



RESEARCH ARTICLE

Structural Equation Modeling of Cultural Novelty Factors Affecting Attitude and Purchase Intention of Products Processed from Local Cultural Resources in Thailand

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ABSTRACT

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This study aims to examine the level of novelty of products derived from cultural resources, consumer attitudes toward these products, and the level of consumers' purchase intentions regarding products from cultural resources. Additionally, it seeks to investigate the relationship patterns among variables using a structural equation modeling (SEM) approach, which could serve as a guideline for promoting marketing strategies in the context of products derived from cultural resources. This will help enhance the grassroots economy in Thailand. The study's population comprises consumers who have experience purchasing products from Thai cultural resources. A sample size of 400 participants was determined, and a questionnaire created by the researcher was used as the data collection tool. The data were then analyzed using structural equation modeling to examine the conformity of empirical data and to study the influence between variables. The findings reveal that the developed structural equation model aligns well with the empirical data. It was found that the novelty of products derived from cultural resources positively influences both consumer attitudes and purchase intentions regarding these products at a statistically significant level of less than 0.001. Moreover, the novelty of the products and consumer attitudes can predict 43% of consumers' purchase intentions regarding products derived from cultural resources.

INTRODUCTION

From the 13th National Economic and Social Development Plan of Thailand (2023-2027), under Target 2, "Thailand as a destination for quality and sustainable tourism," and Target 8, Strategy 1 for strengthening the grassroots economy, sub-strategy 1.2 focuses on empowering the community economy. This will be achieved by using existing community networks as the primary mechanism for driving development through research, technology, innovation, and local wisdom. It is essential to seek and utilize cultural resources, local wisdom, and unique local identities to develop community enterprise products and enhance their strength. According to data from the Thai People Map and Analytics Platform (TPMAP), an integrated data system coordinated by the National Economic and Social Development Council (NESDC) and the National Electronics and Computer Technology Center (NECTEC), Ministry of Science and Technology, recent surveys in 2023 indicate a significant proportion of poor populations in the 21 provinces of the Central Region of Thailand, excluding Bangkok. The data reveal that many provinces still have a high percentage of people living in poverty (Thai People Map and Analytics Platform, online access, May 2024). Moreover, the data suggest that poverty is predominantly in rural areas compared to urban areas over the past 30 years (National Statistical Office, online access, May 2024). These households often come from sub-districts or communities not prioritized in economic development due to a lack of

unique local identities. Local identities are critical in attracting tourism or creating distinctive products (Phra Kru Bideek Wichan Wisutho, 2020; Nattaprai Chaisinkunanon & Kesuda Phokanit, 2023).

The use of cultural resources for marketing purposes has a long-standing history. The concept of “Cultural Resources for Marketing” emphasizes the importance of cultural resources in the business and marketing context to enhance value and create differentiation in the market competition (Aljumah et al., 2021). From a review of related literature, including works by Lin et al. (2007), Shin, Cassidy, and Moore (2011), Eunju Ko et al. (2013), and Qin et al. (2019), it has been found that utilizing cultural resources or unique traditional elements within a community or social group can effectively be applied as a marketing strategy. This process is called the “cultural product transformation” (Cultural Product). In the literature by Qin et al. (2019), it is evident that applying identity or stories to create novel elements and integrating them with products aligns with the current market's response, leading to an intention to purchase products developed from culture. These are considered “Traditional Cultural Products” (TCPs), incorporating traditional cultural resources as core components. Qin et al. (2019) also highlight that creating novelty through traditional cultural perspectives generates product acceptance. This acceptance is reflected in the intention to support and the development of positive attitudes toward the product, whether through novel tastes, scents, sounds, or other elements resulting from such integration. This novelty is well-supported in the literature, both in marketing and tourism contexts, fostering a desire to support these products from within the same social groups and from others who become aware of the creation of products with cultural or traditional cultural resource components (Cattani et al., 2022; Liu, 2021; Huang et al., 2021; Yen & Wang, 2020; Min & Schwarz, 2022; Sivrikaya & Pekerşen, 2020; Nguyen et al., 2020).

