

**THE ROLE OF STRATEGIC MARKETING IN MOO DENG'S  
SUCCESS AT KHAO KHEOW OPEN ZOO**

The seal of Mahidol University is a circular emblem. It features a central blue circle containing a golden Thai-style stupa or chedi. Surrounding this central circle is a white ring with Thai script. The outermost ring is a larger white circle, also containing Thai script. The entire seal is rendered in a light, faded yellowish-gold color.

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**A THEMATIC PAPER SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL  
FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR  
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Thematic paper  
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**THE ROLE OF STRATEGIC MARKETING IN MOODENG'S  
SUCCESS AT KHAO KHEOW OPEN ZOO**

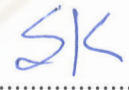
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Napapha Wongchanadej

## **THE ROLE OF STRATEGIC MARKETING IN MOO DENG'S SUCCESS AT KHAO KHEOW OPEN ZOO**

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M.M. (MARKETING MANAGEMENT)

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### **ABSTRACT**

The zoo industry has transformed over the past decade, focusing on immersive, educational experiences that engage visitors and promote wildlife conservation. Moo Deng, a pygmy hippo at Khao Kheow Open Zoo, exemplifies how strategic marketing drives success in this changing landscape. Through viral and ethical marketing, alongside the 4E framework (Emotion, Experience, Engagement, Exclusivity), Moo Deng has become a global sensation.

This research examines the factors behind her success, using visitor interviews and social media feedback. Findings show that her emotional appeal, engaging content, and adorable portrayal resonate deeply with audiences. Platforms like TikTok and Facebook were instrumental in fostering widespread engagement and international recognition. The zoo's marketing not only increased visitor satisfaction but also raised awareness about wildlife conservation and the plight of pygmy hippos.

The study demonstrates that combining viral, ethical, and experiential marketing boosts brand visibility while aligning with consumer values. It also highlights the importance of proactive engagement, transparent communication, and strategic investments to sustain long-term interest and manage increased visitor numbers. Moo Deng's case offers a blueprint for balancing entertainment, education, and conservation, ensuring both business growth and social impact in the zoo industry.

**KEY WORDS: MOO DENG/ ZOO INDUSTRY/ 4E MARKETING/ VIRAL MARKETING/ ETHICAL MARKETING**

27 pages

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## **CHAPTER I**

### **INTRODUCTION**

Over the past decade, the zoo industry has undergone a profound transformation, marked by a significant shift towards creating immersive and educational experiences. This evolution prioritizes not only visitor engagement but also the crucial aspect of wildlife conservation. As these trends have taken root, they have opened up unique investment opportunities for stakeholders who are keenly aware of the growth potential within this dynamic sector. Recognizing these emerging trends, Moo Deng strategically positioned itself to capitalize on them by identifying and investing in innovative zoo projects that aligned with the evolving demands of modern consumers. This foresight allowed Moo Deng to stay ahead of the curve and meet the changing expectations of zoo visitors, who are increasingly seeking enriching and educational experiences.

Moo Deng's rise to prominence can largely be attributed to its keen ability to anticipate market trends and make informed, strategic decisions that resonate deeply with its target audience. By focusing on marketing strategies that enhance the visitor experience and promote conservation efforts, Moo Deng has successfully achieved viral recognition on a global scale within the zoo market.

To gain a deeper understanding of Moo Deng's success, a comprehensive analysis of customer feedback was conducted through interviews with zoo visitors and extensive feedback gathered from various social media platforms. This feedback revealed that Moo Deng's marketing strategies have been exemplary in improving visitor satisfaction and increasing customer visits. Moreover, these strategies have significantly raised awareness about the challenges faced by pygmy hippos and other endangered species in the wild, underscoring the importance of wildlife protection.

Through its innovative approach and strategic investments, Moo Deng has demonstrated how effective marketing strategies can drive success in the zoo industry while also contributing to wildlife conservation. This case serves as a powerful example of

how aligning business objectives with consumer demands and ethical considerations can lead to remarkable achievements and lasting impact.





## **CHAPTER II**

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

#### **2.1 Viral Marketing**

Viral marketing has become a potent and influential strategy in the modern digital era. It harnesses the power of social networks to disseminate marketing messages swiftly and organically, reaching vast audiences with remarkable speed. This literature review delves into the fundamental concepts, various strategies, and significant outcomes associated with viral marketing. It draws insights from a diverse array of academic sources and industry case studies to provide a comprehensive understanding of this dynamic marketing approach. By examining these elements, this review aims to shed light on how viral marketing can effectively engage consumers, drive brand awareness, and generate significant buzz in today's interconnected world.

