

Empirical Evidence of Demographic Characteristics Toward Destination Brand Equity of Hua Hin, Thailand

Revita Saisud^{1,*}, Chawalee Na Thalang²

College of Management, University of Phayao

Received: 6 February 2020

Revised: 7 October 2020

Accepted: 9 October 2020

ABSTRACT

The objectives of this quantitative research were to examine how the variation of demographic characteristics of Thai tourists influences destination brand equity toward Hua Hin destination. The research sample consisted of 400 Thai tourists who had visited Hua Hin destination, obtained by the convenience sampling method. The research instrument was a questionnaire comprising four parts, namely, demographic characteristics, top of mind attraction awareness, brand equity element, and suggestions. Statistics used for data analysis were the percentage, mean, standard deviation, t-test, one-way ANOVA, and Scheffe's method for pair-wise comparison. The .05 level of statistical significance was pre-determined for hypothesis testing. The results of analyzing the demographic characteristics influencing brand equity factors on tourism destinations indicated that the educational level, residential region and average income per month had an impact on destination brand equity. Therefore, the analysis result confirms that the demographic characteristics of tourists can be the marketing data for creating the marketing strategy and brand strategy to enhance image and reputation for the accurate segmentation, target, and position.

Keywords: destination brand equity, demographic characteristics, Hua Hin

* Corresponding Author; E-mail: revita.saisud@stamford.edu

Introduction

Hua Hin is one of the most well-known destinations for Thai and International tourists with a long history as a luxury beach destination for the past hundred years. Currently, it has been transformed into a major tourism destination and investment hub with the infrastructure and services to accommodate millions of tourists from around the world every year. Hua Hin municipality stated the city vision in three years development plan as an international tourism destination, established educational system, sustainable environment, and sufficiency community with a quality of life (Hua Hin Municipality, 2017). The participation will lead Hua Hin to be a fascinating city. Consequently, Hua Hin destination has the potentials with a variety of values, both ecotourism and historical destination. It is relevant to World Tourism Organization described that tourism takes full account of its current and future economic, social and environmental impacts, addressing the involvement of visitors, the industry, the environment, and host communities (World Tourism Organization, 2005).

The evolution of attraction development path has begun with the growth stage, stagnation stage and regression of popularity. Tourist attractions are not infinite and timeless but should be viewed and treated as finite and possibly non-renewable (Butler, 2006). Based on the changing phenomena and tourist behavior, the destination needs to recognize the importance of attracting the right target with the right capacity. Furthermore, the concept of tourism carrying capacity is the maximum number of people visiting the tourist destination without causing destruction of the physical, economic, and socio-cultural environment and an unacceptable decrease in the quality of visitors' satisfaction (United Nations Environment Programme, 1997).

Purposely, the study of demographic characteristics is to observe the differences in the population in each area. So, there will be a different selection of products and services for each area. Serirat (2007) defined the demographic characteristics as the data for the market segmentation, making more effective in defining target markets and easier to measure than other variables. It consists of five characteristics; gender, age, education, occupation, and income. Gender tends to make differences in attitudes and behaviors. Age groups are in differences of a liking of different tastes and changing with age. The educational level will result in the consumption of better quality products. People with different occupations result in different needs of goods and services. Consumers with medium-income and low-income have a larger market size than high-income consumers. Therefore, there is a market segmentation based on income for various products and services (Serirat, 2007). The past studies demonstrated that branding, brand image management, and brand engagement have not been seriously studied in Thailand. The government and private sectors have emphasized on overall tourism studying and image promotion (Prommahaa, 2015).

However, there is a lack of research on specific brand equity in tourism literature in Thailand. In this present competitive market among national and worldwide cities and the competitive phenomena of the brand destination, the researcher recognized the significance of demographic characteristics toward the destination brand equity of Hua Hin tourism.

Literature Review

Hua Hin District, Prachuap Khiri Khan Province, Thailand

In 1834, a group of farmers moved southward because of the severe deficiency that affected the agricultural areas in Phetchaburi province and found a small village with white sands and the row of rocks along the beach. Consequently, they settled and gave the name “Samore Riang”, which means rows of rock. In the early 1920s, the resort was discovered by King Prajadhipok (Rama VII) as a chosen getaway from Bangkok. The fishing village had evolved into the Royal resort and turned to be famed among Siam's aristocrats and nobility. In 1920, the Railway Hotel was built by Prince Purachatra, the director of the state railway. Currently, it is the Centara Grand Beach Resort and Villas Hua Hin in the architectural style of old Siam (Hua Hin Today Newspaper, 2017).

King Rama VII built a summer palace “Wang Klai Kang Won”, which today until remains an official royal residence. The palace has been commonly used by the royal family and open to the public for visits. After the southern railway was built and ensured popularity and accessibility, Hua Hin became the first and well-known beach resort in Thailand (Hua Hin Today Newspaper, 2017).

