

Branding Egypt's Heritage Handicrafts in The Global Markets as Fashionable Creative Industries

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Abstract

Egypt has always fascinated the world by its art and cultural heritage, as since the dawn of mankind the Egyptian artist and hand crafter has provided the world with masterpieces that still fascinate the viewers whenever they happen to meet them in the museum displays all over the world. The problem is that those handicrafts are facing now serious difficulties in reaching their audience while introducing themselves in outer markets as they might lack some of the competitive advantages, or for being rated as obsolete or unfashionable.

Egypt today is totally different from before, aiming to brand itself as a strong and powerful country with great past and not-less future; it has all the constituents required for achieving its goals, regarding the governmental efforts in supporting small businesses and entrepreneurs the country is offering a wide range of international forums and exhibitions whether in or outside the country. It is now the role of good branding to address the exterior markets in a way revealing the true value of the products and their producers as the heirs of such a great and magnificent historical heritage.

This paper is aiming to suggest an approach for branding Egypt's traditional handicrafts in global markets in a way that supports their image as fashionable creative industries, clarifying their true value as timeless masterpieces, not obsolete or retrograde.

Keywords

Branding, Heritage Crafts, Global Markets, Creative Industries.

الملخص

بناء الماركة للحرف التراثية المصرية كصناعات إبداعية عصرية

تناقش الورقة البحثية موضوع "بناء الماركة للحرف التراثية المصرية في الأسواق العالمية كصناعات إبداعية عصرية"، وهو أحد الموضوعات ذات الأهمية الكبيرة في السنوات الحالية، حيث تسعى مصر إلى بناء اقتصاد قومي قوي يقوم في جزء كبير منه على دعم الإقتصاديات الصغيرة ومتناهية الصغر والمتوسطة. ومن أكبر المشكلات التي تواجه مجال الحرف التراثية في مصر والتي أدت إلى انصراف عدد كبير من المشتغلين بها عنها هي مشكلة صعوبات التسويق وخاصة في الأسواق العالمية التي تعتبر نقطة الجذب الأساسية لأي صاحب صناعة أو حرفي، ويرى القائمون على التصدير أن جزء كبير من المشكلة يقع على عاتق أصحاب الحرف نفسها حيث يفتقد كثير منهم لمهارات الترويج وبناء الصورة الذهنية المناسبة

لمنتجاتهم، مما قد يؤدي إلى ظهورها بمظهر الصناعات البسيطة قليلة التكلفة فيأتي العائد المادي بسيطاً وغير قادر على دعم استمرار الحرفة أو الصناعة، إلا أن هناك نماذج مضيئة استطاعت شق طريقها في مجال الحرف التراثية وتمكنت من بناء "علامة تجارية" قوية لمنتجاتها أدت في نهاية الأمر إلى فتح الأسواق العالمية أمام المنتجات وارتفاع مكانتها في السوق وبالتالي سياسات التسعير، ومن أهم هذه الأمثلة "عزة فهمي" والتي تباع منتجاتها من الحلي الفضية والذهبية بأعلى الأسعار ويتنافس على ارتدائها كبار فناني مصر والعالم. ويجب أن يكون الهدف الأساسي خلف أي استراتيجية لبناء الماركة لأي من تلك الحرف هو بناء صورة ذهنية لها كمنتجات ابداعية عصرية لا تقل قيمتها عن تصميمات المصممين العصريين، بل على العكس تمتلك قيمة مضافة أخرى وهي ارتباطها بالإرث التاريخي لدولة تاريخية عظيمة وتعد استمراراً نابضاً بالحياة لمنجزات وابداعات الأجداد، بهذه الطريقة يمكن فتح الأفق الجديدة والأسواق العالمية وارتفاع قيمتها التسويقية والثقافية، وهذا هو هدف الورقة البحثية المقدمة. وقد قدمت الورقة البحثية نموذجاً لعملية بناء هوية مؤسسية لعلامة تجارية محلية، من خلال خطوات كتابة القيم الحاكمة والرؤية والرسالة وغيرها، بالإضافة إلى عناصر بناء الشكل للعلامة التجارية مثل تصميم اللوجو، والكتابات، واللون وغيرها من عناصر الهوية المؤسسية البصرية.

الكلمات المفتاحية

الماركة، الحرف التراثية، أسواق عالمية، صناعات ابداعية

1. Introduction

Heritage handicrafts are considered as one of the main components of historical and cultural attractions of touristic countries around the world. It also plays a significant role as a tool of poverty reduction. Countries need to preserve and promote their cultural and artistic traditions, that are the ones transmitted from generation to generation. The sector of handicrafts has undergone several challenges such as industrialization and globalization. The traditional artisans faced considerable difficulties to compete with well-organized industrial entities and had to down-level their prices, as they were slowly losing their markets. Many artisans had to abandon their business as a means for earning income. As a result, many skills and techniques have disappeared, and needed a new revival. Heritage handicrafts need to be highlighted, protected and safeguarded. This is crucial for keeping community's identity, as well as giving economic advantages and other values.¹

This paper suggests that heritage handicrafts need to implement sufficient branding strategies in order to compete in global markets, as entering those markets as fashionable creative industries provide much more opportunities for upgrading their status in the market, and as a consequence, upleveling theirⁱ prices according to their new positions.

