Marketing Potential of Thai Food and Products in the U.S. Market

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Global business, in terms of import and export, is one of the factors indicative of the growth of economy in each country. Export is the most important factor that increases the annual income in many countries, including Thailand. The development of Thailand's economy had grown rapidly since 1950. Exports have been the prime mover in Thailand's drive towards prosperity. According to a report from Country Profile, Export Overview, the government had started to promote exports as a core policy in 1972, and the ratio of exports to the country's gross domestic product (GDP) was about only 13 percent. By 1987, the ratio had risen to 23 percent, and it reached to 30 percent by 1998. (Country Profile, Export Overview, 2001). Thailand exports agricultural products as well as agricultural processing products to many countries around the world. The main commodities exported include rice, rubber, cassava products, pineapples, black tiger prawns, and poultry. (Economy report [Thailand], 2002)

Over four decades, Thailand has been exporting food and many products worldwide, and it has become one of the largest food exporters in the world. Thailand is also a leading food producer among other countries in Southeast Asia. The major markets are Japan, the U.S., and the E.U. (U.S. Department of Agriculture [USDA], 2002)

Close relations between the United States and Thailand have developed since World War II. The U.S. has supported Thailand in many areas as shown in several bilateral treaties and by the United Nations multilateral activities and agreements, in which both countries participate.

On the economic side, The United States has become Thailand's largest export market. The commodities are apparel and textiles, canned tuna, integrated circuits, canned pineapple and juice, jewelry and precious stones, rubber, tin, tobacco leaf, artificial flowers, and frozen marine
products. The United States is also one of the largest foreign investors in Thailand. The estimated value of the total private American investment in Thailand is over $4 billion (Muscat, 1990).

Thailand faced a financial crisis in late 1997 that forced the government to float the Baht. Previously the exchange for the Baht was 25 to the dollar, but it reached the lowest point of 56 to one dollar in January 1998 (Thailand Economy, 2002). After these difficult times, Thailand tried very hard to put the economy back on the right track to recovery. The government focused on restructuring the financial sector, stimulating domestic demand, and boosting exports to recover from the financial crisis. Recently, Thailand’s economy has improved gradually little by little. However, it is still questionable whether Thailand’s exports will bring prosperity again or not. And, a critical factor is how will Thai food and products likely grow in the U.S. market?

This study will focus on Thailand’s efforts to recover its export potential as well as the efforts to expand its market in the U.S. In chapters I and II, the study will review a historical background of Thailand’s economy and exports, Thailand-U.S. relationships, a movement to recover Thailand’s economy and exports, and the barriers to its success. In chapters III and IV, the study will concentrate more on Thailand’s promoting its market particularly in the U.S. In conclusion, this research will focus on the possibility to increase the sale of Thai food and products in the U.S market.

Research Question

How can Thai food and products become well known in the U.S. market? This research will investigate if the U.S.’s market will be open for Thai food and products as well as asking if Thai food is popular among people in the US.
Subsidiary Questions

In an effort to comprehend the scope of Thailand’s exports, the study will be devoting time on answering the following questions:

- What is the historical background of Thailand’s economy and exports before and after the crisis period?
- What is the historical background of the relationship between Thailand and U.S.?
- What role has Thailand played in order to recover after its financial crisis particularly in terms of export movement?
- What barriers has Thailand faced during this period to recover its export markets?
- How does Thailand promote Thai food and products in U.S market?
- What kind of Thai food and products are the most popular in the U.S.?
- Who are the greatest consumers of Thai food and products?
- How do the customers or buyers know about Thai products?
- What is the attitude, opinion, or viewpoint of people in the U.S. toward Thai food and products?
- What other conditions concern people in the U.S. about consuming Thai food and products?
- What are the issues that could influence people to buy or try Thai food and products?
- Will Thai food and products be popular in the U.S.?
- Can Thai exports expand in the U.S.’s market?
Purpose of the Study

As a core factor in the growth of their economies, exporting is one of the most important elements that concern developing countries, particularly Thailand. To become a major exporter is not very easy, but to maintain the firm markets and expand them is more difficult. Thailand has been trying to develop its capacity of exporting in order to become stronger in the world's economy again. Therefore the purpose is to observe the strengths and the obstacles relate to Thailand exports, especially in the U.S. market, and to determine the possibility of increasing Thai food and products penetration of the U.S. market. In addition, the study will conduct a survey of attitudes, opinions, viewpoints of people in the U.S. toward Thai food and Thai products.

Objectives

The intention of this study will be to observe the strengths and the obstacles that Thailand faces in the area of exporting. The author will focus on three objectives during the course of this examination. The first objective will be to detail the historical background of Thailand's exporting before and after the financial crisis period, as well as the relationship between Thailand and the U.S. The second objective of this study will focus on the current strategies by which Thailand has been trying to recover its economy, the promotion of its exporting in the U.S. market, and the strengths and the obstacles in the processes. In this part, the author will study the current marketing situation of Thai food and products in the U.S. as well as some cases of the successful exporters and importers in the U.S. Thirdly, the author has conducted a survey in order to know the attitudes of people toward Thai food and products, and how, possibly, Thai food and products may grow in the U.S. market.
Limitations

The extent of this study will be on the scope and background of Thailand's experience in general. It will not show the details of exporting values in every segment, and it would not review the depth of exporting statistics. The study will focus only on some Thai products, especially rice, frozen food, agricultural products, beverages, liquor, and some other products which are the famous in the U.S. The study will not go into the details of every product exported to the U.S. In addition, this research will be concerned about the attitude of people in the U.S. toward Thai food and products rather than focus on the business strategies, business management, or economic processes. The survey will be designed for determining the opinions and viewpoints of people in the U.S. and the possibility that they will consume more Thai food and other products.
Chapter II

THAILAND'S ECONOMY AND EXPORT HISTORY

Historical background of Thailand's economy and its exports before the financial crisis

After World War II, Thailand's economy had been growing rapidly. It became a "NIC", a newly industrializing country, and joined South Korea, Taiwan, Singapore, and Hong Kong as a fifth "Asian Tiger" economy. As Muscat, 1990, said, "It is interesting to recall that in the 1950s, following the end of the Korean War, the consensus view saw a bright economic future for Thailand and a dim one for South Korea. Although Korean development has outpaced Thailand's by considerable margin, the record of Thai economic growth has borne out the confidence that the World Bank, AID, and other observers had in the late 1950s when modern Thai development was just gathering steam." (Muscat, 1990, pg. 15)

Since 1965, the economy in Thailand has grown at annual average rate of about seven percent. The average person's output is between $1,500 and $2,000 a year. The gross saving and investment rate for Thailand is at or above 30 percent of GDP, and the gross domestic product (GDP) its exports and imports have increased the rate of 15 to 25 percent per year. (Abegglen, 1994)

In the late 1980s, Thailand became a strong and trustworthy country in which many foreigners invested their business, particularly Japanese companies. Japan accounted for more than 40 percent of foreign direct investment in Thailand from 1986 to 1991. Foreign investment was greater than in neighboring countries. Japanese nationals and companies made Thailand their first choice among Southeast Asian countries because they were more welcome in Thailand than elsewhere in the region. (Abegglen, 1994)
Thailand has long been famous as an exporter of food and traditional commodities. Because of the growth of exports, Thailand improves its performance as a great and high technology exporter, which lifts Thailand's economy to greater and faster growth. Thailand has become an important production center in Southeast Asia as is evidenced from the large investment of multi-nationals, the major one being Japanese companies. Most investment manufacturers assemble computers, electronic integrated circuits, automobiles, auto parts and air conditioners (Country Profile, Export Overview, 2001).

