

PROMOTION FOR THE HEALTH RECOVERY SLIPPER INDUSTRY THROUGH CONSUMER PURCHASES

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ABSTRACT

The objective of this research is to present the promotion for the health recovery slipper industry through consumer purchases. The research employs the literature review methodology, drawing from documents and internet information, and utilizes content analysis to provide academic evidence for entrepreneurs, marketers, footwear designers, and stakeholders involved in promoting the health recovery slipper industry. In addition, it is for those interested in studying the factors that promote the health recovery slipper industry, consumer behavior, and the current health trend in the market. One trend that is increasingly gaining traction is health recovery slippers. The rise of this trend necessitates that entrepreneurs analyze how to create market advantage to meet the growing demand for health-centric footwear through quality production, excellent service, and targeted market analysis. These factors contribute to profitability and organizational survival. From literature review, it was found that: 1) Entrepreneurial capabilities in retail businesses including support from the government, sufficient financial resources, establishment of popular brand names, management on customer relationship, and competition analysis, 2) Product manufacturing standards including utilizing modern technology, using durable materials, obtaining certification standards, and receiving awards, 3) Marketing strategies including product development, distribution channel management, sales promotion, advertisement, and public relations, 4) Service standards including good salesperson qualities, multiple payment channels, convenience facilities in stores, and after-sales service. These factors influence the promotion of the health recovery slipper industry, particularly in the context of promoting health-enhancing footwear through consumer purchases. The promotion in this industry comprises quality matching prices, word-of-mouth marketing, brand loyalty, and a positive brand image. This literature review is beneficial for entrepreneurs in developing and promoting the health recovery slipper industry effectively, meeting the highest consumer demands, and sustaining sales for the organization.

Keywords: Entrepreneurs, Industry Promotion, Health Recovery Slippers

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INTRODUCTION

The footwear and leather industry is one of the major industries in Thailand as it involves essential products that everyone needs to wear and use in daily life. According to a study by the Thailand Textile Institute in March 2023, the export value of footwear and leather was USD 172.3 million, which is a 6.1% decrease compared to the same month of the previous year (YoY). The footwear export value alone was USD 52.6 million, showing a decrease of 15.1%. In contrast, the overall import value for the industry in that month was USD 236.6 million, an increase of 50.7% compared to the same month of the previous year (YoY). The footwear import value alone was USD 59.3 million, up by 50.5%, leading to a trade deficit in March 2023 (Thailand Textile Institute, 2023).

From the in-depth study in 2021, “slippers” became a notable export product for Thailand due to continuous export growth. Thailand ranked as the 8th largest exporter of rubber or plastic slippers globally, following China, the European Union, Vietnam, Turkey, the United Kingdom, Indonesia, and Brazil. Thanks to cost and quality advantages, slippers are a common household item in Thailand and a significant economic product (Thai Rath Online, 2021). This success results from the promotion of the 20-year national strategy, which outlines the development framework for all governmental sectors to achieve the vision of a “stable, prosperous, and sustainable” Thailand through the principles of a sufficiency economy. The strategy period spans from 2017 to 2030 and includes six key areas, with the second focusing on enhancing competitiveness. The general footwear and health-recovery slipper businesses should receive future government support to boost competitiveness and economic value. The third area emphasizes human development and capacity building, where footwear plays a crucial role in enabling individuals to walk and work, thereby enhancing national human potential (Office of the National Economic and Social Development Council, 2023).

Based on the import and export data for footwear in Thailand, it is evident that there is currently an imbalance. This imbalance is due to various factors such as economic conditions, changing global scenarios, fluctuating raw material costs, and new competitors emerging as a result of global phenomena. These factors significantly impact business operations, as domestic entrepreneurs may struggle to keep up with market strategy changes, making it difficult to compete against international brands entering the market (Prosoft, 2021). One key aspect that businesses should focus on to capture market share and attract the target audience is the management capability of entrepreneurs. In other words, modern entrepreneurs need to be success-driven, have a strong desire to make their businesses successful, and be able to handle risks at any time. They should be creative and capable of addressing any issues that arise, turning every situation into an opportunity, be self-confident, decisive, and have expertise in managing business-customer relationships. They should also be able to analyze market competitors to devise effective strategies, use marketing strategies to build brand recognition, and assess funding strategies to ensure business survival (Vu, 2020). Moreover, the competition in Thailand’s health footwear market has seen an influx of foreign entrepreneurs, leading to issues such as price-cutting and the creation of various strategies to attract customers. This has had a significant impact on the market. Price-sensitive customers are always ready to change their purchasing behavior and do not show loyalty to any specific brand. If entrepreneurs can develop these competencies, the chances of business survival and success will greatly increase (Thailand Textile Institute, 2023).

