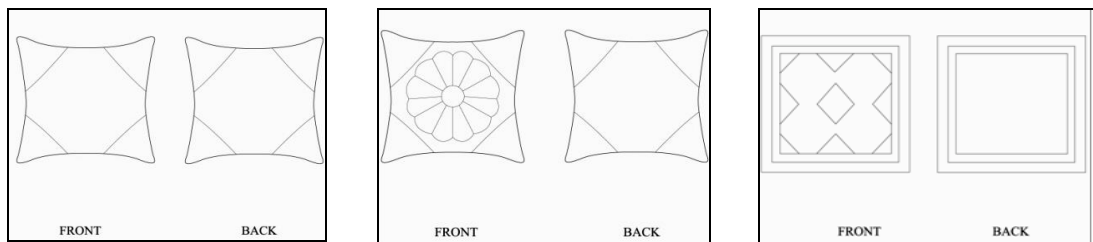


Figure 4: Household products

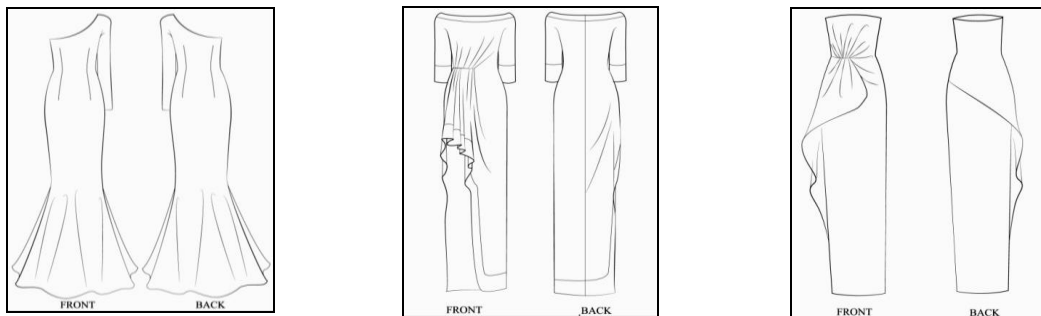


Figure 5: Evening dresses

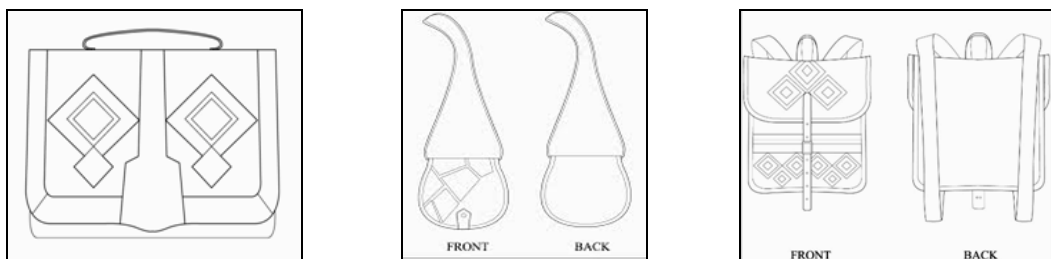


Figure 6: Bags designed for teenagers

The product developments are based on customer demands, product variety, modernization, local identity and the creative economy. The product designs develop existing woven fabrics products to be creative products following market demand. They retain an outstanding identity and add value to the woven fabrics. Consequently, they can help increase product distribution, community revenue and development of the community economy. The reasons for selection of these designs and the feedback from focus group discussions with the respondents are outlined in the table below (Table 1).

Product	Details
Work clothing	The designs were received favorably by respondents, who commented that the shape of the clothes was practical and suitable for the work environment, while the added embroidery and addition of accessories (pearls, sequins, etc.) made the clothing look modern. The material was found to be fresh and light, suitable for working in a tropical country such as Thailand.
Work bags	The work bag designs were seen as beautiful and durable by respondents. They particularly commented on the simple, yet elegant designs and the stylish inclusion of polyurethane (artificial leather), which makes the bags stronger, especially the handles.
Household products	The household products were viewed as adding market potential by increasing product variety. The products themselves were considered by respondents as practical and suitably designed for the home. The traditional materials transformed in this way may add new value to the weaving economy.
Evening dresses	The evening dresses were considered by respondents as a luxury line of products that could add status and value to the weaving industry. They were particularly admired for the integration of almost 100% local materials and weaving techniques. The additional details of embroidered flowers added to both the beauty and the sense of maximization of local resources and cultural identity.
Bags for teenagers	The bags for teenagers were viewed as a particularly valuable design because they will allow the weavers to access the notoriously difficult teenage market. The designs are not too big and are in modern shapes for young people. The local fabric mixed with artificial leather will help make younger generations appreciate the value and beauty of traditional local weaving heritage.

Respondents made two notable suggestions for improvement of the designs. Firstly, "the inclusion of the local provincial symbol would be good, such as the fish, rubber trees or tuk tuks of Trang Province, because the purchaser would be able to say that these products really are from Trang Province and nowhere else" (Informant 1, personal communication, 2014). Secondly, "You should put the symbols of Songkhla Province in too – the mermaid or the rat and cat islands – they will really show the origin of the products" (Informant 2, personal communication, 2014).



