

# Development of a Design Thinking-Based Storytelling Learning Model to Improve Brand Identity among Emerging Entrepreneurs

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**Abstract** – This study aims to develop a design thinking-based storytelling learning model to enhance brand identity development among emerging entrepreneurs in the digital economy. New entrepreneurs often struggle to differentiate their brands due to the absence of a clear and coherent brand identity. Although previous studies have examined design thinking and storytelling separately, limited research has integrated these approaches into a unified learning framework for brand development. This study employed a developmental research methodology consisting of three phases: Model synthesis through the integration of design thinking and storytelling concepts, expert validation of the proposed model, and implementation in a digital storytelling course. The results indicate that the proposed model achieved high content validity (CVI = 0.95), while student outcomes demonstrated visually compelling, strategically aligned, and emotionally engaging brand identities, with the strongest performance observed in practical usability and consistency.

**Keywords** – Design thinking, storytelling, brand identity, learning model, emerging entrepreneurs.

## 1. Introduction

In the digital age of intense business competition, emerging entrepreneurs face the challenge of creating brand differentiation and distinctiveness. A significant proportion of startups fail during the early stages of operation, with the absence of a clear and strong brand identity identified as one of the contributing factors [21]. Building a brand identity has become a key factor influencing business competitiveness and long-term sustainability, particularly in digital markets where consumers are exposed to abundant choices and make rapid decisions [19].

Design thinking is an internationally recognized approach for fostering innovation and creative problem-solving, emphasizing a human-centered and iterative process to address user needs effectively [4]. Previous studies have demonstrated that this approach can support the development of creative design skills and contribute to the formation of distinctive brand identities [5].

Storytelling has also been widely acknowledged as an effective strategy for communicating brand values, beliefs, and emotions, enabling stronger connections between brands and their target audiences [26]. Prior research suggests that storytelling can enhance brand recall and positively influence consumer purchase decisions, particularly in competitive markets [27]. For emerging entrepreneurs, the use of meaningful and engaging narratives can support brand differentiation and improve communication effectiveness [34].

Although design thinking and storytelling have been extensively studied as separate concepts, limited research has integrated both approaches into a structured learning model specifically designed to enhance brand identity development for emerging entrepreneurs.

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This gap highlights the need for further investigation into instructional frameworks that combine analytical, creative, and narrative-based learning processes.

Integrating these concepts within a learning model may promote experiential learning, enabling learners to systematically develop analytical, creative, and communication skills essential for building clear and distinctive brand identities [5], [34].

This research aims to develop a design thinking-based storytelling learning model for entrepreneurs in the creative industry and design and marketing students. The specific objectives of this study are: (1) To examine the components of a learning model that integrates storytelling for brand identity development; (2) To develop and evaluate the effectiveness of the proposed learning model; and (3) To investigate the effects of the model on brand identity creation among emerging entrepreneurs.

The findings of this study are expected to contribute academically through the proposal of a structured learning model, while also offering practical implications for both educational and business contexts.

## 2. Research Objectives

- 1) To synthesize the learning processes that integrate design thinking and storytelling for brand identity development.
- 2) To develop the design thinking-based storytelling learning model to improve brand identity among emerging entrepreneurs.
- 3) To evaluate the content validity of the developed learning model.
- 4) To evaluate effectiveness of the brand identity outcomes in student-created works using the proposed learning model.

## 3. Literature Review

This section reviews relevant literature related to design thinking, storytelling, brand identity, and learning model development. The review aims to establish a theoretical foundation for integrating design thinking and storytelling into a structured learning model that supports brand identity development among emerging entrepreneurs.

### 3.1. Design Thinking

Design thinking is a process that focuses on creative problem solving [1], [2]. The main steps are problem understanding, problem definition, brainstorming, prototyping, and testing [3], [4]. The process has been used in many fields, such as product design, service development, and education, to promote innovative thinking and effective problem solving [5].

Applying design thinking to the learning process can help students develop critical thinking and problem-solving skills [6].

In addition, design thinking can enhance creativity and collaboration in educational contexts [7]. In the business sector, design thinking can be used as an important tool in creating unique brands that better meet customer needs [8].

In the business sector, design thinking is used to develop products and services that meet customer needs [9], focusing on understanding customer behavior and expectations through in-depth research [10]. Businesses can also use design thinking to create innovations that differentiate them from competitors and help in strategic decision-making. For example, technology companies and startups often use design thinking to design user experiences (UX) and user interfaces (UI) that meet market needs [11].

Design thinking also plays a key role in developing new approaches to marketing and brand communication. It helps companies identify real customer problems and create effective solutions [12]. Additionally, small businesses and new entrepreneurs can use design thinking to test business ideas and improve products or services before launching them in the market [13], [14].

### 3.2. Storytelling

Storytelling is a communication method that uses stories to convey information, ideas, or experiences [15], [16]. In the context of learning, storytelling can enhance learners' understanding and retention, acting as a cohesive tool to effectively communicate to their audience [17]. Using storytelling in teaching can make content more engaging and relevant to learners' experiences [15]. Storytelling is also a powerful tool for building rapport and understanding between teachers and learners [18].

In business, storytelling is a key strategy for building a strong brand identity, as it helps customers connect with and remember a brand more easily [19]. Using storytelling to convey a corporate identity and brand values can create an emotional connection with the target audience and help brands differentiate themselves from their competitors [20].

### 3.3. Brand Identity

Brand Identity is the set of elements that make a brand distinctive and recognizable [21]. These elements include the name, logo, colours, communication style and brand values [22], [23]. Building a strong brand identity is essential to the success of a business as it helps build trust and loyalty among customers [18].

