CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES OF THAI RICE EXPORTS TO CHINA: A CASE STUDY OF INFOTAX SURVEY LIMITED PARTNERSHIP

BY

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Abstract

The objectives of this research were: 1) to examine and analyze the detailed value chain activities involved in Infotax Survey Limited Partnership's rice export operations to the Chinese market, 2) to identify specific challenges faced by Infotax Survey Limited Partnership in its rice export processes and interactions with stakeholders within the export value chain, and 3) to propose targeted value chain optimization strategies aimed at enhancing Infotax Survey Limited Partnership's competitive advantages in the Chinese market.

The study utilized in-depth interviews with a sample group of five respondents who worked at Infotax Survey Limited Partnership. The results of the study indicate the following key findings: (1) Most respondents were male and held positions as business owners or managers in logistics, quality control, and sales, with experience ranging from 8 to over 20 years. (2) Key factors for a successful export operation include effective quality control and timely documentation, which includes the Letter of Intent (LOI), Full Corporate Offer (FCO), Full Corporate Agreement (FCA), and various types of Letters of Credit (LC), including Standby Letters of Credit (SBLC) and Red Clause Letters of Credit (RXLC). (3) Challenges such as quality assurance issues, logistical disruptions, port congestion, limited sub-port capacity, and compliance with evolving international and Chinese regulations were identified. (4) Rice exporters are focusing on maintaining competitive pricing, utilizing innovative processing techniques, offering flexible packaging options, and ensuring the availability of high-quality rice, such as parboiled rice, to meet consumer demand while enhancing logistics networks to reduce transportation costs and time. (5) The future focus should be on adopting innovative processing technologies to improve product quality, optimizing logistical networks to minimize transportation time and costs, and further strengthening quality control while expanding buyer relationships. These efforts are expected to reinforce competitive advantages in the Chinese market.

(Total 63 pages)

Keywords: Parboiled Rice, Chinese Regulations, Competitive Advantages

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background and Significance of the Problem

Rice occupies a special place in East Asia and Southeast Asia. About 90% of the world's rice is produced in Asia, and rice is also the staple food of 3 billion people around the world (Xu & Hu, 2016).

Table 1.1 Rice Production in Million Tonnes

Country	2020	2010	2000	1990	1980	1970	1961
China	211.9	195.8	187.9	189.3	139.9	110	53.6
India	178.3	144	127.5	111.2	80.3	63.3	53.4
Bangladesh	54.9	50.1	37.6	26.8	20.8	16.7	14.4
Indonesia	54.6	59.3	51.9	45.2	29.7	19.3	12.1
Vietnam	42.8	40	32.5	19.2	11.6	10.2	9
Thailand	30.2	35.7	25.8	17.4	13.9	10.2	8.6
Myanmar	25.1	32.1	21	14	13.3	8.2	6.8
Philippines	19.3	15.8	12.4	9.9	7.6	5.6	3.9
Brazil	11.1	11.2	10.4	7.4	6.8	7.6	5.4
United States	10.3	11	8.7	7.1	6.6	3.8	2.5
Japan	9.7	10.7	11.9	13.1	12.2	16.5	16.2
Pakistan	8.7	7.2	7	4.9	4.7	4.3	3.7
Nigeria	8.2	4.5	3.3	2.5	1	0.3	0.1

Source: Wikipedia, 2024

Thailand is one of the world's largest rice exporters. In the current situation of low global agricultural product prices, Thailand's rice exports will continue to maintain a high level. Changes in Thailand's rice production will have a profound impact on the pattern of the world rice market. Southeast Asian countries are important markets for Thai rice exports. Changes in the rice market pattern and policies will potentially affect the rice markets of various countries through trade and other channels. Therefore, it is necessary to pay attention to Thailand's relevant rice policies.

Rice is an important export-led agricultural product in Thailand. The Thai government also attaches great importance to the sustainable development of the rice industry. Thailand has a significant position in the world rice market (Chen & He, 2011).

Phoolpipat (2023), the Minister of External Trade of Thailand, said Thailand exports 600,000 to 700,000 tons of rice to China, mainly white rice and Thai jasmine rice. Hong Kong imports even more much. Thailand exports an average of 1.7 million to 1.8 million tons of rice to Hong Kong each year, 70% to 80% of which is Thai jasmine fragrant rice.

China's love for Thai rice often stems from several factors: Thailand is known for producing high-quality Jasmine rice, which is loved by Chinese consumers for its unique aroma and soft texture. Secondly, Thai rice has a good brand image and popularity in the international market. Many consumers choose to buy Thai rice because of their trust in the brand, especially in Hong Kong. Thailand has active trade relations with China and Hong Kong, and its facilitated trade policies have also promoted the circulation and popularity of Thai rice in these regions. Thailand is one of the world's major rice exporters and can provide a stable supply chain guarantee. This allows Chinese consumers to continue to have access to high-quality rice.

In the global grain market, Thailand has long been a leader in rice exports, with its total export volume second only to India. The high-quality Thai fragrant rice enjoys a high reputation in the international market. This makes Thailand play an important role in the global rice supply chain. However, with the continuous changes in the global market environment and trade pattern, Thailand's rice export logistics system faces new challenges and opportunities. Effectively managing and optimizing these logistics processes is essential to maintaining its international competitiveness.

The rice industry not only contributes significantly to Thailand's economy, Changes in Thailand's rice production will also have a profound impact on the pattern of the world rice market (Xu & Hu, 2016).

With the acceleration of globalization and the complexity of international trade, the challenges facing Thai rice export logistics are also evolving. In recent years, international market competition has become more and more fierce, and countries such as China, India and Vietnam are pressing forward in the field of rice exports, which has posed new challenges for Thailand to maintain its market share. In addition, the global supply chain disruption caused by the previous COVID-19 pandemic and the increasing global attention to food safety, quality control, and environmental standards have also put higher demands on rice exports.

This research specifically focuses on Infotax Survey Limited Partnership, a distinguished company providing comprehensive logistical and supervisory services in the Thai rice export sector. With extensive experience spanning more than 20 years, Infotax Survey Limited Partnership specializes in facilitating rice exports, including survey information, data analysis, quality assurance, and logistical support services connecting Thai rice mills with Chinese import entities. By analyzing the value chain of Infotax Survey Limited Partnership, this research seeks to pinpoint precise operational challenges and identify targeted opportunities within the context of exporting Thai rice to China.

1.2 Research Objective

1.2.1 To examine and analyze the detailed value chain activities involved in Infotax Survey Limited Partnership’s rice export operations to the Chinese market.

1.2.2 To identify specific challenges faced by Infotax Survey Limited Partnership in its rice export processes and interactions with stakeholders within the export value chain.

1.2.3 To release targeted value chain optimization strategies specifically designed to enhance Infotax Survey Limited Partnership's competitive advantages in the Chinese market.

1.3 Research Questions

1.3.1 What specific challenges does Infotax Survey Limited Partnership encounter during its rice export activities to the Chinese market?

1.3.2 How can a comprehensive value chain analysis identify key opportunities for Infotax Survey Limited Partnership to optimize its logistics efficiency and market access in exporting rice to China?

1.3.3 What targeted strategies can be developed based on value chain analysis findings to strengthen Infotax Survey Limited Partnership's competitive position in the Chinese rice market?