2. Problem Statement

Pricing strategies always reflect your self-image as a producer as well as the way you see your product among its competitors and rivals. As for handcrafters it is a crucial problem that

the raw materials cost a lot, and it takes a lot of time and effort to produce such masterpieces, so unless the feedback comes fulfilling the result would be catastrophic in the means of decline of skilled craftsmen, and eventually leading to a total breakdown of the profession.

The good branding of such masterpieces as genuine outcome of extraordinary handcraft designers might be the solution for such a dilemma as it would open the global markets doors allowing the opportunity to address higher categories of audiences, hopefully that would lead to better opportunities for raising demand and prices.

The problem of this research paper can be stated in the research questions as follows:

1. How to establish a scientific approach for branding Egyptian heritage handicrafts to support their image as fashionable creative industries, and how would that reflect on their demand and pricing in the global markets?
2. What are the obstacles suppressing the demand on Egyptian heritage handicrafts in global markets, and is it (or isn't it) related to their images as outdated or obsolete?
3. What are the examples of heritage handcrafters who could make it to be globally stated as high-level designers, and what are the main characteristics of their branding approaches?

3. Aim of the Research

This research paper shades the light on the opportunities and threats facing the Egyptian heritage handicrafts, especially when being marketed to exterior markets, as sometimes they become underestimated due to some lack of branding techniques, the main aim of the paper is to identify a scientific as well as creative approach towards branding the Egyptian heritage handicrafts in the global markets in a way that reflects their true essence as being timeless, fashionable and creative.

4. Hypothesis

There are some few examples of noticeable Egyptian handcrafters who surpassed their rivals in Egyptian and global markets, as they managed to build their own images as fashionable and creative industry leaders, to be regarded and appraised as craft designers with super dreaming visions, this helped them to raise their own standards and be fashion icons in their design realms. This research paper puts those examples in account, under the following hypothesis:

- Egyptian heritage handicrafts are being underestimated in global markets as outdated or obsolete, which reflects on their market demand and pricing categories.

- It could be of great importance for Egyptian handcrafters to switch to a more professional branding approaches, taking in account some inspiring examples (ex: Azza Fahmy), as it is not appropriate to maintain the same old marketing techniques in an ever fast changing world.
- The core of any branding strategy for Egyptian heritage handcrafts should be upon building their images as timeless, fashionable and creative industries, therefor allowing them to be rightfully estimated as world masterpieces.

5. Significance and Importance

The importance of heritage handcrafts goes beyond the economic value to the cultural value, it is for great importance for every nation to put up its image as historical, civilized as well as modernized nation. Abdelfattah Elsisy the president of Egypt has always asserted that Egypt supports its handcrafts and small enterprises, and what is more profitable than opening global markets for them, while allowing them to be high rated and priced.

6. Delimitations and Scope

This research paper is restricted to the subject of branding Egypt's heritage handcrafts in the global markets as fashionable creative industries, it will discuss some of the inspiring examples from Egypt and other countries, then applying on Egyptian heritage handcrafts, during the time span between 2018-2022.

7. Research Methodology

The study adopts a descriptive approach in describing and analyzing the theoretical framework. An analytical approach of a case study (Laura Zindel from USA & Azza Fahmy from Egypt) will be conducted. An experimental approach will be held on for branding one Egyptian heritage handicraft.

8. Literature Review

8.1. Heritage Handicrafts in Egypt and the world

In a country known for its rich and unique cultural heritage, Egyptian heritage handicrafts present a sustainable source of income for a large percentage of the Egyptian labor force. This industry requires small capital investments and provides high added value in comparison to other manufacturing sectors.

As a recognition of its importance, Egypt celebrates its cultural heritage by holding international exhibitions whether inside or outside the country borders. In February 2015, “Creative Egypt” figured with a huge Pavilion in Furnex International Exhibition. This international trade fair among other fairs and exhibitions, such as Turathna and Deyarna, are being held in Egypt since 2004, introducing Egypt to the international trade community as a world-class supplier.ⁱ

8.1.1. Definition & Characteristics

Handicraft is defined as “handmade products that have artistic and cultural attraction based on their materials, designs and workmanships”.ⁱ On the other hand, a heritage craft is defined as a “practice which employs manual dexterity and skill and an understanding of traditional materials, design and techniques, and which has been practised for two or more successive generations”.^v In this sense, “a craft is called handicraft when it possesses a considerable amount of craftsmanship”, and is called a heritage handicraft when this craftsmanship is practiced and delivered from generation to generation”.^v