Effective brand strategy management can help businesses develop and refine their strategies to increase the value and appeal of their brand [24]. In addition, corporate communications play a key role in conveying corporate identity and building good relationships with stakeholders [25].

Design thinking and storytelling can help strengthen brand identity by designing creative processes that are relevant to the target audience and using stories as a tool to create an emotional connection with customers [26], [27].

### 3.4. Emerging Entrepreneurs

Emerging entrepreneurs are individuals who start or develop a new business in its early stages [28]. These entrepreneurs often face a number of challenges, such as lack of resources, high competition, and market uncertainty [29], [30]. Proper support and education can help new entrepreneurs develop the skills and knowledge necessary for business success [31], [32].

Learning through the process of design thinking can help entrepreneurs develop problem-solving approaches and create products that meet market needs [33].

While storytelling helps them build connections with customers and create a stronger brand identity [26]. Therefore, integrating design thinking and storytelling is an important approach that can help new entrepreneurs differentiate themselves in a highly competitive market [34].

## 4. Research Framework

This study proposes a conceptual research framework that illustrates the systematic structure of the design thinking-based storytelling learning model. The framework is designed to explain the relationships among key components involved in the development and evaluation of the learning model, as well as the expected research outcomes. The framework follows an input–process–output (IPO) structure, which reflects the causal relationships guiding the instructional design and assessment of learning effectiveness.

As illustrated in Figure 1, the research framework consists of three interrelated components: Input, process, and output. These components collectively describe how theoretical foundations are transformed into learning activities and subsequently evaluated through measurable outcomes.

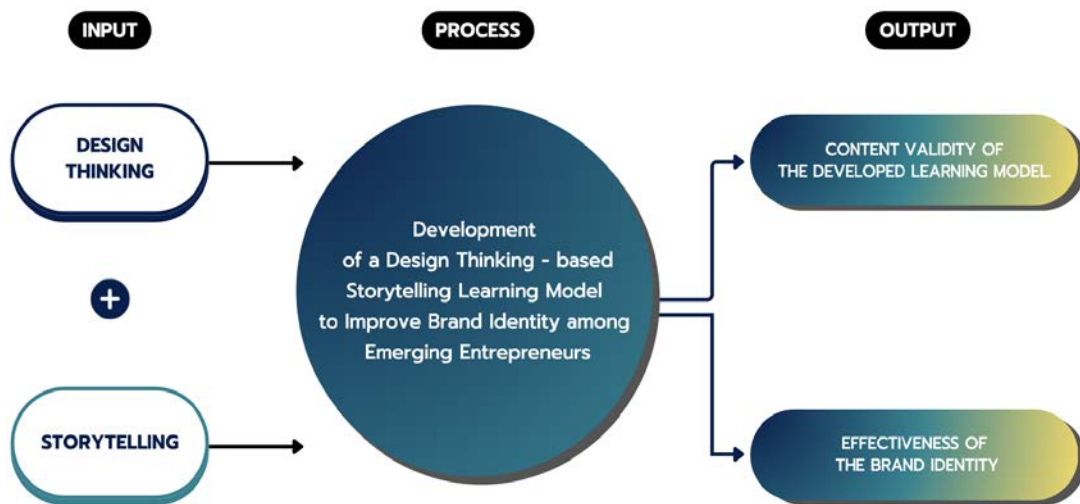


Figure 1. Input-process-output research framework linked with design thinking and storytelling outcomes

The input component comprises two core theoretical foundations: Design thinking and storytelling. Design thinking is a creative problem-solving approach that emphasizes deep understanding of users through a human-centered and iterative process. It consists of five main stages: Empathize, define, ideate, prototype, and test.

Storytelling, on the other hand, functions as a communication approach that uses narratives to convey values, meanings, and emotions, thereby supporting sense-making and emotional engagement in learning and branding contexts.

The process component represents the development of the design thinking-based storytelling learning model, which integrates design thinking stages with story creation processes to support brand identity development for emerging entrepreneurs. Based on the research design, the learning process combines design thinking and storytelling as follows:

Step (1) Empathize + story gathering - Collecting data and stories to understand users, contexts, and relevant situations.

Step (2) Define + story structuring - Defining clear problems or needs and establishing an appropriate narrative structure.

Step (3) Ideate + Story element ideation - Generating creative concepts related to story elements, such as characters, settings, and messages.

Step (4) Prototype + story prototyping - Developing preliminary story prototypes to explore and refine ideas.

Step (5) Test + story testing - Testing stories with target groups to obtain feedback and improve the outcomes.

This integrated process enables learners to systematically apply analytical, creative, and narrative skills throughout the learning activities.

The output component represents the expected outcomes of the research and consists of two dimensions. The first outcome is the content validity of the developed learning model, which evaluates the appropriateness, accuracy, and applicability of the model through expert assessment. This evaluation confirms whether the learning model is suitable for instructional use. The second outcome is the effectiveness of brand identity, which assesses the quality of brand identities developed by students using the proposed learning model. This evaluation focuses on how effectively the resulting brand identities meet the needs of emerging entrepreneurs and their target markets.

## 5. Methodology

This study employed a developmental research approach with the objective of developing and evaluating the effectiveness of a design thinking-based storytelling learning model to enhance brand identity among emerging entrepreneurs. The research process was divided into three main phases, as described below:

### *Phase (1) Synthesis of learning model components:*

The first phase focused on analyzing relevant theoretical foundations and synthesizing the initial structure of the learning model. The procedures in this phase were as follows:

1) A review and analysis of documents, previous research, and theoretical concepts related to design thinking, storytelling, and brand identity development.

