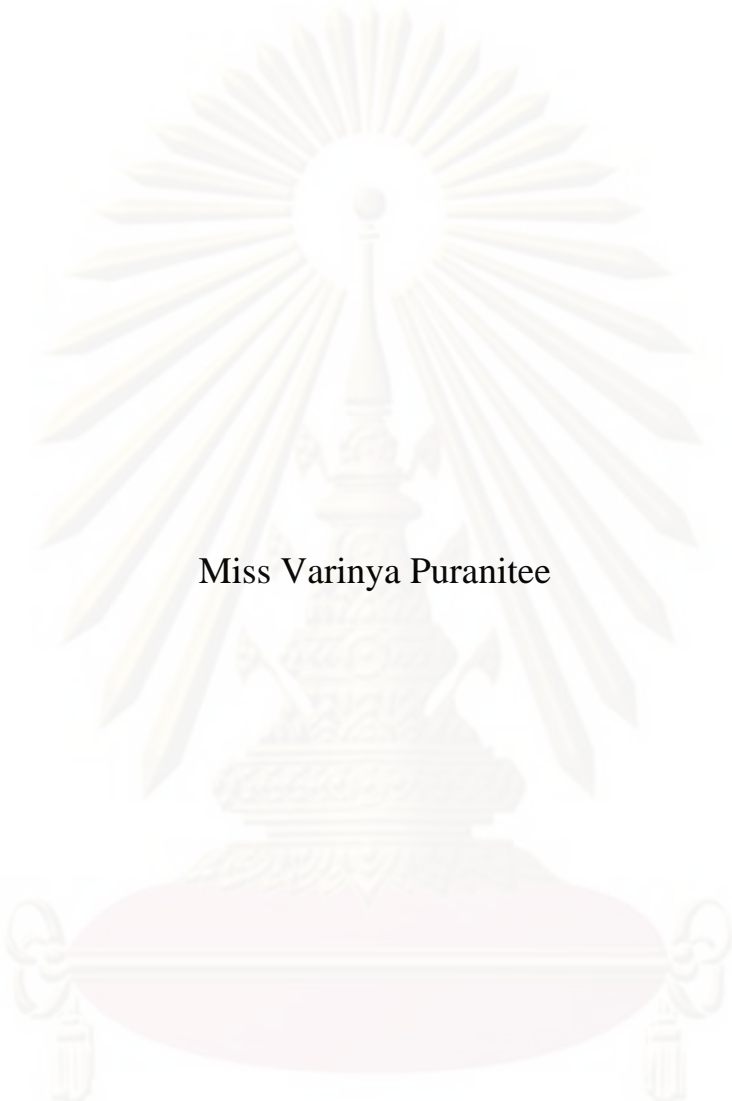


INTERNATIONALIZATION OF THAI SILK



Miss Varinya Puranitee

A Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
for the Degree of Master of Arts Program in Southeast Asian Studies
(Interdisciplinary Program)

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การทำให้เป็นนานาชาติของผ้าไหมไทย



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ศูนย์วิทยทรัพยากร

วิทยานิพนธ์นี้เป็นส่วนหนึ่งของการศึกษาตามหลักสูตรปริญญาศิลปศาสตรมหาบัณฑิต

สาขาวิชาเอเชียตะวันออกเฉียงใต้ศึกษา (สหสาขาวิชา)

บัณฑิตวิทยาลัย จุฬาลงกรณ์มหาวิทยาลัย

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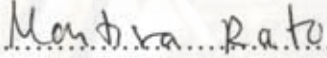
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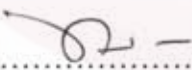
Accepted by the Graduate School, Chulalongkorn University in Partial
Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Master's Degree

..... Dean of the Graduate School
(Associate Professor Pornpote Piumsomboon, Ph.D.)

THESIS COMMITTEE

..... Chairman
(Assistant Professor Montira Rato, Ph.D.)

..... Thesis Advisor
(Professor Amara Prasithrathsint, Ph.D.)

..... External Examiner
(Associate Professor Songsak Prangwatthanakun)

ศูนย์วิทยทรัพยากร
จุฬาลงกรณ์มหาวิทยาลัย

วาริญา ปุรานิติ: การทำให้เป็นนานาชาติของผ้าไหมไทย (INTERNATIONALIZATION OF THAI SILK) อ. ที่ปรึกษาวิทยานิพนธ์หลัก : ศ.ดร.อมรา ประสิทธิ์รัฐสินธุ์, ๑๑๕ หน้า

วิทยานิพนธ์ฉบับนี้ มีจุดมุ่งหมายที่จะ ศึกษาผ้าไหมไทย ว่ามีความเป็นนานาชาติเพียงใด และอะไรเป็น ปัจจัย ที่ทำให้ผ้าไหมไทยพัฒนาไปสู่ระดับนานาชาติ

ข้อมูลที่ใช้ในการวิเคราะห์มาจากเอกสารทางราชการและ จากกลุ่มตัวอย่างของชาวต่างชาติที่ซื้อผลิตภัณฑ์ ผ้าไหมไทย ในบริเวณสี่ลม สาทร์ สยาม และห้างสรรพสินค้าต่างๆ จำนวน ๕๐๐ คน และ กลุ่มผู้ผลิตผ้าไหมไทย ๕ แห่ง ในประเทศไทย เครื่องมือที่ใช้ในการวิจัย คือ แบบสอบถามเกี่ยวกับผ้าไหมไทยในแง่การยอมรับในระดับ นานาชาติ ลวดลายและคุณภาพของผ้าไหมไทย และการสัมภาษณ์เกี่ยวกับการส่งออกในระดับนานาชาติ และปัจจัย ที่ช่วยผลักดันให้ผ้าไหมไทยก้าวออกไปสู่ตลาดโลก การวิเคราะห์เชิงคุณภาพใช้การตีความ ส่วนการวิเคราะห์เชิง ปริมาณมีการใช้สถิติประกอบด้วย เช่น ค่าเบี่ยงเบนมาตรฐาน

ผลการวิจัยพบว่า ประเทศไทยส่งออกผ้าไหมไทยสู่ตลาดนานาชาติมากกว่า ๑๐๐ ประเทศทั่วโลก ใน รูปแบบเสื้อผ้าที่มีลวดลายทันสมัย และ ผลิตภัณฑ์ตกแต่งภายในบ้าน ซึ่งทำรายได้ให้แก่ประเทศไทยเป็นมูลค่า มากกว่า ๔๐,๐๐๐ ล้านบาทต่อปี นอกจากนี้ ยังพบว่า มีปัจจัยที่สำคัญที่เป็นตัวผลักดันให้ผลิตภัณฑ์ผ้าไหมไทย พัฒนาไปสู่ระดับนานาชาติ ๔ ประการคือ (๑) องค์กรที่สำคัญจากในประเทศและนอกประเทศ ซึ่งช่วยเหลือทั้ง ทางด้านการเงิน และการให้ความรู้ ทำให้ผ้าไหมไทยพัฒนาไปในระดับนานาชาติ (๒) ผลกระทบจากเศรษฐกิจทั่วโลกต่อผ้าไหมไทย ทำให้เกิดการเพิ่มหรือลดกำลังการใช้จ่ายของผู้ซื้อทั่วโลก (๓) ผ้าไหมไทยมีลวดลายที่ หลากหลาย ขึ้นอยู่กับจินตนาการ และ วัฒนธรรมของผู้ทอผ้า และความหลากหลายของท้องถิ่น (๔) ผ้าไหมไทย ปรับเปลี่ยนลายผ้าให้เข้ากับรสนิยมของชาวต่างชาติ ชาวต่างชาติที่ซื้อผลิตภัณฑ์ผ้าไหมไทยชื่นชอบลายผ้าไหมไทย ที่มีลวดลายแบบประดุกค์ มีสีเขียว และทันสมัย แต่ยังคงความเป็นลวดลายไทย นอกจากนี้ ผ้าไหมไทยยังปรับ หน้าที่ให้ใช้ในแวดวงอื่นๆ เช่นการตกแต่งภายใน เป็นต้น

ผลงานวิจัยครั้งนี้มีประโยชน์ต่อกลุ่มคนที่อยู่ในอุตสาหกรรมผ้าไหมและผู้ผลิตรายอื่นที่จะนำสินค้าไปสู่ ระดับนานาชาติ อีกทั้งยังทำให้เข้าใจเกี่ยวกับเอกลักษณ์ความเป็นไทยของผ้าไหมไทย

สาขาวิชา เอเซียตะวันออกเฉียงใต้ศึกษา

ปีการศึกษา ๒๕๕๒

ลายมือชื่อนิติศ. *Vanya Panta*

ลายมือชื่ออ.ที่ปรึกษาวิทยานิพนธ์หลัก *อ. อมรา*

ศูนย์วิทยทรัพยากร

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The present study aims to investigate the internationalization of Thai silk in terms of its international market and factors that make it internationalized.

Some part of the data used in the analysis was taken from governmental documents. The other part was collected from five hundred foreign customers of Thai silk by using questionnaires and five Thai silk shop owners dealing with the industry and business of Thai silk by interviewing. Descriptive statistics was used to determine how much Thai silk has been internationalized and how much it is accepted by foreigners.

The result of the analysis reveals that over the past six decades, more than thirty countries around the world have imported Thai silk for use in fashion and home decoration. Thai silk export has generated an income over 40,000 million baht for the country. It is found that there are four main factors that make Thai silk developed to the international level. They are: (1) support from important organizations divided into two kinds; internal support divided into public and private organizations, which play an important role in prompting Thai silk industry, and external support which helps ensure the growth Thai silk industry; (2) the effect of world political and economic situation, which affects the export of Thai silk by changing the purchasing power of the world customers; (3) the great variety of designs of Thai silk, which are composed of both traditional and modern patterns; (4) the adaptation of Thai silk to suit foreigners' taste and preferences. Thai silk has adapted both its designs and functions; i.e., its designs have been more westernized and its function has been expanded from being used for clothing to being used for home furnishing.

Field of Study: Southeast Asian Studies
Academic Year: 2009

Student's Signature.....

Advisor's Signature.....

Varinya Puranitee
Prof. Amara Prasithrathsint

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

Nowadays Thai silk is well-known in many countries for its shiny features and as luxury items. It represents the Thai culture in the global context, in the same way as “plaid,” which is the symbol of Scotland, and “Saree,” which represents India.

According to Collier and Tortora (2002) in the book *Understanding Textiles*, silk is one of the most important products and known as a main export for Asian countries. Throughout history, silk was a symbol of wealth and civilization. Silk industry has gradually increased and developed in the world market.

Silk fabric and silk products in Thailand are popular among both Thais and foreigners. The uniqueness and traditional value of Thai silk have attracted many foreigners. This could boost the Thai economy and increase the income of local people.

Nalinee Suramoon (2005), compared three selected areas of silk producer groups of One-Tambon-One-Product (OTOP) project, which had similar structures in terms of their corporate organization, marketing, and the way they preserve their tradition knowledge. She found that the three selected provinces (Surin, Chaiyaphum, Nakhon Ratchasima) have a lot of raw material and silk yarn factories. This brings a good opportunity for the local people to earn more money from this silk business. The products in each province show characteristics and uniqueness of their styles or patterns. So OTOP is a good sign for them to show their traditional skill of weaving silk, and distribute the silk products in a bigger market.

Prattanna Thongchai, (2006), analyzed the beginning of “know how OTOP” of the silk branding in each province and the marketing communication strategies for that OTOP Thai silk and dress branding. She found that the brand names of all products in the OTOP project including silk products in each province have the same brand names as OTOP. She also found that the OTOP logo has three styles for three different purposes: 1) the original logo of

OTOP, 2) the OTOP logo for international festivals, and 3) the grand festival OTOP logo. This study shows that the OTOP project is very important for local Thai people in distributing their products so that they will be recognized under the name of OTOP products. However, this study does not deal with the development of Thai silk products and how Thai silk has turned to an internationalized product.

Another study by Marida Prapin (2005) focused on silk production and marketing in Bando's silk handicrafts. It shows that the Thai silk community concerns three strategies. First, they emphasized the quality of silk yarn before making silk products. Second, the distribution of Thai silk should be in business areas. The last strategy is a promotion strategy, such as festival fairs. Marida Prapin also found that support from the government is important in promoting Thai silk to a wider market. The study also shows that the silk products in Bando's are very essential for the local people in terms of the quality and the tradition of silk making.

In addition to the above-mentioned studies, the selling and distribution of warp silk are well covered in Varaporn Boonsutta (1979) and Anun Wantan (2006) thesis. They analyzed the silk yarn production industry, the demand and supply of silk yarn in Thailand, and found that the use of machineries is inefficient, and that the quality of raw silk is not up to standard. Higher production cost is also the result of inefficient use of old machineries. Moreover, there is a shortage of supply in the country because of the lack of support from the government for raw silk production.

Based on a review of related studies (see Chapter 2) and my own observation, Thai silk has been dealt with in terms of silk yarn, weft silk industry, the cost of raw material, silk yarn marketing, the processing of silk cloth, and problems in silk production. There has been no study that focuses on the starting point of internationalized Thai silk production, how Thai silk industry developed and adapted, the production and procedure of making silk, patterns and designs from the traditional Thai silk to become international products and the extent to which Thai silk marketing is international. Therefore, I would like to fill this gap; that is, to find out the inspiration and tendency of creating designs and patterns in each Thai silk export company; i.e., turning the traditional Thai silk into an international product. This leads to the main objectives of this thesis.

1.2 Objectives of the thesis

1.2.1 To study the extent to which Thai silk marketing is internationalized.

1.2.2 To study the main factors of Thai silk development to become an internationalized product.

1.3 Research Questions

1.3.1 How did Thai silk business change from household to domestic marketing?

1.3.2 How has Thai silk become a national product?

1.3.3 Which channel of distribution turned and promoted Thai silk from a local to international product?

1.3.4 How did Jim Thompson contribute to the internationalization of Thai silk?

1.3.5 To what extent does the Thai market help promote Thai silk to the global market?

1.3.6 How do Thai silk products maintain Thai identity while adapting to international taste?

1.4 Major arguments and hypotheses

In the past, silk was made for household and local use before silk production started to be national production. Later, it was developed into the international level around the period after the Second World War when an American architect, Jim Thompson, created new designs of Thai silk and established the Jim Thompson Thai Silk Company in Thailand. This is the starting point for Thai silk production to become an international industry.

For the past few decades, Thai silk marketing has been international to the extent that Thai silk is exported to more than 30 countries in the world. It contributes to the national income increase for more than 900 million baht per year. In addition, Thai silk is internationally popular for interior decoration and clothing fashion. For example, Jim Thompson Thai silk Company, and Pasaya are well-known companies that export textile products worldwide for decoration and fashion. They have also been known for their artistic skill in designing, manufacturing products of high quality.

This study also aims to find out what factors have made Thai silk developed to the level of an internationalized product. It is hypothesized here that there are three main factors affecting the internationalization of Thai silk. They are: 1) the support from important organizations, e.g. Queen Sirikit's SUPPORT Foundation; 2) the variety of the designs of Thai silk; and 3) the adaptation of the designs to suit foreigners' taste and preference.

1.5 Significance and usefulness of research

1.5.1 This study will benefit those involved in Thai silk marketing.

1.5.2 This study will provide knowledge of the path for the other local Thai brand products to become international brand products.

1.5.3 This study will create the understanding of Thai silk identity and uniqueness.



ศูนย์วิจัยทรัพยากร
จุฬาลงกรณ์มหาวิทยาลัย

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

To provide background for this study, I have reviewed relevant previous studies. The following are the results of the literature review, which are divided into six topics: the origin of the silk trade, the beginning of Thai silk, the making of Thai silk, silk weaving techniques, patterns of Thai silk, and Thai silk marketing.

2.1 The origin of silk trade

According to Sharples (1994), silk originated in China over 5,500 years ago. China was an ancient silk producing country and the fame of Chinese silk eventually became world renowned. Chinese silk gained a reputation as a luxury good and was prized for its unique features compared with other textiles. Ever since, silk has been a symbol of wealth and civilization and was craved by all men.

Macdonald, Schoeser, and Marcandalli (2007), stated that people in many countries outside China became interested in the quality, beauty and great value of silk. Therefore, silk began to be traded and became an important commodity around the world, reaching places as far away as Europe. Silk was so important that it became the name of the main trading route from Asia to Europe, the “Silk Road”, on which people from different races and cultures were willing to risk their lives to make a fortune by participating in this long trade journey across the continent. The route became one of the most significant to the world economy at that time. The legacy of the Silk Road can still be seen today as it brought people from different cultures and backgrounds together.

Kadolph (2007) adds that on the Silk Road, more than silk and commodities traversed the continents. There was also an exchange of ideas, information and technologies. Many economies, cultures and technologies across the region were changed in the process. The silk trade became one of the greatest means of cultural exchange

between people from various countries and strengthened the relationship between them.

According to Panya Vijintanasan (2000), after Europeans discovered Chinese silk, the demand for silk increased significantly. As a result, over the next few centuries, the silk industry spread and developed in many other East Asian countries. People in western countries became increasingly interested in silk products because they were impressed with the reputation, quality, beauty and the great value of silk. Silk production began to take place in countries outside China. Other Asian countries realized that there was great profit to be made in silk production and they began to develop their own silk industries and create their own style and silk weaving skills.

2.2 The beginning of Thai silk

According to Viboon Leesuwon (1987), there are written records of the existence of textiles that date back to the beginning of the historical period. Remnants of prehistoric cotton and silk thread were found in the areas of Ban Nadi in Nong Han, in Udon Thani Province. Chinese traders in these areas often recorded many findings, including silk. In the Sukhothai kingdom, cotton and silk of various colors were produced. Sukhothai textiles were first meant for family use. Later on when there was a surplus, textiles trading started to take place. Also, high quality textiles for monarchs were imported from China, India or Persia. During the Ayutthaya kingdom, which is the period of great advances in terms of politics, economics and technologies, western influences motivated the kingdom to develop the higher quality products, including silk. Thus, the export of Thai silk began to take place via foreign travelers. Later the Ayutthaya kingdom became the center of trade in the region, including textile trading.

Nuttapat Juntavit (2002), adds that during the Ayutthaya reign (B.E 1350-1767), the kingdom was the center for trading silk and other textiles. This fact was confirmed by foreign written documents that stated that other fabrics, which could be found elsewhere, could also be found in Ayutthaya. Some silk was produced domestically and some was imported from China and India. Since this period, Thai silk began to be produced in various patterns and designs because Thai buyers like different designs.

According to Thompson (1976) the silk industry began to spread outside China to other places in East and Southeast Asia around two thousands years ago. It started when Chinese silk traders were looking for additional markets in which to grow silk worms, instead of China. Thailand was one of the countries that could grow the worms well and had a good climate for raising silk worms. Thailand began to be involved in the silk industry and silk was being traded for other valuable local commodities by the Europeans. In the beginning, silk was an expensive import product in Thailand prior to being able to be produced within the country. Soon after, as stated by Teerapat Oankitanun (2005) along with rice, it became one of the most sought after commodities being manufactured in Thailand because of its unique weaving style and shiny features.

Thompson (1976) adds that the silk that Thailand imported from China and Japan was quite expensive and was considered to be a luxurious commodity used by the minority of the population, particularly the wealthy and the nobility. When silk was able to be produced with local labor and technology, it became more financially accessible for local people. And when the skill and knowledge of producing silk developed further, Thailand was able to export silk and generate more income for its people.

According to Viboon Leesuan (1987), since ancient times, silk has been a part of Thai culture and civilization. The local villages that produced silk developed their own weaving techniques and dyeing processes. They also acquired their own distinct weaving techniques which they passed down from one generation to the next. This made silk patterns of different regions distinct from the others. In the silk cottage industry, families normally assigned family members different tasks in the silk producing process. Mothers and daughters may weave the silk while father and son dye the silk. Thus, the silk industry was closely related to the family structure in the local silk making villages.

Viboon Leesuan (1987) also stated that in addition to function and utility, silk materials together with costume designs and the use of certain colors also indicated the social status of the wearers. Silk has always been a valuable commodity that many people can not afford, especially the common people. In the ancient times monarchs

sent silk fabrics as official gifts or gave them as rewards to their subjects. Sometimes, Ayutthaya in (B.E 1408) silk was given instead of salaries to aristocrats for them to make garments with.

Viboon Leesuwon (1987) adds that the common people during the Ayutthaya period dressed very casually. They wore two pieces of cloth, one on the top and the other for the lower part of the body, which is called Chongkraben. Women wore Chongkraben and a halter top called Sabai, while men wore only Chongkraben and nothing on the upper part of the body. Some men might hang a piece of long narrow cloth called Pha Khao Ma around their neck. Working-class people may not have been able to afford silk for their wardrobe. However, the aristocrats or the ruling classes could. Thus, the material for clothing marked the differences in the clothes worn by the ruling classes and the common people in ancient times. However, during the period of great reform of King Rama IV (B.E. 1851-2303) cloth and costume began to change dramatically because of the influence of the western culture. Even though western style clothing became more common in everyday life, silk was still worn at special and important occasions, by noblemen and high-ranking officials still wore Thai-style outfits. And silk fabrics remained a high-value material for those who could afford it.

Viboon Leesuwon (1987) adds that for the common people, folk textiles were produced in many parts of the country. There are many kinds of textiles, such as plain colors, and special delicate designs that require special knowledge and weaving skills such as *mat-mi*, *khit*, and *chok*. Thai folk-textile weaving, both at cottage industry level and small industry scales are found mostly in the North and the Northeast. In the South and the Central region folk textiles were produced only by the village households. There is a strong tendency that Thai silk industry is closely related to the cultures and civilization in those local silk villages. Since the silk weavers often designed their silk patterns and they are closely related to the history background and cultures of their villages, silk served as the evidence of their history and art forms.

According to Songsak Prangwatthanakun (1993) traditionally Thai people were farmers. They cultivated rice to earn a living. Their primary income came from harvesting rice once a year. Because the lifestyle of Thai men and women were different, Thai men went to the field to cultivate and harvest rice, while Thai women

did work at home. Therefore, in rural Thai women's lifestyle, cottage-industry silk became an important tradition. During the weaving, women shared experiences and culture with the next generation. Moreover, Songsak Prangwatthanakun also stated that cottage-Industry silk wearing was important for them to pass down tradition and regional culture. Each family unit developed its own distinctive designs.

Traditionally, each member of the community wove silk and used locally cultivated silk for creating goods that were used in their own homes. According to Songsak Prangwatthanakun (1993), a cottage-industry later developed, so that the groups would have surplus goods which were then sold and traded. As part of this process, local communities worked cooperatively, shared information and increased the value of silk in terms of patterns and designs; they gradually became more complex, intricate, mature techniques of weaving and dying color. In the context of prototype industrialization, the cottage industry emerged as a measure to gain additional income by utilizing the underemployed labor in rural areas.

While the local communities were weaving silk for home use, on the other hand silk was also becoming an art form practiced by Royal artisans for use in palaces. Silk and fine textiles had always held an important place in the Thai royal courts. Royal silk is very special in the sense that it represents Thai history in terms of dress and decor. As illustrated by Thidarat Wanponethong (2005) silk was a valuable and luxurious material that was crafted into elaborate gowns and robes. The delicate weaving, embroidery, sewing and stitching became an art form that required long term knowledge, unique skill and deep interpretation. Magnificent brocaded silk costumes were a sign of wealth, power and nobility. They enriched ceremonial occasions and served as a valuable medium of exchange or gifts to a respectable people.

2.3 The making of Thai silk

According to Sharples (1994) records indicate that during the Sukhothai period (around A.D 1250-1438) and Ayutthaya period (A.D 1350-1767), exotic silks, brocades and satins were imported from China, Persia, and India to make elaborate court costumes for the nobility. Sharples also stated that aristocratic ladies wore a

court *pha sin*, a simple garment one meter long, gathered and folded at the waistline and secured with a belt. This was combined with a *sabai*, a long piece of plain, pleated or pattern silk about 30 centimeters wide that was worn above the waist, draped across the chest, falling casually over the left shoulder. Thus, the growing popularity of Thai silk among the nobility inspired the beginning of Thai silk made within communities.

According to Collier (2002) with silk being produced within the country, it has allowed Thai silk to develop its own characteristics. Soon after that, Thai silk developed its own unique characteristics and patterns which distinguished it from Chinese and Japanese silks. Unique patterns, such as “twisted coin” or “hump and bump” (๖๓,๖๓) of silk was a symbolic of Thai silk and became recognized by Thai people and foreigners.

Prior to the Second World War, the Thai silk industry was in crisis. It had steadily declined because silkworms became infected by disease, which had spread to almost everywhere in Thailand and caused great damage to the Thai silk industry. According to Varaporn Boonsutta (1979) there was a slowdown in silk production, and a large number of silk companies and traditional weaving families abandoned the business. Therefore, several Thai silk companies’ owners were forced to shut down. Several companies closed permanently. Thus, the Thai silk industry was in the fall down.

From then until the end of the Second World War, silk production was diminishing and came to nearly a dead stop in Thailand. However, in certain areas such as the Muslim Ban Krua community in Bangkok and local villages in Northeastern Thailand kept the legacy alive. The knowledge and skills of silk making silk being passed down from generation to generation. The survival of the Ban Krua silk weaving community was the turning point of the development of Thai silk industry.