It is extremely difficult to give a satisfactory definition of the material content, technique of production and/or functional use of craft products. But there are certain characteristics broadly apply to a wide range of the world’s crafts, such as:

- 1- Produced by artisans, either completely by hand or aided by tools or machinery. The manual artisan contribution remains the most substantial component of the finished product.
- 2- No two pieces are exactly the same.
- 3- Tend to use sustainable raw materials.
- 4- Their special nature is derived from their distinctive features, which can be utilitarian, aesthetic, artistic, creative, culturally attached, decorative, functional, traditional, and religiously and socially symbolic and significant.^v

8.1.2. The Crisis of handicrafts in developing countries

In many developing countries, handicrafts sector represents the most key source of income, after the agriculture. The key weakness of this sector is the lack of facts and figures, and the non-availability of data. Thus, there is a difficulty in the use of safeguard measures for handicrafts. Moreover, generally the industry codes to measure import, export and employment in handicraft sector does not separate handicrafts as a separate entity. Without sufficient data, it is hard to take appropriate measures, when a country is struggling with import and/or export

competition. In other words, handicraft activities are mostly informal. Consequently, policy-makers are unable to draft policies accordingly to promote and revive the sector.

Also, there is a considerable decline in the young generation handcrafters' numbers, as they find it difficult to undergo complex and time-consuming processes of production. Moreover, it is difficult to find a good teacher/master who is willing to teach as many traditional crafts contains "trade secrets". Various artisans are unwilling to pass the profession secrets to strangers, and in case the members of family are not willing to learn, such knowledge may vanish, thus, leading traditional heritage to vulnerability.

Considered as a low technology sector, the handicrafts industry involves traditional methods of design and production. Producers lack the capability to develop new products, and as a consequence, unable to create marketable products. On the other hand, those who dare to innovate new products face the issue of risk, patent and copyright. Nowadays, with customers' rapidly changing demands for new designs, handcrafters have to acquire considerable understanding of the needs and demands of customers in local and global markets, while in the same time, maintain the old inherited traditions.

One of the most recognized factors disabling the evolving of heritage handicrafts is that majority of artisans have a low level of education, as a consequence of the complex and lengthy processes required for production, and that often involves whole family including children who usually quit or miss school.

Low levels of education affect the ability of artisans to comprehend market variables, and also to develop competitive plans for their products. Consequently, they lack the vision needed for improvement and development. The number of vocational institutes providing training in handicraft skills is very small and needs a governmental reconsideration.^v

8.1.3. The Crisis of Egyptian handicrafts

Egypt's handicrafts face uncounted obstacles every day, these obstacles led to a major decline in crafters and business leaders' numbers. The global financial unsettlements are among the most dangerous barriers as they threat small enterprises (which represent the majority of handicraft businesses) causing them great damages such as lack of currency, importing raw materials and exporting end-products difficulties, and unlikely stable pricing policies.

One of the obstacles facing Egyptian handicrafts is the overpricing of national and local exhibitions fees, along with the lack of communication with global markets. Though Egyptian handicrafts have quite a reputation in some areas of the profession, yet it is apparently not enough to construct satisfying positioning strategies for most of them. To simplify the equation: Egyptian handicrafts need a push forward into new markets internally as well as externally.

To sum up the challenges facing small heritage handcraft businesses owners and managers with marketing their products, they can be put as follows:

- lack of access to finance.
- Lack of business skills.
- Lack of knowledge, experience and time needed.

The drawbacks of such challenges come in the form of:

- The practice of marketing planning is limited.
- They adopt an informal marketing planning approach that relies on social and personal contact networks rather than formal approach.
- Their planning is informal and short-term in nature.
- They also do not consider marketing plans as essential for the survival of their business.
- They do not work on branding themselves or their products.¹

Products Pricing is another challenge that is facing craft producers. There is also a lack of data on pricing of craft products. However, there are wide perceptions that in the craft industry, prices are highly negotiable. There is also a belief that some craft customers, including consumers, trade and corporate, exploit craft producers and expect to pay lower prices that are not profitable to the producers. The prices of craft raw materials and equipment are high, making it difficult for craft producers to meet the pricing levels of the international suppliers. Production costs are also very high, contributing to high selling prices.

There are many craft producers, locally and internationally, varying in terms of prices charged and products offered which provides customers with a variety of suppliers from whom they can source craft products. There is also a growing trend for retailers nationally and internationally to source products from cheaper suppliers in Asia, such as China and Taiwan.

8.1.4. The New International Term, Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH)

In recent decades, the term “cultural heritage” has expanded to exceed built heritage such as monuments and collections of objects. It now includes knowledge, traditions or living expressions inherited from the ancestors and passed to next generations. In 1990s, another term has emerged; that is Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH). The new concept transcended the narrow scope of “World Heritage”, and focused on other intangible features that included songs, music, drama and crafts.