Discussion

The techniques used by local people to create Namuensri and Koh Yor fabrics have been passed on from generation to generation. This heritage has huge potential benefit for society, particularly its role in a sustainable creative community economy. The National Education Council of Thailand (1998) explained that the value of traditional knowledge is in its nature as a vessel of cultural development. For this reason, Thai people must work together to preserve inherited traditional knowledge. This corresponds to the research results of Sawitree Suwannasatit (1996), which concluded that for society to understand the benefit of woven fabric products, their value must be actively promoted. In addition, Jirote Tangsakun (2004) emphasized the transformative role that effective integration of traditional knowledge can have on the community economy.

In order to meet consumer demand and bring the traditional knowledge of Namuensri and Koh Yor fabrics in line with modern trends, there must be a larger variety of products developed. Creative design is important to ensure both maintenance of original identity and greater appeal for modern generations. These findings are consistent with the research of Kanitsara Tantipimun and Suwimon Sakundet (1993) in relation to the traditional Thai fabrics of three Southern Thai provinces. Nevertheless it is important for the conservation of traditional knowledge that the original designs and styles are continually produced and sold (Nakasetien, 2013).

The problems identified by this investigation included difficulties with raw material orders, boring product designs, a lack of experienced weavers and limited marketing. These findings concur with those of Piyamaporn Reutraksa (2008), which particularly noted the lack of variety in the design of traditional woven fabrics. In addition, Sakorn Kantachote (1985) found that consumer demands are becoming ever more varied and frequent and the traditional handicraft industries are struggling to keep pace. Part of the reason for the difficulty faced by the traditional artisans is the ever-changing nature of aesthetics and, particularly, fluctuating popularities and trends among consumers (Aragon, 1999). The difficulty for weavers is creating fresh, new product designs that are appealing, cost-effective, maintain the quality standards of the traditional fabric and retain the original identity passed down by ancestors. This is an ongoing challenge that has been with the textiles industry for many centuries (Abernathy, Dunlop, Hammond & Weil, 1999).

A lack of interested young people to take up the mantle of skilled traditional craftsmanship is a problem in many different industries, from weaving to pottery (Von Lewinski, 2008). Without adequate numbers of future weavers, the industry can never realistically hope to make much more of an impact on the community economy as it already is. This is because consumer demand will outstrip production and, eventually, consumers will turn to modern manufacturers due to their ability to quickly produce varied goods that meet demand (Sanchez, 1995). This is a crucial issue for weavers to address and ways to encourage new weavers to train in the production of Namuensri and Koh Yor fabrics require further research. Perhaps one potential solution is increasing the level of tourism related to weaving and traditional handicrafts. If tourist-focused seminars or workshops could be organised there would be an increase in revenue for the weavers and perhaps an increase in status surrounding the profession. Not only would this help conserve the practice, it may also encourage younger generations to see their future in the industry. For this reason, tourism-based conservation is a potentially important step in the development of traditional Southern Thai weaving (Suriyavarakul, 2004).

Since, Nameunsi and Koh Yor woven fabrics have been inherited over a long time and are widely known, this study will be useful as guidelines for product development in the aspects of standardized quality, value addition, product design, packaging, marketing management and product identity. Furthermore, community economic development is a guideline for other similar handicrafts and industries because designs are mainly based on customer needs and the integration between cultural arts and local identity. In order to really substantiate the value of Southern Thai products, the inclusion of local symbolism is vital. One problem with the handicrafts and OTOP products sold to tourists in Thailand is the generic inclusion of stereotypical symbolism (Jory, 1999). While the elephant and the mythical creatures of Thai legends and literature are part of the larger Thai identity, local products need a unique selling point to stand out at the market against mass-produced products. If they display the same symbolism, producers cannot compete. However, if the woven products of the South were to include provincial emblems of the Southern Provinces, as the respondents in this investigation recommended, they will have a unique place in the market. Creation of unique products is a selling point of traditional products that helps promote and preserve product markets and sustains creative services.



Suggestions

Based on the outcomes of this investigation, the researchers would like to make a number of recommendations for practical application of the results and further study.

Suggestions for practical application of the research results

1. Weaving communities should study the market and consumer behaviors to determine what kinds of products consumers need. They can then take explicit knowledge from the local community and integrate this with consumer behaviors.
2. Members of weaving groups should be trained in product design and identity creation in relation to marketing and business changes.
3. The scientific aspects of the weaving process should be used in production to enhance the products and profitability.
4. Various unique patterns of each weaving group should be gathered for registration of a patent to protect the intellectual property and rights of the weavers.

Suggestions for further study

1. There should be further investigation into the strategies of creative economic concepts in product development for the community economy based on market demand.
2. Marketing strategies of other woven fabric groups should be studied, applied and expanded to the Namuensri and Koh Yor communities.
3. The background of local wisdom inheritance and local weaving fabric processes of both groups should be studied and compiled as a resource for others to use.

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