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VALUE ADDED TO TAI LUE ETHNIC TEXTILE HANDICRAFT PRODUCTS IN NAYANG, LUANG PRABANG, LAO PDR.

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Abstract

The objectives of this research were to 1) explore the process of new product development of Tai Lue ethnic textile handicraft, 2) investigate value added of Tai Lue ethnic textile handicraft products, and 3) analyze the product development process that had influence on value added of Tai Lue ethnic textile. The sample group consisted of 400 Lao tourists who visited Nayang, Luang Prabang, Lao PDR. from January to May 2022. Findings showed that the product development processes had the highest mean score in screening and selection process, followed by idea generation, product development, product testing, and business analysis. For value added aspect, image value was found to have the highest average mean score, followed by personnel value, product value, and service value. According to NPD processes on ideas generation, business analysis, product development, and product testing stages, they showed a positive influence on the value-added, which could predict the value added of Tai Lue ethnic textile for 56.6%, while the screening and selecting process could not predict the value added of Tai Lue ethnic textile handicraft products for tourism with a statistical significance level of .05. The research suggested to the concerned parties should propose the model of product development to promote handicraft products of other communities, and the handicraft products should be promoted based on value added to support souvenir shops.

Keywords: Product Development Process, Value Added, Tai Lue Ethnic Textiles, Luang Prabang Tourism, Lao PDR.

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Introduction

Luang Prabang, Lao PDR., has become an important tourist destination for the ASEAN community because the city was declared the first World Heritage City of Laos by UNESCO in 1995. In fact, this city has preserved its architecture, nature, culture, and art, including traditional textiles (Sirisack, Sirivanh, Sengchanh & Bounpathaph, 2016). Luang Prabang textiles are woven from cotton and silk with highly experienced craftsmanship and refinement. The province consists of many districts that produce textile handicrafts, one of which is Nayang sub-district in Nambak district.

Nayang is in the northern part of Laos, about 140 kilometers from Luang Prabang. The city is the home of the Tai Lue, the oldest ethnic group living in Laos PDR. Their ancestors immigrated from Yunnan, China more than 400 years ago (Saleumsack, 2017). When people immigrated and resettled, they brought traditions, beliefs, and local wisdom that had been handed down for generations to be used in daily life. One of their outstanding local traditions that has been handed down until today is the weaving of textiles that have become distinguished works of art. The patterns and designs of the textiles reflect the ongoing relationships and beliefs of people in the past. Most of the textiles are made by cotton, dyed in indigo and natural colors, produced for the needs of daily life, and some are provided as souvenirs to the Luang Prabang Night Market (Saleumsack, 2017). Since the Tai Lue ethnic textiles symbolize a valuable culture that has been preserved throughout the centuries and passed down from generation to generation, it is crucial to consciously promote it.

Adding value to the production of these handicrafts is one method to market them, and it is a strategy to preserve cultural heritage while also providing the community raising revenue. In the past, a number of organizations had contributed to develop product by training weavers how to process their products and upgrade natural dyes skill. However, the value of the product may not have upgraded and touched the customer; therefore, they were not recognized or remembered. Additionally, the products lacked distinctiveness, difference, and variety in design, including size and price, and some looked like those made by other ethnic groups. Being the oldest ethnicity with a variety of patterns, they were unable to identify and define the older patterns that were the core of their identity and choose them to serve as a community's representative. Weavers also lack basic marketing knowledge and skills to produce products in a way that will increase their value. Actually, development of Tai Lue ethnic textile handcraft products is to get higher value. The product should have a distinctive style, make itself different and remarkable in order to generate it in a way that is more high-quality and memorable to consumers. As a result, adding value through products is essential for the success of product development. Enhancing value through goods, services, and experiences are significant. Therefore, to make product be successful, it must focus on creating value and also known as value creation through products. Reasons for adding value through products, experience, and service are. First, some product, service and experience are Outstanding Universal Value critical (OUA) include. It needs to create by and still sustained by traditional socio-economic system. It is imperative that value be added to the product can be sustained and the OUA attribute preserved through its survival. Second, some products are community welfare critical in which many communities will depend on a relatively small number product, service and experience to survive and feed families. They survive to have a reasonable standard of living (UNESCO, n.d.). UNESCO further explain approach to adding value product one of such significant is investing in branding, marketing, and adding provenance premium to a key product.

