

**THE CONSTRUCTION OF A NATION BRAND IMAGE
OF THAILAND OTOP**

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THE CONSTRUCTION OF A NATION BRAND IMAGE OF THAILAND OTOP

By

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ABSTRACT

This research aimed to study the factors influencing Thailand's brand image that included brand associations, country of origin image, and brand attitude. Thailand OTOP which reflects culture and local intelligence and is the sources of the local income for rural people was chosen as the product under the study. The population of the study comprised two groups of Thai tourists and foreign visitors. The method of mall-intercept approach was employed in data collection with a total sample group of 324 Thai tourists and 157 foreign visitors. The statistics used in data analysis is the Structure Equation Model (SEM). The study showed that brand attitude was the most influential factor, followed by the country of origin image and brand associations, respectively, both for Thai tourists and foreign visitors. Similarly, these three influential factors can determine the nation brand image by 83 percent in the model for Thai tourists and 92 percent in the model for foreign visitors. The study also found that for the foreign consumers, the brand attitude acted as a mediator between brand associations and the nation brand image, while the country of origin image had a direct effect on the nation brand image, not being mediated by brand attitude. A detailed discussion of each variable including its roles and importance is provided. Recommendations for the government sectors and OTOP producers are also presented.

Keywords: nation brand image, brand personality, brand associations, country of origin image, brand attitude

ABSTRAK

Kajian ini bertujuan untuk mengkaji faktor yang mempengaruhi imej jenama negara Thailand yang melibatkan persatuan jenama, imej negara asal dan sikap terhadap jenama. Produk OTOP merupakan produk keluaran negara Thai yang mencerminkan budaya tempatan dan kecerdasan sertasebagai sumber pendapatan tempatan bagi penduduk luar bandar. Produk OTOPdipilih sebagai produk di bawah kajian ini. Populasi kajian terdiri daripada dua kumpulan pelancong, iaitu pelancong dari negara Thai dan pelawat asing. Kaedah ‘mall-intercept’ telah digunapakai dalam pengumpulan data dengan jumlah sampel sebanyak 324 pelancong Thai dan 157 pelawat asing. Kaedah statistik yang digunakan dalam menganalisis data yang dikenali sebagai Pemodelan Persamaan Struktur(SEM). Kajian telah memperlihatkan bahawa sikap terhadap jenama adalah faktor yang paling kuat, diikuti oleh imej negara asal dan persatuan jenama untuk kedua-dua pelancong Thai dan pelawat asing. Begitu juga, ketiga-tiga faktor yang berpengaruh ini boleh menentukan imej jenama negara sebanyak 83 peratus untuk pelancong Thai dan 92 peratus bagi pelawat asing. Kajian ini juga mendapati bahawa bagi pengguna asing, sikap terhadap jenama bertindak sebagai perantara di antara persatuanjenama dan imej jenama negara, manakala imej negara asal mempunyai kesan langsung terhadap imej jenama negara yang tidak diantariaoleh sikap terhadap jenama. Perbincangan terperinci setiap pembolehubah termasuk peranan dan kepentingannyaturut disediakan. Cadangan bagi sektor kerajaan dan pengeluar OTOP juga turut disertakan.

Kata kunci: imej jenama negara, personaliti jenama, persatuan jenama, imej negara asal, sikap terhadap jenama

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List of abbreviations

AFFECT	Social achievement dimension
ASEAN	Association of Southeast Asian Nations
ASSOC	Brand associations
ATTUDE	Brand attitude
AVE	Average Variance Extracted
BENEFIT	Functional dimension
BRDASS	Brand as person
CBBE	The Customer-Based Brand Equity
CFA	Confirmatory factor analysis
CFI	Comparative Fit Index
COMPET	Competence
COOI	Country of origin image
COOIcul	Country of origin; Culture- image
COOImac	Country of origin; Macro-image
COOImic	Country of origin; Micro-image
CR	Construct Reliability
DDII	Dynamic Destination Image Index
EXCITE	Excitement
GFI	Goodness-of-fit index
GOF	Goodness-of-fit
NBI	Nation brand image
NBT	Nation brand image (Thai customers)
NBF	Nation brand image (Overseas customers)

