



EXPRESSING LOCAL IDENTITY THROUGH TEXTILE

BY
CAMILO ANDRES MARHEDEN

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CAMILO ANDRES MARHEDEN

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Assoc. Prof. Pakorn Prohvitak
Examination Committee Chairperson

Prof. Eakachat Joneurairatana, Ph.D.
Member

Assoc. Prof. Pisprapai Sarasalin
Member and Advisor

Approved by Graduate School

(Prof. Suejit Pechprasarn, Ph.D.)

Dean of Graduate School

October 17, 2024

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Camilo Andres Marheden

Researcher

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Thesis Advisor : Assoc. Prof. Pisrapai Sarasalin

Abstract

This research explores the interesting field of textile art, focusing on how Buriram, Thailand, and Sweden can use textiles as a powerful means of expressing their local identities and promoting cross-cultural communication. The goal is to craft designs that not only captivate the senses but also act as a bridge between diverse cultural landscapes, achieved through a seamless fusion of Swedish minimalism and Buriram's intricate textile traditions. To gather information regarding local perspectives and preferences regarding their textile heritage, the research employed a multimodal methodology that included in-depth online research, in-depth visits to silk production communities in Buriram, and a perceptive online survey. The results of the survey highlighted the importance of including symbols that have cultural resonance in the final designs, such as the red topper associated with Buriram's famous Sin Teen Daeng. The study aims to establish meaningful connections and discourse through the universal language of textile art, thereby extending beyond geographical and cultural barriers through this exploration. The final aim is to pay tribute to and enhance the splendor of Buriram's textile legacy while enhancing the world of design with its rich cultural tapestry.

(Total 67 pages)

Keywords: Identity Expression, Cross-cultural Design, Fabric Artistry, Textile Fusion

Student's Signature Thesis Advisor's Signature

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Chapter 1

Introduction

1.1 Background and Significance of the Problem

1.1.1 The study of cultural identity and expression through textile

To fully realize the beauty and potential of Buriram textiles, this study looks at how to integrate them with the contemporary Scandinavian design style. Not only are Buriram textiles' aesthetic qualities being enhanced, but its usage area and target group are also being expanded, enabling these materials to tell an interesting cultural story to a wider audience. The goal is to learn how this combination can open new possibilities for beauty, functionality, and cultural layers by examining the similarities and differences between the two already established, but different textile cultures found in Buriram and Sweden, and how it can be used as a colorful canvas for cultural and personal expression.

Throughout millennia, pattern and color have played a big part in visually identifying a person (Schneider, 1987). The mix of these two hugely different artistic styles and cultures is expected to produce new, unique, and original patterns that combine the sophisticated innovation of Scandinavian design with the rich legacy of Buriram's textile craftsmanship. Understanding how this imaginative fusion can result in a new visual language where the threads serve as speakers of cultural identity and resonate with the spirit of a peaceful cross-cultural exchange is the main goal. Both Buriram and Sweden have established textile industries and traditions, even though they have taken slightly different paths. While Buriram still creates textiles and motifs by hand and mostly uses different religious symbols inspired by temples, the Swedish textile has evolved to adapt to these current times and is being

used for products in furniture and homeware as well as fashion brands. Borås has a long tradition, and its university supports and searches for new talents, textiles that are produced in the city are used all over the country for all kinds of products. Some with older aesthetics, and some with modern and contemporary design. This combination of west and east, more traditional with contemporary, makes a remarkably interesting base for something unique and playful.

It is however still important to recognize that the patterns and motifs still must pay respect to each culture, so no disrespect or misinterpretation is being made, so it is important to understand the symbols and their meaning and what they represent. As of today, the Buriram textile uses many motifs inspired by religious sites and beliefs such as architectural elements found in temples, but there are also natural elements such as volcanoes, birds, and flowers typical for the area. All these elements are meant to help capture, display, and represent the local culture, history, and heritage not only for local communities but also for faraway communities.

Since Thailand and Sweden are so different in many ways, it can be an interesting journey to explore, experiment, discover, and develop new ways to communicate both countries' cultures and how to bring them together in a respectful yet playful and modern way. It can also be a challenging journey just because they are so different, and how to make justice for both sides.

1.1.2 Significance of the Problem

Thailand has an established textile industry and culture that uses and mixes different colors, patterns, symbols, and materials to express and display its heritage. However, a lot of the finished products are mostly used for ceremonial and religious usage and do overall look a bit "outdated", which can be a reason not too many of the younger generation or middle-aged people incorporate it into their everyday life. With my study, where I will focus on Buriram, Northeastern Thailand, and its textile culture which is particularly known for its silk and "Sin Teen Daeng" design which

originally is a wraparound skirt. While it is beautiful and requires a lot of skill and talent to make, since it is still handmade and weaved, its usage area has become limited, which means that to full potential of the textile and the talent of the weavers/artisans are not fully reached. By expanding the usage area of textiles and the potential of reaching more consumers it is not only helpful for the weaver but for the whole community. In the area around Buriram, a lot of people work in agriculture, which is not always proving a reliable source of income.

For that reason, many women and elderly have turned to textile and weaving as a way to create more income for their families. So by allowing the textile to be used for a more diverse range of products, it not only allows the weavers to expand their knowledge and skills but also gives them the chance to earn more money, but also create patterns and motifs with a modern and unique touch, which can attract more buyers, both local as well as foreign.

1.2 Research Objectives

1.2.1 To develop cross-cultural design concepts that seamlessly integrate Buriram textiles with contemporary design elements, ensuring products that appeal to a diverse demographic.

1.2.2 To expand the current usage area of Buriram Textiles, to help the beauty and talent of its textile and artisans reach its full potential through a combination of Scandinavian contemporary design elements.

1.3 Research Questions/Assumptions

How can Buriram Textile's beauty and talent be fully realized through the infusion of Scandinavian contemporary design elements and expanded usage area?

1.4 Research Framework

This research framework investigates existing patterns and motifs and how they can be transformed and combined with Scandinavian elements to create and tell a new cultural expression and story. How the textile and its patterns are created will be examined both by reading literature and by watching videos, as well as site visits where it is possible to watch and observe first-hand the entire process from weaving and pattern making to the color process. Questions can be asked to get a better and more personal understanding of the meaning of the patterns, colors, combinations, and current preferences of stores with the process and the result, and if so, in what way? (would they like to explore and make some specific pattern, or motif, use other materials, colors, etc.).

A questionnaire/survey will also be conducted targeting everyday people both in Thailand and Sweden, to better understand the already existing knowledge about textiles, their patterns, how it's made, preferences regarding colors, materials, size, where to use it, how and in what way it can be used as a way to express cultural identity and if they are already using textile as an expression tool, if yes in what way? What do they think of the current existing patterns and motifs and what would they like to change if they could? All the answers and feedback will be analyzed to create new and unique patterns and motifs using both Buriram and Swedish cultural elements and buyers. Also, if the weavers would like to change something.

Table 1.1 Research Framework

Research objectives	Research questions	Research methodologies	Research outcomes
To develop cross-cultural design	Can textiles and patterns be used as	Literature Review	A guidance for textile and

Table 1.1 Research Framework (continued).

concepts that seamlessly integrate Buriram textiles with contemporary design elements ensuring products that appeal to a diverse demographic	a tool to express local identity and cultural heritage?		pattern Combination to express both cultural identities.
To expand the current usage area of Buriram Textile to help the beauty and talent of its textile and artisans reach its goal in full potential through a combination of Scandinavian. Contemporary design elements	How can Buram textiles, beauty, and talent be fully realized Through the infusion of Scandinavian contemporary design elements and expanded usage area	Quantitative Survey	Pre- and post-survey results from Participants to analyze the impact of a developed Contemporary design expressing cultural identities through textile.

Source: Researcher

The research objectives center on investigating the multifaceted aspects of cultural expression in textiles, exploring influencing factors, symbolic meanings, and the interplay between cultural heritage and social interactions. Through a qualitative methodology employing interviews and visual analysis, the study aims to capture the narratives behind textile choices and uncover the complexities of

cultural identity woven into each fabric.

The expected outcomes include creating new, unique textile patterns and a deeper knowledge and understanding of how people use textiles to express identities and cultures. The research also wants to help improve academic knowledge as well as give helpful insights for designers, and the public as part of the journey to better understand and appreciate the beauty of diversity, culture, and heritage and how it can be expressed and displayed through textiles and its patterns, colors, and materials. The study will also give a look into the people who are creating the textiles and patterns, and the creation process.

In summary, the research framework developed for the examination of Buriram textile and its fusion with modern Scandinavian design offers a tactical road map for revealing the hidden possibilities within these creative domains. This study, which bridges the traditional and the modern, aims to advance Buriram textiles into new domains of practical application and cultural significance in addition to improving their aesthetic appeal. The study aims to shed light on a way forward for the peaceful coexistence of cultural identities as tradition and innovation intertwine functional and stylish spaces or products.”

1.5 Definition of Terms

Cultural Identity In the 1934 book Patterns of Culture, cultural anthropologist Ruth Benedict introduced the configurations theory of cultural identity, which holds that people are shaped by the cultures to which they are exposed and that human nature is malleable. Society chooses a portion of the human behavior arc, which is then passed down to the other members of society. Each society member must then adjust to these social behaviors to survive in a particular ecological niche. Therefore, meanings and values that are created by society and culture shape identity.

Contemporary “It refers to design styles and trends that are popular and relevant today. Contemporary design often features clean lines, neutral colors, and minimalist aesthetics, incorporating the latest materials and technologies to create.



Chapter 2

Literature Review

One important theme that has become known is the study of semiotics, which sheds light on the ways in which signs and symbols found in textiles help to construct cultural meaning. The works that analyze the symbolic language present in textile selections are critically engaged in this review, considering the historical allusions, cultural codes, and personal narratives incorporated into each pattern and stitch. An important source of information is literature that examines the semiotic aspects of textile communication. It provides an understanding of the cultural codes, symbolic meanings, and communication potential ingrained in each fiber and stitch.

The literature review also investigates one more theory - Cultural Identity Theory which focuses on how people express and grow a sense of identity within a specific cultural group. It focuses on how a person's self-perception and interpersonal relationships are influenced by their cultural background, customs, and shared experiences. Understanding and accepting one's cultural background has an impact on values, beliefs, and behaviors, and is a component of cultural identity. This theory acknowledges the dynamic nature of cultural identity and how it is shaped by experiences, social interactions, and outside perceptions. School works were also investigated and analyzed which talks about textiles, their cultural meaning, motifs and what they express, the techniques used to make it, the people behind them, and what they mean and how they are a resource for the people and their communities.

2.1 Semiotics Theory

The Study of signs and sign language. The study of "the life of signs within society" is how Swiss linguist Ferdinand de Saussure, one of its founders, defined it. The concept of semiotics as an interdisciplinary field of study first appeared in the late

19th and early 20th centuries with the independent work of Saussure and the American philosopher Charles Sanders Peirce, even though the English philosopher John Locke first used the word in this sense in the 17th century.

Semiotics investigates how meaning is created, conveyed, and interpreted through various sign systems. A sign consists of a physical form (signifier) and the associated mental concept or meaning (signified). The relationship between signifier and signified, along with concepts like denotation and connotation, forms the foundation of semiotic analysis. Pioneered by figures like Ferdinand de Saussure and Charles Sanders Peirce, semiotics offers insights into the construction of meaning in language, culture, and communication. It helps dissect how signs influence perceptions, convey cultural messages, and shape various aspects of human expression. Three primary concepts comprise the semiotics model. Signage is the first idea. A signifier is the shape a sign takes in physical reality, and the signified is the way the signifier is understood or perceived by the observer, according to De Saussure. Both are necessary for a sign to exist; according to Saussure, a sign is an integrated whole that is created when the signifier and it are combined. Body language, sounds, and smells are just a few examples of how a sign might appear. Setting is the second idea. As per Bowcher's (2019) explanation, context in semiotics pertains to the facets of a discourse or interaction that offer distinctive and pertinent significance to the specific exchange taking place. This helps the person on the receiving end of the conversation to understand the exchange and interpret it as intended. Significance is the last and third idea. (Thompson, Bowcher, Fontaine, & Schöntal, 2019) suggests in cognitive semiotics that meaning is the connection between the person receiving a sign and their individual perception of the environment. This indicates that when the recipient connects and engages with their environment, meaning is generated.

2.1.1 Exploring fashion semiotics: Communicating meanings in fashion in dress literature review by Priyanka Virajini Medagedara Karunaratne.

