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Development of Cultural Silver Jewelry Products: A Case of Ubonchat Sattathip Design

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Abstract

This paper reports a case of development of cultural silver jewelry products of Ubonchat Sattathip Design. The objective was to identify guidelines for the development of Ubonchat Sattathip cultural silver jewelry. This was to increase value of silver jewelry products responsive to the users' preferences for cultural silver jewelry. The research used both qualitative and quantitative research methods. The results of the study were the identified guideline to development of Ubonchat Sattathip Design in the shape of a beautiful lotus in 9 colors and these colors represent nine different gemstones, and positive responses to the new design from the silver jewelry users under study. The combination between a silver jewelry pattern and gem colors created added value to the cultural silver jewelry. The opinion of users on the cultural silver jewelry Ubonchat Sattathip was at the high level (Mean=4.43, S.D = 0.38).

Keywords: *Product development, cultural silver jewelry product, lotus design, Ubonchat Sattathip*

1. Introduction

"Ubonchat" is one of lotus flowers that are delicately beautiful with unique features. The flower buds are quite slender and turn a semicircular shape when in bloom. The full bloom has petals with three important features: (1) the petals are long, slender, both sharp and rounded with the narrow base and tip, (2) The petals are slender, both sharp and rounded with the broad and half-rounded bottom, and (3) The petals are slender, both sharp and rounded but with the broad bottom half and pointed or rounded tip in the top half. The colors of Ubonchat Lotus are in three: (1) Perennial Ubonchat has 5 colors: white, pink, red, yellow and orange (with color change from the first to the last day), (2) Annual Ubonchat, blooming day time in all colors except black, and (3) Annual Ubonchat, blooming night time in three colors: white, pink and red (Rajamangala University of Technology Thanyaburi, 2018). To the researcher of this study, Ubonchat can serve as a topic of design under study for its natural beauty in petal shapes, stalks and multi-colors, as artistic inspiration and a source of creative design.

From reviewing the literature on art culture in the northern province of Thailand--Chiang Mai, the researcher found an important silverware production site and Wat Sri Suphan on Wua Lai Road as the main silverware village in this Province. Wat Srisuphan is the first silver temple in the world that is unique in its interior and exterior architectural design. The Silver Temple, Wat Srisuphan, has been built by villagers for 8 years in support of Buddhism by their local wisdom in silver handicraft at 25 million baht in budget. As of now, the temple has spent 12 million baht on 60% of the work done; the temple still has to raise fund of 13 million baht to complete the decorative parts, arts and crafts, and silver artifacts both inside and outside the entrance arch carve patterns. The carvers use the traditional method of hammering into the silver plate for the sketched designs. Each level of work requires fine craftsmanship to accomplish.

Rajamangala University of Technology Rattanakosin (RMUTR) has carried its mission on academic services for communities. As an RMUTR staff member, the researcher in this study has been on this mission to help and develop working knowledge in the field of art and design for cultural silver jewelry of Ubonchat Sattathip at Wat Sri Suphan. Those involved in the development attended the meeting to discuss ways to create lotus-themed jewelry, of which shows the lotus represents this type of indigenous plants in almost all regions worldwide. In Thailand, lotus flowers are used for both food and as a symbol of Buddhism as seen in architectural design which signifies purity. The colors of lotus flowers are delicately beautiful at birth as in the Buddhist philosophy that the lotus is born out of a dirty swamp and settling under water, but later its leaves and flowers will rise above the surface of the water. The Buddhist art design conveys the point that human beings though born from a corrupt source, yet can develop themselves to be virtuous persons at will. The corresponding concept is the design of Ubonchat Sattathip to decorate the interior of religious places. As for cultural silver jewelry, it is an accessory designed using a mix of cultures. This has become the focus of interest to the researcher to study how to integrate creative designs into various forms of jewelry for the body, temple decorations and a wide variety of other decorative products.

2. Research Objectives

This research had three objectives:

1. To identify guidelines for the development of cultural silver jewelry using Ubonchat Sattathip Design.
2. To study the needs of users in Chiang Mai for cultural silver jewelry using Ubonchat Sattathip Design to add value of its products.
3. To develop and create cultural silver jewelry based on Thai traditions and needs of users in Chiang Mai Province.

3. Research Scope

The scope was on development of cultural silver jewelry Ubonchat Sattathip according to the needs of users in religious places and decoration as derived from the combination of local arts and culture seen in valuable silverware. Such combination creates beauty and increases the value of silver jewelry products.