The product development process and value added to the products have not previously been the focus of the other study. In order to be able to produce products with added value for the community, this research focuses on the study of the product development process. The result of this research can be expanded to produce more sources of revenue for the community. In

addition to the advantages of increasing the product's value, it is also thought to raise its standard, with the hope that the community will help set a standard for the product that will be accepted in order to establish a widespread trend for product purchases. These factors need making Tai Lue ethnic textile items viable in society.

This study aimed to 1) explore the process of new product development of Tai Lue ethnic textile handicraft; 2) investigate value added of Tai Lue ethnic textile handicraft products; and 3) analyze the product development process that had influence on value added of Tai Lue ethnic textile. This study will offer useful information regarding the process of products development and the value added of products made by Tai Lue artisans. In order to encourage and support local product to achieve greater value available in the market, local weaves, entrepreneurs and other related tourism authority and stakeholder will utilize the results of this research.

Literature Review

New Product Development

Scholars have studied the concepts of NPD processes including (Cooper & Kleinschmidt, 1986; Apiprachayasakul, 2016; Kuntontutr, 2012). Each scholar examine different stages of the development process. This study applied NPD of Apiprachayasakul (2016) which consisted of six processes. Idea generation came first. This process explained that many ideas were being acquired through this approach both direct and indirect search. An idea could be information or anything that might be found by looking through, investigating, visiting different libraries, exhibitions, markets and interviews with professionals who could provide information. Also, the ideas of the product's requirements, technical that connected to product improvement like packaging, quality assessment, qualitative data, quantitative market information, and consumer information are frequently the necessary information. Data should be collected, organized, summarized, and analyzed before being screened and selected for usage in the subsequent phase. Second is the process of ideas screening and selecting. This method was used to find information that conformed to corporate guidelines and the desired goal. To concentrate on developing product, these ideas may exclude some data. As a result, additional action was required in order to analyze the data, which brought us to the third stage in the process which is business analysis. This was the process of determining whether a product was viable. It also included elements such as marketing management, finance, profit analysis, and business competitiveness that were crucial to understand. Fourth, product development. The operation's primary task in this procedure, which involved choosing items that would develop to meet the goals as stated in the established business policy. Fifth, the product testing could be broken down into three categories, such as product measurement, quality measurement, and customer testing. The last stage was the market launch. These entailed having a product on the market, establishing a manufacturing facility, marketing, and frequently adopting a regional launch. In spite of this, based on this research had not yet been released or made a product available to the public. In this study, the market launch process was not used. In order to develop Tai Lue ethnic textile handicraft items for tourists in Luang Prabang, five variables ideas generation, screening and selecting, business analysis, product development, and product testing were used.

Value Added

The added value is commonly used as an approach for achieving a competitive advantage in a market that has grown increasingly competitive (Gale, 1994). Porter (1998) suggested that added value is the amount of money that consumers are willing to spend when a cost leadership or differentiation methods are used. Companies create value for customers by cutting costs or improving work efficiency and added value is defined as going above and beyond what customers expect in terms of product quality, service quality, and value-based price (Ravald & Grönroos, 1996). An added value also contributes to the creation of "value", which enhance

consumer perspective (Thipchatyothin, 2010). De Chernatony et al. (2000) stated that adding value provides competitive advantage over competitors that will lead to success of product in the long-term, it helps to serves as a marketing strategy for new product development, distribution channel, advertisements, and promotions exceed customer expectations and satisfaction. As a result, the producer needs to make sure that the product has value or worth in order to produce it and acquire a higher price. Gupta & Lehmann (2005) proposed three approaches of value that customers desire: 1) economic value refers to the financial advantages that consumers derive from using products and services as opposed to other alternatives that can give customers "value for money." compared to the quality of product and services obtained; 2) functional value refers to the capacity of a new product to function more effectively than similar products on the market by enhancing the positive aspects of current items such as the use of natural color reproduction, utilize natural dyed; and 3) psychological value refers to value and mental consumers derive from using intangible products and services, such as brand names, images and trends of social needs. Four approaches that help value added such as: 1) product value, the value that consumers receive through product that appeal them; 2) service value, the worth provided to the customers as a result from the service quality such as accessibility, communication, competence, courtesy, credibility; reliability, responsiveness, security, as well as tangible and understandable customer knowledge; 3) personnel value, the value that provided to customers as a result of employees' high ability; and 4) image value is the sentiment consumers have for certain product or services (Sereerat et al., 2000; Chemsripong & Petmee, 2017). In this study, the variables applied to the value added of Tai Lue ethnic textile handcraft items for Nayang include product value, service value, personnel value, and image value. From the literature review, the researcher established a conceptual framework as a guideline for the study as follows.

