Designing Outside of the Classroom: Branding Design for Thai Traditional Pottery

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Abstract
This research aims to develop branding for pottery products in Maha Sarakham, Thailand and to generate the collaboration between the local community and university. Ban Mo village, which is the community dedicated to pottery making, is used as the case study. This local wisdom has been inherited from ancestors for over 200 years, yet there is no definitive brand for Ban Mo Pottery products. To achieve this, 22 third-year students in Graphic Design at the Faculty of Architecture Urban Design and Creative Arts, Mahasarakham University were invited to work with Ban Mo community to help develop branding strategies that promote the sales and marketing of their products. 22 logo models were designed by 22 students. The research tool was a questionnaire examining key factors of branding development and rating the 22 logo designs. The target samples were collected from 40 members of Ban Mo Community. The results showed that Logo 9 was the most preferable logo for the Community's members. The illustration and product identity of Ban Mo Community were the key factors that the members used to select as their preferable logos. This suggested that the members preferred a simple logo with having the graphic design of local product identity on. In addition, the collaboration between local community and students creates a symbiotic condition, where the community benefits from the creativity offered by the students, while the students gain real-world experience working with clients to understand their process, goals, and needs. Also, placing students in these situations can help them better understand about their work, roles, and impacts on the business world as graphic designers.

Keywords: Brand Design, Local Product, Product Development, Pottery

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1. Introduction

The wisdom of pottery has historical evidence that is related to human life from the past to the present. This can be found from the excavations and studies of clay fragments by archaeologists, and this also arises from the natural human instinct for learning to invent, design and solve problems with art created from terracotta materials (Haaland, 2007). In the past, people mainly produced the pottery products (e.g., clay pots) for their convenience such as food preparation and storage (Heron and Evershed, 1993). The pottery products are also produced in connection with people's beliefs, religions, culture and geographical locations (Saunders, 2004; Haaland, 2007). These factors have still become an important element for pottery makers these days to create their work as it is seen today.

In Thailand, there are many areas where ancient pottery has been discovered from excavations. These pottery products have different patterns, styles and techniques according to the skill of the craftsman in different geographical locations. This wisdom has been transferred from generation to generation, creating the uniqueness of the pottery for each location and community. Baan Mo pottery community in Maha Sarakham Province is a group that has a long history in pottery making and has now become a source of learning about pottery (or in Thai called "Krueang Pun Din Pao") within the province and region. This community historically immigrated from "Non Sung" district, Nakhon Ratchasima province to "Nong Loeng" district, Maha Sarahkam province because of a long period of drought and severe epidemics. The majority of the households in this community are rice farmers. However, this location is enriched with a significant source of good clay and soil that are perfect for producing high quality pots. Since then, many households have started producing clay pots and other pottery products, and then it becomes commercial production. Therefore, the pottery has become a significant economic activity contributing to income generation for this community and province.

However, Baan Mo pottery products are still not popular in the domestic market, for both locals and tourists, because of lack of attractiveness and product identity (Tiwasing et al., 2018). Thus, Donaldson and Moore (2017) suggested that a good marketing plan can help promote a product more quickly. Farmer et al. (2013) emphasized that branding (or logo) is an important part of marketing strategies that can help to enable those products to be recognized. They also pointed out that branding plays a vital role in making a memorable impression on consumers, which potentially increases sales opportunities. Wang (2013) and Silayoi and Speece (2007) also supported that logos and brands play a crucial role in consumers' purchasing decision. It is often used as a marketing tool to communicate information to consumers and influence consumers' attention. Additionally, Tiwasing et al. (2018) studied the factors of branding design that influence the consumer perception on local agricultural product, which is jasmine rice, in Roi Et Province, Thailand. They found that the colors, fonts and illustrations that resented the identity of the local community and the product produced by natural methods (e.g., organic product) could significantly increase consumers' interests in this local product.