The movement toward industrial development began in earnest after 1960, but twenty years later Thailand was still mainly an agriculture country. The type of exports clearly showed Thailand's agricultural economy: 45 percent of exports were foods and another 14 percent consisted of minerals and other raw materials. The four main exports in 1980 were rice, tapioca, rubber and tin (together about 32 percent of all exports); textiles, the top manufactured product came in fifth place, less than half the value of rice. (Falkus, 1995, pg.13-32)

"Change thereafter was rapid, especially in the closing year of the 1980s. Around 1986 industry exceeded agriculture in its contribution to GDP. For the three years 1988-90 Thailand recorded double-digit GDP growth, reaching 13.2 percent in 1988. The rates of growth of exports and particular sectors such as construction, banking transport and other services were higher still. These notable rates were the more striking since they took place at a time when some economies elsewhere were slackening; indeed Thailand probably had the fastest rate of real economic growth in the world in these four years, and although the rates slackened thereafter (8.1 percent in 1991 and 7.6 percent in 1992) growth is still very high, especially at a time of general world recession." (Falkus, 1995, pg. 13-32)
In 1991, manufactured goods became the most important export, providing more than 76% of the total. This fact shows how much the type of exports from Thailand had changed composition. In 1994-1995, textile products, integrated circuits, jewelry and processed food, especially canned tuna and pineapple were the main exports. (Suphachalasai, 1995, pg.66-84)

The Financial Crisis in 1997

Because industries grew rapidly in Bangkok, the center of foreign investments, the amount of land needed and inadequate roads in the city became a problem as people tried to expand the investments into industries. Also the wages for laborers were increasing when compared to other nations, such as India, China and Vietnam. In Bangkok, the average hourly wage was approximately $3 (US) per hour, which was three times higher than Shanghai (Kunio, 1999). Many investors tend to shift their investment to those countries to save costs. Many companies had to lay off some employees to save costs as well. This caused an unemployment crisis and led to a decrease in wages for ordinary workers.

Before the rapid development between 1985 to 1989, Thailand was affected by the rapidly increasing price of oil which it imported. In addition, the decrease in the price importers were willing to pay caused a problem for exporters of manufactured goods. "When interest rates started to increase dramatically, Thailand, like other developing countries, came to enlist the support of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and was subjected to a structural adjustment program. This restructuring was central to the boom-bust scenario of the last ten years" (Julian, 2000, pg.40).

According to this author, the main cause of economic crisis in Thailand was the deficit of 8 percent of GDP in 1995; 7.9 percent in 1996 and 1997. At the same time the export rate of
growth went down by 23.5 percent between 1995 and 1996. This problem caused the country to rely heavily on borrowing funds from abroad. (Julian, 2000, pg.43)

This led to a great increase of debts to outsiders; “In 1997 the International Monetary Fund (IMF) estimated that Thailand's external debt was about $U.S. 99 billion i.e. about 55 percent of GDP. The majority of this debt was privately incurred and this large external debt sharply lifted the country's debt service ratio from 11.4 percent in 1994 to 15.5 percent in 1997” (Julian, 2000, pg.43).

The third aspect of the crisis was related to property ownership, which grew rapidly in the late 1980s. By 1995, an oversupply of housing emerged, and it expanded into a major problem. After the property sector began to collapse, many finance companies and small banks faced the defaults interest payments by the property sector. Many finance companies were hurt and they were closed permanently by December 1997 (Julian, 2000, pg.43).

A fourth factor in the financial crisis related to the exchange rate. The Thai baht was priced too high when compared with other currencies; this caused a decrease in exports in 1996. “The exchange rate for the baht has fallen steadily from 25.8 baht to the SUS to around 40 baht to the SUS, and it reached to 50 Baht to the SUS in the late 1999.” (Julian, 2000, pg.43-44)

The last factor is the political instability of the country. In 1997 the government did not do a good job in economic management. “Its economic teams lacked unity and common goals, and failed to deal with mismanagement by the technocrats.” (Julian, 2000, pg.44) The confidence of foreign and domestic investors shrank, and the economy continued to became more shaky after the 1996 elections. (Julian, 2000, pg.44)
The Recovery of Thailand's economy and its exports

Thailand began to restructure its economy as the crisis developed, and generally followed the guidelines laid down by the International Monetary Fund (IMF), which led the way back to economic growth. The process of recovery began in 1999, and Thailand experienced a positive growth by the second half of that year. (IMF, July 1999)

The economy had recovered in Asia and elsewhere by the late of months 1999, along with the positive development of America. The Thai Ministry of Commerce set a forecast export growth around 4% (Maneerungsee, 1999)

"The role of farm products, which had benefited from the weakened baht during the crisis, diminished with exports representing $5 billion or 12% of the total. The exports started to pick up substantially in the second quarter of 1999. Over the first nine months of the year, Thailand exported $7.8 billion worth of goods to Asian countries, a rise of 59% from the same period a year earlier. Thai exports to the United States rose by 15% to $9.2 billion, but exports to European markets dropped by 0.4% to $7.1 billion, largely because of the sluggish economies of some European nations. Thailand could see export growth of 8.6% in 2000 that was a clear harbinger of recovery."
(Maneerungsee, 1999)

For Thai people to become key exporters, the government suggested that the exporters take a good look at the need to meet international sanitary standards because certain importing countries may be creating such non-trade barriers to inhibit food imports. The government was also working on additional measures to promote exports. (Maneerungsee, 1999.)