The concept of novelty in the context of products derived from wisdom or innovation that transforms cultural resources remains ambiguous regarding consumer acceptance, as there may be distortions or deviations in the cultural representation (Rabadán, 2021). This ambiguity necessitates caution and awareness when using innovation to modify or develop cultural resources to gain a competitive advantage (Chen et al., 2021). This caution is crucial, as it ensures that while novelty can add value and differentiate products in a competitive market, it does not risk alienating consumers if perceived as a distortion or inappropriate use of cultural resources. Therefore, marketers must carefully balance innovation with respect for cultural authenticity to optimize consumer acceptance, fostering a sense of awareness among the readers.

Given the background above and the issue's significance, the research team aims to study “A Structural Equation Model of Cultural Novelty Factors Influencing Attitudes and Purchase Intentions of Products Derived from the Transformation of Local Cultural Resources in Thailand.” This study seeks to examine how the incorporation of novelty into products derived from cultural resources affects their commercial value within the community context of Thailand and contributes to the sustainable improvement of the quality of life at the grassroots economic level. The potential benefits of this research are significant, and the outcomes could bring about macroeconomic benefits to the country as a whole.

Objectives

1. To examine the novelty of products derived from cultural resources, consumer attitudes toward these products, and consumer purchase intentions regarding them.
2. To investigate the influence of the novelty of products derived from cultural resources on consumer attitudes toward these products and consumer purchase intentions regarding products derived from cultural resources.

3. To study the structural equation model in the marketing context of products derived from cultural resources and understand its characteristics.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Ko et al. (2013) describe the transformation of cultural resources into products, emphasizing that traditional culture in a contemporary cultural context has garnered significant attention due to its practical ability to add value to the market. The use of traditional culture in marketing, referred to as “traditional cultural marketing,” involves leveraging traditional cultural resources to create added value, communicate, promote, and present products to consumers effectively (Lin et al., 2007; Shin et al., 2011, as cited by Ko et al., 2013). This practice is a form of cultural commodification, where cultural products can be either tangible or intangible and are often produced by integrating culture with the ability to create economic or social value (Ahmad, 2006, as cited by Ko et al., 2013). The concept of commodification, when applied to culture—such as ideas, beliefs, and traditions—often involves abstract elements. By embedding culture within concrete objects or practices, capitalism selectively appropriates certain cultural aspects that are suitable and in demand by consumers or stimulates consumer demand, leading to the transformation of culture into products by assigning an exchange value (Ekjitra Khameesuksri, 2008, as cited by Thanyapat Srimarut, 2015).

Novelty in the context of a product refers to the extent to which the product can present new features or capabilities beyond the current expectations of consumers or customers. This novelty enhances the product's competitive edge compared to other products available (Nagaraj et al., 2020). Additionally, the novelty of a product is often related to innovation in creative thinking and the design of new products, as it involves developing new products capable of meeting customer needs innovatively (Siwiec & Pacana, 2024). Keith et al. (2024) further explain that product novelty does not rely solely on creativity to gain acceptance; it also requires consideration of other contextual factors, such as the inherent risks associated with the product itself. These risks, especially within the cultural context, might involve distortions or alterations that compromise the authenticity of the cultural origins (Chen et al., 2021).

Consumer attitudes represent the positive or negative evaluations of a particular product, service, or brand, which is crucial in predicting purchase intentions. Attitudes often serve as an essential intermediary that transmits various stimuli to influence whether consumer purchase intentions increase or decrease (Arachchi & Samarasinghe, 2023). To stimulate a more favorable attitude or a higher level of purchase intention, appropriate triggers are required. These triggers lead to beneficial commercial outcomes for both goods and services, thus promoting a positive trend (Li & Peng, 2021).