Yet, evidence of this research area in Thailand is still rather scant. There is a need to expand this research focus to help improve the marketing plans for local communities locally, nationally, and internationally. Therefore, this research aims to develop and design a unique brand (logo) for the pottery products produced by Ban Mo Community. To design the effective logos, the ideas and discussions from both members in the community and educational institution, namely Mahasarakham University, Thailand were integrated in the

graphic design processes. In this case study, 22 graphic designs were created by 22 students in the Graphic Design class at the Faculty of Architecture Urban Design and Creative Arts, Mahasarakham University to develop a unique brand (logo) for the pottery products of Ban Mo Community. The designs were then used in a questionnaire to ask 40 community members to rate each design on several parameters such as, colors, text, and so on. This helps to identify which logo designs are preferred and therefore would be the basis of a new brand image for the pottery in this community. Having a unique logo could help make this local pottery stand out and easy to remember. Also, it is important to preserve this local wisdom and at the same time to provide a channel to generate income for the community and expand the product to wider markets. More significantly, the research activity also recognizes the importance of students' engagement by allowing them to learn about the local wisdom and exchange their knowledge with the local community.

This paper is structured as follows: Section 2 presents the main objectives of this study. Section 3 discusses research framework including participants and research tool. The results are reported in Section 4, and Section 5 concludes key findings with suggestions for future research.

2. Objectives

This research presents the importance of the collaboration between the local community and university through the students' engagement. The main objectives of this study are:

1. To study the local wisdom of pottery from Ban Mo Community, Maha Sarakham Province.

2. To design a unique brand (logo) of the pottery products for Ban Mo Community, Maha Sarakham Province by the graphic design students from the Faculty of Architecture Urban Design and Creative Arts, Mahasarakham University.

3. To explore the community members' perception on the brand (logo) patterns designed by the students.

3. Research Method

3.1 Research Formwork

This research followed Gestalt Theory on the issue of visual perception and the issue of Perceiving Elements of Design (Principle of Design) (Bloom et al., 1956; Arneson and Offerdahl, 2018). Gestalt Theory is the principle that describes the recognition of the human eyes on visual elements, which aims to show how complex scenes can be reduced to more simple shapes (Wagemans et al., 2012). Figure 1 shows the research framework of this study. We started with the concept of product development by focusing on the development of physical goods and business and marketing processes (Krishnan and Ulrich, 2001). Then, we examined the importance of local wisdom of pottery from Ban Mo Community to understand their local knowledge and identity. Then, the obtained knowledge from Ban Mo Community was integrated with the concept of brand design based on key elements of the visual perception from Gestalt Theory. At this stage, the students had an opportunity to learn about the local wisdom and first-hand experience from Ban Mo Community, providing them with significant thoughts to design the specific logos for the local pottery based on their obtained knowledge. We then applied this key information such as colors, fonts and so on through graphic design to develop the unique logos or brands for the local pottery.
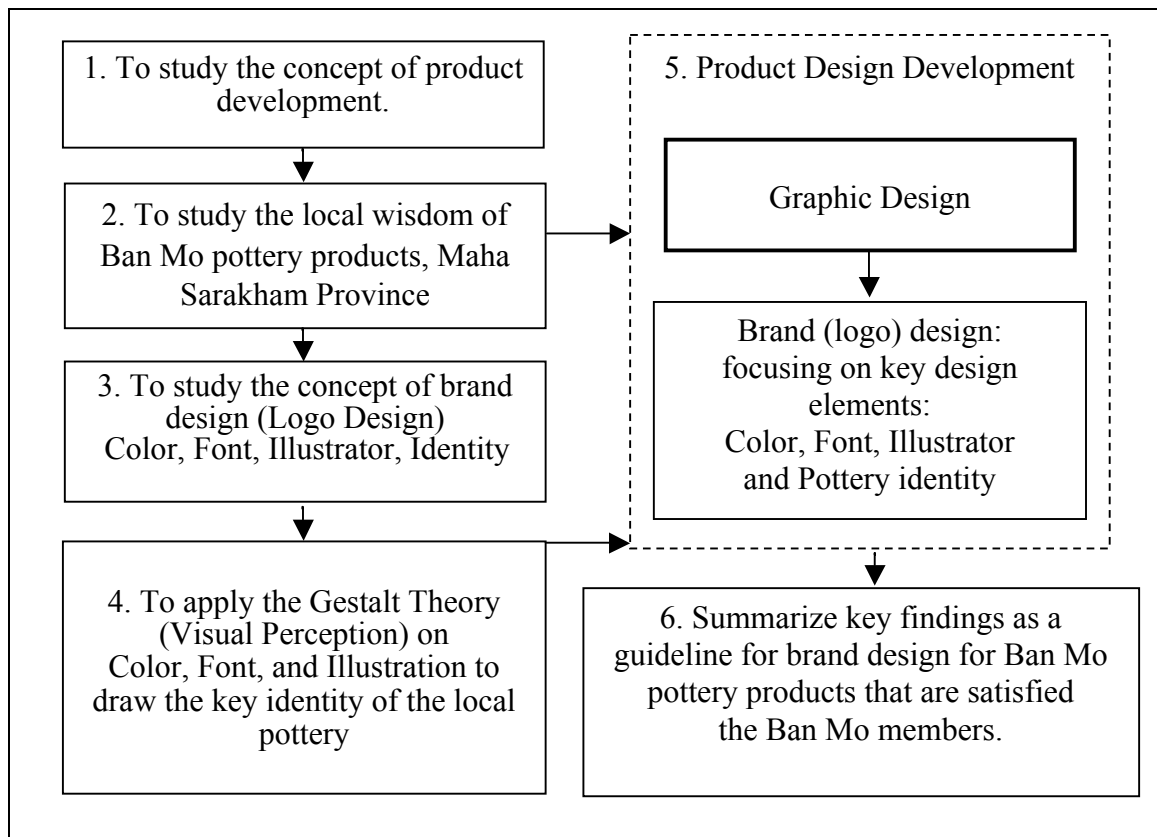
Figure 1: Research framework

