

The Construction of Community Identity of the Silk Weaving Group in the Context of the State and Contemporary Society: A Case Study of Ban Phon, Kham Muang District, Kalasin Province

Laongdaw Poosumrong, Chalong Phanchan and Theerapong Meethaisong

Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, Maha Sarakham University, Thailand

E-mail: pitchayakon.m@gmail.com, chalong.p@msu.ac.th and theerapong.m@msu.ac.th

(Received: 12 November 2025, Revised: 7 March 2026, Accepted: 9 March 2026)

<https://doi.org/10.57260/csdj.2026.285064>

Abstract

This research aims to study the process of constructing community identity among the silk weaving group in Ban Phon, Kham Muang District, Kalasin Province, within the context of the state and contemporary society. It also seeks to analyze the social, cultural, and governmental factors influencing the preservation and transformation of such identity. This study employed a qualitative research methodology, using in-depth interviews, focus group discussions, and participant observation. The key informants totaled 25 persons, consisting of 5 community leaders, 8 local silk weavers, 4 entrepreneurs, 4 government officers, 2 academic experts, and 2 cultural tourists.

The findings revealed that the identity of the Ban Phon silk weaving community has been constructed and reshaped through various social processes and state policies, particularly those promoting the One Tambon One Product (OTOP) project, creative economy initiatives, and digital media for cultural communication. The image of "Phrae Wa Silk of Ban Phon" has become a cultural symbol reflecting both local pride and modern Thai identity. However, the changes brought by the digital era have led to the reinterpretation of identity in multiple dimensions—cultural, economic, and social. Therefore, identity construction is not merely a process of preservation but also a dynamic adaptation of the community to contemporary social transformations.

Keywords: Community identity, Silk weaving group, State, Contemporary society, Ban Phon

Introduction

In the era of globalization and the movement of local cultures, Thai society has faced challenges in multiple dimensions—economic, cultural, and social—particularly for communities with local wisdom such as silk weaving groups, which need to adapt and create new meanings for their identities to survive and thrive within the context of the state and contemporary society (Hall, 1996). The construction of community identity is not merely about preserving tradition but is a process involving communication, negotiation, and transformation within the context of state policies, economy, and society (Naiyanit et al., 2024).

For the silk weaving community of Ban Phon, Kham Muang District, Kalasin Province, which has a rich history of silk production and distinctive weaving wisdom, this location is not just a geographical area renowned for silk weaving but also serves as a theoretically significant case study for examining the dynamics of identity. This is due to the community's long history of inheriting the wisdom of Phrae Wa silk among the Phu Thai people, and a crucial turning point through royal benevolence and patronage from the monarchy, which elevated Phrae Wa silk from local heritage to a national cultural symbol. Consistent with the conceptual framework of (Eoseewong, 1995), which posits that local culture gains significance when it is redefined within the context of Thai society, the identity of the Ban Phon silk weaving community is deeply intertwined with the spatial and historical narrative of the Phu Tai ethnic group (Vallibhotama, 2003). Beyond exquisite craftsmanship, proactive marketing management and the strategic utilization of digital media are pivotal factors driving the international success of Ban Phon's Phrae Wa silk products (Akranupapong, 2008). This serves as a communicative strategy to construct a contemporary image for traditional cultural capital (Sthapitanonda, 2002). Furthermore, Ban Phon demonstrates a remarkable adaptation through obtaining national-level certifications such as the Peacock Gold Label and OTOP. The OTOP policy has functioned as a vital mechanism in strengthening the economic structure of the weaving groups (Vachirakhachorn, 2004). Alongside entering the digital society where the community actively utilizes online platforms to communicate and tell stories about their identity. These factors make Ban Phon a space of complex negotiation between 'traditional values' and 'contemporary societal demands'. For these reasons, researchers are interested in studying the process of identity construction (Benjawan, 2024). The newly developed patterns in the contemporary era, such as animal motifs or modern color palettes, can be elucidated through (Wittayapak, 2002) theory of 'Invented Tradition'. This demonstrates that the community has not abandoned its cultural roots; instead, it is employing the 'politics of identity' to negotiate with the demands of the global market. Such a process is consistent with the conceptual framework of local wisdom adaptation for sustainable existence within modern Thai society, as articulated by Yos (Santasombat, 2001). Such study is significant both for cultural preservation and community development in line with contemporary contexts.

Additionally, research indicates that silk weaving groups utilize "cultural capital" to construct group identity through various processes such as designing fabric patterns, narrating community stories, and participating in state projects, which helps products gain acceptance both within and outside the community (Thnomdham, 2025). Meanwhile, other studies have found that traditional silk patterns represent Thai culture and community identity and have been developed to possess market value in the present era (Wannakit, 2023). Within the context of the state and contemporary society, there are structural changes in the economy, social media, and concepts of "top-down" and "grassroots" culture, which influence how silk weaving communities define and express their identity. This research's primary objectives are to study the "process of identity construction" of the Ban Phon silk weaving community under the

context of the state and contemporary society, and to analyze the social, cultural, and state policy factors influencing the construction and transformation of identity.