One effective method for deciphering communication meanings is semiotics. It is a philosophy, a collection of theories, and a range of techniques that addresses the investigation of signs and their functions. The basic idea of semiotics is the sign, which is anything that can be interpreted to stand in for something else (Sebeok, 1986). Every element of attire and way of presenting oneself could be a clue. Semiotic analysis is an important procedure that involves both the sender and the recipient of signs, in addition to the message, the communication channel, and the communication style. It is crucial to emphasize that interpretation is the process by which signs gain their meaning rather than the signs themselves having an inherent meaning. In general, signs' meanings—and appearances in particular—tend to be ambiguous or subject to interpretation. A sign starts to have certain associations in the social setting and starts to make sense to people in managing their appearance, can lead to new appearances that may not fit into existing cognitive structures. (Kaiser, 1998)

An individual can experiment with their identity through their clothing. These functions include defining, presenting, misleading, revealing, and concealing. A lot of creativity went into the dressing. According to Gottdiener (1995), Ferdinand de Saussure (1857–1913), a Swiss linguist and the founder of semiology, examined human language from two perspectives: language and parole. A virtual system that becomes actualized only in an actualized manifestation of the function of language, language is the social institution that exists independently of the individual. It is a normative reserve from which the individual draws their parole. French semiotician Roland Barthes suggests using language as clothing. In addition, he suggests parole, which is defined as the individual style that a wearer adopts in the clothing that their social group suggests (Barthes, 2006). It is common to think of dresses as extensions of the wearers. It is recognized to possess semiotic significance in conveying the vulnerability and strength of social statuses and socio-political relationships. It is essential to the portrayal and replication of society and creates a vital connection

between social groups in both space and time. Dress communication was brought up by Lars (2009). "Symbols, whether they be a crucifix, a safety pin that pierces the skin, or a national costume, are central to all shaping of identity," he asserts. The significance of these symbols for the wearer must be understood.

Attempting to think of clothing as a form of language is one of Roland Barthes's most ambitious theoretical initiatives. The entirety of the social interactions and activities required for fashion to exist is what he defines as the fashion system in his book. The real garment, the represented garment, and the used garment are the three categories he first makes between clothing. During a garment's journey through the fashion system, it takes on these three forms of existence. What is produced in real life is the garment that is real; what is represented in fashion magazines and advertisements is what is shown; and what is purchased and worn is the garment that is used. Because we are presented with this category of clothing as consumers, Barthes is interested in the represented garment. According to him, fashion is a language created by designers rather than something that is derived from the physical qualities of clothing. It follows that knowledge of the vocabulary used to define fashion is essential to understanding the phenomena. In fashion magazines, Barthes expresses his desire to study "written garments," or clothing with no practical purpose other than to convey the idea that, when the function is removed, only the "meaning" remains. (Barthes, 1983).

Not only are clothes and dresses seen as personal expressions of the sender, but they can also be viewed as goods or locally made consumer goods. The meanings of consumer goods are created during production and are not inherited in the slightest. (Keiser, 1998) Dress codes are powerful tools used by societies to demarcate gender roles, social classes, and castes. The distinctions between social classes are reflected in fashion choices. Marx's theory states that it is unlikely that any society has ever existed that did not have fashion, at least potentially. That is because, according to Marx (Marx & Engles, 1992), "the history of all hitherto existing society is the history of class struggles.". Every society has always been made up of various classes,

according to this assertion. It follows that all of them must have been potentially stylish societies that employed these alterations in attire to define and express social classes. Marxists contend that a person is first and foremost a member of a social class and then communicates that membership through fashion and attire. Fashion and attire are merely means of expressing or reflecting class identity.

Individual signs, according to Peirce, are systems made up of several components, such as the signifier—a term used to refer to an expression, concept, or object. A signifier and a signified are the two distinct parts that Saussure claims make up a sign (Peirce, 1958). In signification, the physical form as experienced by the senses is referred to as signifier, and in signified, the mental idea associated with the sign is understood. A bifacial unity of signifier and signified is what Saussure defined as the sign. Cultural factors impact unity, this is the process by which a signifier—like the word "chair"—is assigned to a signified—what a specific user community interprets as a chair. An indicator's means of communicating its meaning is called a signifier. Vehicles with the capacity to convey messages can be thought of as clothes, accessories, hairstyles, and other grooming techniques. The automobiles might stop delivering the message if it starts to seem stale, irrelevant, or boring. This brings up some important issues if we want to contrast verbal and visual cues. Examining why some common words—like dog and cat—retain their meanings after hundreds of years of use while other words appear to be more fixed in time requires careful consideration. Given the possibility of mixing and matching, the evolution of fashion, and other related characteristics, it is acknowledged in this argument that the signifiers are incredibly complex.

Semiotic theory holds that meaning is not limited to social interactions within a speech community but can be formed by the relationships between any kind of objects. Two factors could set one sign apart from the other. The functioning of distinctions between cultural units forms the basis for both. Moreover, this concept can also be recognized as language's constituent parts (Gottdiener, 1995). The acceptable ways that elements follow one another or merge together in a discourse chain are known as

syntagmatic relations or distinctions. This is akin to the distinction between things that might occur first and later in the sequence. Signs can be used to construct holes or sequences of meaning, which is where the syntagmatic difference lies. Culture's rules regarding proper modes of appearance govern this syntagmatic relationship.

In the context of dress and fashion studies, this paper offers a thorough overview of the status and importance of semiotics today. The main aim of this study is to shed light on the diverse functions of semiotics in interpreting the complex meanings incorporated into clothing and accessories. The article discusses theoretical discoveries and clarifies how semiotics can be a useful lens for revealing the complex and symbolic aspects of fashion choices. This paper examines the ways in which fashion is used by people, communities, and cultures to convey their stories, identities, and values. In addition, it contemplates the applicability and relevance of semiotics in the dynamic and constantly changing field of fashion by critically examining the concept of semiotics itself. It looks into the ways that semiotics offers a theoretical framework for comprehending the semiotic processes at work in people's decisions about what to wear and personal embellishment. The study includes a critical examination of the ways in which fashion's signs, symbols, and codes shape and convey meaning, illuminating the intricate relationship between personal agency and larger cultural settings. This study contributes to our understanding of the intersections between culture, tradition, and semiotics in the context of clothing and self-expression by providing a thorough overview of the state of semiotics in dress and fashion research and by engaging in a theoretical discussion

2.2 Cultural Identity Theory

The term "cultural identity" describes a person's feeling of inclusion in a specific group or culture. This process entails becoming aware of and accepting of a culture's customs, language, religion, ancestry, aesthetics, ways of thinking, and social structures. People typically identify with their culture by internalizing its ideas, values, customs, and social practices. Their self-concept integrates the culture." (Lustig,

2013). Intercultural Competence Interpersonal Communication Across Cultures, 7th ed. New York: Pearson.) A person's development and expression of a sense of belonging to a specific cultural group are examined by cultural identity theory. It centers on the ways that a person's interpersonal connections and self-perception are influenced by their cultural background, customs, and shared experiences. To have a positive influence on one's values, beliefs, and behaviors, it is important to acknowledge and accept one's cultural heritage. As a result of social interactions, life experiences, and outside perceptions, cultural identity is dynamic, according to this theory. Learning about cultural identity facilitates comprehension of how people negotiate their sense of self in a variety of cultural settings and societies

2.2.1 Ethnic Identity Through Textile: The Case Study of Tai Lue of Phayao Province, Thailand and Tai Aiton of Assam, India by Patcharaporn Luerajn & Wanlaya Namtham

This paper focuses on studying the textile traditions of the Tai Lue and Tai Aiton people. Tai Textile serves as a reflection of ethnic identity for both groups, demonstrated through motifs and colors. The research methodology includes participant observation and group interviews to gather data. The findings reveal that both Tai groups use their traditional clothing as a means of expressing their ethnic identity. Gender roles are significant in textile activities, with women being responsible for weaving and men assisting in making weaving instruments. The societal norm dictates that women must know how to weave to be considered virtuous. Therefore, Textile not only showcases ethnic identity, but also highlights socialization and the division of labor within the community.

One of the things that everyone needs in life is clothing. Clothing serves as both a means of body covering and a symbol of identity and human aesthetics. The Tai people use their clothing to symbolize who they are. Living in various parts of Northeast India, Northern Thailand, and Southern China are the Tai people. Language

speakers in Tai are known as Tai people. Despite not coming from the same original location, Tai people share many aspects of their culture, including textiles, food, and house architecture. Tai Aiton in Assam, India, and Tai Lue in Phayao Province, Thailand, were chosen for this study's case study on textiles using the idea of ethnic identity. Nearly all Tai villages in Southern China, Southeast Asia, and Northeast India practice the weaving culture. Beginning with an understanding of cotton planting, sericulture, and weaving tradition, the process of weaving begins. Weaving is therefore a division of labor as well as a task performed by women. Tai men learn how to make a hand loom, weave equipment, and plant cotton and sericulture while Tai women learn how to weave. Tai Lue in Ban Sanphulei, Phayao province, Thailand, and Tai Aitons in Banlung Mantai are the two locations the researchers chose for the case study.

Field observation and group interviews served as the foundation for this paper. To comprehend the histories of the two Tai groups, review literature is also studied. Participant observation and group interviews were employed by the researcher to gather data. The data for the Tai Lue cast study was gathered in Ban Sanphulei village, in the northern region of Thailand, by the researchers in Payao province. The village is located 85 kilometers from Muang District in Payao province and 14 kilometers from Chiang Kham district. The researchers discovered that the residents of this area are Tai Yuans and Thai Isan in addition to Tai Lues. Because of this, the village's diversity can be shown in the ethnic identities of the Tai Lues through their clothing, and the Tai Lue women's organization helps the Tai Lues maintain their own culture. Since Tai Aiton is located in Banlung Mantai, Karbi Anglong District, it is at least kilometers away from the Golaghat-Saupathar road. The Dhansiri River is another route that leads to the village. In Assamese, the village is known as Bargaon, and in Tai Aiton, it is known as "Banlung Mantai.". In Tai Aiton village, there is a group called "Banlung Mahila," or the women's organization of Banlung, which handles all the administrative and economic tasks. Banlung is the name of a large village, and Mantai is the name of the Tai language speakers.

Understanding ethnic maintenance and how the Tais preserve their ethnic identity through language, festivals, wet-rice cultivation culture, clothing, textiles, and other means will be made easier for the researcher with the aid of ethnic identity concepts. A person's social identity in a broader sense, derived from belonging to a particular cultural or social group, is referred to as their ethnic identity. Identity is subdivided into ethnic identity. The process of forming an individual's ethnic identity involves their self-categorization and psychological attachment to their ethnic group. Ethnic identity is defined as a component of a person's overall identity and self-concept.

Maternal lineage makes up most Tai groups. In Tai, the saying goes, "Tai men are blacksmiths, Tai women weave.". This proverb illustrates the distinct gender roles that Tai people live in. Given that Tai women produce most of the cloth, they are also the source of the matrilineage system, which fixes women's knowledge of weaving by tracing their ancestry back through their mother's side of the family. As the primary producers of cloth, Tai women are responsible for weaving all the family's clothing, including that for her husband, kids, and herself. Tai women remain in the house because of the weaving process. For women from Tai, the act of weaving is akin to securing their position and responsibilities as mothers. Her clothing and weaving expertise thus represent her ethnic identity.

For Tai Lues in particular, the first step in the weaving process is learning how to plant cotton. "KamKub 12 Doen," a song by Tai Lues, describes the annual activity. It states that in the first month of the year, all Tai women would spin cotton thread together; in the second month, they would prepare for the loom; in the third month, they would prepare for the equipment; in the fourth month, elder people would prepare for coloring the thread; in the fifth month, they would prepare for the equipment; in the sixth month, it's Songkran time; in the seventh month, it's the first time of the year for cultivation; eighth month, plowing; ninth month, the month of rice cultivation; tenth month, all Tai women would be busy with the rice-cultivation; in the eleventh

month, it's a good time to wait for the rice to grow; and in the twelfth month, the cotton flowers are ready for harvesting.



Figure 2.1 Star Motif of Tai Textile

Source: Luerajn & Namtham, 2022

The song claims that Tai women are preoccupied with domestic duties, such as the annual agricultural process and weaving method. When a Tai woman was a child, her mother and grandmother had to socialize her in order for her to learn how to cook and weave. She would initially learn with her mother's help before taking on the task on her own. Every female member or family member would be delighted to assist her. An apprentice Tai girl would first learn how to weave on a very small scale, making Tai bags or Thung-Yaam, before learning how to sew. Tai women begin by weaving the basic pattern, "Pha Hum," and then progress to more challenging designs. All Tai women have been taught how to dress for religious events, including wearing a Tung or flag or a monk's robe. Because she must weave her own son's monk robe, the weaving symbolizes not only Tai identity but also the bond between mother and son. The value of Tai women is reflected in the weaving process. Traditionally, a woman was not considered to be "a good woman" if she could not weave; however, due to capitalism, this norm has changed in the modern era. Both ready-made clothing and tai clothes are sold in the market. However, if a woman could weave with grace and neatness, many men in the village would admire her. Her own wrap skirt would

display her artwork. Tai women typically dress in wrap skirts that they made themselves for every festival.