ODOP	One District One Product
ORGASS	Brand as organisation
OTOP	One Tambon One Product
OVOP	One Village One Product
PNFI	Parsimony Normed Fit Index
PROASS	Brand as product
RUGGED	Ruggedness
RMSEA	Root Mean Square error of Approximation
RMR	Root Mean Square Residual
SEM	Structural Equation Modelling
SINCERE	Sincerity
SOPHIS	Sophistication
SRMR	Standardised Root Mean Square Residual
THIMGE	Thailand's image

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

Since the 1980s, several countries have had an interest in the development of their Nation Brand to create a dominant position of the country on the world stage. Each country has been trying to create events to promote their Nation Brand. For example, they present their exports and promote their tourism industry through the country image. Also, the governmental activities are done in consistent with the values in the image of the country. The culture, as well as, the people of the country is used to create such a program that will make a greater value to the Nation Brand and to repeat the image of the brand in the eyes of customers (Sinclair, 2004). A good example of a well-known nation brand is Swiss watches (Fosher, 2003).

The nation brand image of a country has been presented through its product, tourism, culture and people of the country. And this image is aimed to influence purchases and decisions in investment or tourism in the country (Kotler and Gertner, 2002; Sinclair, 2004). This nation image will, in turn, facilitate the economy growth of the country. Nation image also affects the 'halo effect' or country-of-origin effect. The halo effect considers the nation a value-added factor for products produced within that nation (Stock, 2009). The intended use of this effect can also be seen in commercials; for example, German products have an image of engineering quality and durable in use. Management of the nation brand image; thereby, expands not only the growth of trade and investment

in the country, it also creates the growth of tourism of the country. Nation brand image also helps increase currency stability (Dinnie, 2007).

The concept of nation brand image is more and more important in recent years. As globalization has made the world more interdependent and all nations are in competition for investment, tourism, exports, education and talent of all kinds (FanningIrish, 2011). In the creative economy, culture is a key factor in generating revenue and driving sustainable human resource development. Economic growth is not just for income generation, but also for job creation and export earnings. Culture is a driver of development, led by the growth of the creative economy in general and the creative and cultural industries in particular, recognized not only for their economic value, but also increasingly for the role in producing new creative ideas or technologies and their non-monetized social benefits. It empowers people with capacities to take ownership of their own development processes (United Nations/UNDP/UNESCO. 2013).

So the culture used to create Nation Brand empowers not only the development of the country's economy, but also the development of its human resources. With the people-centered development integration of spatial growth will be achieved. Culture creates local values to the community since all created activities are based on the lifestyle of the people in the area and use resources in the area. In brief, OTOP is a tool for creating sustainable human and economic development of rural Thailand. Thailand OTOP reflects the local area lifestyle and uses local ingredients for its products.

A nation brand image is currently recognised as a tool for creating success for both the business and the country of origin of the business entity. It is the perception and belief in the mind of consumers about the nation where the

products originate. In addition, referring to brand image, a nation brand image also needs to measure what kinds of people use the brand, what the usage occasions for the products are, and what usage imagery the brand stands for. Moreover, it would be worthwhile to consider the future brand image desired. Evidently, the achievement of the image will be determined by the customers; but how marketers can plan this in the early stages needs to be worked out. This should be kept in mind while developing the brand package (Parameswaran, 2006).

The culture, one of the six components of nation branding, as highlighted by Anholt (2003), is discussed in this research, specifically with regards to cultural products of Thailand. Community products related to the culture and cultural activities of the country's population are also considered in this research.

OTOP (One Tambon One Product) in Thailand is a community products that has successfully identified, cultivated and fully utilised the local resources (including natural, historical, cultural and human resources) towards the continual development of a greater variety of unique local products and services, including local tourism (Fujita, 2006). OTOP should be not only commercialised in Thailand, but are expected to export worldwide.

The community product uses various names, such as OVOP (One Village One Product), OTOP (One Tambon (village) One Product; One Town One Product) and ODOP (One District One Product). In the mid-1980s, the OVOP policy was implemented in many countries, including China, Malaysia, Thailand, the

Philippines, Indonesia, Cambodia, Laos, Mongolia, Kazakhstan, Malawi and Uganda. Actual experiences vary substantially from country to country. The OTOP scheme is the government's agenda to encourage local communities throughout the country to make use of their resources and local wisdom in creating one unique marketable product.