1.4 Research Framework

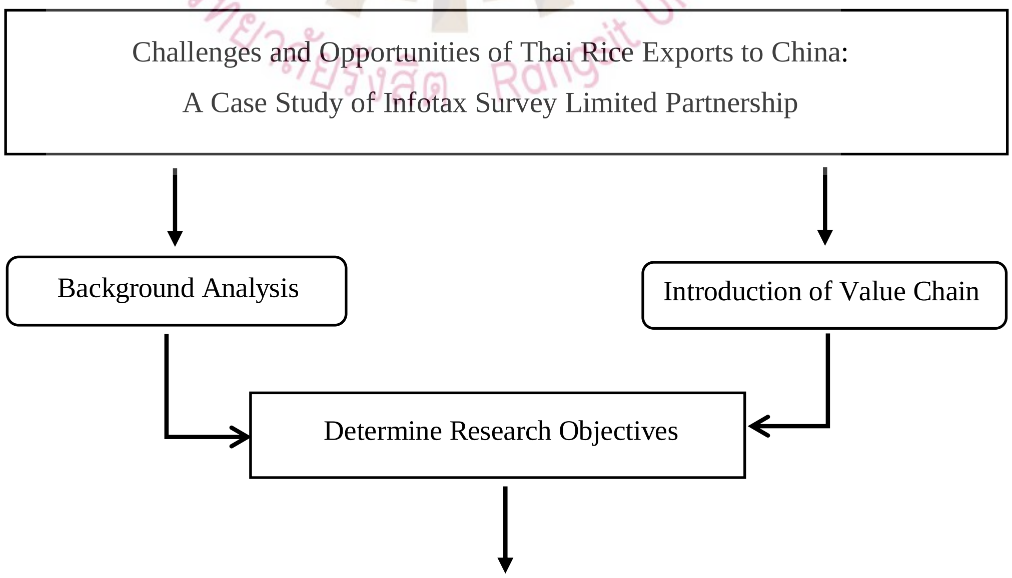

Figure 1.1 Research Framework

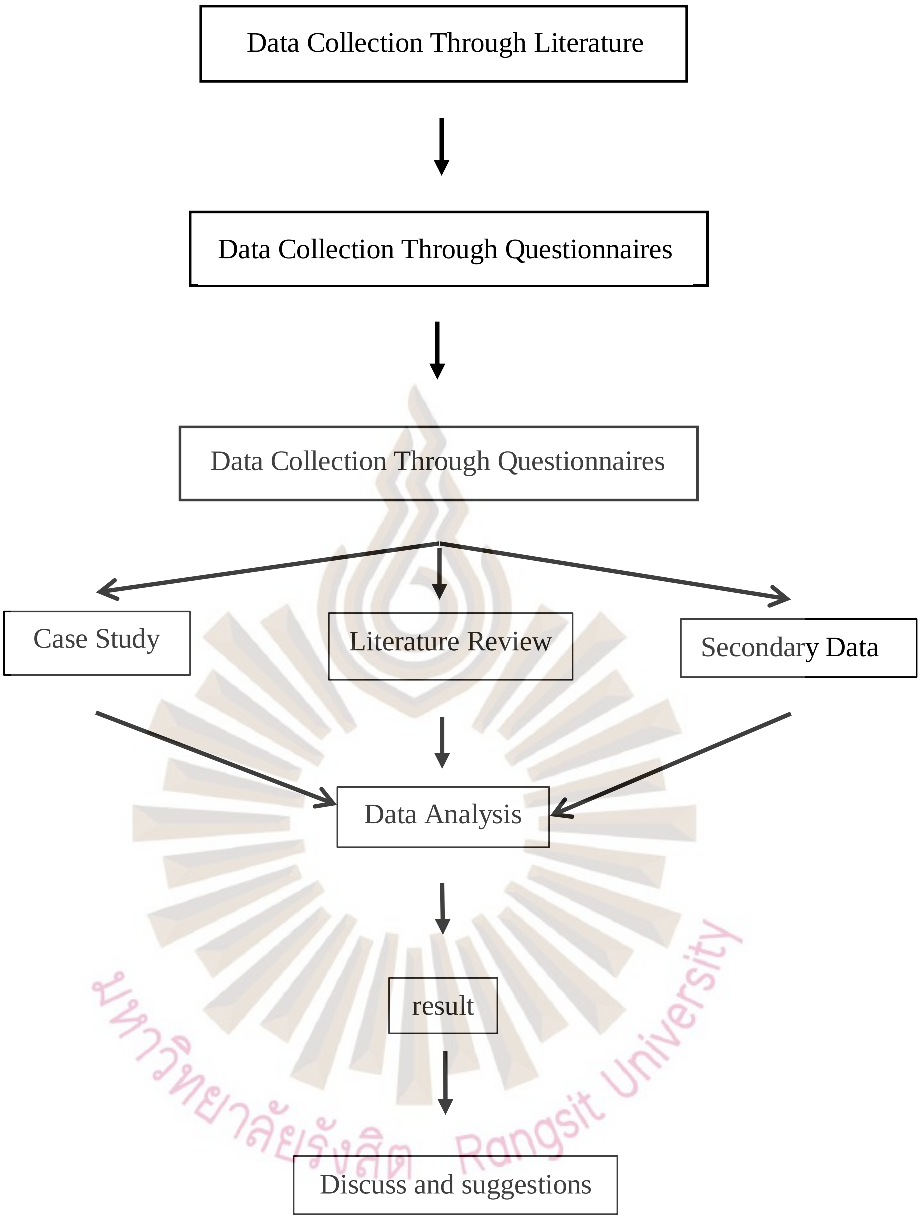

Figure 1.1 Research Framework (Cont.)

1.5 Definition of Terms

Value Chain: It is a concept used to describe a series of activities in the entire process of a company's product or service from concept to market. This theory was originally proposed by Michael Porter in his book “Competitive Advantage” to help companies identify their competitive advantages.

Optimization Strategy: It refers to plans and methods for improving efficiency, reducing costs or improving overall performance by analyzing and improving existing processes, systems or resource allocation.

Procurement Costs: All expenses incurred by a business in acquiring the goods, materials or services it needs. It includes not only the direct purchase price but also other costs associated with the purchase.

Parboiled Rice: Rice that has been partially boiled in the husk, which is a method utilized by Infotax Survey Limited Partnership to enhance the nutritional quality, shelf-life, and market competitiveness of rice exports.

Primary Activities: Refers to core business activities directly related to the production, sales, and delivery of products or services, which directly affect the value creation of products.

Support Activities: Links in the value chain of an enterprise that are not directly involved in production and sales but are crucial to the execution of basic activities. These activities provide the necessary resources and support for basic activities.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Overview of Thai Rice Exports

2.1.1 Infotax Survey Limited Partnership

Infotax Survey Limited Partnership is a specialized service provider with extensive experience in the rice export sector of Thailand, particularly focusing on trade activities between Thailand and China. Established more than two decades ago, the company primarily provides services such as cargo inspection, quality assurance surveys, logistical coordination, and related data analysis for Thai rice export companies.

The company plays a significant intermediary role by facilitating effective communication and operational cooperation between Thai rice mills and Chinese importers. Specifically, Infotax Survey Limited Partnership ensures that rice exports comply with stringent international quality standards, regulatory requirements, and market-specific demands through meticulous surveys and inspections.

Through its comprehensive value chain management approach, Infotax Survey Limited Partnership not only identifies bottlenecks in export operations but also provides strategic insights and practical solutions for optimization. Thus, examining this company offers valuable insights into the broader dynamics and challenges of the Thai rice export industry.

2.1.2 Organization

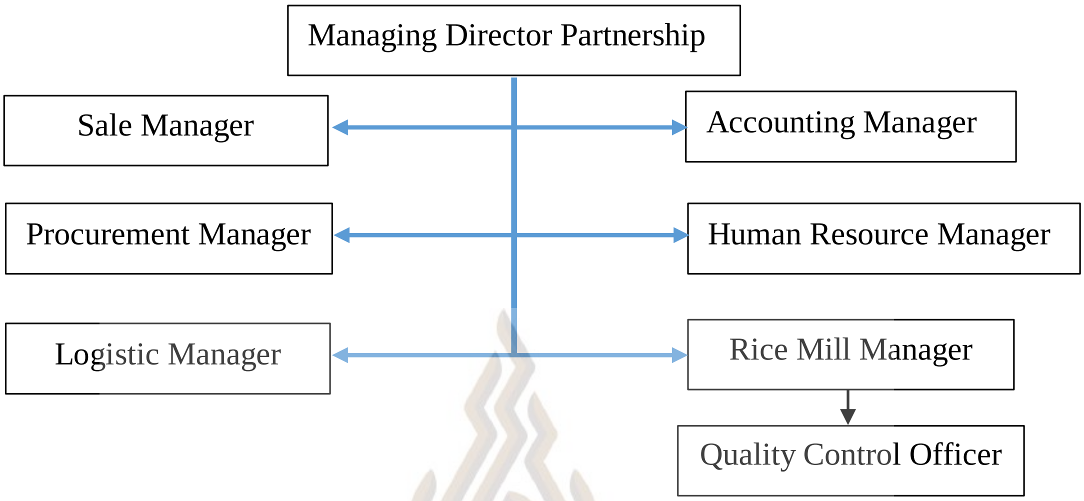

Figure 2.1 Organization of Infotax Survey Limited Partnership

Source: Researcher

2.1.3 Process Flow Chart

Process Flow Chart of Infotax Survey Limited Partnership could be shown below:

1) Ordering: Treader from China will order the goods, which they need for their markets and their customers.

2) Procurement: We source raw material of rice (rice seed) from farmers, which is then stored in a secure facility.

3) Processing: The rice is milled and sorted based on quality. This includes removing impurities and grading it accordingly.

4) Packaging: The rice is packed using automated robotic systems, with various options for packaging sizes, depending on the buyer's needs, for example the packaging will be packed by the automatic robot with variety packs; 12.5kgs, 25kgs, 50kgs or even packaging into a big bag (1 Bulk=1 metric ton), these packaging are available upon the client.

5) Transportation: The rice is transported by trucks from the rice mills to sub-ports for final loading onto ships then keep in the main stock under the sub-port in Ayutthaya Province before loading onto the boat (Capacity max. 3,000 - 5,000MT).

6) Once the sales and purchases agreement (SPA) has been countersigned under banking procedures of payment then the seller will be loading rice onto small boat.

7) The small boat will sail along the Chao Praya River out to the sea then the loading rice onto the main ship (Capacity max. 12,500 - 50,000MT). which is rugged at Laemchabang port/Sri-Chang port.

8) Customs and Documentation: We ensure all required export documents are prepared, including invoices, packing lists, bills of lading, and quality control certificates. The customs clearance procedures will be performed while transporting from a small boat to the main ship. The document needs for exporting rice to China are as following.

(1) Company registered by Department of Business Development (DBD), minimum capital fund THB 20,000,000.00.

(2) Copy passport of Authorized.

(3) The exported license of rice.

(4) Check controlled quality approved (CCIC) for exporting to China.

(5) Copy of Terms and Conditions of Payment.

(6) The Original of product (Department Agriculture).

(7) The Billing of Lading (B/L).

(8) The Packing List.

(9) The Invoice.

(10) Shipping: The rice is loaded onto ships, which travel from Laemchabang port/Sri-Chang port to China, adhering to all shipping and customs regulations.

9) The buyer must make a payment in the same day of completed loading by cash (TT) or deduct from the Letter of Credit (LC), Standby Letter of Credit

(SBLC) or upon the statement in DOA. We have usually accepted the Terms and Conditions of Payment as follows.

(1) Letter of Credit (LC) under general private bank.

