

## EMPIRICAL EVIDENCE ON RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS AND CUSTOMER-BASED BRAND EQUITY OF HUA HIN, THAILAND

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### Abstract

The customer-based brand equity model is an assessment for reflecting the marketing performance of the destination management organization, the perceptions, the learning attitudes, and the data memory of tourists. Also, it is not just the brand image evaluation, but it also considers various factors. The purposes of this research were to study the demographic characteristics of Thai tourists and to examine the relationships between the demographic characteristics and customer-based brand equity of Thai tourists in Hua Hin, Thailand. A questionnaire was used as the research tool to collect data from the research sample consisting of 400 Thai tourists in Hua Hin, Thailand, who were obtained by the convenience sampling method. Statistics applied for data analysis were the descriptive statistics and inferential statistics of multiple regression analysis. The overall distribution of the respondents was 244 females (61.00 %) and 156 males (39.00 %). The majority of the respondents were between 21-30 years old (45.25%, n = 181), with marital status as single (63.00 %, n = 252), with having completed bachelor's degree (59.25%, n = 237), with the Central Region of Thailand as residential region (28.25 %, n = 113), with the occupation as employees (41.50 %, n = 166), and with average income per month between 10,001-20,000 baht (31.50 %, n = 126). The findings suggest that educational level, residential region, and monthly income affect the perceived on customer-based brand equity. Therefore, the analysis results confirm that the demographic characteristics of the tourists can be the marketing data for creating the marketing strategy and brand strategy to enhance the image and reputation for the accurate segmentation, target, and position.

**Keywords:** Demographic Characteristics, Customer-based Brand Equity, Destination Branding Strategy, Hua Hin, Thailand

### Introduction

In today's global dynamic competition,

Thailand has been among the “transition” chapter which has experienced the economic

and political crisis. Moreover, the global structure has changed in the 21<sup>st</sup> century and the future is likely to be more severe and competitive. This will cause inevitable changes in terms of economy, business, society, culture, technology, and the environment, both macro and micro levels. All factors affect lifestyle, business operation, and management model. The tourism industry under the globalization process needs to be able to adjust itself from an added value economy in industrial society to a created-value economy in a knowledge-based society. Additionally, the lifestyle and working styles have changed under the era of “digital society”. Accordingly, technology and innovation are vital and be the basic needs of tourists (Maesincee, 2013).

Currently, the high competition in the tourism industry has affected the brand equity to create a competitive advantage for the destinations. The product-oriented concept of the brand, which is created by the destination management organization (DMO), will be replaced by the tourist-oriented concept and the brand value for creating strategic marketing activities more effective and competitive (Pike & Bianchi, 2016).

In the past, the overview of the tourism industry showed that operational performance was successful in terms of the number of tourists and revenue increasing. In contrast, the tourism has still been encountering many important issues such as the number of tourists and revenue are concentrated mainly in the famous destinations, the

negative tourism image needs to be improved to build the tourist confidence, including the resource degradation and the lack of new destination development. Moreover, the lack of in-depth marketing data for tourism development and planning as well as the lack of integration of the entire tourism management mechanism have continuously required development (National Tourism Policy Committee, 2017). Therefore, the study of Customer-based Brand Equity (CBBE) toward destination will be the solution to understanding how to create an effective brand strategy for the destination.

Currently, the rapid growth in the tourism industry also has the negative impacts on Hua Hin in terms of natural resources and environmental issues, social issues, population issues, traffic accident issues, and the various forms of deceiving tourists. As the development plan of Hua Hin Municipality (2017-2019) which is part of the economic and social development plan of the local government organization is consistent with the development strategy and shows the summarizing of the past situation and the weaknesses analyze of Hua Hin destination into 6 main points as follows: 1) traffic congestion and accidents in the urban areas 2) insufficient raw water sources and water supply pipe deterioration 3) insufficient walkway to the beach 4) insufficient parking space 5) financial limitations of the municipality and the two different forms of society between truly urban and semi-rural communities and 6) non-registered population in the inner city,

which leads to the usages of local resources, the issue of professional competition, illegal labor and criminal issue (Hua Hin Municipality, 2017).