Location and accessibility data

Hua Hin District is located at the northern area of Prachuap Khiri Khan Province at 10° 57' to 12° 38' north and the 99° 9' to 100° 1' east, approximately 185 kilometers from Bangkok and away from the main city of Prachuap Khiri Khan Province, approximately 92 kilometers, with 824.60 square kilometers. It connects to the southern region with the connecting routes to the western region, southern region, and Bangkok, especially by car, train, and airplane.

It has 2 municipality offices and 5 sub-district administrative organizations. Hua Hin District is adjacent to the neighboring areas as follows:

North: Phetchaburi Province

East: Gulf of Thailand

South: Pranburi District, Prachuap Khiri Khan Province

West: Republic of the Union of Myanmar

Population growth data

As the study of population growth rate in Hua Hin city area, it has found that the trend of population growth in the municipality area is at high level because the municipality and nearby area

has the potential for developing into a tourist destination to stimulate the income distribution to the people who are businesses or industries related to tourism with high return on investment.

Table 1 Number of Population

Description	Number
Male population	44,839 persons
Female population	45,809 persons
Total population	90,648 persons
Population density	99.50 persons/square kilometers

Source: Department of Provincial Administration (2017)

Economic data

Most of the population is in the community area of Hua Hin municipality which consists of Hua Hin sub-district and Nong Kae sub-district. There are many large and small industrial factories such as the canned pineapple, powder fish, ice-making, local weaving (Khomapastr Fabrics), dried squid, dried shrimp, etc., which generate income for the locals each year.

In the municipality area, most people are engaged in fishery, trading, hotels, private business, tourist services as well as general employment. As Hua Hin district is the well-known destination at the national and international level, the large number of both Thai and foreign tourists has visited and stayed in the accommodations, bungalows resorts, and hotels. Accordingly, the key income of the community comes from employment in many tourism services which leads to the general condition of the economy and living costs at a high level.

Outside the municipality area, most people are engaged in agriculture, such as farming and raising animals. Most areas are agricultural areas and major crops are such as pineapples, sugarcane, cassava, lemons, various fruits, sisal as well as assembling general contractors which lead to the general condition of the economy is in a moderate level.

Table 2 Number of Visitors from 2013-2018

	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
Visitors (person)	4,417,025	4,660,994	4,835,371	4,979,804	5,895,143	6,105,416
Thais	3,500,499	3,730,557	3,868,173	4,015,323	4,744,501	4,930,312
Foreigners	916,526	930,437	967,198	964,418	1,150,642	1,175,104
+increase /-decrease	+ 7.32	+5.52	+3.74	+2.99	+18.38	+3.57

Source: Ministry of Tourism and Sport, Thailand (2018)

Table 3 Number of Tourism Income from 2013-2018

	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
Income (Millions)	24,317.29	25,905.56	28,268.48	29,520.16	37,196.35	39,467.91
Thais	15,834	17,125.33	18,683.64	19,640.36	24,585.26	25,866.43
Foreigners	8,482.94	8,780.23	9,584.84	9,879.80	12,611.09	13,601.48
+increase /-decrease	+ 7.28	+6.53	+9.12	+4.43	+ 26.00	+6.11

Source: Ministry of Tourism and Sport, Thailand (2018)

In 2018, the number of tourists visiting Hua Hin was 6,105,416 persons, divided into Thai tourists as 4,930,312 persons and foreign tourists as 1,175,104 persons. The total tourism income was 39,467.91 million baht, divided into income from Thai tourists as 25,866.43 million baht and foreign tourists as 13,601.48 million baht (Ministry of Tourism and Sport, Thailand, 2018). The figures show that the potential of Hua Hin tourism has been growing continuously as the investment in infrastructure, transportation, hotel and accommodation businesses, restaurants, tour businesses, and gift shops which is relevant to the report on three years development plan of Hua Hin (Hua Hin Municipality, 2017).

Destination System Approach

A management system that can support the pull factors is essential for a city or area to develop into a tourist destination and to continually develop for destination sustainability. The assessment of tourism capacity needs to be a systematic consideration of the relationships of various components and factors, as shown in picture 1.

The destination system within the city or tourist area must be the important elements that attract the tourists in traveling to the destination. The main elements are natural resources, history, culture, community activities as well as the supporting elements such as hotels, accommodation, infrastructure, transportation, various activities, entertainment, and retail shops, etc.