(2) Standby Letter of Credit (SBLC) under general private bank.

(3) Red Cross Letter of Credit (RXLC) under the EXIM bank (Export-Import Bank of Thailand).

(4) The buyer must confirm when the ship arrives at the destination port to end of processing.

2.2 Overview of Value Chain

2.2.1 Definition and Importance

Tardi (2024) explains the definition of value chain is a series of consecutive steps that go into the creation of a finished product, from its initial design to its arrival at a customer's door. The chain identifies each step in the process at which value is added, including the sourcing, manufacturing, and marketing stages of its production. A company conducts a value chain analysis by evaluating the detailed procedures involved in each step of its business. The purpose of a value chain analysis is to increase production efficiency so that a company can deliver maximum value for the least possible cost.

World Business Council for Sustainable Development (WBCSD, 2011). explains the value chains are an integral part of strategic planning for many businesses today. A value chain refers to the full lifecycle of a product or process, including material sourcing, production, consumption and disposal/recycling processes.

2.2.2 Components of a Value Chain

Porter (1985). Explains in his concept of a value chain, Porter splits a business's activities into two categories, primary and support, of which sample activities for each are listed below. Specific activities in each category will vary according to industry (Shown on Figure 2.2 Michael Porter‟s Value Chain Model).

2.2.2.1 Primary Activities

Primary activities consist of five components, all essential for adding value and creating competitive advantages:

(1) Inbound logistics include functions like receiving, warehousing, and managing inventory.

(2) Operations include procedures for converting raw materials into a finished product.

(3) Outbound logistics include activities to distribute a final product to a consumer.

(4) Marketing and sales include strategies to enhance visibility and target appropriate customers—such as advertising, promotion, and pricing.

(5) Service includes programs to maintain products and enhance the consumer experience—like customer service, maintenance, repair, refund, and exchange.

2.2.2.2 Support Activities

The role of support activities is to help make the primary activities more efficient. When you increase the efficiency of any of the four support activities, it benefits at least one of the five primary activities. These support activities are generally denoted as overhead costs on a company's income statement:

(1) Procurement concerns how a company obtains raw materials.

(2) Technological development is used at a firm's research and development (R&D) stage—like designing and developing manufacturing techniques and automating processes.

(3) Human resources (HR) management involves hiring and retaining employees who will fulfill the firm's business strategy and help design, market, and sell the product.

(4) Infrastructure includes company systems and the composition of its management teams such as planning, accounting, finance, and quality control.

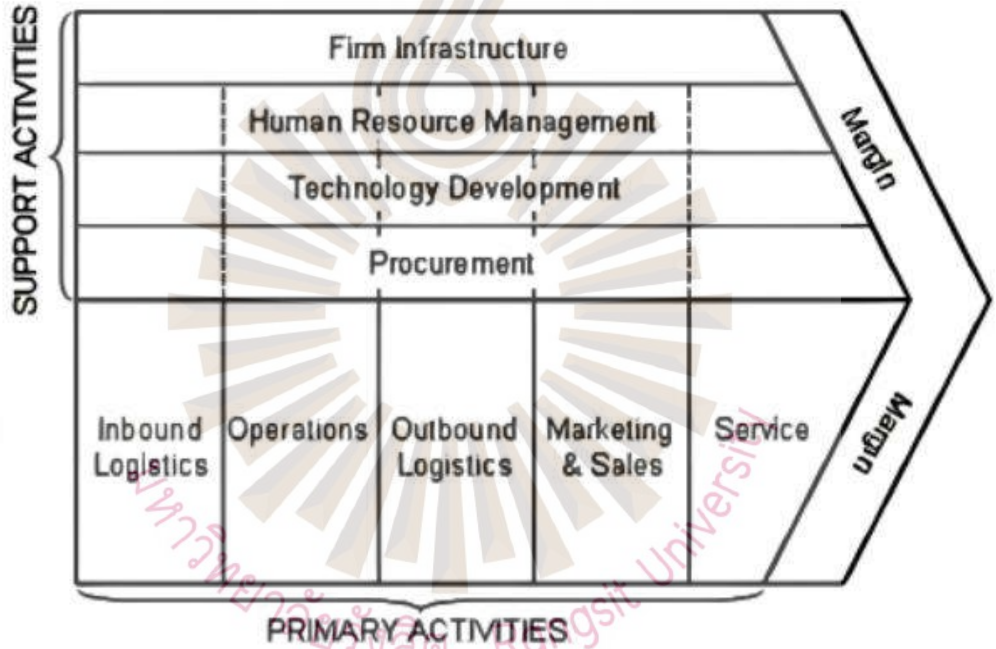

Figure 2.2 Michael Porter"s Value Chain Model
Source: Porter, 1985

The value chain is used to describe a series of activities that an enterprise performs from the conception to the delivery of a product or service. The core idea is that an enterprise creates value through a series of interrelated activities, thereby enhancing its competitive advantage. These activities are divided into basic activities and supporting activities. Basic activities are directly related to production and delivery, while supporting activities provide the necessary resources and support for basic activities.

The importance of the value chain lies in that it helps companies discover competitive advantages: helping companies identify which links can gain competitive advantages by improving efficiency, reducing costs or improving quality, so as to formulate corresponding strategies and optimize resource allocation: By understanding the value brought by each activity, companies can optimize resource allocation, ensure that sufficient resources are invested in key links, and improve overall operational efficiency.

2.3 Application of Value Chain in Logistic

2.3.1 The Size and Resources of the Logistic Company

Large and medium-sized enterprises: Large enterprises usually have more resources (such as funds, technology and professionals), so they are more likely to use value chain analysis to optimize logistics. These enterprises can devote enough energy and funds to systematically evaluate and improve each link in the supply chain to ensure the optimization of logistics efficiency and cost.

Small businesses: Small businesses may lack the resources or capabilities to conduct a comprehensive value chain analysis, especially if the business is small, has limited resources, and faces higher operating costs. Small businesses may be more focused on short-term operational optimization rather than long-term strategic analysis.

Enterprises that use value chains usually have complex logistics chains, and logistics is a key factor in their competitiveness. Value chain analysis is widely used to optimize the entire logistics process from suppliers to customers. By optimizing production, warehousing, transportation and other links, enterprises can improve efficiency, reduce costs and increase customer satisfaction.

2.3.2 Technical Capabilities

Whether the enterprise has sufficient technical capabilities to implement value chain analysis is also a key factor. Effective value analysis usually requires efficient data collection and data analysis tools, such as warehouse management systems (WMS), transportation management systems (TMS), enterprise resource planning systems (ERP), etc. If the enterprise does not have appropriate technical support, then even if the benefits of value chain analysis are known, it may be difficult to implement.

For small enterprises without high-end technical infrastructure, they may rely more on experience or intuition to optimize logistics without conducting in-depth value chain analysis.

2.4 Previous Research Studies

Bach, Pham, and Hoang (2016) study a critical analysis of the value chain in the rice industry and its effects on the export rice industry in Kien Giang Province, Vietnam. It was found that underscore the importance of a well-structured value chain, noting that each stage, from sourcing to shipping, must be meticulously managed to ensure compliance and efficiency in international trade. This aligns with the findings from this study, where respondents similarly emphasized that maintaining detailed and timely documentation is critical in managing risks and ensuring smooth export transactions.

Porter's value chain theory emphasizes each link in the process of creating value for an enterprise and proposes to enhance competitive advantage by optimizing these links. This theory provides a foundation for subsequent research, guiding scholars to apply and extend this framework in different fields. For example, many researchers have explored how to identify and achieve improvements in economic benefits through value chain analysis (Harrison & Van Hoek, 2019). These researchers have shown that synergies between value chain activities can significantly improve a firm's overall performance.

Tao, Cai, and Cui (2022) studied a technological quality control system for the rice supply chain, It was found that echoes these concerns, noting that stringent quality control systems are essential to mitigating the risks of contamination within the rice supply chain. Their research aligns with this study's findings, reinforcing the necessity for robust quality assurance protocols in the face of both natural and logistical disruptions.

Szuster and Lotko (2022) study disruptions and risk management in supply chains before and during the COVID-19 pandemic, found that they examined supply chain disruptions during the COVID-19 pandemic, highlighting similar logistical challenges such as fuel price volatility and congestion at key ports. Their findings support the assertion that external factors such as global economic fluctuations and regulatory changes require ongoing adaptation from exporters.

Xiao (2025) study China's supply chain transformation: Technological innovations and future outlook, found that It discusses how businesses within global supply chains, particularly in sectors like rice export, rely on similar strategies to balance cost efficiency with high-quality standards. Xiao highlights the importance of innovation in processing and packaging, which is mirrored in this study, where respondents emphasized the need for flexible and cost-effective solutions to maintain a competitive edge. Respondents noted that efficient logistics, aimed at reducing transportation time and costs, are equally crucial in ensuring that cost savings are passed onto customers, reinforcing the need for strategic investments in logistics and product quality.

Zhang, Y. and Zhang, L. (2022), study Blockchain digital technology empowers e-commerce supply chain sustainable value co-creation decision and coordination considering online consumer reviews, found that we explore how blockchain digital technology can empower e-commerce supply chain management by enhancing transparency and improving decision-making and coordination across the supply chain. This aligns with the findings of this study, where respondents noted that technology adoption, especially blockchain, was vital to improving supply chain transparency and product integrity. Similarly, the rise of e-commerce and digital trade platforms.