As contemporary social development continuously evolves, the government must support silk, which embodies this valuable community way of life, and must consider economic survival in the globalization era. Due to changing consumer behaviors and the expansion of the ready-made garment market, traditional time-consuming weaving faces challenges in competition. Communities need to create new meanings for their identities to transform 'household items' into 'fashion items and souvenirs' that align with modern market tastes, and to address challenges in wisdom transmission, as younger generations have higher educational opportunities and may view traditional occupations as providing unstable income. Adaptation by incorporating modern knowledge in design and digital marketing becomes a crucial mechanism to attract younger generations back to appreciate and continue their ancestral cultural heritage. The state's role is thus essential in driving and promoting approaches for developing silk weaving wisdom, specifically the silk weaving group within the state and contemporary society context at Ban Phon, Kham Muang District, Kalasin Province, to ensure maximum efficiency and effectiveness for the community's silk weaving group sustainability.

Objectives

1. To analyze the social, cultural, and state policy factors influencing the preservation and transformation of community identity.
2. To study the process of identity construction among the Ban Phon silk weaving group, Kham Muang District, Kalasin Province, within the context of the state and contemporary society.

Literature Review

A review of related research reveals that the concept of "community identity" is viewed as a product of social processes involving interaction between community members and various factors. Identity is not static but is continuously constructed, adjusted, and reinterpreted within social and cultural contexts. Thongkaew (2019) studied weaving communities in Northern Thailand, finding that the process of identity construction arises from negotiation between tradition and modernity, with markets and state policies as key factors. This negotiation is evident through the fusion of traditional patterns with modern color schemes, maintaining ancient weaving techniques while adapting product forms to meet urban market demands, reflecting the community's agency rather than passive reception of impacts. Jaiman (2020) researched the roles of women in Northeastern Thai silk weaving groups, indicating that weaving is not merely an economic activity but a 'social space' where women have decision-making power and demonstrate leadership roles. Women's possession of weaving knowledge grants them significant status within households and communities, making them the main force in preserving and perpetuating cultural identity. Duangduean Phansri et al. (2018) studied social networks and silk identity, finding that platforms such as Facebook and Instagram have become new 'fields' for presenting and constructing community identity. Posting images of the weaving process, behind-the-scenes stories, and direct interaction with customers enable communities to directly control the narrative about their products, reducing dependence on intermediaries or government agencies for meaning communication. Sangrungruengroj (2020) studied marketing communication strategy developing. The marketing communication guideline should portray the product value as being produced by community, gone through production process that inherited from the ancestors' wisdom, and useful for belief and faith related purposes, including the beauty of the products in order for the customers to perceive them as priceworthy. Recommends that social media communication skills and knowledge to realize the use of social media for marketing communication should be emphasized.

Furthermore, Kunsri (2017) analyzed the discourse of "authenticity" in the silk market, finding that the meaning of "authentic" or "traditional" is constructed by multiple parties, including consumers seeking products with stories, communities selectively choosing certain cultural elements to retell, and capitalists creating brands by leveraging the discourse of community to add value to products, sometimes leading to cultural simplification for easier marketing communication. And Wattanaphan (2022) conducted a follow-up study on the impact of the BCG Model policy on weaving communities. This research indicates that the green economy policy has become a new factor affecting identity, with communities increasingly emphasizing natural dyeing and environmentally friendly fibers, not only to meet policy requirements but also as a new 'selling point' for differentiation and value addition, leading to the revival of traditional knowledge about local plants in a new dimension. Naiyanit et al. (2024) highlighted that identity construction among weaving groups arises from utilizing "cultural capital" such as fabric patterns, narratives, and rituals, reflecting community pride. Work emphasizes that local silk is developed to possess economic value alongside cultural value, particularly when the state promotes it through OTOP projects. Bourdieu's (1986) work on cultural capital and Cohen's (1985) work on the symbolic construction of community have been employed to explain that identity construction is not merely heritage transmission but a negotiation of power and meaning in social contexts.

Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework of this research is based on the concept of the "community identity construction process" under the influence of the state and contemporary society, comprising three main dimensions:

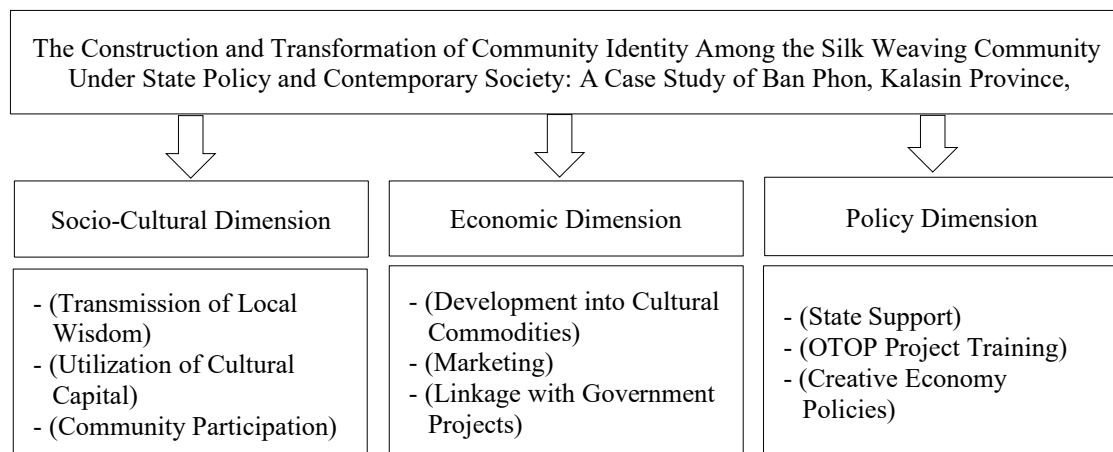


Figure 1 Research conceptual framework (Source: Researcher, 2025)

Methodology

This research is qualitative in nature.

Research Design

A qualitative research design was chosen to understand the complex social phenomenon of "identity construction," which involves deep meanings, perspectives, experiences, and contexts of people in the community, not quantifiable by numbers. The research likely follows phenomenological principles, seeking to understand villagers' direct experiences with identity construction, and constructivist principles, viewing identity as built through social meaning-making and interaction. Key informants included community leaders, weavers, OTOP entrepreneurs, government officers, academics, and cultural tourists, totaling 25 individuals.

Research Instruments and Sampling

Purposive sampling was used to select approximately 25 informants who best aligned with the research themes. Informants were divided into six groups: Community Leaders (e.g., village head, weaving group president): 3-4 people, providing overviews of community history, development policies, and visions for community identity.

Silk Weavers 8-10 people, providing in-depth information on weaving wisdom, pattern design, pattern meanings, changes in weaving styles, and views on traditional vs. modern identity.

OTOP Entrepreneurs 3-4 people, providing information on marketing, product adaptation to customer demands, leveraging cultural capital for value addition, and impacts of state policies.

Government Officers 2-3 people, providing information on top-down promotion policies, budgets, and projects affecting the weaving group's development.

Academics/Experts in culture or community development: 2-3 people, providing theoretical perspectives, broader socio-cultural context analysis, and suggestions for sustainable development.

Cultural Tourists 3-4 people, providing external perspectives on their perception of the community's identity, product value, and appeal, reflecting broader market acceptance.

Data Collection

Methods included in-depth interviews, small focus group discussions, and participant observation in community activities. Instruments were open-ended and flexible, including interview guides, observation forms for field notes, and researcher field diaries.

Data Analysis

Inductive content analysis was employed, moving from specific data to general knowledge. Steps included

Data Preparation: Transcribing interviews and compiling field notes and observations.

Reading for Understanding: Repeatedly reading all data to grasp the overall picture and become familiar with the content.

Coding: Assigning labels or keywords to significant data segments (e.g., "pattern adaptation to market," "intergenerational conflict," "impact of OTOP").

Categorization: Grouping codes into larger themes related to research objectives (e.g., Category 1: Social factors affecting identity; Category 2: State policy factors; Category 3: Identity construction processes).

Interpretation and Conclusion: Explaining the meanings of the categories, connecting them to the theoretical framework and reviewed literature to answer research questions and present new knowledge.

Results

The study on the construction and transformation of community identity among the silk weaving community under state policy and contemporary society: A case study of Ban Phon, Kalasin Province revealed the following:

1. Social, Cultural, and State Policy Factors Influencing the Preservation and Transformation of Community Identity

The process of community identity is continuously adjusted under the influence of three main factors:

1.1 Social Factors Changing values and lifestyles of the younger generation: Community youth with higher education and urban employment opportunities tend to view weaving as time-consuming with unstable income, creating direct transmission challenges. However, some younger generation members, aware of cultural heritage value, attempt to apply modern knowledge in design, online marketing, and business management to develop products and distribution channels, enabling Phrae Wa silk to transcend the framework of "community-use items" to become "fashion items and souvenirs."

Expansion of cultural tourism: Increased tourist visits (both Thai and international) to the community has created "external identity perception." Tourists value beauty, handcrafted qualities, and behind-the-product stories. The community thus learns to "tell stories" and selectively choose patterns and products meeting new market demands while maintaining core cultural values.