Because of the crisis and the exports drop, the government has focused more on solving basic problems. For example, it introduced a tax restructuring program, expected to take effect...
sometime in 2000, this will attempt to decrease the production costs of exporters and strengthen their competitiveness. At the same time, it accelerated refunds of value-added tax so that their cash flow would be better. (Maneerungsee, 1999)

From 1999 through 2003, the Commerce Ministry offered financial assistance to small and medium-sized exporters who want to expand their new markets in the Middle East, Latin America and Africa. By 2003, the ministry hoped that this plan might help Thai exports to increase to 35% of all exports, an increase of 7% from the present rate. (Maneerungsee, 1999)

The US-ASEAN Business Council has noted that Thailand is stable, relatively safe, and well-positioned to attract new investment and trade as of 2003. This year, Thailand should benefit from its chairmanship of the Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) forum which culminates in a Summit of heads of state, ministers and chief executive officers from 22 countries in Bangkok in mid-October. This is an important opportunity for Thailand because major business should decide whether to increase investment at this time. (The US-ASEAN Business Council, January 2003)

"Thailand can benefit by underlining its advantages and implementing key reforms this year because strategic investors are looking to improve the return on investment they have made in Southeast Asia and relate that to their newer and still smaller bets in China. Thailand, together with its ASEAN partners, is home to over US$50 billion in direct investment by U.S. companies more than five times that invested in China." (The US-ASEAN Business Council, January 2003)
"The Council’s leader pointed out that Thailand will receive special attention from U.S. companies this year, as President Bush hopes to visit in October for the APEC meetings, and Prime Minister Thaksin may make a State Visit to the U.S. Bower noted that several U.S. officials will visit the Kingdom during 2003 to prepare for the President’s visit, and announced that his organization’s US-Thailand Business Committee, chaired by Unocal Corporation, would organize a senior level US investment mission from July 15-18, 2003. He said the Council would host the annual U.S. Ambassadors Tour from June 1-11, 2003, which will include the participation of U.S. Ambassador to Thailand Darryl Johnson. Now in its second decade, the U.S. Ambassadors Tour is a major program designed to educate U.S. investors on opportunities and developments in Thailand and ASEAN." (The US-ASEAN Business Council, January, 2003)

The Thailand-U.S. Relationship

Over the past 60 years, the United States and Thailand have developed close relations; this is shown in several bilateral treaties (to be discussed) and by both countries’ participation in UN multilateral and agreements. The principal bilateral arrangement between the two countries is the 1966 Treaty of Amity and Economic Relations, which facilitates U.S. and Thai companies’ economic access to each others’ markets. Other important agreements deal with civil uses of atomic energy, sales of agricultural products, investment guarantees, and military and economic assistance (U.S. Embassy in Thailand, 2003).

The United States and Thailand are among the nation signing the 1954 Manila pact of the former Southeast Asia Treaty Organization (SEATO). Article IV (1) of this treaty provided that,
in the event of armed attack in the treaty area (which includes Thailand), each member would respect the common danger according to manner of government leadership. "Despite the dissolution of the SEATO in 1977, the Manila pact remains in force and, together with the Thanat-Rusk communique of 1962, constitutes the basis of U.S. security commitments to Thailand. Thailand continues to be a key security ally in Asia, along with Australia, Japan, the Philippines, and South Korea. In October 2003, the Administration notified Congress of its intent to designate Thailand as a Major Non-NATO Ally. (U.S. Embassy in Thailand, 2003)

The United States is convinced that Thailand's stability and independence are crucial to the peace of South East Asia. Therefore, the US government has given economic assistance in various fields, including rural development, health, family planning, education, and science and technology. The formal USAID program was ended in 1995. However, there are several special assistance programs which continue in the context of agreements, including health and HIV/AIDS programming; refugee assistance; and trafficking in persons. At present the U.S. Peace Corps in Thailand has about 90 volunteers, they work in primary education, with a special program for teacher training, health education, and environmental education. (U.S. Embassy in Thailand, 2003)

"Thailand has received U.S. military equipment, essential supplies, training, and assistance in the construction and improvement of facilities and installations since 1950. In recent years, U.S. security assistance has consisted of military training programs carried out primarily in the United States. A small U.S. military advisory group in Thailand oversees the delivery of equipment to the Thai Armed Forces and the training of Thai military personnel in its use and maintenance. As part of their mutual defense cooperation
over the last decade, Thailand and the United States have developed a vigorous joint military exercise program, which engages all the services of each nation and now averages 40 joint exercises per year.” (U.S. Embassy in Thailand, 2003)

For many decades the problem of illegal sale of narcotics has been a great concern for the governments of many countries. Heroin and other drugs produced in countries neighboring Thailand still cause the United States to ask Thailand for cooperation. Illegal banking practices, police and military corruption, and a continuing flow of drugs out of Myanmar have hindered efforts to limit Thailand’s control of this problem. “The United States and Thailand work closely together and with the United Nations on a broad range of programs to halt the flow of narcotics. A memorandum of understanding was signed in 1971 affirming U.S.-Thai cooperation, resulting in a strengthened Thai enforcement program. The U.S. has extended financial support for the International Law Enforcement Academy (ILEA) in Bangkok, which provides counter-narcotics and anti-crime training to participants from regional countries. With U.S. support, Thailand has a good record in crop control, law enforcement, and demand reduction.” (U.S. Embassy in Thailand, 2003)

From the economic viewpoint, the United States has become Thailand’s largest export market. For example, in 1986 U.S. imports from Thailand reached $1.9 billion. However, although exports to Thailand amounted to more than $900 million, the United States ran a deficit that year of about $1 billion. Among the leading products Thailand now supplies to the United States are clothing and textiles, canned tuna, integrated circuits, canned pineapple and juice, jewelry and precious stones, rubber, tin, tobacco leaf, artificial flowers, and frozen seafood.
Thailand's imports from the United States include cotton, tobacco, wheat and other agricultural items, fertilizer, machinery, chemicals, and office equipment. (Muscat, 1990, pg. 17-18)

"In 1990s, The United States is the largest foreign investor in Thailand, with the value of total cumulated private American investment in the country estimated at over $4 billion. Nearly half of this investment was in oil and gas production and distribution, one-quarter in banking and finance, the rest in manufacturing and trade. Given the relative size of the two economies, it is not surprising that these economic relationships are asymmetrical, much more important relatively of Thailand than for the United States. Thus Thai exports to the United States represented 18 percent of total Thai exports in 1986, but only 0.5 percent of total U.S. imports. The relatively large U.S. investment in Thailand amounts to less than 2 percent of total U.S. investment in other countries." (Muscat, 1990, pg 18)

Chapter III
REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The review is based on a bibliographical search in the University Library as well as on the websites available to Seton Hall and the search engine Google. Five books plus 19 websites were found that are related to the topic being explored. Because books pertaining to these topics were published earlier than 1993, the information they contain is not very useful. For this reason various websites are used in order to reflect the current situation regarding Thailand's economy and exports.

This chapter is divided into four sections to cover the areas of interest that are presented in the above sources. The first point to be discussed is economic policy and the way that the Thai government develop its approach. Then the next three parts will be on Thailand's exports.

