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DEVELOPING POTENTIAL AND ENRICHING LIFE THROUGH LIVELIHOOD COMMUNITY IDENTITY PRODUCTS FOR WIDOWS IN THREE SOUTHERN PROVINCES, THAILAND

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Abstract

The purpose of this research was to develop the potential and enhance life through livelihood community identity products for widows in the three southern border provinces of Thailand. The study involved one hundred widows employed as hired workers living in Narathiwat, Pattani, and Yala. Findings revealed that the life model of livelihood community identity products for widows in the three southern border provinces could be categorized into two groups: One group possessed the skills and readiness to manufacture products. However, this group did not necessarily choose the community identity products proposed by the researcher; instead, they aimed to utilize their existing products to establish careers. The second group was not prepared to become product manufacturers. The model for developing potential and enriching lives through livelihood community identity products can serve as a guide for establishing careers as online sellers, particularly for widows in the three southern border provinces. This approach can help them generate income for themselves and their families.

Keywords: Potential Development, Life Values, Identity Products, Widows, Thailand's Southern Border Provinces

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Introduction

The violence and unrest in Thailand's three southern border provinces since 2004 have resulted in numerous women losing their husbands. According to the Southern Situation Monitoring Center database as of January 2021, there were 20,487 deaths and injuries due to various forms of violence, leading to more than 3,003 widows in Narathiwat, 1,238 in Pattani, and 917 in Yala. This has also left a total of 6,085 orphans in Pattani, 2,467 in Narathiwat, and 1,488 in Yala (Office of Social Development and Human Security, Narathiwat, Pattani, and Yala, 2020, cited in Burancharoenkit, 2021). The impact on widows is profound both mentally and economically. Mentally, it was found that widows typically take nearly two years to recover and accept their loss. Economically, upon their husbands' deaths, widows must adapt to managing their family's finances in place of their husbands (Academic Coordination Center for Assistance to Victims of Unrest, 2020, cited in Burancharoenkit, 2021). Consistent with the findings of Promrat et al. (2015), the status of women in Malay society is closely tied to their role as a wife. When there is no male leader in the family, the value of widows diminishes, causing many women to shoulder the burden of managing both finances and domestic work. Similarly, orphans affected by such situations face the impact of losing their father, the head of the family. This often forces them to leave school to reduce the family's burden or to start working at a young age to help ease their mother's responsibilities.

Currently, several agencies are involved in enhancing the job skills of widows and promoting women's careers, but these efforts have faced challenges. One reason for this is that the skills development often does not align with the specific needs or existing skills of widows in the region or within the labor market. Therefore, developing the potential and enriching life through community identity products for widows in the three southern border provinces offers another avenue for transformation. This approach aims to equip widows with knowledge and skills relevant to their roles and responsibilities, thereby enhancing their potential and life through community identity products. By promoting careers that meet the local widows' needs, this initiative can help them generate income for themselves and their families, thereby reducing social inequality and fostering the empowerment of widows towards contributing to a more robust societal fabric.

Literature Review

Community Product Identity

Identity refers to the effort to establish a clear boundary for individuals to understand their own uniqueness and differences from others, shaped by their past and present experiences (Chumpradit & Khunsri, 2006). Meanwhile, Praichanjit (2009) defines local identity as the distinct characteristics that differentiate individuals or groups from others.

The concept of "identity" plays a crucial role in community products, posing a challenge for communities to contemplate how to manifest the unique characteristics of each type of product. Each region is distinctive and possesses products that are exclusive to that area alone. Community product identity encompasses the original essence of the product, derived from wisdom passed down through generations. During this transmission, changes may occur through alterations or additional embellishments, creating a new identity that merges the traditional with the contemporary. This transformation imbues the community product with a distinct identity that sets it apart from others. Whether intentional or unintentional, the ability of the community to identify and highlight these unique traits serves as a selling point, generating interest and enhancing the product's value and marketability (Chamnian, 2021).

Chamnian (2021) further emphasizes the importance of "identity" or "uniqueness" in production, particularly for community products that require differentiation to captivate consumers and build a sustainable brand image.