1.2 Cultural Factors Traditional cultural capital: Originally, silk in Ban Phon was not specifically called "Phrae Wa silk" but was household-use silk for important ceremonies. Traditional patterns were simple stripes or khit patterns with less complexity than today, often using natural dyes producing earth tones, reflecting simple lifestyles connected to nature.

Awareness and pride in identity: Exposure to external cultures has generated awareness of their own "valuable assets." Accumulated weaving wisdom and skills are viewed as valuable "capital" and are creatively developed further.

1.3 State Policy Factors OTOP (One Tambon One Product) Policy: This project was one of the most crucial accelerating factors transforming Ban Phon silk from "local woven fabric" to "OTOP products" with standards and wide recognition. The state promoted multiple dimensions including standard development by establishing quality criteria for silk threads, pattern density, and weaving intricacy. This aligns with an interview with the president of the Ban Phon silk weaving group who stated "Previously we wove fabric only for household use or merit-making ceremonies. But when the government promoted through OTOP standards and the Peacock Gold Label, villagers became more quality-conscious, needing greater intricacy to meet international standards. Today, Phrae Wa silk is no longer just a shawl for Phu Thai people; it is our pride and the main income supporting the entire community."

2. The Process of Identity Construction Among the Ban Phon Silk Weaving Group in the Context of the State and Contemporary Society

This involves promoting design that supports the community in developing new patterns while preserving traditional identity, making them more contemporary and responsive to market demands as follows:

2.1 Creating Marketing Channels: Organizing OTOP exhibitions and sales nationwide provided crucial platforms making "Ban Phon Phrae Wa Silk" widely known. Cultural tourism promotion policies by the government and local agencies promoted Ban Phon as a "cultural tourism destination," generating additional income from weaving activities and

compelling the community to clearly define and present their identity publicly. The identity construction process of "Ban Phon Phrae Wa Silk" emerges from "negotiation" between tradition and modernity, and between the community and external factors, which can be explained in stages.

2.2 Construction of Silk Weaving Group Community Identity in the Context of the State and Contemporary Society, Ban Phon, Kham Muang District, Kalasin Province

This involves hand-woven silk with long development and immense cultural significance for the Phu Thai people in Kalasin Province. A crucial turning point brought Phrae Wa silk to recognition and widespread inheritance in the pre-royal patronage era. The development of Phrae Wa silk represents a transition from local wisdom to cultural heritage and commercial products gaining international acceptance, with royal institution support playing an extremely important role in elevating and preserving Phrae Wa silk for Thailand until the present. Details include:

Raw Materials and Production Process

Uses natural local silk threads, divided into warp threads and weft threads. Dye colors mostly derived from local plants such as lac, indigo, turmeric, and ebony, reflecting Phu Thai wisdom.

Raw materials The primary raw material for Phrae Wa silk weaving is silk thread, classified into warp threads (stretched lengthwise on the loom) and weft threads (inserted across to intersect warp threads, creating patterns and fabric). Dye colors mostly remain natural, representing inherited Phu Thai wisdom using local plants for distinctive identity colors such as red from lac, blue from indigo, yellow from turmeric and prahod, black from ebony and mud.

Market and Consumers

Phrae Wa silk is distributed through both offline (OTOP) and online (e-Commerce) channels to reach younger customers.

Social media is used for branding and identity creation.

Customer demand Phu Thai hand-woven Phrae Wa products are sold through OTOP shops and online market channels.

Marketing promotion e-Commerce sales design, providing detailed information to motivate purchases, determining digital marketing communication strategies on platforms.

Customer groups purchase from production sources, women's groups, silk weaving cooperatives, shops at trade fairs and other areas. Ban Phon Phrae Wa has numerous shops selling Phrae Wa silk. Hand-woven Phrae Wa silk is known among silk collectors, and besides having many skilled Phrae Wa weavers, the area produces the highest quality natural silk threads in Northeastern Thailand.

Product Processing and Development

Development and processing into sabai (shoulder cloths), fabric bolts, clothing, accessories, souvenirs, and home decorations to increase product value.

Products and processing: Phrae Wa silk is a distinctive handicraft of the Phu Thai people in Kalasin Province, renowned for its intricacy, beauty, and complex patterns. Phrae Wa silk products can be processed as follows Sabai or shawls: Woven width not less than 27-75 cm, length not less than 2 meters, or dimensions according to market demand, with patterns throughout and fringes on both ends.

Fabric bolts or pieces: Woven width not less than 62-90 cm, length not less than 5 meters, or dimensions according to market demand, with patterns throughout or patterns on

one part and plain color on another, used for garment sewing or processing into other products according to desired usage characteristics.

Hair wraps, neckties, hair clips, keychains.