3.2 Survey Participants

Following Gubrium and Holstein (2001), we firstly applied the focus group format to discuss the background, history and key knowledge of the local pottery with selected members of 40 persons from Ban Mo Community, Maha Sarakham province. Based on the obtained information, 22 students in the major of Product Design from Faculty of Architecture Urban Design and Creative Arts at Mahasarakham University designed their own logos. Then, we asked the selected members about their perception on 22 logos designed by 22 students (See Appendix). For the selected members, 37 persons are women and only 3 persons are men. The average age of the participants is 61 years old, ranging between 39 and 78 years. More than 50% of total participants have monthly income between 10,000 and 20,000 baht, which are considered as a low-income household.

3.3 Research Tool

Figure 2 details the research tool of this study, which is the questionnaire to ask about the satisfaction (and perception) of 40 participants from Ban Mo Community regarding the 22 brands designed by the students, who are a third-year student in the major of Graphic Design. The participants had to select the logos they liked most and then rated their preference on the key factors detailed in the 5-likert scale questionnaire.

Following the visual perception from Gestalt Theory, this study explored the design factors that affected the visual perception of the selected members of Ban Mo Community. The key factors used for the logo development through the graphic design in this study focus on 3 elements as follows:

- The perception on the key elements used to design the brand for the local pottery such as color, font and illustrator. We asked the participants to consider whether the colors, fonts and illustration used with the brand are appropriate or not.
- The perception and attitude towards brands of Ban Mo pottery products. We mainly focused on the attractiveness, uniqueness, and identity of the brand designed for the local pottery
- The general knowledge towards pottery products such as price of pottery products, variety of product styles, durability of products and so on.

Factors	Logo 1-22				
	Satisfaction level				
	5 Extremely Satisfied	**4**	**3**	**2**	**1** Not satisfied
1. The general knowledge towards pottery products					
1.1 Pottery is generally durable.					
1.2 Price of pottery is generally cheap.					
1.3 Pottery generally has a variety of styles					
1.4 Pottery can be found (or bought) easily.					
1.5 Pottery should be promoted to preserve the local wisdom for the next generation.					
2. The perception of brand elements is appropriate for pottery products.					
1.1 The colors used with the brand are appropriate.					
1.2 The font used with the brand are appropriate.					
1.3 The illustrations used with the brand are appropriate.					
3. The perception and attitude towards brands of Ban Mo pottery products.					
3.1 The logo brand is attractive.					
3.2 The brand has characteristics that are easy to remember.					
3.3 The Logo Design can communicate the identity of the Ban Mo Pottery Group.					
4. Conclusion of satisfaction towards the brand of Ban Mo pottery products					
4.1 The impression of the preferable brand you.					
4.2 Your preferable brand has a positive influence on the decision to purchase the pottery.					