Above all, it has shown that Hua Hin tourism has been successful in increasing the number of tourists and tourism revenue. At the same time, the situation and the impact of changes, both locally and internationally, including changes in tourist behavior has caused the awareness of Hua Hin tourism brand equity and the tourist decision. Therefore it is a challenge to upgrade the Hua

Hin brand to enhance the brand image and reputation by the study of the customer-based brand equity model.

### Research Objectives

1. To study the demographic characteristics of Thai tourists and the top of mind awareness on tourist attractions in Hua Hin, Thailand

2. To examine the relationships between the demographic characteristics and customer-based brand equity of Thai tourists in Hua Hin, Thailand

### Research Framework

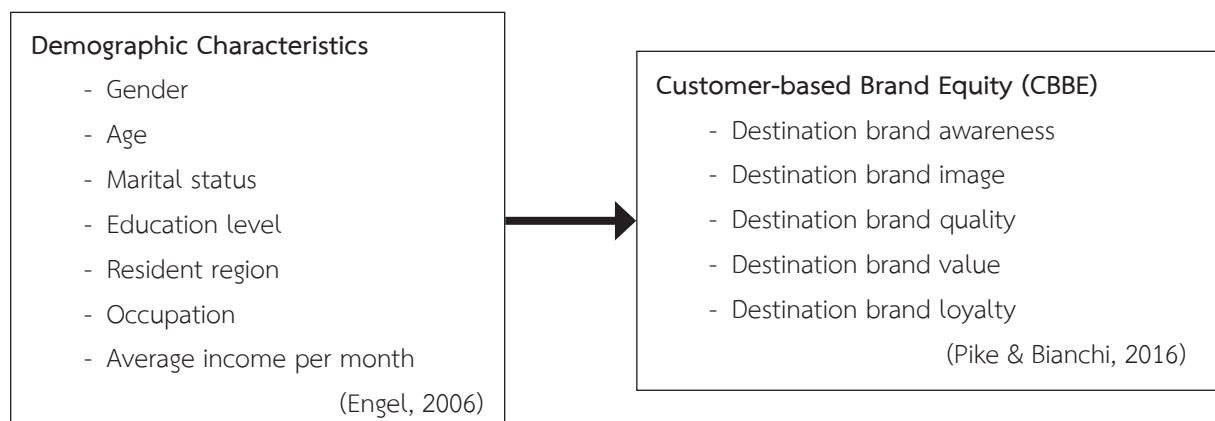


Figure 1 Research Framework (Saisud, 2019)

### Literature Review

#### Demographic Approach

The term “demography” derived from the Greek words “demos” means “people” and “graphia” means “description of” so the term “demography” means a description of people, more specifically a description of their ages and sexes and this description must move beyond the level of individual people (Konigsberg & Frankenberg, 2013). The demographic approach is the analysis of

the population, including structure, size, and distribution concerning the socioeconomic and cultural factors. The previous study of Muslims towards the marketing factors affecting tourism decisions showed the differences of age group and education level had different opinion levels on promotion and the different marital status had different opinion levels on product and place (Khamsamran & Vanichkul, 2016). Therefore, the tourists’ decision behavior depends on

demographic factors because the individual differences based on demographic characteristics are considered as the basis of tourists' decisions.

The demographic segmentation can be divided into the consumer groups by age, income, nationality, gender, occupation, marital status, type and size of household, and geographical location. These variables have an empirical purpose which can be easily examined or observed and helps the marketers to classify each type of consumer, such as age or income, and the social class (Schiffman & Wisenblit, 2015). The demographic study will shape and change the demand and supply in the tourism destination, which will further change the economic pattern. Therefore, the key factor of demographic characteristics; gender, age, marital status, education level, resident region, occupation, and income are needed to study for targeting individual destinations.