Ready-made shirts and garments: High-value-added silk processing popular especially among working-age and middle-aged groups.

Accessories and souvenirs: Including earrings, necklaces, bracelets. Additionally, Phrae Wa silk is processed into bags, scarves, and home decorations such as pillows, table covers, and curtains.

Phrae Wa silk processing reflects the invaluable wisdom and culture of the Phu Thai people, inherited and developed from generation to generation.

State Policy and Support

The state plays a crucial role in promoting silk identity through OTOP projects, training, trade fair organization, and standard certification such as the Peacock Gold Label.

Market and products comparison Saket silk Scarves, shawls, fabric bolts, ready-made garments.

Khan Kaen Khun silk: GI certified and provincial identity fabric, consistently in demand, especially naturally dyed fabric bolts. Products: fabric bolts, garments, accessories, utilities, religious items.

Soi Dok Mak silk: OTOP 5-star standard, demanded by government and private sectors for important events, sold both online and at trade fairs. Products: fabric bolts and garments.

Phrae Wa silk market: Peacock Gold Label standard, Thai Community Product Standard (TCPS) certified, known as provincial identity pattern, distribution channels through trade fairs and various markets.

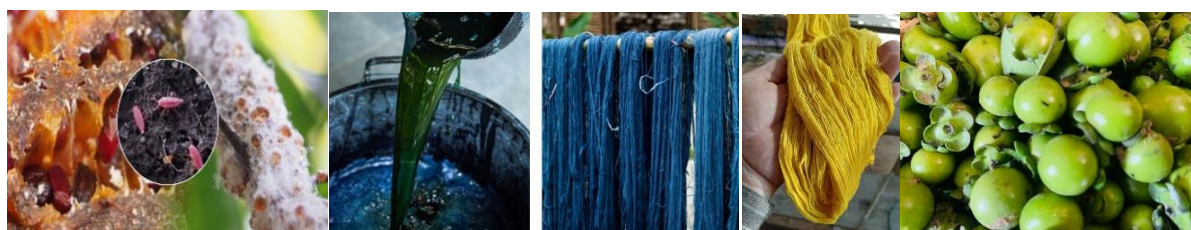


Figure 2 Soi Dok Mak silk (Source: Researcher, 2025)

Market and Consumers

Phrae Wa silk is distributed through both offline (OTOP) and online (e-Commerce) channels to reach younger customers. Social media is used for branding and identity creation. Regarding customer demand, Phu Thai hand-woven Phrae Wa products are sold through OTOP shops and online market channels. Marketing promotion involves designing e-Commerce sales, providing detailed information to motivate purchases, and determining digital marketing communication strategies on various platforms. Customer groups make purchases from production sources, women's groups, silk weaving cooperatives, and shops at trade fairs and other venues. Ban Phon Phrae Wa has numerous shops selling Phrae Wa silk. Hand-woven Phrae Wa silk is well-known among silk collectors. Besides having many skilled Phrae Wa weavers, the area is also recognized as producing the highest quality natural silk threads in Northeastern Thailand.

Product Processing and Development

There is development and processing into sabai (shoulder cloths), fabric bolts, clothing, accessories, souvenirs, and home decorations to increase product value. Regarding products and processing, Phrae Wa silk is a distinctive handicraft of the Phu Thai people in Kalasin Province, renowned for its intricate beauty and complex patterns. Phrae Wa silk products can be processed as follows Sabai or shawls: Woven with a width of not less than 27-75 cm, length not less than 2 meters, or dimensions according to market demand, featuring patterns throughout and fringes on both ends.

Fabric bolts or pieces: Woven with a width of not less than 62-90 cm, length not less than 5 meters, or dimensions according to market demand, with patterns throughout or patterns on one part and plain color on another. These are used for garment sewing or processing into other products according to desired usage characteristics.

Hair wraps, neckties, hair clips, keychains.

Ready-made shirts and garments: This represents high-value-added silk processing, popular especially among working-age and middle-aged groups.

Accessories and souvenirs: Including earrings, necklaces, and bracelets. Additionally, Phrae Wa silk is processed into bags, scarves, and home decorations such as pillows, table covers, and curtains.

The processing of Phrae Wa silk reflects the invaluable wisdom and culture of the Phu Thai people, inherited and developed from generation to generation.

State Policy and Support

The state plays a crucial role in promoting silk identity through OTOP projects, training, trade fair organization, and standard certification such as the Peacock Gold Label.

Saket silk: Products include scarves, shawls, fabric bolts, and ready-made garments.

Khan Kaen Khun silk: The marketing of this silk benefits from GI certification and its status as the provincial identity fabric, ensuring consistent demand, especially for naturally dyed fabric bolts. Products include fabric bolts, garments, accessories, utilities, and religious items.