Hinviman (2017) asserts that personal identity is not inherent but rather constructed by society. Similarly, community products also possess identities shaped by their origins and evolution. The original identity of these products stems from ancestral wisdom, which may evolve through adaptation or innovation. For instance, traditional community products originally used natural dyes from local plants but may have evolved to incorporate synthetic dyes, creating a new identity that distinguishes them in the market. Whether deliberate or incidental, the community's ability to recognize and leverage these unique identities as selling points can enhance the product's appeal, value, and income potential.

In conclusion, identity refers to the cultural roots and social heritage that are cultivated and utilized as wisdom, representing the distinctive cultural characteristics of a community formed over time. This development leads to various aspects becoming unique and intriguing, forming a distinctive identity that signifies the community's ethos. When discussing "community identity," it denotes products originating from local wisdom or offered for sale by community enterprises. These products can be tangible or intangible and reflect the community's values or well-being. The identity of community products stems from their original essence, passed down through generations. For example, a community product may originally utilize natural dyes from local plants, but over time, these may be combined with synthetic dyes, creating a new identity for the product that is unprecedented. Whether intentional or incidental, the crucial factor is whether the community owning the product can identify and highlight its unique identity as a selling point to generate interest, enhance product value, and increase income, thereby influencing consumer purchasing decisions. Effective identity communication is essential in this regard. However, it's imperative to first delve into the spatial identity of community products mentioned earlier. The community should play a central role at every stage of this process. Chaikulap's research (2019) outlines a structured approach to developing community product identities in Loei, Thailand. This process involves Step 1 - Studying the Community Context of Loei, Step 2 - Studying the Identity of Loei Community Products, Step 3 - Developing an Identity Creation Process for Community Product Development, and Step 4 - Evaluating this Identity Creation Process for Community Product Development. This systematic approach ensures that the creation and evaluation of community product identities are guided by thorough research and community involvement.

Potential Development and Enrichment of Life

Nunkliang & Khumphiranont (2021) define potential as the readiness or inclination to demonstrate existing abilities when presented with an opportunity to act on an individual level. Capacity development refers to the enhancement of skills that enable individuals to perform effectively. Scholars have variously defined "potential" using terms such as competence and capability, often employing the English word "competency". In summary, potential refers to the knowledge, skills, and practical behavior necessary for an individual to perform successfully above the general standard. Aobaom (2014) explains potential as an inherent aspect of an individual's personality that can drive personal growth. Therefore, potential encompasses a set of interconnected knowledge, skills, and desirable attributes that contribute to fulfilling specific roles through training and development. An individual's potential consists of two components: the visible part, which includes elements of acquired knowledge and skills developed through experience, and the hidden part, comprising personality traits and internal motivations (Nunkliang & Khumphiranont, 2021).

In conclusion, potential, ability, readiness, or qualities latent in a person can be made manifest if developed or stimulated from the outside, which will affect the highest success and satisfaction.

Potential Development: Potential development is divided into two parts.

1) Basic potential refers to the knowledge or basic skills that a person must have to be able to perform higher or more complex tasks, such as speaking, writing, etc.

2) Potential to make a difference refers to the factors that make a person have better or higher performance than the average person, so it causes different results.

In conclusion, potential comprises five critical components divided into two parts: The first part is the visible aspect, developed through study and research, consist of 2 things: knowledge and skills (hard skills), and the second part the hidden aspects within individuals, including attitudes, values, opinions about self-image, personality traits, and internal motivation (soft skills). This framework is consistent with findings from Ditta-Ang's study (2016), which outlines guidelines for developing the potential of the elderly within the context of the self-sufficiency economy. These guidelines emphasize: 1) Resilience: Promoting awareness and providing information about self-sufficiency economy principles, health education, and nutrition training for the elderly, establishing groups or clubs and encouraging their participation in community activities through local leaders or schools. 2) Moderation: Facilitating understanding among children and family members regarding the needs and changes of elderly care, and supporting their active involvement in family activities, organizing income-generating occupations for the elderly and finding funding or support sources for impoverished seniors. 3) Rationality: Equipping the elderly with knowledge and skills to contribute to the development of younger generations in the community through mentoring and training. The study for government and other agencies to comprehensively promote the potential of the elderly, encompassing job planning, support networks, skill development, and market access to enhance their income generation opportunities. Family members should prioritize enhancing the potential of the elderly to ensure that their development within the Sufficiency Economy framework is maximally effective.