Additionally, both Tai men and Tai women give gifts of clothing. If a Tai woman has romantic feelings for a man in the village, she would love to weave a gift for him. Typically, a Tai woman will give a Tai man a pha-toom, or scarf. When a Tai woman gets married, she must set up the groom's family or her own by setting up the mattress, pillows, bed sheet, mosquito net, and curtain by herself. The Tai people weave clothes not only for practical purposes but also to demonstrate their identity. The process of weaving involves a great deal of knowledge and gives a certain value to Tai women

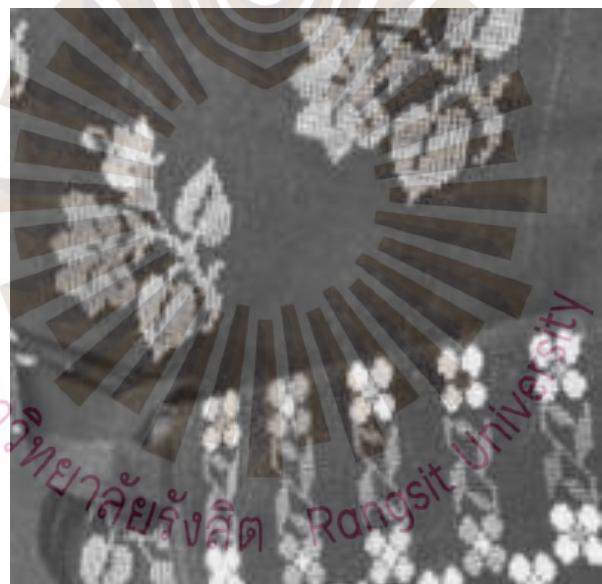


Figure 2.2 Flower Motif of Tai Textile

Source: Luerajn & Namtham, 2022

The motifs and designs of Tai Lues created from the techniques of weaving. The color of thread that is used in each cotton clothes create meaning and motifs from the environment, mythology and imagination. There is a folktale among the Tai Lues told that long ago, one angel was born as a dog, that dog is a powerful and dangerous dog. One day that dog killed all the men in the village and got all the

women as his wives, if any woman delivers a baby as a boy, he will kill them all. One day, one of his wives delivered a baby boy. Later, she hides the boy from the dog. Once the boy grows up, he kills the dog and finally that dog dies. All the women in that village cried and used their own wrap skirt to clean all the blood. That is why Tai Lue women must wear the red wrap skirt and it has the dripping water motif on their wrap skirt.

In conclusion the colorful harmonious motifs from both Tai groups are unique and it can obviously identify the Tai groups. The colors and motifs reflect cultural and ethnic identity for both Tai groups. For Tai Lue people in Payao province, Thailand, have colorful dress and the famous motifs of Tai Lue are “Dribbling Water”, “Water Fern”, “Fish Tail”, “Butterfly”, “Dice”, “Star”, “Tam Khoaw” and “flower”. Tai Aiton people have colorful dress. The famous motif of Tai Aiton are “Flower” and “Leaves”. The weaving process from both groups also reflects the idea of gender role, division of labor and it can show the status of women in Tai society that women have their own value and status through her weaving activity.

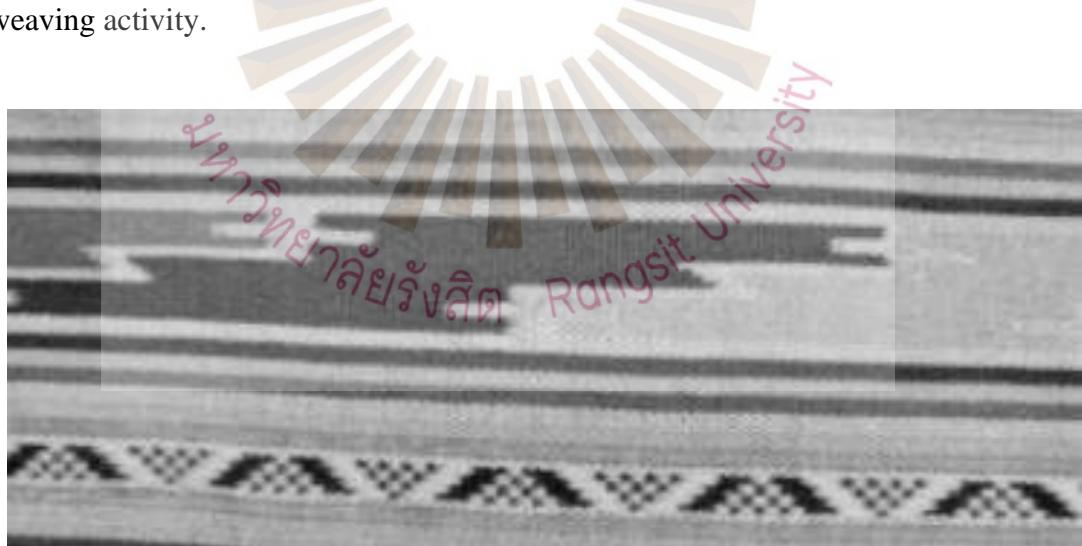


Figure 2.3 Dribbling Water Motif of Tai Textile

Source: Luerajn & Namtham, 2022

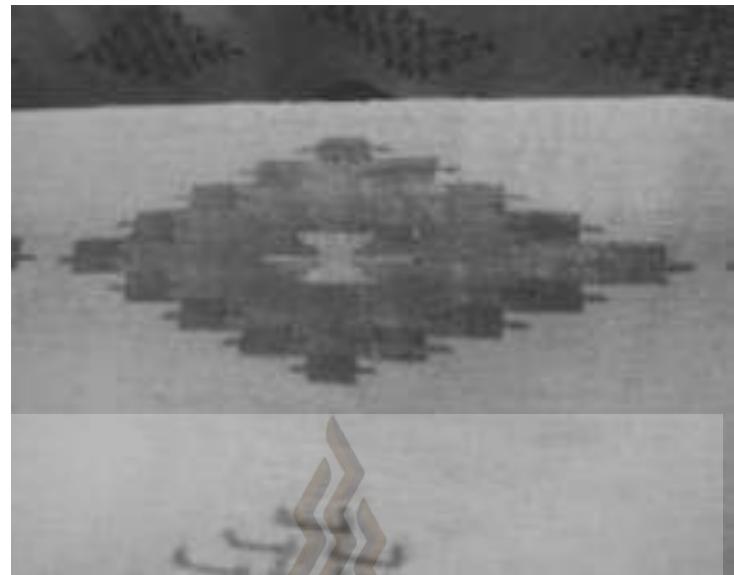


Figure 2.4 Butterfly Motif of Tai Textile

Source: Luerajn & Namtham, 2022

2.2.2 Chok Weaving and textile enterprises from Northern Thailand by Disaya Chudasri

This chapter in the book “Design roots; culturally significant design, products and practices” (Stuart Walker, Martyn Evans, Tom Cassidy, Amy Twigger Holroyd, Jeyon Jung) discusses a field research analysis conducted in the weaving communities of long district (Phrae province) and Mae Chaem district (Chiang Mai province) in northern Thailand. The research aimed to explore the relationship between weaving communities, textile enterprises, and sustainability principles based on Walker’s Quadruple Bottom Line of Sustainability (2011), which includes personal meaning, social responsibility, environmental care, and economic viability. The study also sought to gain a deeper understanding of how textile production, design, and sustainability are interrelated among different stakeholders, with the goal of promoting craft and design practices that support sustainability. The research also aimed to identify ways in which design can contribute to the long-term survival of weaving communities and the production of sustainable textile products. The primary research question focused on determining which handwoven textiles from northern Thailand

could benefit from design interventions that align with sustainability principles, and what criteria should be used for their selection.

The research methodology consisted of four main phases: (1) identification of case studies, (ii) collection of information and its validation, (iii) data analysis and the formulation of findings and conclusions from the field data, and (iv) validation of the findings. What are the relationships between sustainability and the textile production of northern Thailand? What potential areas can design contribute to the weaving communities and textile enterprises of northern Thailand? Gathering and evaluating data was done using a grounded theory approach (Glaser & Strauss 1967, as cited in Castree, Kitchin, & Rogers 2013; Scott, 2014). With an awareness of the Triple Bottom Line (Elkington, 1997,2004) and the Quadruple Bottom Line (Walker,2011) of sustainability, in addition to the three research questions listed above, the author entered the field without any preconceived design framework or theoretical premises. Speaking with the various stakeholders and spending time with the weaving communities and textile enterprises provided contextual information gathered from the field. The concepts of sustainable design were then discussed in relation to this data. Case studies were found using a variety of research methods and instruments. and gather details regarding the chosen case study businesses. A review of the literature was one of the research techniques. Other methods included conversations, informal interviews, and group interviews.

The weaving communities in these two districts produce a variety of textile products, in addition to chok textiles and sin tin chok, which they sell in commercial markets. This research focuses on the weaving communities in these districts due to the compatibility of their textile production, especially sin tin chok, with all aspects of Walker's Quadruple Bottom Line of Sustainability (personal meaning, social responsibility, environmental care, and economic viability) (Walker, 2011, p. 190). The benefits of their textile production align with these elements of sustainability as outlined below.

Personal meaning is imbued in the textile production process in various forms, including (i) the spirituality associated with weaving and other craftwork, inspired by Buddhist beliefs and religious practices, (ii) the self-expression and identity of the artisans, resulting from their creativity, imagination, and handiwork in creating fabrics with unique patterns, and (iii) the sense of fulfillment derived from emotions such as joy, contentment, and peace that comes from loving their work and feeling content while creating. Textile community enterprises and business activities In the context of the study areas, a community enterprise is defined as a group of neighbors in one or more villages within the same sub-district or outside of it, who establish a business together and manage their local capital (resources, expertise, capital, and sociocultural heritage) to trade goods or services in order to generate income and become self-sufficient (Secretariat Office of Community Enterprise Promotion Board (SCEB) c). (2015). Several community businesses in the two districts under study produce textile goods, such as traditional clothing. E. Cin chok, clothing in both traditional and modern styles, scarves, wallets, and purses; kitchen and bedroom accents; rolls of fabric with hand-spun cotton and indigo dyed fabrics; and handwoven textiles created especially for textile fairs or competitions. Textile product manufacturing and trade involve a number of stakeholders. The roles that they play can be categorized as follows (Chudasri, 2015, p. 242): makers/ artisans who provide materials like handspun cotton yarns, weavers, tailors, and group leaders; producers/purchasers/group leaders, local teachers, business owners, designers, government departments/officers; buyers/traders/ artisans, group leaders, local teachers, tourists, market customers, business owners, designers, government departments/officers; purchasers/users all of the above. In this, one individual may adopt multiple roles.

But sin tin chok produced using traditional methods is known for being progressively more expensive, which could make it unaffordable for the average person and limit its availability to a select group of affluent individuals and the weavers themselves. They are only allowed to wear sin tin chok for formal events like religious ceremonies. It is also noteworthy that men who buy or collect do not typically wear sin tin chok. Rather, they store it in their home textile collections and

occasionally display sin tin chok to guests. Small, affluent markets like these for traditional handmade textiles may cause the general public to lose interest in and understanding of these textiles. However, the weaving communities in Long District have taken advantage of advancements in traditional weaving to shorten production times and boost their ability to produce chok textiles for trade and revenue generation. The goal of Queen Sirikit of Thailand is to revive traditional textile culture and weaving in a way that can help reduce poverty in rural areas, and this strategy aligns with that vision. The brocade method known as "yok dok" among the Long District weavers was adopted in the 1990s. For weaving a piece of chok textile with seventy repeating patterns, using this technique reduced production times by about sixty percent. But because the high-quality patterns are limited to one side, hak textiles created in this manner have a distinct quality.

While their current method of production relies solely on handmade techniques, a weaving community in long district launched a new method in the 2010s that uses machinery and skilled hand labor to produce goods like pleated blouses, tube skirts, and printed bags. Increased production of chok textiles at more reasonable prices leads to greater quantities being produced—at prices that allow weaving communities to maintain their standard of living while also earning additional revenue and saving money. Moreover, more common people can now afford to purchase Chok textiles and use them to create modern dresses. Consequently, these advancements in traditional weaving contribute to the revival of traditional textile culture throughout Thailand as well as the reduction of poverty in rural areas. Innovations in the commercial production of textiles and their effects on the identity, knowledge, and skills of weavers as well as on the perceptions of consumers These innovations result in the entry of various quality levels of textiles into the market at varying price points.

The knowledge, abilities, and identities of weavers may be undermined as a result of these advancements. Customers who may not be aware of the variations in

craftsmanship and quality, as well as the reasons why some chok textiles are highly priced while others are more reasonably priced, may become confused by the wide range of textile options. For weavers in the Long district, the loss of their identity, knowledge, and skills is a specific problem. Producers in Long district is ordered by buyers and traders of Tai Yuan groups in other provinces, including Sukhothai, to produce chok textiles with patterns associated with Sukhothai identity, as weaving communities are eager to use the faster integrated techniques to produce chok textiles. While many weavers in Long district are aware that they are producing chok textiles in the area, they have turned into "supply weavers," meaning that they are no longer associated with or aware of the traditional traits of Long district chok textiles, which are identified by their unique textile patterns and motifs.

