

## Identity Exploration of Community Products, Woven Products from Water Hyacinths in Ban Nok Krathung Community, Nakhon Pathom Province, to Transform the Product Brand “Yim Thai”

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### ABSTRACT

This qualitative research aimed to explore and develop the identity of Thai Smile or Yim Thai brand woven products by interviewing 5 experts and 5 weaving handicraft producers about the search for the Thai Smile brand identity using the quasi-experimental method, which created 3 layouts: (1) Love Thailand, Love the World, Use Yim Thai (2) Trust, Confident, Use Yim Thai (3) Use Yim Thai, Starting to Value. The findings reveal that the draft of Layout 1 had the best data analysis results in terms of identity, logo, slogan, and suggestions. There was satisfaction and feeling towards Layout 1 that it was a layout that represented the brand identity well, consistent with the product in terms of using natural materials to create products, using natural materials to be beneficial, including the campaign to love the world. The logo was perfect, simple, and conveyed the meaning well according to the concept. The slogan was easy to understand, clearly conveying the antiquity, preserving Thai wisdom and culture.

**Keywords:** Identity, Water Hyacinth, Woven Products, Wisdom Preservation, Love the World

### INTRODUCTION

Water hyacinth is a succulent weed with a succulent stem and stolons that extend along the water surface and grow into young plants at the tips of the stems. The stem surface is smooth and has light and dark green color. The petioles are swollen at the center with holes inside, helping to support the stems to float in the water. Due to the rapid propagation and flooding, water hyacinth escaped and spread widely as we see. Currently, water hyacinth is classified as an invasive species that spreads and causes damage to native plants and the ecosystem of Thailand. It causes problems for both agriculture and irrigation, and affects health and hygiene. Therefore, controlling this weed is difficult because water hyacinth is resistant to environmental conditions. It can propagate quickly using seeds and sprouts in only 1 month. There are many problems caused by water hyacinth, such as being an obstacle to water drainage and causing flooding because when water hyacinth is in a large group, it slows down the flow of water by about 40%. It is also a habitat for animals that are disease carriers. It also affects aquatic life, water transportation, tourism and the economy. Although water hyacinth has many negative effects But at present, water hyacinth has been used for various purposes, such as making natural compost to help reduce agricultural costs, edible, young shoots and leaves are rich in nutrients, used as animal feed by chopping them finely and mixing them with bran for chickens or pigs, used to treat wastewater because water hyacinth has the ability to absorb toxins and

heavy metals, and can be processed into various products or woven products. Thai woven products are based on agricultural society, with woven farmers in rural areas who use their free time from work to select raw materials that can be naturally found in the local area. Woven handicrafts reflect the historical, cultural and important wisdom of Thailand, especially the wisdom of natural materials that can be applied to life harmoniously and are clearly a reflection of uniqueness.

Woven work is considered an art or local handicraft that exists in every region, which originates from the wisdom of the villagers by using local materials to produce woven products and sell them to generate income. It can be seen that Thai woven products in different regions are diverse and have unique local characteristics. In addition, it also reflects the wisdom of the villagers in many ways, such as the intelligence in selecting raw materials to be used in woven machines, which the villagers have good knowledge of the properties of each type of raw material. Then, they are selected and transformed into materials used for weaving in a simple way but are useful for their use. They are produced as utensils and decorations, as well as bags, baskets, boxes, and appliances. Currently, trends are constantly changing. Bags made from water hyacinth, which were once popular, are becoming less popular. The problem is that the bag designs are still the same and do not provide many options for consumers. Or, they only produce bags without any other products that can meet all of their needs. This is the spark for the Yim Thai brand to develop products that are more in line with the times and trends. In addition, new products are constantly being produced to meet the needs of consumers as comprehensively as possible. However, the water hyacinth weaving community enterprise often encounters problems in doing business, namely that the products are similar to competitors in the market, and there are no new product designs. Therefore, the producers have the idea of developing products that meet the needs of consumers more, which will make this new product unique, outstanding, and different from competitors in the market. From what was mentioned above, the researcher has the idea of studying the identity and developing from useless water hyacinth to valuable water hyacinth products. Water hyacinth is a weed that can be applied as a raw material for weaving. Water hyacinth is a weed that is commonly found in local areas and is abundant. Due to the special properties of water hyacinth, namely its toughness and durability, and its long lifespan, when applied to weaving, it becomes even stronger. This is in line with consumer demand, as well as the current market and social demands, and is another way to continue and preserve weaving from water hyacinth so that it becomes popular again.

