A SUCCESSFUL MODEL OF BAG EXPORTERS IN THAILAND

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Abstract

Export helps drive Thailand's economic growth, and the government's policies focus on supporting and promoting export also helps Thailand to overcome the economic crisis. One of the export products is bags made from natural and synthetic materials. There have been problems with marketing competition and the impact of the coronavirus (COVID-19) epidemic, resulting in a reduction in export efficiency. In addition, the competition in the modern market is more intense, causing problems for entrepreneurs exporting bags in business operations and lacking competitiveness in the market. This study aims to 1) examine the level of variables on the following aspects; entrepreneurial potential, digital marketing strategy, management innovation, and success of bag exporters in Thailand, 2) study the influence of the captioned variables towards the success of bag exporters in Thailand, and 3) develop a successful model of the bag exporters in Thailand. The mixed research methodology was applied to this study between the quantitative and qualitative ones. In view of the quantitative term, the sample group was 280 bag exporters, with its sampling size based on 20-time criteria of the observed variables and proportional sampling. Data collection was undertaken through questionnaires and later analyzed by Structural Equation Modeling. For the qualitative term, an in-depth interview was conducted through the primary informants of 20 bag exporters in Thailand. The findings revealed that 1) the variables on entrepreneurial potential, digital marketing strategy, management innovation, and success of the bag exporters in Thailand were all at a high level. 2) The entrepreneurial potential, digital marketing strategy, and management innovation influenced the success of bag exporters in Thailand at a 0.05 significance level. 3) The successful model of bag exporters as developed by the researcher was called the "SIP Model" (S = Digital Marketing Strategy, I = Management Innovation, P = Entrepreneurial Potential(. Furthermore, the qualitative findings revealed that to build success in the bag export business in Thailand. The exporters must obtain potential to operate their businesses differently, enhance competitiveness with vision, skills, and intellect to export bags, and deploy innovation and digital marketing strategy that can sustainably make brand awareness of Thai bags among foreign customers. The findings of this research can be further applied as a guideline to define the business policy to enhance the success of bag exporters in Thailand to be capable of global market expansion effectively.

Keyword: Successful Model/ Exporters/Bag/Thailand

INTRODUCTION

Significant growth in the tourism industry has increased the demand for luggage. This is directly proportional to the growing travel and tourism industry. In the past few years, the global travel and tourism industry has grown exponentially. Today, the tourism industry is one of the fastest growing and most diversified sectors in the world (Kerdpitak et al., 2022). Many countries such as China, the United States, South Korea, Brazil, the Netherlands, Spain, Germany and the United Kingdom have an increase in outbound tourism. International tourism of global travelers stood at 1.25 billion tourists in 2016. In addition, from the past few years, leisure spending by baby boomers is increasing rapidly and has promoted the growth of the

market as well. Therefore, from the growth of tourism, the need for backpacks, travel bags, rug bags, duffel bags and laptop bags are on the rise. The Asia-Pacific region has become the fastest growing region in luggage market across Asian countries such as India. The luggage market is highly competitive, with established brands such as VIP competing in the market with new entrepreneurs such as Da Milano. Market growth is expected to increase due to increased travel and tourism activities and the number of business travelers soaring. As a result, sales of luggage and business bags have increased. Nearly 23.94 million Indians traveled abroad in 2018, a 9.5% increase compared to the previous year. This indicates that the demand for luggage is increasing. The luggage industry in Asia produces luggage bags, backpacks, duffle bags, laptop bag and other business luggage. Consequently, it helps drive the market in the Asia-Pacific region further. Thus, the luggage market is highly competitive to strive for market share. The entrepreneurs are Samsonite International SA, LVMH and VIP Industries Limited. The main strategy adopted by market players is to launch new products with innovative designs, followed by mergers and acquisitions. Expansion is another strategy that gives manufacturers an advantage in expanding their global consumer base. The goal is to expand retail through online retailers (Mordor Intelligence, 2021).