#### **Brand Equity Element Approach**

In this study, the researcher focused on the brand equity element. However, it is significant to distinguish between various concepts of “place marketing”, “place brands” and “place branding”. Firstly, “place marketing” refers to the application of marketing instruments to geographical locations, such as cities, towns, regions, and communities so the place marketing as the coordinated use of marketing tools are supported by a shared customer-oriented philosophy for creating, communicating, delivering and exchanging the value for the city's customers and the

city's community at large (Braun, 2008). Secondly, “place brands” are symbolic constructs adding the meaning or value to places, identifying places and “place branding” refers to the development of brands for geographical locations such as regions, cities or communities, usually intending to trigger positive associations and distinguish the place from others so place branding is an element within place marketing that involves influencing people's ideas by forging particular emotional and psychological associations with a place as a marketing tool for place management (Eshuis, Klijn, & Braun, 2014).

Aaker (1991) described the brand equity element is the group or the sum of assets or liabilities, including the positive or negative memories that are associated or linked to the brand and symbol so it is possible to increase or decrease the brand value of products and services from the customer viewpoint, consisting of brand awareness, perceived quality, brand associations, brand loyalty, and other proprietary brand assets. Keller (2013) defined the brand value as “the group of assets, commitments, and values associated with the brand by the unique identity of products or services and the identification of the unique logo and symbol, which are different from other competitors in the market”. The vital key is the understanding stage of consumers in the brand differences because brand awareness is different, attractive, and difficult for replacing by other brands. Moreover, brand affiliation makes the superior to its competitors and helps customers for

positively evaluating a brand.

The brand knowledge in terms of the network model in consumer memories can measure the brand value, which consists of two components 1) brand awareness is the strength of various brand databases in consumer memories so the consumers can distinguish or identify the brand under different circumstances and 2) brand image is the consumer's brand perception from various connections in consumer memories so the connection will pass on the brand meaning to consumers and it can be both rational and emotional perception of the brand (Keller, 2013). Moreover, the places and destination are also the forms of products and the marketing operations have been rapidly changing in the global tourism situation. Therefore, this research studied the destination through the Customer-based Brand Equity model (CBBE).

The Customer-based Brand Equity model is an assessment that reflects the marketing performance of organizations, which take the responsibilities for destinations on how the tourist have shown the perceptions, attitudes, learning, and memories and consider the brand value based on many factors, not just the brand image. The product-oriented concept of the brand, which is created by the Destination Management Organization (DMO), will be replaced by the tourist-oriented concept and the brand value for creating strategic marketing activities more effective and competitive (Pike & Bianchi, 2016).

According to the model of CBBE:

Customer-based Brand Equity of Pike & Bianchi (2016), the customer-based brand equity elements are the following:

1. Destination Brand Awareness - the recognizing of destination brand and the ability to come in the tourist minds as the first choice has shown stability in terms of good quality and reliability. Therefore, the tourist often selects more than other destination brands.

2. Destination Brand Image - the image of a destination in the tourist perception.

3. Destination Brand Quality - the quality perception of destination and the tourist feelings on perceiving the overall quality or the superior quality to other destinations.

4. Destination Brand Value - the value of the destination brand from the tourist perspective linking to the main brands of the destination.

5. Destination Brand Loyalty - the brand loyalty of destination and tourist adherence reflects the changing of tourist behavior.

As the above, this research conducted the hypothesis testing using the model of CBBE: Customer-based Brand Equity (Pike & Bianchi, 2016), which are all five key factors, creating as a questionnaire for Thai tourists and will be used as a guideline for creating the marketing strategy and brand strategy to enhance image and reputation for the accurate segmentation, target, and position.

## Methodology

### Research Design

This research employed the quantitative

research approach to collect the data of the Thai tourists on their top of mind awareness towards the famous attractions in Hua Hin and examine the demographic characteristics on the customer-based brand equity of Hua Hin.

### **Population and Sampling**

Due to this research focused on Thai tourist characteristics, 400 Thai tourists were considered as representative of the population by using convenience sampling (Cochran, 1977). The survey data were collected by using the 50% online and the 50% face-to-face survey method of the Thai tourists who visited Hua Hin. Then 400 questionnaires were coded for analysis.