## **Research Gap**

The study of water hyacinth as a raw material for woven handicrafts presents significant potential for sustainable economic development and environmental management. While existing literature and industry practices highlight the benefits of water hyacinth utilization—such as its role in water purification, compost production, and animal feed—the application of water hyacinth in woven handicrafts remains underexplored in several key areas. These research gaps are critical in understanding how water hyacinth weaving can be innovatively developed to meet modern consumer preferences, enhance local economies, and contribute to sustainable design.

### ***1. Limited Innovation in Water Hyacinth Woven Product Design***

Most existing woven products made from water hyacinth, particularly in Thailand, focus on traditional bag designs that have remained largely unchanged over time. Research on product innovation in water hyacinth weaving is scarce, with little exploration into contemporary, multifunctional, or aesthetically diverse designs that align with global fashion and home decor trends. The lack of variation and modernization in design has led to a decline in consumer interest, as traditional products may no longer align with evolving market demands. This gap suggests a need for research into innovative design strategies that incorporate modern aesthetics, functionality, and consumer preferences into water hyacinth woven products.

### ***2. Absence of Market Differentiation and Competitive Advantage***

Current research does not adequately address the issue of market competition in water hyacinth woven products. Many producers in Thailand and other regions face challenges due to product similarity and the absence of strong brand identities that differentiate their products from competitors. Studies focusing on branding, positioning, and product uniqueness within the water hyacinth weaving industry are limited. Research is needed to identify how these woven products can stand out in the market through improved marketing strategies, cultural storytelling, and enhanced value propositions.

### ***3. Lack of Sustainable and Scalable Business Models***

While water hyacinth weaving is a well-known practice in rural communities, few studies examine how to scale and sustain these businesses beyond local markets. Challenges such as limited access to distribution channels, inconsistent raw material supply, and inadequate business training hinder the growth of water hyacinth weaving enterprises. Existing research tends to focus on the environmental impact of water hyacinth rather than on

sustainable business models that integrate traditional weaving techniques with modern entrepreneurship strategies. Future research should explore how small enterprises can scale their operations, attract wider consumer bases, and integrate digital marketing tools to increase sales.

#### **4. Limited Exploration of Consumer Preferences and Global Market Trends**

Most research on water hyacinth weaving is centered on production techniques rather than consumer behavior. There is a lack of studies examining how consumer preferences, lifestyle trends, and sustainability awareness influence purchasing decisions related to water hyacinth woven products. With the increasing global demand for eco-friendly and handmade products, understanding consumer expectations regarding design, durability, and pricing is crucial for product development. Research should focus on consumer insights to guide the evolution of water hyacinth products in ways that align with global sustainability movements and ethical consumerism.

#### **5. Need for Integration of Advanced Technology in Water Hyacinth Processing**

Traditional water hyacinth weaving methods rely heavily on manual labor, which limits production capacity and efficiency. Research on integrating modern technology, such as improved drying techniques, chemical treatments for enhanced durability, and mechanized weaving processes, remains minimal. Exploring technological advancements in material processing could improve the quality, durability, and scalability of water hyacinth woven products, making them more competitive in both local and international markets.

#### **6. Insufficient Research on Government and Policy Support**

Government policies and support programs play a crucial role in promoting traditional crafts and sustainable product development. However, studies on policy frameworks that support water hyacinth weaving communities are limited. Research should explore how government initiatives, subsidies, training programs, and trade policies can enhance the growth of water hyacinth-based businesses. Additionally, understanding how water hyacinth utilization aligns with environmental policies can encourage more sustainable waste management and economic development strategies.

