

Institutional Alignment and Governance Capacity: Evaluating THACCA through Theoretical Models of Creative Economy

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Abstract

This study examines the Thailand Creative Culture Agency (THACCA) by applying established theoretical frameworks to evaluate its institutional readiness and governance capacity. The study serves as the foundation for understanding the challenges to transform cultural capital into a sustainable global industry. The research question is how the agency aligns with concepts such as the creative economy, soft power, national branding, and the developmental state to assess THACCA's potential to drive economic growth. The analysis conducted through the developed theoretical framework under those theories finds the gap in the THACCA context. The study finds that Thailand has good policy goals, but there are still significant structural gaps. These gaps include legal ambiguity, fragmented coordination, and underdeveloped intellectual property protections. It suggests that THACCA requires a more robust legal foundation and greater autonomy from political shifts.

Keywords

THACCA, Creative Economy, Soft Power, National Branding, Developmental State

Introduction

In recent years, the creative economy has become a major policy priority for governments to seek economic growth, innovation, and international influence. The creative economy is increasingly viewed as strategically important because it intersects with cultural policy, soft power, and national branding. The Korea Creative Content Agency (KOCCA) is a well-known example of how the government provides institutional support and can contribute to commercial success and global visibility. Consequently, this successful model inspires the creative economy as a critical area of policy design, requiring specialized agencies, coordinated funding systems, and long-term strategic planning.

Thailand has begun to follow this policy by positioning the creative economy and soft power as core pillars of national development. The Thailand Creative Culture Agency (THACCA), inspired by KOCCA, represents institutional innovation in line with global creative economy trends. The objective of THACCA is to be a main agency to promote creative industries. It also expects to bridge fragmented policy efforts across ministries and link the creative sector to broader global efforts (Bank Finance, 2026).

Even though there is strong political momentum, THACCA remains in a formative phase. The government pushes the agency to evolve its legal authority, governance structure, and related mechanisms. So, this raises many questions about whether the institution is ready and the policy is appropriate. However, establishing a specialized agency alone does not guarantee success because there are factors such as clarity of functions, coordination capabilities, financial stability, and strategic direction. Moreover, these factors determine whether the agency primarily serves as a promotional platform or a mere state instrument.

Nevertheless, existing discussions of Thailand's creative economy have tended to focus on policy narratives, potential of related sectors, or comparative lessons from other creative economy agency models. There has been less attention to theory-driven assessment of THACCA's institutional design.

This study treats THACCA not as a completed agency but as an evolving project. The study evaluates THACCA through theoretical frameworks with the policy models. In a nutshell, to address the study gap, it analyzes institutional design and readiness, offering an early analytical baseline for understanding Thailand's emerging creative economy agency.

Research objectives

1. To assess that THACCA aligns with theoretical perspectives on creative economy, soft power, national branding, and developmental state.
2. To identify institutional gaps that may affect the agency's capacity.

Research questions

1. How does THACCA's design reflect key theoretical models of creative economy governance?

Literature Review

The rapid expansion of the creative economy has elevated the industry contributing to economic growth. Therefore, the Thai government announced the THACCA in 2024 as a part of a broader effort to support the country's cultural and creative sectors. Among the existing literature, Kim, Shim, and Kim (2024) provide the most direct comparative analysis between THACCA and KOCCA. Their study explicitly evaluates both agencies side by side, assessing differences in legal mandate, organizational structure, and the scope of the creative value chain each agency is designed to govern. This comparative approach is particularly important because it goes beyond the general claim that THACCA is inspired by KOCCA and instead identifies the specific institutional gaps between the two. Kim, Shim, and Kim (2024) highlight in their study about differences between the Korea Creative Content Agency (KOCCA) and THACCA. They argue that THACCA draws inspiration from the KOCCA. The KOCCA is institutionally different from THACCA since it is a centralized executive body under Korea's Ministry of Culture, Sports and Tourism. The Ministry oversees the full content from initial planning and production to international distribution. However, THACCA does not adopt the full model of KOCCA because THACCA still has fragmentation in policies. The reason for fragmentation is that THACCA is designed to operate as a one-stop service to manage everything by itself (Kim, Shim, & Kim, 2024).

