



The Development of Marketing Communication Potential of the Community Business Groups in Pattani Province

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Abstract

Marketing Communication is one of the most important approaches to increase selling efficiency. This research aims to develop marketing communication competency for five community business groups in Pattani province. There are two objectives which are 1) to explore the challenges of marketing communication and 2) to develop marketing communication competency. This is qualitative research applies the Participatory Action Research (PAR) approach integrating document analysis, in-depth interviews, focus groups, and workshops as the research tools for data collection.

The results found three challenges that affected the marketing communication competency and product sale distribution: 1) the brand names and packaging have often changed due to the government agencies' support that triggered confusion for customers who were unable to identify the product names and appearances, and 2) The lack of confidence to conduct sale exhibition to showcase products on their own, and 3) The lack of confidence to communicate and present the products. The development of marketing communication competency includes three procedures: 1) to enhance marketing communication knowledge and skills, 2) to develop marketing communication tools to support their sale distribution activities, and 3) to practice selling to gain more experience.

Keywords: 1) Marketing communication 2) local/community business groups 3) Marketing communication 4) local/community business groups in Pattani province

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Introduction

In compliant with the national strategic plan (16) regarding local economy (2018-2037) by the Office of the National Economic and Social Development Council (2018, p. 1), the plan specifies “the development of the local economy as a crucial implementation for development and increase the country to become a high-income nation which thoroughly covers income distribution. It outlines the plan for a sustainable local Thai economy in the future by supporting the strength of the economy at the community level for competitive potentials for self-reliance”. Within this national strategic plan in regards to the local economy, the target objective has been initiated to adjust the local economic infrastructure and to enhance strength for the local economy so that it is conducive for different areas of development in the area. Another sub-plan includes increasing the potential for businesses via increasing knowledge management to start a business with support from different academia in order to increase their knowledge and important skills.

Hence, the gatherings create occupations from community knowledge by collective gathering as a community economic network based on the research for communities in Pattani province. This acts as one of the procedures to develop a provincial-level economic foundation so that there are developments for varieties of products such as food, souvenirs, herbs, and cosmetics. From gathering as a community economic network based on research for the community locals in Pattani province, there are readiness regarding

knowledge, local knowledge management, and gatherings of group members. This would be a crucial base to develop the economic strength in local communities. These network groups have always developed the drive for stable incomes for members in their respective communities.

From conducting conferences with the research network for locals in Pattani province to find development approaches for the local economy of Pattani province on Monday 20th February 2017, the representatives from the local economic network had exchanged ideas regarding their group implementations, problems, and obstacles arising from lack of knowledge and skills in marketing communication which is one of the crucial mechanisms in developing occupations to generate group income. (Network of Researchers for Local, Pattani Province, 2017)

The suggestions of the representatives from of local economic network based on the research for the mentioned communities have been applied to implement this research which aims to support the potential of marketing communication.

The project's inception was initiated by members of the community groups who saw problems or obstacles in creating occupations for their groups. Therefore, they cooperated to find approaches to adjust, develop and establish procedures with the participation of members within their communities to increase knowledge management, important marketing communication skill development in compliance with their roles, and marketing landscapes of local business owners. They aim



to enhance the level of knowledge management regarding marketing and affecting the quality of product sales within the groups. This was conducted through study cases with 5 groups of local business owners in Pattani province: 1) Ban Tha Khlong Saving Group in Khok Pho district, 2) Fishery Union group in Yaring district, 3) Ban Plugprue Agricultural Association in Mae Lan district, 4) Ban Thung Basketry Group in Panare district, and 5) Su-Ngai Panae Women's Group in Bana sub-district, Meung province.

As all of the 5 groups have a similar group forming with group leaders, different group management according to each of their criteria, group products that have been distributed for some time, and other preliminary issues that are similar: all groups seek to develop their potential in the marketing community, media development and the communication tools need that are appropriate to their targeted customers and are in compliant to each group potential to increase income and create strengths for their groups. These were achieved via implementing marketing communication to create integrated communication procedures, methods, activities, and other communication tools for the targeted groups to reflect their targeted objectives (Holm, 2006, pp. 23-33). These are crucial in publicizing news and information related to the products or services for the targeted groups, pushing for competition, creating product or service awareness, and setting the needs for customers to purchase or decide to buy the products or services. These are significant strategies to increase the potential for local business owners.