### **Variables**

The independent variable was the demographic characteristics of Thai tourists who visited Hua Hin in the past period. The dependent variable was their perceived on customer-based brand equity toward Hua Hin tourism which are brand awareness, brand image, brand quality, brand value, and brand loyalty.

### **Research Instrument**

The questionnaire was developing used the quantitative method study with four parts in this survey. Part 1 was the nominal and ordinal questions, collecting gender, age, marital status, educational level, resident region, occupation, and personal income per month. Part 2 was the multiple responses question, collecting the top of mind awareness towards Hua Hin attractions.

Part 3 was twenty Likert-scale questions, probing about respondents' brand equity, having five key constructs, brand awareness, brand image, brand quality, brand value, and brand loyalty. Finally, Part 4 was the open questions, collecting the comment.

### **Data Collection**

The data collection was conducted from April to September 2019, by using convenience sampling both the on-line and the face-to-face survey method at the popular sightseeing spots in Hua Hin District area which were Hua Hin beach, Hua Hin Railway Station, Hua Hin Night Market, Wat Huay Mongkol, Cicada Market, Bluport Huahin Resort Mall, and Market Village.

### **Data Analysis**

Multiple Regression was analyzed to test hypotheses H1, H2, H3, H4, H5, H6, and H7.

## **Results**

### **Summary of Descriptive Findings**

The overall distribution of the respondents in table 1 shows that majority of the respondents of 400 people were female (61.00 %, n = 244), aged 21-30 years old (45.25%, n = 181), marital status as single (63.00%, n = 252), completed bachelor's degree (59.25%, n = 237), from the central region of Thailand as resident region (28.25%, n = 113), had the occupation as employees (41.50%, n = 166), and average income per month between 10,001-20,000 Baht (31.50%, n = 126).

Table 1 Demographic Characteristics of Thai tourists

Tourist Characteristics		Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Male	156	39.00
	Female	244	61.00
Age	≤ 20 years old	37	9.25
	21-30 years old	181	45.25
	31-40 years old	138	34.50
	41-50 years old	36	9.00
	51-60 years old	5	1.25
	≥ 61 years old	3	0.75
Marital Status	Single	252	63.00
	Married	129	32.25
	Divorced	19	4.75
Educational Level	Below Bachelor's degree	99	24.75
	Bachelor's degree	237	59.25
	Higher than a Bachelor's degree	64	16.00
Resident Region	Bangkok	93	23.25
	Northern region	21	5.25
	Eastern region	23	5.75
	Southern region	51	12.75
	Central region	113	28.25
	Northeastern region	66	16.5
	Western region	33	8.25
Occupation	Government officials	27	6.75
	Employees	166	41.50
	College students	92	23.00
	Housewife/husband	14	3.50
	Self-employed business	75	18.75
	Freelance	22	5.50
	Farmers	2	0.50
	Retirement	2	0.50
Average income per month	≤10,000 ฿	99	24.75
	10,001-20,000 ฿	126	31.50
	20,001-30,000 ฿	55	13.75
	30,001-40,000 ฿	29	7.25
	40,001-50,000 ฿	22	5.50
	≥50,001 ฿	69	17.25

Source: Created by the author using SPSS software

As shown in table 2, it shows that the top of mind awareness on tourist attractions of Thai tourists in Hua Hin, Thailand. There are top 10 tourist attractions, which are very quickly coming to mind as the first choice for Thai tourists as following Hua Hin Beach (9.80%), Hua Hin Railway Station (7.50%), Klai

Kangwon Palace (7.50%), Hua Hin Night Market (7.40%), Wat Huay Mongkol (6.70%), Cicada Market (6.40%), Rajabhakti Park (6.20%), Plearn Wan Hua Hin (6.00%), Vana Nava Water Jungle (5.20%) and Wat Khao Takiap (4.40%), respectively.