In 2003, the UNESCO passed a convention to protect ICH, its main objective was to raise awareness regarding the importance of ICH and ensure its respect and mutual appreciation. The convention defined ICH as “the practices, representations, expressions, knowledge, skills, as

well as the instruments, objects, artefacts and cultural spaces associated therewith, that communities, groups and, in some cases, individuals recognize as part of their cultural heritage”.

The convention required its member states to prepare the inventory of ICH with the participation of concerned communities; adopt policies and establish institutions to monitor and promote it; and take other appropriate safeguarding measures. The convention was ratified by several countries on different dates. Since that time, UNESCO has declared several heritages as “intangible cultural heritage for humanity”, such as “Baul Songs” (traditional music) and “Traditional skills of Jamdani weaving” of Bangladesh, “Sericulture and silk craftsmanship of China”, and Iran’s “Traditional skills of carpet weaving in Fars” etc. Furthermore, several intangible cultural heritages have also been identified such as “Ala-kiyiz and Shyrdak (Skills of Kyrgyz traditional felt carpets)” of Kyrgyzstan, “Earthenware pottery-making skills” of Botswana, “Al Sadu (Traditional weaving skills)” of United Arab Emirates” etc.^x Egypt has ratified the ICH convention on the 3rd, August 2005.^x

8.1.5. Means of Development for Heritage Handicrafts

In order to compete in global markets, technology and innovation becomes a necessity. Those countries that have taken over the major portion of the world market, have adopted modern approaches, techniques, tools and technology to respond to customer needs and desires more effectively than other counterparts.

Artisans need to produce innovative designs in response to consumers’ tastes. While Intrapreneurs play a crucial role in preserving the industry of handicrafts and its cultural identity for future generations. To meet market demands, entrepreneurs have to grow and develop their businesses through innovation and modernization. Innovation is defined as “the transformation of ideas and knowledge into new products or services which involve technology and organization, and can be in terms of production, services, processes or management”.

It is crucial to establish vocational training schools offering training to young generations of artisans, especially those who offer middle to high level skills training. Training will help artisans improve their skills and implement new technologies in the production of high-quality products. Governments should take the lead in establishing such vocational schools and also support them in order to preserve the industry of traditional handicrafts. Attention shall also be paid to the training artisans to get necessary techniques of teaching in order to pass the inherited skills and techniques to others. The policy-makers should also focus on the implementation of

new technologies in educating and training of young generations to promote and preserve this valuable cultural heritage.^x

8.2. Entrepreneurship and Global Marketing

Global marketing is no longer an exclusive multinational corporations' activity. Since the advent of new technologies and transportation development has caused the world to be more like a small village.^x In the meantime, most people nowadays dream of quitting their jobs and having their own businesses, urged by the desire for independence from corporate politics. This is called Entrepreneurship; which means “startups owned by people not corporates or governates”, some call this the Entrepreneur Era. The core idea of entrepreneurs that they generate around a hobby or passion. They use this passion in order to take control, make money, and create jobs for themselves.^x It is an ultimate goal for any company to expand its market to cross the borders into global markets, paving the way forward into multi-nationalization.

8.2.1. Clarifying Definitions

International Marketing means “developing and performing marketing activities across national boundaries”, while Global Marketing means “Developing marketing strategies for major regions or for the entire world”.^x

Entrepreneurship is “the ability and readiness to develop, organize and run a business enterprise, along with any of its uncertainties in order to make a profit. The most prominent example of entrepreneurship is the starting of new businesses”. And the entrepreneur can be defined as “someone who has the ability and desire to establish, administer and succeed in a startup venture along with risk entitled to it, to make profits”.^x

8.2.2. Basic Ingredients of Business Success

For generating an effective marketing plan for products; there are three considerations to be taken into account:

- 1- **A quality product:** This implies that consumer perceives it to be better than competing products, whether due to its functional or technical attributes, or because of its outward appearance and style.
- 2- **A distinctive brand:** By achieving market recognition and respect for itself and its products. This is done by creating and nurturing an enterprise image linked primarily to the name of the proprietor, of the business or of its products. The essence of a great brand lies in its capacity to foster the sales of a product by creating an emotional link with its customers.