2) The synthesis of a preliminary learning model structure that integrates design thinking processes with storytelling practices, intended to support students' skill development in creating brand identity.

### *Phase (2) Development and content validity:*

The second phase involved the development of the learning model and the evaluation of its content validity. The procedures were as follows:

1) The development of the design thinking-based storytelling learning model based on the synthesized structure obtained in Phase 1.

2) An evaluation of the content validity of the developed learning model using an expert assessment form. The evaluation was conducted by five experts with expertise in design, marketing, and storytelling. The content validity index (CVI) was calculated to assess the appropriateness, clarity, and applicability of the learning model.

### *Phase (3) Model trial and effectiveness evaluation:*

The third phase focused on implementing the learning model and evaluating its effectiveness. The procedures were as follows:

1) The learning model was implemented with a group of 30 students enrolled in a digital storytelling course, selected using purposive sampling.

2) Students participated in learning activities following the stages of the proposed model, including empathize, define, ideate, prototype, and test, integrated with storytelling activities aimed at developing creative media for real emerging entrepreneurs.

3) The student-created works were presented to five emerging entrepreneurs, who evaluated the effectiveness of the developed brand identities across multiple dimensions, including clarity, distinctiveness, brand communication, and alignment with the target audience.

### **5.1. Population and Sample**

The population and sample of this study consisted of three groups involved in the development, implementation, and evaluation of the learning model. All participants were selected using purposive sampling, based on their relevance to the research objectives. The details are as follows:

1) Experts: 5 experts with professional experience in design, marketing, and storytelling were purposively selected to evaluate the content validity of the proposed learning model.

- 2) Students: 30 undergraduate students enrolled in a digital storytelling course were purposively selected to participate in the implementation of the learning model.
- 3) Emerging entrepreneurs: 5 emerging entrepreneurs were purposively selected to evaluate the effectiveness of the brand identities developed by students using the proposed learning model.

### 5.2. Research Variables

The variables used in this study are classified into independent and dependent variables as follows:

- *Independent variable*: The design thinking-based storytelling learning model.
- *Dependent variable*: The effectiveness of brand identity demonstrated in students developed works.

### 5.3. Research Instruments

The instruments employed in this study were designed to support the development, implementation, and evaluation of the proposed learning model. The research instruments consisted of the following:

- 1) A content validity evaluation form used to assess the appropriateness, clarity, and applicability of the learning model by expert reviewers.
- 2) A brand identity assessment form used to evaluate the effectiveness of brand identity outcomes in student-created works.
- 3) Guidelines for data collection from students' learning activities and creative works, used to support systematic observation and documentation during the implementation phase.

### 5.4. Data Analysis

The data collected in this study were analyzed using descriptive and evaluative methods aligned with the research objectives. The analysis procedures were as follows:

- 1) The content validity index (CVI) was calculated based on expert evaluations to determine the content validity of the developed learning model.
- 2) Descriptive statistics, including mean ( $\bar{X}$ ) and standard deviation (SD.), were used to analyze the results of the learning model implementation and to evaluate the effectiveness of brand identity demonstrated in students' works.

## 6. Results

The findings of the study will be presented in four parts: (1) The synthesis of the design thinking-based storytelling learning process, (2) The development of the learning model to enhance brand identity among emerging entrepreneurs, (3) The evaluation of the content validity of the developed learning model, and (4) The assessment of the effectiveness of brand identity in student-created works for emerging entrepreneurs.

### 6.1. Processes of Design Thinking-Based Storytelling Learning

Table 1 demonstrates the developed learning process integrates the five steps of the design thinking process with the story creation process. Each step is detailed as follows:

Table 1. Integrated thinking-based storytelling process

| Design Thinking | Story Creation            | Description                                                            | Reference                  |
|-----------------|---------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------|
| 1. Empathize    | 1. Story gathering        | Gathering data and stories to understand users or relevant situations. | [3], [4], [35], [36]       |
| 2. Define       | 2. Story structuring      | Clearly defining the problem or need and structuring the story.        | [3], [4], [35], [36], [37] |
| 3. Ideate       | 3. Story element ideation | Creating concepts about story elements such as characters and setting. | [3], [4], [35], [36]       |
| 4. Prototype    | 4. Story prototyping      | Prototype stories for testing and improvement                          | [3], [4], [35], [37], [38] |
| 5. Test         | 5. Story testing          | Test stories with target audiences to get feedback and improve them.   | [3], [4], [35], [36], [37] |

This process helps students practice thinking, analyze, and create a clear brand identity that can be communicated effectively through storytelling.

Overall, each step integrates processes which helps students develop technical design and communication skills as well as the abilities of problem-solving and strategic thinking when it comes to storytelling.

By implementing these processes into real-world setting, this can help transform passive academic knowledge into successful and active brand building.

Furthermore, based on the integration of each phase, the model combination of storytelling and design thinking aspects can help ensure that student's output is virtually appealing and creative while being able to create human-centred value and competitive strategies that are important for successful branding.

## 6.2. Design Thinking - Based Storytelling Learning Model to Improve Brand Identity Among Emerging Entrepreneurs

Figure 2 shows that the developed learning model consists of 5 steps, each step combining the approaches of design thinking with storytelling, as detailed below.