Being an entrepreneur in this type of business is not solely about conducting business activities but also involves managing and organizing various activities within the enterprise. To achieve success, an entrepreneur cannot operate alone but needs the support of employees, labor, and the community environment, collectively known as stakeholders. These stakeholders include 1) the entrepreneur themselves, who is the business operator, 2) the external environment, such as the community, customers, and other relevant business operators like suppliers, managers,

and banks. The business needs support from government policies, the community, and the public, who also become important customers. Furthermore, the business requires funding from banks and quality raw materials from suppliers (Minshall et al., 2008).

In the production of health shoes, aside from the unique characteristics, shape, color, quality, and standards produced by the entrepreneur's factory, an important factor influencing consumer purchase decisions is the marketing strategy. This includes product development, where the quality of health shoes must be continuously improved. Innovations and research are crucial to making the product stand out from competitors. In addition, creating a story or history about the health shoes and publicizing the benefits consumers will receive when purchasing them is important. Marketing channels include social media, sales through stores, booth sales, and providing excellent customer service. Polite language and a pleasant shopping environment greatly influence brand awareness and perception. Currently, health shoes are not limited to the elderly; younger generations are also increasingly concerned about foot health. With ongoing innovations and modern designs, new entrepreneurs see opportunities and enter the market, competing on design, quality, and price to attract target customers (Prachachat Business, 2022). If entrepreneurs produce standard products with attention to detail in production, use appropriate marketing strategies, effectively advertise and publicize, and ensure accessibility to distribution channels close to the target audience to maximize brand and health shoe awareness, the target audience can easily become consumers. Providing standardized, polite, and convenient service to the target audience will further influence their purchase decisions, leading to them becoming loyal customers and increasing market share. This, in turn, can generate sustainable profits (Manager Online, 2018).

Capabilities of Retail Entrepreneurs in Promoting the Foot Health Slipper Industry

In the context of retail entrepreneurs' capabilities, the focus is on conducting business with determination and the effort to seek opportunities that add value to the business. This may manifest as profits or improved social well-being within a risky and challenging business environment. For business operations, entrepreneurs might prioritize economic factors over others because they are essential for the long-term sustainability of the business. Entrepreneurs should carefully consider factors affecting costs and profits, such as capital, land, labor, and other necessary resources. Following this, they should evaluate factors that create competitive advantages and meet customer satisfaction, as well as seek continuous opportunities for business success (Sutheera Athawongsa, 2017). Entrepreneurship is a concept developed after the general notion of an entrepreneur and is closely related in definition to "entrepreneur." Both terms are often used interchangeably. However, entrepreneurship focuses not just on the individual but also on the context, environment, processes, and actions related to seizing opportunities and creating organizations capable of leveraging those opportunities (Phatthranit Sorasemsombat et al., 2017).

McClelland's work in psychology explains why entrepreneurs can respond to opportunities while others cannot. This psychological perspective is significant because it is clearly linked to entrepreneurship. Scholars use psychological theories as a basis to analyze key entrepreneurial traits, which include 5 main characteristics; 1) Creativity, 2) Risk-taking, 3) Desire to achieve, 4) Self-confidence, and 5) Motivation to engage in business (Lanza & Passarelli, 2014).

From this reason, for entrepreneurs to sustain their businesses, it is essential to establish a solid foundation for management both within and outside the organization. This involves controlling both controllable and uncontrollable variables. Controllable factors should be adjustable within the organization, including the development of strategies to attract target customers. In addition, the operations must rely on appropriate sources of funding to ensure smooth and continuous functioning (Vu, 2020). Furthermore, building a brand is crucial for strengthening the organization. This includes strategizing from the beginning to maintain customer loyalty.

Strategies should highlight the company's internal strengths, such as product quality standards, the use of high-quality raw materials, careful selection of materials before production, analyzing production to meet sales and customer demands, and implementing a well-thought-out service standard process. The service process should neither be too short nor too long, as this can negatively impact customers deciding to purchase shoes. The final element that influences customer purchasing decisions is marketing. Analyzing customer behavior, needs, and perceptions, and observing what can best meet customer expectations, is vital. If entrepreneurs can implement these strategies effectively, it will significantly impact the decision to purchase health recovery slippers (Rujira Lueangsakdaphit & Aphichai Mahatham, 2021).

