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THE EFFECT OF EXPORT MARKETING ADAPTATION STRATEGY AND COMPETITIVENESS OF FOOD PRODUCT BUSINESS IN THAILAND

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this research is to investigate the influence of export marketing adaptation strategy, namely, continuous innovation improvement focus, flexible marketing channel orientation, diversified customer behavioral learning, and valuable marketing communication proactiveness on AEC competitiveness via the mediating role of marketing advantage, namely, marketing efficiency, marketing innovation, and effective customer response. The model testing is collected data from 155 exporting food product firms in Thailand by utilizing the resource advantage theory explaining conceptual framework. Descriptive statistics are used to analyze data. The results of OLS multiple regression show each dimension of export marketing adaptation strategy has a positive influence on AEC competitiveness via mediating effects of marketing advantage. Continuous innovation improvement focus and flexible marketing channel orientation have positive effect on marketing innovation. Also, diversified customer behavioral learning has a positive effect on both marketing efficiency and effective customer response. In addition, valuable marketing communication proactiveness has a positive impact on all consequences. Both theoretical and managerial contributions are explicitly provided. Conclusion and suggestions for future research are described accordingly.

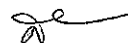
Keywords: Export Marketing Adaptation Strategy, Marketing Advantage, Marketing Efficiency, Marketing Innovation, Effective Customer Response, AEC competitiveness, Exporting Food Product Business

1. INTRODUCTION

The growth of competition on global scale has managed to an increasing number of firms seeking opportunities in order to survive. Business opportunities in ASEAN are estimated to fast-track in the run-up to the ASEAN Economic Community (AEC)'s integration in 2015 with AEC's single-market, free-trade framework, capital, labor, goods and services. However, the basics of each country are different which leading to both opportunities and threats in the business. The potential competitors from member countries also develop superior capabilities to compete in the ASEAN market more quickly as well. Therefore, to achieve the rising competition, firms need to find effective ways to deal with changing situation.

Food product business which remarkable and rapid development in global market is one of Thailand's competitive advantage and highlight industries in ASEAN market with population about 580 million. Thailand's food product exports are worth over 32 billion U.S. dollars, accounting for 14.2 percent of total exports (Board of Investment of Thailand, 2013). By the year 2013, ASEAN export market remains the most country's total food product exports. This is because about 80 % of the raw materials are produce in Thailand so it is an opportunity for Thailand to be a key producer of product food for the region and beyond, especially Ready-to-eat Food (RTE). However, business environment is fast change in customer. In addition, to complete free trade area policy, the competitors in ASEAN market also develop new capabilities to innovate in responding to their environments that leads to competitive advantage. Thus, food products

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business of Thailand has to adapt marketing strategies to increase benefits over the rivals in ASEAN market.

Exporting is a key business movement for nations' economic, as it meaningfully contributes to employment, trade balance, economic growth, and higher standard of living. Enhancing export performance is critical for firms based in developing countries that view the global marketplace as a means to ensure growth, survival or competitiveness (Matanda and Freeman, 2009). So, it is important to identify marketing strategy that support export performance of firms based in developing countries in order to increase their competitiveness in the ASEAN market. In view of the understanding exporting firms' success in a foreign market, prior study argues that marketing adaptation strategy plays a crucial role in powerful a firm's performance in the global market (Porter, 1986; Zou and Cavusgil, 1996). With Even though marketing adaptation has been studied in different discipline, it seems to be limited research regarding the implication of export marketing adaptation strategy in ASEAN market. Accordingly, this research attempts to extend the literature by empirically test the effect of export marketing adaptation strategy on marketing performance outcomes.

Export marketing adaptation strategy in this focusing is viewed as the degree to which a firm globalizes its marketing behavior in various countries by adapting and integrating marketing activities. Chung, Rose and Huang (2012) proposed export marketing adaptation strategy into four aspects such as 1) product strategy 2) price strategy 3) distribution strategy and 4) promotion strategy. This research focuses on four dimensions adapted from Akkarawimut and Ussahawanitchakit (2011), namely, continuous innovation improvement focus, flexible marketing channel orientation, diversified customer behavioral learning, and valuable marketing communication proactiveness. The main aim of this research is to examine the relationships between export marketing adaptation strategy and AEC competitiveness via the mediating role of marketing advantage, namely, marketing efficiency, marketing innovation, and effective customer response. The key research question for the study is how does export marketing adaptation strategy affect AEC competitiveness?