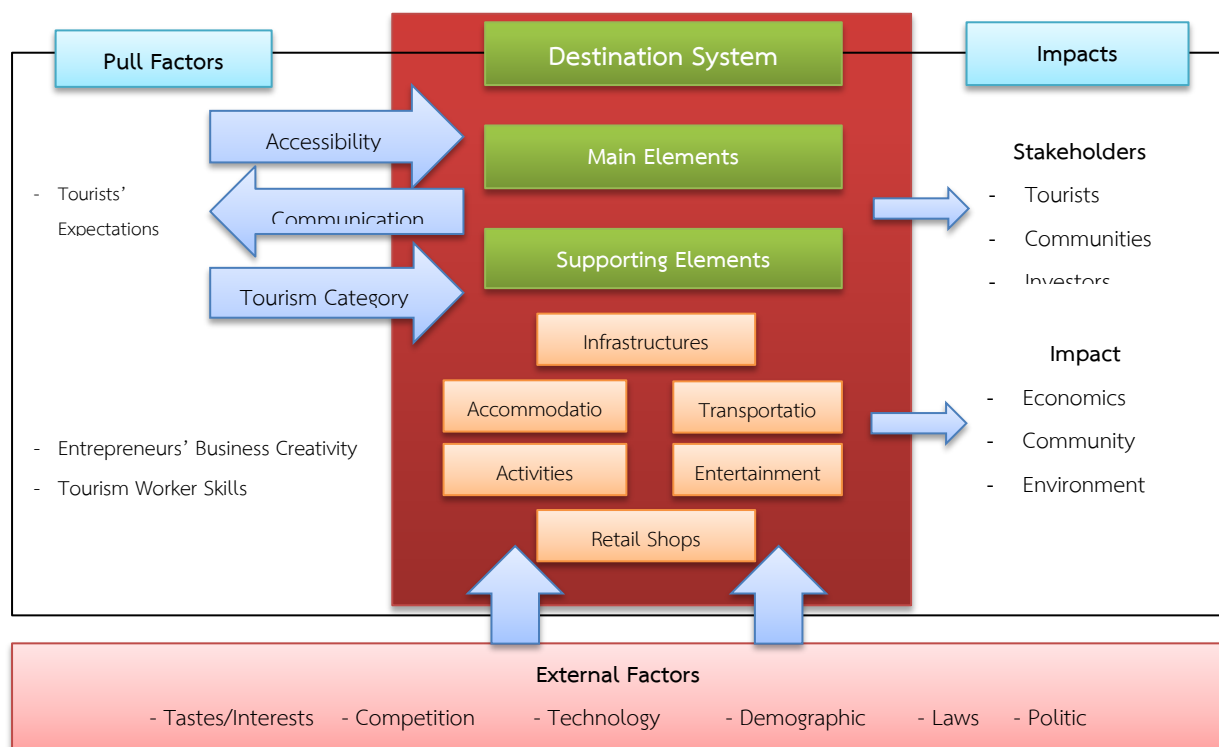


Figure 1 Destination System (Chiangchai, 2015)

Pull factors consist of many important factors that will be a catalyst for traveling as follows:

- (1) Tourists' expectations come from the destinations with good accessibilities and a convenient traveling network linking from the tourists' residence to the destinations. Moreover, promoting communication stimulates awareness so that tourists are familiar with the destination.
- (2) Entrepreneurs' creativity in doing business is an important factor involving the tourists' expectations and the supporting factors which result in business development in various forms.
- (3) Tourism worker skills including service provider skills, communication skills, and technical skills such as communication technology, information dissemination, media organizing, and tourism management skills.
- (4) Investments and investment stimulation in the area cause development at various levels. The government's investment policy has greatly contributed to the investment from the private sector in the area.

Various impacts were caused by the destination elements and pull factors.

- (1) Impact on the stakeholders such as tourist satisfaction, residents in the areas, investors and entrepreneurs.
- (2) Impact on the areas such as economics, social, community, environment, and ecology.

External factors that influence the area are tourists' tastes, tourists' interests, competitive tourist cities or other destinations, technology, investment laws, demographic characteristics, and the political situation.

Consequently, the destination potential and management efficiency can be evaluated from the initial study of the development impacts. All changes occurring towards the pull factors and external factors will affect the growth of the destination development direction. Therefore, Hua Hin is a tourist city with the development impacts of pull factors and the external factors which affect the destination brand image both positive and negative viewpoints. Further study is necessary for adjusting the Hua Hin destination brand to enhance the brand image and reputation.

Destination Brand Equity

Marketing communication plays an important role in creating various components of customer-based brand equity. The marketers use various marketing communication tools such as advertising, sale promotion, marketing communication via online media, marketing activities, being sponsorship in the society, public relations through the mass media and word-of-mouth with other consumers in a combination way to create brand value (Keller, 2013). Brand values are a reflection of consumers' perceptions and attitudes towards brands. Besides, the tourist awareness of destination comes from sources both direct experiences of tourists, such as visiting, word-of-mouth and various activities of marketing organizations and business organizations in the destination area.

