

**THE DEVELOPMENT OF PROTOTYPE BRANDING FOR  
SUSTAINABLE RICE FROM SMALL-SCALED FARMING IN  
THAILAND**



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**A Dissertation Submitted in Partial  
Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of  
Doctor of Philosophy (Communication Arts and Innovation)  
The Graduate School of Communication Arts and Management  
Innovation  
National Institute of Development Administration  
2018**

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## ABSTRACT

<b>Title of Dissertation</b>	THE DEVELOPMENT OF PROTOTYPE BRANDING FOR SUSTAINABLE RICE FROM SMALL-SCALED FARMING IN THAILAND
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<b>Degree</b>	Doctor of Philosophy (Communication Arts and Innovation)
<b>Year</b>	2018

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The research of Development of Prototype Branding for Sustainable Rice from Small-scaled Farming in Thailand has the essential objectives which includes 1) To study the branding process and communications from rice brand of successful farmers who have production process of small- scaled farms in Thailand; 2) To study methods and prototype of sustainable rice branding for farmers who have production process of small-scaled farms in Thailand; and 3) To study acceptance of sustainable rice branding prototype for farmers who have production process of small-scaled farms in Thailand. This is a mixed methods research which is allocated into three parts in accordance with its objectives respectively. The first part is in-depth interviews with successful rice branding developers. The second part involves in-depth interviews with stakeholders of rice branding development like branding experts, state sections and involved private sections. In addition a survey was implemented on the nationwide consumers and group discussion with consumers. The third part consists of group discussion with stakeholders of rice branding development like branding experts, successful rice branding developers, state sections and consumers.

The results of the study revealed that development of successful branding for sustainable rice from small-scaled farming in Thailand had been developed in line with all steps and elements of branding. However, brand developers failed to analyze the data systematically, which might lead to deviation resulting in the next stage of branding. Besides, when it comes to identify and establish brand positioning and values, it lacks a sense of differences from which of competitors. This affected brand differentiation and awareness for consumers. With regards to the development of brand elements, the study found that brand developers clearly emphasized more on concrete components than on

abstract components causing a lack of brand identity in developing unstable elements of branding. In brand communications, most of Thai rice brand developers have no plan in communicating their brands in a step by step manner, which is a substantial weak point that needs improvement.

In terms of the guidelines for the development of organic rice branding, the brand developers should analyze data extensively to discover strength of their own products, which is different from those in market. This includes the identification of obvious marketing competitors and conducting a data analysis of marketing competitors in search of an opportunity to deliver our own brand in a different dimension. They should specify their target groups and study consumers' buying decision behaviors on rice products. They also need to consider factors of government policies and online media popularity which can evidently create both opportunities and barriers to development of rice branding. When all factors considered, the brand developers would be able to utilize the acquired data for a guideline of identification and positioning organic rice brands to be distinctive among competitors and compatible to consumers' needs. The next step of development of brand elements is that brand developers should realize a connection between brand element development and brand positioning together with brand personalities. It is also found that product packaging has been found to be very important in organic rice branding. In terms of the marketing plan and activity, brand developers are supposed to design message strategically, deploying storytelling to mainly present emotional benefits. Communications should use suitable media such as online media, event and packaging so as to put organic rice brands in consumers' choices and eventually develop become consumers' buying preference. Next the performance evaluation should be conducted to assess two main dimensions. This includes a marketing performance evaluation focusing on a source of sales volume which can be done in mid-term to long-term and consumer mindset evaluation. This can be done immediately in order to collect in-depth data and perceive the factors required in a strategy development of brand improvement. Also, sustainable brands should adapt to survive constantly to maintain brand consistency by adjusting some of its elements. However, it is important to keep the brand core identity enduringly for its effective sustainability.

For the development of prototype branding for sustainable rice from small-scaled farming in Thailand, the researcher has studied guidelines and approaches of brand development from those involved and then developed an outline of brand development under the name of ‘Once Upon a Rice’. This brand is in a position of 100% organic rice. Its brand design of all elements highlights simplicity and modernity.

In addition, a trademark consists of a brand name and tagline: Organic rice for organic life. Packaging design focuses on a good connection with its brand personalities, capability of product internal protection and perceived ease of use. In brand communication, could be used for a strategy of storytelling to manifest every thoughtful manufacturing process together with a scheme of an integrated marketing communication. In terms of the evaluation process, there are two main dimensions to be focused upon. First is the evaluation of marketing performance and an evaluation of consumer mindset. In the final process, the researcher recommended that the brand developers should keep their products diverse by varying its packaging annually and designing a gift packaging in line with several special festivals as well as keep communication manifold by focusing on a storytelling design and communicative channel that keeps up with the times. Nevertheless, all element alterations must be based on continuous analysis of data.

The researcher has brought an outline of development of prototype branding for sustainable rice from small-scaled farming in Thailand into a study of acceptance of reviewers involved in rice branding. It is found that the outline has received acceptance from most of them. Yet, there are a few suggestions to change a tagline into “Once Upon A Time: Before Coming to Your Plate” totally with its brand name and be easier to remember. It should also include some informative facts about benefits of each species through QR Code which links to its social community. In the first period of the product debut, proactive communications should be adopted and added with a presentation of wisdom and expertise of the rice farmers. According to suggestions from the reviewer acceptance test, the researcher has taken the recommendations into action for development of prototype branding for sustainable rice from small-scaled farming in Thailand in order to propose to the government sector for a future implementation.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Completion of this doctoral dissertation was possible with the support of several people.

Firstly, I would like to express my sincere gratitude to my thesis advisor, Asst. Prof. Dr. Bu-nga Chaisuwan for her great support. Throughout my thesis-writing period, she provided encouragement, sound advice, good teaching, good company, and lots of good ideas. I would not have achieved this far and this thesis would not have been completed without all the support that I have always received from her.

Besides my advisor, I would like to thank the rest of my thesis committee: Prof. Dr. Yubol Benjarongkij and Asst. Prof. Dr. Tatri Taiphapoon, for their guidance, feedback, suggestions and encouragement.

Finally, but by no means least, thanks go to my family and friends for almost unbelievable support. They are the most important people in my world and I dedicate this thesis to them.

I could not have done any of this without you. Thank you all.

Panpilas Kuldilok  
September 2018

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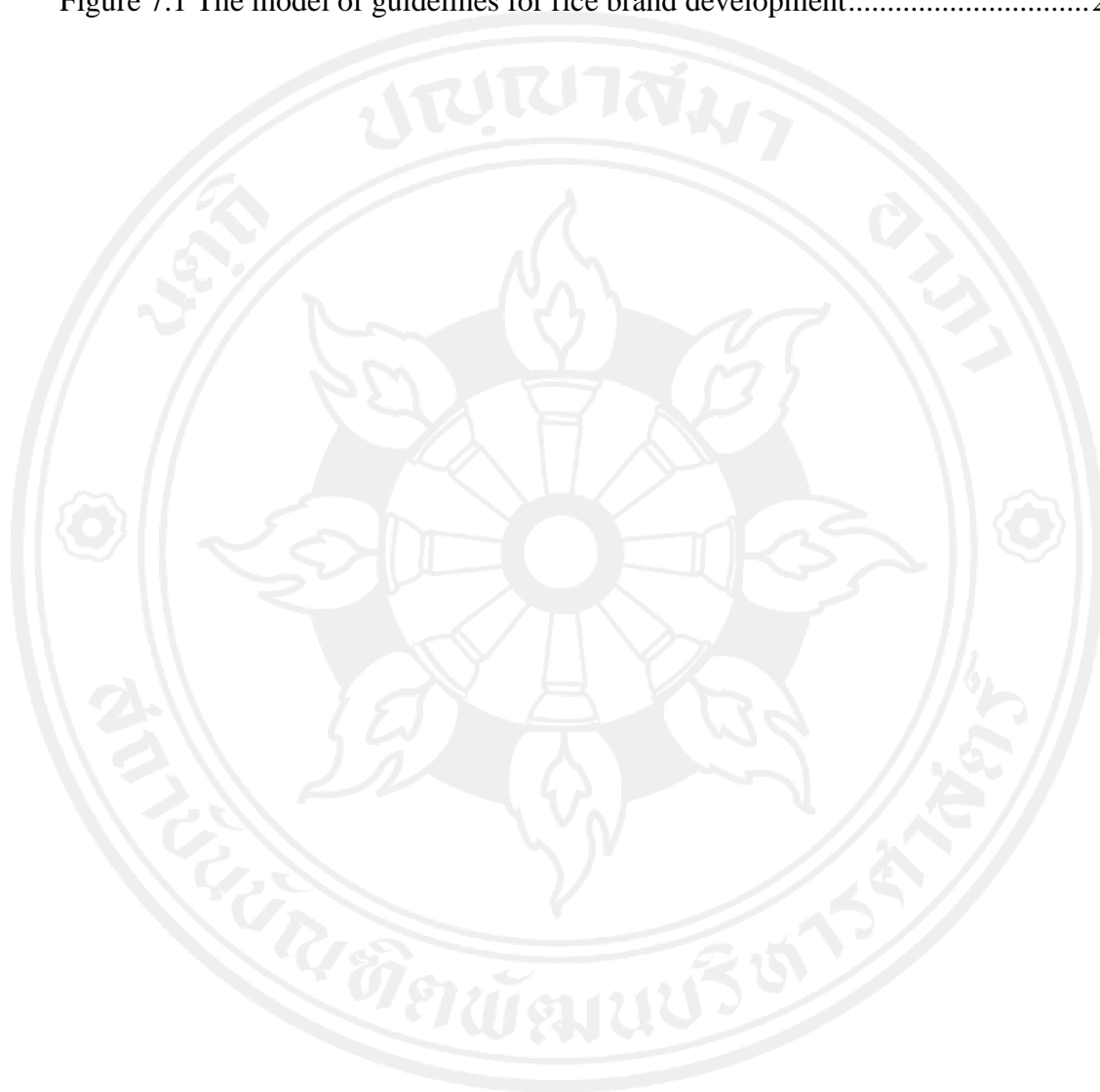
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# **CHAPTER 1**

## **INTRODUCTION**

### **1.1 Statement and Significance of the Study**

Rice is considered as an essential export product of the Asian Region especially in Cambodia, Laos, Myanmar, Vietnam, and Thailand or the CLMVT countries. These CLMVT countries have great advantages in terms of abundance in the variety of natural resources, ready availability of raw materials, and low cost of agricultural labor. However, there are some key challenges faced by small-scale farmers in the Asian Region. These include the lack of (i) production development technology, (ii) good management, and (iii) skilled young labor able to operate modern technology. These shortages lead to a disadvantage in global competition (Hongthong, 2016) and stable income. Thai farmers are the poorest in Asia since the cost of production is significantly higher than other Asian countries. A research by the Center for International Trade Studies, University of the Thai Chamber of Commerce, found that on average, Thai farmers earn a net income of THB 1,555.97 per rai, which is lower than its neighbors. For instance, on average, farmers in Myanmar generate a net income of THB 3,484.1 per rai while Vietnamese farmers earn THB 3,180.74 per rai. Although Thai farmers have the highest total income and average land size, they have a greater cost of production. As a result, they have the lowest income in comparison to their peers in the neighboring nations (Pisanwanich, 2014).

Thailand currently has more than 12 million farmers, which accounts for one third of its total labor force. They are considered as a major sub-population in the country. Therefore, in the event these farmers face problems in their livelihood and source of income, the national economy will be negatively impacted (Nakornthap, 2016) Upon considering the differences in family backgrounds and challenges, Thai farmers could be categorized into 3 groups based on the types of land tenures as follows (Kusanthia, 2016):

1. Small-scale farmers that farm rice on their own land- Most of the farmers in this group are poor and have low net income per rai. However, the most significant characteristics of this group is the fact that they utilize own labor rather than hiring. Also, they use less chemical fertilizers, plant growth regulators, and pesticides.

2. Rental farm farmers or non-land owner farmers- The key problem of this group is the rental cost, which is the main cost of production. The farmer increases their income by leasing more land in order to generate sufficient income to cover their expenses.

3. Farmers who own land in combination with land rental- This group has adaptive ability and tend to be the most progressive thinking compared to the other two groups. Also, this group has an interest in learning new information including ability to do self-production planning and marketing. Nevertheless, this group has a high cost of production due to labor employment at almost every stage of production.

According to the above information, each group of farmers has different level of difficulties. However, one common problem faced by all farmers is the high cost of production which does not correlate to income levels and caused by three main reasons; 1) failure to get the desired result in rice farming 2) decrease in rice market price; and 3) shortage of new generation farmers in agriculture sector.

Failure to get the desired result in rice farming is determined by both external and internal factors. External factors include (i) farmers are forced by middlemen to sell rice at below market price; (ii) legal and market structure are not conducive to small-scale farmers; and (iii) natural disasters like flood and drought. Internal factors consist of (i) high cost of production, (ii) consumerism lifestyle, and (iii) knowledge deficiency, especially in modernized agriculture and market mechanism knowledge

In 2016, rice prices have dropped to levels that are the lowest in the past 10 years in Thailand. This is due to oversupply from three sources: 1) higher yields of rice per rai in the Northeastern region in Thailand as a result from abundance of water; 2) high paddy stockpiling during the drought in 2016; and 3) middlemen were faced with financial problems due to unfavorable rice policies, thus they could not buy rice at the same quantity. Aside from the aforementioned supply factors, the increasing supply of jasmine rice from Vietnam is also a key factor negatively affecting the demand for Thai rice. If Thailand cannot effectively deal with this

problem, it may lose its market share to Vietnam in the long-term. Apart from the competitor's growth factor, another vital problem that has driven the slump in the price of rice is the lack of appropriate guidelines and methods to create value-added products. As a consequence, the selling price alone is not enough to cover the cost of production. (Kingkaew, 2016)

The last problem is a lack of new generation farmers in agriculture sector. The average age of farmers is rising, as young people prefer to work in the industrial and service sectors. People, who are still working in the agricultural sector, would remain three times poorer than the ones who work in other sectors. Currently, the average age of Thai farmers is around 58-60 years old (Sarikulya, 2016 ), which results in inferior skills to adapt to new technology for creating added value in products.

The price crisis event in B.E 2559 saw a good sign that many related sectors in Thailand were keenly finding solutions as they focused their attention to the national problem. The solutions proposed could be divided into three parts based on the contribution from different stakeholders. The first part is the solutions by the government, which mainly focus on the management of consequences, such as rice pledging scheme, rice price guarantee program, paddy credit program, and price support scheme. The government always utilizes these intervention programs to uphold price collapse in short term (Poapongsakorn, 2016). The second part is the solution by private and other related sectors. This includes supplying essential machines for harvesting, seeking for the places to sell rice, and ordering rice from farmers directly instead of through companies. However, these schemes would only temporarily help farmers to have better life and relieve their struggles in the short term. The third part is the solution from people sector. For instance, increase people's awareness to buy rice from farmers directly including sharing farmers' information through personal channels lending their best support. Meanwhile, the farmers are also grouping to support each other and rely on one another to minimize the cost of production, such as rice milling by community miller, and self-packing rice including marketing and distribution without the use of middlemen and government, namely the RICEXIT phenomenon. However, the result is not obvious yet and these efforts may

be just a trend and not sustainable. The farmers adopting this solution are, however, only the knowledgeable middle-class ones.

Japan had experienced similar issues as Thailand, however, they managed to handle the problem well. In the past, small-scale farmers in Japan had faced the problem of individualistic work and lacked of good coordinated management, which caused an oversupply of rice accompanied by a drop in the price. The farmers' average age also was on the rise and the younger generation was no longer seeking employment in the agriculture sector (Suesuwan, 2016). As mentioned above, Japanese farmers had very similar problems to those of Thai farmers.

The solution to the price collapse employed by the Japanese government was to aid small-scale farmers through the integration of many sectors. On the part of the government, it developed the policy called "Four Agricultural Pillars". The first pillar is to increase Japanese rice consumption both domestically and overseas. The second pillar is to multiply the product value by implementation of innovation. The third pillar is to increase the skill of the farmers. The fourth pillar is to improve budget allocation in order to introduce equality between urban and rural areas. This would help to stimulate agricultural economy in the local areas. The small-scale farmers were also grouping to help each other in order to standardize production, management, and rice distribution effectively. Moreover, it also helps to receive budget from the government as well as to support the group members in developing their capabilities and knowledge in regards to the rice industry. As a result, Japan was able to increase its competitive advantage in the market and generating higher income. Currently, Japanese farmers have the capability to yield 675 kilogram per rai, at the highest value in the world at THB 600 per kilogram. As a result, the Japanese farmers are earning income at the same level as the employees in leading companies in Tokyo (Hongthong, 2016). The positive outcome from this solution is the implementation of innovation and cultural art in order to create value that leads to national branding. In addition, the indirect outcome is that more young generation, aged below 40 years old, has entered into agricultural sector. There was an increase from 200,000 to 400,000 people. They have also further developed their farms into small-scale businesses (Kusanthia, 2016).

Apart from Japan, the People's Republic of China ("China") has demonstrated another successful example in rice branding development. China used to have insufficient rice supply in the country causing widespread rice shortages domestically. Nevertheless, China is currently the largest rice producing country in the world reducing its food shortage for 58 million people within 10 years. The objective focused on increasing household consumption. China's achievement was derived from integrative collaboration through rice research centers developing technology to improve quality of Chinese rice breeds by using Thai rice as the benchmark. At the same time, the rice industry received support mainly from the private sector, as well as the government, in product development and marketing areas. This resulted in restructuring and product branding based on the agricultural policy of President Xi Jinping. These efforts brought about good cooperation and initiate rice branding, which created value-added for Chinese rice. In addition, it also resolved the poverty issue for the small-scale farmers, for instance, by employing geographical indications (GI) strategy, strength of rare local resources policy, and storytelling strategy. Through rice branding strategies, China rice brands are progressively enhanced and developed to become leading products with a high value price at THB 1,000-5,000 per kilogram. It also attracts customers ranging from the middle-class to high-class. Furthermore, the good quality Chinese rice has become a direct competitor to Thai rice that is currently distributed in China. This is an enormous challenge for Thai rice (ThaiBiz, 2017).

It is, however, meaningful to consider Thailand's key strengths. Thailand has a wide variety of rice breeds, which allows Thai rice to be able to respond to any market demands. Moreover, Thai farmers have cultivated tacit knowledge that generates skills and expertise in rice farming, while clearly accumulating their knowledge in rice production and processing. Thailand also holds the reputation for rice breeds that are considered as geographical indications (GI) products. There are many familiar names, namely Kao Sang Yod Muang Pattalung, Kao Hom Sulin, and Kao Jek Chuy Sao Hai. In addition to local reputation, Thai rice breeds are widely accepted at the international level as well (Sarikulya, 2016 ).

One strong point of Thai rice breeds and reputation is that they are widely known as the world's kitchen. Also, the Thai government has a strong commitment

towards rice policy. In addition the general public also lends a strong support. Yet, Thai farmers are still facing rice price crisis without any long-term solution that addresses value-added product and sustainability. The agriculture sector and food production industry are the assets of Thailand that should not be ignored.

Assuming Thai farmers can create value for their rice products, particularly in terms of branding, they will have more bargaining power in the market and create competitive advantages (Sukkumnoed, 2016). According to product branding theory, research found that successful branding would generate consumer's preference and imprinting the brand name in the minds of consumers. When the consumer is purchasing a particular product, they are likely to think of the known brand name rather than others (Noble, 2006).

In addition, if the products could be upgraded from an ordinary consumer product to a value-added product, including creating brand value, it would make that particular rice brand enter into the Blue Ocean market (Kim & Mauborgne, 2014), which is less competitive than the current Red Ocean market. Moreover, the product will not face current oversupply, which can generate higher income. The solution to price crisis is to employ branding strategy, which is in accordance to agricultural research. Both overall and specific components of brand, such as brand name, brand character, and product packaging, would create financial growth. This is because consumers would feel confident towards the brand and likely to pay premium price. Consequently, the farmers will earn higher income. The components of each brand would make consumers recognize the particular brand's qualification and value that are different from other brands (Bradley, Todd, Miguel, & Hao, 2011; Fernández-Barcala & González-Díaz, 2006; Nijssen & Van Trijp, 1998; Nkari, 2015; Utami, Sadeli, & Perdana, 2016).

From the above findings, branding is a crucial method for farmers to break away from the price crisis. However, reviewing past studies, only a few are concerned with branding. Current database (as of B.E 2560) of Thai Library Integrated System found that there are a large number of rice research works or about 8,000 studies. Out of these, only a small number are associated with rice/agricultural branding. Most of the rice research works focus on agricultural and science, as well as a comprehensive study on rice production, such as rice development by different means, improve and

standardize rice breeds, minimize cost of rice production, packing development, rice export management, innovation on rice processing, impact on ecology from rice farming, and conservation of rice breeds in each area.

The research works about rice branding in Thailand can be divided into two parts. The first part is related to senders and receivers including the studies by Patrawart (2009), Saengwang (2011) and Padpai (2009). The study is about rice branding strategy from farmers of different areas, with a focus on a specific brand. The target is mainly farmers group, and it reveals that the process of rice brand is divided into four steps. The first step is to create brand awareness in consumers. The second step is to create value of brand identity. The third step is to create positive brand attitude to consumers. The fourth step is to create a competitive advantage of the brand. Furthermore, there is a brand management strategy that gets through marketing mix. The result, however, found that farmers are not successful. However, they still lack the understanding in creating their brand, and only focus on the tangible components.

The second part is the study where the consumer is the receiver. The research by Suthasri (2010), Trakoolchokumnuay (2015), Tuangsuwan (2010), Pattarapunsin (2013), Sattayopas (2009), Adirekchotikul (2005) and Ruttanawarn (2003) emphasized on rice buying decision making processes. This includes attitudes, information receiving, and consumer behaviors in different areas, which relate to marketing mix that impacts buying patterns and types of rice consumed, such as normal rice, brown rice, and rice packaging. The research shows that the decision-making process to buy rice still lacks the buyers' brand loyalty to any particular brands. Therefore, it would be a good opportunity for new rice brands to develop products that can respond to both the physical and psychological aspects of consumers. Nevertheless, rice branding should be a proactive strategy constantly changing with the needs of consumers.

There are a small number of studies about rice branding in international research as well. While most research works highlight on other products, only a few study agricultural products and fresh foods, as cited in the research of Nijssen and Van Trijp (1998). On top of that, rice branding research tends to focus primarily on the decision making process of consumers. Past research found that the vital

properties consumers often consider are safety, taste, geography, size, price, and rice brand. The consumers are willing to pay a higher price, if the quality is desirable (Abdullahi, Zainalabidin, & Isalami, 2011; Ahmad, Jinap, Mad, Alias, & Muhammad, 2012; Azabagaoglu M.O. & Gaytancioglu O., 2009; Musa, Othman, & Fatah, 2011). This result is consistent with other rice branding development research, where the perception of product quality, brand awareness, brand associations, brand image, and brand loyalty are important in developing a rice brand, and eventually generate brand equity. Aside from this, to design a strategy focusing on consumers' perception of quality, safety and cleanliness, and benefits to the consumer's health would create value-added product effectively (Hilal, 2016; Hoang, Chi, Linh, & Quang, 2016).

Thoroughly viewing various past contexts and perspectives from research found that there is no study that completely examines the entire process of rice branding. There is no prototype of rice brand creation for farmers to apply as a reference model.

Thai farmers are grouped to create an abundance of rice brands. However, they are still not booming due to lack of appropriate brand development. Most of them only focus on tangible elements, such as brand name, logo, slogan, and packaging (Padpai, 2009). Thus, the outcome of some rice brands is not effective. The research by Saengwang (2011) surveying consumers' satisfaction and expectation towards the rice brand "Kerd Boon", as developed by Thai Jasmine Rice Cooperative Center. The survey result reveals that the target samples have never heard of this "Kerd Boon" brand before. This research summarizes that the Cooperative Center should seek for specialists to create rice brand equity more effectively. In addition, this is in line with the other research on Thai agricultural products where it stated that the farmers simply pay attention to some essential characteristics, especially solely on the packaging in agricultural brand.

The present circumstances provide a great opportunity to develop and add value to farmers' products. Currently, the public sector, which is the major consumer accounting for 60% of total sales (Kingkaew, 2016), pays significant attention prompting solution for farmers' problems including agricultural policy introduced by current government. Such policy provides technological development and innovation in order to add value to agricultural products and Thai branding. Moreover, the policy

is set to improve marketing and service aspects by “marketing lead product”, so as to improve competitive ability to change from Traditional Farming to Smart Farming. As clearly mentioned in the country’s development policy under name “Thailand 4.0”, and in line with country’s development strategy, the 12<sup>th</sup> National Economic and Social Development Plan, Thailand is focusing on strong economic and sustainable competitiveness. Thailand 4.0 policy endeavors to turn problems into opportunities by implementing innovation to achieve the country’s wealth, stability and sustainability. In particular, the country wants to eagerly progress in five business targets: 1) foodstuff, agriculture, and biotechnology; 2) public health and medical technology; 3) intelligent devices, robots and mechanical systems using electronic control systems; 4) digital, internet technology that links and enforces devices, artificial intelligence and embedded systems technology; and 5) creative industries, cultures, and high value services. The policy aims to create changes in three aspects. Firstly, the goal is to switch from commodity to innovative production. Secondly, the aim is to shift from a country driven by the industrial sector to technologies, creative and innovation. Thirdly, there should be a change of focus from manufacturing sector to services sector.

Rice is considered as one of the industries the government would like to develop under Thailand 4.0 policy. The objective is to increase the skill of the farmers to be “Smart Farmers” who have “Smart Farming” and create quality professional farmers to deal with the current circumstances. The effort is taken by cooperating with the private sectors, such as the banking and financial sectors, universities and research institutes, under the government support. Focus on internal strength to connect domestic production to the world economy has become the country’s foundation in the long-term strategy.

As mentioned above, the price crisis faced by Thai farmers should be urgently resolved on a long-term sustainable basis. Providing suitable rice branding from the academic and professional perspectives will create a value-added product as per the country’s policy. Also, educating Thai farmers to adopt a branding strategy into Thai rice branding will subsequently solve problems sustainably, and create a basis that will turn Thailand into a high income country by 2027 in line with the 20 years national strategy framework.

Consequently, the researcher would like to create a prototype of sustainable Thai rice branding for small-scale farmers in Thailand. Such rice branding will be created from facts, determined based on academy and profession methods, and suited for environment in Thailand. The prototype will be tested and validated before actual implementation. This research aims to solve problems in concrete terms from the practical level to strategic level and in line with the country's development strategy.

## **1.2 Statement of the Problem**

1.2.1 What is the pattern of successful Thai rice branding of small-scaled farmers?

1.2.2 How should the prototype branding for sustainable rice from small-scaled farming in Thailand be like?

1.2.3 How should the strategic proposal of sustainable rice from small-scaled farming in Thailand be like?

## **1.3 Objectives of the Study**

1.3.1 To study the branding process and communications from rice brand of successful farmers who have production process of small-scaled farms in Thailand.

1.3.2 To study methods and prototype of sustainable branding of Thai rice for farmers who have production process of small-scaled farms in Thailand.

1.3.3 To study acceptance from the prototype of sustainable branding of Thai rice for farmers who have production process of small-scaled farms in Thailand.

## **1.4 Research Framework**

This research is developed from various literature reviews, in particular the branding model: Brand Orientation Model (Urde, 1999), Brand Leadership Model (D. Aaker, A., & Erich, 2000), Brand Asset Management Process (Davis S. M., 2002), Customer Based Brand Equity Model (Keller, 1993), Brand Strategic Management Process (Keller, Parameswaran, & Jacob, 2011), Sustainable Strategic Brand Management (Gerlach & Witt, 2012) and the idea of Smart Farming that is

appropriate for the circumstances in Thailand. The framework for creating a sustainable rice branding is summarized in the framework below:



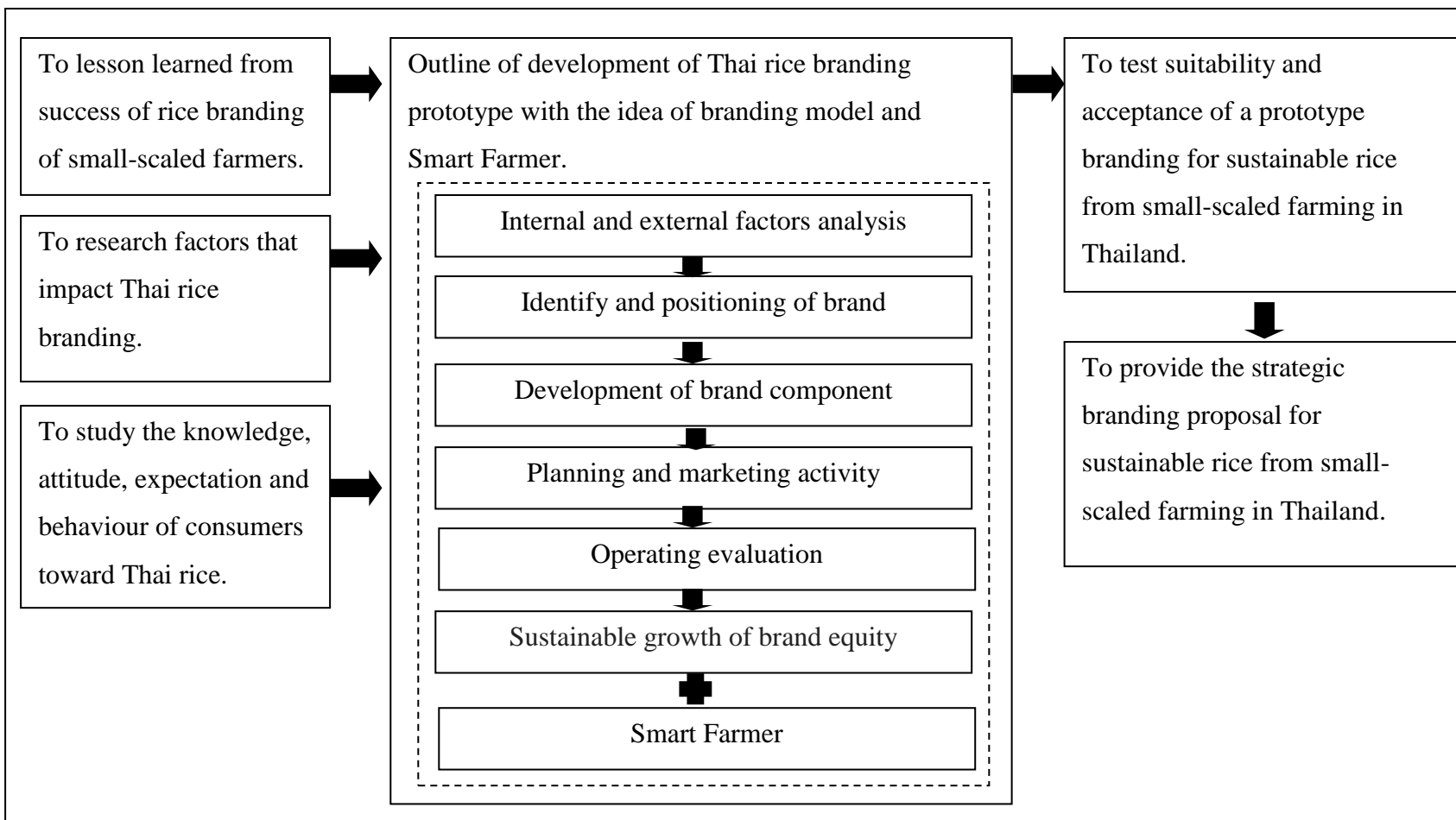


Figure 1.1 Research Framework

## **1.5 Scope and Limitations of the Study**

The study of the development of prototype branding for sustainable rice from small-scaled farming in Thailand carried out from the relevant people in-charge in branding such as the in-depth interview with successful rice brand developers for small-scaled farmers, marketers, branding specialists, governments agencies, and distribution channel representatives. In addition, this research implemented the survey research and group discussions with the target respondents of rice brand prototype development. After that, the researcher implemented the group discussions with all relevant representatives again in order to bring all obtained information to develop the prototype of rice brands for small-scaled farmers in Thailand. This research collected the data and information from May 2016 to March 2017.

## **1.6 Definitions**

1.6.1 Thai Rice branding is the process of creating a competitive differentiator for Thai rice products when compared to other brands in the market, including symbol, design, appearance, and marketing activity. This will persuade consumers to recognize and distinguish the product's difference. The process is divided into six key steps: internal and external factors analysis, identify and positioning of brand, development of brand component, planning and marketing activity, operating evaluation, and sustainable growth of brand equity.

1.6.2 Rice brand communication is the communication of brand components to consumers, through marketing communication tools and integrated marketing activities of brands. This will create a clear and constancy as well as differentiated brand according to consumers' preference.

1.6.3 Prototype of Thai rice branding is the process of Thai rice branding that is studied and tested in order for small-scaled farmers to apply in their own brand in the future.

1.6.4 Sustainable branding is the branding that is adaptable and compatible to various changes. As a result, small-scaled farmers will be relieved of the price crisis sustainably.

1.6.5 Small-scaled farmers are farmers that predominantly farm on their own land and yet remain poor. One advantage is that these farmers are using their own labors instead of employing.

## **1.7 Expected Benefits of the Study**

1.7.1 Benefits from academic aspect - This research is a further study of knowledge transfer of Thai rice branding and brand communication, namely to initiate new knowledge transfer for branding and brand communication that are suitable for small-scale farmers under the circumstances in Thailand.

1.7.2 Benefit from professional aspect - This research aims to design implementation guidelines for small-scale farmers as well as related sectors, both public and private sectors. Relevant stakeholders would be able to apply research outcomes to Thai rice branding and further create a sustainable development.

1.7.3 Benefit from policy aspect - The research outcomes would provide related government offices with a strategic proposal that can be applied to solve rice price crisis. The outcomes would be in line with the country's development's strategies, including Thailand 4.0 policy and the National Economic Plan, in terms of sharing academic knowledge to small-scaled farmers to improve the quality of Thai rice.

## **CHAPTER 2**

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

The concept, theory, and relevant research works that provide the basis for this study “The Development of Prototype Branding for Sustainable Rice from Small-scaled Farming in Thailand”

2.1 Rice Industry Information / Current Thai rice situation.

2.2 Branding Concept

2.3 Sustainable Branding Concept

2.4 Smart Farmer Concept

#### **2.1 Rice Industry Information/ Current Thai Rice Situation**

The agriculture sector is truly important to the Thai economy, which makes up to eight per cent to the economic growth annually. Rice is the main industrial crop generating a substantial income of more than THB 65 billion for the country. Rice is also the main food of the Thai people.

Thailand is one of the biggest rice producers and exporters in the world making up to 24% of the world’s total rice export. The main markets are the United States of America, Republic of China, Hong Kong, Canada, and Singapore. Moreover, the rice farming community in Thailand has approximately 3.7 million households, which accounts for 65 per cent of the nation’s total households. It also makes up one-third of the country’s labor (Nakornthap, 2016). Nevertheless, rice farmers are still facing with poverty from price crisis, high cost of production, market mechanism, increasing number of competitors as well as other related factors. In B.E 2559, Thai farmers have the production cost of THB 9,763/ rai while the sales price is THB 11,319.37. From this fact, Thai farmers can only earn a profit of THB

1,555.97/rai. As a result, they are ranked as the poorest farmers among the Asian countries (Hongthong, 2016).

In 2016, Thailand faced the worst price crisis in the past 10 years caused by oversupply of Jasmine rice. This abnormal situation was triggered by three factors: 1) the yield of 2016 crop was much higher than previous year due to good rain, which resulted in higher yield per rai; 2) during the early part of 2016, the paddy stocks at rice mills and middlemen warehouses were high due to the wrongful prediction of a drought; 3) the middlemen suffered from financial problems due to high levels of in their rice stocks, thus they could not procure more rice during the price decrease (Poapongsakorn, 2016).

As mentioned earlier, this situation had a great impact causing oversupply in 2016 that ultimately led to the price crisis. This also had negative effects on the export sector - 1) tariff barrier and non-tariff barrier, such as high tariff on rice imports in many countries; 2) intense competition especially in low quality rice from main competitors like Vietnam, India and Pakistan; 3) trading partners / buyers suffered from financial problems; and 4) currency fluctuations changed the world buyers' behavior to buy rice from cheaper sources.

The analysis of internal factors (Strengths and Weaknesses) and external factors (Opportunity and Threats) or SWOT Analysis was used to investigate the Thai rice industry situation (Hongthong, 2016; Sarikulya, 2016 ; Tuangsuwan, 2010; Vichyadachar, 2015). The results are presented as follows:

### **2.1.1 SWOT Analysis of the Thai rice industry**

#### **2.1.1.1 Strengths of the Thai rice industry**

- 1) Thailand has a variety of rice breeds enabling effective response to market demands.
- 2) Thai farmers have tacit knowledge and are experts in growing rice.
- 3) Thailand has quality rice breeding resources along with a robust rice research and development team. Therefore, Thailand could constantly produce new rice breeds to cater to the market.

- 4) Thai rice quality is widely accepted particularly Jasmine rice, which can be exported and distributed in high-income markets successfully.
- 5) Thailand is one of the leaders in rice export shipping approximately 8.66 million metric tons per year.
- 6) Thai rice has been further developed using knowledge in rice production and processing.
- 7) Thailand has an advantage in special rice products i.e. high nutrition rice due to variety of rice genetic resources. This special rice has higher value than normal rice.

#### **2.1.1.2 Weaknesses of the Thai rice industry**

- 1) Thailand has high cost of production, which attributes 54 per cent to labor cost, 20.40 per cent to production, 10.40 per cent to land rental, and the rest to other factors. All of these costs cause the farmers to suffer losses.
- 2) Thai rice generates low production with average yield of 450 kilogram per rai, while other Asian countries have an average yield of 686 kilogram per rai.
- 3) Thai farmers have put in the effort to increase their productivity by planting more crops per year without resting the farmland. Consequently this negatively impacted the natural resources in rice fields. As a result, the farmers have to use chemicals to solve the problem stated above, ultimately resulting in higher production costs.
- 4) Thailand has smaller amounts of value-added processed and developed products.
- 5) There is no precise information collected on Thai rice system in terms of supply and demand of rice production. Hence, buyers have to primarily buy rice at low prices to protect themselves from the loss, which eventually has an impact on the farmers.

### **2.1.1.3 Opportunities of the Thai rice industry**

- 1) World rice's consumption demand is likely to increase in the future.
- 2) Lower cost of logistics
- 3) Trend of food safety and organic foods are skyrocketing.
- 4) The government has a strong focus on rice policy paying attention to optimization of farmers' income through many schemes. The authorities have restructured agricultural production to meet consumer's needs as well. In addition, the government enhances the farmers' capability to compete in the market effectively.
- 5) Thailand possesses the appropriate geography and climate to produce rice throughout the year.
- 6) Thai rice competitors are experiencing natural disasters in their countries due to inappropriate geography.
- 7) Thailand is situated in the midst of Asian countries, thus it is strategic and convenient for logistics.

### **2.1.1.4 Threats of the Thai rice industry**

- 1) The existence and constant development of competitors has diminished the market share of Thai rice.
- 2) The self-reliance policy of traditional rice importers i.e. Indonesia, Philippines, and Bangladesh, has reduced rice imports from Thailand.
- 3) The proportion of domestic consumption and exploitation rice for other purposes has a slight growth of 0.9 per cent rate only.
- 4) The intermittent nature of government's policy results in inefficient outcomes.
- 5) The shortage of labor in agriculture sector.

However, the research by Vichyadachar (2015) analyzed the Thai rice industry based on the SWOT analysis. Consequently, Thailand should proceed with the growth

strategy by expanding the opportunities and applying the strengths as effectively as possible.

### **2.1.2 Thai Rice Product Types**

Thai rice products are differentiated based on the uniqueness of each type based on the Boston Consulting Group (BCG) Matrix. Thus, the analysis of the marketing situation can be categorized into four groups as follows (Vichyadachar, 2015) :

- 1) Star refers to the products that have significant market share and high growth rate. So, this product type initiates fast and high income under market growth. Examples of rice products under this group are Jasmine rice and glutinous rice, since both are gaining high market share and likely to expand further. Thus, these types of products should be the focus for future development and growth.
- 2) Cash Cow refers to the products that have high market share but low growth rate such as white rice. The product is in high demand and has significant market share. Although its business opportunity is moderately high/slow growth because of its product maturity, the product still needs to be maintained to gain market share for profitable returns.
- 3) Question Mark refers to the product that has low market share in a high growth rate market. Therefore, this group generates low profit rate. The products categorized in this group are Parboiled rice, Patum rice, mixed-color rice, and organic rice. These products have an opportunity to be developed and expand market share. However, the proportion of this product type is not sizeable, thus it is necessary to find ways to increase their market share and develop products to be in the Star group.
- 4) Dogs refers to the product group that has low market share, little growth rate and small profit. The products that are categorized in this group are GI rice and Japanese rice. Since both products have low

market share and low demand, this product type is not in high priority to develop. However in order to be successful, the products need to be strategized to expand market share and educate society to understand the product's value for future expansion of market demand.

For the study of developing prototype for Thai rice branding, the researcher focused the direction on organic rice since it is associated with the key success factors of Thai rice brand development for small-scaled farmers. Moreover, organic rice has a potential growth since it is consistent with consumers' health conscious trend. Therefore, the farmers should pay strong attention to branding in order to succeed in winning market share.

### **2.1.3 Rice Solution Policies in Thailand**

Thailand has placed the rice strategy in various national policies. These policies have the mutual purpose, aimed to strengthen Thai farmers and support market mechanism. By doing so, it can enhance rice consumption and domestic production as well as boosting Thai rice exports thus, minimizing cost of distribution while ensuring fast delivery. Moreover, there is another policy regarding rice production such as price intervention. Nevertheless, the implemented solution has not been successful since the rice policy in Thailand has not been legitimately implemented. In the past Thailand always focus on rice pledging scheme or rice price guarantee program. Therefore, from now on, Thailand should pay attention on rice branding, quality control, and development of new tools (Trakoolchokumnuay, 2015). The result of the rice-pledging scheme is not only the impact on market mechanism, but also the resources. Since the given scheme has changed the method of rice farming as it emphasizes fast return under time constraint condition. Thus, the farmers utilize more chemicals in farming, which ruin the resources (Lianjumroon, 2012).

Currently, the solution of Thai rice's policy aims to bring an innovation to help farmers escape poverty. Its purpose is to change farmers from rice producers to be modern entrepreneurs, called Smart Farmer. The Smart Farmer will have good management, low cost of production, being able to add value to products and having

marketing orientation. In addition, the Smart Farmer will be wisely adaptive towards change, which will escalate Thai agriculture to Thailand 4.0. Innovative rice production is one way to increase quality and add value to rice production, which in turn leads to sustainable solution for farmers. This innovation will also help to complete the valuable rice supply chain through the system developed by competent farmers. The system will start from production processing, marketing, and consumption systems utilizing precise and suitable research as well as principles.

However, innovation is not only accomplished by research and development team only, but it also must be implemented by every sector. Such sectors consists of 1) farmer, who has to adapt themselves and combine the old and new knowledge together; 2) village “Wiseman”, the person who conveys knowledge from the ancestors and adjust it into current farming; 3) agricultural supporter, one who transfers knowledge and have the actual practice together with farmers to ensure job accomplishment; 4) rice breeder, who breeds the new variety of rice to respond the consumer’s demand and the change of environment; 5) fertilizer specialist, the person who helps to minimize cost and increase efficiency of rice production; 6) plant pathologist, one who brings innovation to develop rice healthiness and increase yield; 7) local politician, the person who pushes forward the change successfully as harmonizer of local farmers; 8) mechanical engineer, one who develops the machine to fit with Thai farming; 9) milling businessman and rice processor, who share marketing information and importance of rice standard with farmers; 10) nutritionist, the person who analyzes the rice nutrition that matches consumer needs in Thai society and collect information for the rice development process; 11) bank and cooperatives officers, the people who facilitate and support farmer for the financials needed for rice development; 12) marketing expert, who help to develop integrated marketing for rice product to achieve high profit; and 13) mass communication journalist, who communicate with farmers all over the country to propose the development in different ways. Moreover, they will also connect and motivate consumers to buy rice (Trakoolchokumnuay, 2015).

This is consent with the research of Tuangsuwan (2010) titled “The Guideline to Improve Competitive Advantages in the Supply Chain of Thai Rice Industry”. The result found that the guideline to improve competitive advantages in the supply chain

could be generated by effective cooperation among all members in the supply chain and arrangement of information filling system for the future plan. However, the government sector should genuinely pay attention to the development of the rice business. In addition, it is also found that organic farming can be one method to provide competitive advantage and reduce the cost of rice product. The further detail shall be elaborated in the following section.

#### **2.1.4 Organic rice**

Organic rice derives from organic rice farming, which is the method to avoid the use of chemicals in every production stage. It also aims to revive the abundance of natural resources such as improving soil by crop rotation, organic fertilizer, and biological method control. Besides, the organic rice production has good benefits such as no impact to farmer's health including reducing the trade barrier from the environmental concerned country. As a result, Thailand can expand the export of organic rice to other countries worldwide.

Nowadays, Thailand exports organic rice approximately 70 per cent of which is sent to the European Union and the United States of America. The remaining 30 per cent goes to the domestic market with intensive growth rate. Since the health consciousness and environmental concern is in trend. Moreover, the support from government and private sectors including development of organic agriculture with certified standard. All of these bring about the consumer's confidence to buy products further (Sarikulya, 2016 ) in which it a good opportunity for Thai farmers. However, the constraint in organic rice expansion is that the strict examination process. Thailand created the standard of organic plants in 2000 establishing the Organic Agriculture Certification Office to monitor and certify organic products.

The organic rice in Thailand first started in the planting season in 1992 by Department of Agriculture (DOA). At that time, DOA supported the private sector to produce organic rice in Payao and Chiang Rai provinces with up to 100 farmers joining the project. In addition, private development and non-profit organizations also assisted the farmers in organic rice farming. Some private companies even put the investment in organic rice farming for their direct sales.

#### 2.1.4.1 Competitive Advantage on Price for Organic rice

Price of organic paddy is higher than regular paddy by approximately 10 per cent, while packaged organic rice's price is greater than regular paddy by around 20 per cent. However, price of organic rice is also different in terms of breeds, location, technique of production, and the level of production, which can be categorized as follows:

- 1) "Pesticide Residue Free Rice" refers to rice farmed without using chemical and weeds. This rice is considered as the first season rice without using chemical in the production process. However, the chemicals are still found, when testing this type of rice. This is because the environment is contaminated with pollution especially in the soil and water.
- 2) "Primary Organic Rice" refers to rice received from the farm that starts to grow organic rice. The farm implements organic agriculture in some part of the land. This type of rice can be harvest in the following season. The chemicals in soil and water would be reduced in this rice.
- 3) "Shifting Organic Rice" refers to rice from farms that start organic method in the whole area for a period of 1-3 years. Nonetheless, this rice cannot pass the organic standard yet.
- 4) Organic Rice or "Full ranged Organic Rice" refers to rice that receives the organic rice standard and is not contaminated with any chemicals.

Nevertheless, each level of production has different pricing standard. This is to motivate farmers to expand and achieve the organic rice level. The price will be ranged from low to high price ranging from Pesticide Residue Free Rice, Primary Organic Rice, Shifting Organic Rice, and Organic Rice, respectively. This research has set a condition for the prototype rice brand, in which the rice standard must categorized in Shifting Organic Rice or Organic Rice level only. In case the rice is in Shifting Organic Rice level, it needs to communicate clearly to the consumers. However, if the rice has not been certified as the organic rice standard from the relevant office, the product developer can substitute by conveying the story that reflects the production of organic rice in each stage to the consumer.

#### **2.1.4.2 Organic Rice Policy**

From the aforementioned situation, the Ministry of Agriculture and Cooperatives, Ministry of Commerce, and Ministry of Interior have established the policy to retain the stability of rice prices and farmer's income. The three ministries have implemented the production plan and integrated marketing scheme to manage rice for the whole supply chain. Moreover, the government has also established in 2017 as the year of upgrading agricultural products. Organic rice is one strategy to develop the agricultural standard as well as add value to existing rice product, sustain the environment, and respond to consumers' demands. On top of that, it also creates stable and sustainable society in terms of economic, social, and environment of the country.

The National Development Plan of Organic Agriculture in 2017 - 2021 aims to expand organic agricultural area no less than 20 per cent annually. From the needs of organic certification in the market, the Ministry of Agriculture and Cooperatives (MOAC) therefore provided the standard "Organic Thailand" in order to uphold the organic rice production standard. This is in line with the market demand as well as creating the safety for both producer/consumer and environment. In 2018, MOAC launched the project "Organic Agricultural Development" accepting the farming area up to 300,000 rai. The important criteria for project application is group farmers, who are committed to organic agricultural farming under "Organic Thailand" standard. The applicants must have their names registered in farmer registration data as well. However, the group of farmer must contain at least 5 members since it is suitable for internal organizing and production management.

The farmers, who passed the criteria of Department of Rice (DOR), will receive funds in order to support their organic farming income. The farmers' yield will be reduced at the first stage of farming and DOR will subsidize for 3 years consecutively. Moreover, the farmers will receive training with regard to the standard and compliance of organic rice, and internal control system including grouping structure. The Rice Research and Development Division, Rice Seed Division, and Thailand Rice Science Institute hold this training. Then, in the second year the

farmers shall have the chance to certify organic rice standard as the group basis in accordance with the standards of organic rice by MOAC.

In accordance to the aforementioned activities, MOAC expects that, by B.E 2564, the farmers – the producer of quality rice- shall receive the organic standard. Moreover, they can produce good quality paddy up to 400,000 metric tons (calculated from 400 kilogram/ rai). This rice will generate the value of THB 8 billion (accounted from THB20/kilogram) compared to the general paddy value of THB 4.8 billion. Therefore, the farmers will be able to sell organic paddy at a higher value or 66.66 per cent. In addition, the expected long-term outcome is establishment of the sustainable competent farmers, self-reliance, and being the learning centre for other farmers in the future. (RiceDepartment, 2017)

In conclusion, organic rice has a growing demand in both export and domestic markets. However, considering the potential of organic rice, the farmers are still able to significantly expand the production in the future. Therefore, it is a good opportunity for farmers to grow organic rice in order to serve the significant demand. One interesting point for organic rice market is low competition compared to general rice market, namely, no price war. As a result, the organic rice farmers can properly implement pricing based on the value and quality of product.

However, the farmers, who are rice brand developers, should create proactive marketing policy that meet the needs of consumer and market demands. This includes creating brand acceptance and communicating the product value in order to raise consumer awareness of the differentiation.

### 2.1.5 Situations of Thai Rice Branding

Currently, Thai farmers have formed groups to create many rice brands. Each brand has factors that lead to success and failure differently. According to the research of Patrawart (2009) , titled “Branding as the Marketing Strategy for Organic products: A Case Study on Moral Rice”, found that Moral Rice is very successful in terms of product’s pricing. Since it is able to sell their Jasmine Rice at the price 25 per cent higher than competitors in the market. The main factors of its success are the farmers’ aggregation and its branding that solved the price crisis sustainably. This farmers’ aggregation is united under the name “Dhamma Ruamjai Foundation”. The members of this foundation profess not to involve with alcohol and gambling, while engaging in self- development. On top of that, they share knowledge to group’s members to standardize the products. The members followed a concept of living according to sufficiency economy philosophy. Therefore, this aggregation’s concept originated from its group’s name. It is part of its branding, that has four dimensions as follows:

- 1) Creating consumers’ brand awareness
- 2) Creating unique brand equity
- 3) Creating consumers’ positive attitude
- 4) Creating product’s competitive advantage

With the suitable operating process, Moral Rice brand succeeded to create Brand Equity and Brand Attachment. This leads to sustainable price crisis solution.

In addition to the Moral Rice brand, there is another brand operated by the farmers’ network. The research was conducted by Saengwang (2011), titled “The Project on Network Development of Thai Cooperatives for Jasmine Rice "Kerd Boon Rice Brand". The research revealed that the network of Thai Cooperative Jasmine Rice has the vision to develop Thai Jasmine Rice for export to the international market through five stages as follows:

- 1) Supporting the production in order to increase yield, reduce cost, and develop production technology
- 2) Yield gathering in order to utilize the equipment of the parties with the maximum benefit and to create a working capital system on the network's dependent principle and seek for the quality of raw materials together

- 3) Processing in order to improve the product according to the market demand and bring up the product's value
- 4) Marketing in order to create the brand for target product of the network
- 5) Evaluation in order to develop and maintain the standard of network

The outcome of this network is “Kerd Boon Rice” brand. The key reason of creating this brand aims to raise consumer awareness of 100 per cent real Thai Jasmine Rice's standard. However, this research showed that most consumers have never known this brand before. The researcher suggested that Kerd Boon Rice should implement the brand communication and focus on the value of goods produced directly by the farmer through cooperative mechanism. Additionally, this brand should seek the marketing specialist to build its image and value of Kerd Boon Rice more effectively.

The aforementioned research demonstrated the process of rice brand development including importance of marketing and marketing communication. This is in line with the proposition of Padpai (2009) who studied about “Marketing Strategy for Organic Rice Business of Sustainable Farmers; Nam Aom District”. The research found that the marketing strategy of sustainable farmers from Nam Aom district can be categorized into four groups as follows:

- 1) Production Strategy, the group prioritizes on the standard of organic rice followed by the packaging.
- 2) Pricing Strategy, the group does pricing on organic rice at approximately 10-15 per cent higher than general rice in the market, since its target customers have high purchasing power.
- 3) Distribution Strategy, the group distributes the product through both domestic and oversea markets. The overseas market is executed through rice exporting company, while domestic market is employed mainly through the trade exhibition.
- 4) Marketing Promotion Strategy, the group has a competent staff to oversee marketing promotion and focus on communication through trade exhibition participation.

However, some of the outcome of this research showed that the sustainable farmers in the Nam Aom district mainly suffered since some group members did not

suspend chemical use in production. This causes a contamination and low quality of rice. Another problem is the domestic organic rice market is still slim, as the group has no advertisement and insufficient distribution. Thus, the products are seldom present in the market.

The aforementioned information revealed that Thai rice branding has not been successful. For example, most consumers have never known this brand due to lack of branding and proper communication. This reflects the fact that its branding process has not been implemented by theory/professional process by specialists. As a result, the outcome is not as good as it should be.

RICEXIT phenomenon in 2016 illustrated that the farmers attempt to unite as a group creating self- reliance. One outstanding situation was the farmers grouped to create a brand. However, the focus is still on building name, logo, packaging or some tangible aspects of production only. Though, most rice brands receive the good feedback, still it is for the short term only. Such solution is merely the trend with no sustainability. Apart from that, just a few groups of farmers, who have good education and decent economic status, who can survive (Marketeeronline, 2016).

#### **2.1.6 Consumer Behaviour in Thailand**

Approximately 60 per cent of total rice production is consumed in the domestic market (Kingkaew, 2016). Rice consumption behaviour study discovered that consumer's purchasing decision of rice product has five steps. This is similar to Trakoolchokumnuay (2015), titled "Innovation of Rice Production, Rice Processing, and Rice Trade in Thailand". However, he found that rice purchasing process has four steps as follows:

- 1) Type of Rice Products. The consumer always determines the type of product from the brand that best matches their needs. The given needs can be divided into two types: 1) physical needs such as a nutrition value from rice production and 2) psychological needs such as an ability to reflect the consumer identity i.e. Rice Berry Rice reflects a healthy lover. At this stage, the consumer will specify the type of product from the brand that consumes in their household.