Indorf (1964) says that Jim Thompson, an American former soldier and architect, came across the weaving community of Ban Krua which was a Muslim community, that began weaving Thai silk for Thompson beginning around the time he first met them. He was very impressed with Thai silk and decided to build a business based on

it. He bought Thai silk from the Ban Krua community and introduced Thai silk to the United States by offering it to his friends and associates.

The first reaction in America was so positive that Jim Thompson used his family's wealth and connections to create a demand for Thai silk. In other words, his family, relatives and close friends were his first customers. They helped expand the reputation of Thai silk to people around them. Thus, this slowly created the international demand for Thai silk and allowed Thai weaving families an opportunity to continue their silk weaving and be able to make a decent living. As a result, Thai silk industry became prosperous. It has been accepted that what Jim Thompson did to Thai silk *was the turning point* –it has changed the status of Thai silk from a local to an international product.

2.4. Silk weaving techniques

According to Viboon Leesuwon (1987) silk weaving techniques in Thailand were passed down from one generation to the next and have changed very little over time. In highly conservative village society, designs tended to remain static, with only insignificant variations appearing with each new generation of weavers. Another factor that caused the slow development of local Thai silk was the use of natural dyeing processes, which limited the range of possible colors, thus encouraging repetition.

The author emphasizes the uniqueness of Thai silk and its important role in Thai culture. Silk was also very important to the foundation of the household economy. Nevertheless, the lack of technological development and innovation proved to be a great obstacle to improvements in the Thai silk industry.

In a study conducted by Veerasuk Domkitdacha and Eiichi Kawai (1993) Mori silk and Tusser silk, which were different types of silk, were investigated. Mori silk is a Japanese silk and Tusser silk is a tan silk from India. The authors focused on neutral and acidic dyeing processes. The chemical compositions of the silks were also investigated. They found that each had similar chemical structures and hence concluded that they should have compatible physical properties and dye-ability.

Petchnoi Vetprasert (1982) investigated the making of Thai silk in terms of the economy, looking closely at profitability. Producers have to be careful budgeting for production silk before they invest. The various factors contributing to the differences in the cost of cocoon production are wages, the amount of labour used, number of rearing cycles, number of silkworms reared in each cycle and the quantity of cocoons produced. Petchnoi Vetprasert strongly suggests that these factors need to be carefully analyzed.

Another study by Piyachart Sangarun (1994) focuses on the famous textiles of the past such as *Toryok Silk and Chinese silk*, the technique of weaving Thai textile such as *mat-mi, chok, and khit* and traditional Thai textiles in the North, Central, Northeast, Southern regions of Thailand. This book has a very clear explanation and illustration of each pattern of Thai silk, the background information, and highlights its delicacy and its beauty. It provides clear information about the differences and uniqueness of each of these silk patterns.

The book also studies and compares the cost of cocoon production and the mean selling price of cocoons as classified by the cocoon shell's percentage from selected factories. It suggests that silk farmers have to reduce their production costs by improving the efficiency of their labour, by increasing the rearing cycles and increasing the number of silkworms reared in each cycle, as well as trying to increase productivity.

Thidarat Wanponethong (2005) discusses the origins and diffusion of Isan wisdom in terms of wearing different silk patterns for various activities. She analyzes and divides diffusion of Isan wisdom and wearing silk into three categories. First, she focuses on the origin of making silk yarn in the Northeast part of Thailand, especially in Khon Kaen province. She found that the origins of the silk route in Khon Kaen province were varied, but only one source could prove clearly that silk traveled through the area. This area was along the same route as migrants who were traveling from Champasak in Lao via Ubon Ratchathani, Roi Et, and later to Ban Pai and Chonabot district in Khon Kaen Province. Second, she found that the factors that related to silk diffusion are internal and external factors. Internal factors stem from the migration of people. Another one is external factors, which comprised of socio-economic changes

such as better communication facilities, and arts and craft development projects. And third, the importance of wearing silk for various occasions can be said to be an imperative function for Isan people's way of life, from birth to death. For social activities such as weddings and religious rituals, the proper wearing of silk could indicate the social status and could increase their status so that it is higher. This book also emphasizes the importance of Thai silk as part of Thai culture.

2.5. Patterns of Thai silk

Over the past ten years, the Fine Arts Department has published numerous books about Thai silk patterns. These books illustrate popular designs from each province and serve as an excellent geographical reference manual. For example, the patterns of Thai silk that come from Chiang Mai, Chiang Rai, Lampang, Lamphun, Mae Hong Son, Nan, Phayao, Phrae, and Uttaradit provinces are different. Each province has its own silk characteristics and way of making Thai silk. The patterns are based on local people's way of life, cultures and traditions. Moreover, the effect of the geographical environment, the social structures, and important ceremonies are also vital factors for the development of these silk patterns. Thus, the unique characteristics of Thai silk relate to regional traditions and social-community structures.

According to Songpan Wanmart (1991), the Isan patterns correlate with Isan's history, traditions, social ceremonies, and way of life. Isan textiles have what has been termed "Isan Style". *Kit and Mi* patterns have become very famous and are attractive to many customers. *Kit and Mi* silk have become identifiable as having come from Isan Provinces.

The Office of the National Culture Commission (1994) provides a fine description of all of the characteristics of textile patterns in Thailand, each textile having its own unique style, appearance, pattern and design. It also describes the customer's preferences for texture and describes the suitable occasions at which to wear each textile. Moreover, it emphasizes the knowledge and the evolution of the textile and how it has been protected and inherited by the next generation, which has historically continued to developed Thai silk patterns and designs.

Chanida Tungthavornsirikul (1995) focuses on Lao Vien Tiane textiles in Mubaan Thung Na in Uthai Thani province. The purpose is to describe it as a symbol of the Lao Vien Tiane society and culture. This paper emphasizes the cultural structure and meanings as they relate to the textile designs, which are specified by the society. The designs are created automatically by the people in that society and clarify the roles and qualifications of individuals and people in the group. This study also found that the *naga* design is a symbol of the rich natural resources, earth, water and mountains of the Lao Vien Tiane society.

Piyaporn Kunchana's book (2003) is about ancient textiles, traditional textiles and textiles collected by celebrities. It suggests that local support for the local buyers is significant in strengthening the Thai silk industry.

The Foundation for the Promotion of Supplementary Occupations and Related Techniques (SUPPORT) of Her Majesty Queen Sirikit of Thailand (1995) focuses on one of the most popular silk patterns in Thailand, which is *mat-mi*¹ silk. It is characterized by unique iridescent colours, original designs and fuzzy-edged patterns. Traditional *mat-mi* colours are based on hues of black, red, brown, and yellow, although each region possesses its own characteristics. Because *mat-mi* weaving involves more human craftsmanship than machine work, the creation of *mat-mi* silk is considered to be a form of art rather than a commodity. A *mat-mi* design is created by a complex dyeing system. The designer must envisage the colours of the fabric and the pattern required and then work with this image in mind while tying and dyeing the yarn.

2.6. Thai Silk Marketing

According to statistics published by the Department of Export Promotion, from 1964 to 1990, the potential for Thai silk exports improved over time with increasing customer demand. Therefore, Thai silk might qualify because it has both beautiful

¹ In the book "The Foundation for the Promotion of Supplementary Occupations and Related Techniques (SUPPORT) of Her Majesty Queen Sirikit of Thailand" (1995): it is written as *mudmee*.

patterns and designs and is of good quality, making it one of the most highly demanded silks in the world market.

A book published by the Department Of Export Promotion (1991) emphasizes the development policy of Thai textiles. It deals with the production, marketing, government policies and the problems with the Thai textile industry. Moreover, this book considers the way the Thai government realized and tried to develop Thai textiles to make them more interesting and of better quality than those in other countries. Lastly, it suggests that exportation is very important for Thai textile as it relates to the industry's future. Therefore, good marketing is also very important.

The article called "Silk Review 1995: A survey of the international trends in production and trade" published by the International Trade Centre UNCTAD/GATT Geneva (1995) deals with production and trade of silk, silk yarn, silk fabrics, silk clothing and accessories. It gives an overview of world data, significant countries, product trends, consumption, generic promotion of silk, analyses of world trade trends, the position of China, demand in silk-producing countries, comments and data on production, trade and demand trends in France, Germany, Italy, Finland, Switzerland, the United Kingdom, Japan, Brazil, China, Hong Kong, India, the Republic of Korea, Thailand, and Viet Nam.

Teerapat Oankitanun (2005) suggested that the problems of exporting silk fabric in Thailand can be categorized into these aspects: (1) the operating problems of silk fabric exporters in different areas, such as quality control for exports, marketing and the external environment problems; (2) the exporter's background variables (such as exporting firm pattern, established time, and export quantity of silk fabric) with the difference of operating problems they may have experienced.

The review of the previous studies on Thai silk shows that they cover the issues of background of silk production in Thailand, techniques for making silk, patterns of silk, and silk marketing. No research has been conducted specifically on how Thai silk is internationalized or how it has been developed to become an internationalized product. As a result, there still remains a void in this area of knowledge about Thai silk. Therefore, I intend to fill the gap by investigating the internationalization of Thai silk.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

The purpose of this thesis is to study how Thai silk has become internationalized. Field research was conducted by observing Thai silk making process and interviewing a number of Thai silk producers and consumers.

The methodology of this thesis followed four steps: (i) documentary research (ii) criteria for selecting data sources, (iii) data collection, and (iv) data analysis

3.1 Documentary Research

Documentary research was conducted in order to get information regarding the past and present of Thai silk production. This information is used for finding out how Thai silk has turned from a traditional to national product. The documents which have been studied in this study are from various sources both from private and public sectors.

Private documentary sources are books and research works, both in Thai and English to gather facts and information from different perspectives. Previous studies were reviewed interesting issues about the internationalization of Thai silk. Public sources were also used, for example, statistics and records about the exporting of Thai silk from various government agencies such as the Ministry of Commerce and Department of Export.

3.2 Criteria for selecting Data Sources

3.2.1 Sampling groups and Sampling techniques

The target groups from which I collected data are: foreign customers of Thai silk and local producers of Thai silk.

Foreign customers of Thai silk were sampled by convenience techniques from those in several different locations such as Silom, Sathorn, Siam and Siam Paragon shopping center, and residential areas such as Thonglor and Ekamai. The total number of sampled foreigners is five hundred. In order to produce the most reliable findings, I focused only on those people who were willing to answer the questionnaires.

The total number of foreign customers who responded was 500. There were 321 females and 179 males or 64.2 percent and 35.8 percent, respectively. (See table A.1.1 in Appendix A)

In terms of age, the largest age groups surveyed were people between the ages of 45 and 54. They accounted for 36.8 percent of the respondents. The second largest group was 35-44 year olds, who accounted for 36.4 percent of the respondents. The third group was 25-34 years old, accounting for 19.4 percent. The fourth largest group was people who are 55 years old and older. They accounted for 5 percent of all of the respondents. The smallest number was 15-24 years old, and they accounted for 2.4 percent. (See table A.1.2 in Appendix A)

Regarding marital status, the majority of the survey respondents were married (41.8 percent). The second largest group was single people (35.4 percent). The third in the rank was separated people (12.8 percent). The smallest group was made up of widows (10 percent). (See table A.1.3 in Appendix A)

The participants were asked to indicate what region of the world they came from. The largest group came from East Asia, and they accounted for 23 percent, followed by South Americans (12.4 percent) and Australians (12 percent). The number of respondents who were from Africa was 12 percent, America 11.8 percent, Europe 9.8 percent, New Zealand 9.6 percent, and the Middle East 9.0 percent. (See table A.1.4 in Appendix A)

Regarding gender and region, the statistics revealed that out of the 500 respondents, 115 people were from East Asia, with (78 percent) female and (37 percent) male. From Australia, there were 43 percent female and 19 percent male. While from South America, there were 46 percent female and 16 male respectively.

From Africa, the respondents were 36 percent female and 24 percent male. America had 30 percent female and 29 percent male. The total number of European respondents was 35 percent female and 14 percent male. New Zealand had 26 percent female and 22 percent male. From the Middle East there were 27 percent female and 18 percent male. (See table A.1.5 in Appendix A)

The survey asked the respondents what their education level was and the findings showed that 52.4 percent of the people have a Bachelors degree, 28.2 percent of them held a Bachelor's degree, and 19.4 had education lower than a bachelor's degree. (See table A.1.6 in Appendix A)

The target population of the local producers of Thai silk were Thai silk business companies. Five Thai silk business export companies were purposely selected as representatives. They were Jim Thompson Thai silk Company, Anita Thai silk Company, LP Thai silk, Jartar, Phantip Thai silk, Shinawatra Thai silk. The reasons why I selected these five companies are: firstly because of their reputation among the foreign buyers, secondly because their shops are located in the center of the city and business area which allow easy access to potential buyers, and lastly because they have acquired experience of dealing with Thai silk industry in the international market. Thus these target companies must be helpful in the matter of this regard.

3.3 Data Collection

Data were collected by using questionnaires and interviews.

3.3.1 Questionnaires

The questionnaires were designed to measure and analyze the preferred taste of designs of Thai silk products. The questions consist of three parts as follows:

- (1) General questions asking for personal information, such as gender, age, education, occupation, and monthly income.

- (2) Questions on their opinions of foreign customers about “Internationalization of Thai silk”, for example their knowledge of Thai silk, what makes them satisfied with Thai silk, what to improve about the patterns and designs to gain more satisfaction, and their expectation to have new Thai silk products and quality.
- (3) Questions on Thai silk products, designs and patterns, and popularity, pictures of different patterns of Thai silk had been shown to the samples for better illustration. The picture of the traditional and modern designs of Thai silk was also included in order to better examine which pattern is more popular and the reason why it is more popular among the foreign buyers. This part is composed of closed-end question Likert 5 rating scaled was used. These scores are rated in five levels as follows:

Strongly Agree	5 points
Agree	4 points
Neutral	3 points
Disagree	2 points
Strongly Disagree	1 point

The questionnaire is composed of three parts, as mentioned above. It is shown in the following.

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Questionnaire

This questionnaire is conducted in order to gather information about “Internationalization of Thai silk”. Therefore, your honest answer and opinions will be highly appreciated. The gathered information will be used only for academic purposes.

Part 1: Personal Information

Please mark x into () of the most suitable answer

1. Gender

- Male Female

2. Age

- 15-24 year 25-34 year
 35-44 year 45-54 year
 55 years and above

3. Status

- Single Married
 Widow Separated

4. Education level

- Lower than Bachelor Degree Bachelor Degree
 Higher than Bachelor Degree Others

5. Occupation

- Student Government Official
 Private Employee Own Business
 Others

6. Income

 Lower than 10,000 10,001-20,000 baht 20,000 -30,000 baht 30,000 baht and above**Part 2:** Your Opinion on “Internationalization of Thai silk”.**Please mark x** to your most appropriate answer

1. Have you ever heard of Thai silk?

a) Yes

b) No

Why?.....

2. Do you recognize the uniqueness of Thai silk?

a) Yes

b) No

Why?.....

3. Do you like Thai silk product?

a) Yes

b) No

Why?.....

4. Have you ever purchased or own the Thai silk?

a) Yes

b) No

Why?.....

5. Have your friends or family members own Thai silk products?

a) Yes

b) No

Why?.....

6. Can you recognize the difference of silk between Thai silk and the other silk products such as Chinese and India silk ?

a) Yes

b) No

Why?.....

Your Opinion on “Internationalization of Thai silk”: Patterns and designs

“You can answer more than one choice”

7. What is your favorite pattern of Thai silk?

- a) Plain
- b) Traditional design
 - () Floral weaving
 - () Animal weaving
- c) Contemporary design (Tradition and western)
 - () Westernize
 - () Fusion
- d) Modern design
 - () Graphic
 - () Architectural

Why?.....

8. What is your favorite brand name of Thai silk?

- a) Jim Thompson
- b) Anita Thai silk
- c) Shinawatre Thai silk
- d) Queen Sirikit’s SUPPORT Foundation

Why?.....

9. What kind of Thai silk furniture do you own?

- a) Sofa
- b) Bed sheet
- c) Curtain
- d) None

Why?.....

10 What do you like about Thai silk products?

- a) Beautiful shiny textures
- b) Varieties of designs and patterns
- c) Luxurious products
- d) Fire resistance
- e) Supporting Thai economy

Why?.....

Part 3: Your opinion on “Internationalization of Thai silk”: Thai silk products, designs and patterns, and popularity.

Please mark x to your most appropriate answer

1. Do you think Thai silk expensive?

- 5)Strongly Agree 4)Agree
3)Neutral 2)Disagree
1)Strongly Disagree

2. Do you think Thai silk has a good quality?

- 5)Strongly Agree 4)Agree
3)Neutral 2)Disagree
1)Strongly Disagree

3. Do you think Thai silk is the priority product of Thailand?

- 5)Strongly Agree 4)Agree
3)Neutral 2)Disagree
1)Strongly Disagree

4. Do you think Thai silk can compete with other silk in the world market in term of price and quality?

- 5)Strongly Agree 4)Agree
3)Neutral 2)Disagree
1)Strongly Disagree

5. Do you think Thai silk can represent Thailand?

- 5)Strongly Agree 4)Agree
3)Neutral 2)Disagree
1)Strongly Disagree

6. Do you think designs and patterns are unique from the other countries?

- 5)Strongly Agree 4)Agree
3)Neutral 2)Disagree
1)Strongly Disagree

7. Do you think Thai silk can represent Thai culture?

- 5)Strongly Agree 4)Agree
3)Neutral 2)Disagree

1)Strongly Disagree

8. Do you think Thai silk has beautiful variety of patterns and color to suit for the foreigners' taste?

5)Strongly Agree 4)Agree

3)Neutral 2)Disagree

1)Strongly Disagree

9. Do you think Thai silk designs and patterns can adapt well for foreigners' preferences?

5)Strongly Agree 4)Agree

3)Neutral 2)Disagree

1)Strongly Disagree

10. Do you Thai silk is known as a good home furnishing and decorative fabric for the foreigners?

5)Strongly Agree 4)Agree

3)Neutral 2)Disagree

1)Strongly Disagree

11. Do you think Thai silk shop is popular among the foreigners?

5)Strongly Agree 4)Agree

3)Neutral 2)Disagree

1)Strongly Disagree

12. Do you think Thai silk can be rank of the world market

5)Strongly Agree 4)Agree

3)Neutral 2)Disagree

1)Strongly Disagree

13. Do you think Jim Thompson Thai silk company is popular among foreigners?

5)Strongly Agree 4)Agree

3)Neutral 2)Disagree

1)Strongly Disagree

3.3.2 Interviews

In-depth interviews were conducted using open-ended questions. The respondents were 1) Mr. Tun Keyuraphan, the Owner of PHANTIP THAI SILK, 2) Miss Apipavadee Putipanpong, the Manager of ANITA THAI SILK, 3) Mr. Juckapong Panomupattum, the Owner of LP THAI SILK, 4) Mr. Hongsa Vongrach, the Marketing Director of JAGTAR, 5) Lady Korbkul Ubondetchpracharuk, the Director of Queen Sirikit's SUPPORT Foundation. They were all asked open-ended questions. The questions concerned foreigners' preferences, how their companies sell Thai silk products, how long they have been in the Thai silk business, how they deal with foreign customers, whether they export Thai silk or not, the most popular products that attract foreign customers, the degree of government involvement in their organizations and government support of their business. The questions provided extensive, descriptive data and further illuminated information gathered from other sources.

A tape recorder was used to record each of the interviews in order to prevent relying on faulty memory or misguided information. Information collected from interviews was carefully transcribed for research. The following are the interview questions.

Interview Questions

Topic: Internationalization of Thai silk

Thai silk shop name:.....

Date of interview:

Name of interviewee:.....

General information

1. Are most of your customers walk-in or oversea exporters?
2. Are most of your customers Thai or foreigners?

3. Where do most of the customers come from?

4. What are some of the good and bad things about foreign customers?

Thai silk products: Popularity

5. What kind of products do you sell?

6. Which kind of product is the most popular for the Thai and foreign customers and why do they like it?

Patterns and designs

7. Which one of Thai silk patterns and designs is suitable for customers: Thai tradition, Contemporary (mixture of tradition and Western), or the Modern designs?

8. Which patterns do they like the most, and why?

9. Do you have your own Thai silk business?

10. Do you have your own factory? , Which province is it located?

11. If not, who supplies you the materials?

Opinion on Thai silk as an internationalized product

12. Do you think Thai silk has a reasonable price? What is the standard for pricing?

13. Do you think why do foreign customers like Thai silk products?

14. In your point of view, do you think Thai silk should adapt or change patterns and designs for the exportation and why?

15. In your point of view, what are characteristics of Thai silk?

16. In your point of view, what are the main factors that make Thai silk an internationalized product?

17. In your own opinion, should Thai silk change patterns and designs in order to boost up the Thai silk export.

18. In your own opinion, what is the unique characteristic of Thai silk?

19. In your own opinion, what is the main factor that can help boost up the Thai silk export?

20. Do you think Thai silk can be famous in the world market?
21. In your opinion, can Thai silk be the top of the world silk market?
22. Do you think Thai silk is famous in the world market now?
23. Do you think Thai government provided great support for Thai silk industry?
24. In your own opinion, who or what Thai silk company has played the important role of helping and supporting Thai silk industry to the world market?
25. In your own opinion, can Thai silk represent Thai?
26. What is your other suggestion about Thai silk industry?

Please recommend other Thai silk shops or companies which can be of great help for this thesis?

3.4 Data Analysis

The data analysis was carried out as with the following procedures.

3.4.1 In order to ensure a variety in the study's samples backgrounds, the questions in part one of the questionnaires were designed to analyze the variety of sample backgrounds. The data from the returned questionnaires of five-hundred foreigners was analyzed. Descriptive statistics, such as: mean, frequency of scores and standard deviation is used in the analysis of their personal information such as gender, age, status, region, education level, occupation, and income. They were then categorized according to gender, age, status, region, education level, occupation, and income. (See Appendix 1)

3.4.2 In order to find out the extent to which Thai silk is internationalized, the questions in part two of the questionnaires were analyzed to measure the popularity, the satisfaction and the prestige of Thai silk among foreign buyers. The results are shown in the pie chart to visually illustrate the proportion between yes and no answers. The results were also analyzed by using frequency and percentage. (See Appendix 2)

3.4.3 The data from the questionnaires were analyzed to determine the tastes and preferences for Thai silk among foreigners. First of all, the samples were categorized according to nationalities in order to better examine the different preferences for Thai silk among people of different nationalities. In analyzing the data of each nationality for each question, descriptive statistics including mean and frequencies was used. (See Appendix 3)

To analyze the different preferences for Thai silk patterns among different nationalities, pictures of different patterns were shown to the sample group in order to avoid any misunderstandings. The pictures of traditional and modern patterns of Thai silk were also included in order to analyze which is most popular. The results were determined by using means, and frequency, and are shown in the tables included within.

3.4.4 To acquire more in-depth information about the Thai silk industry, the interviewees responses were analyzed qualitatively. The data analysis followed the hypothesis of this thesis.

In order to best extract in-depth information about the Thai silk industry, interviewees were given an opportunity to answer the questions and were given an unlimited amount of time to do so, without interruption. During the interviews, none of the subjects revealed confidential information or industry secrets.

It is generally accepted that the arrival of Jim Thompson was the initial turning point in the Thai silk industry, causing it to catapult to the international level. Thus in the interview, questions were asked of each interviewee about whether Jim Thompson was the person they believe initially brought Thai silk to the international level.

3.4.5 Statistics from the government agencies were collected in order to analyze the export of Thai silk to the international markets. According to the hypothesis of this thesis, Thai silk marketing has been internationalized to the extent that Thai silk is exported to many countries around the world. The statistics provided by government agencies were a great source for the analysis of this matter.

The purpose of interviewing silk shop owners was to find out about their export markets and to see to which countries they exported their silk to most frequently and who their largest customers are.

3.4.6 This study also aims to find out what factors have made Thai silk develop to the level of an internationalized product. The data analysis was categorized according to the main hypothesis of this thesis. They are: 1) the support from important organizations, e.g. Queen Sirikit's SUPPORT Foundation; 2) the variety of the designs of Thai silk; and 3) the adaptation of the designs to suit foreigners' taste and preference. Initial research revealed additional factors such as economic and potential influences, which are explored further.

3.4.7 After having obtained the data as described above, I explained and analyzed the results and looked at what factors contributed to the internationalization of Thai silk by combining the data from the statistical data, questionnaires and interviews to support facts and reach a conclusion.

CHAPTER IV

INTERNATIONALIZATION OF THAI SILK MARKETING

This chapter presents the result of an analysis of the extent to which Thai silk marketing is internationalized. The analysis is based on interviews of five Thai silk shop owners dealing with the industry and business of Thai silk. They were Jim Thompson Thai Silk Company, Anita Thai Silk Company, Phantip Thai silk, Shinawatra Thai Silk, and Jagtar Thai silk. The interview was designed to study how Thai silk started to become internationalized and to what extent Thai silk became known to the international market.

Questionnaires were also used in data collection. They were distributed to five hundred foreign customers of Thai silk in seven areas: Silom, Sathorn, Siam and Paragon shopping center, Kaosan road, and residential areas such as Thong Lor and Ekkamai. The purposes of the questionnaires were to measure and study the situation, progress, the preferred taste of silk patterns and designs of Thai silk products.

In this chapter, the extent to which Thai silk is internationalized are analyzed in terms of the following points: (i) the countries that imported Thai silk, (ii) The contribution of exporting Thai silk to the national increase (iii) The area in which Thai silk is used internationally and (iv) International impression of Thai Silk.

