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Abstract

The hotel industry is one of the prime sectors in the tourism and hospitality industries where English is used as a medium for communication. Although hotel staff are required to use English when serving foreigners, communication problems frequently occur. As a result, this study aimed to analyze English communication problems, with a focus on speaking and listening skills, and to investigate solutions for hotel staff who communicate with foreigners. The samples in this study consisted of ninety-five hotel staff in Phuket. Questionnaires and interviews were used to gather data. The collected data were analyzed using percentages, means, standard deviations, and content analysis of interview data. The findings revealed that the overall problem in English listening among the sample group with foreign customers and foreign staff was low ($\bar{x}$= 1.55, S.D. = 0.77), ($\bar{x}$= 1.52, S.D. = 0.74), with the most common problem being listening to various English accents. Furthermore, while English speaking problems with foreign customers and foreign staff were the lowest ($\bar{x}$= 1.39, S.D. = 0.73),

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($\bar{x}$= 1.38, S.D. = 0.71), telephone communication in English were the most common. The most common way to solve English communication problems with both foreign customers and staff was to apologize and ask for repetition ($\bar{x}$= 4.63, S.D. = 0.62). The findings of this study could be used as guidelines to improve English communication among relevant staff or those interested in working in the hotel industry.

Keywords: English communication problems, English in the workplace, hotel staff

บทคัดย่อ

ในภาคอุตสาหกรรมการท่องเที่ยวและการบริการ ธุรกิจการโรงแรมจัดเป็นธุรกิจอันดับต้น ๆ ที่มีการสื่อสารด้วยภาษาอังกฤษ แม้ว่าพนักงานโรงแรมต้องใช้ภาษาอังกฤษสื่อสารกับชาวต่างชาติแต่ยังคงประสบปัญหาระหว่างการสื่อสารได้ตลอดเวลา ดังนั้นการศึกษานี้จึงมีวัตถุประสงค์เพื่อศึกษาปัญหาการสื่อสารภาษาอังกฤษโดยเน้นทักษะการพูดและฟัง และวิธีการแก้ปัญหาของพนักงานโรงแรมที่ต้องสื่อสารกับชาวต่างชาติ กลุ่มตัวอย่างคือ พนักงานโรงแรมแห่งหนึ่งในจังหวัดภูเก็ตจำนวน 95 คน เครื่องมือที่ใช้ได้แก่ แบบสอบถาม และการสัมภาษณ์ สถิติที่ใช้คือ ค่าร้อยละ ค่าเฉลี่ย ส่วนเบี่ยงเบนมาตรฐาน และการวิเคราะห์เนื้อหา ผลการศึกษาพบว่า ปัญหาการฟังภาษาอังกฤษของกลุ่มตัวอย่างกับลูกค้าและพนักงานชาวต่างชาติในภาพรวมอยู่ในระดับที่น้อย ($\bar{x}$= 1.55, S.D. = 0.77) และ ($\bar{x}$= 1.52, S.D. = 0.74) โดยปัญหาการฟังสำเนียงภาษาอังกฤษที่แตกต่างกันเป็นปัญหาที่พบได้มากที่สุด ปัญหาการพูดภาษาอังกฤษกับลูกค้าและพนักงานชาวต่างชาติในภาพรวมอยู่ในระดับที่น้อยที่สุด ($\bar{x}$= 1.39, S.D. = 0.73) และ ($\bar{x}$= 1.38, S.D. = 0.71) โดยปัญหาการสื่อสารโดยการพูดทางโทรศัพท์พบได้มากที่สุด วิธีการแก้ไขปัญหาการสื่อสารภาษาอังกฤษกับลูกค้าและพนักงานชาวต่างชาติคือ พนักงานใช้การกล่าวขอโทษและขอให้พูดซ้ำอยู่ในระดับมากที่สุด ($\bar{x}$= 4.63, S.D. = 0.62) ผลการศึกษานี้สามารถใช้เป็นแนวทางในการแก้ปัญหาและพัฒนาการสื่อสารภาษาอังกฤษของบุคลากรที่เกี่ยวข้องหรือผู้ที่สนใจในการทำงานธุรกิจโรงแรมต่อไป

คำสำคัญ: ปัญหาการสื่อสารภาษาอังกฤษ การใช้ภาษาอังกฤษในที่ทำงาน พนักงานโรงแรม

Introduction

For the purpose of international communication, the English language is one of the most important languages. It serves as a tool for people to effectively communicate with individuals from different cultures around the world (Hotekim & Taylor, 2020). According to Internet World Stats (2021), approximately 1.5 to 1.6 billion people from 195 countries use English as a medium of communication. These statistics highlight the global importance of English as the primary language. This aligns with Boonyaruksa's (2021) assertion that English is widely used in various sectors such as business, education, logistics, workplace, tourism, and the service industry.

English plays a major role in the tourism and service industry, encompassing sectors such as hotels, tourism, transportation, logistics, restaurants, and entertainment. Among these, the hotel industry relies more heavily on English compared to other sectors (Arunchai, 2020). In cases where hotel staff struggle to communicate with guests, it can lead to communication barriers between the staff and the guests. The use of English as a medium for communication is of utmost importance, especially for hotel personnel working in the tourism and hotel sectors (Chaichana et al., 2017). Not only does English serve as the key to providing services to foreign tourists, but it is also essential for hotel staff when interacting with other foreign employees. To support this, Boonyaruksa (2021) highlighted in his study the significance of English communication, both internally (among foreign staff) and externally (with foreign guests).

Despite the challenges posed by the Covid-19 pandemic, Thailand welcomed approximately 7 million foreign tourists in the year 2020-2021, according to statistics from the Ministry of Tourism and Sports (2023). To mitigate the negative impact on the domestic tourism economy, the Thai government implemented the Phuket Sandbox project in Phuket with the aim of attracting foreign tourists to visit after the pandemic began to subside. From July 1 to August 31, 2021, a total of 26,400 foreign tourists participated in Phuket Sandbox project (Tourism and Sports Economic Bureau, 2022). An interview conducted by Prachachart Business (2023) with Mr. Nantasiri Ronasiri, the Director of the Tourism Authority of Thailand, Phuket Office, stated that the number of tourists that have participated in the Phuket Sandbox has already exceeded 400,000 since July 2021. This upward trend emphasizes the importance of studying communication problems between hotel staff and foreigners to guide further improvements in the quality of service provided by hotel staff.

Therefore, it is crucial to investigate the problems that arise during their communication with foreign staff and guests. Such research serves as a guideline for enhancing the quality of services and improving English communication skills. Several researchers (Arunchai, 2020; Chaichana et al., 2017; Hotekim & Taylor, 2020; Jindapol, 2023; Kamwiset, 2018; Rattanapiboonwong, 2023; Watthanarangsan & Sutanyarak, 2019) have studied the problems encountered by hotel staff in their English communication within and outside the organization. Their findings indicate that factors such as accents, environmental distractions, and individual competency skills significantly contribute to communication difficulties. Insufficient knowledge, ability, or experience in using English can lead to mistakes and misunderstandings during communication. While various strategies and methods exist for resolving these problems, everyone adopts different approaches (Charoensuk & Tantihachai, 2021).

Emphasizing the importance of English communication problems and solutions encountered by hotel staff, the objective of this research was to examine communication problems experienced by hotel staff in Phuket who were employed within a chain hotel operating under foreign management and administration. Phuket was selected for this study due to its status as a popular destination for foreign tourists, necessitating effective English communication with both internal and external stakeholders. The present study specifically focused on a hotel belonging to an international hotel chain – in this case the InterContinental Hotels Group (IHG). This hotel was chosen because, with their standard services, they often employ foreign staff to cater to their guests, underscoring the significance of English communication within the hotel environment. The study identified specific problems faced by hotel staff in English communication, particularly in speaking and listening skills, and explored potential solutions. The findings of this study can serve as a valuable resource for improving English communication in the hotel industry, enhancing overall efficiency, and benefiting instructors, students, and individuals interested in pursuing careers in the hotel sector.

Research Objectives

1. To analyze English communication problems, with a focus on speaking and listening skills, encountered by hotel staff when interacting with foreigners, both within and outside the organization.
2. To investigate practical solutions for hotel staff who encounter problems when communicating with foreigners in English.

Literature Review

English for Specific Purposes

English holds significant importance not only in everyday communication but also in various professional domains, including the business sector. This importance has led to the emergence of English for Specific Purposes (ESP), defined by Hutchinson and Waters (1987) as an approach to language teaching based on learners' specific reasons for learning. The rising demand for English language skills, coupled with advancements in linguistics, has driven the need for ESP to cater to specific communication needs. Robinson (1991) further categorizes ESP into two types: English for occupational purposes (EOP) and English for educational purposes (EEP). In the context of this study, the focus lies on real communication within the hotel industry, prioritizing practical language use over grammar. Many hotels now place a premium on hiring individuals proficient in English communication to excel and remain competitive in the industry (Kanjanasilanon, 2016). These employees must adeptly use English to convey ideas, bridge cultural gaps, and build positive relationships, both internally and externally. While General English learners may struggle with context-specific sentence application, ESP offers a task-oriented and purposeful approach. Consequently, hotel industry professionals must effectively differentiate between Specific English and General English and employ them appropriately within their specific work environments.

English Communication Problems

Problems in business English communication often arise when the recipient fails to comprehend the sender's intended message, leading to communication breakdowns. These barriers can result from misunderstandings or a lack of attentive listening (Scott, 1996). Language barriers in communication encompass both verbal and nonverbal aspects. Individuals who interact closely with customers must possess strong language skills to effectively convey messages. Language proficiency stands at the heart of these challenges, and individual differences can further compound communication issues (Davidoff, 1994).

In the hotel industry, the quality of service is paramount as it profoundly influences guests' perceptions, expectation, and satisfaction (Sonthimoon & Khamdet, 2014). Consequently, they found that the hotel sector necessitates personnel equipped with top-tier service skills, the ability to cater to service users' requirements, and effective communication proficiencies within its workforce. Communication stands as a pivotal factor with a direct impact on service user satisfaction. Therefore, hotels must prioritize improving their employees' communication skills and addressing communication-related issues to ensure outstanding service quality. This ensures that guests are not only impressed and satisfied but also inclined to return for future services.

Previous Related Studies

Previous studies have extensively examined the problems faced by staff when communicating in English with foreigners within and outside their organizations. These studies aimed to identify and address problems and solutions among hotel staff working with foreigners.

Arunchai (2020) conducted a study on front desk employees at a hotel in Bangkok, the main problem identified was receptionists' difficulty in understanding tourists' English accents, leading to word meaning uncertainty. The study found that staff used various methods like watching movies, TV, and listening to English songs to improve language skills, pronunciation, and vocabulary.

Chaichana et al. (2017) examined English communication challenges among hotel staff in Nan province. They identified speaking issues, such as difficulties in telephone conversations, conveying hotel and tourism information, and forming coherent sentences. Additionally, listening challenges were observed, including comprehension difficulties with complex English from foreign tourists and understanding simple sentences they used.

Hotekim and Taylor (2020) investigated English speaking problems in corporate meetings, highlighting problems related to accents and pronunciation. Based on the study, it is evident that problems exist in English communication, particularly in speech skills, grammar usage, understanding accents, and pronunciation.

Jindapol (2023) evaluated the English communication abilities of reception staff at a 3-star hotel in Phang Nga Province. The study emphasized problems related to grammatical accuracy and pronunciation. Utilizing a questionnaire administered to English-speaking foreign tourists, the results revealed that front desk staff at 3-star hotels exhibited moderate fluency in English conversation. However, they still lacked grammatical accuracy and faced problems with English word pronunciation.

Kamwiset (2018) assessed receptionists' English readiness in Phuket hotels, focusing on various skills using a questionnaire. It identified top scores in listening and speaking (room reservations and telephone service), while reading skills excelled in handling manuals and guest assistance. Writing skills were robust in creating hotel announcements. The study also considered readiness based on factors like education, occupation, location, and hotel type.

Rattanapiboonwong (2023) studied language needs among operational-level employees in multinational firms, emphasizing accent-related challenges. It found co-worker communication as the top language requirement, followed by interactions with foreign customers and supervisors. The research assessed speaking, listening, reading, and writing skills, highlighting problems in understanding diverse accents, especially in listening.

Thongsai and Sittipragan's (2021) study showed participants in their sample group used quick solutions in English communication, including mobile translation apps, repeated requests for clarification, and written communication. Some also used body language like gestures and drawings to compensate for their limited English proficiency.

Watthanarangsan and Sutanyarak (2019) studied hotel staff efficiency in Bangkok, emphasizing empowerment and foreign language communication. Their research, employing questionnaires and interviews, revealed high productivity, recommended empowerment, systematic issue analysis, effective goal communication, improved job satisfaction, and cross-training.

Considering the findings of previous studies, this present study aimed to address English communication problems experienced by hotel staff in Phuket and examine potential practical solutions to resolve all minimized such problems.

Research Methodology

This research adopted a mixed-method approach, combining quantitative and qualitative research methodologies. These included participants, research instruments, data collection, and data analysis.

1. Participants

The primary participants in this study were purposively selected from a chain hotel located in Phuket, Thailand. These participants are Thai nationals who serve in various capacities within the hotel, encompassing roles as receptionists, office staff, food and beverage personnel, and housekeeping staff. These participants were specifically chosen because they play a crucial role in utilizing a foreign network system (chain hotel) to manage and oversee the hotel's operational activities. A specific method, based on Taro Yamane's (1967) sample size calculation with an expected degree of error of 0.05, was used to select 95 individuals from the hotel's population of 125. From this sample group, 10 participants were further chosen using a convenient random sampling method for in-depth interviews.

2. Research Instruments

The present study employed two primary research tools: a questionnaire and semi-structured interviews. The instruments were developed and administered in Thai for the data collection.

2.1 Questionnaire

The questionnaire aimed to collect data on the communication problems encountered by hotel staff, as well as the solutions they employed to mitigate these problems. It comprised six parts, each devoted to specific aspects of English communication problems. Participants' responses were measured
using a 5-point Likert Scale. The structure of the questionnaire was as follows:

Part 1: General Information

Part 2: English communication problems with foreign customers

Part 3: English communication problems with foreign staff

Part 4: Solutions to address communication problems with foreigners

Part 5: Suggestions or opinions on problem solutions in English communication with foreigners

Part 6: Consent for additional interviews

2.2 Semi-structured interview

Besides the questionnaire, a set of ten semi-structured interview questions was created to explore communication problems in more detail. These questions covered aspects such as participants' personal information, frequency of English communication, the importance of English in their workplace, problems faced when communicating with foreign guests and foreign staff, solutions used to overcome these problems, methods for improving English communication skills, and recommendations for individuals working with foreigners.

The research instruments utilized in this study were adapted from Arunchai (2020) and placed particular emphasis on the listening and speaking components of English communication skills. By combining the questionnaire and the semi-structured interviews, this research sought to provide comprehensive insights into the communication problems faced by hotel staff as well as potential solutions to address these problems.

Before implementing the research instruments in this study, the set of questions, including a questionnaire and ten interview questions, was submitted to three experts for the assessment of data quality, validity, and reliability. The three experts included two English lecturers and a hotel manager who worked in a chain hotel. The experts evaluated the questions using the Index of Item-Objective Congruence (IOC), which produced values ranging from 0.50 to 1.00. IOC values within this range indicate that the questions align with the study objectives or content and are suitable for use. Questions with IOC values below 0.50 suggest a lack of objectivity or content alignment, making them unsuitable for inclusion.

The validity of the questions used for data collection in this research was assessed, revealing that there were no questions with IOC values below 0.5. Consequently, all questions were considered acceptable, resulting in an overall IOC validity value of 0.94. This value indicates that the questions were valid and appropriate for data collection purposes. Following the validation process, a pilot study was conducted with 10 non-sample hotel employees using a questionnaire. Data from the pilot study were analyzed using Cronbach's Coefficient Alpha, recommended by Prasitratsin (1997). The calculated alpha coefficient was 0.97, indicating high reliability. This confidence in the tool's consistency makes it suitable for collecting genuine data and ensuring analysis accuracy.

3. Data collection

The data collection in this present study was divided into two stages:

Stage 1: The researchers obtained permission from the hotel to collect data. After securing the hotel management’s approval, they distributed the online questionnaire to each participant for completion.

Stage 2: With the participants' consent, 10 participants were selected for semi-structured in-depth interviews to gather more detailed information regarding communication problems and the solutions used to address these problems. Following the participants’ approval, the interview data were recorded for subsequent transcription and analysis.

4. Data analysis

The collected questionnaire data were analyzed using Excel and statistical formulas, while interview data were subjected to content analysis. Part 1 of the questionnaire provided general information assessed through frequency and percentage. Problem levels and solutions from Parts 2-4 used mean ($\bar{x}$) and standard deviation (S.D.) calculations for interpretation. The data was categorized into five levels based on specific criteria for average score ranges.

4.51 to 5.00: Highest level of problems or solutions.
3.51 to 4.50: High level of problems or solutions.
2.51 to 3.50: Moderate level of problems or solutions.
1.51 to 2.50: Low level of problems or solutions.
1.00 to 1.50: Lowest level of problems or solutions.

Furthermore, additional suggestions from the questionnaire and data from interviews underwent content analysis to extract crucial information aligning with the study's purpose (Lincharoen, 2011).

Findings

The researchers analyzed the collected data and presented the results in four distinct parts.

1. Personal Information

In the study, there were a total of 95 participants from four hotel departments. The majority of participants (61.05%) fell within the age range of 31 to 40 years old. Additionally, a significant proportion of the sample, 82 individuals (86.32%), held a bachelor's degree. When considering the roles of the participants, it was found that 40 (42.11%) worked as office staff, 30 (31.58%) as receptionists, 17 (17.89%) in the food and beverage department, while the smallest group consisted of 8 (8.42%) individuals serving as housekeepers, as shown in Table 1.

Table 1
Participants' Roles

Roles	Number (person)	Percentage
Office staff	40	42.11%
Receptionists	30	31.58%
F&B Staffs	17	17.89%
Housekeepers	8	8.42%
Total	95	100

When participants were asked about their work experience, it was observed that the majority of individuals (56.84%) had accumulated 5 years or more of work experience, while 27 participants (28.42%) had 3 to 4 years of work experience, and 13 (13.69%) had 1 to 2 years of experience. Notably, only one participant out of the total sample of 95 (1.05%) had less than 1 year of work experience, as shown in Table 2.

Table 2

Participants' Working Experience

Years of Experience	Number (person)	Percentage
Less than 1 year	1	1.05%
1-2 years	13	13.69%
3-4 years	27	28.42%
5 years or more	54	56.84%
Total	95	100

Since the participants were from different departments and had varying levels of work experience, it was found that the frequency of English communication with foreigners varied based on the differences in job roles. The intriguing results revealed that all participants had the opportunity to use English at work at least 3-4 days per week. Based on the data provided in Table 3, it is evident that the majority of participants, specifically 49 individuals (51.58%), engaged in English communication for 5-6 days per week. Furthermore, 42 people (44.21%) communicated in English every day. Additionally, a smaller group of 4 individuals communicated in English for 3-4 days a week, representing 4.21% of the total sample.

Table 3

Frequency of Participants' Engagements in English Communication

Frequency of English Communication	Number (person)	Percentage
Every day	42	44.21%
5-6 days per week	49	51.58%
3-4 days per week	4	4.21%
Total	95	100

When participants were asked to rate their own English language proficiency, a significant majority of 59 individuals (62.10%) assessed themselves as having a good level of proficiency. Additionally, 22 participants (23.16%) rated their proficiency as fair, while 12 individuals (12.63%) considered themselves to be very good in English. Notably, a small subset of only 2 participants (2.11%) indicated an average proficiency level in the English language. These findings are presented in Table 4.

Table 4

Participants' English Language Proficiency

English Language Proficiency	Number (person)	Percentage
Very good	12	12.63%
Good	59	62.10%
Fair	22	23.16%
Average	2	2.11%
Total	95	100

The following data analysis is split into two parts: 2. Communication with foreign customers, and 3. Communication with foreign staff.

2. English Communication Problems with Foreign Customers: Listening and Speaking Skills of Hotel Staff in a Foreign Network System

2.1 Listening skill problems

Based on the data analysis, it can be concluded that the participants revealed a low level of problems in English listening skills ($\bar{x}$ = 1.55, S.D. = 0.77). However, when considering specific problems, the problem faced most by staff was understanding different English accents ($\bar{x}$= 2.77, S.D.=1.24), indicating a moderate level of problems. Table 5 shows more detailed results.

Table 5

English Listening Problems with Foreign Customers

Problems	Mean	S.D.	Level of Problems
1. Listening to English over the Phone	1.71	0.84	low
2. Listening to needs or asking for help	1.21	0.58	lowest
3. Listening to complaints	1.22	0.60	lowest
4. Listening to English words or expressions	1.58	1.01	low
5. Listening to different English accents	2.77	1.24	moderate
6. Listening comprehension	1.19	0.57	lowest
7. Listening to respond to general conversations	1.17	0.57	lowest
Total	1.55	0.77	low

Based on interviews with 10 participants, the main problem in English communication with customers is different accents due to diverse nationalities. This aligns with questionnaire responses indicating problems in understanding foreign accents. The participants stressed that regular interaction with foreigners improves communication and helps overcome accent differences. In their own words:

Participant 1:

"At first, I had trouble understanding foreign accents, but with time and practice, it became easier."

Participant 10:

"In my opinion, Ethnic diversity creates misunderstandings and mistakes in communication, leading to customer dissatisfaction."

Overall, the interviews highlight the impact of accent variations and the importance of regular practice to enhance communication skills and mitigate misunderstandings.

2.2. Speaking Skill Problems

Based on the data analysis, it can be concluded that the participants showed the least difficulty in speaking English ($\bar{x}$ 1.39, S.D.= 0.73). However, when considering specific problems, it was found that the participants faced the most difficulties in speaking English over the phone ($\bar{x}$ =1.67, S.D.= 0.77), indicating a low level of difficulty. Table 6 shows detailed results.

Table 6
English Speaking Problems with Foreign Customers

Problems	Mean	S.D.	Level of Problems
1. Speaking over the phone	1.67	0.77	low
2. Giving information or explaining	1.22	0.62	lowest
3. Asking for help	1.19	0.53	lowest
4. Suggesting	1.24	0.64	lowest
5. Pronouncing words or using English expressions in spoken language	1.60	0.98	low
6. Pronouncing clearly and correctly	1.65	1.03	low
7. Responding to general conversation	1.16	0.53	lowest
Total	1.39	0.73	lowest

3. English Communication Problems with Foreign Staff: Listening and Speaking Skills of Hotel Staff in a Foreign Network System

3.1 Listening Skill Problems

Based on the data analysis, it can be concluded that the participants encountered problems in listening to English spoken by their foreign colleagues at a low level ($\bar{x}$ 1.52, S.D.= 0.74). Further examination of specific problems revealed that the participants faced the most difficulty in understanding different English accents ($\bar{x}$= 2.66, S.D.= 1.15) indicating a moderate level of difficulty. Table 7 shows detailed information.

Table 7
English Listening Problems with Foreign Staff

Problems	Mean	S.D.	Level of Problems
1. Listening to English over the Phone	1.71	0.81	low
2. Listening to needs and requests for assistance	1.22	0.62	lowest
3. Listening to complaints	1.22	0.60	lowest
4. Listening to English words or expressions	1.51	0.92	low
5. Listening to different English accents	2.66	1.15	moderate
6. Listening comprehension	1.20	0.57	lowest
7. Listening to respond in general conversations	1.16	0.53	lowest
Total	1.52	0.74	low

During the interviews, it was found that 60% of the 10 participants experienced minimal communication problems with foreign staff, which aligns with the questionnaire data. Surprisingly, even though the staff had been working with each other for at least one year, they still considered listening to different English accents as the most problematic aspect. Four out of the 10 participants (40%) reported facing accent-related problems when conversing in English with foreign staff. However, they stated that these problems did not significantly impact their work and could be overcome through adjustments such as actively seeking clarification, repeating key information, and developing a better understanding of each other's accents through regular interaction. The participants emphasized that these adjustments were relatively easy to implement, given the amicable and collaborative atmosphere within the team, which fostered effective cross-cultural communication. Participants 1 and 10 provided the following quotes to support these points:

Participant 1:

"I rarely have communication problems with foreign colleagues as my close friends are mostly from nearby countries, so our accents are similar. This makes understanding each other easier compared to communicating with foreign customers."

Participant 10:

"Occasionally, there are misunderstandings due to varying local accents, leading to miscommunications in pronunciation. However, through time and experience, I haven't faced any major problems."

Furthermore, one participant expressed that their relative lack of problems with English communication might be attributed

to the hotel's policy of occasionally requiring staff to take English tests and establishing an English-speaking environment.

Participant 5:

I've faced some English communication issues here. The hotel tests staff's English competence, which is good. Some are naturally good because of their TOEIC scores, and the hotel encourages speaking English, like housekeepers greeting guests in English. It is really helpful for the staff.

Overall, the interviews revealed that the majority of participants experienced minimal communication problems with foreign staff, but some still faced problems related to accents. However, these problems were effectively managed through adaptation and regular interaction, ensuring smooth workplace communication. The English-speaking environment within the workplace and the hotel's policy of requiring staff to take English tests were identified as valuable factors that greatly assist the staff in improving their English communication skills.

3.2 Speaking Skill Problems

The analysis of the data suggests that the participants encountered fewer problems when speaking English with foreign staff ($\bar{x}$= 1.38, S.D.=0.71). Nevertheless, when taking all the problems into account, it became apparent that participants faced the greatest problems when communicating in English over the phone ($\bar{x}$ = 1.67, S.D.= 0.77), denoting a relatively low level of problem. Additional details can be found in Table 8.

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Table 8

English Speaking Problems with Foreign Staff

Problems	Mean	S.D.	Level of Problems
1. Speaking over the phone	1.67	0.77	low
2. Giving information or explaining	1.21	0.60	lowest
3. Asking for help	1.20	0.55	lowest
4. Suggesting	1.21	0.60	lowest
5. Pronouncing words or using English expressions in spoken language	1.57	0.91	low
6. Pronouncing clearly and correctly	1.65	1.00	low
7. Responding to general conversation	1.16	0.53	lowest
Total	1.38	0.71	lowest

4. Solutions for English Communication Problems with Foreigners

The comprehensive data analysis of the questionnaire revealed that, as communication problems occurred less frequently, the participants exhibited limited solutions to their English communication problems. Their average score was 2.24 (S.D.= 0.85), indicating a relatively low level of solution utilization. However, an examination of the various solutions employed showed that staff often employed the solution of apologizing and requesting repetition ($\bar{x}$= 4.63, S.D. = 0.62), which was the most employed solution among the six. Table 9 is a reference for more detailed information.

Table 9

Solutions for English Communication Problems with Foreigners

Solutions	Mean	S.D.	Level of solution
1. Apologizing and requesting repetition	4.63	0.62	highest
2. Using English vocabulary or expressions to illustrate a misunderstanding	3.82	1.15	high
3. Using a translation tool	1.57	1.05	low
4. Using gestures	1.87	1.10	low
5. Asking for help from others	1.16	0.62	lowest
6. Using gestures or facial expressions to illustrate a misunderstanding	1.22	0.67	lowest
Total	2.24	0.85	low

In interviews with 10 participants, it was discovered that 60% of them employed the solution of apologizing and asking foreign customers to repeat themselves when communicating in English. Additionally, the use of translation applications was identified as another solution to overcome language and accent barriers when communicating with foreigners. In one participant's own words,

"In communication, we often ask customers to kindly repeat themselves, mainly due to language accents. If I face difficulty understanding, I apologize and request the customer to repeat their words. It's a common practice for effective communication."

Participant 4 stated,

"Translation apps are commonly used for easier communication, particularly when dealing with difficult accents. However, translations may not always be accurate, so intuition plays a role in understanding."

The analysis of the data revealed that participants had a limited ability to address communication problems. However, the most utilized solution was apologizing and asking for repetition. Translation apps were also used to overcome language and accent barriers. The participants in this study mentioned asking customers to repeat themselves and relying on translation apps for better communication with foreigners.

Discussion

In the study of English Communication Problems and Solutions Among Hotel Staff Working with Foreigners in Phuket Province, it was found that staff faced communication problems with foreigners, both inside and outside the organization. However, solutions were identified to address these problems. Based on the data analysis, the following key findings emphasize important issues:

1. English communication problems

The findings of this study provide valuable insights into the communication problems faced by hotel staff when interacting with foreigners, both within and outside the organization. The analysis of questionnaire and interview data consistently indicates that hotel staff in this study exhibited a low level of difficulty in speaking and listening to English with foreigners. These findings differ from previous research, which identified that hotel staff had notable difficulties communicating in English with foreigners. One significant difference in this study is that the participants work in a chain hotel managed and administered by a foreign network system. Based on the interview data, it implies that the hotel places a high priority on delivering high-quality service to its customers, which necessitates well-informed staff members who can communicate proficiently in English. The environment of English-speaking in the workplace and the regulations for staff to take English tests affect staff's English communication. This emphasis on language proficiency within the hotel industry aligns with the demand theory proposed by Sonthimoon and Khamdet (2014). According to their theory, it is imperative for hotels to establish a strong foundation for delivering exceptional service that exceeds customers' expectations and leaves a lasting impression that influences guest retention. Consequently, the hotel in this present study carefully select employees based on their experience, education, and language skills. They also conduct regular language assessments

to maintain a high level of English proficiency among their staff, in line with the findings of Kamwiset (2018). However, the results offered valuable insights that despite utilizing a foreign network system for management and administration, hotel staff still encounter problems in English communication with foreigners, particularly in comprehending different English accents. The findings of this study align with previous relevant research conducted by Arunchai (2020), Chaichana et al. (2017), Intorn et al. (2020), Charoensuk et al. (2018), Jindapol (2023), and Rattanapiboonwong (2023). These studies consistently identify varied English accents as a primary obstacle in communicating with foreigners.

In summary, despite the adoption of foreign network systems, hotel staff continue to encounter English communication issues with foreigners, primarily related to listening and speaking skills. These findings align with existing research, emphasizing the importance of addressing these problems as part of the solution to improve English communication.

2. Solutions to overcome problems in English communication

The analysis of questionnaires and interviews provides valuable insights into problem solutions used by hotel staff when communicating in English with foreigners. The data consistently reveals that the most common approaches include offering apologies and requesting repetition, along with methods such as expressing incomprehension through English words or gestures and utilizing translation tools. These findings align with research by Arunchai (2020) and Charoensuk et al. (2018), which emphasize various problem solutions to facilitate effective communication and mutual understanding between parties. However, it is important to note that English communication solutions are influenced by personal experience, knowledge, and intuition, as highlighted by Srisakorn (2004). Chombuathong's research (2019) also underscores the significance of addressing specific communication problems to enhance English proficiency. While the present study's findings on problem solutions in English communication among hotel staff using foreign network systems for management and administration align with several studies, discrepancies with Charoensuk and Tantihachai's (2021) findings exist. These differences may be attributed to factors such as language proficiency and available resources. Further research is needed to comprehensively understand effective English communication solution tailored to the unique context of hotel staff utilizing foreign network systems.

Conclusion

In conclusion, this study shows the English communication problems faced by hotel staff when interacting with foreigners, both within and outside the organization. Despite the utilization of foreign network systems for management and administration, the participants still encounter problems.

The findings also emphasize the significance of practical solutions employed by hotel staff during English communication with foreigners. The most common approaches include apologizing, requesting repetition, expressing incomprehension through English words or gestures, and utilizing translation tools. These solutions align with previous research and highlight the importance of adapting solutions to address specific problems and promote effective communication in intercultural contexts.

Overall, this study contributes to the understanding of the English communication problems and practical solutions employed by hotel staff in their English communication with foreigners. It emphasizes the need for ongoing language development initiatives and effective communication training to improve proficiency and enhance intercultural communication in the hotel industry.

Recommendations

For further research, the following suggestions are proposed:

1. Researchers should investigate problems and solutions across all English language skills.

2. Researchers should conduct research with hotels using foreign networks in different provinces to obtain diverse data.

3. The study should include pre- and post-assessments of language proficiency, and these assessments should be analyzed in relation to job experience, age, and hotel departments to gain more comprehensive insights.

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Opinions Towards the Use of Reciprocal Teaching Strategy in English Reading of Thai Lower Secondary Level Students

ความคิดเห็นต่อการใช้กลวิธีการสอนแบบแลกเปลี่ยนบทบาท ในการอ่านภาษาอังกฤษของนักเรียนไทยระดับมัธยมศึกษาตอนต้น

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Abstract

Reciprocal Teaching Strategy (RTS) is an interesting strategy for reading activities which helps develop English reading abilities. This study investigated Thai lower secondary school students’ opinions on the use of RTS while reading in English. The investigation was conducted with 40 students enrolled in the eighth grade at a public school in the Huaiyot district of Trang province. The non-probability sampling method was utilized. The participants were in an intact class which was an already-formed group with a similar English proficiency level. Quantitative data were collected through opinion questionnaires and calculated with means and standard deviations. Qualitative data were obtained from open-ended questions in the questionnaires, interviews, and the teacher’s logs. It was found that most students agreed with the use of the reciprocal teaching strategy in English reading; that is, they had positive opinions on using RTS stages of predicting, questioning, clarifying, and summarizing and the exchange of leading roles in a discussion group. It can be inferred from the findings that RTS can be an engaging tool in a reading class and can enhance students' inspiration to improve their English reading skills and to develop more positive attitudes when reading texts in English.

***Keywords**:* opinions on the use of RTS, reciprocal teaching strategy, English reading, lower secondary school students

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บทคัดย่อ

กลวิธีการสอนแบบแลกเปลี่ยนบทบาทเป็นกลยุทธ์หนึ่งที่น่าสนใจสำหรับกิจกรรมการอ่านซึ่งช่วยพัฒนาความสามารถในการอ่านภาษาอังกฤษ การศึกษานี้สำรวจความคิดเห็นของนักเรียนไทยระดับมัธยมศึกษาตอนต้นเกี่ยวกับการใช้กลวิธีการสอนแบบแลกเปลี่ยนบทบาทในการอ่านเรื่องภาษาอังกฤษ กลุ่มตัวอย่าง คือ นักเรียนจำนวน 40 คน ที่ลงทะเบียนเรียนในระดับชั้นมัธยมศึกษาปีที่ 2 โรงเรียนของรัฐแห่งหนึ่งในอำเภอห้วยยอด จังหวัดตรัง สุ่มกลุ่มตัวอย่างโดยไม่ใช้ความน่าจะเป็น ซึ่งได้มาโดยการเลือกจากห้องเรียนที่มีอยู่แล้วและมีผลการเรียนรายวิชาภาษาอังกฤษใกล้เคียงกัน ข้อมูลเชิงปริมาณได้มาจากแบบสอบถามความคิดเห็น สถิติที่ใช้ในการวิเคราะห์ ได้แก่ ค่าเฉลี่ยและส่วนเบี่ยงเบนมาตรฐาน ข้อมูลเชิงคุณภาพได้มาจากคำถามปลายเปิดในแบบสอบถาม การสัมภาษณ์ และบันทึกการสังเกตของครู ผลการสำรวจความคิดเห็นของนักเรียนต่อการใช้กลวิธีการสอนแบบแลกเปลี่ยนบทบาท พบว่า นักเรียนส่วนใหญ่เห็นด้วยกับการใช้กลวิธีการสอนแบบแลกเปลี่ยนบทบาทในการอ่านเรื่องภาษาอังกฤษ กล่าวคือ นักเรียนมีความคิดเห็นเชิงบวกต่อขั้นตอนการเดาเรื่อง การตั้งคำถาม การตรวจสอบความเข้าใจ และการสรุปเรื่อง ตลอดจนการแลกเปลี่ยนบทบาทการเป็นผู้นำในกลุ่มอภิปราย จึงสรุปได้ว่าการใช้กลวิธีการสอนแบบแลกเปลี่ยนบทบาทสามารถเป็นเครื่องมือที่น่าสนใจในชั้นเรียนการอ่านเรื่องภาษาอังกฤษ และอาจช่วยเพิ่มแรงบันดาลใจของนักเรียนในการพัฒนาทักษะการอ่านเรื่องภาษาอังกฤษ และพัฒนาทัศนคติเชิงบวกมากขึ้นเมื่ออ่านข้อความภาษาอังกฤษ

คำสำคัญ ความคิดเห็นต่อการใช้กลวิธีการสอนแบบแลกเปลี่ยนบทบาท กลวิธีการสอนแบบแลกเปลี่ยนบทบาท การอ่านเรื่องภาษาอังกฤษ นักเรียนระดับชั้นมัธยมศึกษาตอนต้น

Introduction

In a knowledge-based society, reading plays an important role. It is a way to find out new information or learn new things when most resources are written in English. The Office of the Education Council (2017) emphasizes that reading has become an important skill for learning in the 21st century since it is a tool to encourage lifelong learning because it is regarded as one of the most important abilities for learners to access a huge quantity of information on a variety of subjects. As a result, reading skill improvement is seen as a primary objective of English instruction. The use of strategies for teaching reading comprehension by English teachers is infrequent (Wibisono et al., 2019; Wibowo et al., 2020). Wibisono et al. (2019) also claimed that in reading, students faced difficulties in identifying the main ideas of the texts, and the reading teaching was monotonous since the teachers seldom applied varying strategies in reading activities. Previous research has demonstrated that the level of English reading competence among Thai students is unsatisfactory since they face difficulty with English reading comprehension (Uraiman, 2012; Chomchaiya, 2014). Thai schools' pedagogical teaching was a significant factor. One claim is that many instructors taught children to read only by translating materials for them (Sawangsamutchai & Rattanavich, 2016). In addition, Tamrackitkun (2010) and Rawengwan and Yawiloeng (2020) mentioned that Thai students were bored and unmotivated because Thai English teachers still used teacher-centered methods in teaching English. They became passive learners to absorb information without engaging with the information received and sharing opinions with others in reading activities. Kongkerd (2013) emphasized that Thai English teachers often read aloud and asked students to follow sentence by sentence and then answer questions. Based on the researcher's teaching experience, students at the lower secondary level are unable to summarize and identify important information when reading in English because they may not be properly trained to improve their reading abilities. Consequently, Thai students were limited in reading and thinking independently. From this limitation, there needs reconsideration of how to apply appropriate strategies in English reading class.

Teachers need to think carefully and choose the most appropriate methods and techniques. According to Fahas (2021), it was claimed that choosing a good technique needs to be considered based on the students' abilities and their needs so that their interest can be increased. Some experts recommended certain teaching strategies to improve reading skills. One method is Reciprocal Teaching Strategy (RTS). Palincsar and Brown (1984), Cotterall (1990), and Allen (2003) suggest that RTS helps readers understand texts and they can observe their advancement. According to Meyer (2010), the use of RTS also promotes higher-order thinking skills by encouraging students to reflect on their cognitive processes while involved in reading activities. Interestingly, students' questioning and answering during reading can contribute to the enhancement of both reading comprehension and critical thinking skills. RTS encourages students to actively participate in collaborative discussions in which they can share their opinions and interpretations in groups. These interactions facilitate the development of reading abilities (Tolongtong & Adunyarittigun, 2020)

It uses a sociocultural strategy to model, explain and teach strategies in a sociable and supportive atmosphere. "Predicting", "questioning", "clarifying", and "summarizing" are the four processes of RTS to improve reading comprehension and critical thinking skills. To provide further explanation, "predicting" is using prior knowledge to discuss or predict what the text might be about. Readers can later check their guesses while reading. Next, "questioning" helps students identify the main ideas and important information by asking questions about the content in the text to check their understanding. Then, "clarifying" means students identify unclear or difficult parts of the reading text. Finally, "summarizing" indicates whether students understand the text by summarizing the main ideas and important information. According to Ghorbani et al. (2013), the teacher (for this study, also the researcher) takes on the primary responsibility of modeling the four strategies, which are predicting, questioning, clarifying, and summarizing in the early stages of using RTS. The teacher, or dialogue leader, teaches and models these strategies to improve students' comprehension skills. After modeling, students take turns leading group discussions and applying the strategies to other parts of the text. The teacher serves as a facilitator providing guidance and feedback. Students are trained to take on and share most of the tasks and thinking when the teacher fades from modeling. (Palinscar & Brown, 1984).

It is expected that reading comprehension and reading attitudes of students could be improved after using this strategy. This study aimed to experiment with the use of the Reciprocal Teaching Strategy in a reading class and to investigate the students' opinions towards reading in English after using RTS. This study could provide useful information for English teachers to improve students' reading comprehension and critical reading with the use of RTS. Also, it is expected that RTS can be used for students' self-learning to comprehend various reading passages and to encourage their lifelong learning.

Objective and Research Question

The purpose of the study was to examine Thai lower secondary level students' attitudes and opinions about the use of Reciprocal Teaching Strategy in reading class. The research question addressed was: What are the students' attitudes and opinions towards the use of RTS in reading class?

Research Methodology

This study aimed to investigate students' attitudes and opinions on the application of the Reciprocal Teaching Strategy in reading class. Participants, instruments, treatment, data collection, and data analysis are described in this section.

1. Participants

The researchers employed a non-probability sampling technique. The study included 40 Mattayomsuksa 2 students from a population of four hundred and seventy-two who were grouped into the same homogeneous class at a public school in Huaiyot district, Trang province. They were in an intact class with similar English ability levels.

2. Instruments

The research instruments used to collect data consisted of RTS teaching materials, opinion questionnaire, interviews, and teacher's logs.