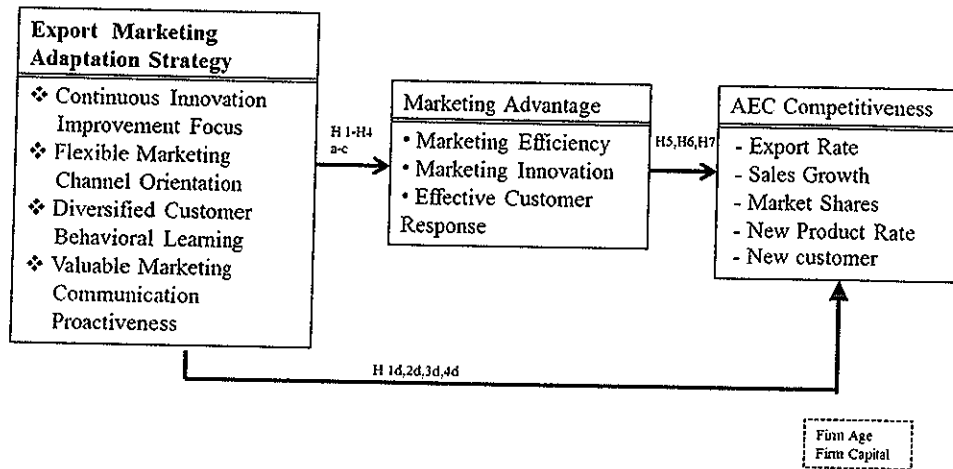
2. RELEVANT LITERATURE REVIEW AND RESEARCH HYPOTHESES

Relevant literature is developed for the conceptual framework shown in figure 1 based on extant research. The framework depicts the impact of export marketing adaptation strategy on AEC competitiveness via marketing efficiency, marketing innovation, effective customer response. The conceptual framework employed is derived from considerations of the R-A theory. The assumption of R-A Theory is that resources of the firm leading to the best marketplace position where the firm can achieve superior performance (Hunt and Arnett, 2003). In this research, the R-A theory has been applied to explain the relationship between export marketing adaptation strategy, marketing advantage and marketing outcomes. According to R-A theory assumption, firm with distinctive export marketing adaptation strategy (continuous innovation improvement focus, flexible marketing channel orientation, diversified customer behavioral learning, and valuable marketing communication proactiveness) may gain marketing advantage such as marketing efficiency, marketing innovation, and effective customer response and ultimately, marketing outcomes (Akkarawimut ,and Ussahawanitchakit, 2011; Chailom and Kaiwinit, 2010; Phokha and Ussahawanitchakit, 2011).

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ศาสตราจารย์ ดร. อภิชาติ อภิชาติธรรม
(อ.ดร.อภิชาติ อภิชาติธรรม)

Figure 1
Conceptual model of export marketing adaptation strategy and AEC competitiveness



2.1 Export Marketing Adaptation Strategy

Export marketing adaptation strategy is defined as the ability of firms to globalize its marketing behavior in various countries by adapting marketing activities and integration of dynamic moves across the markets. The term export marketing adaptation strategy emphasizes the role of strategic management as the marketing activities coordinated and integrated across multiple country markets (Johansson, 2000). A business creates its own unique marketing mix, which is directed specifically at their target market. There are many different factors that influence a firm's strategy by changing over time such as customer, competitor, supplier, technology and socio-political elements. In this study, export marketing adaptation strategy consists of four dimensions as follows:

Continuous innovation improvement focus is defined as the concentration in continuing plan to cultivate new creative idea and new ways of marketing to potential or to constantly existing customer (Morgan, Clark and Gooner, 2002). It can describe as developing new product or service, creating new distribution channels and discovering new opportunity for management (Chapavang and Ussahawanitchakit 2010). Firms with greater capacity to innovate will be more successful in responding to their environments and developing new capabilities that lead to competitive advantage and superior performance (Hurley and Hult, 1998). According to Hult, Hurley and Knight (2004), they indicate that innovativeness relates to firm's capacity innovation and can adopt or implement new ideas, processes, or product successfully. In addition, creative marketing strategy might move to be more successful in responding to environment that leads to competitiveness (Slater, Hult and Olson, 2010). Likewise, Iqbal (2011) indicates that creativity and innovation are crucial factors in generating and keeping a competitive advantage for export performance. The study of Murray, Gao, and Kotabe (2011) reports a significant positive effect of new product development capability on the business performance of export ventures. Therefore, the hypothesis is proposed as below:

Hypothesis 1: Continuous innovation improvement focus has a positive relationship with (a) marketing efficiency, (b) marketing innovation, (c) effective customer response, and (d) AEC competitiveness.

Flexible marketing channel orientation is defined as the degree to which speedy and flexible performs or activities necessary to transfer and move goods, from the point of production to the point of consumption that increase competitive opportunity Zhang, Vonderembse and Lim (2002). Firm can achieve diversity through their supply channels. If products are made available to final customers can gain brand equity, product positioning, or customer service, thus, the channel of distribution can be crucial to successful global marketing (Akkarawimut and

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Ussahawanitchakit, 2011). Moreover, Ogunmokun and Li (2012) stated that firms that are not flexible may be hindering the performance of their export ventures whereas flexible distribution has a significant positive effect on export performance. Previous research studies have reported that distribution network availability and a cooperative partnership between the manufacturer and the export channel have a positive effect on export performance (Lages, Jap and Griffith, 2008). The study of Akkarawimut and Ussahawanitchakit (2011) shows that flexible marketing channel has a positive effect on customer response and export performance. As mentioned above, the hypothesis is posited as follows:

Hypothesis 2: Flexible marketing channel orientation has a positive relationship with (a) marketing efficiency, (b) marketing innovation, (c) effective customer response, and (d) AEC competitiveness.

Diversified customer behavioral learning is defined as the ability of the firm to know a separate of perception with difference in customer concerning requirement and expectation for creation response process in terms of product features and benefits (Jaworski, Kohli and Sahay, 2000; Narver and Slater, 2004). The study of Zahay and Griffin (2004) finds that customer learning is associated with marketing performance. Thus, if firms seek for information of customers and understand their differences, needs and expectation, they can respond to customers correctly by variety product which increases competitive advantage (Ooncharoen and Ussahawanitchakit, 2009). In addition, Jirawuttinunt and Ussahawanitchakit (2011) reveal that customer learning has a positive effect with customer response and market excellence. Global marketing's study of Jadesadalug and Ussahawanitchakit (2009) and Akkarawimut and Ussahawanitchakit (2011) also show that diversified customer learning has a positive with marketing performance. Thus, it leads to the hypothesis proposed as below:

Hypothesis 3: Diversified customer behavioral learning has a positive relationship with (a) marketing efficiency, (b) marketing innovation, (c) effective customer response, and (d) AEC competitiveness.

Valuable marketing communication proactiveness is defined as an strategic advance process which is designed to make different tools to maximize the communication impact on target customer by producing and delivering a message to consumers with effective attitude (Mendez, 2009; Saeed et al., 2013). The study of Tsai (2005) suggests that marketing communication as strategy can improve consumer awareness of the brand, increase consumer trial of brand and strengthen consumer recognition of product quality that, ultimately, provide consumer experience toward brand loyalty. Also, Tuten and Urban (2001) confirmed the role of communication as a key factor of company achievement. The study of Pouremaeili, Nezakati and Mehdizadeh (2010) finds that integrated marketing communication is directly and positively related to marketing communication performance. Similarly, Saeed et al., (2013) propose that valuable marketing communication has a positive impact on market performance. The study of Reid, Luxton and Mavondo (2005) indicated that technology change the world marketing such as e-business, e-commerce, thus, firm chooses new communication tools to achieve the competition. In the same way, Akkarawimut and Ussahawanitchakit (2011) illustrate that marketing communication has positive relationship with marketing advantage, marketing acceptance quality and firm survival in global marketing. Thus, the hypothesis is posited as follows:

Hypothesis 4: Valuable marketing communication proactiveness has a positive relationship with (a) marketing efficiency, (b) marketing innovation, (c) effective customer response, and (d) AEC competitiveness.