Luggage market segmented by product type consists of luggage business bags, sports bags, and other product categories, while distribution channels comprise offline and online retails. The luggage market in North America, Europe, Asia Pacific, South America, Middle East and Africa are expected to grow during the period 2021 – 2026 due the COVID-19 virus pandemic and its mutation, causing the majority of the population around the world to stay at home due to travel restrictions and lockdowns. The luggage and backpack industry has been hit hard by the pandemic. In addition, most potential customers are limiting their spending on luggage. This has a direct impact on the sales revenue of leading luggage products in the luggage market. However, lifestyle changes have affected the growing travel and tourism industry. Moreover, the customer's inclination toward high-end luggage is likely to have a positive impact on the market growth over the forecast period in the future. The increasing convenience of online shopping has led to a major shift in consumer preferences when it comes to shopping for traveling luggage and other luggage through e-commerce platforms such as Amazon and eBay. The bag segment is gaining a lot of attention in the market due to increased global business travel and economic development in developing markets. In price-sensitive markets such as some emerging economies across Asia-Pacific and Latin America, the availability of cheaper substitutes and counterfeits as compared to brand name products has hindered the growth of the luggage market)Mordor Intelligence, 2021).

LITERATURE REVIEW

Management Innovation

Management innovation refers to new concepts and methods different from the original that the export business uses to produce products. The export process and the service of exporting products provide more convenience for customers and distributors. It also increases the efficiency of exporting products to businesses, which consists of product process and service as follows:

1. Product is the use of new concepts and methods, including the technology in the production for higher quality products, more fastness, reducing production costs and saving more resources. This affects customer satisfaction and business success. This is consistent with the concepts of Cabrilo and Dahms (2018); Habidin et al. (2018); Altuntas et al. (2018); Haddoud et al. (2018); Efrat et al. (2018); Kerdpitak et al., 2023a).

2. Process means the use of new things and new ideas, including technology in the export process. This makes the export process more efficient and affects the success of the export business. This is in line with the concepts of Altuntas et al. (2018); Haddoud et al. (2018); Efrat et al. (2018).

3. Service refers to the use of new concepts and new methods, including technology in customer service and dealers abroad, making the service of the business convenient and satisfied for customers and dealers. As a result, the export business was successful. This is in keeping with the concepts of and Jin and Cho (2018), Kerdpitak et al. (2023)

Digital Marketing Strategy

Digital marketing strategy refers to marketing tools that use technology and platforms to communicate with customers in digital channels that can create awareness of the quality of the product Service and distribution. It makes customers get convenience and fastness according to their need. It consists of modern marketing communications, social media orientation, and marketing content creation potential, focusing on online marketing influencers, and online reputation management, as follows:

1. Modern marketing communication means the marketing of export businesses using technology, internet and platform to respond customers quickly and provide customer services, making customers more convenient, as in line with the concepts of Florido-Benítez (2022), Raj et al. (2021), Dabas et al. (2021), and Hiranrithikorn (2023).

2. Social media orientation means determining the communication method of the export business that wants to communicate to customers on social media, both in terms of products and services, including promotions that customers will benefit from. This is consistent with the concepts of Katsikeas et al. (2019), and Florido-Benítez (2022), and Kerdpitak et al. (2023).

3. Marketing content creation potential means the ability of an export business to customize marketing content to communicate with customers and create awareness of the quality of the product. It affects the purchase decision of customers in the international market, as in agreement with the concepts of Aunyawong et al. (2020), Raj et al. (2021), Dabas et al. (2021); Kerdpitak et al., (2022) Kortana et al., 2023).

4. Focusing on online marketing influencer means bringing in famous people and people who are most recognized in national, regional and global levels to reviewing products in various ways to build confidence for customers. This affects the purchase order and makes the export business successful, as in relation to the concepts of Raj et al. (2021) and Dabas et al. (2021).

5. Online reputation management means presenting and managing the use of various awards that businesses receive to guarantee the success of businesses nationally, regionally and globally to build confidence with customers in the export market. This is according to the concepts of Florido-Benítez (2022) and Raj et al. (2021).

Entrepreneurial Potential

Entrepreneurial potential refers to the ability of entrepreneurs exporting bags to make the export process more efficient, compete in the market, and make customers satisfied. It consists of bag export vision, export skills and bag export knowledge as follows:

1. Bag export vision refers to the concept and outlook of market demand that entrepreneurs use to supply high quality and beautiful bag products according to the benefits of each type of bag and customer needs/behaviors in exporting. This is consistent with the concepts of Haddoud et al. (2018); Altuntas et al. (2018); Efrat et al. (2018); Jin and Cho (2018); He and Wang (2019).