The research gaps identified above highlight the need for an interdisciplinary approach that combines design innovation, market differentiation, business sustainability, consumer insights, technological advancements, and policy support. Addressing these gaps will contribute to the revitalization of water hyacinth weaving as a valuable craft while promoting environmental sustainability and economic opportunities for local artisans. Future research should focus on developing comprehensive frameworks that integrate traditional craftsmanship with modern business strategies, ensuring the long-term success and relevance of water hyacinth woven products in both domestic and international markets.

#### **Research Objectives**

1. To explore the identity of *Yim Thai* woven products
2. To develop *Yim Thai* woven products

This study focuses on their identity and development, offers multiple benefits across cultural, economic, environmental, and business perspectives of *Yim Thai* woven products. The key contributions of this research are outlined below:

1. **Preservation and Promotion of Cultural Heritage.** By exploring the identity of *Yim Thai* woven products, this research helps preserve and promote traditional Thai weaving techniques. It contributes to cultural sustainability by documenting and revitalizing local weaving knowledge and craftsmanship. The study enhances appreciation for Thai handicrafts, strengthening their presence in both domestic and international markets.
2. **Product Innovation and Market Competitiveness.** The research facilitates the development of new, innovative designs that align with modern consumer preferences, increasing market appeal. It provides insights into how *Yim Thai* woven products can differentiate themselves from competitors by incorporating unique branding, patterns, and functionalities. By modernizing traditional designs, the study ensures the continued relevance of water hyacinth weaving in contemporary markets.
3. **Economic Empowerment for Local Artisans.** The findings support local artisans by enhancing their ability to produce and market high-value woven products, leading to increased income opportunities. It encourages entrepreneurship within the weaving community by offering strategies for business sustainability and expansion. The research can attract government or private sector support for artisans, promoting fair trade and sustainable craft industries.
4. **Sustainable Utilization of Water Hyacinth.** By repurposing invasive water hyacinth, this study promotes an eco-friendly approach to waste management and environmental conservation. It highlights

the potential of using natural, locally available materials for handicrafts, reducing dependency on synthetic materials and industrial production. The research supports circular economy principles, where waste materials are transformed into valuable products.

5. **Contribution to Sustainable Fashion and Design Trends.** The study aligns with the global trend of eco-conscious consumerism by developing biodegradable and sustainable woven products. It fosters innovation in sustainable fashion and interior design, offering environmentally friendly alternatives to mass-produced goods. By exploring contemporary design trends, the research enables the development of stylish, functional, and versatile woven products.
6. **Policy and Business Development Implications.** The research can inform policymakers about the economic and environmental benefits of supporting water hyacinth-based industries. It provides guidelines for local businesses and cooperatives on effective marketing, branding, and product development strategies. The findings can encourage investment in artisan training programs and technological advancements to improve product quality and production efficiency.

This research provides significant benefits by merging traditional craftsmanship with modern business strategies, ensuring the long-term viability of Yim Thai woven products. It fosters cultural preservation, economic growth, environmental sustainability, and market innovation, ultimately contributing to the revitalization and global recognition of Thai woven handicrafts.

## RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study employs a qualitative research methodology with an exploratory research approach to identify and develop the identity of Yim Thai woven products. The research focuses on understanding expert perspectives, traditional craftsmanship, and product development processes through in-depth interviews and fieldwork.

The population of this study consists of:

1. Experts in woven handicrafts and product identity development – These individuals provide insights into the process of identifying and enhancing the unique characteristics of Yim Thai woven products.
2. Producers of Yim Thai woven products – Local artisans and manufacturers who contribute firsthand knowledge of traditional weaving techniques and the challenges in product development.

The study utilizes two main research tools:

1. **Expert Interview Guide** – Designed to explore the identity of Yim Thai woven products. The interview is structured into three sections: Section 1: Demographic and background information of the expert. Section 2: Knowledge and understanding of product identity identification. Section 3: Opinions and recommendations for identity development.
2. **Producer Interview Guide** – Focuses on insights from Yim Thai woven product manufacturers. It is structured into three sections:  
**Section 1:** Demographic and background information of the producer.  
**Section 2:** Knowledge and understanding of product identity identification.  
**Section 3:** Opinions and recommendations for improving woven product identity.