At the same time, the consumers also identify new brands through advertisement including promotion activities.

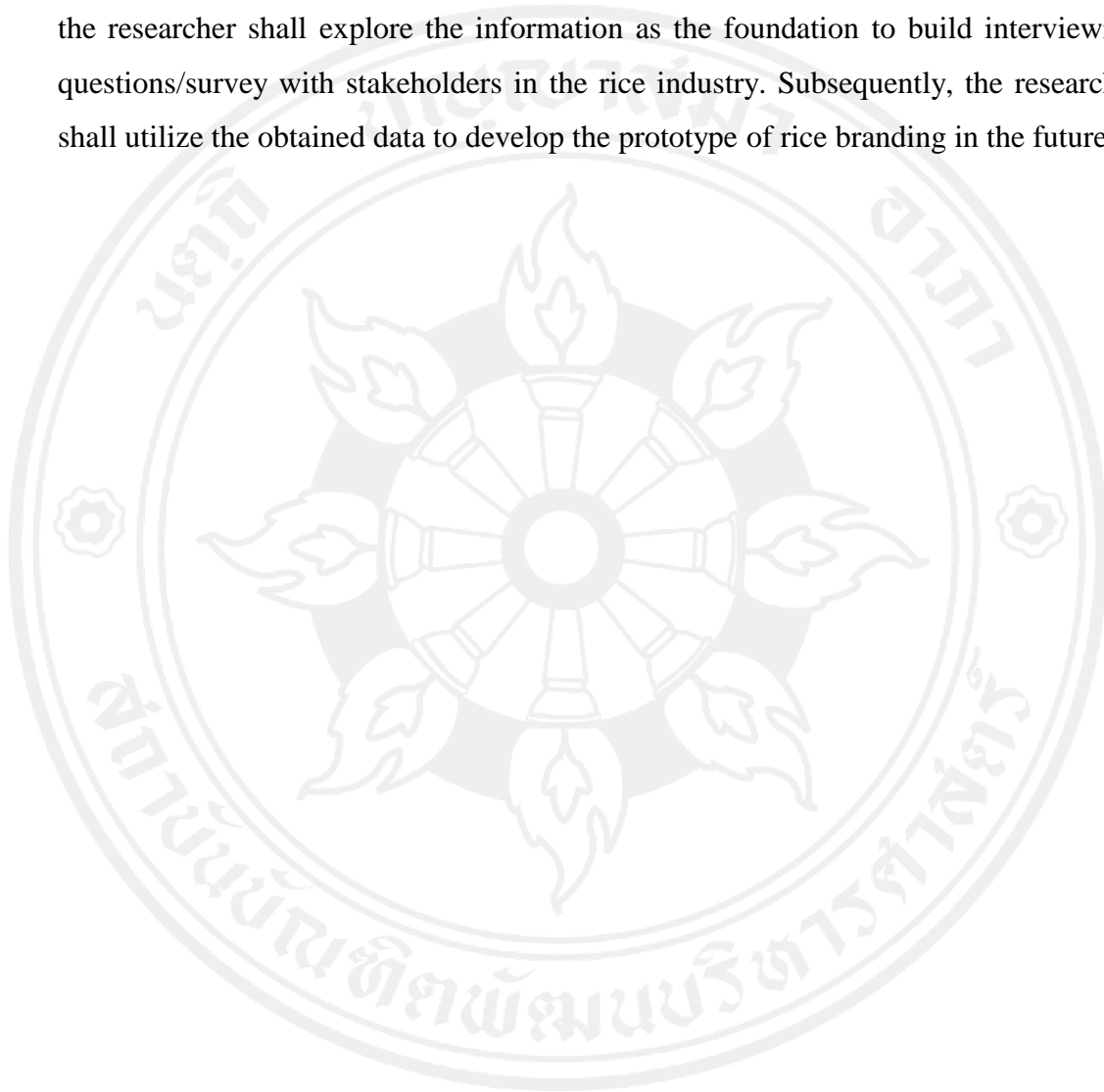
- 2) Distribution Channel. The consumers would prefer to select a distribution channel considering three factors, such as travelling cost, worth, and convenience. Moreover, it is found that consumers enjoy the distribution service like home delivery service.
- 3) Comparison of Rice Product. The consumers often compare the products once presented in the distribution channel. They shall consider the criteria based on product's ability to respond to their needs.
- 4) Purchasing Decision. The consumers always buy product according to their needs. However, they can change their purchasing decision and not adhere to an old brand if new brands can better respond to their needs.

The aforementioned research reflected that the consumers purchasing decision has no brand loyalty toward any of the rice brands. Therefore, it would be a good opportunity to introduce new products that respond to the consumer's physical and psychological needs. This can also be used to implement the product image by utilizing differentiation strategy in order to generate consumer's loyalty. These executions are consistent with the research of Pattarapunsin (2013) titled "The Influence of Brand Loyalty of Packaged Rice". However, many research works such as "Media Exposure that Impact to Brown Rice Consumption" by Ruttanawarn (2003), "Behaviors of consumers toward the purchasing of packed rice in Mueang Chiang Mai District" by Sattayopas (2009) and "Rice Purchasing Behavior of Consumers in Mae Sai, Chiang Rai" by Inthapunya (2010) found that the four factors of Marketing Mix such as Product, Price, Place, and Promotion are significant to rice purchasing decision. People media or word of mouth has the highest positive correlation to rice consumption, especially friends. Therefore, branding should consider the Marketing Mix as a whole as well as using people media.

The research "The Guideline to Improve the Competitive Advantages in the Supply Chain of Thai Rice Industry" by Tuangsuwan (2010) showed that it is vital to understand consumer behavior. If the producers can match consumer's needs, it will in turn maintain the current customer base. On the other hand, this will help to expand

to new customers as well. In addition, it should create a value for rice product according to the consumers' needs as well as building awareness of that given value to consumer. For that reason, the consumer shall repeatedly purchase the products in the future.

After informative reviews regarding the current situation in the rice industry, the researcher shall explore the information as the foundation to build interviewing questions/survey with stakeholders in the rice industry. Subsequently, the researcher shall utilize the obtained data to develop the prototype of rice branding in the future.



## 2.2 Branding Concept

### 2.2.1 Brand

In the past, “Brand” signifies the name or characteristics for differentiating goods (Kotler, 2000). Thus, when marketers create names, logos, or symbols for new products, it means they create branding in the particular era (Keller et al., 2011). However, the branding during the earlier period, is just one of the components of Product Strategy (Kotler, 2000) that aims to improve a product image for high sales and broaden market shares in short term only (D. Aaker, A., & Erich, 2000).

However, since BC 1980, the definition of “Brand” has been changed from time to time to have a wider scope (Kapferer, 2008). The definition of “Brand” has focused on differentiation of goods in the consumer’s mind. When the consumer compares two different brands, even though both products share the same attributes or benefits, yet the consumers can feel the differences. Such differences are influenced by the brand satisfaction and lead to buying decision as well as willingness to pay a premium (De Chernatony, 2006). This can be related to agricultural research, both general branding and component branding -product name, character of brand and packaging, have a direct impact to the financial growth. For that reason, the consumers are likely to pay premium price for the product. Branding also enhances consumers’ confidence, and ultimately leading to greater profit. Moreover, the component of branding will render the consumers to recognise product’s quality that distinguish from other brands (Bradley et al., 2011; Fernández-Barcala & González-Díaz, 2006; Nijssen & Van Trijp, 1998; Nkari, 2015; Utami et al., 2016).

In summary, “Brand” means a word or name, symbol, sign, and related forms. Kotler and Armstrong (2010) cited that if an organization focuses solely on the name, that many organizations do not actually understand the branding concept. The brand components are therefore allocated into four elements as follows:

- 1) “Attributes” refers to external elements such as logo, packaging, colour, and sign that make consumer recognize the brand.
- 2) “Benefits” refers to a main qualification consumer expected to receive from a brand, for example eating brown rice in order to obtain high vitamin.

- 3) “Value” refers to a value that consumers require from the brand. It may be intangible since it relates to emotion and feeling, such as being delighted when using this product.
- 4) “Personality” refers to a personality that consumer expects other people to perceive about themselves after using a brand, for instance, being healthy lover when having Rice Berry Rice.

Therefore, “Branding” means everything that a product belongs in terms of concrete and abstract features that different in each brand. As a result, the consumers can differentiate brands.

### **2.2.2 Essentials of Branding**

The essentials of branding can be categorized into two parts -essentials of branding towards the consumer and essentials of branding towards the organization (Charupongsopon, 2014). They can be elaborated as follows:

Brands will help consumers to know the producer or people responsible for the products. It will also reduce buying decision risks. The risks can come from product, physical, financial, social, psychological, and time aspects. Therefore, the essentials of branding are the symbols to assure product’s qualities for consumers.

Essentials of branding toward the organization

Branding will benefit the organization in various aspects especially in terms of competitive advantage. The brand can also prevent product’s qualities imitation from its competitors. Most importantly, high value brands will bring greater return from the consumer’s willingness to pay. This provides an advantage on pricing (Miller & Muir, 2005) once the consumer admires the product’s brand.

Both essentials are consistent with the research of Sirimangkalakul. C. (2007) titled “The factors that affect to branding of successful agricultural products”. The research found that agricultural products are in the commodity market. However, branding can help to differentiate the product in terms of the consumer’s response. Moreover, the consumers deem a branded product being safer than a non- branded product.

Nevertheless, the essentials of branding have different roles in each era. In the first era, a brand only tells who is the owner of the product, since each is similar in quality. As people are more educated, the brand works as the owner of concept and being a trademark of product's inventor. When moving to the mass production era, the brand performs as the production standard in order to assure the consumer of product's quality. Subsequently, the technology was become more advanced making products have similar quality. The brand in this era, therefore, has to have its unique position and gain more opportunity in the market than its competitors. However, since the consumers is likely to change their behaviour and use competitor's product easily. Therefore, the brand, currently, aims to create brand acceptance in order for them to stay in consumer's mind in the long term, which in turn leads to the brand loyalty. Additionally, branding today means building reputation which is a part of intangible asset of organization (Laukaikul, 2007). However, the brand can increase its value as long as the organization can create its brand's strength from the right branding process.

### **2.2.3 Branding**

Branding, historically, is only a method to differentiate a product. The popular method among many organizations is to use mass media advertising in which the marketers perceive the advertisement as equally to branding (Davis & Dunn, 2002).

Current branding has much more extensive process than the past. As Knapp (2000) mentioned that branding has consisted of five elements, which started from (i) brand differentiation; (ii) connection with consumers; (iii) building consumer confidence; (iv) creating the brand awareness; and (v) initiating brand recognition of consumers, respectively. These five elements shall be analysed based on market environment, brand positioning, brand identity, brand communication via various types of tools, and brand management. All of those will facilitate its business growth and crafting its opportunity in the future

Nonetheless, there are many concepts and models that exist. However, only five prominent concepts shall be mentioned here. These concepts are aligned with the research of Guzman (2005) titled "A Brand Building Literature Review" reviewed

the concepts and theories of product's branding and organization's branding. However, for this study, the researcher focuses particularly on product's branding and summarizes each of the concepts as shown in below figure.

Table 2.1 Table of Summary of Brand Model

Concept/Model	Inventors	Uniqueness
Brand Orientation Model	Urde (1999)	Aim at creating overall brand experiences to consumer, both internal and external organization.
Brand Leadership Model	Aaker and Joachimsthaler (2000)	Aim at strengthening brand by considering 4 main factors i.e. Organization Structure, Brand Architecture, Brand Identity, and Branding Program.
Brand Asset Management Process	Davis (2000)	Aim at initiating profit and asset value to the brand through Developing brand vision, Determining brand picture, Developing brand asset management strategy, and Supporting brand management culture.
Customer Based Brand Equity Model	Keller (1993, 1998, 2002, 2003)	Aim at providing customer a brand's equity by concentrating brand identity, positive attitude toward brand, consumer's response to brand, and relationship of consumer to brand.
Strategic Brand Management Process	Keller (2011)	Aim at comprehensive process of branding beginning from brand positioning, designing and applying marketing activity. Initiating and managing brand including brand evaluation and sustainable branding.

Source: D. Aaker, A., and Erich (2000); Davis and Dunn (2002), Keller (1993); Keller et al. (2011) and Urde (1999)

### 2.2.3.1 Brand Orientation Model

Brand Orientation Model focuses on aggressive brand development and elevates branding to a strategic level rather than tactical level as before. The process will start from understanding people in the organization regarding the brand identity. The brand will also work to build the customer's satisfaction. The brand in the viewpoint of Urde (1999) means the overall experience the consumer receives from the brand in terms of emotional and rational aspects. However, the main principal of branding establishes the value and meaning to the brand. Subsequently, Urde additionally explained that the branding process is divided into two functions - internal branding and external branding (Urde, 2003). Urde illustrated the branding process model in the structure of Urde's Brand Hexagon as shown in Figure 2.1.

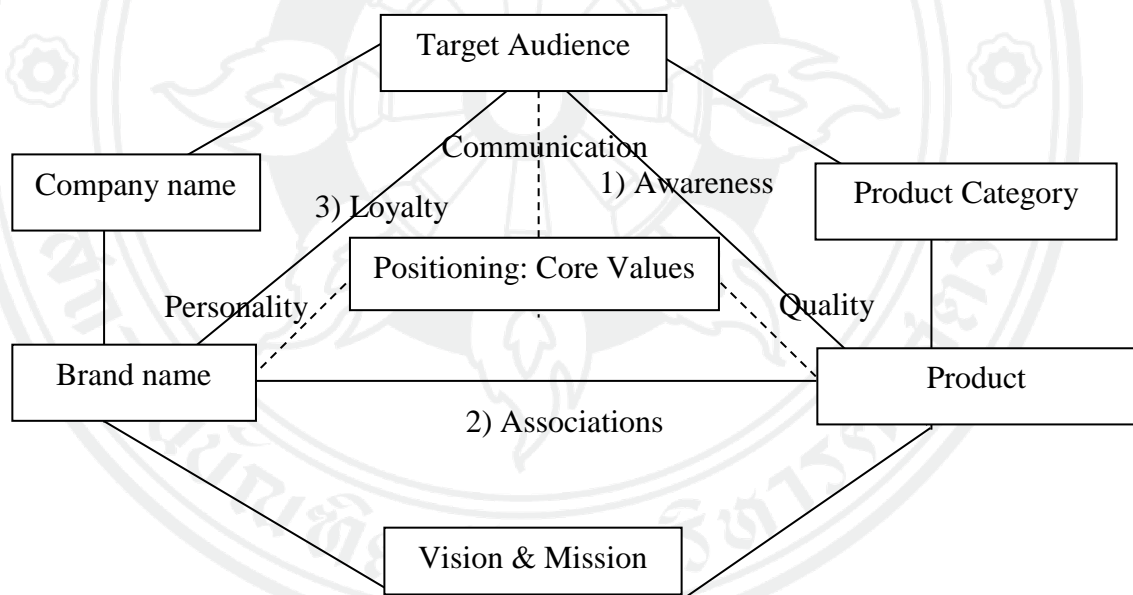


Figure 2.1 Urde's Brand Hexagon Model

Source: Urde (2003)

According to the above figure, the elements at the right side such as product category and product reflecting usage's benefit. They emphasize mainly on product's quality and consider it as the rational aspect of branding. In contrary, the ones at the left side like company name and brand name exposes the sake of emotion

communicating the brand's personality. In addition, Urde (1999) mentioned that apart from these two elements, branding has to consider the brand's communication toward consumer and target of organization. This concept model has three main purposes, which are brand awareness, brand association toward consumer, and brand loyalty.

However, the elements of this branding concept is in line with the research of Hoang et al. (2016), "Factors Affecting the Sustainable Development to Vietnamese Rice Brands in Joining TPP Agreement: A Study in Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam". This research is an integrated research that is implemented by group discussion among many professionals in order to select the variables that impact the brand development of Vietnamese rice after TPP agreement. Then the selected variables are used to create the questionnaire. Data was collected using the survey method totalling 532 respondents in Ho Chi Minh. The Exploratory Factor Analysis – EFA is used as the analytical tool. The research outcome revealed that the factors that impact to the brand development of Vietnamese rice after TPP agreement were perceived superior quality, brand awareness, brand associations, and brand loyalty as illustrated in below Figure 2.2.

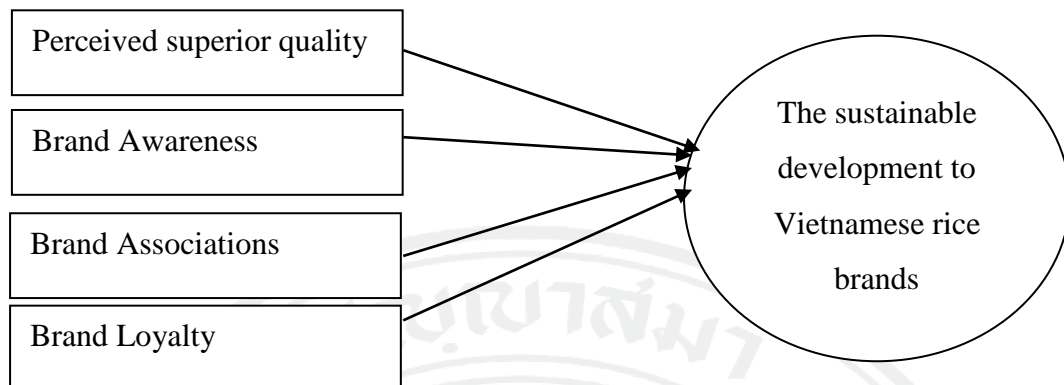


Figure 2.2 Model of factors affecting the sustainable brand development of Vietnamese rice

Source: Hoang et al. (2016)

Additionally, this research further demonstrated that the customers are likely to purchase high quality product. The quality factor can bring about brand loyalty to the products. The marketer should draw the strategy to contribute brand perception in Vietnamese rice, especially for the high quality rice, cleanliness, safety and storytelling to connect/mark its brand into customer's mind. The brand loyalty shall lastly be formed in the mind of consumers.

### 2.2.3.2 Brand Leadership Model

Brand Leadership Model proposed by D. Aaker, A., and Erich (2000) emphasizes on strategic management rather than tactical management. The purpose of this model is to create branding by following the concept of brand leadership in order to create brand's strength. There are four key factors related to this model, such as organization's structure, brand architecture, brand identity, and branding program as shown in the following Figure 2.3.

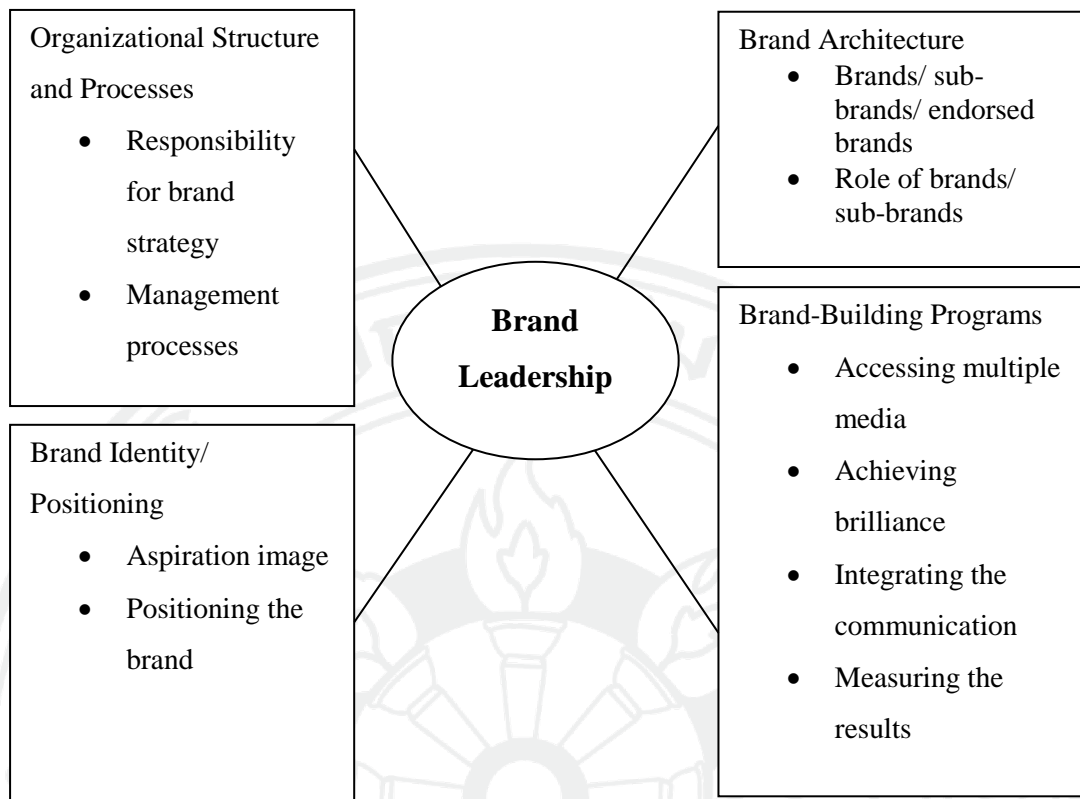


Figure 2.3 Brand Leadership Model

Source: D. Aaker, A., and Erich (2000)

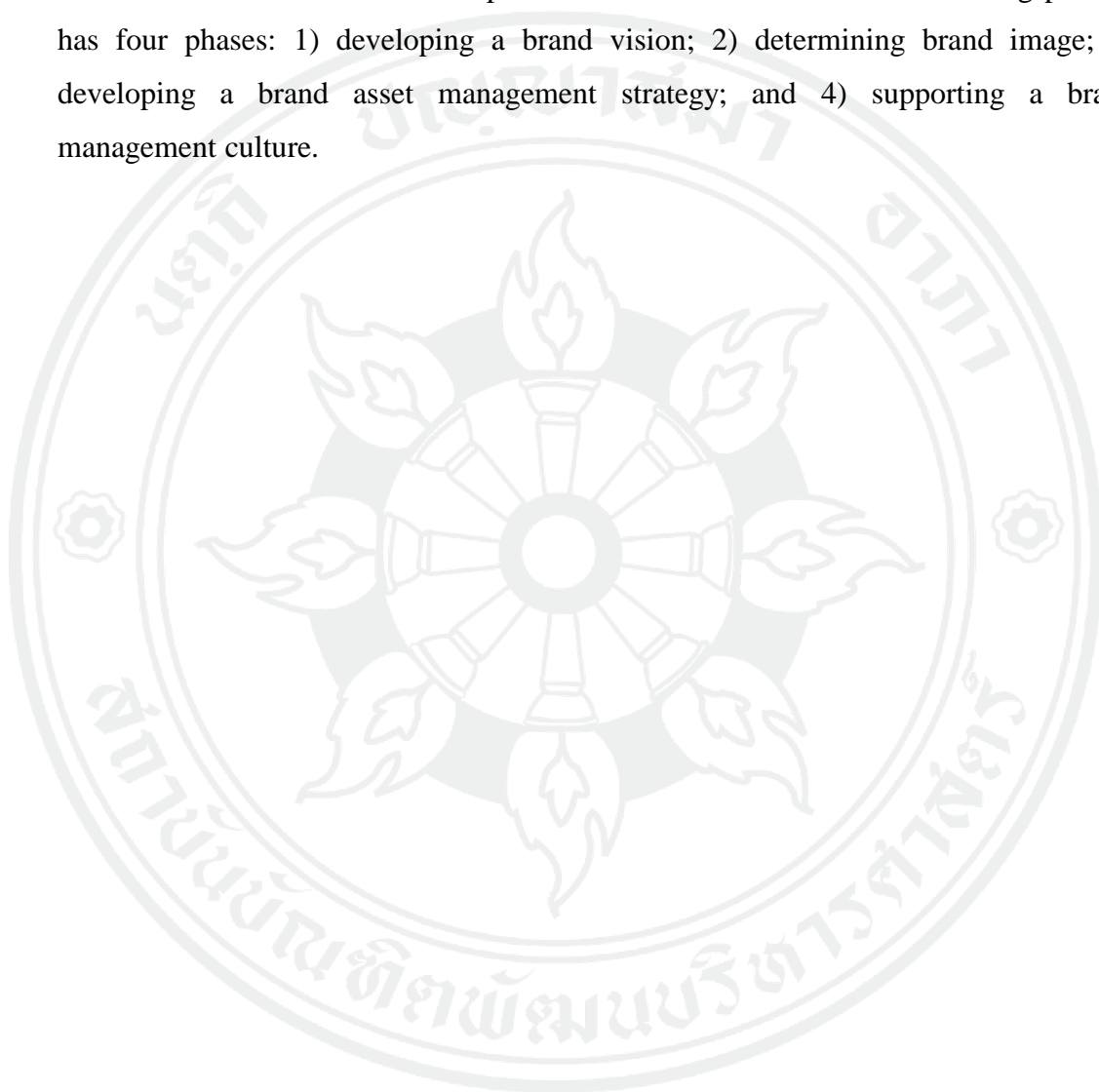
- 1) Organization structure has to support its branding. All stakeholders of organization need to understand the branding process. Aside from this, the brand management should be considered as one part of organizational management, not only an activity of the marketing department.
- 2) Brand architecture is a guideline to manage sub-brands of whole organization. The organization need to visibly identify the value given to the consumers.
- 3) Brand identity/ positioning should be clearly defined to integrate with branding process properly.
- 4) Branding program aims at brand communication towards the particular target to explore perception, raise positive attitude and leading to brand loyalty.

However, D. Aaker, A., and Erich (2000) further explained that the importance of branding is to recognize the brand essence that truly reflects the brand's strength. The brand identity, moreover, should differentiate from its competitor and create the brand's own character associating with the consumer's image. Nonetheless, with good strategic management and decent corporate culture, it will support to accelerate brand identity. On the other hand, if the company's strategy and culture are ambiguous, brand identity will not be successful. This is supported by Andre F. R. L. (2015) titled "Brand Management in SMEs: A New Customer Brand Engagement Framework". The author developed a question guide used to interview the employees of Beauti Portugal. The outcome showed that the company concentrates on product development and product distribution rather than brand development. In terms of communication, the company prioritizes on external more than internal communication. Therefore, its company culture is, to some extent, fragile which bring about unsuccessful branding.

D. Aaker, A., and Erich (2000) described branding that it can divided into nine stages, namely: 1) strategic brand analysis, which Aaker subdivided into three classifications, such as consumer analysis, competitor analysis, and self-analysis; 2) core Identity is used to create identity and creating recognition in the market. This identity will work as a core to generate other brand elements; 3) extended identity is utilized to produce evident self-appearance and details that hard to replicate. Moreover, extended identity can be considered from four perspectives as cited by Aaker, i.e. brand as product, brand as organization, brand as person, and brand as symbol; 4) value proposition is divided into functional benefit, emotional benefit, and self-reflection benefit; 5) brand credibility; 6) brand-customer relationship; 7) brand positioning that is suitable for company itself and its target as well as being different from competitor as to gain competitive advantage; 8) execution means the work should be examined before actual performance to gain the best method; and 9) tracking the task should be regularly evaluated in order to improve plan and increase work's efficiency.

### 2.2.3.3 Brand Asset Management Process

Brand Asset Management Process concept was proposed by Davis S. M. (2002) This process refers to an investment of brand through internal and external communications in order to earn profit and brand asset value. The branding process has four phases: 1) developing a brand vision; 2) determining brand image; 3) developing a brand asset management strategy; and 4) supporting a brand management culture.



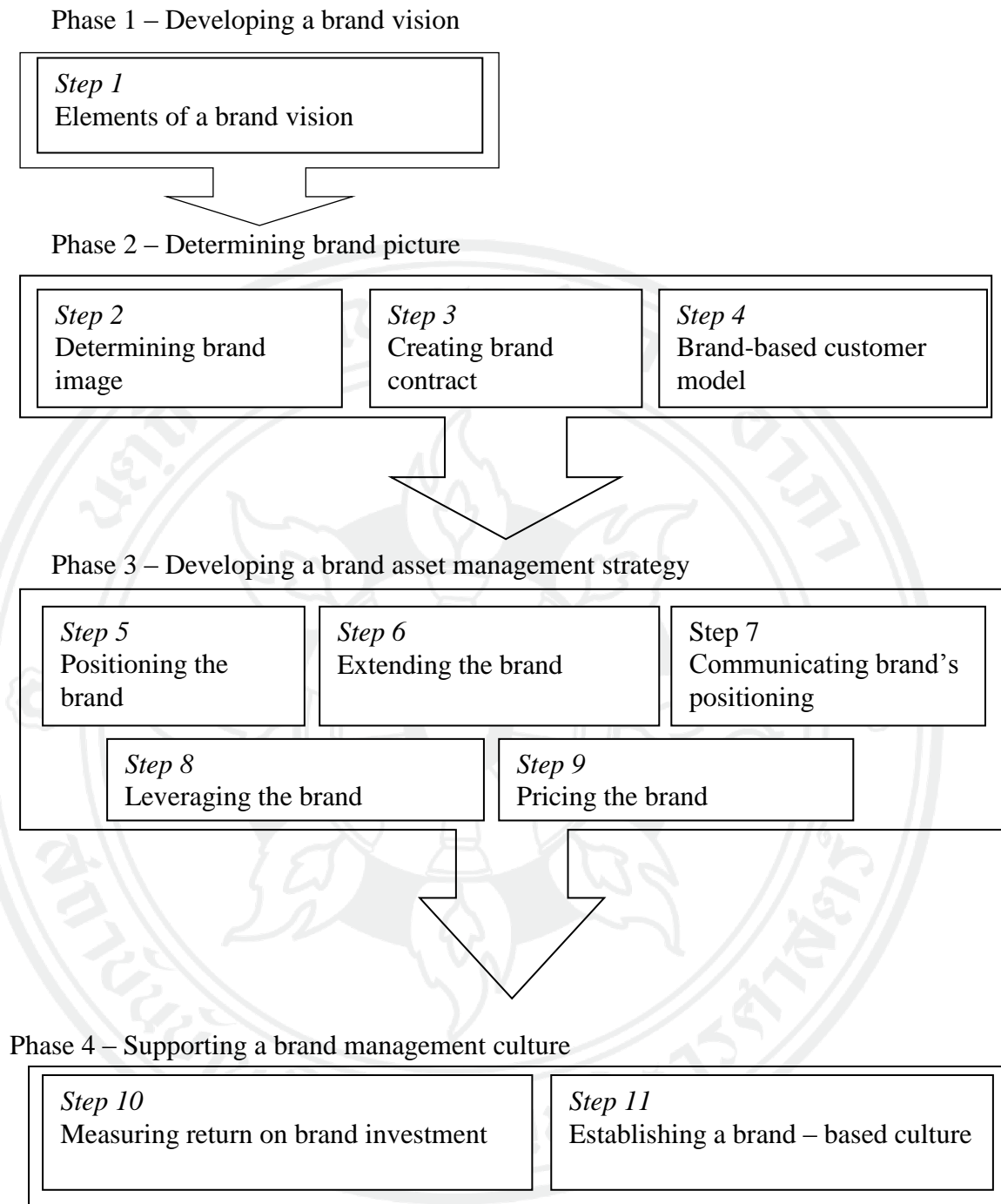


Figure 2.4 Brand Asset Management Process Model

Source: Davis S. M. (2002)

According to Figure 2.4, in the first phase, Davis S. M. (2002) described that developing brand vision has to be consistent with the brand's position, benefits, and strategic goal. The brand vision needs to be consistent with organization's vision. At

the second phase, determining brand image is a process that supports the consumer to perceive brand clearly, especially when compared to its competitor. Thus, it is necessary to investigate current consumer's brand awareness and how it could be developed.

At the third phase, it is relevant to positioning, extending, and communicating the brand as well as operating the brand to influence the consumers. This should start from identifying target, competitor, and brand's distinctive point over the other brands. Davis S. M. (2002) proposed five ways in positioning the brand as follows:

- 1) Value – Brand positioning should emphasize on the benefit/value the consumer will receive from the brand.
- 2) Uniqueness – Brand positioning should clearly differ from competitors.
- 3) Credibility – Brand positioning ought to be examined whether such position is reliable.
- 4) Sustainability – Brand positioning should be contemporary to any change of times, namely, it should not be fashionable or temporarily popular.
- 5) Fit – Brand positioning should fit with brand's objective and organization's overview.

After following the third phase completely, then proceeding to the last phase which is an assessment of its return on brand investment and establishment a sustainable brand culture. This concept corresponding to the research of Lim, Mohamed, Ariffin, and Guan (2009) studied the subject "Branding an Airline: A Case Study of Air Asia" researched through the documents and in- depth interviewing with the management people of the brand. Bringing all collected information to be analysed based on the Brand Asset Management model, the results showed that the clear brand vision of organization is correlated with its operational management strategy. Air Asia understands the consumers' need and perception about brand image. This includes its brand positioning that is different from competitors. This has caused the company to generate good returns and profit thus far.

Davis S. M. (2002) mentioned that the good branding will result in an increase of its market share. The organization should understand that the brand is the vital

asset of organization and has to be continuously maintained for its turnover in the long run.

#### **2.2.3.4 Customer – Based Brand Equity**

In 1993, Keller proposed Customer – Based Brand Equity (CBBE) model, which is a concept that is concerned about brand equity from the customers' viewpoint. Keller explained that CBBE when consumers have awareness, brand preference, and deep brand acquaintance (Keller, 1993). However, the method to create good Customer – Based Brand Equity based on the model consists of four stages: 1) the consumer recognizes brand identity (Brand Identity) responding to the question “Who are you?”; 2) the consumer has a positive attitude towards the brand (Brand Meaning), responding to the question “What are you?”; 3) the consumer response toward brand (Brand Response), responding to the question “What about you?”; and 4) the consumer has relationship with the brand (Brand Relationships), in response to the question “What about you and me?” The branding detail of Brand Building Blocks is illustrated as follows:

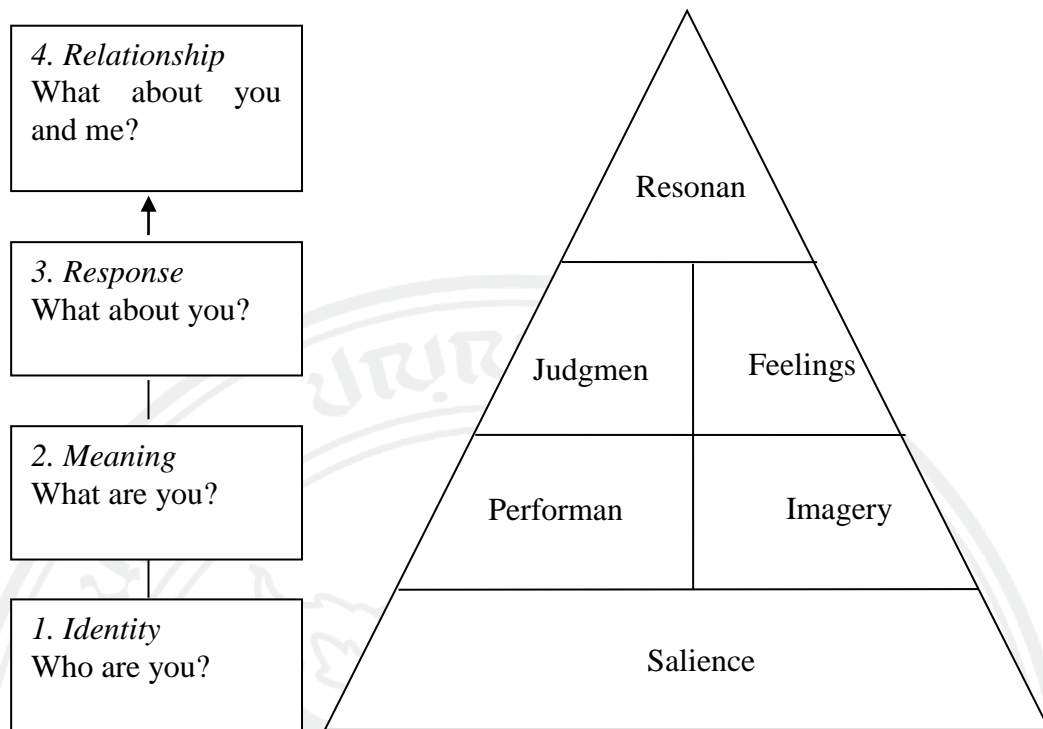


Figure 2.5 Brand Building Blocks Model

Source: Keller (1993)

In the first stage, brand salience involves name, logo, symbol and other parts of product for consumers to distinguish the brand. Moreover, this ensures the consumer puts the brand on top of their mind and notices it in every consumption-oriented situation. However, the company needs to select the right product category for determining the appropriate position over the competitors.

The second stage is to signify the brand meaning. It is a vital part of brand value which could be classified into two aspects: 1) brand performance which is product quality containing five characteristics, including i) product compositions, ii) product durability/reliability, iii) service quality/type of service, iv) product design, and v) product price; and 2) brand image, is brand quality in abstract terms, at the same time it needs to be consistent with the functional aspect of the brand as well. However, the consumers might come across the direct or indirect experiences from using the product. The consumer will then evaluate those experiences giving meaning to the brand.

The third stage is the customer's reaction to the brand, which can be categorized as brand judgements in terms of customer's thinking, responses and feelings. This is considered as the emotional reaction caused by the brand image communication together with the customer's experiences.

The last stage, brand resonance refers to the relationship that the consumer has with the product. The brand resonance can be classified in four aspects -brand loyalty behavior, relationship attitude, feeling of brand unity and feeling of enthusiasm as part of the brand.

However, after establishing brand's strength successfully, the next essential objective is the retaining of the brand's reputation, brand image, and brand strength for future sustainability (Charupongsopon, 2014).

Furthermore, Keller et al. (2011) stated that brand awareness, brand image, and brand loyalty are the main factors to produce brand equity. Likewise, the research of Hilal (2016) titled "Creating Brand Equity: A Study on Rice Based Value Added Products", is related to the significant factors that impact on brand equity of the rice products in Sri Lanka. The survey was conducted using questionnaires and surveyed 114 consumers by using Brand Building Blocks Model as a framework. The result showed that all of aforementioned three factors have affected brand equity of rice products in Sri Lanka. However, the most significant factor is brand loyalty, followed by brand awareness. For the brand image, the marketer needed to improve the activity and encourage the consumers to gain more awareness as it is insufficient execution. The traits that are relevant to each of the factors are shown as follows:

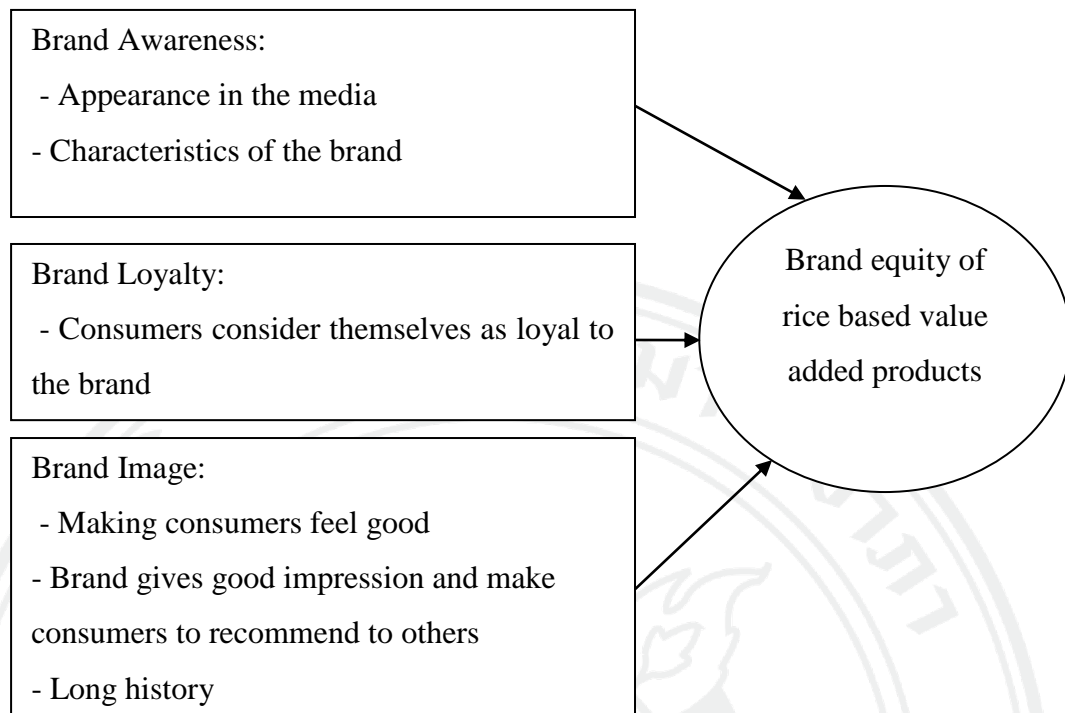


Figure 2.6 Factors that affected to Brand Equity of Rice products in Sri Lanka.

Source: Hilal (2016)

However, the researcher suggested that brand image can be improved by consciousness of value- added rice, especially for communications regarding the healthy benefit from rice.

#### 2.2.3.5 Strategic Brand Management Process Model

Apart from the above model, Keller advised further with regard to planning of the marketing program to produce, manage and evaluate the brand under Strategic Brand Management Process by Keller et al. (2011). The process can split into four steps described below.

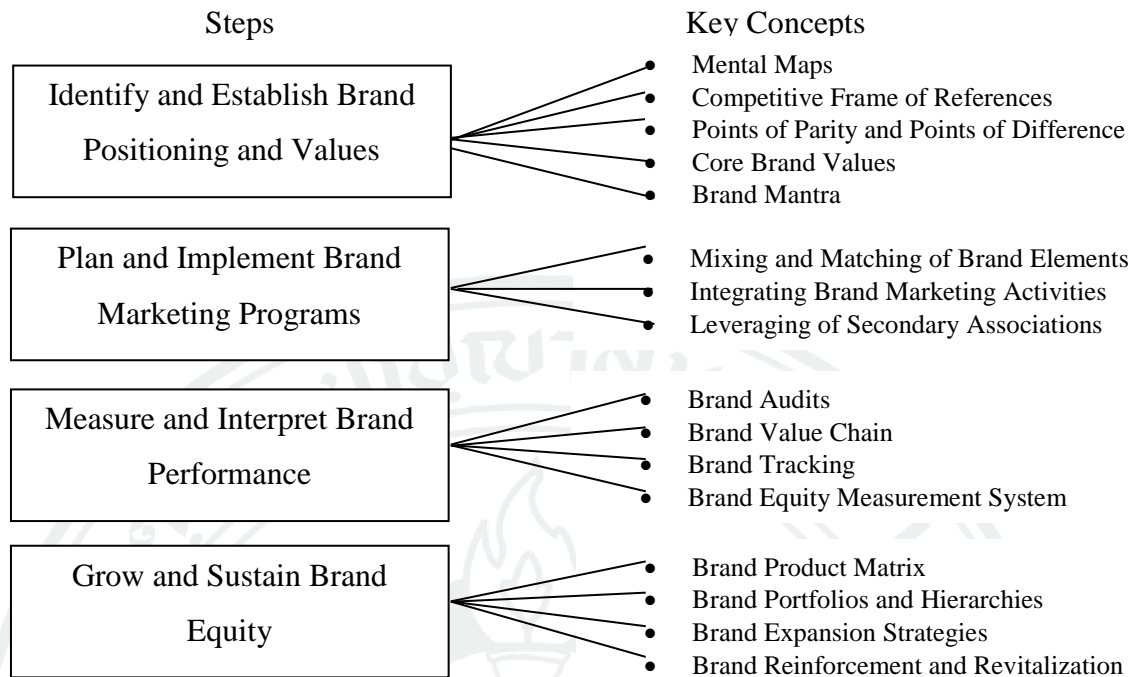


Figure 2.7 Strategic Brand Management Process Model

Source: Keller et al. (2011)

1) Identify and establish brand positioning and values – refers to the brand positioning process. The efficient brand positioning is an establishment of a superior brand in the customer's mind. The basis of this stage starts from understanding the consumer demand, particularly the emotional benefit in order to build brand elements to gain consumer's acceptance. Additionally, it is necessary to understand other surrounding factors as well such as competitive frame of references, points of parity and points of difference, core brand value as well as brand mantra. After that, setting the direction and positioning the brand image that aligns with the product, customer and environment.

2) Plan and implement brand-marketing programs – after accomplishment of brand positioning, the next step is mixing and matching brand elements such as brand name, symbol, and slogan. Then, clearly mixing these elements to communicate to the consumer through marketing tools and integrating brand marketing activities. Such elements have to produce consumers' preference and able to differentiates product from its competitors. Moreover, it also associates to some images to build the required product image or links to the sub-brand (Leveraging of Secondary Association). This

is done in order to borrow the sub- brand to establish the value added product. The brand association can be linked to its three attributes (Keller, 1993) as follows:

- a) Product or service attributes that are relevant and irrelevant to the product itself.
- b) Product or service benefits, for example, functional benefits that are consistent with product attributes, experiencing benefits by the use of product, and symbolic benefits in which is unrelated to the product but influences the emotion and feeling.
- c) Attitudes toward brands that are caused by the attributes and benefits of brands as well as the consumers' evaluation.

Brand communication is defined as the relationship between the brand and consumer resulting ultimately in brand resonance. Currently, the brand communication is important since most products and services are similar to one another. Thus, the communication design needs to be concentrated on communication method that is consistent with the marketing position of the brand and consumer behaviour. The focus is also on knowing the competitor's marketing approach including good and creative planning, in order to gain communication efficiency.

Nowadays, there are numerous brand communication tools. The company therefore should have a clear goal when selecting the tools since each one provides different results. The popular tool is integrated marketing communications (IMC), which includes advertising, public relations, sales promotion, event marketing and sponsorship, and personal selling. Rita, John, Sameena, and Feldwick (2004) stated that the brand communications includes three steps: 1) sourcing information for consumer decision, 2) communicating to generate core of brand offer, and 3) communicating to form associations in consumers' thinking, feelings, emotions, and memories.

Nevertheless, the efficient and effective brand communications design should follow "The 6 C's" principal (Charupongsopon, 2014), which comprises of the factors listed below:

- 1) Coverage – refers to the extension of brand communication scope of using media and linking the brand to its target effectively.

- 2) Contribution – refers to the capability of brand marketer in implementing customer's response towards a certain communications method. However, the brand marketer has to consider the possible outcome whether it is worthwhile to make the investment.
- 3) Commonality – refers to the communication that can create image stability and consistency for the brand, while bringing these factors into every marketing program.
- 4) Complementarity – refers to a selected communication tool that can support other tools in order to maximize consumer's perception of information delivered.
- 5) Conformability – refers to the conformance of communication in each period of time that contributes to the desired consumer perception.
- 6) Cost – refers to the budget for communication expenses. The outcome from using this budget must be evaluated, in which the essential part is the value extracted from the expenditures.

However, brand communication should be gauged, selected tool and planned carefully so that the communication would be effective and worthwhile for the investment.

3) Measure and interpret brand performance – after implementing the marketing program, the organization needs to regularly track the brand outcome in order to know if the brand health needs any improvements. However, the brand tracking consists of brand audits and brand value-chain checking. This forms the basis of evaluation of the result of marketing expenses and also helps to implement brand equity measurement's system. This process will generate useful information for short-term as well as long-term planning.

4) Grow and sustain brand equity – growing and sustaining brand equity needs to be concerned with the operational management of other factors as well. Thus, the brand will be able to grow in the future. Establishment of sustainable brand equity comprises of the four factors explained below:

- 1) Brand Product Matrix refers to a brand metrics method used to rate brand value. This is to examine the age of product category, inspect brand knowledge structure, extra profit, and brand value that can be assessed and developed to be the revenue at the end.
- 2) Brand Hierarchy refers to a brand strategy's diagram of organization that illustrates the linkage of relationship of all brands in organization in terms of the brand quantities and character of each brand. After that, bringing those brands and allocating their relationship in the diagrams. Therefore, this diagram will show the overall picture of all brands and it will develop appropriate sustainable brand strategy.
- 3) Brand Expansion Strategy refers to a strategy whereby an organization uses its old brand name with new products in several product categories. Alternatively, the organization may use a new brand name, i.e. Sub Brand, under its old brand name which becomes the Parent Brand. Brand expansion may support organization in reducing the risk of creating a new brand name and assure product quality with the former brand image as well as reduce the cost of new product development.
- 4) Brand Reinforcement and Revitalization, generally brand reinforcement can be regularly exploited through marketing activities, in order to reactivate brand recognition and image inside the consumer. By doing so, it can be considered by raising the following questions, i.e. whether the brand can represent or refer to its product, how the brand can respond to consumer's demand, how the brand can value up the product over the one in the same product line. Aside from this, if the brand are fading out of the market, the organization must attempt to revitalize brand back into its market again.

Strategic Brand Management Process Model harmonizes with the proposal of Abdul Hadi, Selamat, Shamsudin, Radam, and Ab Karim (2012) titled "Consumers'

Demand and Willingness to Pay for Rice Attributes in Malaysia”. This survey had 205 respondents from 13 different states in Malaysia. The results showed that the attributes the consumer considers when buying rice are safety, taste, and rice seed’s size. However, the consumers are willing to pay if the rice has a preferable quality. This research’s outcome was useful in providing the opportunity to develop the future business. The researchers of this research paper further suggested that rice branding should be systematically implemented under a consumer-oriented strategy, which begins with choosing, providing, and communicating the value through marketing tools. Subsequently, the branding strategy involves evaluating the result and developing the business for sustainable growth.

This research “Development of Prototype for Sustainable Rice brand for Small-Scaled Farmers in Thailand” utilizes the Strategic Brand Management Process Model as the key framework to develop prototype for Thai rice branding. This will include the branding process particularly for new brands and sustainable branding. The main purpose of this research is to generate brand uniqueness, while being easy to remember and able to gain competitive advantage in the market. However, the researcher shall involve relevant previous research works into the rice brand development process as well.

## **2.3 Sustainable Branding**

In this research, the researcher has brought the concept of sustainable branding as the framework for rice branding development together with the branding concept. Since the researcher would like to develop rice-branding model as a sustainable solution that aligns with country's development policy.

The emergence of globalization has caused positive and negative impacts all over the world including Thailand. These impacts spread quickly on a wide scale. For example, Thailand has shifted from the self-reliance agricultural society to industrial society in which the government attempted Thai society copy Western ideals. Moreover, the development of capitalism economy is evident in the National Economic Plan, numbers 4-7. This development has constantly generated great economic expansion and increase the capita income per head. However, this increase only applies to a few particular groups. At the same time, it also produces severe disparity in income distribution. In particular, it increases more poverty to parts of the population. For example, the highest income group is about 20 per cent of the total population, who generates 55.20 per cent of the total country's income. Meanwhile the lower 20-percentile income group generates 4.3 per cent of the total country's income. This shows that the gap between rich and poor people is very large. Furthermore, it shows that capitalism, which is the result of globalization, cannot sustainably solve the poverty, which in turn creates negative consequences, for example, the floating of Thai baht currency caused by economic crisis in 1997 in Thailand (Pantasen, 2005). From the data above it can be said that Thai people are naive to the country's revolutions and lack of adjustment in response to global changes.

### **2.3.1 Sustainability with Branding**

Branding is one of many methods in creating business sustainability in the long-term. The sustainable brand refers to a brand that responds to the consumer's needs at present, while being able to retain resources for the next generation.

Additionally, such brands must have suitable branding process, thus it will warrant brand acceptance and brand love.

Implementing the sustainable concept to use with branding, Laukaikul (2007), a branding consultant for various organizations in Thailand, mentioned that sustainable branding consists of 10 steps as follows:

- 1) Business Description – Identifying business framework under terms and conditions of the company based on business knowledge.
- 2) Brand Vision – Identifying the brand vision reasonably through understanding own-self and the environment.
- 3) Brand Positioning – Identifying brand positioning with insights by considering the company's ethical terms and conditions. The brand position, which would be consistent with the company's belief, should be practical for the long term. Also, the brand position should be valuable for all stakeholders. Last but not least, the most important part is the brand position to have an alignment with the company's framework, support brand vision, being flexible to business growth and changes.
- 4) Brand Attributes – Identifying the brand attributes clearly. The attributes should reflect to functional and emotional benefits as well as promote the brand to have greater distinction. However, the attributes need to foster the brand position and be realistic.
- 5) Brand Promise – Identifying the values of brand promise. The brand promise should be wise, ethical, based on self-perception. Nevertheless, the brand promise must come from the summary of ideas after analysing the data. Accordingly, such summary will express the value of the brand that can be everlastingly promised.
- 6) Brand Identity – Establishing the brand identity system that is different from others. Brand identity is constantly established until it becomes a symbol. However, it should start from assessing step 1 to step 5 in order to create the brand identity. Specifically, brand positioning and brand attributes are greatly necessary for the identity system, which will be a guideline to regulate the brand communication methods. However, it is crucial to select professionals

or skilled people to customize the brand identity system as well as to set the framework that fits the business size.

- 7) Brand Culture – Establishing brand culture through self-awareness by exploring the brand attributes to be a part of the organization's culture. The process initiates from building the confidence of brand attributes toward people in the organization. They can therefore transfer their own experiences with the brand to outsiders. Since the people of organization are acting as the brand ambassadors, they are likely to be the best advocates of the brand.
- 8) Brand Awareness – Establishing a good brand awareness which is suitable to the organization. The suitability refers to the ability of brand awareness that is competitive in the market determining the proper communication tools for the brand. However, brand awareness is usually an activity implemented mainly for external targets.
- 9) Brand Preference – Establishing brand preference that should be prudent, resilient, and consistent with the company's terms, conditions, and knowledge.
- 10) Brand Loyalty – Establishing a brand loyalty that should be prudent, resilient, and consistent with the company's terms and conditions, and knowledge.

In addition, Intasara (2016) described that strong and sustainable branding must have a clear strategy. It starts from research to form and develop the brand, and then proceeds to the strategy to create the brand. Lastly, the strategy has to be evaluated whether it achieved the goal. However, the vital parts of sustainable branding are the effective communication and product development that fits to the consumer's needs.

In conclusion, sustainable branding has to be consistent for all brand elements, especially the balance of the three elements including people, profit, and environment. Through thoughtful self- investigation, such branding shall be utmost suitable for its brand. Therefore, it will create a sturdy foundation in the event of changes in the future, while the environment has to be constantly monitored.

In this study, the researcher uses the sustainable branding concept as the guideline to develop Thai rice product. Moreover, the researcher conveys the process

and preferable attributes of sustainable branding to progress in each step of the branding process. The researcher expects that when the farmers have a strong and social friendly rice brand, it shall support their brands to creatively compete in the market. It also promptly helps the farmers to wisely adjust themselves to any changes or future crisis, particularly by being independent and sustainable.