Enrichment of Life: The Royal Institute Dictionary (2011) defines the word “value” as “something useful or of high worth”. Wittawet (1989) describes value as a “desirable” or “satisfactory” characteristic, emphasizing its importance. Similarly, Attapat (2000) states that value refers to characteristics that are desirable, satisfying, and beneficial to fulfilling human desires. Therefore, value encompasses what is desirable, and useful, and what individuals believe should be prioritized. Furthermore, the concept of “value of life” pertains to living in a manner that aligns with societal virtues and norms, aiming to achieve personal and societal goals for mutual benefit.

Understanding and living with value is essential for every human being. It involves living a purposeful life where every moment. By living mindfully, we make the most of every second of our lives. Living with value entails being born and striving diligently, steering clear of wrongdoing, both in actions and thoughts, while actively doing good deeds and upholding positive qualities throughout life. We must cherish every remaining day and not take life for granted, as each moment could potentially be our last breath. When we deeply comprehend the value of life and prioritize understanding our inner selves, we cultivate a fulfilling existence. This approach leads to a life where we are recognized as the happiest and most meaningful contributors to society.

In short, the word "value" implies that what is valuable is what should be prioritized. Valuable things creatively address both physical and mental needs. They encompass material possessions as well as potential achievements. Valuable actions are those that strive towards achieving noble goals such as goodness, beauty, and truth.

Increasing the value of life can be approached in two ways: first, by enhancing personal value through self-improvement, and second, by contributing to society and creating value beyond oneself.

1) Intrinsic value refers to the inherent worth of something or an action in and of itself. For instance, goodness and knowledge are valuable in their own right, and we desire them for their own sake. Philosophers regard these as true values that possess inherent worth.

2) Extrinsic value is an external value attributed to something or an action as a means to an end. Its value lies in its utility as a tool or method to achieve other goals. For example, the pursuit of knowledge may be a step towards gaining a position or financial stability. Status or finances, in turn, can lead to further ends, such as money buying food, clothing, and housing. These necessities ultimately contribute to happiness (Methavityakul, 1991).

In conclusion, the creation of community identity products serves not only to promote the household and community economy but also as a means to develop the potential and enhance the lives of Muslim women in the three southern border provinces. This initiative is particularly significant in light of the loss of family heads due to the unrest in these regions.

Research Conceptual Framework

In this research conceptual framework, the researchers explore the development of potential and enrichment of life through livelihood community identity products for widows in the three southern border provinces as shown in Figure 1:

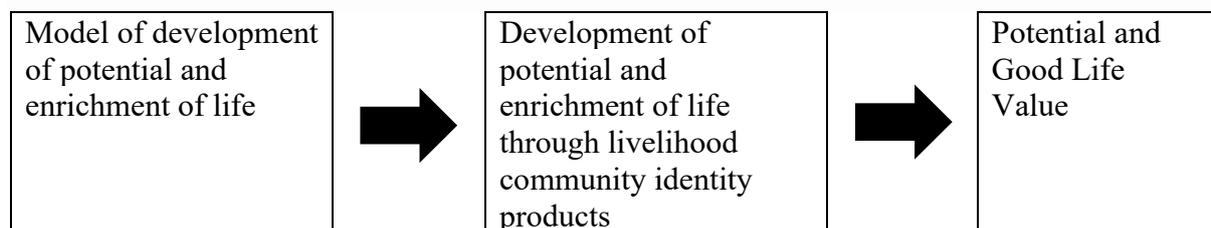


Figure 1 Research Conceptual Framework

Research Methodology

Key informants were one hundred widows employed as hired workers living in Narathiwat, Pattani, and Yala, Thailand. This group was significantly affected economically and was prioritized in the target sub-district for 2023, according to the (Draft) Action Plan for Administration and Development of Southern Border Provinces 2023-2027 (Office of the National Security Council, 2022). Samples were selected through a system involving local leaders who showed interest and had spatial possibilities. Participants were chosen from areas with distinctive product identities that could be developed to create careers for widows and had continuous marketing opportunities, particularly in online marketing.