2.2 Marketing Efficiency

Marketing efficiency is defined as an ability of the firm to achieve efficient marketing activity such as product quality, cost reduction, and creating values for the customer that can results in competitive behavior (Dastagiri et al., 2013). Also, Zou and Cavusgil (2002) reveal that global marketing strategy is positively associated with firm performance. Townsend et al., (2004) find

that global product standardization and global marketing structure drive the implementation of global product processes which are positively related to marketing performance. The competitiveness of a country derives from the efficiency of its enterprises Blesa and Ripolle (2008). Past research has consistently found that international marketing capabilities are positively related to export performance (Mostafa, 2009; Chailom and Kaiwinit, 2010). In addition, Keh et al., (2006) found that marketing efficiency and effectiveness are the crucial role of service organization. Thus, it leads to the hypothesis proposed as follows:

Hypothesis 5: *Marketing efficiency has a positive relationship with AEC competitiveness.*

2.3 Marketing Innovation

Marketing innovation can be defined as the potential of firm to develop new ways, new method and new process of marketing which is first and unique to satisfy existing or future customer. Particularly, marketing innovation can enhance developing varied products and service. Then, firm can be offering products to meet requirement of customer and as a consequence, it achieves satisfaction of customer through performance in the market. Prior study concludes that marketing innovation can lead to marketing leadership (Chapavang and Ussahawanitchakit, 2010) new product development and marketing excellence (Meesuptong and Ussahawanitchakit, 2013) which gaining superior performance. Hence, it implies that marketing innovation is associated with AEC competitiveness as well. As mentioned above, the hypothesis is posited as follows:

Hypothesis 6: *Marketing innovation has a positive relationship with AEC competitiveness.*

2.4 Effective Customer Response

Effective customer Response is defined as an ability of firm to response customer demand or needs and delivers superior values to customer (Lee and Lin, 2005). It concerns with customer by identifying, analyzing, understanding and reaction their needs. Thus, customer response efficiency may be a driver of competitive advantage. Chapavang and Ussahawanitchakit (2010) find that the higher the customer response, the more firm will gain greater marketing leadership. In addition, Jadesadalug and Ussahawanitchakit (2009) show that the higher the effective customer response is, the more likely that firms will gain greater competent competitive advantage and greater corporate performance. In international marketing context, a number of studies have examined customer response across global markets as a factor affecting the ability of the marketing mix (Griffith , Chandra and Ryans, 2002; Theodosiou and Katsikeas, 2001). Likewise, Jirawuttinunt and Ussahawanitchakit (2011) assert that customer response has a positive impact on marketing excellence. Thus, it leads to the hypothesis proposed as follows:

Hypothesis 7: *Effective customer response has a positive relationship with AEC competitiveness.*

3. RESEARCH METHOD

3.1 Sample and Data Collection Procedure

The population was obtained from the database of Department of International Trade Promotion, Ministry of Commerce of Thailand which provided 2,064 firms (http://application.ditp.go.th/exporter_directory). By using Yamane sample size Table, the sample sizes are 345 firms. The key participant is marketing director, marketing manager or chief executive officers of each firm. In total, the mailing yields of 162 responses are received. There were 7 unusable questionnaires. Thus, total valid useable were 155 responses. The effective response rate was approximately 44.92%. According to Aaker, Kumar and Day (2001), the response rate that acceptable for mail survey is at least 20%, thus, the response rate were acceptable for this study.