The data collection process involves two main phases:

1. **Documentary Research** – A review of academic papers, related studies, and industry reports to define the research scope and theoretical framework.
2. **Field Data Collection** – Conducting field observations, in-depth interviews with experts and producers, and collecting questionnaire responses to gain firsthand insights into Yim Thai woven products.
3. **Data Organization and Analysis:** The collected data undergoes systematic organization and analysis in alignment with the research objectives:
  - **Document Analysis** – Reviewing secondary data from literature and previous studies to create a structured dataset.
  - **Field Data Analysis** – Organizing qualitative data obtained from expert and producer interviews into key themes.
  - **Identity Analysis** – Developing three initial identity models for Yim Thai woven products based on collected insights.
  - **Theoretical Integration** – Studying relevant concepts and theories related to product identity formation.
  - **Identity Selection and Refinement** – Evaluating the three proposed identity models and selecting the most appropriate one based on expert and producer feedback.
  - **Conclusion and Recommendations** – Summarizing findings, discussing implications, and providing recommendations for future development of Yim Thai woven products.

## RESULTS

The researcher analyzed the data, searching for community identity in Yim Thai brand woven products, and was able to summarize the analysis results as follows:

### Layout 1: Love Thailand, Love the World, Use Yim Thai



In terms of experts, it was found that the identity clearly shows the identity, is simple, and is consistent with the product, clearly conveying Thainess. There is a symbol that conveys that it is a woven product, which is a pond related to handmade work. It also supports local wisdom and the conservation of nature and the environment, including the conservation of the world. The logo creates good recognition when seen for the first time. When looking at it, it is understood that this is a brand that weaves from water hyacinth. The colors are consistent with the brand, simple, conveying the conservation of ancient wisdom and the conservation of the world. It also clearly shows the brand identity. The slogan is easy to understand, no need to explain more. By stating the highlight is the conservation of the world, it is reliable and trustworthy. The suggestion is that the background image is too much, it looks dizzying. There should be more vibrant colors. In terms of the producer, it was found that the identity makes people feel good, makes people smile, and is interesting. It conveys the conservation and love of the world. It is an identity that fits with work, love of nature, and the use of natural materials in Thailand to be beneficial and to preserve Thainess. The logo is Thai, feels good, and makes people smile. It is a good and beautiful logo. But the letters look far apart and I would like to fix it. The color is suitable for all levels, easy for anyone to access. It is also a color that is easy to match with outfits and is not specific to age. The color goes well together, has a natural feel, good meaning, the participants really like this color and the slogan, the participants read it and feel good, it is consistent with the product, easy to understand, indicates weaving directly to the identity, resulting in more awareness of saving the world and reducing global warming. Customers trust it and come back to buy more.

### Layout 2 Trust, Confident, Use Yim Thai

Experts found that the identity is consistent with the product, easy to understand, clearly conveys Thainess, presents nature and the environment, creates recognition, emphasizes trust and confidence, shows usability and liking, the logo font is beautiful and easy to read, the colors convey conservation and confidence, naturalness and uniqueness, elegance and strength. Although the color meaning is good, the colors are not harmonious. The slogan is a strength, sincere, easy to understand, feels trust and confidence, but the word trust seems too soft. Suggestions should convey more feelings, increase awareness with more customer groups. Good elements will increase the value of the brand. Too many images. The identity does not meet the needs of long-term use because it is not known how long the product will last, including choosing the right color.

Manufacturers found that they had good feelings about the identity in terms of trust. It is necessary to interact with customers first before they can trust the product. Some thought that it was not consistent with the product and thought that the identity was difficult, and it seemed to conflict with the concept and name. The logo felt good, beautiful, but did not meet the needs very well. The colors did not match, using too many colors made the

logo not stand out. The slogan was easy to understand, had trust, and built trust with consumers. This will make consumers want to try it and gain confidence.