4.1 The Countries That Imported Thai Silk

Thai silk is internationalized because there are regular customers of Thai silk around the world. Based on the analysis of the interviews of Miss Rosarin and Apipavadee Puthipannapong, the owner of Anita silk Company, it is found that the main customers of Thai silk are from America, Japan, Western Europe, and Middle East such as United Arab Emirates and Saudi Arabia. The other regular foreign customers are from strong economic countries, such as Singapore, Malaysia, New Zealand, Australia, South Korea. Countries in Middle East are newly important emerging markets because customers from these countries have high purchasing power and they

do not care how much they pay as long as they get products of top quality. In terms of silk, Thai silk is listed as the top quality as Davis, (2007) said “if you are serious about silk shopping, nowhere beats Thailand. Thai silk may be rougher in texture and heavier than silk made in China and India, but its quality is second to none, thanks to the country having the best soil in which to cultivate mulberry bushes (the leaves of which make up a silk worm’s diet) and because the producers maximize the length of time a cocoon is boiled.” From this passage we can assume that Thai silk is considered to be one of the most wanted souvenirs among foreigners.

The following is a table showing numbers of countries that imported Thai silk for clothing and textile;

Table 4.1: The buyers of silk from Thailand

Countries that buy silk from Thailand	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006 Jan-Dec	Expansion ratio (percentages)				Proportion (percentages)				
						2003	2004	2005	2006	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006
1. U.S.A	4.07	4.11	7.21	6.70	5.71	1.01	75.33	-7.01	-14.84	40.37	32.33	44.62	42.38	32.53
2. France	0.79	0.50	2.95	3.02	2.73	-96.50	490.15	2.58	-9.89	7.80	3.93	18.25	19.21	15.33
3. Italy	1.51	1.45	1.57	1.04	2.00	-3.83	8.10	-33.51	95.01	14.97	11.42	9.71	6.63	11.42
4. Saudi Arabia	0.04	0.11	0.10	0.18	0.84	145.41	-16.7	84.55	377.80	0.46	0.89	0.59	1.12	4.79
5. Germany	0.08	0.16	0.13	0.12	0.83	106.27	-17.80	-6.30	583.41	0.71	1.24	0.80	0.77	4.74
6. Japan	0.57	0.50	0.53	0.56	0.80	-11.86	6.46	4.71	43.30	56.30	3.94	3.30	3.54	4.56
7. Norway	0.02	0.02	0.01	0.43	0.51	-11.40	-8.44	2895.40	18.93	0.18	0.12	0.09	2.74	2.92
8. United Arab Emirates	0.04	0.10	0.11	0.19	0.45	135.20	5.38	72.29	144.08	0.43	0.80	0.67	1.18	2.58
9. United Kingdom	0.23	0.22	0.32	0.64	0.43	-5.25	49.18	99.32	-32.80	2.26	1.70	1.99	4.07	2.46
10. Philippines	0.02	0.08	0.21	0.56	0.37	293.83	180.62	167.91	-34.84	0.20	0.63	1.30	3.38	2.09
11. HongKong	0.05	0.05	0.07	0.05	0.24	1.11	30.90	-23.82	376.28	0.49	0.39	0.41	0.32	1.36
12. Australia	0.14	0.13	0.35	0.17	0.16	-7.89	176.29	-30.35	-7.16	1.35	0.99	2.15	1.09	0.91
13. Kenya	0.00	0.00	0.20	0.20	0.16	-	209.85	-57	-19.33	0.00	0.00	1.23	1.26	0.91
14. Brunei	0.01	0.04	0.12	0.10	0.15	3.28	164.93	-14.71	52.14	0.10	0.35	0.72	0.63	0.87
15. Spain	0.06	0.08	0.06	0.04	0.04	30.62	-32.24	-22.51	218.05	0.64	0.67	0.35	0.28	0.80
16. Greece	0.03	0.03	0.01	0.06	0.13	-6.82	-61.79	455.92	125.96	0.30	0.22	0.07	0.37	0.76
17. Singapore	0.30	1.22	0.60	0.13	0.13	310.76	-31.30	-78.47	2.52	2.96	9.63	3.69	0.82	0.75
18. Pakistan	0.00	0.01	0.01	0.01	0.12	474.57	-39.50	88.48	984.68	0.02	0.07	0.04	0.07	0.66
19. Belgium	0.58	2.67	0.40	0.08	0.11	338.75	224.34	128.38	47.18	0.13	0.07	0.18	0.43	0.57
20. Kuwait	0.01	0.01	0.03	0.07	0.10	-31.05	224.34	128.38	47.18	0.13	0.07	0.18	0.43	0.57
21. Sweden	0.06	0.05	0.01	0.02	0.09	-8.18	-83.08	83.14	472.48	0.57	0.42	0.06	0.10	0.53
22. South Africa	0.07	0.06	0.06	0.12	0.09	-9.79	-1.92	91.07	-26.08	0.68	0.49	0.38	0.74	0.49
23. Netherlan	0.04	0.04	0.04	0.09	0.09	-21.52	-2.16	100.94	-2.19	0.36	0.35	0.27	0.55	0.49
24. Fiji	0.05	0.04	0.11	0.11	0.07	-18.68	163.01	-61	-33.27	0.52	0.34	0.70	0.71	0.41
25. Congo	0.01	0.00	0.00	0.03	0.03	0.07	-88.84	-100	-	0.08	0.01	0.00	0.19	0.37
26. Tanzania	0.11	0.03	0.01	0.03	0.06	-87.52	-77.09	305.96	84.34	1.06	0.27	0.05	0.20	0.34
27. Mexico	0.16	0.02	0.05	0.11	0.05	-88.30	170.19	111.40	-53.84	1.16	0.15	0.32	0.69	0.29
28. Taiwan	0.02	0.03	0.04	0.02	0.05	12.77	60.46	-53.39	143.76	0.24	0.21	0.27	0.13	0.280.28
29. Maldivre	0.02	0.02	0.03	0.02	0.04	-2.25	74.37	-24.19	79.84	0.19	0.15	0.20	0.15	0.25
30. Canada	0.15	0.04	0.08	0.15	0.04	-72.03	89.09	97.48	-73.62	1.47	0.33	0.48	0.98	0.23
Total 30 Countries	9.24	11.84	15.40	15.06	16.77	28.17	30.13	-2.24	11.34	91.59	93.08	95.33	95.63	95.52
Other Countries	0.85	0.88	0.75	0.69	0.79	3.77	-14.31	-8.68	14.12	8.41	6.92	4.67	4.37	4.48
Total Value	10.08	12.72	16.16	15.75	17.55	26.11	27.05	-2.54	11.47	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00

Source: Tech center information technology and communications. Office of Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Commerce. The cooperation of the Customs Department

According to table 4.1, on the average growth in export sales from 2003-2006 was 31.7 percent. This indicates that the silk industry is continuing to grow. If suppliers can continue to manufacture Thai silk, there is market demand throughout the world. In 2002, Thailand exported 10.8 tons of silk, and in 2006 that number grew to 17.55 percent.

This table indicates that there are many buyers of Thai silk from all over the world. The largest buyer from 2003 to 2006 was America. It shows that Thai silk is highly valued by customers around the world who are willing to pay the price. The more expensive products we sell, the more value of Thai silk they demanded from Thailand. According to Miss Rosarin and Miss Apipavadee Puthipannapong, it is found that their main concerns are about the quality, the uniqueness of Thai silk, which has the characteristic of luxurious products. They stated that, because of the characteristic of luxury products, currently the regular customers of Thai silk are from many of highly successful and respectable professions such as ambassadors, international officials, and chief executive officers (CEO).

Moreover, based on the data from the Department of Exportation, silk yarn which is made from natural silk from Thailand is widely exported to many of the developing and developed countries such as Brazil, India, Indonesia, Iran, Japan, Tajikistan, Turkey, Turks and Caicos Islands, US Virgin Islands, Viet Nam, etc.

It should be noted that the difference in consumption of Thai silk between the developed and developing countries is different. The developed and wealthy nations such as America, Japan and Middle Eastern countries normally buy Thai silk in the form of finished products like handbags and furniture. Countries in Europe like France, Italy and Spain buy silk textile as finished products and raw material, that they add the value and turn in to export products of their own. While other economically developing countries like China, India and Vietnam mainly imported Thai silk as a raw material in order to produce their own export products. The purchasing of Thai silk for individual use in developing countries still does not account for much in terms of total export value.

However, as a result of the world economic slowdown in the past decade, many major silk exporting countries have lost its purchasing power for luxury products such as silk. According to the statistics of the Department of Exportation from the year 1988 to the end of the year 1998, the price for raw silk has significantly dropped in the past decade. The world market price for raw silk was about US\$ 26 per kg at the end of 1998, which dropped about 50% from its high percentage in 1989. China remains the largest producer of exportation country (70% of the total of some 72,000 tons). Japan's raw silk production slipped to about a quarter of its previous level (from 6840 tons in 1988 to 1902 tons in 1997). The Republic of Korea's fall was even more dramatic, from 1343 tons in 1988 to 110 tons in 1997.

Moreover, the consumption of silk has declined steadily as a result of the surplus of sandwashed silk boom and growing competition from other fibers textiles. According to the interview with Mr. Tun Keyuraphan, the owner of Phantip Silk company, the artificial silk nowadays has been developed to become so close and similar to natural silk. This resulted in further slowdown of the consumption of natural silk. However, silk producers in Asia, such as India and Thailand, remain significant consumers. Japan is still the largest consumer of raw silk and silk products.

Mr. Tun Keyuraphan, further suggested that whereas Thai silk has lost its silk export in major economic countries such as America and Japan, it has found new potential market in new emerging and fast economy growing countries, such as China and India. From the interview, I found that the data from the Global Trade Atlas, Department of Export Promotion supported his comments. The economy of China and India has grown at a rapid rate in the past decade. Therefore, the purchasing power of these countries has grown significantly as he suggested, and resulted in considerably high export level for Thai silk, as shown in Figure 4.1 below. Thus, the level of consumption for Thai silk is growing in China and India. Nevertheless, the overall international consumption is still falling. The following is a table showing the fast growing export level of textile;

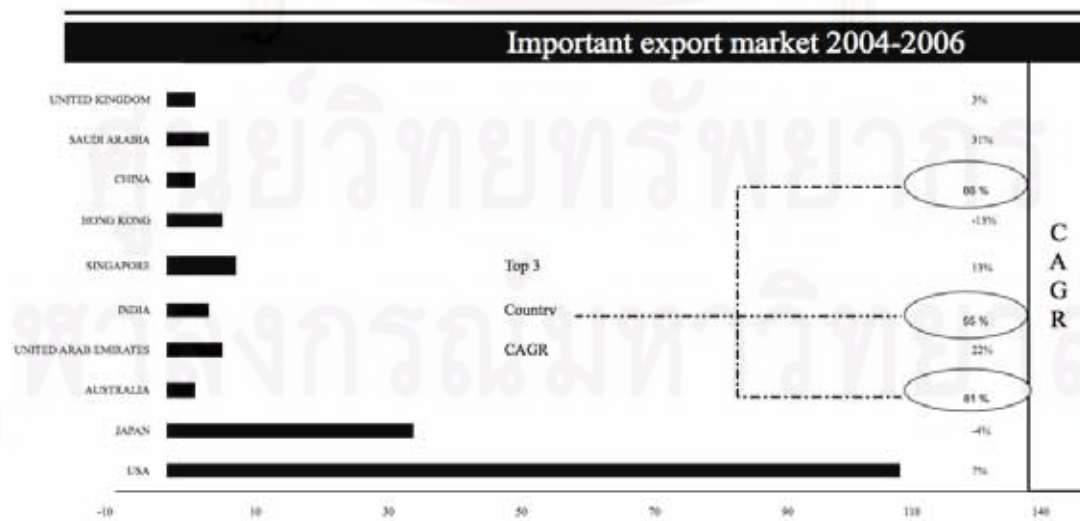
Figure4.1: Overview of Total Exports of Textiles Industry 2005-2007



Source: Global Trade Atlas, Department of Export Promotion.

According to Figure4.1, Thailand rose export value of textile has increased from 230 million US dollars in 2005 and to 330 million US dollars in 2007. As we can also notice from the chart, Thailand’s textile exports are in keeping with the overall worldwide trends in the textile industry.

Figure4.2: Important Export Markets of Industrial Textile Housing



Source: Global Trade Atlas, Department of Export Promotion.

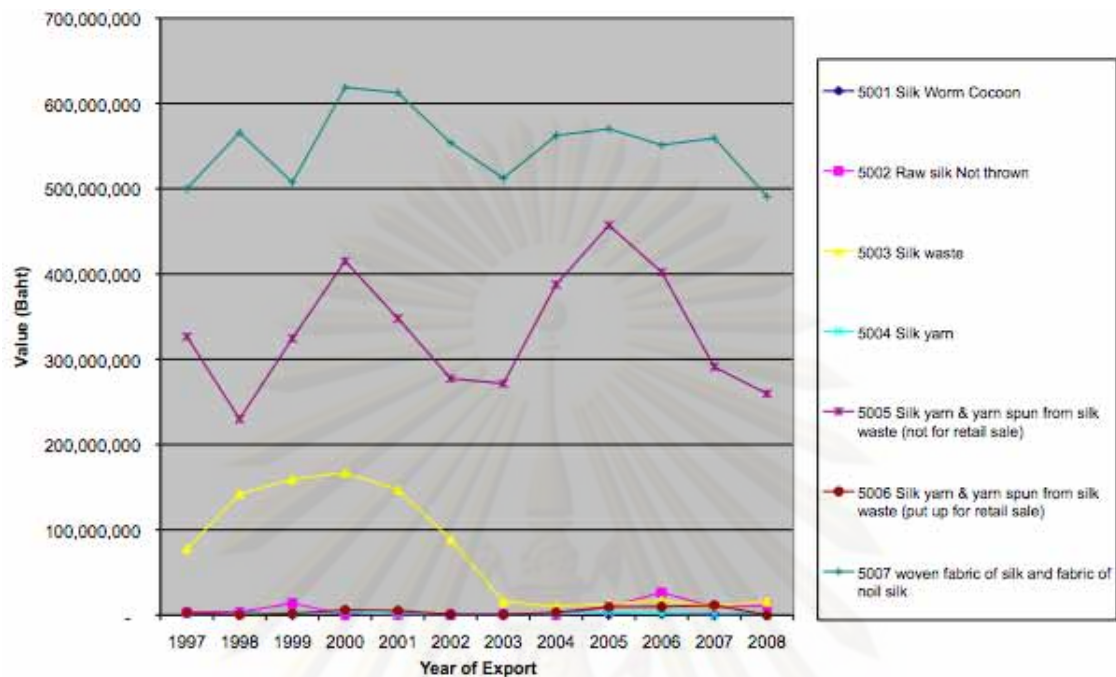
From Figure 4.2, we can see that although America and Japan are the largest export destination for textile products, the countries with high compound average growth rate (CAGR) are China, Australia, and India. For example, the CAGR of China was 88 percent from 2004 to 2006, while Australia was 81 percent, and India was 55 percent. This is the result of free trade agreement between Thailand and these countries. The export tariff barriers to these countries have been reduced greatly. Thus, it encouraged the level of exports of Thai silk to these countries. Also, Department of Export Promotion further suggested that China and India are among the top of the fastest growing economies in the world, they have become important emerging new markets for Thai silk export.

Overall, the consumption of Thai silk is changing according to the economic situation around the world. However, the buyers of Thai silk are all over the world. Many countries around the world, for example, Western countries like America and Europe, Eastern countries like Japan and South Korea, the Middle East like Saudi Arabia, Pacific countries like Australia and New Zealand, or even the new emerging economic powers like China and Vietnam, are regular buyers of Thai silk, as can be seen in the above chart.

4.2 The Contribution of Exporting Thai Silk to the Increase of Thailand GDP

In order to determine how significant Thai silk exports actually are to the overall Thai economy, I gathered the data from the Department of Exportation and analyzed the changing pattern of Thai silk industry. The data that I collected and analyzed was from the year 1997 through 2008. The value of Thai silk exports was recorded in Thai baht. The silk commodities were categorized into different final products that were exported such as silk worn cocoon, raw silk, silk waste, silk yarn, etc.

The data is illustrated in the following Figure 4.3;

Figure 4.3: Income of Silk Exportation

Source: Tech center information technology and communications. Office of Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Commerce. The cooperation of the Customs Department

As can be seen in the above figure, silk worm cocoon, which is the larva of the silk moth, is the largest export commodity of Thai silk, and the second largest is the raw silk, which has not been through a chemical process. They both share a similar pattern of increase and decline. In 1997, the total export size of silk worm cocoons industry was worth 500 million baht and 330 million baht for raw silk. They both experienced sharp increase in the total exports as they moved to the year 1997 and later suffer a significant decline from 2000-2003. After that, the silk worm cocoon industry started to recover and increased steadily before it started to decline steadily again toward the year 2008. The total value of Thai silk worm cocoon export in 2008 was 490 million baht. The raw silk export, on the other hand, experienced a sharp increase after the year 2003 but experienced a sharp decline toward the year 2008. The total size of Thai raw silk exports in 2008 was 260 million baht. In other words, both Thai silk worm cocoon and silk worm commodity exports in 2008 are smaller than in 1997.

The total export value of silk waste was about 80 million baht in 1997 and it experienced a sharp increase to 170 million baht in 2000. After that, it experienced a sharp decline to 10 million baht in 2003 and maintained this level of export value to 2008. The other silk exporting commodities did not experience any sharp increase or decrease during these eleven years. On the other hand, they maintained their export value at a constant level. However, their exporting value was quite small and accounted for only a few million baht every year and hardly showed any differences or movements as seen in Figure 4.3

Table 4.2 as follows shows the largest export commodities of Thailand and we will compare how significant Thai silk has contributed to the total export level of Thailand.

Table 4.2: Top 30 products exported by Thailand's top income countries

EXPORT PRODUCTS	VALUE : MILLION BTH										
	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
COMPUTER (Computer system components)	307,328.30	348,118.10	351,797.80	319,129.20	339,944.50	368,867.00	474,445.20	565,806.90	597,039.90	605,314.00	545,521.30
CIRCUIT BOARD	111,767.40	179,202.10	154,879.50	141,912.40	191,540.30	196,444.30	138,454.60	267,598.30	290,349.50	237,972.60	219,508.90
VEHICLE (Component and part)	71,998.00	96,520.00	117,613.90	129,244.30	164,705.80	220,788.10	310,306.50	362,374.30	447,109.40	513,154.20	378,374.80
FINISHED CLOTHING	110,268.20	124,212.40	129,128.90	116,589.30	114,744.60	124,132.60	136,178.30	121,882.60	105,227.10	101,842.90	88,697.90
JEWELRY AND ACCESORIES	67,479.30	69,396.90	81,312.30	93,082.20	104,525.60	106,278.30	129,339.30	139,864.60	185,149.60	274,093.10	333,719.60
RADIO AND TELEVISION (Part)	51,203.80	77,968.80	74,910.20	89,751.60	103,764.70	129,515.30	129,534.40	131,548.80	105,908.50	103,665.30	107,741.40
CANNED MEAT/SEA AND PROCESSING PRODUCTS	76,438.70	82,840.10	89,376.60	86,501.90	88,789.10	90,688.40	100,284.20	113,030.10	109,024.30	128,923.90	126,717.70
PLASTIC	46,025.80	73,973.20	71,428.70	76,110.90	89,204.80	124,783.10	167,914.20	171,394.10	179,512.00	181,138.70	151,979.10
RUBBER	43,941.70	60,712.00	58,708.00	74,603.60	115,796.90	137,454.20	148,679.90	205,483.10	194,338.70	223,628.20	146,263.60
RICE	73,812.10	65,556.60	70,095.20	70,004.20	75,776.10	108,328.30	92,993.70	98,179.00	119,215.40	203,219.10	172,207.70
SEMICONDUCTOR, TRANSISTORS AND DIODES	28,893.40	40,531.00	39,255.30	62,181.00	56,367.60	43,544.70	32,928.80	37,862.90	33,691.30	31,020.80	26,370.40
RUBBER PRODUCTS	33,109.30	42,022.30	48,485.40	54,090.90	64,668.20	76,014.20	94,094.30	117,269.50	125,960.70	149,894.90	152,800.10
IRON, STEEL AND PRODUCTS	36,196.20	53,318.10	48,300.60	53,600.40	70,222.30	99,577.90	115,513.30	134,035.20	157,686.00	176,877.00	169,036.10
CHEMICAL	34,514.00	49,427.20	44,875.60	41,150.10	65,897.40	82,841.30	105,732.80	130,475.50	135,073.00	141,693.80	152,208.90
AIR CONDITIONER AND PARTS	33,663.80	42,228.60	51,151.40	47,676.00	59,779.00	79,947.20	87,334.10	87,460.70	110,262.20	107,112.50	84,567.60
VIDEO AND AUDIO PLAYER (Component and Part)	27,557.00	33,962.00	35,341.30	45,852.60	41,999.00	37,250.30	34,649.50	33,357.40	24,172.60	19,715.80	12,992.30
PTERIDUM PRODUCTS	24,843.70	52,787.90	50,832.70	45,152.70	42,404.80	71,073.90	94,995.30	138,785.60	140,716.10	259,739.10	184,670.60
FURNITURE AND PARTS	30,144.90	36,605.60	38,445.90	41,237.00	43,215.20	48,370.00	49,534.00	46,500.60	44,625.40	40,982.10	34,140.30
PLASTIC PRODUCTS	28,720.90	35,439.80	38,052.10	40,922.60	51,447.40	56,630.90	70,997.40	71,728.40	79,291.60	88,586.90	78,232.60
MACHINERY AND PARTS	23,199.70	31,907.90	38,143.01	39,909.60	51,716.60	67,083.60	84,509.10	100,867.00	149,901.20	139,367.20	113,337.20
ELECTRONIC DEVICE AND OTHER COMPONENTS	20,624.20	36,093.90	38,668.40	38,893.90	40,077.90	73,903.30	88,314.40	95,521.20	128,988.80	123,832.40	113,835.30
FAX MACHINE, TELEPHONE (Component and Part)	23,839.10	33,839.30	33,981.70	37,722.20	45,071.30	42,736.20	41,809.30	40,192.60	29,836.60	39,402.00	31,473.90
MOTOR AND GENERATORS	28,267.40	32,436.80	32,499.40	37,316.60	28,521.70	26,261.10	27,890.80	26,648.20	26,828.40	29,181.70	26,962.70
TEXTILES	33,646.00	37,316.70	36,846.00	34,499.20	36,328.80	41,472.30	43,131.20	42,037.60	40,109.60	39,690.20	39,825.40
FROZEN AND CHILLED MEATS	48,348.20	59,840.30	54,747.20	34,406.20	35,921.20	32,530.20	37,730.30	42,828.30	42,418.10	42,755.20	46,098.80
TRANSFORMER AND COMPONENTS	28,232.30	32,023.70	35,363.40	33,538.40	32,366.30	32,568.40	29,910.10	32,226.80	32,133.10	34,355.10	29,528.60
FOOTWEAR AND MATERIALS	32,394.40	33,518.20	37,290.90	33,159.20	33,216.90	30,597.30	35,883.90	35,305.30	33,565.10	31,969.80	27,117.80
ROPER	20,895.90	25,749.40	30,592.30	29,375.30	38,429.20	32,452.80	28,114.00	28,109.20	43,806.70	47,637.30	61,583.40
WOOD AND WOOD PRODUCTS	19,541.90	23,377.80	25,508.30	28,875.90	29,855.30	36,207.20	36,716.70	40,391.80	40,928.30	41,466.80	41,549.10

Source: Tech Center information technology and communications. Office of Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Commerce. The cooperation of the Customs Department

If we compare the value of Thai silk exports with the total exports from Thailand, textiles rank is the 24th out of the total ranking of Thai products. Therefore the size of silk export is very small because silk is a only small part of textile exports. According to the statistics provided by the Ministry of Commerce, the value of Thai silk and other textile export estimated in Thai Baht, in 2007 was 40,109 million baht, while the overall total export value of Thai commodities in the same year was 5,302,119 million baht. In other words the export value of Thai silk was merely one percent of the total export value of Thailand goods and products. The number is not much different than monetary value in previous years. This is considered to be very small in terms of total money.

As we see from the information in this section, Thai silk, in terms of the overall economy, it is a relatively small percentage. Despite the fact that the value of Thai silk exports is very small, it has other significance that should not be overlooked. This is because when we export Thai silk, we do not just bring back the money but we also export our culture, traditions and history. It is a very useful method to promote Thai culture to other countries. This in turn will bring in more money and benefits to other industries in Thailand as a whole, for example, tourism, food, arts, music and crafts. This is called “culture exporting” which was successfully practiced by many countries such as America, Japan and most recently South Korea. Therefore, Thai silk exports represent much more than just monetary value export.

4.3 The Area in Which Thai Silk is Used Internationally

Traditionally when Thai silk was first introduced to the world market, it was mainly consumed for the purpose of clothing like any other fabric textile. The use of other countries silk also limited in clothing and fashion. However, Thai silk industry was successfully internationalized because it has explored outside the limitation of the previous silk industry. While other silk producing countries still continue with the limited use of silk as clothing purpose, Thai silk industry began to explore other possibilities and purposes for silk.