**Table 2** Top of mind awareness of tourist attractions in Hua Hin, Thailand

Tourist Attractions	Frequency	Percentage
Hua Hin Beach	353	9.80
Hua Hin Railway Station	271	7.50
Klai Kangwon Palace	272	7.50
Rajabhakti Park	224	6.20
Wat Huay Mongkol	240	6.70
Wat Khao Takiap	160	4.40
Suan Soan Pradipat	151	4.20
Khao Hin Lek Fai	102	2.80
Hua Hin Night Market	266	7.40
Chatsila Night Market	95	2.60
Cicada Market	229	6.40
Sam Phan Nam Floating Market	95	2.60
Venezia Hua Hin	66	1.80
Fisherman Village	28	0.80
Vana Nava Water Jungle	188	5.20
Black Mountain Water Park	59	1.60
Plearn Wan Hua Hin	215	6.00
Khao Tao Beach	100	2.80
Queens Park 19 Rai	64	1.80
Monsoon Valley Vineyard	52	1.40
Seenspace Hua Hin	99	2.70
Baan Sillapin Hua Hin Art Gallery	21	0.60
Racing Market	7	0.20
Bluport Huahin Resort Mall	86	2.40
Air Space Hua Hin	20	0.60
For Art's Sake	11	0.30
Market Village	129	3.60
<b>Total</b>	<b>3,603</b>	<b>100.00</b>

**Source:** Created by the author using SPSS software



### Summary of Inferential Findings

This research applied the triangulation concept for comparing the factors from a variety of perspectives and confirming the result validity (Bechara & Van de Ven, 2011) by conducting multiple regression analyses. Multicollinearity testing was used to analyze the reliability

and validity of the instrument. Table 2 shows that all variables showed no multicollinearity because the correlation was less than 0.75 (Davis, 1971). Moreover, the quantitative data of the independent variables in this research is only the nominal and ordinal data, so the analysis of the correlation status of research variables based on Spearman's test.

**Table 3** Analysis of correlation status of research variables based on Spearman's test

Variables	Gender	Age	Status	Education	Region	Occupation	Income
Gender	1.000	-0.113 <sup>*</sup>	-0.051	-0.005	-0.038	-0.018	-0.120 <sup>*</sup>
Age		1.000	0.538 <sup>*</sup>	0.227 <sup>*</sup>	-0.028	-0.208 <sup>*</sup>	0.567 <sup>*</sup>
Status			1.000	0.061	-0.053	-0.089	0.257 <sup>*</sup>
Education				1.000	-0.052	-0.165 <sup>*</sup>	0.369 <sup>*</sup>
Region					1.000	0.034	-0.094
Occupation						1.000	-0.194 <sup>*</sup>
Income							1.000

Source: Created by the author using SPSS software

As shown in table 3, it shows that the correlation coefficient is between 0.005 and 0.0538 which less than 0.75 (Davis, 1971). It explains that there is no multicollinearity and can proceed to the next step.

The dummy variable of independent variables was created instead of the quality variables. It must change the quality variables to a dummy variable before taking into the multiple regression equation. This research analyzed the multiple regression equation with 2 methods which are the Enter method and Stepwise method.

### Method 1: Selecting variables by importing all variables (Enter)

This method selects the variables by adding all independent variables (Enter). It selects the variables that have the correlation coefficient with all the independent variables into the equation. The selection will be made from the seven variables that are gender, age, status, education level, resident region, occupations and income per month, which are the factor that needs to be tested into the equation at once. The results show as follows.