Economic policy and the Thai government's processes

According to the U.S. Department of Trade website, the economy of Thailand continues to be defined by ongoing efforts to return the country to a level of sustainable economic growth. It stated that dissatisfaction with the slow pace and uneven distribution of Thailand's economic recovery played a major role in the January 2001 election victory of Thaksin Shinawatra's Thai Rak Thai Party. Thaksin's government made important steps in stabilizing the economy after the 1997 economic crash of the several Asian nations and laid down a framework to restructure the financial sector, improve bank supervision, and strengthen the legal effort to support corporate debt restructuring. Challenged by a strong demand from the U.S. and other major export markets, real gross domestic product (GDP) increased from 1998's disastrous 10.5 percent decline and brought moderate growth of more than 4 percent in both 1999 and 2000. (U.S. Commercial Service, 2002)
This website noted that the economic picture became considerably better in early 2002, as recovering demand in the U.S. combined with domestic stimulus to create a consumer-led recovery. The GDP growth was exceed 3.7 percent in 2002; however the success of the recovery depends on a stronger development in exports and private investment, particularly as government spending has already started to decrease. (U.S. Commercial Service, 2002)

The Association for International Cooperation for Agriculture and Forestry (AICAF) website report from Japan makes several important points. The condition of Thai financial institutions has improved because the government has implemented several measures to restructure and strengthen the problematic financial sector. The growth rates of Thailand's exports and imports are expected to increase over time since trading partners' economies and the domestic economy are likely to improve. "The current account is likely to remain positive with an average of 1.4 percent of GDP over the 2003-06 period mainly due to gains from the service sector, especially tourism." (Economy report-Thailand)

The Thai government report for the October 2003 APEC meeting in Bangkok emphasized the following points. Because of the effective government teamwork, the Thai economy has gradually begun to show positive results. The government has made important strides to put Thai economy back on the road to recovery. For example, the Thai baht, has become stable and the net international reserves have increased to 39 billion dollars. The contribution that promoted a rapid recovery is the continuation of Thai policy which strongly promotes an open economy in accordance with market-based rules. On 31 July 2003, the government made the final payment of debt worth about 1.4 billion US dollars to the IMF and other creditors. This marked the day of the nation's economic liberation. The settlement with the IMF two year earlier than expected signaled a healthy state for the Thai economy, which has
reached the point of full recovery and begins to develop once again with sustained growth and confidence. (Division of Economic Information)

The roles to promote Thailand's exports

A Wall Street Journal article of February 6, 2001 made the following report. As Thai food is famous around the world, the government has a plan to begin to promote one of the world's most unusual food ventures. Over the next five years, the government plans to launch a chain of more than 3,000 Thai restaurants world-wide. The largest number, more than 1,000 will be in the U.S. (Frank, February 2001).

"The business, called Global Thai Restaurant Co., marks the latest extreme in the Thai government's ambitious campaign to boost the country's cuisine to the top of the global food chain. Since 1990, the government sent dozens of Thai chef abroad, helped launch giant culinary training centers around Bangkok, formed vast networks of food and tableware suppliers, and organized countless cooking fairs and food show around the world." (Frank, February 2001, pg. B1)

As a result, there are now more than 5,000 Thai restaurants in foreign nations, with more than 2,000 in the U.S., as compared with about 500 in 1990. Thai food has become one of America's fastest-growing culinary experiences, along with Indian, Vietnamese and Cajun. The growth is exciting for Thailand's economy. Thailand brings in more than $6 billion a year from food-related exports, for example, ingredients and more than $1.6 billion restaurant supplies, such as Buddha bronzes and plates. Herbs and spices used for Thai cooking have become one of the country's fastest-growing exports. (Frank, February 2001, pg. B1).
The American periodical, Nation's Restaurant News of January, 2002 reported on the popularity of Asian cooking. A growing variety of Southeast Asian restaurants are bringing the cuisines of Thailand, Vietnam, Malaysia, and neighboring countries into mainstream America. In the 1990s, every little town in America had one or two Thai restaurants. Their flavors have become a big trend now. Recently more new Thai restaurants have opened in many big cities and other surrounding areas such as New York and Long Island, Chicago, San Francisco, Boston, and Philadelphia. (Walkup, February 2002)

The current strengths and barriers of exporting

According to Kenen Institute of Asia research, barriers to export are viewed in two categories, internal and external. The internal barriers are viewed as obstacles over which a company and its management have direct control. Usually, these barriers can be overcome by hiring new staff, training current staff, or finding assistance from an outside source. External barriers are much wider in scope. These barriers, generally, come from government policy or international law. Although small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) can lobby to influence these situations, overcoming them usually requires a considerable amount of time and resources and cannot be changed by any one company or manager. ("Barriers to Export,"")

The same source has noted that the significant barriers that present-day exporters face include increased competition from other APEC nations (China, Vietnam, Indonesia); lack of advanced technological production processes, high tariffs or duties, poor quality of Thai products, lack of investment, international trade regulations, little knowledge of foreign market characteristics, difficulty of obtaining government support, lack of financial resources to sell products overseas, ineffective or unclear government export promotion policy, language barrier
(inability to communicate effectively with potential buyers), lack of government support of Thai exporters, complicated documentation for export and shipping, and inexperience with international financial transactions. Other challenges are caused by improper packaging (either design or ability to protect products during shipping), difficulty locating and contacting international buyers, lack of effective export strategy, marketing materials/brochures/web sites that are not compatible with the target market, and poor knowledge and capacity of management because of inexperience. ("Barriers to Export", pg. 2-3)

"The function support areas that most exporters' need are as follows.

1. Access to Information, the exporters need export information support center, the better information on potential foreign markets, providing up to date information on the needs of foreign importers, providing information and contact for trade officers at each embassy, and provide website that supports Thai exporter's products and services.

2. Human Resource Development, the exporters need experts or specialists to provide advice on export markets.

3. Financing, the exporters need government supported capital investment.

4. Improved Business Environment, the exporters want tax reduction on imported raw materials and the low interest rate load to support production technology" ("Barriers to Export", pg. 6-7)

In response to the requests from the exporters, the Department of Export Promotion (DEP) has been providing what many companies need. In general the Thai government has made efforts to meet almost all of the needs mentioned above. The situation where the DEP lacks a very effective role is in the reduction of external barriers.
such as tariffs and import taxes, and this happens because of the limited scope of the
DEP. The DEP does, however, have a number of programs, which intend to make Thai
exporters more competitive internationally. ("Barriers to Export", pg 10)

The Thai newspaper published in English, The Nation, is the source of these
comments. “As evaluating the country’s problems, the government proceeded to examine
our strengths and identify the opportunities that were available to us. The first that came
to mind is our diversified experiences in industrial and agricultural production. Even
though we may not possess much of the component of production that we can call our
own intellectual property, we nevertheless, possess an abundance of skills, local
ingenuity and wisdom that enable us to input the appropriate knowledge and technology
together to achieve desirable results. We also have the advantage of rich natural assets
waiting to be combined with proper management and technology to produce new
products for new lifestyles.” ("Asia must rely on strength", 2002)

Some successful companies

These are examples of Thai companies whose products have reached the international
market.