My analysis of the interviews suggest that foreign customers, especially from western countries, also enjoy the variety of Thai silk materials for home decoration, such as

bed sheets, pillow sheets and curtains. Thus, there are two types of products that make Thai silk popular in the international market nowadays. First is clothing products. Second is home furnishing and decorative fabrics.

Based from the interview with Mr. Tun Keyuraphan, home furniture and decorations applications have caused Thai silk to become very popular among western countries. The foreigners love to find exotic furniture and beautiful cloth to decorate their house. In the foreigners' view, Thai silk is one of their first choices to suit their requirements and taste. They are fascinated by Thai silk not only because of its shiny and delicate texture, but also because of their incomparable luxury.

Here, I will show the result of my analysis of the two areas in which Thai silk is used internationally. First, the use of Thai silk as clothing and second, the use of Thai silk for home furnishing and decoration;

4.3.1 Silk Clothing Products

Some foreign customers do not like to wear traditional silk patterns, or Thai-styled clothing. For example, tailored women's jackets, material for men's silk. However, men's silk is a popular. This does not indicate that they do not like silk as a material, it simply means that they prefer to wear more western styled clothing or a mix of the two. They also like accessories like scarves, hat, and cosmetic bags. Thai silk in its shiny features can be quite stunning, and eye-catching, and foreign buyers have expressed a preference for more subdued and muted garments.

For the most part, silk clothing products are commonly popular among customers for certain items such as shirts, dresses, especially these worn on important occasions. Most customers in this respect are Thai people because they tend to put much value in their appearance and what they wear, especially on special occasions. Moreover beautiful luxurious silk outfits can boost their confidence and also make them look outstanding during an important ceremony or occasion. Thai customers are commonly repeated. Most of them are government officials, ambassadors, international officials, and chief executive officers (CEO).

4.3.2 Home Furnishing and Decorative Fabric

Recently home furnishing and decorative fabric have become increasingly popular among the foreign customers, who would like to decorate and make their house more exotic and beautiful. The most popular decorative fabric that the customers like to use in their house is for making curtains, bed sheets, sofas and pillows. Most of the customers who purchased Thai silk for home decoration purposes are foreigners from western countries who do not like to wear Thai silk clothes because of the weather and the different lifestyles. They usually like to use them as decorative fabric and home furnishing to make their house more exotic and oriental.

Thai silk that is used for making curtain is said to add softness and elegance atmosphere to the living room. Having Thai silk as part of their furniture also expresses their wealth and luxurious way of living. Moreover, Thai silk is fire resistant and is suitable as part of furniture decoration for those who are aware of fire safety. Thus, Thai silk has become more internationalized in the area of home decoration.

Moreover, other famous Thai silk products are small home accessories such as silk dolls or key rings. Thai silk cocoon was also begun to be used for material in other products such as perfume, soap, women cosmetic in the recent years. Most Thai silk companies are trying to seek new possibilities of purpose of Thai silk other than just for clothing and household items. It is this limitless use of Thai silk that has helped it gain an international reputation that out-shines than other silk producing countries.

4.4 International Acceptance of Thai Silk

The data shown in the next page is about the international acceptance of Thai silk. The questionnaire used for this analysis is a closed-end question following Linkert 4 rating scales. Initially, the question of this part was constructed with 5 rating scales which are “strongly agree”, “agree”, “neutral”, “disagree” and “strongly disagree”. The results are shown in the Table 4.3 in the next page with the mean scores.

Table 4.3: The mean scales of foreigner's acceptance of Thai silk.

Internationalization of Thai silk		
Thai silk products		Mean
1.	Do you think Thai silk is expensive?	4.15
2.	Do you think Thai silk has good quality?	4.43
3.	Do you think Thai silk is the priority export product of Thailand?	3.85
4.	Do you think Thai silk can compete with other silk in the world market in term of price and quality?	4.22
5.	Do you think Thai silk can represent Thailand?	4.31
Designs and patterns		Mean
1.	Do you think Thai silk designs and patterns are unique from the other countries?	4.46
2.	Do you think Thai silk designs can represent Thai culture?	4.39
3.	Do you think Thai silk has beautiful variety of patterns and color to suit for the foreigners' taste?	3.98
4.	Do you think Thai silk design and pattern can adapt well for foreigners' preferences?	3.96
Popularity		Mean
1.	Do you think Thai silk is known as a good home furnishing and decorative fabric for the foreigners?	3.99
2.	Do you think Thai silk shop is popular among the foreigner?	3.93
3.	Do you think Thai silk can be the rank of the world market?	4.20
4.	Do you think Jim Thompson Thai silk company is popular among foreigners?	4.11

According to Table 4.3, the results of the survey show that Thai silk is widely accepted by foreign customers. Most of the questions have a mean of above 4, and all of the questions have a mean of above 3. Some results stand out, as the mean score is almost 5. For example, respondents answered the question, "Do you think Thai silk has good quality?" and the mean score was 4.43. This result proves that customer perception of Thai silk is that it has great delicacy, consistency and quality. Regarding questions regarding patterns and design, respondents were asked, "Do you think Thai silk designs and patterns are unique from other countries?" To this they answered with a mean score of 4.46. This shows that the uniqueness of Thai silk is clear to customers and that Thai silk products really stands out from silk from other countries. The results of such a high response rate can only be because Thai silk has enjoyed many years of good reputation. In other words, Thai silk is highly popular and dominant in the world market.

A major factor in the internationalization of Thai silk could be measured with the acceptance by foreign buyers. Four Thai silk export companies in particular have been instrumental in bringing Thai silk to the world. They are Jim Thompson, Queen

Sirikit's SUPPORT Foundation, Anita Thai silk, and Shinawatra Thai silk. When I asked survey respondents about these export companies, I found that Jim Thompson is the most famous Thai silk shop among all. This is because Jim Thompson has been established for long time and was the first Thai silk company that acquired an international reputation. As shown in table 4.4, 61.8 percent of the buyers said that Jim Thompson is their favorite Thai silk shop. 38.2 percent said that Queen Sirikit's SUPPORT Foundation for Thai silk is their favorite, 19.4 percent said that Anita Thai silk is their favorite, and 5 percent said that Shinawatra Thai silk is their favorite.

Table 4.4: What is your favorite brand name of Thai silk?

What is your favorite brand name of Thai silk?		Frequency	Percent
1	Jim Thompson	309	61.8
2	Anita Thai silk	97	19.4
3	Shinawatre Thai silk	25	5.0
4	Queen Sirikit's SUPPORT Foundation	191	38.2

The other Thai silk companies are less popular because the variety of their products is not as great as Jim Thompson. Although there are many silk producers in Thailand, Jim Thompson Thai silk is still the most popular name amongst foreign buyers because of how long it has been established. Jim Thompson is also well known among the foreign buyers because in its marketing campaigns, it directly targets foreign markets. In contrast, some buyers prefer silk from other silk companies due to their relatively low price for similar quality products. Moreover, some buyers suggest that Jim Thompson silk patterns are too fancy.

Queen Sirikit's SUPPORT Foundation is less popular than Jim Thompson, which is the result of smaller scale production. However, it is still gaining in popularity because of its relatively low prices, high quality goods and beautiful patterns. The silk from Sirikit's SUPPORT Foundation enjoys the appreciation of buyers because it is supported by Her Majesty the Queen. This silk is labeled with a peacock, which is a symbol guaranteeing the quality of silk and corresponds with certain price points. Queen Sirikit's silk maybe too traditional for young buyer's tastes, which could be reason it doesn't enjoy the popularity of Jim Thompson.

The other Thai silk companies, such as Anita and Shinawatra are the least popular, as seen in Table 4.4, I found that this is because their silk designs and patterns are not varied compared to Jim Thompson. Their patterns are also mostly done in Thai traditional styles, which is not very popular among foreign buyers. In contrast, some buyers prefer Anita and Shinawatra Thai silk because they like traditional styles rather than contemporary ones.

According to Piyaporn Kunchana (2004) naturally, Thai silk has special components compared with other silks that make it unique among other kinds of silk and memorable to international customers. Thai silk has triangular fibers which reflect light like prisms. This quality makes Thai silk shinier and more light reflective than the others. It also has a layer of protein that gives it a natural sheen and makes it lustrous and smooth.

Mr. Tun Kayurapun, whom I interviewed, showed me samples to illustrate the difference between Thai silk, Chinese and Indian silk. Compared with Thai silk, Chinese silk, tends to be smooth and satiny, where Indian silk tends to be softer but more crinkly with richer colors. Italian silk tends to have a refined and elegant look. Thai silk is more accepted internationally because of its rich, exotic beauty. Based on my interview with Miss Rosarin and Miss Apipavadee Puthipannapong, Thai silk can become even more soft if it goes through a chemical finishing process. However, they choose not to do this, in order to maintain the exotic, natural characteristics and rough feeling to the touch. Therefore, the stunning character of Thai silk is a result of its being handmade, which we can feel when we use.

Also, a number of different weaving techniques and processes allow Thai silk to produce a variety of weights, patterns and designs. Thai silk also provides a greater number of purposes and uses. Based on an analysis of the interviews, Thai silk is not only accepted for clothing, but is also accepted internationally as a good material for home furniture and decoration. In western countries, Thai silk materials are very common for making home curtains and furniture because of its luxurious designs. Most important is that Thai silk is inflammable. This makes it safer to use as home decoration or furniture.

However, based on the interview with Miss Chutima Dumsuwan, the public relations representative for the Jim Thompson company, it seems that the high-end positioning of Thai silk also poses a disadvantage, as many customers can not afford this price-point, or they would rather purchase less expensive pieces of silk of similar quality. At the same time, high-end customers are just a small fraction of the market. It would be quite difficult to promote Thai silk to mass-market customers given its high price, especially in the local market. In addition, if Thai silk companies choose to target local customers, their prices would have to be lower so that it is affordable to everyone. This would eventually cause the quality of Thai silk to go down, which would alienate high-end customers.

Based on an analysis of the interviews with managers and owners of Thai silk companies, the silk industry today is facing growing challenges from other fiber textiles. There is now competition from artificial fibers that are very similar to silk. New synthetic fibers are more sophisticated. They look like silk and feel like silk and they are easier to care for. Examples of these artificial fibers are viscose and polyester. They have encroached upon some of the market share for silk exportation.

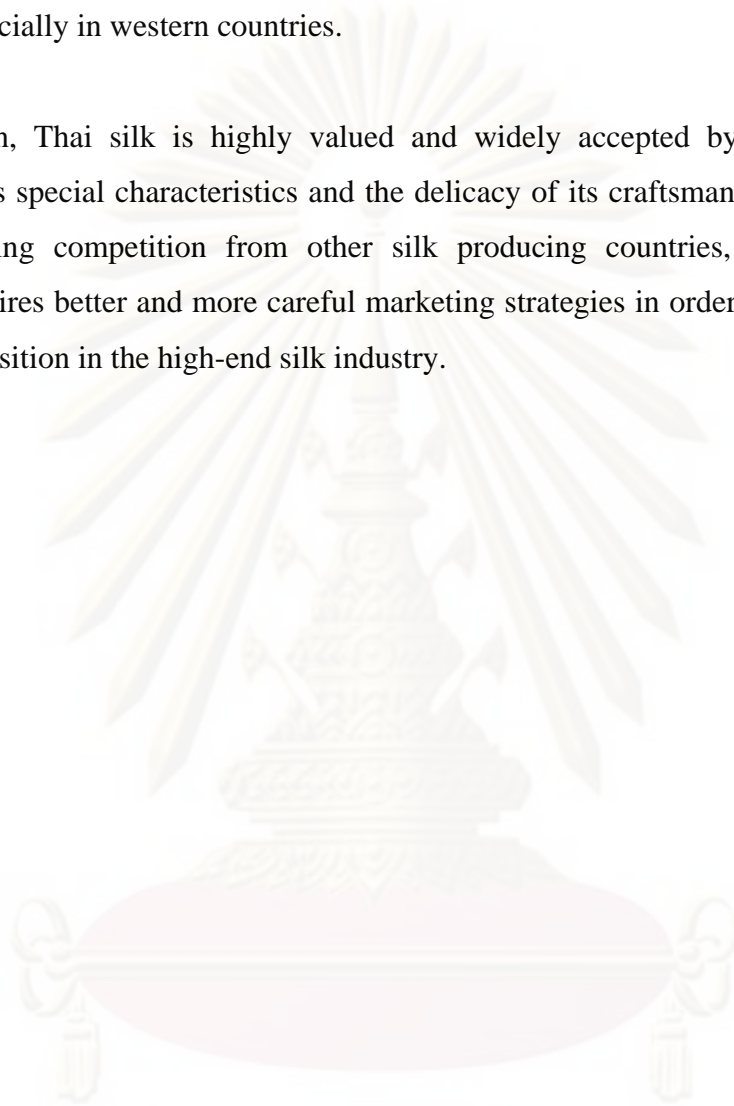
Moreover, artificial fibers also have had the effect of damaging the acceptance of Thai silk commodities as luxury products. Currently, no promotion campaigns from Thai silk producers are addressing this problem. This is the result of a lack of cohesiveness among suppliers, traders and producers in the Thai silk industry. If the Thai silk industry intends to be a global leader, these problems need to be resolved quickly.

4.5 Summary

This chapter shows the extent to which the Thai silk industry is internationalized. An important piece of evidence that supports the hypothesis that Thai silk is internationalized is the fact that there are regular buyers of Thai silk from around the world. Although there is a great deal of competition from other silk producing countries, Thai silk is still in high demand in various world markets because of its shiny texture and luxurious feel.

Even though the Thai silk exports contributed only a relatively small amount to the total GDP of Thailand, the amount is constantly growing. Moreover, Thai silk is widely internationalized because of its application and use as a material in home decoration and furniture. Recently, home furnishing using Thai silk have become very popular, especially in western countries.

In conclusion, Thai silk is highly valued and widely accepted by world buyers because of its special characteristics and the delicacy of its craftsmanship. However, with increasing competition from other silk producing countries, the Thai silk industry requires better and more careful marketing strategies in order to maintain its leadership position in the high-end silk industry.



ศูนย์วิทยทรัพยากร
จุฬาลงกรณ์มหาวิทยาลัย

CHAPTER V

FACTORS CONTRIBUTING TO THE INTERNATIONALIZATION OF THAI SILK

Based on data from Thailand's Ministry of Commerce and Department of Export Promotion, and the analysis of questionnaires, I found four factors that have most contributed to the development of Thai silk to the international level. The first factor is support from important organizations. These can be divided into two groups; internal and external support. The second factor is the effect of the global political and economic situation. The third factor is the wide variety of Thai silk designs. The last factor is the process of adaptation of Thai silk to suit foreigners' taste and preferences.

5.1 Support from Important Organizations

There are many organizations that provide crucial support to the exportation of Thai silk to other countries. They serve as the foundation and strength of the Thai silk industry in different ways. Their aim is to promote and strengthen the culture and values of Thai people. For each organization, their most important goal is to drive Thai silk to the international level.

When the Thai government set a goal of promoting the Thai silk industry in an effort to make Thai silk one of the country's most important export products, it implemented a certain degree of support to boost the development of this industry. It is this support that caused the Thai silk industry to develop rapidly at the international level. Thai silk business owners would not be able to sell their products as effectively if it weren't for the support and guidance of these organizations; especially in the beginning stages of their business. An example of such an organization is the Thai Silk Association of Thailand (สมาคมไหมไทย) which was established in 1962 by a group of leading Thai silk producers. Information on the Thai Silk Association of Thailand²

²From www.thaitextile.org (Feb 28, 2008).

states that the objective of the Thai Silk Association is to, “promote the production and trade of silk through joint undertakings and co-operation between businesses and relevant government agencies, facilitating knowledge exchanges and the sharing of technical information among members.” It also serves to set and maintain standards as well as work to improve the quality of Thailand’s silk industry.

Based on a study done by Piyachart Sangarun (1994), in the beginning, Thai silk producers lived in separate villages throughout the country. In each community with cottage silk industries, silk weaving proved an important transmitter of tradition for Thai people. During the production process, women shared their experiences and skill with the younger generation. Cottage-industry silk weaving also proved important in passing down traditions and skills to the next generation. Therefore, within each family unit, weaving group, and region they developed their own distinct designs.

Each producer has his or her own strengths and weaknesses, but silk producers lack a connection with one another, whereby they might share their strengths. They need a conduit to act as a facilitator who can connect them. Therefore, local governments were given a mandate to assist silk weavers in working toward common goals and providing support to village-level producers. For example, the Thai Silk Association of Thailand has enabled Thai silk business owners to exchange and share their strengths with one another. Today, this government organization helps Thai silk business owners work together and with local officials who assist them and help them improve their silk products so that they can better compete in the world market. They also help weavers develop a common vision and reach the mutual goal of being more competitive in the world market.

Apart from the Thai Silk Association, there are other organizations that support the development of Thai silk. They are divided into two primary groups—internal organizations and external organizations.

5.1.1 Internal Organizations

Internal organizations are local organizations that support Thai silk business owners. They can be divided into two groups: public organizations and private organizations.

1) Public Organizations

Public organizations are financially supported by the government. They normally support the foundational strength of the industry, in initiatives such as the improvement of labor skills, improving the standard of living of local producers, and the transmission of the knowledge of silk making from one generation to another. Support from the public organizations is often represented by government agencies such as different ministries that have the task of supporting the Thai silk industry according to their responsibilities and specialties. Below are some examples;

Ministry of Agriculture and Cooperatives

The Ministry of Agriculture and Cooperatives is a major government agency that helps promote the development of Thai silk and employment for local people. This organization provides education, work experience and the development of labor skills for community members. It provides them with knowledge in terms of silk making procedures, creating new products from silk, understanding the silk market system, and developing cooperatives.

This ministry encourages local people to study how to distribute Thai silk efficiently. Moreover, it supports them in terms of human resources, facilities and instruments, and booths for demonstrating Thai silk products at many events.

Several units within the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Agriculture and Cooperatives support Thai people regarding Thai silk business. The Department of Agriculture has implemented the Agricultural Extension Workers Program in order to support different groups working together. These groups provide one another with knowledge, and advice concerning the development of Thai silk production. However, this cannot be done effectively without the support and cooperation of other organizations, such as the National Bureau of Agricultural Commodity and Food Standards, Office of Agricultural Economics and The Royal Irrigation Department.

The support can be seen in the form of various activities. For example, according to the web site of the Ministry of Agriculture³, the Ministry of Agriculture implemented a national plan for every city and town in Thailand to provide a place for Thai silk to be exhibited in order to promote Thai silk commodities to both local and international customers.

Ministry of Industry

The Ministry of Industry is responsible for the promotion and regulation of industries. It is concerned with improving machinery for commodity production processes in order to promote large scale production. As silk is an important export product for Thailand, the Ministry of Industry sought to improve, better and create a more efficient technological processes to produce silk.

According to the The Ministry of Industry website,⁴ the Ministry of Industry works in collaboration with the Institute of Textile Development to unify the processes of local silk producers in and around Ubon Ratchathani under the brand name, “Cluster Ubon” in order to share the market, information and work under the same guidance. By working together, they are better able to produce a wide variety of products instead of producing the same things and competing with each other for buyers.

Ministry of Commerce

The Ministry of Commerce is responsible for national import and export policies to ensure a trade good balance. Its objectives are to strengthen the domestic economy and trade and create opportunities for Thai producers, and to develop and manage trade systems to efficiently support trade competition.

With reference to Thai silk, the Ministry of Commerce sought to find greater export markets and to develop the potential of Thai silk producers so that they can compete

³ From www.moac.go.th (April 9, 2008).

⁴ From www.m-industry.go.th, (October 2, 2008).

in the world market more effectively. It is also concerned with promotion of Thai silk to the public in both local and foreign markets.

According to the Ministry of Commerce website⁵, the minister and staff from this ministry traveled to France and met with leading fashion designers to promote and encourage them to import silk from Thailand. Especially silk good under the peacock symbol brand. They also invited them to invest in Thailand, as their preferred production base in Southeast Asia.

Ministry of Finance

The Ministry of Finance is responsible for import and export tariffs and preventing illegal importation of silk into the country. It helps to support the Thai silk industry by protecting the industry from illegal silk imports. This ensures a good income for all Thai silk producers.

Based on the information found on the Ministry of Finance's website⁶, the Ministry of Finance allocated a budget of 745 million baht earmarked for low interest loans for SMEs (small and medium sized enterprises), and some of these benefits went to Thai silk SMEs .

Ministry of Education

The Ministry of Education is responsible for providing fair and quality education for all Thai people, regardless of class and race. It also is responsible for providing education for basic labour skills. Regarding the silk industry, the Ministry of education is responsible for improving the skills of silk weavers and people in the industry.

⁵ From www.moc.go.th (May 20, 2008).

⁶ From www.mof.go.th (November 13, 2008).

For example, according to the Ministry of Education⁷ they work in co-operation with private organizations to host exhibitions like “Thai silk to fashion world” to help educate and impress upon young people the importance and process of making Thai silk.

Ministry of Culture

The Ministry of Culture is in charge of developing and protecting the values and traditions of Thailand. In the case of the silk industry, it seeks to promote and encourage awareness of the value of silk to Thai people, as can be seen by the Ministry’s organizing activities that emphasize silk as an important part of Thai culture.

According to the Ministry of Culture’s website⁸, the Ministry of Culture frequently arranges Thai silk exhibitions. Even though it may not host the event, it often works with other ministries to arrange Thai silk exhibitions at the national level.

Queen Sirikit’s Support Foundation

In 1970, Her Majesty Queen Sirikit visited Nakornpanom Province and saw Thai village women wearing beautiful dresses made of tied-dyed silk (*mat-mi*), she immediately had a vision that making *mat-mi* cloth would be a good supplementary occupation for the villagers. Later, Her Majesty asked the villagers to weave *mat-mi*. She herself bought and used *mat-mi* silk for some of her dresses.

Queen Sirikit’s Support Foundation was officially established on July 21st, 1976. It is financially supported by a government fund and donations from Thai people. The organization has proven quite beneficial to local silk producers since previously, there

⁷ From www.moe.go.th (November 13, 2008).

⁸ From www.m-culture.go.th (November 13, 2008).

was no middle man in the transaction process. According to the website of this foundation⁹, the objectives of Queen Sirikit's Support Foundation are as follows:

1. To provide opportunities to farmers, gardeners and their families to earn supplementary income without being worried about the climate-change obstacles. This would improve their living.
2. To preserve and prolong traditional Thai arts and crafts, at the same time maintaining the production of great quality products.

Silk is considered one of the most precious forms of Thai arts and traditions and is supported by Her Majesty. Thus, Her Majesty the Queen has helped greatly in developing the Thai silk industry by providing assistance and training to local silk producers. Her Majesty the Queen also gave design guidance to Thai silk designers. She also shows support for the promotion of Thai silk by always wearing, on formal occasions, a Thai silk dress. This is especially true at international events and ceremonies where she can show the world and international audiences the beauty and elegance of traditional Thai silk.

In an interview with Miss Chuanpit Simakachorn, an agricultural researcher at the Institution of Thai Silk, Miss Chuanpit stated that another factor that helps promote Thai silk is the categorization of Thai silk according to its qualities by using different colored peacocks as indicators of different levels of quality. The markers appear on the packages of silk commodities. The golden peacock ensures the finest quality of Thai silk. The other color-coded symbols represent varying grades of silk such as silver, blue, and green. This gives buyers more confidence, as it ensures the quality and guarantees the grade of silk the buyer is purchasing.

⁹ From www.northernstudy.org (November 13, 2008).

2) Private Organizations

Private organizations that support Thai silk are usually private silk companies, which have been working hard for a long time to improve the process of silk making so that they become more advanced in the application of new technologies and the weaving process, in order to ensure profits. Thus, these private companies have acquired certain knowledge and experience in the silk industry, especially in their employment of marketing strategies. These organizations gradually increased the level of Thai silk sales among foreigners. This factor helps drive Thai silk products to become internationalized products more smoothly. Below is an example of a private organizations that supports silk production.

Internal private organizations

Examples of internal private organizations are the International Silk Association (ISA) and Silk Painters International (SPIN)

ISA has members in 40 countries, including major silk producing countries such as Thailand. ISA attempts to promote silk production and trade processes.

SPIN on the other hand, provides technological support, encourages professional development of silk artists and promotes the worldwide recognition of silk art, including artistically driven Thai silk.

In November 2009, ISA and SPIN worked in conjunction with the Institute of Thai Silk to host the “Thai Silk to Fashion World” exhibition in Chiang Mai to create an awareness of the value of Thai silk among the local people. The trainees were also able to participate in seminars designed to teach them the process of Thai silk making and how to properly take advantage of other benefits of Thai silk, such as face and body treatments. There was also a fashion show to demonstrate that Thai silk clothing can also be worn for ordinary day outings.

Agricultural Research Development Agency

The Agricultural Research Development Agency encourages strong grouping among silk producing communities and introduces to them to knowledge about creating business plans and managing their funds effectively.

In November 2007, the Agricultural Research Development Agency conducted a survey of the machinery and other production processes used in the Thai silk industry. They tested their efficiency in order to improve the process so that it will be more effective and efficient.

3) Contributions of Public and Private Organizations

Public and Private Organizations have different tasks in the process of developing the Thai silk industry. Nevertheless, good cooperation between public and private organizations is a key factor for the success of the internationalization of Thai silk in the world market. However, occasionally, the private groups complain that government organizations' intervention poses big problems for the silk shop owners, silk factories and business owners. It creates difficulties in product distribution because of the limitations placed on Thai silk exportation. Silk business owners have to pay fees in order to export silk. Nowadays, Thai silk stake holders have to carefully study and follow the government policies before they can plan their exports. Therefore, instead of promoting export, the government seems to limit it. Thus, government intervention sometimes becomes an obstacle.