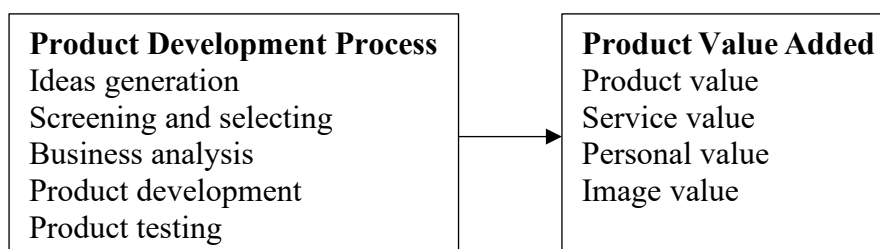


Figure 1 Research Conceptual Framework

Research Method

The population of this study was Laotian tourists who visited Luang Prabang from January to May 2022. To get the sample group of 400 people, the researchers calculated from 860,035 Laotian tourists who visited Luang Prabang in 2018 (Ministry of Information, Culture and Tourism, 2021) by using Yamane's formula (Yamane, 1973) and determined a confidence level which was equivalent to 95%, with an error level at 5% (Untong, 2018). A probability sampling with simple random sampling techniques was applied in which this methods explained that each member of the population had an equal chance of being selected (Prakobtham, 2011).

The questionnaire was a research tool and it was distributed to Laotian tourists who visited Luang Prabang more than one day. The questionnaire consisted of two parts. The first part was the level of product development process, and the second part was the level of value added of handcraft products of Tai Lue, with a five points Likert scale ranging from 1-5 indicated from the lowest to highest level.

Content validity testing was assessed by five experts to ascertain whether the research tools entirely addresses the contents or issues that need to be measured. Experts' measurement of the product development process generated a value of .900. The results of the content validity on

the NPD process was .970 after the adviser and committees recommended revisions and improvements to the completed questionnaire. To test the reliability, the questionnaire was tried out with 30 Laotian tourists who visited West Meets East Handicraft Centre. The evaluation value was .930 indicating that the questionnaire had a high reliability by using the Cronbach's alpha coefficient.

Data was analyzed both descriptive and inferential statistics; furthermore, the mean score and standard deviation were each analyzed as an independent variable. Multiple Regression Analysis (MRA) was used to analyze the influenced between one dependent and two or more independent variables (Wanichbancha, 2008). The hypothesis was set at the acceptance value at .05.

Research Results

Process of New Product Development of Tai Lue Ethnic Textile Handicraft Products

The process of new product development for Tai Lue handicraft was shown in Table 1. The level of product development process for Tai Lue handicraft product of tourism in Luang Prabang was found the highest ($\bar{X} = 4.54$). Based on the figures, screening and selection process had the highest mean score ($\bar{X} = 4.63$), followed by ideas generation ($\bar{X} = 4.56$), product development ($\bar{X} = 4.49$), product testing ($\bar{X} = 4.48$) and business analysis ($\bar{X} = 4.47$), respectively.

Table 1 Mean, standard deviation, and the level of product development process of Tai Lue ethnic textile handicraft for tourism in Luang Prabang

Product development process	Mean	S.D	Level of product development
Screening and selection	4.63	0.23	Highest
Ideas generation	4.56	0.27	Highest
Product development	4.49	0.39	Highest
Product testing	4.48	0.38	Highest
Business analysis	4.47	0.38	Highest
Total	4.54	0.30	Highest

Value Added of Tai Lue Ethnic Textile Handicraft for Tourism in Luang Prabang

Table 2 illustrates the results of value added of Tai Lue handicraft products for tourism in Luang Prabang. Based on the statistic, the result of valued added were at a highest mean score ($\bar{X} = 4.54$). The highest mean score was image value ($\bar{X} = 4.56$) followed by the personnel value ($\bar{X} = 4.55$), product value ($\bar{X} = 4.54$) and service valued ($\bar{X} = 4.51$).

Table 2 Mean, standard deviation, and level of value added product of Tai Lue textile handicrafts for tourism in Luang Prabang

Value Added	Mean	S.D	Level of value added
Product value	4.54	0.34	Highest
Service value	4.51	0.37	Highest
Personnel value	4.55	0.37	Highest
Image value	4.56	0.37	Highest
Total	4.54	0.30	Highest

Analysis of Product Development Process that Influenced the Value Added of Tai Lue Handicraft Products

Table 3 showed that the smallest tolerance value equaled to .519 or variance inflation factor (VIF) value was the highest as 1.925 which was less than 4. Thus, it showed that independent variables had no Multi-collinearity.