4. Research Method

The researcher used a combination of qualitative and quantitative research methods. The emphasis was on obtaining qualitative data, followed by those quantitative.

4.1. Participants

In this research, the participants were informants in two groups: (1) One representative from Wat Sri Suphan (Wat Bot Ngoen), Chiang Mai Province and two informant-experts in cultural jewelry and Thai culture, and (2) users who are interested in cultural silver jewelry products in Chiang Mai. Since the researcher did not know the exact population group and therefore had to use the formula for calculating the sample in case the unknown population (Srisaard, 2017), the researcher used the population proportion at .50, the confidence level at 95%, and the error at 5%. The sample number was increased to 400 participants by random sampling. Then the researcher used a multi-step randomization method as follows.

Step 1: Specified the sample group used in the study using multi-step randomization for 25 districts in Chiang Mai Province: (1) Chiang Mai District, (2) Chom Thong District, (3) Mae Chaem District, (4) Chiang Dao District, (5) Doi Saket District, (6) Mae Taeng District, (7) Mae Rim District, (8) Samoeng District, (9) Fang District, (10) Mae Ai District, (11) Phrao District, (12) San Pa Tong District, (13) San Kamphaeng District, (14) San Sai District, (15) Hang Dong District, (16) Hot District, (17) Doi Tao District, (18) Omkoi District, (19) Saraphi District, (20) Wiang Ha District, (21) Chai Prakan District, (22) Mae Wang District, (23) Mae On District, (24) Doi Lor District, (25) Amphor Kalayaniwattana.

Step 2: Randomly selected ten districts for data collection according to the probability principle.

Step 3 Determined the percentage of data collection in each district: 40 samples per district, a total of 400 samples.

4.1. Research Instruments

Tools Used for Data Collection

The tools used for data collection consisted of two types:

1. A set of questions for the semi-structured in-depth interview was developed by the researcher on the basis of related art theories and by advice from Thai culture experts. These questions were meant to collect data concerning guidelines for cultural silver jewelry design and development of Ubonchat Sattathip for decorations of Buddhist temples/ worship places and value added quality of art works.
2. A questionnaire derived from the data obtained from the semi-structured in-depth interview to collect information on users' needs for cultural silver jewelry. The total of 400 sets of data were collected from tourists, users and groups interested in cultural silver jewelry in ten districts under study.

The questionnaire contained three parts:

Part 1 Demographic Information

Part 2 Opinion about cultural silver jewelry of Ubonchat Sattathip
on a rating scale of 1-5 with specific meanings:

Scale	Comment level
5	Highest level of opinion
4	High level of opinion
3	Moderate level of opinion
2	Low level of opinion
1	Lowest level of opinion

As for discussion on the research results, the researcher used the criteria after Srisa-ard, B. (2017).

Score	Meaning
4.51-5.00	Strongest support/ agreement
3:51-4:50	Strong support/ agreement
2:51-3:50	Moderate support/ agreement
1:51-2:50	Weak support/ agreement
1:00-1:50	Weakest support/ agreement

3. Additional suggestions on development of cultural silver jewelry Ubonchat Sattathip.

As for the validity of the questionnaire, the researcher asked three Thai culture experts to check consistency of questions with the research objectives to obtain Item-Objective Congruence Index (IOC) between 0.60-1.00, which was considered acceptable in criteria for data collection. The confidence of the questionnaire or reliability was at 0.836 obtained from 30 subjects in Chiang Mai Province with similar demographic variables as those of the real participants in the study.

5. Data Analysis

The descriptive data were analyzed by frequency, percentage, mean, and standard deviation. In addition, users' needs data was counterchecked with the interview results on the development of cultural silver jewelry. The users' data were analyzed by t-test and One-Way ANOVA using a statistical package for social science research.

6. Significance of Research

The significance of research is by the research objectives; that is, the obtained findings were expected to generate a guideline to cultural silver jewelry design and development to create cultural silver jewelry products and decorations for temples and worship places in all regions across Thailand.

7. Research Results

The results from the analysis of the obtained data were as follows.