Viral marketing is a technique that motivates individuals to share a marketing message with others, potentially leading to exponential growth in its visibility and influence. According to Reece et al. (2010), for a campaign to achieve virality, it must provide value to both the sender and the receiver, be easily reproducible, and predominantly spread via the internet. Effective strategies for fostering viral marketing campaigns include creating compelling and shareable content, leveraging influencers and social media platforms, and using emotional triggers to encourage sharing. Middleton (2012) points out that satisfied customers, aspiring customers, journalists, and experts can serve as carriers of viral messages, helping to spread them to a broader audience.

The effectiveness of viral marketing campaigns is frequently evaluated by their capacity to draw in new customers, boost brand loyalty, and raise brand awareness. According to Zarella (2010), viral marketing can accomplish these objectives by fostering a sense of community and trust among consumers. Furthermore, viral marketing can result in substantial cost savings compared to traditional marketing techniques, as the message disseminates without requiring extensive advertising budgets.

A literature review identifies viral marketing as a strategy that leverages social networks to rapidly disseminate marketing messages, resulting in exponential growth in visibility and influence. Effective strategies include creating engaging content, utilizing influencers, and triggering emotional responses to encourage sharing. The aim of these messages is to satisfy customers, aspiring customers, journalists, and experts which help to expand reach. Success is measured by attracting new customers, enhancing brand loyalty, and increasing brand awareness, all while fostering community and trust. Additionally, viral marketing can significantly reduce costs compared to traditional methods, as messages spread organically without extensive advertising budgets.

## **2.2 4E Marketing**

The 4E Marketing Theory, which includes Emotion, Experience, Engagement, and Exclusivity, has become increasingly popular as companies seek to improve customer interactions and strengthen brand loyalty. This literature review explores the fundamental aspects of the 4E Marketing Theory, analyzing current research and its real-world applications in today's marketing environment.

### **2.2.1 Emotion**

Emotion in marketing involves creating a bond between the brand and the consumer. Holbrook and Hirschman (1982) highlight that emotions significantly influence consumer behavior, shaping decisions and encouraging loyalty. Advertisements that emotionally engage viewers tend to be more memorable and shareable, boosting brand recall and customer retention (Morris, Woo, Geason, & Kim, 2002). Additionally, emotional branding helps a brand stand out in a competitive market, making it more relatable and memorable to consumers (Thompson, Rindfleisch, & Arsel, 2006).

### **2.2.2 Experience**

Experience encompasses the overall impression a consumer has with a brand, which includes not only the product or service but also the interactions and touchpoints throughout the customer journey. Schmitt (1999) posits that experiential marketing creates a holistic experience for the consumer, engaging multiple senses and

creating a memorable encounter with the brand. Pine and Gilmore (1998) argue that in the Experience Economy, businesses must go beyond the product to create unique experiences that captivate consumers. These experiences can lead to stronger emotional bonds, increased customer satisfaction, and loyalty (Gentile, Spiller, & Noci, 2007).

### **2.2.3 Engagement**

Engagement entails encouraging active involvement and interaction between a brand and its consumers. According to Brodie et al. (2011), customer engagement is a psychological state that emerges from interactive, co-creative experiences with a brand. Engaged customers are more inclined to become brand advocates, offering valuable word-of-mouth promotion and feedback (Bowden, 2009). Social media platforms play a crucial role in fostering engagement, enabling brands to communicate directly with consumers and build a sense of community (Hollebeek, Glynn, & Brodie, 2014).

### **2.2.4 Exclusivity**

Exclusivity involves offering unique, time-limited products or experiences to generate urgency and desire among consumers. Cialdini (2001) explains that scarcity greatly increases perceived value and drives demand. Creating exclusivity can involve limited edition items, members-only events, or personalized offers, all of which make consumers feel special and loyal (Kapferer, 2008). This approach helps a brand stand out from competitors and strengthens emotional connections with its customers.

In summary, the literature review of 4E Marketing Theory presents a comprehensive approach to building strong, lasting relationships with consumers. By leveraging Emotion, Experience, Engagement, and Exclusivity, brands can create memorable interactions that drive customer loyalty and advocacy. The evolving landscape of digital marketing provides numerous opportunities for brands to implement these strategies effectively. Future research should continue to explore how the 4E Marketing Theory can be adapted to emerging trends and technologies to further enhance consumer-brand relationships.

## 2.3 Ethical Marketing

Ethical marketing is a philosophy that prioritizes honesty, fairness, and responsibility in marketing activities. This strategy not only builds consumer trust and loyalty but also promotes a positive brand image and sustainable business practices. This literature review explores the fundamental principles of ethical marketing, evaluating current research and its practical implications in today's marketing environment.