Wang and Zhang (2023), study Can the digital economy accelerate China's export technology upgrading, found that which whom explored how the digital economy is driving greater access to global markets. Our respondents echoed this, pointing out the importance of leveraging digital tools to expand market reach and improve operational efficiency. Furthermore, the increasing emphasis on food safety and traceability.

Huang and Rozelle (2022), study China's food security: Key challenges and emerging policy responses, found that the necessitates that exporters continuously adapt their practices to meet new regulatory requirements. This shift towards enhanced traceability and food safety standards, identified as a critical regulatory trend, requires proactive investment in compliance and technological solutions to ensure market competitiveness.

Li, X. and Li, Y. (2024), study AI, cross-border e-commerce are bright spots for Chinese internet firms, found that we argue that technologies like AI are essential for optimizing logistics and e-commerce, a sentiment that aligns with the future focus identified by respondents in this study. The anticipated advancements in processing technologies and logistics optimization are expected to reinforce the competitive edge of rice exporters in the Chinese market by improving overall supply chain efficiency and strengthening relationships with buyers.

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Research Design

This study adopts a qualitative case study method, taking Infotax Survey Limited Partnership as a single case to deeply explore the challenges and opportunities faced by the company in the process of exporting rice to the Chinese market. Through in-depth interviews with the company's core personnel and secondary data analysis, key issues such as cost control, logistics management, market entry strategy, and value chain optimization in the export process are elaborated in detail, aiming to provide theoretical basis and practical suggestions for the company to enhance its competitiveness and achieve sustainable development.

3.2 Population and Sample

As this research employs a qualitative case study approach focusing specifically on Infotax Survey Limited Partnership, the population and sample definition is clearly defined around this single company. Infotax Survey Limited Partnership operates as a specialized intermediary service provider, responsible for coordinating the export of Thai rice to China. Thus, the relevant population for this research comprises individuals within this organization who possess direct knowledge and practical experience related to rice export activities, logistics coordination, and quality assurance processes.

Given the qualitative nature and depth-oriented focus of the study, a purposeful sampling method is applied. The selected sample includes key management personnel, senior supervisors, and experienced employees who are directly involved in the company's rice export operations. These participants provide detailed insights and expert knowledge essential to understanding the operational challenges, value chain bottlenecks, and optimization opportunities for exporting Thai rice to the Chinese market.

The use of purposeful sampling allows this research to obtain rich, context-specific data, offering in-depth and meaningful analysis relevant to the research objectives.

3.3 Research Instruments

This study employs in-depth interviews as the primary data collection method to gain comprehensive insights into the export processes, value chain structure, and logistical practices of the selected Thai rice exporter (Infotax Survey Limited Partnership) in the context of exporting rice to the Chinese market.

The respondents from Infotax Survey Limited Partnership include the business owner director and managers in logistics, quality control, and sales department. The primary reason for choosing in-depth interviews is their ability to provide detailed, nuanced, and context-rich data, revealing complex issues and individual experiences that cannot be fully captured through quantitative methods such as questionnaires.

By utilizing qualitative interviews, the study ensures the robustness and comprehensiveness of the analysis, enhancing the overall validity and reliability of the research results.

3.3.1 Interview Design Principles

1) Clear and Concise

The interview questions are designed to be clear and concise, avoiding complex terminology or overly lengthy expressions. This ensures respondents can easily understand the questions, provide accurate answers, and ultimately enhances the quality and efficiency of data collection.

2) Logical and Structured

The interview questions are organized in a logical sequence, systematically covering the core research issues such as export procedures, logistics management, value chain challenges, market competition, and cost-control strategies. This structure helps guide respondents smoothly through topics and ensures comprehensive data collection.

3) Open-end and In-depth

Interview questions are primarily open-ended to allow respondents the freedom to express their insights, experiences, and suggestions thoroughly. This approach helps capture detailed, context-rich information, providing deep insights into respondents' perceptions of challenges and opportunities within the company's export value chain—information that cannot be easily obtained through structured quantitative methods.

3.3.2 Interview Structure

The in-depth interviews conducted in this research are structured into the following main sections:

1) Respondent Background

(1) Position and role in the company (e.g., senior management, export operations, logistics coordination).

(2) Years of professional experience in rice export activities.

(3) Scope of responsibilities and involvement in the company's rice export activities to China.

2) Export Process and Value Chain

(1) Overview of the company's export procedures and activities (e.g., procurement, packaging, transportation, customs clearance, and marketing).

(2) Key stakeholders involved in the export process.

3) Challenges in the Value Chain

(1) Major operational challenges faced during rice exports to the Chinese market (e.g., production stability, transportation delays, customs clearance issues).

(2) Policy-related challenges and their impact on export activities.

4) Logistics and Cost Management

(1) Factors significantly influencing transportation costs (e.g., transportation modes, fuel prices, tariffs, warehousing).

(2) Strategies currently adopted by the company for effective cost management and control in logistics operations.

5) Market Access and Competition

(1) Key competitors in the Chinese rice market.

(2) Strategies employed by the company to maintain competitive advantage.

(3) Pricing strategies and market positioning approaches.

6) Opportunities and Future Strategies

(1) Potential areas for value chain optimization and efficiency improvements.

(2) Perspectives on future trends in rice exports to China, including technological advancements, market expansion, and sustainability initiatives.

3.3.3 Trustworthiness of the Study

To ensure the rigor and quality of this qualitative case study, the research applies the following measures:

1) Credibility

Member checking: Interview transcripts and summaries will be provided to respondents for verification to confirm accuracy and authenticity.

Triangulation: Multiple respondents from different positions within the company will be interviewed to cross-validate information and enhance credibility.

2) Transferability

Detailed descriptions of the research context, company background, and respondent profiles will be provided. This allows readers and future researchers to assess the applicability of the findings to similar contexts or cases.

3) Dependability

A detailed record (audit trail) of all steps in data collection and analysis will be documented clearly, ensuring transparency, consistency, and repeatability of the research process.

4) Confirmability

The researcher will maintain objectivity throughout the data analysis phase, ensuring that all conclusions drawn are clearly linked back to the original interview data and respondents' statements, thus minimizing researcher bias and subjectivity.

3.4 Data Collection

This study employs in-depth qualitative interviews as the primary data collection method. The main objective of these interviews is to gain a thorough understanding of the selected Thai rice export company's value chain, logistics processes, cost management practices, market access challenges, and competitive landscape related to rice exports to the Chinese market.

Interviews are carefully structured to capture detailed information on critical aspects of the company's export activities, including transportation practices, customs clearance efficiency, pricing strategies, logistics optimization measures, and stakeholder interactions within the supply chain. Through these interviews with senior management and experienced staff within the selected Thai rice exporting company, the study aims to clearly identify existing bottlenecks and explore practical opportunities for optimizing the export value chain.

The data collection process is designed to be rigorous and systematic, ensuring that the qualitative data gathered is detailed, accurate, and reflective of real-world practices, thus providing a solid empirical foundation for subsequent analysis.

3.4.1 Interview Question Design

The interview questions for this study are designed to explore the following main areas:

Respondent background: Position, responsibilities within the company, and professional experience in rice export operations.

Export processes and logistics management: Detailed exploration of the company's export procedures, logistics arrangements, transportation management, and customs clearance practices.

Market entry and competition: Understanding of barriers to entering the Chinese market, major competitors, competitive strategies, market positioning, and pricing strategies.

Value chain optimization strategies: Current practices in optimizing the value chain, identification of bottlenecks, and potential strategies for future improvements.

Open-ended questions: Additional insights, recommendations, or views provided by respondents regarding challenges and opportunities in exporting Thai rice to China.

3.4.2 Sample Selection and Interview Participants

The interviewees selected for this study are key internal stakeholders from the chosen Thai rice exporting company (Infotax Survey Limited Partnership Co., Ltd.).

These participants are selected based on their direct involvement in or comprehensive understanding of the company's rice export activities to China, ensuring the reliability and depth of the data obtained.

Specifically, the interviews target:

1) Senior management: Personnel with overall strategic oversight of the company's rice export operations.

2) Logistics and supply chain coordinators or supervisors: Individuals knowledgeable about logistics processes, supply chain efficiency, transportation management, and related operational challenges.

3) Experienced export-related staff or department managers: Staff who directly handle export operations, market strategies, customer relations, and competition within the Chinese market.

3.4.3 Data Collection Methods triankel

Due to practical constraints, this study employs online qualitative interviews as the sole method of data collection. The interviews will be conducted by directly sending structured open-ended questions via email or online messaging platforms (such as email or WeChat) to key respondents within the selected Thai rice exporting company (Infotax Survey Limited Partnership Co., Ltd.).

Participants will be asked to provide detailed written responses to open-ended questions covering core topics such as export procedures, logistics management, market challenges, competitive strategies, and value chain optimization. The use of online interviews allows participants the flexibility to respond at their convenience, ensuring the feasibility and practicality of data collection under existing limitations.

The primary advantage of this online qualitative interview approach is its flexibility and efficiency, allowing respondents sufficient time to reflect and provide detailed, thoughtful answers, while overcoming geographical and scheduling constraints. Appropriate reminders and follow-ups will be implemented to ensure timely and comprehensive responses from participants.

This approach ensures the collection of rich, context-specific qualitative data, suitable for thorough analysis of the company's export challenges and opportunities.

3.5 Data Analysis Method

This study adopts a Triangulation Method to enhance the reliability and validity of the qualitative findings derived from in-depth interviews. Triangulation involves cross-verifying data by using multiple perspectives, such as different respondents, roles, and operational functions within the same organization.