For the capabilities of a good retail entrepreneur, besides the aforementioned points, it is also important to enhance survival skills in a competitive market. This includes gaining support from the government for business operations, having sufficient internal funding for the company's production needs, and promoting the company's reputation through various means. These might include sponsorship, participating in or winning awards in the business's area of expertise to guarantee product quality. Managing customer relationships through online communication, providing opportunities for customer engagement activities, and analyzing competitors to adjust the organizational structure are also crucial. These efforts will influence consumer purchasing behavior for slippers (Zafar et al., 2022).

Product Quality Standards in Promoting the Health Slipper Industry

The theory of product quality standards is a mainstream theory that helps improve the quality of products, especially in industries producing essential goods for human survival. The footwear manufacturing industry is significant to the country's economy. The footwear industry has a relatively simple production structure, and some types of production still rely heavily on Labor Intensive, especially for leather shoes or shoes requiring human craftsmanship. Many production steps cannot yet be automated. Production methods range from household levels to large-scale industries. When discussing standards or features of products or services that can satisfy customer needs, quality can be seen in terms of fitness for use and the ability of the manufacturer to meet established standards or criteria (Garvin, 1983; Juran, 1988; Bemowski & Stratton, 1999).

Quality in production must be defined as standards that satisfy both producers and customers. Achieving this satisfaction requires the cooperation of everyone in the organization, regardless of position, secretaries, sales staff, or company presidents must all participate in quality control. Good quality results from continuous development, maintenance, and improvement (Feigenbaum, 1991). However, Juran (1988) and Feigenbaum (1991) further suggest that good quality management should include a process starting from quality planning, quality control, and quality improvement. Quality control aims to identify problems or deficiencies that do not align with the quality management guidelines and improve quality to produce products and services that meet customer needs and create satisfaction. This agrees with Nantiya Wattanavitukun (2001), who explained that total quality development in an organization is the philosophy of "the best way to increase sales and profit for the company is to make products and services that satisfy customers." The operation should be performed in accordance with desired standards or requirements by creating customer satisfaction with the lowest operating costs. Quality means different things to different people or customers, typically measured by "satisfaction" or "impression." If the product meets explicit customer needs, satisfaction is achieved. If it exceeds expectations or meets hidden needs, customers are impressed.

Considering product quality standards, it is essential for entrepreneurs to find ways to develop production to meet the quality that consumers demand. Further studies reveal that good entrepreneurs analyze Deming's objectives for improvement as increasing efficiency, which enhances competitiveness. Improving quality reduces repeated work and waste (Therdphan

Thammarattanaphong et al., 2022). Resource usage and errors decrease as well. Quality standards for sustainable competitiveness in the industry should include 1) Using Modern Technology: Technology in production is a strength that helps create products according to customer needs, increasing competitive advantage, speeding up production and delivery, and reaching target groups before competitors, 2) Using Durable Raw Materials: The primary factor for customer satisfaction is the quality of raw materials used in production, ensuring that consumers can use the product for a long time, and 3) Obtaining Quality Certifications: Certifications assure the target audience that the products are safe and high-quality, making it easier for consumers to decide to purchase. Awards act as a guarantee of expertise in the product. These factors significantly influence the health slipper industry, helping it reach target groups effectively (Wiphaphorn Ongkanussorn & Chalermrat Prasertsang, 2021; Chutima Nuttayasakul et al., 2021; Nareerat Sirasarn & Chananaat Chanaaksorn, 2020).

Marketing Strategies to Promote the Health Slipper Industry

Marketing strategies are crucial tools closely related to the daily lives of individuals and organizations. Marketers in each company select target groups that align with their products or services and adjust the marketing mix factors to fit these target groups. This involves defining the Product, structuring the Price, and organizing the Place appropriately for the target market (Kotler et al., 2019). In studying current marketing strategies for the health slipper industry, which faces high competition, it is essential to use marketing promotion activities to help the business succeed. Marketing promotions provide information about the marketing mix to the target audience (Bhasin, 2021). Therefore, understanding consumer behavior allows companies to create marketing strategies that satisfy consumers, leading to purchasing decisions and improving market and product development (Lakra et al., 2016). Creating marketing strategies is crucial for businesses. Marketing managers must thoroughly study consumer groups to understand the reasons behind their purchases, changes in buying patterns, and purchase decisions. This understanding helps managers predict consumer needs, buying behaviors, motivations, and the sources of information consumers use to make decisions. All this information is vital for marketing planning (Kotler et al., 2019).