- 3- **Effective marketing:** Market strategies must be focused on the needs and desires of customers, and to reach such information there is a need for a sound and continuous marketing research. Effective marketing creates the demand for a product. Understanding the needs of consumers allows producers to invest time, skill and other resources in creating, testing, replicating and marketing new products, thus, consumers' needs and expectations are fully met.^x

8.2.3. Levels of Commitment to International and Global Marketing

The level of commitment to international marketing is a major variable in deciding what kind of involvement is appropriate. A firm's options range from occasional exporting to expanding overall operations (production and marketing) into other countries. Below are the levels of commitment to international and global marketing:

- 1- **Exporting:** The lowest level of commitment to international marketing and the most flexible approach. A firm may find an exporting intermediary to take over most marketing functions associated with selling to other countries. This approach entails minimum effort and cost. Modifications in packaging, labeling, style or color may be the major expense. Export agents bring together buyers and sellers from different countries and collect a commission upon. Export houses and export merchants purchase products from different companies and then sell them to foreign countries. Foreign buyers from companies and governments provide a direct method of exporting. They encourage international exchange by contacting domestic firms about their needs and the available opportunities.
- 2- **Trading Companies:** A trading company links buyers and sellers in different countries, but is not involved in manufacturing or owning assets related to manufacturing. Trading companies buy goods in one country in the lowest price consistent with quality and sell them to buyers in another country. An important function of trading companies is taking title to products and performing all activities necessary. Thus, they reduce risk for companies that want to sell their products abroad. Trading companies give advices around products that meet quality considerations, price expectations. Also, they offer consulting, marketing research, advertising, insurance, product research and design, legal assistance, warehousing, and foreign exchange.
- 3- **Licensing:** It is an alternative to direct investment. The licensee (the owner of the foreign operation) pays commissions or royalties on sales or supplies used in manufacturing. An initial down payment, or fee may be charged when the licensing

agreement is signed. Licensing is profitable when political stability of a foreign country is in doubt, or when resources are unavailable for direct investment. Licensing is especially profitable with small manufacturers when expanding internationally. Yoplait yogurt is a French yogurt licensed for production in the United States; the Yoplait brand tries to maintain a French image.

- 4- **Joint Ventures** is a partnership between a domestic firm and a foreign firm or government. It is especially popular in larger investments. Control of the joint venture can be split equally, or given to one party. Entrepreneurs in less developed countries actively seek associations with a foreign partner as a ready means of implementing their own corporate strategy.
- 5- **Direct ownership** happens once a company makes a long-term commitment to marketing in a foreign nation that has a promising political and economic environment. It is possible for a foreign subsidiary or division. The term, Multinational enterprises, refers to a firm that has operations or subsidiaries located in many countries. The main company in one country carries on production. A wholly owned foreign subsidiary may be allowed to operate independently of the parent company. ^x

8.3. Branding Heritage Handicrafts as Creative Industries

For handicrafts to take order and to start to achieve fulfilling avenues, in other words to take the turn into creative industries, they need a strategic branding; a branding plan that applies a profound and thorough brand strategy. Branding gives the business the right touch and feel as a consequence of establishing the brand heart and soul.

It is essential to think brand and to build personal brands, as this will increase the impact and hopefully, the success as represented by money or fame. Branding helps maximizing business assets by identifying a clear promise to consumers, the promise around which branding efforts is generated,^x and this promise shall be kept, not broken.^x Brand promises are symbolized in a specific culture being elicited in all the marketing efforts done by the brand, and in rare cases brands may turn to be cultural icons themselves.

Brands succeed when they tend to be much more about belonging as they are about buying, only then, they can build the greatest value over time. When people buy a bag or a computer they don't just buy the product, instead the promise given by the brand, and the meanings symbolized in the branding proposition.^x

8.3.1. Definition and Etiology

Nothing is sold until it's branded; branding is building an image and an emotional connection with customers.^x It can be defined as “a disciplined process used to build awareness and extend customer loyalty”.^x It is much more than a logo or a visual identity program. Branding starts simultaneously with the very beginning of the business, otherwise most of the marketing efforts will be in vain.

In other words; brands are promises, they have to be consistent in order to keep these promises. In most of the cases the promise of a brand stems from the values of an organization's founders. Successful brands build their personalities with their consistent behavior. They take decisions about what's and what isn't appropriate according to its relevance to the brand, and whether it's on brand or not.^x

8.3.2. Phases of Brands

The fast speed new media world has changed the way people engage with brands, and how they relate to them. Branding now is turning to a process of achieving engagement and urging loyalty.^x

Starting from small businesses and startups, brands go through various phases which require different approaches and strategic planning:

- 1- **The Early-stage Phase (the start-up phase):** Considered as the discovery mode, needs more flexibility. Starting to develop the vision of the business, overcoming obstacles with few resources.
- 2- **The Rapid-growth Phase:** Exhilarating mode, trying to steal the market share and break through to being a big brand. Developing branding to support growth and attract investors. Manufacturing and distribution of products. Structured systems and brand culture established.
- 3- **The Leadership Brand (The mature-leadership Phase):** Growing with slower rate. Defending brand's leadership positioning. A visible role as industry leader and a spokesperson.
- 4- **The Declining Phase:** New leadership, a turnaround leader to revitalize the brand, futuristic vision, focus on the brand's key jewels.^x

8.3.3. Branding entrepreneurs and entrepreneurs

Consumers are always skeptical when purchasing handcraft products, as they fear that they might be fooled or getting overpriced products. They may want to buy, but they have to be selective, and that makes them feel impowered. There are four value propositions that affects

purchasing decisions; price, performance, service and relationship. Market research started to show that consumers who considered themselves to be in a relationship with a brand are less influenced by price, performance, and service, as a result, they remained totally loyal.