THACCA is not the first creative economy agency in Thailand. There was the Creative Economy Agency (CEA), which is the creative economy agency established before THACCA. The challenge of the CEA is that it has a flat organizational structure, without legal support, while the THACCA will be under a specific act, with legal support. The legal support is different. However, the objectives of both agencies are similar. So, Rodpan (2023) presents risk to organizational overlap and potential loss of expert skills if not managed through a clear and successive plan (Rodpan, 2023). Besides fragmentation in policies, some literature highlights fragmentation in responsibility among public entities. The Asian Development Bank (2024) identifies that there are at least four to six different agencies in Thailand that share overlapping jurisdiction over sectors like gaming and audiovisual production. This reflects a lack of communication, duplicated efforts, and a failure to maintain a 360-degree view of the creative industry (Asian Development Bank, 2024). Therefore, there are some fragmentations and overlapping in the creative economy idea of the government.

In terms of governance capacity, this is challenging because Thailand lacks data infrastructure. The ADB reports that Thailand still lacks a centralized, systematic data collection center. So, this will be difficult for policymakers when assessing data of the economic contribution. Thereby, this challenge hinders efficient resource allocation and discourages private investment (Asian Development Bank, 2024). In terms of theoretical models, the creative economy often distinguishes between instrumental (top-down) and organic (bottom-up) approaches. Moonsarn (2025) argues that the Thai government's strategy, including the One Family One Soft Power (OFOS), follows a bureaucratic model which is the top-down model, like the OTOP program. This model focuses on mass training and cultural products that readily

serve the market. So, this reflects that it prioritizes economic success over authentic impact (Moonsarn, 2025). Cogan (2024) and Ainslie (2025) further identify the so-called soft power paradox within the institutional framework. They argue that while Thailand attempted to be a digital hub through THACCA, Thailand also represses some cultural policies like banning some expressions in games or films (Theppaitoon, 2024). This contrasts with authenticity and attractiveness from soft power theory by Joseph Nye. Ainslie also critiques that Thailand can clash with global creative standards and reinforce outdated stereotypes from using some kinds of incentives (Ainslie, 2025).

Therefore, previously mentioned literature provides many perspectives of the THACCA, such as comparative analysis agency model, fragmentation, and state-led soft power and paradoxes. The research gap still lies in the lack of assessing the institutional alignment with the theoretical framework. It aims to fill this gap and explain the theoretical approach, based on the Creative Economy Theory, Soft Power Theory, National Branding Theory, and Developmental State Theory.

Conceptual framework

This study adopts four theories, Creative Economy, Soft Power, National Branding, and Developmental State, because each addresses a distinct institutional dimension that successful creative economy agencies, such as Korea's KOCCA and Taiwan's TAICCA (Ministry of Culture (Taiwan), 2020), have been able to fulfil. Creative Economy theory explains the value-chain logic that allows KOCCA and TAICCA to convert cultural assets into economic value through IP protection and integrated production support. Soft Power theory captures how these agencies project cultural influence abroad through deliberate institutional channels rather than by chance. National Branding theory accounts for the cross-sector coordination that aligns creative content with tourism, exports, and diplomacy under a coherent national identity. Developmental State theory, finally, explains the bureaucratic capacity and embedded autonomy that enable such agencies to plan strategically beyond political cycles. Together, these four theories form a layered framework that allows THACCA to be assessed not only against its stated ambitions but also against the institutional foundations that have made comparable agencies effective.

The theoretical framework for assessing the THACCA resides at the intersection of economic transition, bureaucratic governance, and international influence. At its foundation, the creative economy represents a fundamental shift from goods or products to an industry fulfilled by ideas, innovation, and service. According to John Howkins' (2002) model, this economy is defined by creative products derived from human creativity and protected by intellectual property laws. So, these creative products can contribute to economic value. The UNCTAD (2018) framework further characterized the creative economy as a feasible development option that combines social inclusion and cultural diversity. This moves beyond traditional upstream arts to downstream integration with services such as publishing and designing.

In terms of soft power, Joseph Nye (2004) describes a nation's co-optive ability to influence international actors through attraction rather than coercion. This intangible power arises from cultural attraction, ideology, and international institutions. In the modern context, Jin Dal Yong (2016) mentions soft power in the perspective of the Korean Wave that soft power is inextricably linked to digital technologies

and social media. So, in this framework, cultural exports are no longer accidental but are the result of well-planned policy initiatives. This shows the transition from hands-off to hands-on government support, to ensure that local creative content links to digital platforms and contributes to broader economic value.