The customer-based brand equity model is an evaluation that reflects 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 (Pike and Bianchi, 2016)

The product concept by the destination management organization (DMO) will be replaced by a tourist-oriented concept and creating brand value to make strategic marketing activities more effective and more competitive advantage (Pike and Bianchi, 2016). As the customer-based brand equity model by Pike and Bianchi (2016), there are the following elements as follows: destination brand awareness, destination brand image, destination brand quality, destination brand value, and destination brand loyalty.

Above all, this research conducted hypothesis testing using the customer-based brand equity (CBBE) with all 5 elements which adapted as a questionnaire for tourists. The results will be used as a guideline for rebranding strategies of Hua Hin tourism to enhance image and reputation.

Research Objectives

The purpose of this research is to examine how the variation of demographic characteristics of Thai tourists influence destination brand equity toward Hua Hin destination.

Research Framework

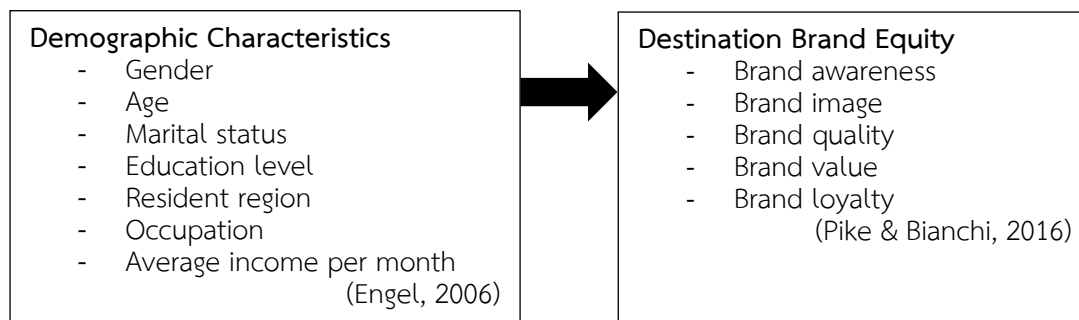


Figure 2 Research Framework (Saisud, 2019)

Research Methodology

Research Design

This research employed the quantitative research approach to collect the data to examine the demographic characteristics of Thai tourists on destination brand equity of Hua Hin destination.

Population and Sampling

The four hundred Thai tourists were considered as representative of the population by using convenience sampling. The researcher calculated an ideal sample size given a desired level of precision, desired confidence level, and the estimated proportion of the attribute present in the population due to Cochran's formula is considered in situations with large populations (Cochran, 1977). The research data were collected by using the on-line and the face-to-face survey method of the Thai tourists who visited Hua Hin. Four hundred questionnaires were coded for analysis.

Variable

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

Research Instrument

This quantitative method study used the questionnaire as the research instrument. The questionnaire was divided into four parts. Part I was the nominal and ordinal questions, collecting gender, age, marital status, educational level, resident region, occupation and personal income per month. Part II was the multiple responses question, collecting the top of mind awareness towards Hua Hin attractions. Part III 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 IV was the open question, collecting recommendations.

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

T-test and One-Way ANOVA were analyzed in testing this hypothesis. When analyzing the variance, if the differences were found between the means, then would test the differences between the paired averages with Scheffe's method.

Findings

1. Summary of Descriptive Findings

The majority of the sampling is 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), the occupation as employees (41.50%, n = 166), and personal income per month from 10,001-20,000 Baht (31.50%, n = 126).

Table 4 Descriptive Statistics of Destination Brand Equity of Hua Hin

Variable Used	Items Used in the Questionnaire	Mean	S.D.
Destination Brand Awareness	This destination is very famous both domestic and international level	4.12	0.819
	This destination is very quickly coming to mind as the first choice nation	4.03	0.904
	This destination is quite attractive and known as the destination	4.13	0.855
	This destination is quite a lot of promoting advertisement	3.39	1.080
Destination Brand Image	This destination image is relevant to the tourist's personality	3.76	0.970
	This destination visiting is demonstrating of tourist's character	3.83	0.913
	This destination image is relevant to the tourist's personal image	3.71	0.907
	This destination image is reflecting the tourist's personal image	3.61	0.946
Destination Brand Quality	This destination has a high quality of accommodation amenities	4.33	0.733
	This destination has a high level of cleanliness	3.76	0.871
	This destination has a high level of safe and secure	3.81	0.875
	This destination has a high quality of infrastructure	3.77	0.895
Destination Brand Value	This destination has the convenience of tourism costs	3.66	0.981
	This destination has offered something more than costs reasonability	3.63	0.897
	This destination has the advantage of tourism costs for the tourists	3.56	0.919
	This destination has reasonable costs for spending pleasant times	3.65	0.892
Destination Brand Loyalty	This destination has a high level of intention for vacation revisit	3.84	0.998
	This destination has a high level of recommending to others	4.05	0.918
	This destination has a high level of loyalty for a revisit	4.11	0.931
	This destination has a high level of advantage comparing to other destinations	3.71	0.959
Valid N (listwise)	400		