Certain weavers categorize patterns into two groups: "traditional" and "new." However, they are unable to specify the names and interpretations of numerous motifs found in Chok textiles without consulting reference materials. The variety of chok textiles available on the market, along with their varying qualities and costs resulting from various production methods, pose a challenge to consumers' comprehension of the value of these products. According to the study, there are numerous ways in which individual customers are underinformed. Consumers are curious about the quality of the products and fair prices. Aside from that, some consumers are curious about how much a product costs in relation to its manufacturing methods, fair trade and ethical production methods, the personal significances connected to weaving communities and their patrons, the historical and cultural legacy of these communities, and the ethnicity and distinct identities of these communities as represented by their textile products. Purchase decisions are often postponed by consumers in the absence of adequate and clear information regarding textile products and their production. Consequently, it is critical to provide customers with sufficient information regarding textile products and their manufacturing in a clear and relevant manner. Their decision-making regarding purchases will be improved because of having a deeper understanding of the textiles that appeal to them. Additionally, these details can help the weavers explain and set their products apart from the competition.

Design assisted by new technologies includes creating websites for e-commerce, creating online databases so that people can look up information about potential customers, products, and markets, and using computer software, the internet, and digital photography to illustrate and design textile patterns, track purchase orders and financial management, and visualize the idea of a textile supply chain and areas for development. The materials, forms, appearances, and functions of textile products, as well as production methods and expenses, pricing, and the preferences of potential customers, are typically the focus of product design and development for marketing. This helps local producers adopt a more entrepreneurial mindset, raise the perceived value of their textile products, and increase sales potential. However, designers must carefully assess how far chok textiles can and should be developed in relation to trade in the context of chok textiles. When we discuss design in relation to trading systems, we are talking about design initiatives that help spread textile goods and make sure they end up in front of potential buyers.

The creation of websites and e-commerce platforms, which local producers are unfamiliar with, may fall under this category. Creating content that is appropriate for a variety of target market segments in several languages, for example English, Korean and Chinese.

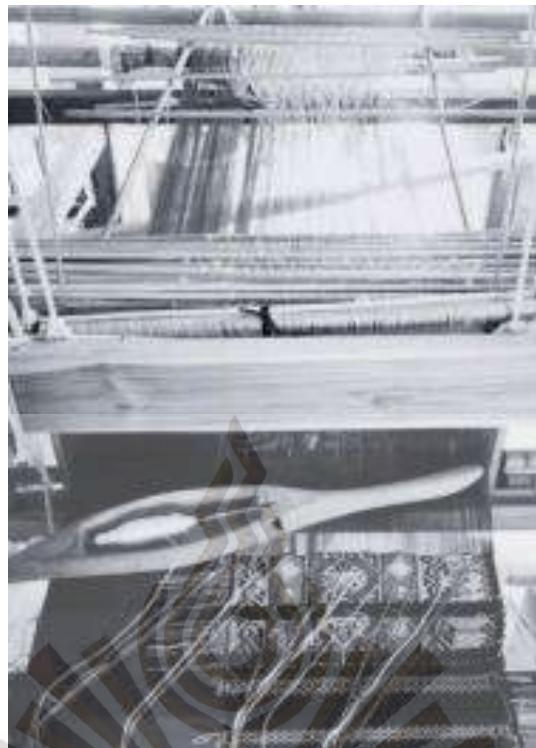


Figure 2.5 Chok Textiles Processed from Traditional Techniques

Source: Chudasri, 2012

2.2.3 “Constructing cultural identity through weaving among Ri-Bhoi women weavers: a symbolic interactionist approach” by Rebecca Maria Dias, Jennifer Paff Ogle and Sonali Diddi

By examining weavers' experiences through shifting currents of modernization in the local hand loom industry, the interpretive study aimed to comprehend how weaving as an activity contributed to constructing women hand loom weavers' cultural identity in the Ri-Bhoi district of Meghalaya, India. In order to examine how interactions within the Ri-Bhoi cultural context contributed to meanings about the women's weaving activities and their cultural identities, they adopted a lens of symbolic interaction.

To gather pertinent data, an ethnographic approach was used in conjunction with participant observation, field notes/journaling, and formal and informal interviews. Four themes emerged from the analyses, reflecting the

importance that Ri-Bhoi women weavers placed on different facets of their weaving tradition and how those elements supported their cultural identities: (a) preserving the tradition through knowledge acquisition and exchange; (b) obtaining social support from family and community; (c) preserving the tradition through the production of textiles that represent tribe and culture; and (d) feeling fulfilled. Subsequent investigation showed that women's involvement in weaving and their desire to uphold their tradition grew as a result of the modernization of the Ri-Bhoi hand loom industry, further strengthening their bond with weaving.

A complex system of values, beliefs, customs, and other practices that individuals learn and share within a particular community is referred to as culture (Ennaji, 2005). Culture shapes people's perceptions of the world, themselves, and their place in it as they acquire it, which eventually aids in the formation of individual and collective identities (Ennaji, 2005). Cultural identity refers to the aspect of oneself or personal identity that embodies the common core values of the society to which one belongs (Tajfel, 1978). Therefore, cultural identity is defined as the meanings that people acquire as they engage in society, adopting various roles and statuses; it includes the values, beliefs, and worldviews that members of a particular cultural group share (Dressler, 2017; Gleason, 1983; Weaver, 2001). Cultural identity is not fixed; rather, it is shaped by social, political, and economic developments over time (Ston, 1962). This enables people to create various identities, or sub-identities, which contribute to the formation of the self (Forney & Rabolt, 1986; Stone, 1962; Weigert et al., 2007). Gender, social class, and status are just a few of the roles that handwoven textiles have been shown to visually communicate (Eriksen, 2005; Forney & Rabolt, 1986; Schofeld-Tomschin & Littrell 2001). The myths, ceremonies, festivals, rituals, and natural world are all reflected in the handwoven textiles known as NERI, which symbolize tribal culture.

Through this study, the researchers aimed to comprehend the cultural identities connected to weaving among Ri-Bhoi women weavers. Symbolic

interactionism can be defined as the mutual relationship that is established between individuals and their social surroundings in order to give meaning and order to society (Aksan et al. 2009; Fuller & Carter, 2015). Dress, according to Roach-Higgins and Eicher (1992), serves as a medium of communication during social interactions and can influence and establish one's own identity in addition to helping one locate the identities of others. In other words, during social interactions, one's attire and appearance can reflect their social status as an observer and wearer in an intersectional context, strengthening and enhancing their sense of self (Roach-Higgins & Eicher, 1992).

In the current Ri-Bhoi cultural setting, participants talked about how traditional handwoven fabrics served as badges of identity, symbolically representing different facets of self-serving. They explained how the colors and motifs woven into their traditional clothing represented the tribe and the area to which they belonged. During weddings, funerals, religious rites, and other special occasions, certain textiles were worn. Handwoven textiles with a long history were used not only as visual symbols of tribe and culture but also as presents and badges of respect. Craftswomen gave their close friends and relatives traditional textiles they woven. Handwoven fabrics were regarded as priceless gifts when they were given. Some of these textile traditions are being actively preserved by women weavers today, who are teaching others the art of weaving thanks to government intervention and the active involvement of women in the community. Along with emphasizing the value of passing on the craft to the next generation, weavers from every village in the Ri-Bhoi community highlighted the necessity of doing so to ensure the weaving tradition's expansion and preservation.

Women weavers in the Ri-Bhoi community are contributing a tangible good that represents the culture and identity of the people who weave for a living by guaranteeing the continuation and preservation of weaving traditions. According to Stone's (1962) theory, appearance can occasionally trump discourse-based communication in establishing identity during social interactions.

Additionally, clothing can "announce social position of wearer to both wearer and observer within a particular interaction situation" (Roach-Higgins & Eicher, 1992, p.29) and so communicate identity. 5. Therefore, Ri-Bhoi women weavers successfully convey their tribe and culture to themselves and others through the creation of traditional textiles, thereby establishing a sense of identity. Furthermore, the process of creating traditional textiles that represent the visual markers of Ri-Bhoi culture, which is associated with women's identity, has expanded to encompass the preservation of both the Ri-Bhoi culture and the art of weaving itself. By ensuring the continuity and preservation of weaving practices in Ri-Bhoi, women weavers are providing a physical product that symbolizes Ri-Bhoi peoples' culture and identity.

Stone (1962) proposed that appearance may sometimes take priority over communication via discourse to establish identity during social interaction. Moreover, dress has the ability to communicate identity as it can "announce social position of wearer to both wearer and observer within a particular interaction situation" (Roach-Higgins & Eicher, 1992, p. 5). As such, through the creation of traditional textiles, Ri-Bhoi women weavers successfully communicate their tribe and culture to themselves and others, thereby establishing a sense of identity. Additionally, the act of weaving traditional textiles that serve as visual markers of Ri-Bhoi culture, which is linked to women's identity, has evolved to include the act of preserving the craft of weaving, and more broadly, the Ri-Bhoi culture.

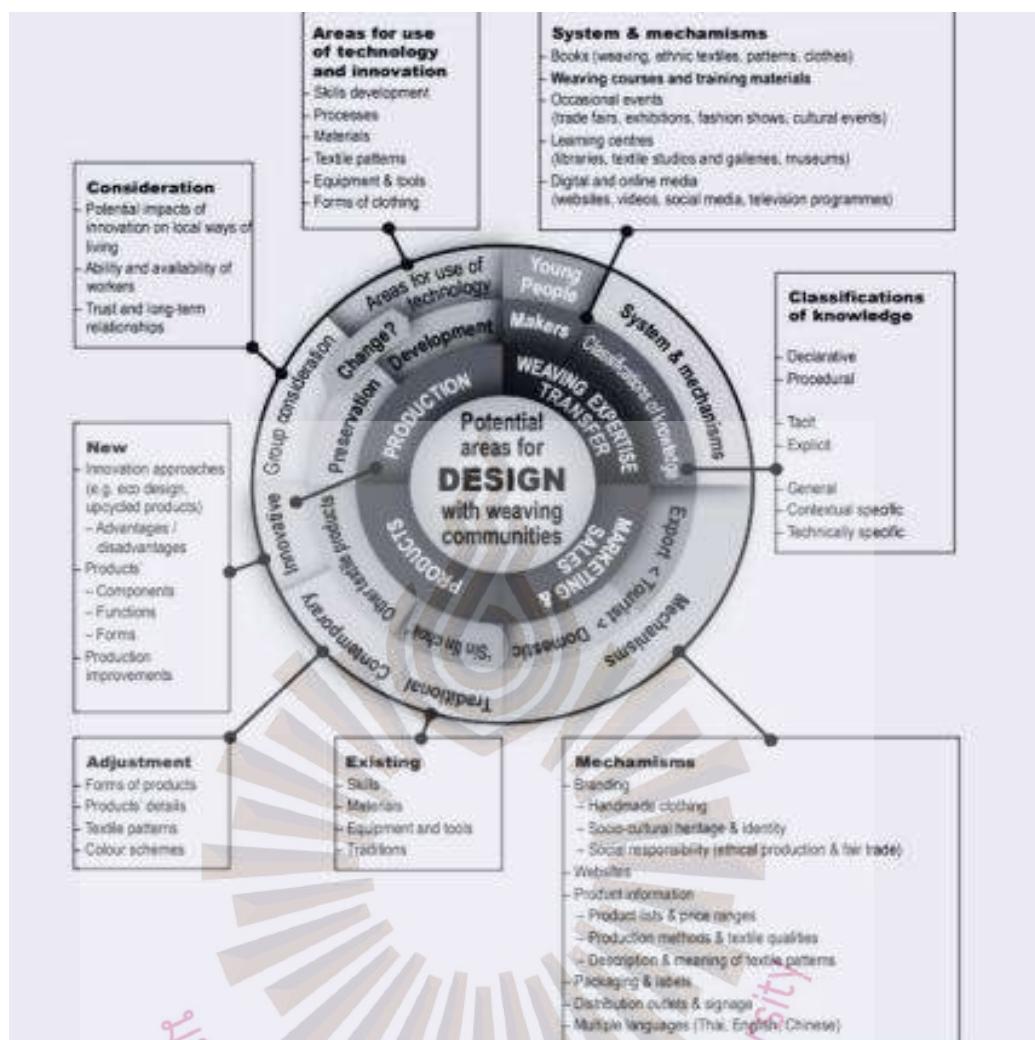


Figure 2.6 Potential Areas for Design with Weaving Communities

Source: Chudasri, 2020

Chapter 3

Research Methodology

3.1 Introduction

The objective for my thesis is to explore the relationship between humans and expressing local identity through textile. I will look into people from the Buriram area and Sweden. The reason for the focus on Buriram is because they have an established textile industry with a rich culture and history, which is mostly focused on silk fabrics with a variety of colours, patterns and designs. The Sweden focus comes from me being a Swede in Thailand, who is based in Bkk but has spent a lot of time in the countryside, especially in the Northeast.