**Table 4** Multiple regression analysis of demographic characteristics of Thai tourists and Customer-based Brand Equity by Enter method

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	Collinearity Statistics	
	B	Std. Error	Beta			Tolerance	VIF
(Constant)	3.449	0.204		16.930	0.000		
Male	-0.041	0.064	-0.032	-0.636	0.525	0.950	1.052
Single	0.022	0.152	0.016	0.141	0.888	0.172	5.798
Married	0.112	0.155	0.083	0.721	0.472	0.177	5.636
Below Bachelor's degree	-0.191	0.113	-0.131	-1.696	0.091	0.394	2.535
Bachelor's degree	0.092	0.096	0.071	0.954	0.341	0.417	2.395
Bangkok and metropolitan area	0.203	0.129	0.136	1.571	0.117	0.313	3.190
Northern region	0.203	0.175	0.072	1.161	0.246	0.615	1.627
Eastern region	0.153	0.172	0.057	0.892	0.373	0.583	1.717
Southern region	0.389	0.141	0.206	2.760	<b>0.006*</b>	0.422	2.369
Central region	0.233	0.125	0.166	1.868	0.063	0.296	3.384
Northeastern region	0.165	0.138	0.097	1.199	0.231	0.358	2.795
Housewife/husband	-0.070	0.176	-0.020	-0.398	0.691	0.892	1.121
Farmers	-0.504	0.450	-0.056	-1.120	0.263	0.928	1.077
51-60 years old	0.145	0.289	0.026	0.504	0.615	0.908	1.102
≤10,000 ฿	0.041	0.114	0.028	0.362	0.718	0.388	2.577
10,001-20,000 ฿	0.297	0.109	0.218	2.724	<b>0.007*</b>	0.365	2.738
20,001-30,000 ฿	0.138	0.119	0.075	1.157	0.248	0.554	1.806
30,001-40,000 ฿	0.060	0.137	0.025	0.438	0.662	0.738	1.355
40,001-50,000 ฿	-0.005	0.154	-0.002	-0.031	0.975	0.758	1.320

$R^2 = 0.110$ , SEE = 0.61117, F = 2.464, Sig. of F = 0.001<sup>b</sup>, Durbin-Watson = 1.777, \*Sig.<0.05

**Source:** Created by author using SPSS software

As shown in table 4, the multiple regression analysis of demographic characteristics of Thai tourists and customer-based brand equity by Enter method shows a significant relationship towards the perceived on customer-based brand equity, which explained 11% ( $R^2 = 0.110$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ) of the variation and significant score at 0.00. The study found that southern region (Beta = 0.206,  $p < 0.05$ ) and income between

10,001-20,000 baht (Beta = 0.218,  $p < 0.05$ ) are significant to the perceived on customer-based brand equity, p-value are 0.006 and 0.007, respectively. The coefficient model suggested that income per month between 10,001-20,000 baht is accountable for 21.8% of customer-based brand equity and the southern region is accountable for 20.6% of customer-based brand equity, respectively.

Moreover, the result indicates that there is no autocorrelation detected in the sample which is the fundamental terms of the multiple regression analysis (Durbin-Watson = 1.777). Values from 0 to less than 2 indicate positive autocorrelation and values from 2 to 4 indicate negative autocorrelation (Lind, Marchal, & Wathen, 2018).

The finding confirmed that demographic characteristics in terms of the resident region of the southern region and income per month between 10,001-20,000 baht are related to customer-based brand equity. The model regression equation can determine as follows:

Customer-based Brand Equity = 3.449 + 0.389 (southern region) + 0.297 (10,001-20,000 baht)

Furthermore, the collinearity statistics show the measurement of the relationship between independent variables, which are tolerance and variance inflation factor-VIF. This research used the criteria of tolerance > 0.100 and the VIF < 10 (Roni, Merga, & Morris, 2019), which means the independent variables have

no autocorrelation detected in the sample. The result shows the tolerance and VIF values of the independent variables between 0.172-0.950 and 1.052-5.798 respectively. The finding indicates the independent variables have no multicollinearity and consistent with the spearman rank correlation statistics as above. Then, the Stepwise test will be analyzed in the next step to confirm the result.

#### Method 2: Selecting variables by importing the independent variables by step (Stepwise)

The stepwise regression is the method of fitting the regression model in which the independent variables with the highest correlation coefficient with the dependent variables are carried out to the equation by an automatic procedure. The independent variables will be fitting from seven variables, which are gender, age, status, education level, resident regions, occupations, and income per month. All independent variables entered the equation at one time. The results can be shown as follows.