2.1 RTS Teaching Materials

The reading materials were adapted from a coursebook that was mandated by the Ministry of Education to be used with students enrolled in Mattayomsuksa 2 at a public school located in Trang, Thailand. The researcher chose 12 different sections from the textbook and then modified or added to those sections with various activities and practice exercises to make them suitable for the aim of this study. Twelve lesson plans were created to use Reciprocal Teaching Strategy. The first two passages were used for RTS training and the others were used for RTS practice. The topics of the 12 reading passages include:

Reading A Life in 2100 (For the 1st RTS training)
Reading B Life-savers! (For the 2nd RTS training)
Reading 1-10 (For RTS practice)

Reading 1 What's your best friend like?
Reading 2 Email of the week
Reading 3 Penpal exchange
Reading 4 Animals at risk

Reading 5 African safari
Reading 6 Strange but true!
Reading 7 Robot World
Reading 8 Red Nose Day
Reading 9 The footprints in the snow
Reading 10 Three British heroes

Teaching materials and lesson plans were examined by the three experts who were experienced English language teachers to ensure content validity and they were revised as advised. The IOC was found to be 0.95.

2.2 Opinion Questionnaire

The opinion questionnaire was designed to obtain students' opinions about the use of Reciprocal Teaching Strategy in reading class. There were 20 questions in Part A that examined students' attitudes after the use of Reciprocal Teaching Strategy. It had five scale values: 5 (strongly agree), 4 (agree), 3 (moderately agree), 2 (disagree), and 1. (strongly disagree). Part B included 4 open-ended questions. The questionnaire was translated into Thai to prevent students' misinterpretation. To ensure the content validity of the questionnaire, the items were verified by three experts and revised as suggested. The IOC level was found to be 0.86. The revised questionnaire was piloted with 30 Mattayomsuksa 2 students who were not involved in the main study. This group shared a similar language level with students in the main study. The reliability of the opinions questionnaires was 0.85 (See Appendix).

2.3 Interview Questions

The objective of the interview was to interact with group members to obtain qualitative information regarding the students' perspectives towards English reading via RTS. The questions were like those in the opinion questionnaire but they were in the form of open-ended questions. To ensure the content validity of the interview questions, they were verified by three experts and then revised as advised (See Appendix).

2.4 Teacher's Logs

The teacher's logs were used to document the researcher's observations of how students apply the four stages of RTS: predicting, questioning, clarifying, and summarizing. It displayed how well the students performed during a reading class with RTS. It was also to discover if there were any problems while doing the reading activities. The structural form of the log was approved by the three experts (See Appendix).

3. The Treatment

This is quasi-experimental research. The treatment was conducted within a single academic term. Within each week, the class met for 90 minutes. It was divided into two phases.

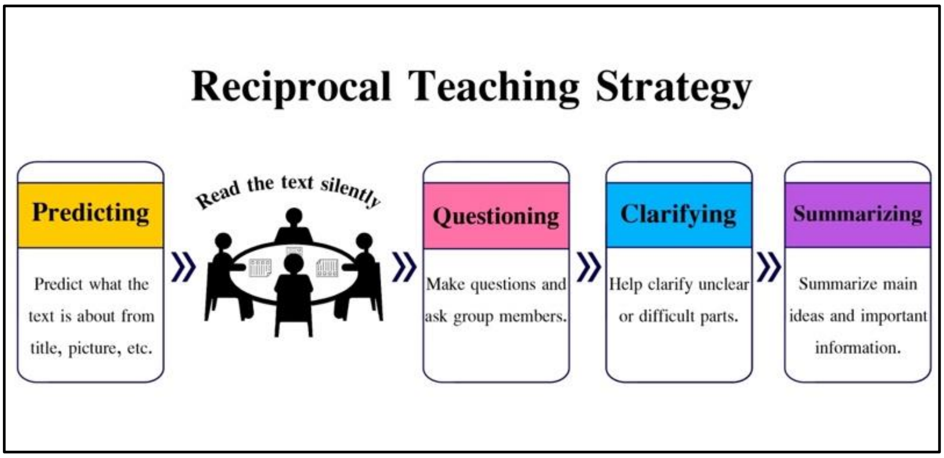
First, the participants were trained on how to use RTS for reading the first two passages during the first two weeks. The teacher modelled the use of each strategy in reading activities from predicting, questioning, clarifying, and summarizing. This was provided as a scaffolding stage to assist students and familiarize them with RTS use.

For the second phase, the participants were divided into 10 groups each consisting of 4 voluntary members. One member of each group acted as the leader of group discussions and led members to practice reading with the RTS process. Each week before class, the teacher asked 10 leaders from each group to get the reading text and helped them prepare as group leaders of the week. The following are the procedures for group work:

- Before reading the text, each leader asked the group members to anticipate the content of the text from the titles, pictures, or context. Then, everyone wrote down what they thought would happen.
- Everyone in each group, including the leaders, read the text in silence.
- Each leader made questions regarding the text, and group members contributed by providing answers and discussing their predictions. During the discussion, group members jotted down the responses.
- Each leader, along with the members of the group, contributed to the clarification of ambiguous or challenging sections within the reading text.
- Each leader asked group members to summarize the main ideas and important information.

The RTS procedure was repeated when each group was assigned to read the next text. Another member of the same group took a new role in leading the group discussion of the next text. Each member of a group took a role in leading the group discussion at least twice during the semester. The following figure shows the process of RTS in class.

Figure 1
The stages of Reciprocal Teaching Strategy (RTS)



During the reading process, Group members were allowed to communicate their ideas in both Thai and English. The teacher moved from group to group to monitor their discussion and to provide assistance if needed including observing and taking notes on the students' use of RTS.

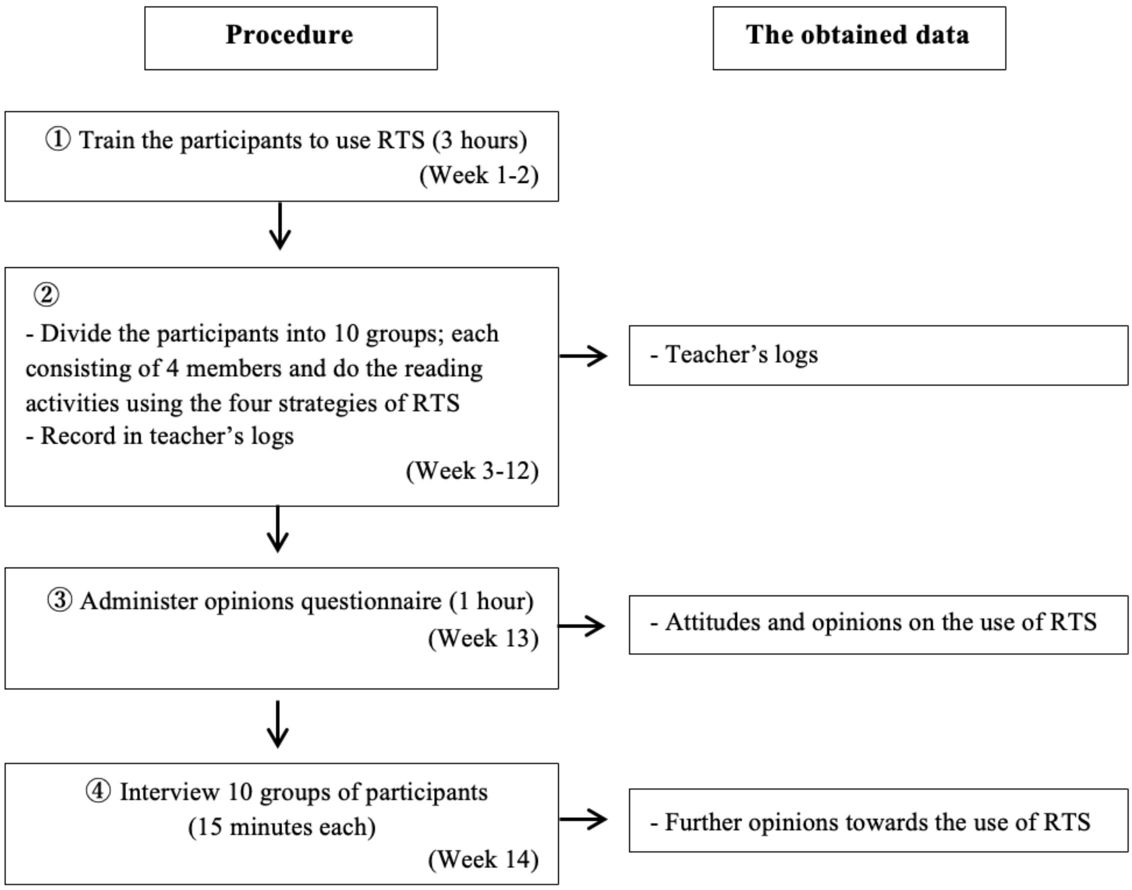
4. Data Collection

The data collection procedure can be described as follows.

During the treatment, observations on the use of the RTS stages were made and recorded in the teacher's logs weekly. At the end of the treatment, all participants were asked to complete the opinion questionnaire. One week later, the ten groups were asked to participate in the group interviews. A 15-minute interview was conducted with each group in Thai. The treatment and data collection process is summarized in Figure 2.

Figure 2

The Treatment and Data Collection Procedure



5. Data Analysis

Data from the opinion questionnaire were calculated with means and standard deviations.

Data from the open-ended questions, the interviews and teacher's logs were analyzed, interpreted, and summarized.

Findings and Discussion

1. Students' Opinions towards the Use of RTS in Reading Class

After using RTS, students were asked to respond to the opinion questionnaire and reflected their opinions in the interviews. The results are presented as follows.

Table 1

Students' Opinions towards the Use of RTS

Statements	Mean	S.D.
2. I could understand English passages better when I read with my friends.	4.45	.68
1. I enjoyed reading English passages when I read with friends.	4.35	.80
14. RTS helps me finish reading the text.	4.10	.70
4. "Predicting" helped me understand English passages.	4.08	.70
20. I think other teachers should use RTS in reading classes.	4.03	1.00
13. RTS made me become an active reader.	3.98	.80
19. I will continue using RTS when I read.	3.98	.80
3. "Predicting" activated my background knowledge before reading.	3.95	.70
12. Being a group member makes me happier than being a group leader.	3.95	1.00
15. RTS helps me understand the whole text.	3.95	.90
5. "Questioning" helped me check my own understanding of the English passages.	3.90	.70
16. RTS helps me remember more words.	3.90	.90
17. RTS helps me think more critically.	3.90	.80
7. "Clarifying" helped me comprehend the difficult parts of English passages.	3.88	.90
9. "Summarizing" helped me focus on the main idea and important information of the English passages.	3.83	.70
18. RTS encourages me to read more.	3.83	.80
8. "Clarifying" helped me understand the correct meaning of the difficult or unknown words, phrases, or sentences.	3.68	.80
6. "Questioning" helped me to develop critical thinking skills.	3.65	.80
11. Being a group leader helps build up my confidence.	3.45	1.00
10. I like being a group leader.	3.38	1.10
Total	**3.91**	**0.86**

* Levels of agreement:

4.21-5.00 = strongly agree 3.41-4.20 = agree 2.61-3.40 = moderately agree
1.81-2.60 = disagree 0.00-1.80 = strongly disagree

As seen in Table 1 reorganized by the top mean ranks of students' opinions, "I could understand English passages better when I read with my friends" (item 2) was the students' opinion that they agreed with the most while the least was "I like being a group leader" (item 10). Overall, the results indicate that students "agree" with the use of the Reciprocal Teaching Strategy in English reading ($\bar{x}$ = 3.91, SD = 0.86). Based on the results, it could be claimed that students had positive attitudes towards the use of RTS. Their opinions as shown in Table 1, triangulated with those from the interviews, the open-ended questions, and the teacher's logs, can be further drawn, classified, and discussed as follows.

2.Opinions towards Different Stages of RTS

The first stage is the "predicting" strategy. Students "agreed" that it activated their background knowledge before reading (Item 3: $\bar{x}$ = 3.95, SD = 0.70) and helped them understand English passages (Item 4: $\bar{x}$ = 4.08, SD = 0.70). From the group interviews, most students reported that they could use their background knowledge, titles, or pictures to predict the content of the passages. The predicting strategy encouraged them to easily guess what the reading texts were about. Some students mentioned that it was hard to guess about the reading text because of the lack of background knowledge. Also, it was observed that the predicting strategy was successful in engaging students in responding; that is, students actively attempted to guess the contents of the texts (Teacher's logs). The following statements from the open-ended questions and the interviews support these findings:

> I liked to predict the content of the texts with friends. We helped each other to look for what the text was about but I did not enjoy predicting alone because it was too hard for me to guess the content within a limited time, particularly during tests.
>
> (Student 17, personal communication, March 5, 2020)

> We could better understand the text when we tried to predict what the text was about from pictures or titles before starting a reading.
>
> Sometimes, we could not guess the content of the texts from the title since we did not know the meaning of the words, but pictures of the texts helped us to predict the content.
>
> (Group interviews, personal communication, March 12, 2020)

The second stage is the "questioning" strategy. This helped students check their own understanding of the English passages (Item 5: $\bar{x}$ = 3.90, SD = 0.70) and helped them to develop critical thinking skills (Item 6: $\bar{x}$ = 3.65, SD = 0.80). Combined with results from the interviews and the teacher's logs, it can be concluded that most students felt happy asking questions about the main ideas or important information of the reading texts. Some group leaders looked nervous while leading their groups to answer the questions (Teacher's logs). This stage made them understand the texts and improve their analytical thinking. However, some students found that it was not easy to cover all the important information of the reading texts. Students' quotes from the interviews and the open-ended questions are displayed as follows:

> I enjoyed sharing the ideas or points of views in asking and answering the questions from the reading texts.
>
> (Student 24, personal communication, March 5, 2020)

> I felt relaxed to answer the questions when the group leader asked the questions. On the other hand, when it was my turn, I struggled with creating various questions to ask my group members to check their understanding of the reading text.
>
> (Student 1, personal communication, March 5, 2020)

> The questioning strategy gave us a chance to analyse interesting issues in order to answer the questions correctly and also enhance our analytical thinking.
>
> (Group interviews, personal communication, March 12, 2020)

The third stage is the "clarifying" strategy, which helped them comprehend the difficult parts of English passages (Item 7: $\bar{x}$ = 3.88, SD = 0.90) and helped them understand the correct meaning of the difficult or unknown words, phrases, or sentences (Item 8: $\bar{x}$ = 3.68, SD = 0.80). It was observed that most students enjoyed clarifying the difficult parts (Teacher's logs). Students mentioned that the clarifying strategy worked well because they could understand the English texts clearly and could identify the main ideas of the English texts. Students' additional opinions from the interviews and the open-ended questions are as follows:

> I thought that the clarifying strategy was useful since it made me clear about confusing things from the reading texts such as the meanings of words.
>
> (Student 34, personal communication, March 5, 2020)

> I learned many new words from the reading texts when the group leader led to clarify the difficult parts of English texts.
>
> (Student 2, personal communication, March 5, 2020)

> We liked this stage because we can recheck our understanding whether it was correct.
>
> (Group interviews, personal communication, March 12, 2020)

The last stage is the "summarizing" strategy. Students "agreed" that it helped them focus on the main idea and important information of the English passages (Item 9: $\bar{x}$ = 3.83, SD = 0.70). Most students took the view that they comprehend more by summarizing the main points of the reading text (Group interviews). Also, the summarizing strategy guided them to realize that they did not have to understand every part of the reading texts. Consequently, it was found that some groups could not cover all the reading text content (Teacher's logs). The following quotes from the open-ended questions confirmed these findings.

> Summarizing the texts helped me understand the important information easily and quickly.
>
> (Student 16, personal communication, March 5, 2020)

> RTS helped me to feel more confident when I had to reach a conclusion for the English reading texts about what the main idea or important detail was.
>
> (Student 39, personal communication, March 5, 2020)

3. Opinions towards Group Working Guring RTS

It was found that students enjoyed reading English passages when they read with friends (Item 1: $\bar{x}$ = 4.35, SD = 0.80). Students could understand English passages better when they read with their friends (Item 2: $\bar{x}$ = 4.45, SD = 0.68). They also like being a group leader (Item 10: $\bar{x}$ = 3.38, SD = 1.10). Being a group leader helps build up their confidence (Item 11: $\bar{x}$ = 3.45, SD = 1.00). Being a group member makes them happier than being a group leader (Item 12: $\bar{x}$ = 3.95, SD = 1.00). Most students felt happy and satisfied reading various reading texts in groups. They looked relaxed reading texts with friends (Teacher's logs). They opined that reading with group members helps improve their reading ability (Group interviews). This made them understand the main points or important information of the reading texts. The quotes from the open-ended questions are shown below:

> I enjoyed reading the reading texts in the group.
>
> (Student 9, personal communication, March 5, 2020)

> I felt confident when reading texts with friends.
>
> (Student 4, personal communication, March 5, 2020)

> I liked working in my group because I can share information and opinions and we can help each other.
>
> (Student 35, personal communication, March 5, 2020)

4. How RTS Makes Better Readers

Based on the findings, RTS made students become active readers (Item 13: $\bar{x}$ = 3.98, SD = 0.80). RTS helped students understand the whole text (Item 15: $\bar{x}$ = 3.95, SD = 0.90) and finish reading the text (Item 14: $\bar{x}$ = 4.10, SD = 0.70). Moreover, RTS helped students think more critically (Item 17: $\bar{x}$ = 3.90, SD = 0.80) and helped students remember more words (Item 16: $\bar{x}$ = 3.90, SD = 0.90). Most students thought that RTS made them become better readers since they could understand some difficult parts of the texts or find the main ideas with the stages of RTS (Group interviews). Some students' opinions from the open-ended questions are presented below:

I could understand the texts and identify main ideas when I read them with the use of RTS.

(Student 28, personal communication, March 5, 2020)

RTS made me read the texts analytically.

(Student 13, personal communication, March 5, 2020)

RTS helped me know my own reading strategies. This made me understand the whole text or main ideas easily when I read the reading texts using appropriate strategies such as reading texts with friends.

(Student 31, personal communication, March 5, 2020)

5. How RTS Becomes Inspirational for Readers of the English Language

According to the findings, it can be concluded that RTS encouraged students to read more (Item 18: $\overline{x}$ = 3.83, SD = 0.80) and continued using RTS when reading in English (Item 19: $\overline{x}$ = 3.98, SD = 0.80). Most students thought other teachers should use RTS in reading classes (Item 20: $\overline{x}$ = 4.03, SD = 1.00). Most students mentioned that they still apply RTS in their English reading (Group interviews). Some excerpts from the open-ended questions are shown below:

I liked to read the texts with the use of RTS because I enjoy sharing ideas with group members.

(Student 38, personal communication, March 5, 2020)

I learned difficult new words after reading with RTS.

(Student 25, personal communication, March 5, 2020)

RTS helped me improve both analytical thinking and metacognitive awareness.

(Student 6, personal communication, March 5, 2020)

6. Problems and Challenges

Although most students responded positively towards RTS, some problems were found. Firstly, being a group leader became an issue during RTS. As seen in Table 1, being a group leader was perceived with the lowest score (Item 10: $\overline{x}$ = 3.38, SD = 1.10) because several students did not like being a group leader. It was found that some students felt uncomfortable to lead group members in reading the texts (Teacher's logs). While some students enjoyed being a group leader, more than half felt uncomfortable. According to the interviews and the open-ended questions, the following are quotes from the students:

I did not like to be a group leader. I was not confident in myself when group members stared at me while I was speaking.

(Student 12, personal communication, March 5, 2020)

I felt bad when my friends did not listen to what I tried to describe during the RTS process.

(Student 33, personal communication, March 5, 2020)

We felt pressured when we had to help group members understand the passages. We were afraid of making some mistakes especially with difficult passages.

(Group interviews, personal communication, March 12, 2020)

However, some enjoyed being leaders as shown in the following report:

Being a group leader gave me the courage to speak up or share the ideas confidently in front of my friends.

(Student 19, personal communication, March 5, 2020)

I was satisfied to be a group leader because it made me more active to prepare myself before starting reading activities.

(Student 6, personal communication, March 5, 2020)

However, it could be noticed that students who acted as group leaders were quite nervous while they were leading group members to read the passages only in the first three weeks, and they gradually became more confident later (Teacher's logs). Secondly, some students viewed that the four stages of RTS were quite complicated (Group interviews). The following are examples of students' views:

I did not want to memorize what to do in the reading process.

(Student 7, personal communication, March 5, 2020)

It took too much time to follow the procedures from predicting to summarizing. One text took 90 minutes. For me, I could read 2 - 3 reading texts within this time.

(Student 24, personal communication, March 5, 2020)

When considering the group interviews, some students stated it was boring to read easy texts with RTS because it wasted time. However, most students felt happy because RTS could help them comprehend difficult texts even if they spent more time reading.

Interestingly, some students suggested something that might be useful for teaching reading as follows:

Working with the same group to read ten reading texts using RTS was quite boring, so I would prefer to work with other groups when I read a new text.

(Group interviews, personal communication, March 12, 2020)

Games should be applied as an activity for "questioning" to ask and answer the questions from the reading texts for more challenging and joyful learning.

(Student 40, personal communication, March 5, 2020)

Discussions

Based on the findings, it can be inferred that students had positive opinions regarding RTS and perceived it as a helpful reading strategy. A similar result was found by Ramadan (2017) and Rawengwan and Yawiloeng (2020) that students hold positive attitudes towards reading comprehension using Reciprocal Teaching Strategies. They considered the four strategies useful in facilitating reading comprehension. As a result, they learned how to make guesses about the content of the reading texts using their prior knowledge or titles and pictures, to ask and answer questions, to clarify any confusing information or difficult words, and to summarize the main ideas of the texts or important information. The use of the four stages of RTS took place within the social context of the classroom, which consisted of two primary interactions: the first was between the teacher and the students, and the second was between the students themselves. Students were observed to cooperate and to actively contribute during group work. This is relevant to Soranastaporn and Ratanakul's findings (2000) who claimed that students had opportunities to share their ideas with others and develop their reading comprehension. Many enjoyed being a group leader and building self-confidence by helping their peers. This finding corresponds with the previous study showing that more capable students provided less capable students with guidance and support (Adunyaritigun, 1999). Finally, students in this study mentioned that they would apply RTS in the future when reading English texts. This result shows that RTS can be an essential reading tool for fostering autonomous readers to encourage their lifelong learning. This implication is consistent with Palincsar's (2013) findings who claimed that RTS helped motivate students to apply relevant strategies to be successful readers.

Conclusion

Students have positive opinions towards the use of RTS at all stages: predicting, questioning, clarifying, and summarizing. The findings show that most students enjoyed reading texts in English through RTS, especially reading texts in groups because they could share knowledge or opinions from those reading activities. It is useful for them to listen to various points of view from their group members. Moreover, "questioning" is a meaningful stage of RTS to motivate them to dig into the texts so that they improve their analytical thinking. As a result, RTS should be an effective strategy for English teachers to apply in reading class as it can be viewed as a supportive learning tool which can produce autonomous readers carrying on their lifelong learning.

Implications from the Study

This study implies that the use of four strategies in the RTS should be explicitly taught in English reading classes. Students should be given enough time to practice each strategy, apply the RTS in reading tasks, and take the role of discussion leader. The teacher gradually minimizes support when students apply RTS in English reading by themselves. Among the 4 strategies, there should be an emphasis on questioning, as different kinds of questions indicate various levels of critical thinking. Training students to formulate questions of different cognitive levels is essential for the development of comprehension and critical thinking. To add pleasure and interest to the questioning strategy, games or competitions are recommended.

Recommendations for Future Studies

1. The study found that students took turns as leaders for group discussions, resulting in different reactions and perceptions. Further research should explore how role differences impact learning and acquisition.

2. The study also found that students worked in the same group for the entire semester, which may constrain their learning experience. Further research should consider group members' rotation to improve the learning experience.

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APPENDICES

Opinion Questionnaire
"Opinions toward Reciprocal Teaching Strategy (RTS)"
Part A: Tick in the box where it is appropriate with you.

Levels of agreement: 5 = strongly agree 4 = agree 3 = moderately agree
2 = disagree 1 = strongly disagree

Items	**Levels of agreement**				
	5	**4**	**3**	**2**	**1**
1. I enjoyed reading English passages when I read with friends.					
2. I could understand English passages better when I read with my friends.					
3. "Predicting" activated my background knowledge before reading.					
4. "Predicting" helped me understand English passages.					
5. "Questioning" helped me check my own understanding of the English passages.					
6. "Questioning" helped me have the critical thinking skills.					
7. "Clarifying" helped me comprehend the difficult parts of English passages.					
8. "Clarifying" helped me get the correct meaning of the difficult or unknown words, phrases, or sentences.					
9. "Summarizing" helped me focus on the main idea and important information of the English passages.					
10. I like being a group leader.					
11. Being a group leader helps build up my confidence.					
12. Being a group member makes me happier than being a group leader.					
13. The RTS made me become an active reader.					
14. RTS helps me finish the text.					

Items	Levels of agreement				
	5	**4**	**3**	**2**	**1**
15. RTS helps me understand the whole text.					
16. RTS helps me remember more vocabulary.					
17. RTS helps me think more critically.					
18. RTS encourages me to read more.					
19. I will continue using RTS when I read.					
20. I think other teachers should use the RTS in reading classes.					

Part B: Respond to the following questions in writing.

1. What are your general opinions/impressions about this practice method?
....

2. What do you like about this practice?
....

3. What do you dislike about this practice?
....

4. What suggestions would you like to make?
....

Interviews Questions

Group .....

1. Do you think that RTS is helpful to you in reading texts in English? How?
2. Do you like or dislike it? Why? Why not?
3. What do you think of each stage of RTS practice? How does each stage help you comprehend the text in English or develop your critical thinking ability?
4. Do you think other teachers should use the RTS in reading classes? Why? Why not?
5. How much are you satisfied with your role as the leader? Why?
6. How much are you satisfied with your role as a group member? Why?
7. What did you find as the problems or difficulties in using this method of reading practice?
8. What did you enjoy the most?
9. What did you enjoy the least?
10. In what way do you think you have improved yourself? (Reading ability, Thinking ability, Leadership skills, Communication, Cooperative learning, etc)

Teacher's logs

Date: …………………… **Time:** ………………….…

Title of the reading text: …………………………………………….…………………….………………..

Group …………………………………………..……………..………………………………

Predicting:

……………………………………………………………………………………………………

Questioning:

……………………………………………………………………………………………………

Clarifying:

……………………………………………………………………………………………………

Summarizing:

……………………………………………………………………………………………………

Remarks:

……………………………………………………………………………………………………

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Situation and Professional Development Needs of Foreign Teachers in Thailand

สถานการณ์และความต้องการในการพัฒนาวิชาชีพของอาจารย์ชาวต่างประเทศในประเทศไทย

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Abstract

The objectives of this research are to 1) investigate the situation of foreign teachers in Thai educational settings; 2) survey their needs for professional development; and 3) propose solutions to overcome the obstacles they faced based on the collected data. The subjects of this study were 13 foreign teachers in a demonstration school in the central region of Thailand. The research tool utilized for the purpose of this study was a semi-structured interview where foreign teachers were asked to reflect on their teaching performance and investigate their needs for professional development. The demographic information, answers from the checklist and the survey were presented in a descriptive analysis. A content analysis was applied to identify and interpret the data gained from the interview, with conclusions drawn from a directed content analysis of the situation and needs of professional development. The findings revealed that their performance in the classroom was effective despite administrative policies of the school, language barriers and the issue of cultural differences posing major challenges to them. The areas that should be included in the professional development program are those that had impacts on their performance in the classroom such as instructional design, classroom management, and contents in the main subject. In order to make the professional development program effective and engaging for the foreign teachers, their opinions should be considered. They should be able to propose the topic or the activities related to their professional development that would correlate to their needs and interests.

Keywords: Foreign teachers, professional development needs, English language instruction

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บทคัดย่อ

การวิจัยเรื่องสถานการณ์และความต้องการในการพัฒนาวิชาชีพของอาจารย์ชาวต่างประเทศในประเทศไทย มีวัตถุประสงค์เพื่อ 1) สำรวจสถานการณ์ของอาจารย์ชาวต่างประเทศในบริบทการศึกษาไทย 2) สำรวจความต้องการในการพัฒนาวิชาชีพ และ 3) เสนอแนวทางรับมือกับปัญหาที่อาจารย์ชาวต่างประเทศเผชิญโดยอิงจากข้อมูลที่ได้รับ กลุ่มตัวอย่างคืออาจารย์ชาวต่างประเทศ 13 ท่านที่เป็นบุคลากรในโรงเรียนสาธิตแห่งหนึ่งในภาคกลางของประเทศไทย เครื่องมือที่ใช้ในการเก็บข้อมูลคือแบบสัมภาษณ์แบบกึ่งโครงสร้าง ข้อมูลพื้นฐานของกลุ่มตัวอย่าง คำตอบจากแบบประเมินการเข้าร่วมกิจกรรมเพื่อการพัฒนาวิชาชีพ และแบบสำรวจความต้องการนำเสนอด้วยการวิเคราะห์เชิงพรรณนา ข้อมูลจากการสัมภาษณ์ใช้วิธีการวิเคราะห์เนื้อหา หลังจากนั้นจึงสร้างข้อสรุปเกี่ยวกับสถานการณ์ และความต้องการในการพัฒนาวิชาชีพด้วยการวิเคราะห์เนื้อหา ผลการวิจัยแสดงว่าอาจารย์ชาวต่างประเทศสามารถปฏิบัติหน้าที่ในห้องเรียนได้อย่างมีประสิทธิผล แม้จะเผชิญกับปัญหาในด้านนโยบายการบริหารจากโรงเรียน ปัญหาหลักเกิดจากอุปสรรคทางภาษา และความแตกต่างทางวัฒนธรรม อาจารย์ผู้สอนชาวต่างประเทศต้องการพัฒนาวิชาชีพในด้านที่ส่งผลต่อการปฏิบัติหน้าที่ในชั้นเรียน เช่น การออกแบบการสอน การบริหารจัดการชั้นเรียนและเนื้อหาที่เกี่ยวข้องกับรายวิชาที่สอน การเปิดโอกาสให้สามารถแสดงความคิดเห็น นำเสนอหัวข้อหรือกิจกรรมการพัฒนาวิชาชีพที่ตอบสนองความต้องการและความสนใจรายบุคคลส่งผลต่อประสิทธิผลและการเข้าร่วมการพัฒนาวิชาชีพของอาจารย์ชาวต่างประเทศ

คำสำคัญ: อาจารย์ชาวต่างประเทศ ความต้องการในการพัฒนาวิชาชีพ การสอนภาษาอังกฤษ

Introduction

Thailand’s Ministry of Education (MOE) has recognized the importance of foreign languages as an important tool for communication, education, and access to the world. English is prescribed as one of several compulsory subjects for students in primary and secondary programs, with teachers positioned as a crucial factor in students’ learning. There have been many implementations to highlight the importance of the English language, resultant of its view as the language of development and globalization (Baker & Jarunthawatchai, 2017). Among them is the introduction of bilingual education to many schools in Thailand. Since 1999, bilingual education has been implemented as an additional measure for achieving Thailand’s lifelong education and development goals of being considered a qualified and competitive human resource (Laksanasut, 2020). The bilingual English education system is classified into the Mini English Program (MEP), in which at least two subjects are taught in English, as well as the English Program (EP) in which at least four subjects use English as the medium of instruction. Bilingual Education programs require foreign teachers to lead teaching and learning activities in the classroom. The qualifications include being a native English speaker, possessing at least a bachelor’s degree and completing Teaching English as Foreign Language (TEFL) certification. Alternatively, non-native English speakers have been increasingly recruited by many schools in order to improve the quality of English teaching and learning so as to prepare Thailand to compete in ASEAN and global communities (Ministry of Education [MOE], 2014).

A high demand for foreign teachers in Thailand was expected as the MOE was poised to recruit 10,000 foreigners for the 2020 academic year. There were more than 5,000 schools prepared to welcome foreign teachers who would teach students and assist in developing the skills of local teachers. They were expected to enhance the students' English skills by building confidence and familiarizing them with foreigners. In addition, the local teachers were also expected to learn from their colleagues (MOE360, 2020).

Additionally, there have been a number of different measurements imposed in order to develop and improve learning standards and school curricula. The Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) has been adopted as a guideline for the instruction of English in Thailand with a focus on Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) (MOE, 2014). In terms of the administrative policies, the MOE has established facilitating factors for learning management which schools must consider and act upon as follows: administrative policy and structure; staff's professional development; budget and resources; and collaborative administration (MOE, 2009). This means that teachers must be able to apply the established learning standards, competencies, and desired characteristics in their teaching activities in the classroom to achieve the goals as is required in the national curriculum. In order to complete this task, the teachers must possess both knowledge of the subject matters and the theories of language learning and teaching.

In addition to the above guidelines, the Office of the Basic Education Commission (OBEC), together with Thailand TESOL, Regional English Language Office (RELO) and other such organizations, play a major role in the professional development of teachers. In order to improve the capabilities of teachers, OBEC has provided scholarships for teachers to pursue master's degrees; workshops; knowledge sharing activities as well as online training seminars for both school administrators and teachers. However, the effectiveness of these programs, especially when considering their purpose is to allow for genuine teacher development, remains rather unclear. More important to note is that foreign teachers at schools are also typically excluded from any requirements to attend such programs, often related to an inability to overcome language and cultural differences or even due to differences in management and communication styles as offered by schools. Ultimately this leads to the diminishing prospects of foreign teachers in wanting, or even having the opportunity to, develop professionally.

These obstacles, particularly as they relate to foreign teachers' ability to attend professional development programs, are considered one of the driving factors behind why foreign staff and their levels of qualification sometimes pose a problem, and are scrutinized as such. The challenges that arise from the differences in school management styles, as well as the aforementioned cultural differences, only act as confounding factors that are further contributing to these issues. Noted by Bishop et al. (2016), the factors affecting teaching and performance of foreign teachers include a lack of knowledge, general skill set, and characteristics of professional teachers in Thai culture. Moreover, they do not possess adequate teaching skills or techniques. Foreign teachers cannot design learning activities, create lesson plans, or implement assessments in the classroom appropriately (Pongsuthirak, 2015). In addition, a lack of motivation due to uncertain working status and low salary is also a problem faced by foreign teachers (Chuchuen et al., 2017). Santimit and Maput (2010) observed that foreign teachers often changed their workplaces. In some cases, foreign teachers would resign without any advanced notice, resulting in inconsistency of teaching and learning in the classroom. A lack of mutual understanding of performance expectations is another obstacle for foreign teachers, as presented by Chitnelawong (2009). Foreign teachers often do not realize that there are many other duties that schools expect them to perform, in addition to teaching, such as being on duty at the school during weekend hours and organizing extra activities which might be after standard office hours, including Saturdays and Sundays. Lastly, Chaiyasaeng and Sudrung (2019) also mentioned adaptation to cultural differences, or lack thereof, as another problem experienced by foreign teachers in Thai schools. Similarly, unfamiliarity with local language and culture was also identified by Chuchuen et al. (2017).

The studies mentioned reveal many challenges faced by foreign teachers in Thailand. Nevertheless, the researchers only discussed the circumstances that foreign teachers find themselves in at schools without further providing actual solutions or guidelines for addressing the issues raised, which shall be the focus of the current study. Hence this research aims to investigate the general circumstances and professional development needs of foreign teachers in order to propose recommendations for potential professional development programs to address foreign teachers' needs.

Literature Review

1. Situation of Foreign Teachers in Thailand

With the rise of bilingual programs and an increase in the overall necessity of language education streams to improve English language proficiency of Thai students, the demand for English-speaking foreigners to teach in Thailand has increased (Ulla, 2019). Nevertheless, it should be noted that English language education in Thailand has been influenced by Anglo-centric models and the perception of "English as the language of development and globalization" Consequently, English has been considered an important tool for communication, thus granted "foreign" but of high status in Thailand (Baker & Jarunthawatchai, 2017).

At the same time; however, to avoid conflict with the hegemony of the Thai language's official status within language policy, English and other languages have been considered as the language of the "other" or "outsider" in Thailand (Baker & Jarunthawatchai, 2017). In response to this concept, foreign teachers are referred to as English-speaking foreigners regardless of their nationalities.

When recruiting a foreign teacher, the requirements need to be clearly stated in order to meet the demands of the school. Each school determines its own requirements based on the position that needs to be filled. For example, the schools administered by OBEC in Bangkok, have to meet a minimum set of standards defined by OBEC. These minimum requirements of foreign teachers are built on in 4 areas including curriculum, teaching, measurement and assessment, and extracurricular activities (Chaiyasaeng & Sudrung, 2019). Similarly, the scope of responsibilities of the demonstration school under this study encompasses 4 areas of duty: 1) curriculum; including analyzing the curriculum to the design of learning activities and materials; 2) instruction involving creating lesson plans and delivering the lessons; 3) evaluation of the instruction and assessment of the students' performance; and 4) performing other duties as assigned such as gate duty, homeroom teacher responsibilities, parent meetings, and attendance and participation in sports days and other such school activities.

All foreign teachers are required to perform the same duties at the school. Nevertheless, each foreign teacher has a different cultural background and teaching practice. To understand and adapt to these differences is particularly important to work effectively in an environment of cultural differences. That is to say that for foreign teachers from different countries to work with Thai teachers in a Thai school, there are many issues they have to confront, specifically cultural differences (Jongjit, 2018).

2. Intercultural Competence in Professional Contexts

Intercultural competence is defined by Spitzberg and Chagnon (2011) as "the appropriate and effective management of interaction between people who, to some degree or another, represent different or divergent cognitive, affective and behavioral orientations to the world" (p.7). Deardorff (2006) proposes that "intercultural competence" involves three elements including one's intercultural knowledge, skills to interpret, relate, discover and/or interact with others, and attitudes such as valuing others. To learn about and explore cultural similarities and differences, intercultural competencies need to be at the forefront of those who wish to develop, encompassing the ideas of mutual respect, curiosity, self-awareness and that of others, reflection, sharing and listening for understanding (Deardorff, 2020). In general, intercultural competence is the combination of personal abilities such as flexibility, empathy, open-mindedness, self-awareness, adaptability, language skills and cultural knowledge as well as relevant contextual variables including shared goals, incentives, perceptions of equality and perceptions of agency (Arasaratnam, 2016).

In schools where there are teachers from different countries working together, there is a need to understand the differences each culture possesses, as people are reflective of their own cultural identity. A more comfortable workplace might result from greater awareness of other cultures. (Jongjit, 2018).

3. Professional Development for Language Teachers

Teacher development serves as a long-term goal and intends to support professional growth and understanding of teaching for teachers, unlike teacher training which focuses on a teacher's immediate responsibilities and short-term goals (Richards & Farrell, 2005). Teacher development is a bottom-up approach in the sense that it involves the teacher's reflection on their teaching practices, beliefs, values, and principles.

Colbert (2008) also proposes that when teachers are empowered to create their own professional development plan, their passion for teaching increases and their students' learning improves. Therefore, authentic professional development activities can develop both teachers and student learning.

Professional development can be self-reflective, dialogues with colleagues and collaborative projects with other teachers. Nevertheless, there are many skills and a vast array of knowledge that cannot be learned from critical reflection such as subject-matter knowledge, understanding of the curriculum and teaching pedagogies. Therefore, professional development should engage the teachers to explore new trends and approaches in language teaching (Richards & Farrell, 2005).

4. Factors Affecting Foreign Teachers' Performance at Schools

In Thailand, the teachers were aware of the needs to continue professional development, as well as the availability of professional development programs. The teachers showed high interest and considered their development as substantially valuable in contributing to their success in the profession, especially development related to English proficiency, the use of pedagogical strategies for teaching as well as assessing productive skills (Noom-ura, 2013). As a consideration, schools should allow and encourage English language teachers to attend professional conferences or workshops once a semester, while government organizations should provide staff development meetings and workshops in order to make recommendations for instructional materials and training opportunities for teachers. In addition, the teachers should accumulate instructional materials and take advantages of online resources (Dhanasobhon, 2007). Ulla and Winitkun (2018) conducted a study and identified primary teachers' beliefs, needs and challenges faced in the teacher training program in Thailand with the implication that educational organizations and the Ministry of Education itself should highlight the importance of professional development as a significant contributor towards the success of students. The findings suggested that previous training experiences had impacts on their beliefs. The training programs must be engaging, simple and provide relevant teaching strategies to the teachers. Lack of teaching resources, problems regarding implementation of the new teaching strategies and large class sizes were some of the obstacles experienced by teachers. In addition, Klinkerd (2016) investigated the professional development needs of primary school English teachers and found that a focus on developing English listening and speaking skills was necessary for most teachers. In addition, teachers tended to opt for professional development courses that primarily allowed for self-study through the use of information technology or the internet as a main resource. It was also voiced that a majority of the training programs lacked ongoing feedback or follow-up actions, and that overall workloads were a major constraint impeding professional development.

The previous studies demonstrated that English teachers required professional development that addressed their needs with respect to their pedagogical approaches (Noom-ura, 2013; Ulla & Winitkun, 2018), English proficiency (Klinkerd, 2016) and ICT (Dhanasobhon, 2007; Klinkerd, 2016). However, the results of these studies were only reflective of Thai teaching staff and their English teaching methods, not that of foreign staff. This suggests that a knowledge gap exists within academic circles regarding the professional development of foreign teachers teaching in Thai schools, as up until this point the research has focused on native Thai teachers only. Moving forward, research that incorporates foreign teachers, who are considered an important factor in successful English language instruction in Thailand, is necessary to bridge this gap.

Objectives

The research aims to investigate the scenario of foreign teachers in a Thai educational context with the following objectives:

1. To investigate the situation of foreign teachers in a Thai educational setting.
2. To survey the needs for professional development of foreign teachers.
3. To map out the possible solutions to overcome teaching challenges the foreign teachers are facing based on the collected data.

Research Methodology

1. Research Procedures

The study can be divided into three stages as follows:

1.1 The preparation stage aims to analyze, design and develop the research tool. The regulations concerning teaching professions set by the Ministry of Education were studied in order to clarify the requirements of the teaching profession. Interviews with three trainers and facilitators who have experience in providing professional development training to foreign teachers were conducted. Their insight, comments and recommendations were used to design and develop the semi-structured interview for the foreign teachers with an integration of the OECD Teaching and Learning International Survey (OECD, 2018), which is an international survey for teachers and principals to provide information about professional development, teaching beliefs and practices.