Research Tools

The research tools consist of two parts. 1) Qualitative Research: This involves interviews on best practices to derive a business model and marketing strategy based on the 6Ps concept from online business entrepreneurs. The study results were used to create a model for developing the potential and enriching the lives of widows through community identity products in the three southern border provinces. 2) Quantitative Research: This involves the use of assessment forms after participating in activities aimed at developing potential and enriching life through community identity products. The goals are to enhance the potential of online marketing, increase the value of life for widows through community identity products, and assess the self-worth of widows in the three southern border provinces. The assessment is conducted using a 5-level scale.

Data Analysis

Data were analyzed using content analysis for the qualitative research, involving the synthesis and interpretation of content. For the quantitative research, data were analyzed using mean and standard deviation.

Research Results

Community Identity Products in Yala

The highlighted products capable of generating revenue include plastic woven baskets, cold-pressed coconut oil, dried Garcinia, Pate products, Beaded Pate, Budo wild honey, grass flower brooms, durian, pickled fish, betel nut sets, souvenirs, and sweets.

The potential for sales and gross profit reveals that cold-pressed coconut oil sells for 60 THB. per bottle in the community (120 THB. in Seven-Eleven shops). The packaging consists of transparent bottles without branding, intended for blending with coffee and for use in skin care and hair care. Profit per bottle is noted. "Given the abundance of coconuts in local gardens, sourcing raw materials incurs no costs." The current cost of coconut milk is 60 THB. per kilo. "Old coconuts yield more oil, maximizing coconut oil production." Betel nut sets are priced at 3000 THB. per set (excluding labor costs), comprising cut cloth, flowers, towels, umbrellas, footwear, prayer cloth, hair ornaments, fruits, bags, souvenirs, buttons, and brooches, each priced between 5 and 10 THB., typically ordered in quantities of 500 to 1000 pieces at a time. In the community, popular tourist attractions include Na-Tham community, Khao Nang Kaew, Wang Phaya, Butong Waterfall, Batapurong (a beach formed by a natural canal, yet to be promoted as a tourist attraction), Ban Bike Dame, and the Sea of Fog.

Interesting products with potential for career development include Pate products, Beaded Pate, Budo wild honey, and dried Garcinia, all originating from the local identity. Despite their presence in the general market, developing these products into career-building ventures requires enhancement in production and marketing strategies to establish unique selling propositions that cater to market demands. For instance, banana cakes could be a viable option due to their ease of production and minimal equipment requirements.

Community Identity Products in Narathiwat

The highlighted products capable of generating revenue include various flavors and processed forms of durian, a snack made from corn or coconut, and pottery.

The potential for sales and gross profit indicates that the income from the current occupation is about 2,000-3,000 THB. per month.

In the community, popular tourist attractions include Ao Manao Beach, Yalapae Waterfall, Ta Pao Waterfall, Sai Buri River Bridge (a popular spot for Malaysians), rafting, Sipo Waterfall, Erawan Learning Center, A waterfront pavilion that can receive tourists year-round.

Interesting products with potential for career development include processing locally available raw materials such as coconut, duck eggs, corn, lemon, banana, and durian.

Community Identity Products in Pattani

The highlighted products capable of generating revenue include the Krupuk (fish cracker), Budu sauce, bamboo products (basketry Chicken houses), bags made of rags, aviaries, chicken arches, and velvet tamarind, rice salad, Batik, and fish balls.