Sweden also has an established textile industry, and several now internationally famous brands come from there (Acne, Toteme, Filippa K, COS, H&M, Our Legacy, Axel Arigato etc), so it is interesting to see similarities as well as differences between the two. Many in the countryside in Buriram are farmers and are living on unreliable incomes and have turned to weaving and textile to create more income to themselves and their families. I have witnessed many in the countryside in Buriram working as farmers and living on unreliable incomes. So, with this study I also would like to explore the possibility of giving this particular part of the Thai textile industry a more diverse usage of area, that potentially can be further expanded to include more objects/items and usage areas.

Right now, it is very focused on clothing that many use mostly for different ceremonies and for uniforms for mostly government servants. Expanding the usage area and target group would not only help the weavers and their families but could also be good for the whole Buriram textile industry, if it got established in other

markets and could earn the region more recognition, money and visitors, but domestic but also international. This could be a tool to expand Buriram as a brand and attract more tourists.

3.2 Population and Samples

A quantitative approach is used to design a structured survey to collect numerical data. It will include questions about preferences, usage patterns, and willingness to adopt Buriram textiles in housewares. The target population (18 to 60+ years-old Thai and Swedish people) online surveys. Randomly select about 50-60 participants from each country for a total sample size of 100 - 120. This method involves dividing the target population into subgroups or strata based on specific characteristics (e.g., age, nationality), and then randomly selecting participants from each stratum. This ensures representation from different demographic segments.

3.3 Research Instruments

Online Survey: A structured and anonymous questionnaire will be the research instrument. The questionnaire will include closed-ended questions to gather numerical data on preferences, usage patterns, and willingness to adopt Buriram textiles in housewares. This survey with a structured questionnaire serves as a practical and systematic approach to collect numerical data from 18 to 60+years-old Thai and Swedish participants regarding their preferences and behaviors related to the use of Buriram textiles in housewares.

Casual interviews while doing store visits: While visiting fabric shops in Buriram I asked general questions such as who's the general customer, general preferences when it comes to colours, patterns, materials, occasions for the purchase, differences between Thai and foreign customers etc. This to get a basic

understanding about the local fabric, usage and customers, and use it as a form of base for further research regarding textile, patterns and materials.

3.4 Data Collection

The data is collected by developing a questionnaire focusing on key aspects such as preferences, usage patterns, and willingness to adopt Buriram textiles in housewares. By Utilize a user-friendly online survey platform like Google Forms for easy distribution and data collection. The data will be translated to the questionnaire into Thai and Swedish to cater to the linguistic diversity of the target audience. The collected data is exported and analyzed using basic descriptive statistics and visualizations which includes an optional section for participants to provide feedback at the end of the survey. The survey is divided into different sections; About Me, Cultural Preferences and Design Preferences. This is to get a better understanding of peoples' already existing knowledge, age, gender, different preferences such as material, symbols and usage area for homeware products.

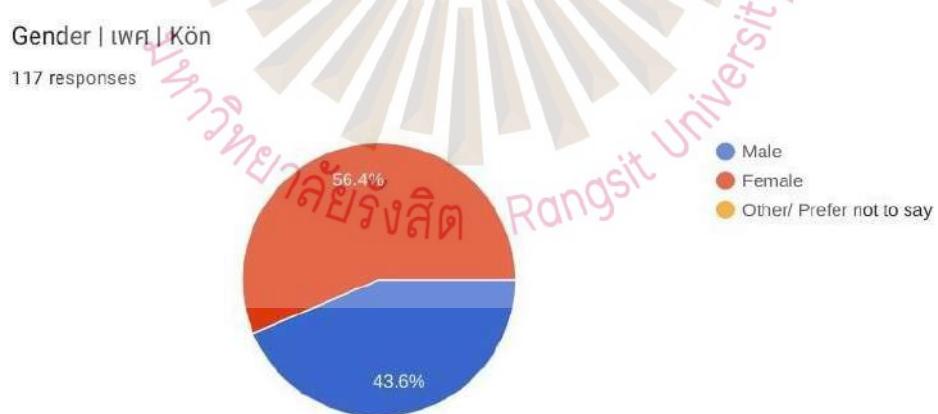


Figure 3.1 Table which shows the gender of the participants.

Source: Researcher

What's your Age? | คุณอายุเท่าไหร่? | Hur gammal är du?

356 responses

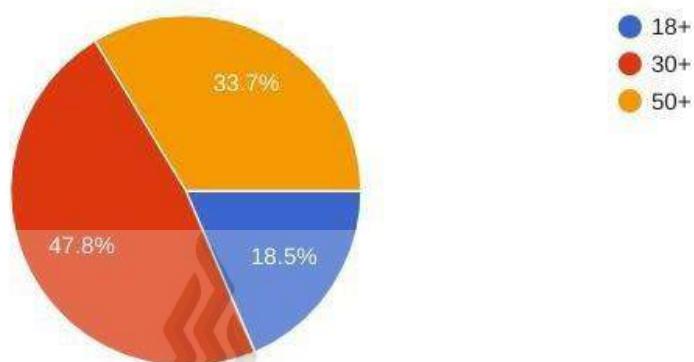


Figure 3.2 The age of the participants.

Source: Researcher

3.5 Data Analysis

To effectively communicate the cross-cultural comparison of preferences for Buriram textiles in housewares among 18 to 50+ years-old Thai and Swedish participants, a bar chart is a suitable choice. The chart will display side-by-side bars for each cultural group, representing key variables such as preferences, usage patterns, and willingness to adopt Buriram textiles. Each bar's height will correspond to the mean or percentage values, allowing for a clear visual comparison between the two groups. Color differentiation can be used to distinguish between Thai and Swedish responses. This visualization will provide an accessible and concise overview, highlighting any significant differences or similarities in the way each cultural group perceives and integrates Buriram textiles into their household items.

3.6 Design Process

3.6.1 Conceptual Design

When thinking of what kind of homeware products to have as part of this study, at first, I felt a little unsure what to do, since it is such a big field with a big range of products. But after some thinking I felt interested in creating something that easily would catch the eye, could be a way to start a conversation, and display the beauty but also the skills of local artisans and the culture. For that reason, I felt drawn towards making something that can be used for the table, table runner, table decoration or table mat. I further felt it could be interesting to look into making some wall art, because that's also a great way to display art and talent in the home.

3.6.2 Design Development

In the early stages I was more thinking of incorporating Thai symbols in the design and creation process and only have the usage area as a Swedish “element” since homeware and interior are big parts of the Swedish home and creating a good comfortable and cozy feeling where you live and stay. Over time it felt like the final result would feel more complete and more beautiful if more elements feeling more Swedish would be incorporated and mixed with the Buriram symbols. This would create a more unique but also more fair design, taking into consideration both cultures and their different aesthetics. In my mind I was thinking a lot about which kind of homeware product(s) could be good and be used as a fair way to display the textile pattern. After some research and thinking I came to the conclusion that homeware products such as wall art and table runners can be very good ways to use as a communication tool to showcase the mixed cultural design pattern. However, I also had in mind that it felt important to produce a design that can be used for a wide range of products, and not just be locked to one specific one, but be adaptable.



Figure 3.3 Conceptual Design Experiments of Buriram Textile for Table Runner and Wall Art.

Source: Researcher

While waiting for the online survey results and analyzing the results I was playing around a lot in my mind with how to mix and combine patterns, colours, symbols and different materials while researching online for further inspiration and more knowledge of what's out there. Ideas from more mixing existing patterns and trying to create a new unique one, to mix already existing ones together with new ones. I was doing some quick sketches and also playing around with pictures and elements online combining them to create new patterns.

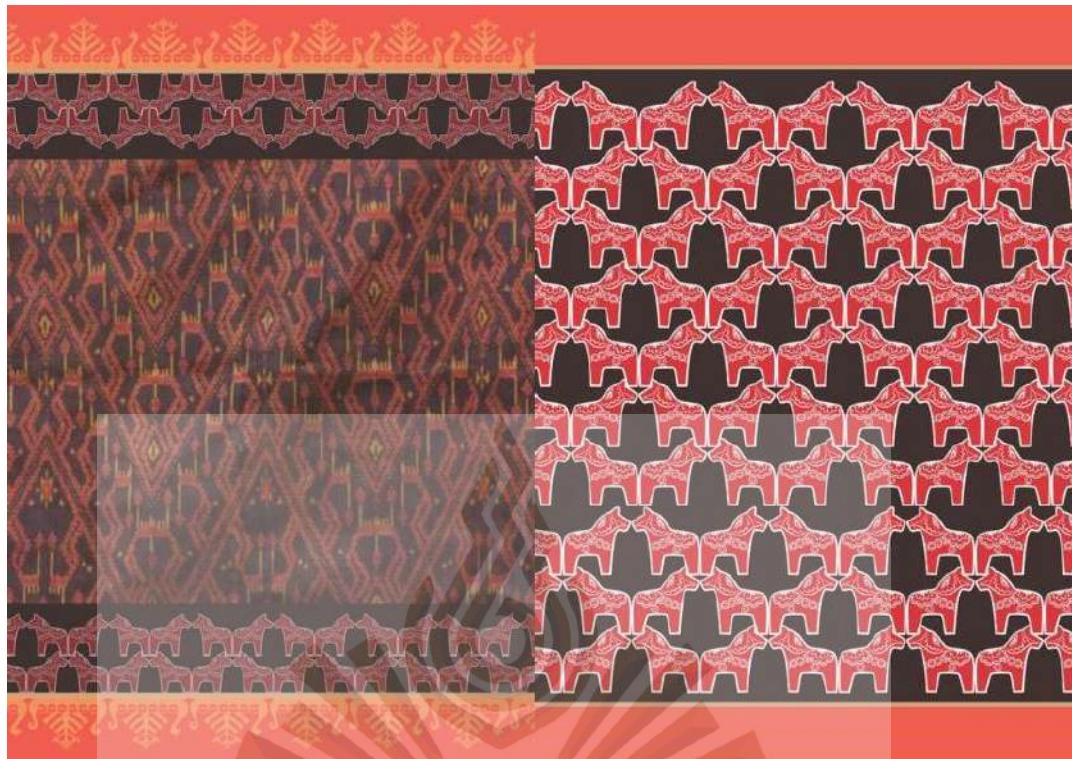


Figure 3.4 Early Textile Design Experiments of Buriram and Sweden Mixed-Culture

Source: Researcher

3.6.3 Material Selection

In Buriram textile, Silk is a very prominent material and it is often used for the traditional Sin Teen Daeng, with its extinguished red fabric as topper and bottom part. (Theptong, 2016). Since silk is more expensive to use and produce in products it does perhaps provide a sense of being more luxurious. It can also be a light material depending on the thickness of the silk thread that is being used. The surface of products being made out of silk can also be glossy, but then also feel more slippery. During store visits I also learned that some artisans have started to mix silk and cotton, both as a way to have less expensive production, but also to have a more contemporary feeling as a result of the market requests. Some products such as shirts, pants and dresses can also come fully made in cotton. In Sweden, wool is a widely used material for winter clothing due to its softness and excellent insulating properties. This makes it ideal for products such as scarves, sweaters, and gloves that are designed to keep you warm. (Cottle, 2010) Wool is not being used in Thailand and is therefore good to use

as a ‘Swedish’ material and element for the final product. Cotton is being used widely in Sweden, since it’s such internationally used material and can be found in many different products. For the final product I wanted to mix together these 3 very different materials as a tool for cross-cultural design, together with the mixed symbols and design.

3.6.4 Design Implementation

Research

Research and read academic journals and articles, books and previously published research work about both Buriram, Sweden and other cultures textile industry to understand traditional techniques and symbols and how it can be used as a tool to express identity.

Store visits

Visit fabric shops in Buriram to get a better understanding about the textile, the symbols, how it’s made and what techniques are being used, preferences from customers, who’s the general customer, and basic knowledge in general, to give idea and inspiration on how it can be given a more contemporary aesthetic and design.

Pre-design development

Sketch and create several new unique contemporary textile patterns combining elements from Buriram and Sweden. Set to be used for homeware to help the Buriram textile and its artisans to reach its full potential, display its beauty and enter a new usage area and hopefully attract new target group(s) as well.

Online survey

Conduct an online survey, with participants coming both from Thailand and Sweden, different ages. Separate into different sections, with questions related to each section. These questions will be used as a tool to better understand people's preferences, knowledge they already have, and what they think about culture, if it can be used to express identity and how important it is, which kind of homeware article they prefer with the design. Will be used as a tool to better determine the direction for the prototype textile design.

Prototype production

Analyze the answers from the online survey and use it to create a prototype on actual fabric, with a new unique textile pattern design. Textile pattern that can be used on a wide range of homeware articles such as wall art, table runner.

3.7 Conclusion

The design process of integrating Buriram textiles and symbols with Swedish symbols involved a thorough research, creative ideas and iterative prototyping. I began by researching and understanding the cultural and historical significance of both traditions through literature reviews, and interviews. Next, I brainstormed and developed concepts that respect and blend these elements, followed by refining the designs after getting feedback from artisans. The final designs achieved a balanced integration, preserving traditional craftsmanship while meeting contemporary standards. This process highlighted the importance of cultural sensitivity, the potential for creating appreciation between cultures. The successful fusion of Buriram and Swedish elements paves the way for further exploration in cross-cultural design.