Ethical marketing entails promoting fairness, transparency, and respect for consumer rights. As noted by Murphy, Laczniak, and Wood (2007), this approach is rooted in moral principles that guide marketers to make decisions that are both profitable and socially responsible. Key principles include honesty, integrity, fairness, and respect. The aim of ethical marketing is to create long-term value for consumers and society by addressing their needs while upholding high standards of conduct. Research by Jones, Felps, and Bigley (2007) emphasizes the role of ethical marketing in building consumer trust and loyalty. With rising concerns about ethical practices, businesses that commit to ethical behavior are more likely to attract and retain customers. Additionally, ethical marketing can generate positive word-of-mouth and improve a company's reputation, which is crucial in a competitive market.

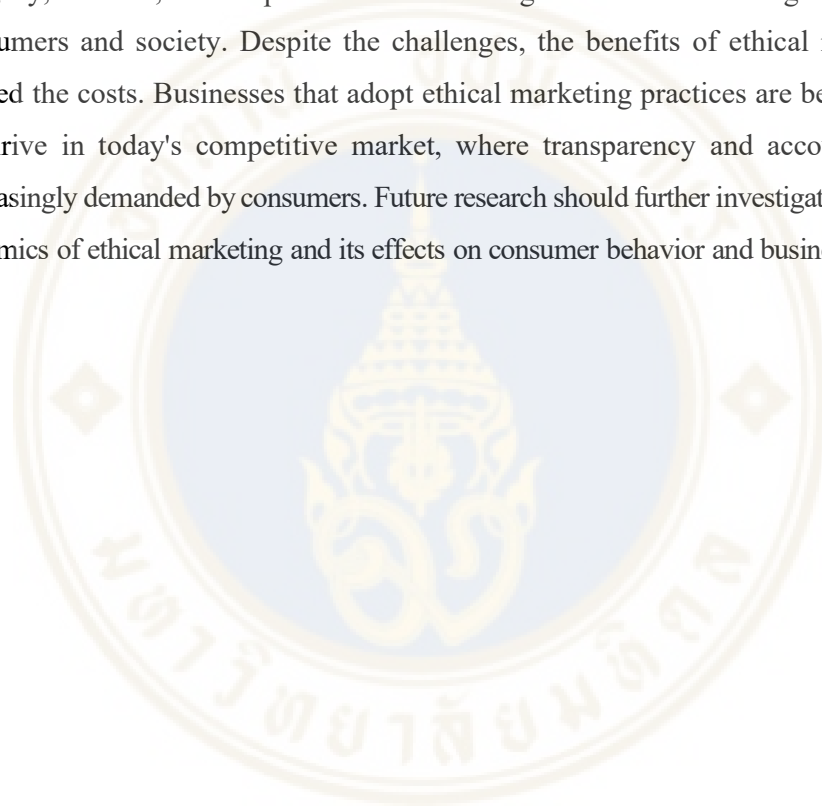
Murphy et al. (2007) has identified several key principles of ethical marketing:

1. **Honesty:** Marketers should provide truthful and accurate information about products and services. Deceptive advertising and misleading claims can harm consumer trust and damage a brand's reputation.
2. **Integrity:** Marketers should uphold ethical standards and practices in all their dealings. This includes being transparent about business practices and avoiding any actions that could be perceived as unethical.
3. **Fairness:** Marketers should treat consumers fairly and with respect. This involves pricing products reasonably, avoiding discrimination, and ensuring that all marketing practices are non-exploitative.
4. **Respect for Consumer Rights:** Marketers should respect the rights of consumers, including their right to privacy and their right to make informed choices. This includes protecting consumer data and being transparent about how it is used.

The practical implications of ethical marketing extend broadly. For instance, Smith and Cooper-Martin (1997) discovered that ethical marketing practices enhance

customer satisfaction and loyalty. Companies that emphasize ethical behavior are also better equipped to evade legal problems and negative publicity, which can have serious financial and reputational impacts. Additionally, ethical marketing fosters a positive organizational culture, motivating employees to maintain high standards and take pride in their roles.

A literature review identifies ethical marketing as a means to establish trust, loyalty, and a positive brand image. Companies that adhere to principles of honesty, integrity, fairness, and respect for consumer rights can create lasting value for both consumers and society. Despite the challenges, the benefits of ethical marketing far exceed the costs. Businesses that adopt ethical marketing practices are better equipped to thrive in today's competitive market, where transparency and accountability are increasingly demanded by consumers. Future research should further investigate the evolving dynamics of ethical marketing and its effects on consumer behavior and business practices.



## **CHAPTER III**

### **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

Writer has used primary research with qualitative research methodology, in order to gain information and deep understating of the subject. The writer has conducted a face-to-face interview with the visitors at the zoo and gathered comments and reactions from viewers in various social media platforms.