In terms of national branding, Simon Anholt (2007) argues that a nation's reputation is a valuable asset that cannot be constructed easily. The branding must be earned through innovation and behavior. He illustrates the Hexagon of Competitive Identity and describes that national reputation is formed through six channels: Tourism, Export, Policy, Investment, Culture, and People. According to this model, the state plays a main role as coordinator, acting as a magnet that aligns these six channels under national strategy.

If the state aspires to support creative industries, it must possess high governance capacity. This governance model is described through the lens of the developmental state. According to Chalmers Johnson (1982), successful economic miracles occur in a state that is well-planned with rationale. This kind of state takes a lead role through an elite economic bureaucracy to guide market systems and coordinate industrial policy. This model is also mentioned by Peter Evans (1995) in the concept of Embedded Autonomy. For the state to facilitate industrial transformation, state institutions must maintain corporate coherence and meritocratic professionalism (autonomy). This structural balance allows the state to negotiate its goals and strategies with business actors without being dominated by narrow interests or falling into the trap of a self-serving elite.

Theory	Key scholars	Core idea from theory	Implication for THACCA analysis
Creative Economy	Howkins (2002); UNCTAD (2018)	Economic value derives from creativity, IP, and the full creative value chain integrating arts, services, and innovation	Examine whether THACCA supports the creative value chain (talent, funding, IP, market access, services)
Soft Power	Nye (2004; 2011); Jin (2016)	Influence comes from cultural attraction; modern soft power is policy-driven and platform-mediated through digital technologies	Assess whether THACCA is designed to promote cultural export, digital distribution, and international cultural presence
National Branding	Anholt (2007)	National reputation is coordinated across tourism, exports, policy, investment, culture, and people through state strategy	Evaluate whether THACCA is integrated into Thailand's broader nation branding and soft power narrative

Developmental State	Johnson (1982); Evans (1995)	Strategic bureaucracy with embedded autonomy coordinates industrial transformation and state-business collaboration	Analyse whether THACCA has authority, coordination capacity, and long-term strategic orientation rather than a purely promotional role
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Table 1 Conceptual framework

Research Methodology

This study employs a qualitative, theory-informed policy analysis to assess the institutional design of THACCA. It applies a framework mapping approach drawing on the creative economy, soft power, national branding, and developmental state. The data analysis is based on official policy documents, government statements, and other related literature.

These documents are analyzed through a thematic approach, focusing on recurring patterns and key dimensions within THACCA's design. In particular, the analysis looks at aspects such as institutional authority, coordination mechanisms, regulatory capacity, and strategic direction. These dimensions are then used as criteria to compare THACCA's structure with the core principles derived from the theoretical frameworks.

This approach allows the study to examine how THACCA aligns with established models of creative economy governance, while also identifying gaps that may affect the agency's overall effectiveness.

Research results

In this part, the study aims to evaluate the institutional design of the Thailand Creative Culture Agency (THACCA) through the theoretical framework, as mentioned before, which includes creative economy, soft power, national branding, and developmental state theory. This goes beyond only assessing policy outcomes.

THACCA positioned itself as the centralized One-Stop Service authority by providing financial support (Bank Finance, 2026), removing legal barriers, and building an infrastructure to promote Thailand's soft power ecosystem and support industries. Also, THACCA serves as the Job Creator to generate 20 million high-skill positions in the job market to support talent under the One Family One Soft Power (OFOS) project. THACCA focuses on 11-14 target sectors, covering from food and film to festivals and art (Yangiam & Promkam, 2025). Through these policies, THACCA aims to translate Thailand's cultural capital into significant economic value (Vitrina, 2025). The initiative aims to align with the goal of generating 4 trillion THB in annual revenue. Moreover, THACCA is the main player to push Thailand toward becoming a sustainable international leader in soft power and aiming to elevate the nation to high-income status. However, translating the creative potential into practical economic and diplomatic influence requires more than symbolic coordination.

In this part, therefore, the study treats THACCA not as a completed institutional arrangement, but as undergoing a governance project (The Legal, 2024). The study introduces theory by theory. First, the study analyzes whether THACCA aligns with the core principles of the creative economy model. Especially, on the capitalization of intellectual property and the integration of creativity into measurable economic value. Second, the study evaluates the agency's soft power strategy in terms of attraction, cultural legitimacy, and the tension between state direction and organic production. Third, the study assesses THACCA's contribution to national branding through the framework of competitive identity and policy coherence. Fourth, the study analyzes how the agency employs characteristics of a developmental state institution, especially in terms of embedded autonomy and strategic industrial guidance.