There are five objectives of OTOP Thailand: 1) to create jobs and incomes for the communities; 2) to drive the communities towards self-dependence; 3) to promote Thai wisdom; 4) to promote human resources development; and 5) to promote the communities' creativity in developing products which are in harmony with local culture and way of life (Ministry of Commerce, Thailand). Precisely, OTOP Thailand is designed as a tool for community-driven development. It is a rural development strategy for a cultural based "brand community". OTOP is a unique policy as it transpired from the government's efforts to translate Thai cultures, aesthetics, etc., and sell it as part of Thai heritage. Unlike other Thai "commercial brands", OTOP was inceptioned mainly as a cottage industry within different regions as a "social marketing" project. OTOP Thailand not only represents Thai wisdom and the country, but also sustainably increases income in rural areas.

In Thailand, this scheme is implemented nationwide, covering nearly all of Thailand's 7,252 districts. OTOP is predicated on the idea that every tambon (sub-district or village) has a variety of unique local products (Rado, 2008). Total sales of village enterprises under this programme were estimated at \$558 million in 2002, with an average profit margin of 26 percent (Looney, 2003 cited by Rado, 2008). These products are also finding their way to the shelves of luxury shops in

Japan, the United States (US) and Europe, thus enabling the village producers to earn five times more on each item than is sold in the local market (Looney, 2003 cited by Rado, 2008). The OTOP of Thailand is potentially aimed at assisting rural villages in promoting tourism and advancing the nation's local products (Zerrillo & Thomas, 2007). OTOP activities contribute about one percent to the Thai GDP including data for Bangkok (Kiyoto, Fletcher & Veld, 2010 cited by JICA Thailand 2003); and through recalculation based on data for the provinces only, concluded that the OTOP contribution resulted in a two percent increase in regional GDP and a six percent enhancement of employment opportunities in Northeast Thailand, where the OTOP scheme is quite popular (Kiyoto, Fletcher & Veld, 2010, cited by Takanashi, 2009). Moreover, 68 percent of the Thai population resides in the rural enclaves. OTOP's goal is to help the small businesses and villages to become self-reliant and insulate them from severe economic cycles (Zerrillo & Thomas, 2007).

1.2 Problem Statement

Brand Equity is important for both customers and the businesses. For the customers, brand equity provides value to customers by giving them confidence and satisfaction when purchasing the product, through the perceived value of the product. For brand manufacturers, brand equity offers value to the firm by creating brand Loyalty, price taking, brand extension and competitive advantage. Brand equity has, consequently, been widely researched. It is important that

organizations create and manage brand equity wisely. Brand image; however, is a primary and vital factor to learn in managing brand equity (Parameswaran, 2006).

Studies on brand equity have mostly focused on brand equity measurement, factors affecting brand equity in terms of brand image that influences brand equity (e.g. Faircloth, 1996; Anderson & Robertson, 2008). Some studies have been undertaken to study the factors affecting brand image in general; some focused on the construction of brand image (Aaker, 1991; Keller, 1993; Faircloth, 1996; Bibby, 2006; Anderson & Robertson, 2008). It is clear that the study on brand image for brand equity management is generally needed for developing all brands.

In the time when the country needs revenue to the country, building a nation brand is the one way that boosts foreign income to the nation (Kotler, Jatusripitak & Maesincee, 1997). As Anholt (2003) states that indexes to build a nation brand comprises tourism, export, governance, investment and immigration, people, and culture. This research is studied focus on dimension of culture. From a review of the research literature, there are not any research studies found on the image of a nation brand. There are some studies related to country image (Papadopoulos, 2002) and destination image (Jacobsen, 2009; Mak, 2011). There are also some studies on measuring influences of country of origin on brand image (Ravi, Pascale & Cooksey, 2006; Hulland, 1999; and Ahmed et al., 2002). There is; however, no research done on the construction of a nation brand image.

The research on the nation brand index (Anholt, 2003) studied "culture" of the nation brand, using Thailand OTOP as the representative of cultural products and

reported that products could generate income for the local people, develop its human resources, reflects the lifestyle of the local people. In particular, OTOP products, not only are generating revenue and job security, they also provide supplementary occupations for farmers in rural areas.