Soi Dok Mak silk: This silk holds OTOP 5-star standard certification and is in demand by government and private sectors for use in various important events. It is sold both online and at trade fairs. Products include fabric bolts and made-to-order garments.

Phrae Wa silk market: It has received the Peacock Gold Label standard and Thai Community Product Standard (TCPS) certification. It is known as the provincial identity pattern, with distribution channels through trade fairs and various markets.

Summary of Research Findings

The research findings indicate that the identity of the Ban Phon silk weaving community arises from a process of construction and adaptation across four dimensions under the influence of cultural, economic, state policy, and contemporary social factors, as follows:

Table 1 Summary of Research Findings

Dimension	Details	Supporting Data
Culture & Local Wisdom	Inheritance of Phrae Wa patterns; storytelling and local symbols.	Use of local floral/fauna patterns expressing Phu Tai identity.
Economy & Market	Product adaptation to market demands; processing silk into diverse goods.	Fabric lengths, shawls, clothing, home decor, accessories; OTOP, e-commerce channels.
State Policy & Support	Support via OTOP, product standards, participation in trade fairs.	OTOP 5-star certification, financial/training support for weavers.
Contemporary Society & Technology	Use of digital media for promotion; reinterpretation of identity.	Communication via social media; creating and promoting community narratives.

Ultra & Local Wisdom: Phrae Wa pattern creation reflects Phu Tai stories/symbols (e.g., local flowers, leaves, animals). Knowledge transmission occurs within families/groups, with new weavers learning both techniques and cultural meanings.

Economy & Market: The community adapts products to market needs (e.g., processing into various goods). Using OTOP, trade fairs, and online platforms promotes Phrae Wa and reaches new customer segments.

State Policy & Support: Support from government/local agencies (e.g., OTOP standards, training, exhibitions) elevates the community's identity to regional/national recognition.

Contemporary Society: Digital media allows the community to **create identity narratives** linked to local pride. Identity is reinterpreted symbolically and economically to adapt to contemporary Thai society.

Overall Summary: The identity of Ban Phon silk is not merely about preservation but is a **process of negotiation and re-creation**, blending local wisdom with state policies and socio-economic pressures.

Discussions

The research findings significantly align with and extend theoretical frameworks and related research, allowing for discussion as follows:

1. Identity Construction as a Process of Social and Cultural Negotiation

The study found that the identity construction process of the Ban Phon silk weaving group is filled with negotiation between tradition and modernity. This aligns with Cohen's (1985) concept of the symbolic construction of community, where communities use various symbols to define boundaries and create shared meanings. A clear example is the community's choice to adapt traditional patterns such as the "pair of birds pattern" and "dok phikul flower pattern" with more modern colors and forms to meet market demands while preserving traditional meanings. This adaptation is not a loss of identity but a dynamic "construction of new identity" consistent with changing social contexts.

2. The Role of Cultural Capital in Value Addition

This research clearly confirms the findings of Naiyanit et al. (2024) that the community utilizes "cultural capital" in three main forms:

Objectified capital: Developing patterns and weaving techniques to become more intricate and complex.

Embodied capital: Inheriting wisdom from generation to generation and applying modern knowledge for further development.

Institutionalized capital: Obtaining various standard certifications such as the Peacock Gold Label.

The use of this cultural capital aligns with Bourdieu's (1986) concept that cultural capital can be effectively converted into economic value, especially when supported by state policies.

3. Influence of State Policies on Identity Formation

The study found that OTOP policy profoundly impacted the community's identity construction, consistent with Vachirakhachorn (2004) research indicating that transforming silk into OTOP products led to adjustments in patterns, production methods, The self-definition of the Ban Phon community through Phrae Wa silk, juxtaposed with the external recognition by the state and society through the OTOP project, illustrates the concept of social identity as a reciprocal process of interaction (Jenkins, 2008). and product meanings. However, this research found that the Ban Phon community was not merely a passive recipient of policy impacts but engaged in "negotiation" with state policies by selectively developing elements aligning with traditional identity while attempting to preserve cultural values.

4. Cultural Tourism and the Process of Identity Construction

The expansion of cultural tourism has created "external identity perception," compelling the community to learn to present and "tell stories" about their identity publicly. This finding aligns with Appadurai's (1996) concept of globalization causing local cultures to adapt to global markets. The Ban Phon community has been able to utilize this opportunity to create an identity that is both "authentic" in the villagers' eyes and "interesting" in the tourists' eyes.

5. The Role of Digital Media in Shaping New-Generation Identity

The research found that social media has become a new field for constructing and presenting community identity, extending the research of Duangduean Phansri (2018). The Ban Phon community uses online platforms not only for marketing but also as spaces to "control their own narrative," creating awareness of the value and meaning of Phrae Wa silk directly to consumers without depending on intermediaries for meaning communication.