Creative Economy

Firstly, the creative economy's lack of clarity regarding Intellectual Property (IP) (Howkins, 2002), data system, and market mechanisms within THACCA's design shows a big gap between the government's big dreams and the complex reality of Thai bureaucracy. While the ambition to turn Thailand into a Creative Hub (Thailand Creative Culture Agency, n.d.) is high, the structural design of this new agency still feels like a work in progress, with several structural gaps that could swallow its potential before it even begins.

In terms of the Intellectual Property (IP) side, even though THACCA wants to turn Thai culture into economic value, the legal framework is incredibly confusing (Ritkasem & Somchom, 2025). In the present, the power to register and protect copyrights still sits firmly with the Department of Intellectual Property (DIP) under the Ministry of Commerce. THACCA, on the other hand, is being designed primarily as a promoter. So it creates a One-Stop Service (Thoopkrajae & Vongpuapan, 2025) paradox which is that a creator might go to THACCA for support, but THACCA doesn't have the legal framework to settle IP disputes or finalize registrations (Lexpertise Law Firm, 2025). This means small creators and independent artists will likely get stuck in the same administrative hurdles, forced to navigate fragmented jurisdictions just to protect their work. Furthermore, there is an institutionalized tension between wanting to be a global creative powerhouse and keeping conservative censorship laws. If the state still uses IP to control films, games, or art, it creates a hidden tax on creativity. Creators are never sure where the line is drawn, which discourages the kind of bold, risky ideas that go viral globally.

When it comes to data, THACCA faces what experts call a massive readiness gap. In the modern creative economy, data is the new oil (Digital Government Development Agency, 2024), but in the present, Thailand's data is leaking everywhere. Information about artists, local businesses, and global market trends is scattered across different government offices that do not communicate with one another. One ministry knows about food, another about textiles, and another about digital exports, but none of them shares a unified language or database. The current plan for THACCA doesn't clearly explain how it will link all this data together. This is known as data interoperability. Without a unified system, it's almost impossible for THACCA to act as a real knowledge hub. If it can't track what global consumers want, like what people in Europe are eating or what gamers in Brazil are playing, and match it with what Thai creators are making, the policy might end up producing things that nobody wants to purchase. It's like building a factory without

knowing if there are any customers. Furthermore, this readiness gap is exacerbated by domestic digital inequality. Since digital access remains uneven across Thailand, evidenced by a 5.7% disparity between urban and rural areas (Digital Economy Promotion Agency, 2023), any data harvested is predisposed to an urban bias. Consequently, the resulting insights may primarily reflect big-city dynamics, thereby marginalizing the needs of rural creators and undermining the inclusive objectives of the One Family One Soft Power (OFOS) project.

Finally, the THACCA market mechanism remains very blurry and raises many questions about sustainability. For example, the government talks a lot about the Soft Power Mutual Fund to consolidate substantial fiscal resources. However, they haven't explained the specific rules for who gets that money or how they will measure success. The dichotomy between national sentiment and commercial viability (UNCTAD, 2008) is also a concern. If the criteria are not clear, there will be a high risk that decisions based on political affiliations will be made, leaving SMEs and grassroots artists behind. The plan to train 20 million people with the One Family One Soft Power goal is significantly ambitious, but it ignores the demand side of the market. If THACCA focuses only on spending billions to create a huge supply of skilled workers without building a real global market for them, it might end up with millions of certified chefs or fashion designers who have no place to work (UNCTAD, 2010). This could lead to a creative bubble that eventually pops, leaving the government with a massive bill and no real economic growth to show for it (UNCTAD, 2018).

To make THACCA work, the government needs to stop thinking like a traditional bureaucracy and start thinking like a platform. It needs to move away from the inward-looking mindset where the state tries to control culture and instead focus on an outward-looking strategy that empowers the private sector. This means fixing IP laws to make them fast and digital-friendly, creating a real-time data bridge between ministries, and ensuring the market is fair for everyone, not just the big players. If THACCA does not fix these unclear points before officially starting, this whole soft power initiative might become a temporary political trend rather than a sustained agency. It would be a tragedy if such a bold idea failed simply because the plumbing of the institution wasn't ready for the flow of creativity.