## **2.4 Smart Farmer Concept**

The fact is that the farmers in Thailand are suffering from low income caused by the lack of knowledge and shortage of marketing information for production planning. Moreover, Thai farmers lack production knowledge for high quality agricultural products as well as safety and environmental friendly solutions. These problems show that the farmers are still a long way from sustainable development especially the strength for long-term self-reliance. If the farmer can achieve this, the government will not need to assign policies to fix the problems (Jingjit, 2016). Additionally, the Eleventh National Economic and Social Development Plan has a vision regarding the agricultural development, namely “Farmers have good quality of life, people have food resources stability, and agriculture will be the foundation of income for Thailand”.

Smart Farmer project is one of many quality of life development strategies. It aims to nurture farmers to be sustainably independent and strong enough to withstand any risk of production. Moreover, it also helps farmers to have in-depth marketing information, knowledge in producing high quality agricultural products and create environment friendly solutions. Nevertheless, the ultimate goal of this strategy is to raise farmers’ average income no less than 10 per cent each year. Also, the consumers can have healthy food, reduce illness, and lastly to expand GDP for the agricultural sector.

### **2.4.1 Smart Farmer Development Mechanism**

The important idea of Smart Farmer development is developing farmers to gain knowledge in various aspects such as marketing, production technology, cost

accounting, and obtaining relevant information. Therefore, it is necessary to have the effective operation to support farmers in order to reach as much information as possible. The related sectors involving this mechanism are listed below:

- 1) Data Center of the Ministry of Agriculture and Cooperatives – who manage all relevant information such as farmer registration, production source, processing source, marketing information, and etc. This data center serves as a war room to connect all provinces' information and can utilize such information to advise their local farmers.
- 2) The Officer from the Ministry of Agriculture and Cooperatives – the staff who have the experience to suggest and provide farmers with any information as a Smart Officer.
- 3) The Policy Board in every level – the group who lead the working guideline, plan the budget, and drive operation in regards to policy. They also help to direct, monitor, recommend, and track operation.
- 4) Parties Network – the one who cooperate and drive the operation for both government and private sectors.

The parties listed above develop and raise the farmer development project in becoming the Smart Farmer by following predetermined guidelines. So, the project can be successful as the goal of national agricultural development plan. However, the researcher believes that developing of prototype of rice brand for small- scaled farmer shall be an effort to support small-scaled farmer and promote them to be a Smart Farmer in the future.

#### **2.4.2 Process of Farmer Development to be Smart Farmer Project**

To achieve the Farmer Development to be Smart Farmer Project, the important process of this development is as follows (Limlaemthong, 2013):

- 1) Qualification: the Policy Board determined the general qualifications as the initial framework to select the farmer such as average annual income that is not less than THB 180,000 per family. Also, the qualified farmer must possess any of the 6 basic qualifications by passing at least one indicator in each qualification, as shown in table below.

Table 2.2 Table of basic qualifications

Qualifications	Indicators
1. Knowledge Ability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Being a host and convey technological knowledge or provide an advice to others.</li> <li>• Being a role model and give advice to others.</li> </ul>
2. Informative Decision	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Being able to attain information from official staff or through information technology and other communication forms.</li> <li>• Being able to record and use information for planning before operating and managing the products to be in line with market demand.</li> <li>• Being able to retrieve information to solve problems and develop one's career.</li> </ul>
3. Production and Marketing Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Being able to manage production, labor and cost.</li> <li>• Being able to associate production and marketing to expand sales.</li> <li>• Being able to manage by products effectively.</li> </ul>
4. Product Quality and Consumer Safety Awareness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Having knowledge or receiving training about organic agricultural standard or other standards.</li> <li>• Having production process and align with organic agriculture standard or other standards.</li> </ul>
5. Environment/ Social Responsibility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Having environmental friendly production.</li> <li>• Having constant community and social support.</li> </ul>
6. Proud to be Farmer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Having commitment to a farmer career.</li> <li>• Having love and the desire to cherish agricultural area for the next generation</li> <li>• Being happy and satisfied in the farmer career.</li> </ul>

Source: Limlaemthong, 2013

After evaluating the qualifications, the farmers who have passed qualification in terms of income and the six basic qualifications, the farmers shall be grouped into

Existing Smart Farmer. For the farmers who have not passed the mentioned one or both criteria, these farmers shall be categorized in Developing Smart Farmer.

Furthermore, the Existing Smart Farmer can be considered and selected to be Smart Farmer Model provided that they can pass the qualifications and indicator of Smart Farmer Model using special skills. The Smart Farmer Model in rice product shall be assessed by Rice Department with details as follows:

- Achieving existing Smart Farmer evaluation
- Experiencing in rice farming not less than 3 years
- Doing rice farming on their own and with their family
- Producing rice product with higher yield than province average

The above grouping is implemented for Smart Farmer to convey knowledge and lessons of agriculture to other farmers. Thus, normal farmers can develop their own rice farming in the future.

2) Proposal, Development and Project Evaluation – the committee will liaise with related persons for the support in terms of resources. Collaborating with the network from supporting sectors in order to grow a farmer to be a Smart Farmer and being skillful in their profession.

3) Information Management for Smart Farmer – the most important operation is transferring farmers' information into the database of Department Of Provincial Administration, under the project “One ID Card for Smart Farmer”. Then, arranging the database of target Smart Farmers including information database and lessons for the Smart Farmer model.

4) Planning and War room – developing war room as the center of agricultural information for both central and provincial level.

5) Developing Websites and E-Services – establishing website [www.thaismartfarmer.net](http://www.thaismartfarmer.net) and e-services system in regards to agriculture. This is to create the center of information management to support progress of policy, included with knowledge of developing Smart Farmer as well as lessons for the Smart Farmer model.

6) Record of Data Base, Tracking and Evaluation – this recorded information would be summarized and analysed, then used to develop agricultural and cooperatives plan for each province further. However, this information shall be kept up-to-date from time to time.

7) Convey Information – conveying information through community's information and communication technologies (ICT) as the base to disseminate information to other communities over the country.

### **2.4.3 Case Example: Leading Farmers**

A clear example of Smart Farmer is the development of leading farmers by Rice Department. They select farmers, who are skilful in production, creativity, and are able to transfer their knowledge to others. Simultaneously, the Rice Department provides them with modernized farming training and offers an opportunity for site visits both domestic and overseas. The leading farmers will work as farming lecturers in their local community, and coordinate between Rice Department and local farmers. This includes sharing information, knowledge, rice survey, disaster alert, and support local farmers to solve problems. Furthermore, the leading farmers will also obtain certificates after training and complete five years duty for honor and pride.

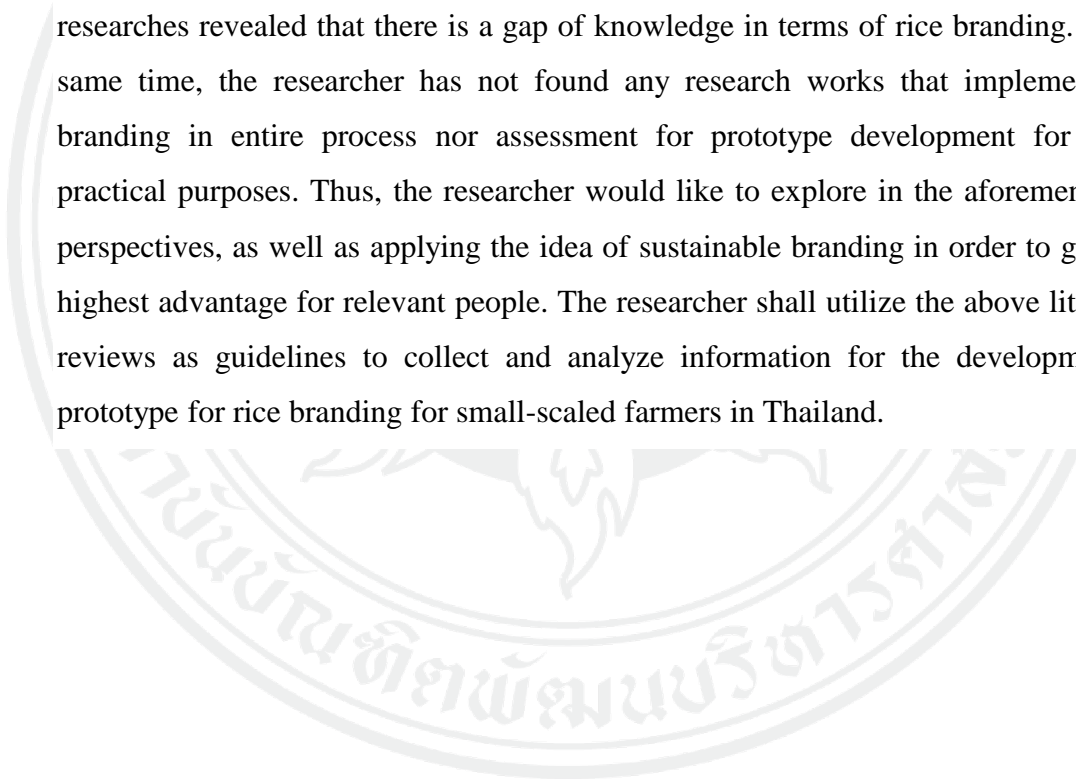
Thailand's National Electronics and Computer Technology Center (NECTEC) has proposed Smart Farm Flagship idea as a roadmap for relevant offices' utilization. The main idea of Smart Farm is to apply electronic and computer technology as well as information and communication technology to farming. This is to improve the entire supply chain from agricultural production process to consumers. As a result, it will raise its productivity, reduce costs, and standardize products. This will also cover marketing aspect emphasizing on value added product through Thai Branding support. On top of that, information technology would be used to create storytelling to add up the value to the products. Moreover, this can employ online media for branding and developing relationship with the customer particularly for the young generation.

From the above statement, it shows that the government's apparent attempt to solve farmer's problems systematically to elevate the farmers, who are the main

population of Thailand, which indirectly develops Thailand's population. Furthermore, it is considered as moving the country in full steam ahead according to Thailand Policy 4.0. Nevertheless, after implementing this policy for a period of time, it is found that the farmers in each product however come across with many problems. The government still has launched the urgent relief schemes for farmers. This highlights the fact that this policy still needs further improvement.

However, the researcher presents the idea of Smart Farmer to use as a method to develop the prototype of Thai rice for small-scaled farmers. It is considered as a tool to encourage farmers to become a Smart Farmer or even Smart Farmer Model. This is considered as sustainable farmer development for the future.

In conclusion, both domestic and international literature reviews and researches revealed that there is a gap of knowledge in terms of rice branding. At the same time, the researcher has not found any research works that implement rice branding in entire process nor assessment for prototype development for actual practical purposes. Thus, the researcher would like to explore in the aforementioned perspectives, as well as applying the idea of sustainable branding in order to gain the highest advantage for relevant people. The researcher shall utilize the above literature reviews as guidelines to collect and analyze information for the development of prototype for rice branding for small-scaled farmers in Thailand.



## **CHAPTER 3**

### **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

This research aims to develop the prototype of rice branding which is suitable for farmers, who have small-scaled rice farming production in Thailand. This study utilized the mixed method research methodology including both qualitative and quantitative studies. The research collected both primary and secondary data in order to achieve the research objectives. Moreover, this methodology is in line with the work of numerous researchers, who have worked on the subject relevant to branding, for instance, the study titled “Branding and Brand Preference in the Mobile Phone Service Industry” by Alamro (2010) and “A Study of Brand Preference: An Experiential View” by Ebrahim (2013). On top of that, there is also a study titled “Internal Branding Strategy and Employees’ Behavior” by Wongwishyakorn (2011). These research works utilized the qualitative research method to study the branding strategy of various products. Simultaneously, they also applied quantitative research method with the aim of investigating the target’s behaviors towards brands. The process of this study is illustrated in the figure below:

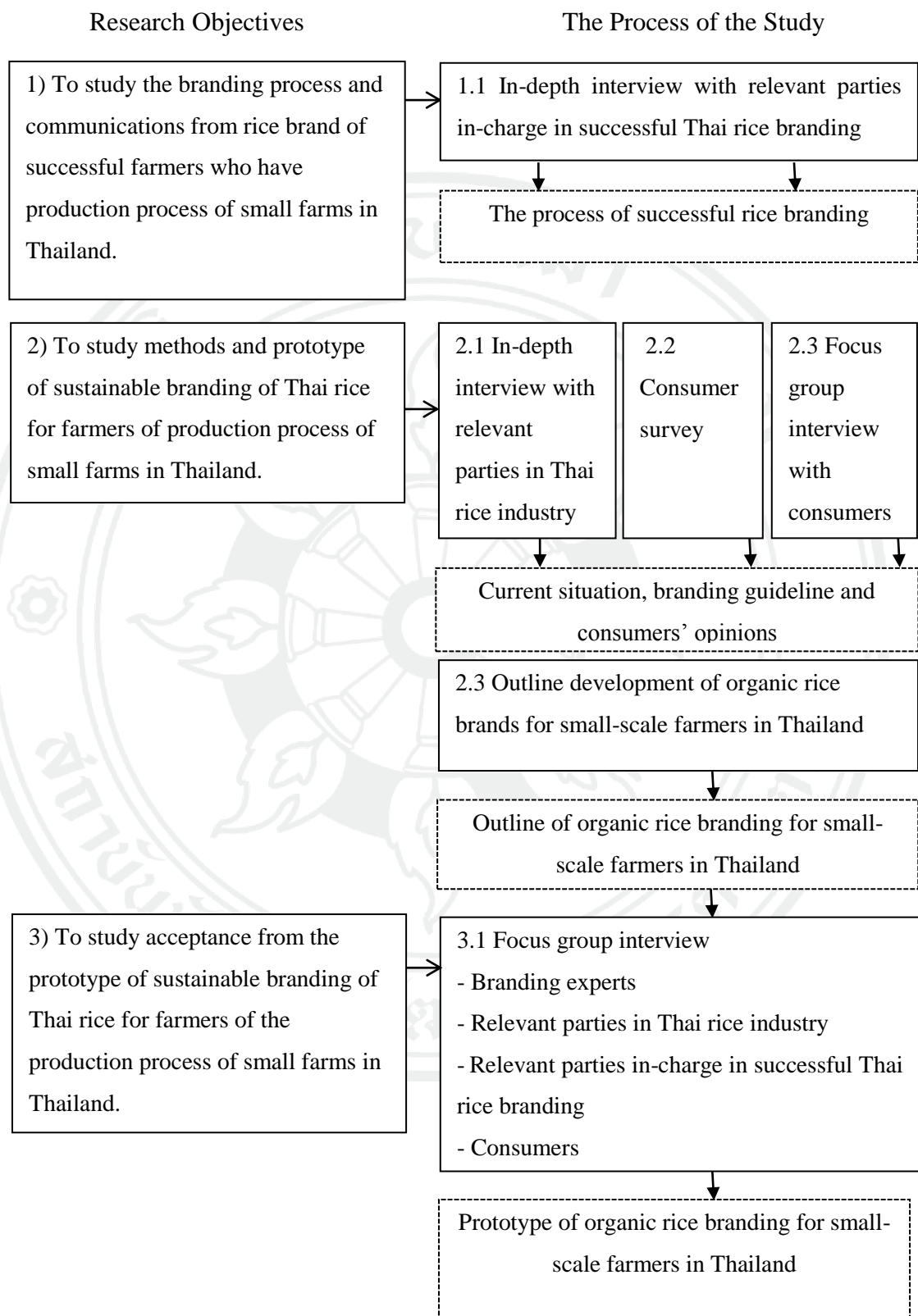


Figure 3.1 The Research Objectives and Process of the Study

According to above diagram, this research is divided into 3 steps according to the research objectives. The detail of research process is explained as follows:

### **3.1 Information Sources of the Research**

The researcher collected the information from two sources including document and personal sources as elaborated below:

#### **3.1.1 Document source**

The researcher reviewed documents, research works, academic journals, and video media relevant to rice branding in Thailand. The aim is to study the method and branding processes of successful rice brand for farmers. Moreover, the researcher shall also bring such information to apply in Thai rice branding development in the future. The document sources were collected from libraries, websites, and relevant department offices.

#### **3.1.2 Personal source**

In this research, the personal source is divided into four groups as follows:

- Group 1: Relevant parties in-charge in successful Thai rice branding
- Group 2: Relevant parties in Thai rice industry
- Group 3: Consumers
- Group 4: Stakeholders in Thai rice branding

##### Group 1: Relevant Parties in-charge of Successful Thai Rice Branding.

Process 1.1, based on the above diagram, is the in-depth interview process using purposive sampling. Since this research requires the target respondents who have extensive relevant knowledge to the subject of the study. Thus, the researcher collected the information from the relevant parties in-charge in branding for seven

brands and one project. The chosen brands are recognizably successful with details as follows:

- 1) Kao Kun Na Tam Brand (Moral Rice) is a brand from the farmer group under “Dhamma Ruamjai Foundation” in Yasothon and nearby provinces. The brand has brought up its strength regarding the moral issue of farmers and utilized it to differentiate its brand. Kao Kun Na Tam Brand caught wide attention being spread by various media without any expenses. In addition, this rice brand has obtained the organic rice standard and has strict product quality’s control. Moreover it established good distribution channel covering many areas. As a result, this brand can earn good sales and offer with the higher price than average price.
- 2) Kao Im Brand is a brand of the farmer group in the area of Maha Sarakham province under the support of “Kaset Kem Kang” project. The strength of Kao Im brand is the communication regarding chemical free process. Moreover, this rice has been grown in the area, where is claimed to be the best for growing Jasmine rice in the world. Furthermore, Kao Im Brand also created additional unique selling point by mixing three rice breeds in one package. This mixed rice has been proven by food experts and specialists as the best tasting rice. In term of distribution process, there is an indication of product’s detail on the packaging in order to add value to the product. The packaging is well-presented and the product is verified by Korn Chatikavanij, who is a reliable person. As a result, Kao Im Brand can target the upper class consumers to the corporate consumer with higher selling price than the market price within a short time.
- 3) Kao Kwan Jak Kra Rad Brand was developed by a farmer’s child, who is marketer. The founder decided to return to his hometown and started new career as a farmer in Nakorn Ratchasima province. The brand developer was elected to participate in the “Professional Farmer’s Inheritor Program”, where he learned the entire agricultural process. He soon became the interest of the mass media. In the part of branding, Kao Kwan Jak Kra Rad Brand utilized its strength involving the concept “grow it like home grown rice” to be its main

selling point. At the same time, the brand developer has a good relationship with government officers; as a result the brand has been encouraged to participate in rice and agriculture trade fairs without any expenses. These activities enables Kao Kwan Jak Kra Rad Brand to reach the target of middle to upper-middle level and can offer higher price than before.

- 4) Pa Hung Brand was developed by a designer, who has a family background as a leading rice entrepreneur in Roi Et province. In terms of branding, this brand brought up the strength regarding the appearance of well-designed packaging. As a result, there was a huge demand on gift and souvenir packages for the special occasions and that allow Pa Hung Brand can significantly generate good sales. In addition, this brand also has special service on customized packages in which they can add extra cost into the selling price. The target consumers of this brand are upper-middle consumer and corporate consumer. Particularly for the hotel business, they offer rice package to the hotel's guests as complimentary gifts.
- 5) De Farm Brand was developed by a marketer, who changed career to be a farmer in Chiang Mai province. In terms of branding, the strength of this brand is the storytelling regarding the caring attention paid on each stage of organic rice farming. This is to ensure consumers that all the processes have no chemical contamination despite the absence of organic certificates. Moreover, the lifestyle of the brand owner is consistent with the organic lifestyle, which helps to strengthen the storytelling. Due to its attractive gift set for the New Year season, it can better attract upper-middle to upper consumers.
- 6) Kao Pleng Rak Brand was established by a financial person, who changed career to be a farmer in Suphanburi province. The strength of Kao Pleng Rak Brand is that the farmer turns on love music for rice plants. In terms of product development, the core of this brand is love, and caring attention to rice plants, farmer, and environment for the entire process. This brand has the celebrity, Boyd Kosiyabong, as the brand presenter. Moreover, Boyd's character is similar to Kao Pleng Rak Brand's character, thus it enhances the brand to better attract the upper-middle to upper consumers.

- 7) Manora Brand is the brand developed by a lecturer at the Faculty of Technology and Community Development, Thaksin University. The brand developer has good knowledge about organic farming. The rice has been continuously developed it to be the first Thai rice breed that was registered as Geographical Indications (GI) product of Thailand. Moreover, the reliability of this brand developer led to the product's acceptance. The reputation of the brand was dramatically spread by word of mouth, especially the upper-middle to upper consumers as well as corporate ones. As a result, the product is able set higher.
- 8) Pook Pin Toe Kao project is the project operated by a non-profit private organization. The project's objective is to support the small-scaled farmers to supply rice directly to consumers residing in the city. This project created the gimmick regarding the idea of marriage including three characters - groom, bride, and matchmaker. The whole process shall be implemented through online media platform. Due to its media content, attractive story and good governance, the brand responds well to consumers' needs. In addition, the social influencers such as actors/actresses, artists, and mass media spread the information widely through word of mouth.

The researcher carried out the interview of the above target brands in order to develop the guidelines of rice branding for small-scaled farmers in Thailand. When the answers started to repeat, the researcher terminated the interview.

#### Group 2: Related Parties in Thai Rice Industry

Process 2.1, according to the above diagram, the in-depth interview process selected respondents based on the purposive sampling method. Moreover, the researcher also pays attention to roles and relationships in the Thai rice industry to obtain information regarding the research subject and the most relevant issues. The researcher also combined snowball sampling technique, namely the main informant shall, in turn, introduce relevant people to be the research subject. This is to confirm that the study was able to access qualified persons for the interview. However, the researcher interviewed the relevant persons until the repeated answers are obtained.

Then, the researcher terminated the interview. The information sources are comprised of three sections discussed in the following section.

1) Branding experts

- Director of Strategic Management of Fame Line, interviewed on October 29, 2017
- Managing Director of Ford Thailand, interviewed on October 6, 2017
- Managing Director of Isobar Thailand, interviewed on October 10, 2017
- General Manager of E-Media, interviewed on October 6, 2017
- President of Y&R Thailand, interviewed on October 3, 2017

2) Representatives of government sector

- Agricultural Research Officer (Professional level), Head of Processed and Product Development, Rice Product Development Division - Rice Department, interviewed on October 3, 2017
- Agricultural Research Officer (Professional level), Head of Economics and Trade Promotion, Rice Product Development Division- Rice Department, interviewed on October 3, 2017

3) Representatives of private sector

- Representative of Eakkachai Distribution System (Tesco Lotus), interviewed on December 8, 2017
- Representatives of Blue Basket – healthy food market platform, interviewed on December 8, 2017

Group 3: The Consumers

Process 2.2, according to the above diagram, refers to the survey research. The population of this research includes the middle-class people who live in Thailand. The Hakuodo Institute of Life and Living ASEAN: HILL ASEAN revealed the research

outcome in 2016 that the middle-class people is the biggest cluster in Thailand, a total of 72% of the population. In addition, this cluster is the group that has high potential purchasing power. However, determining of social class is derived from Socio-Economic Class (SEC) based on the monthly income per family. The monthly income B to C-level shall be considered as middle-class. The B-level has income between THB 50,001-85,000 per month, accounted as 8% of the total population. Meanwhile, C-level has income between THB 18,001 – 50,000 per month, accounted as 64% of the total population (MarketingOops, 2015).

The total population of this research is therefore 47,563,920 people, calculated from the total current Thailand population at 66,061,000 people.

The sample size of this research is defined from the Yamane (1973) formula, with 95% confidence interval and error margin within 5%. With the total population of 47,563,920 people, the significant sample size should be 399.96 people. Therefore, the researcher drew the target sample of 400 respondents and randomly selected from the group of people 20 years old and above. In this research the accessible population comprised of people from four regions such as North, Middle, North East, and South with 100 respondents from each.

Process 2.3, according to the above diagram, refers to the group discussion. This group discussion consists of candidates, who are male and female consumers at the age between 21-50 years old, residing in Bangkok and the outskirts. Moreover, this group consists of healthy food conscious middle-class income consumers who are experienced in consuming organic rice for longer than 1 year. There are eight candidates regarding to this as elaborated in the following section.

- A corporate employee aged 33 years old, interviewed on December 15, 2017
- An investor aged 40 years old, interviewed on December 15, 2017
- A university instructor aged 43 years old, interviewed on December 15, 2017
- A government officer aged 40 years old, interviewed on December 15, 2017
- A doctoral student aged 31 years old, interviewed on December 15, 2017

- A businessman aged 27 years old, interviewed on December 15, 2017
- A freelance actor aged 34 years old, interviewed on December 15, 2017
- A doctor aged 32 years old, interviewed on December 15, 2017

#### Group 4: Stakeholders in Thai Rice branding

According to diagram 3.1, the researcher arranged the group discussion with the persons who are relevant to Thai rice branding including four stakeholders as follows:

- 1) Representatives of branding experts
  - Marketing Manager at Aisance, interviewed on January 27, 2018
  - Marketing Director of Tao Kae Noi Food & Marketing, Interview on January 27, 2018
  - Managing Director of Z-Dragon, interviewed on January 27, 2018
  - Food business entrepreneur, interviewed on January 27, 2018
- 2) Representatives of Rice department
  - Head of Process and Product Development, Rice Product Development Division- Rice Department, interviewed on January 27, 2018
- 3) Representatives of small-scaled farmers
  - Brand Owner of Kao Pleng Rak, interviewed on January 27, 2018
  - Brand Owner of Rice Berry Rice, interviewed on January 27, 2018
- 4) Representatives of organic rice consumers
  - Freelance actor, male, aged 37 years old, interviewed January 27, 2018
  - Corporate employee, female, aged 41 years old, interviewed on January 27, 2018
  - University instructor, female, aged 35 years old, interviewed on January 27, 2018

- Doctoral student, female, aged 31 years old, interviewed on January 27, 2018

However, the researcher selected the group discussion members using the purposive sampling method and focus on their roles and readiness in providing the information. As a result, the researcher can obtain the sufficient data to improve Thai rice branding and develop the branding prototype. This is in line with the purpose of preparing the policy proposal for further process.

### **3.2 Data Collection**

Data collection can be divided into four parts as follows:

#### **Part 1: Data collection**

The researcher collected the data from documents, research works, academic journals, and videos related to Thai rice branding from libraries, websites and related agencies. After that, the researcher analyzed the information based on the branding process, which is consistent with the research framework, in order to compile the lessons learned from successful rice branding.

#### **Part 2: In-depth interview**

In-depth interview with relevant persons in charge of rice branding for small-scaled farmers in Thailand including seven brands and one project. The researcher initiated from making appointment and delivered the questions to the informant in advance to ensure that they clearly understand the interview purposes as it leads to the most effective execution of the lesson learned about Thai rice branding.

The researcher designed a semi-structure interview with guideline questions as the instrument for data collection of this research. This method included open-ended questions, which enabled the informant to freely and fully provide information. The research practiced the flexible interview based on any interesting issues that came up during the session. The researcher reviewed the research works and related theories. Subsequently, the researcher developed the questions in accordance to the research framework, which is then validated by a research advisor. The given research questions consist of the following guideline.

- 1) Self-Introduction (position and amount of time involved in the project or brands)
- 2) What was the problem condition prior to the inception of branding/project implementation? What are the reasons led to the development of the project?
- 3) How did the brand/project identify and position implementation to determine the core or promise of the brand?
- 4) Are there any processes to analyze the differences between your brand and competitors' brands in creating the core feature of your brand? If yes, how?
- 5) What are the market planning and operating activity of branding/project?
- 6) Are there any evaluations after brand/project operating? If yes, how?
- 7) How do you manage the sustainable growth of the brand?
- 8) What are the brand opportunities and threats of brand/project?
- 9) Are there any suggestions for development of prototype of rice branding for small-scaled farmers?

The researcher carried out the in-depth interview with relevant persons in charge of rice branding from June to December 2017. After that, the interview was transcribed into text interview and sent it back to the informant to verify. Then, the researcher analyzed the interview and arranged it for the lessons learned for successful Thai rice branding.

Nevertheless, the aforementioned lessons learned will be utilized as the basic information for competitor analysis and the guideline to develop prototype of rice branding for small-scaled farmers. Moreover, it shall be worked as the primary data to develop the questions for data collection with relevant persons of Thai rice industry in the future.

In term of the in-depth interview with relevant persons in the Thai rice industry, the researcher initiated the process from making appointment and released the questions to the informant in advance to ensure that they clearly understand the interview purpose, as it will lead to the most effective result for this research.

The researcher designed a semi-structure interview with guideline questions as the instrument for data collection of this research. The guideline questions were

generated from the documents reviews and primary interviews of successful rice branding of small-scaled farmers. However, this interview method was based on open-ended questions, which allow the informant to freely and fully provide information. The researcher used flexible interview whenever interesting issues came up during the conversation. The researcher reviewed the research works and related theories. Subsequently, the researcher developed the questionnaires. In addition, the researcher validated the content by requesting academic experts to assess the final version of questionnaire, and seek for any adjustments to improve its coverage and clarity of the research objective. The data collection was conducted by the researcher to ensure face validity. While collecting the data, the researcher simultaneously confirms the understanding with the key informant. In addition, the researcher verifies the reliability of information derived from the key informant with documents and comparison with other informants.

The question outline used in the interview emphasized on self-evaluation, which primarily refers to the Thai rice industry including the suggestion of effective branding development in each stage as detailed below:

- 1) Basic information of the informant
- 2) Current situation of Thai rice industry
- 3) Strengths, weaknesses, opportunity, and threats of branding for small-scaled farmers in Thailand
- 4) Guidelines of rice branding for small-scaled farmers in Thailand
  - 4.1) Internal and external analysis
  - 4.2) Brand positioning
  - 4.3) Development of brand's elements
  - 4.4) Market operation and communication
  - 4.5) Evaluation
  - 4.6) Sustainable branding
- 5) Limitation of branding for small-scale farmers in Thailand
6. Other suggestions of branding for small-scaled farmers in Thailand

The researcher contacted three sources for the appointments namely i) government officer, ii) private agencies, and iii) marketing specialist in branding, to interview in the above-mentioned issues. On the interview date, the researcher asked

for their permission to do voice recording and explained the research objectives. Additionally, they were informed that the answers would be kept confidential and used for the educational purpose only. After that, the researcher transcribed the interview into text interview and send back to the informant to verify. Then, the interview analysis would be used for further processing.

However, the researcher employed the triangulation method for the content validity and reliability's purposes using the in-depth interview, with the detail as follows:

- Information to be verified by triangulation method: the researcher shall examine the content consistency of interview content of informant from three different sources.
- Data collected to be verified by triangulation method: the researcher shall verify the accuracy of information obtained from the interview with relevant documents that reflects the current Thai rice industry compared to the interview content.

The obtained data was employed as guideline in development of rice branding of small-scaled farmers in Thailand. Moreover, this given data was exploited in developing the questionnaire and inquiry for group discussion with rice consumers in the following process.

### Part 3: Survey research

In the survey research, the researcher gathered information from the documents review and in-depth interview with rice brand developers of small-scaled farmers in Thailand. Moreover, the researcher also collected the information from relevant persons in the rice industry according to the research methodology as mentioned above as well as the research framework. The researcher subsequently used the information to produce the questionnaire in order to survey the rice purchasing behaviour and rice consumption opinion. As a result, the researcher used the given information to implement branding for small-scaled farmer in Thailand. The structure of questionnaire is divided into three parts as follows:

- 1) Basic information regarding the informant's behavior and rice purchasing behavior
- 2) Information related to informant's opinion toward rice consumption
- 3) Information concerning to integrated marketing that impact to the organic rice purchasing decision

Nonetheless, after building the questionnaire, the researcher examined the instrument by testing validity and reliability as below detail:

- Validity testing: the researcher proceeded by giving out the questionnaire to branding experts and specialists to evaluate its accuracy, content consistency, and data coverage including usage of language. Then, the researcher corrected and improved the questionnaire before actual survey.

- Reliability testing: the researcher sent out the questionnaire to 30 middle-class people in Bangkok. The researcher brought the specified data to test reliability by using the internal consistency method through Cronbach's alpha coefficient with the reliability outcome at 0.926. The reliability can be broken down based on the criteria as follows:

- Information regarding the informant's opinion toward rice consuming; the reliability value is at 0.844.
- Information regarding the integrated marketing that impacts the organic rice purchasing decision; the reliability value is at 0.917.

After testing the instrument, the researcher used the final version questionnaire to collect data with the target samples. In term of research sampling frame, this research used the Multi-Stage Random Sampling method. In the initial stage the selection was made based on geography, as this study required the coverage of population in each region. Therefore, the researcher divided Thailand into four groups such as Middle, North, South and Northeast. After that, the researcher proceeded with the use of the Simple Random Sampling for 1 province from the provincial list of each region. On top of that, the researcher implemented the Accidental Sampling by collecting target respondents, who are in the middle-class, with an equal proportion of 100 people from each of the 4 provinces.

The researcher implemented self-collected data from September to December 2017 and examined the obtained data including the data coded and recorded for

analysis and reporting. The obtained information is used to develop prototype of rice branding of small-scaled farmers, especially consumer analysis. This is in order to accomplish the branding in accordance with purchasing demand of consumers. In addition, the researcher also brought the obtained data to use as the basis to develop group discussion questions and provide the additional explanation of survey outcome for the next process.

#### Part 4: Group discussion

##### *Group discussion with consumers*

The researcher contacted eight consumers and made an appointment for group discussion in the issues as mentioned earlier. On the interview date, the researcher asked the permission to do voice recording, clarified the research objectives, and explained that this group discussion would be confidential and only used for educational purposes only. Subsequently, names, surnames, and the official office names of the group members would not be mentioned.

The researcher designed the semi-structure interview with guideline question used as the data collection instrument. This is in accordance with the consumer decision making process as follows:

- Problem and need recognition
- Information search
- Evaluation of alternatives
- Purchase
- Post – purchase behavior
- Suggestion for rice branding of small-scaled farmer in Thailand

##### *Group discussion with relevant persons in-charge of Thai rice branding*

The researcher made appointments with four group members for discussion in the issues as mentioned earlier. On the interview date, the researcher asked the permission to do voice recording, clarified the research objectives, and explained the group discussion would be confidential and only used for educational purposes only.

The researcher designed the semi-structure interview with guideline questions used in data collection instruments by focusing on the branding concept according to

the branding prototype specified in research framework. This is to verify whether the branding prototype's outline is suitable. However, the guideline questions include open-ended questions, thus the members would be free to provide the answers. The moderator practiced the flexible debates including any interesting issues that may arise. The researcher subsequently validated the content by requesting the academic experts to assess the final version of questionnaire, and seek for any adjustments to improve its coverage and clarity of research objective. The data collection was conducted by the researcher to ensure face validity. While collecting the data, the researcher simultaneously confirmed the understanding with the key informant. In addition, the researcher verified the reliability of information derived from the key informant with documents and compared other informants.

The moderator explained the question guideline based on the process outline of Thai rice branding, which includes five aspects as follows:

- The suitability of the product components
- The suitability of price components
- The suitability of the distribution channel component.
- The suitability of the promotional activities
- Appropriateness of sustainable growth of Thai rice brand equity
- Other suggestions for improving the branding prototype for small farmers in Thailand.

After that, the discussion was transcribed into text discussion and sent back to the informant to verify. Then, the researcher analyzed the interview and summarized it to use in the next process. The obtained information shall be used as the suggestions for further application in the development of prototype for sustainable Thai rice branding for small-scaled farmers.

### **3.3 Data Analysis**

In terms of qualitative research, the researcher analyzed and summarized information based on the research objectives, research framework, and related concepts. After that, the researcher verified data validity and reliability, and then analyzed the findings. Moreover, the researcher also implemented the grounded

theory approach by selecting the theoretical samples and establishing the constructivism through categorizing relationships together with constructing theoretical conclusions (Strauss & Corbin, 1990).

In terms of quantitative research, after completing data collection the researcher will codify and process the data with computer through SPSS (Statistical package for the Social Science) in order to calculate the statistics to be used in the research and data analysis explained as follows:

- Descriptive Statistics Analysis is the method to analyze the information through frequency, percentage, means, and standard deviation in order to describe the character of each data.
- Consumer category/ Cluster Analysis is used to classify group by Nonhierarchical Cluster Analysis or K – Means Cluster Analysis. This can be split into three sub-groups and determine the opinion variable of organic rice consumption is the standardized variable. Also, the researcher utilized the income variable to categorize the groups.

### **3.4 Information Proposal**

The result of the qualitative research proposal is “Descriptive Writing” using the data conclusion according to the specified research objective and framework together with the example and relevant interview content.

The result of the quantitative research proposal is the numerical statistical analysis in the form of tables combined with the explanation of questions indicated.

## **CHAPTER 4**

### **LESSONS LEARNED FROM RICE BRANDING OF SUCCESSFUL SMALL-SCALED FARMERS**

According to the literature review regarding the rice branding for small-scaled farmers, it is found that the farmers have gathered in groups to develop their own brands. However, most of them are not successful due to shortage of systematic development and focus on the tangible aspects of branding only. Whereas, there are some groups of farmers that could successfully develop their brands. As a result, they have gained more income and achieved improvement in their livelihood. Therefore, the objective of this research is to study the branding process and brand communication of successful small-scaled farmers. Also, the researcher shall use the outcomes as supportive information in order to develop the prototype of rice brand as part of the following research process.

In order to achieve the aforementioned objectives, the researcher has carried out in-depth interview with relevant parties regarding the rice branding of successful small-scaled farmers in Thailand. This includes seven brands and one project, namely; “Moral Rice”, “Kao Im”, “Kwan Kao Jak Kra Rad”, “Pa Hung” “De Farm”, “Kao Pleng Rak”, “Manora”, and “Pook Pin Toe Kao” project, respectively. Simultaneously, the researcher will also utilize the information from related documents to complete the analysis.

The researcher has divided the research proposal into two parts as follows:

- 1) The report of basic information regarding the rice branding of successful small-scaled farmers. It consists of information sources of brand development and the marketing mix.

- 2) The report of rice branding guideline and brand communications of successful small-scaled farmers. The researcher analyzed information by exploring the branding prototype combined with Smart Farming idea, which is mentioned in the research framework. Moreover, the researcher would use this specified framework as the outline to report the research outcome. The report consists of six steps as follows:

- 2.1) Internal and external analysis
- 2.2) Identification of brand positioning
- 2.3) Development of brand elements
- 2.4) Planning and marketing activities
- 2.5) Operation evaluation
- 2.6) Growth of sustainable brand equity

#### **4.1 Part 1: Basic Information Regarding the Rice Branding of Successful Small-scaled Farmers**

This research studied the rice brand of successful small-scaled farmers. This includes seven brands and one project; the details are presented as follows:

##### Moral Rice Brand

Moral Rice is a brand from a group of farmers under “Dhamma Ruamjai Foundation” in Yasothon and nearby provinces. These farmers were united to do rice farming. The emphasis was not only on the outcome, but they also brought the sufficient economy philosophy into rice farming. Since they believe that this philosophy can provide sustainable solutions to poverty, promote self- reliance, and foster moral and ethical considerations among group members. Moreover, this philosophy concept will nurture and maintain natural resources in the long run through the organic farming. Moral Rice Brand has conveyed its strength regarding the farmers’ moral as its unique selling point. Consequently, this brand can catch wide attention. Its news is spread by various media without any expenses.

In addition, Moral Rice Brand also has another distinctive point with regards to the rice quality. This brand has received the Organic Standard from Organic Agriculture Certification Thailand. This brand has strict product quality control by their self-screening system. Also, this brand has good distribution channel that covers many areas, especially in the leading department stores. Therefore, Moral Rice Brand can have good sales and can offer higher than average price. The consumers of Moral Rice can be divided into three groups: upper level consumer, intermediate consumer and corporate consumers. The detail of the marketing mix of this rice brand is presented as follows.

Table 4.1 Moral Rice Brand Marketing Mix

Marketing Mix	Detail
Product	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Variety of organic rice breeds such as Ves San Ta Ra Jasmine Rice, 105 Jasmine Rice, Jasmine Brown Rice, Kad Kao Jasmine Rice, Red Brown Jasmine Rice, Black Rice, and etc.</li> </ul>
Price	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>THB 65-150 per kilogram (rice price variation is based on type and quality of rice grain).</li> </ul>
Distribution Channel	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Online media of the brand e.g. Line and Facebook fanpage (Home delivery and through general logistics).</li> <li>Leading department store e.g. Paragon.</li> <li>Modern trade department store e.g. Big C and Mini Big-C.</li> <li>Direct contact to the organizations.</li> </ul>
Communication	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Key Message:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Group of valuable rice and moral famers.</li> <li>Desire of Thai people to take rice as medicine.</li> </ul> </li> <li>Media:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Online media of brand</li> <li>Online media of consumers</li> <li>Marketing activities media such as sales booth, camp activity by inviting consumers to harvest rice, knowledge sharing activity joint with the government sector and etc.</li> <li>Public relations media that is broadcasted by mass media through TV, newspapers, magazines, and online media.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

### Kao Im Brand

Kao Im Brand was developed by a farmer group in the area of Maha Sarakham province under the support of “Kased Kem Kang” project. This project was developed by Mr. Korn Chatikavanij, who was the former Finance Minister of Thailand. He is one of knowledgeable people in the rice industry. The selling point of Kao Im Brand is the communications regarding the entire chemical free production process. Moreover, this rice has been grown at “Tung Kula Rong Hai” area, which is the best area for growing Jasmine rice in the world. Furthermore, Kao Im Brand also developed an additional unique selling point by mixing 3 rice breeds all in one package. This mixed rice has been approved by food experts and specialists that it has the best taste after cooking.

In the process of distribution, there is an indication on the packaging regarding the rice origin, farmers’ faces, and area of rice farming. Also, the rice history is stated in front of the packaging to add value to the rice. Moreover, the packaging is designed by the famous designer and the product is certified by Mr. Korn Chatikavanij. Therefore, the product is reliable and the brand has a good relationship with many organizations including the mass media. As a result, Kao Im Brand can target consumers ranging from upper class consumers to the corporate consumer with the higher selling price than the market price. The detail of marketing mix of Kao Im Brand is as follows:

Table 4.2 Kao Im Brand Marketing Mix

Marketing Mix	Detail
Product	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Organic Brown Rice mixed with 3 rice breeds; 105 Jasmine Rice, Red Brown Jasmine Rice, Black Rice.</li> <li>• Organic Fragrance Bai Toei Rice.</li> <li>• Organic Jasmine Rice mixed with Organic Tub Tim Chum Pae Rice.</li> </ul>
Price	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• THB 100 per kilogram</li> <li>• Gift Set THB 150-650</li> </ul>
Distribution Channel	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Online channel of the brand e.g. Facebook fanpage “Kased Kem Kang”</li> <li>• (Self-collection /delivery by Thai Post).</li> <li>• Online channel in the form of Market Place.</li> <li>• Leading department store e.g. The Mall.</li> <li>• Leading supermarket e.g. Villa Market and Top Super</li> </ul>

Marketing Mix	Detail
Communication	<p>Market.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Activity booth especially in community mall e.g. K-Village</li> <li>• Direct contact to corporate.</li> <li>• Key Message: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The elaboration from the beginning of rice production until serving on the plate according to the idea “From Farm to Fork”.</li> <li>- The story of sustainable farmer development by Mr. Korn Chatikavanij.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Media: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Online media of Kased Kem Kang Project.</li> <li>- Online media of the celebrities.</li> <li>- Marketing activity e.g. activity booth, invitation for consumer to harvest rice, knowledge sharing regarding sustainable agriculture, etc.</li> <li>- Public relations media by mass media through TV, newspapers, magazines, and online media.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

#### Kao Kwan Jak Kra Rad Band

Kao Kwan Jak Kra Rad Brand was developed by a farmer's child, who is a marketer. The founder decided to return to his hometown to start a new career as a farmer in Nakorn Ratchasima province. The founder learned the farming knowledge at “Kwan Kao Foundation Farmer School” at Suphanburi province and was elected to participate in the “Professional Farmer's Inheritor Program”. From this program, he has learned the entire process of agriculture from the business planning, marketing, processing, financial investment planning, and network planning until the actual practice with the real successful entrepreneurs. Since he participated in several projects especially “Kon Kla Kuen Tin” project, he became well known and was the target of interest of the media.

In terms of branding, Kao Kwan Jak Kra Rad Brand utilized its strength involving the concept “grow it like home grown rice” to be its unique selling point. Additionally, this brand has received the organic rice's production standard (Shifting Organic Rice). At the same time, it has a good relationship with government offices too, as a result the brand has been encouraged to participate in rice and agriculture trade fairs without any expenses. Therefore, these activities make Kao Kwan Jak Kra

Rad Brand attract the interest of middle to upper-middle level consumers. As a result it has price than before the branding. The detail of marketing mix of this brand is presented as follows:

Table 4.3 Kao Kwan Jak Kra Rad Brand Marketing Mix

Marketing Mix	Detail
Product	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ves San Tara organic rice</li> <li>• Organic Fragrance rice</li> <li>• Organic Rice Berry Rice</li> </ul>
Price	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• THB 65-100 per kilogram (rice price variation is based on breeds)</li> </ul>
Distribution Channel	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Online Channel e.g. Facebook fanpage.</li> <li>• Trade fairs especially the ones held by the government.</li> </ul>
Communication	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Key Message:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Every consumed grain has the same quality as what we select for our family.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Media:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Online media of the brand</li> <li>- Activity media e.g. sales booth and participate in “Kon Kla Kuen Tin” project.</li> <li>- Public relations media by mass media e.g. newspapers and online media.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

#### Pa Hung Brand

Pa Hung Brand was developed by a designer, who has the family background as leading rice entrepreneur in Roi Et province. It is the most suitable area in the world for growing Jasmine Rice (Tung Kula Rong Hai). In terms of branding, this brand has the strength regarding the appearance of presentable packaging which unique from other brands in the market. As a result, there is a huge demand of gift and souvenir packages for the special occasions. Hence, Pa Hun Brand can generate good sales particularly for the gift set packaging. In addition, this brand has special service on customized package (under Pa Hung Brand) too, as such it produces higher selling price than the market price. However, the target consumers of this brand are upper-middle consumer and corporate consumer. In particular for the hotel business, the rice package is offered to the hotel’s guests as the complimentary gifts during their stay.

Table 4.4 Marketing Mix of Pa Hung Brand

Marketing Mix	Detail
Product	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Organic Fragrance Jasmine Rice</li> <li>• Organic Back Rice</li> <li>• Organic Rice Berry Rice</li> </ul>
Price	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• THB 89 per kilogram</li> <li>• Gift set THB 199 per kilogram</li> </ul>
Distribution Channel	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Online media of the brand e.g. Facebook fanpage and Instagram.</li> </ul>
Communication	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Online media of the brand and brand owner e.g. Facebook fanpage and Instagram.</li> </ul>

#### De Farm Brand

De Farm Brand was developed by a marketer, who changed career to be a farmer in Chiang Mai province. Their target is to create happiness and enjoyable feeling for family and community as well as healthy life. Moreover, the founder also shared and transferred knowledge to anyone who was interested. These interested people can apply the knowledge for their own sake according to the sufficient economy philosophy in rice farming with zero chemical use. In terms of branding, the strength of this brand is the delivery of the story that the producer is caring and pays attention of each stage of organic rice farming. This is to ensure consumers that all the processes have no chemical contamination as well as to present the organic lifestyle of the brand owner which is consistent with the organic lifestyle. Though, this rice brand has not obtained any certificate from the rice organic certified bodies. Due to its well-designed gift set for the New Year Season, it can attract upper-middle to upper consumers, especially those who have known the owner well. The detail of marketing mix of this brand is presented as follows:

Table 4.5 Marketing Mix of De Farm Brand

Marketing Mix	Detail
Product	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Organic Jasmine Rice</li> <li>• Organic Sun Pa Tong Sticky Rice</li> <li>• Organic Tub Tim Brown Rice</li> <li>• Organic Patum Fragrance Brown Rice</li> </ul>

Marketing Mix	Detail
Price	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• THB 90 per kilogram (distributed in 6 kilograms set and 14 kilograms set)</li> <li>• Gift set THB 690 (2 kilograms of rice)</li> </ul>
Distribution Channel	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Facebook fanpage of the brand owner</li> </ul>
Communication	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Key Message: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The attention to organic farming with happiness and wish to convey this happiness to De Farm Rice's consumer.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Media: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Facebook fanpage of the brand owner</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

### Kao Pleng Rak Brand

Kao Pleng Rak Brand was established by a financial person, who has changed the career to be a farmer in Suphanburi province. The founder learned the organic rice farming knowledge at “Kao Kwan Foundation Farmer School”, Suphanburi province. Moreover, the founder always attended several trainings to develop various skills including the marketing field. However, the strength of Kao Pleng Rak Brand is that the farmer turns on love music for rice plants. The background of this idea came from the research studied by the founder, which found that there is a correlation between music and plant. This research also showed that the music has significantly affected the growth of plants. As such, the founder tried to experiment this concept with rice farming by playing the song of Boyd Kosiyabong, since his song has slow melody and positive meaning.

In terms of product development, the core of this brand is love, and caring attention to rice, farmer, and environment for the entire process, which is in line with consumers' needs. This brand has the famous person, Boyd Kosiyabong, as the brand ambassador. Moreover, Boyd's character is similar to Kao Pleng Rak Brand's character too, thus this brand can well attract the upper-middle to upper consumers especially the homemakers. This brand can generate double income for the group of farmers due to higher selling price. The detail of marketing mix of Kao Pleng Rak Brand is presented below:

Table 4.6 Marketing Mix of Kao Pleng Rak Brand

Marketing Mix	Detail
Product	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Organic Patum Fragrance Brown Rice</li> <li>• Organic Patum Fragrance Rice</li> </ul>
Price	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• THB 90 per kilogram</li> </ul>
Distribution Channel	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Health food store e.g. Especially store, Golden Place store.</li> <li>• Online media of the Brand e.g. Line and Facebook fanpage.</li> <li>• Sales booth in shopping mall and trade exhibition.</li> <li>• Direct sale to corporate.</li> </ul>
Communication	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Key Message: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Rice that is farmed with love and happiness by turning on love music, which will help rice plants and farmers feel enjoyable.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Media: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Online media of the brand e.g. Facebook fanpage, YouTube, and Line.</li> <li>- Online media of the celebrities, who is the brand ambassador.</li> <li>- Activity media e.g. having sales booth to introduce the product.</li> <li>- Public relations media that broadcasted by mass media, TV, newspapers and online.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

#### Manora Brand

Manora is a brand developed by a lecturer at the Faculty of Technology and Community Development, Thaksin University. The founder has good knowledge about organic farming and would like to improve farmer in Phatthalung province to grow organic rice. The tactic of the founder was to persuade the farmer with the premium price in developing this project.

Sang Yod rice is the local rice breed of Phatthalung province and used for special occasions in the olden times. It has been continuously developed to be the first Thai rice breed that was registered as Geographical Indications (GI) product of Thailand. Moreover, the reliability of this brand developer led to the product's acceptance and rapidly widespread from consumers to consumers, especially upper-middle to upper consumers as well as corporate ones. As a result, the product is able to set pricing much higher than before the branding effort. In addition, this organic

rice is truly certified by Organic Thailand Standard. The detail of marketing mix of Marora Brand is presented as follows:

Table 4.7 Marketing Mix of Manora Brand

Marketing Mix	Detail
Product	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Organic Sang Yod Rice</li> </ul>
Price	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>THB 85 per kilogram</li> </ul>
Distribution channel	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Health food store.</li> <li>Facebook fanpage of the brand and related person.</li> <li>Online shop e.g. website “Bluebasket” and website “Randyroads”.</li> <li>Direct sell to corporate e.g. Bangchak Oil Refinery.</li> </ul>
Communication	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Key Message:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Love from Phatthalung farm to all health lovers.</li> </ul> </li> <li>Media:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Online media of the brand</li> <li>Activity media e.g. activity booth for product introduction and distribution.</li> <li>Public relations media that broadcasted by mass media, TV, newspapers and online.</li> <li>Media person e.g. Influencer of organization as well as social media.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

#### Pook Pin Toe Kao Project

Pook Pin Toe Kao is the project that is operated by a non-profit private organization. The project’s objective is to support the small-scaled farmers to supply rice directly to consumers residing in the city. This project created the gimmick based on the idea of marriage including three characters- groom, bride, and match maker.

The groom to be is a farmer who did rice farming and meet the bride to be, who is a city consumer through the introduction by match maker, who are the volunteers of Pook Pin Toe Kao project. The final goal of the match maker is getting both of them to get married, which refers to a trade deal. The whole process shall be implemented on online media platforms such as website, social media, and mobile application. Due to media context, attractive story and easy to understand, the brand responded well to the consumers’ needs. In addition, the social influencers such as actors/actresses, artists, and mass media spread the content widely through word of

mouth. Therefore Pook Pin Toe Kao project is well recognized in a very short time. The detail of marketing mix of Pook Pin Toe Kao project is presented as follows:

Table 4.8 Marketing Mix of Pook Pin Toe Kao Project

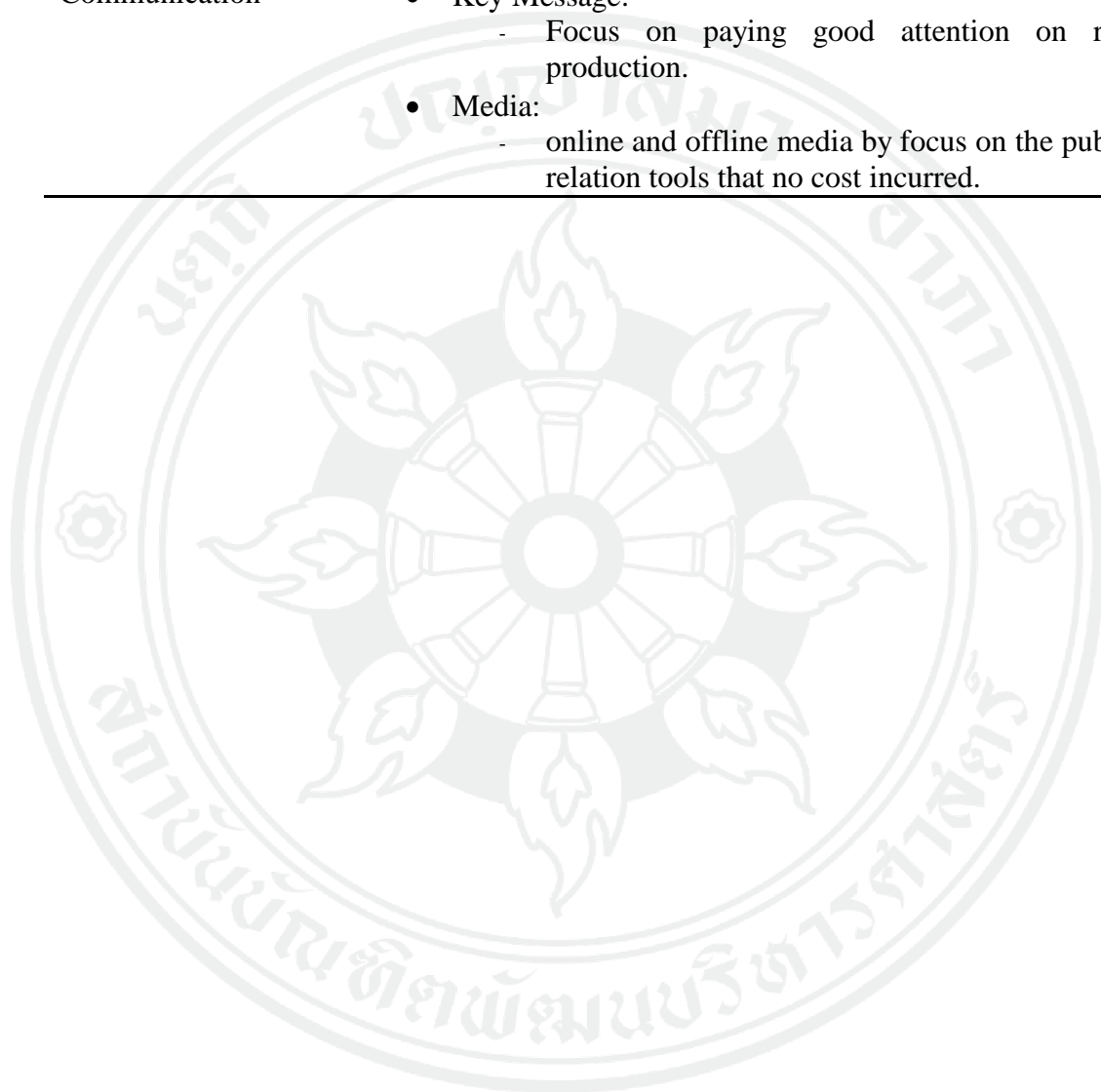
Marketing Mix	Detail
Product	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Various types of organic rice</li> </ul>
Price	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Depends on negotiation between farmers and consumers.</li> </ul>
Distribution Channel	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Website and social media of the project.</li> </ul>
Communication	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Key Message:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Unite life and heart of farmers, and city dwellers with Thai rice.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Media:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Website, social media of the project,</li> <li>- Social media of the consumers especially the celebrities,</li> <li>- Activity media i.e. sharing knowledge activity of organic farm which in cooperated with the government agencies.</li> <li>- Public relations media that broadcasted by mass media e.g. TV, newspapers, magazines and online media.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

According to the aforementioned analysis regarding seven rice brands and one rice project, it is found that all products are organic products but different in terms of rice breeds. Since organic rice has high nutrient and unique selling point, the organic rice is easier to create value than rice grown using chemicals. The average organic rice price is approximately THB80-90 per kilogram and has the distribution channel through 3 channels: 1) retail stores and health food store 2) online media, and 3) direct sales to corporate entities. However, the main idea of rice brands emphasize on the good attention of rice production via online and offline channels, which focus on public relation tools which can summarize in the following table.