Literature Review

Local Economic Approach

"Local Economy" means different economic activities that people in the communities participate in, think, operate, benefit and own. The local economy is based on using the community potential such as knowledge, tradition, culture, and community resources for manufacturing, consumption, and distribution. (Sukhothai Thammathirat Open University, 2012) and Sriwichailamphan (2015) empathized that the local economic system is not only limited to the economy that generates income and spending but it is an economic system that is a part of a culture that is related to livelihood, including "values" given as well. From this definition, this research aims to analyze 2 areas of economic activities (collective gathering to create products) and a system integrating community value (area outstanding points and community livelihood) to be used in communicating and identifying products from all 5 communities.

Market Analysis

Market analysis can be implemented by using SWOT analysis protocol to analyze internal factors for strengths or weaknesses in business implementation and analysis of opportunities and obstacles arising from external factors that are related to the business implementation. This one could be beneficial to or negatively impacts the business. The internal environment or internal factors are notions that the business can control while the external environment or external factors are ones that the businesses are not in control of or have little control over it. "Market Envi-

ronment means everything that could impact marketing that will make you successful or fail.” (Yaipairoj, 2015).

Marketing Communication Competency

Marketing communications means all activities that the market operates to stimulate and convince meanings and ideas applying different media to engage with the targeted groups regarding the products, services, or others resulting in the generation of product awareness and customers’ decisions to eventually buy the products, or behaving in a responsive way that marketing communication has obliged.

The setting of marketing communication strategy is the setting up of different thoughts and methods to be applied to achieve the marketing communication objectives of that particular product brand or organization. There is therefore a need for market communicators to consider key points in setting the strategic approach plans and implementation methods. There are 2 key points as follows (Yomchinda, 2012):

- 1) News Information Strategy
- 2) Media Strategy

Creating news means the ability to create new, fresh, outstanding, and appropriate ideas that could be utilized to resolve communication and thoughts and impact product information to be advantageous to other competitors.

Plans to create marketing communication are needed before any information is sent to the decision-makers. Things planned during decision-making can be adjusted while they are still in the implantation process. Thus,

the media tool plan is the best tool specifying methods to send information to the targeted group. The planner has to evaluate and select a media channel to send the news in time, place, and at a price appropriate to the budget. (Terason, 1998) This also has to reflect the marketing communication conditions of that particular business too.

Methods

This research uses qualitative research methodologies by using a research method called Participatory Action Research (PAR). The departments that have been involved in this research are the researcher team from the faculty of Communication Science from Prince of Songkla University, Pattani section who is the sole stakeholder to implement this research with the cooperation of officials from the Science, Research and Innovation Promotion Committee (TSRI), research coordination unit for the community in Pattani province. They are involved in selecting the businesses to participate in the project based on the following criteria: 1) The business group that has developed a product within the community business group for the community of local groups in Pattani province, 2) Gathering readiness of group members, 3) Readiness in product development, 4) The problems and needs for marketing communication development and small focus group discussions for information exchange and the participation from the 25 selected business owners participating in this project.

These are leaders and representatives from 5 community business groups with 5



people in each business from Pattani province as follows: 1) Ban Tha Khlong Saving Group in Khok Pho district, 2) Fishery Union group in Yaring district, 3) Ban Plugprue Agricultural Association in Mae Lan district, 4) Ban Thung Basketry Group in Panare district and 5) Su-Ngai Panae Women's Group in Bana sub-district, Meung province. This research uses data collection from applying three pillars which are 1) data analysis about the creation of all 5 groups, 2) In-depth interview of the leaders and group representatives via focus group discussions and 3) Participatory observation of the workshops implemented to develop the potential of group members and product distribution trials for all of the 5 business groups. This was proceeded using 5 methods:

1. Marketing analysis using the integration between learning and teaching with the research activity implementation via workshops and focus group discussions. These implementations would be conducted from

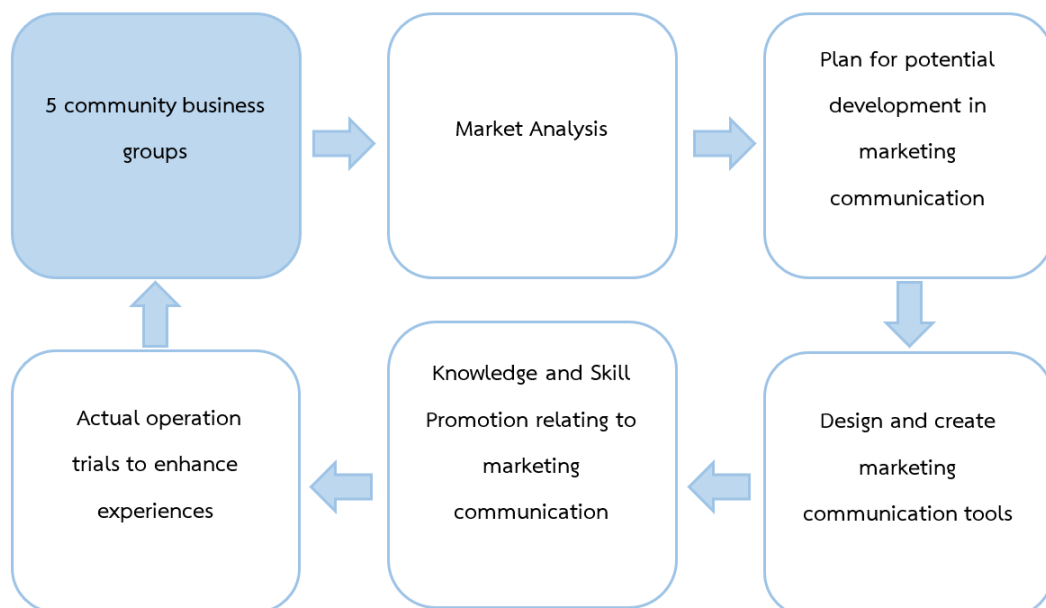
analysis of previous marketing communication problems to reflect topic 1 of the research objective.

2. Set development plan potential regarding marketing communication of the community business groups using the integration between learning/teaching with the research and set a space to exchange knowledge between students, business owners, and researchers.

3. Design and create marketing communication tools that promote product distributions for groups of business owners using an operation form of participative development.

4. Knowledge and skill promotion relating to marketing communication via learning from site surveys and participative seminar activities.

5. Actual operation trials to enhance experiences related to marketing communication and product distribution by training to sell products by themselves.