Soft Power

The gap between promotion and its sustainability in terms of soft power, one of the biggest issues, is that THACCA is designed to be a promoter itself rather than a protector or a diplomat in legal terms (Vivatanapaiboonlap & Pham, 2024). However, when considering other successful models like South Korea's KOCCA, their international projection is built into the law (Dinamika, 2023; Korea Creative Content Agency, n.d.). They not only introduce K-Pop brands globally but also negotiate trade deals that favor their creative exports. While in THACCA's case, the design is still inward-looking. This is evident in the THACCA's policy to train 20 million people under the One Family One Soft Power (OFOS) project that focuses on building skilled labour inside Thailand (Public Relations Department of Thailand, 2025). Yet, there is no clear institutional link that explains how THACCA is planning to provide assistance to all 20 million people on generating income from foreign investors or hirers (Kanyapong, 2023). Based on the

discussion above, it suggests that THACCA only functions as a training center rather than a national powerhouse, because it lacks a legal framework that connects Thai creators to global markets.

The paradox between authenticity and control suggests that international projection works only if the world perceives culture as cool and authentic (Nye, 2004). However, the research by Mark S. Cogan highlights a major risk which is called the Soft Power Paradox. THACCA is currently designed to be closely aligned with the central government and the Prime Minister's office. This creates a risk that the international projection will look like government propaganda rather than organic culture (Cogan, 2024). Especially when soft power is overvalued, it may sound more like propaganda than genuine promotion to the audience.

When a country tries to control its image too much by showing only positive or traditional versions of Thailand, it often fails to attract a global audience. Global hits like *Parasite* or *Squid Game* became popular because they were allowed to criticize Korean Society (Jin, 2016). If THACCA is institutionalized as a tool to promote a narrow version of Thainess, it will struggle to gain international credibility. To be a true international player, THACCA needs institutional independence to support creators even when they challenge the status quo, but that independence is not in the current design.

In terms of budget and sustainability, currently, the international push of THACCA is tied to a specific budget of 5.1 billion baht and the current political administration. This is a huge risk. International projection takes decades of consistent work, because THACCA's international role is not locked into a long-term plan, THACCA lacks a sustainable legal framework, so it could easily disappear if the government changes. According to the KOCCA model, the funding and the global offices are permanent. Referring to this successful model, THACCA's soft power mutual fund is still vague. People do not know how this money will be used to support international marketing in the long run. Without a permanent and sustained budgeting plan or initiative to expand globally that operates independently of local politics, Thailand's international projection will remain a series of one-time events, such as festivals or road shows, rather than a constitutionalized presence.

To conclude, THACCA's role in projecting Thailand onto the world stage is currently more of a slogan than a system. To move from soft power without power to a real global force, THACCA needs to bridge these institutional gaps. Several practical steps illustrate how these gaps could be addressed. For example, creating a legal bridge to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of Commerce, building a world-class data hub to track global trends, and most importantly, giving creators the freedom to be authentic. Until these elements are written into the agency's institutional DNA, Thailand's international projection will remain fragmented and dependent on luck rather than strategy.

National Branding

In terms of national branding, this focuses on how a country organizes its policies, institutions, and international presence to project a consistent identity unlike soft power. According to Competitive Identity, national branding is not only about communication strategy or image promotion (Anholt, 2007). It is the result of long-term policy alignment across economic management, governance quality, cultural production,

and international engagement. Therefore, this examines whether THACCA's institutional design supports a coherent and credible projection of Thailand's identity.

THACCA aims to reposition Thailand from its traditional image of a tourism and low-cost production destination by focusing on creativity, cultural value, and innovation. By positioning Thailand as a future Creative Hub, the agency aims to translate its cultural assets, such as food, film, fashion, festivals, and digital content, into national competitive advantages (Creative Economy Agency, n.d.; Brand Finance, 2026). The centralization of coordination under THACCA also reflects an effort to reduce fragmentation among ministries that previously handled creative sectors separately. By theory, this direction is fine with the idea that the national image must be supported by structural coordination rather than by isolated campaigns (Murphy, 2022).

