Transforming traditional trade of the hand-woven textile community to digital trade: The case study of Tai Lue group at Toong Mork Village, Chiang Kham, Phayao, Thailand

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Abstract

Nowadays, the world has been settled in the stage of digital era. The evolution of society effects to wildly area including the ethnic group in a small city. Digital technologies are crucial influence on the human ontologies (Mungpattanasunthon, 2019) and also reshape the activities of traditional societies such as Tai Lue hand-woven textile community at Toong Mork village, Chiang Kham, Phayao, Thailand. At the present, the more high technologies invented the more conveniences human have. Tai Lue also have been used social media especially Line application to contact with the customer for their dealing. Therefore, the objective of this article aims to explore that how the traditional trade of the hand-woven textiles community was reshapes to social media trade in the disruptive technology era. For the methodology, the investigations are based on qualitative research method by starting with 1) reviewing multiple documents and literatures on three aspects, that is, the history of community enterprise, traditional trade and digital trade, 2) the conceptual framework and theory of Technological Mediation, and 3) in-depth interview with 3 channels; face-to-face, telephone and social media (Line: chat application) and site investigation approach are adopted to conduct the community study and data analysis. The sample group of this study is the member of hand-woven textile group at Toong Mork village, Chiang Kham District, Phayao Province, Thailand.

Keywords: Ethnic Group, Digital Trade, Digital Anthropology, Hand Woven Textile, Technological Mediation Theory

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INTRODUCTION

Nowadays, the world has been settled in the stage of digital era. The evolution of society effects to wildly area including the ethnic group in a small city. Digital technologies are crucial influence on the human ontologies (Basoglu, 2017; Dyah, Apriliayi, Saparita, & Abbas, 2017; Mungpattanasunthon, 2019), and also reshape the activities of traditional societies such as Tai Lue hand-woven textiles community at Toong Mork, Chiang Kham, Phayao.

Tai Lue is an ethnicity who has long culture history. Originally, Tai Lue located their community in Sibsongpanna or Xishuangbanna, Yunnan, the southern province in China and migrated to around China, Myanmar, Laos and in the northern of Thailand. Tai Lue in Thailand most settled in Nan, Chiang rai, and Phayao province. Xishuangbanna is in Pinyin; when the status of the prefecture as part of the People’s Republic of China is being referred to here it will be written in its

Pinyin form, and when the Tai sociopolitical unit is the important issue it will be written in Romanised Tai (Encyclopedia of World Cultures, 2019). Although they settled down in different area, they still inherit the traditional culture such as hand weaving textile. Toong Mork, Tai Lue hand-woven village, is a small village in Phayao Province, North of Thailand. Tai Lue population in this village most immigrated from Xishuangbanna, and agriculture is their main occupations. At the end of the harvest season, the housewives tend to prefer Tai Lue hand-weaving for everyday life products such as sarong, local shirt and other clothes. The surplus of family were usable, the weavers sold in the traditional market or at the community enterprise.

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Traditionally, the customer who preferred to trade or order Tai Lue hand-woven textiles would contact the group by travel to the area. At the present, the more high technologies invented the more conveniences human have. Tai Lue also use social media especially Line application to contact the customer for their dealing. Therefore, this research article aims to represent the transformation of hand woven-textile traditional market to digital trade. The scope of this article illustrated in the area of Cultural relay and Identities of Tai Lue Hand-Woven Textile Group: The case study of Toong Mork Village, Chiang Kham, Phayao research. Moreover, the results that were presented on this article are valuable unexpected consequences from the research.

Study Objectives
The objective of this research article aims to explore that how the traditional trade of the hand-woven textiles community was reshapes to social media trade in the disruptive technology era. To achieve the research objectives mentioned as the above, two primary study questions can be addressed as follow:
1. What are the influence factors that effect on Tai Lue hand-woven textiles trade?
2. How and when Tai Lue hand-woven textiles group start to use digital technologies such as social media to deal with the customer?

Significant of the Study
The contribute of this study is to carry out the current circumstances of Tai Lue hand-woven textiles groups ontologies that have been changed from the traditional trade to digital trade.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Community Enterprise
The concept of community enterprise is based on both views between sufficiency economy and sustainable development. In 2005, the Community Enterprise Promotion Act, B.E. 2548 was announced. The Act supports and promotes community enterprises to achieve the goals that have been set (Parinyasutinun, 2017; Teophanitkit, 2014). The enterprise is a small business that pays intension to the individual and social relations rather than seeing the holistic and emphasize on financial impact in the business as a macro organization (Bjerke, 2013).