**Table 5** Multiple regression analysis of demographic characteristics of Thai tourists and Customer-based Brand Equity by Stepwise method

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	Collinearity Statistics	
	B	Std. Error	Beta			Tolerance	VIF
(Constant)	3.779	0.041		93.105	0.000*		
Income 10,001-20,000 Baht	0.266	0.066	0.196	4.006	0.000*	0.969	1.032
Below Bachelor's degree	-0.278	0.071	-0.190	-3.937	0.000*	0.991	1.009
Southern region	0.222	0.092	0.117	2.412	0.016*	0.972	1.029

$R^2 = 0.087$ , SEE = 0.60642, F = 12.506, Sig. of F = 0.000<sup>b</sup>, Durbin-Watson = 1.766, \*Sig<0.05

**Source:** Created by author using SPSS software

As shown in table 5, the multiple regression analysis of demographic characteristics of Thai tourists and customer-based brand equity by Enter method shows a significant relationship towards the perceived on customer-based brand equity, which explained 8.70% ( $R^2 = 0.087$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ) of the variation and significant score at 0.00. The study found that income between 10,001-20,000 baht (Beta = 0.196,  $p < 0.05$ ), educational level of below Bachelor's degree (Beta = -0.190,  $p < 0.05$ ) and southern region (Beta = 0.117,  $p < 0.05$ ) are significant to the perceived on customer-based brand equity, p-value are 0.000, 0.000 and 0.016, respectively. The coefficient model suggested that income per month between 10,001-20,000 baht is accountable for 19.6% of customer-based brand equity, educational level of below Bachelor's degree is accountable for 19.0% of customer-based brand equity and southern region is accountable for 11.7% of customer-based brand equity, respectively.

Moreover, the result indicates that there is no autocorrelation detected in the sample which is the fundamental terms of the multiple regression analysis (Durbin-Watson = 1.766). Values from 0 to less than 2 indicate positive autocorrelation and values from 2 to 4 indicate negative autocorrelation (Lind, Marchal, & Wathen, 2018).

The finding confirmed that demographic characteristics in terms of income per month between 10,001-20,000 baht, educational level of below Bachelor's degree, and the resident region of the southern region are related to customer-based brand equity.

The model regression equation can determine as follows:

$$\text{Customer-based Brand Equity} = 3.779 + 0.266 (10,001-20,000 \text{ baht}) - 0.278 (\text{below Bachelor's degree}) + 0.297 (\text{southern region})$$

Furthermore, the collinearity statistics show the measurement of the relationship between independent variables, which are tolerance and variance inflation factor-VIF. This research used the criteria of tolerance  $> 0.100$  and the VIF  $< 10$  (Roni, Merga, & Morris, 2019), which means the independent variables have no autocorrelation detected in the sample. The result shows the tolerance and VIF values of the independent variables between 0.969-0.991 and 1.009-1.032 respectively. The finding indicates the independent variables have no multicollinearity and consistent with the spearman rank correlation statistics as above. Therefore, the Stepwise test has confirmed the results.

### Summary of verifying of research hypotheses

All of the above, this research used the stepwise analysis to summarize the hypothesis testing because the stepwise method can select most of the variables. As shown in Table 5, the income between 10,001-20,000 baht, the education level of lower than a bachelor's degree, and the resident region of the southern region are related to Customer-based Brand Equity significantly at the level of 0.05. Thus, as shown in Table 6  $H_1$ ,  $H_2$ ,  $H_3$ , and  $H_6$  were rejected while  $H_4$ ,  $H_5$ , and  $H_7$  were supported. Therefore, educational level, resident region, and income affect the perceived on customer-

based brand equity and the relationships between these demographic characteristics and customer-based brand equity should not be ignored.