Qualitative research methodology is highly valuable for gaining in-depth understanding of human behavior and experiences. By exploring underlying motivations, thoughts, and feelings, researchers can gain a comprehensive view of the subject matter. This is particularly important in fields like psychology and sociology, where the nuances of human behavior are central to research objectives. Furthermore, qualitative research is adaptable and can adjust based on new insights. This allows for a dynamic and responsive research process that remains relevant and reflective of real-world complexities. Qualitative research is also ideal for exploring new or poorly understood areas. When limited knowledge exists on a topic, qualitative methods provide a flexible approach to exploration, generating rich data that can inform further research. These will lead to richer data collection. Participants can express themselves freely, resulting in a comprehensive and nuanced dataset. This richness enables researchers to develop a holistic understanding of the subject matter.

The main objective of interviewing visitors is to understand visitor behavior and attitudes is crucial for creating engaging and sustainable animal exhibits. The case of Moo Deng, the viral pygmy hippo at Khao Kheow Open Zoo, offers a compelling example of how visitor interviews can provide deep insights into the factors driving an animal's popularity and how they engage with Moo Deng. Interview can give a guideline which marketing campaigns or strategies have been most effective in attracting visitors to Moo Deng's exhibit.

### 3.1 Interviewee Selection Criteria

The author decided to conduct interviews with five visitors at the zoo to gain insights into their experiences. Each interview was planned to last approximately 10 minutes, allowing for in-depth discussions. To ensure a diverse range of perspectives, the author carefully selected interviewees from various categories, as outlined by the criteria below;

1. Visitor Demographics: Include a mix of age groups and ensure a balanced representation of male and female visitors.
2. Group Composition: Include solo visitors, groups of friends, and families with children
3. Visit Frequency: Both first-time visitors and repeat visitors.
4. Cultural and Ethnic Diversity: Include local and international visitors.

### 3.2 Research Question

The research question for this paper is to examine the key success factors in the Moo Deng case. The writer aims to use open-ended questions to explore a wide range of possibilities from the interviewees without any guiding questions to capture overall perspectives.

Below are the questions that the writer has asked the interviewee by topics.

1. Personal Background
  - Can you tell your personal background?
2. Visitor Experience
  - What initially attracted you to visit Moo Deng's exhibit?
  - Can you describe your overall experience at Moo Deng's exhibit?
3. Emotional Connection
  - How did you feel when you first saw Moo Deng?
4. Marketing and Social Media
  - How did you first hear about Moo Deng?
  - Have you seen any viral or memes about Moo Deng? If so, what was your impression?



- Do you follow Moo Deng or the zoo on social media? Why or why not?

#### 5. Feedback and Suggestions

- What did you like most about the Moo Deng exhibit?
- Would you recommend the Moo Deng exhibit to others? Why or why not?

The author conducted the interviews at the zoo on September 25th, 2024 for 5 interview sessions and another 5 on October 6th, 2024. The interviews were held near the golf cart rental area and on the line waiting for seeing Mee Deng, where visitors were waiting, ensuring they had ample time to answer the questions without feeling rushed.

### 3.3 Selected Visitors

- September 25th, 2024

1. A Thai couple, aged 24 and 22, traveled from Bangkok to see Moo Deng at the zoo because the girlfriend found Moo Deng irresistibly cute. They are both avid followers of Moo Deng on TikTok, keeping up with her daily activities.

2. Four female friends, aged 20 to 21, visited the zoo from Chonburi to see Moo Deng in person. They knew about her from TikTok and Facebook and were charmed by her antics. Having previously visited the zoo on a school trip, they decided to come again as it's easily accessible from their home.

3. A middle-aged Chinese couple, who were vacationing in Pattaya, decided to visit the zoo after hearing about Moo Deng's popularity on Douyin (the Chinese version of TikTok).

4. A 36-year-old woman from Bangkok visited the zoo alone to take photos of Moo Deng and share them on her social media. She is a dedicated fan, regularly posting about Moo Deng on Facebook and Instagram.

5. A family from Samutsakorn, consisting of parents and two children, visited the zoo after hearing about Moo Deng on the news and Facebook. The mother finds Moo Deng cute, and the children insisted on the visit.



- October 6th, 2024

6. Three Australian friends, aged 22 to 23, visited the zoo during their first trip to Thailand. They included the zoo in their itinerary after learning about Moo Deng on TikTok. While they were keen to explore the entire zoo, they had a special interest in seeing Moo Deng.

7. A Thai couple, both aged 25, who regularly watch Moo Deng on TikTok, traveled from Nakorn Ratchasima and stayed overnight in Bangsaen to visit the zoo early in the morning. They hoped to catch Moo Deng's cute interactions that are not always visible in the livestreams.

