

ENHANCING THE VALUE-ADDED OF COMMUNITY ENTERPRISES FOR INCOME INCREASING IN RANONG PROVINCE

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Abstract

This research aims to: 1) study product development and packaging of community enterprises in Ranong Province, 2) study proactive marketing and public relations development of community enterprises to enhance income of Ranong Province, and 3) find guidelines to enhance the added value of community enterprises to enhance income of Ranong Province. The study was a documentary research using content analysis and descriptive analysis to present the results. The results showed that: 1) the opinion about the product and packaging of community enterprises in Ranong Province, including two aspects, was at a moderate level. When considering each aspect, it found that the opinion about product was at a moderate level. When considering each item in order from highest to lowest mean, the item with the highest mean was the physical appearance of the product with modern shape and the packaging style attracting consumers to purchase the product, followed by, the design of the product packaging with tight opening and hygienic closing to preventing adulterated thing from entering the product, and the price that consumers could accept in their decision to purchase the product, respectively. For packaging, when considering each item in order from highest to lowest mean, the item with the highest mean was the packaging with easy, quick and frequent opening and closing, followed by the packaging with suitable size as well as convenient and quick usage, and packaging with environmental disposal, respectively. 2) For proactive marketing and public relations development of community enterprises to enhance income of Ranong Province, it was found that Most of the community enterprises in Ranong Province were related to agricultural and handicraft sectors divided into 3 main categories: foods, jewellery and household items. Investment in marketing promotion, public relations and advertisement were still insufficient. Most of the problems of community enterprises were inadequate budget and lack of technology knowledge so that the enterprises could not be advertised and promoted via online media or advertised and promoted narrowly (Phrapratanporn et al., 2022). 3) For finding guidelines to enhance the added value of community enterprises to enhance income of Ranong Province, it was found that products should be developed in terms of beautiful and modern shape, style, and packaging with reasonable price to attract consumers. Relevant agencies to help promote and support the design of the reliable and acceptable product brand. Packaging to be tight in closing and opening as well as hygienic can prevent foreign matter from entering the product. The size of the product packaging of community enterprises, moreover, should be developed in terms of suitability, convenience, and quickness to use. Packaging storage should be developed to have the appearance of a packaging that was convenient and strong for storing in the product shelf, not easily broken, damaged, and clearly indicating the age of the product with the date, month, and year on the package. Packaging, besides, should be developed for opening and closing easily, quickly and several times. The packaging, in addition, should be used for other benefits and easily biodegradable, including environmental disposal.

Keywords: Enhancing, Value-added, Community Enterprise, Income Increasing

1 INTRODUCTION

Ranong Province is the province located in the upper southern region on the west side (Andaman Sea) of Thailand with an area of approximately 3,298.045 square kilometers (approximately 2,061,278 rai) divided into 5 districts: Mueang Ranong, Kraburi, Kapur, Lanun, and Suk Samran. Population is 194,237 Thais, having their name in the household registration, divided into 98,086 males and 96,151 females. The total of 252 community enterprises is divided into 203 manufacturing groups and 49 service groups. Most of the producers of community products in Ranong Province, however, still face various problems or weaknesses due to current trade competition. These difficulties include product quality, styles, colors, packaging and business management knowledge. Therefore, relevant agencies must accelerate and develop the potential of manufacturers to increase their competitiveness by improving the ability to develop quality products. In addition, suitable packaging as well as the business management competency must be developed in accordance with the market demand concurrently.

From the problems mentioned above, the researchers therefore raised the research question on how to develop products, packaging, marketing and proactive public relations of community enterprises to enhance the province's income. Moreover, the researchers realized that the problems were caused by the 4 successes and failure indicators of community enterprises: 1) management, 2) finance or funding, 3) production, and 4) marketing. Nevertheless, the sustainable problem solving should focus on developing products, packaging, marketing, proactive public relations of community enterprises, and use tactics to work until complete success. (Kerdpitak et al, 2022a) The researchers, therefore, were interested to study "Enhancing the value-added of community enterprises for income increasing in Ranong Province". The results of the research will be data and guidelines on the development of community enterprise management for government agencies or the private sector in formulating strategies, tactics, policies, plans, which will create efficiency concrete effectiveness, stability, prosperity, sustainability. Furthermore, the people or the general public are able to apply the knowledge from the research as a guideline for practice in daily life, increasing incomes for them and their families, working and living together happily, and generating concrete efficiency and effectiveness.

2 RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

- 2.1 To study product development and packaging of community enterprises in Ranong Province.
- 2.2 To study proactive marketing and public relations development of community enterprises to enhance income of Ranong Province.
- 2.3 To find guidelines to enhance the added value of community enterprises to enhance income of Ranong Province.

3 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The study was a documentary research with 3 stages: preparation, conducting and evaluation stages, as follows.