**Table 6** Verifying of research hypotheses

Hypotheses	Results
H <sub>1</sub> : Gender affects the perceived on Customer-based Brand Equity	Not supported
H <sub>2</sub> : Age affects the perceived on Customer-based Brand Equity	Not supported
H <sub>3</sub> : Marital status affects the perceived on Customer-based Brand Equity	Not supported
H <sub>4</sub> : Educational level affects the perceived on Customer-based Brand Equity	Supported
H <sub>5</sub> : Resident region affects the perceived on Customer-based Brand Equity	Supported
H <sub>6</sub> : Occupations affect the perceived on Customer-based Brand Equity	Not supported
H <sub>7</sub> : Income affects the perceived on Customer-based Brand Equity	Supported

**Source:** Created by the author

## Discussion and Conclusion

In this research, the relationship between demographic characteristics and Customer-based Brand Equity (CBBE) which consists of destination brand awareness, destination brand image, destination brand value, destination brand quality, and destination brand loyalty were examined. Due to the current global economic environment, competition between destinations has been increasing forcing policymakers and all stakeholders to better understand the significance of customer-based brand equity as the key of tourist's satisfaction, moreover, overseeing the factors linked with destination brand equity and addressing destination brand equity in endorsement campaigns (Yousaf & Amin, 2017).

Hua Hin as a leisure beach destination has been well-known for domestic and international tourists with a long history for the past hundred years. Besides, the tourism situation has been changed in both positive and negative impacts

based on the global changing phenomena and tourist behavior. However, Customer-based Brand Equity (CBBE) has not been applied to measure the Hua Hin tourism brand from the tourist perspective of visiting the destination. According to the research results, this research conducted with empirical evidence supporting the findings and it can be concluded that gender, age, marital status, and occupation differences have no significant positive relationship with customer-based brand equity as the market segmentation in this competitive market cannot be divided by these characteristics but educational level, resident region, and average income are significant relationship toward customer-based brand equity. Therefore, the destination management organization of Hua Hin needs to focus on the niche target market by considering the educational level, resident region, and average income as the quality tourist for the destination.

On the demographic studies, according to the previous research stated that the relationship between the demographic characteristics as dependent variables gender, age, marital status, education level, employment status, and incomes, involving the destination image formation using several statistical tests indicated some socio-demographic characteristics influence the perception of destination image in the virtual environment. Hence, the destination marketing organization has to pay attention to market segmentation in its marketing strategies (Rafael & Almeida, 2017). Moreover, the previous study of consumer-based brand equity (CBBE) has been considered from services marketing researchers as an alternative to the traditional “net-present-value of future earnings” method of destination brand performance measurement (Pike & Bianchi, 2016).

However, it is argued that the residents are an important target group in place marketing, as the material shows, has not been acknowledged so clearly in the existing literature. It means that place marketing is not only applied to satisfy visitors and outside investors but also residents. Place marketing aims to address the needs and wants of residents, even when decisions about the content of place marketing are mainly taken in coalitions of political executives and companies (Eshuis, Klijn, & Braun, 2014).

Finally, strategic applications for understanding tourist behavior on how the examination and application of tourist behavior are central to the planning, development, and implementation of successful marketing

strategies for the destination with the right target and the right capacity and this will reserve the tourism resources with the valuable brand for the next generation.

### **Limitations and Recommendations**

Although this research presents significant theoretical and practical implications, some limitations must be addressed. First, this research was conducted only in Hua Hin municipality areas. Second, this research was only carried out for Thai tourists. Third, the tourist perspective is just the demand side of the tourism industry. Fourth, this research was conducted before the outbreak of coronavirus which did remarkably affect the tourism industry, not just in Hua Hin or in Thailand but all around the world.

This research type can be implemented in other viewpoints of destination modules on tourism such as destination marketing, destination capacity, destination strategy. The demographic characteristics in more detail will accurate the finding of tourist segmentation, targeting, and positioning for the competitive marketing mix in this changing marketing element. The implication of results may be useful for the Hua Hin municipality development plan. Future research should examine the supply side of the tourism supply chain such as the government sector, business sector, and community by in-depth interviewing. The viewpoints of supply will receive the data of their capacity and the way to match their development plan of tourism products and services in their areas.

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