In this study, data were gathered from various key stakeholders including senior management, logistics managers, quality control officers, and sales managers. Their responses were analyzed collectively to identify recurring patterns and validate findings across different functional domains.

This multi-perspective approach ensures that insights into the challenges and opportunities within the value chain of the selected Thai rice exporter are not solely based on a single viewpoint but are confirmed through cross-comparison among respondents, enhancing the credibility of the research conclusions.

CHAPTER 4

RESEARCH RESULTS

The research title the Challenges and opportunities of Thai rice exports to China: A case study of Infotax Survey Limited Partnership. This chapter presents a comprehensive analysis of the five-depth interviews conducted Rice Export Business to China from a case study company as follow.

4.1 Results on Question 1: Position & Experience

What are your position and main responsibilities in the company? How many years of experience do you have in rice exports or related logistics operations?

Summary of Interview found that:

Key Informants 1

"As the owner of the rice export company, I have been actively involved in the business for over 15 years. My main responsibilities include overseeing all company operations, from procurement to shipment. I ensure that we maintain strong relationships with rice mills and buyers, especially in China. I'm also heavily involved in strategic decision-making, including market expansion, financial planning, and navigating regulatory challenges to ensure smooth and profitable operations." (Business Owner of Rice Export Company (Male), personal communication, March 20, 2025).

Key Informants 2

I'm the Director of Rice Exports with more than 20 years of experience in the industry. I oversee all aspects of the rice export process, including quality control, packaging, and logistics. My role involves ensuring that all shipments comply with international standards, managing the supply chain, and negotiating with buyers in China. I also handle the administrative side, ensuring that all documents, including customs and export licenses, are accurate and processed on time." (Director of Rice Exports (Male), personal communication, March 20, 2025).

Key Informants 3

"I've been in the field for 10 years, specifically focusing on transportation and distribution for rice exports. I manage the logistics operations, ensuring that rice is delivered from the mills to ports in a timely manner. This includes coordinating with transport companies, managing port logistics, and handling any delays or issues that arise during the shipping process. I also work with the customs department to ensure smooth clearance and documentation for each shipment." (Logistic Manager (Male), personal communication, March 20, 2025).

Key Informants 4

"I have been the Quality Control Officer for 8 years. My job is to ensure the quality of rice meets both domestic and international standards before export. I supervise the milling process, inspect the raw rice before it's packed, and conduct regular quality checks. I also handle certifications required by Chinese authorities, such as quality control certificates, and ensure that the rice is free from contaminants, including chemicals, which are especially crucial for the

Chinese market." (Quality Control Officer (Female), personal communication, March 20, 2025).

Key Informants 5

"As the Sales Manager, I've been in this field for over 12 years. My primary responsibility is to build and maintain relationships with Chinese buyers. I work closely with the marketing team to ensure we meet the specific needs of our clients and negotiate pricing and delivery terms. I also manage the documentation related to sales, ensuring that contracts are signed, and payment terms are clear. Additionally, I keep track of market trends in China to ensure we're staying competitive with pricing and product offerings." (Sales Manager (Male), personal communication, March 20, 2025).

Conclusion: Position & Experience

All five respondents was 4 males and 1 female, their roles within the rice export business—ranging from the business owner and director to managers in logistics, quality control, and sales. They all highlight extensive experience (from 8 to 20+ years) and stress that each role is crucial for overseeing different aspects such as operations, quality, logistics coordination, and customer relations.

4.2 Results on Question 2: Key Export Procedures

Please describe the key procedures of your company's rice export activities to the Chinese market.

Summary of Interview found that:

Key Informants 1

The key procedures of rice export include the following stages:

1) Ordering: Treader from China will order the goods, which they need for their markets and their customers.

2) Procurement: We source raw material of rice (rice seed) from farmers, which is then stored in a secure facility.

2.1) Letter of Intent (LOI) is a document declaring the preliminary commitment between our treader with us. It includes customer requirements or specifications of goods.

2.2) Rice mill factory will reply to the LOI documents with full corporate offer (FCO), full of products specification, and condition term of payment at last.

3) Processing: The rice is milled and sorted based on quality. This includes removing impurities and grading it accordingly.

4) Packaging: The rice is packed using automated robotic systems, with various options for packaging sizes, depending on the buyer's needs, for example the packaging will be packed by the automatic robot with variety packs; 12.5kgs, 25kgs, 50kgs or even packaging into a big bag (1 Bulk=1 metric ton), these packaging are available upon the client.

5) Transportation: The rice is transported by trucks from the rice mills to sub-ports for final loading onto ships then keep in the main stock under the sub-port in Ayutthaya Province before loading onto the boat (Capacity max. 3,000 - 5,000MT).

6) Once the sales and purchases agreement (SPA) has been countersigned under banking procedures of payment then the seller will be loading rice onto small boat.

7) The small boat will sail along the Chao Praya River out to the sea then the loading rice onto the main ship (Capacity max. 12,500 - 50,000MT). which is rugged at Laemchabang port/Sri-Chang port.

8) Customs and Documentation: We ensure all required export documents are prepared, including invoices, packing lists, bills of lading, and quality control certificates. The customs clearance procedures will be performed while transporting from a small boat to the main ship. The document needs for exporting rice to China are as following.

8.1) Company registered by Department of Business Development (DBD), minimum capital fund THB 20,000,000.00

8.2) Copy passport of Authorized

8.3) The exported license of rice

8.4) Check controlled quality approved (CCIC) for exporting to China

8.5) Copy of Terms and Conditions of Payment

8.6) The Original of product (Department Agriculture)

8.7) The Billing of Lading (B/L)

8.8) The Packing List

8.9) The Invoice

8.10) Shipping: The rice is loaded onto ships, which travel from Laemchabang port/Sri-Chang port to China, adhering to all shipping and customs regulations.

9) The buyer must make a payment in the same day of completed loading by cash (TT) or deduct from the Letter of Credit (LC), Standby Letter of Credit (SBLC) or upon the statement in DOA. We have usually accepted the Terms and Conditions of Payment as follows.

9.1) Letter of Credit (LC) under general private bank.

9.2) Standby Letter of Credit (SBLC) under general private bank.

9.3) Red Cross Letter of Credit (RXLC) under the EXIM bank (Export-Import Bank of Thailand).

10) The buyer must confirm when the ship arrives at the destination port at the end of processing.

Key Informants 2

As a director of rice exports, the main procedure for rice export is to ensure the smooth operation of transporting rice from the mills to the Chinese market. We begin by selecting high-quality rice, processing it, and then packaging it into various sizes. From there, the rice is loaded onto trucks that take it to the sub-ports for further transport.

Customs clearance and shipping processes are conducted to ensure timely deliveries. All documentation must be accurate to avoid delays at ports.

Key Informants 3

The process of rice export is initiated when raw rice is sourced and stored at the mills to ensure it is properly milled, sorted, and inspected for quality as customer specification required. Our packaging process uses automated machinery for consistent and reliable output. After that, transportation logistics are managed to move the rice to the port where it will undergo customs clearance and be shipped to China. Proper documentation is vital to ensure compliance with all regulations under the laws and customer requirements or specifications.

Key Informants 4

Our rice export activities follow a systematic process to ensure customer satisfaction. We start by negotiating contracts with our Chinese buyers, agreeing on terms, and ensuring the rice's quality. We ensure that the product is processed and packaged according to the buyer's specifications. My team handles the necessary paperwork, ensuring the contracts and payment terms are met, and finally, the rice is shipped in compliance with all customs and shipping regulations.

Key Informants 5

The export procedures from a financial perspective include managing contracts and payment terms. Payments are either handled through Letters of Credit (LC) or via TT. As we process payments, I ensure that all documents, such as the Bill of Lading and the Invoice, align with the contract terms. Additionally, I work with the customs team to verify that all shipments meet financial and logistical standards for smooth export to China.

Conclusion: Key Export Procedures

The process is systematically structured. It begins with sourcing and processing the rice, followed by automated packaging. Then, the rice is transported (often by trucks to sub-ports), where it undergoes customs clearance before being shipped to China. Each respondent notes that quality control and timely documentation are keys to a successful export operation. These can be explained by the flow chart below.

Letter of Intent (LOI) → Full Corporate Offer (FCO) → Full Corporate Agreement (FCA) → Sign agreement → Issuing Letter of Credit (LC) / Standby Letter of Credit (SBLC) / Red Cross Letter of Credit (RXLC) → Loading rice → Shipping.

The term of contract is usually the 12-month contract or year contract. So, the issuing LC / SBLC / RXLC must be covered with a 12-month contract to ensure supplying rice will continue throughout the year.

4.3 Results on Question 3: Main Challenges

What are the main challenges your company faces when exporting rice to the Chinese market?

Summary of Interview found that:

Key Informants 1

"The major challenge is ensuring high product quality to meet the strict standards of Chinese authorities. Any contamination or quality issues can lead to shipment rejections. Furthermore, transportation costs are affected by fluctuating fuel prices, and congestion at the ports can cause delays in our export process." (Business Owner of Rice Export Company (Male), personal communication, March 20, 2025).

Key Informants 2

"We face challenges such as transportation delays due to fluctuating fuel prices. The increasing cost of diesel affects our overall transportation budget. Additionally, the sub-ports we rely on sometimes have limited capacity with others on the next transportation, and we don't have control over stock management as ship capacity there, which can lead to shipping delays." (Director of Rice Exports (Male), personal communication, March 20, 2025).