Based on interviews with silk shop owners, it has been suggested that the government should allow and encourage more free competition by allowing silk companies to compete based on quality, characteristics and potential of their products. This would cause them to continuously develop their products and adjust prices in order to compete with each other and gain a greater market share. Thus, this would improve the quality and competitiveness of the Thai silk industry in the international market.

There is also an argument that private organizations and silk firms still lack co-operation amongst themselves. Each silk firm is mainly concerned about its total sales and profits. At the same time, they try to maintain a leadership position in the silk industry. Thus, selfishness is another obstacle for the successful cooperation among different silk firms. One suggested solution is that the government should act as a middle man or bridge in order to implement more effective co-operation among different silk firms.

5.1.2 External Support of Thai Silk Production

External support is the driving exporting force outside of Thailand. It mainly depends on the world economic situation and other factors that are unpredictable. This factor has an effect on every commodity in world export markets. However, the degree to which it is affected varies in different countries and products.

Silk Commodity

As shown in the previous chapter, Thai silk commodities could be sold to foreign buyers and exported outside of Thailand but duties must be paid on them. However, different countries around the world also acquire different taxation, limitation or restriction for Thai silk. External organizations also play a crucial role in the internationalization of Thai silk as they could exercise new laws or alter regulations regarding the importation of silk in the international market.

Therefore, the Thai silk industry, to a certain extent, relies on external forces outside the country. These conditions are beyond the control of the Thai government and are quite difficult to predict. However, in order to prevent this uncontrollable condition, the Thai market has to deal with and work together with international organizations to be able to implement the most suitable market plan, according to the different laws in different regions.

In order to maximize the exporting of Thai silk to different regions or countries, the implementation of free trade agreement (FTA) should be encouraged. The implementation of FTA can help reduce export tariffs in exchanging goods. These

organizations are very important as they can give advice concerning distribution in world exports. The silk products are also subject to recommendations in the world market. Examples of these international organizations are as follows.

1) The World Trade Organization (WTO)

The World Trade Organization (WTO) is an international organization designed to supervise and liberalize international trade. For the silk industry, according to the WTO official website¹⁰, WTO opened 460 tons of raw Thai silk to the world market in 1995 and increased to 485 tons in 2005. Thus, the WTO is important to the world silk industry as the major mechanism to ensure the free and fair market competition.

2) ASEAN Free Trade Area (AFTA)

ASEAN Free Trade Area consists of countries in Southeast Asia. It aims is to promote free trade among Southeast Asian nations. At the same time, according to the ASEAN web site¹¹, it aims to protect and ensure the competitiveness of ASEAN silk industry (including Thai silk) in the world market, and to reduce the tariffs for silk cocoon, raw and waste silk, silk yarn, silk fabrics, silk clothing and other accessories to zero percent. As a result, Thai silk should find a larger market within the ASEAN community as well as experience a greater level of competition from other ASEAN silk exporters.

As mentioned above, we can see that Thai silk has already acquired a good reputation for many decades. The internal factors are from within the country, for example, government support and working together with public and private organizations. Organization such as the Thai Silk Association (TSA), which for many years has put so much effort into promoting the Thai silk industry. It cooperates with all Thai silk companies and factories in Thailand to develop, support, and try to solve problems

¹⁰ From <http://www.wto.org/> (November 28, 2008)

¹¹ From <http://www.aseansec.org/12025.htm> (December 28, 2008)

concerning Thai silk together in many areas such as the lack of raw materials and worm disease. Therefore, the support of these organizations serves as a very important foundation for the internationalization of Thai silk.

5.2 The Effect of the World Political and Economic Conditions

The second factor which has an effect on the internationalization of Thai silk are the political and economic issues around the world, including within Thailand. In the age of globalization—with its technological and communication advances, the world has become increasingly borderless. The silk industry in Thailand can also be easily affected and by the changing conditions of the world economy and politics.

The rise or fall of the world economy is out of the control of Thai silk industry. However, it has great effect on the performance of Thai silk industry. World economic booms and recessions also affect the export of Thai silk by changing the purchasing power of the world customers. Based on the analysis and interviews with Miss Rosarin and Apipavadee Puthipannapong, the manager and owner of Anita silk Company, they commented that the world economic boom obviously increased the purchasing power of foreign buyers. People bought more products regardless of its high price as they became richer. In contrast, a recession would automatically lower the purchasing power of world buyers and people would think twice before they bought any products. Thai silk is considered to be luxury product. Thus, this factor could affect the export of Thai silk accordingly.

Furthermore, the insecure political situation in Thailand during the last few years also poses a threat to the Thai silk industry as can be seen by the fewer number of tourists traveling to Thailand. Fewer tourists led to fewer products being sold, including Thai silk which tourists often buy as souvenirs. According to the Phantip Thai Silk, their shops have experienced more than a fifty percent decrease of visitors per day during the last two years. Also, the insecure political situation in Thailand has led to less effective support strategies being implemented by the government.

Another important external factor that has had a great impact on exports in the Thai silk industry and should be taken into account is the rise of the Chinese economy over

the past decade. The fast growing economy of China has had an affect on every industry in every country to a certain extent. China has a cheap and large labour pool that allows it to be able to produce almost every product faster and cheaper than competing countries. Therefore, Thai silk producers are facing great challenges from Chinese competitors in term of prices. However, the Thai silk industry has managed to maintain its leadership position among world buyers in terms of labour skills compared to the Chinese silk industry.

At the same time, the fast emerging economy of China provides opportunities in addition to competition. Thailand is entering into a free trade agreement with China and it could prove to be the largest market for Thai silk exports. FTAs could improve the export of Thai silk, as it should reduce export barrier such as tariffs, but it also means greater competition from other foreign products in certain industries. The fast growing economy of Vietnam also has also had an effect on the Thai silk industry as Vietnam is becoming more economically dominant in this region. Vietnam has become a great competitor to many of Thailand's export commodities. Therefore, careful market planing and positioning strategy of Thai silk commodities must be implemented to cope with the changes in the world economy and politics.

5.3 Varieties of the Designs of Thai Silk

The third important factor that promotes the development of Thai silk to the international level is the varieties and designs of Thai silk. Thai silk acquired great varieties and patterns because there are many local producers of Thai silk in all over Thailand. The famous local silk producers are mainly concentrated in north and north eastern Thailand. Different silk producer's village developed their own weaving techniques and dyeing method.

Moreover, the traditional Thai silks were woven by hand and require highly trained and skilled weavers. It also takes a long period of time to finish one piece of Thai silk. The weavers made silk patterns according to the cultures and arts of their cultures. Thus, different villages developed their own patterns which are unique and carried by the cultures and history of their people. And because Thai silk is woven by hand, no silk pattern can be the same, which makes Thai silk more exotic and valuable.

According to the survey conducted, as shown in Table 5.1, 49 percent of foreigners said that the variety of designs and patterns of Thai silk is the feature they like most about Thai silk. The designs and patterns of Thai silks are the characteristics that is visible to eye. So it is the most common characteristics that is recognized by foreign buyers. Moreover, buyers commented that they don't just appreciate Thai silk because it has a wide variety of designs and patterns, but because every patterns and design is attractive and colorful.

Table 5.1: What do you like about Thai silk products?

What do you like about Thai silk products?		Frequency	Percent
1	Beautiful shiny textures	301	60.2
2	Varieties of designs and patterns	245	49
3	Luxurious products	189	37.8
4	Fire resistance	0	0
5	Supporting Thai economy	96	19.2

The characteristic of Thai silk products can be divided into five categories, as outlined in the table above. Regarding item (1) which asks respondents, to rate the degree to which they agree with the importance of “beautiful shiny textures”, it was found that the beautiful shiny features of Thai silk products are what make them unique and attractive. Once the buyers purchased a piece of Thai silk, they could recognize this uniqueness. Foreigner buyers like Thai silk because it has a shiny texture and reflects the light, which is one characteristic that has made it famous amongst foreign buyers. It is this characteristic that differentiates Thai silk from other silks. On the other hand, some buyers do not care about the texture, but make their purchasing decisions according to use.

As for item (2), about the varieties, designs and patterns of Thai silk, it was found that buyers appreciate Thai silk because there are many designs that customers can choose from and they can find designs that are suitable to their preference. In contrast, some buyers may not like products that offer too many choices because not every item is appealing to them, and they may be overwhelmed by too many choices.

Item (3) shows that Thai silk carries a certain cache and is a luxury product, which is appealing to many foreign buyers as it gives them status. They appreciate luxury goods and are proud to carry them. However, not everybody can afford luxury products due to their high prices. Some buyers may prefer more reasonably priced items rather than more expensive luxury brand goods.

Based on item (4), it can be noted that none of the buyers indicated that they choose Thai silk because it is inflammable. This might be due to the fact that this is a scientific characteristic, as opposed to aesthetic. This information also may not be known to many buyers.

Considering the last item in the question, supporting the Thai economy is another reason that some buyers purchase Thai silk. Some foreign buyers are from Asian countries like Japan and South Korea and they prefer to support other Asian countries, such as Thailand, rather than non-Asian countries. In contrast, the foreign buyers from other continents might not give much thought to the Thai economy and don't tend to choose Thai silk versus other silk for this reason.

Moreover, because many other silk exporting countries produce much of their silk by machine, Thai silk, which is woven by hand, becomes more valuable. Based on an interview with Mr. Tun Keyuraphan, the owner of Phantip Silk Company, the foreign customers consider hand woven silk to be more beautiful and exotic in terms of delicacy. Therefore, Thai silk is not just a product. It represents history and hard-earned pride. When customers purchase Thai silk, they are also purchasing skill and style. Thus, hand woven silk products offer a quality that is much higher than items made by machines.

As we saw, the variety of Thai silk products has been an important factor in causing the Thai silk to become internationalized since customers have also expressed familiarity with the uniqueness of Thai silk products.

According to the survey of this thesis, as shown in table 5.2, 100 percent of the foreigners surveyed known about Thai silk, 79.4 percent recognized the unique

characteristics of Thai silk, and 92.2 percent like Thai silk products. Thus, Thai silk has quite a good reputation in the world market.

Table 5.2: opinion on “Internationalization of Thai silk”(Region)

Items		Frequency	Percent
1	Have you ever heard of Thai silk?	500	100
2	Do you recognize the uniqueness of Thai silk?	397	79.4
3	Do you like Thai silk product?	461	92.2
4	Have you ever purchased or own the Thai silk?	219	43.8
5	Have your friends or family members own Thai silk products?	342	68.4
6	Can you recognize the different of silk between Thai silk and the other silk products such as Chinese and India silk?	119	23.8

The results of this study’s analysis reveal some interesting information contained in table 5.2 above. An analysis of the findings show that Thai silk has a good reputation among world buyers, as every person who filled out the questionnaires had heard about Thai silk. As question (1) reveals, people indicated in their surveys that they have heard about Thai silk through many different places. Some through their travels or from books they have read. There are many channels through which respondents reported that Thai silk has found its way to target buyers. Some of these include books, magazines, museums, and tours of palaces. Many buyers are also familiar with Thai silk because they have seen it in fashion shows in some of the famous fashion cities in Europe, such as Milan or Paris. This could be considered a success for the increasingly good reputation of Thai silk.

Regarding question (2), the number of people who recognize the uniqueness of Thai silk is also very high--nearly 80 percent. This number represents how well information has been disseminated and how many people are familiar with or own a number of Thai silk pieces. Thus, they are able to distinguish the characteristics that make Thai silk unique, such as the rough feeling and texture of Thai silk. On the other hand, some people may not recognize the uniqueness of Thai silk because they have received Thai silk as gifts or souvenirs from other people.

Question (3) shows that a very large number of people like Thai silk products because Thai silk dresses give them a stunning look that they can be proud to wear. Silk

covered furniture also gives the house a more elegant look. Some foreign buyers however, whose body size is quite big might not be comfortable in silk, as it is believed that silk clothing makes them look bigger. Moreover, some buyers do not want to stand-out at an event. On the other hand, silk upholstered furniture is more difficult to take care of, thus reducing its popularity for some buyers.

Based on question (4), even though the number of people who have heard about Thai silk is 100 percent, the number of people who have purchased Thai silk is much less; 68.4 percent of people answered that their friends or family members have purchased Thai silk before. Question (5) reveals that only 43.8 percent of the people who filled out the questionnaire have ever purchased the Thai silk. This is due to the fact that Thai silk is a high-end product and quite expensive. Therefore, it is not affordable for all buyers.

Considering the last question (6), only the small number of buyers are able to recognize the difference between Thai silk and other silks such as Chinese and Indian. Thai silk has fewer layers of pile compared to the one or two piles in Chinese silk. Thai silk is also thicker, while Chinese silk has an opaque satiny characteristic, but not many buyers are aware of this information. This maybe due to the fact that these countries also developed artificial silk that is of a quality similar to Thai silk. High quality imitations make it difficult for buyers to determine the origins of their silk.

According to the feedback regarding the opinions about the internationalization of Thai silk, it can be concluded that more than half of the foreign buyers have heard about Thai silk from friends or members of their family who have owned Thai silk products. This means that Thai silk has gained popularity through word of mouth from buyer to buyer. Together with global media promotion, international road shows and internet access, the reputation of and information about Thai silk has become more accessible to people world wide.

Table 5.3: opinion on “Internationalization of Thai silk”(Gender)

Items		Gender%	
		Male	Female
1	Have you ever heard of Thai silk?	100	100
2	Do you recognize the uniqueness of Thai silk?	88	75
3	Do you like Thai silk product?	86	95
4	Have you ever purchased or own the Thai silk?	12	61
5	Have your friends or family members own Thai silk products?	62	71
6	Can you recognize the different of silk between Thai silk and the other silk products such as Chinese and India silk?	7	33

The result of the analysis revealed some notable facts regarding the above statistics as they relate to gender. It is worth analyzing two interesting points which are; (1) men’s ability to recognize the uniqueness of Thai silk and (2) the low frequency of men’s purchasing of Thai silk.

As we see in table 5.3, one finding of the research showed that the men surveyed recognize the uniqueness of Thai silk significantly more often than females—88 percent versus 75 percent. This indicates that men are interested in silk, if they are able to distinguish between Thai silk and other silks. One possible reason for this is that men have interacted with Thai silk, often enough that they know the textures and designs that are unique to Thai silk.

When asked in the survey, “Have you ever purchased Thai silk?” Only 12 percent of the men reported that they have and 61 percent of women reported that they have. This is an interesting statistic given that men reported recognizing the uniqueness of Thai silk with significantly greater frequency than females. One might expect that since 88 percent of men recognize the uniqueness of Thai silk, they have also purchased it, but here we see that females purchase Thai silk almost five times more often.

Moreover, the questionnaire was also designed to find out which patterns are most popular among foreign buyers. The following are examples of different kinds of Thai silk material and patterns of Thai silk which are the most famous traditional pattern among foreigners. They are *mat-mi*, *khit*, and *chok* (floral, batik, graphics and animal).

These patterns are important, as they represent the famous designs of different regions in Thailand.

According to the survey, as noted in Table 5.4, the favored pattern of Thai silk among foreign buyers is a plain one in various colors 68.6 percent, followed by traditional designs with floral weaving 60 percent and animal weaving 23.6 percent. The modern design is less popular than the traditional design. The favored modern design is the graphic pattern 22 percent, followed by westernized 21.4 percent, and fusion pattern 13.8 percent.

Table 5.4: What is your favorite pattern of Thai silk?

What is your favorite pattern of Thai silk?	Frequency/ 500	Percent
1. Plain in various colors	343	68.6
2. Traditional design - Floral weaving	300	60.0
3. Traditional design – Animal weaving	118	23.6
4. Contemporary design – Westernize	107	21.4
5. Contemporary design – Fusion	69	13.8
6. Modern design – Graphic	110	22.0
7. Modern design – Architectural	40	8.0

The results of this study show that patterns and designs on Thai silk are both beneficial and detrimental to the popularity of silk. These patterns and designs can be categorized into seven primary styles which are; plain in various colors of pattern, traditional design of floral weaving, traditional design of animal weaving, contemporary design of westernize, contemporary design of fusion, modern design of graphic, and modern design of architectural.

As can be seen in item (1), the pattern and design in Figure 5.4 was the plain in various colors. It was found that foreign buyers like it because it is simple and easy to match with other things and they can adapt it to other purposes. Moreover, the plain color is suited for all ages and does not get out of date or old fashion.

On the other hand, some foreign buyers may not like the plain colors because they have little visual interest. Plain designs seem boring and too simple to them. These buyers prefer to use multi-colored patterns with designs and prints. Moreover, the

plain patterns are easy to get dirty and cannot hide stains and spills well. Thus, the plain color patterns require more care and attention from the owners, which may not be acceptable to some buyers.

Regarding item (2), the traditional design of floral pattern designs are quite popular amongst foreign buyers. Some foreign buyers like to be close to nature and trees and floral motifs give them a feeling of relaxation and relief in their environment, especially when used for furniture in the house. Moreover, mixing colors and patterns is visually appealing to the buyers' eyes. On the other hand, they may prefer geometric shapes. The traditional designs are sometimes perceived to be too antique or out of date.

Item (3) reveals that the traditional designs that feature animal weavings are popular for buyers who are also animal lovers. The animal pattern is also exotic as many of the animals shown in the pattern are creatures in Thai mythology such as the *naga* and *phoenix*. Thus, some animal patterns are uniquely Thai. On the other hand, some animal patterns are too mysterious and scary as some animals look furious and fearsome.

Based on item (4), contemporary western design is popular because it is modern. The design is geometric, which makes it easily adapted into fashion clothing today. The contemporary design of western styles allows foreign buyers to be fashionable and bold. In contrast, some buyers do not like this because they like traditional Thai silk. The contemporary design of westernized patterns lack warmth and do not match with traditionally styled wardrobes.

As we can see, item (5) shows a contemporary design called fusion. This pattern is popular because it is a mix between traditional and contemporary designs. It is a blend of eastern and western cultures. The designs easily fit in to most home decoration styles. However, some buyers may not like it due to the fact that the patterns stick to one feeling. The lines are too busy on the textiles may make some people dizzy.

As for item (6), it shows the modern designs with graphic designs and they are very eye catching and attractive to many buyers. The design of bold graphics allows

designers to use many unique techniques while still allowing the wearer to mix and match their own style. The graphic designs are also modern, which makes them attractive to young buyers. On the other hand, some buyers do not like the bold graphic design because it looks too stark or busy when combined with other patterns. They may also prefer the traditional look of Thai cultural patterns.

Considering the last item (7), I surveyed respondents about is modern designs with architectural patterns. Respondents reported that this design is popular because it is inspired by existing famous architectural buildings. Buyers like to repeat the existing architectural elements in their clothes or furniture. The buyers want to be fully immersed in their surrounding and environment. It gives the buyers the feeling of repetition and structure and of being in places that they like. In contrast, the architectural designs use too much repetition of the same pattern and motifs, which has led consumers to choose other designs and patterns.

The results of the analysis show that 60 percent of international customers who purchase Thai silk expressed a preference for traditional Thai designs and patterns. They provided rationales as described in the previous section. However, it is appropriate to take closer look here. The following is a description of the examples of famous traditional Thai silk patterns and designs in Thailand.

5.3.1 Traditional Patterns and Designs of Thai silk

Traditional patterns of Thai silk vary greatly among the different regions where silk is made. Different local villages have developed their own distinctive patterns and designs according to their knowledge, technology and weaving skill. The traditional patterns carry with them the art, tradition and culture of the villages. In the silk weaving cottage industry, weaving skills were passed down from one generation to another within the same family or community.

Different traditional patterns represent the different values and culture of the weavers. The traditional Thai patterns are still popular among some buyers who like the exotic patterns and designs. Nowadays these designs are more exotic and delicate. Moreover, some patterns are more difficult to weave and take much a longer time (1-2 years)

than other patterns to complete. Thus, this makes some patterns more valuable and unique than others. Below are some examples of the most famous traditional patterns of Thai silk. When conducting the research contained in this paper, I showed survey participants the following pictures of traditional designs. They are 1) *khit*, 2) *chok*, and 3) *mat-mi*

1. *Khit*

*Khit*¹² is a traditional way of weaving Thai silk that originated in the northeastern part of Thailand. A special type of handloom is used in the production of *khit* patterns. *Khit* traditional patterns can be divided into different categories, and are inspired by the natural environment such as animals, trees and flowers and other natural designs. (See Figures5.1-5.9)

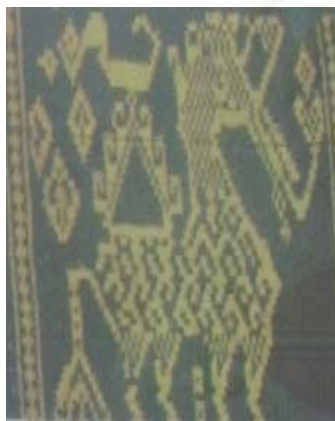


Figure5.1: *Khit* Animal Design
(Lion)



Figure5.2: *Khit* Animal Design
(Naga)



Figure5.3: *Khit* Animal Design
(Elephant)

Source: Figures5.1-5.2 from Panya Vijintanasan (2000)

Figure5.3 from Vimolphan Peetathawatchai (1986)

¹² The meaning of *khit* in Thai language is to pick things up and down. (สะกิด) It's the weaving technique of *khit* pattern.



Figure5.4: *Khit* Flower Design
(Glass Flower)



Figure5.5: *Khit* Flower Design
(Bai sri)



Figure5.6: *Khit* Flower Design
(Glass Flower)



Figure5.7: *Khit* Miscellaneous
Designs
(Hook)



Figure5.8: *Khit* Miscellaneous
Designs
(Human)



Figure5.9: *Khit* Miscellaneous
Designs
(Kab noi)

Source: Figures5.4-5.9 from Panya Vijintanasan (2000)

2.Chok

Chok is the term given to a design using the same technique as *khit*, except that this time the supplementary yarns are introduced into the wefts discontinuously and instead of shed sticks, porcupine quills or fingers are used to make the silk introduction. Also, while the weft threads for the *khit* design, are uni-colour, this *chok* design has colourful wefts. Thai people who live in the country wear this kind of skirt to the temple or on other ceremonial occasions. (See Figures5.10-5.13)

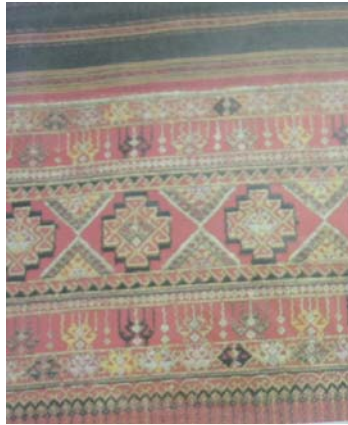


Figure5.10: *Chok* Flower Design
Hard Seaw District



Figure5.11: *Chok* Flower Design
Kubua District, Ratchaburi



Figure5.12: *Chok* Flower Design
Flower Kab
Kubua District, Ratchaburi



Figure5.13: *Chok* Flower Design
Prae Province

Source: Figures5.10-5.13 from Panya Vijintanasan (2000)

If compare *khit* patterns, with *chok* patterns, we see that *chok* patterns have a more complex design and are more colorful, which make it more appropriate to be worn on special occasions. As can be seen in the Figures5.10-5.13, *khit* tends to feature flower patterns.

3. *Mat-mi*

Hand woven *mat-mi* Thai silk (also know as “ikat”) originated from the northeastern part of Thailand. The intricate traditional geometric and zoomorphic motifs of *mat-mi* have been handed down for centuries. The designs and patterns in *mat-mi* are created primarily by using various colors in the weft (left to right threads) of the fabric.

Mat-mi pattern is also divided into different categories, similar to the animal and floral designs in the *khit* pattern. However, *mat-mi* designs were later developed into

more complex pictorials, such as patterns of famous Thai myths like the Naga and the Phoenix. The designs of *mat-mi* patterns are also inspired by important Buddhist events. The *mat-mi* patterns are often adapted by different modern weavers according to their own inspiration. Below are examples of *mat-mi* designs.



Figure5.14: *Mat-mi* Flower Design
(Glass Flower)



Figure5.15: *Mat-mi* Flower Design
(Pine tree)



Figure5.16: *Mat-mi* Flower Design
(Pineapple)
Khon Kan Province



Figure5.17: *Mat-mi* Flower Design
(Little Flower around hook)
Khon Kan Province



Figure5.18: *Mat-mi* Animal Design
(Naga)



Figure5.19: *Mat-mi* Animal Design
(Naga choo son)
Khon kan Province



Figure5.20: *Mat-mi* Animal Design
(Turtle)
Khon kan Province



Figure5.21: *Mat-mi* Animal Design
(*Mat-mi* Bird Chrom)
U-Dontanee Province

Source: Figures5.14-5.21 from Sasiwan Dumrongsiri (1996)



Figure5.22: *Mat-mi* Animal Design
(Cockpit)



Figure5.23: *Mat-mi* Animal Design
(Squid)



Figure5.24: *Mat-mi* Animal Design
(Ga-lhong)



Figure5.25: *Mat-mi*
Miscellaneous Design
(9 Lanterns /Khome 9 wongs)



Figure5.26: *Mat-mi*
Miscellaneous Design
(Candle Sticks)



Figure5.27: *Mat-mi*
Miscellaneous Design
(5 Lanterns /Khome 5 wongs)



Figure5.28: *Mat-mi*
Miscellaneous Design
(Bubbles)



Figure5.29: *Mat-mi*
Miscellaneous Design
Khon kaen Province



Figure5.30: *Mat-mi*
Miscellaneous Design
(Chinese Diamond/Phet prajae jeen)

Source: Figures5.22-5.30 from Sasiwan Dumrongsiri (1996)

As noted previously, foreigners did not only express preferences in traditional Thai silk patterns such as *khit*, *chok*, and *mat-mi*. They are also interested in more contemporary designs and modern-day adaptations of traditional designs.