However, national branding requires consistency between policy narrative and regulatory practice (Ipsos, 2021a; 2021b). Yet THACCA promotes innovation and global competitiveness, while some existing bureaucratic structures remain conservative and complex. All film administrative approval procedures such as regulation, and content oversight, may create uncertainty for creators (Ritkasem & Somchom, 2025). When domestic regulatory conditions do not fully support experimentation and risk-taking, the external branding message of creativity may lose credibility. However, the most important condition is that national identity should not be separated from domestic governance conditions (Vivatanapaiboonlap & Pham, 2024).

Furthermore, effective national branding depends on cross-sector integration. Trade promotion, intellectual property protection, digital infrastructure, and cultural diplomacy must reinforce the same strategic direction. Although THACCA positions itself as a coordinating center, its formal authority over these areas remains limited. Key regulatory and economic instruments are still located within other ministries. Without clearly institutionalized coordination mechanisms, the risk of fragmented branding remains. Different sectors may project different images, which weakens the clarity of Thailand's overall international positioning.

Another important dimension is policy continuity. Competitive identity is built gradually through stable and predictable policy behavior. THACCA benefits from strong political endorsement; however, its long-term funding stability and institutional autonomy are still developing. If creative economy promotion becomes dependent on short-term political priorities, it may reduce international confidence in Thailand's branding strategy. Sustainability, rather than intensity, determines whether branding efforts generate long-term impact.

This reflects that THACCA shifted Thailand's strategy by recognizing that cultural industries can not only shape economic growth but also influence national reputation (World Bank, 2026). However, national branding requires much deeper institutional consolidation, regulatory alignment, and long-term coordination capacity. THACCA, in its current stage, reflects its strong narrative ambition, but a strong structural foundation is also necessary to maintain a consistent and credible competitive identity while remaining under development.

Developmental State

Finally, beyond questions of intellectual property, soft power projection, and national branding coherence, THACCA can also be evaluated through the lens of developmental state theory. The creative economy framework (Johnson, 1982) emphasizes market generation through intellectual property. Soft power theory focuses on attraction and cultural influence. In contrast, the developmental state perspective examines whether the agency functions as a strategic pilot institution capable of guiding industrial transformation. Drawing on MITI and the Japanese Miracle, and Embedded Autonomy (Evans, 1995). This perspective shifts analytical focus from narrative aspiration to the question of bureaucratic capacity, autonomy, and strategic coordination

The state did not simply encourage creativity; it structured markets, sequenced sectoral upgrading, and tied support to measurable performance. When examined against these benchmarks, THACCA appears politically strong but institutionally weak. Even though THACCA holds a high position within Thailand's soft power agenda, its formal authority across ministries is fragile. Intellectual property enforcement, export regulation, and financial instruments are still dispersed among different bureaucratic actors. As a result, THACCA's coordination role resembles facilitation more than command (Wright, 1996). It convenes, but it does not yet decisively steer.

Moreover, developmental states can be described as selective industrial targeting rather than broad inclusivity. Johnson's analysis emphasizes disciplined prioritization, as limited resources are the main factor that improves upgrading potential. On the other hand, THACCA adopts coverage from food and festivals to digital content and sports without clear mechanisms or performance-based conditionality. This reflects political inclusiveness over strategic focus. Furthermore, without clear prioritization criteria, the agency may struggle to translate cultural assets into globally competitive industries and continue to compete on a global stage.

The assessment could be further sharpened by applying Evans' concept of embedded autonomy. Effective developmental institutions rely on connections with industry while preserving bureaucratic insulation from short-term political pressures. However, THACCA promotes stakeholder engagement, yet the institutionalization of these linkages remains unclear. There is limited evidence of formalized advisory structures, long-term industrial compacts, or structured performance evaluation systems. Without these mechanisms, embeddedness may become informal networking rather than strategic coordination. At the same time, strong political sponsorship, while accelerating visibility, may reduce bureaucratic insulation if policy direction becomes overly dependent on shifting political priorities.

Another core feature of developmental states is technocratic competence. Institutions such as MITI invested heavily in internal research capacity, industrial intelligence, and long-term planning expertise (Johnson, 1982). In the context of the creative economy, where global demand changes rapidly and digital platforms can reshape market needs, THACCA's current design still relies on coordination and promotion rather than on developing an integrated policy capable of informing strategic intervention.