1.2 The implementation stage is when the semi-structured interviews were conducted with the foreign teachers. The data from the interviews were analyzed in the pursuit of meeting the objectives of the research.

1.3 The final stage presented the conclusion from the collected data. The discussion and suggestions for future research were put forth.

2. Subjects of the Study

The population of this study includes the foreign teachers at a demonstration school in the central region of Thailand that has been providing a bilingual education program for 10 years. All foreign teachers are directly recruited by the school to allow for performance appraisal. There were 18 foreign teachers during the 2020-2022 academic year. The subjects of this study were 13 foreign teachers due to their consent according to the guidelines and requirements of the research ethics. Despite the limited number of foreign teachers, the subjects of the study were representative of a vast number of different cultural backgrounds, teaching many different subjects and having diverse teaching experiences in Thailand.

3. Research Instrument

A semi-structured interview form was applied as the main instrument to collect data for later analysis. There were three parts of the questions prepared for the interview as follows:

Part 1 requested personal information about the teacher, the teacher's qualifications, teaching experience and workload.

Part 2 concerned teacher's reflection on teaching approaches, materials, learning environment, assessment, workload, stress, coping strategies, curriculum, ethics and professionalism, problems faced in the classroom, school and as a teacher, as well as solutions to the problems based on the teacher's perception.

Part 3 investigated teachers' needs for professional development and their general attitude towards it. A checklist served as a guideline of the areas available for professional development of which the foreign teachers were able to choose from. In addition, the teachers were asked to provide any suggestions or comments regarding English instruction and professional development.

After constructing the semi-structured interview form, three reviewers were invited to check face validity (Lyman, 1963) of the questions. This process aimed to ensure its accuracy, appropriateness, and quality of the interview and to make sure that the questions covered all issues and information essential for the analysis. The questions in the semi-structured interview were revised according to the comments and feedback before resending it to the reviewers for final approval.

4. Data Collection

The following procedures were implemented. First, the researcher contacted the participants via e-mail requesting them to sit for an interview. The objectives of the interview and the research were provided. The participants could choose whether to have face-to-face or online interviews based on their preference and convenience. Before the interview, the researcher informed each participant of the objectives, confidentiality, anonymity, protection of data and the right to withdraw from the interview. The participant was then asked to sign the consent form. Finally, the researcher conducted the interview with individual participants.

5. Data Analysis

The demographic information, answers from the checklist and the questionnaire were presented in a descriptive analysis to present and summarize data in a clear manner, reflected as a percentage. Content analysis was applied to identify and interpret data gained from the interview to gain understanding of the situation and the needs of professional development among the foreign teachers in Thailand. The responses from the interviews were combined before identifying patterns or themes into categories through a directed approach. Conclusions were drawn from induction analysis of the situation, attitudes and needs of professional development in pursuit of meeting the research objectives.

Findings and Discussion

This study investigates the circumstances and professional development needs of foreign teachers within Thai schools. The results can be presented in three parts as follows: 1. Information about the participants; 2. Situation of foreign teachers in a Thai educational setting; 3. Needs for professional development of foreign teachers.

1. Information about the Participants

The demographic information revealed that most of the foreign teachers were native English speakers (76.92%). Only three of them (23.08%) were non-native English speakers. The majority of the foreign teachers at school were middle-aged, between 30-39 years old (61.54%). The more senior group comprised 4 teachers: two of whom were between the 40-49 age bracket (15.38%) and another two of whom were beyond 60 years old (15.38%). There was only one teacher who was new to the teaching profession, falling within the 25-29 age bracket (7.70%).

With respect to qualifications, teachers held a bachelor’s degree (76.92%), master’s degree (15.38%) and doctoral degree (7.70%). Their majors ranged from business administration, English language, anthropology, general science, broadcast media production, third world development, a dual degree program in medical science and international studies and information science. Lastly, their teaching experiences in Thailand ranged from 1 year to more than 20 years.

2. Situation of Foreign Teachers in Thai Educational Settings

2.1 Teaching Practices

According to the data from the interviews, the foreign teachers reflected on their teaching practices as effective.

> My new approach of starting (the lesson in an) easy (way to understand) has proven to be much more effective as I can build upon the foundations I've laid, and teacher instructions being understood often follow the same pattern of application.
>
> (Teacher H, personal communication, April 25, 2022)

The foreign teachers knew how to select and adapt their teaching approaches to address the students' abilities. One of the teachers commented:

> The reason for this is in activity-based classes, having students move away from a 'listen, learn, copy' approach tends to strengthen their vocabulary & grammar retention beyond a classroom environment.
>
> (Teacher B, personal communication, April 30, 2022)

The research findings revealed that the area in which foreign teachers reflected upon as being already effective was their teaching approach. They applied a variety of teaching practices and used those they deemed most appropriate for their students. This finding is in contrast with the previous study by Bishop et al. (2016) who identified a lack of knowledge, skills and techniques among foreign teaching staff, with a lack of the aforementioned seen as having a negative impact on the teaching profession.

2.2 Problems Faced by the Foreign Teachers

There were a number of issues that foreign teachers deemed problematic with respect to the school's administrative policies, communication style and cultural differences.

2.2.1 Challenges of the School's Administrative Policies

First, the issues related to the administrative policies included scheduling, lack of communication channels and sharing information, as well as overall workload.

> The challenges I've faced in class can be looked at a number of ways. One such way, administration decisions in regard to scheduling issues. Certain school activities will conflict with class-time which have caused classes to fall behind and if I stick to the original syllabus, not complete the set work.
>
> (Teacher H, personal communication, April 25, 2022)

The foreign teacher's comment suggested the school's administration as one of the factors affecting their performance. The administration's decisions forced the teacher to steer away from what had been planned. This is reflective of Chitnelawong's study (2009) that identified a lack of mutual understanding of performance expectations as a challenge faced by foreign teachers.

> Our workload includes so many different classes to prepare, and this is a significant challenge of mine. Workloads also change regularly and during my 6 years at the school I have had to teach nearly 50 different classes.
>
> (Teacher D, personal communication, April 25, 2022)

The statements revealed constant changes to the subjects that the foreign teacher was assigned to teach. Teaching requires preparation and a workload featuring many different subjects demands extra efforts for planning the lessons, teaching, marking assignments, and evaluating the students' performance.

2.2.2 Language Barriers

Communication problems as they relate to difficulties in language comprehension and general understanding are a common theme represented throughout previous research on this topic (Chaiyasaeng & Sudrung, 2019; Chuchuen et al., 2017), with the current situation also reflective of this notion.

> Challenges I have faced in school include communication difficulties with my co-teacher regarding the curriculum.
>
> (Teacher F, personal communication, May 12, 2022)

Working together might be challenging due to communication issues caused by language barriers between foreign and Thai teachers.

2.2.3 Cultural Differences

Moreover, cultural differences have the potential to negatively affect the foreign teachers' performance. This could be caused by different perceptions of matters in everyday life such as timeliness.

> In my opinion, the problems faced in the job stem from people not adapting to the cultural differences associated with time, working hours and punctuality. If you accept these differences, then the only downside is listening to people complain.
>
> (Teacher G, personal communication, June 10, 2022)

Different cultures have differing concepts of time and work ethic. Without respect, curiosity, awareness of self and that of others, reflection, sharing and listening for understanding (Deardorff, 2020), the collaboration of foreign and Thai teachers can be challenging. Interestingly, these findings correspond with those found by Chaiyasaeng and Sudrung (2019) and Bishop et al. (2016).

> Being a foreigner in Thailand has its own difficulties: Language barriers, culture differences, the distance and cost to return home (especially in times of emergency). Balancing home and work life is something that I have always struggled with.
>
> (Teacher F, personal communication, May 12, 2022)

People are representative of their own cultural identity. When there are teachers from different cultures working closely together, there is a need to develop intercultural competencies which encompasses a range of knowledge, skills and attitudes to effectively and appropriately interact or behave towards others (Arasaratnam, 2016; Deardorff, 2006; Spitzberg & Chagnon, 2011).

Consequently, the foreign teachers perceived that they were treated as an outsider even though they desired to be part of the school community, where they had the potential to develop and grow as a teacher.

> …I want to be treated more like an asset to develop in the school. The school's attitude of 'we will just find another teacher' is very dangerous to the reputation and standards of the school. Recruitment is not as easy as the school believes, therefore much more should be done to develop and keep teachers currently doing well at the school.
>
> (Teacher C, personal communication, May 5, 2022)

In conclusion, the above self-reflections revealed that the foreign teachers had extensive knowledge of teaching approaches. Nevertheless, policies of the school, as well as communication and cultural differences posed major challenges to them.

3. Needs for Professional Development of Foreign Teachers

Table 1

Areas of Professional Development Needs

Professional Development Areas	Strongly in need	In need	Moderately in need	Low level of need	Not need at all
1. Content in main subject	5 (38.46%)	8 (61.54%)	0 (00.00%)	0 (00.00%)	0 (0.00%)
2. Curriculum, learning standards, indicators	6 (46.15%)	5 (38.46%)	2 (15.38%)	0 (00.00%)	0 (0.00%)
3. Student assessment	5 (38.46%)	5 (38.46%)	3 (23.08%)	0 (00.00%)	0 (0.00%)
4. Classroom management	8 (61.54%)	3 (23.08%)	2 (15.38%)	0 (00.00%)	0 (0.00%)
5. Instructional design	9 (69.23%)	4 (30.77%)	0 (00.00%)	0 (00.00%)	0 (0.00%)

Professional Development Areas	Strongly in need	In need	Moderately in need	Low level of need	Not need at all
6. ICT skills for teaching	4 (30.77%)	5 (38.46%)	1 (7.69%)	2 (15.38%)	1 (7.69%)
7. Teaching students with special learning needs	4 (30.77%)	5 (38.46%)	4 (30.77%)	0 (00.00%)	0 (0.00%)
8. Teacher's ethics and professionalism	6 (46.16%)	5 (38.46%)	2 (15.38%)	0 (00.00%)	0 (0.00%)
9. Handling with student discipline and behavior problems	5 (38.46%)	6 (46.16%)	2 (15.38%)	0 (00.00%)	0 (0.00%)
10. Action research	0 (00.00%)	2 (15.38%)	3 (23.08%)	5 (38.46%)	3 (23.08%)

The areas of professional development that the foreign teachers had the strongest need to attend were those related to instructional design including teaching materials, worksheets, handouts, lesson plans and learning activities (M = 4.69, S.D. = 0.48) classroom management (M = 4.46, S.D. = 0.7), and content in the main subject (M = 4.38, S.D. = 0.51) respectively. The teachers expressed that instructional design was an important area for professional development because it provided the teacher with tools to design appropriate materials that were applicable to the classroom practice as revealed in the interview excerpt below:

> I can create materials, but when implanted in class I find them to need improvement perhaps that is normal for the first use, or too difficult for the students.
>
> (Teacher F, personal communication, May 12, 2022)

Curriculum, learning standards, indicators (M = 4.31, S.D. = 0.75) and teacher's ethics and professionalism (M = 4.31, S.D. = 0.75) were found to be in a high level of need, followed by handling with student discipline and behavior problems (M = 4.23, S.D. = 0.63) and student assessment practices (M = 4.15, S.D. = 0.80). The foreign teachers commented that knowledge of the curriculum, learning standards and indicators was important because teachers needed to keep up to date with current standards and practices. This is in alignment with the proposal by Richards and Farrell (2005) that professional development should provide the teachers the opportunity to explore new trends and approaches in language teaching. In addition, knowledge of teacher's ethics and professionalism was indispensable as reflected from the comment below.

> As a foreigner living in amongst a foreign culture to my own. I think there will always be a need for learning opportunities to understand culturally-appropriate expectations of professionalism, but not necessarily specifically as a professional development need.
>
> (Teacher B, personal communication, April 30, 2022)

The topics that the foreign teachers perceived as low in need were teaching students with special learning needs (M = 4.00, S.D. = 0.82) and ICE skills for teaching (M = 3.69, S.D. = 1.31). The area that was the least in need by the foreign teachers was action research (M = 2.31, S.D. = 1.03). The teachers commented that this was not an area of their interest.

> Research is something that is complicated. If the school requires me to do it, I'll do it. If not, it the area not much of interest.
>
> (Teacher J, personal communication, May 18, 2022)

While the regulations by the Teachers Council of Thailand required the teachers to have knowledge of educational research, the teacher's comment implied that research was an additional task for foreign teachers. The research must be conducted to meet the school requirement only.

The foreign teachers are well aware of the importance of professional development and look to this positively for their teaching as one teacher commented:

> Professional development in any field is essential – change is consistent feature of all fields and the teaching profession is no different. The only way to understand these changes is through continued development. I can see a direct impact of professional development on my own teaching as it has allowed me to take a step back, think through the key components of what it is a need to understand, and then apply that knowledge to the lessons I create.
>
> (Teacher B, personal communication, April 30, 2022)

In addition, the professional development program must address the needs of the teacher so that the knowledge and the skills required can be applied in their teaching. This is congruent with the proposal set forth by Richards and Farrell (2005) in which professional development should apply a bottom-up approach in which the foreign teachers can voice their needs for professional development.

> I generally choose a workshop based on areas that I feel need improving or areas that I enjoy and want to know more. I am always looking for new activities and new ways to engage students in a communicative classroom and therefore seminars about this usually take my interest. In the last year seminars about improving online engagement have been of interest due to the current situation with COVID-19.
>
> (Teacher A, personal communication, April 21, 2022)

In conclusion, the areas that should be included in the professional development program as needed by the foreign teachers are those that had impacts on their performance in the classroom, particularly classroom management and instructional design. These two areas would equip them with tools to manage their class and provide effective learning experiences appropriate to the students.

4. Proposed Solutions to the Situation of Foreign Teachers

Based on the analysis of the situation of foreign teachers in Thai schools and their needs for professional development, the following solutions are proposed.

Firstly, to address the administrative issues, the school should establish clear guidelines on the scope and responsibility of the foreign teachers. For example, the maximum range of the subjects that they are required to teach in a term must be determined.

Secondly, a general lack of communication and cultural issues pose a great challenge to foreign teachers in Thai schools. Frequently, they do not know the information regarding school activities, announcements, and changes to the timetable. One cause of this can be attributed to language barriers. Without effective communication, the foreign teachers are treated as outsiders in school. Thai teachers do not learn and adapt to Western cultures and vice versa. Most of the time, the foreign teachers are not invited to join the monthly meeting. All of the activities, including the routine activities at schools, are organized with the use of the Thai language as the medium of communication, such as the case for Teachers' Day, Sports day, and etc.

To handle the communication issues, the school should implement a bilingual policy in which all announcements are to be communicated in both Thai and English. For immediate action, coordinators with a proficiency level in both Thai and English should be assigned to help in communicating with the foreign teachers for all information and announcements from the school. At the same time, intercultural communication competence should be promoted. There should be an activity that provides an opportunity for teachers from different backgrounds to share, learn and explore cultural similarities and differences based on the principles of intercultural competencies including respect, curiosity, self-awareness, and that of others (Deardorff, 2006).

In terms of the professional development program, foreign teachers' opinions should be considered in order to ensure it is reflective of their needs. By this, the school can ask the foreign teachers to develop their individual development plans by determining their strengths and areas for improvement. The self-reflected response will be beneficial for the school to organize an effective professional development program.

Conclusion

This research provides information about the situation and the needs of professional development of foreign teachers in Thai schools. The results of this study suggest the importance of possessing intercultural competence for appropriate application in contexts where interactions between people of different cultural backgrounds are involved.

Professional development is crucial for foreign teachers. It is an ongoing process that ideally should be integrated into routine tasks including critical self-reflection on teaching practices, classroom observations and classroom action research. Moreover, training seminars or other such activities aimed at short-term and immediate goals of the teachers should be blended with these tasks to provide a structured process of professional development.

In order to make the professional development program effective and engaging for foreign teachers, their opinions should be considered. They should be able to propose the topic or the activities proposed for professional development schemes that would correspond with their needs and overall interests.

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A Study on Flight Attendants' Perceptions towards Airline Careers: The Effects of COVID-19 Pandemic

การศึกษาการรับรู้ของพนักงานต้อนรับบนเครื่องบินที่มีต่ออาชีพด้านการบิน : ผลกระทบจากการระบาดของโรคโควิด 19

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Abstract

This study sought to explore the problems experienced by Thai flight attendants and understand how they perceive the careers in airlines based on the problems caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. This study employed a qualitative approach to identify the problems Thai flight attendants experienced during the pandemic and understand how those problems have contributed to their perceptions towards airline careers. Thirty Thai flight attendants both employed and unemployed were selected as participants. To collect in-depth data, the semi-structured individual interview was employed. Thematic analysis was utilised to organise data while interpretive analysis was employed to interpret data. The findings showed that the participants faced with five main problems which were physical and mental health problems, pay and benefit loss, struggles for future plans, job insecurity, and loss of trust in organisations. As influenced by those problems, the findings revealed that there were three different types of perception that the participants had towards airline careers which were stable, quite stable, and unstable. The study also contributes to the understanding of relationship between the problems and Thai flight attendants' perceptions and its significance which could be beneficial for both educational and business contexts. For the educational context, educational practitioners might consider including contents regarding impacts of COVID-19 on the airline business in their airline-related courses so that it could benefit students who want to work in this business. For the business context, those who work in human resources department might use the findings of this study in staff planning and risk management in the future.

Keywords: perceptions, Thai flight attendants, airline careers,
effects of the COVID-19 pandemic

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บทคัดย่อ

งานวิจัยชิ้นนี้ศึกษาปัญหาที่พนักงานต้อนรับบนเครื่องบินชาวไทยประสบและการรับรู้ต่ออาชีพด้านการบิน ในช่วงการระบาดของโรคโควิด 19 โดยใช้กระบวนการวิจัยเชิงคุณภาพเพื่อระบุปัญหาที่เกิดขึ้นและเข้าใจความเชื่อมโยงต่อการรับรู้ของพนักงานต้อนรับบนเครื่องบินชาวไทยที่มีต่ออาชีพด้านการบิน ผู้เข้าร่วมโครงการวิจัยนี้ประกอบด้วยพนักงานต้อนรับบนเครื่องบินชาวไทยจำนวน 30 คน ทั้งที่ถูกจ้างอยู่และถูกเลิกจ้างจากบริษัท งานวิจัยนี้ใช้แบบสัมภาษณ์แบบกึ่งโครงสร้างในการเก็บข้อมูลเชิงลึก ใช้การวิเคราะห์เชิงแก่นสาระเพื่อจัดระเบียบข้อมูล และใช้การวิเคราะห์ข้อมูลโดยการตีความข้อมูลเพื่อตีความข้อมูลที่ได้ ผลการวิจัยพบว่าพนักงานต้อนรับบนเครื่องบินชาวไทยประสบปัญหาหลัก 5 ประการ คือ ปัญหาสุขภาพกายและสุขภาพจิต การสูญเสียรายได้และผลประโยชน์ ความยากลำบากต่อการวางแผนในอนาคต ความไม่มั่นคงทางอาชีพ และการสูญเสียความเชื่อมั่นต่อองค์กร ปัญหาข้างต้นส่งผลต่อการรับรู้ของพนักงานต้อนรับบนเครื่องบินชาวไทยที่มีต่อความมั่นคงของอาชีพด้านการบิน โดยมีการรับรู้ที่แตกต่างกัน 3 รูปแบบ คือ อาชีพด้านการบินมั่นคง อาชีพด้านการบินค่อนข้างมั่นคง และ อาชีพด้านการบินไม่มั่นคง งานวิจัยชิ้นนี้ก่อให้เกิดความรู้ความเข้าใจเรื่องความสัมพันธ์ระหว่างปัญหาที่เกิดขึ้นและการรับรู้ของพนักงานต้อนรับบนเครื่องบินชาวไทยที่มีต่ออาชีพด้านการบิน โดยผลการวิจัยนี้สามารถเป็นประโยชน์ต่อผู้นำไปใช้ทั้งในบริบทด้านการศึกษาและด้านธุรกิจ ในบริบทด้านการศึกษา ผู้สอนในรายวิชาที่เกี่ยวข้องกับด้านสายการบินสามารถเพิ่มเติมเนื้อหาเรื่องผลกระทบจากการระบาดของโรคโควิด 19 ที่มีต่อธุรกิจการบินเพื่อเป็นประโยชน์ต่อผู้เรียนที่จะเข้าสู่การทำงานด้านสายการบิน และในบริบทธุรกิจ ฝ่ายทรัพยากรบุคคลสามารถนำไปใช้ในการบริหารบุคลากรและวางแผนจัดการความเสี่ยงที่อาจเกิดขึ้นในอนาคต

คำสำคัญ การรับรู้ พนักงานต้อนรับบนเครื่องบินชาวไทย อาชีพด้านการบิน ผลกระทบจากการระบาดของโรคโควิด 19

Introduction

Due to the emergence of COVID-19, Lange (2020) states that in 2020 businesses in the airline industry collapsed. Two-thirds of the aircrafts around the world were grounded and nearly 98% of global flight operations were suspended especially for international operations. Never before has the airline industry experienced such a sudden and dramatic decline in air travel demands. The extreme decrease in air travel demands has caused many challenges for the industry. Lange (2020) adds that while the main focus is on how the industry survives the current crisis, how the industry handles the recovery period cannot be ignored. In Thailand, the pandemic of COVID-19 also has had disastrous effects on the airline industry. Both domestic and international flights have dramatically decreased or stopped altogether. There are a considerable number of laid-off flight attendants and airline staff leaving without pay. The THAI Airways' State Enterprises Workers' Relations Confederation reports that 2,600 employees were laid off due to the suspension of THAI flights in 2020. Even though there are employees who are still employed by airline companies, the study from Charernnit (2021) shows that many of them are still hesitant and frustrated about their career in the airline industry.

Given the situation of the pandemic in Thailand, the impacts of COVID-19 have worried those in airline businesses since they are getting direct effects from the pandemic causing flight cancellation and suspension. Many Thai airlines have been losing incomes for a few years now and are seeking financial support immediately. In the meantime, they have to reduce the workforce resulting in an early retirement scheme of 5,000 employees, a leaving without pay scheme and, in the worst-case scenario, a laid-off scheme (Charernnit, 2021). Even though previous studies from Charernnit (2021), Laovoravit et al. (2021), and Thongmeensuk and Rojsirikulchai (2020) shed light on impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on air transport industry in Thailand, they suggest that there is still a particular need to focus on airline staff's perceptions towards the pandemic as well. Therefore, these situations have led the researcher to concerns and investigations of the flight attendants' perceptions towards airlines careers as affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. Moreover, it could create the original contribution of this present study.

Objectives and Research Questions

Based on the statement of problems presented earlier, the main objectives of the research are

1) to investigate Thai flight attendants' perceptions of airlines careers in the period of time during the COVID-19 pandemic, and

2) to explore the problems experienced by Thai flight attendants and understand how they perceive the careers in airlines based on those problems caused by the COVID-19 pandemic.

These are formulated into two research questions.

1) What are the problems that Thai flight attendants experienced during the COVID-19 pandemic?

2) How do Thai flight attendants perceive the airline careers in association with the emergence of COVID-19?

Literature Review

This section reviews the literature and studies related to this study. The chapter discusses three main perspectives related to the study including 1) definitions and descriptions of airline careers, 2) the impacts of COVID-19 on both global and Thai airline businesses and related studies, and 3) the concepts of perceptions and related studies on perceptions.

1. Airline Careers

Ford et al. (2013) state that airline careers involve rendering services to passengers on domestic and international departures and arrivals at the airport. In other words, the airline staff and the passengers are personally engaged in the service transaction which shows hospitality relationship between them. There are various definitions of a flight attendant. The word flight attendant has been explained by English dictionaries and aviation authorities as follows; Oxford's Learners Dictionaries Dictionary defines a flight attendant as a person whose job is to serve and take care of passengers on an aircraft. Cambridge dictionary states that a flight attendant is a person in an aircraft whose job is to serve passengers and to make sure they obey safety rules. The Civil Aviation Authority of Thailand (2016) defines that a flight attendant is a crew member who performs duties in the interest of comfort, convenience and safety of passengers and tasks as assigned by the pilot-in-command of the aircraft. Therefore, it can be said that generally a flight attendant is an airline staff who works directly with passengers and whose main jobs are to serve food and drinks to passengers and to ensure their convenience on a plane.

However, the significant responsibilities of the flight attendant are to maintain safe conditions in the airplane cabin, to teach passengers safety procedures and to assist passengers during emergency situations. Flight attendants are required to complete training courses focusing on safety procedures since it is important that they must be equipped with the knowledge about flight systems, basic components, and configuration of aircrafts in order to provide passengers with comfort and safety throughout the flight.

2. The Impacts of COVID-19 on Global Airline Businesses

Lange (2020) reports that, in 2020, two-thirds of airline fleets around the world were grounded. While 90% of domestic fleets were not happening, 98% of international fleets could not be operated. International Air Transport Association or IATA (2020) estimates that global airline businesses would end up around 60% down for the next few years since the airline industry has never seen such a dramatic and sustained decline in air passenger demand before. Although the industry experienced previous crises such as SARS pandemic in 2003 and the 911 terrorist attacks in 2001, they were geographically limited and occurred in a short period of time (Lange 2020). Therefore, the pandemic of COVID-19 has become more challenging to the industry because they are not any certain solutions when airlines will be able to operate their flights and passenger demands will return.

For airline businesses in Thailand, Amornpipat (2020) reports that domestic flights are grounded and will be grounded until the COVID-19 outbreak can be controlled. During the pandemic many airlines in Thailand have made the painful decision to suspend all of their flights although some airlines continue to operate limited domestic flights. Passenger demands have declined since the first lockdown of cities was announced and people's movements were restricted. This has led to big financial challenges for many airlines in Thailand. Charernnit (2021) notes that the adverse effects of the pandemic on Thailand's aviation industry are just a tip of the iceberg to what is happening all over the entire national economy. The halting of flights not only affected the airline companies but also their employees. Laovoravit et al. (2021) report that nearly 2,600 employees of Wingspan, a subsidiary company of Thai Airways, had been laid off because their flights had been suspended since the end of March in

2020. In some airlines, they report that employees would lose vacation time and leave and many of them were asked to leave without pay. It is obvious that COVID-19 has largely affected both airline companies and their employees in terms of finance, flight operations, and unemployment in Thai airline businesses.

There are studies conducted about the impacts of COVID-19 on Thai airline industries. The study of Amornpipat (2020) presents the impacts of COVID-19 on aviation industry in Thailand. Similarly, the study of Thongmeensuk and Rojsirikulchai (2020) shows that, as a consequence of the dramatic decrease in air travel demands, the majority of airline companies in Thailand were encountering a significant fall in their revenues. The study of Charernnit (2021) focuses on Thai airline employees. Her study shows that the COVID-19 pandemic put many Thai airlines employees' financial and emotional instability. The result shows that participants mostly adopt Buddhism beliefs to develop emotional intelligence to cope with their financial and emotional instability. Another study focusing on flight attendants was conducted by Laovoravit et al. (2021). The study mainly discusses the impact of COVID-19 on mental health of Thai flight attendants. The result shows that psychological strains from COVID-19 caused by perpetuated stress that can cause ineffective safety-related performance when flight attendants need to perform safety roles in emergency situations during their flights. Therefore, the flight attendants' mental health should be checked up before they return to work when regular commercial flights operate.

3. The Concepts of Perception

Investigating perceptions is one of the most widely adopted approaches to explore issues in emerging situations. According to Jalilah (2010), perception refers to someone's understanding, beliefs, feeling about persons, situations and events as his/her learning experience which will be the major determiner of the stimuli to which he/she responses. Démuth (2013) argues that human assumptions are behind perceptions and influence these in a relatively consistent way. Perceptions are regarded as objects that form the "content and diversity of the world" and as "the source of sensual and intellectual cognition" will form the subject of human thoughts (Démuth, 2013, p.13). Moreover, perception is significant in understanding human behaviour, as individuals might perceive the world differently. Therefore, exploring perceptions could help to understand phenomena in the social context. In terms of this study, the investigation of perceptions reflects how Thai flight attendants perceive airline careers during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The importance of perception has been discussed in many studies. From the concepts presented earlier, it seems clear that it would be useful to take into consideration flight attendants' perceptions in reflecting their views towards airline careers and their experiences during the pandemic. Murphy (2013) and O'Connor et al. (2014) state that it is essential to know how airline staff feel about the issues they have been dealing with during the pandemic and understand how they make sense of airline careers as airline staff's perceptions, in this case, flight attendants can give feedback, provide information about what happens to them during the suspension of flights, and provide recommendation to human resource departments about whether or not employee welfare and benefits have been appropriately managed. Ford et al. (2014) note that it might be useful for airline companies if airline staff provided data from their actual situations, as inputs for human resource management, in order to ensure that an improvement meets the majority of airline staff's needs. In addition to the importance of perceptions, Ming et al. (2019) comment that it appears that airline staff's perceptions are also worth investigating, not least because understanding their perceptions is an asset to quality work and service because the intention clearly is that they should be reflecting how their companies have treated them and what they have experienced. That is to say, their feedback could usefully feed into airline companies' adaptations of their human resources management.

Research Methodology

1. Research Instrument

Interview was the main research instrument employed in this research to collect in-depth information from the participants. Semi-structured interview approach was administered during the interviews. This approach incorporates conversational aspects between researchers and participants (Creswell, 2012). However, the order of prepared questions and wordings were not fixed. Follow-up questions connected to participants' previous answers were also used to keep the conversation flowing.

2. Research Participants

This study adopted a qualitative approach which usually requires a small number of participants so that researchers could explore their perspectives in depth and produce detailed findings. Creswell (2012) mentions that, in conducting a qualitative study, five to twenty-five participants could provide data adequacy while Munhall (2010) suggests that two to ten participants are sufficient to reach data saturation. Following the notion of data adequacy, this study included thirty participants. All of them worked for Thai airline companies based in Bangkok, Thailand. They worked as flight attendants whose flights were operated in both domestic and international routes. These participants were accessible through snowballing sampling so that the researcher could draw samples for this study. They were purposively selected from an initial pool of five participants, as the researcher's acquaintances, before the number of research participants expanded to thirty. All of them were selected because they had particular experiences and characteristics that could contribute to a better understanding of the phenomenon studied, in this case their perceptions towards the airline career based on the impact of COVID-19. Although they shared some similarities such as job responsibilities, workplaces, and their nationality, there were some differences such as their genders, their challenges they experienced during the pandemic, and their current job status, employed and unemployed.

3. Data Collection Procedure

Initially, the participants were directly contacted by phone, explained their rights as research participants, and asked to have individual interviews by phone. The participants were also informed that the interview would be audio recorded. After all of them agreed, the information sheets and consent forms were given to the participants. All the interviews were scheduled following participants' convenience. All the interviews were conducted in Thai since the participants could understand the interview questions easily and express their opinions fully and freely through Thai. The interview duration was expected to be not over thirty minutes in order not to exhaust both the participants and the researcher. However, the duration was flexible and they could extend it. Each participant took approximately 25 – 35 minutes, to finish the interview. The interview was mainly about their experiences during the COVID-19 pandemic and their perceptions towards airline careers. The prepared questions mentioned in the previous section (Research Instrument) were used at this stage.

In every interview, the researcher started by talking about the participants' backgrounds, not only to obtain some data relevant to the study, but also to break the ice and create good rapport with them. During the interviews, the researcher attempted to avoid asking multiple questions and leading questions. The researcher always gave them time to think and respond and encouraged them to share their stories. More importantly, the researcher avoided giving his own ideas or correcting their answers. All these interviews were also audio recorded through the researcher's phone and later transcribed. Notes were also taken during the interview when the researcher found some particular interesting issues. Although some participants shared their bad experiences which the researcher deeply felt for them, the researcher tried to control his emotions and focus on the interviews. They were also advised to stop in case they were unhappy and uncomfortable to talk about sensitive topics. The data from the interviews were hoped to show evidence of problems they experienced in during the pandemic (RQ1) and their perceptions towards the airline careers based on the emergence of COVID-19 (RQ2).

For qualitative research, which involves human sensitivities, ethical consideration must be taken into account. Throughout this study, ethical guidelines provided by Forum for Ethical Review Committees in Thailand (FERCIT) were followed. This study was also approved by the Research Ethics Committee of Thaksin University (COA No.TSU 2022_175, REC No.0383)

4. Data Analysis

Interpretive analysis was used as a tool to analyse the interview data. The interpretation involves understanding the meaning of the participants' experiences in order to provide a thick description or an in-depth narrative story of the phenomenon under the investigation which can explain why participants perceived or behaved the way they did (Bhattacherjee, 2012). This study also adopted thematic analysis. Although this analysis takes time and depends on the interpretation of each researcher, it is a widely used qualitative analysis method due to its flexibility, easy implementation, and potential to provide richness of data (Guest et al., 2012). The thematic analysis process includes six main steps, including 1) Familiarising with data, 2) Producing initial codes, 3) Looking for themes, 4) Reviewing themes, 5) Labelling themes, and 6) Writing a report. Verbatim transcription was used with the interview recordings. In the process of transcription, translation, and data analysis, the researcher ensured the participants that their names were completely anonymised. Pseudonyms were given to all participants in reporting of findings so that they would not be identifiable. After the interviews were transcribed, the researcher then began following steps of thematic analysis. As the study progressed, the codes were created, organised, and grouped into themes. Also, interpretive analysis was used as a way of interpreting meanings and understanding the orientation to the identified themes.

Figure 1

The Procedures of Interview Data Analysis

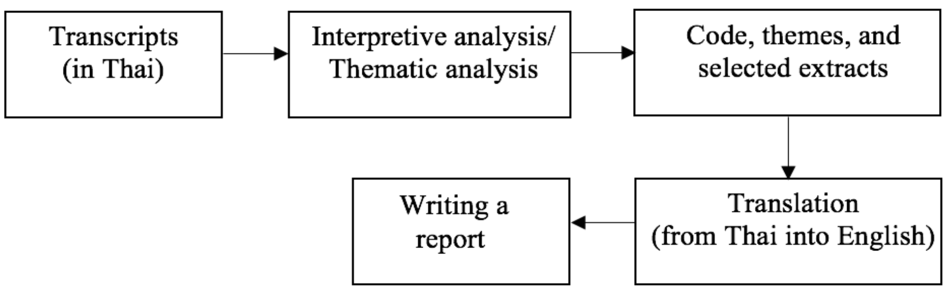

Figure 1 shows the procedures of how interview data was analysed. As the analysis progressed, the codes were created, organised, and grouped into themes. The codes, themes, and selected extracts were translated from Thai into English before they were presented in the report.

Findings

Based on the findings presented in this chapter, they offered answers to the main research questions of this study.

1. What are the problems that Thai flight attendants experienced during the COVID-19 pandemic?

2. How do Thai flight attendants perceive the airline careers in association with the emergence of COVID-19?

In relation to RQ 1, the findings showed that the participants of this study experienced various problems during the pandemic. There were five main problems that can be identified which are physical and mental health problems, pay and benefit loss, struggles for future plans, job insecurity, and loss of trust in organisations.

Below are example excerpts showing that participants reported they experienced physical and mental health problems, pay and benefit loss, struggles for future plans, job insecurity, and loss of trust in organisations.

Extract 1: Physical and mental health problems

"I was shocked when I discovered that my result of COVID-19 test was positive. I didn't know what to do. I cried a lot. My family and friends were worried about me. My health was not the same. At that time I completely lost my sense of smell. I couldn't breathe. I thought I was going to die."

(Sam, personal communication, November 20, 2022)

Extract 2: Pay and benefit loss

"It was a nightmare that one day I got high salary but the next day I was stony broke. I was shocked not knowing what to do next. I talked to my friends who were also asked to leave when we all agree that it was our financial crisis. We lost income and other benefits that we used to receive."

(Anne, personal communication, November 18, 2022)

Extract 3: Struggles for future plans

"I had no idea about what to do next, about finding a new job. I worked as a flight attendant for many years and I only had one job. I was blank. The moment I knew that I was laid off, I collapsed. I was quite old to start a new job in this industry."

(Watt, personal communication, December 1, 2022)

Extract 4: Job insecurity

"I've been thinking about job insecurity. Although I'm still employed, I feel stressful. My salary was reduced. My benefits were cut off. Some of my friends were laid off. I don't know when my turn is. I work but I also question about job insecurity. Is it really secure?"

(Krit, personal communication, November 20, 2022)

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Extract 5: Loss of trust in organisations

> "I felt that the company treated me and my colleagues unfairly. They cut off all benefits that we deserved to have. They focused only on the business but they seemed to ignore employees' needs. I've been working here for over 10 years. I've come to the point that I'm having doubts about the company's risk management. And I don't blame if the colleagues who got laid off would get mad and criticised the company for their poor management."
>
> (Araya, personal communication, November 25, 2022)

Table 1

Problems During the COVID-19 Pandemic

Problems	Employed	Unemployed	Total	%
Physical and mental health problems	15	15	30	100
Pay and benefit loss	15	15	30	100
Struggles for future plans	5	10	15	50
Job insecurity	3	9	12	40
Loss of trust in organisations	2	8	10	33.3

Table 1 reveals that physical and mental health problems and pay and benefit loss are the most frequently reported problems which are mentioned by all participants (100%). This is followed by struggles for future plans which is reported by 15 participants (50%) consisting of five employed participants and ten unemployed participants. Job insecurity is reported by 12 participants (40%) consisting of three employed participants and nine unemployed participants. Finally, loss of trust in organisations is the least frequently reported by ten participants (33.3%) consisting of two employed participants and eight unemployed participants. It can be seen that participants experienced different problems. However, based on the frequency of reported problems, it is obvious that the unemployed participants faced up to more problems than the employed participants.

In relation to RQ 2, the findings unfolded the participants' perceptions and showed how those problems reported in RQ1 affected their perceptions towards the airline careers in three main aspects. These include stable, quite stable, and unstable.

Below are example excerpts showing that participants reported their perceptions towards the airline careers including stable, quite stable, and unstable.

Extract 6: Stable

> "I've been working in this career for a long time. I've been through many problems and crises and here I am. I'm still working here. I strongly believe that airline careers are still stable. The pandemic is new to all airlines but it depends on how companies deal with it. My company handled it well. I think those who feel that these careers are

not stable are the people who got laid off and they just got mad. I feel that you should have prepared for the future. In my case, I studied for Master's degree. So, I'm not relying on one job. I could do more jobs. I'm now a guest lecturer at many universities."

(Veena, personal communication, November 19, 2022)

Extract 7: Quite stable

"Although I got laid off, I still feel that airline careers are quite stable. I guess it depends on how airline companies deal with the situation. I'm not happy with the compensation that I received from the company. I think they could do more to help the employees who got laid off. My friends work for another airline and they're still employed. I'm going to apply for a job at their company. But I think this time I'll be more careful with spending money and I have to have a backup plan."

(Wanda, personal communication, November 23, 2022)

Extract 8: Unstable

"Although I haven't been kicked out yet, I feel that airline careers are unstable. I feel like I'm hanging by a thread. I feel terrible about this career. As you can see there're many employees getting laid off. The company haven't done much to help those employees. I feel that they focus on their business more than employees' job security and well-being. I'm thinking about resigning and I'm now doing my own small business. I feel better that way. At least I can manage future risk in my own way."

(Nalin, personal communication, November 27, 2022)

Table 2

Perceptions Towards Airline Careers

Perceptions	Employed	Unemployed	Total	%
Stable	3	0	3	10
Quite stable	11	5	16	53.3
Unstable	1	10	11	36.7

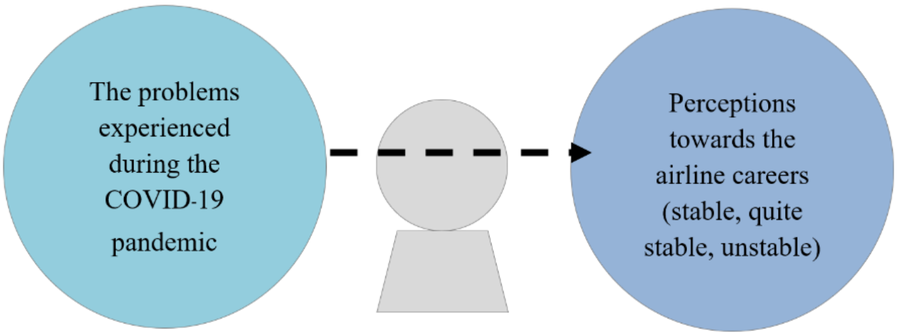
Table 2 presents three main perceptions towards airline careers mutually reported by the participants. The table reveals that although the participants were negatively affected by the COVID-19 pandemic, most participants perceived that airline careers were quite stable. It is reported by 16 participants (53.3%) consisting of eleven employed participants and five unemployed participants. This is followed by eleven participants (36.7%) consisting of one employed participant and ten unemployed participants who perceived that airline careers were unstable. Finally, there are only three participants (10%) consisting of three employed participant and none of unemployed participants who perceived that airline careers were still stable. It can be seen that the employed participants mostly perceived that airlines careers were quite stable while–the unemployed participants mostly perceived that these careers were unstable.

Analysis and Discussion

This section discusses the role of problems experienced by the participants during COVID-19 and their perceptions towards airline careers. It revealed the relationship between the problems based on the pandemic of COVID-19 which are physical and mental health problems, pay and benefit loss, struggles for future plans, job insecurity, and loss of trust in organisations and Thai flight attendants' perceptions which are stable, quite stable, and unstable. It also revealed how those problems were engaged and how they contributed to the Thai flight attendants' perceptions towards airline careers. That is to say, the reported problems playing significant roles in affecting the participants' perceptions. There were connections between the reported problems and perceptions of the participants. It can be said that each problem played its role differently depending on the participants' employment situations. Different problems were engaged in the participants' perceptions. Figure 2 provides a graphical representation of how the problems experienced during the COVID-19 pandemic are related to the Thai flight attendants' perceptions towards the airline careers.