5.4 The Adaptation of Thai Silk to Foreigners' Taste

Most Thai silk patterns have their origins in ancient times, which may not be suitable for buyers nowadays. The original patterns remain exotic but with the limited technologies and weaving techniques, there was something that could be improved upon and adapted for a better and more beautiful pattern. The increased knowledge and technology that weavers have acquired has allowed them to be more precise while doing their work. The result is a more delicate, colorful and precise pattern that still retains the exotic feel and value of the original patterns.

The adaptation of Thai silk can be divided into two topics which are the adaptation of design and pattern of Thai silk and the other, the adaptation of purposes of Thai silk. These adaptations allowed Thai silk products to reach more buyers globally.

5.4.1 The Adaptation of Design and Pattern of Thai silk

In order to be able to suit foreign buyers' tastes better, Thai silk has been adapted and now features new patterns and designs, such as modern designs inspired by architectural elements and buildings, modern graphic, fusion, and westernized patterns. The traditional patterns such as trees, floral designs and the plain colors silk still exist for buyers who prefer these exotic and simple designs.

The following Figure5.31 shows a design that was created before World War II, and the silk was dyed using ebony (*ผลมะเกลือ*) in which the entire part of the ebony was used to dye the fabric black. Unfortunately, there is no recorded evidence of ancient designs and patterns because Thai local people did not keep written records of old traditional designs and patterns and fabrics decay over time.



Figure5.31: Pre-World War II *mat-mi* Design

Source: Figure5.31 from Sasiwan Dumrongsiri (1996)

Figures 5.32-5.33 below represent a design called trapezoid (*เปลี่ยกุ่น*). It was a very famous *mat-mi* design. If we compare the details of both patterns, we can see the different details in the past and the present piece of Thai silk. As we can see, in Figure 5.32, it is an example of a pre-Second World War pattern. This piece of old Thai silk has a very traditional appearance. It contains three-colors and the way it was woven was a complex process and required highly skilled weaving and practiced technique. It was a complex task for weavers because they must acquire the skill to weave three colours into one piece of textile. Also, in the pre-Second World War piece, in Figure 5.32, we can see that it is more true to the trapezoid shape, where Figure 5.33 which is more modern contains decorative elements between the corners of the patterns. In both Figure 5.32 and Figure 5.33, diamond shapes were added to the designs. Thus, Figure 5.33 is more fashionable and more uniform in appearance than Figure 5.32



Figure 5.32: Old Tradition Design of *mat-mi* silk



Figure 5.33: New Design of *mat-mi* silk

Source: Figures 5.32-5.33 from Sasiwan Dumrongsiri 1996

In order to catch up with changing trends in the fashion world, designs and patterns must be able to adapt with changing trends. They must be continually tweaked updated. Each season fashion designers make their statement by creating new collections.

As we can see in the above examples, Thai silk has undergone many changes since the Second World War. In the case of *mat-mi*, these changes occurred quite organically. However, another process has also impacted the adaptation of Thai silk.

As we will see in the following section, market demands and customer feedback have influenced modern day silk production. Today, a great deal of Thai silk that is exported into the international market is very contemporary. Below are the examples of modern Thai silk designs. They are 1) tree and flower, 2) plain, and 3) graphic designs.

1) Tree and flower

As can be seen from Figures 5.34-5.39 below, new elements and patterns have been introduced into the patterns, for example, the use of foreign flowers and new colors. The patterns have also been inspired by the new designers who have a design vision. Each season, they come out with new goods and products in order to attract buyers while still maintaining the exotic value of the traditional design.



Figure 5.34: Tree and Flower Design



Figure 5.35: Tree and Flower Design



Figure 5.36: Tree and Flower Design



Figure 5.37: Tree and Flower Design



Figure 5.38: Tree and Flower Design



Figure 5.39: Tree and Flower Design

Source: Figures 5.34-5.39 from www.jimthompson.com

Besides tree and flower patterns, plain designs are one of the most favored patterns and are very popular with foreign customers, especially those from western countries.

2) Plain

Plain patterns of various colors are very popular among the foreign buyers, especially those from western countries and Japan, where buyers have expressed a preference for simplicity. The colours have changed to be softer and are found in smoother hues which attract foreign buyers. For example, as we see in the following Figures 5.40-5.45, the colors of the cloth are salmon, silver, light blue, light yellow, light grey, light green, and dark red. These colors are preeneally favored. Now these colors are available in lighter hues of the color, and are suitable for buyers who like to dress or wear simple and classy garments. Plain patterned Thai silk is suitable for many occasions, and it allows the wearer to feel the natural silkness of Thai silk material.

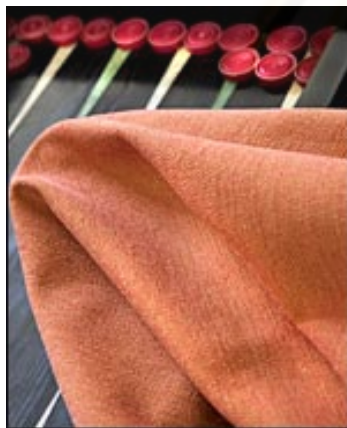


Figure5.40: Plain Salmon



Figure5.41: Plain Sliver



Figure5.42: Plain Light Blue

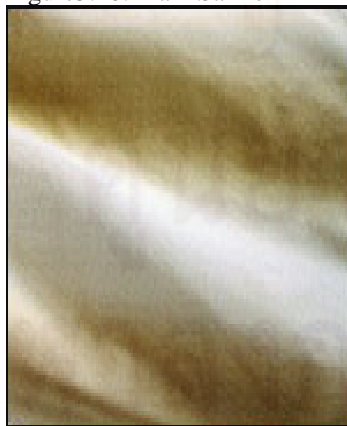


Figure5.43: Plain Light Yellow

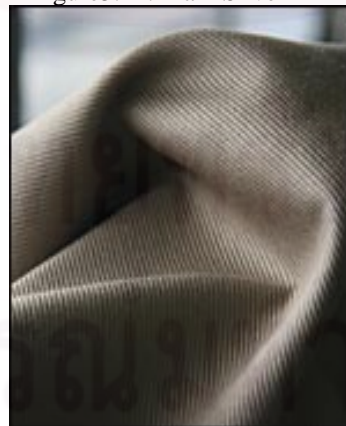


Figure5.44: Plain Light Gray

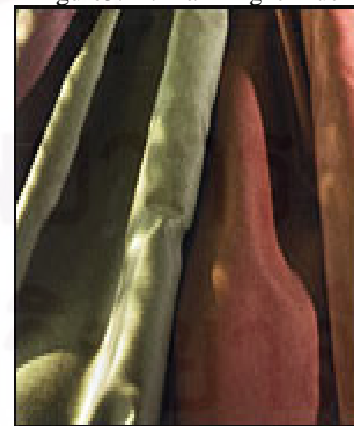


Figure5.45: Plain Light Green/
Dark Red

Source: Figures5.40-5.45 from www.jimthompson.com

In the past, weavers worked with a limited color palette, as the dyes came from natural sources such as insects, flowers, grasses, trees or plants. As weaving technology changes, chemical dyes are being used, giving the weavers and end users a greater variety of choices in color.

Another advance in weaving technology that has allowed patterns to adapt rapidly are automated looms. With this technology, manufacturers are able to produce silk more rapidly and they can now combine a greater number of colors in the piece of cloth. They are also able to change rapidly in response to market demands and orders almost overnight. The negative of this technology is that the quality is not as good as hand-woven goods.

Computers have also impacted the adaptation of Thai silk. Designers are able to program the machines to create intricate patterns, which the weaving programs can calculate and create work that was traditionally done by people in the communities. The following pictures are examples of graphic geometric shapes that were laid out by computers, as can be seen in the following illustration. Graphic design are also popular among foreign buyers

2) Graphic

Graphic design are also popular among foreign buyers. The graphic designs of Thai silk have been adapted in order to attract more young buyers who may not be familiar with the traditional designs of Thai silk. The graphic designs are often inspired by the building architecture. Below Figures 5.46-5.48 are examples of graphic designs.



Figure 5.46: Graphic Design

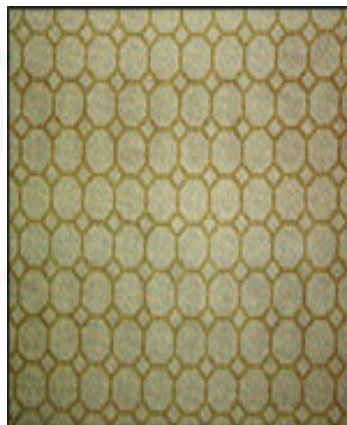


Figure 5.47: Graphic Design

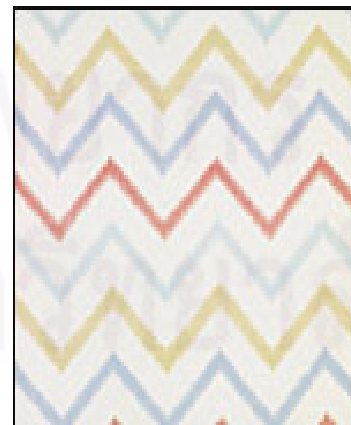


Figure 5.48: Graphic Design

Source: Figures 5.46-5.48 from www.jimthompson.com

As discussed above, graphic patterns are one example of the adaptation that Thai silk that has undergone adaptation to accommodate foreigners' tastes. Another adaptation that has proven very popular is silk textile in which traditional motifs and patterns have been re-interpreted for the modern market.

The traditional patterns and designs are very popular among foreigners as they represent the culture and story of the culture where it was made. However, these traditional designs had been adapted in order to communicate with the new buyers. According to the interview with Miss Chutima Dumsuwan, the public relation person of Jim Thompson Company, to attract the foreign customers, designers at the Jim Thompson Company have to do a lot of homework to create a new collection of patterns and designs. The inspiration for them was created from many famous village stories in the past and popular and classic movies. The inspiration did not only come from Thai culture but also from other Asian and Western cultures. She also mentioned that designers have to pull the most remarkable characters of each story to put in the fabric and use varieties of color to tell the story.

Miss Chutima Dumsuwan said that many times foreign customers helped them to come up with new styles of silk to suit their specific preferences because they ordered and created their own patterns and designs by merging two cultures together; tradition and modern or Thai tradition and Western tradition in various designs. Therefore, this concept highlights the idea of making silk in terms of the classy and plain colors, while still maintaining Thai culture and tradition.

Examples of collections of Jim Thompson can be seen on the Jim Thompson website¹³. They were created, each reflecting different inspiration such as the ancient Khmer civilization of Angkor Temple, or the classic western novel "Alice in Wonderland" and the Benjarong collection which shows a combination of Chinese heritage, Thai designs and Indian's Persian motifs. This adaptation of past and present traditions, Eastern and Western cultures continues to attract more buyers from international market.

¹³ From www.jimthompson.com.(May 22, 2008)

Some silk designs have been created by combining two cultures together. As we will see in the following section, others use classic motifs and re-interpret them, giving them a fresh new life and inspiration.



Figure5.49:Fusion Design

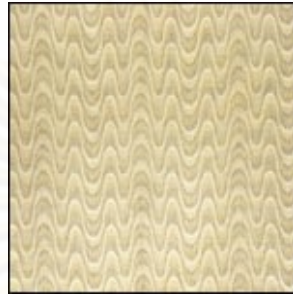


Figure5.50: Fusion Design



Figure5.51:Fusion Design

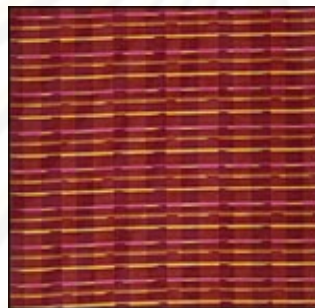


Figure5.52: Fusion Design



Figure5.53: Fusion Design

Source: Figures5.49-5.53 from www.jimthompson.com

The adaptation of Thai silk to foreigners' taste is perhaps the most important factor in the success of the internationalization of Thai silk. It is important because foreign customers are different from Thai people. The reason they buy silk may be different. The customers who buy Thai silk are from countries around the world. The main customers are from America, Japan, Western Europe, and Middle East such as United Arab Emirates, and Saudi Arabia, which has the highest level of income per capita in the world.

Because foreign customers who buy Thai silk are from all around the world as shown in Chapter 4, their taste may differ according to where they are from. Their tastes have been shaped according to their geographic, culture, tradition and social background.

One factor that proved Thai silk could adapt itself very well to the foreigners' taste is its adaptation to the changing fashions. Clothing fashion and styles vary greatly among different continents and cultures. For example, in Europe, fashion trends change every year. Every season designers introduce new trends. Thai silk is always able to adapt its style and can be tailored to suit clothing for each season, such as summer, winter or spring.

Thus the talents and visions of Thai silk designers are the significant driving force that made Thai silk suitable for foreign buyers according to their preferences. This was no easy task because the foreigners changing preference for fashion trends are not easy to understand and predict. In order to achieve this, the co-operation and vision of Thai designers is highly essential. Below are the examples of the adaptation of Thai silk designs by famous Thai designers.



Figure5.54: Adaptation Design



Figure5.55:Adaptation Design



Figure5.56: Adaptation Design



Figure5.57:Adaptation Design

Source: Figures5.54-5.57 from Sasiwan Dumrongsiri 1996



Figure5.58 Adaptation Design



Figure5.59 Adaptation Design



Figure5.60: Adaptation Design



Figure5.6: Adaptation Design



Figure5.62: Adaptation Design



Figure5.63: Adaptation Design

Source: Figures5.58-5.63 from Sasiwan Dumrongsiri 1996

Modern-day Thai silk designers are inspired by the world around them. They cite as their inspiration, their surroundings, environment, and the objects around them in their everyday lives, even watches. According to Mertens (2007), one of the most influential of today designers is Sasiwan Dumrongsiri who designed the patterns shown in Figures5.54-5.63. They are also concerned with commercial viability, draw inspiration from ancient artifacts, personal collections and antique cloths, and found objects. Tinanart Nisalak, the designer of Jim Thompson silk, says, “Designing textiles is a lot like cooking. You put in colours in the right proportions just like using salt, pepper and spice. I take a big stripe of red, add a little line of orange and some

green, all in the right balance, except that no one else can tell you what is right. It's your own intuition.”

5.4.2 Adaptation of purpose of Thai silk

Though silk is often popular and connected to clothing, there are many different uses for Thai silk most people were not aware of. According to Sara Kadolph (2007) the author of “Textiles”, Thai silk is worn by space astronauts. It is also used to produce carpets, sewing thread, type writer ribbons, as well as fishing lines. Thus Thai silk has been made into various products to serve variety of purposes. Products made from Thai silk are, for example, handbags, handkerchiefs, neckties, readymade clothes, scarves and even photo frames. Recently silk has become popular among foreign buyers for making home furnishing and decoration.

The following Figures 5.64-5.66 are examples of the adaptation of the purpose of Thai silk for things other than clothing. Thai silk is also popular as hanging wallpaper. The patterns that are popular for this purpose are scenery patterns of beautiful building, festivals or religious important events.



Figure 5.64: Temple Design

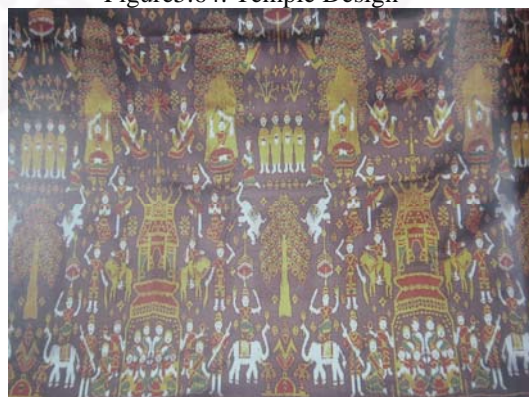


Figure 5.65: Religious Design

Source: Figures 5.64-5.65 from Panya Vijintanasan (2000)



Figure 5.66: Rockets ceremony ¹⁴ Design

Source: Figure 5.66 from Panya Vijintanasan (2000)

People began to use silk on the walls because the fabrics are quite beautiful. They add color and visual interest to the room. In some ways, silk on the walls tells a story. Tun Keyuraphan explains that people enjoy the beauty it adds to their homes.

Home Furnishing Products

Nevertheless, the most popular decorative fabric that the customers like to use in their house is silk fabric for curtain, bed sheet, sofa, cushion cover and pillows etc. Based on the interview with Mr. Tun Keyuraphan, most of their customers are foreigners who do not like to wear Thai silk clothes because of weather conditions at home and their lifestyles. They usually like to use them as decorative fabrics and home furnishings to make their homes more exotic and oriental. Moreover, Thai silk is fire resistant and therefore suitable as part of the furniture decoration for those who are aware of fire safety.

As for the most popular Thai silk product among the foreign customers according to table 5.5, sofa and curtains are the most popular because sofas and curtains are the main part of the household furniture. But the top ranked uses varied among different countries. For example, sofas are the most popular Thai silk products in Europe, the Middle East, and Australia. And curtains are the most popular Thai silk products in

¹⁴ The Rocket Ceremony is one of the traditional ceremonies in Northeastern Thailand.

America, East Asia, New Zealand, South America and Africa. In addition, the use of Thai silk for bed sheet is the least popular among all regions.

The use of Thai silk as clothing is the least popular purpose for foreign buyers in all regions. This might be due to the different weather conditions, which make Thai silk not suitable for wearers in those countries.

Table 5.5: What kind of Thai silk furniture do you own?

Items	America	Europe	East Asia	Middle East	Australia	New Zealand	South America	Africa
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
1 Sofa	32.2	38.8	27.0	46.7	43.5	35.4	37.1	31.7
2 Bed sheet	28.8	22.4	30.4	11.1	17.7	14.6	17.7	15.0
3 Curtain	37.3	34.7	39.1	40.0	35.5	39.6	43.5	41.7
4 None	1.7	4.1	3.5	2.2	3.2	10.4	1.6	11.7

The table 5.6 below indicates the result that besides the silk clothing, furniture is very famous and commonly used in all regions.

Table 5.6: Which kind of silk products do you like the most?

Items	America	Europe	East Asia	Middle East	Australia	New Zealand	South America	Africa
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
1 Clothes	6.8	6.1	60.0	35.6	9.7	22.9	17.7	18.3
2 Furniture	47.5	36.7	22.6	35.6	46.8	39.6	41.9	40.0
3 Accessories	42.4	51.0	13.9	26.7	41.9	35.4	30.6	30.0
4 Others	3.4	6.1	3.5	2.2	1.6	2.1	9.7	11.7

According to the table 5.6, item (1) shows that the Thai silk products as clothing is more popular for foreign buyers in East Asia and Middle East while it is not popular in Western countries like Europe, America and Australia. It is popular in East Asia and Middle East because of the similarity in cultures and weather conditions. People in Asia always wear it on special occasions because of the highly value of silk which gives the wearers the elegant look and pride. On the other hand, people in western

countries tend to have a bigger size body and the shiny feature of Thai silk clothing will make them look bigger and older for young people.

Item (2) shows that Thai silk products such as furniture are quite popular for all regions because Thai silk furniture is very exotic and could add luxurious atmosphere to the house. Foreigners love to find Thai silk materials for sofa and curtain the most because these are the main furniture in the houses. Other popular Thai silk furniture includes bed sheets and cushion pillows. In contrast, Thai silk furniture can be highly expensive due to the amount of fabric being used. Therefore, many people can not afford to buy it. Moreover, Thai silk furniture is also very difficult to take care of. Therefore, some families with small children or dogs may be afraid of the damage to their furniture caused by their unpredictable behavior.

Based on item (3), other Thai silk accessories products are also popular among foreign buyers. Moreover, the item (4) is about accessories, such as dolls, key chains, pencil cases, cosmetic cases, hand bags, hats and scarves. These are perfect souvenirs for foreigners who have visited Thailand. They are small, which makes them affordable for most travelers and they have become famous gifts from Thailand. In contrast, the receiver may not aware of price and value of Thai silk which made the buyers considered buying other things for souvenirs from Thailand.

Nevertheless, the ability to adapt Thai silk to be used for home furniture and decorations has made Thai silk very popular among western countries. According to the interview of Mr. Juckapong Panomuppattum, the Owner of LP THAI SILK, the foreigners love to find the exotic furniture and beautiful cloth to decorate their house. Silk materials also offer features and quality that other material could not offer. Silk table sheets for the dining room add softness to the room. Many bedrooms display a silk bed spread, blanket, sheets or matching pillows. Silk curtains and other home accessories can really add flair to any room in the home. In other words, Thai silk furniture is one of the most sought after for home decoration in foreign countries.

Figures 5.67-5.70 are examples of the adaptation of purpose of Thai silk. Silk for use in accessories is also very popular among foreign customers—one such example is scarves. As can be seen in these pictures, the designs and patterns of them look

modern. Especially, the colors of silk are mostly in light and soft colors, such as light beige, light orange, purple, green, red, brown, white, and metallic gold. The patterns are designed with graphics, lines and various shapes.



Figure5.67: Modern Design



Figure5.68: Modern Design



Figure5.69: Modern Design



Figure5.70:Modern Design

Source: Figures5.67-5.70 from www.jimthompson.com

Besides the clothing and accessories silk products, silk home furnishing products also very attractive and popular to use in foreign house. Below are the examples home furnishing products in adapted patterns and more modern styles.(See Figures5.71-5.79)



Figure5.71: Home Furnishing Products



Figure5.72: Home Furnishing Products

Source: Figures5.71-5.72 from www.jimthompson.com



Figure5.73: Home Furnishing Products



Figure5.74: Home Furnishing Products



Figure5.75: Home Furnishing Products



Figure5.76: Home Furnishing Products



Figure5.77: Home Furnishing Products



Figure5.78: Home Furnishing Products

Source: Figures5.73-5.78 from www.jimthompson.com

As we see, there are many patterns and designs including geometrics, stripes, floral, botanicals and figures to suit contemporary international interiors. These designs of fabrics are used for upholstery, curtains and soft furnishings to suit all lifestyles.

According to Mr. Juckapong Panomuppatum, “adaptability” is the key to the success of the Internationalization of Thai Silk. As illustrated above, Thai silk has indeed adapted and continues to do so, each season giving international consumers a greater variety of colors, patterns, and textures.

5.5 Summary

This chapter deals with four factors which contribute to the internationalization of Thai silk. First, the support from many important organizations helps strengthen the foundation of Thai silk in different ways according to their specialties and responsibilities. Second, the world political and economic conditions also affect the internationalization of Thai silk. The rise and fall of the world economy affects the Thai silk industry by increase or decrease the purchasing power of the international buyers. The world political situation can also increase or decrease the confidents of both buyers and producers of the Thai silk industry.

The third factor that contributes greatly to the internationalization of Thai silk is the great varieties and designs of Thai silk. Because traditionally Thai silk is weaved by hands, not by machines, and every pattern of Thai silks is unique and this is what foreigners like the most about Thai silk. Other famous Thai silk patterns also carry with them a tradition and culture of where it was made. Therefore, this made Thai silk more exotic than other kinds of silk.

The last factor is the adaptation of Thai silk to suit the changing trend of the fashion world in order to keep up with the changing preference of the buyers. Thai silk has adapted itself in terms of designs and purposes for home decoration and furniture which has made it became more famous.

CHAPTER VI

CONCLUSION

This chapter begins with a summary of the study followed by a discussion of certain points. Finally, to conclude this thesis, there is suggestion for future research.

6.1 Summary

The purpose of this study is to analyze the extent to which Thai silk is internationalized and the factors which contribute to the internationalization of the Thai silk industry. The data of this study was taken from questionnaire answered by five hundred foreign customers of Thai silk in the different locations such as Silom, Sathorn, Siam and Siam Paragon shopping center, and residential areas such as Thonglor and Ekamai and from interviewing five Thai silk shop owners dealing with the industry and business of Thai silk. The analysis was conducted both quantitatively and qualitatively.

Some part of the data was analyzed by using descriptive statistics: means, frequency and the other part was analyzed qualitatively by interpretation. The result of the analysis shows that Thai silk has gained much reputation in the countries around the world such as America which is the largest buyers, Japan, Western Europe, and Middle East such as United Arab Emirates and Saudi Arabia, Singapore, Malaysia, New Zealand, Australia, South Korea, etc. This generates great income of over 40,000 million to Thai people.

Regarding the factors contributing to the internationalization of Thai silk, five factors were found that contributed to the development of Thai silk to an international level.