Source: Created by the author using SPSS software (Saisud, 2019)

Table 4 shows the descriptive statistics of the various dimension of destination brand equity toward Hua Hin tourism. The level of destination brand equity was examined–very high, high, medium, low and very low level. Data analysis revealed that destination brand awareness shows the overall mean of 3.92 (S.D. = 0.915). It shows that “this destination is quite attractive and known as the destination” is the highest mean in this dimension (Mean = 4.13, S.D. = 0.855), followed by “this destination is very famous both domestic and international level” (Mean = 4.12, S.D. = 0.819) and “this destination is very quickly coming to mind as the first choice” (Mean = 4.03, S.D. = 0.904), respectively.

In the second dimension, respondents responded about the destination brand image with an overall mean of 3.73 (S.D. = 0.934). The highest mean in this dimension is “this destination visiting is demonstrating of tourist's character” (Mean = 3.83, S.D. = 0.913), followed by “this destination image is relevant to tourist's personality” (Mean = 3.76, S.D. = 0.970), and “this destination image is relevant to tourist's personal image” (Mean = 3.71, S.D. = 0.907), respectively.

The third dimension shows the destination brand quality with an overall mean of 3.92 (S.D. = 0.844). The highest mean in this dimension is “this destination has high quality of accommodation amenities” (Mean = 4.33, S.D. = 0.733), followed by “this destination has high level of safe and secure” (Mean = 3.81, S.D. = 0.875), and “this destination has high quality of infrastructure” (Mean = 3.77, S.D. = 0.895), respectively.

The fourth dimension shows the destination brand value with the overall mean of 3.63 (S.D. = 0.922). The highest mean in this dimension is “this destination has the convenience of tourism costs” (Mean = 3.66, S.D. = 0.981), followed by “this destination has the reasonable costs for spending pleasant times” (Mean = 3.65, S.D. = 0.892), and “this destination has offered something more than costs reasonability” (Mean = 3.63, S.D. = 0.897), respectively. The fifth dimension shows the destination brand loyalty with an overall mean of 3.97 (S.D. = 0.952). The highest mean in this dimension is “this destination has high level of loyalty for revisit” (Mean = 4.11, S.D. = 0.931), followed by “this destination has high level of recommending to others” (Mean = 4.05, S.D. = 0.918), and “this destination has high level of intention for vacation revisit” (Mean = 3.84, S.D. = 0.998), respectively

2. Summary of Inferential Findings

Hypothesis 1: Tourists' gender significantly influence destination brand equity

Table 5 T-test tests between the effect of gender and destination brand equity

Destination Brand Equity	\bar{X} Male	\bar{X} Female	S.D. Male	S.D. Female	t	df	Sig.
Brand Awareness	3.86	3.95	0.754	0.686	3.568	398	0.060
Brand Image	3.70	3.74	0.822	0.816	0.156	398	0.694
Brand Quality	3.96	3.89	0.688	0.662	1.109	398	0.293
Brand Value	3.62	3.63	0.833	0.811	0.527	398	0.468
Brand Loyalty	3.87	3.96	0.847	0.802	0.335	398	0.563
Overall	3.8019	3.8359	0.658	0.616	0.659	398	0.417

Note: * $p < 0.05$ **Source:** Created by the author using SPSS software (Saisud, 2019)

T-test analysis in Table 5, shows that tourists' gender had no significant difference on destination brand equity ($F = 0.659$, $Sig. = 0.417$) in overall and in all five dimensions: brand awareness ($F = 3.568$, $Sig. = 0.060$), brand image ($F = 0.156$, $Sig. = 0.694$), brand quality ($F = 1.109$, $Sig. = 0.293$), brand value ($F = 0.527$, $Sig. = 0.468$) and brand loyalty ($F = 0.335$, $Sig. = 0.563$). Therefore, gender did not influence destination brand equity.

Hypothesis 2: Tourists' age significantly influence destination brand equity

Table 6 One-Way ANOVA analysis the influence of age on perceived destination brand equity

Destination Brand Equity	SS	df	MS	F	Sig.
Brand Awareness	4.070	5	0.814	1.609	0.157
Brand Image	2.878	5	0.576	0.859	0.508
Brand Quality	4.137	5	0.827	1.852	0.102
Brand Value	3.112	5	0.622	0.927	0.463
Brand Loyalty	5.904	5	1.181	1.771	0.118
Overall	2.368	5	0.474	1.188	0.314

Note: * $p < 0.05$ **Source:** Created by the author using SPSS software (Saisud, 2019)

One-Way ANOVA analysis in Table 6, shows that tourists' age had no significant difference on destination brand equity ($F = 1.188$, $Sig. = 0.314$) in overall and in all five dimensions: brand awareness ($F = 1.609$, $Sig. = 0.157$), brand image ($F = 0.859$, $Sig. = 0.508$), brand quality ($F = 1.852$, $Sig. = 0.102$), brand value ($F = 0.927$, $Sig. = 0.463$) and brand loyalty ($F = 1.771$, $Sig. = 0.118$). Therefore, tourists' age did not influence destination brand equity.