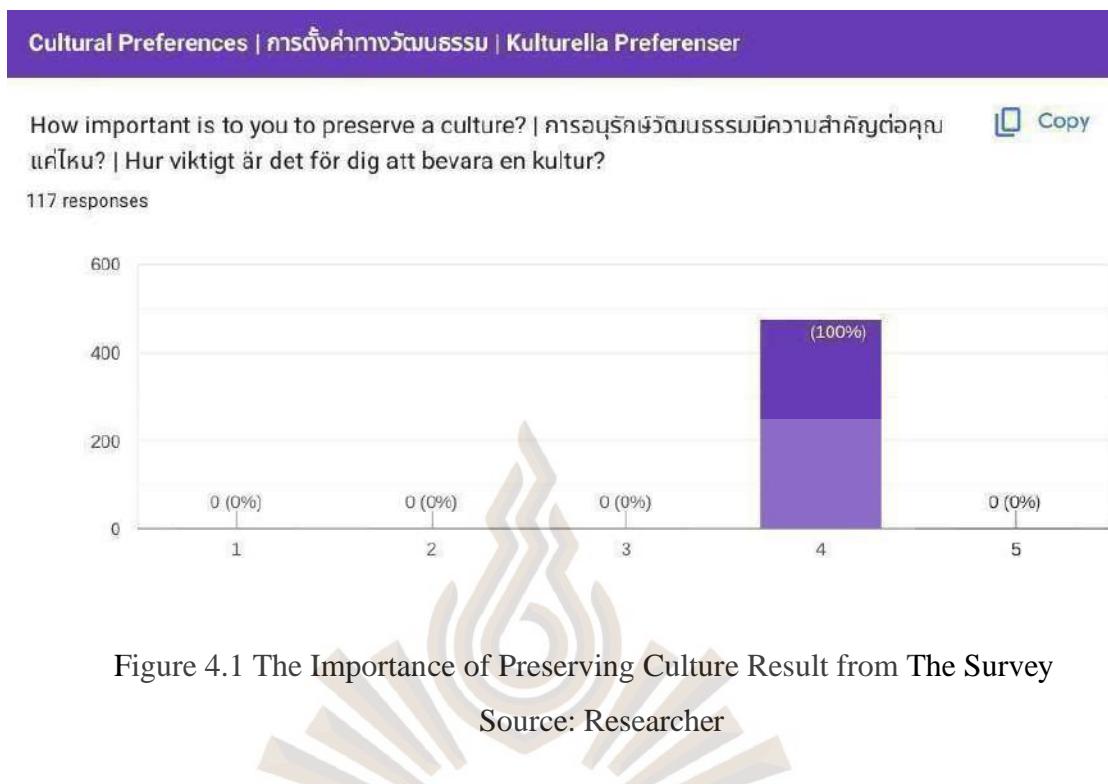
Chapter 4

Research Results

4.1 Online Survey Result

The results from section 2 and 3 in the online survey which are titled: Cultural Preferences and Design preferences were used as a tool to determine the direction of the final prototype textile design. The questions were asking about which materials that were preferred for textile, what kind of homeware product, if they think it is important to preserve culture, if mixed cultural contemporary textile patterns can express identity to name some of the questions. The results are displayed with diagrams which show which age group and percentage has answered each question in what way. This can give an insight into what the different ages and people think about this topic and its importance and in what way it can be used to express cultural identity in a contemporary way and apply to a new usage are and hopefully give more awareness to wider audience about the beauty that is textile design and the cultures behind it and what they can tell and express.

In this graph below, it is visible that every one of the 117 people that participated in the survey answered 4, to how important it is to preserve culture. In this case nr 5 is the highest possible. This shows that everyone, no matter age and gender, thinks it's important to preserve culture, which in this case is displayed with the help of textile.



For the following question in the online survey which is “Do you think mixedculture contemporary textile design will support preserving culture?”. The result was similar to the previous question, except that this time almost every one of the participants answered nr 3 out of 5. 99.6 % to be exact and 0.2 % and 0.2 % answered nr 5. So, textile is seen as a tool that can help preserve culture but with less strength compared to the importance of preserving culture in general. Potential follow up question can be, if it would be different if the textile did not incorporate cross cultural and/or contemporary elements?

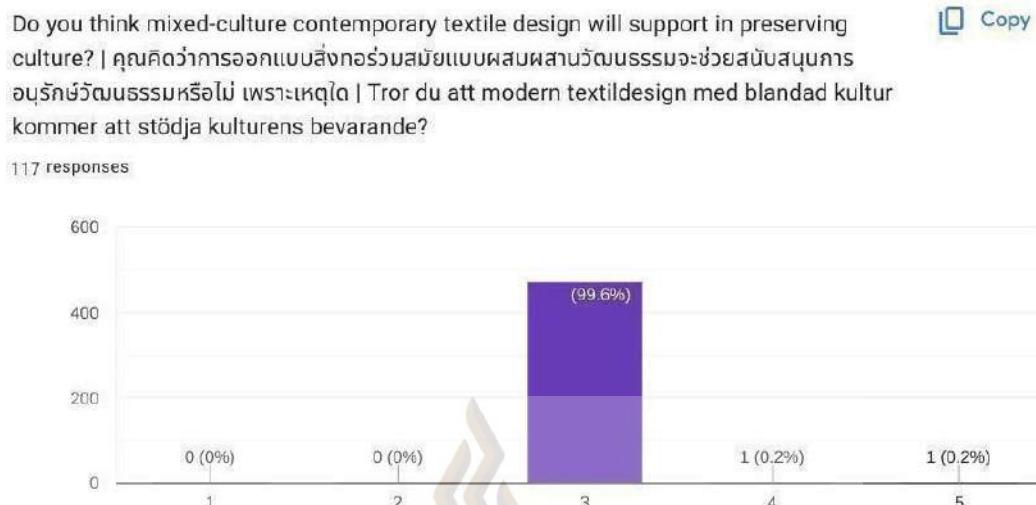


Figure 4.2 Do You Think Mixed-Culture Textile Is a Good Support in Preserving

Culture

Source: Researcher

Figure 4.2 is similar to the previous one; “Do you think a good textile design can express identity? If so, how effective?” Everyone, so 100 % of the participants answered nr 4 out 5, so it is the same result as the same question in the “Cultural Preferences” section of the survey. Once again it shows that no matter age and gender, people do think that expressing identity, and therefore culture is very important. Especially expressing identity and oneself, is something many do with the help of how they dress, products they use and how they decorate their homes. Textile is one of the main elements that can be used as a tool, to express identity in different ways, which in this graph is seen as something people think is important.

Do you think a good textile design can express identity? If so, how effective? | คุณคิดว่าการออกแบบสิ่งทอที่ดีสามารถแสดงตัวตนได้หรือไม่ เพราะเหตุใด ถ้าเป็นเช่นนั้นมีประสิทธิภาพแค่ไหน? | Tror du att en bra textildesign kan uttrycka identitet? Om så är fallet, hur effektivt?

 Copy

117 responses

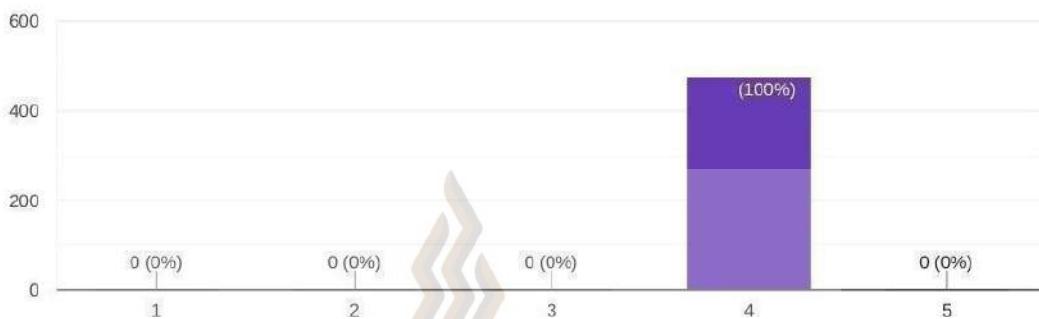
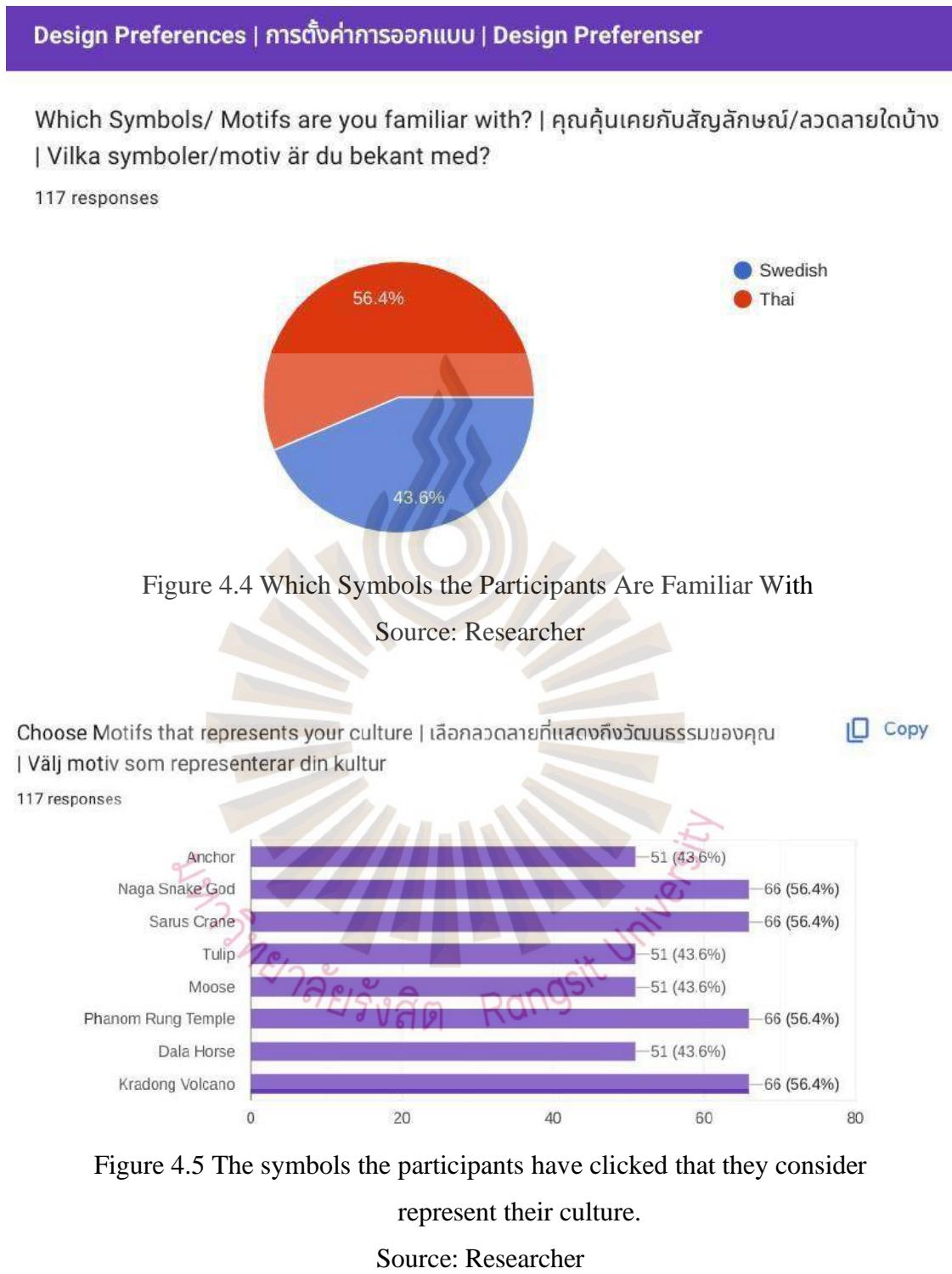


Figure 4.3 Do You Think Textile Design Can Express Identity Effectively?

Source: Researcher

Figure 4.3 is aimed to just get an understanding of whether the participants are more familiar with Thai or Swedish symbols, and which of the symbols provided in the survey they associate with being either Thai or Swedish. With a slight majority of 56.4 % saying they are familiar with Thai symbols over Swedish ones, shows that little more than half of the people are more familiar with Thai culture, or at least what is seen as symbols that are Thai and Buriram. To keep Thai essence even though the result will be cultural mix and contemporary, is important so that it's still recognizable and appealing to people in the Thai market and can be used as a tool to express cultural identity according to figures 4.4 and 4.5 shown below.