Marketers now started embracing the relationship marketing, which orbited the brand promise, assuming that the brand that managed to keep a relationship can keep its customers forever.^x

The most important trait in brand entrepreneurs is visioners, and to envision what was to come. Jeff Bezos of Amazon and Mark Zuckerberg of Facebook positioned themselves well ahead of the curve of the Internet or social media when no market research anticipated its popularity. A brand entrepreneurs' vision is more than just making money and being a CEO. It is about building their businesses and simultaneously positioning themselves as the leaders of those businesses.^x

There are many examples of entrepreneurs who managed to brand themselves as well as their businesses into global markets, such as Steve Jobs at Apple, Richard Branson at Virgin, Martha Stewart at Martha Stewart Living Omnimedia (MSLO), and John Mackey at Whole Foods. More recently, entrepreneurs like Tony Hsieh of Zappos and Reed Hastings of Netflix have taken the same double-barreled approach. All of them started out small and built strong businesses and simultaneously managed their personal brands. Thus, they became Brand Entrepreneurs; business leaders who weaved their personalities, leadership styles, and values tightly into their business brands.^x

8.3.4. Examples of Branded Handicrafts in the Egyptian Market

There are few craft producers who managed to surpass such obstacles, and could address the global markets as heritage handicrafts artists and designers, as they branded their names as well as their products.

- **Yasmine Fahmy Metal Work**

A brand of special lighting units, made from copper and brass, mainly inspired by Islamic Art. The owner and founder, is Yasmine Fahmy, a graduate of the faculty of Fine Arts,



where she fell in love with Islamic architectural details.^x

Figure No.1 Yasmine Fahmy metal work

- **Kilim**

A brand for kilim products founded by an Egyptian couple Noha El Taher and her husband Ibrahim, their main aim was reviving this special Egyptian Kilim craft while adding a modern touch to it.

Their products are handcrafted in Fowa village in Kafr El Sheikh. This place used to be a hub for kilim industry two decades ago.^x



Figures No. 2,3 Products of Kilim

- **Markaz Online Shopping Platform**

A brand that focuses on promoting and selling Egyptian heritage handcrafts founded by Mohamed Amin and Naila El Shishiny. It highlights traditional



Egyptian crafts from all Egyptian governorates.

All the products are made by artsy Egyptian women who inherited their craft from their ancestors. The products vary from bags and scarves to cushions and home accessories.^x



Figures No. 4,5 Products of Markaz Online Shopping Platform

- **Gebraa**

A brand founded by Rania Salah Seddick to support Egyptian artisans by enhancing their product developing skills. This approach came through various training and design workshops, and also marketing these products locally and internationally. Furthermore, most of Gebra's profit goes to fund activities of Karama NGO for community development and heritage preservation.^x



Figure No. 6 Products of Gebraa

8.4. Analytical Study

Laura Zindel from USA and Azza Fahmy from Egypt are two examples of artisans who managed to transfer their business into fashionable creative industries. Both of them now acquire an international reputation and their names are considered trademarks in the field of heritage handicrafts.

8.4.1. Laura Zindel Designs

Laura Zindel is an artist, designer, and ceramicist. She and her husband, Thorsten Lauterbach (Laura and Thor), along with a small staff of artisans, create fine ceramics, dinnerware, textiles, paper products, and gift items from the converted barn of the Partridge House, a farmhouse located in Guilford, Vermont. Merging a passion for naturalist illustration with the day-to-day needs of a household, Laura Zindel integrates techniques from the Arts and Crafts movement with modern industrial design practices.



Figures No. 7,8 Laura Zindel Ceramics

The Branding Process

Before launching her new brand identity, Laura Zindel had practiced handcrafted ceramic tableware for more than a decade from a small studio in San Francisco. She used the word-of-mouth as her lead marketing strategy along with participations in national craft fairs. Laura's team consisted of her and her husband and business partner Thor Lauterbach, but only after the incorporation of the designer Jon Bjornson they managed to reposition the brand.

Goals

- Reposition the brand.
- Develop a distinct and versatile visual identity.
- Transform perceptions from a craftsman to a design maven.
- Develop a platform for multi-product brand development.
- Build a web presence to support the positioning goals and enable online retail activity.

After gaining national and international acclaim with celebrities, retailers, and upscale restaurants among her clientele; Laura Zindel aimed to cross the borders of the handicraft

profession into the vast fields of creative industries. She aimed to launch a new identity in tandem with the launch of her new line of production dinnerware, also building a platform for increasing retail sales, entering new houseware product categories, and engaging financial and manufacturing partners for expanding production. In order to do so, the team examined the company's operations, wholesale clients, retail customers, market segment, and competitive set.