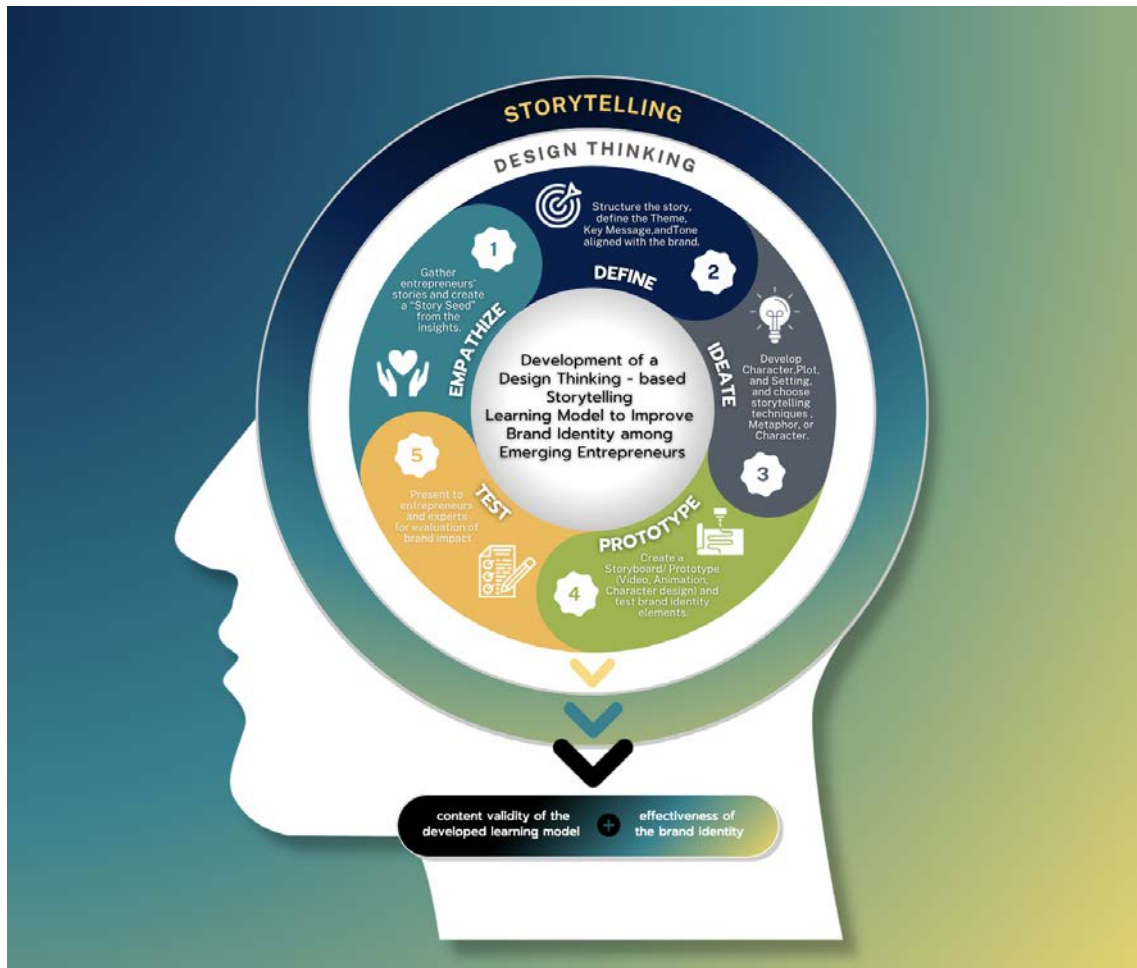


Figure 2. Five-step design thinking-based storytelling learning model to improve brand identity among emerging entrepreneurs

Table 2. Design thinking-based storytelling learning model

| Design Thinking Step | Story Creation Step       | Objectives                                                       | Activities                                                                                                                                                         | Tools/Techniques                                                                                                                                | Participants                  | Outcomes                                              | Time Allocation |
|----------------------|---------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------|-----------------|
| 1. Empathize         | 1. Story gathering        | To understand the needs and experiences of entrepreneurs         | Interview entrepreneurs, observe behavior, listen to stories                                                                                                       | Brand story, Brand origin, entrepreneur interview                                                                                               | Learner, entrepreneur         | Understanding the entrepreneur's problems and needs   | 1 week          |
| 2. Define            | 2. Story structuring      | To identify key issues and themes to communicate                 | Brainstorm, analyze brand data                                                                                                                                     | Brand strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats analysis, demonstrating an understanding of the business context, SWOT Analysis and 5W2H | Learner                       | Clear main points and themes                          | 1 week          |
| Design Thinking Step | Story Creation Step       | Objectives                                                       | Activities                                                                                                                                                         | Tools/Techniques                                                                                                                                | Participants                  | Outcomes                                              | Time Allocation |
| 3. Ideate            | 3. Story element ideation | To create interesting and creative story elements                | Brainstorm, choose storytelling techniques, conceptualize brand (concept) design moodboard, sketch, and character logo design set brand colors, fonts, and symbols | Brainstorming, shape psychology / color psychology/typography matching, adobe illustrator/ procreate/ website Coolors.co/ Canva                 | Learner                       | Ideas for characters, plots and scenes                | 2 week          |
| 4. Prototype         | 4. Story prototyping      | To create a prototype of a story that can be tested              | Create storyboard, design brand identity, develop presentation media, create mockups to visualize the virtual implementation                                       | Storyboard creation, brand identity design, prototyping tools                                                                                   | Learner, entrepreneur, expert | Storyboard or prototype of storytelling media, mockup | 2 week          |
| 5. Test              | 5. Story testing          | To evaluate the effectiveness of the story and make improvements | Presenting prototypes to entrepreneurs and experts, listening to opinions                                                                                          | User testing, feedback collection                                                                                                               | Learner, entrepreneur         | Improved and effective storytelling media             | 1 week          |

Note: Time allocation increases in the Ideate/Prototype stages (2-week/stage) reflects how most creative production and iteration occurs

The learning model developed under the concept of design thinking-based storytelling learning model (Table 2) aims to promote the development of brand identity for emerging entrepreneurs through the participation of students in the field of multimedia technology.