8. A 26-year-old male TikToker from Bangkok visited the zoo alone to create content about Moo Deng. Seeing her popularity, he decided to livestream his visit on TikTok to attract more followers.

9. Two teenage school friends, a boy and a girl, visited the zoo because the girl was eager to see Moo Deng in real life after following her on TikTok. The zoo is conveniently located near their school.

10. A family from New Zealand, consisting of middle-aged parents and two children, included a visit to the zoo in their Thailand trip after hearing about Moo Deng from the news and Facebook. The children were excited to see her, so the parents added the zoo to their travel plans.

## **CHAPTER IV**

### **DATA ANALYSIS**

The interviews were conducted at the Khao Kheow Open Zoo on 25 September 2024 and October 6<sup>th</sup>, 2024, a popular destination where many visitors were particularly eager to catch a glimpse of Moo Deng, the pygmy hippo. The excitement surrounding Moo Deng was palpable, drawing a diverse crowd of all ages and genders. A total of 10 interview sessions were held, each featuring different participants to capture a wide range of perspectives.

These interviews took place near the golf cart rental area and a line waiting for visiting Moo Deng, a strategic location where visitors typically wait in line. All ten individuals interviewed in person are fans of Moo Deng. This setting provided a relaxed atmosphere, as people were not in a rush and had time to engage in conversation. The casual format of the interviews allowed for more genuine and thoughtful responses, as participants were comfortable and unhurried. Each interview session lasted between 10 to 15 minutes, providing ample time to gather meaningful insights while keeping the process efficient and enjoyable for the participants.

After conducting all the interview and reactions from viewers from social media, the writer organizes the gathered information into two comprehensive sections. The first section synthesizes the various viewpoints of the interviewees and social media to construct a cohesive narrative that reflects their collective thoughts and perceptions about Moo Deng. This part aims to provide a thorough understanding of how Moo Deng is viewed by different stakeholders. The second section delves into an in-depth analysis of the marketing strategies and tools that were instrumental in Moo Deng's rapid rise to fame. By examining these marketing techniques, the writer highlights the key factors and tactics that contributed to Moo Deng's swift and successful ascent in popularity.

## 4.1 Findings from Interviews

The interviews involved 21 individuals (10 males and 11 females) spanning various age groups and geographical areas. Most of the interviewees traveled from outside Chonburi province, often driving more than two hours to visit the zoo. Foreign visitors included the zoo in their itinerary primarily because of Moo Deng's fame, even though it wasn't the main reason for their trip to Thailand. Moo Deng had become a significant attraction for these visitors. Many of the visitors were well-informed about Moo Deng and were enthusiastic about seeing her in person. However, some older individuals were less familiar with her. Family groups were primarily motivated to visit the zoo by their children, who were enthusiastic fans of Moo Deng and had requested the visit. Interestingly, about 80% of the interviewees, mainly those aged between 16 and 35, discovered Moo Deng through TikTok, where her popularity had surged. These visitors were drawn to the zoo to experience her charm in real life. Only visitors under 21 lived nearby the zoo which is convenient for them who do not own the vehicles. The rest of the visitors, including those from China, followed Moo Deng's life updates on platforms like Facebook and Douyin.

The interviews revealed that Moo Deng's immense charm and cuteness are key attractions for zoo visitors. Interestingly, her appeal resonates more with female visitors and children who come with their families, while male visitors, although familiar with Moo Deng, are less likely to visit alone. Many people follow her daily activities on social media, which eventually motivates them to see her in person. Another reason for their visit is the hope of witnessing Moo Deng's movements, which they haven't seen online. Moo Deng's unique charm, especially compared to other pygmy hippos, lies in her endearing interactions and movements, particularly with her keeper. These moments have been widely shared and appreciated online. Visitors often spend as much time as possible observing Moo Deng, particularly during her active periods. After enjoying their time with her, they usually explore other popular exhibits nearby, such as the penguins, capybaras, and regular hippopotamuses. These additional attractions enhance the overall experience, making the zoo visit even more enjoyable and fulfilling.

## **4.2 Social Media Feedback**

According to feedback from viewers regarding the Moo Deng case, over 80 percent of respondents perceive Moo Deng as more appealing than other pygmy hippos due to her endearing appearance. Many enjoy observing her playful behaviors throughout the day, and some express a strong desire to see her in person. The bond between viewers and Moo Deng is notably strong, with many individuals expressing a commitment to defending her against negative reviews or feedback.