Additionally, the non-response was tested for two independent samples. A comparison of early responses and late responses data is recommended by Armstrong and Overton (1977). T-tests comparing the first 78 survey responses received with the last 77 survey responses across a

firm's four characteristics (i.e. number of employees, number of years in business, amount of capital invested, and sale revenue per year) did not find any significant differences between the two groups. Hence, it implied that non-response bias does not pose a significant problem for this study (Armstrong and Overton, 1977).

3.2 Variables

Research instrument was questionnaire developed by review of the relevant literature. All constructs in the model were with multiple-item scales. Each of these variables was measured by five point - Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree).

For dependent Variable, *AEC competitiveness* is measured by export rate, sales growth, market share, ability to introduce product rate, new customer and customer acceptance, adapted from Dilek and Hakan (2013). *Export marketing adaptation strategy* is measured by four dimensions which adapted from Akkarawimut and Ussahawanitchakit (2011). *Marketing efficiency* is measured by the quality of products and services, cost reduction, the recognized reputation increasing customer repurchases and higher rate of customer retention adapted from Phokha and Ussahawanitchakit (2011). *Marketing innovation* and *effective customer response* is adapted from Chapavang and Ussahawanitchakit (2010) and Jirawuttinunt and Ussahawanitchakit (2011).

Control Variables consist of firm age and firm capital. Firm age was evaluated by the number of year that a firm has been in operation (0 = Less than 10 years and 1 = more than ten years). Firm capital was evaluated d by the money or asset on investment operation in firm (0 = 10,000,000 Baht or less than 10,000,000 Baht and 1 = more than 10,000,000 Baht). This is because firm performance may be influenced by firm capital and firm age (Ussahawanitchakit, 2007).

3.3 Validity and Reliability


The validity of data in questionnaire was checked by confirm factor analysis that is used to test whether multi-item measures of each construct unidimensionality. A higher rule-of-thumb, a cut-off 0.40, was adopted (Nunnally and Berstein, 1994). All factors loading are 0.709-0.935 as being greater than the 0.4 cut-off and are statistically significant. Reliability of the measurement was assessed by Cronbach Alpha coefficients. In the scale reliability, Cronbach Alpha coefficients range from 0.745 to 0.958 as being greater than 0.7 therefore above acceptable threshold (Nunnally and Berstein, 1994). Table 1 shows the results for both factor loading and Cronbach Alpha for multiple-items scales used in this study.

TABLE 1: Result of Measure Validation

Items	Factor Loadings	Cronbach Alpha	Items
AEC Competitiveness (AEC)	0.826-0.935	0.958	5
Continuous Innovation Improvement Focus (CII)	0.806-0.887	0.862	4
Flexible Marketing Channel Orientation (FMC)	0.803-0.908	0.909	3
Diversified Customer Behavioral Learning (DCB)	0.777-0.844	0.856	3
Valuable Marketing Communication Proactiveness (VMC)	0.836-0.860	0.843	4
Market Efficiency (MAE)	0.842-0.895	0.868	3
Marketing Innovation (MAI)	0.866-0.920	0.745	3
Effective Customer Response (ECR)	0.709-0.868	0.812	3

3.4 Statistical Technique

All variables are the metric scales, thus the Ordinary Least Square (OLS) regression analysis is appropriated statistical technique to investigate the hypothesized association and estimate coefficients affecting of the export marketing adaptation strategy and marketing outcomes (Dilek and Hakan, 2013). The research models were presented as follows:

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Equation 1: $MAE = \beta_{01} + \beta_1 FC + \beta_2 FA + \beta_3 CII + \beta_4 FMC + \beta_5 DCB + \beta_6 VMC + \varepsilon$
Equation 2: $MAI = \beta_{02} + \beta_7 FC + \beta_8 FA + \beta_9 CII + \beta_{10} FMC + \beta_{11} DCB + \beta_{12} VMC + \varepsilon$
Equation 3: $ECR = \beta_{03} + \beta_{13} FC + \beta_{14} FA + \beta_{15} CII + \beta_{16} FMC + \beta_{17} DCB + \beta_{18} VMC + \varepsilon$
Equation 4: $AEC = \beta_{04} + \beta_{19} FC + \beta_{20} FA + \beta_{21} CII + \beta_{22} FMC + \beta_{23} DCB + \beta_{24} VMC + \varepsilon$
Equation 5: $AEC = \beta_{05} + \beta_{25} FC + \beta_{26} FA + \beta_{27} MAE + \beta_{28} MAI + \beta_{29} ECR + \varepsilon$