Key Informants 3

"One of our major challenges is ensuring that the rice meets the Chinese market's high-quality standards, how many percentages as specification or mixed size, particularly regarding chemical residual contamination, bacteria contamination, and physical contamination as specification required. We must consistently test and certify the rice for export to avoid rejections or fines. Additionally, any logistical delays or packaging mistakes could jeopardize our shipment." (Logistic Manager (Male), personal communication, March 20, 2025).

Key Informants 4

"The biggest challenge is staying competitive in the Chinese market. As Vietnam poses a significant threat with competitive pricing and similar product offerings, we must find ways to differentiate ourselves. Maintaining strong relationships with buyers while ensuring timely deliveries is crucial to securing long-term contracts." (Quality Control Officer (Female), personal communication, March 20, 2025).

Key Informants 5

"The primary challenge I face is the financial fluctuations due to payment terms and exchange rate risks. With China, payments are often made via Letters of Credit (LC), Standby Letter of Credit (SBLC), Red Cross LC (RXLC) and any issues with payment processing can delay shipments. We also deal with the impact of fluctuating costs for raw materials and transport on our overall profitability." (Sales Manager (Male), personal communication, March 20, 2025).

Conclusion: Main Challenges

The common challenges include:

1) Quality Assurance: Meeting strict Chinese standards (avoiding chemical contamination from agriculture and process, bacteria contaminations, foreign matter).

2) Logistics Disruptions: Issues like fluctuating fuel prices and port congestion.

3) Regulatory Compliance: Constantly adapting to changing international and Chinese policies.

Each role points out that these factors, if not managed properly, can lead to shipment delays and increased operational costs.

4.4 Results on Question 4: Specific Logistics Issues

What specific logistics issues does your company usually encounter (e.g., transportation delays, port congestion, increased costs, or customs clearance difficulties)?

Summary of Interview found that:

Key Informants 1

"Logistics issues primarily involve delays in transportation due to fluctuating fuel prices, and port congestion is another problem. The small sub-ports we use to load rice onto boats sometimes face capacity limitations, which cause delays in our shipments. Additionally, customs clearance can sometimes be slow due to changes in regulations, and this can lead to complications during the export process.” (Business Owner of Rice Export Company (Male), personal communication, March 20, 2025).

Key Informants 2

“The main logistics issues we encounter are delays caused by port congestion and transportation. Fluctuating diesel prices affect transportation costs, and with limited options for storage at sub-ports, we face bottlenecks in getting shipments loaded onto boats. This often results in delays that affect our schedules.” (Director of Rice Exports (Male), personal communication, March 20, 2025).

Key Informants 3

“While quality control is my primary concern, logistics issues such as transportation delays, congestion at the ports, and customs clearance delays also impact our operations. These delays can result in the rice being kept in storage for longer than expected, which could affect the overall quality of the product.” (Logistic Manager (Male), personal communication, March 20, 2025).

Key Informants 4

“Logistics issues, such as transportation delays due to fuel price fluctuations and port congestion, are a constant challenge. These delays not only affect our delivery timelines but also have an impact on our ability to maintain strong relationships with clients in China. If there are delays, customers may hesitate to place future orders.” (Quality Control Officer (Female), personal communication, March 20, 2025).

Key Informants 5

"From a financial perspective, transportation delays and port congestion can result in additional costs and loss of revenue. The increased transportation costs due to diesel price hikes also directly affect our profitability. Moreover, customs clearance delays may affect payment schedules, leading to a delay in financial inflows." (Sales Manager (Male), personal communication, March 20, 2025).

Conclusion: Specific Logistics Issues

The responses converge on the fact that transportation delays due to fuel cost fluctuations, port congestion, and sub-port capacity issues and payment schedule are significant hurdles. Additionally, delays in customs clearance further exacerbate these problems, ultimately affecting delivery schedules and increasing costs.

4.5 Results on Question 3: Impact of Regulatory Changes

How do policies or regulatory changes in the Chinese market affect your export activities?

Summary of Interview found that:

Key Informants 1

"Policy and regulatory changes in China can significantly affect our operations. For example, if China introduces stricter quality standards or alters import quotas, we may face delays in the approval process or higher costs to meet the new requirements. The unpredictability of these changes makes it challenging to plan long-term." (Business Owner of Rice Export Company (Male), personal communication, March 20, 2025).

Key Informants 2

“Regulatory changes, such as adjustments to customs procedures or import quotas, can create delays. If China changes its standards or regulatory processes for importing rice, it affects the time it takes to clear shipments at the port and ultimately impacts our delivery schedules.” (Director of Rice Exports (Male), personal communication, March 20, 2025).

Key Informants 3

“Regulatory changes often affect the standards for chemical residue and quality testing for rice. If China introduces new regulations or modifies current ones, we must quickly adapt our processes to ensure compliance. This may include additional testing or changes to packaging, which can incur additional costs.” (Logistic Manager (Male), personal communication, March 20, 2025).

Key Informants 4

“Changes in Chinese market policies can lead to fluctuations in demand or complications with our pricing strategies. For instance, if China implements higher tariffs on imported rice, it could make our products less competitive compared to other countries like Vietnam. We must stay informed to adjust our strategies accordingly.” (Quality Control Officer (Female), personal communication, March 20, 2025).

Key Informants 5

“Regulatory changes often impact payment terms or shipping procedures, which in turn affect cash flow and working capital. For instance, if new documentation requirements are imposed, it could lead to delays in receiving payments or result in additional administrative costs.” (Sales Manager (Male), personal communication, March 20, 2025).

Conclusion: Impact of Regulatory Changes Changes in Chinese policies has a direct impact:

1) They can impose stricter quality or documentation requirements.

2) They may lead to delays in approvals and increased costs.

3) Adaptation is necessary across all departments—logistics, quality control, and sales—to remain compliant and competitive.

4.6 Results on Question 6: Competitors & Company Response

Who are your main competitors in the Chinese market, and how does your company respond to this competition?

Summary of Interview found that:

Key Informants 1

“Vietnam is one of our main competitors in the Chinese market, as they provide rice at competitive prices. To counter this, we focus on producing high-quality rice, particularly parboiled rice, and investing in innovation to improve our product offerings. We also maintain close relationships with our Chinese buyers to ensure customer loyalty.” (Business Owner of Rice Export Company (Male), personal communication, March 20, 2025).

Key Informants 2

“The main competitors we face in the Chinese market are Vietnam and other Southeast Asian countries. To stay competitive, we focus on ensuring smooth and timely logistics, minimizing delays, and reducing transportation costs. This allows us to provide competitive pricing and on-time deliveries." (Director of Rice Exports (Male), personal communication, March 20, 2025).

Key Informants 3

"Our primary competitor is Vietnam, who offers similar types of rice. However, we differentiate ourselves by focusing on quality control, offering radiation-free parboiled rice with high nutritional value. This is a key selling point in the Chinese market, where quality is a top priority." (Logistic Manager (Male), personal communication, March 20, 2025).

Key Informants 4

"Vietnam and India are our key competitors in the Chinese market. To compete, we focus on offering rice with superior quality and better nutritional value, such as our parboiled rice. We also engage in educating our buyers on the health benefits of consuming our rice to create a niche market." (Quality Control Officer (Female), personal communication, March 20, 2025).

Key Informants 5

"Vietnam poses the greatest competition due to their cost-effective production. We respond by ensuring our pricing strategy reflects the high-quality nature of our rice, and we invest in improving our operational efficiency, which helps reduce costs while maintaining the premium quality of our product." (Sales Manager (Male), personal communication, March 20, 2025).

Conclusion: Competitors & Company Response

Vietnam (and sometimes India) is identified as the main competitor. In response, the company differentiates itself by focusing on high-quality, innovative products like parboiled rice, and by maintaining strong relationships with Chinese buyers through excellent service and reliability including other company, who can produce the parboiled rice in their factory to be a competitor by double price in normal.

4.7 Results on Question 7: Pricing Strategy & Competitive Advantage

Please briefly describe your current pricing strategy in the Chinese market and measures taken to maintain your competitive advantage.

Summary of Interview found that:

Key Informants 1

“Our pricing strategy focuses on producing rice that combines high quality with competitive pricing. We invest in innovative milling technologies to improve the quality of our rice, especially parboiled rice, which is increasingly popular in China. We also provide flexibility in packaging and offer customized solutions to buyers, which add value beyond just price.” (Business Owner of Rice Export Company (Male), personal communication, March 20, 2025).

Key Informants 2

“While I am not directly involved in pricing, I know that our company focuses on minimizing logistics costs to maintain competitive prices. By reducing t ransportation delays and optimizing routes, we can pass savings onto our customers in China without compromising quality.” (Director of Rice Exports (Male), personal communication, March 20, 2025).

Key Informants 3

“From a quality perspective, our strategy is to ensure that our rice consistently meets the highest standards, especially in the competitive Chinese market. We position ourselves as a premium product provider, offering nutritious, chemical-free rice, and our pricing reflects this added value." (Logistic Manager (Male), personal communication, March 20, 2025).

Key Informants 4

"We focus on offering competitive prices while maintaining high-quality standards. By offering innovative products like parboiled rice and educating buyers on their health benefits, we create a strong value proposition. We also offer flexible payment terms, which helps our buyers in China manage their purchasing process more efficiently." (Quality Control Officer (Female), personal communication, March 20, 2025).