Table 3 The testing of multi-collinearity

Independent variables	Tolerance	Variance Inflation Factor (VIF)
Ideas generation	.728	1.373
Screening and selection	.807	1.240
Business analysis	.536	1.866
Product development	.519	1.925
Product testing	.650	1.539

* significance level at .05

According to Table 4, results of the MRA by using Enter Method of NPD processes on ideas generation, screening and selecting, business analysis, product development and product testing stages showed a positive influence on the value-added of Tai Lue ethnic textile handicraft products. This indicated that ideas generation ($t = 3.406$, $Sig = .000$), business analysis ($t = 5.816$, $Sig = .000$), product development ($t = 4.670$, $Sig = .000$), and product testing ($t = 7.592$, $Sig = .000$) with statistical significance at the .05 level while the screening and selecting process ($t = .953$, $Sig = .341$) showed that the process could not predict the value added of Tai Lue ethnic textile handicraft products for tourism with statistical significance.

The variable that was predicted the best was the product testing. The predictive regression coefficient (β) was equivalent to .313, followed by the business analysis (β) .264, the product development (β) .215, and ideas generation process (β) .133 respectively. These four variables could explain the influence of value added for Tai Lue ethnic textile product for tourism in Luang Prabang, which was 56.6% ($R^2 = .566$) the other 43.4% was due to the influence of other variables that were not studied. The standard error in the forecasting was equivalent to .200 ($SE_{est} = .200$), a multiple correlation coefficient was equivalent to .752 ($R = .752$), and a constant value in raw scores was equivalent to .835 ($a = .835$). If the values of all four variables were known, the value added of Tai Lue ethnic textile handicraft products could be estimated. The multiple regression in the form of raw score was Y (value added of Tai Lue textile handicraft products) = .232 + .251 (product testing) + .211 (business Analysis) + .167 (product development) + .148 (idea generation). Multiple regression equation in the form of standard scores + 311 (product testing), + 264 (business analysis), + 215 (product development), + 133. (ideas generation).

The multiple regression equation explains that product testing, business analysis, product development, and idea generation processes had influence on the value added of Tai Lue ethnic textile handicraft products in Nayang with statistical significance at the .05 level, respectively. The four variables able to explained influence on the added value by 56% (Adjusted $R^2 = .560$). The testing process had the standard regression coefficient value (β) which was equivalent to .313, it means that if the testing process is increased by 1 unit while other factors remained constant, the value added of Tai Lue ethnic textile handicraft products in Luang Prabang would increase by .313 units. The business analysis had the standard regression coefficient value (β) equivalent to .264. This meant that if the business analysis process is increased 1 unit while other factors remain constant, the value added of Tai Lue ethnic textile handicraft products in Luang Prabang would increase by .264 units. The development process had the standard regression coefficient value (β) which was equivalent to .215. This meant that if the development process is increased by 1 unit, while other factors remained constant, the value

added of Tai Lue ethnic handicraft products in Luang Prabang would increase by .215 units. The idea generating process had a standard regression coefficient value (β) which was equivalent to .133. This meant that if ideas generation process increased 1 unit while other factors remained constant, the value added of Tai Lue ethnic textile handicraft products in Luang Prabang would increase by .133 unit.

Table 4 The NPD process has a positive influence on value added Tai Lue ethnic textile handicraft products for tourism in Luang Prabang

Variables	Valued Added Product of Tai Lue Textile Handicraft Product				
	Unstandardized	Standardized		T	Sig
	Coefficient	Coefficient			
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
Constant	.835	.232	-	3.599	.001
Ideas generation	.148	.043	.133	3.406	.000*
Screening and selecting	.046	.049	.035	.953	.341
Business analysis	.211	.036	.264	5.816	.000*
Product development	.167	.036	.215	4.670	.000*
Product testing	.251	.033	.313	7.592	.000*
R = .752, R ² = .566, Adjusted R ² = .560, SE _{est} = .200, F = .000					

* significance level at.05

According to Table 5, It could be concluded that the product testing, the business analysis, the product development and the ideas generation processes had the greatest influence on the value added of Tai Lue ethnic textile handicraft products in Nayang yet the screening and selection process did not influence on the added value of Tai Lue ethnic handicraft products.