In response to criticisms from PETA, which suggested that the zoo is exploiting Moo Deng for profit without regard for her safety and proposed that she should be released into the wild, more than 90 percent of comments advised PETA to refrain from intervening. Reasons cited include the belief that Moo Deng appears happy in the zoo and concerns that releasing her into the wild may pose greater risks to her well-being.

## **4.3 Analysis**

In this analysis section, the writer will delve into three pivotal factors that have contributed to the remarkable success of Moo Deng. These factors include Viral Marketing, 4E Marketing, and Ethical Marketing. By examining these elements, the writer aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of how each factor has played a crucial role in Moo Deng's widespread popularity and influence.

## **4.4 Viral Marketing**

Firstly, the concept of Viral Marketing will be explored to understand how Moo Deng's story and appeal have been effectively disseminated through various social media platforms, creating a ripple effect that has captivated audiences globally. The Moo Deng case serves as an excellent example of successful viral marketing. Moo Deng, the pygmy hippo, showcases the transformative impact of social media in creating global sensations. Her journey to fame started with captivating TikTok videos that quickly spread to platforms like Facebook and Instagram, underscoring the importance of cross-platform engagement.

Besides, the strategic use of hashtags such as #Moodeng and #WhenWillMooDengBounce was crucial in making the content easily discoverable and shareable, significantly enhancing user interaction. User-generated content, including memes and creative videos, further propelled the viral trend, fostering a sense of community among fans. This phenomenon extended beyond Thailand, attracting international media attention and demonstrating the potential for local content to achieve global resonance. Consequently, the increased visibility led to tangible benefits for the zoo, including a significant rise in attendance from both local and international visitors.

Interviews indicated that the majority of individuals became aware of Moo Deng through various social media platforms, with Facebook and TikTok being the most prominent. The widespread dissemination of her endearing and playful videos on these platforms significantly contributed to her popularity. Consequently, many people were irresistibly compelled to visit the zoo in person to witness Moo Deng's charm firsthand. Moreover, during the viral period, some visitors specifically visited to create content and increase his follower base.

However, the unexpected surge in visitors posed challenges for the zoo, necessitating effective crowd control measures to ensure Moo Deng's safety. Additionally, Moo Deng's popularity opened up opportunities for branding and merchandising, enhancing her visibility through brand campaigns and potential livestreams. The emotional connection audiences felt towards Moo Deng, driven by her playful nature, was a key factor in the campaign's success. By utilizing data-driven insights from social listening tools, the zoo was able to refine its marketing strategies and maximize engagement, highlighting the profound impact of well-executed viral marketing.

Overall, the Moo Deng case illustrates the power of viral marketing through social media, with strategic hashtags and user-generated content driving engagement and creating a global phenomenon. This success led to increased zoo attendance and opportunities for branding and merchandising, despite the challenges of managing visitor surges and ensuring Moo Deng's safety. The emotional connection with Moo Deng and data-driven marketing.

## **4.5 4E Marketing**

Lastly, the 4E Marketing framework which is a contemporary strategy for engaging customers, emphasizing four key elements: Emotion, Experience, Engagement, and Exclusivity. This approach aims to forge deeper connections with customers by addressing their emotional and experiential needs, rather than relying on traditional product-focused marketing. The writer discovered that the Moo Deng case effectively integrates the 4E marketing framework, demonstrating how to engage customers intensely.

### **4.5.1 Emotion**

Moo Deng's charm is primarily rooted in emotional connections. Her baby-like features, including large eyes and rosy cheeks, evoke nurturing instincts in viewers, making her irresistibly adorable. In addition, the content creator from the zoo has created Moo Deng's characteristic by making story and feeling of Moo Deng like she is human which deeply resonate with audiences, evoking empathy, hilarious, and admiration and lead to the stronger sense of connection. This emotional reaction is key to forming a strong bond between Moo Deng and her audience. Additionally, the glimpses of her daily life further strengthen these connections. However, from the interview, it illustrates that emotional affect mainly to the female customers more than male with more than 70% of the female interviewees came from emotion while male interviewees came because they were asked to.

### **4.5.2 Experience**

The zoo has created a remarkable extraordinary experience around Moo Deng. Visitors can see her in person and engage with her through various online platforms. The zoo's ongoing efforts to share charming moments from Moo Deng's daily life, including her playful antics and interactions with zookeepers, enrich the overall visitor experience. Moreover, an interviewee, came here mainly because she wants to experience the new interactions from Moo Deng which might not be seen online.