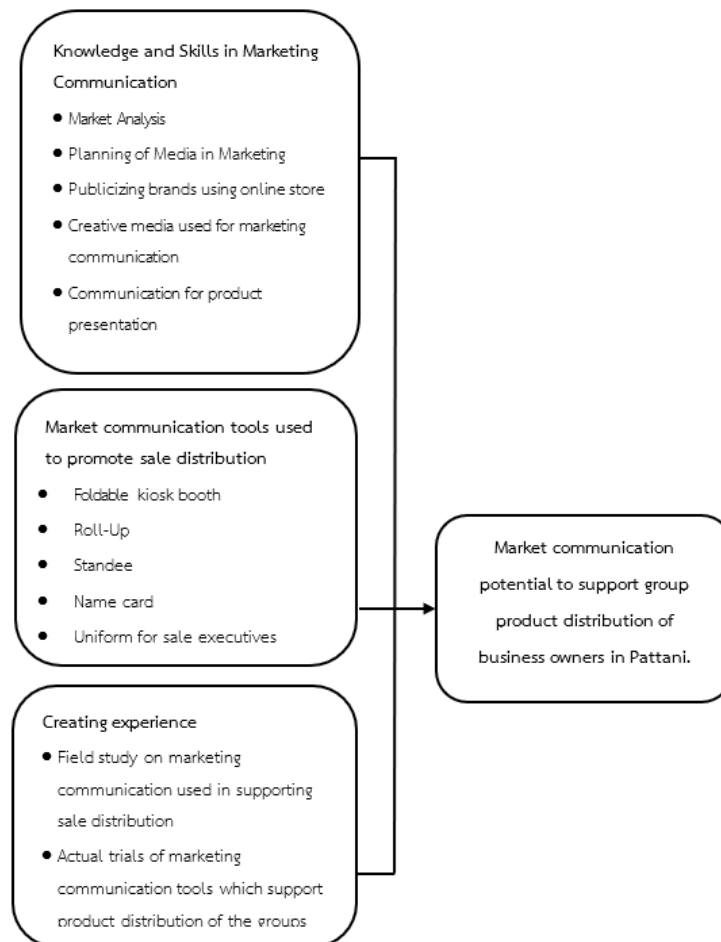


Picture No. 1 Conceptual Framework

Results

From studying the preliminary data of the marketing circumstances of all 5 groups of community business groups, we found three general problems which affected marketing communication implementations and product distributions as: 1) Product brand or packaging of the groups has been adjusted according to supports from different departments or development projects. This resulted in the lack of stability in publicizing product brands for awareness for the market targeted groups. 2) Most of the sale distributions are in the form of exhibitions via different projects supported by the state departments, therefore they still lack

the skills to distribute the products by themselves, such as choosing to open a store or present their products for the targeted groups, etc.3) Most of the group members are aging at least 50 years old and are groups that subside and work in the communities. They are more familiar to communicate with people within their communities rather than people from other areas therefore they lack the confidence to present their products. From data analysis based on these notions, the research applies this to design the procedures to develop marketing communication potential for all of the 5 community business groups using the following 3 procedures:



Picture No. 2 Development approach for potential regarding market communication to support group product distribution of community business groups in Pattani province



1. Promotion of knowledge and skills used to develop the potential in marketing communication for the business owners to promote product sale distribution. This includes 5 topics of knowledge management and skills as followed:

1.1 Market Analysis

From implementing the market analysis procedure, business owners have received knowledge regarding market analysis within their groups which were used to understand different factors related to their community business implementations, including their ability to analyze the strengths, weaknesses, and opportunities of their groups.

1.2 Publicizing brands through online stores

The activities to help them train in branding via using online stores have enabled the business owners to see more importance in online marketing which would increase another channel to distribute their products. However, online marketing and other forms of different online channels are still considered new and business groups are still unfamiliar therefore continuous time is needed for training so that they are more accustomed to it.

1.3 Creating simple media for marketing

This activity had enabled business owners to receive knowledge and training in making creative messages to create media for marketing, and the ability to create simple media by themselves that could be used as a channel to communicate both offline and online formats. However, the skills to create

new materials using smartphones need consistent training so that they are familiar with using them.

1.4 Marketing Communication Plan

From activity implementation through integration with research and learning procedures to promote knowledge for the business owners to understand the general overview of marketing communication, there were approaches to set topics, stories to be used for targeted groups, selections of different marketing communication tools to develop marketing communication for the groups in the future. Using these procedures, the research team and 5 of the business groups have utilized information for planning and conducting data analysis prior to creating marketing communication media that would promote a higher quality of sale distributions: via small focus-group discussions we have summarized designs for the marketing communication tools that promote product sales for 5 of the business groups as follows:

1.5 Communication skills for products presentation

The activity was conducted in the form of an operation seminar with techniques used to present and sell the products. The group members shared their ideas to set the contents they would present for distribution with a real mock trial so that business owners receive the skills to be able to sell the products on their own.

2. Design and create marketing communication tools to promote the selling of group products in the form of participative

development. The marketing communication tools promoting sell distribution for each of the group was designed and created from this research procedure with a selection plan of the tools needed.