According to the literature by Abdullah and Yu (2019), novelty stimulates consumers' desire to try new things constantly. In the context of various goods or products, novelty is a crucial factor influencing consumer attitudes and purchase intentions. This aligns with the works of Yildirim and Yalcintekin (2021) and Barber et al. (2020), who explain that novelty is a perceptual experience not typically associated with everyday products encountered by consumers. It arises when innovation or creative thinking transforms products into new forms, significantly increasing consumer purchase intentions. In the context of products rooted in traditional cultural wisdom, Barber et al. (2020) found that the perception of novelty in traditional local products greatly influences consumer attitudes and purchase intentions. In the marketing context, purchase intention is closely related to consumer attitudes, which stem from stimuli that must be carefully considered to determine whether they will positively or negatively influence the level of purchase intention (Li & Peng, 2021).

Additionally, other studies have explored the relationships between these variables and found that novelty significantly affects consumer attitudes and purchase intentions (Rachbini & Agustina, 2019; El-Zeiny, 2019; Pereira et al., 2019; Powrani & Kennedy, 2018). Based on this, the researchers formulated the following hypotheses:

1. **Hypothesis 1:** The novelty of products derived from cultural resources directly influences consumer attitudes toward products derived from cultural resources.
2. **Hypothesis 2:** The novelty of products derived from cultural resources directly influences consumer purchase intentions regarding products derived from cultural resources.
3. **Hypothesis 3:** Consumer attitudes toward products derived from cultural resources directly influence consumer purchase intentions regarding products derived from cultural resources.

Based on these hypotheses, the researcher developed a conceptual framework for the study, as shown in Figure 1.

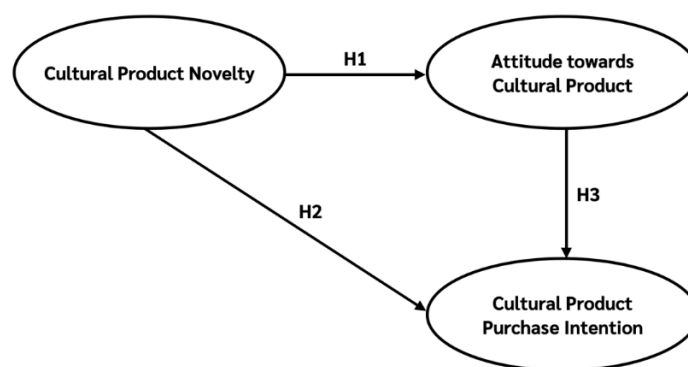


Figure 1: The Conceptual Framework Illustrates the Relationships Between the Variables in this Research

METHODOLOGY

The population for this study consists of potential consumers who have had previous experience purchasing products derived from the transformation of any local cultural resources in Thailand. The population size is large, and the exact number of consumers is unknown. The researcher determined the sample size for this study based on the guidelines provided by Hair et al. (2010), which recommend that an appropriate sample size for structural equation modeling (SEM) analysis is between 200 and 400 samples. This recommendation is also consistent with the literature by Chomeya et al. (2024) and Hair et al. (2008). Therefore, the researcher has set the sample size at 400 and will collect additional data for reserve purposes and to ensure the quality analysis of the research instruments.

The researcher employed online platform-based sampling by creating a questionnaire and including a screening question on the first page to target the desired population characteristics. A convenience sampling method was used to distribute the questionnaire through various online social network communities where products transformed or enhanced by cultural resources for novelty are sold. The researcher received 498 completed questionnaires from consumers. The first 50 questionnaires were used to test the quality of the research instrument and were not included in the statistical analysis, leaving 400 samples for the analysis. The remaining 48 responses were kept as reserve data.

The instrument used in this study was a questionnaire developed based on the literature by Qin et al. (2019), Yildirim et al. (2021), Zhang & Zhang (2022), and Kusuma (2021). The quality of the instrument was initially verified for content validity by the experts. After reviewing the results, the researcher calculated the Index of Item-Objective Congruence (IOC) and made the necessary adjustments (Pornchai Sakdanuwatthawong, 2015). The instrument's reliability was further evaluated using Cronbach's Alpha (Cronbach, 1951). An Alpha value of 0.70 or above indicates that the instrument is reliable. The results showed that the reliability coefficient for the novelty variable was 0.839, the attitude variable was 0.885, and the purchase intention variable was 0.829, all above the acceptable threshold, indicating that the instrument is suitable for data collection.