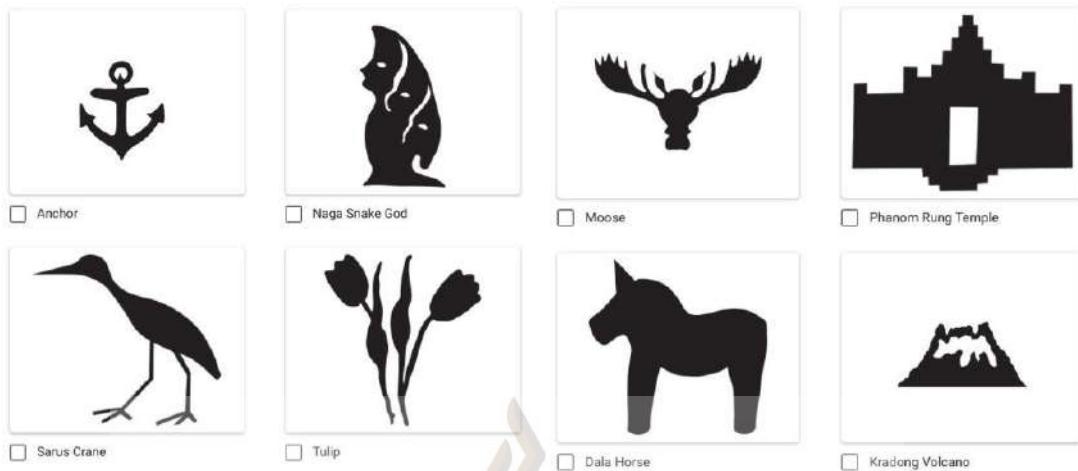


Figure 4.6 The symbols the participants can box if they know

Source: Researcher

According to Figure 4.6, these are the symbols the participants can box if they are familiar with them. They are different symbols that represent each country and culture and should be recognisable for most of the ones who answered the survey.

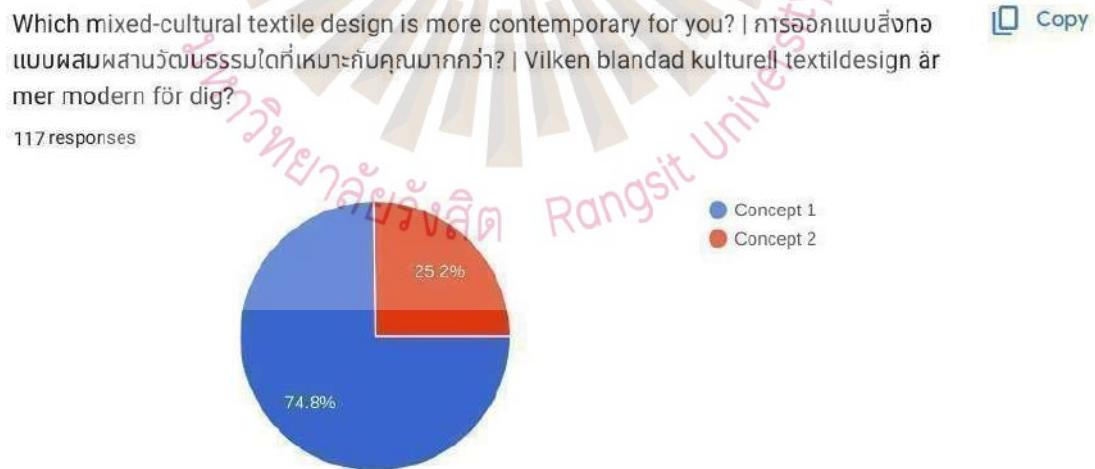


Figure 4.7 Which one of the two concepts given the participants feel's more contemporary.

Source: Researcher

The participants had to choose which one of the cross-cultural concepts that felt more contemporary. With 74.8 % of the answers, concept 1 became the chosen direction for the next step in this research, to make the concept become real and be made into a proper textile pattern. Potential follow up question could be to explain why and how it feels more contemporary. This would give even more insight into people's opinions, preferences, and dislikes.

Which mixed-cultural textile design is more contemporary for you? | Which mixed-cultural textile design is more contemporary for you? | What is your favorite modern design?

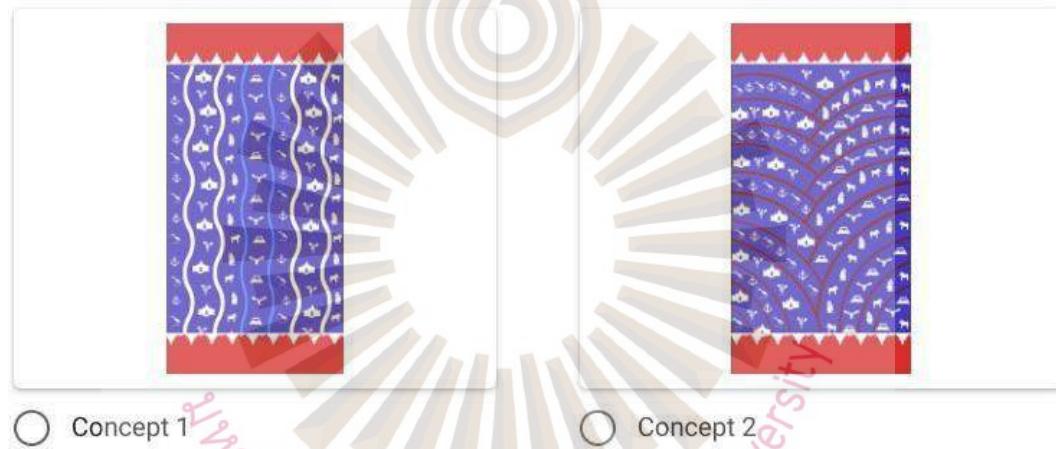


Figure 4.8 Images of the two concepts that could be chosen between

Source: Researcher

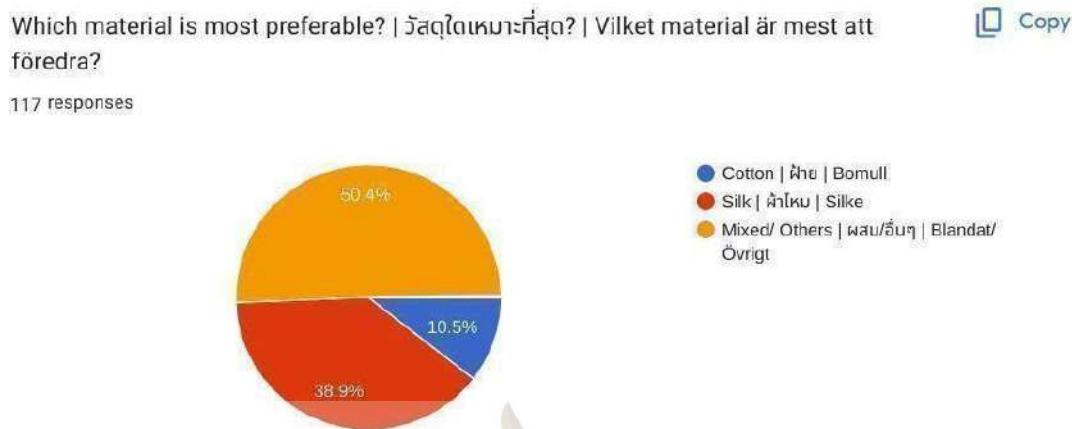


Figure 4.9 Which material is most preferable?

Source: Researcher

In the above graph it is displayed which material people would prefer being used to create the new textile pattern. The responses were a bit more mixed compared to some of the other previous questions. With 50.4 % of the votes, mixed usage of materials won, before silk (38.9 %) and cotton (10.5%). This is also a step away from the usual usage of only silk or cotton and a direction towards embracing something new, different and contemporary. With this result I decided to fully embrace the idea of mixing materials from both cultures, which ended up being cotton, silk and wool. This to create an even more unique textile design and approach to the cross-cultural concept and result.

4.2 Initial Prototype

The initial prototype design was decided by the survey result which showed that most of the participants preferred option 1, which was a more contemporary approach with its design, compared to option 2, which had a more traditional design approach and aesthetics, with less contemporary overall design. The textile design that got the most votes as the preferred design was done to make it stand out from the usual design, which is often more dark, heavy as well as having the pattern design horizontally. So, with this pattern the meaning was to keep elements and essence of

the culture but give it a new twist and try to take it to a new direction, a more contemporary one.

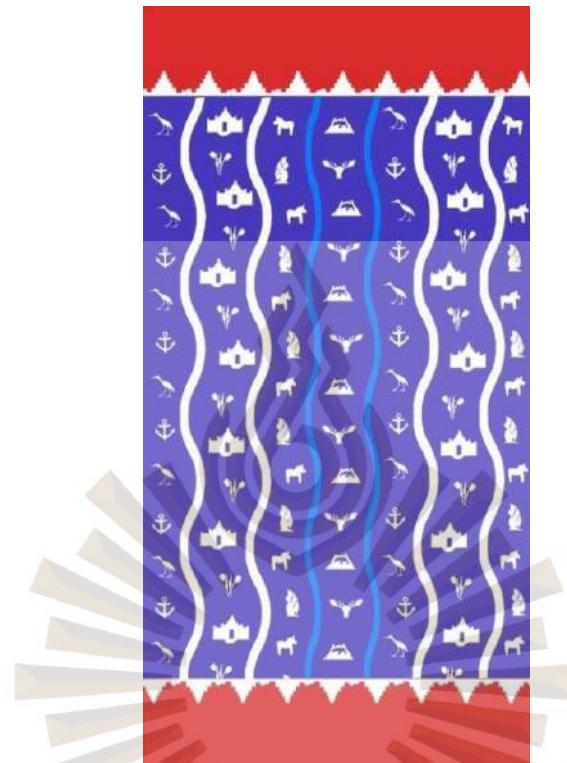


Figure 4.10 The Concept Design That Was Chosen in The Survey

Source: Researcher

With this initial design the purpose was to create something that took a step away from the usual design that often consists of dark colours and an overall “heavier” feeling. I wanted to try to create something that stayed true to the cultures of both places, thanks to the symbols and elements such as the red top and bottom part, which is a signature for Buriram textile. The blue colour is a reference to Buriram being called the “Blue City”, as well as being one of the two colours being used in the Swedish flag. Usually, the design is being done horizontally, therefore making vertically felt like a good way to create a new and unique pattern for the textile, creating 7 rows with a mix of Buriram and Swedish symbols. The white and blue lines going from top to bottom are done to reference silk threads. The meaning of this

design was to make a more playful, contemporary, light, more suitable for homeware, and easy to adapt design which could have the potential of being appealing to a wider, younger and more diverse audience than the already existing textile patterns.

4.3 Design Development



Figure 4.11 The Re-worked Design Concept for The Buriram and Sweden Mixed Culture Pattern

Source: Researcher

When it was time to make a prototype of the design, and I contacted several handweaving studios however, I came to realize that it would be more challenging than expected to make the design come to life on actual textile, even just as a prototype. The vertically made design would not be possible to make using hand-weaving technique as I wanted, I was told. It was simply too complex for that. I talked with a couple of studios about how I could change the design in different ways, If I wished to proceed further with making a prototype. Like mentioned before, it was not possible to have a vertical design so I would have to change everything horizontally, which meant starting over from scratch. When brainstorming for new ideas, I played

around with different colours, placements of the symbols and overall aesthetic of the textile pattern.

4.4 Final Prototype

However, once again I was told that this design would not be possible to make using hand weaving technique, since it was still considered too complex to make with the red frame, and the diagonal design used for the symbols and lines. So, after taking into consideration the new feedback from the studio I started working on creating a new textile pattern design again. Looking over some already existing ones and the previously made ones by me, I started putting together what would become the final prototype design. I wanted to try to stay with the overall feeling and aesthetic the previous final design proposal had.