This model integrates the design thinking process, which is a creative approach to problem solving, with the use of storytelling, an effective storytelling technique to create a connection between the brand and the target group.

The process of this learning model has 5 main steps that reflect the principles of design thinking and are consistent with the story development process, as follows:

**Step 1 *Empathize* (story gathering):** Is the first step that focuses on understanding the needs and experiences of entrepreneurs, using interview techniques, observation, and analyzing the basic story of the brand. Students will collect information on the brand concept, business goals, and core values that they want to communicate, to proceed to the next step. Based on this approach, it can help in the practices related to human-centred designs as well as guarantees that branding is derived from real experiences rather than assumptions.

**Step 2 *Define* (story structuring):** After collecting information, at this stage, students will analyze and define the main points of the brand by defining the key message, theme, and tone so that the brand story has a clear direction and can create a distinctive identity that identify emotional landscape of the context.

**Step 3 *Ideate* (story element ideation):** This step focuses on developing the elements of the story. Consisting of creating character, plot, and setting, including the selection of mascots that help enhance the brand's appeal. Students will apply techniques such as brainstorming and defining shape psychology / color psychology / typography matching using a variety of tools such as Adobe Illustrator / Procreate / website Coolers.co / Canva to design. This step ensures the balance between strategic coherence and originality of the design, which can help ensuring that the components compromising the story are relatable to both brands and target market.

**Step 4 *Prototype* (story prototyping):** Once the concept and story are clearly defined, students will be able to develop media that communicates brand identity, such as Storyboard, Prototype Video, Animation, and Brand Identity Design to present brand concepts in a tangible form or more clearly visualized through simulation.

**Step 5 *Test* (story testing)** is the final step, which is to test the media prototype with target groups such as entrepreneurs and branding experts to use feedback to improve market suitability and enhance brand communication effectiveness. Moreover, through the learning process of this step, it can help students to gain skills regarding iterative development, which is one of the most significant skills needed in design and brand building practices.

The results of this model can be divided into 2 aspects: Evaluating the validity of the developed learning model (content validity of the developed learning model) and evaluating the effectiveness of the developed brand identity (effectiveness of the brand identity).

This learning process not only helps students develop skills in media design and storytelling, but also helps emerging entrepreneurs benefit from quality brand media that can be used effectively in marketing communications.

The development of a design thinking-based storytelling learning model to improve brand identity among emerging entrepreneurs is an approach that can help students learn through practical practice (experiential learning), and support entrepreneurs create a unique brand identity through the storytelling process.

When it comes to real-world practice, these structures extend beyond instructional design, but also transformative frameworks that empowers students to adopt the mindset of entrepreneurs through the activities of brand creation by collaborating with organizations confronted with tangible brand challenges [40]. This real-world endeavor connects classroom with market implementation that can improve emotional and physical skills of students.

Another critical importance of this model is the flexibility as it can be applied to different business types from lifestyle to luxury goods. This shows that storytelling is not only relevant in one industry, but is universally applicable with cautions. For example, students collaborating with "Farm Duck" had to convey rural appeal and genuinely to consumers whereas "Vorn" utilizes the method of minimalist sophistication.

Additionally, the model is designed to encourage collaborations and creativity. Within each stage, students are able to ideate and negotiate their design choices based on their group ideas in order to foster cross-disciplinary thinking, which relates to the workflow of creative protects [41].

### **6.3. Results of the Evaluation of the Content Validity of the Developed Learning Model**

The validity assessment of the developed learning model had been conducted. The model was assessed for content validity index (CVI) by 5 specialists. The results of the assessment of the validation of the model showed the content validity index (CVI) = 0.95 (shown in Table 3) which is valid and applicable.

Table 3. Result of evaluation of the effectiveness of the brand identity

| Item                                                                      | Validity |             |                    |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------|-------------|--------------------|
|                                                                           | N        | CVI         | Meaning            |
| The purpose of the design thinking-based storytelling learning model      | 5        | 0.97        | Appropriate        |
| Elements of the design thinking-based storytelling learning model         | 5        | 0.95        | Appropriate        |
| Criteria for evaluating design thinking-based storytelling learning model | 5        | 0.93        | Appropriate        |
| <b>Summary</b>                                                            | <b>5</b> | <b>0.95</b> | <b>Appropriate</b> |

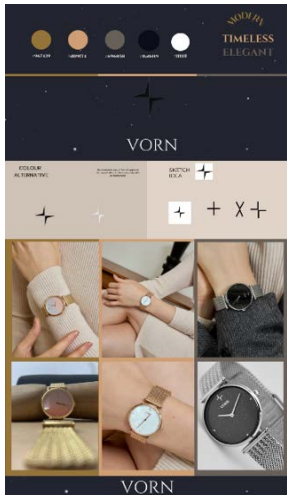
#### 6.4. Results of the Evaluation of the Effectiveness of the Brand Identity in the Student-Created Works for Emerging Entrepreneurs

After applying the developed model to teaching, it was found that students were able to produce brand identity design works that were fully consistent with the model steps, including brand analysis, storytelling, and image element design. All works were presented and evaluated by real entrepreneurs, which can be depicted in Table 4.