From consideration in compliance to the overall market conditions of the 5 groups, it would need to be tools that enable marketing communication, in particular the tool that is called “communication” that promotes sale distribution. More significantly, it has to be long-term and durable, therefore there has to be the design of marketing communication tool that promotes sale distribution such as foldable product booth or kiosk (like a counter selling products), roll-up/billboard sign or standee/animated tent card, name card and uniforms for sale executives. All of these tools were designed to be used as marketing communication to present the pros, uniqueness of that particular product brand of the business groups.

The tools used for marketing communication to promote the distribution of the product for 5 of these groups act as the tool for brand awareness that presents main selling points for the business owners. Thus, products made by the Su-Ngai Panae women’s group in Bana sub-district, Meung district used the slogan, “Coolness By Faith”. The Rice-berry rice product by Agricultural Group in Ban Plugprue, Mae Lan sub-district used the main slogan, “Good Rice is Good for the Soul and Body”. Local rice products by the Ban Thung Basketry Group in the Panare district used the main slogan, “Great Energy Source Made From the Heart”. The picked fish product of the Fishery

Union Group in Yaring district use their main slogan as, “Deliciousness in Every Spoon and Menus” and finally the cold-pressed coconut product by the Ban Tha Khlong Saving Group in Khok Pho district use their main slogan, “Good for the Body and Belly”. All of these tool designs were created in consideration to designing the protocol and utilizing marketing communication tools so that they are consistent to present the contents and media designing so that the people acknowledge and memorize the brands. These tools are not only limited to be used for marketing communication but they also promote the distribution for the groups that can use them to sell their products on their own so that more distribution channels are available. Furthermore, these business owners got to develop their selling skills as well.

The followings are some of the samples that Bang Thung Basketry Group in the Panare district used as the tools for marketing communication that helped in promoting their products (Picture No. 3-7). The designing process for these marketing tools was created by the group leader and members who participated together to provide and share necessary information and ideas using the marketing communication tools.



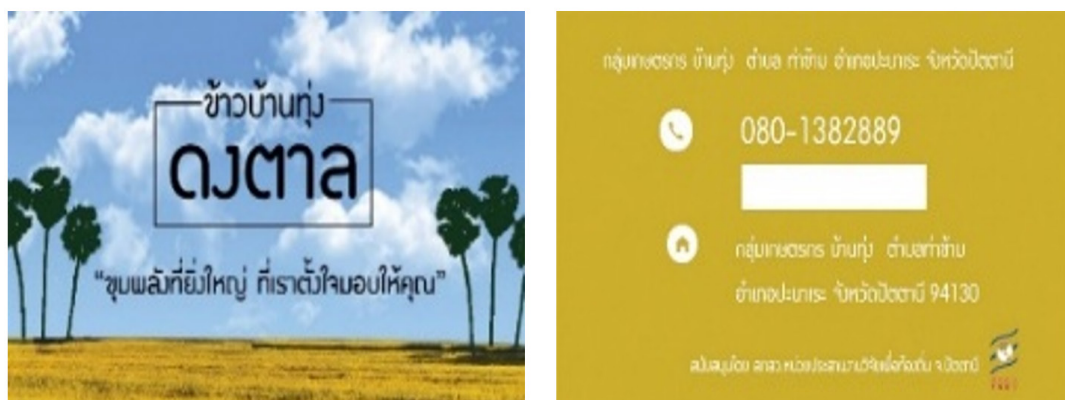
Picture No. 3 Example of the foldable kiosk booth

Picture No. 4 Example of Roll-Up or banner (right)

Picture No. 5 Standee or tent card



Picture No. 6 Uniform design for sale executives



Picture No. 7 Name card

3. To increase experience in marketing communication to promote sale distributions. This has been conducted by utilizing 2 learning processes.