Table 4.9 Summary of Marketing Mix of Rice Brands for Successful Small-Scaled Farmers.

Marketing Mix	Detail
Product	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Variety of organic rice breeds</li> </ul>

Marketing Mix	Detail
Price	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• THB 80-90 per kilogram</li> </ul>
Distribution Channel	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Retail stores /Health food stores</li> <li>• Online media</li> <li>• Direct sales to corporate</li> </ul>
Communication	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Key Message: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Focus on paying good attention on rice production.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Media: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- online and offline media by focus on the public relation tools that no cost incurred.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>



## 4.2 Part 2: The Guideline of Branding and Brand Communications of Successful Small-scaled Farmers

For the report regarding the guideline of branding and brand communications of successful small-scaled farmers, the researcher analyzed the data by using the prototype of branding together with Smart Farming concept according to the research framework used to frame the research outcome based on six guidelines as follows:

- 1) Internal and external analysis
- 2) Brand identification of brand positioning
- 3) Development of brand elements
- 4) Planning and marketing activities
- 5) Operation evaluation
- 6) Growth of sustainable brand equity

The research outcome of seven rice brands and one rice project revealed that the most important part is the product element development, while the least important part is the evaluation. This would be elaborated in the following section.

### 1. Internal and external analysis

In terms of internal and external analysis, the interview indicated that the farmers and relevant parties have self-analysis, consumer analysis and competitor analysis. Moreover, the farmers also analyzed the trends that can be the opportunity to develop the brand. However, the farmers and relevant parties in-charge of branding have not intensely worked on the information analysis, instead they only generally consider each factor. The result of the analysis is presented as follows:

#### *1.1 Self-analysis:*

In the part of self-analysis, most rice brand developers evaluate their strengths and weaknesses by emphasis on human resources and product aspects. The detail is presented in the following section.

In terms of human resources, the strength of the seven brand developers is that they are the knowledgeable and able to create the value to rice properly. Additionally, they have established good relationship with the organizations, influencers, and mass

media as well as having the financial ability. Whereas the farmers' strength is the knowledge and skill, and caring attention to rice farming. The detail and content of the interview are presented in the following section.

*“Our strength is we know the artist so we can make use of his art. Mr. Korn is also strong in financial, policies, and reliability. Moreover, we subsidize money to the farmers first and later we can deduct the money from the harvested rice.”* (Brand developer of Kao Im Brand, May 26, 2017)

*“I used to be an organic rice auditor at the Rice Department. I have to admit that if we have an experience about the system and knowledge in this industry, most of people will trust and listen to us and it will be easy to communicate.”* (Brand developer of Manora Rice Brand, January 14, 2018)

*“Our good point is the opportunity to learn at 'Kao Kwan Foundation', Suphanburi province. This helped us to learn and gain knowledge about organic rice farming. In addition, we have the chance to participate in many projects like Kon Kla Kuen Tin project. This project enabled us know a lot of people and have wide range of experiences. From this project, we received the fund to develop our brand further.”* (Farmers and brand developer of Kwan Jak Kra Rad Brand, May 8, 2017)

*“We are designers. People around us who helped us are creative designers. This should be our strength. This would distinguish us in terms of aesthetics. It is not like anyone can do it right away.”* (Brand developer of Pa Hung Brand, September 19, 2017)

*“The strong point of agriculture for successful new generation is knowledge, understanding of the process and financial planning.”* (Farmer and brand developer of De Farm Brand, October 25, 2017)

*“I always keep learning and training. Initially I needed training about rice farming. After I am about to start the branding, my training has been changed to the marketing*

*side. I discovered new relationships and people connection through the training courses.”* (Farmer and brand developer of Kao Pleng Rak Brand, 8, 2017)

*“The date we selected the groom to be, we actually selected the farmers who followed the sufficient economy concept of King Rama IX. Moreover, that farmer should have the good character too since they will need to take care the brides to be.”* (Brand developer of Pook Pin Toe Kao project, May 30, 2017)

*“When we started, we declared among all farmers that we will do rice farming guided by good morals. This is our strong point. We have quality rice and quality people, and we have social control to monitor each farmer’s behavior.”* (Farmer and brand developer of Moral Rice Brand, June 11, 2017)

The research outcome found that, in terms of human resources, the interviewee from five brands however have the similar ideas regarding the weak point. Most farmers tended to do rice farming in the conservative style. Namely, they are familiar with using chemical in rice farming since it provided the higher yield. The farmers lacked the knowledge and understanding to create value or rice product appropriately. In addition, they are not open to new wisdom. The detail shall be cited in the following interview.

*“I used to work with a group of farmers who are traditional and fairly voracious. Everyone told me that they followed the Rama IX’s concept. When the time is come, I snuck in to check the farm, I was very sad because I found that they secretly put chemicals in the rice farm because they want to get more yield.”* (Farmer and brand developer of De Farm Brand, October 25, 2017)

*“I think the most difficult job is how to control the farmers not to be off the track. The farmers often think that branding is difficult.”* (Farmer and brand developer of Moral Rice Brand, inter June 11, 2017)

*“The farmers still do rice farm in the traditional way, and we cannot control the pricing. Also, the generation gap makes the conversation is even more difficult. In the beginning the senior farmers were not really open to this type of new farming.”* (Farmer and brand developer of Kwan Jak Kra Rad Brand, May 8, 2017)

*“I often find that farmers are close-minded, if they open to new theory they can have a lot improvement as they already have very good skill and knowledge. Some traditional farmers cannot take it if the disease affects their rice crop, finally they spray chemical onto rice plant because they want to get more yield.”* (Farmer and founder of Kao Pleng Rak Brand, December 8, 2017)

*“The farmers understand the importance of value-added product. However, they do not have known how and lack of marketing as well as branding knowledge. There is a farmer in my group who processed rice to be a kind of cosmetic product. However, the packaging is too simple and cannot sell in the urbanised city.”* (Brand developer of Manora Brand, January 14, 2018)

Another part of self-analysis on the founders of seven rice brands and one project focused on self-product evaluation. The result of interview with regards to this aspect revealed that the main strengths of the product are organic rice, chemical-free, and strategic rice planting area. While the weakness of some brands is they are do not have certified organic standard from the accredited bodies. However, there are other assurances from the brand developers that their rice is authentic organic rice explained in the following section.

*“In the beginning our farmers did not apply for the organic standard yet, but we guarantee that our farmers do not use chemicals at all in the farm.”* (One of Pook Pin Toe Kao founder, May 30, 2017)

*“Organic is our character, though it is not 100% but we are trying our best. This is like our strong point to ensure that consumer can consume good rice.”* (Farmer and brand developer of Kwan Jak Kra Rad Brand, May 8, 2017)

*“Our strong point is chemical free product and nutrition selling.”* (Farmer and brand developer of Moral Rice Brand, June 11, 2017)

*“We are confident of our rice quality that it is good and organic. We are not worried about our quality. Another strength is that we grow rice in Tung Kula. If people talk about Jasmine Rice, they will surely think of Tung Kula.”* (Brand developer of Pa Hung Brand, September 19, 2017).

*“In general, the product should be certified since the consumer feels more comfortable with it. But I am a self-made person, people who read my story, they will know that I do organic process in every stage.”* (Farmer and brand developer of De Farm Brand, October 25, 2017)

The interview illustrated that the brand developers of the seven brands and one projects analyzed the opportunity of rice product in the same direction, which is the health lovers' trend. As a result, it encourages the consumer to gain knowledge and understanding, and rapidly accept organic products. Due to the price crisis, it has persuaded consumers to change their behavior and purchased more alternative products. Moreover, the government's policy also supported organic farming.

*“I think there is always an opportunity. It depends on whether we will take it or not. Today, there are lot of issues like health concern, rice price crisis, and organic support.”* (Farmer and brand developer of Moral Rice Brand, June 11, 2017)

*“Being health conscious is now in trend. So it is easier to communicate the message. It is like the consumer is already open to the idea that eating organic rice is good. That is our opportunity.”* (Farmer and brand developer Kao Kwan Jak Kra Rad, May 8, 2017)

*“Now the trend is rice, so it is easy to communicate the message. The number healthy people have increased. There is more emphasis that organic products are able to sell.”* (Brand developer of Pa Hung Brand, September 19, 2017)

*“This year the government has the policy of 100 million baht, which is considered as an opportunity as they give funds to the farmers. We also have to keep catching up with all of these supportive policies.”* Brand developer of Manora Brand, January 14, 2017)

At the same time, in terms of risk analysis, the researcher found that two brand developers realized some types of rice are only popular in short term for specific groups. Therefore, if the farmers do not employ situation analysis or market tendency's investigation, it may bring about the oversupply and eventually lead to price crisis situation. However, if the product is very popular, it may possibly cause the risk regarding the product element's imitation. The detail of interview is as the following.

*“At some period of time, Rice Berry Rice is very popular so a majority of farmers changed to grow it. The problem is distributing to the same market. As a result it led to the oversupply and from that point it make the price dropped. Principally, the farmers are not directly connected to the market, therefore it is a risk to grow rice without the necessary market demand.”* (Farmer and brand developer of Kao Pleng Rak Brand, December 8, 2017)

*“There is some case that buyer bought our product and copy it almost everything including the package. So, we have to keep changing our product style”.* (Farmer leader of Kao Im Brand, June 12, 2017)

In summary, in terms of self-analysis, the researcher found that the strength of the successful rice brand of small-scaled farmers is the brand developer, who is knowledgeable in adding value to rice product. Moreover, the brand developer also established good relationship with organizations, influencers, and mass media as well

as have sufficient investment fund. Meanwhile the farmer has strength such as the skill and attention paid to rice farming, including the organic rice that comes from strategic rice growing area. Whereas the weakness of brand development is that most farmers lack knowledge and understanding regarding the correct way to add value to rice product. Additionally, the farmers are still narrow-minded to new knowledge and some brands are not yet certified by the organic certified bodies. In terms of branding opportunity, the researcher discovered that the growth of health lover trend and the previous price crisis have affected the consumer to realize and accept organic rice. In addition, the government's policy also provided the support for organic rice farming. However, in terms of risk aspect, the researcher found that some types of rice are only popular in the short term and for specific groups. Also, for the popular brand there might be a risk of imitation products.

### *1.2 Consumer Analysis*

In the part of consumer analysis, four brand developers identified their main target as the city dwellers and have upper-middle to upper income level. Since this group of people have the potential to consume quality rice and afford to pay premium price. Moreover, they are also health conscious and have social concern, which is in accordance with organic rice characteristics. Aside from this, the interview also revealed that the people who live in the rice growing area will not buy branded rice but they tend to buy rice directly from the farmers. The detail of interview is presented as follows:

*“Our target customer is urbanized people. It is difficult to sell to people who live in rice growing area; it is better to go to sell in cities far away. The trend of organic rice consumption is increasing, starting from upper income level to the lower income level. The one who has purchasing power, at the top of pyramid, will buy everything in organic nature. However it is decreasing according to the purchasing power.”*  
(Brand developer of Kao Im, May 26, 2017)

*“We have to know where we can sell our rice. In E-Sarn area, most people do rice farm. We cannot sell in the rice growing area; we must cross the area zone. Our*

*customer will be city people, this group is willing to pay if they know the product is good.” (Farmer and brand developer of Kao Kwan Jak Kra Rad, May 8, 2017)*

*“I believe that organic market is supposed to be from B-level consumer and above because they are willing pay if they believe in product quality and good taste.” (Farmer and brand developer of De Farm, October 25, 2017)*

*“Our current customers are health lovers, most of the people will not buy organic rice since it is too expensive. They are normally in upper level market; the ones in lower level market will not buy. It is like they do not know the benefit of organic rice that is important to their lives.” (Farmer leader of Kao Im Brand, June 12, 2017)*

However, in terms of rice consumer analysis, two brand developers and one project determined that the critical problem in organic farming is the shortage of consumer knowledge and understanding about rice product. Particularly, they are not aware of the difference between conventional and organic rice products as shown in the interview below.

*“Consumers do not know about the rice they are consuming. They do not even know brown rice is not a rice breed, but it is a milling process. They thought that brown rice is healthy rice. They do not know how much chemicals are in it. They only know this rice is not tasty and do not know what the tasty rice is like. They do not understand that bad health partly comes from what they eat. But if they know and realize the result, they will be scared of taking it.” (Founder of Pook Pin Toe Kao, May 30, 2017)*

*“You eat rice just because it make you feel full, but you do not know they contain the chemicals. You always think that you can eat any rice because you only concentrate on being full. Since the consumers think this way, so the traditional farmers do not want to change to do organic farming.” (Farmer and brand developer of Moral Rice Brand, June 11, 2017)*

However, the interview indicated that one brand developer identified that the main target of successful rice brand is corporate consumer. Since they have high and continuous demand, as quoted in the interview below.

*“We think that the corporate customer is our good opportunity since they have high demand and it could be our stable income. For example, the hotel continuously order from us as a complimentary gift to the hotel guests.”* (Brand developer of Pa Hung Brand, September 19, 2017)

In conclusion, the main target of rice brand of successful small-scaled farmers is city dwellers, who earn upper-middle to upper income level. Such group has capability to pay premium rice price than average price. In addition, they are health conscious and social concern people. However, the major consumer’s difficulty is the shortage of knowledge and understanding regarding the rice product. Particularly, they are not aware of the difference between conventional and organic rice. Moreover, corporate customer is one of the targets as well, since they have high demand and continuously purchase the product.

### *1.3 Competitor Analysis*

In terms of competitor analysis, the researcher noticed that farmers and relevant parties in branding implement investigation of other brands in the market. The key issues that four brand developers investigate their competitors are pricing and mistake, and the past experience of other brands. Such developers will utilize that information in their pricing and use it as a guideline to improve and develop their own brand elements as mentioned in the following interview.

*“I monitor market prices of the products sold in the market. Then I use it to calculate my cost and capital. We consider how to control our cost and capital if the price is within each range. Also, how much we should be pricing to have the least difference from the market price,”* (Farmer and brand developer of Kao Pleng Rak, December 8, 2017)

*“We check the price of organic rice brands, at the same time, we also check the chemical rice price too. Our product should sell higher than that, we cannot survive if we sell lower price since the process is different.”* (Farmer leader of Kao Im Brand, June 12, 2017)

*“We look mainly at the difference of design, sometimes we check on the Internet how the competitors sell their products and packaging. Apart from the online search, we also check at the merchandise display too.”* (Brand developer of Pa Hung Brand, September 19, 2017)

*“Some brands were sued by consumer regarding dishonesty on organic rice claims. They solved the problem by involving technical specialist as the referrer in communication and marketing process. This tactic makes them become credible and gain reliability again. We have learned from such situations that the honesty is very important, we have to be careful.”* (Farmer and brand developer of De Farm, October 25, 2017)

However, according to the interview, the researcher found that farmers and relevant parties in-charge of branding do not explore much about the competitor analysis. Most of them merely apply general marketing evaluation.

In summary, in the aspect of internal and external analysis, the researcher discovered that successful farmers have analyzed internal factors through self-evaluation. The external factor analysis specified that the successful farmers evaluate the situation of other brands to seek for the difference. Moreover, the farmers also employ consumer analysis; the target is city dwellers from middle class and above. The result indicated that this group of people pay attention to health issue and social responsibility. However, the main difficulty is the fact that consumers lack the knowledge regarding rice products. Additionally, the external factor analysis also showed that the farmers investigate the current trend especially the health conscious lifestyle is a good opportunity for rice branding. Nevertheless, the interview revealed that farmers and brand developers have shortage of systematic analysis and do not

seriously concentrate on it. As a result, the brand developer and farmers may receive the erroneous information during the investigation leading to inefficient branding efforts.

## 2. Brand identifying and brand positioning

The interview indicated that five brand developers in successful rice branding have clearly identified and established brand positioning. The core value used is “consumer-centric rice branding” and that is the position in accordance with the product’s attributes. Since the main product of this research is organic rice, its strengths are chemical-free, high nutrition, and healthy choice for consumers. These points make organic rice unlike the other conventional rice. The detail of interview is presented as follows:

*“Our rice is grown by focusing on the moral of farmers which reflects our group name ‘Value Rice and Moral Farmer’ group. This literally means ‘rice production must be valuable and farmer must have good morals.’”* (Farmer and brand developer of Moral Rice Brand, June 11, 2017)

*“Our position is that we grow quality, organic, and chemical free rice. We try our best as it is our unique selling point. We guarantee that the consumers get the best rice, and we will try our best.”* (Farmer and brand developer of Kao Kwan Jak Kra Rad, May8, 2017)

*“Our selling point is ‘from the heart to home’. We use our heart, we are determined, and we pay close attention in producing this rice,”* (Brand developer of Pa Hung Brand, September 19, 2017)

*“We are 100% organic rice and our rice is nurtured with happiness.”* (Farmer and Brand developer of De Farm, October 25, 2017)

*“About our brand positioning, the people perceive that this brand takes good care of the rice crop with all its heart. The farmers turn on love music for the rice crops. I am*

*focusing on paying good attention to our produce.”* (Farmer and Brand developer of Kao Pleng Rak, December 8, 2017)

In addition to the attention perspective in authentic organic rice production, the researcher found that two brand developers have established the additional core value with regards to the support provided to the farmers. The findings are presented from the quotes presented in the following section.

*“In addition to the organic rice brand positioning, we also work as a social enterprise returning the benefit to the community.”* (Brand developer of Manora Brand, January 14, 2018)

*“We have our commitment as a non-profit agency, our profits will circulate back to the farmers. At the same time, our rice has to have a high standard.”* (Brand developer of Kao Im Brand, May 26, 2017)

From above dialog, the similar significances of brand identification and brand positioning of successful rice branding for small-scaled farmers can be divided into three aspects as follows:

- 1) Attention in production process
- 2) Authentic organic rice
- 3) Quality life improvement of farmer

According to the three aforementioned aspects of brand identification and brand positioning are consistent with consumers’ needs generating reliable positioning. However, this study revealed that rice brand positioning lacks evident identities that differ from the competitors since most of them are similar. The only difference is the detail of attention or honesty in rice production. Therefore, such shortage of unique points of difference may lead the brands to be under recognized and differentiated.

### 3. Development of brand elements

In the process of brand elements development, the interview of candidates indicated that after brand positioning those people will manipulate the integrated brand's element including brand name, logo, slogan and packaging. Most brand elements are consistent with its brand image and proper association with the brand. On top of that, the brand elements have clearly communicated the brand position toward the consumers. The detail of brand elements can be elaborated in the section below.

#### *Brand Name:*

The interview revealed that most successful rice brands have developed their branding through employing the criteria, memorability and meaningfulness of brand attributes. The design of the brand name can be divided into three types as follows:

- 1) *Suggestive* refers to the brand name design that proposes the benefit of the product such as “Kao Im”.
- 2) *Compound* refers to the brand name design that mixes two words to create a new name or new brand name such as “Kwan Jak Kra Rad” (mixing of ‘Kwan’ and ‘Jak Kra Rad’), “Pa Hung” (mixing of ‘Pa Pai’ and ‘Hung’), “De Farm” (mixing of ‘Dee’ and ‘Farm’), “Kao Kun Na Tam” (Moral Rice) (mixing of ‘Kao’ and ‘Kun Na Tam’), and “Kao Pleng Rak” (mixing of ‘Kao’ and ‘Pleng Rak’).
- 3) *Classical* refers to the brand name design from the traditional languages or indigenous languages to apply as a name such as “Manora” and “Pook Pin Toe Kao”

The nomination of the following three brand names can instantly convey the meaning of product and brand name. Moreover, it can deliver the message regarding the type or category of product as well as the benefits. Also, it is able to communicate the brand market positioning as indicated in the following section.

*“Our name is very straightforward and truly communicates what we are doing. We intend to make it consistent. So we derive the name Kao Pleng Rak.”* (Farmer and brand developer of Kao Pleng Rak Brand, December 8, 2017)

*“The word ‘Im’ provides different perspectives. We do rice farming, we want consumer feel full (Im-Tong) after eating our rice, and that make us satisfied (Im-Jai). We do not add chemicals (toxic) into rice, it is like we do merit because we only provide good products for consumers. As such we already made good deeds (Im-Boon). Thus, we have three ‘Im’. After combining everything in a long discussion, we agreed to use one ‘Im’.”* (Farmer and brand developer of Kao Im Brand, June 12, 2017)

*“The word ‘De’ can be extended and become many words such as ‘delicious’ and ‘delight’. The word ‘De’ associates with and can break down to various sub-brands. At the moment, we only have rice as the product under De Farm. After its success, we will develop other products in the future.”* (Farmer and brand developer of De Farm Brand, October 25, 2017)

Furthermore, the interview indicated that there are four brand names that reflected their identity or background of brand developer in the following section.

*“‘Pa Hung’ come from ‘Pa Pai Hung’ (bring to cook), but we shortened it to only ‘Pa Hung’ as it sounds like chanting name. My sibling nominated it like that because it best suited me to which I agreed. This name is totally right and truly reflects my identity.”* (Brand developer of Pa Hung Brand, September 19, 2017)

*“Our group name is ‘Klum Kao Kun Ka, Chao Na Kun Na Tam’ (Value rice, Moral farmer). We suppose how we should communicate our concept to the consumer. We start from name ‘Kao’, as the foremost word. ‘Kun Na Tam’ will be the next word, which means rice of moral person. We have mutual agreement that the name must be ‘Kao Kun Na Tam’. Actually it is a quirk, and literally means the rice from your own farm that you paid good attention at every stage of production. If you pay attention to it, you will get the rice that you grow (Kao Kun Na Tam). It is a kind of homophone or pun. The word ‘Kun’ here refers to everyone, it represents producers, consumers, and*

*society. It is about everybody, something like that.”* (Farmer and Brand developer of Moral Rice Brand, June 11, 2017)

*“When we were setting the name, we think of where we learned this knowledge, and that is from Kao Kwan foundation. So we derive the word ‘Kwan’. ‘Jak Kra Rad’ is the farming area name that we possess. This is how we came to use the name ‘Kwan Jak Kra Rad’. We want people to know our district name too.”* (Farmer and brand developer of Kwan Jak Kra Rad Brand, May 8, 2017)

*“Actually I thought of other names too, but I chose Manora. I think it represents the southern region and I prefer on that point.”* (Brand developer of Manora Brand, January 14, 2018)

*Logo:*

The logo of rice brand name for successful small-scaled farmers can be split into three forms as follows:

- 1) The use of symbols in various figures along with the letters
- 2) The use of letters only
- 3) The use of letters along with the slogan

The interview discovered that the logos of the four brands are designed by mixing various figures (Non-word symbols) especially the symbol that is related to rice, and the letters (Wordings) together. These logos have expressed their brand positioning and enhance the meaning of brand name as stated in the interview below.

*“We always use this logo that we designed since the inception of the brand. It is a sign language meaning ‘I love you’. I would like to communicate that I make this with love for you.”* (Farmer and brand developer of Moral Rice Brand, June 11, 2017)



Figure 4.1 Logo of Moral Rice Brand

*“The background of our logo is ear of the paddy since we are mainly farmers. On top of that, we put our name on it too, so that people can concurrently recognize the brand.”* (Farmer and brand developer of Kao Kwan Jak Kra Rad Brand, May 8, 2017)



Figure 4.2 Logo of Kao Kwan Jak Kra Rad Brand

*“Our logo’s design comes from our brand identity. Our designer sat down in the rice farm, listened to the song, and absorbed the surrounding environment. Then they came out with the green color and that is the real rice’s leaf colour. The yellow color is also comes from the real paddy as well.”* (Farmer and brand developer of Kao Pleng Rak Brand, December 8, 2017)



Figure 4.3 Logo of Kao Pleng Rak Brand

*“Our logo is similar to the headdress of Nora because Phatthalung province is the origin of the southern Nora. The diamond shapes in the logo represent the rice grains.”* (Brand developer of Manora Brand, January 14, 2018)



Figure 4.4 Logo of Manora Brand

Furthermore the researcher further studied the literature and found that in addition to the use of symbols combined with letters, there are two brand names that developed the logo using typography only. These logos include the logo of Kao Im Brand and De Farm Brand. However, no brands use a pure symbol logo.

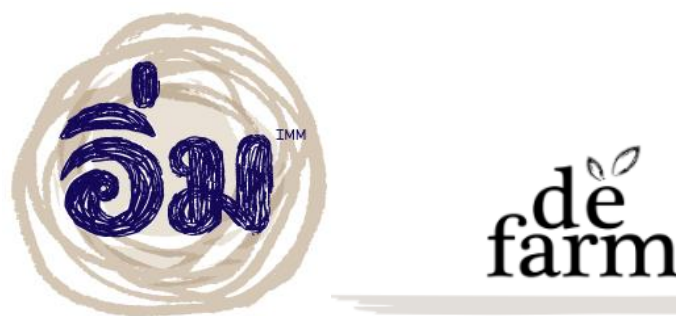


Figure 4.5 Logo of Kao Im Brand and De Farm Brand

In addition, the interview indicated that two brand names implemented the slogan and joined it with the logo in order to describe the product and persuade consumers. Moreover, this slogan will help the consumer to distinguish the product and the unique point of difference from the competitor's. For instance, the slogan of Kao Kwan Jak Kra Rad is "Every rice grain consumed are the same standard to what we select for our beloved family".

#### *Packaging:*

The packaging of rice products of successful small-scaled farmers tend to be packed in the vacuum bag in order to maintain the product quality. However, such packaging is risky to damage, therefore implementing the secondary layer bag can help to prevent risk. Moreover, the beautiful design of packaging consistent with the festive season as well as the personalized design, both can enhance the opportunity to gain higher sales as presented in the following section.

The Interview revealed that the packaging is a very important element of the rice brand. It does not only perform as the product covering, but it also reflects the production standard and product story. These will add value to the product and induce the purchasing of consumers. Additionally, the well-designed packaging can be used to distinguish and gain competitive advantage for the product. The detail of interview is presented in the following section.

*"This year we make clearer communication on our package. In the past, we concentrated on the nice packaging. However, this year we want to communicate the*

*roles of the buyer after purchasing. Because we trust that the buyer actually would like to support farmers.” (Brand developer of Kao Im Brand, May 26, 2017)*

*“For instance, let’s say every rice brand is the same, the only first thing that can attract people is its appearance as they first see the package. We are not worried about rice quality, the only issue we lack is adding the value of product through nice packaging,” (Brand developer of Pa Hung Brand, September 19, 2017)*

Nonetheless, the interview revealed that one brand developer mentioned that the packaging of organic rice tend to be packed in the vacuum bag to maintain the rice quality. However, one layer of vacuum bag has a damage risk such as ripping and leakage. It can bring consumers about unsatisfied condition as well as impact on the cost of production. Adding the secondary packaging is therefore necessarily as verified by the dialog below.

*“Organic rice must be packed in the vacuum bag, but still can be ripped. I used to count that there is about 18% damage, which is a significant number. So, the entrepreneur has to pay that as the cost of production. If the customer sees the leaked bag, they will not buy our product too. So we introduced a secondary box, though the cost of production will be increased but it will prevent the future problem. If the package drops, it will not affect the vacuum bag. We have never received any returns from our customers at all,” (Farmer and brand developer of Kao Pleng Rak, December 8, 2017)*



Figure 4.6 Sample of box packaging of Kao Pleng Rak Brand

In addition, the interview also specified that the nice packaging can further develop the sales during festive seasons as well, according to the interview of the two rice brand developers in the following section.

*“Originally, when we designed the nice packaging, our team member decided to do it as the New Year gift set. We only did the small project in the first year and they were all sold out,”* (One of brand developer of Kao Im Brand, May 26, 2017)



Figure 4.7 Sample of gift set packaging of Kao Im Brand

*“The New Year gift set has very quick sales. Since we do wet-season rice harvest and it will be at the end of the year, the buyers will wait to order our rice. We do both big and small gift sets and they are very successful. We have got people continuously ask about it every year.”* (Farmer and brand developer of De Farm Brand, October 25, 2017)



Figure 4.8 Sample of gift set packaging of De Farm Brand

One interesting aspect about packaging from one brand developer is that the packaging development through the customization is one of good value added methods for rice products as mentioned in the following interview.

*“The customer can contact us if they are finding the gift for their wedding tea ceremony. We ask about the theme color as we want to make the product according to the theme. It is actually the existing package and we decorate it with a ribbon or card. This additional decoration makes the difference, added value, and customization. Some customers provide us the condition, for example they want the package with handle and easy to handle, but they need to order with the minimum quantity. The customized products gain higher pricing.”* (Brand developer of Pa Hung Brand, September 19, 2017)



Figure 4.9 Sample of gift set packaging from consumer's customization of Pa Hung Brand

The element of packaging implemented by most rice brands include the combination with brand name, logo, slogan, rice breeds name, nutrition, product attention, cooking method, manufacturing date and expiry date, contact detail, and organic standard. The interview showed that one brand developer cited that the certified standard is the significant element for rice branding as mentioned in the following interview.

*“Now we develop our rice in accordance with the organic rice standard and that enables us to sell at a higher price. We can refer to the certified standard as our product guarantee since some customers are serious about product certification.”* (Farmer and brand developer of Kwan Jak Kra Rad Brand, May 8, 2017)

In conclusion, the packaging development of branding for successful small-scaled farmers corresponds with the functional need, especially the quality maintenance and provided information of organic rice. On the other hand, in terms of emotional need, it focuses on the presentable packages that are attractive to the consumers. Moreover, one brand developer mentioned that the packaging is also an essential area to convey the storytelling from producer to consumer. The detail of interview is presented as follows.

*“We try to tell everything on the package, we add a card to deliver the story. We tell about our intention on the package. We mentioned that our rice comes from Tung Kula Rong Hai origin and how good it is. We tell everything including how to cook it and attach the information to the package.”* (Brand developer of Pa Hung, September 19, 2017)

Therefore, according to interview, it can be summarized that the successful rice brands have developed the brand elements both tangible and intangible. This includes 1) brand name that reflect the brand position and value including brand owner's identity; 2) logo that mostly symbolize the international meaning; 3) packaging that can distinguish, make it attractive and add value to the brand; 4) slogan that reveals the brand position and identity; and 5) certified bodies that

guarantee the brand reliability. This also includes the intangible aspects that offer the value of production attention that is delivered to the consumer. The unique point of brand element development is the ability to communicate product characteristics immediately in order to create brand awareness and support image communications more effectively. The interesting finding is that most rice brand developers concentrate on brand element development process rather than other processes.

#### 4. Market Planning and Activity Operation

In term of market planning and activity operations, the interview indicated that after farmers and related parties determined the brand position and integrated brand elements, as stated earlier. Then they will continue to communicate the elements through storytelling in order to raise the safety awareness and production attention. In addition, that will be conveyed to the consumers by means of marketing tools such as online media, marketing activity media, and public relation media broadcasted through mass media. In this stage, the researcher shall propose two perspectives under this topic, which are determining the key message used in communication and the media used in communication. The detail is presented as follows.

##### *4.1 Determining the key message used in communication*

The interview specified that the main current difficulty is that even though consumers would like to consume safe rice but they have very limited knowledge about rice products. Particularly, they are not aware of the differences between organic rice and chemical rice. As such, the main reason could be rice consumption of Thai people is categorized as the low involvement product, which impacts the buying intention. Thus, the key challenge for communications planning is the encouragement of consumer awareness regarding the organic rice. Creating the understanding that is overwhelmingly better than conventional rice. It not only provides energy but also being safe and healthy as well as to ensure consumers that they consume the best rice. This is in line with the interview of two brand developers as presented in the dialog below.

*“We called it ‘eat what we know’. It is not easy for rice products to change people to change the rice they eat. I think if they know the background of what they eat, they will feel comfortable. We try to communicate this idea that eating rice is similar to taking medicine. Eating rice is healthy. It is unlike eating rice followed by medicine. We sell chemical free products and nutrition.”* (Farmer and Moral Rice Brand, June 11, 2017)

*“We want to communicate that we do it ourselves and how good it is. We present that it is safe to eat. You know the producer and how they produce it. When they know it, they are willing to pay a higher price.”* (Farmer and brand developer of Kao Kwan Jak Kra Rad, May 8, 2017)

After determining the main idea, there are four rice brand developers that use storytelling tactic to convey the message to consumers. The story of each brand emphasized on the origin of brand and production attention in each stage. This is to persuade customer to believe and willing to pay premium price without focusing on hard sell. The detail of interview is presented as follows.

*“We have a story, we sell the reputation of Tung Kula. If we talk about Jasmine Rice, people will firstly think about Tung Kula. We add the story along the conversation. If we are confident in our product, it will support the story to be real, reliable and pleasant. However, our product is good, we need to speak out and tell them how good it is.”* (Brand developer of Pa Hung Brand, September 19, 2017)

*“I do storytelling, people continuously follow my story. The buyers also read my story, they know I do 100% organic. They know I only do rice farming once a year. I rest the farmland and do crop rotation according to Rama IX concept.”* (Farmer and brand developer of De Farm, October 25, 2017)

*“Usually we will be in the rice farm during the growing season. It helps us to gain the real experience to create the story. Sometimes we have activities. We posted the*

*photos to let our customers know what we were doing or to let them know that we did it ourselves. So they would understand that paying for this price is not that pricy. Look at what we did, we paid a lot of effort to get that rice.”* (Farmer and Kao Kwan Jak Kra Rad Brand, May 8, 2017)

*“My storytelling is unlike others. I look at this one as my unique selling point. In the past 2-3 years, my storytelling is not about selling rice. For example, when I posted on my Facebook page, I did not post about rice product at all. I only tell story, I do not think we need hard selling.”* (Farmer and brand developer of Kao Pleng Rak Brand, December 8, 2017)

#### *4.2 Determining the media used in communications*

The interview discovered the communication tools that farmer and relevant persons used in rice branding. This consists of online media of brands, online media of influencers, online media of consumers, market activities, and public relations that broadcasted by mass media through TV, newspapers, magazines, and online.

Nonetheless, five brand developers mainly emphasize on trade shows or market activities method. Since this channel can establish direct experiences toward consumers especially testing and smelling, in which the taste and smell are the selling point of the organic rice. Besides, the participation in trade shows and marketing activities provide the chance for farmer to directly convey their own story to customers. The trade shows can be both held by government and private agencies. The detail of interview is presented in the following section.

*“We went to trade fairs and had a chance to talk and tell our story. We focused on selling the story. We told them that we are the new generation that returned back home. From that we have got the new generation customers or the buyers who buy our story. If we have chance to talk, we will emphasize that we pay attention to each of our rice grains, and how we make it different.”* (Farmer and brand developer of Kwan Jak Kra Rad Brand, May 8, 2017)

*“Normally we go to trade fairs, we will bring the leaflets and name cards to distribute. We usually meet the customer who are health lovers.”* (Brand developer of Kao Im Brand, June 12, 2017)

*“Actually I met the target customer from the trade exhibition and sales booth. I think trade exhibition is very effective because we can cook rice for them, and tell our story by ourselves.”* (Farmer and brand developer of Kao Pleng Rak Brand, December 8, 2017)

*“Since the beginning people know us from trade shows, especially we get good sales at trade show held by huge organization. Since then we try to follow the trade show that is held by the government organization if they have quota for rice product. So, the trade show or sales booth is my main communications method, I can talk and explain the story.”* (Brand developer of Manora Brand, January 24, 2017)

*“During the harvest season, we will invite our customers to harvest rice, collect hay, stargaze, and tent camping. The customers can spend time with us to communicate exchanging direct experiences.”* (Farmer and brand developer of Moral Rice Brand, June 11, 2017)

However, another main communications tool that four brand developers used in rice product communication is social online media. As it is a channel that can constantly deliver message directly to target consumers without any expenses or with very limited costs. The most popular social online media is Facebook fanpage, followed by Line and Instragram. In addition, implementing people media, especially social online of famous people can have a good influence to the target customer as mentioned in the below dialog.

*“Our base is the Facebook fanpage, when we first actively contacted our famous bride. Because we know that if we have a famous bride, it will help to expand the target audience. We told our story to people we know, and get them (the brides) to sign up right away. For example, Boyd (Boyd Kosiwabong) is our first famous bride.*

*We went over to his office and told our story, then we asked if he would accept our proposal and he said 'Yes'. So we took a photo with Boyd and we posted it on our Facebook fanpage, he also did the same on his and also on 'Love Is' fanpage, which he managed himself.*" (One of founders of Pook Pin Toe Kao Project, May 30, 2017)

*"I only do it through my private Facebook fanpage. I think is a good fit to our pace."* (Farmer and brand developer of De Farm, October 25, 2017)

*"We use our online media to help us to approach the target, we have Facebook fanpage and Instragram to do some advertisements through it."* (One of brand developer of Kao Im Brand, May 26, 2017)

*"That time I hired Drama Addict Facebook fanpage to review my product. I sent Sung Yod Rice for them to review. The people seemed to be interested and followed this fanpage to order and buy our rice. It serves as a good attractive trigger."* (Brand developer of Manora Brand, January 14, 2018)

However, there are three successful brands that are in spotlight of mass media and the government agencies as well as private sector and social influencers. As a result, this allows them to receive the media opportunity to deliver their message to wider consumer base and without any expenses. This is good advantage for them as stated in the interview in the following section.

*"On the day that we started our group, we took an oath among the group members. Then we communicated about this production method, if we are doing good deeds the outcome will be good. We were broadcasted by 'TV Burapha' and 'Kon Kon Kon' TV programs. We communicated our moral people to the public. After that, various newspapers also published about it although we never requested them to do so."* (Farmer and brand developer of Moral Rice Brand, June 11, 2017)

*“For me, the effective channel is TV media. It may be because of the unique idea, so the media people were interested about it. They contacted us, most of them are the TV programs related to the new business idea. Every time we showed up on TV program, we can get more customers.”* (Farmer and brand developer of Kao Pleng Rak Brand, December 8, 2017)

*“We use the interview through PR news, social media or political media and some of business media. We have some alliances with the media which helped to promote what we do.”* (One of brand developers of Kao Im Brand, May 26, 2017)

Nevertheless, the interview indicated that the Thai farmers do not have clear brand communications planning. This becomes a crucial weakness that needs to be improved further. In addition, apart from the consumer communications as mentioned previously, the group members also have regular internal group discussions, which result in the efficient operations. Additionally, the appropriate storytelling and suitable media channel will support the brands reaching target audience in the upper market. Such that, they raised a commodity product to a value added product along with creating value in the consumer’s mind, as stated earlier. These activities will stimulate the brand to enter into the Blue Ocean Market, in which it has low market competition. Moreover, the brand will not encounter with oversupply situation too, resulting in more income for farmers.

### 5. Operations evaluation

The study found that all brands have implemented operations evaluation of the overall picture. Most of them evaluated the performance in two steps. Firstly, the evaluation during the production process focuses on the production process standard. Secondly, the evaluation at end of the year focuses on the turnover in order to seek operations improvement. The evaluation types have both unofficial and official ways. The unofficial way is through conversation and exchange of opinions within group members. The official way is carried in the form of the annual report. However, three brand developers cited that the result of these evaluations was utilized for their further short term and long term planning basis, as stated in the following section.

*“Our evaluation allows us to check everything to see what needs improvement. The stuff that is not good needs to be improved to meet the standard of customers’ needs or market demands. We will tell farmers about customers’ expectation. We have to keep improving and sincerely tell them of what has been happening. Then we solve the problem together and get it improved.”* (Brand developer of Kao Im Brand, May 26, 2017)

*“Every year we do the annual summary report during January 5<sup>th</sup> -7<sup>th</sup>, every year, called ‘Boon Kum Kao Yai’. We will conclude the lesson learned at the individual and group level. We have the discussion on the stage to exchange opinions.”* (Farmer and brand developer of Moral Rice Brand, June 11, 2017)

*“We are learning all the time. Whenever we experience problems, we keep improving them. We do not really have evaluation, but it is a kind of finding solution and improvement throughout the way.”* (Farmer and brand developer of Kao Kwan Jak Kra Rad, May 8, 2017)

Nonetheless, the interview showed that farmers and relevant parties in rice branding do not have official operations evaluation. This may lead to insufficient information to establish the product improvement planning in the future.

## 6. Growth of sustainable brand equity

The interview revealed that the guidelines of sustainable growth of successful small-scaled farmers are composed of three strategies. This includes 1) consumers and farmers’ relationship strategy; 2) farmer groups strengthening strategy; and 3) quality maintenance and brand extension strategy presented in detail in the following section.

### *6.1 Consumers and farmers’ relationship strategy*

In terms of consumers and farmers’ relationship strategy, the interview revealed that farmer and related parties in-charge of branding have implemented the communication process such as meet up activities between farmers and consumers,

and having regular direct communication with consumers. In addition, two of the brand developers mentioned that the communications should be in line with the brand positioning in order to build clear brand awareness and brand image in consumer's minds. These are essential for sustainable growth of brands as mentioned in the interview below.

*“We discuss with farmers with questions such as, “have you (farmer) paid attention on every rice grain you grew? You have to have freshly milled rice every month, do not mill in advance. The post office process is slow, you have to push them. What the bride want is, and have you answered what they asked? Have you talked with them or invited them to do farming? Have you cooked anything for them when they came to our farm?” (One of founder of Pook Pin Toe Kao project, May 30, 2017)*

*“The production and marketing have to be simultaneously done along the way. The constant communication is very important, for example, the communication of honesty is truly essential. It needs to be delivered repeatedly.” (Farmer and brand developer of Kao Kwan Jak Kra Rad Brand, May 8, 2017)*

The interesting part from the interview is two of brand developers arrange the activity for consumers to participate in the rice production process. This will ensure consumers about the rice quality and create good relationships. This activity initiates the commitment with the farmers and brings about the brand loyalty in the future.

*“During early winter near the end of the rainy season, in November, we invite the customers to harvest rice, collect hay, stargaze, and tent camping. This is one of the projects to let people do rice farming and it is aligned with the government policy. But I only accept 30-50 people, we communicate this activity by ourselves and the social media also help to promote. Our customers also spread the news. We use the government's media to support us too.” (Farmer and brand developer of Moral Rice Brand, June 11, 2017)*

*“We promote and invite the customer to see how we do it. We have international students visiting us today and they are our customers too. Most of our customers are corporate and institutions. Sometimes our product is sold in the department stores.”*  
(Farmer and brand developer of Moral Rice Brand, June 11, 2017)

### 6.2 Farmer group strengthening strategy

In terms of farmer group strengthening strategy, the interview indicated two of brand developers have fostered the farmer to have honesty toward consumers, as well as strictly maintain the standard of production to be consistent with consumers' expectations. This honesty shall convey to the consumers and will enhance the brand to grow sustainably as stated in the dialog below.

*“I think the branding process can be successful, but maintaining the brand may be difficult. It is not only communicating the fact from community, the teamwork is also important. The most difficult jobs are managing people's minds and internal control system. We have to take care and discuss regularly. We focus on tiny but loud meetings. We have to retain the core, no matter what happens the core must be there.”* (Farmer and brand developer of Moral Rice Brand, June 11, 2017)

*“We will pay attention to production and our members according to the standard and keep it on track. We will test the rice and soil, and do site visits. We will always educate them (farmers) that if they are honest, they can survive. If we are honest, the customers will trust us, we can continue to grow in the market. The priority is honesty. I am the leader of the group, I have to always talk and discuss with the members to have mutual understanding. When the people seriously do it, their minds will follow and they will be committed. After that, it will then become sustainable. We can confidently say that we always maintain our standard.”* (Farmer and brand developer of Moral Rice Brand, June 11, 2017)

### 6.3 Quality maintenance and brand extension strategy

The interview showed that three brand developers have their main strategy as quality maintenance and brand extension to other product lines. The product line can

be within the rice category but different in rice breeds, this is considered as “Line Extension”. For the foodstuff and other categories are considered as “Category Extension”.

However, such extensions are still under the same brand name to reduce the risk of new branding. Moreover, this strategy would guarantee the product quality with similar image, and lessen the cost of new branding as well as establish the novelty under the current brand name. As a result, the brand would have growth and be updated constantly. The detail of the interview is presented as follows.

*“From now on, we would like to change people’s minds that the packaged rice is a mass product and industrial grade. We would like to build the trend about fresh milling, but it needs time and this is very challenging mission compared to the first one. Although the product is premium grade, other people also can do the same. Thus, this fresh milling will change the people’s behavior. We would like to make it like the coffee machine concept, and that you can eat fresh rice at home. At least, in my point of view, if the people are motivated and understand about the fresh milling, the farmer can produce quality products to support consumers’ needs.”* (Brand developer of Kao Im Brand, May 26, 2017)

*“To survive in the long term, the quality is the most important issue. Apart from this, we should further develop more variety of products like I have lipsticks, cereals, and soaps produced by Sung Yod Rice. These products will use Manora Brand, so that people can recognize us.”* (Brand developer of Manora Brand, January 14, 2018)

*“Aside from rice, I also do brown rice and rice brand oil capsules. The small rice grains leftover from the milling, I use it to produce porridge. Do not think that it is only rice, continue searching what else can be done. This will help the brand to be more sustainable and all of our products are under Kao Pleng Rak Brand.”* (Farmer and brand developer of Kao Pleng Rak Brand, December 8, 2017)

In conclusion, the sustainable successful rice branding has to establish the relationship bonds between consumers and farmers via various communications

processes. Instantaneously, it is important to strengthening the farmer group by fostering them to be honest toward the consumers. In addition, the brand developers must not cease to develop the brand elements and keep crafting new product lines under current brands.

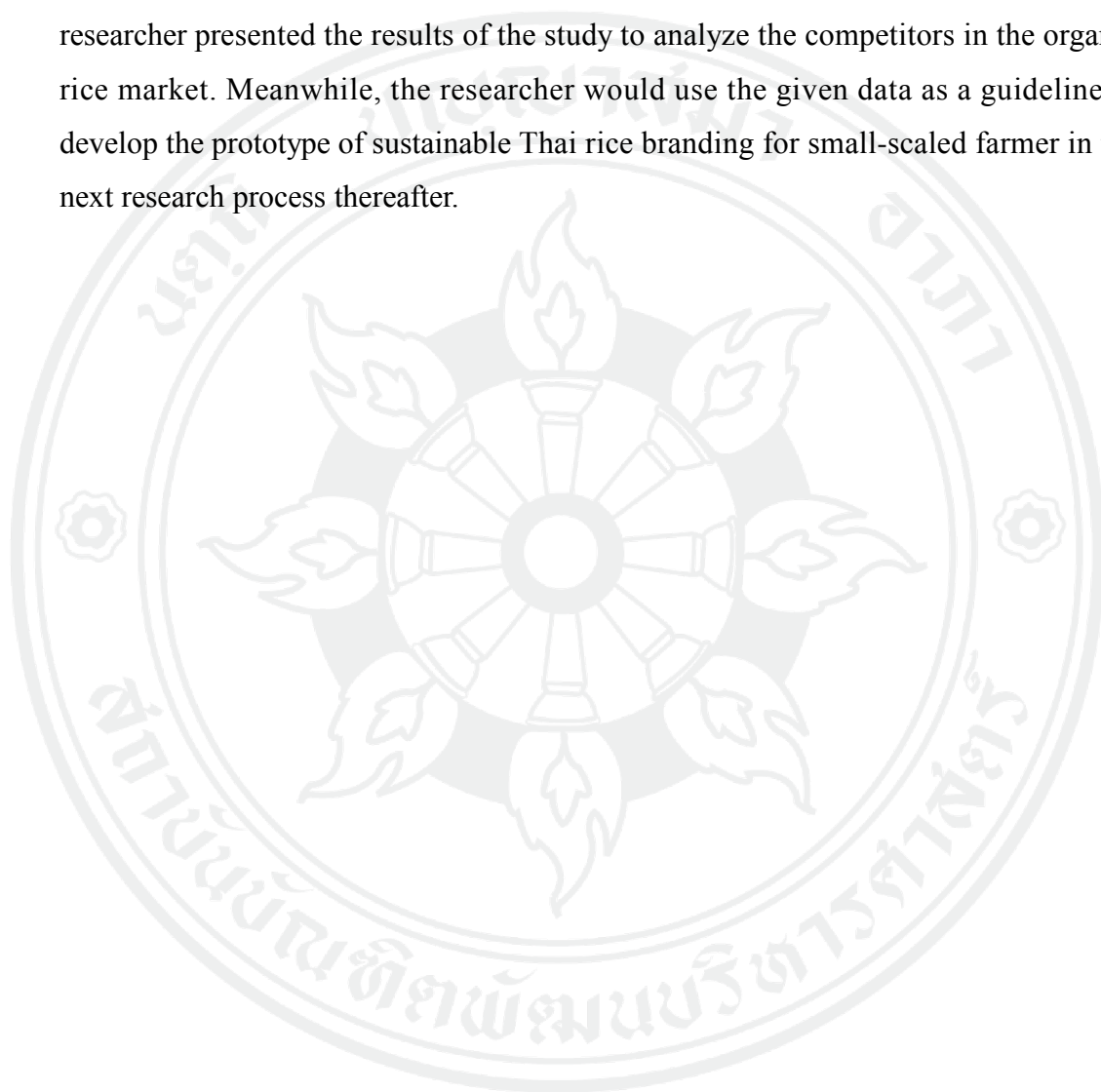
The aforementioned research summarized that the guidelines of branding for successful small- scaled farmers has to be implemented throughout the whole branding process. For the internal and external factors analysis, the brand developers have analyzed self-strength and self-weakness, other brands, consumers, including the related trends. However, the farmer and brand developers do not have systematic information analysis. This may lead to data error impacting the next step of branding process. In terms of identification and brand positioning, it is found that the brand positioning of all brands have identified their brand core values focusing on organic rice production. This is consistent with the consumer's needs and brand position reliability.

This study illustrated that the positioning of Thai rice brands are still unclear in terms of their identities that differ from their competitors. The development of the brand element process consists of tangible and intangible attributes. However it is interesting that most farmers strongly concentrate on the development of brand element process rather than other processes. Nevertheless, the study showed that Thai farmers do not have efficient planning in brand communications. This is a crucial weakness and it needs to be improved further. In the evaluation part, the study indicated that each brand has evaluated their operations in overall picture. Most of them shall evaluate the performance in two steps. Firstly, the evaluation during the production process focuses on the standard production process. Secondly, the evaluation at end of the year focuses on the turnover in order to seek for operation improvement. The result of the evaluation shall be used for further short term and long term planning. Last but not least, the sustainable growth of branding process for successful small-scaled farmers are composed of three strategies, namely - consumers and farmers' relationship strategy, farmer groups strengthening strategy, and quality maintenance and brand extension strategy.

Additionally, the interview specified that the branding process of successful small-scaled farmers in Thailand is consistent with sustainable branding concept, as

the farmer and relevant parties implement branding development knowingly, based on their group regulations and moral values. Moreover, they must properly synchronize each brand element together. This should be in line with the capability of their members for long-term control of the operations.

From the lesson learned of branding of successful small-scaled farmers, the researcher presented the results of the study to analyze the competitors in the organic rice market. Meanwhile, the researcher would use the given data as a guideline to develop the prototype of sustainable Thai rice branding for small-scaled farmer in the next research process thereafter.