Financial instruments also reveal limitations. Developmental states deploy targeted credit schemes, export financing, and conditional subsidies to nurture industrial upgrading. While THACCA positioned itself as a funding mobilizer, its mechanisms are broader governmental budgeting processes. This shows the absence of stable multi-year industrial financing frameworks that may constrain its ability to pursue sustained upgrading strategies beyond annual policy cycles.

Discussions and Conclusions

Taken together, the four theoretical lenses reveal a consistent pattern. Across creative economy governance, soft power strategy, national branding, and developmental state logic, THACCA shows high strategic intent but uneven institutional consolidation, which does not translate well. THACCA shows an ambitious political project to reposition Thailand to compete in the global creative stage, yet its legal authority, coordination mechanisms, technocratic infrastructure, and performance discipline remain in formative stages.

From the four theoretical aspects, the most significant gap appears within the developmental state framework. The analysis shows its weaknesses at the structural level, which is the root constraint. This extends into the other domains, including national branding, soft power strategy, and ultimately the broader creative economy agenda. Altogether, it reflects the core issue which is the ambiguity of THACCA's structural authority within the state apparatus. Its institutional position within the Office of the Prime Minister, combined with funding from central budget allocations, creates uncertainty about its formal jurisdiction and hierarchical standing. This structure might create coordination problems between ministries especially with agencies that are creative-related.

Moreover, THACCA was not well constructed through a natural step-by-step bureaucratic consolidation process. Instead, it was integrated into the executive structure with immediate budgetary support from the Office of the Prime Minister, enabling rapid operationalization. While this allows the agency to begin operations quickly, it also means that certain foundational governance elements are not fully institutionalized. This lack of maturity is made worse by a readiness gap in the country's data systems. Currently, information is spread across different ministries that do not share a unified database. Without this data interoperability, THACCA cannot easily track what global customers want. This means the government might spend billions training millions of workers for skills that the global market does not actually need.

As a result, THACCA has not yet fully developed in terms of governance architecture, procedural clarity, and institutional maturity. This foundational weakness within the developmental state dimension therefore has cascading effects on its ability to execute coherent soft power policy, strengthen the credibility of national branding, and sustain long-term governance of the creative economy. Furthermore, the agency faces a soft power paradox because it is so closely tied to the government. To be successful, cultural exports need to feel authentic to a global audience. However, if the state controls the message too much, international audiences might see it as government propaganda.

In summary, the analysis shows that Thailand Creative Culture Agency (THACCA) reflects strong political ambition throughout the creative economy, soft power, and national branding agendas. However, its institutional consolidation, especially within the developmental state dimension, remains uneven. Because of this, it reveals a gap between strategic vision and institutional capacity.

Suggestions

As mentioned before, the main challenge of THACCA is not the absence of vision from THACCA, but the gap between strategic aspiration and the institutional readiness of THACCA. The following chapters, therefore, synthesize these assessments and discuss their broader implications for Thailand's creative economy governance and long-term policy sustainability (Tilleke & Gibbins, 2025). So it would like to propose that if THACCA aims to implement its policies successfully, efficiently, and in a sustainable manner, it must begin with the most fundamental issue that was overlooked from the outset: establishing the organization on a clear and proper legal foundation.

A useful comparison can be made with the Korea Creative Content Agency (KOCCA) in South Korea (KOCCA, 2023). KOCCA has policy goals and operational characteristics that are like those of THACCA. However, one important factor behind KOCCA's success is that it developed its projects step by step and accumulated institutional experience before being formally established as a full government agency. As a result, KOCCA gained clear legal authority and was able to cooperate effectively with other ministries, industries, and private actors through well-defined procedures. This gradual institutional development strengthened both its legitimacy and its administrative capacity.

In contrast, THACCA is currently placed under the Office of the Prime Minister and relies on central budget allocations. This arrangement creates uncertainty regarding its exact position within the state structure. It has the potential to lead to confusion about its authority and causes difficulties when coordinating with different ministries, public organizations, and private sector stakeholders. Without a clearly defined legal mandate and institutional status, inter-agency cooperation can become slow and inconsistent.

In conclusion, the study kindly suggests that if a future organization is to perform a role like THACCA's in promoting the creative economy, it must be established through a clear and formal state mandate. Its legal status, authority, and institutional position should be explicitly defined from the beginning. This clarity would allow the organization to demonstrate its full potential, operate with greater stability, and sustainably advance the country's long-term creative economy policies.

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