3.1 Field Survey

The learning process from the field survey had enabled the business owners to see the approaches of creating the product values through online media and sale distribution at the community and at the national level. The research finds that the business owners opinionated their ideas from what they learned and were able to apply them to develop the marketing communication for their groups. These could be classified in three forms as follows:

3.1.1 Using online social technology in creating the contents to publicize for the consumers and product values.

“Using traditions, cultures as the tools to narrate stories about that particular product as an approach to draw the customers’ interests” (Community business group 1, personal communication, July 29, 2019)

“Creating product stories using online media so that the customers become more aware of the products” (Community business group 2, personal communication, July 29, 2019)

3.1.2 The form and the technique in sale distribution and exhibition should be implemented so that they are appropriate to the role of the area and create customers’ interests.

“Dressing appropriately to the product sale distribution locations and setting up booths that appeal to the customers” (Com-

munity business group 3, personal communication, July 29, 2019)

3.1.3 Gathering group members in the community is crucial in developing the group’s potential.

“ Discussions for understanding regarding group gathering before gathering up ” (Community business group 4, personal communication, July 29, 2019)

3.2 Actual trials to sell the marketing communication tools that promote sales.

Group products

The actual trials of the group product sale distribution and the marketing tools promoting the product sale distributions were used to distribute the products via selling in front stores in two formats: front store sales in which each group had to plan and select a location and using each group’s marketing tools. The store designs vary according to each group’s plans so that they are compliant with each group’s targeted customers. All of the 5 stores exhibited their products in a shopping mall to enhance the skills and experience related to marketing communication and product presentation of the community business group members.

After all different procedures were implemented, the research team set a space to return the collected information to the community by summarizing all previous implementations. The state officials involved with community development were invited to acknowledge their roles to further support the business groups. These state stakeholders included Pattani province Industrial representatives, Pattani province Labor representatives,



community development specialists, and all 5 business group representatives to participate in mutual suggestions regarding the implementations and research results. This discussion meeting also exhibited the products from 5 business groups.

The results illustrate the feedback from local business owners that their skills and potential in marketing communication have improved. They were able to learn online sale distribution using mobile phones, Line sales, Facebook sales, and other sale methods. More importantly, the business groups are more confident to present their products.

“...They have taught us to be more familiar to the point that I can sell the product using different communication and techniques” (Community business group 5, personal communication, November 27, 2019)

“Able to sell the products proactively to the customers using online tools and billboards to show the product quality so that the consumers are more interested” (Community business group 1, personal communication, November 27, 2019)

“We are more confident in direct sales and front store sales in exhibitions. We can express more about our product” (Community business group 6, personal communication, November 27, 2019)

Conclusion and Discussion

The research implementation regarding the development of marketing communication potential for business groups for Pattani province has the following objectives: 1) to study the problems relating to the marketing communication of the community business groups

in Pattani province 2) to develop the potential of marketing communication for local business groups in Pattani province through participatory operational research implementation to develop potential marketing communication for the following 5 community business groups:

1) Ban Tha Khlong Saving Group in Khok Pho district, 2) Fishery Union group in Yaring district, 3) Ban Plugprue Agricultural Association in Mae Lan district, 4) Ban Thung Basketry Group in Panare district and 5) Su-Ngai Panae Women's Group in Bana sub-district, Meung province.

The results find that there are general problems affecting marketing communication implementation and sale distributions in 3 areas which are: 1) The brand names or packaging of the groups have adjusted according to supports from different agencies or development projects which affected the stability in brand awareness for people to remember 2) most of the sale distribution activities were implemented by front selling of products via different projects that the state departments have supported every once in a while, therefore, the business owners lacked the confidence to sell their products on their own, and 3) Most of the group members are in the middle-age range who are lacking the confidence to publicize and present their products.

By summarizing these notions, designs for approaches to develop marketing communication for the community business groups for Pattani province were conducted using the following 3 procedures which are: 1) Procedures to increase knowledge and skills to develop marketing communication of the business groups to sell their products, 2) Procedure to design and create marketing communication

tools to promote product distributions for the groups, 3) Procedure to enhance experience relating to marketing communication to promote sales for the local business groups via actual trials using marketing communication tools. From implementing these procedures for the 5 local business groups, the results of their participation throughout the research period enabled the group members to learn and increase skills to improve their marketing which impacted the ability of the business groups to have the skills to increase the quality of product distribution.