The Name: Bjornson recommended a name change from Zindel Ceramics to Laura Zindel Design, acquiring the URL laurazindel.com in order to add more personalization to the brand.

The Logo: Bjornson created a symbol developed to recall antique colophons to reflect the meaning of creativity, craftsmanship, and uniqueness of Zindel's work. He also symbolized Laura's graphite illustrations by a drawing of a partridge, emblematic of the 1778 farmhouse they now occupied in Vermont. The colophon and the partridge were combined together for the signature.



LAURA ZINDEL
MADE IN VERMONT

Figure No. 9 Laura Zindel Ceramics New Logo

The Font: A contemporary font with industrial roots, carrying the name of the small town in Vermont where the company is based.

Packaging: A basic marketing package was created, with look and feel reflecting the simple color palette and subdued warmth and beauty of her products. ^x



Figure No. 10 Laura Zindel Ceramics New Packaging

8.4.2. Azza Fahmy Jewelry

Azza Fahmy is an Egyptian jewelry designer who inspires from Egyptian and Islamic culture, with a use of both gold and silver in the same piece. She started her branding campaign in 2006, when her daughter Fatma Ghaly took over as managing director of the company. She transformed the brand from a local one into a global luxury brand. The brand has a high-profile clientele including the Saudi royal family, the Jordanian royal family and certain western iconic figures, such as supermodel Naomi Campbell.



Figures No.11,12 Azza Fahmy Signature Logo

The rebranding; unlike her local peers, Azza Fahmy goods are not sold according to the weight or number of carats, because their true value is based on the design of the product, and the name of Azza Fahmy as a luxury brand. Azza Fahmy produces more than 5,000 jewelry pieces each year. She also has an online boutique, five stores in Cairo, two in Amman, and a popup shop in Washington.

Campaign had 4 prominent aspects:

- **First**, collaborating with well-known fashion designers. This provides the brand with industry legitimacy and access to important trade shows.
- **Second**, strong online presence. Azza Fahmy established a presence in the fashion capitals of the world, focusing on Europe, United States, and of course, the Arab market.
- **Third**, limiting distribution to a select number of outlets. Products to be found exclusively in upscale outlets such as international hotels.
- **Fourth**, focusing on marketing, as the brand fosters a close relationship with media to make sure it is featured frequently on prestigious outlets.
- Finally, expanding appeal to younger audiences, while adding youthful energy to the brand. To achieve that, they developed strategic and tactical communication approaches and visual treatments that created a strong buzz; eg: Azza Fahmy Valentine's Day campaign.^x





Figures No. 13,14, 15, 16 Azza Fahmy Window Displays and Packaging Design

8.5. Practical Study

The Art of Mai & Hamid is an Egyptian handmade ceramic brand started in 2015. It is a family business that offers a unique experience integrating the skills of the ceramicist (Abdelhamid Amer; the husband), and the painter (Mao Nada, the wife). They produce their art pieces in their studio that's located on their rooftop. They participated in several local and international exhibitions and fairs located in and outside Egypt. The biggest obstacle facing the business is the lack of production due to the long and time-consuming hand painting of products which also require a superior skill and an extraordinary talent. There is a need for a new beginning accompanied with a new approach toward industrialization and manufacturing. Thus, a rebranding process is needed.



Figures No. 17,18 The Art of Mai & Hamid Ceramic works

Brand Positioning Statement: A brand for handmade products (mainly ceramicwares), that is targeting high-class art appreciators who ask for a functional yet, artistic tableware. Mainly women with ages mostly over 25. Mostly urban, and also women of foreign nationalities. The brand promise is the commitment to produce tableware with original designs, highly artistic taste and with zero toxicity.

Big Idea Producing tableware fulfilling the equation of combining innovation and functionality with reasonable prices.

Incorporating Celebrities This is a very functional way of building trust and harnessing loyalty for brands. Amr Helmy; a famous Egyptian food blogger boosted an Instagram story which gained high reach with a noticeable sales raise for almost a month.

Voice and Tone: Words such as home, family, affectional, original, superior, the only, antidotal, durable, timeless is going to be used throughout all marketing activities.



Figure No. 19 Celebrity indorsement; Amr Helmy, the food critic, holding a cup of The Art of Mai & Hamid

The name: The name needed a change from (The Art of Mai & Hamid) into (Mai & Hamid) with the tagline (Handmade with Love) to convey the brand's big idea of offering a family portion of love and intimacy. The name also is more flexible, and can extend to include more handicraft products other than ceramics.

The Logo: The old logo represents a handmade signature of the artisans in Arabic, and needed to be exchanged with a new one that can address foreign markets and communicate with foreign customers.