Key Informants 5

"We maintain a competitive advantage by controlling our operational costs and ensuring that our rice is priced at a point that reflects both its quality, and the value added through our efficient logistics and quality control processes. We also offer discounts for bulk orders to attract larger buyers in China." (Sales Manager (Male), personal communication, March 20, 2025).

Conclusion: Pricing Strategy & Competitive Advantage

The overall strategy involves:

1) Offering competitive pricing without compromising quality.

2) Using innovative processing techniques and flexible packaging and offer better quality of rice as the parboiled rice.

3) Ensuring cost savings through efficient logistics to pass on benefits to customers. This approach positions their product as premium yet competitively priced.

4.8 Results on Question 8: Cost Reduction & Efficiency Measures

What effective measures does your company currently take to reduce export costs and improve efficiency?

Summary of Interview found that:

Key Informants 1

“We focus on streamlining our supply chain and reducing unnecessary delays. By optimizing transportation routes and investing in warehouse technology, we can reduce handling and storage costs. Additionally, we maintain strong relationships with our logistics partners to negotiate better rates for shipments to China.” (Business Owner of Rice Export Company (Male), personal communication, March 20, 2025).

Key Informants 2

“We actively look for ways to optimize the transportation process, reducing both costs and delays. This includes using a combination of road and sea transport to minimize fuel costs and ensuring that our shipments are consolidated to maximize space. We also maintain close coordination with the ports to ensure that we avoid any congestion or delays.” (Director of Rice Exports (Male), personal communication, March 20, 2025).

Key Informants 3

“In quality control, we work to optimize our processes by reducing waste during milling and packaging. This not only reduces costs but also ensures that we maintain a consistent product. We also streamline our inspection processes to ensure quicker turnaround times without compromising on quality." (Logistic Manager (Male), personal communication, March 20, 2025).

Key Informants 4

"To reduce costs, we focus on improving operational efficiency and passing those savings onto our customers. We also work with our Chinese clients to create long-term partnerships, offering them better pricing based on consistent and large-volume orders." (Quality Control Officer (Female), personal communication, March 20, 2025).

Key Informants 5

"On the financial side, we closely monitor transportation costs and work to reduce inefficiencies. We have implemented budgeting systems that track all logistics expenses and find cost-saving opportunities across the board, including packaging, transportation, and even currency exchange risks." (Sales Manager (Male), personal communication, March 20, 2025).

Conclusion: Cost Reduction & Efficiency Measures

Key measures include:

1) Optimizing the supply chain to reduce delays from supplier ordering and customer required.

2) Investing in warehouse technology and route optimization.

Coordinating closely with logistics partners to minimize costs and avoid bottlenecks. All respondents agree that operational efficiency directly translates into cost savings and improved service.

4.9 Results on Question 9: Future Optimization Areas

In the future, which specific areas does your company plan to optimize to enhance your competitive advantage in rice exports to China?

Summary of Interview found that:

Key Informants 1

“We plan to further invest in innovative rice processing techniques, such as parboiling, to enhance the nutritional value and shelf life of our products. Additionally, we aim to strengthen our logistics infrastructure to further reduce transportation costs and improve delivery times to China.” (Business Owner of Rice Export Company (Male), personal communication, March 20, 2025).

Key Informants 2

“We’re focusing on expanding our logistical network to reduce transportation times and costs. By optimizing shipping routes and integrating more technology into our supply chain, we expect to significantly improve efficiency and reduce delays.” (Director of Rice Exports (Male), personal communication, March 20, 2025).

Key Informants 3

“We plan to continue investing in cutting-edge technology to maintain and improve the quality of our rice. This includes advanced quality testing equipment and software to track and monitor quality in real time. This ensures that we stay ahead in meeting China's stringent standards.” (Logistic Manager (Male), personal communication, March 20, 2025).

Key Informants 4

"We will continue to strengthen our relationships with key buyers in China while expanding our reach in other regions. Our future focus will also be on providing value-added products like organic and parboiled rice, capitalizing on the growing demand for healthier food options." (Quality Control Officer (Female), personal communication, March 20, 2025).

Key Informants 5

"From a financial perspective, we plan to enhance our forecasting tools and adopt more efficient financial management practices. We're also looking into optimizing our working capital management to ensure smoother financial operations throughout the rice export process." (Sales Manager (Male), personal communication, March 20, 2025).

Conclusion: Future Optimization Areas

Future plans focus on:

1) Adopting innovative processing technologies to improve product quality.

2) Enhancing logistical networks to reduce transportation time and cost.

3) Further improving quality control and expanding buyer relationships.

Strengthening financial management and forecasting systems. These steps are expected to reinforce their competitive edge in the Chinese market.

4.10 Results on Question 10: Impact of New Technologies, Trends, & Policies

What new technologies, trends, or policies do you think may significantly impact your company's rice export business to China in the future?

Summary of Interview found that:

Key Informants 1

“Emerging technologies such as AI and blockchain may significantly impact on how we manage logistics and ensure transparency in the supply chain. Additionally, China's increased focus on food safety and traceability may lead to stricter regulations that we’ll need to adapt to.” (Business Owner of Rice Export Company (Male), personal communication, March 20, 2025).

Key Informants 2

“The use of automation and AI in logistics is a trend we are closely monitoring. Automated warehouses, drones for last-mile delivery, and AI-driven route optimization will likely become key elements of our logistics strategy in the coming years.” (Director of Rice Exports (Male), personal communication, March 20, 2025).

Key Informants 3

“New technologies in food safety and quality testing will play a major role in ensuring compliance with China's evolving regulations. Additionally, trends toward sustainable farming practices may impact our sourcing of rice, and we plan to incorporate more eco-friendly practices.” (Logistic Manager (Male), personal communication, March 20, 2025).

Key Informants 4

“The rise of e-commerce and digital trade platforms will play a big role in how we engage with buyers in China. By leveraging these platforms, we can reach new markets and streamline the purchasing process, making it more efficient and accessible.” (Quality Control Officer (Female), personal communication, March 20, 2025).

Key Informants 5

“Technologies that enhance financial reporting and automate payment processing will be key to improving our operations. Furthermore, blockchain for secure and transparent transactions will be crucial in improving trust with our Chinese clients and partners.” (Sales Manager (Male), personal communication, March 20, 2025).

Conclusion: Impact of New Technologies, Trends, & Policies

Emerging trends such as AI, blockchain, and automation are seen as game changers:

1) Technology: AI and blockchain can enhance transparency, logistics management, and quality control.

2) Digital Trends: The rise of e-commerce and digital trade platforms will improve market access.

3) Regulatory Trends: Increased emphasis on food safety and traceability means the company must continuously adapt its practices. Overall, these developments will require proactive investments to remain competitive.

4.11 Question 11; Additional Insights & Recommendations

Besides the topics mentioned above, do you have any additional insights or recommendations regarding this research topic?

Summary of Interview found that:

Key Informants 1

“One key recommendation is to enhance collaboration with both Thai and Chinese governmental bodies to ensure smoother export procedures. We also need to focus on improving our risk management strategies, particularly around currency fluctuations and market uncertainties.” (Business Owner of Rice Export Company (Male), personal communication, March 20, 2025).

Key Informants 2

“A key focus should be on optimizing the entire supply chain from farm to port, including better coordination between rice mills, warehouses, and transportation providers. This will help reduce bottlenecks and improve efficiency overall.” (Director of Rice Exports (Male), personal communication, March 20, 2025).

Key Informants 3

“It’s essential to stay ahead of regulatory changes in China. We should also continue to invest in food safety technology to maintain our product’s competitive edge and marketability.” (Logistic Manager (Male), personal communication, March 20, 2025).

Key Informants 4

“Fostering long-term partnerships with Chinese buyers should be a top priority. Providing them with high-quality products and a consistent supply will make us their go-to provider.” (Quality Control Officer (Female), personal communication, March 20, 2025).

Key Informants 5

“We need to focus on strengthening our financial forecasting and management systems to better respond to market changes and optimize cash flow for the business.” (Sales Manager (Male), personal communication, March 20, 2025).

Conclusion: Additional Insights & Recommendations

The concluding advice from all perspectives is to:

1) Foster closer collaboration with governmental bodies for smoother export processes.

2) Enhance risk management strategies, particularly concerning market uncertainties and currency fluctuations.

Invest in robust financial forecasting and build long-term relationships with buyers. These insights emphasize the importance of strategic planning and proactive adaptation to maintain success in the rice export business.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSION, DISCUSSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Conclusion of Study

The conclusions presented in this chapter were drawn using a Triangulation Method, which involved cross-verifying qualitative data obtained from multiple interviewees in different functional roles. This approach enhances the credibility and reliability of the findings.

5.1.1 Respondent Background

Most of respondents were males, the position was business owner and the managers in logistics, quality control, and sales, experience from 8 to 20+ years.

5.1.2 Value Chain Analysis

1) Key factors for a successful export operation include effective quality control, regulatory compliance and timely documentation, which encompasses the Letter of Intent (LOI), Full Corporate Offer (FCO), Full Corporate Agreement (FCA), and various types of Letters of Credit (LC), including Standby Letters of Credit (SBLC) and Red Cross Letters of Credit (RXLC).

2) The quality assurance, logistical disruptions, port congestion, and limitations in sub-port capacity, regulatory compliance to evolving international and Chinese regulations.

3) The rice exporters are focusing on maintaining competitive pricing, innovative processing techniques, offering flexible packaging options, and ensuring the availability of superior quality rice, such as parboiled rice, to meet consumer demand and further enhance logistics networks to reduce transportation costs and time.