7.1. From the interview data, it was found that the participants gave information to formulate a guideline for creating, developing and designing cultural silver jewelry. The area of Bua Lai Road in Chiang Mai Province was identified as an important source of silverware design and development. Designers and artists use flowers to represent purity or goodness of the dharma (Buddhist teaching). With the identified guideline to design and

development of cultural silver jewelry, the researcher put Ubonchat Sattathip as the main context for design and development as shown in Figure 1.

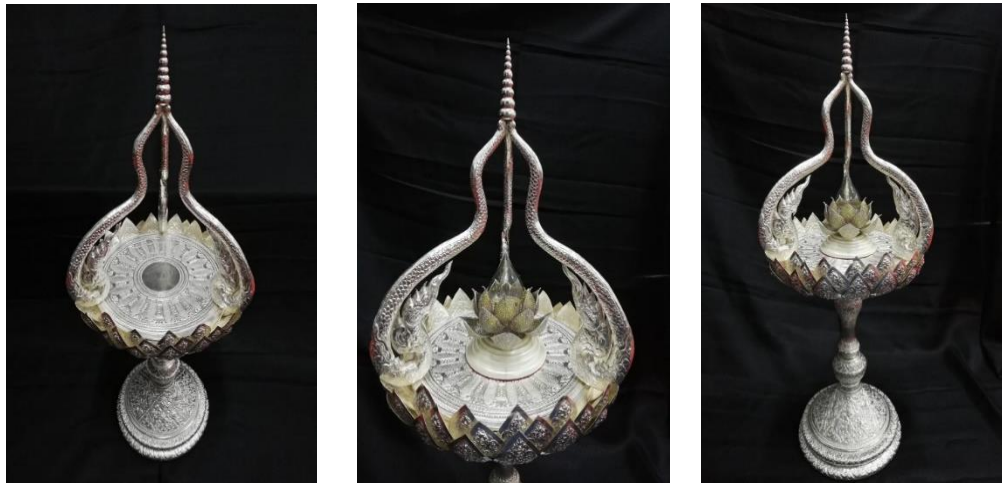
Figure 1: Ubonchat Sattathip Design Outline



The researcher arranged for a small group discussion with a representative of Wat Sri Suphan, Chiang Mai Province to secure feedback to the design outline whether it can be viable for development and subsequent production of cultural silver jewelry, silverware and decorations in religious or worship places. The design outline was to follow the guideline identified in the small group discussion with the Thai culture expert from Wat Sri Suphan. It was noted that the guideline to the Ubonchat Sattathip Design corresponded with the results from the in-depth interviews with experts in jewelry design and jewelry products to help determine suitability and potential of the newly created design.

It was the researcher's attempt to use Ubonchat Sattathip Design for cultural silver jewelry and the study was treated as an exemplified case of a new flower design after indigenous flowers known to local people in almost all areas in Thailand. It was expected that Ubonchat Sattathip Design can be used to create valuable and exquisitely beautiful accessories. This was meant to serve as a model for cultural silver jewelry and decorations for the human body as well as religious or worship places.

Ubonchat Sattathip is in fact a further development from Bua Noppakao Design; that is, the design with nine beautiful lotus petal colors after colors of different nine gems. Fineness of cultural silver jewelry was suitable for Wat Sri Suphan in Chiang Mai Province as the world's first silver temple featuring Ubonchat Sattathip. The design was further refined as shown in Figure 2.

Figure 2: Refined Design of Ubonchat Sattathip

7.2. From the opinion data given by 400 users (including tourists) of cultural silver jewelry in Chiang Mai Province, the findings were summarized from the users' responses to the questionnaire as follows:

Part 1 Demographic Variables of Participants

- The participants were 205 male (51.25%), and 195 female (48.75%)
- As for age, 98 participants (24.50%) were under 25 years, 152 participants (38.00%) of 25-35 years followed by 99 participants (24.75%) of 36-45 years, and 51 participants (12.75%) of 46+ years.
- As for occupations, 150 participants (37.50%) are working in government service/ state enterprises, followed by 100 (25.00%) in companies and private businesses, 101(25.25%) in business occupations, and 49 (12.25%) studying at university.
- Details of average monthly income were: 150 participants (37.50%) with 15,000-20000 baht, 101 (25.25%) with 20,001-25,000 baht, 100 (25.00%) with 25,001-30,000 baht, and 49 (12.25%) with less than 15,000 baht.
- Of 400 participants, 252 participants (63.00%) were tourists and 148 participants (37.00%) were local residents.
- As for their interest in visiting temples, 202 participants (50.50%) for local architecture study, number, 99 (24.75%) for local culture, and 99 (24.75%) for recreation.
- Influencers of temple visit were: 151 (37.75%) by self-interest, 101 (25.25%) by public relations, 99 (24.75%) by family guidance, and 49 (12.25%) by peer contact.