Figure 2

Relationship Between the Problems and Thai Flight Attendants' Perceptions



In the discussion of Thai flight attendants' perceptions towards the airline careers, it shows that the engagement of different problems contributed to different perceptions towards airline careers including stable, quite stable, and unstable. For participants who perceived that airline careers were stable, it shows that job security played an important role in these participants' perceptions. They shared the similar perception on job security since they felt that their airline companies showed them that they could manage change effectively, handling the pandemic situations in a way that keeps them safe. For participants who perceived that airline careers were quite stable, it shows that job security and trust in organisations played important roles in the participants' perception. They mutually shared the similar perceptions that they still received some benefits from the companies such as compensation after getting laid off and regular income during lockdown. Finally, for participants who perceived that airline careers were unstable, it shows that job insecurity, loss of trust in organisations, and struggles for future plans played an important role in the participants' perceptions. They reported that they were treated unfairly by the companies. As they experienced laying off they felt that working for airline business is like hanging by a thread.

However, it should be noted that this study focused on thirty participants including employed and unemployed Thai flight attendants. With a larger number of participants, the problems and the perceptions identified in this study may or may not be associated.

Conclusion

This study has fulfilled its objective to investigate the problems experienced by Thai flight attendants and understand how they perceive the careers in airlines based on those problems caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. The problems experienced by Thai flight attendants during the pandemic were found to be various including physical and mental health problems, pay and benefit loss, struggles for future plans, job insecurity, and loss of trust in organisations. The study also revealed the relationship between those problems and Thai flight attendants' perceptions which include stable, quite stable, and unstable. That is to say, there were connections between the reported problems and perceptions of the participants. Job security played an important role in the stable perception towards airline careers. For the quite stable perception, job security and trust in organisations had an impact on the participants' perceptions. For the unstable perception, job insecurity, loss of trust in organisations, and struggles for future plans mainly played an important role in the participants' perceptions. However, it should be noted that problems caused by the COVID- 19 pandemic, perceptions towards airline careers, and connections between them could be different and emergent in different groups of participants such as ground service agents, HR staff, and even pilots since an individual could have experienced and perceived things differently.

Although generalisability does not fit the results of this study, the notion of transferability may be more appropriate. This study might provide educational practitioners with useful ideas in implementing and designing appropriate contents for airlines-related courses and benefit students in higher education for their job training in airline businesses and related fields. That is to say, educational practitioners might consider including reported problems in this study in their courses so that students can understand negative impacts regarding COVID-19 airline staff have had experienced and see another aspect of this career. Also, the depth of the data and findings is hoped to provide other researchers and those who work in human resources department with information or perspectives that may be relevant to their contexts. Based on the findings of the study, this should be taken into consideration by human resources departments from not only airlines but those who have been affected by the pandemic. It is important to seriously focus on the existing problems and understand perceptions of their employees so that the departments can prepare for unexpected situations, help their employees in case that similar situations occur in the future, and support airline employees' mental health, welfare, and benefits. Struggles for future plans and loss of trust in organisations were new categories emerging from this study which has expanded from the previous studies on perceptions conducted by Amornpipat (2020), Thongmeensuk and Rojsirikulchai (2020), Charernnit (2021), and Laovoravit et al. (2021). This represents the original contribution of this research. These problems have been suggested as constructive findings since they might be beneficial for the human resources departments in airline businesses and related fields to gain the feedback from their employees, both employed and unemployed. Also, those emerging problems were reported to have connections with attitudes of the participants towards the companies. Therefore, they should not be neglected.

In conclusion, this study has made contributions towards understanding the problems and perceptions reported by Thai flight attendants. It is also hoped that the discussion of the concepts and findings of this study will contribute to relevant contexts and reflect the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on airline businesses.

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Strengthening Community's Financial Organization Network in Rattaphum District, Songkhla Province

การสร้างความเข้มแข็งให้เครือข่ายองค์กรการเงินชุมชนอำเภอรัตภูมิ จังหวัดสงขลา

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Abstract

This research, entitled "Strengthening Community's Financial Organization Network in Rattaphum District, Songkhla" aimed to identify the strengths, weaknesses, and opportunities for improving the community economy through the Community's Financial Organization (CFO) in Rattaphum District, Songkhla. The study focused on establishing cooperative networks and implementing best practices in financial management. The research utilized a case study approach and centered on the community financial organization group in Rattaphum District, Songkhla Province. This study comprised three stages of data collection from 156 participants. The results showed that 1) regarding different types of CFOs and their characteristics, village funds operated under formal regulations while production-oriented saving groups and other financial entities in the community adopted more flexible and independent management approaches. However, certain weaknesses were identified, including committees primarily comprising older individuals, a lack of volunteers to lead committees, non-adherence to rules by some members, limited financial resources, and inadequate administrative planning. Nevertheless, all community financial groups had opportunities to enhance the community economy with support from both government and private sectors. 2) Concerning the types of CFO networks, the study identified four categories of CFO networks: district-level networks, sub-district-level networks, networks operating in specific sub-district areas, and some CFOs without any network affiliation. 3) As for good practices in CFO

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financial management, the research identified seven effective practices in financial management within CFOs. The paper is concluded with recommendations for policy makers and future research.

Keywords: strengthening, community financial organization network (CFO), community economic promotion

บทคัดย่อ

งานวิจัยนี้ มีวัตถุประสงค์เพื่อค้นหาจุดแข็งจุดอ่อนและโอกาสในการส่งเสริมเศรษฐกิจชุมชนขององค์กรการเงินชุมชนเพื่อสร้างเครือข่ายความร่วมมือในพื้นที่และเพื่อสร้างแนวปฏิบัติที่ดีในการบริหารจัดการด้านการเงินเป็นการวิจัยแบบกรณีศึกษากับกลุ่มองค์กรการเงินชุมชนอำเภอรัตภูมิ จังหวัดสงขลา เก็บรวบรวมข้อมูลสามระยะ มีผู้ให้ข้อมูลรวม ทั้งสิ้น 156 คน ผลการวิจัย พบว่า 1) จุดแข็ง มีความแตกต่างของประเภทองค์กรการเงินชุมชน อาทิ กองทุนหมู่บ้านฯ มีจุดแข็งที่มีระเบียบกฎหมายรองรับอย่างชัดเจน กลุ่มออมทรัพย์เพื่อการผลิตและกลุ่มลักษณะอื่น ๆ มีจุดแข็งที่มีอิสระในการบริหารจัดการ สำหรับจุดอ่อน พบว่า คณะกรรมการขาดความเข้มแข็งมีผู้สูงอายุเป็นกรรมการมายาวนาน และหาผู้ที่จะอาสามาเป็นประธานได้ยาก สมาชิกส่วนหนึ่งไม่ปฏิบัติตามระเบียบข้อบังคับมีเงินทุนน้อย และมีข้อจำกัดเกี่ยวกับการใช้จ่ายและยังขาดการวางแผนอย่างเป็นระบบ ส่วนโอกาสในการส่งเสริมเศรษฐกิจชุมชน คือ รัฐบาลและหน่วยงานภาครัฐและเอกชนให้ความสำคัญและคอยให้การสนับสนุน 2) เครือข่ายความร่วมมือมี 4 ลักษณะ คือ เครือข่ายระดับอำเภอ เครือข่ายทั้งตำบล เครือข่ายบางส่วนของตำบล และไม่เชื่อมโยงเครือข่าย และ 3) ได้แนวทางปฏิบัติที่ดีในการบริหารจัดการด้านการเงิน 7 ประการ ทั้งนี้ผู้วิจัยได้ทิ้งท้ายด้วยข้อเสนอแนะสำหรับผู้กำหนดนโยบายและการทำวิจัยในอนาคต

คำสำคัญ การสร้างความเข้มแข็ง เครือข่ายองค์กรการเงินชุมชน การส่งเสริมเศรษฐกิจชุมชน

Introduction

Community Financial Organizations (CFOs) are voluntary associations of local residents who come together to support one another in addressing financial challenges within their community. The group is formed with members and committees who regularly contribute to a shared fund utilized in diverse ways. This concept was initially introduced by the renowned Bangladeshi economist, Professor Muhammad Yunus (Yunus, 2008, 2010), who recognized the plight of the underprivileged and marginalized. Despite limited financial resources, these individuals demonstrated diligence and capability, deserving opportunities to access loans for improving their livelihoods and that of their families. Professor Yunus personally experimented with lending from traditional banks and then proceeded to extend these loans to poor individuals, confident in their sense of responsibility to repay and recognizing their low-risk profile. This pioneering endeavor eventually led to the establishment of the widely recognized

Grameen Bank, which has provided loans to nearly four million people and accumulated savings from its members exceeding 212 million US dollars (Lertkulprayad, 2012; Lertsrichainon, 2013).

Based on data from research articles published in the WoS database, there were only 27 articles related to microfinance in the year 2012. However, this number significantly increased to 84 articles in the year 2020. These studies indicate that microfinance serves as an effective tool in mitigating financial capital-related challenges (Ribeiro et al., 2022), particularly among the poor and those with limited access to formal financial resources (Bocher et al., 2017) and small businesses with limited capital (Tarozzi et al. 2015). Moreover, the research findings highlight microfinance as an innovative approach to overcoming the economic difficulties faced by underdeveloped countries (Mustafa et al., 2018) and as a means to combat poverty worldwide (Brau & Woller, 2004).

In Thailand, Community Financial Organizations (CFOs) come in various forms and are known by different names, but they share similar characteristics in terms of management including savings groups, complete life-cycle savings groups, production-oriented savings groups, village banks, community financial institutions, community and urban funds, etc. The Department of Community Development, under the Ministry of Interior, has placed significant emphasis on developing the quality of life for rural communities by promoting and supporting the establishment of “production-oriented savings groups” since 1974 (B.E. 2517). Subsequently, based on statistics, it was found that there are 34,530 production-oriented savings groups operating in various villages and sub-districts throughout the country with a total of 4,506,411 members, and the accumulated savings amount to 25,247,736,106 baht. These initiatives were driven by the government's policies to alleviate poverty in the year 2001 (Dhammasaccakarn & Hanghon, 2018)

Rattaphum District is divided into 5 sub-districts and consists of 63 villages, with a total population of 60,327 people. The majority of the population follows Buddhism, and their main occupation is agriculture, including activities such as rubber plantation, fruit orchards, and rice cultivation. Additionally, the population also has secondary occupations in the industrial sector, such as labor in wood processing factories, rubber product manufacturing, and animal feed production plants. The district has 42 educational institutions, including 2 high schools, 1 vocational college, and 1 Southern Region Women's Vocational Training Center. Moreover, Rattaphum District boasts numerous tourist attractions, such as Boripat Waterfall, Ton Pliew Waterfall, Thip Khiri Sea, Kongka Liaw Monastery, the 200-Year Durian Garden, and others. The district's slogan reflects its natural beauty and landscape, which says "Red Earth, Abundant Fruit, Royal Waterfalls, Legendary Mountains, Gateway to the Border" (Rattaphum District, 2019).

In Rattaphum District, the operation of community financial organizations displays a diverse range of entities, including production-oriented savings groups, community and urban funds, community business groups, occupational promotion groups, and other groups/organizations under various names. There are over 100 such groups/organizations, but they share similar management characteristics. For example, community financial organizations i.e. the Community Financial Institution of Kamphaeng Phet Sub-district, established in 2006, with 2,195 members and a total capital of 38,740,312 baht. Another example is the Savings Group of Ban Klong Khaolon, established in 1999 in Khao Phra Sub-district, with 1,450 members and a total capital of 70,855,800 baht. Similarly, there is the Savings Group of Ban Sai Yai in Khuan Ru Sub-district, established in 1998, with 802 members and a total capital of 14,008,727 baht (Community Organization Development Institute (CODI), 2013). These fund groups may vary in terms of their strength and stability, the majority tend to lack robustness due to various reasons.

The objective of this study is to identify the strengths, weaknesses, and opportunities of various types of community financial organizations in Rattaphum District, Songkhla Province to promote a collaborative network among these organizations and develop practical strategies to strengthen them sustainably in the long run.

Research Objectives

1. To identify the strengths, weaknesses, and opportunities in the operations of community financial organizations in Rattaphum District
2. To study collaborative networks among community financial organizations, facilitating shared learning from past successes and failures
3. To develop best practices in financial management for community financial organizations based on lessons learned for them to become significant funding sources that can consistently support and strengthen the communities in the long term

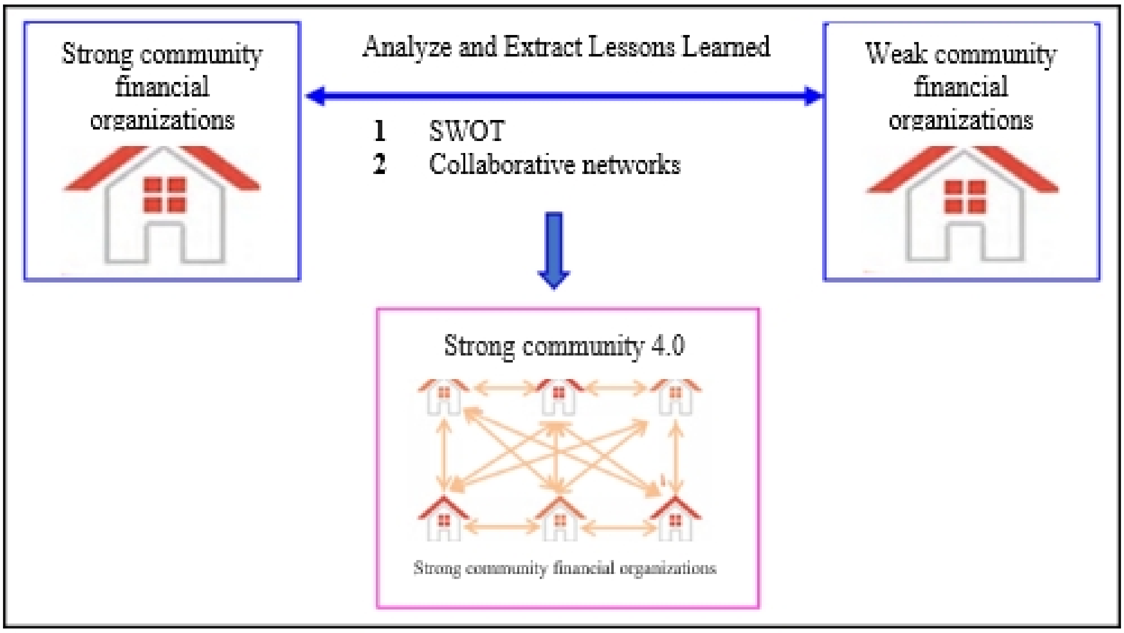
Research Methodology

A qualitative approach was adopted in this study based on Pragmatism, which served as a research framework (Tashakkori & Teddlie, 1998) together with an action research method with the researchers' involvement in activities within the field (Somekh, 2006). Additionally, Grounded Theory was employed to study phenomena from different perspectives and to derive meaning from these occurrences. The data collected allowed the construction of concepts and the establishment of connections between various concepts, leading to theoretical conclusions that explain and enhance our understanding of the observed phenomena. Thus, this study consists of a set of phenomena's conceptual frameworks, which are interconnected through proposals demonstrating their relationships in various forms (Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Leedy & Ormrod, 2001).

The research was divided into 3 phases: Phase 1 demographic data collection and interviews, including reviewing of documents from secondary sources about community financial organizations in Rattaphum District, Songkhla Province, to plan on-site interviews with main informants from all 5 sub-districts; Phase 2 workshops for extracting lessons from 5 sub-districts, selecting key informants from both strong and weak community groups based on the 3-level classification of the Community Development Department. Choosing groups with the lowest (Level 1) and highest (Level 3) levels of strength; and Phase 3 a workshop for analyzing collaborative networks innovation and best practices in financial management among community financial organizations in all 5 sub-districts, as depicted in the conceptual framework below.

Figure 1

A framework of how community financial organizations within Rattaphum District, Songkhla Province can be strengthened



1. Key Informants

Purposive sampling was employed in this study (Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2009, 97) to select key informants, categorized into two groups: the committee members of community financial organizations and members of community financial organizations from all five sub-districts in Rattaphum District. In the initial phase, interviews were conducted with a total of 23 committee members of community financial organizations, both strong and less strong. In the second phase, workshops were organized to extract lessons from the committee members and members of the five sub-districts. These workshops were held three times with a total participation of 102 individuals. In the third phase, a workshop was organized with 31 participants to present the overall community data to the committee members and members in the five sub-districts.

2. Research Tools and Data Collection

2.1 Document Data: This method involved collecting and summarizing information from documents related to the operations of community financial organizations in the target area including group regulations, operational guidelines, financial statements, and other relevant documents.

2.2 Informal Observation and Unstructured Interviews: This approach involved observing and engaging in informal conversations and unstructured questioning. These approaches were applied to the key informants, both the committee members and the members who are utilizing services within the organizations.

2.3 In-depth Interviews: In-depth interviews involved asking guided questions to 23 committee members of the community financial organizations. The goal was to gain insights into the current operational context and situations of the community financial organizations. The interviews were conducted until data saturation was achieved, where no new or additional information emerged (Lindlof, 1995; Reid, 1996, 387-389, as cited in Sale, Lohfeld & Brazil, 2002). Each interview session lasted approximately 30 to 50 minutes.

2.4 Group discussions: Group discussions were the research tool for gathering information with the committee and members of the community financial organizations. These discussions took place three times with 34 participants, 42, and 26, respectively. They were aimed at soliciting opinions and extracting lessons learned about the operations in the organizations. Finally, a community feedback session was organized to present the findings to the committee and members at a broader district level with 31 participants. These sessions provided data used to design innovative collaborations between organizations, along with best practices in the finance management of community financial organizations.

2.5 Research materials included recording devices, cameras, notebooks, and other essential tools. The researcher obtained permission from the interviewees prior to every instance of audio recording or photography. Furthermore, this research project has received ethical approval for human research.

3. Data Analysis

The processes of data verification and analysis are outlined as follows:

3.1 Data Verification involved different specific steps, including assessing data validity by extracting text from the interviews and data from observations, as well as from the group discussions and field notes. Additionally, 2 types of Triangulation were applied. First, Triangulation of Methods was employed (Silverman, 2001, 288) in the documentary data collection, informal interviews, in-depth interviews, and group discussions. Second, Triangulation of Observers (Neuman, 2003, 138-139), was applied in conducting in-depth interviews using the same set of questions from diverse groups of informants.

3.2 Content Analysis (Bergman, 2010, 379-396) comprised three key components: (1) Data organization, involving the process of managing data by categorizing issues based on research objectives, structuring main themes, and subthemes before presentation; (2) Data display, a process of descriptive data representation to illustrate the management processes, strengths, weaknesses, and opportunities in the operational practices of community financial organizations in Rattaphum District; and (3) Drawing conclusions, interpretation, and verification, where the research findings were descriptively synthesized and analyzed in accordance with the essence of the underlying concepts and theories employed in this study.

Findings

Part 1: Strengths, Weaknesses, and Opportunities in Operations and Community Economic Development of Community Financial Organizations in Rattaphum District.

Data collected from community financial organizations within the Rattaphum District revealed a diverse landscape, ranging from strong groups to weak groups, and several groups are currently in the process of revitalizing their management practices after experiencing setbacks in the past. Presently, community financial organizations in Rattaphum District are classified into various types: village fund groups (63 groups), community financial institutions (5 institutions), savings groups and production savings groups (43 groups), Satcha Saving Groups (40 groups), Mae Khong Pan Din Fund Groups (32 groups), and other types of groups (47 groups). Each of these groups operated as a community financial organization with the goal of providing welfare to their members. The strengths, weaknesses in operations, and opportunities for community economic development are as follows:

The Strengths: Distinct strengths in the operations of each type of community financial are outlined as follows:

1) The Community Financial Institution Groups: These groups had evolved beyond being village fund organizations, reaching a management level comparable to state-owned banks. While their financial transactions may be less extensive, they received mentorship from state financial institutions like the Government Savings Bank and the Bank for Agriculture and Agricultural Cooperatives (BAAC). Consequently, the strength of community financial institutions lies in their autonomy and ability to transcend their initial status as village funds. They had integrated computer systems and financial management software to aid in administration, control of income and expenses, balance sheet accounting, and issuing receipts. Examples included the Nong Mai Kean Community Financial Institution, the Kamphaeng Phet Sub-district Community Financial Institution, etc.

2) The Village Fund Groups: These groups benefited from a strong legal framework established under the Act on National Village and Urban Community Fund (B.E. 2547). The legislation had undergone multiple revisions to adapt to changing circumstances. As a result, most village fund groups had been elevated to legal entities, enhancing their stability. Therefore, when managed by a competent committee with a thorough understanding of management practices rules, and regulations, these village fund groups could experience significant growth and become dependable pillars of support for the community.

3) Savings Groups and Production-Oriented Savings Groups: The distinction lies in the natural formation of these groups. Savings groups were formed organically by pooling contributions from members. Some groups had officials from the Department of Community Development acting as mentors during their establishment phase. The strength of these groups lied in the autonomy of their committee members in management, especially when not bound by extensive regulations. This allowed for flexible organizational management that could cater to the members' needs. Examples included the Nong Mai Kaen Savings Group, the Rubber Plantation Savings Group in Ban Thung Khom Bang, etc.

4) The Satcha Saving Group was an emerging group that aims to exclusively provide community benefits. It resembled a savings group. The group's strength lied in its objective to provide welfare for its members. Therefore, the main source of income was through savings, which continuously grew. Except for cases where members were sick or deceased, or situations where they needed to fulfill welfare conditions, funds were withdrawn and distributed on each occasion. There was autonomy in managing the group's affairs, guided by the jointly established rules between the committee and the members. For instance, some groups might lend money from the accumulated funds to members and charge interest to generate income for managing the group. As an example, the Satcha Saving Group in Tambon Tha Chamuang followed this model.

5) The Mae Khong Pan Din Fund Group stemmed from an initial fund created for the purpose of overcoming substance abuse within the village or community. The group's strength lay in being the sole recipient of donations or allocated funds, without engaging in the collection of savings like the Satcha Savings Group. As a result, managing the group was not complicated. When funds were needed for any activities, the community members used a collaborative decision-making process unique to that village or community, for example, the Ban Na Pab Mae Khong Pan Din Fund Group and the Khlong Yang Daeng Village Woman Fund. These groups or funds typically did not have a permanent establishment. They were usually embedded within other types of community financial organizations. The majority of members were also members of these community financial organizations.

6) Groups of various types, for the most part, emerged to provide occupational support to their members. For example, a fertilizer group operated by pooling together various needs for both chemical and organic fertilizers. This group acted as an intermediary, procuring fertilizers from wholesalers and distributing them to the members, often earning a profit from the price difference. Members had the option to use the fertilizers before making payments at a later time. The strength of these groups lies in their focus on promoting livelihoods, enhancing the quality of life, and directly strengthening the members within the community.

The Weaknesses: Despite their differences in objectives and methods, the operations of community financial organizations of various types, what they shared in common was the group management structure through committees. The observed vulnerabilities which had an impact on the growth of these groups primarily revolved around management factors (4 M) as follows (Rompho, 2014).

1) Man: One crucial factor in managing community financial organizations was the people or personnel involved. An often-observed weakness was that the committee and group/organization

members did not cooperate in adhering to rules and regulations. Borrowed funds were not returned, even when the committee followed up and requested repayment. There was a persistent attitude of "deny, avoid, and refuse to pay." This behavior negatively affected the group's strength. If legal action was taken, conflicts arose, and the committee members were often reluctant to take legal measures due to the fact that all members were part of the same community and were familiar with each other.

2) Money: There were weaknesses in terms of capital and financial expenditure, which could be divided into two parts. The first part was insufficient capital to meet the borrowing needs of the members. Additionally, the loan approval process was controlled to prevent easy and excessive disbursement of funds. The second part was related to the limited financial resources, leading to minimal allocation for expenditures resulting in low compensation for the workforce which reduced motivation for work. As a result, the workforce was primarily volunteering.

3) Materials: The weakness lies in the group's office premises and facilities. This was evident in groups that were not yet well-established, where there was a lack of a clearly defined office space. Seating and workspaces were often shared with various community activities, lacking privacy. This resulted in discomfort for the committee members while working. It also hindered coordination among members contributing to overall challenges in terms of meeting locations, etc.

4) Management: This was a crucial factor affecting the progress and advancement of a group. A significant weakness commonly observed in less established groups, especially those in the process of revitalization from past failures, was the lack of systematic short-term, medium-term, and long-term planning. Additionally, there was a deficiency in updating regulations to current standards and a lack of organized financial accounting. Efforts tend to be reactive and focused on resolving immediate issues. A key vulnerability for these groups was member confidence, which required a considerable amount of time to rebuild.

Opportunities: Throughout the past two decades, Thailand has faced financial and economic challenges on various occasions, such as the 1997 Tom Yum Kung Crisis, the 2007 Hamburger Crisis, and the 2014 political turmoil. As a response to these challenges, direct funding support had been provided to village and urban community funds nationwide, starting with an initial budget of 1 million baht in 2001 (Wongkham, 2017: 211). This has led to the transformation of village funds into legal entities, with the aim of establishing community banks in the future. Furthermore, financial organizations in various forms emerged, including production-oriented savings groups with support from both the public and private sectors. State-owned banks also contributed by strengthening communities in diverse ways, including academic support, advisory services, and low-interest loans to elevate groups into community enterprise entities, etc.

In summary, community financial organizations have progressively grown in significance, playing a vital role in driving community and national well-being and economy. Through this study, both strengths and weaknesses in their operations have been identified, along with opportunities to boost community economies. These insights can serve as valuable lessons to further fortify community financial organizations as foundational pillars for community resilience. Additionally, the findings can be used to facilitate inter-group connections, fostering mutual aid and expanding cooperation among groups, ultimately leading towards the establishment of a network of community financial organizations in Rattaphum District.

Part 2: Collaboration Network Among the Community Financial Organizations in Rattaphum District

The study revealed that community financial organizations in Rattaphum District, Songkhla Province, consisted of various groups, including village fund groups, community financial institutions, production-oriented savings groups, Satcha saving groups, Mae Khong Pan Din fund groups, and other similar groups. While each group follows a committee-based management structure, the internal management details differed among them. All these groups made efforts to establish connections and networks among themselves to provide mutual advice and support. The networking structure varied, including connections at the district and sub-district levels, as well as groups that remained unconnected with others as shown in the following sections.

1) Networking at the District Level: Representatives from community financial organizations in each sub-district came together to form a district-level network committee. This committee's strength lay in its establishment of an operational team of village and urban community funds in Rattaphum District consisting of skilled and enthusiastic individuals. This task force was dedicated to assisting and advising on various aspects, including changing fund regulations and maintaining balanced financial accounts. The team was equipped to provide both academic guidance and practical management support related to fund management within the district.

2) Networking at the Sub-district Level: The network connected all community financial organizations within a specific sub-district. The study revealed that while there are legal regulations in place, some village fund groups were not yet prepared to engage in such network activities due to various reasons. However, there were strong instances of sub-district-level networking observed, such as the network of village fund groups in Khuha Tai Sub-district, the network of village fund groups in Khao Phra Sub-district, and the network of village fund groups in Kamphaeng Phet Sub-district. However, for other types of community financial organizations, such as production-oriented savings groups, Mae Khong Pan Din fund groups, and Satcha savings groups, there was no evidence of sub-district-level networking.

3) Partial Networking at the Village Level: This involved connecting some of the community financial organizations within a specific village. The study found that there was partial driving of the sub-district-level village fund network, with some village fund groups participating while others did not join in the network activities. In some cases, village fund groups only associated their name with the network but did not send representatives to

participate. Examples of these included the village fund network in Tha Chamuang Sub-district and the village fund network in Khuan Ru Sub-district. Additionally, there was also networking observed among other types of community financial organizations, such as savings groups and community financial institutions, which engaged in exchanging practices and guidelines among certain groups. Examples included the savings group in Ban Klong To Sub-district and the community financial institution in Ban Na Pap Sub-district, etc.

4) Lack of Networking with Other Groups: The lack of networking with other groups was mainly attributed to past management failures, where some groups had experienced irrecoverable setbacks or partial recovery, rendering them unprepared to engage in networking. Examples included the village fund groups of Plai Lahan Sub-district and Chai Khlong Sub-district, etc. There were also instances where certain groups disappeared entirely, such as the savings group in Khao Soi Dao Sub-district and the savings group in Ban Na Lueak Sub-district. Furthermore, some other types of community financial organizations did not establish networking connections from the outset. These included the Satcha saving groups, Mae Khong Pan Din fund, livestock-raising groups, goat-raising groups, and other product processing groups, etc.

In summary, the networking among community financial organizations in Rattaphum District demonstrates various levels of connectivity, each differing in its strength. Furthermore, the extent of connectivity is influenced by the specific type of community financial organization. Some affiliations adhere to established organizational regulations, such as village and urban community fund groups. The decision to join these networks often depended on the readiness of the organization and the perceived benefits of participation.

Section 3: Best Practices in Financial Management of the Community Financial Organizations in Rattaphum District for Strengthening Community Resilience

The study revealed that at the core of effective management for the community financial organizations lay the human factor, particularly the committee members. When individuals embodied qualities such as honesty, knowledge, selflessness, and a strong spirit of volunteerism, they became driven to contribute to the group's growth, fostering its resilience. They actively sought methods to propel the group forward, especially in terms of achieving financial stability. The workshop, aimed at gathering opinions and exploring efficient models for managing the community financial organizations in Rattaphum District 20 September 26, 2020, revealed intriguing conclusions, presenting a commendable approach to best practices in the management of the community financial organizations in Rattaphum District to bolster community strength including 1) a committee with high integrity, selflessness, a strong volunteer spirit, and substantial knowledge and abilities in financial management, particularly if the committee chairperson possessed expertise in accounting or audit, it significantly enhanced the efficiency of financial management, 2) regular preparation of income and expenditure statements and balance sheets every 6 months or annually, ensuring their up-to-date status for seamless audit readiness, 3) All monetary transactions, both receipts, and disbursements, should be recorded in separate ledgers from the income and expenditure accounts, with detailed and thorough documentation, 4) each payment and receipt must adhere to the regulations and guidelines set by the organization, especially in the allocation of funds for various expenses. Any payments beyond the established guidelines should be presented for approval at committee or member meetings before disbursement, 5) regular updates and improvements should be made to the organization's regulations and guidelines, aligning them with the members' needs gathered during the annual general meeting should be utilized for these revisions, 6) adherence to the members' regulations and guidelines was essential, as any updates or changes must be approved during the general assembly. In each general assembly, the committee should summarize the key regulations and any new amendments for member awareness, fostering a collective review of the practices, and 7) there should be an auditing committee/department in place, which could be adaptable based on the situation. For instance, there could be an auditing system involving committee members, personnel from other departments, or even from networked organizations. The purpose of the auditing process was not primarily to detect wrongdoing, but rather to help mitigate risks and ensure mutual accountability.

Discussion

Based on the findings from the three aforementioned research sections, several notable achievements, innovations, and new insights have been derived, which can be summarized as follows:

1. Establishing a robust network of community financial organizations is possible when all parties share a common interest. This was evident in the case of training sessions on fund accounting provided to the network of village funds in Khao Phra Sub-district. The research team consulted with the Village Fund Network (VFN) in Rattaphum and found that the network's operational team from the district office was willing to serve as trainers, leading to a tripartite collaboration involving the Faculty of Liberal Arts, Rattaphum District's network operational team, and the village fund network of Khao Phra Sub-district. This collaboration extended to include 12 participating village funds for them to share their common practices. Furthermore, representatives from various government agencies were invited to observe and participate in the project. These included the Community Development Office and District Chief of Rattaphum District, who served as project consultants. Additionally, officers from Songkhla Village and Urban Community Fund Office were also involved as speakers, while the village headman and sub-district headman of Khao Phra Sub-district jointly presided over the closing ceremony. The circumstances align with the findings of Yimyam and Thawarom (2018) who identify factors contributing to the self-sufficiency and resilience of prototype village communities. These factors encompass state and private sector support, community management processes, active participation, and notably, the establishment of networks, which emerges as another pivotal element in fostering resilience. The findings also aligned with the research conducted by Thiraphat et al. (2012) exploring the sustainability of community

welfare funds in the context of striving for group excellence. It was found that key components included extending the group's operations to other communities, establishing both internal and external network connections related to various group activities, and creating a collaborative work network within the group to foster collective learning among its members, etc.

2. Strengthening community financial network organizations is possible if the network committee consistently holds consultative meetings, as can be seen from the village fund network in various sub-districts such as Kamphaeng Phet Sub-district, Khao Phra Sub-district, and Kuha Tai Sub-district. These networks have a monthly committee meeting in different village fund groups' offices within the sub-district. The research team participated in these meetings, suggesting ways to establish second and third tiers of leadership to prepare for a new leadership structure. Currently, most leadership positions are held by the elderly. This proposal will guide the Village Brick Fund of Kuha Tai Sub-district in implementing these recommendations. This is in line with the research by Kitiwong and Rattanasa-nguanwong (2018), which discusses the components contributing to the success of community-based occupational groups. These components consist of four main factors: leaders, followers, networks, and collaboration between government and private sector entities. The process of building success within these groups includes fostering inspiration, self-assessment, management, progression towards achievements, and collective goal attainment. Furthermore, this aligns with the findings of Chantaranamchoo et al. (2018), who explored causal factors affecting the application of the Sufficiency Economy Philosophy in managing community financial institutions. They identified five key dimensions: leadership, committee members, members, learning, and networks. These dimensions play a crucial role in guiding the management of community financial institutions and establishing connections with the local economy, leading to sustainable success.

3. Creating greater cooperation in a multicultural society, as observed through on-site research conducted by the research team, it can be concluded that Rattaphum District is an area with a high level of cultural diversity. Many village funds (VFs) and community networks within the sub-districts have members from both Buddhist and Muslim communities. These groups adhere to the same rules and regulations without encountering conflicts, and importantly, they provide mutual assistance to each other. This aligns with the research by Lakthong (2015), who studies strategies for building community resilience within a multicultural context and identified seven key strategies for community resilience-building, including (1) developing the capacity of community leaders, (2) cultivating unique community knowledge, (3) designing activities to foster relationships within the community, (4) community involvement, (5) establishing internal network organizations within the community, (6) community funds, and (7) rules, regulations, and discipline.

4. Promoting resilient community economies has been found to involve several sub-districts and networks that effectively utilize community financial organizations as a foundation for advancing the local economy. For instance, the network of village fund groups

in Kamphaeng Phet Sub-district provides support to various groups such as fertilizer cooperatives, cattle farming groups, goat herding groups, Ung (Stingless bee) product processing groups, and community artisan groups, etc. This aligns with the research by Butsalee et al., (2019) which explores sustainable strategies for strengthening the economic development of communities in the northeastern region. The study highlights that communities should engage in collaborative group management through various processes and methods, including: (1) active participation in community activities, (2) leadership strength and managerial capacity, (3) shared rules, regulations, or guidelines for cooperative operations, (4) collective knowledge for group functioning, and (5) collaborative utilization of resources for joint endeavors. The findings are in accordance with a study by Lasanklang et al., (2020), examining debt management in participatory household economics in Lamphun Province. The focus was on evaluating the outcomes of economic resilience building. The study found that resilient communities must maintain regular household accounting, engage in various community funds, conserve watershed forests, and reduce unnecessary household expenses. Additionally, the research revealed that sustainable community resilience requires three important components: active participation in community activities, application of Self-reliant Economy, and the transmission of ethical values through the cultural traditions and customs of the community (Kongjareaun & Rattanaubon, 2011).

Nevertheless, there are several issues that need to be addressed. Firstly, communication challenges aroused by different factors i.e. age gaps, educational levels, and financial status may arise both within the groups. The issue also occurs between the community financial organizations and government regulatory bodies. These are in line with Muensai et al., (2017) who found that to enhance access to welfare-promoting funds, clear communication channels and more transparent profit-sharing mechanisms should be established. Mediators could be appointed to facilitate communication, offer guidance, organize forums to exchange knowledge, run projects, and write appealing project proposals, etc. From the service users' or the public’s perspective, issues such as lack of information tracking, residential mobility, and misunderstandings of the information conveyed by current media used by organizations might occur. These problems are exacerbated by limited learning opportunities due to economic and societal factors. Nonetheless, the state and all relevant stakeholders should promote group activities, foster community financial organizations, or increase group formation in various forms. This will contribute to the development of a community democratic process by showcasing receptiveness to others' opinions, respecting each other's rights, fostering collaborative learning processes, and sustaining community culture (Plodkong & Dhammasaccakarn, 2013).

Conclusion

In Rattaphum District, community financial organizations come in various types, each with its own strengths and weaknesses in operations. Additionally, they offer different opportunities for promoting the local economy. For instance, the village fund groups have a strong legal framework to support them, while the community financial institution groups have built on their own identity, uplifted from village funds, and incorporated computer systems and software to assist in financial management. Next, the savings groups and production-oriented savings groups gain the advantage from their flexible management, allowing greater adaptability. Likewise, the Satcha saving groups have their strength in providing member benefits and the Mae Khong Pan Din Fund Groups excel in being the sole receiver of donations or allocated funds to be used exclusively for activities related to community drug prevention. Lastly, the strengths of other financial entities in the community lie in being organizations that promote their members' livelihoods. As for the weaknesses identified in community financial organizations that are not yet strong, the 4M management factors serve as a framework for analysis. It can be concluded that in terms of the Man, the weaknesses revolve around an insufficiently robust committee, comprising elderly and long-serving members. Some members do not follow rules and regulations, borrowing money but failing to return it. In the area of the Money, the weakness is characterized by limited capital, while members have significant borrowing needs. Moreover, there is restricted funding available for essential operations. In addition, concerning the Material, there is a lack of designated workspace, necessitating the use of the community's multipurpose hall or committee members' homes. Regarding the Management, weaknesses include a lack of systematic planning, failure to update rules and regulations to current standards, absence of balanced financial record-keeping, and a deficiency in conducting audits to serve as a cornerstone for risk mitigation within the group.

Regarding network collaboration among the community financial organizations in Rattaphum District, it has been found that there are linkages at both the district and sub-district levels, as well as instances where some groups have no connections with other groups at all. The most well-defined network is the one among village fund groups, which aligns with the regulations stipulated by the government. However, in practical implementation, it has been observed that this network has not been fully established in every sub-district.

For effective financial management practices to strengthen the community financial organizations in Rattaphum District, the following key points can be summarized: (1) committee members should possess qualities of honesty, integrity, self-sacrifice, volunteerism, and relevant knowledge and skills in financial management, (2) regular financial records of income and expenses, balanced sheets should be maintained, (3) record keeping of all financial transactions in a ledger, (4) every financial transaction, both incoming and outgoing, should strictly adhere to the established rules and regulations of the group, (5) continuously update and improve the organization's rules and regulations to stay current, (6) all group members should abide by the established rules and regulations, and (7) an audit committee responsible for overseeing and evaluating the organization's operations should be established.

Recommendations

1. Policy-oriented Recommendations

The government should consider reducing populist policies as they tend to provide equal assistance to all organizations without analyzing each one's specific needs. This can lead to a situation where many organizations do not strive for self-improvement and instead rely solely on government assistance.

Simultaneously, efforts should be directed toward promoting welfare through the utilization of community welfare fund networks as a foundation. This approach would serve to enhance the strength of the community financial organization network in another impactful way.

2. Recommendations for Future Research

It is advisable to study the integration of state-promoted financial organizations, such as village and urban community funds, with pre-existing community-initiated financial entities to understand how these two types of financial organizations can create a unique and potent force, thereby enhancing the resilience and strength of the community in the future.

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The Development of Processed Coconut Products by Bungasire Savings Community Enterprise, Tha Klong Village, Pattani Province

การพัฒนาผลิตภัณฑ์แปรรูปจากมะพร้าวของวิสาหกิจชุมชน กลุ่มออมทรัพย์บุหงาซิเร๊ะ บ้านท่าคลอง จังหวัดปัตตานี

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Abstract

This research aimed to firstly explore Bungasire Savings Community Enterprise's capabilities in processing coconut-based products, developing processed coconut products, and enhancing packaging for product value enhancement; and secondly identify approaches for marketing development. Purposive sampling was employed to select 53 members from the Bungasire Savings Community Enterprise, five coconut processing experts, and six packaging specialists. Data were collected through interviews and packaging assessment questionnaires, which were subsequently analyzed using descriptive statistics in percentage, mean, and standard deviation, complemented by an evaluation of product packaging. Findings revealed that the enterprise demonstrated consistent and positive development, emphasizing the use of local resource capital in its product development. Consequently, four new products were developed from processed coconuts, including coconut cooking oil, coconut balm, coconut yellow massage oil, and coconut facial serum. The development of the products also included secondary aspects such as logo and packaging design. This development aimed to increase product value and applied the 2S+2P model for marketing development, which included elements of 1) Storyline, to create brand narration or description; 2) Satisfaction, to ensure customers experience a feeling of worthiness and appreciation when using the product; 3) Promotional activities, to inform customers about the products and implement promotional activities; and 4) Partnership, to build marketing alliances. In conclusion, the results of this study indicated growth at the grassroots level of the economy and demonstrated the strength of community enterprise.