2. Export skills mean the entrepreneur's ability in the bag export businesses that are proficient in export procedures under an appropriate and efficient export environment and context. They include the capability to promote export potential for entrepreneurs, resulting in business success. This is in line with the concepts of Alarcon-del-Amo et al. (2018), Efrat et al. (2018), Jin and Cho (2018), and He and Wang (2019).

3. Bag export knowledge means the entrepreneur's ability to have knowledge of the bag export context, such as the needs of customers in each exporting country, the environment in exports, export-related laws and prohibitions, etc. It can make exporting bag effective and lead to entrepreneurial success. This is in keeping with the concepts of Haddoud et al. (2018), Altuntas et al. (2018), Alarcon-del-Amo et al. (2018), Efrat et al. (2018), and Jin and Cho (2018).;

Success of Entrepreneurs

The success of bag export entrepreneurs in Thailand means the performance of the bag export business arising from the entrepreneurial potential, digital marketing strategy and management innovation.

It comprises higher profits, popularity with customers and the market, and competitiveness, as follows:

1. Higher profits mean the success of exporting bags that entrepreneurs use their vision, export skills and knowledge, are able to apply digital marketing strategies to reach customers and markets in order to respond to the needs, and implement management innovations in production. Modern export processes in a faster way and service that exceeds expectations for overseas customers and distributors make customers satisfied and accepted, resulting in higher revenues and profits. This is consistent with the concepts of Sraha et al. (2020); Du and Li (2020); Goldman et al. (2020).

2. Popularity with customers and the market means the customer's positive attitude towards the product and the export business. Customers understand and recognize the quality of the product. They make the purchase of the product repeatedly for regular customers and make a decision to buy the product quickly for new customers. This makes the product always wanted by customers and the market, affecting the success of the export market. This is in line with the concepts of Sraha et al. (2020), Du and Li (2020), Goldman et al. (2020), and Cassia and Magno (2021).

3. Competitiveness refers to the ability of export business entrepreneurs to impress customers with their products and business. A good image for the business leads to a competitive advantage in the market and affects the success of exporting products. This is in relation to the concepts of Du and Li (2020), Goldman et al. (2020), Cassia and Magno (2021), and Diaz et al. (2021).

METHODOLOGY

This study was a mixed methods research, with embedded design (Cresswell, 2003), to get the highlight of both quantitative and qualitative methods to better support the quality of the research (Johnson & Turner, 2003). The quantitative sample was 550 senior executives of 110 bag exporting businesses in Thailand (5 persons per each business) (Department of Business Development, 2022). The study started from quantitative research by reviewing the literature and related research on success variables of bag export entrepreneurs consisting of entrepreneurial potential, digital marketing strategy and management innovation. The data was synthesized and summarized into definition of terms. The indicators of variables according to the research concept were determined. The questionnaire was then constructed according to the 5-level Likert's scale (Likert, 1932), with the validity and reliability tests before collecting data and then statistically analyzing data by using structural equation modeling (SEM).

For qualitative research, the researchers concocted in-depth interviews from 10 Thai bag export entrepreneurs and 10 bag export experts in Thailand, a total of 20 people arisen from snowball sampling. The qualitative data was complied, categorized, analyzed, interpreted and linked to draw conclusions on the results of the quantitative analysis with more depth, detailed, rational explanation.

RESULTS

This study used the analysis of exploratory data to test the relationship between the variables by examining the normal distributions of the 15 observed variables studied in the structural equation model, using the chi-square test (χ^2). If it was found to be statistically significant at the .05 level, it means that such variables were non-normally distributed. On the other hand, if it was found to be not statistically significant (P-value > .50), it means that such variables were normally distributed.