Table 4. Summary of brand identity outputs for five emerging entrepreneurs

| No. | Brand name/<br>Logo & visual<br>identity                                                             | Brand concept & story                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      | Target<br>audience                                                                                                           | Brand identity design<br>for emerging<br>entrepreneurs                                |
|-----|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1   |  <p>Farm Duck</p> | <p>“Farm Duck, Fumrak, Mak Lert Rot”</p> <p>“Mixed Salted Eggs” is a brand originating from the intention of the owner of the duck farm named “Khun Ped” who is passionate about taking care of the farm and producing quality salted eggs with a heart full of love, care and consistency in every step, from raising ducks, selecting eggs to delivering directly to customers.</p> <p>The farm’s goal is not just to make delicious salted eggs, but also to pass on “care” and “happiness” from the farm to consumers through fresh products with a well-rounded taste and produced with honesty and punctuality, earning the trust of regular customers in the area and growing into a wider market.</p> <p>Brand highlights:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Own duck farm produces a large number of salted eggs with consistent quality.</li> <li>• “Duck Duck” character, the brand representative duck, is cheerful and bright, conveying care.</li> <li>• The logo of a duck and a heart-shaped egg conveys the “love” that goes into every egg.</li> <li>• Unique packaging and colors, white-yellow-orange, conveying the identity of salted eggs.</li> </ul> <p>Brand mission:</p> <p>Delivering deliciousness and freshness from the farm to your hands with heart in every step.</p> <p>Brand vision:</p> <p>Wanting every province in Thailand to know about mixed salted eggs through wholesale and as local souvenirs.</p> | <p>All ages and genders who want to taste the flavor of salted eggs and those who want to experience eating salted eggs.</p> |  |

| No. | Brand name/<br>Logo & visual<br>identity                                                            | Brand concept & story                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      | Target<br>audience                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             | Brand identity design<br>for emerging<br>entrepreneurs                                |
|-----|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 2   |  <p>Lung Chong</p> | <p>“Uncle Jong’s warm coffee, aromatic, strong, fresh and friendly price.”</p> <p>“Uncle Jong’s coffee” was born from the love of coffee of Professor Jong, or as everyone calls him “Uncle Jong”, who is passionate about drinking fresh coffee and started his own business by roasting coffee beans during the COVID-19 pandemic with a small roasting machine and his true intention to learn.</p> <p>From his personal preference, he became a small business that roasted quality fresh coffee beans and sold them at affordable prices to meet the needs of coffee lovers who love strong flavors and aromas and want to support handmade homemade products that are “honest and intentional”. Brand highlights:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Roasting own beans, fresh for every order,</li> <li>• Many varieties, choose the intensity level,</li> <li>• Selling retail and wholesale at affordable prices,</li> <li>• Promoted via social media and word-of-mouth,</li> <li>• Simple concept, accessible to all ages.</li> </ul> <p>Brand mission:<br/>To pass on quality coffee beans that are filled with the dedication of the maker and fill your good day with Uncle Jong’s strong flavor.</p> <p>Brand vision:<br/>To be a local coffee brand that people remember and want to support because of the sincerity and charm of the unique coffee flavor.</p> | <p>The target group is mostly teachers or coffee shops that can contact to buy coffee beans.</p> <p>The owner therefore wants to design a simple brand logo using a warm brown-cream tone.</p> <p>The character “Mocha”, a calm American Bobtail cat, represents stylish, deep coffee.</p> <p>The coffee bean symbol in the form of a cat = cuteness + intensity of taste.</p> <p>The package design is a pattern from the icon in the coffee shop, geometric, minimalist.</p> |   |
| 3   |  <p>Kinnhon</p>  | <p>“Baked with love, freshly made in every bite”.</p> <p>“Gin Nom” was born from the owner’s love of eating desserts, who wanted to turn his personal preference into an additional income. Starting with the first menu, “Blueberry Cheesecake,” which was made with intention and gradually developed into a variety of menus.</p> <p>The desserts are all homemade, with attention paid to every step, from carefully selected ingredients to taste and appearance. The brand wants everyone to enjoy their desserts as much as owners do when they make them.</p> <p>Brand Highlights:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Homemade, fresh desserts made to order every day,</li> <li>• Use good quality ingredients at affordable prices,</li> <li>• A variety of menus suitable for all ages,</li> <li>• Sold through online channels (IG, Facebook, Line OA),</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   | <p>People of all ages, whether children, adults, students, or office workers, who like to eat sweet snacks during their free time.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |  |

| No. | Brand name/<br>Logo & visual<br>identity                                                        | Brand concept & story                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             | Target<br>audience                                                                                                                                                          | Brand identity design<br>for emerging<br>entrepreneurs                               |
|-----|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|     |                                                                                                 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Has a regular customer base from companies and agencies that order break snacks.</li> </ul> <p>Brand mission:<br/>Delivering happiness through delicious desserts made by hand and with heart.</p> <p>Brand vision:<br/>A homemade dessert brand that everyone thinks of when they need to energize each day.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |                                                                                                                                                                             |                                                                                      |
| 4   |  <p>VORN</p> | <p>“VORN – Timeless Beauty”<br/>MODERN / TIMELESS / ELEGANT / INTEGRITY</p> <p>VORN is a luxury watch brand for modern women that perfectly combines modernity with classicism. Its elegant design emphasizes peace and quietness, and is easy to wear with every style, whether for work, study or travel.</p> <p>The inspiration for the name “VORN” comes from the word “Thaworn”, which is the name of my beloved grandmother, representing “lasting memories” and time that never stops. The brand wants every VORN watch to be a symbol of precious and beautiful moments.</p> <p>Brand highlights:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Minimal design, no minute hand, giving a sense of “peace”,</li> <li>The case is made of medical grade 316L Stainless Steel, durable, waterproof and sweatproof,</li> <li>Interchangeable straps, suitable for every look and occasion,</li> <li>Suitable for teenagers and working adults aged 18-40 who love elegant fashion.</li> </ul> <p>Brand mission:<br/>Create watches that are both “accessories” and “timepieces” that reflect the identity of the wearer at every stage of life.</p> <p>Brand vision:<br/>A luxury watch brand for modern women that meets every lifestyle aspect, both function and fashion.</p> | <p>Women aged 18-40 years old, who are university students and working, who like simple, luxurious and classic styles, which are stylish, modern, timeless and durable.</p> |  |