The first factor is the support from important organizations which can be divided into internal and external support. The internal supports are public and private organizations are divided. Public organizations are supported by the government. They support Thai silk industry in terms of the improvement of skill labor, the standard of living of the local producers, and the transmission of the knowledge of

silk making from one generation to another. Examples of the public organizations are the Ministry of Agriculture and Cooperatives, the Ministry of Industry, the Ministry of Commerce, the Ministry of Finance, the Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Culture, and Queen Sirikit's SUPPORT Foundation. As for private organizations, they are silk companies which have been working for long to improve Thai silk with new technology, making process, in order to ensure profits. Examples of internal private organizations are International Silk Association (ISA) which attempted to promote silk production and process of trade and Silk Painters International (SPIN), which provides technological support, encourages professional development of silk artists so that they can go worldwide. The external support is from international organizations such as the World Trade Organization (WTO) and the Free Trade Agreement (FTA) with other countries. The external support helps improve the Thai silk industry.

The second factor is the world political and economic situation, which has influence on Thai silk industry. For instance, during the past decade the rising of Chinese economy has great impact on the export of Thai silk. China produces cheaper silk than any other competitors and it makes Thai silk stronger because it has to compete with the quality and high price of silk. In addition, this challenge gives Thailand opportunity to create a free trade agreement with China and it could provide the largest market for Thai silk export. FTA could improve the export of Thai silk as it should reduce the exporting barrier such as tariff.

The third factor is the great variety of designs of Thai silk. Thai silk has varieties of patterns and designs according to the region. Most foreign customers like the traditional designs of Thai silk because they represent Thai culture. This contributes to the popularity of Thai silk in the international domain.

The last factor is the adaptation of Thai silk to suit foreigners' taste and preferences. Customers from different countries tend to have different purposes and preference of buying silk, and this study shows that Thai silk is able to adapt to suit the foreigners by adopting modern and Western patterns while maintaining the main characteristic of Thai silk texture and also by changing the function of Thai silk from being used

only for clothing to being also used for home furnishing. This adaptation of Thai silk is very important because it makes Thai silk industry more successful internationally.

6.2 Discussion

Thai silk has natural characteristics with its bump and hump features, which make it the top quality silk. The fact that Thai silk is not weaved by machines but traditionally weaved by hands, made it become more exotic and valuable as every silk pattern cannot be the same as others. The patterns carry different stories and vary according to the weavers and their traditional backgrounds.

Nevertheless, Thai silk industry is facing bigger challenge in the world competition as other silk producing countries are constantly developing their silk qualities at the cheaper price. The development of artificial silk also damages the luxurious image of the Thai silk. In order to cope with this challenge, Thai silk industry needs to implement carefully a strategic marketing plan. A constant international road show of Thai silk products is necessary to strengthen the high end position. There is also more potential of Thai silk to explore. For example, more designs of Thai silk could be promoted to be well known. Moreover, there should be more research to develop the producing process of the Thai silk. More benefits and earnings could be promoted to the local Thai silk producers in villages in order to encourage the local people to participate and protect this industry.

6.3 Suggestion for further study

This thesis has analyzed the extent to which Thai silk is internationalized and factors behind it. A future study concerning Thai silk industry involving in other topics would provide further support for the internationalization of Thai silk.

Further research could be done on the effect of Free Trade Agreement on Thai silk industry. The rules of each FTA are very trivial. Some of the rules are very conditional and carried broad implication which needs a very careful interpretation and study in order to be truly beneficial to the silk industry in Thailand.

Future research might also investigate the impression and awareness of Thai silk among young Thai people. For Thai people, silk is still considered to be the clothing for old people. It would be of good interest to know the extent to which Thai silk is popular and could be localized in the heart of the new generation of Thai people.



ศูนย์วิทยทรัพยากร
จุฬาลงกรณ์มหาวิทยาลัย

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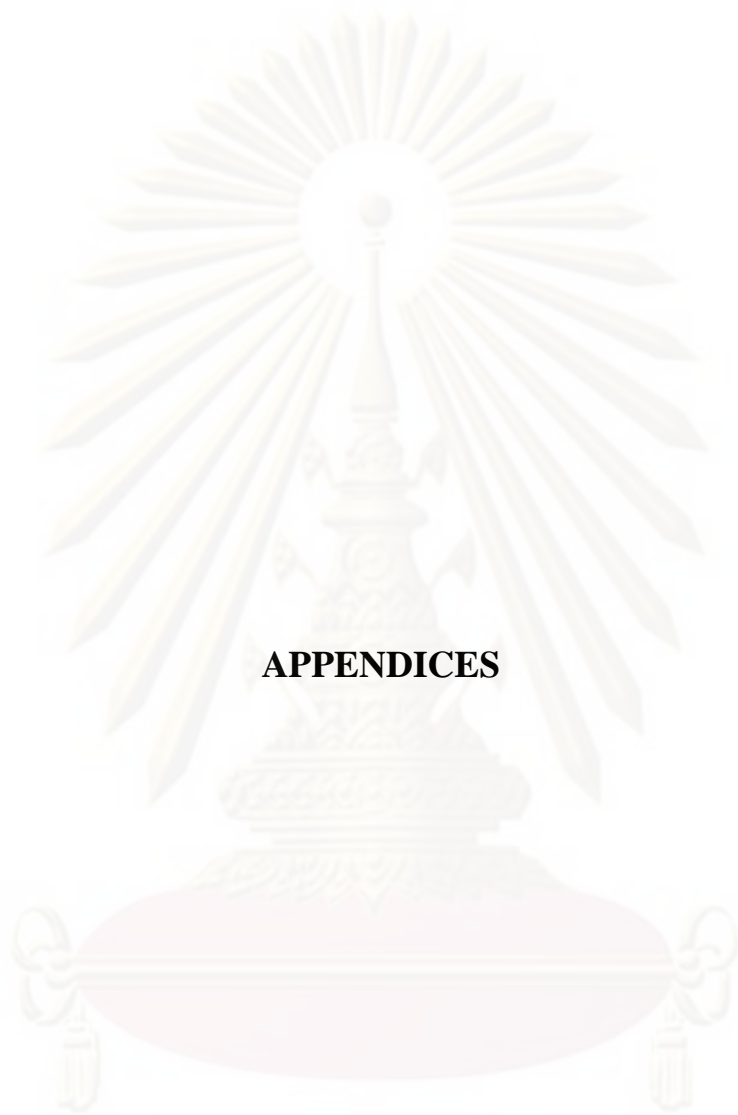
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APPENDICES

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APPENDIX A

Statistics showing the variation of the foreign respondents according to gender, age, status, region, education level and occupation

Part 1: Personal Information

Table A 1.1 : Gender

	Gender	Frequency	Percent
1	Male	179	35.8
2	Female	321	64.2
Total		500	100.0

Chart A 1.1 : Gender

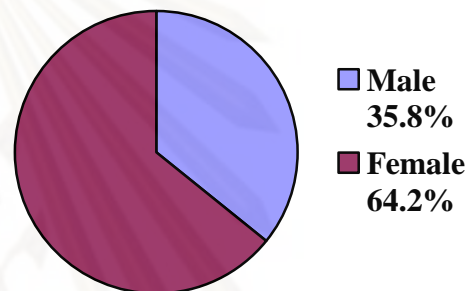


Table A 1.2 : Age

	Age	Frequency	Percent
1	15-24 Yrs	12	2.4
2	25-34 Yrs	97	19.4
3	35-44 Yrs	182	36.4
4	45-54 Yrs	184	36.8
5	55 Yrs and above	25	5.0
Total		500	100.0

Chart A 1.2 : Age

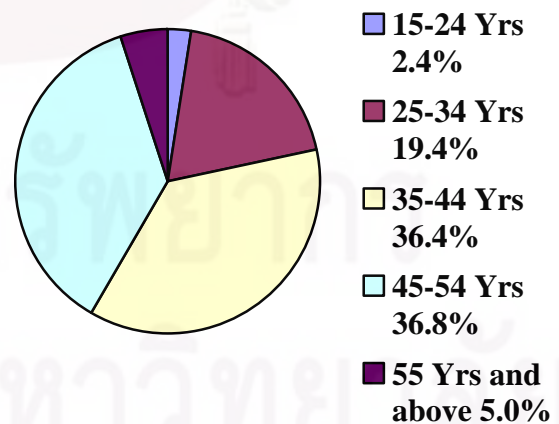


Table A 1.3: Status

Status	Frequency	Percent
1 Single	177	35.4
2 Married	209	41.8
3 Widow	50	10.0
4 Separated	64	12.8
Total	500	100.0

Chart A 1.3 : Status

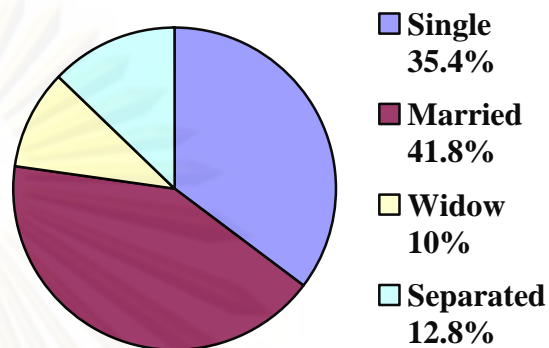


Table A 1.4: Region

Region	Frequency	Percent
1 America	59	11.8
2 Europe	49	9.8
3 East Asia	115	23.0
4 Middle East	45	9.0
5 Australia	62	12.4
6 New Zealand	48	9.6
7 South America	62	12.4
8 Africa	60	12.0
Total	500	100.00

Chart A 1.4 : Region

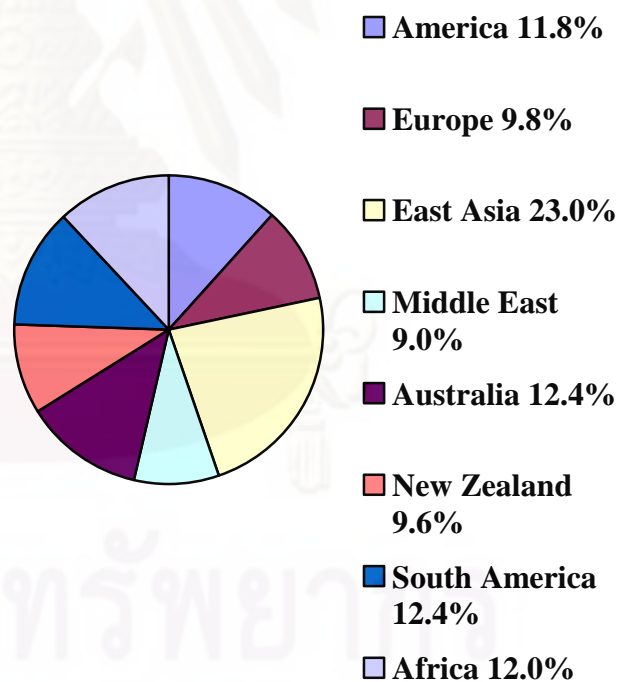


Table A 1.5 Region and Gender

Region		Gender		Total
		Male	Female	
1	America	29	30	59
2	Europe	14	35	49
3	East Asia	37	78	115
4	Middle East	18	27	45
5	Australia	19	43	62
6	New Zealand	22	26	48
7	South America	16	46	62
8	Africa	24	36	60
Total		179	321	500

Region and Gender

Chart A 1.5 Male

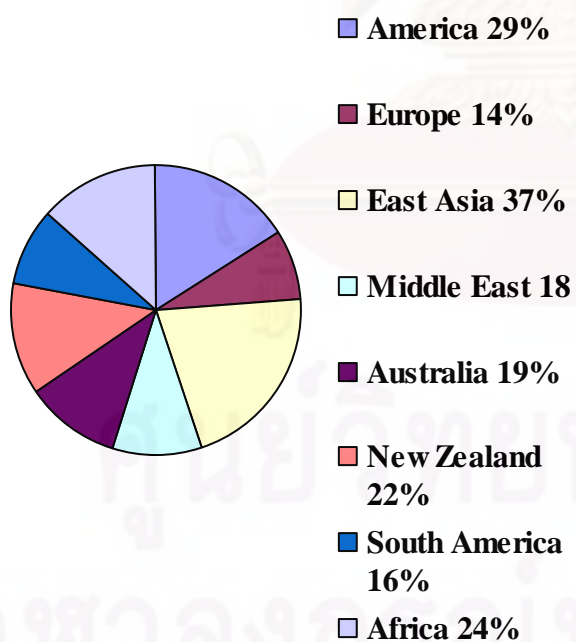


Chart A 1.6 :Female

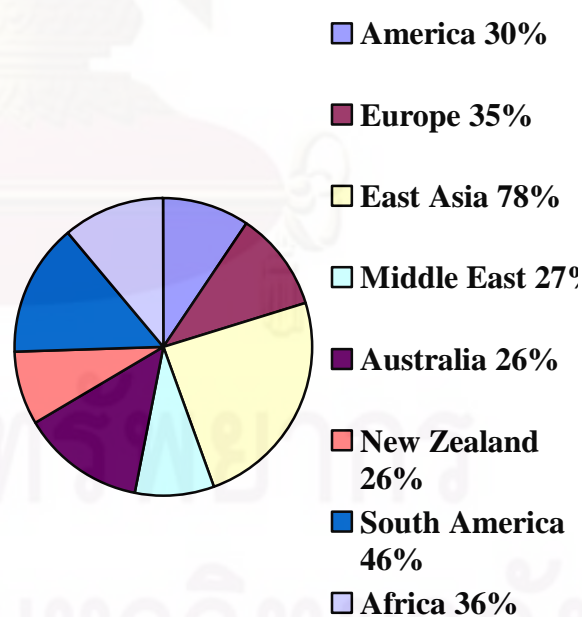


Table A 1.6 : Education level

Education level		Frequency	Percent
1	Lower than Bachelor Degree	97	19.4
2	Bachelor Degree	262	52.4
3	Higher than Bachelor Degree	141	28.2
Total		500	100.0

Chart A 1.7 : Education level

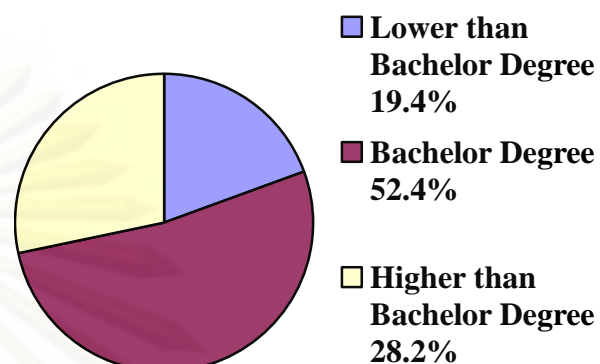


Table A 1.7 : Occupation

Occupation		Frequency	Percent
1	Student	69	13.8
2	Government Official	267	53.4
3	Private Employee	81	16.2
4	Own Business	83	16.6
Total		500	100.0

Chart A 1.8 : Occupation

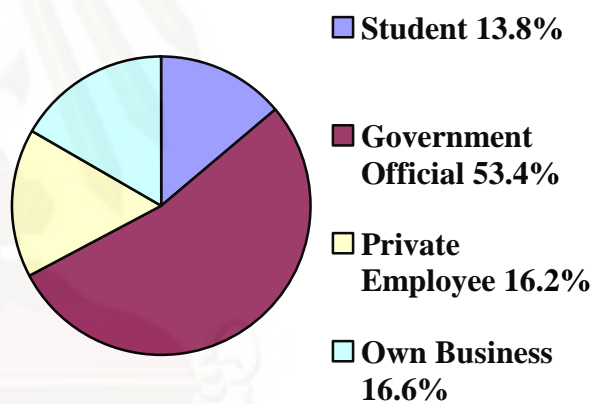
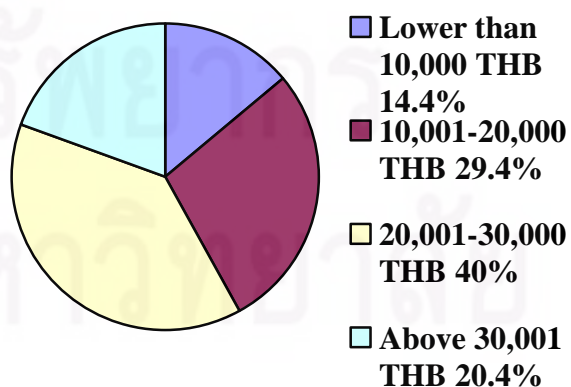


Table A 1.8 : Income

Income		Frequency	Percent
1	Lower than 10,001 THB	72	14.4
2	10,001 - 20,000 THB	147	29.4
3	20,001 - 30,000 THB	200	40.0
4	Above 30,001 THB	81	16.2
Total		500	100.0

Chart A 1.9 : Income



APPENDIX B

Statistics showing the popularity, satisfaction, and the prestige of Thai silk among foreigners.

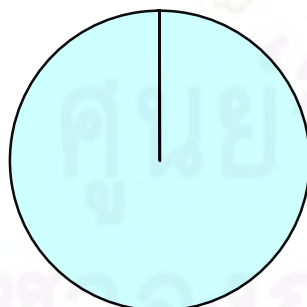
Part 2: Your opinion on “Internationalization of Thai silk”

Table B 2.1 : Your opinion on “Internationalization of Thai silk”

Items		Frequency	Percent
1	Have you ever heard of Thai silk?	500	100
2	Do you recognize the uniqueness of Thai silk?	397	79.4
3	Do you like Thai silk product?	461	92.2
4	Have you ever purchased or own the Thai silk?	219	43.8
5	Have your friends or family members own Thai silk products?	342	68.4
6	Can you recognize the different of silk between Thai silk and the other silk products such as Chinese and India silk?	119	23.8

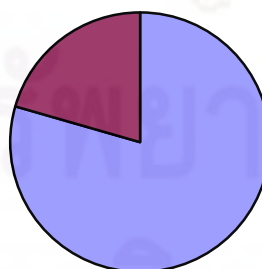
Your opinion on “Internationalization of Thai silk”

Chart B 2.1 Have you ever heard of Thai silk?



□ Have you ever heard of Thai silk? 100%

Chart B 2.2 Do you recognize the uniqueness of Thai silk?



■ Yes 79.4%
■ No 20.6%

Chart B 2.3 Do you like Thai silk product?

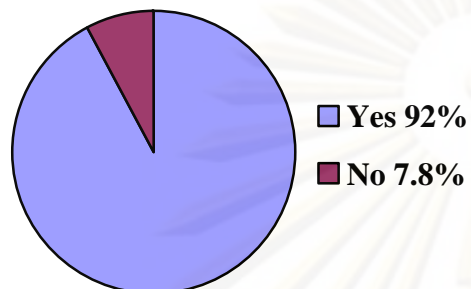


Chart B 2.4 Have you ever purchased or own the Thai silk?

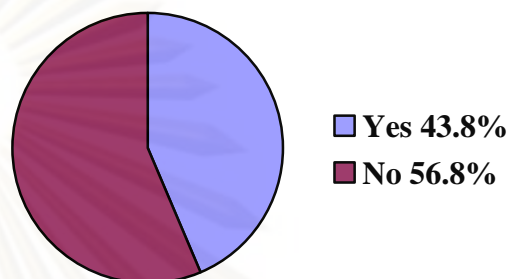


Chart B 2.5 Have your friends or family members own Thai silk products?

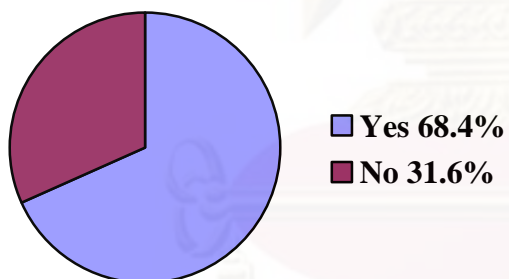


Chart B 2.6 Can you recognize the different of silk between Thai silk and the other silk products such as Chinese and India silk?

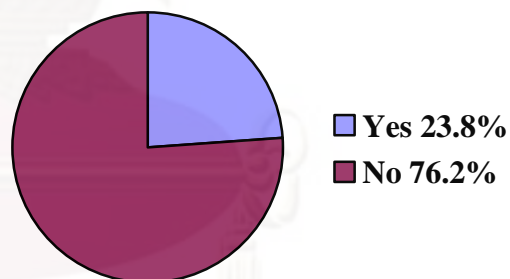


Table B 2.2 : Your opinion on “Internationalization of Thai silk”

Items		Gender%	
		Male	Female
1	Have you ever heard of Thai silk?	100	100
2	Do you recognize the uniqueness of Thai silk?	88	75
3	Do you like Thai silk product?	86	95
4	Have you ever purchased or own the Thai silk?	12	61
5	Have your friends or family members own Thai silk products?	62	71
6	Can you recognize the different of silk between Thai silk and the other silk products such as Chinese and India silk?	7	33

Your opinion on “Internationalization of Thai silk”

Chart B 2.7 Have you ever heard of Thai silk?

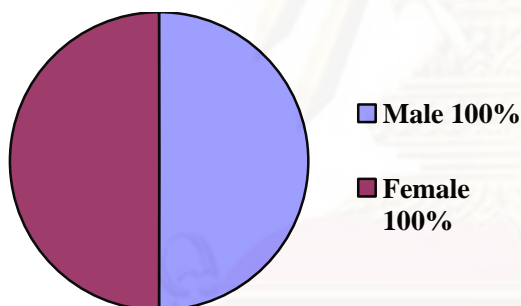


Chart B 2.8 Do you recognize the uniqueness of Thai silk?

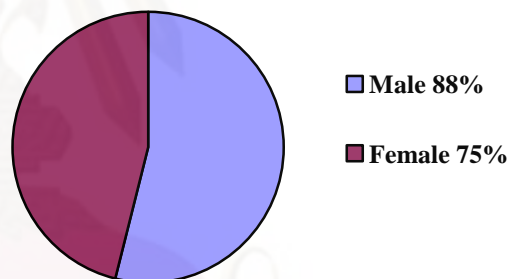


Chart B 2.9 Do you like Thai silk product?

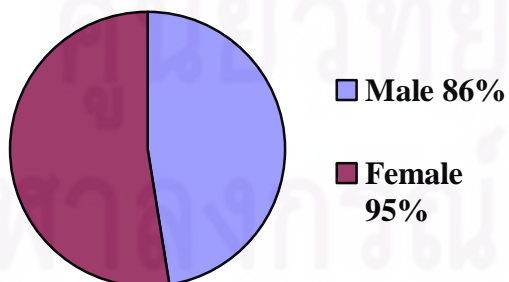


Chart B 2.10 Have you ever purchased or own the Thai silk?

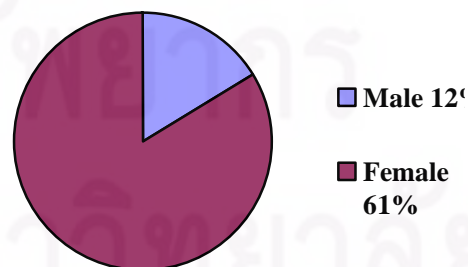


Chart B 2.11 Have your friends or family members own Thai silk products?

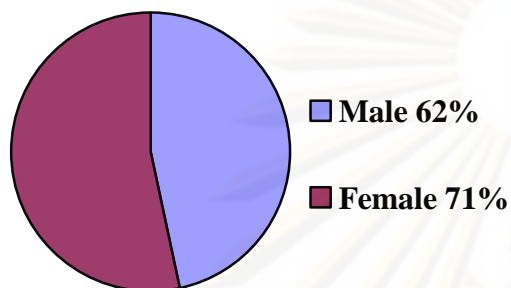


Chart B 2.12 Can you recognize the different of silk between Thai silk and the other silk products such as Chinese and India silk?

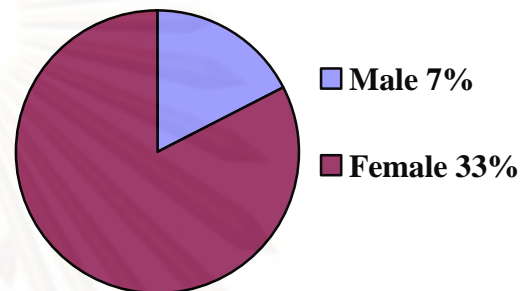
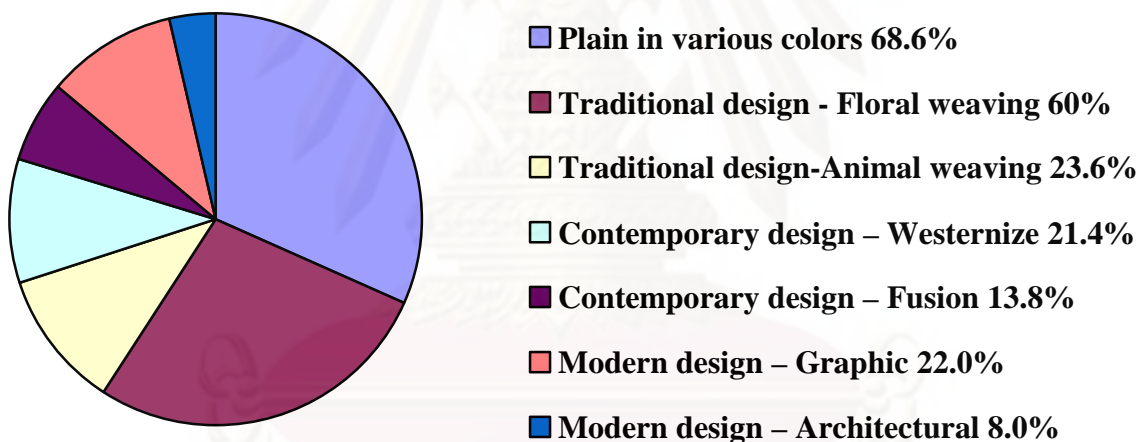


Table B 2.3 : What is your favorite pattern of Thai silk?