Part 2 Users' Opinions about Cultural Silver Jewelry of Ubonchat Sattathip

The study results were as follows:

- Opinions about Cultural Silver Jewelry Reviews of Ubonchat Sattathip Design: overall at a high level (Mean=4.43, S.D.=0.38).
- The obtained data were sorted in a descending order: Cultural silver jewelry can be widely used for trial in other temples with opinion at the highest level (Mean=4.75, S.D.=0.43), followed by cultural silver jewelry having a psychological value to the audience at the highest level (Mean=4.62, S.D.=0.48). Cultural silver jewelry

designed to suit local culture and local area was at the highest level (Mean=4.54, S.D.=0.49); cultural silver jewelry with a reasonable design was also at the highest level (Mean=4.52, S.D.=0.50).

- Other opinions were also at the high level: Cultural silver jewelry being valuable in the arrangement of the temple at Mean=4.49 (S.D.=0.50), Cultural silver jewelry conveying the history of Buddhism at Mean=4.37 (S.D.=0.48), Cultural silver jewelry in beautiful local style at Mean=4.12 (S.D.=0.78), and Cultural silver jewelry conveying the story of the Buddha at Mean=4.00 (S.D. = 0.70).

8. Discussion and Conclusion of Findings

It was found that the users' overall opinions on cultural silver jewelry design and development of Ubonchat Sattathip were at a high level (Mean=4.43, S.D.=0.38). It was a combination of bringing out valuable silverware in Chiang Mai and uniqueness of Wat Sri Suphan in Chiang Mai Province. The design was derived from the lotus as the symbol of purity and awakening in Buddhism. The lotus flower has been used to worship the Buddha images and statues since the long past over thousand years. The lotus flower's beauty in various shapes and colors appeal to the eyes of the spectators in artistic impression on the local aesthetics (Suwanthada & Sikkha, 2018).

The study showed the identified guideline for the development of cultural silver jewelry using Ubonchat Sattathip on the basis of the experts' evaluation of the design for development of products in silver jewelry or for decorative purposes. As shown in the users' overall opinion at a high level (Mean=4.43, S.D.=0.38), the design of Ubonchat Sattathip appeared very promising for further development—be it in the form of cultural silver jewelry, architectural enhancement, decorations for temples and worship places, and cultural/ souvenir products.

The point on cultural products and souvenirs from local wisdom was pursued by earlier researchers, particularly Thongsupon, & Pinitdanklang (2017) on Thai jewelry in four regions' silver jewelry design responsive to the needs of the contemporary clients. Narongwit & Saengchanthai (2019) also reported on cultural souvenirs of the clay Buddha image at the learning center of Nakhon Chum amulet making, Kamphaeng Phet Province, which were well received by consumers and tourists. The results of the present study pointed to the need to develop such a new design as Ubonchat Sattathip to meet with users' needs for contemporary silver jewelry designs for decorative purposes for the body and architecture.

9. Recommendations

Based on the findings on (1) guidelines for the development of cultural silver jewelry using Ubonchat Sattathip, (2) the needs of users in Chiang Mai for cultural silver jewelry using Ubonchat Sattathip to add value of its products, and (3) creation of cultural silver jewelry based on Thai traditions and needs of users in Chiang Mai Province, the researcher would like to recommend the following:

- The new design requires research into the viewpoints of cultural experts and potential users of products of cultural silver jewelry or silverware.

- It is imperative that such a new design as Ubonchat Sattathip secure opinions from the prospective clientele to determine how well it would be accepted in real products.
- The development of cultural silverware/ jewelry products can help support local business well by adding value to newly developed ornaments that can appeal to the general public as well as foreigners or tourists. This is meant to generate income for the communities involved as well as create a sustainable career for the local people.

The researcher has considered possibility of further research into foreigners' preferences as potential users of cultural jewelry products. In addition, more research into silver jewelry combined with other types of auspicious flowers, particularly *Magnolia liliifera*, known in Thai as "monta," would be interesting to the contemporary jewelry and silverware clientele in the tourism and hospitality industry.

10. The Author

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