According to its website, Boon Rawd Brewery Co.Ltd., one of the largest businesses, has
produced the first Thai beer, “Singha” for over 70 years. To date, Boon Rawd’s extensive
product line include beer, soda water, drinking water, ready to drink fruit juice, ready to drink
tea, and ready to drink coffee. The products are under “Singha”, “Leo”, and “Thai Beer” brand
names. ("Company Overview")
"Boon Rawd's strengths stem from its commitment to using the best ingredients combined with its ability to apply the latest technological advancement in the brewing process to produce only the finest beer under full compliance with FDA regulations and approval of each country, including European and North American Countries. Moreover, Boon Rawd's vast distribution network further enhances its ability to serve the customers throughout the Kingdom as well as the rest of the world. To date, aside from exportation of Singha Beer to 25 countries worldwide, Boon Rawd also acquired two breweries in Germany and entered into a joint venture in China to establish production bases for the European and Asian markets." ("Company Overview")

This website noted that, through its commitment to produce the best beers possible, Boon Rawd's products have continuously been receiving honors and gold medal awards from various respectable institutions both locally and internationally for the past 30 years. The attainment of ISO 9002 standard offers proof that Boon Rawd always strives to keep up with the ever-changing environment and international standards. ("Company Overview")

Boon Rawd has exported “Singha Beer” to many countries worldwide as well as to North America. There are four monopoly companies that import “Singha Beer” in the U.S., and the biggest company that has a wide network within Eastern part of America is Paleewong Trading Co., Ltd. This company has been importing “Singha Beer” since 1975, and has expanded the market into about 32 states. It is also import “Monsoon Valley”, Thai wine which vinified and bottled by Siam Winery. Besides beers and wines, Paleewong Trading Company has been importing Thai newspapers and magazines to supply the demand from Thai people and Thai stores. It also runs the wholesale operation in New York, Los Angeles, and San Francisco. ("Our Company")
On its website, The Thai Pineapple Public Co., Ltd. claims to be one of the biggest companies that produce many kinds of products from pineapple under the "Tipco" brand names.

"The company was established in 1976, and its function is to grow, process and can pineapple products and juice concentrate, for export. From the very beginning, the company had Board of Investment promotional privileges and began exporting in 1978. Since then, the company has expanded steadily and, at present, its registered capital stands at 500 million Baht. It was on September 25, 1989 that the Security Exchange of Thailand granted permission for Tipco to trade its shares as an 'authorised company'. Four years later, on September 10, 1993, the company's corporate status was changed to that of a 'public company' as stipulated under the 1992 Public Company Act and the company name became 'The Thai Pineapple Public Company Limited' (Tipco)." ("Tipco Profile")

Tipco is Thailand's largest grower, processor and exporter of pineapple products including canned pineapple, juice concentrate, milled run pineapple juice concentrate, crushed pineapple in aseptic bags, canned tropical fruit salad, as well as other tropical fruits such as longan and rambutan. Tipco never ceases its effort to improve its existing products and to research new ones, to meet its customers' precise demands. Currently, the company's main markets are in Europe, the USA, Scandinavia, Korea, Japan as well as the Middle East and Latin America, into which it expanded in 1993. ("Tipco Profile")

"Tipco's supply of fresh pineapples comes mainly from plantations within the surrounding province of Prachub Khiri Khan which actually accounts for some 60% of all pineapples grown in Thailand. The company promotes 'contracted farming' and provides consultation on crop planning and farming methods to the growers. The company's own experts frequently visit the fields to ensure that proper farming methods
and crop management are in use and to suggest any improvements which may be made. This ensures that the farmers are able to supply the factory with exactly the correct crop of top quality on a consistent basis. Tipco also offers price guarantees, which also allows it to ensure stability of supply." ("Tipco Profile")

"The factory occupies over 150 rai of land and, currently, has an annual processing capacity of between 200,000 and 220,000 tons, giving a yield of around 5 million standard cases of canned pineapple and 2.5 million gallons of pineapple juice concentrate. The company employs between 2,500 and 3,000 employees of whom more than 500 are office staff. Throughout the entire process, use is made of the very latest of machinery and technology to ensure that Tipco's products meet the most rigorous of industrial standards worldwide. ("Tipco Profile")
Chapter IV
A SURVEY SEEKING PUBLIC OPINION ON THE ATTITUDE TOWARD THAI FOOD AND PRODUCTS

Description of the Survey

The survey (see Appendix A) included ten questions, which offer multiple choices. In viewing the 10 questions that were designed for this survey, each had a general stance pertaining to satisfaction regarding Thai food and products. The author's intention was to elicit a positive or a negative reaction on concerning of Thai food and products as well as the possible popularity of Thai cuisine in USA.

Sample

The goal was to survey at least 200 individuals in order to receive a quantitative response that would be relevant to this study. Each of these individuals was a consumer who had already tried Thai food at Thai restaurants in the USA. Rather than making a survey of the general population, the author tried to obtain a qualified pool of individuals who: (a) had experience in tasting Thai cuisine and (b) had some knowledge about Thai food and products.

Purpose of the survey

To investigate the idea that Thai exports may increase in the U.S., the author has conducted a survey to compile data. A questionnaire has been designed to survey public opinion on people's attitude toward Thai food and products, and it will assess how positively people in the U.S. regard Thai food and Thai products. Is it possible that, in the future, they will consume more Thai food and products?
Analyzing the results of the survey

In one month the author obtained the responses of 270 individuals who were able to participate in the survey. All the responses are the customers of Thai restaurants within the East coast areas. The author categorized areas of the restaurants into three regions; New Jersey (NJ) and Pennsylvania (PA), Chicago, and Miami. Most respondents answered all 10 questions. However, some people did not answer question #10 based on their experiences. After collecting each survey, the author tallied the responses based on the question’s choices for answering. The results were measured by calculating the percentage of responses in relation to the number of choices offered for that question.

Question #1: How often do you eat Thai food?

For this question, thirty respondents (11.1 percent) answered that it was their first time. Eighty-four respondents (31.1 percent) had eaten Thai food less than once a month while eighty-seven respondents (32.2 percent) had eaten Thai food 1-2 times a month. For the range of 3-5 times a month the result was 16.3 percent (forty-four respondents). The remaining of twenty-five respondents (9.3 percent) had eaten Thai food more than 6 times a month.

The majority (57.8 percent) of the subjects have eaten Thai food more than 1 time a month. An interesting result shows, after comparing the majority in the 3 regions, that about 76.1 percent of people in Chicago have eaten Thai food more than once a month. The result for people in Miami was 56.8 percent, and 51.8 percent for NJ and PA. It can be inferred that people in Chicago had eaten Thai food more frequently than people in Miami, NJ and PA. (Appendix B)
Question #2: What are your favorite Thai dishes?

In this question, one hundred and twenty one (44.8 percent) respondents replied Pad Thai is their favorite. Twenty one respondents (7.8 percent) chose Tom Yum Koong, while 18 respondents (6.7 percent) loved Satey. Red curry was checked by 24 respondents (8.9 percent), but Beef Salad was 0.7 percent (2 respondents). About 12 respondents (4.4 percent) liked “House special”; meanwhile 37 respondents (13.7 percent) said it was too early to have a favorite. The rest of 35 respondents (13 percent) answered “other”.

In evaluating this question, it is easy to see Pad Thai is the favorite dish of the majority of respondents (44.8 percent). It is noteworthy that, 35 respondents (13 percent) chose other dishes, which are not indicated in the answer choice, as their favorite. The lists of other dishes that the respondents added are Green Curry, Panang Curry, Som Tum or papaya salad, Pad Gra Prow, Pad See Ew, Fried Rice, Tom Ka Kai or coconut soup, Duck, Deep Fried Fish, Dumpling, Lemon Grass Soup, Spicy Noodle, Massaman curry, Yello curry, Gai Yang or grill chicken, Thai Salad, Pad Woon Sen, Nam Sod, Rad Na, Sesame Tuna, Vegetable Stir Fried, Mee Grob, and Thai Ice Tea.