Figure 2: the example of questionnaire for each logo

4. Results

In Figure 3, the results showed that more than 50% of Ban Mo Community's members chose Logo 9 as the most preferable brand, followed by Logo 10 and Logo 3 (15.0%) and Logo 12 and Logo 6 (7.5%), respectively.

No.	Logo	Percentage of satisfaction
1	Logo 9	52.5
2	Logo 10 Logo 3	15.0
3	Logo 12 Logo 6	7.5
4	Logo 22	2.5

Figure 3: The results of the most preferable brand selected by the members of Ban Mo Community

We also asked the participants about general knowledge on the pottery products. The key findings revealed that the members of Ban Mo Community were more likely to agree with the promotion of the local wisdom through pottery for the next generations with an average of 4.83 (Standard Deviation (S.D.) = 0.54), which was the 1st rank, followed by the variety of styles (average = 4.70, S.D.= 0.72), where to buy the pottery (average = 4.65 S.D.= 0.66), the durability of pottery (average = 4.55 S.D.= 0.67) and the pottery's price (average = 4.52 S.D. = 0.84), respectively.

For the perception on the brand elements, based on their most preferable logos, we found that the Ban Mo Community's members were satisfied with the appropriate illustrations or graphics used to design the brand with an average of 4.88 (S.D. = 0.33), which was the 1st rank. While the color and font used for the brand development were ranked 2nd and 3rd with an average of 4.75 (S.D. = 0.43) and 4.70 (S.D. = 0.46), respectively.
For the attitude towards brands of Ban Mo pottery products, we found that the community's members were satisfied with having the brand that best describes the identity of Ban Mo

Community on logo as the 1st ranked, with an average of 4.88 (S.D. = 0.33), followed by the brand that is interesting (average = 4.78, S.D.= 0.42) and the brand's uniqueness (average = 4.75, S.D. = 0.49), respectively.

In this analysis, we also used the participants' perception on the designed brand to consider the marketing opportunities. The result showed that the members were likely to agree that their preferable brand has a positive influence on the decision to purchase the pottery, with an average of 4.83 (S.D. = 0.38).

5. Conclusion and Recommendations

This research aims to develop a unique brand (or logo) for the local pottery products using Ban Mo Community in Maha Sarakham province, Thailand as the case study to increase the market opportunity for local pottery products. Using the questionnaire together with the brands (or logos) designed by the students in the major of Packaging Design at Mahasarakham University, Logo 9 was rated by the Community's members as the most preferable logo, followed by Logo 10 and Logo 3. The illustration and Community's product identity were rated as the key factors for the selection of the preferable logos. These results suggested that the members of Ban Mo Community preferred a simple logo with having the graphic design of local product identity on the logo. In particular, Logo 9 is only in black and white which may not be attractive to customers when compared to Logo 10 and Logo 3. However, for the producers' perspective, this logo is very simple to produce, and it could help reduce the production cost regarding printing and graphic design services (Chen et al., 1997). This unique brand could also help increase sales and market opportunities and expand the local pottery of Ban Mo Community to the wider markets. Also, this could help generate more income for the Community's members. However, to understand the full marketing process, we recommend future research to further investigate the consumers' perception on the designed brands for local pottery in order to design the best and effective logos to meet both producers and consumers' satisfaction.

In addition, this research emphasizes the importance of the collaboration between the local community and university through the students' involvement. This collaboration creates a symbiotic condition, where the community can benefit from the creativity and graphic design knowledge offered by the students. At the same time, the students can gain real-world experience working with the local community as clients to understand their process, goals, and needs. Also, working in these situations can help the students to better understand about their work, roles, and impacts on the business world as graphic designers.

Appendix

The figure below shows the 22 styles of Ban Mo pottery products brand patterns designed by 22 3rd-year students studying in the graphic design. Faculty of Architecture Urban Design and Creative Arts Mahasarakham University Thailand.

Logo 1	Logo 2	Logo 3	Logo 4
Logo 5	Logo 6	Logo 7	Logo 8
Logo 9	Logo 10	Logo 11	Logo 12
Logo 13	Logo 14	Logo 15	Logo 16
Logo 17	Logo 18	Logo 19	Logo 20
Logo 21	Logo 22		

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