The researcher employed statistical techniques using structural equation modeling (SEM) to analyze the data. This included conducting Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) to validate the measurement model and Path Analysis to examine the influence and relationships between latent variables. The analysis aimed to study the influence among latent variables, the factor loadings of the observed variables, and the goodness of fit of the constructed structural equation model with the empirical data.

RESULTS

The demographic characteristics of the survey respondents, which include gender, age, and average monthly income, revealed that the majority of the sample were male, with 247 respondents accounting for 61.75%. The largest age group was between 21 and 30 years old, with 194 respondents making up 48.5% of the sample. The majority of respondents had an average monthly income between 10,001 to 20,000 baht, totaling 156 individuals or 39%.

Before testing the structural equation model (SEM), the researcher assessed the measurement model's performance. This involved using Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) to check the construct validity and reliability of the measurement scales. The initial measurement model, before any modifications, is shown in Figure 2, where "NO" represents Novelty, "AT" represents Attitude, and "PU" represents Purchase Intention.

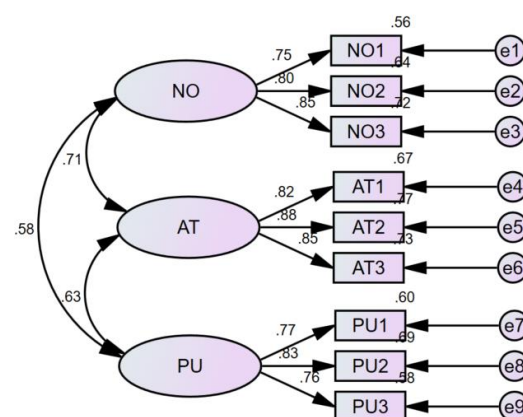


Figure 2: The Initial Measurement Model Used to Assess Construct Validity and Reliability Through Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA).

Based on Figure 2, the analysis of the measurement model reveals that the internal relationships of the observed variables for each construct exhibit factor loadings higher than the correlations among the latent variables included in this study. The analysis shows that

all observed variables have factor loadings greater than the threshold of 0.70. Moreover, when assessing the model fit of the structural equation model with the empirical data, all fit indices meet the required criteria: CMIN/df = 3.466, GFI = 0.956, NFI = 0.959, RFI = 0.939, IFI = 0.971, TLI = 0.956, CFI = 0.970, and RMSEA = 0.079. These values exceed the standard fit indices Hair et al. (2010) defined.

The researcher then tested the structural model. For construct reliability, Composite Reliability (CR) coefficients were calculated using nine observed variables, following the guidelines by Fornell and Larcker (1981). The results are presented in Table 1.

Table 1: Construct Reliability Results

Latent Variable	Number of Observed Variables	Composite Reliability (CR)	Average Variance Extracted (AVE)
Novelty	3	0.843	0.642
Attitude	3	0.887	0.723
Purchase Intention	3	0.830	0.620

These results indicate that all latent variables have composite reliability (CR) values above the acceptable threshold of 0.70 and average variance extracted (AVE) values above 0.50, demonstrating adequate construct reliability and validity for the measurement model.

Based on Table 1, the Composite Reliability (CR) coefficients for all variables exceed 0.60, indicating that each latent variable effectively explains the set of observed variables according to the measurement model developed by the researcher (Diamantopoulos & Siguaw, 2000, pp. 90-91; Saarani & Shahadan, 2012).

Regarding the examination of convergent and discriminant validity, the researcher assessed convergent validity using the Average Variance Extracted (AVE). The table shows that the AVE values for each latent variable are all above 0.50, demonstrating sufficient precision in measuring the variables (Fornell & Larcker, 1981). For discriminant validity testing, based on the criteria from Fornell and Larcker (1981), it was found that the square root of the AVE for each variable was greater than the pairwise correlation coefficients between each latent variable and other latent variables in the model. Therefore, the model is considered to have adequate discriminant validity (Hair et al., 2014).