### **4.5.3 Engagement**

Moo Deng's story has quickly spread across social media, prompting active audience engagement. People interact with her posts by liking, sharing, and commenting. Additionally, numerous brands across different product categories have embraced the Moo Deng trend. They've launched Moo Deng-inspired products and campaigns that resonate with their audiences. These brands continue to create engaging content and generate memes featuring Moo Deng, which significantly boosts audience interaction and engagement. This approach not only keeps the trend alive but also strengthens the connection between the brands and their customers, making Moo Deng a powerful marketing phenomenon that transcends categories and demographics. Thus, Moo Deng, the pygmy hippo from Khao Kheow Zoo, has become a viral sensation on social media. This phenomenon has inspired numerous creative memes and content, attracting attention from international media as well.

### **4.5.4 Exclusivity**

By organizing limited-time events, special viewing hours, and exclusive content, the zoo enhances the uniqueness and exclusivity of seeing Moo Deng. This sense of exclusivity not only draws more visitors but also makes them feel like they are part of something special. Also, the zoo has introduced branded merchandise and special events related to Moo Deng which creates a sense of exclusivity and urgency among fans.

In summary, Moo Deng's case exemplifies the 4E marketing framework through her emotional appeal, which charms audiences with her cute, baby-like features. The zoo enhances visitor experiences by sharing engaging content about Moo Deng's daily life both online and offline. Social media interactions and brand collaborations keep the audience actively engaged in her story. Furthermore, the zoo fosters a sense of exclusivity by offering special events and content focused on Moo Deng, making her a unique attraction that boosts visitor interest and loyalty. These combined elements have significantly contributed to her viral success and the zoo's growing popularity.



## 4.6 Ethical Marketing

Ethical marketing is a strategic approach that emphasizes honesty, integrity, fairness, and respect for consumer rights. It aims to build trust, loyalty, and a positive brand image while creating long-term value for both consumers and society. The Moo Deng case provides a compelling example of how ethical marketing principles can be applied and the potential benefits and challenges associated with it. One of the primary goals of ethical marketing is to build trust and loyalty among consumers. In the Moo Deng case, the zoo's decision to highlight the hippo's unique antics and provide regular updates through social media has garnered significant attention and support from the public. By being transparent about Moo Deng's living conditions and the zoo's conservation efforts, the zoo has managed to create a positive image and build a loyal fan base. This approach aligns with the ethical marketing principle of honesty and transparency, which helps in fostering trust and loyalty among consumers.

Ethical marketing promotes high standards and encourages employees to take pride in their work, fostering a positive organizational culture. In the Moo Deng case, the dedication of the zoo staff to providing the best care for the hippo reflects this positive culture. Their commitment to ethical practices not only benefits the animals but also improves the work environment, leading to higher employee satisfaction and productivity. However, ethical marketing also presents challenges, such as balancing ethical practices with financial goals. The Moo Deng case highlights this potential conflict. The zoo's decision to capitalize on Moo Deng's popularity has led to increased revenue from admissions and merchandise sales. While this approach has been financially successful, it has also drawn criticism from animal rights groups like PETA, raising questions about the ethical implications of using animals for entertainment purposes. Addressing these concerns, the zoo has emphasized its commitment to animal welfare and conservation efforts. By proactively addressing the criticism and demonstrating its ethical practices, the zoo can mitigate negative publicity and maintain a positive brand image.

Overall, The Moo Deng case exemplifies the key findings of ethical marketing and their relevance in today's competitive market. By building trust and loyalty, avoiding negative publicity, and contributing to a positive organizational culture, ethical marketing can create long-term value for both consumers and society. However,



businesses must also navigate the challenges associated with ethical marketing, such as balancing ethical considerations with financial goals. As the landscape of ethical marketing continues to evolve, ongoing research and adaptation will be essential to ensure that businesses can effectively meet the demands of consumers and uphold ethical standards.



## **CHAPTER V**

### **CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

#### **5.1 Conclusions**

The success of Moo Deng at Khao Kheow Open Zoo can be attributed to a combination of viral marketing, 4E marketing, and ethical marketing. Each of these marketing theories has played a crucial role in establishing Moo Deng as a beloved figure and ensuring the zoo's sustained popularity.

Viral marketing has been instrumental in Moo Deng's rise to fame. The use of social media platforms especially TikTok and Facebook enabled the zoo to reach a wide audience quickly. Engaging content featuring Moo Deng's playful antics captured the hearts of viewers worldwide. The power of shareable content, including videos and images, allowed Moo Deng's story to spread rapidly, creating a ripple effect that amplified the zoo's message. By leveraging viral marketing, the zoo was able to attract a diverse and global audience, significantly increasing its visibility and visitor numbers.

The 4E marketing framework—Emotion, Experience, Engagement, and Exclusivity—has also been essential in Moo Deng's success. Emotionally resonant content created a deep connection between Moo Deng and the audience. The zoo capitalized on this emotional bond by curating memorable experiences for visitors, such as interactive exhibits and live streaming of Moo Deng's activities. Engagement was fostered through active participation on social media, where fans could share their experiences and interact with the zoo. Exclusivity was achieved by offering unique Moo Deng-themed merchandise and special events, further enhancing the sense of connection and loyalty among visitors. This comprehensive approach ensured that every aspect of the marketing strategy was aligned with the needs and desires of the audience.