Figure No. 20 The Art of Mai & Hamid logo (No. 1)

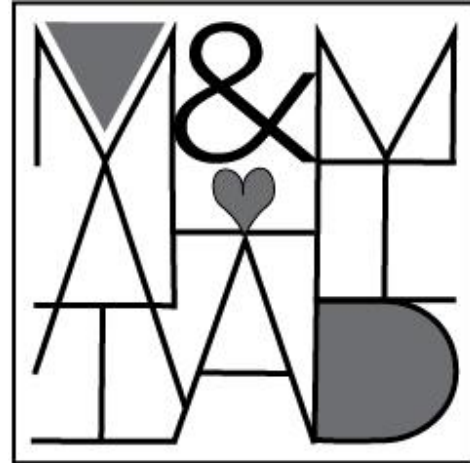
The new logo is required to suggest the new approach of industrialization and manufacturing, yet, preserve the brand gem of the family love warmth and intimacy. Three logos were suggested; one focusing on the loving hand of the artisans' family.



Figure No. 21 The Art of Mai & Hamid logo (No. 2)

The second logo focuses on the modernized design approach, with the names of the artisans written a geometric square design.

Figure No. 22 The Art of Mai & Hamid logo (No. 3)



Mai & Hamid
Handmade with love

The third logo focuses on the process of manufacturing and the unity and structure.

The Font: Sinhala MN; a simple san-serif font. Some modest alteration was added to the shape of the dots as transferred to hearts. The tagline “handmade with love” emphasizing the branding big idea.

Figure No. 23 The Art of Mai & Hamid logo (No. 4)

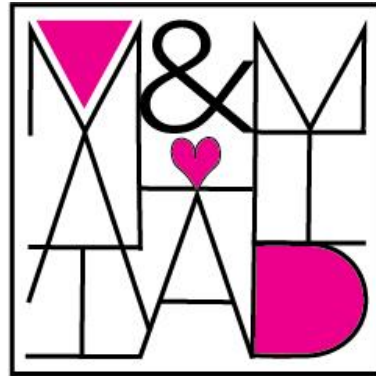


The Color: A set of vibrant colors, to express the feelings of creativity and intimacy at the same time.



Yellow: C 7%, M 11%, Y 87%, K 0%; symbolizing hope and positive vibes.

Doll Face: C 2%, M 33%, Y 33%, K 0%; symbolizing kindness, humanity and intimacy.



Pink: C 0%, M 100%, Y 0%, K 0%; symbolizing creativity and innovation.

Mai & Hamid
Handmade with love

Mai & Hamid
Handmade with love

Fresh Green: C 40%, M 14%, Y 100%, K 0%; symbolizing sustainability and sanitary.



Dull Black: C 81%, M 69%, Y 62%, K 80%; symbolizing power and reliability.

Figure No. 24 The Art of Mai & Hamid visual identity designs



Figure No. 25 The Art of Mai & Hamid visual identity designs

Packaging: Proper packaging also is needed as a fundamental part of a brand's corporate identity. The main role of packaging, aside from protection and distribution, is to deliver messages about the product and provides a memorable foundation on which visual and emotional messages are laid.

A simple sustainable approach is required, incorporating recycled carton paper, with a mono-colored patterns to insure an immediate identification of the brand.



Figure No. 26 The Art of Mai & Hamid visual identity designs



Figure No. 27 The Art of Mai & Hamid visual identity designs

9. Conclusion

- Branding simply is about Building-or-rebuilding and maintaining the image.
- All the efforts paid on the path can be considered Branding Efforts.
- Branding helps producers to build their clientele-bases in the market, identify their categories, and address them properly.
- Branding can completely change your position in the market, your pricing policies, your financial situation.
- All the money spent for Branding can be considered as an investment that would bring back more money and more success.
- Any producer, especially those who sell unnecessary artifacts, need to export their products globally.
- Addressing Global Markets is very profitable for heritage handicrafts producers and designers, and efforts should be spent to achieve this goal.
- Interring global markets without sufficient branding would heavily affect the pricing categories, and would minimize the opportunities for a powerful competition.
- Products should be branded, and their producers should be branded as well.

- As creative industries establish their market equities, they earn considerable avenues, and their producers are counted as designers not mere crafters. As their entitlement, creative industries participate in fancy exhibitions and probably compete in global competitions, getting much more attention and recognition than traditional handicrafts.
- Countries can benefit from the handicrafts-to-creative industries transformation on various levels. Such as:
 - Exportation Growth: This would reflect on the national income.
 - **Job Vacancies**: As business expansion would reflect on creating more vacancies.
 - **National Pride**: Raising the national self-esteem and respect. Finally, igniting national pride.
 - Global Equity and Recognition: This would reflect on the country image in global markets.

10.Recommendations

- More and more efforts should be spent in the field of Branding Heritage Handicrafts.
- Materials of packaging (especially sustainable Packaging) should be supported by the government to encourage producers to adopt modern packaging policies.
- Efforts should be devoted towards addressing global markets, thorough all the possible channels.

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