Keywords: coconut products, packaging development, community enterprise

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บทคัดย่อ

งานวิจัยนี้มุ่งศึกษาศักยภาพของวิสาหกิจชุมชนกลุ่มออมทรัพย์บุหงาซิเร๊ะ ในการแปรรูปผลิตภัณฑ์จากมะพร้าว พัฒนาผลิตภัณฑ์แปรรูปจากมะพร้าว และพัฒนาบรรจุภัณฑ์เพิ่มมูลค่าสินค้า และมุ่งหาแนวทางการพัฒนาการตลาด กลุ่มตัวอย่างเลือกแบบเจาะจง ประกอบด้วยสมาชิกวิสาหกิจชุมชนกลุ่มออมทรัพย์บุหงาซิเร๊ะ จำนวน 53 คน ผู้เชี่ยวชาญการแปรรูปผลิตภัณฑ์จากมะพร้าว จำนวน 5 คน และผู้เชี่ยวชาญด้านบรรจุภัณฑ์ จำนวน 6 คน เครื่องมือที่ใช้ คือ แบบสัมภาษณ์และแบบสอบถามประเมินบรรจุภัณฑ์ วิเคราะห์ข้อมูลด้วยวิธีพรรณนาวิเคราะห์และใช้สถิติค่าร้อยละ ค่าเฉลี่ย ส่วนเบี่ยงเบนมาตรฐานในการวิเคราะห์ประเมินบรรจุภัณฑ์ผลิตภัณฑ์ ผลการศึกษาพบว่า ศักยภาพของวิสาหกิจชุมชนกลุ่มออมทรัพย์บุหงาซิเร๊ะ มีพัฒนาการที่ดีต่อเนื่อง การพัฒนาผลิตภัณฑ์เน้นการใช้ทุนทรัพยากรในท้องถิ่น โดยได้พัฒนาผลิตภัณฑ์ใหม่ที่แปรรูปจากมะพร้าว จำนวน 4 รายการ ได้แก่ น้ำมันมะพร้าวปรุงอาหาร ยาหม่อง น้ำมันเหลือง และน้ำตบเซรั่ม รวมทั้งได้ออกแบบตราสัญลักษณ์ ออกแบบบรรจุภัณฑ์เพื่อเพิ่มมูลค่าสินค้า ตลอดจนได้แนวทางการพัฒนาการตลาด รูปแบบ 2S+2P ซึ่งประกอบด้วย 1) Story สร้างเรื่องราวของแบรนด์ 2) Satisfy สร้างความพึงใจให้ลูกค้า 3) Promotion ส่งเสริมการตลาด และ 4) Partnership สร้างภาคีการตลาด ผลลัพธ์ที่ได้จากการศึกษานี้ ชี้ให้เห็นการยกระดับเศรษฐกิจฐานรากและความเข้มแข็งของวิสาหกิจชุมชน

คำสำคัญ ผลิตภัณฑ์แปรรูปจากมะพร้าว การพัฒนาบรรจุภัณฑ์ วิสาหกิจชุมชน

Introduction

Community enterprises serve as a localized strategy for economic development, targeting the enhancement of quality of life at the grassroots level. Managed by cohesive groups of individuals bound by shared ways of life and values, these enterprises produce goods and provide services. Their primary aim is to generate income and achieve self-reliance in terms of resources, productivity, knowledge, wisdom, cultural capital, and social capital (Kaewsri, 2018). These community-based businesses are driven by combining traditional wisdom with new knowledge and technology to manufacture community-beneficial goods through effective cost management (Thongpoon et al., 2017). Furthermore, community enterprises also offer social benefits, such as promoting community resilience and harmony (Rattananuphong et al., 2021).

The Bungasire Savings Community Enterprise is situated in Village Number 10, Ban Tha Klong, Khok Pho District, Pattani Province. Most of the residents in the village are mainly engaged in agriculture, focusing on crops such as coconut, corn, and local vegetables. Consequently, the community has amassed a large capital in raw coconut material. In 2017, the community faced issues related to an oversupply of coconuts and plummeting prices. To counter this, a proposition was made to the villagers to process the raw coconuts into cold-pressed coconut oil products, opening up more opportunities for part-time employment and raising the value of coconuts in the area (W. Mareeka, personal communication, November 16, 2021). During the fieldwork, it was observed that the process of producing cold-pressed coconut oil generated a considerable amount of by-products, primarily residues of creamy coconut milk, that did not contain oil. However, with the aid of local expertise, these residues were successfully converted into cooking oil, yellow massage oil, balm, and other products. The earnings from the production of cold-pressed coconut oil amounted to approximately 50,000-60,000 baht per year for the group. Unfortunately, this was still below the set target for the 2018-2019 year period.

Given the situation described above, the researcher has developed an interest in exploring the development of processed coconut products and adding value to the products of the Bungasire Savings Community Enterprise. Anticipated benefits from this project included the innovation and development of new products derived from coconuts that would result in increased income for the group and the introduction of economic crops within the community, serving as a crucial step toward the further development of the foundational economy.

Objectives

1. To explore the potential of the Bungasire Savings Community Enterprise and its processed coconut products
2. To develop processed coconut products for the Bungasire Savings Community Enterprise
3. To design packaging that would enhance the value of the products from the Bungasire Savings Community Enterprise
4. To identify approaches for marketing development

Literature Review

1. Community Enterprise

A community enterprise is conceptualized as the organizational management of community affairs related to the production of goods and provision of services by a unified group of individuals who share a common way of life and collaboratively engage in business enterprises to generate income and achieve self-reliance on resources, productivity, knowledge, wisdom, cultural capital and social capital (Kaewsri, 2018). It represents a form of entrepreneurial endeavor for creatively managing community funds for self-sustainability (Phattarachachai et al., 2019). In Suphanburi Province, Nichanon et al. (2022) investigated the revenue growth of community enterprises from the processing of safe agricultural products and discovered the presence of cosmetics and food processing items available in the area, with the potential yield up to 531,600 baht per annum for local enterprises. Petpradub (2018) analyzed the profit-making capacity of coconut products of the Aman Coconut Processing Community Enterprise Group in Narathiwat province and revealed that the business of roasted coconuts experienced an incremental profit each year for the three consecutive years under study relative to the base year. Therefore, it is essential to develop coconut products that offer added value to the community.

2. Product Development

Praneetphonkrang (2004) mentioned that the essence of product development lies in the refinement of existing products or the creation of entirely new ones to enhance their value and differentiate them from competitors. Similarly, Yijohor et al. (2018) proposed incorporating the “3S model" as a key strategy for achieving success in new product development, especially in the realm of community handicraft products, to align with market demands while offering added value. The 3S model contains three components: Story, Sustainability, and Suitability. In addition, Kunasri et al. (2018) revealed a compelling consumer preference for community-produced items, especially those that incorporate locally sourced ingredients and employ innovative packaging techniques to create distinction and amplify product value. Consequently, it is imperative for community enterprises engaged in product development to prioritize the utilization of community-specific raw materials as a means to maximize the overall value of their offerings.

3. Packaging Design

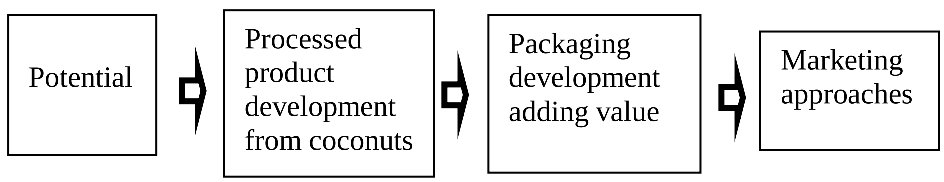
Packaging serves as a shield, safeguarding products against damage during transportation and storage (Plengdeesakul & Plengdeesakul, 2018). It can also be a strategic tool for manufacturers to foster brand awareness (Ritmanee et al., 2017). Saksanga et al. (2018) noted that effective packaging designs can establish credibility and add value to product distribution. Currently, many brands focus more on leveraging community image as a unique selling point to differentiate them from their competitors.

4. SWOT and PEST Analysis

SWOT is an analytical tool for assessing an organization's Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats to aid in planning and strategizing (Phattarachachai et al., 2019). Conversely, PEST analyzes external factors that impact an organization, including Policy, Economy, Society, and Technology. After conducting a SWOT analysis on the Bungasire Savings Community Enterprise, the researcher identified its strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and obstacles. PEST, focusing on uncontrollable external factors, was utilized to provide critical information to develop responsive strategies to maximize opportunities for the group.

Figure 1

The Research Framework: The Development of Processed Coconut Products by Bungasire Savings Mommunity Enterprise



Note. Research framework by Nipatimah Hayehama

Research Methodology

Below is the research methodology employed in this study:

1. Data Collection

Purposive sampling was employed to select 53 members of the Bungasire Savings Community Enterprise, five specialists in processed coconut products, and six packaging specialists.

2. Research Instruments

2.1 For qualitative data, in-depth semi-structured interviews were conducted with open-ended questions to collect data corresponding to Objectives 1-4.

2.2 For quantitative data, 5-point Likert scale questionnaires on product packaging designs with 16 response items corresponding to sub-points of Objective 3 were administered. Before the administration, the instrument's quality was evaluated by three experts.

3. Other Complementary Methods

3.1 A review of related literature was carried out to study the concepts, theories, and related research, defining the conceptual framework of this study.

3.2 Fieldwork was also conducted to obtain detailed information for the research project and consent from volunteers.

3.3 Meetings were organized to perform the SWOT and PEST analyses to identify external and internal factors, weaknesses, and strengths that impact the enterprise.

3.4 The process of developing new products from coconuts involved 1) brainstorming meetings to identify needs for product-processing development, leading to the decision to develop products such as coconut cooking oil, coconut balm, yellow massage oil, and facial serum; 2) experimenting with product development by incorporating comments and suggestions from local specialists; 3) organizing training to transfer knowledge about new prototype products; and 4) testing new products for chemical properties in the laboratory.

3.5 The packaging development process to enhance product value involved 1) studying packaging concepts and identities, 2) interviewing group representatives and analyzing the identity of Bungasire Savings Community Enterprise, 3) organizing packaging design and development activities to enhance product value and distinctiveness, and 4) assessing packaging design with relevant expertise.

3.6 The process of identifying approaches for marketing development involved 1) organizing training sessions to enhance knowledge of marketing management and online media, 2) conducting marketing trial and market testing, and 3) holding group meetings to finalize the marketing development approaches.

4. Data Analysis

4.1 Qualitative data were descriptively analyzed and validated for accuracy, directness, and practicality through joint analysis with the Bungasire Savings Community Enterprise and related individuals.

4.2 The quantitative questionnaires, assessed by six packaging design experts, were used to evaluate product packaging design. Data were analyzed using simple descriptive statistics in percentages, frequencies, mean, and standard deviation.

Findings

Findings are reported in alignment with objectives as follows:

1. Potential of Bungasire Savings Community Enterprise and Its Processed Coconut Products

Three significant issues were discovered regarding the potential and the products processed from coconuts by the Bungasire Savings Community Enterprise. These are listed as follows:

1.1 Bungasire Savings Community Enterprise's Capacities

The group has embraced the concept of continuous improvement, having worked collaboratively for over a decade and finally having registered as a community enterprise. Initial development capital was sourced from the Sajja Savings Group. Budgetary money was also secured to aid further development and fund other activities. Emphasis was placed on the productivity derived from local wisdom and the optimal utilization of raw materials in the community. This endeavor has not only nurtured business expertise within community members but also served as a unifying tool, fostering cohesion and collaborative economic development for self-reliance. Today, known as Bungasire Savings Community Enterprise, it remains a strong entity.

1.2 Coconut Product Processing by Bungasire Savings Community Enterprise

The Bungasire Savings Community Enterprise produces various processed coconut products, with cold-pressed coconut oil being the primary source of income for the group. They also manufacture everyday household items, incorporating cold-pressed coconut oil as a main ingredient to reduce household expenses. Surplus products are made available for sale in community markets and to general vendors.

1.3 Analysis of Bungasire Savings Community Enterprise's Capacities

Based on the SWOT and PEST analyses of the potential challenges faced by the Bungasire Savings Community Enterprise, the following were observed:

Strengths: The strengths of Bungasire Savings Community Enterprise are internal factors that provide advantages to the group. These strengths include 1) a highly skilled and experienced group leader who excels in development and leadership and has extensive experience working with group networks; 2) abundant access to raw materials within the community, ensuring ease of availability and sufficiency; 3) clear and well-defined policies and operational goals, coupled with a structured organizational approach; 4) members' proficiency in developing products based on local wisdom and acquired skills; and 5) a familial, warm kinship among group members, fostering strong internal relationships.

Weaknesses: The weaknesses of Bungasire Savings Community Enterprise refer to the internal factors that pose disadvantages or obstacles to the group's operations. Identified weaknesses include 1) a lack of knowledge in production management, particularly in quality control and adherence to quality standards during the production process; 2) the absence of FDA certification for the products manufactured, indicating a lack of conformity to quality standards and a deficiency in laboratory testing; 3) limited marketing knowledge characterized by an absence of market analysis planning, insufficient distribution channels, an undefined customer base, and inadequate promotional strategies or techniques; 4) the products lack distinctive branding, with no logo or emblem to convey the image and identity of the group; and 5) a deficiency in IT skills necessary for managing sales, coupled with the absence of strategies for distribution, online sales, and proactive sales.

Opportunities: Opportunities refer to the external factors that can aid Bungasire Savings Community Enterprise achieve its objectives. These opportunities include 1) support from government networks aimed at capacity building; 2) recognition and involvement from external agencies who perceive the potential of the group, leading them to participate and conduct research for the group's development, coupled with support in the form of funding, equipment, knowledge, and advice; 3) the selection of the group's products by the district agricultural agency to showcase their specialty and uniqueness at both the provincial and national levels; and 4) the chance to receive feedback and assessments during product contests, paving the way for enhanced reliability of the group's products.

Threats: Threats are external environmental factors that can serve as obstacles and cause harm. For the Bungasire Savings Community Enterprise, these threats are categorized as follows: 1) The presence of changing situations, such as political instability, fluctuations in government policy, and varying economic, social, and technological conditions within the country, could hinder the ability of group members to adapt to these external alterations; 2) The stringent requirements of the Thai Industrial Standards Institute (TISI), especially regarding the production location standards, pose challenges to small community enterprises with limited capital capacity; 3) Specific standards for product placement in stores may limit the group's ability to initiate trial sales; and 4) The products of the community enterprise have been certified at the OTOP level, potentially imposing restrictions on the production standards' quality and affecting consumer confidence.

The PEST analysis results (external factors) found that policy-wise, the Thai government had formulated and enforced policies and a promotional act specifically for community enterprises to promote and support community economic growth, aligning with the Philosophy of Sufficiency Economy. Economically, the nation is in a recovery phase, which has led to a reduction in support from external agencies for community enterprises, affecting funding, development, and activities. Socioculturally, there is a prevalent trend focusing on health and self-care, driving an increased interest in quality cold-pressed coconut oil due to its health benefits for the body and skin. Technologically, the progression in information technology has enhanced the accessibility and availability of the group's cold-pressed coconut oil products online, ensuring quicker deliveries and making the products readily reachable for customers.

2. Development of Processed Coconut Products for Bungasire Savings Community Enterprise

Bungasire Savings Community Enterprise has innovated by developing four new products from processed coconuts, including cooking oil, coconut balm, yellow massage oil, and facial serum. The subsequent details are as follows:

2.1 Development of Cooking Oil from Processed Coconut

To develop coconut cooking oil, the researcher conducted surveys and interviews with the group leader and local specialists experienced in coconut oil creation. The product development team attempted to innovate cooking oil using a hot-pressed method by leveraging the residues: the thin blemish cream from the first layer and the non-oily coconut cream from the third layer, left from the cold-pressed coconut oil production process. The experimentation revealed that the technique to create high-quality coconut oil was similar to the procedure of extracting fresh coconut milk from raw materials. This attempt was recognized as a new product development, reflecting the collective wisdom of the community members and aligning with the local way of life, norms, and culture.

2.2 Development of Yellow Massage Oil from Processed Coconut

The initiative to develop balm and yellow oil products was primarily driven by the needs of the group members who aimed to utilize raw coconut oil, a product the group could independently produce. Consequently, representatives from Bungasire Savings Community Enterprise seized the opportunity to acquire knowledge on creating balms and yellow massage oil under the guidance of local expert Somchai Boonpan, the proprietor of Nakee brand yellow oil balm. Subsequently, these representatives have successfully implemented the newfound knowledge to develop their distinct coconut products.

2.3 Development of Facial Serum from Processed Coconut

Given the properties of cold-pressed coconut oil, known for its quick absorption into the skin and its health and beauty benefits (Bawalan & Chapman, 2006), the idea of developing a facial serum product using this oil as a primary ingredient was conceived. Subsequently, an experimental study was conducted utilizing local knowledge to produce the serum oil. Members who tried the resultant product observed that cold-pressed coconut oil, when mixed with salt flowers and brown sugar, absorbed more quickly into the skin, maintained the oil texture for a longer period, and provided immediate moisturization from the first use.

2.4 Chemical Test Results

Analysis for heavy metal contaminants, including mercury (Hg), arsenic (As), and lead (Pb) was conducted on samples of coconut cooking oil, coconut balm, yellow massage oil, and facial serum. The results revealed an absence of mercury, arsenic, and lead in all four product samples, affirming their safety for consumer use (certified to ISO/IEC 17025). The findings provide a significant measure of accomplishment in developing these new products and attest to the capability of Bungasire Savings Community Enterprise. This safety assurance substantiates the elevation of community economic standards by introducing reliable high-quality products.

3. Development of Value-Added Packaging for Bungasire Savings Community Enterprise

The research led to the development of distinctive packaging to enhance the perceived value of the products from Bungasire Savings Community Enterprise. A logo embodying a “betel leaf” image and the word “Plu leaf” was created, drawing inspiration from the Malay word “Sire,” a short name aiming to facilitate brand recall. “Sire” serves to craft a unique identity representing both the community and the group, associating the brand with its roots. Additionally, the logo utilizes a green color palette to signify the organic and natural essence of the products, telling a story of community, nature, and health, while encouraging support for local products. This unique logo was then applied across various product packages to fortify the brand identity of Bungasire Savings Community Enterprise. Subsequently, specialized packaging was designed for the four new additions to the product line: coconut cooking oil, coconut balm, yellow massage oil, and coconut facial serum. Each of the four product packaging designs underwent a meticulous evaluation process involving the analysis of percentages, mean values, and standard deviations. Six packaging experts provided high ratings for all items: cooking oil packaging ($\bar{X}$ = 4.02, SD=.30), balm packaging ($\bar{X}$ = 4.22, SD=.30), yellow oil packaging ($\bar{X}$ = 4.22, SD=.27), and serum packaging ($\bar{X}$ = 4.22, SD=.30).

4. Marketing Development Approaches for Bungasire Savings Community Enterprise

From the trial marketing study conducted through trade fairs at the Pracharat market, online markets, group meetings, and summaries of lessons learned, the Bungasire Savings Community Enterprise derived several marketing development approaches consolidated into the 2S+2P model as follows: 1) Storytelling/Story Line Narratives were emphasized to forge a compelling brand story, presenting the uniqueness and identity of the group to endow the products with added value and distinctiveness from competitors, communicated through various channels such as photos, video clips, and packaging that convey narratives intertwining communities, nature, and health; 2) Satisfaction was pivotal, relying on the intertwining components of product quality, pricing, and service delivery to cultivate customer loyalty and engagement. The group utilized its Facebook page to assess satisfaction and gather essential insights for marketing development; 3) Promotion involved implementing a spectrum of promotional activities, advertisements, and public relations, incorporating strategies such as discounts, product sampling, sales-boosting activities, and utilizing advertising media that efficiently ~~can~~ reach target audiences, coupled with proactive promotional efforts; and 4) Partnership was crucial, involving collaborations with diverse networks of partner organizations in both public and private sectors, including community enterprise marketing networks. These partnerships not only served as marketing channels but also facilitated market broadening to different networks across multiple provinces. The fortified relationships emerging from these collaborations could amplify marketing impact and open up avenues to align community products with tourism activities.

Figure 2

Processed Coconut Products

Note: Original photograph by Nipatimah Hayehama, June 12, 2022

Discussion

The discussion centers on themes stemming from the objectives of the study.

1. Bungasire Savings Community Enterprise's Capacities and Processed Coconut Products

The findings indicated that Bungasire Savings Community Enterprise has evolved as a crucial entity, originating from the Sajja Savings Group in Tha Khlong Village. The enterprise was established to serve as a capital base for further community development, complemented by various activities carried out by community members to foster mutual support and collective progress within the community. The enterprise emphasized community-engaged product processing stemming from community-based learning, local wisdom, and the availability of raw materials and capital resources. It sought to integrate business operations at the community level, build careers, increase income for community members, serve as a conduit to unite people and capital and encourage participation in economic development and self-reliant community progress. These foundational elements have cohesively contributed to the present-day resilience and success of Bungasire Savings Community Enterprise. Hence, it has demonstrated that the foundation of Bungasire Savings Community Enterprise was a strategic initiative aimed at grassroots economic development to enhance the community's quality of life. It has also demonstrated its efficacy as a unifying mechanism, fostering increased awareness among Tha Khlong Village community members about the richness of their resource base, intellectual capital, and cultural wealth. This newfound awareness has empowered them with the requisite knowledge to manage local resources proficiently, a concept that aligns with Kaewsri's (2018) observations. According to the observations, community enterprises are one of the strategies for economic development at grassroots levels, improving people's quality of life through the characteristic communal governance in product and service production joined by parties sharing a common way of life, collaboratively operating businesses to generate income and achieve self-sufficiency. The success of such enterprises is often attributed to the harmonious integration of resources, productivity, knowledge, wisdom, and sociocultural capital. In line with Ritmanee et al. (2017), the role of community enterprises is to undertake and expand investments, illustrating the ability to secure maximum returns for the community in the future. This involves product development, utilizing local raw materials to forge a unique identity for community enterprises. Therefore, it could be said that community enterprises play a crucial role in stimulating the grassroots economy, diversifying career opportunities, and fostering job creation and income generation, allowing greater self-reliance among community members. This phenomenon illustrated that the activities of the Bungasire Savings Community Enterprise have contributed to advancing the foundational economy by uplifting the quality of life for locals in Tha Klong Village.

2. Development of Processed Coconut Products by Bungasire Savings Community Enterprise

The investigation into Bungasire Savings Community Enterprise revealed the development of four new products: coconut cooking oil, balm, yellow massage oil, and facial serum. The formulation of these new products was strategically informed by distinctive brand identity, consumer needs, raw material costs, and the imperative of sustaining the group in a highly competitive business environment. This intention has led to the development of new products in response to target consumers' needs, stemming from a shared aspiration among group members to develop new products using processed coconuts. Specifically, concerning the product development concept, Plengdeesakul and Plengdeesakul (2018) emphasized the need to align products with customer needs, ensuring the distinctive appeal of the new products. Congruently, Mccathy and Pereault (1991) also highlighted that modifications and refinements in the product are integral to increasing customer satisfaction levels, especially in competitive market situations. Motivating community-based businesses requires continual improvement in products to ensure they remain appealing and current in the eyes of customers (Thongpoon et al., 2017). Kunasri et al. (2018) suggested that product development within community enterprises is often molded by customers' needs. Consequently, in the context of Bungasire Savings Community Enterprise, the development of four new products is perceived as a strategic response to consumer needs in today's competitive business landscape. The enterprise utilizes the availability of local raw materials to uplift its sustainability and market relevance.

In addition, the study found that Bungasire Savings Community Enterprise expressed a desire to expand its product line to include balm and yellow massage oil. This inclination was due to the group's ambition to maximize coconut oil utilization, a raw material they could autonomously produce and a principal component in all existing products. Furthermore, this approach not only establishes a unique selling point for the balm and yellow massage oil but also introduces a different niche to the market. As Thongpoon et al. (2017) articulated, a product brought to market should ideally embody local identity, reflecting the utility of local biodiversity and resources. In line with Tekhanmag (2020), leveraging local wisdom and natural resources in production can establish a product's distinctiveness among competitors. Incorporating stories or narratives can further enhance a product's value, fostering positive customer responses by providing items with meaning and context. It could thus be concluded that establishing a product's identity is partially achieved through incorporating local raw materials available within the community and crafting narratives about the product's origin to equip it with distinctive value. This approach aligns with Bungasire Savings Community

Enterprise's strategy for their new products, which prioritize the use of locally sourced coconut as a primary ingredient, especially in the formulation of balm and yellow massage oil. The use of self-produced coconut oil serves as a unique selling point, giving the products the differentiation they need to penetrate the market. This approach not only reflects the uniqueness of the group's products but also serves as an effective marketing strategy.

3. Value-added Packaging Development for Bungasire Savings Community Enterprise

In considering the packaging approach of Bungasire Savings Community Enterprise, it is clear that their packaging was strategically designed to project the image and story of the community as a distinctive element. This method aimed to provide the products with a unique identity and narrative, illustrated directly on the packaging, to enhance their appeal and distinguish them from competitors. Elements such as logo and packaging design play pivotal roles in this strategy. For instance, the new logo, "Baiplu," featuring a depiction of a betel leaf, and the inventive packaging design for new products like cooking oil, balm, yellow massage oil, and facial serum with coconuts and herbs serve to represent and convey the community's identity vividly. These decisions enabled recognition and differentiation, echoing the sentiments expressed by Sueathong (2011). Accordingly, the packaging design should incorporate well-conceived graphic elements, including logo, product name, brand, and illustrative depictions of the product, all to foster awareness and recall among customers. This is harmonious with promotional activities, where the objective is to portray the product in a memorable, positive light, transmitting the product's essence through clear, aesthetically pleasing imagery. This becomes especially significant when it comes to unique packaging that reflects the community's image, cultural lifestyles, wisdom, focus on nature, and environmental friendliness, which can subsequently cultivate a favorable impression of the products. As a result, the products not only meet expected values but also experience value enhancement. Likewise, Bungasire Savings Community Enterprise recognized the significance of creating a distinctive product image, integrating elements and narratives from the community into the packaging to set itself apart from other competitors. The researcher coined the label "betel leaf" and adopted the term "Baiplu," derived from the word Sire, to establish an easily recognizable and memorable brand identity. This approach conforms to Saksanga et al. (2018) concerning the design and development of packaging for Tung Lanna products of Chiang Mai province, demonstrating that strategic packaging fosters product credibility and enhances value in distribution.

4. Approaches for Marketing Development

From the market trial studies and lessons learned, a model termed 2S+2P was developed as a marketing approach for Bungasire Savings Community Enterprise. The elements of this included 1) Story, representing the coherent narratives of products and brands, illuminating their distinct value; 2) Satisfaction, focusing on delivering consumer contentment through product quality, fair pricing, and excellent service; 3) Promotion, which includes diverse promotional activities such as advertising and public relations to improve product visibility and appeal; and 4) Partnership, reflecting the synergy created with partner organizations and community enterprise networks to streamline marketing efforts and enhance product reach. This model, adapted from the concept of the 4Ps in the marketing mix, is crucial for devising marketing strategies that can enhance product distribution efficacy (Chanbuala et al., 2016). It was anticipated that the 2S+2P model could not only boost the sales of the enterprise's products but could also serve as a prototype for future marketing development strategies.

Conclusion

This study revealed the adequate capacities of Bungasire Savings Community Enterprise, highlighted by the development of four innovative processed coconut products: cooking oil, balm, yellow massage oil, and facial serum. The enterprise has designed distinctive and impactful packaging to add value to these new products and has formulated strategic marketing approaches to fulfill the group's objectives. In alignment with Pattani's provincial development strategy, specifically Strategy Number 2, which aims "to promote the competitiveness of the production process of goods and services to international standards," it is recommended that educational institutions research to enhance the quality of these four products to international, possibly FDA-certified standards. Furthermore, developmental research should be pursued to advance community products, ensuring they achieve internationally recognized standards, a goal shared by enterprises globally.

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The Development of Cultural Products from Southern Ancient Bead Patterns

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Abstract

This research aims to study the ancient beads in southern Thailand, design patterns based on beadwork gathered from several sources, and develop shawls as a multi-purpose product using the bead patterns. The data were collected from books, related documents, and interviews with 13 informants who were staff members in cultural museums situated in communities, bead intellectuals, and bead collectors in Songkhla and Krabi Provinces. The obtained information was used as fundamental knowledge in the designing process and the development of multi-purpose shawls. The satisfaction with the products was evaluated by 400 tourists through an online questionnaire. The study found that there are three distinct types of southern ancient beads reflecting the unique southern context: monochrome glass beads, beads of the sun gods, and seashell beads. Hence, the identities of those three beads were brought to create patterns and design multi-purpose shawls. The analysis of the tourists' responses showed that the sun god pattern shawls were the most satisfying ones, followed by the monochrome glass bead pattern shawls and the seashell bead pattern shawls.

Keywords: ancient beads, design, cultural products

บทคัดย่อ

การศึกษาวิจัยครั้งนี้มีจุดมุ่งหมายเพื่อศึกษาองค์ความรู้เกี่ยวกับลูกปัดโบราณภาคใต้ ประเทศไทย ออกแบบและพัฒนาลวดลายผ้าคลุมไหล่อเนกประสงค์ โดยใช้วิธีการศึกษารวบรวมข้อมูลจากหลักฐานทางโบราณวัตถุ

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การเก็บข้อมูลจากหนังสือ เอกสารที่เกี่ยวข้อง และการสัมภาษณ์เจ้าหน้าที่ในพิพิธภัณฑ์ ผู้มีความรู้เกี่ยวกับลูกปัด และนักสะสมลูกปัด ในจังหวัดสงขลาและกระบี่ จำนวน 13 ท่าน นำข้อมูลที่ได้จากการศึกษามาเป็นฐานความรู้ เชื่อมโยงไปสู่กระบวนการในการสร้างสรรค์ลวดลายและพัฒนาเป็นผ้าคลุมไหล่อเนกประสงค์ และการประเมินผลความพึงพอใจของกลุ่มตัวอย่างนักท่องเที่ยว จำนวน 400 คน ที่มีต่อผ้าคลุมไหล่อเนกประสงค์ โดยใช้แบบสอบถามออนไลน์ ผลการวิจัยพบว่า ลูกปัดโบราณในภาคใต้ที่มีความโดดเด่น สะท้อนถึงบริบทของภาคใต้มีสามชนิด ได้แก่ ลูกปัดลูกกลม ลูกปัดสุริยะเทพ และลูกปัดเปลือกหอย ผู้วิจัยได้นำอัตลักษณ์ของลูกปัดทั้งสามชนิดมาสร้างสรรค์ลวดลายและพัฒนาเป็นผ้าคลุมไหล่อเนกประสงค์ ผลการวิเคราะห์ระดับความคิดเห็นของนักท่องเที่ยวที่มีต่อสินค้าทางวัฒนธรรม พบว่า มีความพึงพอใจต่อผ้าลวดลายสุริยะเทพมากที่สุด รองลงมา คือ ผ้าลวดลายลูกปัดลูกกลม และผ้าลวดลายลูกปัดเปลือกหอย ตามลำดับ

คำสำคัญ ลูกปัดโบราณ การออกแบบ สินค้าทางวัฒนธรรม

Introduction

Ancient beads, the small inventions known to be made by humans in several regions around the world since the pre-historic era, were creatively made of raw materials in everyday life such as wood, stone, minerals, bones, shells, corals, plant seeds, clay, and glass. These materials were sometimes dyed or colored. Some materials were polished, melted, and placed in molds to form various physical appearances before drilling a small hole for stringing (Pongpaiboon, 1986). They were found in many regions around the globe. They varied in terms of appearance, shape, size, color, and pattern, depending on several factors such as raw materials, manufacturing techniques and technology, and creativity and imagination of the creators. Knowledge of bead production has been accumulated and transferred between local groups as well as regions. In addition, roles of the beads invented by humans differed in each area. They could be used as body ornaments, social status indicators, protective talismans, tools in ceremonies, a medium of exchange, or a significant product in trading from the past until the present time.

Thus, beads are one of the vital pieces of evidence indicating the relationship between trade, society, cultures, and people in the past. Both domestic and international scholars in history and archeology considered beads as archeological and cultural objects in relation to people in the different fields of history, economy, and cultures which reflect the traces of prosperity occurring in the past between communities in Southeast Asia and other regions around the globe (Borell et al., 2014; Glover et al., 2014; Gosh, 2018; Jedeetha, 2015).

In Thailand, conservation and management of cultural heritage and wisdom have been implemented through collecting and displaying beads at museums in order to preserve their value and meaning. The narratives of the bead origins and examples that have been discovered in the areas are on display so that those interested can visit to learn and enjoy the activities about the beads and related items. Museums and learning centers which present particular narratives about southern beads are Klongthom Museum and Andaman Bead Museum inside the Andaman Culture Learning Centre in Krabi Province. Moreover, there are other places that display bead narratives alongside other forms of knowledge such as national museums, local museums, and folklore museums inside the Institute for Southern Studies, Songkhla Province.

Nowadays, although beads are conserved and managed as a valuable cultural heritage of society, younger generations generally know little about ancient beads and their importance is even being compromised due to the invention of artificial beads. Also, groups of people smuggle, sell, and possess ancient beads. These vulnerable antique items are regarded as in danger of disappearing. Currently, beads not only hold cultural value in terms of identity value, relative artistic/technical value, and rarity value, but they also create contemporary socio-economic values. These values are elements of the cultural resource evaluation criteria of Feilden and Jokilehto (1998, as cited in Lertcharnrit, 2011). Southern beads have been the focus of many researchers who studied, designed patterns from beads, and created products to regenerate the value of the beads. For instance, Rattanapan (2018) created souvenirs from Nora beads; Santajit et al. (2019) used beads as parts of jewelry; Kaewareelap and Kritsanapan (2018) incorporated ancient bead patterns into batik design; and Kednaramol (2012) designed areas in a health center for the elderly using the characteristics obtained from the beads such as colors, patterns, and arrangement.

A survey was completed by 400 tourists and the results pointed out that a multi-function body accessory with bead patterns was preferred. As a result, the researchers decided to develop multi-purpose shawls using patterns that resemble the southern ancient beads. These shawls are useful as they keep the users warm and are eye-catching with nice unique patterns and colors, making a good body accessory. At the same time, the shawls with bead patterns can work to enhance the economic value of the ancient, beads. In fact, the purchase of ancient beads is prohibited nowadays. Integrating bead patterns on daily items such as shawls can be seen to revive the utilization of the beads and maintain the value of their cultural heritage

Objectives

The study aimed to:

1) study the ancient beads found in southern Thailand.

2) design shawl patterns inspired by southern ancient beads.

3) develop multi-purpose shawls as cultural products based on the southern beads.

Research Methodology

Both qualitative and quantitative research approaches have been applied in this study to analyze patterns of ancient beads which are outstanding in southern Thailand. Data collection and research tools are described below.

1. Participants

There were two main groups of participants participating in this study: the informant group and the designer group.

The informant group consisted of two groups of specific informants chosen as the research samples based on their qualifications and how they were related to the beads: key informants and casual informants. The first group, key informants, consisted of 13 informants who were staff members in cultural museums situated in communities, bead intellectuals, and bead collectors. Interviews about the narratives of the southern beads were organized and group discussions were conducted to find out guidelines for product development. The second group, casual informants, consisted of 800 informants including tourists, consumers, and the public who were chosen by the simple random sampling method. The designer group consisted of five experts or experienced designers specializing in historical art who evaluated the bead patterns used in cultural product development.

2. Research Tools

There were five research instruments in this research.

1) An unstructured interview was carried out to obtain knowledge on beads through narratives connected with local people in the southern region of Thailand.

2) A group discussion was conducted to exchange opinions among museum staff, bead intellectuals, and bead collectors in order to create guidelines for cultural product development from their knowledge of beads and to increase the value of cultural tourism.

3) A questionnaire was created to ask for opinions of the sample group towards the cultural product developed from knowledge of beads.

4) An evaluation form was designed to evaluate the bead-driven patterns used in cultural products. This is a tool used to collect experts' responses for data verification and determine its consistency with the focus of the study. Also, the tool is used to ensure its value towards cultural tourism before the information is revised and used in the development process.

5) A satisfaction survey was constructed to measure the satisfaction level of the sample group with the cultural products developed from bead inspiration.

3. Collection of Data

There are five phrases necessary for the data collection in this research.

1) Background information on southern ancient beads from the collected beads, books, and related documents was studied. Interviews were also conducted to obtain specific information about beads including general characteristics, identity, appearance, and narratives.

2) Patterns that would be used for the prototype development of the product were designed, and the designed patterns were evaluated by five designers.

3) Group discussions were arranged for the local experts to brainstorm ideas in order to indicate guidelines for designing the prototype of the bead-inspired cultural products.

4) An online questionnaire was conducted to ask the opinions of 400 tourist samples about the guidelines for cultural product development from beadwork. This information was used as the criteria for product design and development.

5) A prototype of the product was created, and an online questionnaire was conducted to determine the satisfaction level of another 400 samples toward the product.

4. Data Analysis

The data analysis procedures are as follows.

1) Information from all papers and interviews was examined.

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2) Percentage, mean ($\bar{X}$), and standard deviation were calculated from the evaluation completed by the designer group on the bead patterns used for the cultural products. The analysis and interpretation were used as guidelines for improving the bead patterns before the finished products were developed.

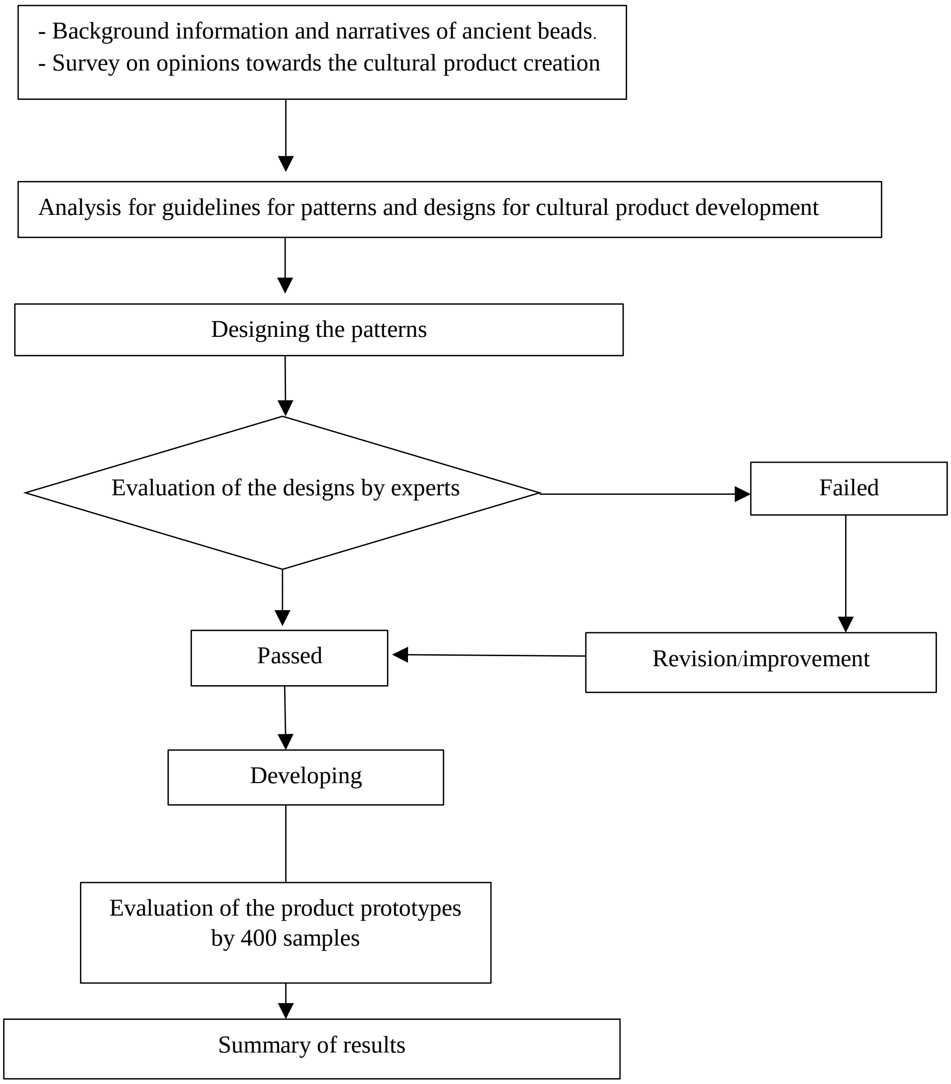
3) Opinions from experts were considered and used as criteria and guidelines for product design and creation.

4) Frequency, percentage, mean ($\bar{X}$), and standard deviation were obtained from the analysis of an online questionnaire to assess the demand for cultural products from consumers and tourists and their satisfaction with the cultural products

The process involved in the data collection was described by the diagram in Figure 1 below.

Figure 1

The Process of the Bead-Inspired Shawl Development



Source: Original photograph by Paweekorn Suraban, November 8, 2022

Findings

This study analyzed information on three types of ancient beads by examining related documents, textbooks, and articles. Theoretical principles in design were utilized to classify basic information on beads of each kind such as production materials, color, production techniques, patterns, general characteristics, appearance, and identity. The local bead narratives obtained from interviews were also analyzed. The three main findings of the study, including characteristics of the ancient beads, patterns obtained from the ancient beads, and the development of the multi-purpose shawls based on the bead patterns, are presented as follows.

1. Obtained Information and Narratives of Ancient Beads

1.1 Monochrome Glass Beads

Materials: Colored glass, rock, or rock-forming minerals such as carnelian, sard, agate and onyx, citrine, amethyst, crystalline quartz, ruby, and jade

Color: Brick-red, yellow, green, light blue, blue, and black

Production techniques: Glass melting and pulling methods are relied on in producing monochrome glass beads. A melted glass cube is stretched into a long tube and cut into pieces. A long-cut glass tube is called a "morning glory-stalk glass tube," while a short-cut glass tube is called a cylinder or short cylinder, round-chopping board or short round bar shape. An oblique or sloping appearance caused by uneven cut of the tip is chamfered by heat to make spherical shape beads and become monochrome glass beads.

Patterns: none

General Characteristics: The entire bead has the same color. They are in different shapes and forms such as round, cylinder, and flat. It is called according to its colors such as light blue wind beads, yellow wind beads, blue wind beads, honey wind beads, or copper wind beads. The sizes vary from small (1-3 millimeters, some scholars called it a mosquito's eye), to medium (8-9 millimeters), and sometimes could be up to 14 millimeters.

Assumption: Monochrome glass beads were originally from India and were exported to Southeastern regions via trading between the regions. In those days, Indian merchants sailed and needed to depend on seasonal winds in order to blow the ships back and forth between India and other cities. This has become the name of the bead in Southeastern regions "Indo-Pacific Beads or Trade Wind Beads".