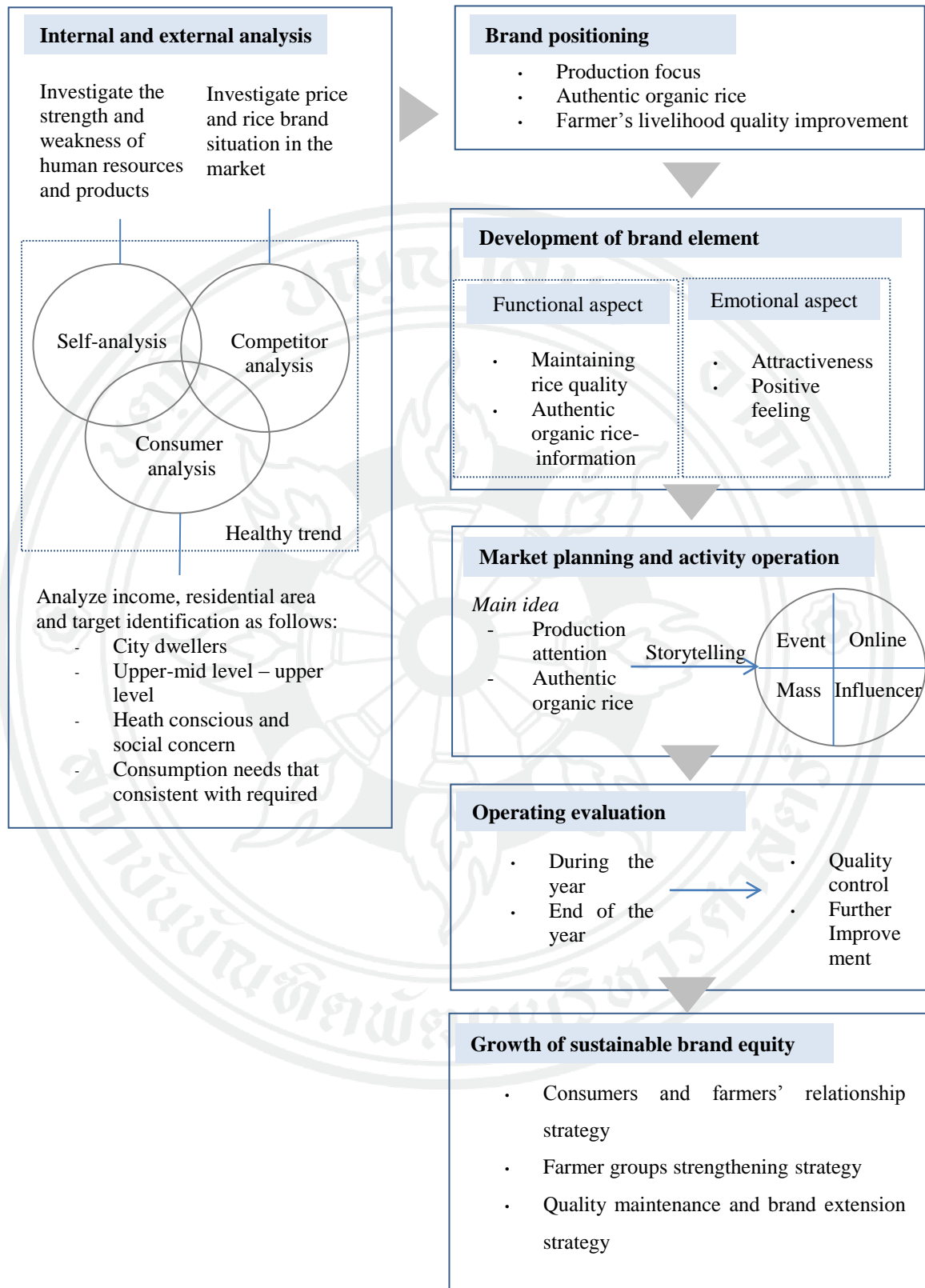


Figure 4.10 Summary Model of Branding for Successful Small-Scale Farmer

## **CHAPTER 5**

### **GUIDELINE OF THAI RICE BRAND DEVELOPMENT FOR SMALL-SCALED FARMERS**

According to the study of branding in the case of successful farmers, as mentioned in earlier chapter, it is found that the farmers and relevant parties in-charge of branding focus on value-added products and creating brands. The brands are developed according to the branding process helping farmers to increase the value of their products effectively. In order to solve rice price crisis faced by Thai farmers, the researcher cooperated with the relevant parties to initiate the guidelines and develop the prototype of Thai rice branding for small-scaled farmers. Moreover, this research is used to study the acceptance and provide policy recommendations for application of the prototype in the future.

In order to achieve the above objectives, the researcher conducted the research based on the procedure described below:

- 1) In-depth interview: this research is conducted by interviewing the relevant parties such as branding specialists, and related government and private agencies in-charge of distribution channel for guideline development of Thai rice branding.
- 2) Survey: this research is conducted by investigating opinions and behaviours of consumers toward rice purchasing decision.
- 3) Group discussion: this research is conducted by having group discussions with the target of rice brand development.

The researcher categorized the research presentation into two parts as follows:

- 1) Reporting of the rice branding guideline for small-scaled farmers through the use of branding prototype, specified in research framework, as the outline to report research findings. This report is composed of six stages of branding guidelines with details presented below:

- Internal and external analysis
  - Identification of brand positioning
  - Development of brand elements
  - Planning and marketing activities
  - Operations evaluation
  - Growth of sustainable brand equity
- 2) Presentation of the Thai rice branding prototype for small-scaled farming is developed from the guidelines generated from the findings in the aforementioned part 1, along with the results of lessons learned from rice branding for successful small-scaled farmer in the previous chapter. This will in turn be used to investigate the acceptance further.

However, in the development of the Thai rice branding for small-scaled farming prototype in Thailand, the researcher implemented the prototype development for organic rice products only. Since the lessons learned from rice branding for successful farmers in the previous chapter, found that all products are organic rice. The organic rice products have good benefit and unique selling point thus, it is easier to create added value than the conventional rice products.

## **5.1 Part 1: Reporting of Rice Branding Guidelines for Small-scaled Farmers**

In this stage, the researcher carried out in-depth interviews with relevant parties in-charge of rice branding as well as an opinion survey, and group discussions. These processes provide the rice branding guidelines for small-scaled farmers as explained in the following section.

### Stage 1: Internal and External Analysis

The researcher divided the internal and external analysis into four main areas including Self-Analysis, Competitor Analysis, Consumer Analysis, and Opportunity and Threat Analysis with the details provided in the following section.

### *Self-Analysis*

In terms of self-analysis, five branding specialists have agreed that the most important issue is that the brand developers must understand the strengths of their own products. The strengths should be in line with consumer's needs, and different from other brands. The self-analysis tools can be Marketing Mix Analysis, Strength & Weakness and Opportunity & Threats Analysis (SWOT Analysis) including Unique Selling Point, which is cited in the following dialog.

*“The first step for analysis is to look at ourselves, how our products are or if our products are different from competitor's offerings.”* (Director of Strategic Management of Fame Line, October 29, 2017)

*“We have to know ourselves first. We need to know the good point of our product, if it is better than or different from others.”* (Managing Director of Ford Thailand, October 6, 2017)

*“In the part of self-analysis, we have to well understand our products, understand the strengths, and finding the selling point. Moreover, we have to know our goal.”* (Managing Director of Isobar Thailand, October 10, 2017)

*“We can understand ourselves by using the marketing concepts like SWOT Analysis/USP/Marketing Mix. However, the important point is finding the useful USP and how much it relates to the consumers.”* (General Manager of E-Media, October 6, 2017)

The branding specialists identified that if the point of difference is not yet significant to consumers, the brand developers can communicate that point of difference and instruct consumers to realize the significance of difference as mentioned in the interview detailed below.

*“Self-analysis has to take into consideration several things. For example, in terms of psychology, the origin of products tells the product’s difference but it does not have any meaning. If we want to associate the region into the products, we have to search how the soil of each region affects the rice, and communicate the importance of it.”* (President of Y&R Thailand, October 30, 2017)

### *Competitor Analysis*

In terms of competitor analysis, the five branding specialists suggested that the brand developers should start the analysis from 1) determining clear competitors; 2) investigating the competitor, especially comparing Marketing Mix and investigating competitor’s branding and selling point; and 3) seeking the market opportunity to generate difference of products as mentioned in the interview in the following section.

*“About competitors, we have to know who we are competing with. We have to compare Marketing Mix and branding between competitors and our brand. For instance, one competitor focuses on health issue and functional benefits, rice is full with vitamins. If our products are same as them, and we communicate the same message or use the same positioning, we will be tired trying to differentiate. We should find the distinction or USP. There might be some differences that the competitors do not notice yet, but we do.”* (General Manager of E-Media, October 6, 2017)

*“When we make branding, we have to know the business environment, what happens. How Thai rice competition in the market is and who we compete with are. After that, we have to analyze our 4P’s to find out our differences.”* (President of Y&R Thailand, October 30, 2017)

*“We have to check what going on in the market is because what we are doing is not the new thing. Thus we have to see what they are doing or we may check their 4P’s, then we consider how we can be different.”* (Managing Director of Ford Thailand, October 6, 2017)

*“In the midst of clutter, we have to find the space, we can own. It is what the competitors or other brands do not offer yet. For example, if you already have organic rice, how different are you? The difference may be the better soil or 100% organic or better breeds. The point of differentiation is gives us a selling point that is unique against our competitors. We investigate the successful players in the market to understand why they are successful, how they communicate, and what we can do to be different. However, we have to firstly identify who we are going to compete with.”* (Director of Strategic Management of Fame Line, October 29, 2017)

In addition, the private agencies in-charge of distribution channel, advised regarding the competitor analysis that the price is essential aspect as rice is a commodity. If the price is significantly different from competitors, the consumer might not consider that product. The detail of interview is presented in the following section.

*“We have to survey what the competitor brands are doing, especially for price. For example, how the product is pricing in the market, because rice price in the market is quite similar. If we set price without comparing to anyone and our price is far higher than others, it will be disadvantage for us.”* (Representative of Eakkachai Distribution System (Tesco Lotus), December 8, 2017)

### *Consumer Analysis*

In terms of consumer analysis, five branding specialists recommended that this process should start from specifying the target clearly. After that, the brand developers have to study actual needs of the target towards the functional benefits and emotional benefits, as well as simultaneously review their behavior and motivation to buy organic rice. Moreover, the specialists suggested that the target should be consumers, who used to consume organic rice before since this group of people have acknowledged the benefits of organic rice. Thus it will be easy for brand communication. The detail of interview is presented in the following section.

*“We need to define who is our target and what do they want. It is not only functional benefits like we are eating to be full. For that, the consumers can buy any rice. You have to find what they want actually. What emotional benefits we can offer to consumers? We have to know them. It is more than knowing that they are 25 years old and their career. We need to know what they really want in their minds. It is important to know what makes them tick what motivates them to buy the product.”* (Managing Director of Ford Thailand, October 6, 2017)

*“We have to know to whom we would like to sell our products, what behavior they have, what attitude or interest they have about rice, what is the meaning of rice in their mind, and how important is rice to them. We need to find answers to all of these questions.”* (Managing Director of Isobar Thailand, October 10, 2017)

*“We have to know the buyers, we have to understand their insights like the health conscious issue. We need to know if they are concerned about the chemical contamination or other benefits.”* (General Manager of E-Media, October 6, 2017)

*“We have to know who our consumers are and their current needs. For example, the 5 kilograms package rice is not suitable for city dwellers. People who live in condominiums can only buy 1kg package rice, as they do not have enough storage space. This is the point that we have to consider. You have to understand what type of rice that Thai people eat; you have to study the culture and lifestyle of consumers; and you have to consider whether or not it is aligned with your products. When you interview the consumers, you should ask their opinion on how they choose rice or what make them to change the brand. You have to focus to one who consume the organic rice at first, and try to switch them to consume your brand.”* (Director of Strategic Management of Fame Line, October 29, 2017)

*“We have to know to whom we are going to sell our products. We need to know their profiles. We need to study their purchase funnel and whether they open to receive new information. We need to decipher their beliefs and how to approach them. You have to*

*go as deep as possible or you can ask the consumers what make them pay premium for the product and continue the purchase. You have to keep asking until you reach the behavioral goal. If you interview consumers, you should ask them the feeling they sense differently regarding rice from each region.”* (President of Y&R Thailand, October 30, 2017)

In addition the government and private representatives further suggested that the organic rice consumers, in term of demographic characteristic, are 25-40 years old, reside in Bangkok and outskirt of Bangkok. They have decent income. They also have important psychological characteristics relating to healthy food consciousness and are meticulous in their food consumption. The information of interview is provided in the following section.

*“The main target customers, especially in the online channel, are 25-40 years old, living in city of Bangkok. Their popular products are groceries and 1 kilogram package rice.”* (Representative of Eakkachai Distribution System (Tesco Lotus), December 8, 2017)

*“The niche rice market group including the organic rice is food among decent income people, as this rice is more expensive than general rice. For example, some organic rice brands have prices up to THB100 per kilogram. This is rice is for the upper class people.”* (Agricultural Research Officer (Professional level), Head of Processed and Product Development, Rice Product Development Division- Rice Department, October 3, 2017)

*“Our customers are from both Bangkok and other big cities. The customers are divided into two groups. The first group is a strict organic product consumer, who always buys healthy food products. The second group is the healthy food newbie, who follows the trend or change behaviour because of health problems. The customers have the expectation that the rice must be chemical-free. Other than that, it will be different depending on rice breeds,”* (Representatives of Blue Basket – healthy food market platform, December 8, 2017)

According to above target identification together with the lessons learned from rice branding for successful small-scaled farmers. The researcher utilized the information to identify the targets and respondents for the opinion survey and group discussions with the consumers. Moreover, the researcher has applied the suggestions from branding specialists as a guideline to generate the questions in order to further study consumer's behavior in terms of survey research and group discussions.

In terms of consumer's information analysis, the researcher employed the Mixed-Method Approach by commencing with Survey Research with 400 target respondents in Thailand. This survey method is to explore opinions, behaviors and marketing-mix that have an impact on organic rice purchasing decision. Subsequently, the researcher utilized the Focus Group to study the respondents' insights toward organic rice purchasing process. The research findings are presented in the following section.

*Consumer analysis: Information from opinion survey of the targets*

According to the investigation of opinions, behaviors, and marketing-mix that impact on organic rice purchasing decision in Thailand, the researcher collected data using 400 sets from respondents aged 20 years old and above. Moreover, the sample is drawn from the four regions -north, central, northeast, and south. About 100 respondents were drawn from each region. The researcher divided the presentation of results into three parts as presented in the following section.

- Part 1: Basic information regarding behaviors of informants and rice purchasing behavior
- Part 2: Opinion of informants toward organic rice consumption
- Part 3: Marketing-mix that impacts on organic rice purchasing decision

Part 1: Basic information regarding behaviors of informants and rice purchasing behaviors

Basic information of 400 respondents includes gender, age, educations, occupation, personal income, marital status, and number of family members. The detail shall be elaborated in detail in the next section.

Table 5.1 Number and percentage of the respondents by gender

Gender	Number	Percentage
Males	78	19.5
Females	309	77.3
Alternative Gender	13	3.3
Total	400	100

Table 5.1 shows the largest gender group of the respondents is females at 77.3%, followed by males at 19.5% and alternative gender at 3.3%.

Table 5.2 Number and percentage of respondents by age

Age	Number	Percentage
21 - 30 years old	95	23.8
31 - 40 years old	157	39.3
41 - 50 years old	109	27.3
51 - 60 years old	33	8.3
61 years and above	6	1.5
Total	400	100

Table 5.2 shows the largest age group of respondents is 31-40 years old at 39.3%, followed by 41-50 years old at 27.3%, 21-30 years old at 23.8%, 51-60 years old at 8.3%, and 61 years and above 1.5%.

Table 5.3 Number and percentage of respondents by education

Education	Number	Percentage
Lower than High School Level	6	1.5
High School Level/Vocational Certificate	13	3.3
Diploma Certificate/High Vocational Certificate	14	3.5
Bachelor Degree	219	54.8
Master Degree	130	32.5
Doctoral Degree	18	4.5
Total	400	100

Table 5.3 shows the largest education group for respondents is bachelor degree at 54.8%, followed by master degree at 32.5%, doctoral degree at 4.5%, diploma certificate/high vocational certificate at 3.5%, high school level/vocational certificate at 3.3%, and lower than high school level at 1.5%.

Table 5.4 Number and percentage of respondents by occupation

Occupation	Number	Percentage
government official/state enterprise employees	95	23.8
corporate employees	147	36.8
entrepreneurs	46	11.5
general employees	18	4.5
home makers	18	4.5
other occupations	75	18.8
Total	400	100

Table 5.4 shows the largest occupation group of respondents is corporate employees at 36.8%, followed by government official/state enterprise employees at

23.8%, other occupations at 18.8%, entrepreneurs at 11.5%, general employees and home makers are at 4.5% each.

Table 5.5 Number and percentage of the respondents by personal income

Personal income	Number	Percentage
Lower than THB 10,000	23	5.8
THB 10,001 – 20,000	80	20.0
THB 20,001 – 30,000	108	27.0
THB 30,001 – 40,000	84	21.0
THB 40,001 – 50,000	44	11.0
THB 50,001 and above	61	15.3
Total	400	100

Table 5.5 shows the largest personal income group of respondents has the personal income range of THB 20,001 – 30,000 at 27%, followed by THB 30,001 – 40,000 at 21%, THB 10,001 – 20,000 at 20%, THB 50,001 and above at 15.30%, THB 40,001 – 50,000 at 11%, and lower than THB 10,000 at 5.8%.

Table 5.6 Number and percentage of the respondents by marital status

Marital status	Number	Percentage
Single Status	221	55.25
Married Status	167	41.75
Divorced Status	12	3
Total	400	100

Table 5.6 shows the largest marital status group of respondents is single status at 55.25%, followed by married status at 41.75%, and divorced status at 3%.

Table 5.7 Number and percentage of the respondents by the number of family members

The Number of Family Members	Number	percentage
1 people	37	9.25
2-3 people	114	28.5
4-5 people	184	46
5 people and above	65	16.25
Total	399	100

Table 5.7 shows the largest number of family members of respondents have family members of 4-5 people is at 46%, followed by family members of 2-3 people at 28.5%, family members of 5 people and above at 16.25 %, and family member of 1 people at 9.25%.

Table 5.8 Number, percentage and arithmetic mean of the media exposures of respondents

Media Type	the media exposures of respondents					Total	Mean	Meaning
	Very rarely	Rarely	Occasionally	Frequently	Very frequently			
Internet	16 (4.0)	9 (2.3)	32 (8.0)	63 (15.8)	280 (70.0)	400 (100)	4.46	Highest
Television	34 (8.5)	58 (14.5)	102 (25.5)	103 (25.8)	103 (25.8)	400 (100)	3.46	Moderate
Point-of-Sales Media	65 (16.3)	73 (18.3)	143 (35.8)	95 (23.8)	24 (6.0)	400 (100)	2.85	Moderate
People Media	85 (21.3)	90 (22.5)	125 (31.3)	77 (19.3)	23 (5.8)	400 (100)	2.66	Moderate

Media Type	the media exposures of respondents					Total	Mean	Meaning
	Very rarely	Rarely	Occasionally	Frequently	Very frequently			
Outdoor Media	92 (23.0)	110 (27.5)	127 (31.8)	60 (15.0)	11 (2.8)	400 (100)	2.47	Low
Activity Media	125 (31.3)	91 (22.8)	136 (34.0)	38 (9.5)	10 (2.5)	400 (100)	2.29	Low
Transit Media	114 (28.5)	123 (30.8)	117 (29.3)	35 (8.8)	11 (2.8)	400 (100)	2.27	Low
Cinema	123 (30.8)	116 (29.0)	107 (26.8)	45 (11.3)	9 (2.3)	400 (100)	2.25	Low
Radio	147 (36.8)	110 (27.5)	103 (25.8)	34 (8.5)	6 (1.5)	400 (100)	2.11	Low
Newspaper	156 (39.0)	118 (29.5)	105 (26.3)	18 (4.5)	3 (0.8)	400 (100)	1.99	Low
Magazines	171 (42.8)	121 (30.3)	93 (23.3)	13 (3.3)	2 (0.5)	400 (100)	1.89	Low
Postal media	197 (49.3)	120 (30.0)	71 (17.8)	10 (2.5)	2 (0.5)	400 (100)	1.75	Low

Table 5.8 reveals the media exposure of respondents through several media. It is divided into three groups such as highest media exposure, moderate media exposure, and low media exposure.

The highest level of exposure is the Internet media with the arithmetic mean of 4.46, followed by the moderate level of media exposure such as television (3.46), point-of-sales (2.85), and people media (2.66). The low level of media exposure such as outdoor media (2.47), activity media (2.27), cinema media (2.25), radio media (2.11), newspaper media (1.99), magazines (1.89), and postal media (1.75), respectively.

Remark: Criteria for interpretation of arithmetic mean are as follows

Arithmetic mean	Meaning
1.00 – 1.80	Lowest
1.81 – 2.60	Low
2.61 – 3.40	Moderate
3.41 – 4.20	High
4.21 – 5.00	Highest

Table 5.9 Number, percentage and arithmetic mean of the media exposures through Internet media of respondents

Media Type	The level of the Media Exposures					Total	Mean	Meaning
	Very rarely	Rarely	Occasionally	Frequently	Very frequently			
Facebook	22 (5.5)	18 (4.5)	31 (7.8)	104 (26.0)	225 (56.3)	400 (100)	4.23	Highest
Line	26 (6.5)	26 (6.5)	61 (15.3)	100 (25.0)	187 (46.8)	400 (100)	3.99	High
Youtube	51 (12.8)	40 (10.0)	93 (23.3)	117 (29.3)	99 (24.8)	400 (100)	3.43	High
Website	42 (10.5)	59 (14.8)	114 (28.5)	110 (27.5)	75 (18.8)	400 (100)	3.29	Moderate
Instagram	127 (31.8)	73 (18.3)	71 (17.8)	64 (16.0)	65 (16.3)	400 (100)	2.67	Moderate
Webboard	126 (31.5)	110 (27.5)	103 (25.8)	38 (9.5)	23 (5.8)	400 (100)	2.31	Low
Twitter	206 (51.5)	90 (22.5)	55 (13.8)	25 (6.3)	24 (6.0)	400 (100)	1.93	Low

Table 5.9 reveals the media exposure through online media that is divided into four groups - the highest media exposure, the high media exposure, the moderate media exposure, and the low media exposure.

The respondents report highest exposure to Facebook media with arithmetic mean of 4.23, followed by the high media exposure such as Line media (3.99), and Youtube media (3.43). The moderate media exposure is reported for Website media (3.29), E-mail media (2.72), and Instagram media (2.67). The low media exposure is reported for Webboard media (2.31), and Twitter media (1.93).

Table 5.10 Number, percentage of respondents classified by influencers provided information for rice purchasing for household consumption

Influencer	Number	Percentage
Mother	177	44.4
Self	76	19.0
Wife	42	10.5
Sibling	28	7.0
Husband	26	6.5
Father	20	5.0
Children	13	3.3
Other person	17	4.3
Total	399	100

Table 5.10 shows the largest influencer group who provided the information of rice purchasing for household consumption is mother at 44.4%, followed by self at 19%, wife at 10.50%, sibling at 7.0%, husband at 6.5%, father at 5%, other person at 4.0%, and children 3.3%. However, the respondents mentioned that other people who make recommendations include friends, colleagues, and online social influencers.

Table 5.11 Number, percentage of respondents classified by influencers of rice purchasing for household consumption

Influencer	Number	Percentage
Mother	168	42.0
Self	92	23.0

Influencer	Number	Percentage
Wife	55	13.8
Husband	23	5.8
Sibling	23	5.8
Father	15	3.8
Children	12	3.0
Other person	12	3.0
Total	400	100

Table 5.11 shows the largest influencer group of rice purchasing for household consumption is mother at 42.0 %, followed by self at 23%, wife at 13.8%, siblings and husband at 5.8%, father at 3.8%, and other persons and children at 3%. However, the respondents mentioned that the other person here includes maids and relatives.

Table 5.12 Number, percentage of respondents classified by average frequency of purchasing of package rice

Average Frequency of Purchasing	Number	Percentage
Once a Week	36	9.0
Once in 2 Weeks	71	17.8
Once a Month	165	41.4
Once in More than One Month	126	31.6
Total	399	100

Table 5.12 reveals the average frequency of purchasing of packaged rice by the respondents, where the frequency of once a month is at 41.40%, followed by once in more than one month is at 31.60%, once in 2 weeks is at 17.8 %, and once a week is at 9%.

Table 5.13 Number, percentage of respondents classified by average quantity of purchasing package rice

Average Quantity of Purchasing	Number	Percentage
1 Kilograms	37	9.3
2 Kilograms	38	9.5
5 Kilograms	198	49.7
15 Kilograms	46	11.6
25 Kilograms	38	9.5
45 Kilograms	15	3.8
Other Size	26	6.5
Total	398	100

Table 5.13 shows the largest average quantity of purchasing packaged rice is 5 kilograms at 49.7%, followed by 15 kilograms at 11.6 %, 2 kilograms and 5 kilograms at 9.5%, 1 kilogram at 9.3%, other size at 6.5 kilograms, and 45 kilograms at 3.8%. However, the respondents identified other size group as unknown quantity and by a tang (or 15 kilograms).

Table 5.14 Number, percentage of respondents classified by average expenses of packaged rice purchasing at one time

Average expenses	Number	Percentage
less than THB 100	21	5.3
THB 100 - 200	122	30.8
THB 201 - 300 baht	123	31.0
THB 301 – 400	32	8.1
THB 401 - 500	29	7.3
THB 501 and above	70	17.6
Total	397	100

Table 5.14 reveals the largest average expense group of packaged rice purchasing of respondents is THB 201 - 300 baht at 31.0%, followed by THB 100 - 200 at 30.8%, THB 501 and above at 17.6%, THB 301 – 400 at 8.1%, THB 401 - 500 at 7.3%, and less than THB 100 at 5.3%.

Table 5.15 Number and percentage of regular places of purchasing packaged rice (can give more than 1 answer)

places of purchasing	Number	Percentage
Tesco Lotus	207	22.9
Big - C	151	16.7
groceries shop	109	12.0
Top Supermarket	104	11.5
rice retailers	99	10.9
Macro	55	6.1
buy direct from farmers	54	6.0
healthy food stores	42	4.6
Online stores	32	3.5
Convenience Stores	30	3.3
Other stores	22	2.4
Total	905	100

Table 5.15 shows the most regular place of purchasing packaged rice of respondents is at Tesco Lotus at 22.9%, followed by Big-C at 16.7%, groceries shop at 12.0%, Top Supermarket at 11.50%, rice retailers at 10.9%, Macro at 6.1%, buy direct from farmers at 6.0%, healthy food stores at 4.60%, online stores at 3.5%, convenience stores at 3.3%, and other stores at 2.4%. However, the respondents identified that the other stores which are nearby department stores.

Table 5.16 Number, percentage and arithmetic mean of the factors in purchasing rice considered by respondents

Factors in Purchasing Rice Considered	Level of Consideration					Total	Mean	Meaning
	Lowest	Low	Medium	High	Highest			

Factors in Purchasing Rice Considered	Level of Consideration					Total	Mean	Meaning
	Lowest	Low	Medium	High	Highest			
Cleanliness and Safety	7 (1.8)	1 (0.3)	22 (5.5)	157 (39.3)	213 (53.3)	400 (100)	4.42	the most influential level
Flavor	10 (2.5)	3 (0.8)	59 (14.8)	158 (39.5)	170 (42.5)	400 (100)	4.19	the highly influential level
Nutrition	9 (2.3)	9 (2.3)	70 (17.5)	145 (36.3)	167 (41.8)	400 (100)	4.13	the highly influential level
Widely Available	18 (4.5)	15 (3.8)	96 (24.0)	181 (45.3)	90 (22.5)	400 (100)	3.78	the highly influential level
Purchasing Habit	38 (9.5)	38 (9.5)	95 (23.8)	138 (34.5)	91 (22.8)	400 (100)	3.51	the highly influential level
Supporting Farmer	25 (6.3)	41 (10.3)	139 (34.8)	147 (36.8)	48 (12.0)	400 (100)	3.38	the moderately influential level
Cheap Price	23 (5.8)	32 (8.0)	182 (45.5)	112 (28.0)	51 (12.8)	400 (100)	3.34	the moderately influential level
Required Quantity	35 (8.8)	48 (12.0)	145 (36.3)	120 (30.0)	52 (13.0)	400 (100)	3.27	the moderately influential level
Rice Growing Area	58 (14.5)	81 (20.3)	146 (36.5)	76 (19.0)	39 (9.8)	400 (100)	2.89	the moderately influential level
promotion activities	56 (14.0)	79 (19.8)	175 (43.8)	73 (18.3)	17 (4.3)	400 (100)	2.79	the moderately influential

Factors in Purchasing Rice Considered	Level of Consideration					Total	Mean	Meaning
	Lowest	Low	Medium	High	Highest			
New Brand	48 (12.0)	103 (25.8)	176 (44.0)	56 (14.0)	17 (4.3)	400 (100)	2.73	level the moderately influential level

Table 5.16 shows the factors in purchasing rice considered by respondents are divided into three groups such as the most influential level, the highly influential level, and the moderately influential level.

The most influential level factors used in rice purchasing decision by respondents is cleanliness and safety (4.42), followed by the highly influential level factors used in rice purchasing decision such as flavor (4.19), nutrition (4.13), being widely available (3.78), purchasing habit (3.52), and the moderately influential level factors used in the decision making such as supporting farmer (3.38), cheap price (3.34), required quantity (3.27), rice growing area (2.89), promotion activities (2.79), and new brand (2.73), respectively.

Table 5.17 Arithmetic mean of the opinions toward rice product origins in each region

Rice Features	North	Northeast	Central	South
Softness	3.5 (High)	3.84 (High)	3.45 (High)	3.13 (Moderate)
Fragrance	3.63 (High)	3.93 (High)	3.53 (High)	3.44 (High)
Flavor	3.44 (High)	3.93 (High)	3.51 (High)	3.14 (Moderate)
Long-grain	3.43 (High)	3.80 (High)	3.53 (High)	3.11 (Moderate)
Fluffy Rice	3.44	3.79	3.52	3.18

Rice Features	North	Northeast	Central	South
	(High)	(High)	(High)	(Moderate)
High Nutrition	3.48	3.78	3.52	3.31
	(High)	(High)	(High)	(Moderate)
Appropriate Pricing	3.34	3.64	3.46	3.21
	(Moderate)	(High)	(High)	(Moderate)
Widely Available	3.34	3.83	3.63	3.20
	(Moderate)	(High)	(High)	(Moderate)
Cleanliness and Safety	3.43	3.73	3.62	3.32
	(High)	(High)	(High)	(Moderate)
Reputation	3.37	3.90	3.55	3.13
	(Moderate)	(High)	(High)	(Moderate)
Total	3.44	3.82	3.53	3.22
	(High)	(High)	(High)	(Moderate)

Table 5.17 shows the opinions toward rice product origins in each region have no significant difference. The opinions regarding rice products from the north, the northeast, and the central parts are in the good range. The northeast has the highest arithmetic mean at 3.82, followed by central at 3.53. Whereas the opinion to south origin is moderate and have arithmetic mean at 3.22.

The researcher discovered that rice from the north has distinctive features such as fragrance (3.63), followed by softness (3.50), and high nutrition (3.48), which corresponded to the characteristics of Glutinous Rice used in this research. While the most prominent factor of rice from the northeast is fragrance and flavor (3.93), followed by reputation (3.90) and softness (3.84), which is consistent with the properties of Jasmine Rice used in this research. For the rice from the central region, the outstanding factor is widely available (3.63), followed by cleanliness and safety (3.62) and reputation (3.55), which in line with the properties of the Fragrant Pratum Rice used in this research. For rice from the southern part, the good feature is

fragrance (3.44), followed by cleanliness (3.32) and high nutrition (3.31), which align this rice to the characteristics of Sangyod Rice used in this research.

Table 5.18 Number, percentage and arithmetic mean of the possibility of rice purchasing decision from different rice origins by respondents

Region	The level of possibility					Total	Mean	Meaning
	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree			
North	25 (6.3)	11 (2.8)	157 (39.3)	142 (35.5)	65 (16.3)	400 (100)	3.53	high possibility
Northeast	8 (2.0)	4 (1.0)	81 (20.3)	130 (32.5)	177 (44.3)	400 (100)	4.37	highest possibility
Central	16 (4.0)	6 (5.5)	121 (30.3)	184 (46.0)	73 (18.3)	400 (100)	3.73	high possibility
South	25 (6.3)	26 (6.5)	196 (49.0)	114 (28.5)	39 (9.8)	400 (100)	3.29	moderate possibility

Table 5.18 reveals the possibility of rice purchasing decision from different rice origins by respondents and is divided into 3 groups; highest possibility, high possibility, and moderate possibility.

The region where the highest possibility of rice purchasing decision is the northeast (4.37), followed by the regions with the high possibility of purchasing decision is the central (3.73), and the north (3.53). The region that has moderate possibility of rice purchasing decision is the south (3.29).

Above table reflects that the brand communication of rice breeds from different origins require different communication levels. Thus, the brands can effectively encourage consumers to realize and accept rice products from each region.

Table 5.19 Number and percentage of respondents classified by rice purchasing demands in specific provinces

Rice purchasing demands in specific provinces	Number	Percentage
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<b>Rice purchasing demands in specific provinces</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
No preference	125	31.3
Preference	275	68.8
Total	400	100

Table 5.19 shows that the respondents have no preference in specific provinces for rice purchasing at 68.8%. The respondents have preference in specific provinces for rice purchasing at 31.3%. The specific provinces the respondents prefer to buy rice from are Surin, Roi-Et, Yasothorn, Chiangrai, and Patthalung.

Table 5.20 Number and percentage of respondents classified by rice breeds or types that mainly consumed (can give more than 1 answer)

<b>Rice breeds</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Jasmine Rice	348	40.4
Rice Berry Rice	171	19.9
Brown Rice	149	17.3
Glutinous Rice	88	10.2
White Rice	38	4.4
Mixed Rice	37	4.3
Fragrant Rice	22	2.6
other rice	8	0.9
Total	861	100

Table 5.20 shows the largest breeds and types group of rice that respondents consume is Jasmine Rice at 40.40%, followed by Rice Berry Rice at 19.1%, Brown Rice at 17.3%, Glutinous Rice at 10.20%, White Rice at 4.4%, Mixed Rice at 4.3%, Fragrant Rice at 2.6% and other rice at 0.9%.

Table 5.21 Number and percentage of respondents classified by opinions regarding name toward rice farming method that free from chemical or any synthetic substances including chemical fertilizers and pesticides in entire production process

<b>Name</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Organic Rice	141	35.3
Kao In Sri	137	34.3
Kao Plod Sarn Pis	120	30.0
Others	2	0.5
Total	400	100

Table 5.21 shows the opinion regarding name toward rice farming methods that are free from chemicals or any synthetic substances including chemical fertilizers and pesticides in entire production process is “Organic Rice” at 35.5%, followed by “Kao In Sri” at 34.3%, and “Kao Plod Sarn Pis” at 30%. Therefore, the development of rice branding prototype primarily utilizes the name of “Organic Rice” for ease of understanding among consumers.

Table 5.22 Number and percentage of respondents classified by organic rice purchasing’s behavior

<b>Purchasing’s behavior</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
used to purchase	312	78
never or unlikely to purchase	88	22
Total	400	100

Table 5.22 reveals that most respondents used to purchase organic rice at 78%, while the person who never or unlikely to purchase organic rice is at 22%.

Table 5.23 Number and percentage of respondents classified by the most important factor in organic rice purchasing decision or being likely to purchase

<b>The most important factor</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Maintaining the healthy condition	244	79.5

The most important factor	Number	Percentage
Sustaining environment	31	10.1
Supporting farmer	19	6.2
Trial due to the healthy food trend	11	3.6
Others	2	0.7
Total	307	100

Table 5.23 shows that most respondents used to purchase organic rice or being likely to purchase given the reason that maintaining the healthy condition is at 79.50 %, followed by sustaining environment at 10.1%, supporting farmer at 6.20%, trial due to the healthy food trend at 3.6%, and other at 0.7%.

Table 5.24 Number and percentage of respondents classified by the most important factor in organic rice non-purchasing decision or unlikely to purchase

The most important factor	Number	Percentage
Non-realizing the difference of organic rice and conventional rice	41	50.0
Non-realizing the need of consumption	12	12.2
Difficult to buy	11	11.2
Higher price	11	11.2
Being not a decision maker	11	11.2
Others	4	4.1
Total	98	100

Table 5.24 reveals that most respondents have never purchased or unlikely to purchase organic rice given the reason that they do not recognize the difference of organic rice and conventional rice at 50%, followed by non-realizing the need of

consumption at 12.2%, difficult to buy, higher price, and being not a decision maker at 11.2%, and others at 4.1%.

Table 5.25 Number and percentage of respondents classified by average frequency of packaged organic rice purchasing

Average frequency	Number	Percentage
Once a week	13	4.9
Once in 2 weeks	28	10.5
Once a month	105	39.5
Once in more than one month	120	45.1
Total	266	100

Table 5.25 shows the average frequency of purchasing packaged organic rice by respondents, were frequency of once in more than one month is at 45.10%, followed by once a month at 39.5%, once in 2 weeks at 10.50%, and once a week at 4.90%.

Table 5.26 Number and percentage of respondents classified by average quantity of purchasing packaged organic rice

average quantity	Number	Percentage
1 kilogram	107	40.8
2 kilograms	47	17.9
5 kilograms	73	27.9
15 kilograms	16	6.1
25 kilograms	9	3.4
45 kilograms	3	1.1
Others	7	2.7
Total	262	100

Table 5.26 reveals the largest average quantity group of purchasing packaged organic rice is 1 kilogram at 40.80%, followed by 5 kilograms at 27.90%, 2 kilograms

at 17.90%, 15 kilograms at 6.10%, 25 kilograms at 3.4%, others at 2.7%, and 45 kilograms at 1.10%. The respondents cited regarding the others group that they buy organic rice in sacks from farmers directly or the quantity is unknown.

Table 5.27 Number and percentage of respondents classified by average expenses of packaged organic rice purchasing per time

Average expenses	Number	Percentage
Less than THB100	27	10.3
THB100-200	81	30.8
THB201-3	81	30.8
THB301-400	34	12.9
THB401-500	21	8.0
THB501 and above	19	7.2
Total	263	100

Table 5.27 shows the largest average expense group of organic rice purchasing is within the range of THB100-200 and THB201-300 at 30.8%, followed by THB301-400 at 12.90%, less than THB100 at 10.30%, THB401-500 at 8.0%, and THB501 and above at 7.2%.

Table 5.28 Number and percentage of regular places of purchasing packaged organic rice (can give more than 1 answer)

Regular places of purchasing	Number	Percentage
Tesco Lotus	104	18.2
Big-C	99	17.4
Tops Supermarket	80	14.0
buy direct from farmers	58	10.2
rice retailers	51	8.9
grocery stores	40	7.0
Macro	30	5.3
healthy food stores	29	5.2

marketing booths	25	4.4
Internet	21	3.7
convenient stores	17	3
Villa Mar	16	2.8
Total	570	100

Table 5.28 reveals the most regular place of purchasing packaged organic rice of respondents is at Tesco Lotus at 18.2%, Big-C at 17.40%, Tops Supermarket at 14.0%, buy direct from farmers at 10.20%, rice retailers at 8.9%, grocery stores 7.0%, Macro 5.30%, healthy food stores at 5.20%, marketing booths at 4.40%, Internet at 3.7%, convenient stores at 3%, and Villa Market at 2.80%.

Table 5.29 Number and percentage of respondents classified by organic rice brand name the respondents regularly purchase

Organic rice brand names	Number	Percentage
Cannot remember organic rice brand names	164	61.4
Moral Rice	27	10.1
No brand names	21	7.9
Thai Thai	14	5.2
Green net	12	4.5
My choice	12	4.5
La Mun	9	3.4
Kao-Im	6	2.2
Red Ant	2	0.7
Total	267	100

Table 5.29 reveals that most respondents cannot remember organic rice brand names is at 61.40%, followed by Moral Rice at 10.10%, no brand names at 7.90%, Thai Thai at 5.2%, Green net 4.5%, My choice at 4.5%, La Mun at 3.4%, Kao-Im at 2.20%, and Red Ant at 0.70%.

Part 2: Opinion of informants toward organic rice consuming

Table 5.30 Number, percentage, and arithmetic mean of respondent's opinions toward organic rice in many aspects

Opinions toward	Level of opinions					Total	Mean	S.D.
organic rice in many aspects	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree			
Health consciousness								
1. Organic rice is good for health	1 (0.3)	5 (1.3)	61 (15.3)	186 (46.5)	147 (36.8)	400 (100)	4.32	2.644
2. Organic rice helps consumer to consume less chemical	-	3 (0.8)	61 (15.3)	174 (43.5)	162 (40.5)	400 (100)	4.24	.730
3. Organic rice gives more nutrient than chemical rice	1 (0.3)	11 (2.8)	118 (29.5)	179 (44.8)	91 (22.8)	400 (100)	3.87	.800
4. Organic rice decrease risk of illness	-	12 (3.0)	129 (32.3)	171 (42.8)	88 (22.0)	400 (100)	3.84	.799
Total							4.07	.9147
Environment concern								
5. Organic farming method reduces pollution in soil	-	8 (2.0)	76 (19.0)	149 (37.3)	167 (41.8)	400 (100)	4.19	.809
6. Organic farming method reduces pollution in water	3 (0.8)	4 (1.0)	82 (20.5)	145 (36.3)	166 (41.5)	400 (100)	4.17	.837
7. Organic farming method preserves environment	3 (0.8)	5 (1.3)	78 (19.5)	158 (39.5)	156 (39.0)	400 (100)	4.15	.826
Total							4.17	.7944
Social problem awareness								
8. Encourage farmers to change farming style from conventional style to organic	-	4 (1.0)	77 (19.3)	158 (39.5)	161 (40.3)	400 (100)	4.19	.775

Opinions toward organic rice in many aspects	Level of opinions					Total	Mean	S.D.
	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree			
one								
9. Purchasing organic rice is the way to support farmers to grow sustainability	3 (0.8)	6 (1.5)	86 (21.5)	159 (39.8)	146 (36.5)	400 (100)	4.10	.837
10. Purchasing organic rice is the way to support farmers to reduce cost in long term	-	11 (2.8)	86 (21.5)	158 (39.5)	145 (36.3)	400 (100)	4.09	.825
11. Purchasing organic rice is the way to support farmers to increase income	2 (0.5)	4 (1.0)	97 (24.3)	162 (40.5)	135 (33.8)	400 (100)	4.06	.814
12. Purchasing organic rice makes me feel good for social responsibility	5 (1.3)	14 (3.5)	101 (25.3)	148 (37.0)	132 (33.0)	400 (100)	3.97	.914
Total							4.08	.7313

Table 5.30 shows the respondent's opinions toward organic rice in are in the highest range for these three aspects: the 1<sup>st</sup> ranking opinion is environment concern (4.17); followed by social problem awareness (4.08); and health consciousness (4.07).

However, comparing each item, the highest arithmetic mean factor is that organic rice is good for health (4.32), followed by organic rice helps consumer to consume less chemical (4.24), and organic farming method reduces pollution in soil and encourages farmers to change farming style from conventional style to organic one (4.19).

Part 3: Marketing-Mix impacts on organic rice purchasing decision

Table 5.31 Number, percentage, and arithmetic mean of marketing-mix impact on organic rice purchasing decision

Marketing-mix factor	Level of opinions					Total	Mean	S.D.
	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree			
Product factor								
1. Cleanliness and safety packaging	1 (0.3)	4 (1.0)	63 (15.8)	164 (41.0)	168 (42.0)	400	4.23	.766
2. Manufacturing and expiration dates indicated on packaging	5 (1.3)	2 (0.5)	84 (21.0)	164 (41.0)	145 (36.3)	400	4.11	.834
3. Nutrition facts indicated on packaging	3 (0.8)	9 (2.3)	89 (22.3)	161 (40.3)	138 (34.5)	400	4.06	.851
4. Organic agriculture certification indicated on packaging	4 (1.0)	13 (3.3)	85 (21.3)	169 (42.3)	129 (32.3)	400	4.02	.870
5. Perfect rice grain	4 (1.1)	5 (1.3)	114 (28.5)	183 (45.8)	94 (23.5)	400	4.00	2.156
6. Rice quantity indicated clearly on packaging	4 (1.0)	5 (1.3)	99 (24.8)	188 (47.1)	103 (25.8)	399	3.95	.804
7. Social responsibility indicated on packaging	3 (0.8)	19 (4.8)	136 (34.0)	164 (41.0)	78 (19.5)	400	3.74	.852
8. Cultivated area indicated on packaging	5 (1.3)	13 (3.3)	140 (35.0)	168 (42.0)	74 (18.5)	400	3.73	.841
9. Good design of packaging and logo	20 (5.0)	39 (9.8)	177 (44.3)	124 (31.0)	40 (10.0)	400	3.31	.955
10. Famous brand	30 (7.5)	53 (13.3)	207 (51.7)	87 (21.8)	23 (5.8)	400	3.05	.938
Total							3.84	.6009
Price factor								
11. Price label indicated clearly on packaging	1 (0.3)	5 (1.3)	98 (24.5)	178 (44.5)	118 (29.5)	400	4.02	.783
12. High price is acceptable	2 (0.5)	6 (1.5)	148 (37.0)	171 (42.8)	73 (18.3)	400	3.77	.778
13. Varied prices	3	16	159	148	72	398	3.68	.841

Marketing-mix factor	Level of opinions					Total	Mean	S.D.
	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree			
	(0.8)	(4.0)	(39.9)	(37.2)	(18.1)			
14. Same price as chemical rice	14 (3.5)	45 (11.3)	169 (42.3)	127 (31.8)	45 (11.3)	400	3.36	.945
Total							3.70	.5929
<b>Place factor</b>								
15. Being widely available	1 (0.3)	-	93 (23.3)	169 (42.3)	137 (34.3)	400	4.10	.767
16. Being always available in stock	4 (1.0)	1 (0.3)	130 (32.5)	152 (38.0)	113 (28.2)	400	3.92	.839
17. Clean and modern design store	4 (1.0)	4 (1.0)	123 (30.8)	171 (42.8)	98 (24.5)	400	3.89	.819
18. A lot of rice types available in store	1 (0.3)	10 (2.5)	124 (31.0)	176 (44.0)	89 (22.3)	400	3.85	.797
19. Located near accommodation	4 (1.0)	15 (3.8)	131 (32.8)	143 (35.8)	107 (26.8)	400	3.84	.900
Total							3.92	.6741
<b>Promotion factor</b>								
20. communicate as a sincere brand	17 (4.3)	31 (7.8)	147 (36.8)	135 (33.8)	70 (17.5)	400	3.53	1.006
21. communicate brand's story	22 (5.5)	38 (9.5)	162 (40.5)	123 (30.8)	55 (13.8)	400	3.38	1.016
22. Product trial	24 (6.0)	54 (13.5)	170 (42.5)	101 (25.3)	51 (12.8)	400	3.25	1.038
23. Sale promotion	31 (7.8)	49 (12.3)	175 (43.9)	90 (22.6)	54 (13.5)	399	3.22	1.075
24. Broadly speaking in the online media	23 (5.8)	62 (15.5)	169 (42.4)	108 (27.1)	37 (9.3)	399	3.19	.998
25. communicate via the online media	27 (6.8)	60 (15.0)	169 (42.3)	101 (25.3)	43 (10.8)	400	3.18	1.035
27. communicate as a new brand	22 (5.5)	46 (11.5)	197 (49.3)	110 (27.5)	25 (6.3)	400	3.18	.912
27. Good customer service after sale	21 (5.3)	62 (15.5)	186 (46.5)	94 (23.5)	37 (9.3)	400	3.16	.973
28. Good personal selling	24	56	193	100	27	400	3.13	.942

Marketing-mix factor	Level of opinions					Total	Mean	S.D.
	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree			
	(6.0)	(14.0)	(48.3)	(25.0)	(6.8)			
29. communicate via mass media	33 (8.3)	64 (16.0)	187 (46.8)	88 (22.0)	28 (7.0)	400	3.04	.996
30. communicate as a luxury brand	52 (13.0)	57 (14.2)	196 (49.0)	77 (19.3)	18 (4.5)	400	2.88	1.012
Total							3.19	.7530

Table 5.31 reveals the factors of Marketing-Mix, in descending order, which is Product (3.84), Price (3.70), and Place (3.92). These factors have high impact on the purchasing decision, whereas Promotion (3.19) has moderate impact on the purchasing decision.

However, comparing each item, the respondents pay the most attention in buying organic rice to cleanliness and safety packaging (4.23), followed by manufacturing and expiration dates indicated on packaging (4.11), and being widely available in general channels of distribution (4.10).

#### Conclusion of Survey

From the above survey, the researcher summarized that the demographic characteristic of respondents are mainly female aged 31-40 years old and have bachelor's degree. Their career is private employee with income range of THB 20,001-30,000. They are single and have family members of 4-5 people. The media exposure behavior indicated that most respondents primarily interact with Internet media namely Facebook, followed by TV and point of sales. This information illustrated that the effective media planning for rice brand communications should focus on the Internet, TV, and point of sales media as predominant media.

The conventional rice consumption behaviour of respondents revealed that the main influencer providing information and making rice purchase decision is the mother. The average frequency of purchasing packaged rice is once a month at 5 kilograms. The average expense is THB201-300, and the most regular place to buy

rice is Tesco Lotus. The respondents pay the most attention to the cleanliness and safety factors. However they neither have opinions regarding the different rice origins nor the needs to buy rice from any particular provinces. There is the highest possibility that the respondents buy rice from the northeast origin, and the popular rice breed is Jasmine Rice. This information illustrates that the modern trade, especially Tesco Lotus, has great potential as a distribution channel. The brand developers therefore should prioritise the modern trade as the first place of distribution. The factors of rice purchasing decision that is considered by the respondents shall be employed as main idea to encourage consumers to purchase further.

The organic rice's consumption behaviour of respondents revealed that the name recognized as free from chemicals or any synthetic substances including chemical fertilizers and pesticides in entire production process is "Organic Rice". Therefore, this development of brand prototype research utilized the name or mentioned rice product as "Organic Rice" in order to gain the mutual understanding with the respondents.

Most respondents, who used to buy organic rice or likely to buy, will potentially buy organic rice due mainly to the healthy reason. While the respondents, who never buy organic rice or unlikely to buy, has given the reason that they do not know the difference between organic rice and conventional rice. This information shall be used in communication on the functional benefits in the future. The respondents, who used to buy organic rice, they buy organic rice once in more than 1 month and 1 kilogram with price range THB100-300. The regular place to buy organic rice is Tesco Lotus. However, most respondents cannot remember organic rice brand names.

The opinion regarding the organic rice consumption illustrated that the organic rice is beneficial for health, followed by reducing chemicals consumption, and declining in soil pollution and supporting farmer shifting to organic farming. In addition, the Marketing-Mix analysis revealed that the respondents mainly focus on clean and safe packaging, followed by the packaging that indicated manufacturing and expiration dates, and being widely available to buy and find in general places. This information shall be used to develop main idea in brand communication and other brands' elements, which in turn to develop the brand prototype further.

Subsequently, the researcher analyzed the information in order to categorize the consumers into groups. The researcher utilized the Cluster Analysis method to classify the group with K-Means into 3 sub-groups. The opinion variable of organic rice consumption is the standardized variable, and the researcher employed the income variable to determine the group as illustrated in Table 5.32.

Table 5.32 Initial Cluster of Income

Opinions toward organic rice consumption	Initial Cluster Centers		
	Cluster		
	1	2	3
1. Organic rice is good for health	-.49835	-.49835	-.12010
2. Organic rice helps consumer to consume less chemical	-2.30104	-2.30104	-1.04877
3. Organic rice gives more nutrient than chemical rice	-3.06644	-1.69596	1.04499
4. Organic rice decrease risk of illness	-2.33805	.16254	.16254
5. Organic farming method reduces pollution in soil	1.03195	-1.38905	-3.81005
6. Organic farming method reduces pollution in water	1.00471	-1.46843	-1.46843
7. Organic farming method preserves environment	.99418	-1.39424	-3.78265
8. Encourage farmers to change farming style from conventional style to organic one	1.15439	-2.52983	1.15439
9. Purchasing organic rice is the way to support farmers to grow sustainability	1.04536	-2.82633	1.04536
10. Purchasing organic rice is the way to support farmers to reduce cost in long term	1.09998	-2.53633	1.09998
11. Purchasing organic rice is the way to support farmers to increase income	1.07889	-3.70290	1.07889
12. Purchasing organic rice makes me feel good for social responsibility	1.12638	-3.24791	.03281

Table 5.32 illustrates the average values of each standardized variable in various clusters or the mean of initial cluster, from which they can be divided into three groups. The result of grouping and group of opinion characteristics can be concluded in descending order as follows:

Group-1: the key opinion characteristics are “organic rice consumption is the support of farmers’ income”, “organic rice consumption make the people feel social responsibility”, and “organic rice consumption foster the sustainable farmers’ growth”.

Group-2: the key opinion characteristics are “organic rice provides higher nutrition than conventional rice”, “organic rice is beneficial for health”, and “organic rice farming method conserve the environment”.

Group-3: the key opinion characteristics are “organic rice consumption is the support of farmers’ income”, “organic rice consumption is the support of farmers to reduce cost of rice growing in long-term, namely, reducing the expenses of chemical”, and “organic rice consumption foster the sustainable farmers’ growth”.

Table 5.33 Arithmetic mean or cluster center of each cluster

<b>Iteration History</b>			
<b>Iteration</b>	<b>Change in Cluster Centers</b>		
	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>
1	5.398	5.060	1.623
2	.046	.144	2.043
3	.580	1.043	2.539
4	.518	.239	.499
5	.003	.003	.003
6	2.214E-5	3.640E-5	1.769E-5
7	1.447E-7	4.494E-7	1.053E-7
8	9.458E-10	5.548E-9	6.269E-10
9	6.182E-12	6.850E-11	3.731E-12
10	4.026E-14	8.456E-13	2.228E-14
11	4.003E-16	1.046E-14	2.379E-16
12	.000	.000	.000

Table 5.33 shows the arithmetic mean of each cluster that is changed in each calculation lapse. The information analysis determines 30 lapses as the maximum. However, the result of Table 5.33 shows 12 lapses, as the 13<sup>th</sup> lapse does not exhibit any changes of arithmetic mean

Table 5.34 Arithmetic mean as final cluster center of each cluster

<b>Opinions toward organic rice consumption</b>	<b>Final Cluster Centers</b>		
	<b>Final cluster center of each cluster</b>		
	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>
1. Organic rice is good for health	.14618	-.35098	-.08450

<b>Final Cluster Centers</b>			
<b>Opinions toward organic rice consumption</b>	<b>Final cluster center of each cluster</b>		
	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>
2. Organic rice helps consumer to consume less chemical	.80491	-.96746	-.29005
3. Organic rice gives more nutrient than chemical rice	.75647	-1.09082	-.18844
4. Organic rice decrease risk of illness	.54092	-.90914	-.07281
5. Organic farming method reduces pollution in soil	.83286	-1.10607	-.24263
6. Organic farming method reduces pollution in water	.90709	-1.27571	-.23186
7. Organic farming method preserves environment	.89204	-1.19262	-.26325
8. Encourage farmers to change farming style from conventional style to organic one	.70194	-1.26986	-.05924
9. Purchasing organic rice is the way to support farmers to grow sustainability	.86705	-1.31788	-.18447
10. Purchasing organic rice is the way to support farmers to reduce cost in long term	.82886	-1.33996	-.13351
11. Purchasing organic rice is the way to support farmers to increase income	.78003	-1.37411	-.07436
12. Purchasing organic rice makes me feel good for social responsibility	.74507	-1.28800	-.08298

Table 5.34 shows the standardized average variable value. The mean, appeared in the table, is the cluster center of each cluster. This indicated the arithmetic mean of opinion “organic farming method can reduce soil pollution” in Cluster-1, which is much different from Cluster-2 and Cluster-3 when compared to other opinion characteristics. Whereas, the other opinion characteristics also have different arithmetic means when they exist in different clusters.

Table 5.35 Distance between the 3 cluster centers

<b>Distances between Final Cluster Centers</b>			
<b>Cluster</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>
1		6.627	3.215
2	6.627		3.477
3	3.215	3.477	

Table 5.35 shows the distance between 3 cluster centers. The Cluster-1 has the longest distance to Cluster-2 at 6.627, and it has the nearest distance to Cluster-3 at 3.215.