Table 1: Statistical test of empirical variables (n=280)

Variables	M	S.D.	%CV	Sk	Ku	χ^2	P-value
VISIN	4.26	.58	13.62	-1.339	-.527	2.071	.355
EXPSK	4.32	.57	13.19	-1.365	-2.184	6.632	.036
EXKNO	4.19	.65	15.51	-1.690	-1.735	5.864	.053
MDNMK	4.23	.63	14.89	-1.865	-1.584	5.987	.050
MDORT	4.32	.59	13.66	-1.828	-2.881	11.642	.003
CONTC	4.25	.60	14.12	-1.432	-2.553	8.570	.014
INFLU	4.62	.51	11.04	-5.237	-2.674	34.573	.000
ONRPT	4.46	.56	12.56	-2.880	-4.071	24.870	.000
PRDCT	4.32	.61	14.12	-2.173	-3.685	18.298	.000
PROCS	4.51	.56	12.42	-4.004	-3.622	29.152	.000
SERVI	4.27	.64	14.99	-2.298	-2.158	9.939	.007
HIPRF	4.26	.60	14.08	-1.420	-2.386	7.710	.021
POPU	4.27	.66	15.46	-2.582	-2.093	11.047	.004
CMPT	4.53	.54	11.92	-3.841	-4.301	33.245	.000

Note: chi-square (χ^2) with statistical significance (P-value <.05) indicates a non-normal distribution.

The result of normal score examination by chi-square (χ^2) of all empirical variables studied in the structural equation model found that export bag vision (VISIN) and export bag knowledge (EXKNO) were not statistically significant (p > .05), indicating that such empirical variable had a normal distribution. Most were tested and found to be statistically significant (p < .05), indicating that most of the empirical variables in the model had a non-normal distribution. When considering the concept of Kelloway (1998) which proposed that a large sample size (n≥400) could be statistically relegated that the data measured with the scale questionnaire have a normal curved distribution, according to The Central Limit Theorem (Kelloway, 1998).

Such results may cause the problem in an empirical model fit assessment by of the chi-square test (χ^2). The researchers therefore solved by finding the relative chi-square (χ^2/degree of freedom). If the value was less than 2.00, it indicated that the model was empirically fit, although the model χ^2 test was statistically significant (p-value < .05) (Hair, et al., 2006).

Table 2: Factor Loadings (n = 280)

Entrepreneurial potential)ENPOT)	Factor Loading)λ(	Error)θ(	t	R²
Entrepreneurial potential)ENPOT)				
Bag export vision (VISIN)	.69	.22	10.36	.78
Export skills (EXPSK)	.65	.27	9.89	.73
Bag export knowledge (EXKNO)	.70	.51	10.5	.49
ρc= .81 ρv = .58				
Digital marketing strategy)DGTMK)				
Modern marketing communication (MDNMK)	.64	.39	10.19	.61
Social media orientation (MDORT)	.58	.36	9.66	.64
Marketing content creation potential (CONTC)	.71	.50	11.31	.50
Focusing on online marketing influencer (INFLU)	.71	.50	9.85	.50
Online reputation management (ONRPT)	.66	.37	11.06	.63
ρc= .84 ρv = .51				
Management innovation)MGINO)				
Product (PRDCT)	.81	.35	11.1	.65
Process (PROCS)	.65	.37	9.53	.63
Service (SERVI)	.56	.39	8.43	.61
ρc= .79 ρv = .56				
Success of bag export entrepreneurs in Thailand)SCBEE)				
Higher profits (HIPRF)	.59	.15	7.42	.85
Popularity with customers and the market (POPU)	.70	.51	8.11	.49
Competitiveness (CMPT)	.50	.15	6.66	.85
ρc= .80 ρv = .57				
Chi-Square=0.00, df=0, P-value=1.00000, RMSEA=0.000				

Table 3: Measurement model (n=280)

Dependent variables	R²	Effects	Independent variables		
			Digital Marketing)DGTMK)	Management innovation)MGINO)	Entrepreneurial Potential)ENPOT)
Digital marketing)DGTMK)	.92	DE	-	.89*(4.00)	.48*(4.41)
		IE	-	-	.35*(3.73)
		TE	-	.89*(4.00)	.83*(9.43)
Management innovation)MGINO)	.71	DE	-	-	.84*(9.86)
		IE	-	-	-
		TE	-	-	.84*(9.86)
Success of bag export entrepreneurs in Thailand)SCBEE)	.85	DE	.42*(4.95)	.46*(4.26)	.49*(4.80)
		IE	-	.36*(4.83)	.35*(4.53)
		TE	.42*(4.95)	.82*(3.37)	.84*(8.93)
χ^2= 99.66 df = 65 p-value = .00369 , χ^2 / df = 1.53, RMSEA = .044, RMR = .014, SRMR = .038, CFI =.99, GFI = .95, AGFI = .92, CN = 267.13					

* Statistically significant at the .05 level

Note: In parentheses, they were the t-value. If the value was not between -1.96 and 1.96, it was statistically significant at the .05 level.