From studying various aspects of marketing strategies, it can be concluded that implementing target marketing strategies is an analysis that helps differentiate the organization's products to meet the diverse preferences, needs, and behaviors of different consumer segments. To tailor the marketing mix to the target market, it is necessary to start by segmenting the market based on consumer or market-related factors. After that, the target market is defined, and the company's product positioning is aligned with the preferences, needs, and behaviors of the chosen market (Kotler & Armstrong, 1996).

Marketing strategies are generally analyzed through 4 variables; 1) Product Development: To meet the constantly changing needs of the target market, 2) Place: To find ways to distribute health slippers to the target audience as effectively as possible through various methods, such as online channels, retail stores, advertising sales, and distribution to shopping centers, 3) Promotion: To announce the product's availability, allowing consumers to know about the health slipper sources and providing opportunities for the target audience to become aware of the product and try it out, 4) Advertising and Public Relations: In creating marketing strategies, entrepreneurs and marketers must thoroughly understand their products, comprehend consumer needs, and recognize the constantly changing consumer behaviors in the new era. These factors affect the formulation of strategies and the scope for generating profit and market share, promoting the health slipper industry (Kotler & Armstrong, 1996).

Service Standards for Promoting the Health Slipper Industry

When studying service standards, it is evident that a key factor in differentiating a business in the competitive service industry is the distinctiveness of the service provided. This includes the uniqueness of the materials used to produce health slippers, equitable service, and attentive

consumer care. Building trust in product quality, meeting promised timelines, and ensuring overall customer satisfaction and recall lead to word-of-mouth recommendations. This, in turn, attracts new consumers and encourages repeat purchases, positively impacting the organization. Quality assessment criteria include tangible service, reliability, responsiveness, assurance, and empathy towards consumers (Worakamonwan Raksa, 2022). Service standards involve activities that occur during communication between consumers and service employees or systems. These activities aim to meet consumer needs, ensuring their happiness and convenience. Service quality is measured by tangible aspects, reliability, responsiveness, assurance, and empathy. High service quality positively influences customer satisfaction. Flawless service that meets and exceeds consumer expectations provides a competitive edge. When service meets customer expectations, it creates a sense of satisfaction, and exceeding these expectations fosters customer delight (Kornkanok Anakthanakun, 2021).

Based on the findings regarding service standards, it can be stated that the factors influencing the establishment of these standards are; 1) qualifications of sales staff: The sales staff's qualifications are crucial in service delivery. They act as representatives of the company. If the sales staff exhibit good service behavior, consumers will develop a positive attitude, which in turn leads to a desire to return for future services. 2) Multiple payment channels: This need has arisen following the COVID-19 pandemic. Companies must increase the variety of payment methods to maximize consumer convenience, such as credit card payments, mobile app payments, and internet banking. 3) Provision of in-store amenities: This aspect is as important as the sales staff. A well-organized storefront affects convenience, spaciousness, and comfort for customers upon entering the store (Febriani & Rahayu, 2023). Business owners, marketers, and store designers need to pay close attention to storefront details. A good storefront does not only attract consumers but it also showcases the products, making them visible and recognizable to customers. In conclusion, service standards are essential for attracting consumers and encouraging purchase decisions (Kornkanok Anakthanakun, 2021)

DISCUSSION & CONCLUSION

Shop operators towards production standards, service standards, and marketing strategies that promote the slipper industry to restore foot health.

In summary, to support the health slipper industry effectively, retailers must focus on three key competencies: 1) Opportunity Seeking: Retailers must be committed and proactive in seeking opportunities to add value to their business, whether in terms of profits or societal well-being, especially in a risky and challenging business environment. 2) Resource Management involves careful consideration of factors that affect costs and profits, such as capital, land, labor, and other essential resources for business operations (Minshall et al., 2008). 3) Creating Competitive Advantage: Retailers must identify and leverage factors that provide a competitive edge, ensuring maximum customer satisfaction. This idea stems from entrepreneurial theory, which considers the context, environment, and processes related to seizing opportunities and creating organizations. This theory spans multiple disciplines, including economics, strategic management, sociology, and psychology, particularly focusing on psychological traits of entrepreneurs (Phatthranit Sorasermsombat et al., 2017).

Research by Lanza and Passarelli (2014) indicates that the ability of retailers to organize their business for competitiveness often depends on government support. This includes facilitating market entry, providing legal standards to assist entrepreneurs, and offering access to funding, favorable tax policies, and interest rates, all of which enable business growth. This includes building a reputation and managing corporate customer relationships. These are all strategies that store operators need to pay attention to when looking at the theory of Human relations management ability. George Elton Mayo and Fritz Roethlisberger's studies, discussed by Chote Bodirat (2015), emphasize that managing relationships between the organization and its target

groups fosters positive relationships. Good management of these relationships and competitor analysis are crucial for entrepreneurs. Understanding and leveraging organizational strengths and weaknesses to analyze competitors can help in continuously improving the slippers, ensuring they remain competitive in the market (Rujira Lueangsakdaphit & Aphichai Mahatham, 2021).