| No. | Brand name/<br>Logo & visual<br>identity                                                              | Brand concept & story                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  | Target<br>audience                                                         | Brand identity design<br>for emerging<br>entrepreneurs                              |
|-----|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 5   |  <p>Healthy Rice</p> | <p>“Good rice is valuable for sustainable health”.</p> <p>“Healthy Riceberry Group” was created from the intention of a group of farmers who wanted to create rice products that are good for health and maintain a good quality of life for both producers and consumers. Healthy rice grows riceberry with care in every process, from selecting seeds, taking care of the rice fields without chemicals, to harvesting and packaging meticulously, so that the rice that reaches you is the best in terms of nutrition and safety.</p> <p>Brand highlights:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Organically grown riceberry, free from chemicals.</li> <li>• Rich in antioxidants, dietary fiber and high nutritional value.</li> <li>• Supports sustainable farming practices, with farmers in the community actually growing them.</li> <li>• Simple and healthy packaging, suitable for people who care about the food they choose to eat.</li> </ul> <p>Brand mission:<br/>Improve the health of consumers with quality rice and create stability for the producing community.</p> <p>Brand vision:<br/>To be a top choice rice brand for health-conscious people in every region.</p> | Health-conscious customers of all ages or general people who eat riceberry |  |

The brand identity designs of students developed under the design thinking-based storytelling learning model are diverse and have their own unique strengths. Each brand is able to convey the main concept of the business through a unique story (brand story) that is consistent with the target group and clearly reflects the brand image as follows:

Farm Duck brand conveys warmth and care in the production process through the story of a local duck farm and uses “Duck Duck” as a memorable brand character, helping to enhance a friendly and sincere image.

Lung Chong brand conveys simplicity and warmth through the identity of the brand owner, using “Mocha Cat” as a representative of stylish, deep and approachable coffee. This affirms that brand mascots make storytelling property more appealing across digital platforms. The students also cleverly merged visual semiotics with personality branding, which demonstrated that they were able to implement cohesive communication into the identity of the entire brand.

Kinnhon brand demonstrates love for homemade pastries baked with heart, conveying the happiness that is intended to be passed on through simple but sincere flavors and packaging.

VORN brand conveys the image of a modern women’s watch that combines classic and modern through the concept of “Timeless Beauty” that is linked to memories and values.

Healthy Rice brand demonstrates the health, sustainability and naturalness of organic rice products, conveying the intentions of the farming community in a credible form. The ability of the brand to facilitate the development of the brand narratives that respond to broader consumer trends even in relative traditional product even in the conventional product categories.

Overall, the students were able to design a complete brand identity in terms of concept, image use, storytelling and suitability for the target group. Which reflects the effectiveness of the learning model that emphasizes practical work with entrepreneurs in the business world.

An example of student work aligned with the model in learning management system is presented in Table 4.

Therefore, the work is evaluated, and the evaluation results are shown in Table 5.

Table 5. Result of entrepreneur evaluation of brand identity effectiveness across four dimensions

| Aspect                                | Evaluation Criteria                 | Indicators                                                                                               | $\bar{x}$ | S.D. | Performance Level |
|---------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------|------|-------------------|
| 1. Visual Identity & Design           | Clarity of Brand Identity           | The brand elements (logo, colors, typography) are distinct and easily recognizable.                      | 4.40      | 0.55 | Good              |
|                                       | Uniqueness                          | The brand identity is distinctive and differentiates from competitors.                                   | 4.00      | 0.71 | Good              |
|                                       | Brand Appeal                        | The design is visually attractive and engaging to the target audience.                                   | 4.20      | 0.45 | Good              |
|                                       | Overall                             |                                                                                                          | 4.20      | 0.57 | Good              |
| 2. Strategic Alignment                | Alignment with Business Concept     | The brand identity clearly reflects the business mission and values.                                     | 4.40      | 0.89 | Good              |
|                                       | Suitability for Target Audience     | The brand identity aligns with the preferences and needs of the target audience.                         | 4.40      | 0.89 | Good              |
|                                       | Scalability & Adaptability          | The brand identity allows for future modifications and business growth.                                  | 4.40      | 0.89 | Good              |
|                                       | Overall                             |                                                                                                          | 4.40      | 0.89 | Good              |
| 3. Communication & Brand Storytelling | Effectiveness of Brand Storytelling | The brand identity effectively conveys the brands story and purpose.                                     | 4.60      | 0.55 | Excellent         |
|                                       | Emotional Connection                | The brand evokes the intended emotions and builds a connection with consumers.                           | 4.40      | 0.55 | Good              |
|                                       | Overall                             |                                                                                                          | 4.50      | 0.55 | Good              |
| 4. Practical Usability & Consistency  | Practicality & Usability            | The brand identity is applicable across different media (print, digital, packaging, social media, etc.). | 5.00      | 0.00 | Excellent         |
|                                       | Consistency                         | The brand maintains visual coherence in logo, colors, and other elements across different applications.  | 4.60      | 0.55 | Excellent         |
|                                       | Overall                             |                                                                                                          | 4.80      | 0.55 | Excellent         |
| Total                                 |                                     |                                                                                                          | 4.48      | 0.64 | Good              |

The results of the evaluation of the brand identity performance in the students' work covered 4 main aspects: (1) Design and brand identity, (2) Strategic consistency, (3) Communication and brand storytelling, and (4) Usability and brand consistency.