Hypothesis 3: Tourists' marital status significantly influence destination brand equity

Table 7 One-Way ANOVA analysis the influence of marital status on perceived destination brand equity

Destination Brand Equity	SS	df	MS	F	Sig.
Brand Awareness	0.955	2	0.477	0.936	0.393
Brand Image	0.820	2	0.410	0.612	0.543
Brand Quality	4.366	2	2.183	4.930	0.008*
Brand Value	1.907	2	0.953	1.424	0.242
Brand Loyalty	1.232	2	0.616	0.915	0.401
Overall	0.628	2	0.314	0.784	0.457

Note: * $p < 0.05$ **Source:** Created by the author using SPSS software (Saisud, 2019)

One-Way ANOVA analysis in Table 7, shows that tourists' marital status had no significant difference on destination brand equity ($F = 0.784$, $Sig. = 0.457$) in overall and the dimensions of brand awareness ($F = 0.936$, $Sig. = 0.393$), brand image ($F = 0.612$, $Sig. = 0.543$), brand value ($F = 1.424$, $Sig. = 0.242$) and brand loyalty ($F = 0.915$, $Sig. = 0.401$). However, only one dimension had a significant difference which is brand quality ($F = 4.930$, $Sig. = 0.008^*$). Thus, hypothesis 3 was not supported.

Hypothesis 4: Tourists' educational level significantly influence destination brand equity

Table 8 One-Way ANOVA analysis the influence of educational level on perceived destination brand equity

Destination Brand Equity	SS	df	MS	F	Sig.
Brand Awareness	6.425	2	3.213	6.475	0.002*
Brand Image	6.822	2	3.411	5.210	0.006*
Brand Quality	3.955	2	1.977	4.455	0.012*
Brand Value	7.723	2	3.862	5.899	0.003*
Brand Loyalty	7.695	2	3.848	5.856	0.003*
Overall	6.305	2	3.153	8.174	0.000*

Note: * $p < 0.05$ **Source:** Created by the author using SPSS software (Saisud, 2019)

One-Way ANOVA analysis in Table 8, shows that tourists' educational level had significant difference on destination brand equity ($F = 8.174$, $Sig. = 0.000^*$) in overall and the five dimensions: brand awareness ($F = 6.475$, $Sig. = 0.002^*$), brand image ($F = 5.210$, $Sig. = 0.006^*$), brand quality ($F = 4.455$, $Sig. = 0.012^*$), brand value ($F = 5.899$, $Sig. = 0.003^*$) and brand loyalty ($F = 5.856$, $Sig. = 0.003^*$). Thus, hypothesis 4 was supported. The further finding by testing the differences between the paired averages with the Scheffe's method found that the dimension of brand awareness ($Sig. = 0.004^*$),

brand image (Sig. = 0.006*), brand quality (Sig. = 0.029*), brand value (Sig. = 0.004*) and brand loyalty (Sig. = 0.010*), had significant difference between below bachelor's degree and bachelor's degree at significant statistics 0.05.

Hypothesis 5: Tourists' resident region significantly influence destination brand equity

Table 9 One-Way ANOVA analysis the influence of resident region on perceived destination brand equity

Destination Brand Equity	SS	Df	MS	F	Sig.
Brand Awareness	10.415	6	1.736	3.535	0.002*
Brand Image	9.111	6	1.519	2.317	0.033*
Brand Quality	4.887	6	0.814	1.826	0.093
Brand Value	6.756	6	1.126	1.696	0.121
Brand Loyalty	10.434	6	1.739	2.648	0.016*
Overall	5.039	6	0.840	2.138	0.048*

Note: * $p < 0.05$ **Source:** Created by the author using SPSS software (Saisud, 2019)

One-Way ANOVA analysis in Table 9, shows that tourists' resident region had significant difference on destination brand equity ($F = 2.138$, Sig. = 0.048*) in overall and the dimensions of brand awareness ($F = 3.535$, Sig. = 0.002*), brand image ($F = 2.317$, Sig. = 0.033*), and brand loyalty ($F = 2.648$, Sig. = 0.016*). However, tourists' resident region had no significant difference on the dimension of brand quality ($F = 1.826$, Sig. = 0.093) and brand value ($F = 1.696$, Sig. = 0.121). Thus, hypothesis 5 was supported. The further finding by testing the differences between the paired averages with the Scheffe's method found that the dimension of brand awareness, brand image, and brand loyalty had a significant difference between regions at significant statistics 0.05