Question #3: What do you like most about Thai cuisine?

The breakdown of response for this question went as follows: 71 respondents (25.3 percent) like Thai cuisine because of its freshness. One hundred twenty-four respondents (45.9 percent) love its tastes, followed by 19 respondents (7.0 percent) who like Thai food because of variety of dishes. Having a new taste experience appealed to 44 respondents (16.3 percent), followed by 12 respondents (4.4 percent) liked “other”, which are spiciness.
The majority of respondents (45.9 percent) enjoy Thai cuisine tastes most, followed by freshness and new taste experience. As a bar in appendix C shows, it is interesting that freshness is the second ranked factor that people in Chicago and Miami chose, while both freshness and a new taste experience are in the second rank for NJ and PA. From this result it may be estimated that people in NJ and PA are interested in trying a new food experience more than people in Chicago and Miami. However, it can be assumed that Thai cuisine may be becoming popular in NJ and PA, so that people would like to try a new thing.

**Question #4: How satisfying would you rank, from 1-10, Thai dishes? (1 is lowest, and 10 is highest)**

In assessing question four, one finds that six, or 2.2 percent, of respondents did not really find Thai dishes satisfying as they rank their satisfaction between 1 and 2. Eight respondents (3.0 percent) stated their satisfaction between 3 and 4, while 25 respondents (9.3 percent) gave Thai dishes a rank of 5 to 6. One hundred and twenty respondents (44.4 percent) enjoyed Thai dishes and scored them at 7 to 8. The remaining one hundred and eleven respondents (41.1 percent) appreciate the food and ranked their highest satisfaction at 9 to 10, as shown on Table 1.

Over all, 85.5 percent of the respondents either showed great satisfaction (9-10) or high satisfaction (7-8) with Thai food. It can be conclude, through the question answered by the 270 respondents, that an authentic Thai food is fascinating to many people in the U.S.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ranking of Satisfaction</th>
<th>1-2</th>
<th>3-4</th>
<th>5-6</th>
<th>7-8</th>
<th>9-10</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>amount</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>111</td>
<td>270</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>percentage</td>
<td>2.2%</td>
<td>3.0%</td>
<td>9.3%</td>
<td>44.4%</td>
<td>41.1%</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1: Ranking of Satisfaction on Thai dishes
Question #5: Have you ever cooked or would you be interested in cooking at home Thai cuisine?

The results from question five were as follows: fifty nine respondents (21.9 percent) answered that they would never cook. One hundred and nine respondents (40.4 percent) said they would like to try it once, and seventy eight respondents (28.9 percent) have already tried cooking, at the rate of less than 6 times within 6 months. Thirteen respondents (4.8 percent) stated they cook Thai cuisine frequently, which is 6-10 times within 6 months, and eleven respondents (4.1 percent) replied that they cook Thai food very often, which is more than 10 times within 6 months. (Appendix D)

The majority of respondents (40.4 percent) expressed their intention of trying to cook Thai food at home, although they have never cooked Thai dishes before. This statement in particular shows that people in the U.S. would rather have Thai food in the restaurants than cook it at home. What is surprising is that the numbers of 102 respondents (37.8 percent), who have already tried cooking, either cook less than six times within six months, or 6-10 times within 6 months, or more than 10 times within six months, are higher than the author expected. One can presume that the demand for consuming Thai food products might be increasing.

Question #6: Have you ever bought some ingredients or Thai products from an Asia supermarket or store?

Upon examining question six, the results were as follows: 119 respondents (44.1 percent) never bought any ingredients or Thai products. Thirty four respondents (12.6 percent) said they had bought it only once, and eighty respondents (29.6 percent) replied they have bought Thai products about 2-7 times. Those who have bought about 8-15 times were 37 respondents (13.7 percent)
In evaluating this question, one can see that the majority of respondents (55.9 percent) have bought Thai products from an Asian supermarket or store. It is easy to make the correlation to the question #5 that people in the U.S. are interested in cooking Thai food. Therefore, the number of people who have bought such ingredients or Thai products is increasing. This relates to the demand for Thai cuisine.

Question #7: Would you be interested in buying Thai food products?

In reviewing the results for the question seven, one finds that thirty three respondents (12.2 percent) are not interested in buying Thai food products. Twenty two respondents (8.1 percent) said they would probably buy some once, while fifty respondents (18.5 percent) had a neutral position. Ninety respondents (33.3 percent) answered that they would like to try some, and 75 respondents (27.8 percent) replied they would definitely try some.

Overall, the largest number of the respondents (33.3 percent) took a positive stance when responding to this question. Besides, the answers of another 27.8 percent of respondents were very optimistic. Under these circumstances, it can be inferred from the opinion and attitude of these 270 individuals that many people in the U.S. is interested and willing to buy Thai food products.

Question #8: What kind of Thai food products have you ever bought?

For this question, eighty six respondents (31.9 percent) never bought Thai food products, while 184 respondents (68.1 percent) have bought several goods. The answer to the question about what kinds of products they have bought was many and varied. Many respondents gave
more than one answer. Therefore, the author categorized Thai food products in the following table.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Count of Respondents</th>
<th>Rice</th>
<th>Pineapple Cans</th>
<th>Tuna Cans</th>
<th>Frozen Shrimp</th>
<th>Noodles</th>
<th>Baby Corn</th>
<th>Tapioa Products</th>
<th>Seasoning</th>
<th>Others</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Have bought</td>
<td>109</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>109</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Never bought</td>
<td>161</td>
<td>233</td>
<td>243</td>
<td>230</td>
<td>161</td>
<td>220</td>
<td>245</td>
<td>170</td>
<td>239</td>
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<td>Total</td>
<td>270</td>
<td>270</td>
<td>270</td>
<td>270</td>
<td>270</td>
<td>270</td>
<td>270</td>
<td>270</td>
<td>270</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2: Categories of Thai food products which the respondents have ever bought

According to table 2, the Thai food products that the respondents have bought most often are rice and noodles. Seasoning is in the third rank, followed by baby corn, frozen shrimp, pineapple cans, tuna cans, and tapioca products.

The list of other Thai products, which 31 respondents have bought, are broken down as follows; curry pastes, chili paste, mix spices, peanut sauce, coconut milk, tea, fish sauce, hot sauce, sweet chili sauce, roast pepper, tamarind soup broth, canned bamboo shoots, and cans of fruit in syrup.

Over all, the majority of the respondents (68.1 percent) stated that they have bought Thai food products, and some have bought more than one thing. From this it may be implied that many people in the U.S. are interested in buying a variety of Thai food products.

Question #9: What other Thai products have you ever bought?