1. Preparation stage. The researchers reviewed the concepts, theories and research related to the value-added enhancement of community enterprises, created the research conceptual framework, determined the research methods and objectives, and formed understanding for the same practice of the research team.
2. Conducting stage. The researchers conducted the research objectives as follows.
 - 2.1 Objective 1 was conducted by the analysis and synthesis from research results of first sub-research project on product and packaging development of community enterprises to enhance income of Ranong province.
 - 2.2 Objective 2 was conducted by the analysis and synthesis from research results of the second sub-research project on proactive marketing and public relations development of community enterprises to enhance income of Ranong Province.
 - 2.3 Objective 3 was conducted using the results obtained from the analysis and synthesis according to objectives 1 and 2 to find a conclusion on guidelines to enhance the added value of community enterprises to enhance income of Ranong Province.
 - 2.4 Activities for people and greater than 100 members of community enterprises in Ranong province were organized to acknowledge and implement in enhancing the added value of community enterprises to enhance income of Ranong Province.
3. Evaluation stage was conducted by concluding results according to the research objectives, making the report and publicizing the research article in academic journal.

4. RESULTS

The results according to the research objectives were as follows:

1. For studying product and packaging development of community enterprises in Ranong Province, the results showed that the level of opinions about the products and packaging of community enterprises in Ranong Province, including both aspects, were at a moderate level with a mean of 3.35. When considering each aspect, the opinion on product was at a moderate level with a mean of 3.40. When considering each item in order from highest to lowest mean, the item with the highest mean was the physical appearance of the product with modern shape and the packaging style attracting consumers to purchase the product, with a mean of 3.48, followed by, the design of the product packaging with tight opening and hygienic closing to preventing adulterated thing from entering the product, with a mean of 3.46, and the price that consumers could accept in their decision to purchase the product, with a mean of 3.29, respectively. For packaging, the opinion was at a moderate level, with a mean of 3.30. When considering each item in order from highest to lowest mean, the item with the highest mean was the packaging with easy, quick and frequent opening and closing, with a mean of 3.49,

followed by the packaging with suitable size as well as convenient and quick usage, with a mean of 3.42, and packaging with environmental disposal, with a mean of 2.97, respectively.

2. For studying the proactive marketing and public relations development of community enterprises to enhance income of Ranong Province, most of the community enterprises were in agriculture and handicraft related sectors such as agricultural products, handicraft products, and food products, etc. Community enterprises in Ranong Province were divided, according to the nature of the product, into 3 main categories: food products, jewellery products, and household products. The community enterprises have slightly invested in marketing promotion and public relations. Some products that want to generate sales were advertised using brochures and community radio. Some community enterprises had public relations using websites, but the media lacked development and modernization so that it did not motivate customers as they should. As a result of such problems, products from many community enterprises could not earn as well as they should. The results were divided into sections as follows:

- 2.1 For advertising, there were leaflets for some products that use plain paper which has not yet attracted customers. There were some advertisements on community radio or social media but lack of continuity. As a result, these were unable to reach customers, probably caused by high cost and lack of cooperation networks among community enterprises to create joint marketing activities which were an advertisement that reaches the customers (Kerdpitak, 2022; Hiranphaet et al., 2022; Sooksai et al., 2022).
- 2.2 For public relations, currently, community enterprises in Ranong Province lacked public relations seriously due to insufficient budget.
- 2.3 For sales promotion, many community enterprises in Ranong Province had no systematic promotion. They have even offered a discount based on individual decision, while some had no any sales promotion.
- 2.4 For sales by staff, there was no salesperson to sell directly to consumers, but there was a service to place orders online or by phone and delivery service by post. Some community enterprises had personnel who were knowledgeable about certain types of products and were able to explain to customers fairly.
- 2.5 Problems of marketing and public relations were that most of the community enterprises didn't have enough budgets and lacked of technological knowledge so that they were not able to advertise and promote online media much (Kerdpitak et al. 2022), making narrow advertising and public relations.

Therefore, it can be summarized as strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats of the marketing management of community enterprises in Ranong Province as follows. 1) Strengths: marketing promotion by word of mouth was effective due to reliable product quality. 2) Weakness: the promotion of marketing was not continuous because lack of budget and technological knowledge couldn't advertise or organize public relations via social media a lot. 3) Opportunity: The products were diverse and could respond to the needs of customers together with the government gave a great importance to community enterprises and focused

on organic agriculture. 4) Obstacles: due to the COVID-19 epidemic for a long time, the market was sluggish and the economic downturn affected sales.