From examining the research literature about nation brand image, Most of the studies on nation brand have been done in four major areas:

- a) Inspecting indices of the nation brand (Anholt, 2005), country brand (Fetscherin, 2010), and place brand (Stepchenkova, 2009);
- b) Investigating the nation brand equity (Artur, Karen, Adamantios & Zeugner-Roth, 2009; Koubaa, 2008; Norjaya, Mohd & Mohamad, 2007; Ravi, Pascale & Cooksey, 2006); and factors of country of origin which concerns brand association and brand Image and factors leading to brand equity (Artur, Karen, Adamantios & Zeugner-Roth, 2009; Koubaa, 2008; Norjaya, Mohd & Mohamad, 2007; Ravi, Pascale & Cooksey, 2006);
- c) Examining the country image or country personality (Cayla & Eckhard, 2008; Kaneva, 2007); and
- d) Studying nation branding (Fan 2006; Anholt, 2008; Đorđević, 2008).

Considering the nation brand in cultural product is scanty. To date, a small number of studies on the Nation Brand, in terms of its cultural dimensions, have

been done. Most studies have been on products (Gnoth, 2002; Kotler and Gertner, 2002; Pappu et al., 2007, cited in Richard, Jane, Tito & Murphy, 2010); tourism (Melike, Oznur, Burcu & Kurtulus, 2010) and foreign direct investment (Farooqi, 2009; Margarita & Konrad, 2010). OTOP product, cultural studies as it is the highlight of this research.

And with the author's literature reviewing, no studies have been found that scrutinises the influential factors that affect the nation brand image. The present study is an attempt to fill this gap; by investigating the factors contributing to creation of a nation brand image. This study also gain benefit to strengthen the nation brand indirectly help the country more prestigious. To build and manage the reputation of countries in the international arena, are needed especially to attract tourism and other businesses, stimulate investments and create positive perceptions and attitudes in the target markets (Farooqi, 2009, Fetscherin, 2010, and Ulla Hakala & Lemmetyinen, 2011).

The nation brand image in this study is based on the Consumer Based Brand Equity (CBBE) Theory which discusses the factors that influence the brand image, brand association and brand attitude (Aaker, 1991; Keller, 1993; Faircloth, 1996; Bibby, 2006; Andersson & Robertson, 2008).

According to the CBBE model, Brand Image is the key element for building brand equity, and the image in consumers' minds, depends mostly on some associations between the consumer and the product (Aaker, 1991; Keller, 1993). Keller & Lehmann (2003) also reports the sequence of perceptions about the brand in the

customer's mindset. The model in this research was developed from the factors that influence the creation of brand equity and the sequence of perception of the brand in the customer's mind, including brand associations and brand attitude.

Factors that influence in the formulation of a nation brand image in this research offer country of origin image to be one of the independent variables. Previous studies have been conducted to examine the country of origin image which is contributing to the nation brand image. Some existing studies (Aaker, 1991; Keller, 1993), have found that country of origin affects brand image perception at a significant level, and is one of the elements of brand association. Other studies suggest that the country of origin is one of the variables that affect consumer perceptions of brands and brand images (Ahmed et al., 2002; Hulland, 1999; and Ravi, Pascale & Cooksey, 2006). Some studies have been conducted to examine the country image (Cayla & Eckhard, 2008; Kaneva, 2007; Nuttavuthisit, 2007). There are however, no direct studies into how the Country of Origin Image affects the Nation Brand Image. This present study intends to examine the influences of country image upon nation brand image.

The Brand Image, from the review of literature, most studies and discussions about brand image involve two dimensions. The first is the elements that construct brand image; how they affect brand image and their role in building brand equity (Aaker, 1991; Keller, 1993; Faircloth, 1996; Ravi, Pascale & Cooksey, 2005; Andersson & Robertson, 2008). The second is the interrelationship between brand image and self-concept of the customers (Graeff, 1996; Aker, 1997; Parker, 2005; Traci & Forbes, 2005; Asperin, 2007). Most studies in this area have found that

when the buyers' ego-involvement is high, their purchasing action is also high. The marketers must, therefore, try to secure the prospective buyers' self-concept on the product (Sengupta, 2005:134). Figure 1.1 illustrates these twofold dimensions in brand image building.