### Layout 3 Use Yim Thai, Starting to Value.

Experts found that the identity is consistent with the product, easy to understand, conveys conservation, creates pride for consumers and the country, shows the brand image, presents the use of natural materials to the greatest benefit, making the product valuable. The logo has colors that are consistent with world conservation, is Thai, easy to remember, the colors are natural, clear, and harmonious, showing water hyacinth. I want the color to be bright and fresh. The yellow color used is blurry, I want it to be yellower. If it is actually produced, it will not be attractive. Blue can be used. The suggestion has a good meaning, but it is not yet the peak. I want it to emphasize that this is garbage. Increase clarity and add more stories for interest. The background image is too much, it looks dizzy. Use bright images. Arrange the logo to be more balanced on both sides.

The manufacturers found that there is a good understanding of colors for the identity, but it is not clear and ambiguous. They think that it is a good identity. It is a cycle from garbage to something useful. The logo thinks that it is a good logo that conveys recycling, but I want to convey water hyacinth more. The colors are appropriate, indicating nature, but they are not very compatible. Using too much makes it not stand out. The slogan is liked and feels good. It is easy to read and understand. It increases brand awareness, resulting in a good effect on nature and the use of natural materials to benefit and generate income. Suggestions: I would like the logo to be more playful and to clarify the concept.



Therefore, in summary, the Layout 1 draft has the best data analysis results in terms of identity, logo, slogan, and suggestions. There is satisfaction and feeling towards Layout 1 that it is a layout that expresses the brand identity well, is consistent with the product in terms of using natural materials to create products, using natural materials to be beneficial, including campaigning for loving the world. The logo is perfect, simple, and conveys the

meaning well according to the concept. The slogan is easy to understand, and clearly reflects the antiquity, preservation of Thai wisdom and culture.



## CONCLUSION

Based on the analysis of different identity layouts, Layout 1 was found to be the most effective in expressing the brand identity of Yim Thai woven products. The key findings include:

- **Strong Brand Identity:** Layout 1 successfully reflects the core values of Yim Thai woven products, emphasizing the use of natural materials and promoting sustainability.
- **Effective Logo Design:** The logo is simple yet meaningful, clearly conveying the concept of eco-friendly craftsmanship and traditional Thai weaving culture.
- **Clear and Impactful Slogan:** The slogan is easy to understand and effectively communicates the preservation of Thai wisdom, cultural heritage, and sustainability.
- **Positive Perception and Satisfaction:** Participants expressed high satisfaction with Layout 1, feeling that it aligns well with the brand's vision and mission while appealing to consumers who value environmental consciousness and traditional craftsmanship.
- Overall, Layout 1 was identified as the best option for branding Yim Thai woven products, as it successfully integrates traditional identity with modern market expectations.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings, the following recommendations are proposed to further develop and enhance Yim Thai woven products:

### 1. **Brand Positioning and Marketing**

Promote the eco-friendly and culturally significant aspects of the products to appeal to both domestic and international markets. Utilize storytelling techniques to highlight the origins of the craftsmanship, emphasizing the unique qualities of Thai weaving traditions.

### 2. **Product and Design Innovation**

Expand the product line beyond traditional woven bags to include home décor, fashion accessories, and lifestyle products that align with sustainable living trends. Incorporate modern aesthetics while maintaining traditional craftsmanship to attract a younger, design-conscious consumer base.

### 3. **Sustainability and Community Development**

Strengthen partnerships with local artisans and communities to ensure the long-term sustainability of water hyacinth weaving. Implement eco-certifications and sustainable production practices to enhance brand credibility.

### 4. **Digital and Social Media Strategy**

Leverage social media platforms to increase brand awareness and reach eco-conscious consumers. Utilize e-commerce channels to expand market accessibility and cater to global demand.

By implementing these recommendations, Yim Thai woven products can strengthen their market presence, preserve Thai cultural heritage, and promote sustainable innovation in handicrafts.

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