1.2 Beads of the Sun God

Materials: Mosaic or Roman colorful glass
Color: Red, green, black, or white
Patterns: Similar to a human face with color stripes around the face

Production techniques: The bead is made of colored glass with a mosaic technique. The colored glass is melted together resulting in a streaked glass of different colors. Then, the glass is melted and softened with heat. After that, it is stretched into a long tube resulting in a pattern of a human face and radial lines around the face spreading out like sunlight on the cross-section surface before being cut into slices. Lastly, a hole is drilled for stringing.

General characteristics: It is small in size, around 1.2 millimeters with a pattern like a human face with radial lines spreading out like sunlight.

Identity: This type of beads has a human face-like pattern with radial lines spreading out like sunlight around the face. Locals called this bead type “Human Face Bead or Indian Face Bead”. Later, scholars who were interested in ancient beads assigned this type of beads the new name “Bead of the Sun God” which has been the most famous bead of Kuan Lookpad archeological site, Klongthom, Krabi province. Some of the beads found were in good condition, and some were broken like crescents.

Legendary: It is assumed that beads of the sun god were created during the Greek-Roman era in a small town named Alexandrea, situated on the Mediterranean coast in Egypt, Africa Continent. Due to its distinct human facial characteristics, it is claimed to be caused by the belief in the faces of Greek-Roman gods together with the respect towards the sun as the source of human beings, wealth, happiness, and suffering.

Narratives from people: It is believed that the beads which look like the sun were invented before pre-historic times. During that era, people regarded the sun and the moon as the inspiration for human well-being or suffering which everyone must worship (Participant No.1, Personal Communication, December 1, 2020).

Another story is that beads of the sun god are a combination of the sun and the moon. The sun is called Suriyan and the moon is called Chandra. Whoever has the sun god beads in his possession will be prosperous. Moreover, he would gain power in the universe. The Sun God is sacred all over the world in many religions such as Buddhism, Christianity, and Islam. If people have an item that can relate to the Sun God, it will definitely give them good luck (Participant No.2, Personal Communication, December 1, 2020).

1.3 Shell Beads

General characteristics: These beads are created from materials found in nature such as seashells which are sheared, polished, and drilled to create holes for stringing. Thus, their shapes vary according to their original states. Their color is usually off-white.

Identity of Money-Cowry Beads: These beads came from natural materials with their own beauty and durability. It was often found during the pre-historic archeological sites and in early history communities in almost every region of Thailand. It was popular for body ornaments or charms by stringing them with threads or ropes. In addition, this type of seashell was used as money or exchange for trading by people in ancient times dating back to China’s Longshan Cultural Era (3000 BC). It was considered to be the first valuable item in society and was popular for collection.

The appearance of Money-Cowry Beads: It is a type of seashell with a single bract, hard, and a convex back. The belly is flat with a cavity showing small teeth-like squiggly marks. They vary in size ranging from as big as a thumb to as small as the tip of a little finger.

Legendary: Hindus believe that these seashells represent Goddess Lakshmi, the goddess of fertility, bringing in fortune, money, love, beauty, and prosperity to worshipers. The god is respected by the Brahmins as a symbol of power and a cult that worships female deities. According to Hindu mythology, Lakshmi originated from a sponge. While the gods and demons performed a great ritual, called stirring the sea to obtain elixir, Goddess Lakshmi was born with a lotus flower and believed to be one of the fourteen miracles. This event is a part of the Hindu Brahmin myth, Vaishnavism (Narayana incarnation). Later on, Lakshmi became the wife of Vishnu (Narayana incarnation). Vishnu acted as a person who helped take care of Lakshmi who is the creator of the world's perfection. A lot of people believing in Goddess Lakshmi often carry this seashell with them as a means of strengthening their finances and protecting against incoming harm.

The overall information about each type of ancient beads obtained from the analysis is presented in Table 1 below.

Table 1

Bead Classification

Bead type	**Proto type image**	**Materials**	**Shape**	**Pattern**	**Color**
-Monochrome glass bead -Trade wind bead -Indo-pacific bead -Single-colored bead		Colored glass, rock or rock-forming minerals such as carnelian, sard, agate and onyx, citrine, amethyst, crystalline quartz, ruby, and jade		Not Available	Brick red, yellow, green, light blue, blue, and black
-Bead of the sun god -Face of the sun bead -Human face bead -Indian bead		Mosaic or Roman colorful glass		Similar to a human face with color stripes around the face	Red, green, black, or white
-Seashell bead -Money-cowry bead		Seashell		Natural patterns	Off-white

2. Designing and Creation of Bead Patterns

To design and create the patterns for the shawl products, knowledge from narratives on the origin of each bead type, the outstanding pattern of ancient beads, principles of design, and art composition were employed as a concept for pattern design that conveys the identity of each ancient bead type, relying on the principles of unity, balance, and dominance. Similar images of the beads were arranged with the designed proximity using the techniques of continuation, repetition, and harmony. The principle of contrast of color was adopted in order to create a difference in color perception (Nimsamer, 2011). Also, the elements of the design (dots, lines, and shapes and forms) as suggested by Suttimusig (2011) were applied in the designing process of the patterns.

2.1 Patterns Derived from Ancient Beads

2.1.1 Pattern from Monochrome Glass Beads

The major inspiration for the concept and pattern design of monochrome glass beads came from the single-color glass including colors like brick red, yellow, green, light blue, blue, and black which appeared throughout every archaeological site both in a pre-historic and early historic time of southern Thailand. This also extended to the Southeast Asia region. There was an assumption that the beads were invented by Indians and brought to Southeast Asia by Indian merchants, Arabs, and sea navigators who sailed along the southwest monsoon and waves in order to exchange goods. This is why this type of bead is called a trade wind bead. This bead was popular for stringing and using as a body ornament before it has been developed into Nora's shirts (Southern Traditional Dance Clothing).

During the designing process, the beads were arranged in a graphic pattern in order to interlace beads together, similar to stringing beads on Nora's shirts, which creates delicacy through circle composition. The background was designed in an overlapping pattern to create dimension and the main pattern becomes outstanding.

Colors on the pattern come from the identity of the beads such as brick red, yellow, green, light blue, blue, and black. Both dark opaque and translucent colors of the beads were chosen in order to reflect different raw materials used in production. For example, monochrome glass beads created from the rock will be opaquer than those made from glass. The white background was selected to convey the transparency of the monochrome glass bead and reflects the origin of this bead type as it came with the entry of trade in the past when sailors needed to rely on wind and sea waves to navigate for trading goods. Besides, greyish brown refers to the color of the soil in the deep layer of earth which is attached to the ancient beads when they were unearthed.

The pattern obtained from the analysis of the monochrome glass beads is shown in Figure 2 below.

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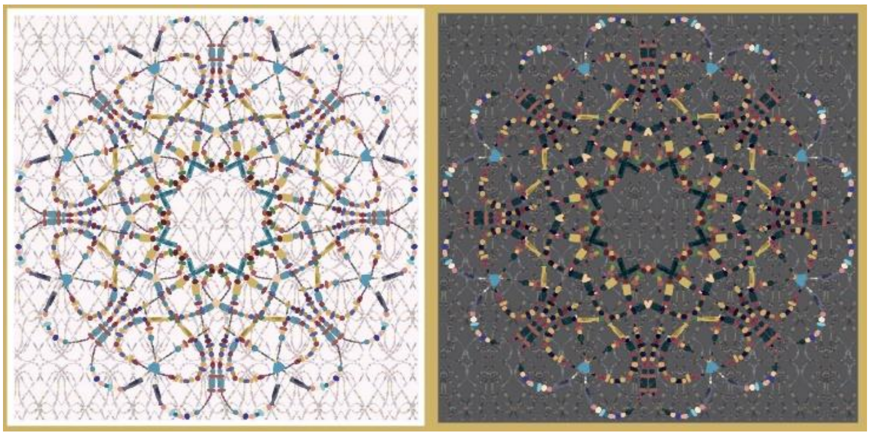
Figure 2
Monochrome Glass Bead Pattern Design



Source: Original photographs Paweekorn Suraban, April 20, 2022

2.1.2 Pattern from Sun God Beads

The concept and pattern design of this bead type was mainly inspired by Mosaic glass beads which create a human face pattern with color stripes around the face like radial lines of the sun. It is the most famous bead from Klongthom archaeological site in Krabi province. Scholars have given the name “Bead of Sun God or in Thai Suriyathep Bead” and assumed that it was first invented during the Greek-Roman era, Alexandrea, Mediterranean coast in Egypt, Africa. This pattern signifies respect towards the sun as the source of human wealth, happiness, and protection against suffering.

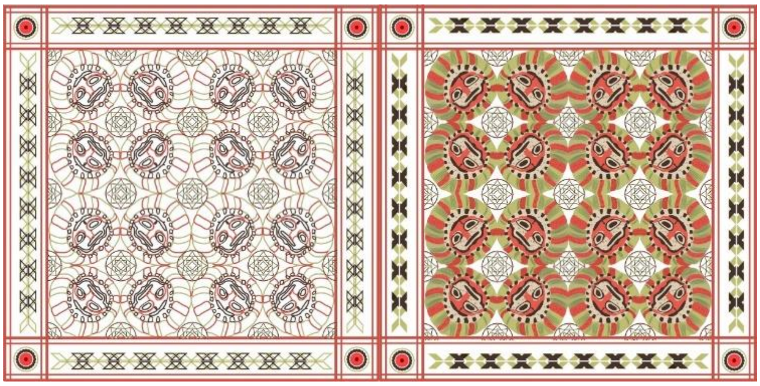
Hence, the outstanding characteristics of the beads were chosen for the pattern design in this study. In other words, the pattern contains beads that resemble a human face with curvy asymmetrical lines. The line from each face is connected with another like when they are strung together with a thread. It is arranged as a graphic pattern. Human faces are separated by circles consisting of overlapping radii that represent the rays of the sun. The four edges contain diamond squares connected like arrowheads of Indigenous African tribes. Each corner contains a pin that has a red circle surrounded by a black and green halo similar to the circle of the sun. The design is available in both stripes and color schemes.

The colors used in this pattern come from the color of glass which is shown on the actual beads including green, red, black, and white. The background color is white which would make the inner pattern distinguishable. This pattern signifies the way people show respect to the sun as a source of affluence, happiness, and safety. The graphic pattern design was chosen and the center of interest is on the human face beads with an asymmetric curve, which is the beauty of the sun god beads. The techniques of repetition, scale, and continuation were adopted in designing the patterns.

The pattern obtained from the analysis of the sun god beads was shown in Figure 3 below.

Figure 3

Beads of the Sun God Pattern Design



Source: Original photographs Paweekorn Suraban, April 20, 2022

2.1.3 Pattern from Seashell Beads

The concept and the pattern design of this bead type were mainly inspired by money-cowry seashell bead which is a natural material favored by ancient people as a body accessory and used as a medium for goods exchange. When it is combined with other natural patterns like waves and other seashells found in the oceans, a new pattern is developed.

White color is chosen for the shell in this pattern as it is the authentic color of the seashell. The colors of the background and surrounding patterns are relative tones of blue including indigo, ocean green, and gray to reflect the abundance of the sea.

The pattern obtained from the analysis of the seashell beads is shown in Figure 4 below.

Figure 4

Seashell Bead Pattern Design

Source: Original photographs Paweekorn Suraban, April 20, 2022

2.2 The Evaluation of the Patterns Derived from Ancient Beads for Cultural Product Development

The result of the evaluation from five experts presented in Table 2 shows that they were highly satisfied with all patterns. The highest satisfaction was given to the seashell bead pattern ($\bar{x}$ = *4.12)* followed by the bead of sun god pattern ($\bar{x}$ = *4.*05*)* and the least was the monochrome glass bead pattern ($\bar{x}$ = 3.92*).* The satisfaction was divided in the light of the suitability of the pattern, and the pattern with the highest suitability was the seashell bead pattern ($\bar{x}$ = *4.*20*)*, followed by beads of the sun god pattern ($\bar{x}$ = *4.00)* and the monochrome glass bead pattern ($\bar{x}$ = *4.00)*. When considering the attractiveness, the bead of the sun god pattern received the highest satisfaction ($\bar{x}$ = *4.1*0*),* followed by the seashell bead pattern ($\bar{x}$ = *4.*05*)* and the monochrome glass bead pattern ($\bar{x}$ = 3.85*)*.

Table 2

The Experts' Evaluation of Bead Patterns for Cultural Product Development: Suitability and Attractiveness

Issues	Satisfaction level					
	Monochrome glass bead pattern		Sun god bead pattern		Seashell bead pattern	
	$\bar{x}$	S.D.	$\bar{x}$	S.D.	$\bar{x}$	S.D.
Suitability of pattern						
1. The patterns can convey the appearance of beads.	4.20	0.447	4.20	0.836	4.40	0.547
2. The patterns can convey the meaning or belief carried by beads.	3.80	0.447	4.00	1.224	3.80	0.836
3. The patterns are suitable for the cultural product used as a body accessory.	4.00	0.707	4.00	0.707	4.40	0.547
4. The patterns are suitable for the cultural product of home decoration items.	4.00	0.707	3.80	1.095	4.20	0.836
Satisfaction level	4.00	0.577	4.00	0.965	4.20	0.691
	High		**High**		**High**	
Attractiveness						
1. The patterns are beautiful and can be developed into cultural products.	4.00	0.707	4.40	0.547	4.00	0.707
2. The identity of beads has been applied and can be clearly seen in the patterns of the products.	3.80	0.447	4.00	0.707	4.00	0.707
3. The patterns are creative.	3.80	0.836	4.00	0.707	4.20	0.836
4. The patterns are beautifully and properly arrang	3.80	0.836	4.00	0.707	4.00	0.707
Satisfaction level	3.85	0.70	4.10	0.667	4.05	0.739
	High		**High**		**High**	
Overall satisfaction	3.92	0.641	4.05	0.816	4.12	0.715
	High		**High**		**High**	

Based on the overall comments of the five experts, the created pattern obviously showed the identity of the actual beads, and the dimensional designs made the pattern more charming.

3. The Development of the Cultural Product Prototypes

3.1 Guidelines for the Management of Cultural Product Development from Knowledge of Beads

Based on the information obtained from the group discussion, guidelines for product development from the knowledge of ancient beads were formulated. The criteria for the design and model creation are shown in Table 3 as follows.

Table 3

Experts' Suggestions as Guidelines for Product Development

Issues	Suggestions
Selection of cultural products	1. The product should be different or distinct from other common products. 2. The knowledge of beads should be taken into account including the narratives, legends, and beliefs attached to beads. 3. Local materials should be used or applied for the further creation of cultural products. 4. Targets or consumer groups should be considered. 5. Cost and management constraints of museums should be considered.
Principles of cultural product creation from beadwork	1. Information about ancient beads from the Folklore Museum of the Institute for Southern Studies must be studied thoroughly including physical characteristics, background, bead's era, finding sites, appearance, identity, stories, or beliefs of the beads which leads to appropriate product design. 2. The elements of design and creation such as color usage and lines must be studied to ensure that beauty quality is reached. 3. The appropriateness of the cultural products in everyday use should be considered.

Data analysis from a survey asking for opinions towards the demand for cultural products from beadwork from tourists is described in Table 4 below.

Table 4

Opinions on the Value of Cultural Products in Cultural Tourism

Opinions	Number of people	Percentage
Demand for cultural product types that should be developed		
Clothing and accessories such as shirts, skirts, pants, shawls bags, and ornaments	255	63.80
Home decoration products such as lamps, mugs, glasses, picture frames, and table clocks	145	36.20
Total	**400**	**100**

According to Table 4, it can be concluded that more than half of the tourist samples (63.80%) show the demand for ornaments as cultural products from beadwork. Thus, this research applied the designed patterns to the creation of the cultural product prototype of a multi-purpose shawl (either shoulders or head covers) with three patterns as shown in Figures 5-7.

Figure 5
A Prototype of a Multi-Purpose Shawl with the Monochrome Glass Bead Pattern and Its Application


Source: Original photographs Paweekorn Suraban, May 3, 2022

Figure 6
A Prototype of a Multi-Purpose Shawl with the Bead of the Sun God Pattern and Its Application


Source: Original photographs Paweekorn Suraban, May 3, 2022

Figure 7

A Prototype of a Multi-Purpose Shawl with the Seashell Bead Pattern and Its Application

Source: Original photographs Paweekorn Suraban, May 3, 2022

3.2 Satisfaction with the Multi-Purpose Shawls Using the Derived Bead Patterns

The tourists' satisfaction with the product of the multi-purpose shawl with three bead patterns was examined and the results are described below.

3.2.1 Satisfaction with a Prototype of the Multi-Purpose Shawl with a Monochrome Glass Bead Pattern

Table 5

Satisfaction with a Prototype of the Multi-Purpose Shawl with a Monochrome Glass Bead Pattern

Multi-purpose shawl with monochrome glass bead pattern	**Issues**	**Satisfaction Level**		
		$\bar{\chi}$	**S.D.**	**Interpretation**
	**Suitability for usage**			
	1. This cultural product is suitable to be used as a body accessory.	4.48	0.600	High
	2. This cultural product is suitable for all genders and ages.	4.32	0.766	High
	Average	**4.40**	**0.68**	**High**
	Appropriateness of material and production process			
	3. The material chosen for production is suitable to be used as body accessories.	4.48	0.633	High
	4. The size of this cultural product is suitable for use.	4.45	0.643	High
	5. This cultural product is durable.	4.34	0.693	High
	Average	**4.42**	**0.656**	**High**
	Attractiveness and uniqueness of the pattern			
	6. This cultural product reflects the identity of ancient beads.	4.52	0.637	Highest
	7. The pattern is beautiful and appropriate for this cultural product.	4.53	0.609	Highest
	8. The pattern layout has been done properly and beautifully.	4.49	0.629	High

	9. This cultural product is fashionable.	4.43	0.712	High
	10. This cultural product **creates** cultural value.	4.55	0.619	Highest
	Average	**4.50**	**0.64**	**High**
	Overall satisfaction	**4.45**	**0.654**	**High**

Source: Original photograph Paweekorn Suraban, May 3, 2022

The analysis of the satisfaction of a prototype of the multi-purpose shawl with a monochrome glass bead pattern (Table 5) shows that tourists expressed a high satisfaction level of the monochrome glass bead patterned shawl ($\bar{\chi}$ = *4.45*) which could be divided into the following aspects. First, the aspect of attractiveness and uniqueness of the pattern has gained the highest score ($\bar{\chi}$ = *4.50*) indicating that this product represents cultural value. Second, the appropriateness of materials and production process received a high score ($\bar{\chi}$ = *4. 42*). The material chosen is silk satin fabric which is suitable for producing this multi-purpose shawl. Finally, the suitability for usage obtained a high satisfaction level ($\bar{\chi}$ = *4.40*) which shows that this product is suitable for use as a body ornament.

3.2.2 Satisfaction with a Prototype of the Multi-Purpose Shawl with the Bead of Sun God Pattern

Table 6

Satisfaction with the Prototype of the Multi-Purpose Shawl with the Bead of Sun God Pattern

Multi-purpose shawl with the bead of sun god pattern	**Issues**	**Satisfaction Level**		
		$\bar{\chi}$	**S.D.**	**Interpretation**
	**Suitability for usage**			
	1. This cultural product is suitable to be used as a body accessory.	4.51	0.629	Highest
	2. This cultural product is suitable for all genders and ages.	4.39	0.713	High
	Average	**4.45**	**0.671**	**High**
	Appropriateness of material and production process			
	3. The material hosen for production is suitable to be used as body accessories.	4.49	0.625	High
	4. The size of this cultural product is suitable for use.	4.47	0.633	High
	5. This cultural product is durable.	4.43	0.630	High
	Average	**4.46**	**0.629**	**High**
	Attractiveness and uniqueness of the pattern			
	6. This cultural product reflects the identity of ancient beads.	4.55	0.616	Highest
	7. The pattern is beautiful and appropriate for this cultural product.	4.55	0.594	Highest
	8. The pattern layout has been done properly and beautifully.	4.55	0.599	Highest
	9. This cultural product is fashionable.	4.47	0.664	High
	10. This cultural product creates cultural value.	4.59	0.594	Highest
	Average	**4.45**	**0.613**	**High**
	Overall satisfaction	**4.50**	**0.629**	**High**

Source: Original photograph Paweekorn Suraban, May 3, 2022

The satisfaction of a prototype of the multi-purpose shawl with the bead of the sun god pattern was analyzed and the finding in Table 6 shows that tourists expressed a high satisfaction level with the bead of the sun god patterned shawl ($\bar{\chi}$ = *4.50)* which could be divided into the following aspects. First, the appropriateness of material and production process received a high level of satisfaction ($\bar{\chi}$ = *4.46).* The material chosen is silk satin fabric which is suitable for producing this multi-purpose shawl. Second, the attractiveness and uniqueness of the pattern gained a high level of satisfaction ($\bar{\chi}$ = *4.45)* indicating that this product represents cultural value. Finally, the suitability for usage had a high satisfaction level ($\bar{\chi}$ = *4.45)* which shows that this product is suitable for use as a body ornament.

3.2.3 Satisfaction with a Prototype of the Multi-Purpose Shawl with the Seashell Bead Pattern

Table 7

Satisfaction with a Prototype of the Multi-Purpose Shawl with the Seashell Bead Pattern

Multi-purpose shawl with the seashell bead pattern	Issues	Satisfaction Level		
		$\bar{\chi}$	S.D.	Interpretation
	Suitability for usage			
	1. This cultural product is suitable to be used as a body accessory.	4.54	0.632	Highest
	2. This cultural product is suitable for all genders and ages.	4.40	0.729	High
	Average	**4.47**	**0.680**	**High**
	Appropriateness of material and production process			
	3. The material chosen for production is suitable to be used as body accessories.	4.51	0.621	Highest
	4. The size of this cultural product is suitable for use.	4.49	0.649	High
	5. This cultural product is durable.	4.46	0.636	High
	Average	**4.48**	**0.635**	**High**
	Attractiveness and uniqueness of the pattern			
	6. This cultural product reflects the identity of ancient beads.	4.52	0.653	Highest
	7. The pattern is beautiful and appropriate for this cultural product.	4.52	0.625	Highest
	8. The pattern layout has been done properly and beautifully.	4.51	0.637	Highest
	9. This cultural product is fashionable.	4.48	0.679	High
	10. This cultural product creates cultural value.	4.56	0.602	Highest
	Average	**4.54**	**0.613**	**Highest**
	Overall satisfaction	**4.49**	**0.646**	**High**

Source: Original photograph Paweekorn Suraban, May 3, 2022

Table 7 shows that the satisfaction of the prototype of the multi-purpose shawl with the seashell bead pattern was rated by the tourists at a high satisfaction level ($\bar{\chi}$ = *4.49*). The satisfaction could be divided into three aspects. First, the attractiveness and uniqueness of the pattern gained the highest satisfaction score ($\bar{\chi}$ = *4.54*), indicating that this product represents cultural value. Second, the appropriateness of materials and production process received a high level of satisfaction ($\bar{\chi}$ = *4. 48*). The material chosen is silk satin fabric which is suitable for producing this multi-purpose shawl. Finally, the suitability for usage garnered a high satisfaction level ($\bar{\chi}$ = *4.47*) which shows that this product is suitable for use as a body ornament.

Conclusion and Discussion

A design guideline for the development of a cultural product prototype was proposed in this study to preserve the artistic and cultural values of the ancient beads in the form of a product of a body accessory in accordance with consumer needs. The pattern distinctiveness and production materials commonly found in the southern regions are the keys to the development of the product from the ancient southern beads. There are three types of beads focused on in this study: monochrome glass beads, beads of the sun god, and seashell beads. The elements of the beads such as colors and bead patterns are used for the design and pattern arrangement with artistic and aesthetic methods such as shape modification, attenuation, stretching, enlargement, and overlapping arrangement. These create outstanding patterns which reflect the identity of the ancient beads and onlookers will be able to perceive the concept of ancient beads the producers want to communicate.

The study found that the three ancient southern beads have a potential for product development as they possess unique patterns, colors, and production materials. The design of the patterns and the development of shawls were carried out in a way to preserve their artistic and cultural values, bringing the bead patterns into use on a daily item, like multi-purpose shawls. The application of beads' identities, like their patterns, on shawls allows the onlookers to familiarize themselves with them and appreciate the values of the beads, without destroying or reducing the number of the discovered beads. The inclusion of ancient beads' elements such as colors, patterns, and characteristics of production materials into patterns on fabric for shawls provides an easier opportunity for people to feel the beauty and value of the beads. This is in line with the analysis of Kednaramol (2012) and Suwacharapinan et al. (2012) who support that the design elements are more common than the concepts or meanings

Recommendations

1. Practical Recommendations

The prototype of the cultural product established from the knowledge of beads creates cultural tourism value. It is an innovation that the Folklore Museum, Thaksin Institute, and other museums displaying ancient beads can produce for commercial sales. Apart from increasing revenue to the museums, the prototype can disseminate stories of ancient beads, leading to the promotion of tourism to the archaeological sites where the beads were found and other places in the South where bead information and antique beads are collected.

2. Recommendations for Future Research

It is recommended that further studies could be built to develop various patterns or create other cultural products such as decoration items, souvenirs, stationery, and office equipment.

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The Study and Application of Local Wisdom in Local Hand-woven Textiles to Design a Unique Contemporary Pattern in Srisaket Province

การศึกษาและประยุกต์ภูมิปัญญาท้องถิ่นด้านผ้าทอมือพื้นเมือง เพื่อออกแบบลวดลายร่วมสมัยที่เป็นเอกลักษณ์เฉพาะในจังหวัดศรีสะเกษ

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Abstract

The purpose of this research is to study Srisaket's local wisdom in hand-woven textiles, with the aim to analyze the unique characteristics of local hand-woven textiles and to design a contemporary unique pattern. The information was derived from two major sources: 1) academic resources related to Srisaket's local culture and local woven fabrics, and 2) field data collection through observations and interviews with the expert groups in woven textiles in Srisaket. The sample population consists of 8 people from three groups. The findings show that the marble glass pattern (Look Kaew) is the most popular woven local textile pattern in Srisaket. To enhance Srisaket's identity and promote Srisaket as the center of cultural and community tourism in Southern Isaan, the researcher created a unique contemporary design. There were four steps in the pattern design process: 1) specifying a unique pattern that is not currently popular in Srisaket, 2) drafting a pattern on paper, 3) constructing a model using Adobe Illustrator (AI) and 4) creating a physical model by weaving it by hand. This process integrates Srisaket's pre-existing traditional Srisaket patterns with contemporary designs.

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This method may attract a wider range of buyers, especially middle-aged and young generation consumers, who possess purchasing power.

Keywords: hand-woven, textiles, local wisdom

บทคัดย่อ

การวิจัยนี้มีวัตถุประสงค์เพื่อศึกษาภูมิปัญญาการทอผ้าพื้นเมือง ลวดลาย ของผ้าทอพื้นเมืองจังหวัดศรีสะเกษ เพื่อวิเคราะห์เอกลักษณ์เฉพาะถิ่นของผ้าทอพื้นเมือง และเพื่อออกแบบลวดลายเอกลักษณ์เฉพาะถิ่นร่วมสมัย จากการสำรวจข้อมูลจากงานวิจัยที่เกี่ยวข้องกับวัฒนธรรมท้องถิ่นและผ้าทอพื้นเมืองของศรีสะเกษ และการสำรวจข้อมูลในภาคสนามจากการสังเกตและสัมภาษณ์กลุ่มผู้เชี่ยวชาญด้านผ้าทอมือของจังหวัดศรีสะเกษ โดยสัมภาษณ์ตัวอย่าง 8 คน จาก 3 กลุ่ม ผลจากการวิจัย พบว่า ลายลูกแก้วเป็นลายผ้าทอพื้นเมืองที่ได้รับความนิยมสูงสุดในจังหวัดศรีสะเกษ เพื่อเสริมสร้างเอกลักษณ์ของจังหวัดและภูมิปัญญาผ้าทอพื้นเมืองให้เป็นศูนย์กลางของการท่องเที่ยวเชิงวัฒนธรรมในภาคอีสานใต้ ผู้วิจัยได้ทำการออกแบบให้มีเอกลักษณ์เดิมภายใต้ลวดลายใหม่ให้ทันสมัยขึ้น โดยกระบวนการออกแบบลวดลายมี 4 ขั้นตอน ได้แก่ 1) กำหนดรูปแบบลวดลายเอกลักษณ์ที่ไม่เป็นที่นิยมของศรีสะเกษ 2) ร่างแบบลงบนกระดาษ 3) สร้างแบบจำลองด้วยโปรแกรม Adobe Illustrator (Ai) และ 4) สร้างแบบจำลองทางโดยใช้กระบวนการทอด้วยมือ เพื่อผสมผสานระหว่างลวดลายอันเป็นเอกลักษณ์เดิมของศรีสะเกษกับการออกแบบที่ร่วมสมัย ซึ่งอาจจะทำให้สามารถดึงดูดผู้ซื้อจากกลุ่มต่าง ๆ เพิ่มมากขึ้น โดยเฉพาะกลุ่มผู้บริโภควัยกลางคนและวัยหนุ่มสาวซึ่งเป็นผู้มีกำลังในการซื้ออย่างกว้างขวาง

คำสำคัญ ผ้าทอมือ ลวดลายผ้า ภูมิปัญญาท้องถิ่น

Introduction

With the COVID-19 pandemic fading away and the economic situation in Thailand recovering, Thai people have started to travel. It is expected that travel growth rate will increase to 278.2% in the first quarter of 2022 and become more active in the last two months (Kasikorn Research Center, 2022). This forecast shows that the tourist industry, which plays a vital role in developing the country, has economic potential. Currently, the government has a development policy for the tourism industry which focuses on building the potential of community tourism. The method is to integrate and add value to cultural and community tourism through OTOP Nawawithi, with *nawatwithi* meaning "innovative life". Its goal is to use the OTOP brand to develop tourism in rural and lesser-known areas.

Enhancing cultural tourism involves the creation of a distinctive local identity for communities that is strong and remarkable. This encompasses the indigenous wisdom, way of life, existence, traditions, and cultural art that can clearly communicate with tourists. It represents sustainable development for the community. Provinces within the Southern Isaan region are of particular interest for development due to their uniqueness. Presently, cultural tourism in the Southern Isaan region has captured the attention of Thai visitors, as evident from the organization of cultural tourism activities in each province. This is due to the diverse societal fabric, traditions, and culture present in Southern Isaan, which makes the local way of life captivating for tourists (Nakthong et al., 2007).

The research employs the local woven textiles from Srisaket province as a sample, guided by the following conceptual frameworks:

1. Developing fabric patterns is a part of bringing fabric designs into the market. Local weavers have limitations in creating new patterns due to a lack of knowledge in art and design. Self-designed fabric patterns are few in number and often resemble traditional ones. They tend to imitate patterns within their communities and may not meet the current consumer demands (Sikkha, 2011).

2. Srisaket has a diverse society and interesting culture. The method of designing new fabric patterns may arise from inspiration or encounter with ideas, beliefs, and ancient patterns that combine elements from tourist destinations and fabric patterns in the northeastern region, such as 'Pha Lad' patterns in the local Isan dialect, signifying castles, and 'Nak' patterns derived from the northeastern belief in abundance, and so on (Champakun et al., 2022).

3. The researcher conducted an extensive fieldwork study in collaboration with the Institute for Small and Medium Enterprise Development (ISMED) in Srisaket, focusing on the local woven textiles. This endeavor aimed to gather ample information for the research.

The research of local wisdom in local textile weaving is an essential body of knowledge of the integrated plan “Creative local woven textile of Srisaket towards being the center of cultural and community tourism of southern Isaan”, which prioritized local wisdom, the production process of and culture in woven textile, in order to analyze Srisaket’s unique characteristics and apply them to the creation of a creative product and a woven textile development plan. This will create sustainability for the Srisaket community, and it can be an example for other provinces in Thailand to examine their own unique identity and bring it to the forefront. The main objective is to study the specific appearance of local woven fabrics in Srisaket which express the uniqueness, art and culture of Srisaket, which is essential for gaining more understanding of the various contexts of local hand-woven textiles in Srisaket province, to apply the design of creative products to promote the southern Isaan cultural tourism and raise awareness of contemporary local wisdom conservation. The design of the new pattern will create a unique identity for the group's fabric pattern, taking inspiration from local identity as a way to create added value and create a new generation of consumers that will help further expand the demand to future consumers.

Objectives

1. To study the local wisdom in textile weaving and textile patterns of Srisaket
2. To analyze the specific local patterns
3. To design a unique, contemporary pattern.

Scope of the Research

1. Research area: Srisaket local woven textile community.
2. Population and samples: local woven textile entrepreneurs in Srisaket, specialists in knowledge of art and culture of Srisaket, experts in local hand-woven textiles, and specialists in cultural tourism.
3. Research Scope

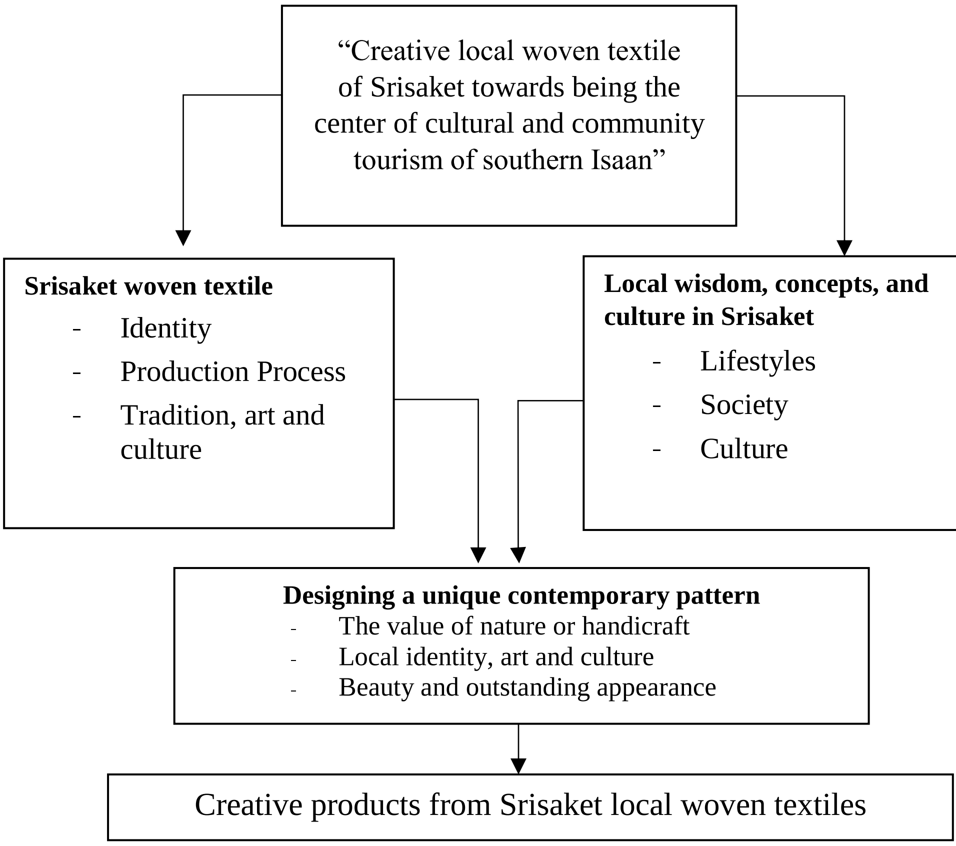
3.1 Study the background of local woven fabrics, the local tradition, art and culture in Srisaket. Moreover, this study includes cultural tourism information from relevant documents, research and information from local specialists.

3.2 Fieldwork study: gather local hand-woven textiles information, production process, tradition and culture that have an impact toward the lifestyle in Srisaket province.

3.3 Identify and determine the various aspects of local wisdom in order to analyze the specific characteristic local woven textile for Srisaket.

3.4 Identify the suitable connection between creative products and designing a unique, contemporary pattern.

Conceptual Framework



Research Methodology

The study of creative local woven textile of Srisaket with the objective of promoting Srisaket as the center of cultural and community tourism in southern Isaan is experimental qualitative and quantitative research. Information was collected from documents, related research, and opinions from experts detailed as follows:

1. Gathering information from documents, books, related research, and academic articles related to Srisaket local culture and local woven fabrics.
2. Fieldwork and data collection from Srisaket Small and Micro Community Enterprise and specialists in local wisdom and culture to determine Srisaket's identity. The details are as follows:

2.1 In-depth interview method

2.2 Observation method covering lifestyle, culture, and woven fabric production in the community.

2.3 Analysis of the information on local wisdom development through creativity theory and cultural tourism development theory.

2.4 Testing the idea by using creativity to find out and create a unique local woven fabric of Srisaket with the objective of promoting Srisaket as the center of cultural and community tourism in southern Isaan.

2.5 Conducting a survey on the opinions of a group of specialists in cultural tourism.

3. Population and Sample Size

The research comprises a sample population of 8 people, consisting of three leaders and five additional members including local woven textile entrepreneurs, as well as Small and Micro Community Enterprises. The group selection process focused on those groups that met all of the following criteria: (1) culture silkworm, (2) use natural dyes, (3) use 4 or more looms, and (4) use weaving techniques as well as "*Mudmee*" technique.

From the preliminary survey regarding textile weaving groups in Srisaket, it was observed that there are groups that align with the study criteria, possess accessible data and exhibit a high level of activity. These groups include: (1) Ban Khuan Silk Weaving Group (2) Farmer Housewives Group Mulberry growers - silkworm raising, weaving according to the Royal Project, Baan Hai Leng, Moo 3 and (3) Ban Na Charoen Silk Weaving House. These groups served as the selected sample group of the research.

4. Data Collection Methodology

The procedures used in this research were as follows.

4.1 Theoretical section included analyses of documents, relevant research from library, online database related to the location, and the study of local weaving technique, Srisaket's identity analysis along with the concept of fabric pattern development.

4.2 Fieldwork was the second phase in which the researcher collected information on the distinctive characteristics and identity of the weaving and local culture of Srisaket province using a camera, voice recorder and notes as collecting tools. This could be described as follows.

1) The researcher used unstructured interviews, structured interviews, in-depth interviews and small group conversations to get in-depth details.

2) The researcher utilized both participant and non- participant observation.

3) In order to collect more insights in developing local wisdom in local woven textile and be able to apply Srisaket's unique contemporary characteristics to a creative product towards the center of cultural and community tourism in southern Isaan, the researcher prepared questionnaires to be completed by specialists in cultural tourism and specialists in contemporary fabric design.

Findings and Discussion

1. The Local Wisdom in the Textile Weaving and Textile Patterns of Srisaket.

1.1 Local Wisdom in Woven Fabric

Woven textile has been produced in the village for a long time. Arts and patterns were documented for the use of the village. A pattern is made from a combination of the creator's idea and experience, which in itself implicitly shows the local art, culture, details and exquisiteness. This concept has been passed on to the next generations which can show the social status and lifestyle of each community. Presently, local textile producers continue to weave traditional symbolic motifs, especially in some ethnic communities that are scattered throughout different regions of Thailand. Therefore, woven textiles are considered as a representation of a community's unique identity.

Srisaket Provincial Cultural Office held a meeting of experts in local weaving wisdom (Srisaket Provincial Public Relation Office, 2021). The experts' opinion was that even though fabric naming is different in each region in Srisaket, the regions have one pattern in common, i.e., the marble glass pattern. Originally, villagers called it "Pha Yeab" (treaded rayon) based on the weaving method using the feet to treadle. Some opined that "Pha Yeab" seems impolite. Therefore, it is better to call this pattern "marble glass" instead.

However, each village has different patterns for tailoring. The provincial cultural committee collectively agreed that marble glass pattern is the fabric pattern unique to Srisaket and symbolizes its identity, naming it "Pha Yeab Lai Luk Kaew" and assigned the relevant departments to raise people's awareness through public relations.

Silk not only plays a significant role in reflecting the local wisdom of the tailors and social status, but also has sentimental and economic value. It is also a cultural inheritance for the next generation. Pratwet et al., (2018) stated that the existence of local wisdom in silk will create a lot of new fabric patterns derived from traditional patterns. It is a combination and integration of local wisdom and universal wisdom to harmonize in the present and it could be applied in daily life, which focuses on diversity that benefits individual interests.

It can be said that the marble glass pattern is the most produced woven local textile pattern in Srisaket. This pattern is popular all over Srisaket province. Many government agencies also consider the marble glass pattern the woven textile icon of Srisaket.

Based on the field studies conducted across the three textile weaving groups, there were three distinct categories of fabric patterns. These include 1) traditional patterns that have been passed down through generations, 2) patterns that were woven following designs found in books, and 3) patterns created by adapting traditional motifs. As the researcher observed, the designs and patterns shared some similarities and could be classified into the aforementioned three groups. The pattern design process was initiated using data collected from interviews with the sample group. The design development employed three approaches: 1) Adapting from pre-existing patterns, 2) Developing patterns based on community resources and 3) Creating entirely new patterns based on the principles of the tile pattern design which allows seamless repetition of the ten newly designed patterns.

1.2 The History of Hand Weaving in Srisaket Province

Before being called “marble glass” pattern, it used to be named “treaded rayon”, because the weaver has to step on a 4-shaft switching treadle to create a pattern in the weaving process (Sikkha, 2011). The marble glass pattern has existed in Srisaket for more than 200 years. It started with villagers cultivating mulberries, feeding silkworms, collecting silk and weaving into many types of fabrics such as sarong, squirrel tail sarong and marble glass pattern silk. This local wisdom in hand weaving and its pattern has been passed on to the next generations by the ancestors in Nong Bua Lam Phu province before they migrated to Srisaket due to the conflict with Laos at that time.

1.3 Pattern of Local Hand-woven Fabric

Srisaket is geographically diverse which has affected people’s lives, especially in indigent areas, making it difficult for people to live in. In terms of historical and archeological importance, it was a center of various ethnic groups which included ethnic groups from Laos, Cambodia, Soai and Yer that led to diverse cultures (Pratwet et al., 2018). However, weaving, which is distinct from each ethnic group, is one thing in common these groups have. Therefore, the geography, history and archeology of the area have an effect on the grouping of people regarding their cultures including the weaving culture of the Srisaket people.