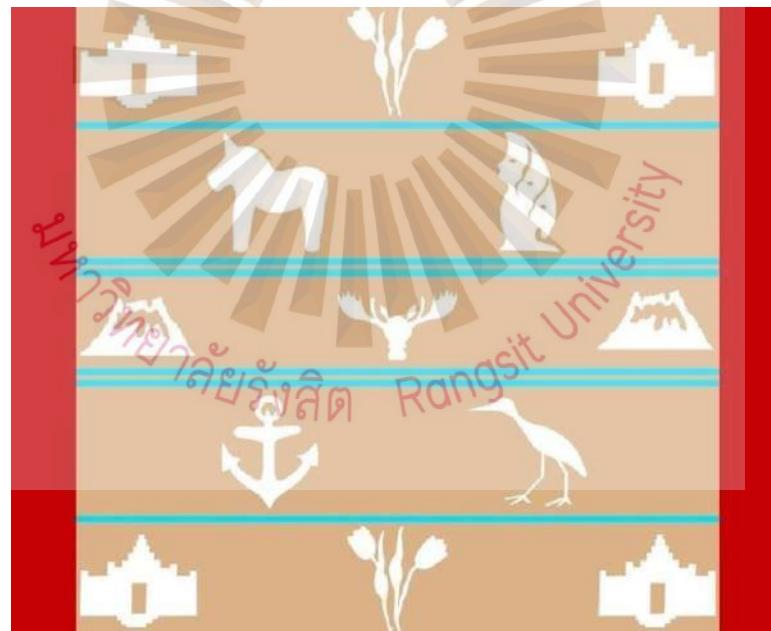


Figure 4.12 The Updated and Final Prototype Design

Source: Researcher

The above figure 4.12 shows how in the end the final prototype design looks like. It is similar to the previous one with the colours, but might feel a bit less

contemporary, but overall, I felt good with the design and that it still captured and blended the two colours in a respectful, new and interesting way. So, the initial red top and bottom part, which is a symbol for the Buriram Sin Teen Daeng fabric, now only appears on the sides. But on the other hand, it can be a new take on the traditional placement of the red part, giving it a new twist. Regarding the materials used, a mix of cotton, silk and wool was used; silk for the blue horizontal lines, wool for the white symbols, to make them stand out and create a contrast between the other materials and overall look and feeling of the textile pattern design. For the rest of the textile, cotton was used giving it a more soft, comfortable feeling and touch on the skin, but it is also cheaper and quicker to use as a tool when doing the hand sewing, according to the studio

4.5 Application of Design

Considering the unexpected last-minute changes with the pattern design, unfortunately I was not able to create the prototype with a Buriram studio but had to do it in Bangkok. Thanks to the help from The Yarn Studio, the prototype could finally come to life, after so long only having been a digital design on my computer. It felt so good seeing it coming to life with actual threads and being able to touch and feel it. Also, the mixture of the materials (cotton, silk and wool) work well together, and help with creating a unique aesthetic and overall design touch to the textile and the new pattern. With the textile pattern coming to life, it also was feeling easier to imagine it being on actual physical products in the real world and not just something digital on the computer screen. Hopefully the pattern will work well on different items for homeware and beyond, all to display the beauty of the textile and help preserve the local culture, even if it's done in a cross-cultural and contemporary way.



Figure 4.13 1st Day of Production of The Prototype

Source: Researcher



Figure 4.14 The first two rows finished displaying Thai & Swedish symbols

Source: Researcher

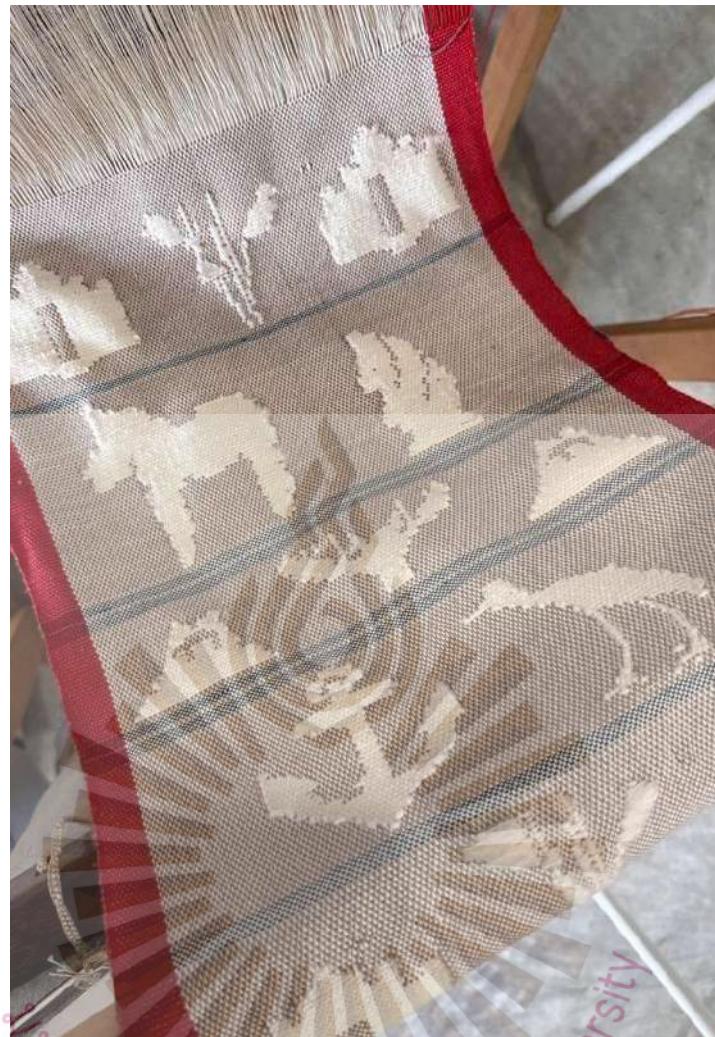


Figure 4.15 The Final Stages of The Prototype Production with All Symbols Visible

Source: Researcher



Figure 4.16 Close Up showing The Contrast Between the Different Materials Used

Source: Researcher





Figure 4.17 The completed prototype textile piece, displaying all the details and symbols.

Source: Researcher

Chapter 5

Conclusion and Recommendations

5.1 Conclusion

As a person coming from Sweden, but now seeing Thailand as home I was early on my stay here, interested and drawn to the textiles and designs that are from here. I wanted to explore and learn more about it, not only because they are beautiful, but also because it's a way to better understand the culture, the people and history. Expressing identity with different parts of design (interior, clothing, accessories, homeware) is something I have been interested in since I was little, and therefore wanted to explore it more and make a thesis related to that topic. This thesis explored the culturally rich fusion of traditional Buriram textiles with Swedish symbols in a new contemporary design way, with the aim to create a new unique textile design that can be applied to various homeware products, such as wall art, table runner to name some. During the work on this thesis, I found that even though the Buriram textile is well established and produces beautiful textiles, it's often with very heavy design elements, colours and symbols related to religion or religious architecture. It is often mostly worn for different ceremonies (religious, weddings, funerals, uniforms) and many of the users are middle aged and up, if they use it in everyday life. With the help of contemporary Swedish design elements, I wanted to try to give a more clean, light and young look to the pattern and take it to a new direction, to help it reach its full potential but also attract new and younger customers.

Store visits and online surveys gave more understanding about who buys the textile and for what, but also that people, even young ones think it's important to preserve culture and that it can be a tool to express identity. Younger generation also expressed they wished more younger and modern looking designs were available,

which further made me interested in creating a more contemporary textile design with a cross-cultural twist

By taking the textile and applying it to a new usage area, is a good way of not only preserving the culture, but also a good way to express it and showcase it in a new way. In an era when many people travel and move to new cities and countries, it is a way of having a piece of your home with you regardless where you live, and it can be used for everyday life. In an online survey, where the participants were given the option to choose which concept they preferred, a big majority wanted the more modern and contemporary option, which further showed that it has big potential and that there's a request for a more modern version among people. It is however important to still keep the essence of the culture and respect it, and not completely create something new and totally unrecognizable. Therefore, it's important to keep elements and parts from the old, and merge it with new and together they create a new beautiful and unique design.

5.2 Key Findings

Cultural Significance: Buriram textiles are well-established in Thai culture, displaying beautiful patterns, vibrant colors, and symbols that reflect the region's history and identity.

Swedish symbols, known for their simplicity, elegance, and historical depth, represent various aspects of Swedish heritage, including nature, folklore, and craftsmanship.

Design Integration: The process of merging these two distinct cultural elements requires a careful balance to respect and preserve their unique qualities. Successful integration involves understanding the cultural contexts, ensuring authenticity, and creating aesthetically pleasing designs.

Various prototypes demonstrated that blending Buriram's intricate patterns with Swedish minimalist symbols can result in harmonious and innovative designs suitable for fashion, home décor, and accessories.

5.3 Recommendations

Based on the findings of this thesis on integrating Buriram textiles with Swedish symbols in contemporary design, several recommendations are proposed to guide future research and practical applications in this field:

Conduct further studies and fieldwork to gather more nuanced insights into the cultural significance and traditional techniques of Buriram textiles and Swedish symbols. This will enhance the authenticity and depth of future designs.

Do more in-depth interviews both with stores, customers as well as visit silk villages which are located around Buriram, to get further knowledge, understanding and knowledge about production procedure, materials, traditions and cultural importance that the textile holds for the area.

Do more in-depth research about the production of the textile, to get a better understanding of the techniques, and how the threads are used and in what ways the patterns can and cannot be done. This is not only to understand the importance of the culture and the traditions they hold, but it will also be of great importance when producing sketches and design proposals for projects and/or potential customers.

Extend the integration of Buriram and Swedish elements beyond textiles into other areas such as interior design, digital media, and fine arts. This diversification can open new avenues for creative expression and commercial opportunities.

Form partnerships with well-established brands that value cultural heritage and sustainability. These collaborations can enhance the visibility and credibility of the designs, reaching a wider audience.

Engage local communities in both Thailand and Sweden by organizing participatory design workshops. This inclusion ensures that the designs are culturally accurate and resonate with the people who hold these traditions dear.

Integrate these textile designs into heritage tourism initiatives. Offer workshops and tours in both regions, showcasing the creation process and cultural significance, thereby attracting tourists and creating additional revenue streams. Use storytelling as a central element in marketing campaigns. Share the rich histories and meanings behind the Buriram and Swedish designs, creating a narrative that connects consumers emotionally to the products.

Establish cultural exchange programs between Thailand and Sweden, allowing designers, students, and artisans to learn from each other's traditions and techniques. These exchanges can inspire innovative designs and deepen mutual cultural understanding. Also offer possibilities to look beyond only these two cultures and see what other cultures look like with their textiles and designs, and how potential cross-cultural designs and collaborations could look like.

By implementing these or some of these recommendations, future projects can effectively integrate Buriram textiles with Swedish symbols, creating designs that honor tradition while appealing to contemporary markets and customers.

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Store visits interview questions and answers done at textile shops in Buriram.

Questions	Answers
1. Who's your general customer? - Age - Gender	Usually middle-aged or older women, but also men. Same age usually for men. There are some younger customers as well but then usually tourists or Thai people who need something for a special occasion.
2. What are they usually looking for kind of product? - Ceremonial? (wedding, funeral, ceremony) - Professional occasion? (work/school related?) - Free time usage?	In general, they are looking for something they need at work. It can be a meeting, an activity at work, or some training. Also, for ceremonial usage, usually religious but also weddings. Free-time usage buyers are usually not Thai.
3. Buying for themselves or as a gift?	Many buys for themselves. Gifts are usually something like a bag, scarf or sarong.
4. Are certain colours more popular than others?	Red, blue, brown-red mix. Also, green can be popular but mostly the previous colours.
5. Are certain motifs more popular than others?	Religious such as gates to temple, steps and the royal S symbol are often on products that are being sold. Symbols that are linked to the region in some way. Also flower and bird
6. Are certain materials more popular than others?	Silk is what most come to buy or silk cotton mix. The colours are in general more visible when on silk. Also have cotton products.

<p>8. Is there a difference between Thai and foreign customers?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - In products they buy? - materials and colors they prefer? 	<p>Thai people usually buy uniforms of some kind. If not whole, part of it. Like mentioned earlier to be part of meetings, training or some activity. Many go for silk. Foreigners often go for cotton products, because they think it feels softer and better on the skin and for movement. Buy scarfs, shirts/t-shirts.</p>
<p>9. Do you have any products made with contemporary pattern design?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - If yes, are they popular? 	<p>There's some but not many. Usually made for scarves or smaller products. Younger people and tourists ask sometimes if we have and wish there were more available.</p>
<p>10. Does the silk come in different thickness or just one?</p>	<p>There's 3 different thicknesses, depending on how thick the tread is. Thicker tread means a more thick product and can feel more stiff.</p>
<p>11. How is silk made?</p>	<p>Here in Buriram it's still being used using the traditional way, which means by hand. Silk worms are used and then women make the products. The treads can be colours either by artificial or natural dye. Most use artificial dye now but still use handweaving.</p>
<p>12. How important do you think it is to preserve traditional textile patterns/designs and culture?</p>	<p>It's very important. No matter what, it's part of our history, who we are! It's something we should make sure survives to future generations. It's part of this region and our legacy.</p>
<p>13. What's your opinion about contemporary textile design?</p>	<p>As long as it's not changing the Buriram textile into something completely unrecognizable, why not? Everything in life needs to adapt a bit today to survive. Some changes is okay, but it should still have Buriram feeling to show respect to our</p>

	heritage, history and culture.
14. Is there anything you would like to personally change or add to Buriram textile?	I think there should be maybe more new motifs/designs. So that more younger people are coming and want to buy. It's important to get more younger customers if we want to pass on this part of our culture to the future.



Biography

Name	Camilo Andres Marheden
Date of birth	May 15, 1991
Place of birth	Pasto, Sweden
Education background	<p>IED Ied Istituto Europeo di Design Bachelor in Fashion Styling & Communication, 2018</p> <p>Rangsit University Master of Fine Arts in Design, 2024</p>
Address	Chateau Intown Ratchada 19, 16/2
Email Address	Ratchadapisek Rd Din Daeng Bangkok 10400 andres.marheden@gmail.com



มหาวิทยาลัยรังสิต Rangsit University