Table 5.36 Anova

ANOVA						
Opinions toward organic rice consumption	Cluster		Error		F	Sig.
	Mean	df	Mean	df		
	Square		Square			
1. Organic rice is good for health	127.158	3	.044	39	2873.349	.000
2. Organic rice helps consumer to consume less chemical	62.323	3	.535	39	116.397	.000
3. Organic rice gives more nutrient than chemical rice	61.910	3	.539	39	114.955	.000
4. Organic rice decrease risk of illness	36.348	3	.732	39	49.642	.000
5. Organic farming method reduces pollution in soil	69.892	3	.478	39	146.190	.000
6. Organic farming method reduces pollution in water	86.524	3	.352	39	245.745	.000
7. Organic farming method preserves environment	81.081	3	.393	39	206.140	.000
8. Encourage farmers to change farming style from conventional style to organic one	66.996	3	.500	39	133.985	.000
9. Purchasing organic rice is the way to support farmers to grow sustainability	84.961	3	.364	39	233.456	.000
10. Purchasing organic rice is the way to support farmers to reduce cost in long term	81.907	3	.387	39	211.608	.000
11. Purchasing organic rice is the way to support farmers to increase income	79.609	3	.404	39	196.818	.000
12. Purchasing organic rice makes me feel good for social responsibility	71.097	3	.469	39	151.603	.000

Table 5.36 illustrates Mean Square values between Clusters and Mean Square Error. The method gives the F statistics without using F statistics and significance value, in the last column of the table, for the test of difference between the arithmetic mean of each variable when they exist in different clusters. The result revealed that the opinion “organic rice is beneficial for health” provided the biggest difference when they exist in different clusters as the F statistics gives the highest value at 2873.349. The opinion “organic rice provides higher nutrition than conventional rice”

given the least difference when exist in different clusters as the F statistics has the lowest value at 49.642.

Table 5.37 Number of cases classified in each cluster

Number of Cases in each Cluster		
Cluster	1	152.000
	2	78.000
	3	170.000

Table 5.37 reveals that most consumers are categorized in Group 3 with 170 people, followed by Group 1 with 152 people, and Group2 with 78 people.

Table 5.38 Relationship of age factor toward grouping

Age (years)	Cluster Number of Case			
	1	2	3	Total
21 - 30	30	21	43	96
31 - 40	52	35	70	157
41 - 50	52	18	40	109
51 - 60	13	4	16	33
61 years	5	0	1	6
Total	152	77	170	400

Table 5.38 shows the relationship of age factor as grouping variables. The outcome reveals that the highest consumption of Group-1 is in the age range of 31-50 years old. The highest consumption of Group-2 is the age range of 31-40 years old, and the highest consumption of Group-3 is the age range of 31 - 40 years old.

Table 5.39 Relationship of education factor toward grouping

Education	Cluster Number of Case			
	1	2	3	Total
Lower than High School Level	2	0	4	6
High School Level/Vocational Certificate	6	2	5	13
Diploma Certificate/High Vocational Certificate	2	4	8	14

Education	Cluster Number of Case			
	1	2	3	Total
Bachelor Degree	88	46	85	219
Master Degree	47	24	59	130
Doctoral Degree	7	2	9	18
<b>Total</b>	152	77	170	400

Table 5.39 shows the relationship of education factor as grouping variables. The finding reveals that the educational level of consumers in every group is bachelor's degree.

Table 5.40 Relationship of income factor toward grouping

Income	Cluster Number of Case			
	1	2	3	Total
Lower than THB 10,000	7	7	9	23
THB 10,001 – 20,000	33	16	31	80
THB 20,001 – 30,000	35	20	53	108
THB 30,001 – 40,000	36	12	36	84
THB 40,001 – 50,000	21	6	17	44
THB 50,001 and above	20	17	24	61
<b>Total</b>	152	77	170	400

Table 5.40 shows the relationship of income factor as grouping variables. The outcome reveals that the income range of the highest consumption in Group-1 is THB 30,001 - 40,000. The income range of the highest consumption in Group-2 is THB 50,001, and that the income range of the highest consumption in Group-3 is THB 20,001 - 30,000.

In conclusion, considering the opinion characteristics of each group, the groups can be defined as explained in the following section.

- Group 1: organic rice consumption makes the people feel good to support farmers. The key opinion characteristics of this group are “organic rice

consumption is the support of farmers' income", "organic rice consumption make the people feel social responsibility", and "organic rice consumption foster the sustainable farmers' growth". The age of respondents are mainly in the range of 31-50 years old and graduated with a bachelor's degree, with the income range of THB 30,001-40,000. The number of respondents in this group is 152 people.

- Group 2: Rice consumption benefits to self and environment. The key opinion characteristics are "organic rice provides higher nutrition than conventional rice", "organic rice is beneficial for health", and "organic rice farming method conserve the environment". The age of respondents are mainly in the range of 31-40 years old and graduated with a bachelor's degree, with the income range of THB 20,001-30,000. The number of respondents in this group is 78 people.
- Group 3: organic rice consumption foster the sustainable growth of farmers' income. The key opinion characteristics are "organic rice consumption is the support of farmers' income", "organic rice consumption is the support of farmers to reduce cost of rice growing in long-term, namely, reducing the expenses of chemical", and "organic rice consumption foster the sustainable farmers' growth". The age of respondents are mainly in the range of 31-40 years old and graduated with a bachelor's degree, with the income range of THB 20,001-30,000. The number of respondents in this group is 170 people.

The researcher utilized the information obtained from the survey and above cluster analysis as the basic information to establish the questions for group discussions. Moreover, this information shall be utilized to analyse the consumer's behaviour in order to develop the brand prototype of Thai rice for small-scaled farming. In addition, the researcher also would use this information to create the message for brand communications that is most suitable for the target audiences. According to the aforementioned grouping, it reflects the message, which the brand developers should communicate to consumers. As a consequence emphasis should be on creating the consumers' awareness that organic rice consumption, under brand development, shall positively help to sustain the farmers' growth. Also, helping the

farmers make consumers feel good and organic rice consumption has the benefit to self and the environment.

*Consumer analysis: data from group discussion*

For the qualitative research, in terms of consumer analysis, the researcher employed the Focus Group method. The objective of this method is to study the insight regarding the purchase decision process of organic rice with eight potential consumers. The researcher considered the essential three basic factors, in accordance with the obtained data from previous research stage, as explained in the following section.

- *Geographic area:* the potential consumers are drawn from their residence area in Bangkok and the outskirts of the city. Since this group has high tendency to purchase organic rice rather than conventional rice. Moreover, combining with the previous finding, the provincial residents or the one who live in rice growing area has low tendency to purchase organic rice rather than conventional rice.
- *Incomes and social classes:* the potential consumers are determined by income. They are from the middle class level and above since the organic rice price is higher than other type of rice in the market. The middle class level people are likely to be open-minded to new products.
- *Organic rice consumption's behavior:* the potential group is identified as the person who knows organic rice and used to consume it before. They have knowledge about the products. Thus they are likely to make decision to purchase new organic rice brands higher than one who do not know of or never consumed organic rice.

The researcher explored the basic factors to obtain potential customers' characteristics, who are the respondents of group discussions. The findings showed that the potential customers are male-female with aged of 21-50 years old and reside in Bangkok and outskirts of the city. Their incomes are categorized in middle class level and above also having used to consume organic rice at least in the past year. The

researcher divided the proposal into five stages according to Consumer Decision Making Process (Kotler & Armstrong, 2010) as follows:

- 1) Need Recognition
- 2) Information Search
- 3) Alternative Evaluation
- 4) Purchase
- 5) Post – Purchase Behavior

According to information analysis from group discussions, the researcher discovered that the core factor, initiating awareness of organic rice consumption, is the aging that influences the health awareness. The consumers mostly pay attention to information search process at the point of sales. The information search process is used together with other factors in the alternative evaluation. The first criterion considered is organic rice quality. However the packaging aspect play an important role to attract consumers in the process of alternative evaluation. In the purchasing process, the consumers select two buying sources- supermarket in leading department stores and healthy food stores. The respondents have two ways of product usage, which are for self-consumption and for seasonal gift. However, after consuming organic rice, the consumers do not implement word of mouth communication or repeat purchasing as they cannot recognize the brand names. The detail is elaborated in the following section.

#### Need Recognition

In the need recognition process, the researcher noticed that there are differences between desired state and actual state by the respondents. The biggest factor that affected these states is the individual development especially the aging. It has the effect on health awareness, since they want to have healthy life as found in the interviews of the following five respondents.

*“I started to be concerned about my health when I was 22-23 years old. It is like my metabolism was getting worse and my body system was changed. Besides, I saw my patient unconsciously sleep on the bed, I think I cannot accept myself if I had to be in*

*the same condition like that. So, that is the main reason that motivated me to pay attention to my food. ” (A doctor aged 32 years old, December 15, 2017)*

*“My main reason is that I’m getting older. At 27 years when I walk up a few steps of staircase, I start to feel very tired. I think I cannot live in this circumstance anymore; I have to be picky about food. I am careful about what I eat.” (A doctoral student aged 31 years old, December 15, 2017)*

*“It began from my annual health check-up, in the later years the result was not very good though I physically look like a healthy person. After that I told myself, I would have to be choosy about what I eat. I have children, and I want to stay with them as long as possible.” (A university instructor aged 43 years old, December 15, 2017)*

*“When I am getting older, it made me more cautious about living. I started to notice myself that my body and skin started to deteriorate. It is obvious that food has direct impact on them, and that persuaded me find out more information. If I can choose what I eat, I will choose the stuff that is good for my health and beauty.” (A corporate employee aged 33 years old, December 15, 2017)*

*“When my family members are getting older, I try to take care of them to have good health, eat good food and be happy. If I could, I will try my best. This is also extended to eating good food that they like.” (A government officer aged 41 years old, December 15, 2017)*

The following factors impact the different points between desired state and actual state is the reference group in primary stage such as families and close friends. They raise or inspire the needs in organic rice consumption. The interviews of respondents are presented in the following section.

*“The food diet actually started from my parents because my mother is a nurse, and she is very choosy about food. So since I was young, I derived this behavior from her. For example in a meal there must be 5 foods groups, or if about rice, it must free from*

*chemicals. If I can choose, I will choose according to ways that I grew up knowing.”*

(An investor aged 40 years old, December 15, 2017)

*“One of my close friend started to take organic rice because they do not want to take advantage of farmers as they will get effect from using chemicals. Thus, even though organic rice is more expensive but it can save people lives. After that, I considered what my friend said and that was my starting point of eating organic rice until now.”*

(A freelance actor aged 34 years old, December 15, 2017).

The final factor that impacts the differences between desired state and actual state is the current situation. Nowadays, the healthy food trend is very popular. As a result, the respondents are given the information that they need to use as reference as presented in the following interviews.

*“I just follow the trend. I eat organic rice on and off. I just would like to try how it is. I am not a healthy lover by nature, sometimes I eat, and sometime I take a break.”* (A businessman aged 27 years old, December 15, 2017)

In conclusion, the factors that impact organic rice consumption needs are composed of three factors: 1) Individual development such as the aging; 2) Reference group in primary stage such as families and close friends; and 3) Current situation such as healthy food trend. However, after realizing the problem and needs, the respondents need the information to probe problems or respond to needs for their purchasing decision, as per the following process.

### Information Search

The information search process is divided into two types, which are internal search and external search. The group discussions regarding the internal search revealed that two respondents implement information search from their memory concerning the organic rice in the past through various media. This is presented in the following section.

*“I have been to trade fairs and come across organic rice booths. I used to try organic rice and talked to the brand owners. I recalled that I did not buy rice as I still have enough rice at that time. But I feel rice is very tasty and it is apparently real organic rice. When I want to buy organic rice, I will think of that brand.”* (An investor aged 40 years old, December 15, 2017)

*“I have seen some information somewhere in the past and I was impressed by the story. For instance, the farmers mill this rice by themselves in the small household. So, when I saw the product displaying on shelf, I remember the brand and bought it,”* (A doctoral student aged 31 years old, December 15, 2017)

However, the researcher found that eight respondents mainly implement external search, particularly information search at point of sales, such as information on the packaging, special activity, and advertising media. The details are presented through the interviews in the following section.

*“I do not have any particular brand in mind and most importantly I cannot remember brand. I have seen some information before but I still could not remember. So, the easy way is I just go to the shelf and read them on the package if it is in line to what I want.”* (A freelance actor aged 34 years old, December 15, 2017)

*“I personally do not find any information upfront, I like to walk around and read information on the packaging. Sometimes I saw the cooking booth giving the trial products, chef and seller provided the information at the point of sales. Perhaps they have brochure, I will just read on the spot.”* (A corporate employee aged 33 years old, December 15, 2017)

*“I do not have any favorite brands, when I want to buy I just read information from the package on the shelf.”* (A government officer aged 41 years old, December 15, 2017)

However, there is one respondent who mentioned that he/she found additional information through search engine as detailed in the following dialogue.

*“I mostly walk over to the shelf and read information on the spot, then I make decision to buy. Sometimes If I am doubt and want more information, I will search from Google on the spot.”* (A university instructor aged 43 years old, December 15, 2017)

In conclusion, most respondents implement external search by focusing on at the point of sales. Some respondents has employed internal search from their memory in the past. This information shall be utilized with other factors in the alternative evaluation process in the future.

#### Alternative evaluation

In the process of alternative evaluation, the researcher found that the respondents apply alternative evaluation in the form of piecemeal process. It refers to an evaluation that considers the strengths and weaknesses of products based on evaluation criteria such as organic rice quality, and price.

In terms of criteria of organic rice quality, the group discussions indicated that eight respondents have considered the self-claim with regards to the authentic organic rice, and the organic rice certificate bodies. Despite lacking certification by any agency, the communication of self-claiming regarding the truly rice organic farming can create reliability as well. The detail of interview is presented in the following section.

*“Normally I do not read (information) on the package that much, so the certificate stamp is necessary.”* (A freelance actor aged 34 years old, December 15, 2017)

*“Some products neither have any organic certificate nor any storytelling. If so, I will not buy those brands except I know them before. Some brands communicate the story*

*of organic farming, I can accept this kind of self-claim.”* (An investor aged 40 years old, December 15, 2017)

*“If I need to compare all the products on the shelf, firstly I will look for the certificate stamp. It ensures to what I am looking for. If I buy organic rice, I want to make sure that it is a genuine organic stuff. I feel more comfortable that way.”* (A doctor aged 32 years old, December 15, 2017)

*“There must be something to endorse, if it is an organic product to make me feel comfortable. But if the storytelling is reliable, the certificate may not be important.”* (A doctoral student aged 31 years old, December 15, 2017)

*“The criteria for rice that I usually consider, I will look at its quality, chemical-free, cleanliness, and any guarantee of organic rice. The guarantee part is my priority.”* (A government officer aged 41 years old, December 15, 2017)

The price aspect is the factor following the quality aspect that respondents use to evaluate the alternatives. The group discussion revealed that eight respondents compare the products' prices to other similar brands. The respondents are able to accept to pay slightly higher price than average price. The information presented in the following section.

*“I do not set the target price. However, if they are on the same shelf, their price should be similar. It can be more expensive, but only a little bit.”* (A businessman aged 27 years old, December 15, 2017)

*“If the price is alike, I am ok with any brands. For example, if the products on shelf cost THB 90 but I am interested in one particular brand with cost THB 95. I can accept this way.”* (A university instructor aged 43 years old, December 15, 2017)

*“I can accept, if the products' prices are different around 20%. But this is the secondary principle after the quality. If this is authentic organic rice or suit my*

*requirements, I am OK to pay a little bit more expensive price.”* (A doctor aged 32 years old, December 15, 2017)

In addition, the respondents have the opinion in the same direction that the organic rice price should be higher than normal rice. Since they acknowledged that this rice is a niche market, and the farming process does not support the big scale farming using chemicals in rice farming.

*“I understand that organic rice is niche, it is supposed to be more expensive. I can accept that as I know its quality is better than rice grown using chemicals.”*

(A corporate employee aged 3 years old, December 15, 2017)

*“I know that the certified organic rice will need to prepare soil for three years. The growing process needs more attention. Thus, the price has to be more expensive than other rice produced in the standard industry practice.”* (A freelance actor aged 34 years old, December 15, 2017)

However, two respondents used the price aspect to accelerate the buying decision. They mentioned that the brand that have higher price given the better quality. The details of interviews are presented in the following section.

*“I personally tend to buy the product that is more expensive. For example, I will compare brand No. 1, 2, 3, and 4, if they are not that different. It should have some hidden reason for its higher price, which is equivalent to being good.”* (A freelance actor aged 34 years old, December 15, 2017)

*“If one product is cheaper among others in the same category, it looks suspicious and I will not buy it. I believe that the more expensive product should have something better than others.”* (A corporate employee aged 33 years old, December 15, 2017)

The researcher found that the attractive or presentable packaging is the core factor stimulating the consumers to buy product. The packaging characteristics should

be designed to reflect the organic product and indicate complete basic information. Moreover, the packaging has to be durable and able to protect the rice inside. Some respondents propose that the packaging should be easy to maintain rice quality after opening. The detail of interview is presented in the following section.

*“Because of nice packaging, I will pick up that rice. But it does not mean that I will buy because of the nice packaging. It catches my attention at first, after that I will read on package if it is truly organic.”* (A university instructor aged 43 years old, December 15, 2017)

*“If the packaging is nice, it will make me take it and have a look. Actually if the packaging is not presentable, I will not take it. If the product motivates me to pick up, I will read the information. If the information and price are OK, the deal is done.”* (A businessman aged 27 years old, December 15, 2017)

*“In my opinion, packaging is a novelty for me. It makes me pick it up, however it depends on the information on the package compared to the other brands too.”* (A doctor aged 32 years old, December 15, 2017)

*“The design should indeed provide the organic feel, it should be clean. The material should be environmentally friendly. If it only uses plastic material, I may be give low priority. However, if it is made by bio-plastic, this is OK.”* (A freelance actor aged 34 years old, December 15, 2017)

*“The reason that I pick the product is the beauty. After that, I will check if it is real organic rice and what kind of rice is. What the nutrition is, how the cooking method is, where the origin of rice is, and manufacturing and expiration dates. I will check if all information are indicated on the packaging.”* (A corporate employee aged 33 years old, December 15, 2017)

*“For me, the packaging makes me take the product to have a look, and compared the information with other brands. Aside from the beauty, it should also clearly specify the word ‘organic’ and the packaging will have to really protect the rice inside.”*

(An investor aged 40 years old, December 15, 2017)

*“Most packaging will be packed with 1 layer of vacuum bag only. After opening, the packaging cannot be kept and we need to find the container or box to keep it. Sometimes it is not convenient, it should have something to close it or another layer of zip lock bag.”* (A government officer aged 41 years old, December 15, 2017)

In conclusion, the packaging stimulates the consumers to pick up the product for consideration and alternative evaluation. The main factor the respondents consider is organic rice quality and focus on the authentic organic rice, followed by price. The price should not be far more than average price. However, the consumers implement an alternative evaluation where either strengths or weaknesses cannot compensate each other. For example, if the rice product’s weakness is false quality of organic rice, the consumers will eliminate this brand out of the evaluation. Subsequently, the consumers will evaluate the alternative, and decide the brand they would like to purchase through obtained information during the alternative evaluation process, as specified in the following stage.

### Purchase

The group discussion indicated that all of the eight respondents make a purchasing decision under the quality consciousness. This type of decision emphasizes on quality of organic rice and elaborately comparing the products prior to purchase as mentioned in the previous process.

Moreover, the group discussion identified that the eight respondents regularly buy organic rice from two store types with the proportion of four people equally. The first is supermarket in the leading department stores and healthy food stores. The major reason of purchasing organic rice from supermarket is convenient aspect. The details are presented in the interview in the following section.

*“I find it convenient to buy organic rice at Top or Villa. Since I want to buy other products as well, so it kind of responds to our requirement more than just buying rice from organic food stores.”* (A corporate employee aged 33 years old, December 15, 2017)

*“Because I buy various products, so I regularly go to department stores. It is more convenient because I have to buy other products as well.”* (An investor aged 40 years old, December 15, 2017)

*“I mainly buy product from Tops as I often have to run errands at Central, so it is convenient for me. Most of the time, I buy other products too. I do not go there particularly to buy rice only.”* (A university instructor aged 43 years old, December 15, 2017)

*“Depends on the opportunity, if I want to buy something else too, thus I will go to the supermarket due to convenience. The supermarket now have the organic corner, so I will go and check out the products.”* (A government officer aged 40 years old, December 15, 2017)

Whereas, the main reason the respondents buy product from healthy food store is that it is more reliable and can ensure the authentic organic rice. Moreover, they feel that the product from this type of store has more value than general stores. The details of interview are presented in the following section.

*“I like to buy rice at organic stores because I think it should be real organic and fresh. It may be because of the store ambience make me feel that way. And I feel the product has more value than buying from other stores.”* A doctoral student aged 31 years old, December 15, 2017)

*“Since I follow the organic trend, so when I buy organic stuff I must buy at organic stores. Usually when I go to the supermarket, I do not walk around the rice section anyway.”* (A businessman aged 27 years old December 15, 2017)

*“I go to organic stores because I buy other organic products too. It is different from other store as this kind of shop is more reliable.”* (A freelance actor aged 34 years old, December 15, 2017)

*“I go to organic stores since I suppose the store already screen the organic products for me.”* (A doctor aged 32 years old, December 15, 2017)

In conclusion, in the purchasing process, the respondents shall purchase organic rice from 2 store types; supermarket in the leading department stores, and healthy food stores. They make the decision based on the obtained information previously combined with quality and price evaluation. However, the researcher noticed that no any respondents regularly purchase organic rice from online channel.

#### Post – Purchase Behavior

In the process of post-purchase behaviour, the group discussion indicated that respondents have two ways of product usage, which are for self-consumption and for seasonal gift. For self-consumption, it is not massive amount as most people stay alone followed by living with small family. The details of interviews are presented in the section.

*“I stay alone so I buy the small package only. Sometimes I buy it as a gift like I just bought organic rice for my colleague as New Year gift.”* (A corporate employee aged 33 years old, December 15, 2017)

*“Usually 1 kg package can last until 1 month since I stay alone. Most of the time, I only eat one meal at home which is dinner, and some days I eat outside for all 3 meals.”* (A freelance actor aged 34 years old, December 15, 2017)

*“We have three people at home, actually we cook every day but we are not big eaters. Aside from buying organic rice for my family, I also give organic rice to a person whom I respected in any opportunities. Most of the time, I will give it during New Year.”* (A university instructor, December 15, 2017)

However, the researcher discovered that after consuming organic rice, the respondents do not implement word of mouth or repeat buying. Specifically, they do not have brand loyalty, even though that brand has good quality and respond to consumers' expectation. In addition, the main difficulty is the respondents cannot memorize the brand names. The detail of interview is as the following.

*“If the rice is delicious, this already made me satisfied. Seriously, I cannot remember the rice brand though I take it every day. But if I see the package, perhaps I could remember.”* (An investor aged 40 years old, December 15, 2017)

*“Normally the organic rice, that I bought, is in line with my requirement. In addition to being organic product, I think the taste wise is also nicer. If you ask me whether I will introduce this brand to other people, I may not do so. It might be that I cannot remember the brand names, and usually we do not talk about rice in the daily conversation.”* (A freelance actor aged 34 years old, December 15, 2017)

*“I personally never feel regret consuming organic rice, I literally feel neutral. When the rice finish, I buy new ones without specific brands. If I find new interesting brands, I will buy it to try. The important thing is that I cannot recall the old brand names, most of them use similar names.”* (A corporate employee aged 33 years old, December 15, 2017)

In summary the consumer decision-making process, the researchers discovered that the consumer realize the importance of organic rice consumption. For example, aging brings consumer's attention to health conscious as well as the family and close friends inspire the need for organic rice consumption. On top of that, the

healthy food trend affects consumers and increase demand for organic rice consumption. After that the information search process, the consumer focus on the information search at the point of sales. Only some of them emphasize on the past experience they have come across. This information search would be utilized with other factors in alternative evaluation by prioritizing on the quality and authenticity, followed by price. The packaging appearance stimulates the consumers to pick up the product for alternative evaluation. In the purchasing process, the consumers select two buying sources; supermarket in leading department stores and healthy food stores. The respondents have two ways of product usage, which are for self-consumption and for seasonal gift. However, the respondents do not apply word of mouth communication or repeat buying. The main difficulty is the respondents cannot memorize the brand name, and no brand loyalty to any particular brands.

In addition to the purchasing decision behavior, the researcher incorporates the advice of the branding specialists to use in consumer insights study as follows:

- 1) Importance of organic rice to consumers
- 2) Main reason for organic rice consumption
- 3) Expectations of organic rice
- 4) Consumers' feelings toward different rice growing regions
- 5) Comparison of organic rice in terms of personality used to develop a prototype of rice branding prototype in the next step

From the group discussions, the respondents have consistency in their opinions that rice is truly important to life. Rice is eaten regularly as main food and good source of nutrients. If that rice has delicious taste, it can be eaten at every meal. The detail of interview is presented in the following section.

*“Rice is very important and indispensable. In spite of eating noodles or any other starches, it cannot compare to rice.”* (A doctoral student aged 31 years old, December 15, 2017)

*“Rice is very important, it is main food and provides the essential nutrition for body in everyday life.”* (An investor aged 40 years old, December 15, 2017)

*“Rice is necessary, it is a source of carbohydrate and is widely available.”* (A doctor aged 32 years old, December 15, 2017)

*“For me, rice is vital to life. The delicious rice can be taken in every meal.”* (A government officer aged 41 years old, December 15, 2017)

The primary reasons of consuming organic rice by respondents are consumption for health, followed by supporting the farmer and maintaining environment, and taste of organic rice. The healthy food trend only plays a role as a stimulus for organic rice experiment. The highest expectation of consumers toward organic rice is that the rice should be under organic process since the inception of growing until the final processes of packing, which all of the respondents have consistently agree. The interview details are presented in the following section.

*“The main reason I eat organic rice is firstly for my health, secondly supporting the farmers, and thirdly for good environment. Actually the trend helps me to be open-minded to organic food but it is not key reason that I keep constantly consuming it.”* (A government officer aged 41 years old, December 15, 2017)

*“Organic rice is important because it is healthy. If I can choose the rice I can eat, I will choose organic rice.”* (A business man aged 27 years old December 15, 2017)

*“I personally eat organic rice due to its taste. I feel it is has purer taste. Also, I believe that organic rice consumption will help farmers avoid using chemicals.”* (A freelance actor aged 34 years old, December 15, 2017)

*“My highest expectation is the rice has to be real organic, after consumption it must be good for health.”* (A doctor aged 32 years old, December 15, 2017)

*“My highest expectation is that rice must be clean and safe, so the entire process should be organic so that I do not need to be worried.”* (A businessman aged 33 years old, December 15, 2017)

For the issue regarding consumers' feelings towards different rice growing regions, all of respondents do not have knowledge regarding the growing origins that associated with rice breeds. However, the respondents suppose that the suitable rice-growing region is the northeast area, followed by the central area, and the northern area. The respondents agree that the southern part is not suitable for growing rice. The details of the interviews are presented in the following section.

*"I do not choose rice based on its origin. But I remember that I used to eat rice from Surin province and it was very tasty. Other than that I have no idea."* (A government officer aged 41 years old, December 15, 2017)

*"I reckon that rice from the northeast is the best. The Jasmine Rice has a strong fragrance."* (A doctoral student aged 31 years old, December 15, 2017)

*"The flatlands in the central part should be appropriate to grow rice. For example, the flatlands nearby Chaophraya River have a lot of sediment, it should be fit to grow rice."* (A doctor aged 32 years old, December 15, 2017)

*"I think the rice from the north is delicious, I like it. The texture will be little bit sticky."* (An investor aged 40 years old, December 15, 2017)

*"For me, I can take rice from any regions except the south. I think that area has too much rain and not being suitable for rice growing. When thinking of the south part, I will think of seafood or rubber trees."* (A freelance actor aged 34 years old, December 15, 2017)

In addition, the respondents associate the regions with the colors, they conclude that the northeast associates with brown or orange, and the south associates with blue or sapphire. While the respondents have different opinion for the north and the central regions. The details of interview are presented in the following section.

*“The northeast must be brown colour and the south should be blue. For other regions, I have to idea.”* (A doctoral student aged 31 years old, December 15, 2017)

*“I think the northeast is equal to brown color and the south is blue color. For the north, I think it is yellow color but I have no idea for the central region.”*

(A businessman aged 27 years old, December 15, 2017)

*“The central region should be green color and the north is white color. The northeast is brown color and the south is blue color.”* (An investor aged 40 years old, December 15, 2017)

Comparing the organic rice personality used to develop a rice-branding prototype is the next stage of analysis. The respondents believe that the personality should be of new generation farmers who are 35 years old with good education, modernized, healthy, humorous but calm, caring attention, social and environmental responsibility, dress minimal, sincere, honest to consumers, and happy to do farming. The details of interview are presented in the section below.

*“It should be a person with good education in the mid-thirties. The person is modernized, knowledgeable in farming, humorous but calm, good man, and caring to environment and society.”* (An investor aged 40 years old, December 15, 2017)

*“It must be sincere person, honest, mingle around, have positive energy, and give the lively feeling to the consumers.”* (A government officer aged 41 years old, December 15, 2017)

*“The person should be new generation, smart, humble, farming with happiness, have good taste, dress minimal, have good heart, heath lover and be, kind.”* (A freelance actor aged 34 years old.” (A government officer aged 41 years old, December 15, 2017)

From above information, it can be concluded that the main reasons for organic rice consumption is beneficial to health, followed by supporting the farmer and maintaining environment, and taste of organic rice. The healthy food trend only plays a role as a stimulus for organic rice experiment. The highest expectation of consumers toward organic rice is that the rice should be under organic process since the inception of growing until the final processes of packing, which all of the respondents have consistently agree. In the issue of consumers' feelings toward different rice growing areas, all of respondents do not have knowledge regarding the growing origin that associated with rice breeds. However, the respondents suppose that the suitable rice-growing region is the northeast area, followed by the central, and the northern regions. However, the respondents agree that the southern part is not suitable for growing rice. Comparing the organic rice personality used to develop a rice branding prototype in the next step, the respondents believe that the personality should be of new generation farmers who are 35 years old with good education, modernized, healthy, humorous but calm, caring attention, social and environmental responsibility, dress minimal, sincere, honest to consumers, and happy to do farming. Nevertheless, all of information obtained from group discussions would be used in the development of prototype for sustainable rice branding for small-scaled farmers in Thailand. As a result, especially in consumer analysis, the researcher can utilize accurate information to develop brand elements, and communicate effectively to consumers.

#### *Opportunity & Threat Analysis*

The opportunity and threat analysis is related to brand development for small-scaled farmers. The interview indicated that the key opportunity for current organic rice branding is the support of government, particularly Rice Department. Since this product development is in accordance with the promotion of organic rice farming under the government policy, and encourage farmers to create brands to add value to the product. The support of government comprises of three levels. This includes upstream, midstream, and downstream. The process of branding is categorized from midstream onwards. Such the support emphasizes on the tangible part of brands and

brand communications. The details of the interview are presented in the following section.

*“For the organic rice product group, the government currently motivates the farmers to grow organic rice such as one million rais policy. During the transition period from the first year to the third year, the government subsidize the money to motivate the farmers. I take responsibility for the special rice in niche market including organic rice. I will mainly take care of the midstream level, and support the farmers in terms of branding, logo, and packaging. Moreover, our team also provides free vacuuming machine and 7,000-10,000 bags a year. We provide education and take care of the farmers from the harvesting process to the distribution.”* Agricultural Research Officer (Professional level), Head of Economics and Trade Promotion, Rice Product Development Division- Rice Department, October 3, 2017.

*“In the downstream part, after completing the packaging and logo process, we shall provide communications knowledge and workshops about suitable media for farmers. For example, we provide the training programs regarding the online media, or update news to farmers if any trade exhibitions. Moreover, we subsidize the money for booth sales that displays in domestic and international events too. In addition, our department also contact with the entrepreneurs, who have the potential for further development with us.”* (Agricultural Research Officer (Professional level), Head of Economics and Trade Promotion, Rice Product Development Division- Rice Department, October 3, 2017)

Additionally, the interview also indicated that the growth of online media supports the distribution channel of organic rice, especially in the marketplace. It has similar function to general market distribution. It benefits consumer to have variety of choices, and better privilege than general distribution channel. Moreover, this online channel makes consumer feel more comfortable for busy people who do not have time to purchase product at normal distribution channel. On the other hand, this marketplace also gives advantages to the brand owners for lower product's display

fee, and no need to wait until low inventory to replace the products. The details of interview are presented in the following section.

*“Online market helps people to reduce their time of finding healthy products. They do not need to search shops one by one. This is our advantage as the customer can save their time when purchasing so many products. In terms of payment, we are a reliable registered company and have a permanent address. Moreover, we handle the transactions to support customers and manufacturers, while we charge only 7% of product price from manufacturer. If the product is unsold, there is no charge.”* (Blue Basket Representative, online healthy food marketplace, December 8, 2017)

*“Actually online and offline product’s prices have no difference, but some products may have better privilege. Some products are not displayed in offline market because offline team will have to check first if there is availability for new product. The space is limited; if we want to replace new products we have to take out some products too. There are many factors involving in the product removing process such as sale performance. However, online market does not have this concern, but it will focus more on the size and trend. The other benefit of the marketplace such as Lazada, is that it has the most traffic among other marketplaces. It uses a lot of media when implementing a campaign, so people will follow and create reviews.”* (Representative of Eakkachai Distribution System (Tesco Lotus), December 8, 2017)

The interview indicated that the difficulty of organic rice brand development is the product’s quantity especially during the transition period. Aside from this, natural disasters also create the limitation for branding development. The details of the interview are presented in the following section.

*“For the first year of organic farming, the products are not sufficient. If the farmers do not have the investor to support, they will lose money and turn back to chemical farming. Some farmers faced with natural disasters such flooding ruins the rice field. It needs time to recover everything.”* (Agricultural Research Officer (Professional

level), Head of Processed and Product Development, Rice Product Development Division- Rice Department, October 3, 2017)

The interview further illustrated that though the online channel is the advantage of the brand owners, it has risks such as the high competitions from many brands. Moreover, the brand owners can lose the opportunity to collect the buyer information which it can in turn be used for further analysis.

*“The disadvantage of marketplace is a ton of people sell products on marketplace and that means high competition. The marketplace owner will not share the buyers’ information to us, thus we will not know who our customers are.”* (Representative of Eakkachai Distribution System (Tesco Lotus), December 8, 2017)

In conclusion, in terms of internal and external analysis, the brand developers should completely analyze information. It is composed of i) Self-analysis: the brand developers need to know their strength that differ from other competitors in the market; ii) Competitor analysis: the brand developers need to clearly identify their competitor, after that the brand developers have to analyze competitor’s information in order to find opportunity to deliver different perspective; iii) Consumer analysis: the brand developers need to clearly specify their own target. Subsequently, the brand owners have to understand the consumer’s needs in both functional and emotional benefits as well as consider the purchasing decision process of consumers; and iv) The opportunity and threat analysis: the brand developers should consider the government’s policy factors and growth of media that impact the opportunities and threats in rice branding development. After the brand developers thoroughly analyze all of these factors in a holistic manner, they can use this information as the guideline to efficiently develop their brands.

#### Stage 2: Identification and brand positioning

Identification of brand positioning is considered as the important stage of branding development. The brand positioning provides the guideline to develop other

brand elements. Therefore, the brand element will be consistent and memorable to consumers.

Five branding specialists specified that the good brand identity should be different from competitors and consistent with consumers' needs. However, the brand identity ought to contain functional and emotional benefits. Subsequently, the brand character will be determined in order to be in line with the brand position, as presented in the following section.

*"In the process of positioning, it needs to be different. There is the perceptual map grid wherein each quadrant represents a unique positioning. If you happen to be at the position that is already occupied, you will have to expend a lot of effort. However, if you are in the vacant position, it may be need the effort in changing the perception from one side to another side, but we do not need to compete with anyone."* (General Manager of E-Media, October 6, 2017)

*"We have to think of our difference whether it is in accordance with consumers' needs. Whether or not the added value part is useful. Not only the positioning, it will also show its brand purpose. For example, the brand wants to be healthy rice, responding to people's need for convenience. The other elements have to be under the same direction too. The most important is that the brand developers should find out the obvious characteristics, do not need to have many characters. The brand developers have to mix functional benefits and emotional benefits that respond to customers' needs that can be actually delivers."* (Director of Strategic Management of Fame Line, October 29, 2017)

*"Brand positioning that we are doing right now is the workshop with customers and related agencies. Each side will have their own tools. Good positioning has to be different, it can be the unique point that the competitors do not have or no one ever had it before. The next one is whether or not this is what the consumers are looking for."* (Director of Strategic Management of Fame Line, October 29, 2017)

*“For rice, I do not want to use too many theories. I want to hear what is the difference point of your product. It can be only 1 sentence. After you have got the selling point, the next one is about the product characteristics. What characteristics that you want people perceive about you? The important thing is what the reason to believe in your selling point is.”* (President of Y&R Thailand, October 30, 2017)

In conclusion, in addressing the brand identification and positioning of organic rice, the brand developers need to understand target consumers’ needs and the market competition circumstances. Thus, they can analyze the similar and different points as the guideline to identify and position the brands. The positioning has to be distinguished from competitors and in line with consumers’ needs.

### Stage 3: Brand elements development

The brand elements development is very essential stage since the elements are the main tools to create difference and uniqueness of the brands. The brand elements consist of brand names, logos, slogans, packaging as well as other symbols.

The interview stipulated that the five branding specialists agree that the good brand elements need to be clear in their position and attributes. Then, the next stage is the development of other elements to be consistent, especially in packaging design. The packaging is important as the main messenger to approach customers, as mentioned in the following section.

*“In the part of the brand elements development, we have to understand the product we created. What we want the product to be and where to position it. If these points are already clear, then we will extend to name, packaging or other value added things. After that, we choose which one is reflects ourselves. However, I think this stage may need the specialist to help in positioning. What it should be if the product put on shelves compared to competitors or online markets. This is what we have to invest as it can obviously see the return on investment.”* (Managing Director of Isobar Thailand, October 10, 2017)

*“When we develop elements, we have to have positioning concept first, then followed by names. Do not start from names then move on other elements. Whether or not to focus on emotional or functional benefits, it depends on their customers’ needs.”* (President of Y&R Thailand, October 30, 2017)

*“Before reaching the elements part, we have to be concerned about the intangible aspects like brand personality. You can try to think the brand as a person, what personality does the person have. This will reflect in packaging and other elements; for example, if it is the promoter, what kind of people will appeal people. Once people see our packaging, they promptly smile and that is the brand that we want.”* (Director of Strategic Management of Fame Line, October 29, 2017)

*“I think this group of people is still buying rice from the supermarket, so the good packaging that can appeal people is very important since your products are not the only ones on shelf. The design and information provided are key factors. However, it needs to be consistent with brand positioning.”* (General Manager of E-Media, October 6, 2017)

The interview with relevant persons in distribution channel of organic rice specified that the packaging element is very vital. The good packaging should comprehensively provide information, clearly identify the certificate bodies, present the nice packaging as well as the package should be able to preserve product quality. The interview details are presented in the following section.

*“The most important factor is the good product quality. Other than that, for us, the packaging is important. All basic information should be there and the packaging must be neat and can well preserve the product. The popular products always have nice packaging, provide complete information, and unique design. Some brand implement creative design, it is not only rice for eating but it can be a gift. It expands the chance to sell.”* (Blue Basket Representative, Online healthy food marketplace, December 8, 2017)

*“When we select the product, the standard certification on the packaging is surely considered. After that we will look into other part like the capacity.”* (Representative of Eakkachai Distribution System (Tesco Lotus), December 8, 2017)

Moreover, the interview indicated that if the brand owners participate in the niche market group by Rice Department. These brands would be subsidized with the tools for branding development such as vacuum machine, training for branding development especially the tangible aspect, and package support. In addition, the decent brand elements would aid in the branding communication process for the next step, as cited in the next section.

*“We support vacuum machine in which it can do two packages at the same time, including the acrylic block for making square shape. At the first time, we open training course for logo design, but there were lot of problems. So now we opt to provide service of logo design, packaging, and analyze rice nutrition. Some groups design logo by themselves and then give the design to us for further process. This year we support free 7,000 bags for brand developers, after reach quota they will need to proceed themselves. However, the brand developers can leave soft file photos at the printing office, and they can make additional prints anytime when the materials are out of stock under their own account. However we only support only for the niche products.”* (Agricultural Research Officer (Professional level), Head of Processed and Product Development, Rice Product Development Division- Rice Department, October 3, 2017)

*“Good logo design and nice packaging will help a lot in terms of communications because these elements particularly logo and slogan are used everywhere together with brand name.”* (Agricultural Research Officer (Professional level), Head of Economics and Trade Promotion, Rice Product Development Division - Rice Department, October 3, 2017)

In summary, in consideration of brand elements development, the brand developers have to consider all elements to be consistent with brand positioning and

personality. The packaging element is truly essential for organic rice product. In addition, if the brand developers participate in the niche market group by Rice Department, they will obtain the privilege and support that aid branding development for their organic rice brands.

#### Stage 4: Market planning and activity operations

After development of brand elements, the brand developers need to continue implementation of the communications of brand elements toward consumers. The consumers will perceive the brands and entail the purchasing decision process further. The interview indicated that the market planning and activity operation have to be considered in two aspects namely 1) message and 2) media used in communications. Particularly for the message, the five branding specialists agree that, currently, the message strategy for organic rice is storytelling. It focuses on emotional benefits to create value for the organic rice. Nevertheless, such messages have to be in accordance with the brand's position and personality, as mentioned in the following section.

*“Functional benefits can attract customers but if we look at the long term, emotional benefit ought to be more suitable. However, it has to start from self-understanding after that it will continue create the story. Storytelling is the important strategy for rice as people perceive it as rice, and cannot differentiate. The story and creative idea will make it different and add value.”* (Director of Strategic Management of Fame Line, October 29, 2017)

*“We have to add emotional aspect. It should have some stories, because after eating rice people will ask the question ‘what will be next’. Some brand present the storytelling about ‘way of life’, they can use that as the unique selling point, and it is quite interesting.”* (Managing Director of Ford Thailand, October 6, 2017)

*“The effective method of value-adding is storytelling as rice is commodity product of our country.”* (General Manager of E-Media, October 6, 2017)

*“Creating the story is important, we have to investigate if we have good story for our products. If not, we have to find out and create one for our products. The communication can be followed later. All messages have to be consistent with brand personality, brand positioning, and brand purpose. It has to become one with no gaps. I think if we have the interesting story, the brand can draw attention from public relations media.”* (Director of Strategic Management of Fame Line, October 29 2017)

In addition, the interview specified that the good storytelling shall greatly support the product presentation on the online media channel. Since the marketplace owners have spared the space for brand owners to present their story for customers to make the decision. The detail of interview is as follows:

*“We will spare the space for the producer to tell their stories, and background of products and brand owner’s profiles. It is like introduce the producers. The producers have to prepare the information to enhance the reliability of buying; for instance, giving the information of why the producer do not add chemical into rice farming, however it need to use some trick to make it unique.”* (Representatives of Blue Basket – healthy food market platform, December 8, 2017)

After completion of message designing process, the next step is the effective planning for media use. The interview of 5 branding specialists specified that the planning should begin with understanding of consumer’s media exposure, characteristics of various media, and potentiality of producing goods. Then the next step is to select the appropriate media. Most branding specialists agree that the suitable media for the target of organic rice is online media, followed by activity media, and packaging media. This is in consistent with the media exposure’s behaviour of consumers that is discovered during survey research as previously mentioned. The detail is as the following interview.

*“We have to analyze media consumption behavior of the target audiences as well as our capacity. If you cannot produce a lot of goods, online media may be the answer. If*

*you only produce a little bit and you use television media, lots of people see the products but that is not enough to sell. This is not worth it. I believe that food has to be tried and eaten. So it must have a trial product or have a tasting booth.”* (General Manager of E-Media, October 6, 2017)

*“We have to check which media channel the consumers usually use. But I think packaging is the main media for rice. You can put the story about the method of growing and concept. This is the channel that consumers will definitely seem.”* (Director of Strategic Management of Fame Line, October 29, 2017)

*“We have to understand the nature of media channel, each channel has pros and cons. I think, for rice, it depends on the targets. If we focus on the high level income or city people, the online channel can work more effectively.”* (Managing Director of Isobar Thailand, October 10, 2017)

*“Currently, the digital channel is most powerful and should be done in community kind of marketing. So the answer should be the social media.”* (Managing Director of Ford Thailand, October 6, 2017)

The online communication is helpful for proposing product into the distribution channel as it is the main media the distribution channel owners used to probe the initial information of brands as mentioned in the next section.

*“When the producers apply to us, we will check their Facebook pages or any products photos on the online media. We will check the initial information based on that.”* (Representatives of Blue Basket – healthy food market platform, December 8, 2017)

The interview further indicated that if the brand owners are the member of the niche market group by Rice Department. The brand owners will obtain the opportunity to present their products through the activity media in both domestic and

international events without expenses. The details are presented in the following interview.

*“We also support in terms of the distribution channel. For instance, we bring the farmers to open display booth oversea, and that some farmers could receive a big lot order. Providing the trial product is very efficient. Recently, I went to China, Chinese people liked it very much. They queued up to try our rice. The domestic events are all year round such as ‘Rice Farmer’s Day’, ‘Gift Exhibition’, and ‘Thai Rice Exhibition.’”* (Agricultural Research Officer (Professional level), Head of Processed and Product Development, Rice Product Development Division- Rice Department, October 3, 2017)

In conclusion, with regards to the market planning and activity operations process, the brand developers should design the message through the storytelling strategy, and focus on the emotional benefits. Subsequently, the rice brand developers should select the suitable media for the products such as online media, activity media, and packaging media. This implementation will enhance consumers to grab attention for rice brands effectively, and eventually bring about the purchasing behaviors.

#### Stage 5: Operations Evaluation

The evaluation process is vital as the systematic performance evaluation of the operations will lead to the set of information that entail accurate decision, and within the suitable timeline. The interview specified that the performance evaluation is included with two main aspects namely 1) Market performance evaluation such as profits of the brand, market shares, and production lines and 2) Consumer mind set evaluation such as brand perception, attitude towards brand, and brand engagement.

For the market performance evaluation, five branding specialists recommended that evaluating of sales performance should be implemented based on the sources of purchase and repurchase. The market performance evaluation is a medium-term to long-term assessment, which is different from customer mind set evaluation that it can be implemented immediately after the communications are completed. However, both assessments focus on the consumption behavior of organic

rice. The brand developers should be concerned that the market planning and activity operation has to be practical and measurable. The details of the interview are presented below.

*“The information collection is actually easy. We have to see the source of purchase, and use that information to evaluate such as we can only sell current customers, or we can sell a lot of products to new customers, and why.”* (Director of Strategic Management of Fame Line, October 29, 2017)

*“The thing that we can assess sales performance - whether the products have buyers or if it can sell, and why. We have to investigate many perspectives; we may have to have the online tracking in weekly basis. If the product is new, we can implement it more frequently, especially the thing that does not work out we can adjust promptly.”* (General Manager of E-Media, October 6, 2017)

*“For evaluation, I think it will be difficult for long-term evaluation, but the middle-term to short-term evaluation can be assessed. Nowadays, everything is digital and measureable. We have to keep tracking, and check which channel has the traffic. Everything can happen so we have to always learn, and everything we do must be measureable.”* (Managing Director of Ford Thailand, October 6, 2017)

*“Evaluation is implemented in all stages. First of all, we have to pay attention in terms of Brand Awareness i.e. if anyone knows our brand. After that we check about the Brand Knowledge, if customers have a good understanding of our brand. Then, we check Brand Preference, to study whether people prefer our brand more than others. Whether or not they are willing to pay premium. However, new brand is difficult to measure the Brand Loyalty. In this case, we will check if customers know, understand, and like our brand.”* (Managing Director of Isobar Thailand, October 10, 2017)

*“For evaluation, you have to revert back to people’s purchase funnel. We have to check if the people understand the brand, if yes what brand they will opt to buy. We have to check if they have the brand loyalty or whether the brand owners make any campaigns. Those aspects need to be assessed immediately.”* (President of Y&R Thailand, October 30, 2017)

In conclusion, in the process of performance evaluation, the brand developers should evaluate in two main aspects: 1) Market performance evaluation which focuses on the sales performance, and implement in the middle to long-terms and 2) Customer mind set evaluation which can be immediately implemented. In addition, these evaluations will encourage the brand developers to obtain the insight information and comprehend necessary factors for the strategic planning of future product improvement.

#### Stage 6: Sustainable growth of brand equity

Effective branding management needs to utilize marketing operation in order to sustainable maintain or increase product value in customers’ minds. The five branding specialists have consent that the sustainable growth of brand equity has to retain the brand constancy by relying on some modifications such as product or communications innovation. This strategy is to retain the highest brand awareness in maximum efficiency in each period. Nonetheless, the core of the brand is central to existence, even though some brand elements are modified. The details are provided in the interview below.

*“I think we have to keep adjusting. For example, packaging is not only done at the first time, it has to be modified, now the world has a lot of changes. We have to think how to always be different. However, the product must be good quality, it will make the brand more sustainable. We have to think in the worse scenario, even if they love our product, they will always want something new. We have to make them feel they are in the launch mode all the time, we should have something update every year.”* (Managing Director of Ford Thailand, October 6, 2017)

*“How to make customer to repurchase products. We have to persuade the target customers to try our products. We have to always refresh our brand too as the product has its life cycle. Moreover, I think the product must have non-stop development.”* (General Manager of E-Media, October 6, 2017)

*“For the guideline of sustainable branding, firstly I think it should come from the real identity of brand. After that, we have to find out the innovation that is able to make the brand competitive and make the consumers feel fresh all the time. It can be divided into two parts. The first part is production innovation, and the second part is communications innovation. The product, sometimes, does not generate new features any more. The trick is to use communications and make it more interesting, or using new presentation to avoid brand stagnation.”* (Managing Director of Isobar Thailand, October 10, 2017)

*“Sustainability consists of three items: firstly- Market share, secondly- Mindshare, these two items are generated from the brand consistency. If the brand still maintain its quality, when customers come to the stores and they still find the products, or even create some activities with the customers. Thus, the customers will continuously tend to buy the product. Thirdly- Heart share, we have to show the story to customers. For example, one baht can support the farmer's association to develop new rice breeds. Heart share is focused on long-term branding. One important thing is that ‘Brand always be active’. We have to analyse the information and review it every year.”* (Director of Strategic Management of Fame Line, October 29, 2017)

In conclusion, in terms of sustainable growth of brand equity, the brand developers must always adapt themselves periodically by retaining the brand constancy. However, some brand's elements should be tailored while maintaining the core of the brand, therefore it can effectively generate brand existence.

However, the interview of branding specialists and government agencies indicated that the beginning stage of brand prototype development should emphasize on a group of farmers within the region. This implementation is in order to be in line

with the demand and supply of the market, and promote the resources sharing within the group according to the government policy, as cited in the following section.

*“If 1 million farmers have their own brands. I think it will create difficulty. The first one is that the consumers cannot distinguish brands. The second one is high competition; each brand will have to invest big money to gain the consumer awareness, which I think it is not a healthy practice. So, I believe that the farmers should be united, and make the unique point of their group. The union can ease the capital and increase the product quantities, as the good Thai old days quote ‘Union is strength’. I suppose rice should be categorized based on regions, and from that we can tell the difference of rice from each region.”* (President of Y&R Thailand, October 30, 2017)

*“I think rice branding has to develop the union or network. If we want to go far, we need to use a lot of resources.”* (Managing Director of Isobar Thailand, October 10, 2017)

*“We would like to support the group of farmers rather than the individual. Since they are stronger and can take care of their resources.”* (Agricultural Research Officer (Professional level), Head of Economics and Trade Promotion, Rice Product Development Division- Rice Department, October 3, 2017)

Additionally, the interview further specified that at the beginning stage of development of prototype. The prototype should be conveyed to a group of new generation farmers or who are willing to add value to their organic rice. Therefore the prototype can potentially generate the highest efficiency as mentioned in the following section.

*“Building the well-known brand needs the know-how. This part may be difficult for old generation farmers. However, I see a few of new generation farmers can do it,*

*which means they have more potential.”* (Director of Strategic Management of Fame Line, October 29, 2017)

*“It is possible to start with the potential farmers such as new generation or people who are ready to be developed. Then they can coach and share the knowledge with each other. This will bring advantages and sustainable growth.”* (President of Y&R Thailand, October 30, 2017)

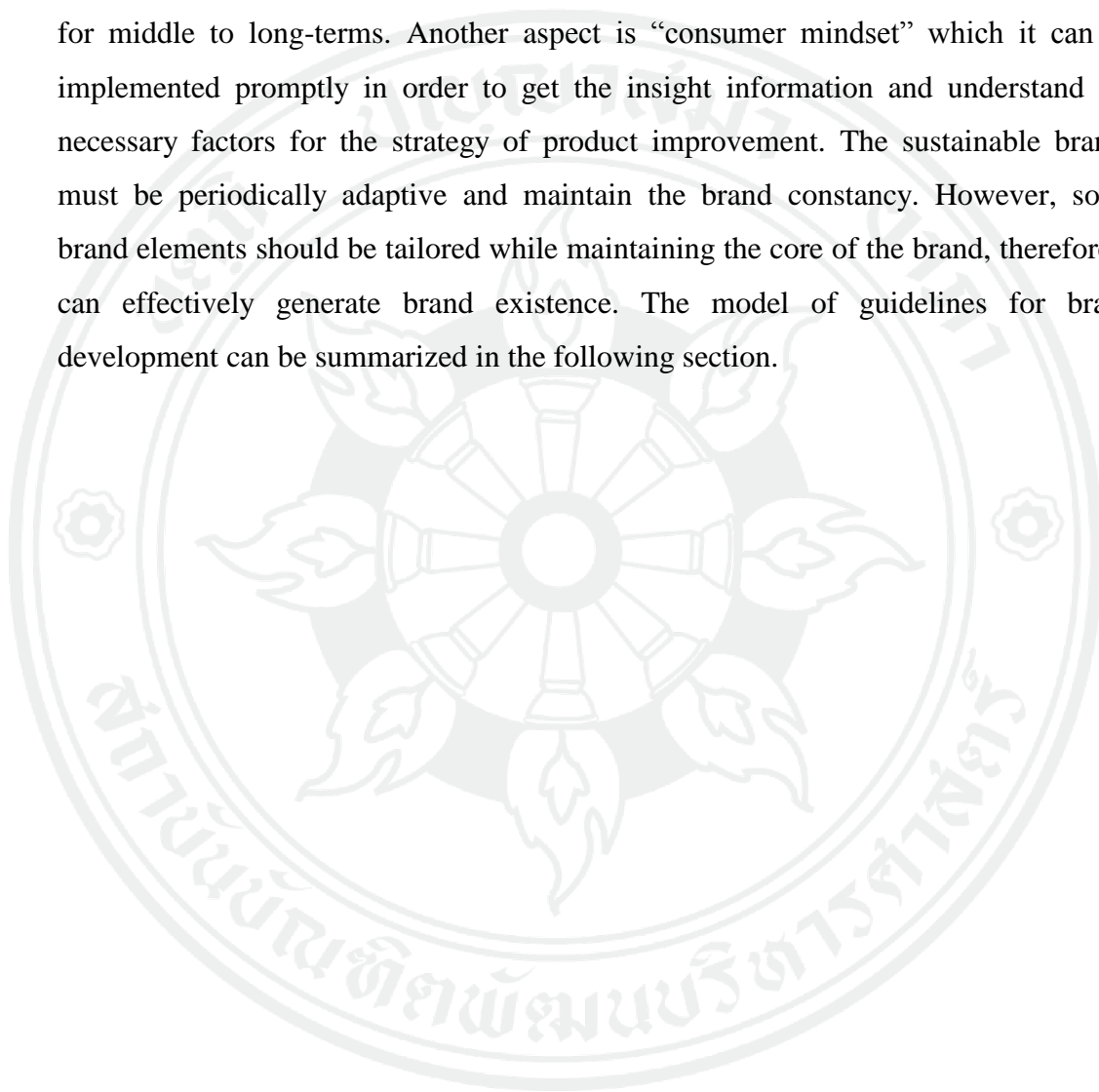
*“The selected people must have high intention. For some people that are not ready, the resources might be wasted. Thus, we prefer to support the ones who have intention and are ready.”* (Agricultural Research Officer (Professional level), Head of Processed and Product Development, Rice Product Development Division- Rice Department, October 3, 2017)

From suggestion above, it can be summarized that development of prototype for Thai rice brands for small-scaled farming in this research shall be conveyed to the farmer union, who can potentially generate the highest productivity.