The concept of community enterprise refers to a group of activities people in a community initiated from learning things related to their daily life without having to depend on complex production methods. The community is the owner of the business by share market and benefit with their members that join corporate with at least 30 members. They primarily aim only at the market in the community. The community enterprise is similar to community business particularly in selling and buying goods and services, and the link with community economy in terms of demand and supply between consumers and producers inside and outside the community. To summarise, community enterprise means one kind of social activity because it was assembled from the household producers with their local products. Community enterprise may divide to two steps (AL Khuja & Mohamed, 2016; Boonvut, 2017; Kharina. & Nauly, 2018; Parinyasutinum, 2017):
1) Basic community enterprise such as daily products for consumption.
2) Advance community enterprise such as service that ready to open outside market. Tai Lue hand-woven textile group at Toong Mork is a basic community enterprise.

Traditional Trade
Traditionally, the product distribution channels have been designed to sell for customer in the same village at the community enterprise location and the weaver house. On the other side, the community enterprise concept was created to support the member to sell product for outside customers. Besides, the government also organise to promote a local product like hand-woven textile at the annually events for every district and province.

Digital Trade
In the 21st century, the digital economy reflected on several commerce and also encourages community enterprise to engage new modern trade. The concept of digital trade refers to the use of digital technologies to facilitate
businesses without limiting it to just online sales or purchases (United Nations, 2016). Social networks, such as Facebook, Line and Instagram have become a typical means of communication between businesses and consumers. In China, almost half of all online shopping is carried out on smartphones (El-Den, Adikhari, & Adikhari, 2017; Wilson, 2016). Sibsongpanna shoppers are living in Yunnan, the southern province of China. They use Line Chat Application to be a tool to contact and deal business with Tai Lue hand-woven textile group in Toong Mork village, Chiang Kham district, Phayao province, Thailand.

In conclusion, digital trade is a market that has business activities and dealing communication via digital channel such as 1) social media; Line Chat Application, Facebook, Instagram 2) internet web browser; online shopping website and shopping application.

**RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

This research stands on qualitative research by in-depth interview with the member of hand-woven textile group at Toong Mork Village, Chiang Kham, Phayao, Thailand.

The investigations are based on qualitative research method by starting with 1) reviewing multiple documents and literatures on three aspects, that is, the history of community enterprise, traditional trade, and digital trade, 2) the conceptual framework and theory of Technological Mediation, and 3) in-depth interview with the semi-structure questions in 3 channels; face-to-face interview, telephone interview and social media interview (Line: chat application) and site investigation approach are adopted to conduct the community study and data analysis.

The participants reported the first in-depth interviews at the community by face-to-face method; second interview with the telephone called, and also lastly the member of hand-woven textile group participated the enquiries via social media such as Line Chat Application.

The sample group of this study is 10 participants from 40 members of hand-woven textile group at Toong Mork village, Chiang Kham District, Phayao Province, Thailand. They were weaving the textiles when the researcher went to collect data at the fieldwork.

**Conceptual Framework**

The conceptual framework of this research article is based on the theory of Technological Mediation that has been developed from Phenomenology approach to Postphenomenology approach. The main idea of this concept represent about roles of technology reshape human ontologies and to investigate the relations between technology and society (Mungpattanasunthon, 2019).

For the study, the researcher applies Technological Mediation Theory with the previous conceptual framework as the below diagram. The aim of this conceptual is to explore the social phenomena in term of the transformation between traditional trade to digital trade. These changing may explain by the influence of social media technologies have been reshaped the member of Toong Mork hand-woven textile group. Diagram1 The Conceptual Framework of Phemenenology and Postphenomenology approaches

![Conceptual Framework](image.png)

Figure 1. The conceptual framework of phemenenology and postphenomenology approaches (Mungpattanasunthon, 2019)
Assumption of the Study

The results of this study are assumes that social media such as Line Chat Application influences to reshape the member being such as their work activities. Therefore, the digital technology is the important key that transforms the traditional trade of Toong Mork hand-woven textile community to digital trade and in the future may transfer to e-commerce.

RESULTS OF THE STUDY

Toong Mork is a small village that was settled in Chiang Kham district, Phayao province, the North of Thailand. Previously, most of the population occupations are agriculturist and farmer. When out of harvest season, the housewives have been woven the local natural textiles such as clothes, scarf, bed cover and etc. The enterprise of Tai Lue hand-woven textiles community at Toong Mork village -was founded on November 9 in 1989 by the rural rehabilitation foundation. The organization has a project to restore ancient cotton to Chiang Kham community, and to earn more income and spend their beneficial free time. After that, the community development of Chiang Kham District and the chairman of the Toong Mork Housewife Group at that time, Mrs. Kamchon Jai-Kla, realized the importance of cotton swirling, and therefore they brought the materials to the Toong Mork Housewife Group and achieved satisfactory results. Later, the Department of Industrial Promotion Chiang Mai Province sent the specialist to give knowledge about the dyeing of cotton produced in cotton lines. The housewives was satisfies with the project. From this point they set up the Tai Lue hand-woven group. For the first time, there are 15 founding members and 5 weaving looms and were settled a group at the member’s house. They invested 100 baht each; with the total fund 1,500 baht.