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

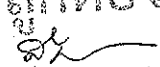
In Table 2, the descriptive statistics and correlation matrix for all variables are presented. The descriptive statistics and correlation matrix for all variables are shown in Table 2. The research examines possible multicollinearity problems by studying correlation between the variables included in the regression analysis. In this way, by means of Pearson's correlation coefficient, we can measure the degree of linear association between every pair of variables as shown in Table 2. With respect to possible problems relating to multicollinearity, all the correlation coefficients of independent variables are smaller than 0.8, and all the Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) values are smaller than 10. The problem of multicollinearity of independent variables in this model is therefore not significant (Hair et al., 2006). Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) was used to check multicollinearity problems among independent variables. The VIF ranged are below the cut-off value of 10 recommended by Hair et al. (2006), meaning that the independent variables are not correlated with each other. Therefore, there are no substantial multicollinearity problems encountered in this study. In addition, Table 2 shows the correlation matrix for all variables used in the regression analysis.

TABLE 2: Descriptive Statistics and Correlation Matrix

Variables	CII	FMC	DCB	VMC	MAE	MAI	ECR	AEC
Mean	3.747	3.600	3.637	3.651	3.366	3.681	3.605	3.589
S.D.	0.821	0.882	0.730	0.780	0.858	0.742	0.716	0.832
CII								
FMC	.787**							
DCB	.602**	.674**						
VMC	.689**	.754**	.711**					
MAE	.648**	.682**	.484**	.597**				
MAI	.351**	.392**	.594**	.595**	.500**			
ECR	.538**	.541**	.640**	.648**	.580**	.756**		
AEC	.394**	.461**	.526**	.631**	.553**	.661**	.650**	

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Table 3 reports the results of the relationship between export marketing adaptation strategy and AEC competitiveness. The findings show that continuous innovation improve concentration and flexible marketing channel focus have a significant positive influence on marketing efficiency ($\beta_3 = 0.278$, $p < 0.01$; $\beta_9 = 0.355$, $p < 0.01$, respectively). **Therefore, hypotheses 1a and 2a are supported** whereas hypotheses 1b-1d and 2b-2d are not supported. Then, diversified customer behavioral learning has positive impact on marketing innovation and effective customer response ($\beta_{11} = 0.364$, $p < 0.01$; $\beta_{17} = 0.326$, $p < 0.01$, respectively). **Thus, hypotheses 3b and 3c are supported.** In addition, valuable marketing communication proactiveness has positive relationship with marketing efficiency ($\beta_6 = 0.209$, $p < 0.10$, marketing innovation ($\beta_{12} = 0.444$, $p < 0.01$), effective customer response ($\beta_{18} = 0.288$, $p < 0.05$) and AEC competitiveness ($\beta_{24} = 0.583$, $p < 0.01$), consistent with literatures. **Hence, hypotheses 4a, 4b, 4c and 4d are supported.** Next, the results show that marketing efficiency, marketing innovation, and effective customer response have positively associated with AEC competitiveness ($\beta_{27} = 0.204$, $p < 0.01$;

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$\beta_{28} = 0.341, p < 0.01; \beta_{29} = 0.243, p < 0.01$, respectively), similar to literature proposed. **Therefore, hypotheses 5, 6, and 7 are supported.**

In line with the results, this research provides a clearer understanding of the direct and indirect effects between export marketing adaptation strategy, namely, continuous innovation improvement focus, flexible marketing channel orientation, diversified customer behavioral learning, valuable marketing communication proactiveness and AEC competitiveness. It reveals that only valuable marketing communication proactiveness has a direct effect on AEC competitiveness whereas other strategies have indirect effect via marketing efficiency, marketing innovation, and effective customer response. Thus, to complete in AEC market, firm should focus on marketing communication proactiveness. Moreover, firm should implement export marketing strategy such as innovation improvement, flexible marketing channel, diversify customer learning to improve marketing efficiency, marketing innovation, and effective customer response, and, ultimately, achieve AEC competitiveness.