4) The future focus should be on adopting innovative processing technologies to enhance product quality, improving logistical networks to reduce transportation time and costs, and further enhancing quality control while expanding buyer relationships. These efforts are expected to reinforce competitive advantages in the Chinese market

5.2 Discussion of Findings

5.2.1 Most of respondents were males, the position was business owner and the managers in logistics, quality control, and sales, experience from 8 to 20+ years.

5.2.2 Value chain analysis

1) The rice export process in this study is structured through several key stages: ordering, sourcing, processing, packaging, and shipping. Stakeholders are heavily involved at each stage, ensuring that the product is transported to sub-ports by truck, undergoes customs clearance, and is inspected through the Check Control Inspection (CCIC) before being shipped to China. Respondents highlighted the crucial role of quality control and the timely submission of essential documentation, including the Letter of Intent (LOI), Full Corporate Offer (FCO), Full Corporate Agreement (FCA), and various forms of Letters of Credit (LC), Standby Letters of Credit (SBLC), and Red Cross Letters of Credit (RXLC), all of which were identified as integral to successful export operations. According to research by Bach et al. (2016) it was found that underscore the importance of a well-structured value chain, noting that each stage, from sourcing to shipping, must be meticulously managed to ensure compliance and efficiency in international trade. This aligns with the findings from this study, where respondents similarly emphasized that maintaining detailed and timely documentation is critical in managing risks and ensuring smooth export transactions.

2) The main challenges identified by respondents were related to quality assurance, where stricter quality control measures and documentation requirements were necessary to mitigate risks of chemical contamination, bacterial contamination, and physical contamination, such as the presence of metal or foreign

matter. Furthermore, logistical disruptions such as transportation delays caused by fluctuations in fuel costs, port congestion, and limitations in sub-port capacity were recognized as significant hurdles. Additionally, regulatory compliance remains an ongoing challenge, as companies must continuously adapt to evolving international and Chinese regulations. According to research by Tao et al. (2022) it was found that echoes these concerns, noting that stringent quality control systems are essential to mitigating the risks of contamination within the rice supply chain. Their research aligns with this study's findings, reinforcing the necessity for robust quality assurance protocols in the face of both natural and logistical disruptions. Moreover, research by Szuster and Lotko (2022) found that examined supply chain disruptions during the COVID-19 pandemic, highlighting similar logistical challenges such as fuel price volatility and congestion at key ports. Their findings support the assertion that external factors such as global economic fluctuations and regulatory changes require ongoing adaptation from exporters.

3) In terms of strategic approaches, the study indicates that rice exporters are focusing on maintaining competitive pricing without compromising product quality. This includes utilizing innovative processing techniques, offering flexible packaging options, and ensuring the availability of superior quality rice, such as parboiled rice, to meet consumer demand. According to research by Xiao (2025) it discusses how businesses within global supply chains, particularly in sectors like rice export, rely on similar strategies to balance cost efficiency with high-quality standards. Xiao highlights the importance of innovation in processing and packaging, which is mirrored in this study, where respondents emphasized the need for flexible and cost-effective solutions to maintain a competitive edge. Respondents noted that efficient logistics, aimed at reducing transportation time and costs, are equally crucial in ensuring that cost savings are passed onto customers, reinforcing the need for strategic investments in logistics and product quality.

4) In terms of strategic approaches, the study indicates that rice exporters are focusing on maintaining competitive pricing without compromising product quality. This includes utilizing innovative processing techniques, offering flexible packaging options, and ensuring the availability of superior quality rice, such

as parboiled rice, to meet consumer demand. According to research by Zhang, Y. and Zhang, L. (2022), we found that we explore how blockchain digital technology can empower e-commerce supply chain management by enhancing transparency and improving decision-making and coordination across the supply chain. This aligns with the findings of this study, where respondents noted that technology adoption, especially blockchain, was vital to improving supply chain transparency and product integrity. Similarly, the rise of e-commerce and digital trade platforms was highlighted by Wang and Zhang (2023), who explored how the digital economy is driving greater access to global markets. Our respondents echoed this, pointing out the importance of leveraging digital tools to expand market reach and improve operational efficiency. Furthermore, the increasing emphasis on food safety and traceability, as highlighted by Huang and Rozelle (2022), necessitates that exporters continuously adapt their practices to meet new regulatory requirements. This shift towards enhanced traceability and food safety standards, identified as a critical regulatory trend, requires proactive investment in compliance and technological solutions to ensure market competitiveness.

5) Looking ahead, respondents emphasized the need for continuous innovation in processing technologies to improve product quality and further enhance logistics networks to reduce transportation costs and time. According to research by Li, X. and Li, Y. (2024) we argue that technologies like AI are essential for optimizing logistics and e-commerce, a sentiment that aligns with the future focus identified by respondents in this study. The anticipated advancements in processing technologies and logistics optimization are expected to reinforce the competitive edge of rice exporters in the Chinese market by improving overall supply chain efficiency and strengthening relationships with buyers.

5.3 Recommendation

5.3.1 Recommendations for the Business

1) Collaboration with Government Bodies: It is recommended that companies foster closer ties with governmental agencies to streamline export processes.

This could help mitigate delays caused by regulatory hurdles and improve overall efficiency in handling the export procedures.

2) Enhanced Risk Management: Exporters should enhance their risk management strategies, particularly to address market uncertainties and fluctuations in currency exchange rates. Proactive measures could help protect against unforeseen disruptions, such as price volatility or unexpected regulatory changes.

3) Long-Term Buyer Relationships: Strengthening long-term relationships with buyers is emphasized. Building trust through consistent supply and high-quality products ensures repeat business and fosters brand loyalty in the competitive market, especially against countries like Vietnam, which present substantial price competition.

4) Financial Forecasting: Companies should invest in robust financial forecasting tools to better manage and predict cash flow, ensuring smoother financial operations. This would also allow for better preparedness against global economic shifts and internal financial challenges.

5.3.2 Recommendations for Future Research

1) Adoption of Innovative Processing Technologies: A primary focus is to continue adopting advanced processing technologies, such as improving parboiling methods to enhance rice quality. This is expected to elevate the nutritional value and shelf life of rice, aligning with growing global demand for high-quality food products.

2) Logistical Network Improvements: Another key focus is enhancing logistical networks to reduce transportation time and costs. Streamlining transportation routes and improving infrastructure are vital to maintaining competitiveness, especially given the fluctuating costs of fuel and the congestion issues at ports.

3) Quality Control Advancements: Improving quality control systems is vital. Investments in advanced testing equipment and systems for real-time quality monitoring will help exporters meet stringent international standards, particularly in China, where quality regulations are becoming more rigorous.

4) Expanding Buyer Relationships: Expanding and strengthening buyer relationships in China is another central goal. This includes maintaining close ties

with existing clients while exploring opportunities in emerging markets to secure a broader customer base.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

LETTER OF REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO COLLECT RESEARCH DATA

RSU มหาวิทยาลัยรังสิต RANGSIT UNIVERSITY

Rangsit University
Muang-Ake, Paholyothin Rd.
Pathumthani 12000, Thailand
T. (66) 2997 2200-30
F. (66) 2533 9470

GS.6881/127

March 5, 2025

Subject: Request for an Interview for Research Data Collection

Dear Sir/Madam,

At this time, Mr. Yi Yao, student ID 6609958, a student of the Master of Science Program in Management of Logistics, Graduate School, Rangsit University, is conducting thesis research on "Challenges and Opportunities of Thai Rice Exports to China: A Case Study of Infotax Survey Limited Partnership", with Dr. Bavornwit Rojsuwan as an advisor.

As part of the research process, Mr. Yi Yao is currently in the data collection stage. In this regard, we kindly seek your cooperation in granting him the opportunity to conduct an interview with you to gather valuable insights for his study. Please be assured that your name and identity will be kept confidential. Mr. Yi Yao will personally coordinate with you regarding the details of the interview at your convenience.

We sincerely appreciate your time and consideration of this request. Your support and expertise would be greatly beneficial to the success of this research.

Sincerely yours,

Dr. Chanakiat Samarnbutra
Director of Master of Science Program in Management of Logistics
Graduate School, Rangsit University
Tel + 66 2 997 2200 Ext. 4183

APPENDIX B

LETTER OF REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO COLLECT RESEARCH DATA

RSU มหาวิทยาลัยรังสิต RANGSIT UNIVERSITY

GS.6881/141

March 24, 2025

Subject: Request permission to identify and disclose the name of the organization in the thesis

Dear Mr. Aukkaranan Nonchayanat

Managing Partner, Infotax Survey Limited Partnership

At this time, Mr. Yi Yao, student ID 6609958, a student of the Master of Science Program in Management of Logistics, Graduate School, Rangsit University, is conducting an thesis research on "Challenges and Opportunities of Thai Rice Exports to China: A Case Study of Infotax Survey Limited Partnership", with Dr. Bavornwit Rojsuwan as an advisor.

Therefore, the student would like to request permission to identify and disclose the name "Infotax Survey Limited Partnership" in the thesis title and in the thesis book for research purposes.

Sincerely yours,

Dr. Chanakiat Samarnbutra

Director of Master of Science Program in Management of Logistics

Graduate School, Rangsit University

Tel +66 2 997 2200 Ext. 4183

ห้างหุ้นส่วน จำกัด อินโฟแทคซ์ เซอร์เวย์

Infotax Survey Limited Partnership

Permission as requested

(Mr. Aukkaranan Nonchayanat)

BIOGRAPHY

Name	Yi Yao
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