In conclusion, in addressing the development of organic rice brands, the brand developer should completely analyze information by understanding the strengths of their products that unique from the others in the market. After that, the developers should clearly identify the competitors, and implement competitor analysis to seek for opportunities in their product offering under different dimensions. Moreover, the brand developers ought to identify the targets, and notice the purchasing decision behavior of consumers toward organic rice. They should also investigate the government’s policies as well as the growth of online media. Subsequently, the brand developers can bring all the information to use as a guideline to identify and position the brands from their competitors, which is in line with the consumers’ needs.

The brands developers should consider the consistency between the brand elements developments and brand position and personality. The research found that the packaging element is the essential key for the organic rice. In the process of market planning and activity operation, the brand developers should design the message through storytelling strategy and focus on the emotional benefits. In addition,

the brand developers have to select the suitable media for products communication such as online media, activity media, and packaging media in order to attract consumers' demand, and eventually result in the purchasing behavior. After that, the brand developers should evaluate their performance in two aspects namely "market performance" which emphasize on sales performance evaluation. This is implemented for middle to long-terms. Another aspect is "consumer mindset" which it can be implemented promptly in order to get the insight information and understand the necessary factors for the strategy of product improvement. The sustainable brands must be periodically adaptive and maintain the brand constancy. However, some brand elements should be tailored while maintaining the core of the brand, therefore it can effectively generate brand existence. The model of guidelines for brand development can be summarized in the following section.



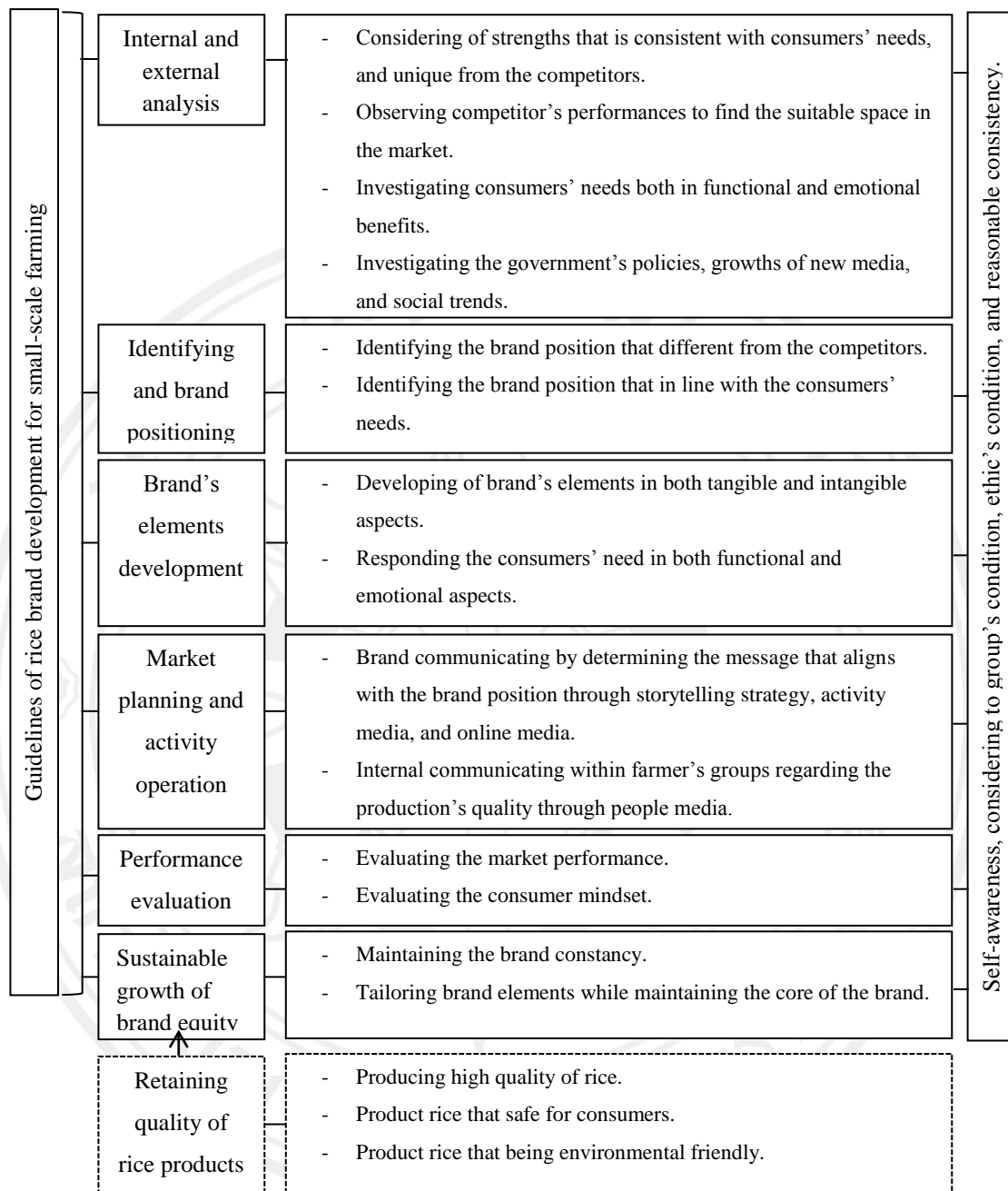


Figure 5.1 The guideline of rice brand development for small-scaled farmers model

According to the model above and research findings, the researcher summarized the branding issues and information analysis for development of organic rice branding outline. This summary shall be functionally utilized and applied as the guideline in Table 5.41.

Table 5.41 Summary of branding issues and information analysis for development of organic rice branding guideline

Branding issues	Information analysis for organic rice branding guideline development
<b>Internal and external analysis</b>	
Self-analysis : identify the unique point of rice products that differ from competitors	Rice products for this branding process are 100% authentic organic rice (free from chemical since growing, harvesting, and packing), certified by reliable organic rice certificate bodies, and the most suitable rice breeds to grow in the particular regions.
Competitor analysis: clearly identify competitors, and investigate their Marketing-Mix. Finding unique selling point and competitor branding methods.	The competitors of organic rice branding are general organic rice brands. The information analysis of successful organic rice branding indicated that all brands utilize the selling point as caring attention of production process. The average price of organic rice is approximately THB65-140 per kilogram. The main distribution channel consists of four channels: 1) healthy food stores, 2) general supermarkets, 3) online channel, and 4) direct sales to corporate. In addition, comparison of brand image among competitors illustrated that there are three similar points: 1) meticulous production process, 2) honesty toward consumers, and 3) authentic organic

Branding issues	Information analysis for organic rice branding guideline development
<p>Consumer analysis: clearly identify consumers as well as investigate purchasing decision process of organic rice. Understanding actual demand of consumers towards organic rice for both functional and emotional benefits.</p> <p>Opportunity and threat analysis</p> <p>Opportunity: the support from government's policies, and growth of online media that is consistent with consumer behaviour.</p> <p>Threat: natural disasters, low supply of products during rice transition period, and high competitiveness in online channel.</p>	<p>rice.</p> <p>The target for the development of organic rice brand is city dwellers in Bangkok and outskirts of the city with the middle income onward. This target used to consume organic rice. They choose to consume organic rice due to health conscious, supporting farmers, and following healthy food trend. The respondents will feel good and proud when supporting organic rice. In addition, the important characteristics of organic rice must be 100% organic rice, presentable packaging, and have similar price to others in the same product line.</p> <p>The brand developers, who apply the prototype of organic rice, should participate in the niche market group by Rice Department. Moreover, they should opt to use the online media as the main channel of product distribution.</p>
<b>Identification of brand positioning</b>	
<p>Identification of brand positioning should be different from competitor, and consistent with consumer's</p>	<p>The market positioning of rice branding in this research is in the position of 100 % authentic organic rice with modernity that in</p>

Branding issues	Information analysis for organic rice branding guideline development
needs.	line with consumer insights. However, the findings showed that no competitor exists in such market position.
<p><b>Development of brand elements</b></p> <p>Development of brand elements has to be consistent with brand positioning and personality.</p>	<p>Development of elements both tangible and intangible in organic rice brands have to be aligned with brand positioning including the authenticity of organic rice with modernity that in line with brand personality. From the group discussions with consumers, organic rice personality should be farmer who are 35 years old, educated, smart, modernized, healthy, humorous but calm, kind, caring, social responsible, organic life style, dress minimal, sincere, honest to consumers, and happy to do farming.</p>
<p><b>Market planning and activity operation</b></p> <p>The message should be implemented through the storytelling strategy, and focus on emotional benefits, and select the suitable media such as online media, activity media and packaging media.</p>	<p>The communications method used in this research is storytelling strategy to convey the story of caring attention paid to the production process. In addition, Integrated Marketing Communication Strategy is used by focusing on the combination of three communication tools: advertisements, public relations, and market activities and brand endorsers through the media that align with the targets' media exposure with 360 degrees perspective.</p>

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**Branding issues**
**Information analysis for organic rice  
branding guideline development**


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**Performance evaluation**

Performance evaluation can be Market performance evaluation is split into divided into two main aspects: two parts -sales operations performance Market Performance evaluation in evaluation and communications evaluation. which emphasize on sales performance, and Consumer mind set evaluation.

**Sustainable growth of brand equity**

The brand should keep being The changes are consist of two main aspects adaptive periodically while as follows: maintaining the brand constancy. In - The change related to the product – it will addition, some elements should be focus on the change of packaging style in amended, while retaining the core of every year, and design the gift packaging for the brand. seasonal occasions.

- The change related to communication- it will focus on designing the story and communication channels according to the time that periodically change.

However, the change of elements has to base on the fundamental of information analysis that being continuously and regularly reviewed.

Remark: the prototype of branding should be delivered to the farmers, who have the potential to apply it for the highest efficiency.

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From the above conclusion, the researcher has developed the outline of organic rice development that small-scaled farmers that can be concretely applied as a

prototype. This outline is developed to investigate the acceptances and comments from the related person in-charge of branding. This includes the branding specialists, government and private agencies, Thai farmers, and consumers through the group discussions presented below.

The outline detail of development of organic rice brands for small-scaled farmers in Thailand is presented in the following section.



## **5.2 Part 2: Outline of Development of Organic Rice Brands for Small-scaled Farmers in Thailand**

### Market conditions and competitors

The packaged rice market in Thailand has a market size of THB 27,800 - 28,750 million with a growth rate of 3-5%. This can be divided into conventional rice at 96%, and premium rice, which consists of Brown Rice, Jasmine Rice and organic rice at 4% (Marketeer, 2016). However, the overall market situation has been modified according to the change of consumer behaviour. The consumers recognize the importance of consuming healthy foods, and being environmental friendly. In addition, the concept of sustainable economy encourages the farmers, entrepreneurs, and government sector pay attention to the development of premium rice, especially organic rice. As a result, the organic rice products are likely to grow rapidly at an average growth rate of 50% a year.

Organic rice refers to the organic rice deriving from the organic rice farming method without using chemicals or any synthetic substances, and chemical fertilizer in entire process. Since the farmers utilize the natural materials, and plants extracts that make the products and environments are free from toxic contamination. The Organic Rice is therefore clean and has the good quality.

Furthermore, since the organic rice market has become popular recently, thus there is no outstanding market leader in this market yet and it has low market competition. The most important point is the fact that consumers do not have brand loyalty to any particular brand, thus they always want to experiment new products provided that it can respond to their needs. The organic rice is interesting product as it can generate double selling price compared to conventional rice.

Therefore, the guideline of branding for rice product under this research shall focus on the branding for organic rice products under the name “Once Upon a Rice”. The detail of guideline of branding shall be elaborated in the following section.

### Consumer Analysis

#### *Market Scope*

Determining the scope of potential customers for organic rice products can be categorized into three important basic factors as follows:

- Location: the potential customers reside in Bangkok and outskirts of the city. This group has high tendency to purchase organic rice rather than conventional rice. Moreover, the previous finding indicated that the provincial population or the ones who live in rice growing area have low tendency to purchase organic rice rather than conventional rice.
- Incomes and social classes: the potential consumers are determined by income and they are from the middle-class level onward. This is because the organic rice price is higher than other types of rice in the market. The middle class level people are likely to be open-minded to new products.
- Organic rice consumption's behavior: the potential group is identified as the person who know organic rice and used to consume it before as they are familiar with the products. Thus, the experienced people are more likely to purchase new organic rice brands rather than one who are not familiar of or have never consumed organic rice.

Considering the factors above, the researcher can summarize the characteristics of potential of customers that they reside in Bangkok and outskirts of the city with middle level income onward, and used to previously consume.

#### Customer Segmentation

The customer segmentation is categorized based on reasons of the target's consumption. The researcher implemented the survey research with the rice consumers in Bangkok and outskirts of the city (400 respondents). This survey research aimed to examine the organic rice consumption's behavior. In addition, the researcher also carried out the group discussion with rice consumers, who regularly consume organic rice (8 people). It is found that organic rice consumers can divide into three groups based on the different reasons for consumption.

Table 5.42 The reasons for organic rice consumption of three consumer groups

	<b>Health Consumption</b>	<b>Healthy Food Trend Consumption</b>	<b>Supporting Farmers and Environments Purposes Consumption</b>
<b>Needs</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- 100% organic rice with reliable certification</li> <li>- Richer nutrition than conventional rice</li> <li>- Tasty and easy to consume</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- 100% organic rice with reliable certification</li> <li>- Richer nutrition than conventional rice</li> <li>- Tasty and easy to consume</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- 100% organic rice with reliable certification (it can be self-claimed by farmer's story)</li> <li>- Tasty and easy to consume</li> <li>- Proof that income will return back to farmers</li> </ul>
<b>Lifestyles</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Meticulous in selecting healthy food</li> <li>- Seldom regular exercises</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Meticulous in selecting healthy food</li> <li>- Seldom exercises where as being meticulous in selecting healthy food</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Neither meticulous in selecting healthy food nor exercise</li> </ul>
<b>Beginning of consumption</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Health conscious in various aspects</li> <li>- Starting to age and fear of illness</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Experiment due to organic food trend, mainly appear from on the social online</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Experience the organic rice farming process through various media</li> </ul>
<b>Search of Product Information</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Social online media such as Facebook, Instragram, Community Webboard</li> <li>2. Point of sales media (aim at information on packaging)</li> <li>3. People media (recommendation from families, friends, people in social circle, and health influencer)</li> <li>4. Mass media such as television programs</li> </ol>		

	Health Consumption	Healthy Food Trend Consumption	Supporting Farmers and Environments Purposes Consumption
<b>Alternative Evaluation</b>	<p>The consumer consider the alternative evaluation based on three criteria as follows:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Specifying the message “100% organic rice”</li> <li>2. The packing is presentable, modernized, user friendly, and safe for rice product and environment.</li> <li>3. The price is similar to others in the same product line (product price should not be too low as the consumers might doubt the product quality).</li> </ol>		
<b>Purchasing Decision</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The regular places to buy rice are healthy food stores, followed by general supermarkets, and online channel.</li> <li>2. The consumers do not have brand loyalty to any particular brand.</li> <li>3. The purchasing decision is based on the quality aspect. The consumers want to purchase good quality product according to their needs.</li> </ol> <p><i>**Most consumers cannot recognize brand names that they used to purchase, so it does not establish repurchase behavior, even if it is a low involvement product.</i></p>		
<b>Importance of Rice Product</b>	<p>Rice is vital part of life as it is a main food, and it cannot be permanently replaced.</p>		

#### *Target customers*

According to target group analysis, it illustrated that the health consumption reason is the most appropriate target due to several reasons presented below.

- High growth rate: the healthy food trend is skyrocketing for middle – upper level consumers in Thailand. As a result, the market value of organic food is constantly growing. In addition, the previous survey research also showed that the biggest reason of rice consumption is the health conscious issue.

- Easily accessible: as the target's needs are consistent with the product's benefit and the target do not have brand loyalty in any particular brands yet, as a result new brand can snatch market's space. There are a lot of opportunities to expand the target size in the future due to high growth rate, increasing of familiarity, and product acceptance.

#### Competitor's Analysis

There are various interesting brands in current organic rice market. The researcher executed the in-depth interview with successful organic rice brands for seven brands and one project. These are "Kao Kun Na Tum", "Kao-Im", Kwan Jak Kra Rad", "Pa Hung", "De-Farm", "Kao Pleng Rak", "Manora", and "Pook Pin Toe Kao" project. The researcher discovered that organic rice brands focus on middle – upper level consumers who are city dwellers. Furthermore, all brands emphasize on caring attention paid to organic rice production process with approximately price of THB 65-140 per kilogram, depending on the rice breeds. The gift set or seasonal packaging can be priced at double the regular price. The distribution channel is composed of 1) healthy food stores, 2) general supermarket, 3) online channel, and 4) direct sales to corporate. In addition, the image analysis of brand association, for organic rice, can summarize points of parity and points of difference in the following section.

Brand image comparison of competitors in organic rice market indicated that there are three essential points of parity: 1) caring attention in production process, 2) honesty toward consumers, and 3) authentic organic rice. The new products that want to enter to the market have to communicate these three points of parity. Whereas, comparison of point of difference showed that there are no brands that communicate or focus on the image of "modernity", which is insight information of the target. Thus, the concept of authentic organic rice with modernity shall bring out the product's uniqueness and respond to the target's needs.

#### Market Positioning

According to above information analysis, the market positioning for the product is presented as follows:

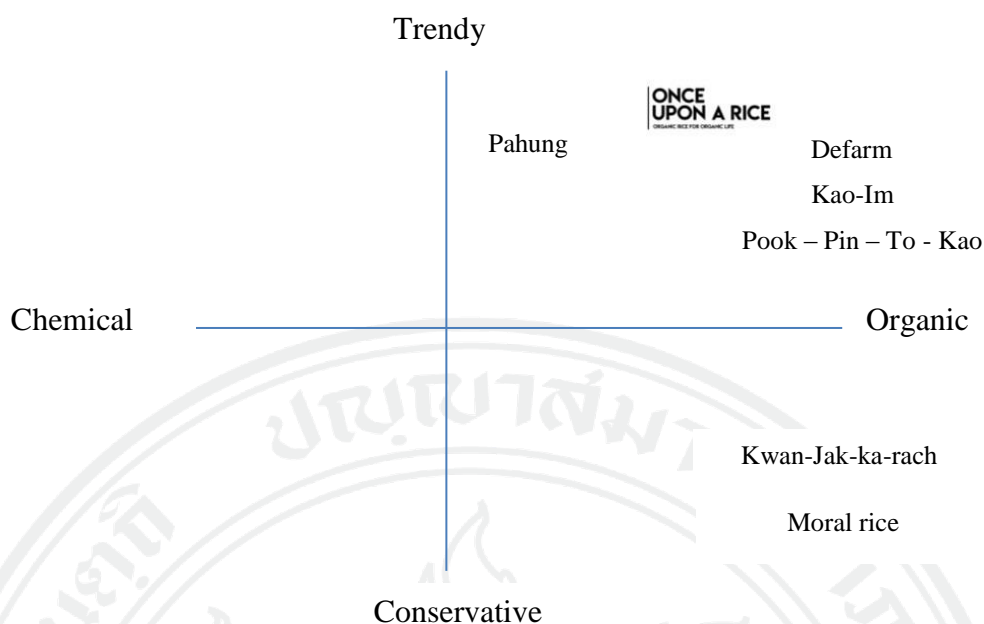


Figure 5.2 The market positioning for the product

Market positioning of rice branding in this research therefore includes 100% authentic organic rice with modernity as it is in accordance with insight demands of consumers. However, the findings showed that no competitor exists in the aforementioned market position.

#### Unique Value Proposition

Authentic organic rice with modernity has the supporting benefits as follows:

Table 5.43 Unique Value Proposition

Functional Benefits	Emotional Benefits
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 100% organic rice</li> <li>• Fresh rice</li> <li>• Modernized and user friendly packaging</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Feeling of farmer's caring attention</li> <li>• Feeling healthy</li> <li>• Feeling privilege and modernized</li> </ul>

#### Brand Purpose

Delivery of authentic organic rice with modernized image

### Brand Personality

A farmer aged 35, educated, smart, modernized, healthy, humorous but calm, kind, caring, social responsible, organic life style, dress minimal, sincere, honest to consumers, and happy to do farming.

### Marketing Strategy for Branding

#### Product Strategy

Product strategy planning has to be consistent with the guideline of organic rice branding. Therefore, the products must have the following necessary attributes.

- 100% authentic organic rice (free from chemical since growing, harvesting, and packing)
- Rice is certified by reliable organic rice certificate bodies, i.e. IFOAM Organic Thailand.
- Rice breeds that is the most suitable to grow in the particular areas, as presented in the following table.

Table 5.44 Rice breeds that is the most suitable to grow in the particular areas

Region	Rice breeds
North	Glutinous Rice
Northeast	Jasmine Rice
Center	Pathum Fragrant Rice
South	Sangyod Rice

From the market survey of 400 respondents and group discussions revealed regarding the consumption size that most consumers purchase is 1-kilogram size for organic rice, while purchase 5-kilogram size for conventional rice. In the first stage of product launching, the package of 1-kilogram therefore should be the ideal, and adjust the package size according to the change of demand in the future.

### *Brand Name*

*“Once Upon a Rice”*: “Once Upon a Rice” is the name the researcher would like to use to connect to consumers. The word “Once upon a time” is often used in fairy tales or storytelling. This word is generally well-known, easy to remember, and quickly connect. In addition, it also has the descriptive meaning and can persuade the consumers to perceive of caring attention the farmers paid to the production process in order to gain 100% authentic organic rice. The presentation shall be under “Once upon a time, prior to your plate”. Moreover, the use of English name can associate the contemporary nature and be beneficial for the export market in the future.

### *Logo*

**ONCE  
UPON A RICE**  
ORGANIC RICE FOR ORGANIC LIFE

ONCE  
UPON A RICE  
Organic Rice for Organic Life

*Once upon a Rice*  
Organic Rice For organic Life

Figure 5.3 Logo

The logo is designed by Word-Mark Logo technique as it can present the brand name clearly. The logo focuses on simple and contemporary design that is in line with product personality. The logo will be composed of brand name along with tagline “Organic rice for organic life” in order to describe product type.

### *Packaging*

The packaging highlights the simple design associating with brand personality. In addition, the packaging has to be able to protect the product inside and must be

user friendly. The colors used on the package are primarily brown, white, and black which refer to simplicity and authenticity of organic rice. However, the use of bright colors is selected according to the regional characteristics based on the opinions from consumer's group discussion.

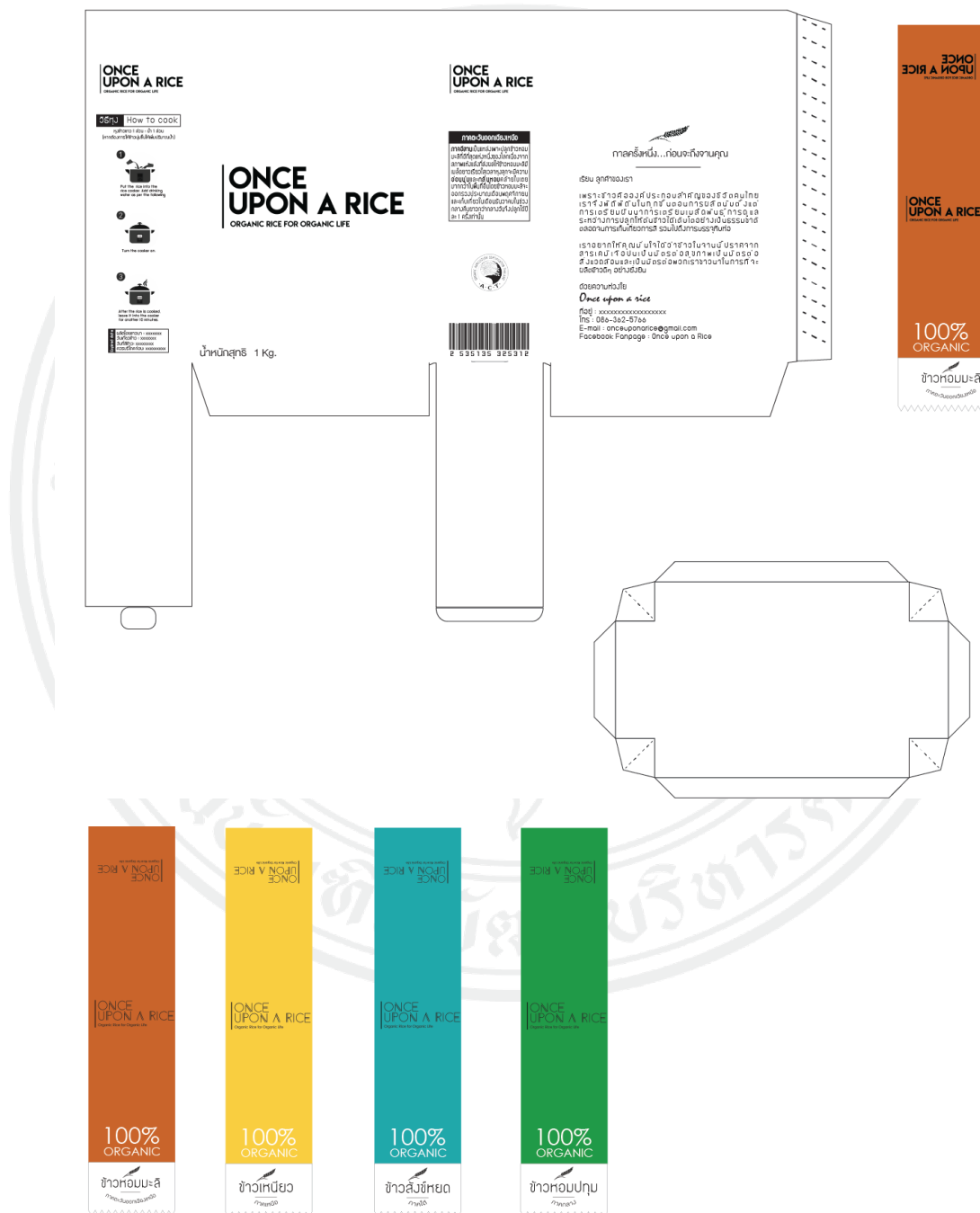


Figure 5.4 The packaging design

This colour pattern will make the packaging simple and modernized, aligning with the brand personality as well as consumers' needs. Moreover, this design also emphasizes on the market position in terms of authentic organic rice by implementing a message "100% Organic" with bold size at noticeable position. On top of that, the packaging also addresses the story of caring attention in entire production under the core "Once upon a time, prior to your plate" through the meaning of the words. The lettering would initiate the feeling of personal communication with consumers, and also stress the attribute of 100% authentic organic rice.

In addition, the packaging also mentions the characteristics of rice from the strategic areas where the best rice of each region is produced. This responds to consumers' needs in terms of desire of eating tasty rice. The strategic rice growing areas provides the good outcomes of the best tasty rice for each rice breed.

In terms of product safety, the packaging shall be divided into two parts. The outer part is the paper box or plastic material that is not touching the rice. It is utilized just to provide information, convenience, attractiveness, and protection of inner packaging. The inner part is a part that connected to rice. Rice is contained in vacuum plastic bag in order to keep rice quality from insect disturbance and contamination.

The brand developers can bring above design to apply for their own products. However, some parts have to be adjusted in terms of rice breeds, rice origins, rice characteristics, and contact addresses.

### Pricing Strategy

The pricing should reflect the quality of the products. Thus, the price is determined to be in line with consumers' value perception. However, the good pricing should have similar range to other products under the same category. This will be acceptable price for consumers. After comparing the price in the market, and surveying the consumers' opinion, the result showed that the organic rice pricelists should be the following:

Table 5.45 The pricing list

Rice breeds	Price/ Kilogram	Gift set
Glutinous Rice		
Jasmine Rice	90 – 95 THB	159 – 699 THB
Pathum Fragrant Rice		(Depend on production cost)
Sangyod Rice		

#### Distribution Channel/ Place Strategy

Distribution channel can be divided into three channels as follows:

##### 1) Online media channel

- Online media of brands such as Facebook Fanpage, Instagram, and Line
- Online media in the form of marketplace such as Blue Basket and Lazada

##### 2) Retailer channel

Retailer channels are the channels that align to consumer's purchasing behavior of organic rice. It comprises of the following:

- Retailer shops such as Tops, and Villa Market
- Healthy food stores such as Lemon Farm, and other healthy food stores

##### 3) Sales booth channel

Sales booth channel includes the following

- Sales booth at retailer stores
- Sales booths at the trade exhibition that related to health

*\*\* Sales booth or activity participation shall focus on the places and activities that are consistent with brand personality only.*

## Marketing Communication Strategy

### *Objectives of communication*

- 1) To establish brand awareness of the target.
- 2) To create brand awareness of “Once Upon a Rice” as authentic organic rice with modern personality, and being paid attention to entire production process.
- 3) To motivate the potential targets to experiment and purchase.

### *Target of Communications*

The main target of communications is people who reside in Bangkok and outskirt of the city with middle level income and above. They are meticulous in selecting the healthy food, and experienced organic rice or used to consume organic rice in the past.

The media exposure behavior of the target, in the process of information search, indicated that the target is exposed mainly to online media such as Facebook, Instagram, and Community Webboard. This is followed by the point of sales media, which focuses on the information given on the packaging, and people media through the recommendation of families, friends, surrounding people and health influencers. Lastly, it includes the mass media such as TV program. The targets use information obtained from above three media channels for alternative evaluations. For instance, being 100% authentic organic rice with the packaging which is presentable, modernized, user friendly, and safe for rice and environment. Also, the price should have similar range of other products under the same category. Subsequently, the targets make the decision based on the quality aspect such as good quality according to their needs.

*Campaign name:*

Once upon a time, prior to your plate. Ep. Rice to meet you

*Period of communication:*

January – December (first year of product launch)

*Key Message:*

“Once upon a time, prior to your plate”

*Strategies:*

The communications method used in this research is storytelling in order to convey the story of caring attention in entire production process from growing to serving on consumers' plates. This project implement under campaign name “Once upon a time, prior to your plate. Ep. Rice to meet you”. The campaign employs Integrated Marketing Communication Strategy and three communication tools such as advertising, public relations, and marketing activities as well as brand endorser, through the media that align with media exposure of consumers with 360-degree perspective. Moreover, the use of message that arouses the emotion will help to achieve the communications objectives more effectively. The period of communication should be implemented continuously during the first year of product launch, and focus on the fourth quarter. Since the fourth quarter is the harvesting season of the year and has high market competition for the organic rice products.

*Tactics:*

Brand awareness and product attribute will lead to purchase decision in the next step. The market communications tactic is divided into four steps. This includes Brand Awareness, Brand Differentiation, Brand Value, and Sense of social belonging. These four steps shall be implemented through communication of slides and videos in a portion of 80:20, and categorized based on quarterly basis as described in the following table.

Table 5.46 The market communications tactic

Period of Time	Objective of Tactics	Communication Tools	Detail
<b>1<sup>st</sup> Quarter</b>	Brand Awareness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Storytelling via social media such as Facebook fanpage, Instagram, and Youtube. All media are under name “Once upon a Rice”.</li> <li>- Media relation including online media influencers through Press Sampling tools for them to experiment.</li> <li>- Online advertisement to motivate brand awareness through communication channel</li> <li>- Market activities related to rice or healthy products such as sales booth</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Presentation of the difference of consuming general rice and organic rice</li> <li>- Presentation of self-introduction by focusing organic farming and overall organic rice farming process</li> </ul>
<b>2<sup>nd</sup> Quarter</b>	Brand Differentiation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Storytelling via online social media of brands</li> <li>- Product recommendation through social media of micro influencers that focus on health conscious young generation</li> <li>- Market activities related to rice or healthy products such as sales booth</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Presentation of meticulous rice farming in each step using storytelling. The communications will be continuous on a weekly basis beginning from preparing soil and seeds, growing, harvesting, milling, and packing.</li> <li>- Delivery of product to micro influencer to promote</li> </ul>
<b>3<sup>rd</sup> Quarter</b>	Brand Value	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Storytelling via online social media of brands</li> <li>- Storytelling through online media of influencers, who is powerful in health consciousness issue</li> <li>- Storytelling through online media of consumers through hashtag that related to the brand</li> <li>- Advertisement on online media to repeat the story content</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Presentation of special characteristics of rice from each region (1 week for 1 breed)</li> <li>- Presentation of nutrition value of each rice type</li> <li>- Arranging the activity to motivate consumer to review product</li> </ul>

Period of Time	Objective of Tactics	Communication Tools	Detail
		to the followers of the brand channels	
		- Market activity related to rice or healthy products such as sale booth	
4 <sup>th</sup> Quarter	Sense of Social Belonging	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Market activities in the form of camping at the real rice growing sites</li> <li>- Storytelling through online media of the brand</li> <li>- Storytelling through social media of the consumers while participating in the activity</li> <li>- Marketing activity related to rice products or healthy products such as sales booth</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Inviting consumer to participate in the rice harvesting camping program and join other activities with farmers</li> <li>- Presentation of packaging in the form of New Year gifts</li> <li>- Sending the thank you message for consumer's supports during the past 1 year</li> </ul>
<b>Remark</b>			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The plans can be adjusted according to the suitability especially in emergency cases.</li> <li>- Participation in market activities can be implemented throughout the year according to suitability.</li> </ul>			

### *Performance Evaluation*

Performance evaluation is divided into two main parts as follows:

- 1) Performance evaluation in the market by considering the sales performances, purchase source, and repurchase source. This evaluation shall be implemented in middle to long-term time frames.
- 2) Consumer mind set evaluation by considering the reaction from communications, which can be assessed immediately after delivering the messages.

### *Sustainable Growth*

The rice brand developers should manage and maintain the specified brand position well. However, the brand developers should tailor the brand elements according to the changes of consumers' needs in each period of time as follows:

- 1) The change of products such as modification of usual packaging every year and special design for the festival periods.
- 2) The change of communications method such as storytelling design and suitable communications channel according to the changes of social context.

Nevertheless, during the changes, the core must be maintained.

The researcher used the aforementioned outline to investigate the acceptance from relevant persons in - charged of Thai rice brand development, in order to obtain the efficient guideline that is suitable for actual implementation.

## CHAPTER 6

### PROTOTYPE APPLICATION ACCEPTANCE OF RICE BRANDING FOR SMALL-SCALED FARMERS IN THAILAND

Based on the guideline of prototype development of rice branding for small-scaled farmers in Thailand and outline development of prototype application as mentioned in the previous chapter, the researcher carried out this research with the relevant people in order to study the acceptance of prototype applications. Moreover, this research aims to originate the manual for practical use and deliver to the potential farmers, who can utilize it for the highest effectiveness.

In order to achieve the research objectives, the researcher implemented group discussions to investigate the acceptance of prototype with relevant people in-charge of rice branding as follows:

- Branding specialists 4 people
- Government agencies 1 people
- Farmer or the brand develop per 2 people
- Consumers 4 people

Focusing on the research findings presentation, the researcher divided this presentation into two parts as follows:

1) Presentation of acceptance of prototype of rice branding for small-scaled farmers, the researcher utilized the Marketing-Mix such as Product, Place, Price, and Promotion for the research presentation. Moreover, the major tool used in the group discussions and acceptance assessment is the outline of rice branding for small-scaled farmers.

2) Prototype of sustainable rice branding development for small-scaled farmers that was an updated version according to the acceptance of prototype of rice branding for small-scaled farmers.

## **6.1 Part 1: Presentation of Acceptance of Prototype of Rice Branding for Small-scaled Farmers**

The researcher implemented the group discussions with the relevant people in-charge of branding for small-scaled farmers. This process has an objective to gain the opinions and suggestions regarding the prototype development of Thai rice branding for small-scaled farmers.

### **1.1 Opinions toward product aspect**

The rice product used in this prototype development is 100% authentic organic rice. This rice is produced under the free-chemical method since the process of growing, harvesting, and packing. Moreover, it is verified by reliable organic rice certifications for the most suitable rice to cultivate in the particular areas. The brand purpose is delivery of authentic organic rice with a modern image.

#### *Brand name*

The brand name of this rice is “Once Upon a Rice” as the researcher would like to connect the word “Once upon a time” used in fairytales or storytelling. This word is one that the consumers are familiar with, easy to understand, and promptly connect to memories. Additionally, this word has the descriptive meaning persuading consumers to perceive the caring attention the farmer paid to the production process of 100% authentic rice. The use of the English language represents the contemporary, which is beneficial to the export market in the future. The tagline used on the packaging is “Organic Rice for Organic Life”. Nevertheless, the group discussion indicated that four brand specialists commented that the brand name is too long, and hard to pronounce for Thai people. Whereas, the other relevant people, especially the consumers, like this name. Despite the long name, the consumers prefer this name as it is easy to remember, and use of familiar words. This brand name motivates the

consumers to explore further regarding its brand story, and it is consistent with its brand's personality. The detail of interview is presented as follows:

*"The name is a bit too long and difficult to pronounce. Even though the target consumers are educated people, but I still feel the pronunciation is not smooth."* (Marketing Manager at Aisance, January 27, 2018)

*"When the name is too long, the pronunciation is not fluent."* (Marketing Director of Tao Kae Noi Food & Marketing, January 27, 2018)

*"I like this name, it has a story."* (Freelance actor, male, aged 37 years old, January 27, 2018)

*"I think this name sounds modern. It is a familiar word and easy to remember. Normally we use the word of 'Once upon a time', though people who are not an English experts also understand its meaning."* (Corporate employee, female, aged 41 years old, January 27, 2018)

However, one branding specialist and one farmer or brand owner suggested modifying the tagline to have an alignment with the brand name such as converting the word 'Once upon a time, prior to your plate' that used to tell the story on the packaging to be the tagline.

*"Maybe this name will be alright if you can change the tagline to be in line with the brand name."* (Food business entrepreneur, January 27, 2018)

*"The problem of the brand name is complicated, I suppose if the word 'Once upon a time, prior to your plate' change to be the tagline, it should encourage the consumers to remember name more easily. Moreover, it will link to the message that we want to communicate."* (Brand Owner of Kao Pleng Rak, January 27, 2018)

In regards to the tagline comments, all of the interviewees suggested that this tagline is suitable and consistent with the target consumers' characteristics, as cited in the interviews below:

*"I think this tagline is possible, it looks specific and right to the target consumers."*  
(Managing Director of Z-Dragon, January 27, 2018)

*"This name is proper with nice word play. It should be easy to understand, and right for the consumers."* (Marketing Manager at Aisance January 27, 2018)

Nonetheless, the interviewees suggested that changing tagline to Thai, in which it has a meaning similar to the brand name, it should be more appropriate, as mentioned in the dialog below:

*"If there is a word 'Once upon a time, prior to your plate' for comparison, I literally like the Thai language more. I feel it supports the brand name. I would be eager to know the next story. It makes us imagine the story and flip the package to read the content."* (University instructor, female, aged 35 years old, January 27, 2018)

### Logo

The logo was developed by utilizing Word-Mark Logo technique as it clearly identifies the brand name. It focuses on the simplicity and modernity that is consistent with the brand's personality. The logo consists of the brand name and alongside with the tagline. The researcher presented three logos to the member of the group discussions.

No. 1



No. 2



No.3



Figure 6.1 Three logos

The findings showed that seven interviewees commented that the logo No. 3 is suitable as it is modern and friendly. Whereas four interviewees supposed that the logo No. 1 is suitable as it is outstanding and simple. The details of the discussion are presented in the following section.

*"I like No. 3, it is touching, friendly, and align to the brand name as well as the story."* (Marketing Director of Tao Kae Noi Food & Marketing, January 27, 2018)

*"I like the font, I feel the attention and friendliness of the brand owner."* (Owner of Rice Berry Rice, January 27, 2018)

*"I like the curving style, it fits the brand name. It looks kind and cheerful."* (Freelance actor, male, aged 37 years old, January 27, 2018)

*"I like bold type, it looks outstanding, simple, and attractive."* (Managing Director of Z-Dragon, January 27, 2018)

*"I like bold type, it looks expensive and modern."* (Doctoral student, female, aged 31 years old, January 27, 2018)

### *Packaging*

The packaging is developed by focusing on the simplicity, association with brand personality, protection of the product, and convenient usage. The main color used in this packaging design is brown, white, and black that represent the simplicity and organic authentication. The bright color is utilized according to the characteristics of each region. The researcher presented three packaging designs to the interviewees. It consists of two types of paper boxes and one type of plastic box.

The findings illustrated that all of the interviewees are fond of paper boxes more than the plastic box. Since it is aligned with environmental conservation, and brand personality. In addition, the interviewees commented that the upper-lid opening package is more convenient for users. The interviewees also further recommended the zip-lock bag as the alternative for the future packaging development.

*"I like the paper box. I do not agree with the plastic box, it does not look organic."*

(Freelance actor, male, aged 37 years old, January 27, 2018)

*"I buy the craft-paper material as it looks natural and organic. It gives the feeling of recycling. The plastic package looks beautiful and modern, but it is not proper."*

(Brand Owner of Kao Pleng Rak, January 27, 2018)

*"I like the packaging that has the upper-lid, I think it is convenient. The craft-paper gives the feeling of being organic. This plastic bag is not suitable at all, even if it looks pretty but it contrasts with being organic that the brand would like to present."*

(Owner of Rice Berry Rice, January 27, 2018)

*"This packaging is good, however, you can try to use zip-lock bag given the opportunity in the future. It is convenient for users, after opening it can be closed and stored in the fridge immediately."* (Managing Director of Z-Dragon, January 27, 2018)

The packaging components are composed of brand name with the tagline, rice breeds, rice origins, rice quantities, organic certificates, characteristics of growing areas, cooking methods, manufacture/expiry dates, caring attention stories, and manufacture addresses. Four marketers from group discussions recommended adding the benefits of each rice breeds, and the story that clearly reflects the rice origins. Alternatively, it can use QR Code in case of limited space in order for the consumers to follow up the information on the online media. The representative from government sector agreed that providing the story on the packaging can ease the problem of reliability, especially for the shifting-period farmers that not being obtained the organic standard yet. In order to obtain the organic rice certificate, the rice farms have to be grown using the organic process for three years. The details of interviews are presented in the following section.

*"I think it lacks information about its benefit. We should tell the benefit of this rice, how this rice makes people healthy. It should create the reason to believe because our product is more expensive than others."* (Marketing Manager at Aisance, January 27, 2018)

*"The packaging should communicate information as much as possible. If space is limited it can use the QR code for scanning in order to tell the information of rice, the origin of rice, and method of farming."* (Food business entrepreneur, January 27, 2018)

*"During the shifting-period farming, we do not provide the organic certificate. This might affect the reliability, but I believe that the storytelling about the farming process can solve this problem. The farmers under our supervision, many brands also use this method, and it seems successful."* (Head of Process and Product Development, Rice Product Development Division- Rice Department, January 27, 2018)

However, four consumers commented that the packaging could persuade purchasing decision. This is because good rice packaging differs from rice packaging that they experienced in the past. The details of the interview are presented in the following section.

*"If it is on the shelf, I will pick it up. I like it in general. I think the packaging is nice. The current packaging that I saw on the shelf still does not look interesting."* (University instructor, female, aged 35 years old, January 27, 2018)

*"I like it, it looks good to buy. It caught my attention."* (Corporate employee, female, aged 41 years old, January 27, 2018)

*"I like it so much, especially the different color according to the growing region. I think it is quite interesting. When they are put on the shelf in order, the color will*

*make it more beautiful and persuade me to pick it up.*” (Doctoral student, female, aged 31 years old, January 27, 2018)

In conclusion, all relevant people in-charge of branding accept the prototype of the product proposed by the researcher. However, they have additional recommendations such as tagline adjustment from “Organic Rice for Organic Life” to “Once upon a time, prior to your plate” to be in line with its brand name, and easy to remember. Most branding specialists accepted the logo in the form of font style, as it is modern and friendly according to its brand’s personality. In addition, all interviewees accepted the paper box packaging rather than plastic one as it is in line with the brand's personality in terms of the environmentally friendly aspect. Furthermore, they commented that the packaging with the upper-lid should be convenient for the users. However, some people in-charge of branding suggested that the packaging should be adding the characteristics of each rice breeds as well as the story of rice origins. In case of limited space, QR Code can be used for consumers to follow up the further information through the online media. The researcher brought those suggestions to improve the prototype of rice branding for small-scaled farmers in order to gain the highest efficiency further.

### 1.2 Opinions toward price aspect

The researcher proposed the price of THB90-95 per kilogram depending on the rice breeds. This pricing level aims to reflect the quality of the product, while its price is not more than other rice products under the same product category. Additionally, the price of gift package is set at the range of THB 159-699, which based on rice's variations, quantities, and design of the packaging. However, all relevant people in-charge of branding agreed on the price, given the reason that this price is in the same range as the market price. This price shall be, therefore, competitive in the market. The details of interview are presented as follows:

*“The price is acceptable and competitive. It is in the price range of organic rice.”*  
(Marketing Director of Tao Kae Noi Food & Marketing, January 27, 2018)

*"If the price range is under THB 70-100 and a little lower or higher than this price is still OK."* (Brand Owner of Kao Pleng Rak, January 27, 2018)

*"Price is OK, it is similar to the rice price I normally buy."* (Corporate employee, female, aged 41 years old, January 27, 2018)

*"Price of gift set is alright, the price has to be adjusted according to the quality and design."* (Marketing Manager at Aisance, January 27, 2018)

Therefore, the researcher shall maintain the price that set out in the outline of the development of prototype for rice branding for small-scaled farmers at THB 90-95 per kilogram and THB 159-699 for normal packaging and gift set, respectively.

### 1.3 Opinions toward distribution channel aspect

The researcher categorized the distribution into three main channels such as 1) Online channels: online channels of the brand and marketplaces; 2) Retailers: general supermarkets and health food stores; and 3) Sales booths: sales booths at the retailer stores and sales booth at the trade fairs related to health products. The results of group discussions illustrated that the relevant people in-charge of branding accepted the proposed distribution channels. However, there is a suggestion that the brand owners should be aware of. Firstly, in case of online channels, the order should be set the minimum of quantity (MOQ) for the sake of delivery cost. Secondly, in case of retailers, the brand owner should pay attention to the marginal cost that they have to pay to the retailer owners. The margin cost might not be worthwhile. They should be aware of the downward trend of health product in small retailers. Thirdly, in case of sales booths, the sales booths should provide the trial for the customers to experiment the products. In addition, one marketer suggested that the brand owner should seek for a new alternative channel to avoid the high competition. Also, one government representative recommended that the direct sales to corporate such as hotel can be an alternative way to boost sales for the rice products in the short time. The details of the interviews are presented as follows:

*"Online channel must be aware of the delivery cost. It needs to set a minimum quantity purchase. For my product, I set the minimum quantity at 5 kg, delivery cost is 80 baht."* (Brand Owner of Kao Pleng Rak, January 27, 2018)

*"The problem is that the products are hard to find in the market, the online channel will be helpful. But there is the delivery cost that the buyers feel it is not worth it. So, we have to set the minimum quantity purchase that can balance the cost for both buyers and sellers."* (Owner of Rice Berry Rice, January 27, 2018)

*"Supermarket is the suitable channel for product distribution. But we need to understand that it has high competition and high margin rate."* (Food business entrepreneur, January 27, 2018)

*"If it is a healthy food store, it must be the big store only. Since the small stores currently are very quiet and risky."* (Marketing Director of Tao Kae Noi Food & Marketing, January 27, 2018)

*"I would suggest to have the trial product at the sales booth, and serve with the food that goes along well with the rice in order to motivate sales."* (Managing Director of Z-Dragon, January 27, 2018)

*"All three proposed channels are OK. However, I want to suggest adding an alternative channel that no need to compete with a lot of people, try to be different. For example, if we have nice packaging, we may be able to sell on the channels that can meet a lot of tourists."* Marketing Director of Tao Kae Noi Food & Marketing, January 27, 2018)

*"Many groups of our farmers are now starting to contact corporate clients for the direct sale. I think the hotel group is also interesting, especially for the gift set."* (Head of Process and Product Development, Rice Product Development Division-Rice Department, January 27, 2018)

According to the above-mentioned suggestions, the researcher, therefore, further improved some conditions regarding the distribution channels. This includes implementing the minimum order of quantity, and reminding the brand owners to check the cost of margin rate that they need to pay the retailers, and should focus on big health food stores. Moreover, it is proposed to implement for product trials at sales booth channel in order to raise the product experiment. Also, the researcher shall suggest the brand owners seek for an alternative channel as well as contact to corporate clients for the direct sale.

#### 1.4 Opinions toward sales promotion aspect

The researcher proposed the communication method for the product launch in the first year by utilizing the storytelling strategy to convey the caring attention in the entire production process from growing preparation to the plate. This communication shall be implemented under the campaign "Once upon a time, prior to your plate" Ep. "Rice to meet you". Moreover, the implementation of the Integrated Marketing Communication Strategy is made through three communication tools such as advertisements, public relations, and market activities and brand endorsers via the media that align with the targets' media exposure with 360 degrees perspective. Furthermore, it is proposed to utilize the messages to arouse the target's emotions such as difference of organic rice consumption, farmers' introduction, entire organic process, caring attention in the production process, characteristic of each rice breed, and different nutrition from each rice breed. The brand owners should continuously implement above communication methods during the first year of product launching, and focus on the 4<sup>th</sup> quarter due to its harvesting and organic rice distribution seasons. Therefore, the 4<sup>th</sup> quarter should be the competitive season for the organic rice products.

The group discussion showed that four consumers agreed with the messages that the researcher proposed especially "Rice to meet you" and "Once upon a time, prior to your plate" as it is aligned with brand's personality, and overall messages used as the campaign. The detail of interview is presented in the following section.

*"I like the word and message so much like "Rice to meet you" or "Once upon a time, prior to your plate", I think it is in line with the brand's personality. I think, it is different and modern and attention grabbing."* (Freelance actor, male, aged 37 years old, January 27, 2018)

*"I personally like the messages of all quarters, I feel it is aligned to each other and reasonable."* (University instructor, female, aged 35 years old, January 27, 2018)

However, four marketers agreed that the messages should be adjusted to more focus on the benefits of organic rice. Since the target consumers are highly educated, the emotional persuasion might not be proper for this group, as presented below.

*"I am not sure if the emotional message will work out for the educated people. I think we should clearly state the benefits of our rice, how could it be better than others by listing down no. 1, 2, and 3 in short."* Marketing Manager at Aisance, January 27, 2018)

*"I think we should tell them that why they have to pay more expensive price. They should make it clear about the benefit they could get from eating organic. If we use too much emotion, it may not look reliable for educated people."* (Food business entrepreneur, January 27, 2018)

*"We should not communicate the farmer's life, but the thing we should tell consumers is the benefits from eating organic rice."* (Managing Director of Z-Dragon, January 27, 2018)

*"The benefit should be clearly mentioned, the story should done in moderate level. I think it is better to communicate clearly about the benefits."* (Marketing Director of Tao Kae Noi Food & Marketing, January 27, 2018)

The marketers suggested that the 1<sup>st</sup> quarter should communicate all messages to allow the consumers perceiving the overall brand. The first time of product launching should implement proactive communication, and present the know-how of farmers to generate message's reliability. The detail of interview is presented below.

*"I think the message communication is too slow. I want you to adjust the order of those phases. All the messages in your list should be communicated in the first phase. At the first time, the communication should be very intense."* (Marketing Director of Tao Kae Noi Food & Marketing, January 27, 2018)

*"It should have the part that tells the know-how of farmers too. We want to propose that the growers are the experts, the consumer can trust."* (Marketing Manager at Aisance, January 27, 2018)

*"I think we should present the story like Japanese farmers. We have to tell that the farmers are smart and innovative. This aspect is not presented by many people yet."* (Food business entrepreneur, January 27, 2018)

*"To top up your list, we should communicate that our farmers are now developing, skillful, and passionate."* (Managing Director of Z-Dragon, January 27, 2018)

In addressing of the communication media, the relevant people in-charge of rice branding accepted the researcher's proposal such as online media, market activity media, and influencer media. However, in terms of influencer media, the marketers recommended that the influencer could be the people who suffer from health problems. This can motivate the consumers that consuming organic rice can be one of alternative.

*"Online channel is very powerful and allow consumers to know about us. At our department also provides the online market course, but only a few people can do it"*

well.” Head of Process and Product Development, Rice Product Development Division- Rice Department, January 27, 2018)

*“The cooked organic rice has extraordinary taste which different from regular cooked rice. However, look at the appearance is hard to tell the different. So the consumers should try in order to understand why it is more expensive than the regular rice.”* (Brand Owner of Kao Pleng Rak, January 27, 2018)

*“I agree that it is good to get a lot of people as the followers on online media, it helps to promote and receive free coverage.”* (Marketing Manager at Aisance, January 27, 2018)

*“The use of influencer media can help. But we may set the gimmick. For example, the influencer can cook food by using our organic rice, it gives more than just a suggestion.”* (Food business entrepreneur, January 27, 2018)

*“I think you may try to send the organic rice to a person who has the health problem. This will highlight the benefits of eating the organic rice are. This should be effective as nowadays people are conscious about their health.”* Managing Director of Z-Dragon, January 27, 2018)

In conclusion, in focusing on sales promotion, the researcher brought all the suggestions from relevant people in-charge of branding to improve and adjust the prototype development. For example, the message adjustment to focus on benefits, and the beginning stage of product launch should be proactive, and present the know-how of farmers. For the communication media, all relevant people in-charge of branding accepted the media that the researcher proposed such as online media, market activity media, and influencer media.