Every year, Toong Mork hand-woven textile group has more members and the weaving business was expanded, grew up by being supported both academically and materials from many agencies. The Tai Lue hand-woven textile group has been registered as Chiang Kham Agricultural Cooperative in 2003 and has received 3 product standards from the Department of Industrial Promotion, including Nam Lai (water flow) pattern, Jok pattern, and Yok Dok pattern. In addition, Tai Lue hand-woven culture has diversity of the textile pattern such as Pak Wan and Koh pattern. The ancient pattern has more expensive price than others and also natural fabrics have higher cost than synthetic fabrics.
The community has been started using social media such as Line to contact and trade with the customer around 3-4 years ago or year 2015. The process of digital trade is the most convenience and popular for the hand-woven textiles group to contact with the customer especially who live in Sibsongpanna, Southern of China. Accordingly, Sibsongpanna customers have been contacted the group via social media channel with Line Chat Application after they traveled to Toong Mork for first time with tour guide. They satisfy with Toong Mork products, and then they have been continued to orders until now. They are the purchasers who have been ordered highest number of Tai Lue hand-woven textiles. Approximately 100 pieces of the short Salong were requested from Sibsongpanna customers per time per order.

The procedures to deal business between the Tai Lue hand-woven textile group and the customer are 1) the customers send the picture of textile pattern that they prefer the group weave 2) choose colour and the texture of textile between natural fabric and synthetic fabric 3) negotiate their satisfy price 4) the customer transfer bond for approximately 50% of the total price to the agent of the group 5) the agent, chairman of the group, transfer and share order to the member 6) member weave to order 7) the agent of the group send the picture of products to the customer 8) the customer transfer the rest of payment to the agent 9) the agent send the order via shipping. All the communication processes of trades are managed via Line Chat Application. The important key factor of Sibsongpanna customers has been selected Toong Mork village to be the supplier to produce hand-woven textile products is the colour of Tai Lue textile. Toong Mork not only weaves the original colour as Tai Lue styles; dark colour such as black and dark blue but also made to order like light colour as pink, green, purple, and light blue. By the fact, Sibsongpanna also has Tai Lue hand-woven textile products but they do not produce the light colour as Toong Mork made. Moreover, the original Tai Lue hand-woven textile in Sibsongpanna does have special techniques as Toong Mork Housewife Group do. For example, the ancient patterns; Jok and Yok Dok are the difficult techniques that rarely hand-woven group remains weave but Tai Lue people in Toong Mork village still conserve and teach to their household member. Besides, the Sibsongpanna customers require specific yarns like silver and gold tinsel to weave combine with the original one.

Consequently, the Sibsongpanna customers have been continuously ordered hand-woven textile from Toong Mork community enterprise via Line Chat Application.

DISCUSSION

At the current, Digitalisation is the most impact on human ontologies and the relations between technologies and society. The changing of digital stream influences to hand-woven textile group especially transforming the pattern of trade from traditional trade to digital trade. These phenomena reshape the way of traditional life of Toong Mork village. The community enterprise at Toong Mork is not an e-commerce yet. At this point, therefore the group has not change to digital trade as online market. However, there are in the situation of automatic transformation to the modern trade in the century of digital era by the demand of customers.

CONCLUSION

Recent day, digital technology is shaping the future of global trade and investment. One aspect of the adoption of digital technology by global exporters and importers is the purchase and sale of goods and services online, which is part of what is broadly understood as e-commerce (United Nations, 2016).

Although Toong Mork hand-woven textile group are not full transferred to online commerce, now, the group is becoming on the stage of transformation the mainstream of global trade. Both of traditional and digital trades are the significant channel for Tai Lue hand-woven textile group. Traditional trade is the main market to do business with local people, while digital trade is suitable for nation and global customers such as Sibsongpanna buyer.

LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

There are some limitations needed to be noted as follow: The limitation is the results that was represented and discussed on this article are unexpected outcome. Therefore, it might need some fulfil the in-depth information about the process of trading such as 1) how often the agent from the hand-woven textile group contact the Sibsongpanna customers and 2) how different communication result between contact via face-to-face and Line Chat Application. These two interesting questions may need to set up for the future research.
RECOMMENDATION FOR FUTURE STUDY

For the future research, it is interested to study in the different area of hand-woven textile group in order to compare and summary the procedure pattern of digital trade in the digital era. Moreover, there are some fascinating to investigate or finding the impact of social media that have been reshaped the ethic group daily life and their ontologies.

REFERENCES