Ethical marketing principles have underpinned the zoo's efforts to present Moo Deng in a responsible and transparent manner. By emphasizing the importance of animal welfare and conservation, the zoo has built trust and credibility with its audience. The commitment to ethical practices, such as providing a safe and enriching environment for

Moo Deng, has resonated with visitors who value transparency and accountability. Addressing criticisms from animal rights groups proactively has demonstrated the zoo's dedication to ethical behavior, further strengthening its positive brand image. Ethical marketing has not only helped mitigate negative publicity but also reinforced the zoo's mission to promote animal welfare.

In conclusion, the key success factors of the Moo Deng case lie in the effective integration of viral marketing, 4E marketing, and ethical marketing. Viral marketing enabled rapid and widespread dissemination of engaging content, capturing the attention of a global audience. The 4E marketing framework ensured a holistic approach to creating emotional connections, memorable experiences, active engagement, and a sense of exclusivity. Ethical marketing established trust and credibility, aligning the zoo's practices with the values of its audience. Together, these marketing theories have created a powerful and sustainable strategy that has propelled Moo Deng to success and positioned Khao Kheow Open Zoo as a leader in animal welfare and visitor engagement. Moving forward, the continued application and evolution of these principles will be essential in maintaining and building upon this success.

## **5.2 Limitations**

The thematic paper's limited generalizability arises from its reliance on interviews, which can introduce subjectivity. Visitors might offer socially desirable responses or feel pressured to answer positively due to their environment, leading to bias in the findings. Additionally, the insights from these interviews can be influenced by personal biases or emotions, impacting the overall conclusions. Furthermore, the limited number of interviews and observations may not provide sufficiently comprehensive insights to validate the conclusions.

Finally, the data collected reflects a specific timeframe and may not account for long-term success factors or shifts in visitor perceptions over time. Additionally, the fast-paced and often unpredictable nature of viral content on social media poses challenges in accurately evaluating and replicating Moo Deng's marketing success.

In conclusion, the paper's findings are possibly limited by the subjectivity of interviews leading to potential data skew. The small sample size may not offer

comprehensive insights. Additionally, the data pertains to a particular period, and the rapid, unpredictable nature of viral content on social media makes it challenging to capture long-term trends or changes in visitor perceptions.

### **5.3 Recommendations**

The success of Moo Deng, the baby pygmy hippo at Khao Kheow Open Zoo, has led to a significant rise in visitor numbers. While this presents a fantastic opportunity for the zoo, it also poses challenges that need to be addressed to ensure a positive visitor experience and sustained interest. This essay provides recommendations to manage the increasing number of visitors and address the potential short-term nature of Moo Deng's viral success.

The surge in visitors due to Moo Deng's popularity necessitates enhancements to the zoo's facilities and processes to accommodate larger crowds effectively. Upgrading facilities such as restrooms, seating areas, and food courts is vital to manage the increased visitor numbers. Ensuring these facilities are comfortable and well-maintained will provide a pleasant experience, encouraging repeat visits and positive word-of-mouth. To handle long entry queues, implementing efficient entry and exit systems like timed entry tickets, advance bookings, or e-tickets can manage crowd flow and minimize waiting times. This enhances visitor experience and ensures safety and order within the zoo. Based on the author's observations, improving signage and information systems will aid visitors in navigating the zoo and making the most of their visit. Clear, informative signs can direct visitors to exhibits, facilities, and services, reducing confusion and improving their overall experience.

However, the challenge with Moo Deng's social media popularity lies in sustaining long-term interest. While the current buzz is advantageous, it is crucial to develop strategies for maintaining engagement and ensuring continued success. Creating a consistent flow of engaging content featuring Moo Deng and other animals is vital to keeping interest alive. Regular updates, behind-the-scenes footage, and interactive live streams can keep the audience excited about the zoo's activities. Additionally, developing and promoting Moo Deng-themed merchandise capitalizes on the current interest and generates extra revenue. Limited-edition products, toys, and apparel can

create a sense of exclusivity and urgency among fans, encouraging purchases. For long-term strategies, given the high visitor numbers while Moo Deng remains popular, there is a significant opportunity to highlight other attractions and initiatives at the zoo to sustain interest. Showcasing different animals, conservation projects, and upcoming events ensures that the zoo remains a dynamic and exciting destination, encouraging visitors to return even during periods of decreased interest in Moo Deng.



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