6. Sustainability of Identity Amidst Change

The success of the Ban Phon community in maintaining their identity under pressure from change supports Hall's (1996) concept that identity is not static but a process requiring continuous adaptation. The community's ability to balance preservation and development by leveraging the strengths of original cultural capital combined with opportunities from state policies and modern technology enables Phrae Wa silk identity to persist meaningfully and vibrantly in contemporary social contexts.

The above discussion indicates that the identity construction process of the Ban Phon community is a complex phenomenon arising from interaction between social structures and the agency of community members. A deep understanding of this process will aid in designing policies and operations that effectively promote sustainable development based on local culture.

Conclusion and suggestions

This research has revealed several interesting issues deserving further study in the future.

Recommendations for Utilizing Research Findings

Role and Bargaining Power of Women in Identity Construction: As textile handicrafts are primarily a women's domain, specific research on how this process affects the roles, status, and decision-making power within households and communities of these women is an important and interesting issue.

Dynamics of Conflict and Cooperation Between Generations: In-depth study of negotiation, adaptation, and finding common ground between older and younger weavers in determining the direction of community identity would provide deeper explanations than merely observing change.

Comparative Study Between Communities: Conduct comparative research between Ban Phon and other renowned silk weaving communities in Northeastern Thailand (e.g., Mukdahan silk, Buriram silk) to analyze factors contributing to each community's success or differences in constructing and maintaining their identity under similar contexts.

Recommendations for Future Research

Quantitative Research on Consumer Behavior: Conduct a broad survey of Phrae Wa silk consumer groups using questionnaires to understand purchasing motivations, levels of cultural value perception, satisfaction, and future purchasing trends. This data would be extremely beneficial for the community's marketing planning.

Longitudinal Study on Sustainable Tourism Impacts: Conduct in-depth, long-term follow-up research on how the expansion of cultural tourism impacts the Ban Phon community both positively and negatively (e.g., excessive commercialism, resource strain, changes in social relationships).

Research on Material and Production Process Innovation: Study the feasibility of applying new innovations such as natural dyeing producing more durable and varied colors, or developing software for digital pattern design, without losing the traditional spirit.

Acknowledgments

This research was successfully completed with the kindness of the Ban Phon community leaders, the silk weaving group, government agencies in Kalasin Province, and experts who provided consultation throughout the research process. The researchers extend their gratitude to all concerned.

New knowledge and the effects on society and communities

1. Analysis of Social, Cultural, and State Policy Factors Influencing the Preservation and Transformation of Community Identity

This objective delves into the driving forces and pressures causing identity to persist or change.

1.1 Cultural and Social Factors (Preservation)

Knowledge transmission: Identity preservation depends on transmitting weaving wisdom across generations within families/groups.

Beliefs/traditions: Weaving continues to be viewed as the "DNA" of Phu Thai women or as a "social symbol medium" used in rituals or important occasions, maintaining connection to traditional identity.

Social capital: Grouping into cooperatives/weaving groups builds bargaining power, enables collective management, and serves as a crucial mechanism for maintaining quality and knowledge.

1.2 Economic Factors and State Policies (Change/Adaptation)

Promotion policies: State and agency projects help make Phrae Wa an economic product (product collection businesses, processing), providing members with clear income. Income generation is a key factor enabling this identity to "survive" and become "interesting" for younger generations.

Modern marketing: Support for marketing channels such as OTOP, fairs, and online channels forces the community to modernize products and packaging (change).

Tourism: Ban Phon becoming a cultural tourism destination (cultural center) results in identity being "displayed" and "presented" publicly, which may lead to emphasizing only market-desired aspects (selective presentation).

Challenge factors (pressures): Weaver age - findings may show most weavers are older, with younger generations less interested in weaving (pressure on transmission).

Ready-made garment market: Community members increasingly purchasing market clothing reduces demand for woven fabric in daily life (social change affecting usage).

2. The Process of Identity Construction Among the Ban Phon Silk Weaving Group in the Context of the State and Contemporary Society

This objective focuses on understanding how the weaving group constructs and maintains their "Ban Phon-ness" amidst change.

2.1 Traditional Identity (Core)

Findings confirm that "Phrae Wa silk" is the core identity, reflecting the "Phu Thai" (Phu Tai) ethnic group of Ban Phon.

Traditional weaving processes represent accumulated wisdom about ways of life rather than commercial production, considered "cultural heritage" inherited from ancestors.

Weaving skills/patterns: Reveal pride in advanced techniques such as jok (brocade with white silk) and preservation of traditional patterns (e.g., cho, khan, choeang).

2.2 State Influence (Integration and Elevation)

The involvement of the Arts and Crafts Promotion projects was a crucial factor transitioning Phrae Wa from local heritage to "national product/provincial symbol."