3. For guidelines to enhance the added value of community enterprises to enhance income of Ranong Province, the results found that:

3.1 Most of the products of community enterprises in Ranong Province were suitable for production and could be used effectively. However, the physical characteristics of the products should be developed to have a beautiful and modern appearance that can attract consumers to make a purchase decision. The reasonable price with comprehensive, beautiful and suitable packaging should be considered (Aunyawong et al., 2020). Relevant agencies should promote and support the development of product logos or symbols to have a reliable brand design, accepted by consumers for product purchase decisions. Relevant departments, furthermore, should develop product design as well as tight and hygienic packaging to prevent foreign matter from entering the product.

3.2 For guidelines on packaging development, community enterprises should develop a packaging that is suitable in terms of size and quick to use. The appearance of a packaging should be convenient for storing in the product shelf or can be set in different areas, including the durability of the packaging. The packaging should be strong, not broken, damaged, twisted, broken and easily bent after opening the package so that it can help extend the life of the product. The age of the product with the date, month and year should be indicated clearly on the package. For the convenience of holding the packaging, there should be variety in products and packaging according to the convenience of consumers. The packaging should be easily carried, picked up and suitable for travelling. In addition, opening and closing the packaging depend on the product types. Therefore, packaging should be opened and closed easily, quickly, opened and able to open or close many times. After using the packaging, packaging should be developed so that the packaging can be used for other purposes. The packaging should be easily degradable and environmental friendly when disposed.

3.3 For proactive marketing and public relations, it was very important because the use of marketing strategies and public relations aims to achieve the goals in order to gain market share and customer groups thus increasing the revenue of the community enterprise members. However, the guidelines for enhancing the added value of community enterprises to enhance the income of Ranong Province in terms of proactive marketing and public relations are as follows:

3.3.1 For marketing promotion, interesting advertising materials such as creating a beautiful and attractive brochure was able to attract customers' attention to read and make a decision to buy a product or installation of advertising signs in the area, including organizing promotions and discounts on festivals. Purchases should be made in instalments. For public relations, there should be a word-of-mouth promotion, marketing to reach customers, product reviews through various online media, free products, giveaways, prizes or sweepstakes. Both online and offline medias sound be used to communicate with target customers to create customer perception

through advertising. The trending products and well-known brands also attracted customers' attention.

3.3.2 For distribution, products should be distributed online focusing on selling through the mobile application. Easy ordering process through online media and presenting the products into categories for easy searching created customer satisfaction with a feeling of being comfortable. To suit life style of target customers, online media must be selected to match their behaviors in the online world, which was constantly evolving and changing. Therefore, it was necessary to make various tools to apply and adjust according to changing situations.

3.3.3 For Logistics, the quick delivery, delivery tracking system, network to deliver nationwide, no charge shipping and cost reduction should be developed to create competitive potential, increase the speed of communication before delivery, during delivery and after delivery (Aunyawong et al. 2021; Nualkaw et al. 2021). Opening the delivery channel for customers to choose such as special express, express, normal delivery responded customer needs and increased service efficiency (Phrapratanporn et al., 2022).

3.3.4 For price, the psychological price ending in 9 (e.g. 99 or 999 baht) will make the buyer feel inexpensive. The price should be cheaper than those sold in stores and competitors' price. It should be suitable for the quality, reasonable, affordable, attractive and easy to calculate. The price when reading aloud, the number of syllables should be less. The price should be separated the shipping cost from the base price. Offering instalment payments and showing the product price in the lower left corner of the price tag using small letters should be adopted according to psychology.

3.3.5 For products, community enterprises should consider products sold through online media by selecting good quality products to sell. Guarantee and returns should be available. Modern, attractive and eye-catching products should be distributed and certified by government agencies. The product should have its picture and video to explain the properties of the product in detail as well as product review with a well-known person in the Internet world.

3.3.6 For service, service recipients should be considered before anything else. Customers are always right, so answering questions, solving problems, replacing product, and educating with a willing voice make customers feel comfortable. Moreover, convenience stores should provide the payments by credit card, debit card, ATM, including an exhibition place where customers can go to see the real product, and allow the purchase cancel and cash on delivery.

3.3.7 For service process, customer relationship management was important. Purchase process should be easy to understand, convenient, fast and able to solve problems quickly. The information sent to target customers should be adjusted to suit each type of them. The easier purchase process easier can save time and reduce costs for each activity.

In addition, the marketing model with the original strategy may not work with consumer groups in the current era that has changed a lot. In general, there were 3 marketing forms that are used: offline, online, and organizing activities. The relationship of all 3 forms was through the current communication channels. The product marketing was expanded to the online market into

various channels, creating consumers' awareness through social media that directly affected the daily life of the consumers. Organizing public relations activities, moreover, were activities to generate consumers' attention and promote sponsors or advertising buyers. In addition, marketing tools have also been developed by applying various technologies and information appearing in society today. Influencers were used to promote sales, including new forms of public relations emphasizing customer expansion by online marketing to make it easier to reach customers.

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