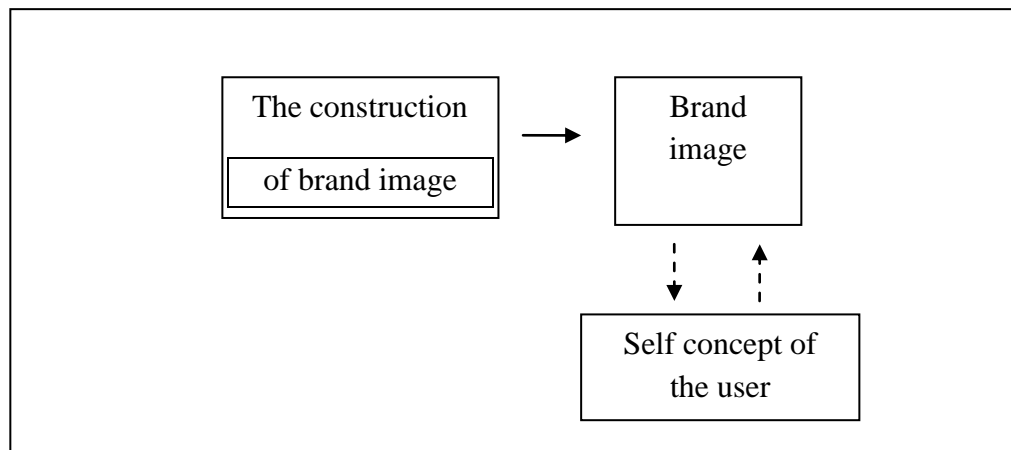


Figure 1.1
Twofold dimensions in brand image building

From an examination of the literature, researcher found that no studies have been undertaken to formulate a model for constructing the nation brand image by investigating the factors that influence it. Most studies have examined the factors affecting brand image of products used in everyday life. There are also no studies on nation brand image in the areas of both brand personality and user personality. Additionally, most studies as regards Thailand OTOP have been conducted to examine the buying behavior (e.g. Jantarach, Sillabutra & Isaranurug, 2007; Siriumpai, 2012; Usanit, 2011). However, there are limited studies which examine

brand image and personality of Thailand's OTOP. The brand image helps marketers in creating marketing activities to draw attention to the products and help make a clear and outstanding image of the brand. Moreover, brand Image and user image contribute to the success of product marketing. If both OTOP brand personality and its user personality are congruent, it will contribute to the success of the brand. Consumer self-concept and brand personality that the consumer will choose must be closely matched (Sengupta, 2005, p. 133). It is also suggested that research on OTOP into place brand should be done (Zerrillo & Thomas, 2007).

Place brand looks into a wide range, encompassing destination brand, nation brand and global brand (Dinnie, 2003). Nation branding is a field of theory and practice which aims to measure, build and manage the reputation of countries (Farooqi, 2009). Regards to these words "place brand, destination brand, nation brand", some researchers use interchangeable (Farooqi, 2009; Outhavong, 2007). Some approaches applied, such as an increasing importance on the symbolic value of products, have led countries to emphasise their distinctive characteristics" (Farooqi, 2009)

For this reason, the present research illustrates the model for building a nation brand image explores both the construction of a nation brand image and the personality of the brand and the user.

This research offers brand attitude to be a mediator variable between brand association and nation brand image. Similarly, brand attitude is a mediator variable between country of origin image and nation brand image. There are no research studies which clearly demonstrate the role of the mediator effect of brand attitude on brand associations and brand image. This current research recognises

the importance of brand attitude that constitutes brand equity (Aaker, 1991; Keller, 1993; Faircloth, 1996), in hierarchy of consumer mindset about the brand (Keller, & Lehmann, 2003), and the role and important of brand attitude on behavior intentions (Fishbein and Ajzen, 1975) and consumer loyalty and satisfaction (Johnson, Gustafsson, Andreassen, Lervik & Cha, 2001; Kristensen, Gronholdt & Martensen, 2000; Juhl, Kristensen & Ostergaard, 2002).

Moreover the significance of brand attitude towards brand image is recognised (Aaker, 1996; Anisimova, 2007; BeleÂn del RôÂo, Rodolfo & Iglesias, 2001; Chen, 2001; Faircloth, 1996 and Keller, 1993; Pantin-Sohier, 2009; Park, Jaworski & MacInnis, 1986; Rui & Alwi, 2008; and Sirgy & Samli, 1985). In addition, brand attitude enhances corporate image (Nguyen & Leblanc, 2001), behavioural intention (Fishbein and Ajzen, 1975).