After verifying various forms of validity, the researcher tested the overall fit of the structural equation model (SEM) against the empirical data. The Goodness of Fit Indices (GFIs) results show that all the indices met the required criteria: CMIN/df = 3.466, which is less than 5 (Loo & Thorpe, 2002); GFI = 0.956, which is greater than 0.80; NFI = 0.959, which is greater than or equal to 0.9 (Bentler, 1999); IFI = 0.971, which is greater than or equal to 0.9 (Bentler, 1999); TLI = 0.956, which is greater than or equal to 0.9 (Bentler, 1999); CFI = 0.970, which is greater than or equal to 0.9 (Bentler, 1999); RMSEA = 0.079, which is less than or equal to 0.08 (Hair et al., 1998). These values indicate that the model fits well according to the standard criteria. The structural equation model created from this analysis is shown in Figure 3.

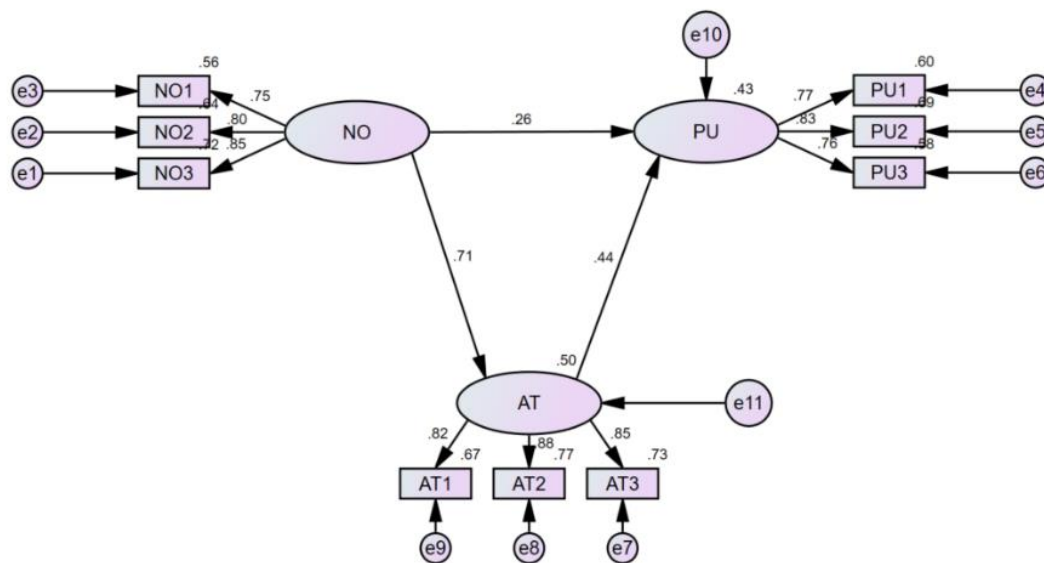


Figure 3:

The Structural Equation Model (SEM) for Marketing in the Context of Products Derived from Cultural Resources.

Based on the hypothesis testing analysis, all three hypotheses were accepted, as indicated by the P-values below the 0.01 level, as shown in Table 2.

Table 2: Hypothesis Testing Results

Relationship	C.R. Value	Standardized Regression Coefficient	P-value	Hypothesis Testing
NO -> AT	12.705	0.640	0.000**	Accepted
NO -> PU	3.287	0.251	0.001**	Accepted
AT -> PU	5.610	0.466	0.000**	Accepted

The results of the hypothesis testing can be summarized as follows:

- Hypothesis 1:** The novelty of products derived from cultural resources directly influences consumer attitudes toward these products, with a statistically significant level below 0.001 and an influence weight of 0.26.
- Hypothesis 2:** The novelty of products derived from cultural resources directly influences consumer purchase intentions toward these products, with a statistically significant level below 0.001 and an influence weight of 0.71.
- Hypothesis 3:** Consumer attitudes toward products derived from cultural resources directly influence consumer purchase intentions, with a statistically significant level below 0.001 and an influence weight of 0.44.