From the research results, the objectives are summarized as follows:

1) The problem relates to the local marketing communication for Pattani province that was accumulated from business groups were that they lack the knowledge regarding marketing communication which impacted their business implementations. This problem shares similarity with the study result of the report, "Nontaburi's OTOP Marketing Potential: Case Study of Non-food agricultural products from Khanthichote and Rodyim (2015, pp. 125-135) which also found that the OTOP business owners lack the knowledge and skills regarding marketing and branding. The study and preliminary data analysis and marketing analysis of the 5 business groups, the members are still lacking the skills needed to sell the products on their own, which impacted the quality of the groups' marketing communication.

From research topic about the development of marketing communication to enhance implementation quality of community business groups in Chiang Rai province conducted by Yaothanee, Leetagool, Areenich,

and Tengtragul, (2015, pp. 85-104), it was found that the conditions of marketing communication for community business groups in Chiang Rai are of the highest quality in the term that the business owners can sell their products (B2C) and they can communicate and have good relationships with the customers. The potential development for business groups in using this sale format would be another approach to help increase the quality related to marketing communication for the business groups in the area.

2) The marketing communication development approach from this project was designed to promote knowledge and skills about online communication and simple media creation so that the business group members can create their media using both online and offline formats to advertise their products. This is incompliant to the research study about the OTOP Marketing Approaches for the International Community conducted by Sam Phran district in Nakhon Pathom province by Leelasuwat, Boonchuai and Teianchan (2015) was obliged to study the market potential, problems, obstacles, and potential development approaches for community business groups in Nakorn Pathom province. The analysis from that research found that business owners have ways to publicize and advertise their products using social networks to create brand awareness for the customers.

Furthermore, the implementation of this research designed marketing communication tools to promote product sale distributions that can create the pros and uniqueness of the group brands which is in compliant with the marketing analysis according to a frame-



work set by 4C (Othakanon, 2012) in which marketing communication planner are easily able to reach the targeted groups. 1 of the 4C notions is “Communication” which is considered to match the consumers’ interests and enable consumers to be open and aware of the product as good communication creates more trust in the brand that affects sales increases.

The selection of marketing tools (by Tongsongyod and Kai-nunna (2018, pp. 14-28) to promote sales such as foldable booths or kiosks is also relates to the development strategies framework for the product made by the Bana sub-district in Pattani province. Their brand strategy was to promote their brand by setting up a small booth on the spot with most passerby customers or setting up a kiosk to create more brand awareness to increase more sales. Other forms such as kiosks (roll-up, standee, animated name cards, or the sale executive uniforms were designed to reflect the initiated approaches according to the market communication approaches by (Yomchinda, 2012).

The “key selling point” or “big idea” that appeals to targeted customers should be used with consistent marketing news and marketing tools. The branding to present different marketing communication tools along with the designs and news contents should also be in a similar form to create brand awareness that customers remember.

In addition, this research to increase potential in marketing communication, actual design training, and front store selling is also compliant with the research regarding the development of marketing potential for mush-

room and lemon farming business groups in Ban Phon Sung, Meung district, Nakhon Ratchasima province that was conducted by Phochkoh (2015, pp. 529-539). It was found in that study that marketing compositions to promote the market are highly crucial, in particular setting up of activities or booths in different festivities. Hence, one of the most important factors to develop the marketing communication for the community business groups is to train the skills to set up marketing-related activities as this is an important factor to promote marketing for community businesses.

Recommendation

1) The potential development regarding marketing communication for community business groups should have a plan for co-operative policy-making between involved stated sectors to precisely set the roles for developments in each of the areas so that it does not duplicate development procedures for sustainable development.

2) The development approach regarding marketing communication for community business groups should set a long-term development plan focusing on consistency of group development from the inception period to the project’s finish line until the groups are strengthened and they can stably maintain their businesses, including the ability to transfer such approaches for other business owners in other communities.

3) The community business groups need to find their development approaches and participate in presenting their development approaches to involved state stakeholders.

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