In assessing question nine, 142 respondents (52.6 percent) never bought other Thai products, and 128 respondents (47.4 percent) have bought other Thai products. In this question,
some respondents replied with more than one answer. The categories of other Thai products are various as shown on Table 3.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Count of Respondents</th>
<th>Beer</th>
<th>Wine</th>
<th>Arts and Crafts</th>
<th>Silk Products</th>
<th>Clothes</th>
<th>Jewelry</th>
<th>Others</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ever bought</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Never bought</td>
<td>208</td>
<td>258</td>
<td>219</td>
<td>228</td>
<td>230</td>
<td>231</td>
<td>285</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>270</td>
<td>270</td>
<td>270</td>
<td>270</td>
<td>270</td>
<td>270</td>
<td>270</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3: Categories of other Thai products which the respondents have bought

According to Table 3, the most popular of other Thai products the respondents have bought is beer. In the second rank are arts and crafts, followed by silk products, clothes, jewelry, wine, and others. The list of others products are bags and wallets, sculpture, and furnishing.

Over all, the majority of the respondents (52.1 percent) indicated that they never bought other Thai products. The other 47.5 percent have bought some others products. However, most of them indicated that they had bought those products in Thailand. The products they can easily buy in the U.S. are only beer and wine. It can be concluded that most of the respondents have bought other Thai products only when they went to visit Thailand.

Question #10: How satisfying would you rank the Thai product you have bought on a scale of 1-10? (1 is lowest, and 10 is highest)

The answer to this question is related to experiences the respondents had relating to questions eight and nine. Therefore, some respondents skipped this question if they had answered none for question eight and nine. Ninety-nine respondents replied to this question, and
71 respondents skipped it. The results for this question were as follows. Two respondents (1.0 percent) ranked their satisfaction at 1-2, and six respondents (3.0 percent) chose 3-4. Forty-five respondents (22.6 percent) expressed their satisfaction at 5-6, and 88 respondents (44.2 percent) scored 7-8. Fifty-eight respondents (29.1 percent) rank their highest satisfaction at 9-10.

In evaluating this question, the majority of respondents (44.2 percent) seem to be satisfied with the products they have bought. It can be implied that the average quality of Thai products quality is as good as the score 7 to 8.

Additional comments

Some respondents kindly provided additional comments, which are interesting to the author. Below is the sampling of some comments regarding Thai cuisine and products:

- I'd rather go to Thai restaurant than cook it myself because it is very difficult to prepare many things just for one meal.
- I would never cook because there are too many ingredients to keep on stock for frequency of working.
- I would be interested in buying prepared foods more than canned /bottle Thai products.
- Thai cuisine is fine, but I like the service of the restaurants. So that I still continue to eat Thai food.
- I am interested in cooking Thai food, and I would like to know about good website with easy-to-make Thai cuisine.
I think Thai food is very pleasant to have experience an excellent food. I like the Asian food because it is an excellent diet meal and reasonable price rate. It is very healthy food diet to eat.

I find Thai food to be more popular among many people and here in Chicago. I have tried dozen Thai restaurants and really enjoy them.

I had an experience in cooking Thai food with Thai friend, so that I become Thai food fan. And I have tried to cook Thai food at home sometime.

I like to make Thai cuisine, but it’s so difficult to find the products in the supermarkets.

Comparing between the price and quantity of food, it seems expensive in my opinion. However, the service is excellent and the restaurant is gorgeous. This sounds reasonable for the bill.

I have been the Asian grocery store, and I saw the products were expired, but the store still put it on the shelf for sale.

I have been to Thailand before and even bought home furnishing products and jewelry. I want to buy it more, but it is difficult to buy it here (in the U.S.). It would be great if there will be Thai store sell those things.

Conclusion

This Survey was well received by a number of individuals. Many of the survey respondents were happy to provide their opinions, not only answering to the question but also sharing their personal information. They were glad to spend their time answering all questions.

In fact, this survey is a good way to evaluate customer satisfaction that many restaurants should
It is astounding to assess the responses, when people were asked about their favorite Thai dishes (Question #2). The answering was greatly varied that 53 percent of the respondents have more than 2 dishes as their favorite Thai food. Over 20 menus were listed as the most popular. It can be implied that Thai cuisine is becoming popular among people in the U.S. and the possibility of expanding Thai cuisine is reasonable. However, people prefer to eat Thai food in the restaurants rather than cook it at home. Therefore the increasing of Thai food and products sales may be stable, as the results to question five, six, and seven indicate.
Chapter V
SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

Summary

As was explained in Chapter III, Thailand engages in a variety of export promotion activities to increasing its target sales. One of its roles is to promote Thai food and restaurants world-wide including the U.S., one of the big markets. The author started the research and concentrated on exploring the popularity of Thai food and products among people in the United States.

Through a comprehensive review of the literature and implementation of a survey, the author has found support for several assumptions that Thai food and products are gradually becoming more popular in the U.S. Most large towns have at least one Thai restaurant at the corner. The number of people who have known and tried Thai cuisine is increasing slightly. The author also has learned that many people are really interested in cooking Thai food and they are willing to try a new taste experience.

Throughout the survey, the author has ascertained that people in the U.S. know about more than 30 dishes of Thai cuisine. It is very amazing that more than a hundred respondents have bought Thai food products and even cooked Thai food at home. The author also has found that many people would like to know more about Thai cuisine and Thai products, but the information they could receive is inadequate. There are not many sources that provide the information about Thai food or Thailand.

For the author, one of the most enjoyable aspects of the research was finding out how people rank their satisfaction regarding Thai food and products. The survey respondents really
opened their mind and expressed their thoughts on the subject as best they could. Some were
humorous and all seemed to be very honest.

Conclusion and Recommendation

Outlook of Thai food and products in term of export

The author was able to determine five interesting points regarding Thai food and products
as follows. First, as regards consumer satisfaction, people in the U.S. seem to be satisfied with
Thai cuisine. Many people know about more than 30 dishes of Thai food. This indicates that
Thailand might greatly benefit if it continues to promote more Thai food products. As regards a
plan to promote more Thai restaurants world-wide, the Thailand government should take this
opportunity to promote Thai food and products.

Second, many people are more interested in cooking Thai food, but there are not many
places where they can buy supplies easily. Some people know that they can find Thai food
products in the Asian grocery stores, while many other people do not know this. Many people
want to see Thai products put on the shelves of the regular supermarket, where is more
c convenient for them to buy. The author would suggest ways to develop the market. If Thailand
importers could contact and sell their products to the big supermarket chains, the market for Thai
food products can be expanded more. This might be coordinated by representatives of the Thai
importers association so that areas with many Thai restaurants would become the focus of this
initiative. Advertisements or notices could be placed in Thai restaurants to alert customer that a
certain local supermarket will carry Thai products. Customers should be encouraged to request
certain products so that the manager of a given supermarket would realize that there is a demand.
This would be the first step in promoting a widening of this “niche” in the market.
Third, many people who have already cooked Thai food indicated that there are a lot of ingredients to use for one recipe. It is difficult to buy the ingredients and stock them at home if they don't use them often. The best advice is that there should be a prepared sauce or other form of the food, which would include all the ingredients for one recipe, to sell in the store. Thailand can receive the benefit if it can promote a set of ingredients for the consumers. This could be an advantage for both consumers and suppliers.