State support through various agencies (e.g., Department of Cooperative Promotion, OTOP) helps create standards and expand recognition, producing state-recognized identity that enhances economic stability.

2.3 Adaptation in Contemporary Society (Dynamics)

Found adaptation termed "dynamics," where weaving groups develop and modernize fabric patterns to meet external market demands (e.g., incorporating animal patterns or applying to contemporary garments).

Conflict/negotiation: May find debate or balancing between "preserving" traditional patterns and "creating" new patterns for commerce.

Acknowledgments

This research was successfully completed thanks to the generosity of the community leaders of Ban Phon, the silk weaving group, government agencies in Kalasin Province, and the experts who provided consultation during the research process. The researchers would like to express their sincere gratitude to everyone involved.

References

- Akranupapong, S. (2008). *Marketing management development for Phrae Wa silk products in Kalasin Province*. (Master's thesis, Rajabhat Maha Sarakham University).
- Appadurai, A. (1996). *Modernity at Large: Cultural Dimensions of Globalization*. University of Minnesota Press, Minneapolis.
- Bourdieu, P. (1986). *The Forms of Capital*. In J. Richardson (Ed.), *Handbook of Theory and Research for the Sociology of Education* (pp. 241-258). New York: Greenwood.
<https://www.marxists.org/reference/subject/philosophy/works/fr/bourdieu-forms-capital.htm>
- Cohen, A. (1985). *The Symbolic Construction of Community*. Routledge.
- Eoseewong, N. (1995). *Thai nation, Thai land, textbooks, and monuments: On the construction of the Thai nation*. Matichon.
- Hall, S. (1996). Introduction: Who Needs “Identity”? In S. Hall, & P. D. Gay (Eds.), *Questions of Cultural Identity*. London: Sage Publications.
- Jaiman, S. (2020). *Roles of women in Northeastern Thai silk weaving groups*. Khon Kaen University Press.
- Jenkins, R. (2008). *Social identity*. (3rd ed.). Routledge.
- Kunsri, B. (2017). *Discourse of authenticity in the Thai silk market*. Somdet Phra Thepparat Publishing House.
- Naiyanit, B., Jutaviriya, K., & Grisanaputi, W. (2024). Using the patronage system to identity construction in the group management of Silk Weaving groups in Khon Kaen Province. *Journal of Humanities and Social Sciences (HUSOKKU)*, 41(1), 122–143.
<https://so01.tci-thaijo.org/index.php/HUSO/article/view/269330>
- Naiyanit, B., Jutaviriya, K., & Grisanaputi, W. (2024). Identity Construction within the Production Process of Thai Silk Weaving Groups in Khon Kaen Province. *Journal of Mekong Societies*, 20(1), 158–178. <https://so03.tci-thaijo.org/index.php/mekongjournal/article/view/268692>
- Phansri, D. (2018). *Social networks and silk identity*. Silpakorn University Press.
- Sangrungruengroj, P. (2020). Marketing Communication Strategy Developing for Ban Yangilai and Ban Dongua Occupational Group, Ku Santarat Subdistrict, Mahasarakham District. *Journal of Applied Informatics and Technology*, 2(1), 57–76.
<https://doi.org/10.14456/jait.2020.5>
- Santasombat, Y. (2001). *Local wisdom and sustainable development*. Thammasat University Press.
- Sthapitanonda, P. (2002). *Communication and community identity*. Faculty of Communication Arts, Chulalongkorn University.
- Thnomdham, P. (2025). The Value of Local Artistic and Cultural Identity of Native Silk in Chaiphum Province. *MCU Ubonratchathani Journal of Buddhist Studies*, 7(1), 287–298. <https://so12.tci-thaijo.org/index.php/JOB2025/article/view/3688>
- Thongkaew, T. (2019). *Negotiating identity in Northern Thai weaving communities*. Chiang Mai University Press.
- Vachirakhachorn, S. (2004). *One Tambon One Product policy and community empowerment*. King Prajadhipok's Institute.
- Vallibhotama, S. (2003). *Lum Nam Khong-Lum Nam Mun: Atalak Isan [Mekong-Mun Basin: Isan identity]*. Matichon.
- Wannakit, N. (2023). Wisdom in “Phrae-Wa Silk of Phu Thai, Baan Phon”: Dynamic and Assimilation. *Journal of Thai Studies*, 10(2), 63–86. <https://so04.tci-thaijo.org/index.php/TSDJ/article/view/263695>

Wattanaphan, A. (2022). *Impacts of BCG policy on Thai weaving communities*.
Chulalongkorn University Press.

Wittayapak, C. (2002). *Politics of identity: Meaning and the struggle of ethnic groups*. Social
Research Institute, Chiang Mai University.