TABLE 3: Results of Regression Analysis^a

Independent Variables	Dependent Variables				
	1 MAE	2 MAI	3 ECR	4 AEC	5 AEC
H1: Continuous innovation improve concentration (CII)	0.278*** (.099)	-0.034 (.109)	0.171 (0.104)	-0.070 (.106)	
H2: Flexible marketing channel focus (FMC)	0.355*** (0.110)	-0.172 (.121)	-0.040 (0.116)	0.004 (0.118)	
H3: Diversified customer behavioral learning (DCB)	-0.101 (.098)	0.364*** (.108)	0.326*** (0.104)	0.072 (.106)	
H4: Valuable marketing communication proactiveness (VMC)	0.209* (0.113)	0.444*** (0.124)	0.288** (0.119)	0.583*** (0.122)	
H5: Market Efficiency (MAE)					0.204*** (0.068)
H6: Marketing Innovation (MAI)					0.341*** (0.085)
H7: Effective Customer Response (ECR)					0.243*** (0.090)
Firm Capital (FC)	0.268** (0.118)	0.257** (0.129)	0.086 (0.124)	0.446*** (0.127)	0.336*** (0.115)
Firm Age (FA)	0.109 (0.126)	0.110 (0.138)	-0.037 (0.133)	-0.183 (0.136)	-0.276 (0.119)
Adjusted R ²	0.507	0.403	0.451	0.428	0.546

^aBeta coefficients with standard errors in parenthesis, *** $p < 0.01$, ** $p < 0.05$, * $p < 0.10$

5. CONTRIBUTIONS AND FUTURE DIRECTIONS

5.1 Theoretical and Managerial Contribution

The findings provide unique theoretical contributions expanding on export marketing adaptation strategy that valuable marketing communication proactiveness has a direct effect on AEC competitiveness whereas continuous innovation improvement focus, flexible marketing channel orientation, and diversified customer behavioral learning have indirect effect on AEC competitiveness via marketing efficiency, marketing innovation, and effective customer response. For managerial implication, this study provides CEO many practices under the international context. To focus in export marketing adaptation strategy, they should understand, manage, and utilize how to provide marketing efficiency, marketing innovation, and effective customer response. From high degree of results, the executives must put more important on valuable marketing communication proactiveness than on other strategies. To maximize the benefits of AEC competitiveness, they should use export marketing adaptation strategy with four dimensions as key success factors for AEC market.

5.2 Limitation and Future Directions for Research

The limitation of this research concerns with the sample is drawn from exporting food product business in Thailand. Hence future research is needed to collect data from other businesses to understand more fully the nature of export marketing adaptation strategy. Also, the small sample size may affect the results. Although it can be accepted, the larger sample size may make the result distinct. Future research should collect data from a larger population and/or a comparative population in order to verify the generalizability of the study and increase the level of reliability.

6. CONCLUSION

Nowadays, exporting has become a crucial driver of firm success. The objective of this study is to examine the effects of export marketing adaptation strategy on AEC competitiveness of exporting food product businesses in Thailand via marketing efficiency, marketing innovation, and effective customer response. Export marketing adaptation strategy includes four dimensions: continuous innovation improvement focus, flexible marketing channel orientation, diversified customer behavioral learning, and valuable marketing communication proactiveness. Here, 155 exporting food product businesses in Thailand were chosen as the sample of the study. With multiple regression analysis, the results show that the relationships between export marketing adaptation strategy and AEC have significant positive impact via marketing efficiency, marketing innovation, and effective customer response. Especially, valuable marketing communication proactiveness is the most important factor influencing AEC competitiveness. For practitioners, the results of the study provide a feasible path for developing competitive advantage in AEC environment. In addition to its empirical contribution, this research will focus the attention by researchers and managers that export marketing adaptation strategy plays a crucial role in developing market-driven capabilities and shaping the firm's competitive advantage in global market.

7. REFERENCES

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