Fourth, a larger number of people expressed that they are willing to learn how to cook Thai food, but there are few sources providing the correct way of cooking, either in a website or magazine. There could be a simple cook book for beginners. Some people are stated that they would like to learn cooking Thai food in a class. According to this statement, the author would suggest another way to promote Thai food and products that Thai government could arrange a cooking course to provide guidance for those who are interested.

Fifth, according to the survey result, many people have bought other Thai products, such as arts and crafts, sculptures, and silk products from Thailand. They had some comments that those products are nice and might be popular in the United States because Asian arts have become famous now. However, there are few stores that specialize in selling those products. Regarding this point, the author has recognized the opportunity that Thailand can expand its export of such products. As the demand for Asian products is increasing, the Thai government can take a step to promote more Thai arts products in the United States by joining international conference and exhibitions hosted in many large cities.

In conclusion, the United States can be a still larger market for Thai exports, especially for food products. It seems that a share market of Thai food products in the U.S. may increase gradually as the popularity shown on the research. Currently, the demand for consuming Thai
food is higher, while the supplies are insufficient. This is the good opportunity for Thailand to expand the market. However, Thailand needs to refine its marketing strategies to reach its goals. There are still some obstacles Thailand has faced either internal barriers or external barriers. As a limit of this research, the author did not elicit the detail of the marketing strategies. Nevertheless, the element of this point is interesting that stimulates the author to continue a future research.
Bibliography


Tipco Profile. Retrieved on December 13, 2003 from http://www.tipco.net/Profile.html
APPENDIX A

SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRE ON THE POTENTIAL OF THAI FOOD AND PRODUCTS IN THE U.S.

This survey questionnaire is being conducted as a thesis project for a Master of Arts in Corporate and Public Communication degree at Seton Hall University. The research topic is to determine the strengths and the obstacles that currently or possibly affect the popularity of Thai cuisine and products in the U.S. market.

Your answers are valuable and they will be kept confidential. If you wish to know the results of this survey, please notify me at vudhikat@shu.edu and a copy of the survey results will be sent to you.

Thank you very much for your cooperation.

Part I: Personal Info

Please check the appropriate answer

1. Gender
   - Male
   - Female

2. Age
   - Less than 18
   - 18-25
   - 26-35
   - 36-49
   - 50+

3. Race/Ethnicity (Check one or more than one)
   - White
   - Black/African American
   - American Indian
   - Latino/Hispanic
   - Mexican, Chicano
   - Other Racial group
   - Japanese
   - Chinese
   - Korean
   - Vietnamese
   - Asian Indian
   - Thai

Part II: Survey Question

Please check the most appropriate answer, based on your experience.

1. How often do you eat Thai food?
   - first time
   - less than once a month
   - 1-2 times a month
   - 3-5 times a month
   - more than 6 times a month
2. What are your favorite Thai dishes?
- Pad Thai
- Tom Yum Kung
- Satey
- Red Curry
- Beef Salad
- House Special
- Too early to have a favorite
- Other (please specify)

3. What do you like most about Thai cuisine?
- Freshness
- Tastes
- Variety of dishes
- New taste experience
- Other (please specify)

4. How satisfying would you rank, from 1-10, Thai dishes?
- 1-2
- 3-4
- 5-6
- 7-8
- 9-10

5. Have you ever cooked or would you be interested in cooking at home Thai cuisine?
- I would never cook
- I would try it once.
- I have already tried cooking. (Less than 6 times within 6 months)
- I cook Thai cuisine frequently. (6-10 times within 6 months)
- I cook Thai cuisine very often. (More than 10 times within 6 months)

6. Have you ever bought some ingredients or Thai products from an Asian supermarket or store?
- Never
- Only once
- 2-7 times
- 8-15 times

7. Would you be interested in buying Thai food products?
- No
- Probably once
- Neutral
- I'd like to try some
- I'd definitely try some

8. What kind of Thai food products have you ever bought? (Can check more than one)
- None
- Rice
- Pineapple cans
- Tuna cans
- Frozen Shrimps
- Noodles
- Baby Corns
- Tapioca Products
- Seasonings
- Others (please specify)

9. What other Thai products have you ever bought? (Can check more than one)
- None
- Beer
- Wine
- Arts and Crafts
- Silk products
- Clothes
- Jewelry
- Others (please specify)

10. How satisfying would you rank the Thai product you have bought on a scale of 1-10?
- 1-2
- 3-4
- 5-6
- 7-8
- 9-10
Please offer any additional comments that you have regarding Thai cuisine and products. Thank you.
## The Frequency of consuming Thai food

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>City in the USA</th>
<th>first time</th>
<th>less than 1 time per month</th>
<th>1-2 times per month</th>
<th>3-5 times per month</th>
<th>more than 6 times per month</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>NJ/PA</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>14</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>% within city</td>
<td>12.7%</td>
<td>35.5%</td>
<td>27.3%</td>
<td>13.6%</td>
<td>10.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chicago</td>
<td>count</td>
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<td>17</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>% within city</td>
<td>4.3%</td>
<td>19.6%</td>
<td>37.0%</td>
<td>23.9%</td>
<td>15.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Miami</td>
<td>count</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
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<td>14</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>% within city</td>
<td>12.3%</td>
<td>31.6%</td>
<td>35.1%</td>
<td>15.8%</td>
<td>5.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>count</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
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<td>30</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>87</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>% of the total</td>
<td>11.1%</td>
<td>31.1%</td>
<td>32.2%</td>
<td>16.3%</td>
<td>9.3%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Characteristics of Thai cuisine people like the most

City | Variety of Dishes | Taste | Freshness | New taste experience | Other
--- | --- | --- | --- | --- | ---
NJ/PA | 23.6% | 41.8% | 8.2% | 23.6% | 2.7%
Chicago | 23.9% | 54.3% | 6.5% | 6.5% | 8.7%
Miami | 23.6% | 46.5% | 6.1% | 13.2% | 4.4%
The frequency of cooking Thai dishes at home

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>City in the USA</th>
<th>would never</th>
<th>Would try once</th>
<th>less than 6 within 6 months</th>
<th>6-10 times within 6 months</th>
<th>more than 10 within 6 months</th>
<th>total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>count</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NJ/PA</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>110</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% within city</td>
<td>25.5%</td>
<td>39.1%</td>
<td>25.5%</td>
<td>6.4%</td>
<td>3.6%</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chicago</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% within city</td>
<td>19.6%</td>
<td>34.8%</td>
<td>30.4%</td>
<td>4.3%</td>
<td>10.9%</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Miami</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>114</td>
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<tr>
<td>% within city</td>
<td>19.3%</td>
<td>43.9%</td>
<td>31.6%</td>
<td>3.6%</td>
<td>1.8%</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total count</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>109</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>270</td>
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<tr>
<td>% of the total</td>
<td>21.9%</td>
<td>40.4%</td>
<td>28.9%</td>
<td>4.8%</td>
<td>4.1%</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>