From the fieldwork study and in-depth interview with Mrs. Wanida Rayoungsri, the president of the community enterprise career development promotion group in Baan Noi Na Charoen, it was found that there are many design patterns from various occupational groups, which included not only marble glass design found in almost every area in Srisaket province, but also other new patterns. Although the invented pattern does not have a specific name, its characteristics were still neat and beautiful. Therefore, through collaboration in the thinking and production process, patterns can be created, and similar patterns can be named similarly. Most importantly, the production techniques will also be known by the local people. In terms of further development, it depends on personal ability, technique and creativity.

1.4 Hand Weaving Tools and Materials

The tools and materials used are listed below:

1) Silkworm	2) Mulberry leaf
3) Silk	4) Chemical colors
5) Natural colors (Ma-Klue)	6) Handloom
7) Shaft switching (Ta-Gor)	8) Fabric keeper (Kra-Som)
9) Beater	10) Spindle
11) Shuttle loom	12) Wooden foot treadle

1.5 Weaving Process

Weaving process involves the stages described as follows.

1.5.1 Silk Production

Instructions on silk production are illustrated below.

1) Screen the cocoons before spinning the yarn, remove twin cocoons, destroy infected fungus and deformed cocoons.

2) Boil the cocoons. The water needs to be fresh, clean and clear and has to be changed when it gets dark or dirty.

3) Control the temperature in the boiling pot. When the cocoons are done, the cocoon shells will be drenched. Let it cool down to 60-70 degrees Celsius.

4) Spin the yarn to make a standard silk hank size. Its circumference is around 135-155 centimeters, and it weighs approximately 80-100 grams. The silk hank is divided into 6 parts for convenience in dyeing and weaving.

1.5.2 Weaving Process

Put a spindle into the shuttle loom and start weaving. Select a spindle to weave in order. In general, handloom machines will be used to make hand-woven textiles to create the desired pattern.

1.5.3 Ma-klue Dyeing Process

To dye the silk, here are the listed instructions.

1) Pestle 1 kilogram of Ma-Klue and Leb Krut leaf. They can be mixed with screw pine root (Rak Lam Jiak) or Jatropha Curcas Black soap leaf (Sa Bu Dam) to blacken the color and increase sheen.

2) Mix the aforementioned ingredients with sufficient water. The mixture should not be too thick or too diluted.

3) Soak the silk in the water and wring. Then soak it in Ma-Klue water for 5 minutes. After that, wring the silk again and dry it by putting it on the ground under the sun. After the silk dries, soak it in Ma-Klue water again. It takes 6 soakings per day in the initial process. After that, the silk will get thicker and dry slower than previously. Consequently, it will take 3 soakings per day. In this dyeing process, the silk needs to be mud-stained at least twice. However, the silk needs to be dyed in Ma-Klue water until it is all black and shiny (300 soakings/60 drying, with 1 drying equivalent to 1 day). Finally, boil the silk in boiling Ma-Klue water for 5 minutes to make the color last longer, dry it under the sun, and wash it with water.

The Mudmee Fabric, Khit-pattern and Mantle are woven fabrics made from both silk and cotton. As for the patterns on these fabrics, they exhibit various cultural elements. For instance, the Sarong fabric features patterns that run parallel to the fabric's length, distinguishing it from the patterns found in the fabrics the Lanna or Northern region, where the design and motifs typically encompass the entire width of the Loincloth and Sarong. These are considered local textiles commonly used in the Northeastern region. The patters on each fabric reflect unique beauty, shaped by the prevailing preferences passed down through generations in each respective region.

The development of textile patterns or the design of distinctive fabric patterns with diversity for experimental production and finding the best design to be put into market should be derived from various local characteristics of the province, such as the sunflower, stone sanctuaries, main motifs found in the sanctuaries, prominent plants in the province, birds, and other animals (Sikkha, 2011) Once the design has been created, experimental production of the design can be undertaken in training workshops.

These new patterns, drawing inspiration from local culture, will create identity and branding for the textile group, enhance value creation and attract new consumer segments.

2. The Specific Local Patterns and the Design of a Unique Contemporary Pattern.

2.1 Local Identity Analysis Process

The researcher collected information from villagers and village leaders through in-depth interview using a voice recorder and photo camera. The result is as follows:

2.1.1 The outstanding woven fabric patterns of Srisaket consist of marble glass, Dok Lamduan and Lai Cherng patterns, important symbols standing for the community's identity. The researcher decided to group the designs into three categories: 1) local resources i.e., Dok Lamduan, pine tree and butterfly patterns, 2) applied patterns which include 8^{th} pattern, 16^{th} pattern and applied marble glass pattern, and 3) newly created patterns such as graphic, abstract and little turtle patterns.

2.1.2 In regard to lifestyle, there are two reasons for weaving, which is to sell the products and to use them in their daily life. Small and Micro Community Enterprises in each village will sell the woven textiles for the villagers as a Srisaket souvenir. They will take tourists who are interested in weaving production to visit a village member's house to see the production process.

2.1.3 The brainstorming between woven textile producers and the researcher was recorded using a voice recorder. The pattern design was generated from internal resources in the community. The researcher developed an existing pattern in the community and created a new pattern derived from the marble glass, Dok Lamduan, Lai Cherng and other outstanding patterns of Srisaket. In this research, there are 10 applied patterns which were designed using a computer program.

2.2 Process of Creating a Unique Contemporary Pattern

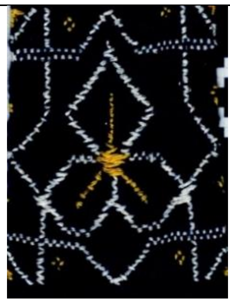
The researcher selected unique patterns of Srisaket province and created a pattern based on a combination of its identity and contemporary design. These designs still maintain the charisma of the original pattern. The process involved the following steps.

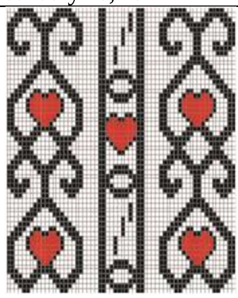
1) Determine the identity of Srisaket
2) Draft a pattern on paper
3) Create a model by using Adobe Illustrator (Ai)
4) Create a physical model by hand-weaving

After the pattern design session was finished, the researcher created a sample to pass on the knowledge to the community by creating a 5x5 centimeter hand-woven fabric from genuine silk using mudmee weaving technique and dyed using natural dyes from local plants, which involved the bundling and dyeing of raw silk threads, facilitated by calculated processes in order to generate patterns during the weaving phase. The aim was to create a prototype to be passed on to the community.

Table 1

Comparison Table: Graphic Patterns Designed Using Adobe Illustrator vs. Actual Hand-woven Fabric Patterns Using Mudmee Technique.

Item	Pattern Type	Design Name	Design Image	Sample
1.	Local Resources	Dok Lamduan	 An original photograph by Khanin Phriwanrat, January 10, 2011	 An original photograph by Khanin Phriwanrat, January 10, 2011

Item	Pattern Type	Design Name	Design Image	Sample
2.	Local Resources	Pine Tree	 An original photograph by Khanin Phriwanrat, January 10, 2011	 An original photograph by Khanin Phriwanrat, January 10, 2011
3.	Local Resources	Butterfly	 An original photograph by Khanin Phriwanrat, January 10, 2011	 An original photograph by Khanin Phriwanrat, January 10, 2011
4.	Applied Pattern	Applicative design	 An original photograph by Khanin Phriwanrat, January 10, 2011	 An original photograph by Khanin Phriwanrat, January 10, 2011
5.	Applied Pattern	8 Design	 An original photograph by Khanin Phriwanrat, January 10, 2011	 An original photograph by Khanin Phriwanrat, January 10, 2011

Item	Pattern Type	Design Name	Design Image	Sample
6.	Applied Pattern	16 Design	 An original photograph by Khanin Phriwanrat, January 10, 2011	 An original photograph by Khanin Phriwanrat, January 10, 2011
7.	Applied Pattern	Applied Marble glass	 An original photograph by Khanin Phriwanrat, January 10, 2011	 An original photograph by Khanin Phriwanrat, January 10, 2011
8.	Newly Created	Graphic	 An original photograph by Khanin Phriwanrat, January 10, 2011	 An original photograph by Khanin Phriwanrat, January 10, 2011
9.	Newly Created	Subjective	 An original photograph by Khanin Phriwanrat, January 10, 2011	 An original photograph by Khanin Phriwanrat, January 10, 2011

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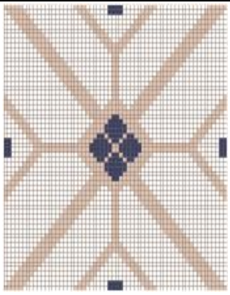
Item	Pattern Type	Design Name	Design Image	Sample
10.	Newly Created	Little Turtle	 An original photograph by Khanin Phriwanrat, January 10, 2011	 An original photograph by Khanin Phriwanrat, January 10, 2011

Conclusion

In this study, the researchers have taken traditional but unpopular fabric patterns and transformed them into new, more contemporary designs. This can be used as a model for integrating other existing fabric patterns using local wisdom and weaving techniques of the "phamudmee" (tied thread fabric) to create a distinct identity for the phamudmee silk fabric of various groups within the province, which can serve as unique patterns. The discussion can be categorized into two main points as follows:

In the study of local wisdom of woven textile pattern of Srisaket province, the production process is similar to “The Research of the Participation in Developing Woven Textile in Ban Phu Thong Community, Sukhothai Province” by Panthung (2019). The objective of the Sukhothai study is to create a new pattern and design but the study of Srisaket has a slightly different research objective, namely, to enhance Srisaket’s original pattern by adding more interesting features, bringing the original pattern into further development such as Dok Lamduan, which is the flower of Srisaket province. Furthermore, the researcher also utilized computer graphics in designing and creating a prototype of other original patterns such as the applied marble glass and pine tree patterns.

On the second research objective, which is the analysis of the specific local patterns and designing a unique contemporary pattern, Srilapan (2016) stated in “The Wisdom of Glass Ball Pattern with Dyed Ebony Silk Weaving of Ethnic Groups in Sri Sa Ket Province” that even though the weaving pattern results are the same, the heddle approaches are different. Each ethnic group has their own creative pattern, and these become their own unique identity.

This study is different from other research such as “Fabric Patterned Design Based on Tai Phuan and Tai Yuan Jok Weaving Art and Wisdom in Line with Creative Economy” by Viengsima and Soodsang (2020), in which existing patterns were used to create a new pattern that maintained the Thai style and was similar to the original.

In the current study, the researcher created a new pattern which differs from the local pattern to build a new contemporary identity for the community. It is anticipated that the new pattern can attract various buyer groups, especially middle-aged and younger generation consumers.

Recommendations

1. The goal of this research is to create a fabric pattern that can be further developed into product designs such as souvenirs and home decorations, among other types, using this new fabric pattern. This will be explored in future studies using woven textiles from Srisaket province.

2. There are 10 different woven design patterns, but this research did not conduct a study on a suitable color for market demand. From the aforementioned issue, we can further study the colors of the woven fabrics according to the market demand.

3. This research involved designing new fabric patterns to increase market demand. Therefore, market trials of the products should be undertaken and a survey on consumer satisfaction should be conducted. It is recommended to include enquiries concerning satisfaction of the target group, the tracking of sales figures and collecting consumer feedback in future studies.

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Attitude Factors Predicting Moon Festival Practice among Chinese Thai Youth in Hat Yai

ปัจจัยด้านทัศนคติที่พยากรณ์การปฏิบัติเทศกาลไหว้พระจันทร์ท่ามกลางเยาวชนไทยเชื้อสายจีนในหาดใหญ่

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Abstract

The Moon Festival originated in mainland China during the Song dynasty. It is currently inherited in Hat Yai by Overseas Chinese immigrants. However, due to social and cultural change, the Moon Festival was increasingly recognized as cultural commodity instead of social and cultural values. Therefore, this research aimed to identify attitude factors predicting the practice of the Moon Festival among Chinese Thai youth in Hat Yai and develop a prediction equation for participation. The subjects comprised 160 Chinese Thai youths selected through purposive sampling. Data collection involved questionnaires, which were analyzed using the R program to calculate Pearson's product-moment and multiple linear correlation coefficients. The study revealed three significant predictors (favorable tourism conditions [X8], family unity [X4], and a stable economy [X7]) for the subjects'Moon Festival practice ($p < .001$). Notably, the attitude factor of improving tourism (X8) exhibited the strongest correlation, while improving economy (X7) showed the weakest correlation. The derived prediction equation is as follows: $\hat{Y}_y = -0.59 + 0.35X_4 + 0.19X\_7$. The study provided insight into the attitudes that need to be fostered in young people to maintain and promote the success of cultures like the Moon Festival in Hat Yai.

Keywords: attitude, Moon Festival, Chinese Thai, youth, Hat Yai

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บทคัดย่อ

วันไหว้พระจันทร์ได้ถือกำเนิดขึ้นในประเทศจีนตั้งแต่สมัยราชวงศ์ซ่ง ในปัจจุบันวันไหว้พระจันทร์ได้มีการสืบทอดในอำเภอหาดใหญ่ จังหวัดสงขลาโดยกลุ่มชาวจีนอพยพ อย่างไรก็ดี การเปลี่ยนแปลงทางสังคมและวัฒนธรรมส่งผลให้เกิดการเปลี่ยนแปลงของคุณค่าทางครอบครัวและวัฒนธรรมสู่การทำให้วัฒนธรรมเป็นสินค้า การวิจัยครั้งนี้มีวัตถุประสงค์เพื่อศึกษาปัจจัยด้านทัศนคติที่พยากรณ์การปฏิบัติเทศกาลไหว้พระจันทร์ท่ามกลางเยาวชนไทยเชื้อสายจีนในหาดใหญ่และพัฒนาสมการพยากรณ์ กลุ่มเป้าหมายคือเยาวชนไทยเชื้อสายจีนจำนวน 160 คนผ่านการเลือกแบบเจาะจง ใช้การเก็บข้อมูลด้วยแบบสอบถามและนำมาวิเคราะห์ด้วยโปรแกรมอาร์ เพื่อหาค่าสัมประสิทธิ์เพียร์สันและสหสัมพันธ์พหุคูณเชิงเส้น ผลการวิจัยพบปัจจัยพยากรณ์ทั้ง 3 ได้แก่ สภาพเศรษฐกิจที่ดีขึ้น (X8) ความสามัคคีในครอบครัว (X4) และสภาพทางเศรษฐกิจที่มั่นคง (X7) สำหรับการปฏิบัติเทศกาลไหว้พระจันทร์ของกลุ่มเป้าหมาย ($p<.001$) โดยตัวแปรสภาพเศรษฐกิจที่ดีขึ้น (X8) เป็นตัวแปรที่สามารถพยากรณ์ได้สูงที่สุด ในขณะที่ตัวแปรสภาพทางเศรษฐกิจที่มั่นคง (X7) เป็นตัวแปรที่พยากรณ์ได้ต่ำที่สุด สมการพยากรณ์ของการวิจัยในครั้งนี้ คือ $\hat{Y}_y = -0.59 + 0.35X_4 + 0.19X_7 + 0.42X_8$ การศึกษานี้ชี้ให้เห็นถึงทัศนคติที่ควรได้รับการส่งเสริมในหมู่เยาวชนเพื่อให้มั่นใจว่าการอนุรักษ์และส่งเสริมวัฒนธรรม เช่น เทศกาลไหว้พระจันทร์ในหาดใหญ่จะประสบความสำเร็จได้อย่างต่อเนื่อง

คำสำคัญ ทัศนคติ เทศกาลไหว้พระจันทร์ ชาวไทยเชื้อสายจีน เยาวชน หาดใหญ่

Introduction

1.Statement of the Problem

The Moon Festival originated in the Song dynasty in mainland China and has been inherited in Chinese communities around the world. Hat Yai, the commercial center of southern Thailand, is one of the destinations that Overseas Chinese migrated to. Siripaisan et al (2006) discovered that the main reason of their immigration was applying as labor for the railway construction in the period of King Rama V. Furthermore, Siripaisan (2007) added that the Moon Festival was changed due to social, political, and cultural factors. Firstly, Chinese people in Hat Yai were forced to inherit Thai culture instead of Chinese culture. This situation happened in the period of Plaek Phibunsongkhram (1914–1957), and is called assimilation policy (Skinner, 1957).

Secondly, the Moon Festival was adapted to Thai culture. It happened after Chinese descendants in Hat Yai werebecoming familiar with Thai culture. Therefore, Thai and Chinese cultures were combined for harmonious inheritance (Morita, 2003). Thirdly, globalization and capitalism have affected the commodity of the Moon Festival, therebyinfluencing the value of the Moon Festival among new generations of Chinese Thais in Hat Yai.

The Moon Festival in present-day Hat Yai has undergone changes influenced by the evolving lifestyle of its people. Chinese Thais are recognized as a large group of immigrants living and engaging in trade and business in the city. Consequently, the economic fluctuations experienced by Hat Yai have impacted the scale of offerings and ritual equipment, such as perfumes, women's clothing, cosmetics, rice, and vegetables. Additionally, the timing of the ritual has been adjusted for convenience, considering the early morning obligations of children and working individuals, resulting in a shortened duration of the ritual. Certain aspects of the traditional ritual have been omitted. Furthermore, fewer Chinese Thai individuals in Hat Yai actively participate in family reunion meals and the consumption of mooncakes. However, in the past offerings to the moon goddess would consist of three to five mooncakes, present-day offerings have reduced to one or two mooncakes due to cost considerations (Buakaew, 2017).

This festival holds substantial value in terms of tourism, culture, and the local economy. The Moon Festival serves as a powerful expression of the Chinese Thai identity in Hat Yai, making it highly advantageous for cultural tourism purposes (Panuwattanakul, 2010). Moreover, the festival has been incorporated into the tourism development campaigns of the Hat Yai Municipality, which aims to promote Hat Yai as a city suitable for investment, travel, and residence. Notably, in response to the economic challenges brought about by the COVID-19 pandemic, the Hat Yai Municipality has identified the Moon Festival as a means to address the resulting crisis (Krueaphat & Laeheem, 2022).

The youth population, particularly the Chinese Thai youth, holds immense importance as the future torchbearers of the Moon Festival tradition. They serve as the focal point of this study since their active engagement and preservation of cultural practices are vital for the successful conservation of this cultural activity. It is suggested that efforts be made to instill a sense of appreciation and knowledge about the festival through education, teaching, and reinforcement strategies. Such endeavors are considered crucial for ensuring the continuity of cultural traditions (Krueaphat, Laeheem, & Dhammasaccakarn, 2021). Hence, conserving the traditional festival amidst the ongoing social and cultural changes poses a significant challenge for the Hat Yai municipality.

To understand the future continuation of the Moon Festival practice and the preservation of its values, previous research identified eight attitude factors that contribute to stimulating Moon Festival participation. These factors include perceiving good benefits for oneself (X1), recognizing the festival as a learning opportunity (X2), associating the festival with a improving quality of life (X3), promoting family unity (X4), supporting ethical values (X5), fostering social unity (X6), recognizing the festival's positive impact on the economy (X7), and acknowledging its potential for enhancing tourism (X8) (Krueaphat & Laeheem, 2023). These attitude factors play a significant role in motivating individuals to actively engage in the Moon Festival and contribute to its continuity.

Among the eight attitude factors identified, tourism has been presented as the most significant factor influencing Moon Festival practice. The hypothesis that tourism is the most influential attitude factor on Moon Festival practice is worth investigating (Alivizatou, 2016; Keawborisut, 2012; Wasee, 1931). It has been observed that cultural elements that can be utilized for cultural tourism purposes tend to be actively preserved by local governments (Prompayuk & Chairattananon, 2016).

Drawing upon attitude theory, which suggests that motivation plays a crucial role in shaping behavior (Kotler & Armstrong, 2018), this study aims to examine the attitude factors that predict Moon Festival practice among Chinese Thai youth in Hat Yai. Additionally, the study seeks to develop a prediction equation for Moon Festival practice, considering the various attitude factors identified. By exploring these factors, the research aims to shed light on the motivations and predictors that drive the participation in the Moon Festival among Chinese Thai youth in Hat Yai.

This study would be beneficial for governmental and private organizations in formulating policies for cultural conservation, given the prominence of Hat Yai as a destination for cultural tourism and commerce (Siripaisan et al., 2006). Despite being recognized as a major center of commerce in southern Thailand, Hat Yai Municipality aims to leverage its multicultural society to promote both tourism and industry (Hat Yai Municipality, 2023). Currently, there have been few studies on the Moon Festival in Hat Yai, which poses a challenge in terms of its recognition among researchers and youth seeking guidelines for conservation and deriving benefits from its cultural value. Therefore, this study aims to fill this research gap and provide valuable insights for the conservation and promotion of the Moon Festival in the city.

Hypothesis

The attitude factor of improving tourism has the highest level of influence in predicting the practice of the Moon Festival among Chinese Thai youth in Hat Yai.

Objective

This study aimed to identify attitude factors predicting the practice of the Moon Festival among Chinese Thai youth in Hat Yai and develop a prediction equation for participation.

Definition of Key Terms

1. Attitude factors encompass certain perspectives that influence the Moon Festival practice. These factors include Moon Festival practice (Y), personal benefits (X1), learning opportunities (X2), improved quality of life (X3), family unity (X4), adherence to ethics (X5), promotion of social unity (X6), economic advancement (X7), and enhanced tourism (X8).

2. Moon Festival practice is defined as participation in a cultural event in Hat Yai that revolves around the worship of the moon goddess. It encompasses activities such as the moon worship ritual, family reunion meals, partaking in mooncakes, observing the moon, and paying respects at communal altars.

3. Chinese Thai youth refers to a specific group of individuals who identify as Chinese Thai and serve as the subject of this study. These individuals were interviewed to gather data for the purposes of this study.

Literature Review

1. Attitude

The concept of attitude encompasses various aspects of human behavior and decision-making. According to Kotler and Armstrong (2018), attitude is an emotion that influences different behaviors. It can be shaped through stimuli, perception, and personal experiences (Nuchanart et al., 2019). When attitudes change, behavior tends to change as well (Newcomb et al., 1965).

Attitudes consist of four main components. Firstly, adjustment reflects how individuals use their attitudes as a tool to make decisions that lead to the greatest personal benefit. Attitudes serve as a guiding force in shaping behaviors aligned with personal goals. Secondly, attitudes are value-expressive, representing an integral part of an individual's value system and reflecting specific values held by individuals. Thirdly, knowledge plays a role in shaping attitudes as they are influenced by an individual's comprehension and learning experiences. Attitudes serve as a standard for evaluating and understanding the environment. Lastly, feelings and interests significantly impact attitudes and can lead individuals to accept or reject certain aspects, thereby influencing their subsequent behaviors. Ultimately, behavior is an outward expression of one's attitudes (Schiffman & Kanuk, 1994).

Understanding the components and mechanisms of attitudes is crucial for comprehending human behavior and decision-making processes. In the context of the Moon Festival and its practice among Chinese Thai youth in Hat Yai, examining the various attitude factors can provide insights into the motivations and drivers behind their engagement with the festival.

2. Cultural Practice

According to Schwartz (1999), cultural practice refers to the shared perceptions of people's behavior within a society. It encompasses the patterns and routines that are collectively followed and recognized by individuals in a particular cultural context. Shteynberg, Gelfand, and Kim (2009) suggest that the concept of norms is closely related to cultural practice. Norms are the accepted standards of thinking and behavior within a society, and they play a role in regulating and influencing people's behaviors. As discussed by Chiu, Gelfand, Yamagishi, Shteynberg, and Wan (2010), norms can be both input and output variables of cultural practice, shaping and reflecting the behavior of individuals within a cultural framework.

Furthermore, Havighurst (1948) adds that cultural practice involves the development of routines and behaviors that result from learning and engagement with cultural values. These cultural practices are acquired and transmitted through socialization processes, and they become ingrained in individuals as they navigate their cultural environments.

Understanding the relationship between cultural practice, norms, and cultural values is important for comprehending how individuals within a society engage with and adhere to specific behaviors and traditions. In the context of the Moon Festival and its practice among Chinese Thai youth in Hat Yai, exploring the cultural practices and norms associated with the festival can provide valuable insights into the underlying motivations and dynamics of their participation.

3. Cultural Festival

Festivals are dynamic expressions of the cultural and creative industries (Johansson, 2016), and their popularity and number have been on the rise (Baez-Montenegro & Devesa-Fernandez, 2017). Cultural festivals play a significant role in economic development, as seen in the annual revenue generated by music and film festivals in Europe. Additionally, cultural festivals serve as key markers of community identity, attracting visitors to the host locations. The economic benefits of cultural festivals are multifaceted. Firstly, they support tourism development, as exemplified by France's lucrative summer festivals in Provence. Moreover, cultural festivals provide small cities with opportunities to showcase their unique identities (Salvador, Castro-Martinez, & Benghozi, 2022). Secondly, festivals contribute to local and regional development through marketing impacts and image building, as proposed by Frey (1994). Lastly, the music industry exemplifies how festivals foster new economic models that combine the dematerialization of content with the power of live events.

4. History of Moon Festival

According to existing literature, the history of the Moon Festival encompasses two narratives: a historical account and a mythical tale. Firstly, Peng (2012) asserts that the Moon Festival originated during the Song dynasty, with the 15th day of the eighth lunar month being officially designated as the festival day under Emperor Tai of the Northern Song dynasty. The festival's ritualistic practices can be traced back to the tradition of moon worship (Castrillón, 2021). In connection to its historical origins, the festival is linked to a significant event during the Yuan dynasty (1206-1341 CE) when the Mongols held power over the Chinese people. Enduring oppression under the Mongol administration, the Chinese populace faced hardship. However, a man named Zhu Yuanzhang initiated a rebellion by covertly disseminating a secret message concealed within a mooncake. This message contained vital information regarding the planned rebellion against the Yuan dynasty, ultimately leading to victory over the Mongols. Thus, one purpose of the Moon Festival celebration is to commemorate this historical uprising (Lu, 2010).

Secondly, the Moon Festival is associated with a mythical tale centered around Chang'e, a celestial figure who ascended to the moon. Legend has it that Chang'e was the wife of Houyi, a deity responsible for safeguarding the earth from ten scorching suns, whose excessive heat threatened numerous species. Upon receiving a heavenly directive, the skilled archer Houyi was tasked with shooting down nine suns to preserve life on earth. As a reward for his feat, he was granted an immortal pill. Tragically, Chang'e had to consume the pill to prevent it from falling into the hands of thieves, causing her to ascend to the moon and become the goddess of the moon. Consequently, the moon ritual is performed as a mark of respect and homage to Chang'e for her valiant act of protecting the pill (Peng, 2012).

These narratives, encompassing historical and mythical dimensions, significantly contribute to the significance and cultural observances associated with the Moon Festival.

5. Original Moon Festival Practice

The traditional practice of the Moon Festival is observed on the 15th day of the 8th lunar month. During the Song dynasty, Chinese culture held the belief that paying homage to the moon goddess, Chang'e, would bring happiness. It was also believed that women who paid respect to the goddess would enhance their beauty. However, men were not invited to participate in the moon ritual, as it was believed to be exclusively for women. This distinction was based on the symbolism of darkness (Yin) representing women and brightness (Yang) symbolizing men. Thus, the festival of darkness was meant to be devoid of brightness. In ancient China, due to the financial circumstances, families would gather to pay respect to the moon at a communal altar. The festival would commence when the moon became clearly visible in the sky and would extend past midnight, involving significant time dedicated to the moon ritual (Shiya & Onkam, 2020).

The Moon Festival practice serves three primary purposes. Firstly, it aims to foster family unity through the shared experience of a family meal. Chinese culture associates the round shape of the moon with family harmony, reflecting the symbolism of the round dining table in Chinese customs. Hence, it is customary for every family member to gather for the festival celebration. Secondly, the festival serves as a commemoration of a historical event related to the resistance against the Yuan dynasty (Hulsbosch, Bedford, & Chaiklin, 2009). Lastly, it involves the worship of the moon goddess. Chinese belief holds that the moon goddess is exceptionally beautiful, and thus cosmetics, traditional attire, and perfume hold significance as offerings. The worshippers seek the blessings of the goddess for good health and fortune. The worship ritual takes place during the nighttime (Cui, 2020).

6. Moon Festival in Hat Yai

Buakaew (2017) stated that the Moon Festival practice among Chinese Thai in Hat Yai bears resemblance to the traditional observance, albeit with certain adaptations influenced by the globalized era. The initial phase of the Moon Festival involves preparation, wherein Hat Yai's Chinese Thai community engages in shopping activities to acquire offerings for the moon goddess, mooncakes, and ingredients for the family reunion meal. The shopping list typically includes items such as candles, joss sticks, cosmetics, women's clothing, perfume, fruits, tea, flowers, vegetables, mooncakes, and rice. The worship ceremony for the Moon Festival traditionally takes place at night, with the timing determined by each family's convenience. Notably, there has been a shift in the inclusion of men in the festival, contrary to previous practices.

Worship rituals are commonly performed in front of or on the deck of the house, depending on the architectural design that offers a clear view of the moon. The conclusion of the ritual coincides with the burning of joss sticks. In the contemporary context, the timing of the ritual initiation is flexible, accommodating the preferences and schedules of individual families. Typically, the worship ceremony takes place in front of the house, while some families opt for the deck area to ensure an unobstructed view of the moon. The altar dedicated to the goddess is meticulously arranged, as Chinese beliefs associate a more aesthetically pleasing altar with the potential for greater fortune.

Offerings consist of fruits, cosmetics, clothing, tea, flowers, joss sticks, candles, joss paper, desserts, and mooncakes. The conclusion of the ritual occurs when the joss sticks have completely burned.

7. Related Research

Previous research has identified six aspects of Moon Festival practice. Firstly, it is presented that inheriting the culture can make good use of peoples' free time. People feel precious to spend free time to participate in cultural activities. Therefore, it is recognized as a benefit to oneself (Gilmore, 2014). Secondly, those cultural activities provide the knowledge about local history and local identity which can make them understand and influence the sense of belonging to their culture (Kawdee, 2016). Thirdly, improving the inheritance of culture would positively affect quality of life because people are gaining benefit from cultural inheritance, an example being the safety guidelines for people to follow Songkran Festival announced by the government (McCarty et al, 2004; Ministry of Culture, 2023; Murihead & de Leeuw, 2012). Fourthly, cultural inheritance is a bridge connecting people between generations. Many teenagers inherit the culture because of the relationship between younger and older generations (Shiya & Onkam, 2020; Vatviroj, 2016). Fifthly, there are etiquettes for cultural activities, so those who inherit the culture would understand and follow those etiquettes which are beneficial to the social orderliness. People understand that culture is not just a heritage of society, but it is a lesson that provides value, ethics and way of life (Sunthonkitcharak & Yuenyong, 2022; Topanurakkun & Paiwithayasiritham, 2016). Sixthly, the economy and tourism are participated in by those who inherit the local culture because local culture is used for tourism and economic development purposes (Canadian Media Production Association, 2011; Krueaphat & Laeheem, 2023).

Conceptual Framework

To comprehensively understand the factors influencing the Moon Festival practice among Chinese Thai youth in Hat Yai, it is essential to examine the attitudes that shape their behavior. As attitudes have been established to impact behavior (Kotler & Armstrong, 2018), identifying the motives underlying these attitudes becomes crucial. This study specifically focuses on investigating the attitudes influencing the Moon Festival practice to gain insights into the reasons behind its observance among Chinese Thai youth in Hat Yai. The conceptual framework presented below highlights the independent factors, or attitude factors, that contribute to this phenomenon:

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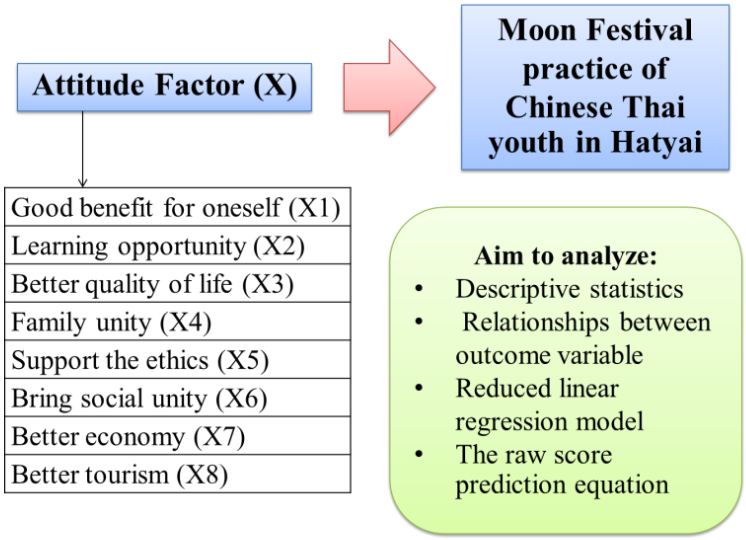

Research Methodology

1.Population and Subjects

The selection of subjects was carried out using judgmental sampling, which involved asking the following preliminary questions to potential participants: 1) Are you between the ages of 15 and 24? 2) Do you have at least one Chinese ancestor? And 3) Does your family continue to observe the Moon Festival?

These questions were used to determine the eligibility of individuals for participation in the study, ensuring that the sample comprised individuals within the specified age range, with Chinese ancestry, and whose families actively practiced the Moon Festival. The use of judgmental sampling allowed for the selection of participants who met the specific criteria relevant to the research objectives.

2. Research Instrument

The research instrument used in this study was developed by the researchers based on relevant literature. It received certification of approval from the Center for Social and Behavioral Sciences Institutional Review Board, Prince of Songkla University, under the reference number 2022-St-Libarts-026.

The research instrument utilized a five-point rating scale for participants' responses. The scale ranged from 5, representing the highest rating, to 1, representing the lowest rating. Participants were asked to indicate their level of agreement or disagreement with the provided statements or questions using this rating scale. The use of a standardized rating scale allows for consistent measurement and interpretation of participants' responses.

3. Data Collection

The data collection for this study spanned a period of one year, specifically from December 2021 to December 2022. The process involved three distinct steps.

In the first step, the questionnaire was developed in the Thai language and underwent evaluation by three experts in the relevant field. This evaluation process aimed to assess the content and quality of the questionnaire. One of the measures used was the Item-Objective Congruence Index (IOC), which helped determine the level of agreement among the experts regarding the questionnaire's suitability and effectiveness.

The second step involved conducting a pilot test with a sample of 200 respondents who were Chinese Thai youth residing in Songkhla City. The primary purpose of this pilot test was to assess the clarity and comprehensibility of the questionnaire. It also aimed to identify any potential issues or areas for improvement that could enhance the questionnaire's reliability and validity.

After making necessary adjustments based on the pilot test results, the main data collection phase was initiated. Some questions were eliminated from the questionnaire to ensure greater reliability. Prior to participating in the study, the respondents were requested to provide their informed consent. They were informed that their participation was voluntary and that their personal information would be treated with the utmost confidentiality. This meant that their data would be anonymized and not disclosed to any unauthorized parties.

4. Data Analysis

The data were analyzed using the R program to calculate frequency, percentage, arithmetic mean, and standard deviation. Pearson's correlation coefficients were used to examine the relationships between the attitude factors and Moon Festival practice. A backward multiple regression analysis was conducted to create a predictive equation for Moon Festival practice.

5. Interpretation Criteria for Mean Values

The interpretation criteria of Cronbach (1990) were selected to interpret the mean values of predictors and variables where 1.00-1.49 = Very Low; 1.50-2.49 = Low; 2.50-3.49 = Moderate; 3.50-4.49 = High; and 4.50-5.00 = Very High.

Findings

1. Profiles of the Subjects

Most of the 160 subjects who were Chinese Thai youth in Hat Yai were 22 years of age (23.25%), followed by 21 years (21%), 23 years (13%), 24 years (10%), 20 years (7%), 19 years (6.25%), 18 years (5.75%), 17 years (5.5%), 16 years (4.75%), and 15 years (3.5%) respectively. The majority of the 160 subjects were female (73.75%), followed by male (26.25%).

2. Descriptive Statistics of Outcome Variable (Moon Festival practice) and Predictors

The outcome variable for this study consisted of Moon Festival practice (Y), and the analysis showed that Chinese Thai youth in Hat Yai had a moderate level of Moon Festival practice (mean = 3.24). The analysis of predictor variables related that most of Chinese Thai youth chose improving tourism (X8) at the very high level (mean = 4.60), followed by family unity (X4) (mean = 3.60), learning opportunity (X2) (mean = 3.40), improving economy (X7) (mean = 3.05), improving quality of life (X3) (mean = 2.60), good benefit for oneself (X1) (mean = 2.45), support the ethics (X5) (mean = 2.20), and bring social unity (X6) (mean = 1.50), respectively (see Table 1).

Table 1

Descriptive Statistics of Outcome Variable (Moon Festival practice) and Predictor Variables

Variable	Mean score	S.D.	Interpretation
Moon Festival practice (Y)	3.24	0.82	Moderate
Good benefit for oneself (X1)	2.45	1.05	Low
Learning opportunity (X2)	3.40	0.94	Moderate
Improving quality of life (X3)	2.60	0.99	Moderate
Family unity (X4)	3.60	0.99	High
Support the ethics (X5)	2.20	1.32	Low
Bring social unity (X6)	1.50	0.60	Low
Improving economy (X7)	3.05	1.05	Moderate
Improving tourism (X8)	4.60	0.82	Very High

3. Relationships Between Outcome Variable: Moon Festival Practice and Predictor Variables

From the analysis of the relationships between the eight predictors and Moon Festival practice among Chinese Thai youth in Hat Yai, by calculating Pearson's product moment correlation coefficients, it was found that there were six predictors that had very high significant, positive relationships with Moon Festival practice. Family unity (X4) had the highest relationship with Moon Festival practice ($r = .04$, $p < .001$), followed by good benefit for oneself (X1) ($r = .89$, $p < .001$), learning opportunity (X2) ($r = .87$, $p < .001$), improving quality of life (X3) ($r = .85$, $p < .001$), improving economy (X7) and improving tourism (X8) shared the same value ($r = .84$, $p < .001$), support the ethics (X5) ($r = .76$, $p < .001$), and bring social unity ($r = .74$, $p < .001$).

Table 2

Relationships between Outcome Variable: Moon Festival Practice and Predictor Variables

Predictor variable	r	p	Interpretation
Good benefit for oneself (X1)	0.89	0.00	Very High
Learning opportunity (X2)	0.87	0.00	Very High

Predictor variable	r	p	Interpretation
Improving quality of life (X3)	0.85	0.00	Very High
Family unity (X4)	0.94	0.00	Very High
Support the ethics (X5)	0.76	0.00	High
Bring social unity (X6)	0.74	0.00	High
Improving economy (X7)	0.84	0.00	Very High
Improving tourism (X8)	0.84	0.00	Very High

4. Factors Predicting Moon Festival Practice

Using multiple linear regressions and incorporating the equation with backward elimination, three predictors of Moon Festival practice among Chinese Thai youth in Hat Yai were identified. The prediction ability was at the significance level of .001 with the prediction efficiency of 97.2 percent ($R^2 = 0.972$, $p < .001$). These three predictors were: family unity (X4), improving economy (X7), and improving tourism (X8). The predictor with the highest relationship with Moon Festival practice was improving tourism (X8), ($B = 0.42$, $p < .001$) while the predictor with the lowest relationship with Moon Festival practice was improving economy (X7) ($B = 0.19$, $p < .001$) (see Table 3). The raw score prediction equation for Moon Festival practice among Chinese Thai youth in Hat Yai could be written as: $\hat{Y}_y = -0.59 + 0.35X_4 + 0.19X_7 + 0.42X_8$

Table 3

Reduced Linear Regression Model of Attitude Factors Predicting Moon Festival Practice in the Final Model.

Predictor Variable	B	S.E.	t value	p value
Constant	-0.59	0.19	-3.01	0.01
Family unity (X4)	0.35	0.09	3.92	0.00
Improving economy (X7)	0.19	0.07	2.77	0.01
Improving tourism (X8)	0.42	0.06	6.99	0.00
Note: Multiple R-squared: 0.972, Adjusted R-squared: 0.9668, Residual standard error: 0.1507, on 16 degrees of freedom; F-statistic: 185.2 on 3 and 16 DF, p-value: 0.000				

Discussion

Cultural festivals in Hat Yai have made significant socio-economic contributions. Firstly, they have boosted the income of merchants and local service providers. Secondly, they have played a crucial role in promoting the tourism industry, benefiting hotels and restaurants. These festivals attract a considerable number of Thai, Malaysian, and Singaporean tourists to visit the tourist attractions in Hat Yai. Lastly, these cultural festivals have played a pivotal role in preserving the identity of the Chinese Thai community in Hat Yai (Chitwiboon & Tepsing, 2017).

Considering the aforementioned reasons, it can be concluded that the Moon Festival in Hat Yai provides economic benefits, boosts tourism, and carries cultural significance (Chootochana, 2022). Therefore, it was considered important to study the attitudes of Chinese Thai youth in Hat Yai towards Moon Festival practices to ensure its continuation. This study can serve as a guideline for both governmental and private organizations in developing policies related to the inheritance and promotion of Chinese culture.

The findings of the study revealed that the strongest attitude factor predicting the Moon Festival practice among Chinese Thai youth in Hat Yai was the belief in improving tourism (X8). This finding aligns with the hypothesis of the study and is consistent with previous research that suggests people continue cultural practices for tourism purposes (Canadian Media Production Association, 2011; Castro-Martinez & Benghozi, 2022; Frey, 1994; Johansson, 2016; McCarty et al., 2004; Murihead and de Leeuw, 2012; Salvador).