Overall, achieving service standards, production standards, and marketing strategies is essential for promoting the health slipper industry. Entrepreneurs need to use quality raw materials (Zafar et al., 2022). The quality of products and services can be measured by their suitability for use and their ability to produce products that meet established standards. Good quality must be established in terms of standards that satisfy both producers and customers. This includes the quality management process consisting of quality planning steps, quality control, and quality improvement to reduce problems and increase customer satisfaction (Therdphan Thammarattanaphong et al., 2022). However, the introduction of modern technology to help with production all has strong influence on the trustworthiness of the organization. Using quality raw materials will affect the quality that consumers will receive and the receipt of standard certificate. The adoption of technology helps production to be fast and competitive. Meanwhile, high quality raw materials and standard certification guarantee the reliability and confidence of consumers in the product. Therefore, it can be inferred that production standards are an important guideline for guaranteeing quality and consumer satisfaction through quality management with a strict process from analysis of store operators who must continually improve and develop in order to keep up with the era and popular trends that are constantly changing (Wiphaphorn Ongkanussorn & Chalermrat Prasertsang, 2021).

To promote the health slipper industry, when the strategy was used in the analysis and development of the product, namely healthy slippers, the important thing that will help the health-rehabilitating slippers reach the hands of the target group is to study the behavior of the target group in order to understand the changing behavior characteristics. It can be said that in adopting marketing strategies to promote the foot health-rehabilitating slipper industry, it is all related to the process of getting slippers into the hands of consumers to wear, attracting them and leading to repeat purchasing decisions in the future. It must come from product development all the time. Products that are not developed will eventually result in being copied and eventually disrupted. Therefore, it is essential to develop products all the time. From applying the marketing mix theory of Kotler et al. (2019), it can be seen that Product development is about bringing in innovation to bring new products to the market, including using distribution channels that must distribute products in order to reach the target group as much as possible. Setting a pricing strategy also influences consumers' shoe purchasing decisions. Therefore, in setting the price of tangible products, it is necessary to set reasonable prices. Marketing promotion and advertising, public relations are all part of the Marketing Mix theory. It can be concluded that effective marketing strategies require a deep understanding of the target audience and unmet consumer needs. They must also continuously monitor and improve their strategies in order to successfully market in an era of high competition (Kotler & Armstrong, 1996).

According to the findings on entrepreneurial abilities, production standards, and marketing strategies that help promote competitiveness within the recovery slipper industry. Terms and conditions in service standards also play very important role in helping consumers make purchasing decisions. By studying service standards, it is necessary to come from the qualifications of salespeople who are considered important in providing services and multiple payment channels (Febriani & Rahayu, 2023). Companies need to add a variety of payment methods to meet the highest convenience of consumers. Regarding the arrangement of facilities in stores, the good storefront will result in a comfortable feeling when the customers step into the store. The storefront is not only a source of attraction for consumers to buy slippers in the

store but the storefront also showcases the products within the store. Thus, consumers can get to know and see the products. It can be said that service standards are considered important to help induce consumers to be interested in deciding to buy products (Nareerat Sirasarn & Chananaat Chanaaksorn, 2020).

From an analysis of documents containing information about the foot recovery slipper industry in Thailand, promoting the industry through the aforementioned factors can be done through the use of various strategies. To meet market demands and increasing competition, the suggestions for promoting this industry in the future include; 1) improving product quality, using modern technology and quality raw materials to produce slippers in order for the product to be reliable and accepted in terms of product standards (Chutima Nuttayasakul et al., 2021), 2) marketing and distribution strategy creating brand awareness and public relations through online and offline channels to reach new target groups and expand the market, 3) government support: Entrepreneurs should receive funding and policy support from the government in order to strengthen competitiveness and reduce production costs (Nanthiya Watthanawithukun, 2001), 4) research and development through the investment in research to develop innovations that respond to market needs and changing health trends, 5) build a brand and image: Having a strong and consistent brand image across distribution channels helps build trust and brand loyalty, 6) collaboration across sectors, collaboration among entrepreneurs, researchers, and government to promote and develop the long-term health rehabilitation sandal industry. Implementation of these recommendations will help the Thai foot recovery slipper industry to compete internationally and meet changing market demands (Bhasin, 2021).

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