Table 5 Summaries of hypothesis testing

Product development process	Statistic	Sig	Result
Ideas generation	MRA*	.000	Accepted
Screening and selecting		.341	Rejected
Business analysis		.000	Accepted
Product development		.000	Accepted
Product testing		.000	Accepted

Conclusions and Discussion

Results of the research showed that screening and selection, idea generation, product development, product testing, and business analysis were at their highest levels. This was consistent with the study of Tongpinyochai & Tangrerkwarasakul (2018), which found that the evaluation and selection process has an influence on the success of new product development in small and medium enterprises. Also, idea generation and initiation screening processes were essential because enterprises must be selected using criteria of standardization in order to obtain a product that is appropriate. The new ideas mainly comes from local wisdom, intellect, and knowledge that handed down for generation to create products and services that are different has storytelling such as the patterns and raw materials. The study of Boonpat & Kaewnet (2019) found that the selection of a target market is crucial because it establishes a precise limit for the execution of a successful marketing strategy. In addition, it draws in the target market's continued consumption patterns and functions as a tool for business growth, profit generation, and adding product value. The research of Pisawong (2021) found that marketing strategy as well as direction must be appropriate. A study of the organization's potential and resources, including capital, and human resources. To make the new product a success, utilize both new

and current marketing channels. If the company has no marketing or advertising plans, as a result, the product has no chance to reach its intended audiences.

The value added of Tai Lue textile handicraft products showed that product value, personnel value, image value, and service value were at a highest level. The first highest level that the respondents showed was image value, followed by personnel value, product value and service valued. The study was consistent with the concept of De Chematony et al. (1998) which stated that added value creates a competitive advantage over competitors that can contribute to the succeed of product at the long-term. Additionally, adding or adding new things beyond the original product is associated to what customer's desire and it is a way to create value for the product beyond the original product. The study was also consistent with a study of Thipchatyothin (2010) which found that the key success of product in the market, it had to outperform its rivals in terms of both quality and ability to satisfy customers. However, due to high quality of today's products, buyers would discover that they had more options. In other words, while the primary service may still be crucial, the "value added" that comes with the product is also becoming increasingly significant. It is in line with a study of Sentangsedtee (2018) which revealed that connecting with customers to understand the value of product and services is essential to adding value to products. Therefore, adding value is a crucial issue that should not be ignored. It's critical to create valuable added value through the storytelling, packaging design, and promotion. This is consistent with study of Butphech et al. (2018) which found that the management process creates value. It helps promote the development of a product identity, having items being designed with their intended audience in mind. Service value is a means of communicating with customers so they can know and use it correctly. It provided by utilities in a variety of ways that satisfy customers. Personnel value is a seller who has detailed product expertise for disseminating information to the appropriate purchasers, and the image is the perceived value of the product in the general public.

The analysis of product development process for value added of Tai Lue ethnic textile showed that the product testing, business analysis, development, and ideas generation process have influenced the value added of Tai Lue ethnic textile handicraft products in Nayang with a statistical significance level at the .05 respectively. The four variables could explain the influence on the added value by 56% (Adjusted $R^2 = .560$). Meanwhile, the product testing, business analysis, product development and ideas generation processes had the standard regression coefficient value (β) which was equivalent to .313, .264, .215 and .133, it implied that if these process are increased by 1 unit while other factors remained constant, the valued added of Tai Lue ethnic textile handicraft products in Luang Prabang would increase by .313, .264, .215 and .133 units respectively. The study was consistent with the concept of Kuntonbutr (2012) which explains that the concept of development and testing refers to the determination of how a product concept is going and testing for market feasibility. The results of this study are accordance with Tongpinyochai & Tangrerkwarasakul (2018) found that ideas generation and evaluation influences the product development process with significantly at the level of .005 and .001 respectively, which can predict 33.7 percent. The predictor's regression coefficient showed that the assessment and ideas screening and selection have influenced the success of the new product development process ($p = .005$). A study of Sotwitee et al. (2022) found that community enterprise groups of Ban Nam Chiew tourism, Trat, Thailand had developed community products according to the 5Cs model of the product development guidelines, including mutual agreements, cooperation and community products. The Nongbualamphu tourism community developed according to the 3Ds model approach, namely access to problems, design and development. These influenced the product development differently according to the community context but could promote community-based-tourism.

Recommendations

This research found that the screening and selecting process did not influence the value added of Tai Lue ethnic textile handicraft products in Nayang. Therefore, further studies should include qualitative study, these two processes carefully, and thoroughly. This is particularly on paying attention to the indicators used in the study. This research is a study of the new product development process. Further research should focus on the application of product design and development as a concept and research tool. For other communities that have similar context to Nambak, the Department of Information, Culture and Tourism, Department of Industry and Commerce can propose a model of product development process of Nayang handicraft products to promote other communities and encourage their products to get greater value.

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