To analyze attitudes, it is important to consider the motivation for cultural inheritance. Previous research suggests that stimuli can influence changes in attitude and behavior (Nuchanart et al., 2019), and attitudes can lead to different behaviors (Katz, 1960; Kotler and Armstrong, 2018). In the case of Chinese Thai youth in Hat Yai, their continued practice of the Moon Festival is driven by the recognition of its significance for tourism.

The cultural practice theory posits that cultural practices are a result of social norms. When individuals share similar beliefs, these beliefs are expressed through cultural activities. Keawborisut (2012) discussed in her master's degree thesis that not only the Vegetarian Festival in Hat Yai, but also other Chinese festivals in the area are specifically designed for tourism purposes. The festival venues, activities, recipes, and atmosphere are tailored to attract tourists. Additionally, new activities are introduced to further enhance the appeal of the festivals to tourists.

Therefore, the practice of the Moon Festival supports the tourism industry and plays a role in overcoming Hat Yai's economic challenges. As Chootochana (2023) emphasized, the Hat Yai Moon Festival is a cultural event managed by both governmental and private organizations to stimulate economic development. Various entities, including Hat Yai Municipality, the Songkhla City Government, and 24 Chinese Thai associations, collaborate to ensure the success of the festival. Thus, the practice of the Moon Festival is a collective effort by the people of Hat Yai.

The second highest beta coefficient in this study was associated with the attitude of family unity (X4). This finding is consistent with the research of Krueaphat and Laeheem (2022), which highlights the value that youth place on spending time with their family members. Analyzing this finding through the lens of Schiffman and Kanuk's (1994) concept theory, the practice of the Moon Festival reflects an attitude that emphasizes the importance of family.

The attitude of family unity aligns with the research of Krueaphat et al. (2021), which identifies family as one of the key factors supporting the inheritance of Chinese culture. Horton and Hunt (1980) also emphasize the role of the family in transmitting cultural traditions to children. As suggested by Pattranupravat (2015), youth who are familiar with family traditions are more likely to participate in Chinese festivals.

From a psychological perspective, the attitude of family unity stems from the emotional need for love and validation from family members. Children receive compliments and rewards from their family when they engage in activities that align with Chinese traditions. This can be observed in the cultural practice of the Chinese New Year festival, where children receive red envelopes (Ang Pao) after offering well wishes to their elders for good luck, health, and wealth (Peng, 2012). This activity aligns with the adjustment component of attitude, as described by Newcomb et al. (1965), as children learn to adapt and embrace Chinese traditions when they recognize their significance.

The smallest beta coefficient in this study was associated with the belief in improving economy (X7). This finding is consistent with the research of Mahasinpaisal (2012), which suggests that many Thai people prioritize activities that can improve their financial situation and contribute to the local economy. This finding aligns with the concept theory of attitude proposed by Kotler and Armstrong (2018), indicating that the stimulus of improving financial prospects motivates people to engage in cultural activities.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the Moon Festival holds significant value for Hat Yai society in terms of social, cultural, and economic aspects, particularly within the hospitality and tourism industry. To ensure the preservation of these values, it is crucial to study the attitude factors of Chinese Thai youth, the subject of this study. The study’s findings indicate that the strongest predictor of Moon Festival practice is the belief in its positive impact on tourism, followed by the attitude of family unity and the desire for improving economic conditions.

Chinese Thai youth recognize the importance of tourism as a key driver of Hat Yai development, given its multicultural nature. Cultural tourism, especially related to Chinese culture, is seen as a positive contributor to the tourism industry. Additionally, the attitude of family unity holds significance as the Moon Festival provides a valuable opportunity for family reunions, which are increasingly rare in the era of globalization.

Furthermore, the attitude of improving the economy reflects the hopes and aspirations of the local Hat Yai community for economic development, particularly in the light of past economic crises. The festival plays a role in supporting local trade and investment, providing tangible benefits to local merchants.

Overall, the Moon Festival contributes precious values to Hat Yai society, encompassing social, cultural, and economic dimensions. By studying the attitudes of Chinese

Thai youth, we can gain insights into their motivations and aspirations, ensuring the continued success and significance of the Moon Festival in Hat Yai.

Suggestions

Future studies should investigate the potential of community tourism for strengthening the role of the Moon Festival. In addition, local Chinese Thai residents should be involved in the development of creative tourism campaigns.

Conflict of Interest

There is no conflict of interest.

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Peter and Wendy and Narratological Point of View: A Stylistic Analysis

ปีเตอร์และเว็นดี้ มุมมองการเล่าเรื่องและวัจนลีลาศาสตร์

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Abstract

Acclaimed as a classic of children's literature, James Barrie's *Peter and Wendy* (1911) displays a theme of eternal youth through the protagonist's heartless characteristics. Although the story has intrigued a worldwide audience due to fantastical elements and memorable characters, the narrative complexity of the story has been mostly critiqued based on psychological and positivistic literary criticism, but stylistic perspectives have not been stressed. This study focuses on the relationship between the narrative structure and the narrator's reliability, controversially articulated by literary scholars and readers. The objectives are to analyze the stylistic point of view employed through its composite narrative and to discuss how the results contribute to the narrator's psycho-pathography and ideology transmission. This study applies Simpson's (1993) narrative point of view and Leech and Short's (2007) speech and thought presentation to investigate the ontological distance of the obscure narrator. The results show that the narrative point of view is sporadically ambivalent, based on the shifting shading of modalities. Although the narrative slippage leads to sceptic reliability, ideology transmission remains unaffected because the narrator's authoritativeness is copiously enacted. Employing the stylistic framework to demonstrate the sophisticated point of view offers bona fide facets to literary criticism where linguistic evidence is of significance for interpretive discussion.

Keywords: narrative point of view, modality, children's literature, cognitive stylistics, *Peter and Wendy*

บทคัดย่อ

ผลงานอมตะของเจมส์ แบรี่ "ปีเตอร์และเว็นดี้" ถูกเขียนขึ้นในปี พ.ศ. 2454 และได้รับการยอมรับว่าเป็นวรรณกรรมสำหรับเด็กที่พูดถึงแก่นเรื่องความเยาว์นิรันดร์ผ่านบุคลิกภาพของตัวละครเอกของเรื่องที่ไร้เดียงสา ถึงแม้ว่าเรื่องราวของนวนิยายได้ทำให้ผู้อ่านทั่วโลกสนใจอย่างกว้างขวางผ่านองค์ประกอบด้าน

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ความเพ้อฝันและมีตัวละครหลากหลายที่ตราตรึงในความทรงจำ ความซับซ้อนของการเล่าเรื่องในนวนิยายก็ได้รับการวิพากษ์เป็นส่วนใหญ่ผ่านวรรณกรรมวิจารณ์ทางด้านจิตวิเคราะห์และปฏิฐานนิยม แต่ยังไม่เคยมีการศึกษาผ่านมุมมองวัจนลีลาศาสตร์ งานวิจัยชิ้นนี้ต้องการหาความสัมพันธ์ระหว่างโครงสร้างการเล่าเรื่องและความน่าเชื่อถือของผู้เล่าเรื่องซึ่งเป็นประเด็นที่ถกเถียงในวงการวรรณกรรมอย่างแพร่หลาย และจุดประสงค์ของงานวิจัยชิ้นนี้มีสองประการ ประการแรกคือเพื่อวิเคราะห์มุมมองการเล่าเรื่องที่ถูกใช้ในการสร้างกระบวนการเล่าเรื่องที่ซับซ้อน ประการที่สองคือเพื่ออภิปรายผลลัพธ์การวิเคราะห์มุมมองการเล่าเรื่องที่ส่งผลเกี่ยวเนื่องมาจากสภาวะจิตบกพร่องและการส่งผ่านอุดมคติ การศึกษานี้ประยุกต์ใช้ทฤษฎีมุมมองการเล่าเรื่องเชิงทัศนภาวะของซิมป์สัน (2536) และทฤษฎีการนำเสนอคำพูดและความคิดของลีชและชอร์ต (2550) เพื่อวิเคราะห์มุมมองการเล่าเรื่องและระยะทางภววิทยาของเรื่องเล่ากับผู้เล่าเรื่องที่อยู่ในสภาวะไร้ตัวตน งานวิจัยนี้พบว่าผู้เล่าเรื่องมีการเปลี่ยนแปลงทัศนภาวะตลอดการเล่าเรื่อง บางครั้งผู้เล่าเรื่องมีความมั่นใจในการเล่าเรื่อง และในบางครั้งก็เหมือนกับเกิดความลังเลในการเล่าเรื่องของตัวเอง อย่างไรก็ดี นอกจากนี้ ยังพบว่าการเปลี่ยนแปลงทัศนภาวะของผู้เล่าเรื่องไม่ได้มีผลกระทบกับความน่าเชื่อถือของเรื่องเนื่องจากอำนาจของผู้เล่าเรื่องยังคงมีอยู่ตั้งแต่ต้นจนจบ การประยุกต์ใช้วัจนลีลาศาสตร์ในการวิเคราะห์มุมมองการเล่าเรื่องสามารถให้ข้อมูลเชิงประจักษ์สำหรับการวิจารณ์งานวรรณกรรม โดยใช้หลักฐานทางภาษาศาสตร์ในการตีความและอภิปรายตัวบท

คำสำคัญ: มุมมองการเล่าเรื่อง ทัศนภาวะ วรรณกรรมสำหรับเด็ก วัจนลีลาศาสตร์ปริชาน ปีเตอร์และเว็นดี้

Introduction

James Barry initially wrote *Peter and Wendy* (1911) as an original play, and then it was published as a novel in 1911 which was widely recognized in British culture. Through the adventures of the protagonists, Peter and Wendy, the story consists of uncanny elements, swordfights, and the concept of eternal youth transpired by the imaginary region, *Neverland*. The author's inspiration dwells on childhood's age of innocence, a period of "either delightful innocence or dangerous ignorance" (Townsend, 1969, p. 160). It is acknowledged that children are either more angelic or harsher than grownups, depending on how they are shaped by adults, where they have the propensity to be coercive appropriately, provided that "these ideas were true" (Spink, 1989, p.45). Based on Thorne (1987), the role of children's literature is to transmit ideological values to children to avoid being victimized by amoral adults (p. 89). In addition, *Peter and Wendy* was set in the Edwardian era (1901-1910) within the Darling family, an age which was influenced by the male-dominated world, including political patronage and control of property. Inevitably, all children "except one" (Barrie, 1911, p.1) were treated as commodities, and women were subservient and voiceless. The exception was Peter, whose characteristics were outrageous, absent-minded, and adventurous, representing an outlier breaking all the rules and societal restrictions. Once he broke into the house and was acquainted with the Darling's siblings, Tinker Bell peppered her fairy dust on the children and got them to fly together to Neverland. The story contains incredible adventures in which the children are involved with and introduced to Captain Hook, a perpetual foil to Peter.

Although its plot is invigorating, *Peter and Wendy* has raised questions regarding its narrative irregularity (Hansen, 2007; Hollindale, 2005; Yeoman, 1988), specifically the ambiguous stance of the third-person all-seeing narrator (Vathanalaoha, 2016). In addition, Routh (2021) highlighted that the titular character is flawed, and the story is "complex" (p. 291). The narrative obscurity has been critiqued as to whether the narrator is omniscient while recounting scenarios. In other words, the narrator is occasionally unable to access some characters' minds or lacks information about situations uttered. The realm between a third-person omniscient mode, as that of the narrator from Tolstoy's *War and Peace* (1869), and a third-person limit mode poses a question to the study of the narrative point of view. Moreover, the manipulation of multiple perspectives, through first-person ("I" and "we"), second-person ("you"), and third-person pronouns, leads to narrative complexity at the discourse level. Since the story has been recognized as children's literature transmitting ideological values to readers, the didactic force could be affected by the narrator's unreliability.

Whether the narrator was controversially defined as the author himself or as a semi-authoritative unidentified voice, literary scholars appeared to criticize the voice primarily based on the narrator's tellability, not on the judgeability. Simpson's (1993) narrative point of view; therefore, was used to evaluate the extent of modality expressed by the narrator. The framework relays the significance of cognitive grammar based on Genette's (1980, 1988) focalization and Fowler's (1996) categorization. Since modality esteems the degree of confidence of the narrator, the results may cast light on stylistic effects in terms of the narrator's reliability and psycholinguistics in children's literature.

Research Questions

The research questions are as follows:

1. What kind of narrative point of view is employed in *Peter and Wendy*?
2. To what extent does the narrative point of view contribute to psycholinguistics and affect ideological transmission in literature?

Literature Review

1. Didacticism

Peter and Wendy has been celebrated in the literary genre, especially children's literature, as seen in various editions and adaptations. According to West (1997), children's literature plays a vital role in instilling moral values in a child's mentality, and censorship is a part of collective responsibility where “adults need to monitor nearly every word” (p. 189). Throughout the story, ideology transmission is demonstrated through thematic opposition of innocence and immorality, which may reflect the gradual transformation to adulthood. The caricature of Mr. Darling, who treats his children as commodities without empathy, and the swordfight between Peter and Captain Hook represents the negative attributes of dishonorable adults. Yeoman (1998) pointed out that Mr. Darling, as a breadwinner of the family, was only a businessman whose tie symbolized “confinement” (p. 91) to egocentrism, lacking empathy towards humanity. Mr. Darling represents capitalism in the Edwardian era as he appraises his children based on socioeconomic value. For example, he calculated his daughter, Wendy, as “another mouth to feed” (Barrie, 1911, p. 2). These traits, nevertheless, appear to be normative and represented insensitivity and “narcissistic wounding” (Asper, 1993, p. 68) in the male-dominated world during the era. In terms of power relations, according to Vathanalaoha (2016), when Mr. Darling is challenged and repetitively mimicked in Michael’s utterances, the reversal of topic initiations shows his immature rivalries, resulting in a lack of respectability (p. 92).

Captain Hook is the main villain and is considered a double-sided character. Although a ruthless pirate, he is empathetic toward Wendy because he “escorted her to the spot where the others were being gagged” (Barrie, 1991, p. 129). Hook is regarded as a foil to the protagonist, who is friendlier and more heroic, as he looks depressed and regretful as if “he had never been born” (Barrie, 1991, p. 141).

Mr. Darling and Hook are exemplars of dishonorable adults, whereas Darling’s siblings and Peter represent innocence and amusement. At the story level, ideology transmission occurs when children can contrast positive and negative attributes and gradually learn how to cope with them. Didacticism is thus hard to be separated from the authoritativeness of the narrator (Katheryn, 2018, p. 703). Once the narrator’s authoritativeness disappears, it raises the question of the narrator’s reliability, as seen from the vagueness of the narrator’s stance, resulting from varying degrees of confidence or even psychological disability, a mental condition that intervenes one’s thoughts, emotions, and social interactions.

2. Psychology and Narrator’s Reliability

The study of narrative complexity begins with the early part of the story, making the presence of the narrator obscure. However, as the narrator utters “I suppose” (Barrie, 1911, p. 1) in the introductory chapter, it suggests that the narrator had a level of uncertainty to recount the story and poses a question involving the stance of the narrator as well as the level of reliability.

As previously mentioned, the narrator’s reliability is the centre of attention for ideology transmission, yet it has not been studied as much as the narrator’s existence. Positivistic critics and the author himself stated that the book was an autograph embedded by a fictional girl “of whom my mother has told me, wandering confidently through the pages” (Barrie, 1896, p. 25). Moreover, Hollindale (2005) supported that the story was driven by his traumatic experience, as can be seen from his “physical immaturity” or a “disastrous marriage” to an actress Mary Ansell (p. 203), illustrated by Barrie's biography that the children in Neverland were influenced by the Llewelyn Davies boys, with whom Barrie closely interacted in Kensington Gardens. In addition, Barrie's childhood tension was triggered by the lack of maternal attention since the demise of his brother because he was obliged to replace "his dead brother in her affections (Frey & Griffith, 1987, p. 182). Rose (1984) found that the author originally had no intention to write it for children, and it had to be transformed into a play and "filtered through an unmistakable act of censorship (p. 5). Before long, Green (1969) realized that the book was considered a psycho-pathography because it could not "be written or spoken" (43) due to the author's mental disorder. Dunbar (1970) stated that the author's traumatic adolescent lifetime led to a "troubled authorial narrative (p. 140).

Regarding the lack of authorial control, Yeoman (1998) particularly observed that the opening paragraph included slippage addressees, moving from "all" to "they" to "you," and this showed the narrator's "uncertain relationship" (p. 82). This observation implied that the obscurity of the narrator's stance could be derived from the author's erratic psyche. *Peter and Wendy* was written in a transition period between the Victorian and Edwardian eras, where it could be inspired by the tendency of authorial narration notable in Dickens's or Brontë's novels. However, Barrie's narrative structure has been on the verge of oblivion.

3. Narratology

Narratology focuses not on a biographical approach, but on linguistic exploration. Point of view, in general, focuses on "who tells" in situations uttered. The first-person point of view is homodiegetic (Genette, 1980, p. 23), and each utterance is narrated by first-person pronouns (Stanzel, 1984; Abbott, 2002). The second-person point of view is considered unusual in literature as it uses the pronoun "you" to perceive ongoing experiences through a story. This type can be considered a "homodiegetic and heterodiegetic" narrative as "you" can act as either a character or an anonymous addressee. According to Schofield (1998), there is an overlap between "you" and "we", as the frontier between the addresser and the addressee is blurred, and these pronouns are typically employed to intensify "rhetorical forces" (p. 10). The third-person point of view is considered "heterodiegetic" (Genette, 1988) because the narrator is an outsider recounting the story from their perspective and usually employs pronouns such as "he, she, they, them, their, herself, himself, themselves throughout the narrative" (p. 72). The problem of categorizing point of view based on "who tells" is on the pronoun use and this may complicate the blurry stance between "you" and "we" as discussed.

Genette's (1980; 1988) focalization takes "who sees" into consideration which is based on grammatical verb category to reflect the degree of certainty during which the narrator describes. It is a viewpoint that "things are implicitly seen, felt, understood, and accessed" (Toolan, 2013, p. 6). Focalization can be either external or internal (Fowler, 1996; Bal & Van Boheemen, 2009). This distinction plays a vital role in informing Simpson's (2010; 1993) narrative point of view which he defines as the narrator being either participatory (A) or non-participatory (B). Both types can be subcategorized as having positive, negative, or neutral shading. Type B can be subcategorized into either Reflector (R), mediated through a character's consciousness, or

Narratorial (N), voiced from an outsider perspective. The narrator can be subcategorized into positive, negative, and neutral on the basis of modality. Positive shading comprises deontic and boulomaic modalities, whereas epistemic and perceptive modalities foreground negative shading. Neutral shading has no salient pattern of modalities and demonstrates a matter-of-factly style of narrative.

Table 1
Simpson's (1993) Narrative Framework (pp. 47-76).

Types	Shading	Linguistic Features
Homodiegetic Narrator (A)	Positive (+)	Utterances with boulomaic and deontic modalities which are cooperatively narrated through first-person narrative, with the presence of verba sentiendi
	Negative (-)	Utterances with epistemic and perceptive modalities which are not cooperatively narrated through first-person narrative
	Neutral (±)	Utterances without modalities, using only a few evaluative adjectival or adverbial phrases through first-person narrative
Heterodiegetic Narrator (B) Narratorial Mode (N)	Positive (+)	Utterances recounted by an external narrator who offers opinions and judgments. They can be eminent with boulomaic and deontic modalities and/or verba sentiendi
	Negative (-)	Utterances recounted by an external narrator who attempts to make sense of situations or characters encountered
	Neutral (±)	Utterances recounted by an external narrator who denies accessing any character's internal feelings
Heterodiegetic Narrator (B) Reflector Mode (R)	Positive (+)	Utterances recounted by a participatory character who offers opinions and judgments, with the use of deontic and boulomaic modalities and/or the presence of verba sentiendi
	Negative (-)	Utterances recounted by a participatory character whose estrangement is founded through the presence of epistemic and perceptive modalities
	Neutral (±)	Utterances recounted by a participatory character whose viewing position is passive with the lack of modalities and evaluative phrases

Leech and Short's (2007) speech and thought presentation (STP) model was developed in 1981 to illustrate a system encompassing five distinct categories of speech and thought representation (refer to Figure 1 below). These categories are designed to highlight the extent of narrative control over the portrayal of utterances or thoughts. Their research reveals that, in authentic examples, direct speech (DS) is the prevailing norm for speech presentation, while indirect thought (IT) dominates for thought presentation. A comprehensive exploration of STP can be found in Fludernik's work (1993), wherein she emphasizes its relevance to the interpretive aspects of the general reading process (p. 7). STP is widely employed in written corpora to identify stylistic variations in both authentic and literary examples (Semino and Short, 2004; Bray, 2010).

Since pronoun use is problematic for categorizing the narrative structure in *Peter and Wendy*, this narrative framework does not focus on the manipulation of pronouns in the story, but rather on the degree of certainty of the narrator responding to situations. Moreover, point of view reflected through shades of certainty assisted with consideration of speech and thought presentation could affect the degree to which readers "can identify with the protagonist" (Al-Alami, 2016, p.22). The results can shed light on the narrator's reliability in the story which is important to ideology transmission.

Research Methodology

This qualitative research gathers data from the novel *Peter and Wendy* (1911) and presents the analysis using selected excerpts. To clarify the first research question, this study applies Simpson's (1993) narrative framework to investigate the stylistic narrative point of view employed throughout the story. Unlike the conventional "point of view" in literature, the framework is constructed upon grammatical modalities to evaluate the degree of confidence of the narrator through all numbered chapters. To answer the second research question, Leech and Short's (2007) speech and thought presentation is applied specifically to explain the ontological distance of the narrative between the narrator and the narratee to see how messages are deictically operated.

Findings and Discussion

1. The Stance of *"I"*

The narrator "I" in the story is unidentifiable and recounts the story from a heterodiegetic position in which they can access the characters' minds. The narrator "I" thus falls into B(N) mode. In the beginning, the narrator is omniscient because they are all-knowing and recount the story without mediating through any character's mind. For example, the clauses "All children, except one, grow up" and "Two is the beginning of the end" (Barrie, 1911, p. 1) suggest that the narrator reports events from an authorial stance:

> *All children, except one, grow up*. They soon know that they will grow up, and the way *Wendy knew* was this. One day when she was two years old she was playing in a garden, and she plucked another flower and ran with it to her mother. *I suppose she must have looked rather delightful*, for Mrs. Darling put her hand to her heart and cried, "Oh, why can't you remain like this for ever!" This was all that passed between them on the subject, but henceforth *Wendy knew* that she must grow up. You always know after you are two. *Two is the beginning of the end*.
>
> (Barrie, 1911, p. 1, my italics)

Apparently, the narrator can access the character's thoughts ("Wendy knew") and that would be categorized as B(N)(+). On the other hand, a complication arises when the narrator remarks, "I suppose she must have looked rather delightful" in the narrative. The statement falls into negative shading as the narrator attempts to make sense of Mrs. Darling's feelings, so it can be classified as B(N)(-). The initial clash between B(N)(+) and B(N)(-) in the introductory paragraph could predict how the narratives would become more intricate afterward.

Moreover, the narrator appears to be hesitant throughout the narrative structure. For instance, the narrator generally inserts their judgments and ironic statements, and it can be classified as B(N)(+) narrative as evidenced from the extract below:

> Mr. Darling *used to boast* to Wendy that her mother not only loved him but respected him. He was one of those deep ones who *know* about stocks and shares. Of course no one really knows, but *he quite seemed to know,* and he often said stocks were up and shares were down in a way that *would have made any woman respect* him.
>
> (Barrie, 1911, p. 2 my italics)

The narrator demonstrates sarcasm through the appraisal "used to boast" and offers personal opinions regarding Mr. Darling's domineering attitude towards materialism and humanities. This extract falls into B(N)(+) narrative, for the narrator offers evaluations ("Of course" and "would have made any woman respect him") and comprises verba sentiendi. Meanwhile, the phrase "he quite seemed to know" suggests weak epistemic modality as the narrator attempts to make sense of Mr. Darling's thought; therefore, it can be seen as negative shading. The stylistic effect of negative shading happens once throughout the narrative and is considered subtle. Since the narrator can access the mind of the character, or at least be authorial, the word "seemed" raises a question of whether it is told from the internal or the external viewpoint. This cross-category overlap imposes the framework's limitation of modality when the distinction between the narrator's point of view is clouded.

2. *Mr. Darling* and Positive Shading

It is observable that the narrator sporadically recounts all the characters in *Peter and Wendy* in the shifting mode from B(N)(+) to B(N)(-) or vice versa. For instance, when the narrator recounts the scene when Peter attempts to catch his shadow, this indicates a shift from B(N)(-) to B(N)(+) narrative through a perceptive utterance "I don't believe" (B(N)(-) and boulomaic modality "wished" (B(N)(+):

> If he thought at all, but *I don't believe* he ever thought, it was that he and his shadow, when brought near each other, would join like drops of water, and when they did not he was appalled…He *wished* she had not mentioned letters.
>
> (Barrie, 1911, p. 15, my italics)

Similar to most characters, for instance, Wendy, Mrs. Darling, and Captain Hook, Peter's characterization can be relayed through dual shades of modalities. Nonetheless, Mr. Darling is the only character about whom the narrator extensively offers ironic opinions and judgments and who is inclined to fall into B(N)(+) throughout the story.

Consider the description of Mr. Darling's childish behavior:

> …*Alas*, he *would not listen*. He *was determined* to show who was master in that house, and when commands would not draw Nana from the kennel, he lured her out of it with honeyed words, and seizing her roughly, dragged her from the nursery. He was *ashamed* of himself, and yet he did it. *It was all owing to* his too affectionate nature, which *craved for admiration.*
>
> (Barrie, 1911, p. 13, my italics)

The narrator emphasizes his characteristics through positive shading. Mr. Darling overtly claims his authority in the Darling family by dragging Nana, the Newfoundland dog, to the backyard. The narrative is eminent with judgmental statements ("Alas," "He was ashamed of himself, but yet he did it," and "owing to his too affectionate nature"). The narrator can clearly access Mr. Darling's emotions, as seen by "ashamed of himself" and "craved for admiration." Therefore, the narrative entirely falls under B(N)(+). Another incident can be examined from the scene where the lost boys and the Darling siblings revisit the house:

> In the bitterness of his remorse he swore that he would never leave the kennel until his children came back. *Of course this was a pity*; but whatever Mr. Darling did he had to do in excess; otherwise he soon give up doing it. And *there never was a more humble man* than the once proud George Darling, as he sat in the kennel of an evening talking with his wife of their children and all their pretty ways.
>
> (Barrie, 1911, p. 108, my italics)

Mr. Darling is described entirely based on B(N)(+) narrative as can be seen from the narrator's evaluation ("Of course this was a pity" and "there never was a more humble man") and satirical expression ("he had to do in excess").

Compared to the other characters, Mr. Darling is explicitly described in B(N)(+) narrative. The analysis could indicate that the narrator's stance towards Mr. Darling is collectively judgmental and reflects the typical Victorian literature whose point of view of the narrator is to parody societal realities. Since Mr. Darling is the family's breadwinner, reflecting the Edwardian patriarchy, the judgmental statements could be deduced from the narrator's insolence regarding the society that treats "children as commodities." (Schulz, 2018, p. 232). Besides, at the story level, Mr. Darling became more empathetic once the children flew away to Neverland.

3. Narratees: *"You" and "We"*

According to Leech and Short (2007), "You" in *Peter and Wendy* can be considered the implied reader or the narratee. However, Vathanalaoha (2016) pointed out that the discourse structure of "you" is blurred because of the ontological collapse between the implied reader and the narratee (p. 87). "You" perceives the ongoing events, and the narrator is an authorial storyteller who can access the reader's perspective. It falls under Werth's (1999) "theoretical situation" (p. 252), where the narratee spontaneously responds to what the narrator illustrates ("you might have got it"). Not only is it structured as a conditional clause, but the following excerpts also fall into B(N)(+) narrative point of view since they comprise occurrences of verba sentiendi "see:"

> …all *you* could *see* of her was the kiss, and then if *you* had dashed at her, *you* might have got it.
>
> (Barrie, 1911, p. 3, my italics)

> If *you* shut your eyes and are a lucky one, *you* may *see* at times a shapeless pool of lovely pale colours suspended in the darkness; then if *you* squeeze your eyes tighter, the pool begins to take shape, and the colours become so vivid that with another squeeze they must go on fire.
>
> (Barrie, 1911, p. 55, my italics)

As the implied reader, "you" appears deictically closer as the events mostly happened in the Darling nursery. Identifying with "you" through the readers' schematic knowledge is not problematic:

> You always *know* after you are two.
>
> (Barrie, 1911, p. 1, my italics)

> You ordinary children can never *hear* it, but if you were to hear it you would *know* that you had heard it once before.
>
> (Barrie, 1911, p. 15, my italics)

> *You may be sure* Mrs. Darling examined the shadow carefully, but it was quite the ordinary kind.
>
> (Barrie, 1911, p. 7, my italics)

> *You may be sure* she begged his pardon; and then, feeling drowsy, he curled round in the kennel.
>
> (Barrie, 1911, p. 110, my italics)

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The first and the second excerpts comprise verba sentiendi "know" and "hear", so it is B(N)(+) narrative. On the other hand, the third and the fourth excerpts reflect uncertainty through epistemic modalities, which can be seen from the clauses "[y]ou may be sure," and fall into B(N) (-) narrative.

4. Inclusive *"We"* as Fictional Character

Complications may arise when the narrator introduces "we" in the story. "We" in *Peter and Wendy* is not homodiegetic since it is not told from a participatory character's point of view, but rather from that of an outsider. Therefore, "we" is considered inclusive "social actors" (van Leeuwen, 2008) combining "you," the narratee, and "I," the narrator. Nonetheless, this situation makes the story more fictitious or deictically distant, based on two reasons. The first is the blurry stance of "you", the collapse of implied reader and narratee, and the narrator "I," the collapse of implied author and narrator. Since we could not define the distinction between "you" and "I," the stance of "we" could not be forthrightly established:

> On these magic shores children at play are for ever beaching their coracles. *We* too have been there; *we* can still *hear* the sound of the surf, though *we shall land no more.*
>
> (Barrie, 1911, p. 4, my italics)

The excerpt above introduces the use of "we" to convince the readers to identify with the narrative, and the narrative falls into B(N)(+) as it comprises verba sentiendi "hear" and shows the narrator's desire through a boulomaic modality "shall." It is apparent that the narrator particularly employs verba sentiendi to entice readers to the imaginary shores. Another incident can be seen in the tenth chapter in which the Darling's siblings confront the threat from Captain Hook and his crews while assembling with the Piccaninny tribes and the princess Tiger Lily:

> Thus to take an instance, we suddenly *discover* that we have been *deaf* in one ear for we don't *know* how long, but, say, half an hour. Now such an experience had come that night to Peter. When last we *saw* him he was stealing across the island with one finger to his lips and his dagger at the ready.
>
> (Barrie, 1995, p. 99, my italics)

The extract draws attention from the use of verba sentiendi ("discover", "deaf", "know", and "saw") and the use of the evaluative phrase "such an experience." Therefore, it falls under B(N)(+) narrative. Since "we" functions as participants and other contexts can be considered as "circumstances" (Simpson, 1993, p. 82), this extract foregrounds mental processes and becomes less materialized. As participants, the ontological distance of "we" becomes more remote as if "we" acted as another fictional character in *Peter and Wendy*. The "real" readers cannot be "deaf," and neither can "see" Peter in Neverland, so the viewpoint of "we" is rather absurd to be the first-person narrative. This could be affirmed by a surreal event when Mr. Darling detains himself in the dog's kennel and criticizes how he used to disregard his children:

> As Mr. Darling puts his head out at it to kiss his wife, we *see* that his face is more worn than of yore, but *has a softer expression*.
>
> (Barrie, 1911, p. 109, my italics)

In this situation, readers can appreciate that Mr. Darling eventually becomes a better father through the phrase "has a softer expression." However, it is absurd for readers, including "we," to see Mr. Darling's "face." As Mr. Darling is a fictional character, his face could be contrastively interpreted based on readers' perceptions. Although "we" speak as part of an unidentified group of children, it is not entirely straightforward to categorize it as the first-person point of view. "We" in this particular scene thus falls into B(N)(+) narrative through the use of verba sentiendi "see."

5. Speech and Thought Presentation: Two-tiered *"we"*

Another technique the narrator employs is manipulating speech and thought presentation (Leech and Short, 2007). At the story's beginning, the narrator uses Direct Speech (DS) to translate exact utterances from any character. The effect of DS inclines to be "character emphasis" rather than "narrator emphasis" (Giovanelli and Mason, 2018) as the readers can trace the verbatim utterance of a speaker. For example, DS can be seen from the quoted statement "[s]econd to […] till morning" and added by the speech clause of the character "Peter had told Wendy:"

> "Second to the right, and straight on till morning." That, Peter had told Wendy, was the way to the Neverland; but even birds, carrying maps and consulting them at windy corners, could not have sighted it with these instructions.
>
> (Barrie, 1911, p.27)

Therefore, readers clearly detect the voice owner. On the contrary, the narrator employs Narrator Representation of Thought Act (NRTA) which is inclined to be "narrator emphasis" in the following excerpt:

> John and Michael raced, Michael getting a start. They recalled with contempt that not so long ago they had thought themselves fine fellows for being able to fly round a room.
>
> (Barrie, 1911, p. 27)

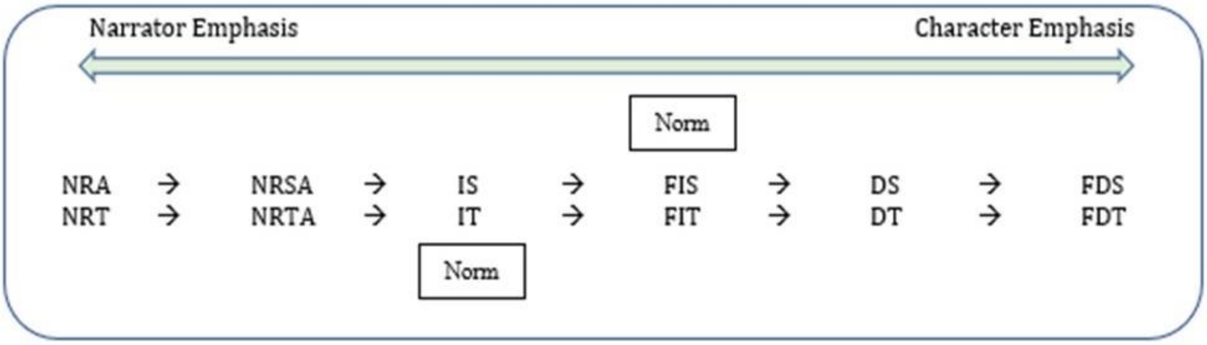
This instance reveals that the narrator chooses not to report word for word like that of DS, but rather summarizes the thought of John and Michael through such words as "recalled" and "thought." Therefore, the readers could not access the characters' consciousness so the narrator eventually reclaims control of the narrative:

> Not long ago. But how long ago? They were flying over the sea before this thought began to disturb Wendy seriously. John thought it was their second sea and their third night.

(Barrie, 1911, p. 27)

In addition to DS and NRTA, another technique of speech and thought presentation can be seen in the above excerpt. Due to its lack of quotation marks, the clause "[b]ut how long ago?" could be seen as Free Direct Thought (FDT) of Wendy and followed by NRTA when John "thought it was […] third night." The use of FDT is considered at the extreme end of character emphasis, proving that the narrator could fully translate the character's mind.

Figure 1
Norms for Speech and Thought Presentation (Leech and Short, 2007, p. 276).



At first, it appears that both FDT and Free Direct Speech (FDS) completely undermine the question of the narrator's reliability as they straightforwardly account for what the characters think and speak. However, since thought could not be verbally formulated, the use of (F)DT thus generates a free-flowing feel, yet "hypothetical" (Jeffries and McIntyre, 2010, p. 91).

The difference between FDS and Free Indirect Speech (FIS) defined by the occurrence of grammatical conversion found in FIS. Even though FIS could be considered a "norm" as seen in Figure 1, the narrator otherwise uses FDS frequently to represent "character emphasis" and acts as if they could be another fictional character belonging to the group of "we." The following excerpt can be identified as the narrator's FDS, yet the narrative is eminent with future present and present tenses.

> *Will they reach the nursery in time?* If so, how delightful for them, and *we shall all breathe a sigh of relief*, but there will be no story. On the other hand, if they are not in time, *I* solemnly promise that it will all come right in the end.

(Barrie, 1911, p. 26, my italics)

The voice of the rhetorical question "[w]ill they reach the nursery in time?" belongs to the narrator "I." This narrative slippage imitates the dramatic technique "breaking the fourth wall" (Brown, 2013) because the narrator "I" can acknowledge the existence of readers ("shall all breathe a sigh of relief") using FDS. At this juncture, "we" here refers to readers, but not to any of the characters, which clearly underlines the heterodiegetic narrative. However, we soon discover that the use of "we" is more elusive, as seen in the excerpt below.

> We are no more than servants. *Why on earth should their beds be properly aired, seeing that they left them in such a thankless hurry? Would it not serve them jolly well right if they came back and found that their parents were spending the week-end in the country?* It would be the moral lesson they have been in need of ever since we met them; but if we contrived things in this way Mrs. Darling would never forgive us.
>
> (Barrie, 1911, p. 107, my italics)

A few instances of rhetorical questions in italics represent hypothetical situations through present unreal conditionals. These questions are not told from the children's perspective, therefore they are not FIS as can be seen from the replacement of "their" instead of "our." The classification of "we" is vague because there is only one authorial narrator since the beginning, yet "we" takes plurality into account. This inclusive "we", including the narratees, are tricked to get involved in the narrative and becoming "servants" and plot against Mrs. Darling. Based on this finding, "we" functions as heterodiegetic due to its involvement of the narrative control ("contrived things"). Another explanation is that FDS is character emphasis, and its flowing-free fluidity (McIntyre, 2004, p. 157) transforms the narrator's stance to that of the character, therefore its voice is blended and hard to differentiate. According to Bal and Van Boheemen (2009), when a focalizer coincides with a character, a reader will be "inclined to accept the vision presented by that character" (p. 104).

Despite the obscure stance of the narrator through the manipulation of pronoun use or through the narrative slippage, this paper argues that it does not weaken the narrator's reliability. On the one hand, this story has no case of double focalization that suggests "bewilderment or alienation" (Simpson, 1993, p. 72). Meanwhile, the sense of alienation never occurs as the narratives are usually cooperative and evaluative towards readers, representing the narrator's authoritativeness.

6. Ideology Transmission and Narrative Point of View

Overall, narratives in *Peter and Wendy* are told from the heterodiegetic position, cooperatively and authoritatively outside of any character, and fall under B(N)(+) through verba sentiendi and personal judgment. Since there are only a few instances of negative shading, there is no case of double focalization where bewilderment and alienation could occur within a character's mind, leading to multiple perspectives. Rather, the novel *Peter and Wendy* predominantly uses the narrator's authoritativeness which emphasizes a unidirectional narrative. Moreover, heterodiegeticity is considered reliable because the narrative does not demonstrate the narrator's unreliability with either intranarrational or internarrational contrasts

(Hansen, 2007, pp. 241-244). Finally, the manipulation of pronoun use encourages readers to get involved in the story and to take "an authoritative account of the fictional truth" (Rimmon-Kenan, 2002, p. 100).

As the narrator is reliable, ideology transmission is not interrupted. The story is to "share values towards readers or encourage readers' rapport and trust" (Abbott, 2002, p. 63). Displaying negative attributes of Mr. Darling and Captain Hook, the narrator gains rapport and trust through exemplars of the amoral adults. Captain Hook symbolizes treachery, entailing the change from childhood to adulthood is disheartening, and the children's escape to Neverland is viewed the redemption of Mr. Darling. For the latter case, Mr. Darling is an Edwardian gentleman whose concept of treating children as commodities may be viewed as cold-hearted. The concept was documented during the late-nineteenth century because of economic tension after the Industrial Revolution and that is the criticism the narrator clearly explains is "the moral lesson that they have been in need of" (Barrie, 1911, p. 107). The narrator's reliability is essential to ideology transmission because it drives readers to acknowledge the value of alien cultures and "confirm ideas about normality that may or may not be desirable" (Nodelman & Reimer, 2003, p. 288). Readers can thus immerse themselves in the narrative and explore the nuances of social interaction through the mimicry presented in fiction.

Conclusion

This study aimed to determine the narrative point of view in *Peter and Wendy* to shed light on the stance of the narrator, deemed as an outturn of the author's psycho-pathography. Despite the manipulation of pronoun use, Simpson's (1993) narrative point of view was employed to evaluate the narratives based on Genette's (1980) focalization, whether homodiegetic or heterodiegetic and modalities. To determine the narrator's reliability, Leech and Short's (2007) speech and thought presentation was applied to illustrate how the utterances are presented to readers.

This study argues that the story is told by an authorial narrator who offers opinions and judgments about the situations uttered. Despite the various use of pronouns, the narratives are heterodiegetic and typically fall into B(N)(+) with frequent use of verba sentiendi. The findings, however, reveal that some sporadically fall into B(N)(-) using epistemic modalities. In terms of speech and thought presentation, the analysis hovers over the ambiguous position of "I" and "we" and argues that the narrator's reliability is not interrupted by the ambiguous stance of the narrative. The foregrounding element of FDS is established as the narrator's attempt to persuade readers, or at least the audience, to become one of the anonymous characters in the story. This stylistic effect is in a similar fashion to breaking the fourth wall, where the audience spontaneously realizes the boundary between fictionality and reality.

In literary studies, using the stylistic framework to illustrate a sophisticated point of view provides genuine insights into formalism, wherein linguistic deviations hold significance for literary appreciation. This study has no intention to undermine scholarly arguments, neither those aiming towards the author's psycho-pathography nor positivistic viewpoints. It only offers stylistic comprehension where the literary interpretation is substantiated by linguistic evidence. Since *Peter and Wendy* is considered a classic of children's literature, the narrator's stance, regardless of the presence of narrative slippage, does not interrupt ideology transmission as the narrator's heterodiegeticity holds total authoritativeness.

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