The potential for sales and gross profit indicates that the income from sewing clothes is very good because many people frequently use these services. We can set the prices ourselves based on suitability. As a result, there is no shortage of income, and the cost of equipment is not high. However, the income is not enough to cover the family's expenses.

In the community, popular tourist attractions include Khae Khae Beach, the Sea, the Old Mosque, Wasukri Beach, Panare Beach, Chalalai Beach, and Talo Kapor Beach.

Interesting products with potential for career development include fried bananas, dried bananas, coconut oil, cold-pressed oils, sweets, freshwater fish, and bamboo products.

Development of Potential and Enrichment of Life through Livelihood Community Identity Products for Widows in Three Southern Border Provinces

The application of the model for developing potential and enriching the lives of widows through livelihood community identity products in the three southern border provinces has inspired and motivated a group of widows. They have begun to set clearer goals and dreams,

dare to think, be assertive, and promote vocational skills by leveraging their craft skills. As a result, these widows can now create careers for themselves in the area. The experiment with this model demonstrated that it can serve as an effective guideline for creating online sales careers for widows in the three southern border provinces.

Results of the Assessment of Self-Awareness of Widows in Three Southern Border Provinces

After completing the potential development and life enhancement activities, the results showed that promoting vocational skills by enhancing the craft skills of widows enabled them to create careers in their area. By promoting and training them in the use of communication devices for online marketing, the widows gained an understanding of online marketing.

Table 1 Results of Analysis of Mean and Standard Deviation of Assessment of Self-Awareness of Widows in Three Southern Border Provinces

Opinion Issues	\bar{X}	S.D.	Level
I generally feel satisfied with myself.	4.28	0.67	High
I feel valued and proud of myself.	4.40	0.66	High
I have a lot of self-confidence.	4.12	0.77	High
I feel like I have many abilities.	4.01	0.60	High
I am encouraged to improve my skills and abilities in various fields.	4.29	0.67	High
I believe I have the opportunity to use my abilities for the benefit of the community.	4.02	0.62	High
I can accomplish things or achieve my goals.	4.03	0.66	High
I am confident that I have value for society as a whole.	4.14	0.46	High
I think I have done a good job in the community where I live.	4.10	0.69	High
I feel enthusiastic and motivated to benefit society and the community.	4.29	0.67	High
Total	4.17	0.65	High

Table 1 shows that the overall awareness of self-worth among widows in the three southern border provinces is high, with a mean value of 4.17. When considered on a case-by-case basis, it was found that “I feel valued and proud of myself” had a mean value of 4.40, followed by “I feel enthusiastic and motivated to benefit society and the community” with a mean value of 4.29, “I generally feel satisfied with myself” (4.28), “I am confident that I have value for society as a whole” (4.14), “I have a lot of self-confidence” (4.12), “I think I have done a good job in the community where I live” (4.10), “I can accomplish things or achieve my goals” (4.03), “I believe I have the opportunity to use my abilities for the benefit of the community” (4.03), and “I feel like I have many abilities” (4.01). From the mean values, it is evident that all aspects are at a high level, indicating that widows in the three southern border provinces have a high level of awareness of their own life value.

Conclusion and Discussion

This process involves promoting and developing widows in the three southern border provinces to enhance their career potential. It applies the model of developing potential and enriching life through livelihood community identity products specifically for these widows. The researcher selected widows who voluntarily participated in the project and could engage in activities throughout its duration. The findings showed that the group of widows was inspired and motivated. They began to set clearer goals and dreams, dared to think and be assertive, and promoted vocational skills by leveraging their craft skills. As a result, these widows can now create careers for themselves in the area. The experiment with this model demonstrated that it