The overall mean of all aspects was  $\bar{x} = 4.48$  (S.D. = 0.64), which is at the "good" level, indicating the students' ability to design a quality brand identity that is consistent with the strategic approach.

The aspect that received the highest score was usability and brand consistency, with an average of  $\bar{x} = 4.80$  (S.D. = 0.55), reflecting the brand design that can be effectively applied in various media. As brands have interacted across such platforms, it is important to prevent the issue as cognitive dissonance.

In addition, the aspect of communication and brand storytelling had an average of  $\bar{x} = 4.50$  (S.D. = 0.55), indicating that the students were able to convey the brand story powerfully and connect emotionally with the target group effectively by utilising omnichannel communication strategies, which integrate several platforms for brand building.

Another noteworthy result that should be pointed out is the Emotional Connection score ( $\bar{x} = 4.40$ ), which was considerably high. Based on the core of the brand identity's core assumption, storytelling drives the consumer's behaviour. This is also shown in the work by the brand such as VORN, which utilises the timeless beauty that draws the feeling of nostalgia and value that convey the rich histories of a brand. This helps evoke the emotions of remembrance as well as sophistication through its design.

All assessed aspects received an average score of more than 4.00, indicating the effectiveness of the learning model that promotes comprehensive brand identity design and can be applied practically. When being put together, this evaluation collectively demonstrates that the model is able to help students confirm that their experiences and understandings that are supported by design thinking can foster full-spectrum comprehension when it comes to brand development.

## 7. Discussion

The results of this study highlight the effectiveness of integrating design thinking and storytelling in developing brand identities among emerging entrepreneurs. The proposed learning model facilitated experiential learning through a structured five-step process: Empathize, Define, Ideate, Prototype, and Test, which were merged with storytelling elements such as story gathering, structuring, and prototyping. This aligns with previous findings that design thinking promotes user-centered innovation and creative problem-solving [4], [5].

The brand identity works developed by students reflected not only clarity and uniqueness but also strong emotional engagement and practical usability. The highest-rated aspect was practical usability and consistency ( $\bar{x} = 4.80$ ), indicating the ability of students to apply brand identity consistently across media platforms. This supports the claim that storytelling enhances real-world brand communication [34].

Additionally, the communication and brand storytelling aspect received a high score ( $\bar{x} = 4.50$ ), particularly in storytelling effectiveness ( $\bar{x} = 4.60$ ), confirming in the findings that storytelling improves brand recall and purchase intention [27].

The overall performance level ( $\bar{x} = 4.48$ ) reflects that students could implement strategic, creative, and technically sound brand identity designs, aligning with the study that storytelling's role in brand differentiation [26]. This implies that the learning model supports the cultivation of T-shaped skills that are including different tools such as strategy, storytelling and consumer psychology. Students could successfully navigate such intricate process of transformation, which shows that the model is able to present unique brand identity and their abilities in strategic execution. Hence, being able to synthesise these diverse skill sets can help to strengthen the interdisciplinary of the model.

The use of real entrepreneur feedback further strengthened authenticity and relevance in student assignment, making this model suitable for application in both educational and business contexts. This demonstrates the model's capability to bridge theory and practice effectively in the context of brand identity development. Entrepreneurs usually have to serve as clients by providing valuable insights to the needs for brands based on consumer expectations and requirements. Their involvement helps to create a feedback cycle that can motivate students to revise their work based on ever-changing market conditions rather than only relying on theories. This aligns with the Experiential Learning Theory that mentions that learning is often supported by reflective investigations and experiments [39]. By engaging entrepreneurs, students can be provided with context and validation of entrepreneur involvement, which can help deepen their learning and branding outcomes in real-world practicality.

Furthermore, the model's iterative structure as well as participatory format are considered the main principles of learning that focuses on collaborative construction of knowledge rather than passively absorbed. Students participated in the process of constructing branding through iterative conversation, feedback, and creative synthesis rather than solely learning about it. In this regard, the classroom was transformed into a collaborative design laboratory, in which students took the role of consultants and entrepreneurs served as clients. This method concealed conventional classroom structures and improved student engagement and responsibility. It also promoted effective evaluation as student performance could be assessed not only on outcomes but also on processes of adaptations and collaboration.

## 8. Conclusion

This study developed a design thinking-based storytelling learning model to improve brand identity among emerging entrepreneurs by integrating the core stages of design thinking with structured storytelling techniques. The results of expert evaluation confirmed that the proposed model demonstrates high content validity (CVI = 0.95), indicating its appropriateness and reliability for instructional application.

The implementation of the model in a digital storytelling course revealed that learners were able to produce brand identity outcomes that were visually compelling, strategically aligned, and emotionally engaging. The highest performance was observed in practical usability and consistency, reflecting the model's effectiveness in supporting the systematic development of brand identity through experiential learning. In addition, the involvement of real entrepreneurs in evaluating student work strengthened the authenticity and practical relevance of the learning outcomes.

Overall, the proposed learning model contributes both academically and practically by offering a structured framework that enhances brand identity development through the integration of design thinking and storytelling. While the study was conducted within a specific instructional context, future research should expand its application across different educational settings, industries, and cultural contexts, as well as examine long-term impacts on brand performance and entrepreneurial sustainability.

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