

ABSTRACT

Footwear is an important export of Thailand. The export volume has increased rapidly each year. However the 1996 export value of footwear had greatly decreased, compared to that of 1995. It is therefore interesting to study the trend and competitive ability of the Thai footwear export. A marketing strategy is offered to overcome the problems and compete in international trade that directly affected the Thai Export main target.

This study was based on secondary data, which are analyzed by using the Product Life Cycle and the Revealed Comparative Advantage theories. The study found that the overall growth rate of Thai footwear is diminishing. In particular, the growth rate of sport, rubber and plastic, slippers footwear export is declining while the export value of leather, parts and other footwear export indicates a down trend. Important export market of the Thai footwear included United States, European Countries, Asia and some Middle East countries. The competitiveness of Thailand as an exporting country is declining because the production cost of Thailand is relative high, compared to those of China and Indonesia, which are becoming more competitive.

To maintain competitive ability, the Thai footwear producers must pay attention in research and development of the footwear production. For instance, they must give attention on production technology, designs, raw material quality and exploration for new markets. The Government sector could have an equal role by providing appropriate tariff policies, giving helps to related industries, settling of skill promotion institutes and bargaining with traded partners to hold the competitive position of the Thai footwear industry.