

# Branding of cooperative products in Elam province

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## Abstract

The present study aims to present a branding model for cooperative products in Ilam Province, in terms of its applicable-developmental purpose. In terms of the nature of the data, it is qualitative-quantitative with a data-based approach, and finally, in terms of the problem or research method, it is descriptive; therefore, this research is placed in the framework of applicable research in terms of orientation. In the qualitative part of this research, theoretical sampling was used according to the subject. The statistical sample in the qualitative part includes 20 professors, specialists, experts, marketers, entrepreneurs, and owners of production cooperative companies; studied by purposive sampling and snowball method. In the qualitative part of the research, the data theorizing approach was used in line with the emergence of the learned helplessness model. In the quantitative part, the statistical population includes 384 customers of production cooperatives in Ilam province using the Cochran formula in unlimited communities and simple random sampling method. The data obtained from the distribution of questionnaires were analyzed in two parts: descriptive and inferential findings. The research findings led to the identification of causal conditions (including intra-organizational and extra-organizational factors), contextual conditions (including technical and legal infrastructures), intervening conditions (including economic and cultural barriers), strategies (including marketing and brand development strategies), and consequences (including economic and social consequences). The final research model shows that successful branding of cooperative products in Ilam province requires attention to all these factors and appropriate interaction between them. The results of this research can help managers and policymakers in the cooperative sector to develop and strengthen the brand of cooperative products and provide the basis for increasing the competitiveness and sustainable development of cooperatives in Ilam province.

## Keywords:

Branding,  
cooperatives,  
Data-based theory,  
cooperative  
Products,  
Brand development

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## **Extended Abstract**

### **Introduction**

Most of the products of cooperatives in Ilam province are marketed without a brand. In such a case, there is no name or symbol of Ilam province in the production and supply of cooperative products to the market, and the products of the province are marketed under the names of others. Therefore, the cooperative products of the province are easily exported under the names of other provinces of the country due to weakness in branding and inattention to marketing, so that the credit of producing these products goes to other provinces of the country. The audience and customers of each product have different views and opinions regarding existing brands. This situation is called brand image. The products of cooperatives in Ilam province are among the productions that, despite having a high volume of product, do not have a market share and remain unknown among customers. In such a case, despite the fact that Ilam province has cooperatives related to the production in the fields of agriculture, horticulture, dairy products, animal oil, etc., there is no name or address in the production and supply of cooperative products in domestic and international markets, and the province's products are marketed under others' names. Branding and brand management have long existed in different societies to identify individuals and services in various ways. The main motivation for branding is to introduce products to customers and differentiate these products from competitors' products; therefore, it can be said that the success of cooperative products depends on the success of the product brand (Jablipo, 2015). A brand with a well-known personality brings customers' perception of the brand, as well as customer loyalty, less vulnerability to competitor marketing efforts, higher profit margins, and fewer negative customer reactions, among other results of a strong brand (He et al., 2022). A strong brand can lead to numerous marketing benefits and increase the competitive power of the product (ShiYon et al., 2022). It is usually interpreted that a brand with a positive and well-known image causes consumers to respond more favorably to product marketing activities (Malarvizhi et al., 2022). A strong brand symbolizes quality, reliability, and distinctiveness, thus improving the product's position in the market (Khan et al., 2022). In this study, researchers seek to find out the question: how and by means of what model can the branding of Ilam province cooperatives' products be presented?

### **Theoretical Framework**

#### **The Concept of Brand**

Product brand includes broad concepts that are examined from different perspectives of marketing, consumer psychology, and strategic management. A brand is defined as a name, word, sign, symbol, or a combination of these elements that is used to identify the goods and services of a seller or group of sellers. Instrumental brand is a value-creating concept for customers and businesses, and includes a set of shared emotional bonds (He, 2022). Brand attributes may be real or unreal, emotional or logical, tangible or intangible. A brand is formed by building trust in specific promises that demonstrate unique and meaningful benefits. These promises can be formed through various communications with customers, including Internet search, websites, social media, advertising, shopping experiences, and customer service.

#### **Importance of Brand**

The importance of brand is felt more than ever in today's economic societies. Brands have become symbols and main players in various sectors including economic, social, political, cultural, and sports. The importance of brand is in achieving profit, facilitating faster

selection, creating awareness and increasing the chances of survival of products. Branding is used as a tool to create distinction between manufacturers' goods (Zhang, 2022).

### **Brand equity**

Brand equity is one of the most important marketing concepts, which includes brand awareness, perceived quality, brand loyalty, and differences in consumer choice between products with a strong brand and products with similar characteristics without a brand. Brand equity includes brand assets, brand power and brand value. (Kimura, 2021) Brand characteristics include simplicity, brevity, ease of pronunciation, lack of negative components, quick placement in people's minds and memories, ability to be introduced in the media and ability to be printed on product packages.

### **History of Branding in Cooperatives in Ilam Province**

With the passage of time and increasing competition in the market, cooperatives realized that branding is an essential tool for survival and growth. In recent years, some cooperatives in Ilam Province have gradually begun to formulate and implement branding strategies. These strategies include determining brand identity, designing attractive logos and packaging, and using various media for advertising and brand promotion. Research on branding in cooperatives shows that this process can help strengthen the competitive position and increase the performance of cooperatives. For example, a study in Ilam Province showed that cooperatives that have taken branding seriously have been more successful in attracting customers and increasing sales (Antunes et al., 2022).

### **Research Methodology**

In terms of the nature of the data, this research is qualitative-quantitative with a data-based approach; and in terms of the problem or research method, it is descriptive; therefore, this research falls within the framework of applicable research in terms of orientation. In the qualitative part of this research, theoretical sampling was used according to the topic. The statistical sample in the qualitative part includes 20 professors, specialists, experts, marketers, entrepreneurs, and owners of production cooperatives, selected by purposive sampling and snowball method. In the qualitative part of the research, in line with the emergence of the learned helplessness model, the data theorizing approach was used. In the quantitative part, the statistical population includes 384 customers of production cooperatives in Ilam province using the Cochran formula in unlimited communities and simple random sampling method. The data obtained from the distribution of questionnaires were analyzed in two parts: descriptive and inferential findings. The research findings led to the identification of causal conditions (including internal and external factors), contextual conditions (including technical and legal infrastructure), intervening conditions (including economic and cultural barriers), strategies (including marketing and brand development strategies), and consequences (including economic and social consequences).

### **Research findings**

SPSS and AMOS statistical software were used to analyze the data. Confirmatory factor analysis was used to confirm the questions related to each of the variables. The results of factor confirmation using AMOS software are listed, given that the factor loading of all questions is greater than 0.3 and the significance level values are greater than 1.96; therefore, it can be said that the questionnaire questions for this variable were formulated correctly.

### **Conclusion**

The findings of this study indicate that factors such as product quality, appropriate pricing, attractive packaging, and targeted advertising play a significant role in the success of branding cooperative products in Ilam Province. Also, the results of this study showed that the use of modern technologies in the production and marketing process can help promote the brand of cooperative products in Ilam Province. In summary, it can be said that branding cooperative products in Ilam Province requires a comprehensive and targeted approach that considers all factors affecting the success of the brand. By focusing on product quality, appropriate pricing, attractive packaging, targeted advertising, and the use of modern technologies, cooperatives in Ilam Province can take effective steps towards branding their products and, in this way, pave the way for the economic and social development of the province.