The novelty of products derived from cultural resources and consumer attitudes toward these products can jointly predict 43% of the variance in the level of purchase intention. The path analysis results for the latent variables are shown in Table 3.

Table 3: Path Analysis Results

Path	Direct Effect	Indirect Effect	Total Effect
NO -> AT	0.705	-	0.705
NO -> PU	0.264	0.313	0.577
AT -> PU	0.444	-	0.444

The path analysis results indicate that The novelty of products (NO) has a direct effect of 0.705 on consumer attitudes (AT), with no indirect effect, resulting in a total effect of 0.705. while the novelty of products (NO) also has a direct effect of 0.264 on purchase intention (PU) and an indirect effect of 0.313 through consumer attitudes (AT), leading to a total effect of 0.577. Finally, consumer attitudes (AT) have a direct effect of 0.444 on purchase intention (PU), with no indirect effect, resulting in a total effect of 0.444.

These results suggest that the novelty of products from cultural resources influences consumer attitudes and purchase intentions directly and indirectly, with consumer attitudes as a mediating variable that enhances the total effect on purchase intention.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

The study aimed to analyze the components and confirmatory factors to develop a structural equation model that fit the empirical data well. The results of the hypothesis testing for the three hypotheses can be summarized as follows:

Hypothesis 1 indicates that the novelty of products derived from cultural resources directly influences consumer attitudes toward these products. The results support the acceptance of this hypothesis, indicating that a higher level of perceived novelty in products developed from or transformed by cultural resources leads to a more positive consumer attitude. Novelty positively impacts consumer attitudes by creating excitement when comparing new products to familiar or traditional ones (Muralidharan & Ferle, 2017). In the context of products developed using cultural resources, these findings align with the research of El-Zeiny (2019), who studied the impact of novelty in product design by incorporating cultural resources, increasing positive consumer attitudes toward these culturally enriched products. This finding also aligns with the literature by Barber et al. (2020), which examined how culturally novel elements in product design can positively affect consumer perceptions and attitudes, highlighting the importance of integrating cultural authenticity and innovation to create appealing products.

Hypothesis 2 suggests that the novelty of products derived from cultural resources directly influences consumer purchase intentions toward these products. This can be explained by the fact that when consumers perceive a high level of novelty in products developed or transformed from cultural resources, their purchase intentions for such products increase. This effect results from consumers perceiving and valuing the cultural elements embedded in the products, which aligns positively with marketing stimuli and enhances their intention to purchase them (Ko et al., 2013). The results of this hypothesis are consistent with the findings of Qin et al. (2019), Powrani and Kennedy (2018), and Rachbini and Agustina (2019), all of which support the idea that incorporating novelty from cultural elements into product design can positively affect consumer purchase intentions by creating a sense of value, uniqueness, and emotional connection with the products. This positive impact occurs because consumers respond favorably to innovative products that reflect cultural significance, enhancing their willingness to purchase.

Hypothesis 3 confirmed that consumer attitudes toward products derived from cultural resources directly influence their purchase intentions for such products. This can be explained by the fact that when consumer attitudes become more positive, their purchase intentions increase, indicating a direct correlation. Attitudes play a critical role in stimulating purchase intentions, as changes in attitudes affect consumers' perceptions of the product's functional value, emotional value, or overall satisfaction. These changes lead to a higher likelihood of the consumer purchasing the product (Chen et al., 2020). The results of this hypothesis are consistent with the literature by Won and Kim (2020) and Vergura et al. (2020), which also emphasize that positive consumer attitudes can significantly enhance purchase intentions by fostering a sense of value and satisfaction toward culturally enriched products.

Practical Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, it is recommended that community enterprises and stakeholders involved in creating or developing products that incorporate local wisdom and cultural resources should prioritize the clear and distinctive application of novelty. This approach will help create a competitive advantage by differentiating their products in the market, eliciting feelings of freshness and excitement among consumers. Additionally, marketing efforts should highlight the unique aspects of local wisdom or cultural resources embedded in the products to ensure consumers know these elements. This strategy is crucial in fostering consumer interest and developing a more positive attitude toward the products, effectively positioning them above competing offerings.

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