Hypothesis 6: Tourists' occupation significantly influence destination brand equity

Table 10 One-Way ANOVA analysis the influence of occupation on perceived destination brand equity

Destination Brand Equity	SS	Df	MS	F	Sig.
Brand Awareness	9.537	7	1.362	2.755	0.008*
Brand Image	6.433	7	0.919	1.384	0.210
Brand Quality	8.256	7	1.179	2.689	0.010*
Brand Value	4.081	7	0.583	0.867	0.532
Brand Loyalty	3.430	7	0.490	0.725	0.651
Overall	4.932	7	0.705	1.788	0.088

Note: * $p < 0.05$ **Source:** Created by the author using SPSS software (Saisud, 2019)

One-Way ANOVA analysis in Table 10, shows that tourists' occupation had no significant difference on destination brand equity ($F = 1.788$, $Sig. = 0.088$) in overall and the dimensions of brand image ($F = 1.384$, $Sig. = 0.210$), brand value ($F = 0.867$, $Sig. = 0.532$) and brand loyalty ($F = 0.725$, $Sig. = 0.651$). However, tourists' occupation had significant difference in the dimension of brand awareness ($F = 2.755$, $Sig. = 0.008^*$), brand quality ($F = 2.689$, $Sig. = 0.010^*$). Thus, hypothesis 6 was not supported. The further finding by testing the differences between the paired averages with the Scheffe's method found that the dimension of brand awareness and brand quality had a significant difference between occupations at significant statistics 0.05

Hypothesis 7: Tourists' average income/month significantly influence destination brand equity

Table 11 One-Way ANOVA analysis the influence of average income on perceived destination brand equity

Destination Brand Equity	SS	Df	MS	F	Sig.
Brand Awareness	15.575	5	3.115	6.534	0.000*
Brand Image	5.830	5	1.166	1.761	0.120
Brand Quality	9.242	5	1.848	4.261	0.001*
Brand Value	7.030	5	1.406	2.126	0.062
Brand Loyalty	7.429	5	1.486	2.242	0.050*
Overall	7.156	5	1.431	3.704	0.003*

Note: * $p < 0.05$ **Source:** Created by the author using SPSS software (Saisud, 2019)

One-Way ANOVA analysis in Table 11, shows that tourists' average income per month had significant difference on destination brand equity ($F = 3.704$, $Sig. = 0.003^*$) in overall and the dimensions of brand awareness ($F = 6.534$, $Sig. = 0.000^*$), brand quality ($F = 4.261$, $Sig. = 0.001^*$) and brand loyalty ($F = 2.242$, $Sig. = 0.050^*$). However, tourists' average income per month had no significant difference in the dimension of brand image ($F = 1.761$, $Sig. = 0.120$) and brand value ($F = 2.126$, $Sig. = 0.062$). Thus, hypothesis 7 was supported.

The further finding by testing the differences between the paired averages with the Scheffe's method found that the dimension of brand awareness, brand quality, and brand loyalty had a significant difference between average incomes per month at significant statistics 0.05

Discussion

The purpose of this study is to examine how the variation of demographic characteristics of Thai tourists influence destination brand equity toward Hua Hin destination. Thai tourists tend to rely on the destination brand they expect to visit and the tourist characteristics can be classified as the target market so the destination management organization and stakeholders need to

comprehend the demographic characteristics of a specific group of tourists. The lack of demographic characteristics of tourists will lead the inaccurate marketing tools for Hua Hin destination in the deepening competition and the effective branding strategy to win the target consumer (Aaker, 1997). Tourists treat tourism destinations as products, perceive them as brands, and make a final selection based on persuasive brand equity (Allan, 2004).

Although tourism may contribute to economic growth for the country, it also damages communities and the environment. The tourism industry has great potential to increase its support for the environment and spread awareness of environmental problems. Because tourism puts people in closer contact with nature and the environment (Agarwal, Katiyapol, and Pienchob, 2019). Subsequently, the destination with the right capacity and right target will be well-prepared for tourists and put this environmental concern into the destination branding strategy.

The research instrument has been adjusted to the theoretical model for its application with the tourists who had visited Hua Hin, thus making it possible to confirm the hypotheses put forward. This study can be used as tools of differentiation strategy thus making competitiveness and better destination branding strategy possible. The results of analyzing the demographic characteristics influencing brand equity factor on tourism destinations have shown that the educational level, resident region and average income per month have an impact on destination brand equity. The most significant influencers were level of education and continent of residence with direct influences on selected destination attractiveness factors. This can assist the destinations, in attracting selected markets based on the attractiveness of the destination. (Woyo, Slabbert, and Saayman, 2019)

It supported that education would result in the consumption of better quality products and services. Besides, tourists with different occupations result in different needs of products and services. Moreover, tourists with medium-income and low-income have a larger market size than high-income consumers.