Chi-Square=99.66, df=65, P-value=0.00369, RMSEA=0.044
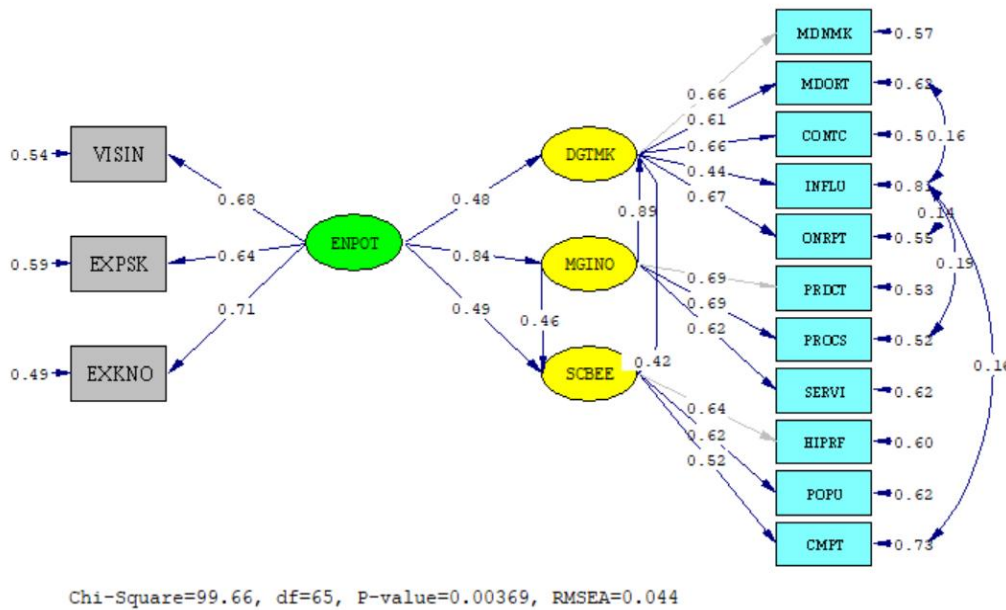
Figure 1: Adjust Model)n=280)

The results of the adjust model analysis found the model fit indices: χ^2= 99.66, df = 65, p-value = .00369, $\chi^2$2 / df = 1.53, RMSEA = .044, RMR = .014, SRMR = .038, CFI =.99, GFI = .95, AGFI = .92, CN = 267.13. The researchers, therefore, relied on the parameter estimation in the model and reported the value of the equation in both the measurement model that showed the factor loadings of observation variables and structural model that exposed the relationship between latent variables according to the research hypotheses. Reading equations in measurement and structural models had four important test statistics considered: 1) R^2 was ability rate in using latent variable to explain the variance of observation variable; 2) Standardized Solution (λ) was parameter estimation of the factor/relationship between the empirical variable and the latent variable, 3) Standard Error was the variation of the measurement error of the empirical variable; and 4) t-value was used to analyze the statistically significant reliability of the measurement by determining that the t-value greater than 1.96 indicated that it was statistically significant at the .05 level; if the t-value was between -1.96 – 1.96, it indicated that it was not statistically significant. The results of measurement equation and structural equation described in the SEM were reported respectively.

CONCLUSION

The results found that entrepreneurial potential, digital marketing strategy, management innovation and success of bag export entrepreneurs in Thailand were at a high level. The path equation of the relationship between the causal latent variables (Independent variables) that has a direct effect on the dependent variables in the adjusted model has shown that entrepreneurial potential, digital marketing strategy and management innovation has a direct effect on the

success of bag export entrepreneurs in Thailand, with statistically significant at the .05 level. The path equation of the relationship between the total effects of the exogenous variables that has a total effect on endogenous variables (Reduced equations) in the adjusted model has shown that the exogenous variables (entrepreneurial potential, digital marketing strategy and management innovation) have a total effect on the success of bag export entrepreneurs in Thailand, with statistical significance at the .05 level. After finding out according to the research objectives, the researchers therefore have created the SIP Model (S = digital marketing strategy, I = Management Innovation, P = Entrepreneurial Potential) as a model for the success of bag export entrepreneurs in Thailand.

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