could serve as an effective guideline for creating online sales careers for widows in the three southern border provinces. The model of community identity products for widows in the three southern border provinces can be divided into two groups: the first group consists of eight subgroups with the skills and readiness to be product manufacturers. These widows did not choose the community identity products selected by the researcher but preferred to use the products they were already selling, as they were more skilled and familiar with them. The second group comprises those not ready to be product manufacturers. For this group, the researcher created a livelihood by using a network of community identity product manufacturers who agreed to cooperate by bringing community identity products that met standards into the online distribution channel. The widows chose to sell batik products from the Saloma Patek group in Ban Tura Pasemas Subdistrict, Narathiwat, receiving a 10 percent share of sales. Once all the widow groups had products to sell, the researcher promoted online marketing. This included providing speakers to educate about online marketing, creating pages for all groups of widows as a channel to sell products, teaching photography to make products appear beautiful and distinctive, and supporting advertising to reach a broader customer base. From the experiment with the model of developing potential and enriching life through livelihood community identity products for widows in the three southern border provinces, it was found that this model can be used as a guideline for creating online sales careers. This can generate income for themselves and their families. Data collection on sales and revenue from both offline and online sales revealed the following results: Group 1: Ceramics sold 42 products, generating revenue of 12,250 THB. However, packaging development is needed to make the product more distinctive and valuable. Group 2: Organic vegetables sold 30 kilograms of products, generating revenue of 6,250 THB. However, there is a need to find a market for a larger customer base to increase sales. Group 3: Batik bags sold 46 products, generating revenue of 11,550 THB. However, the design of batik bags and patterns needs to be more modern. Group 4: Duck eggs, chicken eggs, and goose eggs sold 18 stalls of products, generating revenue of 2,520 THB. However, selling to distant areas is not feasible due to high transportation costs. Processing the eggs into products may result in higher income. Group 5: Crackers sold 51 jars of products, generating revenue of 1,275 THB. Group 6: Muslim costumes sold 25 sets of products, generating revenue of 11,250 THB. Group 7: Perfumed coconut sold 60 products, generating revenue of 1,200 THB. However, processing coconuts into other products may result in higher income. Group 8: Ancient Noodles sold 550 bowls of products, generating revenue of 13,750 THB. The group not ready to be product manufacturers, Group 9, sold 11 batik products, generating revenue of 4,950 THB.

After completing the activities aimed at developing the potential and enriching the lives of widows in the three southern border provinces, and promoting their potential through online marketing to enhance the value of life using community identity products, the researcher provided consultation for implementation by students majoring in Business Computing at the Faculty of Management Science, Yala Rajabhat University. Amonthep Mani-niam, a lecturer in the Department of Business Computing, supervised and advised the students for two months. Following the curriculum activities, the researchers assessed the self-worth awareness of 20 widows who volunteered to participate in the project, focusing on intrinsic and extrinsic values. The overall mean value was 4.17, indicating a high level of awareness. When considered on a case-by-case basis, it was found that "I feel valued and proud of myself" had a mean value of 4.40, followed by "I feel enthusiastic and motivated to benefit society and the community" with a mean value of 4.29, "I generally feel satisfied with myself" (4.28), "I am confident that I have value for society as a whole" (4.14), "I have a lot of self-confidence" (4.12), "I think I have done a good job in the community where I live" (4.10), "I can accomplish things or achieve my goals" (4.03), "I believe I have the opportunity to use my abilities for the benefit of the community" (4.03), and "I feel like I have many abilities" (4.01). From the mean values,

it is evident that all aspects are at a high level, indicating that widows in the three southern border provinces have a high level of awareness of their own life value.

Recommendations

- 1) Widows should be encouraged to pursue online business careers continuously to create business opportunities and generate income consistently from online platforms.
- 2) Widows can collaborate to bring community identity products that meet standards into both online and offline distribution channels, leveraging this research's findings.

Recommendations for Future Research

- 1) Encourage the establishment of a livelihood network among widows by supporting groups to develop new community products, thereby creating sustainable careers and income.
- 2) Develop tailored educational curricula to address the educational gaps faced by widows who lack opportunities to attend available courses in the market.
- 3) Focus future research on enhancing widows' vocational skills, particularly in product manufacturing such as baking, crafts, and other crafts, to complement their understanding of online marketing. This includes developing skills for product promotion, distribution channel development, and ensuring sustainability in their careers.

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Data Availability Statement: The raw data supporting the conclusions of this article will be made available by the authors, without undue reservation.

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