However, all relevant people in-charge of branding suggested that maintaining quality of products and production are critical factors for the sustainable rice branding for farmers. Additionally, the brand should continuously and consistently propose the

new ideas particularly in product development and communicate it with the consumers. The detail of dialog is presented in the following section.

*"If I will make repurchase, it will be based on the quality."* (Doctoral student, female, aged 31 years old, January 27, 2018)

*"To make the entire process sustainable, it has to create good quality throughout the production chain, especially the product."* (Marketing Director of Tao Kae Noi Food & Marketing, January 27, 2018)

*"I supposed that making the product survive for a long time, the owners have to always learn and educated. They should always be active and apply knowledge to improve the product."* (Head of Process and Product Development, Rice Product Development Division- Rice Department, January 27, 2018)

*"We have to see if we have any new product in each year. We have to check if our communication planning is effective and implement regularly. It has to have a new addition every year, and reliable communication for consumers."* (Marketing manager at Aisance, January 27, 2018)

*"I think the relationship between growers and buyers are important, it needs to communication on a regular basis."* (Food business entrepreneur, January 27, 2018)

The findings of the group discussions can be concluded as in this section. For the product aspect it is found that the relevant people in-charge of branding accepted the proposed prototype outline. However, there is the suggestion regarding the adjustment on tagline to "Once upon a time, prior to your plate" to be aligned with the brand name and easy to remember. For the logo, most of the target respondents accepted the logo in alphabet writing style since it provides the modernity, and in line with the brand's personality. All related person in-charge of branding accepted the paper bag packaging as it is in line with the brand's personality in terms of the environmentally friendly. However, from the suggestion, the packaging should insert

the benefit information from each rice breed as well as the rice origin. If space is limited, QR code is the alternative way for consumers to follow up the information through online media. In addressing of price aspect, all target respondents accepted the price ranges of THB 90-95 per kilogram for the normal packaging, and THB159-699 for the gift set packaging. All of them agreed that this price is similar to the market price, the product can be competitive in the market. For the distribution channels aspect, the target respondents accepted the distribution channels as per the researcher proposed. However, they suggested that the brand owners should concern about a few additional issues. Firstly, in case of online channels, the order should be set the minimum of quantity (MOQ) for the sake of delivery cost. Secondly, in case of retailers, the brand owner should pay attention to the marginal cost that they have to pay to the owners. The margin cost might not be worthwhile, and should aware of the downward trend of health product in the small retailers. Thirdly, in case of sales booths, the sales booths should provide the trial for customers to experiment the products. In addition, one marketer suggested that the brand owner should seek for a new alternative channel to avoid the high competition. Also, the direct sales to corporate such as hotel can be an alternative way to boost sales for the rice products in the short time. For sales promotion aspect, the target respondents accepted the communication strategy proposed in the outline. However, they provided the suggestions, for example; the message adjustment should focus on benefits, and the beginning stage of product launch should be proactive and present the know-how of farmers. For the communication media, all relevant people in-charge of branding accepted the media that the researcher proposed such as online media, market activity media, and influencer media. However, all relevant people in-charge of branding suggested that maintaining quality of products and production are the most key factor for the sustainable rice branding for farmers. In addition the brand should continuously propose new ideas particularly in product development to communicate with consumers.

## **6.2 Part 2: The Prototype of Sustainable Rice Branding Development for Small-scaled Farmers**

According to the acceptance study of the prototype application for Thai rice branding as mentioned in Part 1, the researcher incorporated all suggestions to improve the prototype application for sustainable rice branding for small-scaled farmers in order to obtain the highest efficiency for the actual practice. The details are presented in the following section.

### *Market conditions and competitors*

The packaged rice market in Thailand has a market size of THB 27,800 - 28,750 million with a growth rate of 3-5%. This can be divided into conventional rice at 96%, and premium rice, which consists of Brown Rice, Jasmine Rice and organic rice at 4% (Marketeer, 2016). However, the overall market situation has been modified according to the change of consumer behaviour. The consumers recognize the importance of consuming healthy foods, and being environmental friendly. In addition, the concept of sustainable economy encourages the farmers, entrepreneurs, and government sector pay attention to the development of premium rice, especially organic rice. As a result, the organic rice products are likely to grow rapidly at an average growth rate of 50% a year. Furthermore, since the organic rice market has become popular recently, thus there is no outstanding market leader in this market yet and it has low market competition. The most important point is the fact that consumers do not have brand loyalty to any particular brand, thus they always want to experiment new products provided that it can respond to their needs. The organic rice is interesting product as it can generate double selling price compared to conventional rice.

Therefore, the guideline of branding for rice product under this research shall focus on the branding for organic rice products under the name “Once Upon a Rice”. The detail of guideline of branding shall be elaborated in the following section.

### *Consumer Analysis*

Determining the scope of potential customers for organic rice products can be categorized into three important basic factors as follows:

- Location: the potential customers reside in Bangkok and outskirts of the city. This group has high tendency to purchase organic rice rather than conventional rice. Moreover, the previous finding indicated that the provincial population or the ones who live in rice growing area have low tendency to purchase organic rice rather than conventional rice.
- Incomes and social classes: the potential consumers are determined by income and they are from the middle-class level onward. This is because the organic rice price is higher than other types of rice in the market. The middle class level people are likely to be open-minded to new products.
- Organic rice consumption's behavior: the potential group is identified as the person who know organic rice and used to consume it before as they are familiar with the products. Thus, the experienced people are more likely to purchase new organic rice brands rather than one who are not familiar of or have never consumed organic rice.
- The reasons for organic rice consumption: Health consumption, healthy food trend consumption and supporting farmers and environments purposes consumption.
- Media exposure for organic rice consumption: Online media, event marketing activities and point-of-purchase media

#### *Competitor's Analysis*

Almost organic rice brands focus on middle – upper level consumers who are city dwellers. Furthermore, all brands emphasize on caring attention paid to organic rice production process with approximately price of THB 65-140 per kilogram, depending on the rice breeds. The gift set or seasonal packaging can be priced at double the regular price. The distribution channel is composed of 1) healthy food stores, 2) general supermarket, 3) online channel, and 4) direct sales to corporate. In addition, the image analysis of brand association, for organic rice, can summarize points of parity and points of difference in the following section.

Brand image comparison of competitors in organic rice market indicated that there are three essential points of parity: 1) caring attention in production process, 2) honesty toward consumers, and 3) authentic organic rice. The new products that want to enter to the market have to communicate these three points of parity. Whereas, comparison of point of difference showed that there are no brands that communicate or focus on the image of “modernity”, which is insight information of the target. Thus, the concept of authentic organic rice with modernity shall bring out the product’s uniqueness and respond to the target’s needs.

#### *Market Positioning*

According to above information analysis, the market positioning for the product is presented as follows:

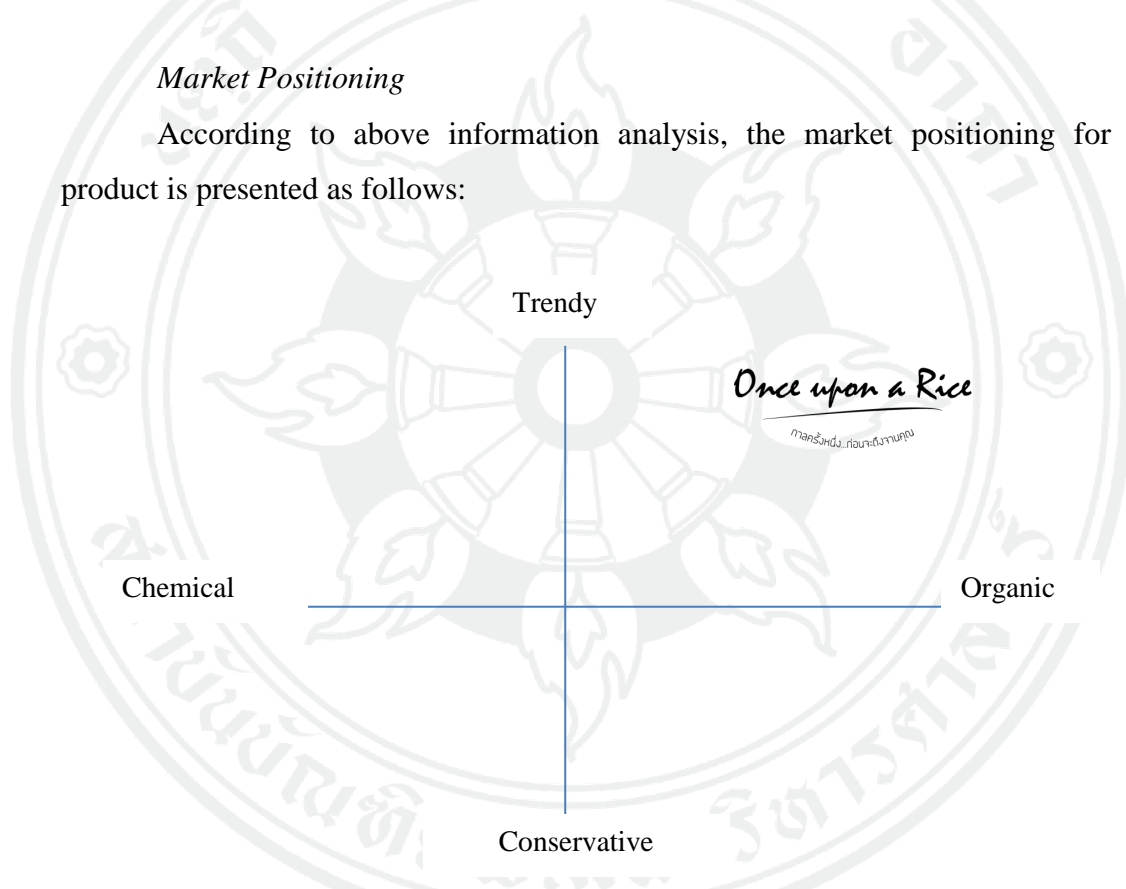


Figure 6.2 The market positioning for Once Upon a Rice brand

Market positioning of rice branding in this research therefore includes 100% authentic organic rice with modernity as it is in accordance with insight demands of consumers. However, the findings showed that no competitor exists in the aforementioned market position.

#### *Unique Value Proposition*

Authentic organic rice with modernity has the supporting benefits as follows:

Table 6.1 Unique Value Proposition of Once Upon a Rice brand

Functional Benefits	Emotional Benefits
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 100% organic rice</li> <li>• Fresh rice</li> <li>• Modernized and user friendly packaging</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Feeling of farmer's caring attention</li> <li>• Feeling healthy</li> <li>• Feeling privilege and modernized</li> </ul>

*Brand Purpose*

Delivery of authentic organic rice with modernized image

*Brand Personality*

A farmer aged 35, educated, smart, modernized, healthy, humorous but calm, kind, caring, social responsible, organic life style, dress minimal, sincere, honest to consumers, and happy to do farming.

*Product Strategy*

Product strategy planning has to be consistent with the guideline of organic rice branding. Therefore, the products must have the following necessary attributes.

- 100% authentic organic rice (free from chemical since growing, harvesting, and packing)
- Rice is certified by reliable organic rice certificate bodies, i.e. IFOAM Organic Thailand.
- Rice breeds that is the most suitable to grow in the particular areas, as presented in the following table.

Table 6.2 Rice breeds that is the most suitable to grow in the particular areas

Region	Rice breeds
North	Glutinous Rice
Northeast	Jasmine Rice

Region	Rice breeds
Center	Pathum Fragrant Rice
South	Sangyod Rice

In the first stage of product launching, the package of 1-kilogram therefore should be the ideal, and adjust the package size according to the change of demand in the future.

#### *Brand Name*

“Once Upon a Rice” is the name the researcher would like to use to connect to consumers. The word “Once upon a time” is often used in fairy tales or storytelling. This word is generally well-known, easy to remember, and quickly connect. In addition, it also has the descriptive meaning and can persuade the consumers to perceive of caring attention the farmers paid to the production process in order to gain 100% authentic organic rice. The presentation shall be under “Once upon a time, prior to your plate”. Moreover, the use of English name can associate the contemporary nature and be beneficial for the export market in the future.

#### *Logo*

The logo is designed by Word-Mark Logo technique as it can present the brand name clearly. The logo focuses on simple and contemporary design that is in line with product personality. The logo will be composed of brand name along with tagline “Prior to your plate” in order to describe product type.

*Once upon a Rice*

กาลครั้งหนึ่ง...ก่อนจะถึงจานคุณ

Figure 6.3 Logo of “Once Upon a Rice”

### Packaging



Figure 6.4 Packaging of “Once Upon a Rice”

The packaging highlights the simple design associating with brand personality. In addition, the packaging has to be able to protect the product inside and must be user friendly. The colors used on the package are primarily brown, white, and black which refer to simplicity and authenticity of organic rice. However, the use of bright colours is selected according to the regional characteristics based on the opinions from consumer’s group discussion.

This colour pattern will make the packaging simple and modernized, aligning with the brand personality as well as consumers’ needs. Moreover, this design also emphasizes on the market position in terms of authentic organic rice by implementing a message “100% Organic” with bold size at noticeable position. On top of that, the packaging also addresses the story of caring attention in entire production under the core “Once upon a time, prior to your plate” through the meaning of the words. The lettering would initiate the feeling of personal communication with consumers, and also stress the attribute of 100% authentic organic rice.

In addition, the packaging also mentions the characteristics of rice from the strategic areas where the best rice of each region is produced. This responds to consumers' needs in terms of desire of eating tasty rice. The strategic rice growing areas provides the good outcomes of the best tasty rice for each rice breed.

In terms of product safety, the packaging shall be divided into two parts. The outer part is the paper box or plastic material that is not touching the rice. It is utilized just to provide information, convenience, attractiveness, and protection of inner packaging. The inner part is a part that connected to rice. Rice is contained in vacuum plastic bag in order to keep rice quality from insect disturbance and contamination.

Moreover, the packaging should insert the benefit information from each rice breed as well as the rice origin. If space is limited, QR code is the alternative way for consumers to follow up the information through online media.

The brand developers can bring above design to apply for their own products. However, some parts have to be adjusted in terms of rice breeds, rice origins, rice characteristics, and contact addresses.

### *Pricing Strategy*

The pricing should reflect the quality of the products. Thus, the price is determined to be in line with consumers' value perception. However, the good pricing should have similar range to other products under the same category. This will be acceptable price for consumers. After comparing the price in the market, and surveying the consumers' opinion, the result showed that the organic rice pricelists should be the following:

Table 6.3 The pricing list of “Once Upon a Rice” products

Rice breeds	Price/ Kilogram	Gift set
Glutinous Rice		
Jasmine Rice	90 – 95 THB	159 – 699 THB
Pathum Fragrant Rice		(Depend on production cost)
Sangyod Rice		

### *Distribution Channel/ Place Strategy*

Distribution channel can be divided into four channels as follows:

#### 1) Online media channel

- Online media of brands such as Facebook Fanpage, Instagram, and Line
- Online media in the form of marketplace such as Blue Basket and Lazada

\*\*The brand owners should concern about the order which should be set the minimum of quantity (MOQ) for the sake of delivery cost.

#### 2) Retailer channel

Retailer channels are the channels that align to consumer's purchasing behavior of organic rice. It comprises of the following:

- Retailer shops such as Tops, and Villa Market
- Healthy food stores such as Lemon Farm, and other healthy food stores

\*\*The brand owner should pay attention to the marginal cost that they have to pay to the owners. The margin cost might not be worthwhile, and should aware of the downward trend of health product in the small retailers.

#### 3) Sales booth channel

Sales booth channel includes the following

- Sales booth at retailer stores
- Sales booths at the trade exhibition that related to health

\*\* The sales booths should provide the trial for customers to experiment the products.

4) The direct sales to corporate such as hotel, public limited company and government organization.

### *Marketing communication strategy*

*Objectives of communication:* 1) To establish brand awareness of the target.

2) To create brand awareness of "Once Upon a Rice" as authentic organic rice with

modern personality, and being paid attention to entire production process. And 3) To motivate the potential targets to experiment and purchase.

*Target of Communications:* The main target of communications is people who reside in Bangkok and outskirts of the city with middle level income and above. They are meticulous in selecting the healthy food, and experienced organic rice or used to consume organic rice in the past. The media exposure behavior of the target, in the process of information search, indicated that the target is exposed mainly to online media such as Facebook, Instagram, and Community Webboard. This is followed by the point of sales media, which focuses on the information given on the packaging, and people media through the recommendation of families, friends, surrounding people and health influencers. Lastly, it includes the mass media such as TV program. The targets use information obtained from above three media channels for alternative evaluations. For instance, being 100% authentic organic rice with the packaging which is presentable, modernized, user friendly, and safe for rice and environment. Also, the price should have similar range of other products under the same category. Subsequently, the targets make the decision based on the quality aspect such as good quality according to their needs.

*Campaign name:* Once upon a time, prior to your plate. Ep. Rice to meet you

*Period of communication:* January – December (first year of product launch)

*Key Message:* “Once upon a time, prior to your plate”

*Strategies:* The communications method used in this research is storytelling in order to convey the story of caring attention in entire production process from growing to serving on consumers’ plates. This project implement under campaign name “Once upon a time, prior to your plate. Ep. Rice to meet you”. The campaign employs Integrated Marketing Communication (IMC) Strategy and three communication tools such as advertising, public relations, and marketing activities as

well as brand endorser, through the media that align with media exposure of consumers with 360-degree perspective. Moreover, the use of message that arouses the emotion will help to achieve the communications objectives more effectively. The period of communication should be implemented continuously during the first year of product launch, and focus on the fourth quarter. Since the fourth quarter is the harvesting season of the year and has high market competition for the organic rice products.

*Tactics:* Brand awareness and product attribute will lead to purchase decision in the next step. The market communications tactic is divided into four steps. This includes Brand Awareness, Brand Differentiation, Brand Value, and Sense of social belonging. These four steps shall be implemented through communication of slides and videos in a portion of 80:20, and categorized based on quarterly basis as described in the following table.

Table 6.4 The market communications tactic of “Once Upon a Rice”

Period of Time	Objective of Tactics	Communication Tools	Detail
<b>1<sup>st</sup> Quarter</b>	Brand Awareness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Storytelling via social media which are under name “Once upon a Rice”.</li> <li>- Media relation including online media influencers through Press Sampling tools for them to experiment.</li> <li>- Online advertisement to motivate brand awareness through communication channel</li> <li>- Market activities related to rice or healthy products such as sales booth</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Presentation of self-introduction by focusing organic farming background and overall organic rice farming process</li> <li>- Presentation of the difference of consuming general rice and organic rice by focusing organic rice benefits.</li> </ul>
<b>2<sup>nd</sup> Quarter</b>	Brand Differentiation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Storytelling via online social media of brands</li> <li>- Product recommendation through social media of micro influencers that focus on health</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Presentation of meticulous rice farming in each step using storytelling. The communications will be continuous on a weekly basis beginning from preparing soil and</li> </ul>

Period of Time	Objective of Tactics	Communication Tools	Detail
3 <sup>rd</sup> Quarter	Brand Value	conscious young generation - Market activities related to rice or healthy products such as sales booth	seeds, growing, harvesting, milling, and packing.
		- Storytelling via online social media of brands - Storytelling through online media of influencers, who is powerful in health consciousness issue - Storytelling through online media of consumers through hashtag that related to the brand - Market activity related to rice or healthy products such as sale booth	- Presentation of the farming attention and the farmer's knowledge - Arranging the activity to motivate consumer to review product
4 <sup>th</sup> Quarter	Sense of Social Belonging	- Market activities in the form of camping at the real rice growing sites (especially corporate consumers) - Storytelling through online media of the brand - Storytelling through social media of the consumers while participating in the activity - Marketing activity related to rice products or healthy products such as sales booth	- Inviting consumer to participate in the rice harvesting camping program and join other activities with farmers - Presentation of packaging in the form of New Year gifts - Sending the thank you message for consumer's supports during the past 1 year

#### Remark

- The plans can be adjusted according to the suitability especially in emergency cases.
- Participation in market activities can be implemented throughout the year according to suitability.

*Performance Evaluation:* Performance evaluation is divided into two main parts as follows:

- 1) Performance evaluation in the market by considering the sales performances, purchase source, and repurchase source. This evaluation shall be implemented in middle to long-term time frames.
- 2) Consumer mind set evaluation by considering the reaction from communications, which can be assessed immediately after delivering the messages.

#### *Sustainable Growth*

The rice brand developers should manage and maintain the specified brand position well. However, the brand developers should tailor the brand elements according to the changes of consumers' needs in each period of time as follows:

- 1) The change of products such as modification of usual packaging every year and special design for the festival periods.
- 2) The change of communications method such as storytelling design and suitable communications channel according to the changes of social context.

Nevertheless, during the changes, the core must be maintained.

According to the prototype of sustainable rice branding for small-scaled farmers as cited above, the researcher implemented the information to develop the manual of rice brand "Once Upon a Rice". The prototype provides information together with soft files that can be used for designing brand's elements to the government officer who is in-charge of organic rice development at Rice Department office. They will present and share this information with the potential farmers or those who are ready to develop their brand in the real-life practice.

## **CHAPTER 7**

### **CONCLUSIONS, DISCUSSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

According to the research subject “The development of prototype branding for sustainable rice from small-scaled farming in Thailand”, the researcher set the research objectives as follows:

- 1) To study the branding process and communications from rice brand of successful farmers who have production process of small-scaled farms in Thailand.
- 2) To study methods and prototype of sustainable branding of Thai rice for farmers who have production process of small-scaled farms in Thailand.
- 3) To study acceptance from the prototype of sustainable branding of Thai rice for farmers who have production process of small-scaled farms in Thailand.

In order to achieve the research objectives, the researcher implemented the Mix-Method research methodology as explained in the following section.

In order to achieve the first objective, the researcher implemented the in-depth interview with relevant people in-charge of branding for successful small-scaled farmers in Thailand with seven brands and one project. In addition, the researcher also studied the information from the documents. This study initiated the guideline of rice branding for successful small-scaled farmers in Thailand as well as being the guideline of prototype for rice branding, especially the competitor analysis information.

In order to achieve the second objective, the researcher carried out in-depth interviews with relevant people such as branding specialists, government sector, and private sector who engage in distribution channels in order to develop the guideline of

Thai rice branding. After that, the researcher implemented the survey regarding the opinions and behaviors of consumers in rice purchasing decision. Subsequently, the researcher carried out the group discussions with the target consumers of rice branding to gain the insight information of consumers, and bring such information to develop the prototype of rice branding for small-scaled farmers in Thailand.

In order to achieve the third objective, the researcher implemented the group discussion to investigate the acceptance of prototype that was developed in the previous stage with relevant people in-charge in rice branding such as brand specialists, government sectors, farmer or brand owner, and consumers. The results of the group discussion was used to improve the prototype of sustainable Thai rice branding for suitable small-scaled farmers to practice in their real life.

## **7.1 Conclusions**

Based on the research methodology mentioned above, the results of the research can be presented as follows:

### **7.1.1: Lessons learned from rice branding of successful small-scale farmers**

According to the successful small-scaled rice brand analysis regarding seven rice brands and one rice project, it is found that all products are organic products but different in terms of rice breeds. Since organic rice has high nutrient and unique selling point, the organic rice is easier to create value than rice grown using chemicals. The average organic rice price is approximately THB80-90 per kilogram and has the distribution channel through 3 channels: 1) retail stores and health food store 2) online media, and 3) direct sales to corporate entities. However, the main idea of rice brands emphasize on the good attention of rice production via online and offline channels, which focus on public relation tools.

The process of branding for successful small - scaled farmers has to be implemented throughout the whole branding process. For the internal and external factors analysis, the brand developers have analyzed self-strength and self-weakness, other brands, consumers, including the related trends. However, the farmer and brand developers do not have systematic information analysis. This may lead to data error

impacting the next step of branding process. In terms of identification and brand positioning, it is found that the brand positioning of all brands have identified their brand core values focusing on organic rice production. This is consistent with the consumer's needs and brand position reliability.

This study illustrated that the positioning of Thai rice brands are still unclear in terms of their identities that differ from their competitors. The development of the brand element process consists of tangible and intangible attributes. However it is interesting that most farmers strongly concentrate on the development of brand elements process rather than other processes. Nevertheless, the study showed that Thai farmers do not have efficient planning in brand communications. This is a crucial weakness and it needs to be improved further. In the evaluation part, the study indicated that each brand has evaluated their operations in overall picture. Most of them shall evaluate the performance in two steps. Firstly, the evaluation during the production process focuses on the standard production process. Secondly, the evaluation at end of the year focuses on the turnover in order to seek for operation improvement. The result of the evaluation shall be used for further short term and long term planning. Last but not least, the sustainable growth of branding process for successful small-scaled farmers are composed of three strategies, namely - consumers and farmers' relationship strategy, farmer groups strengthening strategy, and quality maintenance and brand extension strategy.

Additionally, the interview specified that the branding process of successful small-scaled farmers in Thailand is consistent with sustainable branding concept, as the farmer and relevant parties implement branding development knowingly, based on their group regulations and moral values. Moreover, they must properly synchronize each brand element together. This should be in line with the capability of their members for long-term control of the operations.

### **7.1.2 Guideline of Thai rice brand development for small-scaled farmers**

In addressing the development of organic rice brands, the brand developer should completely analyze information by understanding the strengths of their

products that unique from the others in the market. After that, the developers should clearly identify the competitors, and implement competitor analysis to seek for opportunities in their product offering under different dimensions. Moreover, the brand developers ought to identify the targets, and notice the purchasing decision behavior of consumers toward organic rice. They should also investigate the government's policies as well as the growth of online media.

Subsequently, the brand developers can bring all the information to use as a guideline to identify and position the brands from their competitors, which is in line with the consumers' needs.

The brands developers should consider the consistency between the brand elements developments and brand position and personality. The research found that the packaging element is the essential key for the organic rice.

In the process of market planning and activity operation, the brand developers should design the message through storytelling strategy and focus on the emotional benefits. In addition, the brand developers have to select the suitable media for products communication such as online media, activity media, and packaging media in order to attract consumers' demand, and eventually result in the purchasing behavior.

After that, the brand developers should evaluate their performance in two aspects namely "market performance" which emphasize on sales performance evaluation. This is implemented for middle to long-terms. Another aspect is "consumer mindset" which it can be implemented promptly in order to get the insight information and understand the necessary factors for the strategy of product improvement.

The sustainable brands must be periodically adaptive and maintain the brand constancy. However, some brand elements should be tailored while maintaining the core of the brand, therefore it can effectively generate brand existence. The model of guidelines for brand development can be summarized in the following section.

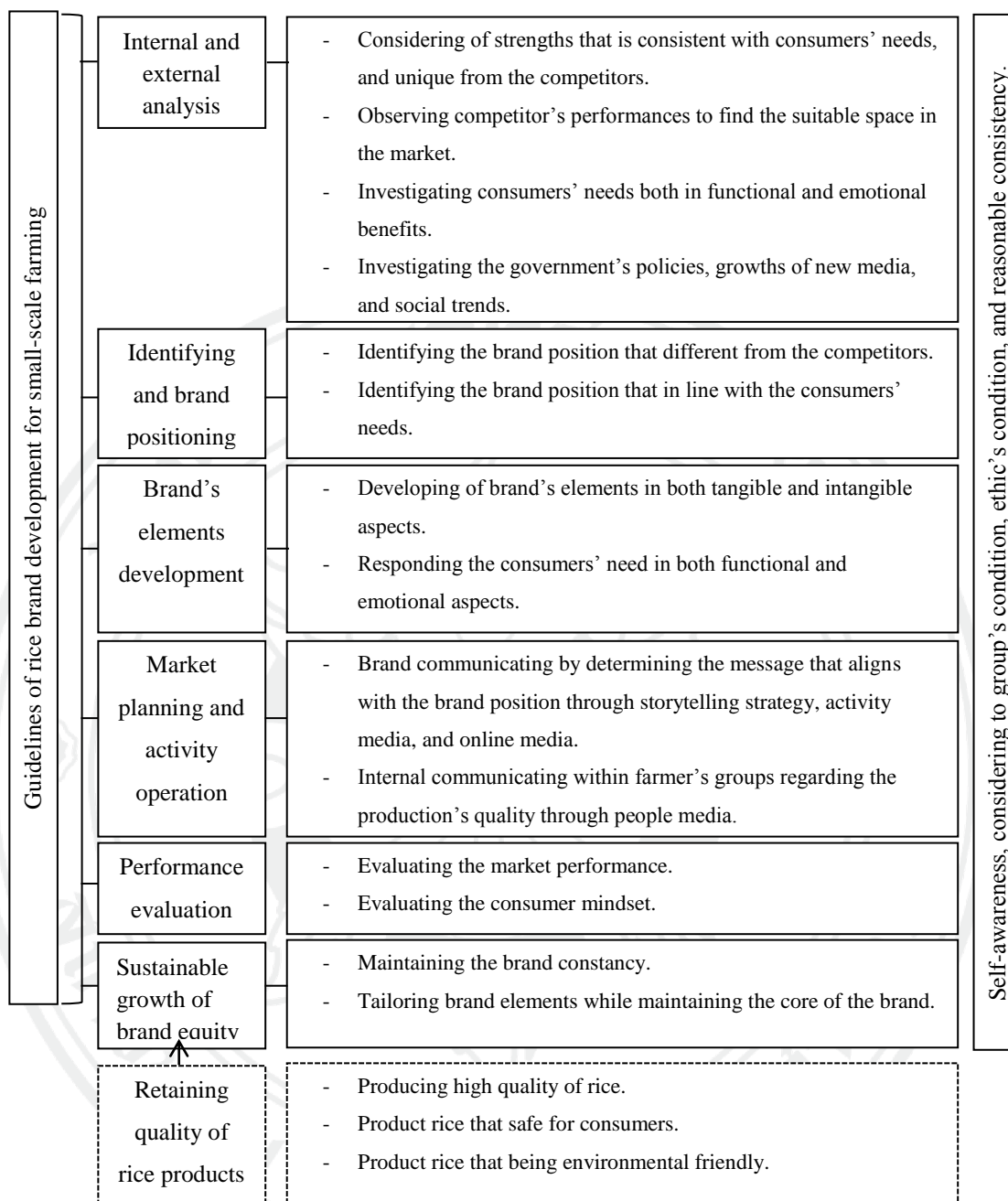


Figure 7.1 The model of guidelines for rice brand development

However, the result shows that the beginning stage of brand prototype development should emphasize on a group of farmers within the region. This implementation is in order to be in line with the demand and supply of the market, and promote the resources sharing within the group according to the government policy. Additionally, at the beginning stage, the prototype should be conveyed to a group of new generation farmers or who are willing to add value to their organic rice. Therefore the prototype can potentially generate the highest efficiency

From the above guideline, the researcher has developed the outline of organic rice brand development that small-scaled farmers that can be concretely applied as a prototype. This outline is developed to investigate the acceptances and comments from the related person. This includes the branding specialists, government and private agencies, Thai farmers, and consumers. The outline detail of development of organic rice brands for small-scaled farmers in Thailand is presented in the following section.

*Brand Name:* “Once Upon a Rice” which is the name the researcher would like to use to connect to consumers. The word “Once upon a time” is often used in fairy tales or storytelling. This word is generally well-known, easy to remember, and quickly connect. In addition, it also has the descriptive meaning and can persuade the consumers to perceive of caring attention the farmers paid to the production process in order to gain 100% authentic organic rice. The presentation shall be under “Once upon a time, prior to your plate”. Moreover, the use of English name can associate the contemporary nature and be beneficial for the export market in the future.

*Market Positioning:* Market positioning of rice branding in this research therefore includes 100% authentic organic rice with modernity as it is in accordance with insight demands of consumers. However, the findings showed that no competitor exists in the aforementioned market position.

*Unique Value Proposition:* Authentic organic rice with modernity

*Brand Personality:* A farmer aged 35, educated, smart, modernized, healthy, humorous but calm, kind, caring, social responsible, organic life style, dress minimal, sincere, honest to consumers, and happy to do farming.

*Logo:* The logo is designed by Word-Mark Logo technique as it can present the brand name clearly. The logo focuses on simple and contemporary design that is in line with product personality. The logo will be composed of brand name along with tagline “Organic rice for organic life” in order to describe product type.

*Packaging:* The packaging highlights the simple design associating with brand personality. In addition, the packaging has to be able to protect the product inside and must be user friendly. The colours used on the package are primarily brown, white, and black which refer to simplicity and authenticity of organic rice. However, the use of bright colours is selected according to the regional characteristics based on the opinions from consumer’s group discussion. This colour pattern will make the packaging simple and modernized, aligning with the brand personality as well as consumers’ needs. Moreover, this design also emphasizes on the market position in terms of authentic organic rice by implementing a message “100% Organic” with bold size at noticeable position. On top of that, the packaging also addresses the story of caring attention in entire production under the core “Once upon a time, prior to your plate” through the meaning of the words. The lettering would initiate the feeling of personal communication with consumers, and also stress the attribute of 100% authentic organic rice. In addition, the packaging also mentions the characteristics of rice from the strategic areas where the best rice of each region is produced. This responds to consumers’ needs in terms of desire of eating tasty rice. The strategic rice growing areas provides the good outcomes of the best tasty rice for each rice breed.

In terms of product safety, the packaging shall be divided into two parts. The outer part is the paper box or plastic material that is not touching the rice. It is utilized just to provide information, convenience, attractiveness, and protection of inner packaging. The inner part is a part that connected to rice. Rice is contained in vacuum plastic bag in order to keep rice quality from insect disturbance and contamination.

*Pricing & Place Strategies :* The price of this organic rice is 90 - 95 THB/ kilogram for normal package and 159 - 699 for festive package. Distribution channel can be divided into three channels as follows:

- 1) Online media channel

- 2)       Retailer channel
- 3)       Sales booth channel

### *Marketing Communication Strategy*

*Objectives of communication:* 1) To establish brand awareness of the target. 2) To create brand awareness of “Once Upon a Rice” as authentic organic rice with modern personality, and being paid attention to entire production process. And 3) To motivate the potential targets to experiment and purchase.

*Target of Communications:* The main target of communications is people who reside in Bangkok and outskirts of the city with middle level income and above. They are meticulous in selecting the healthy food, and experienced organic rice or used to consume organic rice in the past. The media exposure behaviour of the target, in the process of information search, indicated that the target is exposed mainly to online media such as Facebook, Instagram, and Community Webboard. This is followed by the point of sales media, which focuses on the information given on the packaging, and people media through the recommendation of families, friends, surrounding people and health influencers. Lastly, it includes the mass media such as TV program. The targets use information obtained from above three media channels for alternative evaluations. For instance, being 100% authentic organic rice with the packaging which is presentable, modernized, user friendly, and safe for rice and environment. Also, the price should have similar range of other products under the same category. Subsequently, the targets make the decision based on the quality aspect such as good quality according to their needs.

*Campaign name:* Once upon a time, prior to your plate. Ep. Rice to meet you

*Period of communication:* January – December (first year of product launch)

*Key Message:* “Once upon a time, prior to your plate”

*Communication strategies:* The communications method used in this research is storytelling in order to convey the story of caring attention in entire production process from growing to serving on consumers’ plates. This project implement under

campaign name “Once upon a time, prior to your plate. Ep. Rice to meet you”. The campaign employs Integrated Marketing Communication Strategy and three communication tools such as advertising, public relations, and marketing activities as well as brand endorser, through the media that align with media exposure of consumers with 360-degree perspective. Moreover, the use of message that arouses the emotion will help to achieve the communications objectives more effectively. The period of communication should be implemented continuously during the first year of product launch, and focus on the fourth quarter. Since the fourth quarter is the harvesting season of the year and has high market competition for the organic rice products.

*Performance Evaluation:* Performance evaluation is divided into two main parts as follows:

- 1) Performance evaluation in the market by considering the sales performances, purchase source, and repurchase source. This evaluation shall be implemented in middle to long-term time frames.
- 2) Consumer mind set evaluation by considering the reaction from communications, which can be assessed immediately after delivering the messages.

*Sustainable Growth:* The rice brand developers should manage and maintain the specified brand position well. However, the brand developers should tailor the brand elements according to the changes of consumers’ needs in each period of time as follows:

- 1) The change of products such as modification of usual packaging every year and special design for the festival periods.
- 2) The change of communications method such as storytelling design and suitable communications channel according to the changes of social context.

Nevertheless, during the changes, the core must be maintained. The researcher used the aforementioned outline to investigate the acceptance from relevant persons in

- charged of Thai rice brand development, in order to obtain the efficient guideline that is suitable for actual implementation as the following section.

### **7.1.3 Prototype application acceptance of rice branding for small-scaled farmers in Thailand**

This process has an objective to gain the opinions and suggestions regarding the prototype development of Thai rice branding for small-scaled farmers. The findings of the group discussions can be concluded as in this section.

For the product aspect it is found that the relevant people in-charge of branding accepted the proposed prototype outline. However, there is the suggestion regarding the adjustment on tagline to “Once upon a time, prior to your plate” to be aligned with the brand name and easy to remember. For the logo, most of the target respondents accepted the logo in alphabet writing style since it provides the modernity, and in line with the brand’s personality. All related person in-charge of branding accepted the paper bag packaging as it is in line with the brand's personality in terms of the environmentally friendly. However, from the suggestion, the packaging should insert the benefit information from each rice breed as well as the rice origin. If space is limited, QR code is the alternative way for consumers to follow up the information through online media.

In addressing of price aspect, all target respondents accepted the price ranges of THB 90-95 per kilogram for the normal packaging, and THB159-699 for the gift set packaging. All of them agreed that this price is similar to the market price, the product can be competitive in the market.

For the distribution channels aspect, the target respondents accepted the distribution channels as per the researcher proposed. However, they suggested that the brand owners should concern about a few additional issues. Firstly, in case of online channels, the order should be set the minimum of quantity (MOQ) for the sake of delivery cost. Secondly, in case of retailers, the brand owner should pay attention to the marginal cost that they have to pay to the owners. The margin cost might not be worthwhile, and should aware of the downward trend of health product in the small

retailers. Thirdly, in case of sales booths, the sales booths should provide the trial for customers to experiment the products. In addition, one marketer suggested that the brand owner should seek for a new alternative channel to avoid the high competition. Also, the direct sales to corporate such as hotel can be an alternative way to boost sales for the rice products in the short time.

For promotion aspect, the target respondents accepted the communication strategy proposed in the outline. However, they provided the suggestions, for example; the message adjustment should focus on benefits, and the beginning stage of product launch should be proactive and present the know-how of farmers. For the communication media, all relevant people in-charge of branding accepted the media that the researcher proposed such as online media, market activity media, and influencer media. However, all relevant people in-charge of branding suggested that maintaining quality of products and production are the most key factor for the sustainable rice branding for farmers. In addition the brand should continuously propose new ideas particularly in product development to communicate with consumers.

According to the prototype of sustainable rice branding for small-scaled farmers as cited above, the researcher implemented the information to develop the manual of rice brand “Once Upon a Rice”. The prototype provides information together with soft files that can be used for designing brand’s elements to the government officer who is in-charge of organic rice development at Rice Department office. They will present and share this information with the potential farmers or those who are ready to develop their brand in the real-life practice.

## 7.2 Discussion

From the research subject "The development of the prototype branding for sustainable rice from small-scaled farming in Thailand", a conclusion can be drawn according to the branding guideline based on the research findings, and the Smart Farming concept specified in the research framework as presented in the following section.

### *1. Internal and external analysis*

The first stage of sustainable development of rice brand, the brand developers should start from internal and external analysis by considering the four main issues as follows:

1) Self-analysis: the brand developers should analyze their own brand to find their strengths. This has to be in line with the consumers' needs and differ from other brands. For instance in addition to rice quality, consumers also want to eat tasty and fragrant rice. In addition, the research showed that the brand developers should be united to generate the effectiveness of brand management. This is aligned with the research of Patrawart (2009) , which found that the core factor that leads to the success of organic rice branding is the union of farmers. This union principal is also in line with the government policy, and the guideline to support small-scaled farmers in Japan, who were suffering from the price crisis. This principal reduced the problems for Japanese farmers regarding the production, management, and rice distribution. Moreover, the government also subsidized the money to the union, as a result, the brands can be more competitive in the market and the farmers can earn more income (Kusanthia, 2016).

2) Competitor Analysis: the brand developers should identify their competitors in the organic rice market as well as investigate them in order to find the suitable space in the market for their own brands. This concept is in line with Arnold (1993) and D. A. Aaker (1996) illustrated that the beginning stage of branding is the competitor analysis both strengths and weaknesses in order to seek for the opportunity in that market. The point of parity of the organic rice market is the caring attention in the production process, in which all brands emphasize on. Thus, the new entrants to

the market, who would like to enter the organic rice market, need to include and communicate this point. Whereas the brand developers should compare information about themselves to competitor's ones, and reveal their outstanding points.

3) Consumer analysis: the brand developers should study the consumer's needs toward rice both functional benefits and emotional benefits. The research indicated that the consumers pay attention to the safety issue, which is in accordance with the strength of organic rice as it is produced without using chemical and safe to consume. Additionally, these findings are aligned with the past researches that the key priority the consumers consider when purchasing rice is the safety, followed by a willingness to pay the premium if the rice is fit to their requirements (Abdullahi et al., 2011; Ahmad et al., 2012; Azabagaoglu M.O. & Gaytancioglu O., 2009; Musa et al., 2011). Furthermore, the communication regarding the attention on production, and nice product design can respond to the consumer's emotional needs. Nonetheless, the main consumer's problem is that they do not have brand loyalty to the organic rice, namely; they cannot remember brand names, which is aligned to the researches of Trakoolchokumnuay (2015), Tuangsuwan (2010), Pattarapunsin (2013), Sattayopas (2009), Adirekchotikul (2005) and Ruttanawarn (2003) that for rice purchasing decision process, the consumers do not have brand loyalty to any particular brands. However, this problem could turn to be an opportunity for a new brand to produce products according to the consumer's needs in both physical and mental aspects.

4) Opportunity and threat analysis: the findings showed that the important opportunity in the brand development of organic rice brand is the support from the government such as "Smart Farmers" concept, and organic rice support policy. This is in line with the rice value development strategy by successful countries such as the policy of branding for agricultural products by the Chinese government. The Chinese government supports their farmers who want to develop brands through various strategies such as geographical indications (GI) strategy and storytelling strategy. This support brings about the rapid growth of rice branding in China and can develop to be the premium product that has the selling price up to THB 1,000 per kilogram. As a result, these products can attract the target consumers who are in the middle class to upper class level (ThaiBiz, 2017). In addition, one of the opportunities to develop rice brands for small-scaled farmers is the growth of online media, which fosters

communication and distribution with low expenses. However, such online media growth could be a potential risk too due to its high competition. The information analysis illustrated that organic rice product is in the position that possesses both strengths and opportunities for sustainable rice branding. Thus, rice branding should be implemented proactively according to the suggestion by the research of Vichyadachar (2015) identified that Thai rice situation is in the strengths and opportunities status, rather than weaknesses and threats. Therefore, Thai rice brands should be operated with the growth strategy by expanding the strengths and use the opportunity situations as much as possible. The marketing growth strategy by the research of Tuangsuwan (2010) suggested that the growth strategy ought to respond to the rice consumer's needs and market trends.

## *2. Identification of Brand Positioning*

The suitable brand identification should be the point that is different from the competitors, and align with the consumer's needs. The important thing is that the brand developers should consider at this stage is the understanding of consumer's needs especially emotional benefits in order to create the brand's elements for consumer's acceptance. Moreover, the brand developers have to recognize the surrounding factors such as a competitive frame of references and points of parity and points of difference between self and competitors. After that, developing those factors to be the core brand value (Keller et al., 2011). The findings showed that most successful brands have a clear brand position, and their core brand value is "Being the rice brand that cares to the consumers". The organic rice is the main product of all successful brands of small-scaled farmers in which its strengths are chemical-free rice, high nutrition, and healthy for consumers. Moreover, this organic rice is grown under the chemical-free farming process which is different from other general rice. Such positioning is in accordance with the target consumers as previously specified in the research results.

The brand positioning of rice brands of successful small-scaled farmers indicated that the key characteristics that in line with the brand identification cited in (Davis S. M., 2002), mentioned that the brand positioning must be valuable, and credible as it is in line with the core brand value. In addition, the brand positioning

has to be sustainable and enduring toward the changes over the period of time. The brand positioning should not be fashionable or popular in short time. Alternatively, it should fit with the brand developers in overall. However, the brand positioning still lacks uniqueness, result in the consumers are difficult to distinguish. This concept is in line with D. A. Aaker (2009), explained that the vital of branding is identifying the position that truly reflects the brand position, and is able to associate with consumer's images too.

### *3. Development of brand's element*

After brand positioning, the next step is the development of brand elements such as logos and slogans that are aligned with brand's personality. This will lead to the user imagery the consumers have toward the particular brands (Rita et al., 2004). Most successful brand elements convey the brand position to consumers. Moreover, the packaging is the key brand element as it reflects the production standard, and main media approaching the consumers. In addition, the presentable packaging shall have the competitive advantage for rice brand since the purchasing decision of consumers is performed mainly at the point of sales. The packaging, therefore, plays an important role as one of the communication tools that persuades the consumers to make the decision. The mixture of above-mentioned elements is in line with Brand Salience as per the model of Brand Building Blocks (Keller et al., 2011). This model can explain that establishing the outstanding point by based on logos, symbols, and other brand's element can definitely make consumers distinguish, and remember the brands on the top of their mind and obvious in every consuming situation.

However, the successful rice brands have all brand elements according to Kotler (2000) that cited that the brand's elements divided into four elements presented below:

1) Attributes: this research indicated that the successful rice brands develop logos, packaging, and colors to make consumers recognize their brands by focusing the symbols that relate to the rice as well as the text.

2) Benefits: most farmers implemented the safe, chemical-free, and certificate by reliably certified bodies to be the main attributes the consumers obtain from the products.

3) Values: most brand developers present the values regarding the caring attention from the growing process up to the consumer's hands. It is used to build the values elements.

4) Personality: most of the brand developers indirectly establish the consumer's perception that the use of product shall reflect being a person who is healthy, sociable and environmentally responsible.

The element development of rice brand is in accordance with the academic theories as well as rice consumer's behavior, as Trakoolchokumnuay (2015) specified that the consumers often purchase the brands that can respond to their needs. These needs can divide into two types. This includes the physical needs such as nutrition of rice, and psychological needs such as the ability to reflect consumer's identities.

Therefore, it can conclude that the brand developers should develop the brand elements both tangible and intangible. This guideline will affect the consumer's perception to recognize product's attributes and values that differ from other brands. Moreover, it will lead the consumers to feel confident and, in turn, tend to purchase a product with the premium price. This process is considered as the important process to generate the value to the rice products (Bradley et al., 2011; Fernández-Barcala & González-Díaz, 2006; Nijssen & Van Trijp, 1998; Nkari, 2015; Utami et al., 2016). Furthermore, the brand developers have to always be concerned that the brand positioning will direct the brand management. This is the outline to develop brand elements for both tangible and intangible components in the future.

#### *4. Market planning and activity operation*

Focusing on brand communications, the research illustrated that even though the consumers demand to consume the safe rice. However, most of them lack rice knowledge especially the difference of organic rice and chemical rice. The main reason is given that the rice consumption in Thailand is in the form of Low Involvement Product, in which it impacts to the consumer's willingness to pay. Therefore the challenge in communications is an establishment of consumer's perception regarding the benefits of organic rice that is better than the general rice. It does not only provide the energy but it also offers the safety and being healthy. Simultaneously, the brand developers have to deliver the message that emphasizes the

consumers to acknowledge the organic rice the best rice. This is in line with the research of Hilal (2016) and Hoang et al. (2016). The researchers suggested that the design of a strategy to create the awareness of quality, cleanliness, safety, and health issue. This strategy shall successfully boost the added-value to the agriculture products. Also, this concept aligns to the research of Padpai (2009) mentioned that the marketing communication strategy for organic rice by successful sustainable farmers prioritizing the standard of organic rice in order to develop consumer trusts.

After identifying the required main message for communications, the rice brand developers need to efficiently present the message according to the objectives. The research further indicated that the presentation strategy should match the organic rice is the storytelling strategy. Each brand could create different key stories in terms of the background of the brands, while they have the parity in the caring attention of production, standardization, chemical-free in order to initiate the belief and wiliness to pay toward the consumers. This ideal is in line with the research of Hoang et al. (2016), which mentioned that the creation of associations and impressive stories should ultimately influence the loyalty of the rice brand. The communications, as mentioned above, leads the rice brand to reach the consumers in the upper market as it escalates the product level from commodities to value products, simultaneously creating the value in minds. This is one of the methods to drive the rice brands to exist in the Blue Ocean market (Kim & Mauborgne, 2014). This market has low competition than general rice market that currently in the Red Ocean. Moreover, the rice brands in the Blue Ocean should not face with the over-supply situation, which eventually affects to high income of the farmers. Nevertheless, the use of storytelling strategy to create value-added products should be adjusted to fit the brand's personality.

The suitable media of rice brand for successful small-scaled farmers is the integration of three media types, which comprise of online media, activity media, and packaging media. These three media are in line with the media exposure behavior of the targets. However, the brand developers should consider the suitability of media integration, it should fit with the consumer's behaviors at the present, and the market condition as well as the return on investment. Saviolo (2013) proposed that if the

brand owners understand the media exposure behavior of the consumers. It should even support the communication more effectively into the costumers' lifestyles.

Furthermore, in addition to the communications with consumers, another important communication is the internal communications of farmer's group. This internal communications should continuously implement through face-to-face conversation in order to exchange information. This will lead to productive operations of the group, which is aligned with Andre F. R. L. (2015) who reviewed that the brands that pay attention to outside communications while neglecting the internal communications would lead to a fragile organizational culture, and in turn unsuccessful branding. Thus, the relevant people in an organization need to understand well the branding process. Also, the brand management should be a part of overall corporate governance, and not only the marketing department activity (D. Aaker, A., & Erich, 2000).

#### *5. Performance evaluation*

The rice brand developers need to evaluate two topics such as market performance and consumer mindset. The market performance evaluation can be implemented from sales performances based on the purchase and repurchase, which is a mid-term to long-term evaluation. The consumer mindset evaluation can be performed immediately after launching of communications. This evaluation should be used to examine the status of a brand in the consumers' mind.

However, it is usually the emotional reactions the consumers have toward the brands. The result is often created by the image communications of the brands and past experiences. In addition, in the long term, the brand's developers can examine the brand resonance, which is a psychological link between consumers and brands. This can be considered in four aspects. This includes loyalty behavior, commitment attitude, sense of belonging in the group, and enthusiasm to engage with the brand (Keller, Apéria, & Georgson, 2008).

The important stage the brand developers should pay attention to is the market planning and activity operation. It ought to be practical and capable for evaluation. D. Aaker, A., and Erich (2000) identified that the performance evaluation should be

continuously implemented, and use the results to productively improve the performances.

#### *6. Sustainable growth of brand equity*

The key characteristics of a sustainable brand is the capability to respond to the consumers' needs at present while maintaining the resources for the next generation (Laukaikul, 2007). Thus, the brand developers have to retain brand constancy by modifying some elements to fit with the consumers' needs, whereas maintaining the core and image of the brands. Moreover, the research showed that the key factor that constructs the sustainable growth of Thai rice brand is the effective communication, which can be divided into two issues presented in the following section.

1) Communications are needed to create a bond between consumers and farmers, for example, arranging a meet event between farmers and consumers. Also, the communications should align to brand positioning and being consistently implemented in order to build the brand awareness and the image clearer in consumer's minds. Moreover, the brand communications is also considered as the stimulus to create a relationship between brands and consumers and ultimately develop to be the brand resonance (Lim et al., 2009). This is in line with the suggestion by a research of Charupongsopon (2014), which mentioned that after the organization creates the strengths of brands, the next important aspect is to remain the reputation, image, and strength of brands, as a result, it shall retain the sustainable brand equity. The interesting finding from this research is that all rice brands under this research implemented event activities for consumers to participate in rice production, thus they can ensure the rice quality as well as create the bonds with farmers. This activities and bonds should lead to the brand loyalty in the future.

Communications is necessary to create the strength in the farmer groups by cultivating and controlling the farmers, to be honest to consumers as well as strictly maintain the standard according to the consumer's expectations. Honesty is conveyed to consumers making brands grow sustainably. At the same time, it has encouraged the new generation to join the group to inherit the sustainable rice branding. This is in line with the agricultural solution in Japan that they motivated new generations to join

the agricultural sector (Kusanthia, 2016). In addition, some group of farmers attempted to extend the product line under the same brand name; this should reduce possible risks and still guarantee the product quality with the same image. Moreover, this will help to reduce the cost of new brand development. The extension of the production line aligns with the brand growth concept through the product line extension strategy too (Keller et al., 2008).

The sustainable rice branding as mentioned earlier is in line with the research of Intasara (2016), which cited that the vital aspect should be considered for sustainable branding. This is composed of product's development that responds the consumer's needs, effective communication, and strategic brand management. However, Davis S. M. (2002) stated that the brand is the valuable asset of the organization and should be sustained for the good return in the long run.

#### *7. Smart Farmers*

The productive rice branding should have its operation aligned to Smart Farmer concept. The findings showed that the successful rice brand for small-scaled farmers has the operation that is in line with this concept. Such operations are mainly producing high quality of rice, safe for consumers and environment, marketing principal, and upper-level market positioning. In addition, the information technology is used to create the stories in order to add value to the product. Also, the online social networking can be utilized as a means to build relationships with consumers, which cause the effective results. The Smart Farmer approach aims to allow farmers to convert themselves from producers to modern agricultural entrepreneurs. This will elevate Thai agriculture to Thailand 4.0, which results in the poverty sustainably solution for farmers.

In conclusion, in order to obtain the sustainable rice branding for small-scaled farmers, the brand developers should implement entire branding process, and suitable for their own brand's context. Therefore, these should create the differentiation over than the competitors, and ultimately trigger the purchasing decision and willingness to pay the premium price. This is a great bargaining power for the market as well as a

competition opportunity, which will lead to the sustainable solutions for farmers poverty conditions.

### **7.3 Recommendations**

1. The research findings showed that the rice brand developers lack clear communications planning toward consumers. This is the weakness that should be solved systematically by determining the suitable media and messages with the information that were analyzed in the information analysis process. This implementation should be in line with brand positioning too in order to create the highest efficient communications.

2. Development of Thai rice brand for small-scaled farmers should consist of insight, consideration of group conditions, group ethics, and element development that aligns with each other. Moreover, this development should implement based on the capability of group members in order to bring out the sustainable rice branding in the long run.

### **7.4 Recommendations for Further Researches**

1. This research aims to develop the prototype of branding for small-scaled farmers in Thailand as well as examining the acceptance from the relevant persons. However, this research has not yet implemented in the actual practice. The further research should utilize this prototype in the real work under the form of Participatory Action Research Model. This is used to develop and seek for the alternative solutions during the workshop gaining the greatest results for the development of rice brands for small-scaled farmers.

2. This research aims to develop the prototype for rice brands for small-scaled farmers in Thailand only for organic rice. Future research should extend the research scope to other rice products under niche market group such as geographical indications (GI) and high nutrition rice. Since they are unique products, they have the outstanding attributes, which are suitable to develop to be value-added product further.

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