	What is your favorite pattern of Thai silk?	Frequency/500	Percent
1	Plain in various colors	343	68.6
2	Traditional design - Floral weaving	300	60.0
3	Traditional design - Animal weaving	118	23.6
4	Contemporary design – Westernize	107	21.4
5	Contemporary design – Fusion	69	13.8
6	Modern design – Graphic	110	22.0
7	Modern design – Architectural	40	8.0

Chart B 2.13 What is your favorite pattern of Thai silk?



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Table B 2.4 : What is your favorite pattern of Thai silk? * Region

Items		America (%)	Europe (%)	East Asia (%)	Middle East (%)	Australia (%)	New Zealand (%)	South America (%)	Africa (%)
1	Plain in various colors	9.8	7.8	7.8	6.8	11.8	9.3	1.3	2.8
2	Traditional design- Floral weaving	3.8	2.5	17.3	8.3	2.8	0.5	8.5	9.5
3	Traditional design- Animal weaving	3.5	2.3	6.0	2.8	2.5	2.8	2.5	10.5
4	Contemporary design- Westernize	9.3	3.0	6.3	2.5	4.5	2.8	4.0	2.0
5	Contemporary design- Fusion	0.5	2.5	4.3	2.0	2.5	1.5	2.3	1.8
6	Modern design – Graphic	2.3	8.5	18.0	2.5	9.3	5.3	3.5	3.5
7	Modern design - Architectural	1.5	1.0	2.8	0.3	1.8	6.0	10.5	1.0

What is your favorite pattern of Thai silk?

Chart B 2.14 Plain in various colors

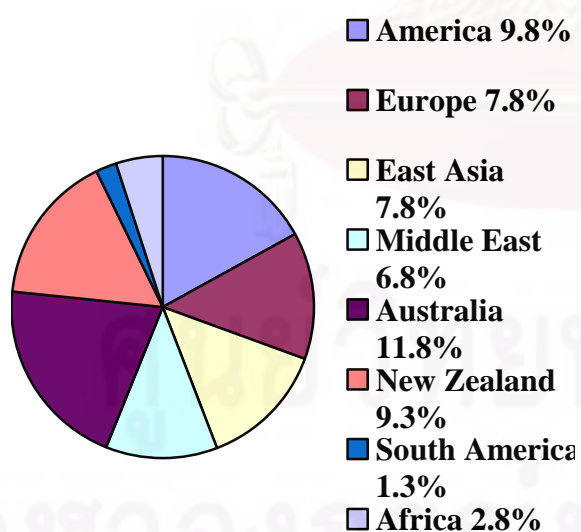
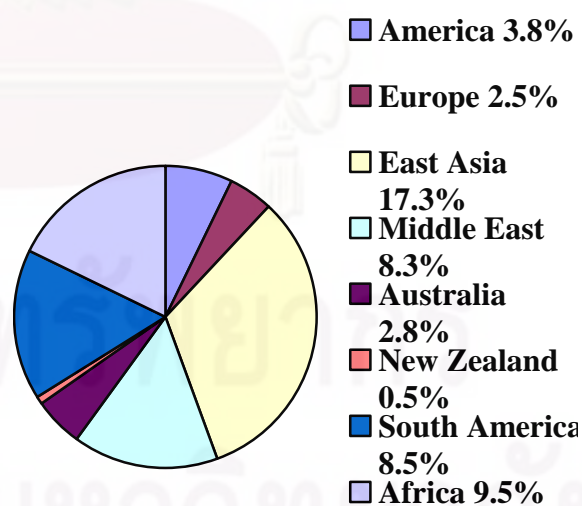
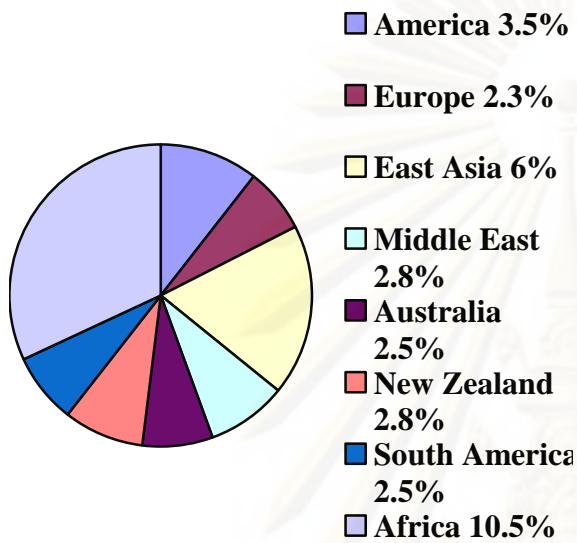


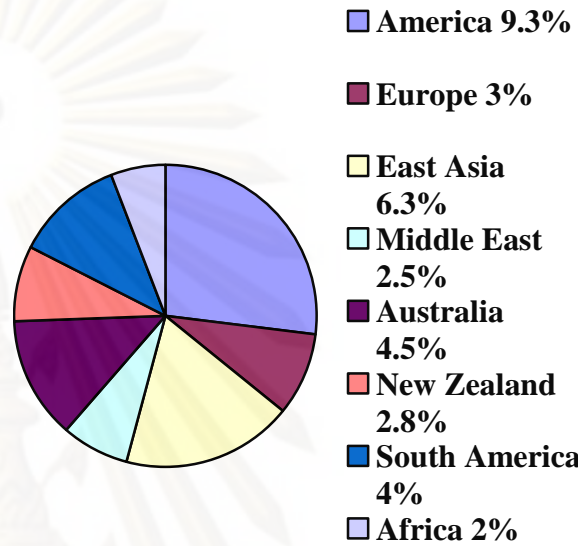
Chart B 2.15 Traditional design - Floral weaving



**Chart B 2.16 Traditional design -
Animal weaving**



**Chart B 2.17 Contemporary design –
Westernize**



**Chart B 2.18 Contemporary design –
Fusion**

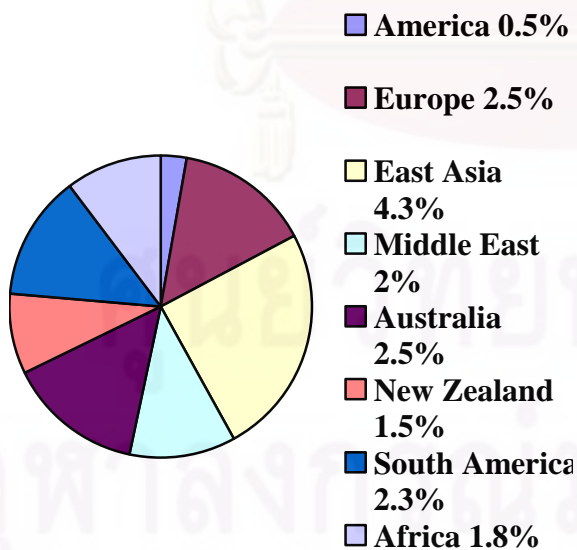


Chart B 2.19 Modern design – Graphic

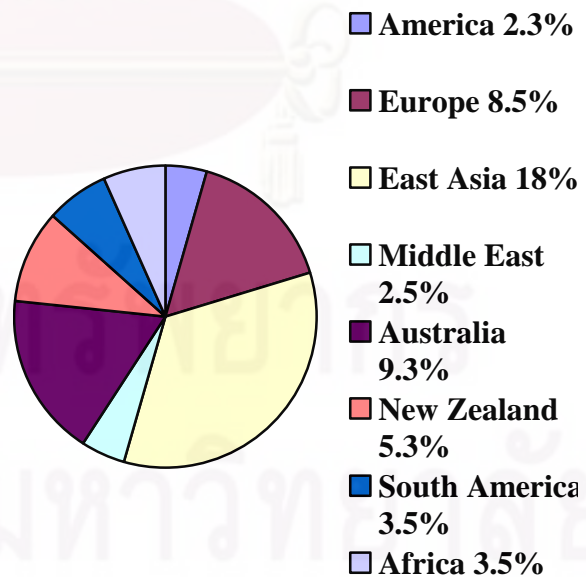
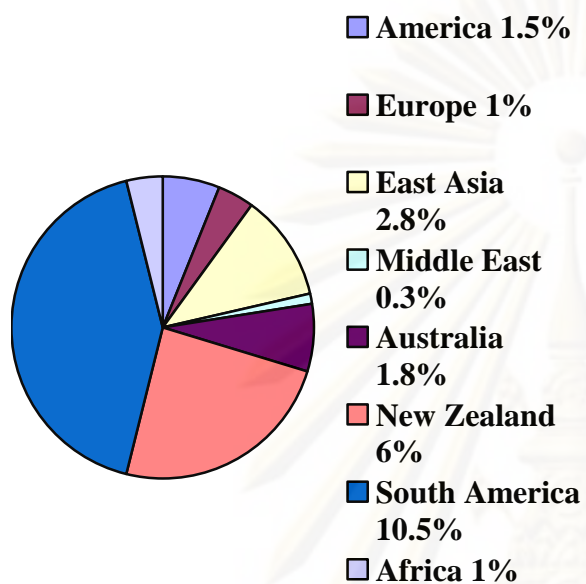


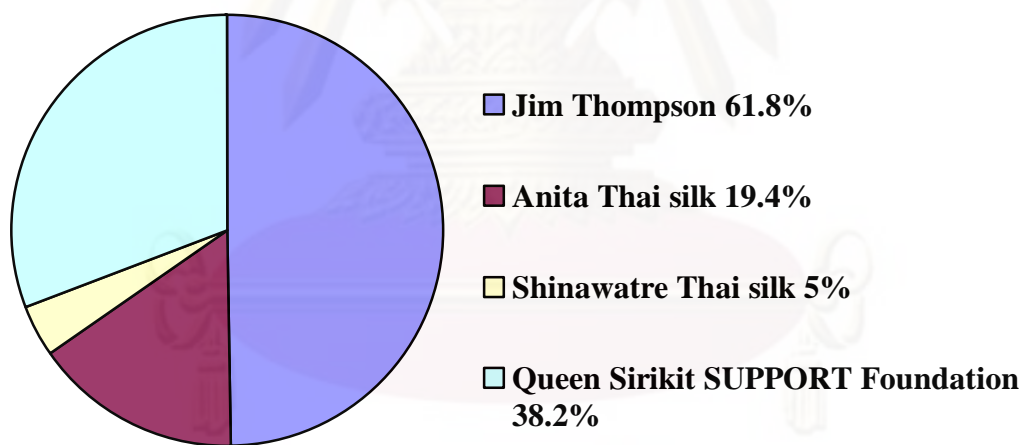
Chart B 2.20 Modern design - Architectural

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Table B 2.5 : What is your favorite brand name of Thai silk?

What is your favorite brand name of Thai silk?		Frequency	Percent
1	Jim Thompson	309	61.8
2	Anita Thai silk	97	19.4
3	Shinawatre Thai silk	25	5.0
4	Queen Sirikit SUPPORT Foundation	191	38.2

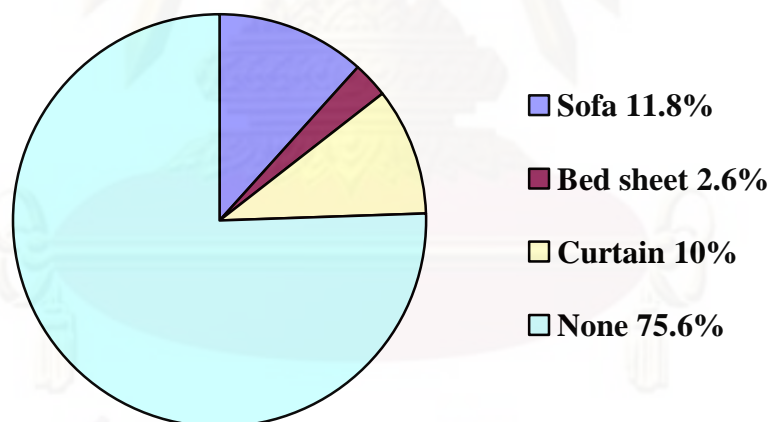
Chart B 2.21 : What is your favorite brand name of Thai silk?



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Table B 2.6 : What kind of Thai silk furniture do you own?

What kind of Thai silk furniture do you own?		Frequency	Percent
1	Sofa	59	11.8
2	Bed sheet	13	2.6
3	Curtain	50	10.0
4	None	378	75.6

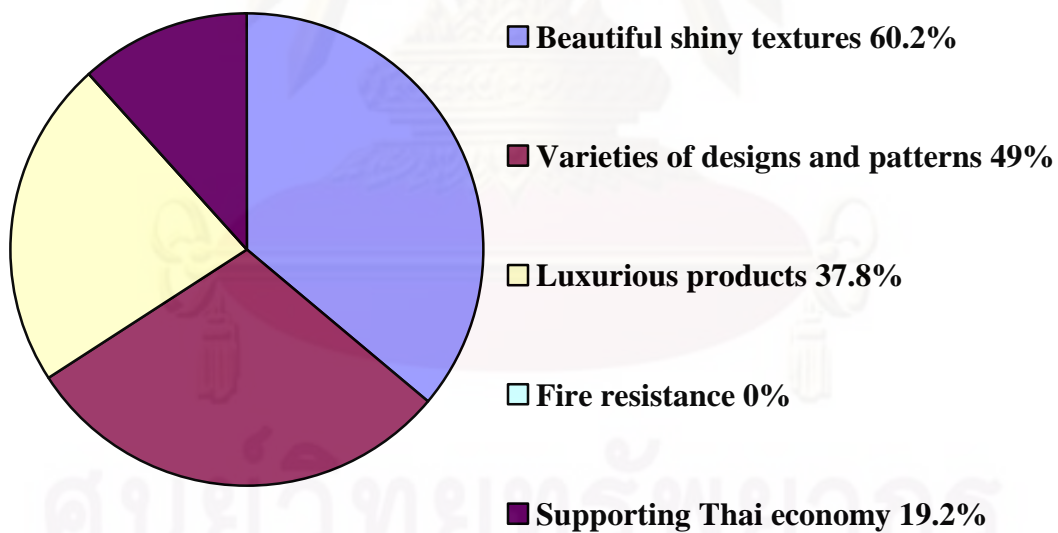
Chart B 2.22: What kind of Thai silk furniture do you own?

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Table B 2.7: What do you like about Thai silk products?

What do you like about Thai silk products?		Frequency	Percent
1	Beautiful shiny textures	301	60.2
2	Varieties of designs and patterns	245	49
3	Luxurious products	189	37.8
4	Fire resistance	0	0
5	Supporting Thai economy	96	19.2

Chart B 2.23 : What do you like about Thai silk products?



APPENDIX C

Statistic showing the acceptance of Thai silk at the international level according to the different tastes and preferences of foreigners.

Part 3: Your opinion on “Internationalization of Thai silk”

Table C 3.1 : Your opinion on “Internationalization of Thai silk”

Internationalization of Thai silk	
Thai silk products	
	Mean
1. Do you think Thai silk is expensive?	4.15
2. Do you think Thai silk has good quality?	4.43
3. Do you think Thai silk is the priority export product of Thailand?	3.85
4. Do you think Thai silk can compete with other silk in the world market in term of price and quality?	4.22
5. Do you think Thai silk can represent Thailand?	4.31
Designs and patterns	
	Mean
1. Do you think Thai silk designs and patterns are unique from the other countries?	4.46
2. Do you think Thai silk designs can represent Thai culture?	4.39
3. Do you think Thai silk has beautiful variety of patterns and color to suit for the foreigners’ taste?	3.98
4. Do you think Thai silk design and pattern can adapt well for foreigners’ preferences?	3.96
Popularity	
	Mean
1. Do you think Thai silk is known as a good home furnishing and decorative fabric for the foreigners?	3.99
2. Do you think Thai silk shop is popular among the foreigner?	3.93
3. Do you think Thai silk can be the rank of the world market?	4.20
4. Do you think Jim Thompson Thai silk company is popular among foreigners?	4.11

Chart C 3.1 : Thai silk products

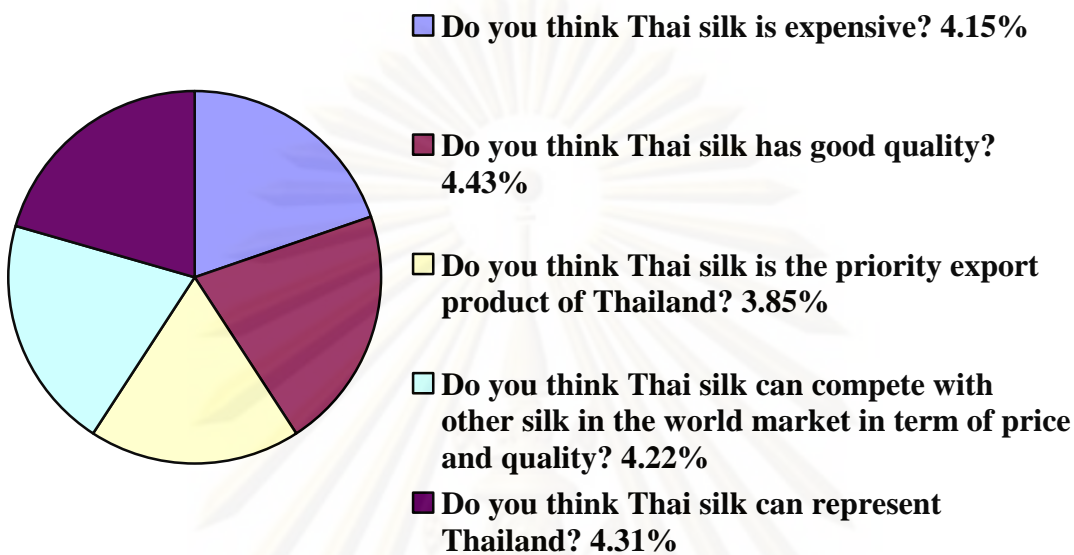


Chart C 3.2 : Designs and patterns

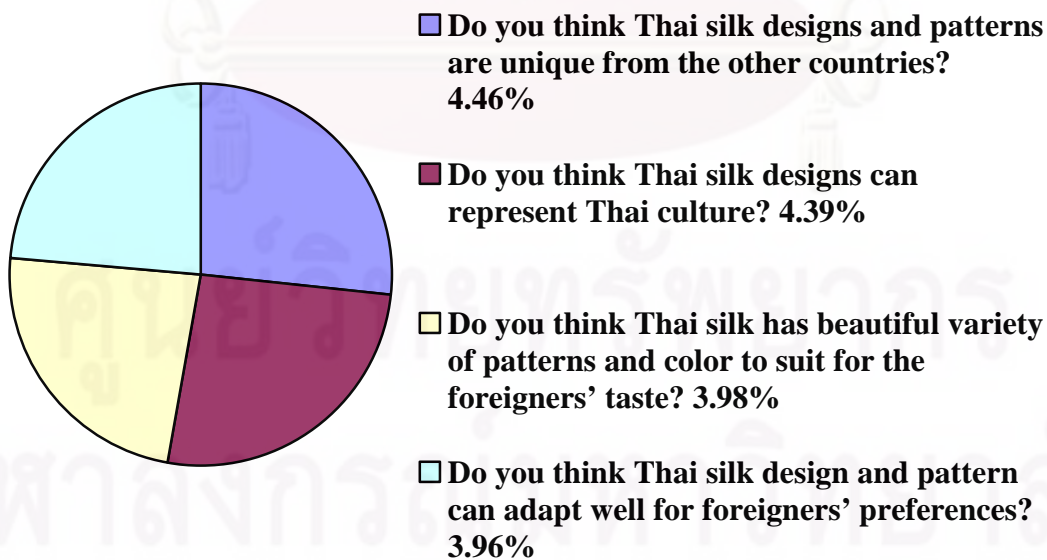
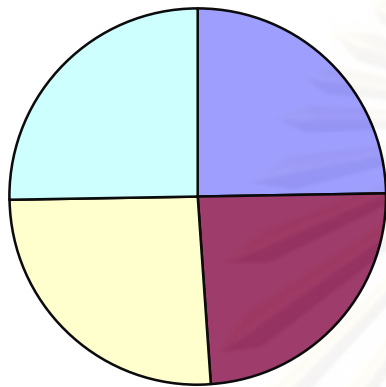


Chart C 3.3 : Popularity



■ Do you think Thai silk is known as a good home furnishing and decorative fabric for the foreigners? 3.99%

■ Do you think Thai silk shop is popular among the foreigner? 3.93%

■ Do you think Thai silk can be the rank of the world market? 4.20%

■ Do you think Jim Thompson Thai silk company is popular among foreigners? 4.11%

Table C 3.2 : Which kind of silk products do you like the most? * Region

Items	America (%)	Europe (%)	East Asia (%)	Middle East (%)	Australia (%)	New Zealand (%)	South America (%)	Africa (%)
1 Clothes	6.8	6.1	60.0	35.6	9.7	22.9	17.7	18.3
2 Furniture	47.5	36.7	22.6	35.6	46.8	39.6	41.9	40.0
3 Accessories	42.4	51.0	13.9	26.7	41.9	35.4	30.6	30.0
4 Others	3.4	6.1	3.5	2.2	1.6	2.1	9.7	11.7

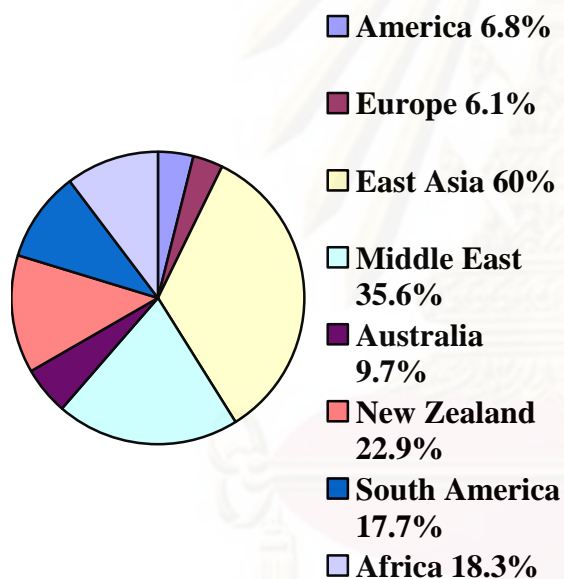
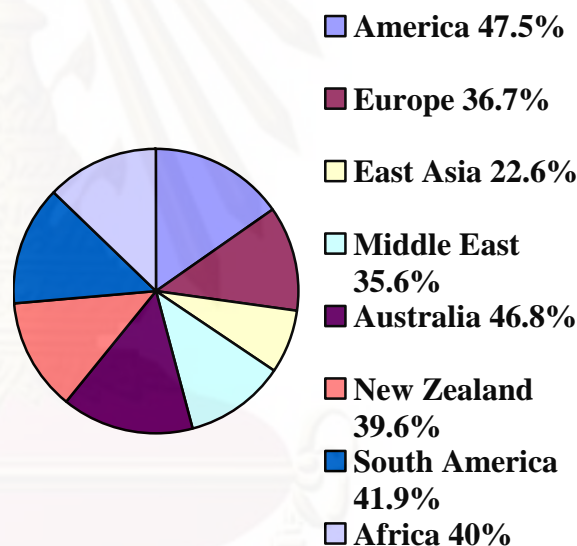
Which kind of silk products do you like the most? * Region**Chart C 3.4 Clothes****Chart C 3.5 Furniture**

Chart C 3.6 Accessories

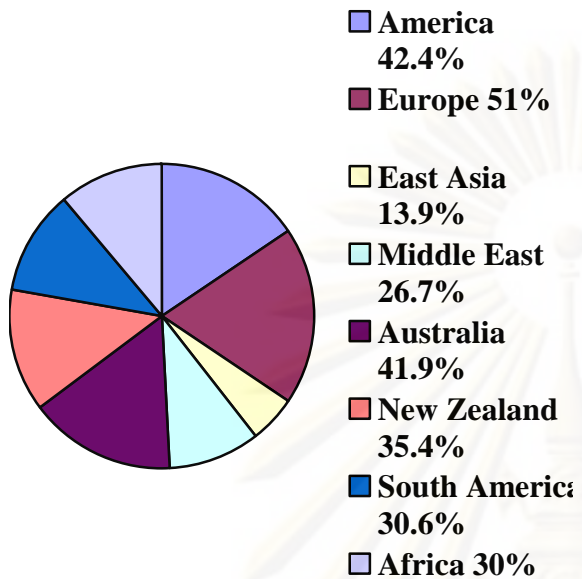
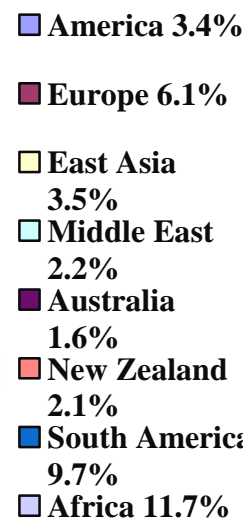


Chart C 3.7 Others



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BIOGRAPHY

Varinya Puranitee was born in Bangkok, Thailand, in 1983. She received a Bachelor of Arts of International College for Sustainability Studies (Second Class Honors), from Srinakarinwirot University in 2005. She began to enroll in the Master Degree in Southeast Asian Studies at Chulalongkorn University, Bangkok, Thailand, in 2007.



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