Moreover, relationships between the cognitive, affective and overall image components and the potential tourist's socio-demographic characteristics were found regarding to gender, age, employment status and incomes (Beerli and Martin, 2004).

Therefore, the analysis result confirms 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.

Suggestion

This type of research 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 Hua Hin municipality.

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.

Acknowledgment

This research would not be completed without the assistance of my advisers. I would like to express my gratitude to Associate Professor Chawalee Na Thalang and Dr. Sumeth Tuvadaratragool. They provided me their time and their insightful comments for this part of my dissertation. Furthermore, I would like to thank my family, my partner and my friends who have provided great understand and encouragement to further my Ph.D. Study.

References

- Aaker, J. L. (1997). Dimensions of Brand Personality. *Journal of Marketing Research*, 34(3), 347-356.
doi:10.2307/3151897
- Agarwal, R., Katiyapol, T., and Pienchob, N. (2019). Positive and Negative Impacts of Tourism on Environment: A Case Study of Pattaya City, Thailand. *Sripatum Review of Humanities and Social Sciences*, 19(1), 139-146.
- Allan, M. (2004). *Why brand places?* [Online]. Retrieved November 11, 2018, from http://beyond-branding.com/Agenda_MSA_Article_Feb2004.pdf
- Beerli, A., and Martin, J. D. (2004). Tourists' characteristics and the perceived image of tourist destinations: A quantitative analysis - a case study of Lanzarote. *Tourism Management*, 25(5), 623-636.
- Butler, R. W. (2006). *The Tourism Area Life Cycle: Applications and Modifications* (Vol. 1). Clevedon, UK: Channel View Publications.
- Chiangchai, N. (2015). *The Identity Using to Promote Tourism in Lampang Province*. Bangkok: Silpakorn University.
- Cochran, W. G. (1977). *Sampling Techniques*. New York: John Wiley and Sons.

- Department of Provincial Administration. (2017). *Information Center for Provincial Administration and Development*. [Online]. Retrieved May 26, 2017, from <http://www2.amphoe.com/menu.php>
- Engel, J. (2006). *Consumer behavior*. Mason: OH: Thomson Higher Education.
- Hua Hin Municipality. (2017). *Three Years Development Plan (2017-2019)*. Hua Hin: Hua Hin Municipality Development Plan Committee.
- Hua Hin Today Newspaper. (2017). *Hua Hin History, Thailand*. [Online]. Retrieved February 22, 2017, from: https://www.huahintoday.com/information/e/huahin_info_general/hua_hin_history.php
- Keller, K. L. (2013). *Strategic Brand Management: Building, Measuring and Managing Brand Equity*. Global Edition: Pearson.
- Ministry of Tourism and Sport, Thailand. (2018). *Department of Tourism, Ministry of Tourism and Sports, Thailand*. [Online]. Retrieved August 23, 2018, from https://www.mots.go.th/old/more_news.php?cid=531&filename=index
- Pike, S., and Bianchi, C. (2016). Destination brand equity for Australia: testing a model of CBBE in short haul and long haul markets. *Journal of Hospitality and Tourism Research*, 40(1), 114-134. doi:<https://doi.org/10.1177/1096348013491604>
- Prommahaa, J. (2015). Destination Branding: Brand Management and Brand Engagement of Health and Wellness Tourism in Thailand and the ASEAN Region. *Sociology Study*, 5(8), 653-675. doi:10.17265/2159-5526/2015.08.006
- Saisud, R. (2019). An Empirical Study of Demographic Characteristics Toward Hua Hin Destination Brand Equity, Thailand. *The Proceedings of the 14th National and International Sripatum University Conference (SPUCON2019): Research and Innovations for Thailand 4.0* on December 19, 2019 at Sripatum University, 169-178.
- Serirat, S. (2007). *Consumer Behavior*. Bangkok: Pattanasuksa Publisher.
- United Nations Environment Programme. (1997). *Guidelines for carrying capacity assessment for tourism in Mediterranean coastal areas*. Split, Croatia: Priority Action Programme, Regional Activity Centre.
- World Tourism Organization. (2005). *Making Tourism More Sustainable - A Guide for Policy Makers*. Paris, France: United Nations Environment Programme.
- Woyo, E., Slabbert, E., and Saayman, M. (2019). Do socio-demographic characteristics influence destination attractiveness perceptions after political turmoil: the case of Zimbabwe? *African Journal of Hospitality, Tourism and Leisure*, 8, 1-20. [Online] Retrieved from: https://www.ajhtl.com/uploads/7/1/6/3/7163688/article_55_vol_8_3_2019.pdf