These facts propose the examination of brand attitude as a mediator variable between brand associations and a nation brand image. Also, it is a mediator variable between the country of origin image and a nation brand image.

As stated earlier, that Thailand's OTOP has been recognised as the nation's brand of community products. In addition, it needs recognition to become a flagship commodity in the international arena, and thereby gain more income for the people in the rural parts of Thailand. Moreover it simultaneously supports the tourism industry.

There are two important reasons for the study of the Brand image of Thailand's OTOP:

- (1) Thailand's OTOP needs to be officially declared as a nation brand.

Thailand's OTOP now faces price competition, particularly with the limitation of the cyclical demand and reliance on mass production. Nevertheless, the OTOP programme has proven to be an integral part of the Thai economy which has experienced top-tier growth levels over the last several years. Zerrillo & Thomas (2007) suggested the extension of OTOP through thriving place branding programmes. Place branding is the specific marketing-instrument that gives added value to a specific product, service or organisation (Martin, Kees & Gorp, 2011). Place brand is similar to nation brand, as they are used interchangeably in the literature. (Fetscherin, 2010). Thus, this research studies OTOP as a nation brand. Nation branding aims to measure, build and manage the reputation of countries, especially to attract tourism and other businesses, stimulate investments and create positive perceptions and attitudes in the target markets (Farooqi, 2009, Fetscherin, 2010, and Ulla Hakala & Lemmetyinen, 2011). Increasing the symbolic value of products emphasises their distinctive characteristics (Farooqi, 2009, and Ulla Hakala & Lemmetyinen, 2011). This research recommends that OTOP should become a nation brand.

In many parts of Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), economic development is urgently needed. Most countries in the region have initiated nation brand strategies to help achieve this aim. The member states of ASEAN find themselves at varying stages of economic development, and their differing needs and priorities may be reflected in their nation branding activities. Nevertheless, ASEAN is a significantly under-researched region within the nation branding literature compared to other more widely studied regions, such as Europe and North America (Keith, Melewar, Seidenfuss & Musa, 2010). This is a significant issue for studying, and also for encouraging OTOP as one of the representatives of a nation brand of Thailand (or OVOP in some countries).

(2) Thailand needs to work on image building.

A study on branding in Thailand and consumer perceptions of the essential characteristics of Thailand (Nuttavuthisit, 2007), revealed both negative and positive images of Thailand. The positive image includes beautiful natural scenery, a rich history, a unique culture and an 'exotic' and 'friendly people'. However the negative image portrays the country as poverty-stricken and as a sex haven. These findings help in identifying both the strengths and weaknesses of the country from a marketing perspective. The research suggests that to alleviate the negative image, Thailand needs to work on both physical improvement

(e.g., government policy) and image improvement (e.g., place branding strategy).

Fortunately, Thailand also possesses many positive features and images. The results of the Branding Thailand research demonstrated that there is an opportunity to build and develop strategies to manage the perceived images of Thailand.

Many countries have become increasingly aware of their image nationally and internationally. Some countries adopt advertising and marketing practices to manage their country's image. Some rely on non-governmental professionals to help with initiatives to stimulate the economy and to increase international goodwill (Outhavong, 2007).

Originally, the Thai OTOP was aimed at showcasing the creative products of the lifestyle of local Thai people in international markets. These product categories are food, health & beauty, lifestyle, fashion, hi-tech, and other dynamic services. Apparently, Thailand's OTOP products have gained favour in international markets, which are appreciative of their creative designs and distinctive Thai touch (Department of Export Promotion). The results of the study, however, shows that Thailand needs to work on image building and image reshaping of the country. Nation branding is crucially needed in building and reinforcing the collective identity of the country in a holistic manner (Nuttavuthisit, 2007). Regarding the nation brand

image building, this research proposes that OTOP should be presented as a product of unique Thai culture to the global marketplace.

In order to understand brand image of OTOP thoroughly, this research focuses on building the brand image, which is the first stage for managing brand equity (Parameswaran, 2006). To build brand image, marketers need to know factors that help promote brand image. This study discusses the elements for building and constructing brand image. It also explores the factors that influence brand image of Thai OTOP. Moreover, it researches on how OTOP, as a nation brand of Thailand, can demonstrate through its brand image, the factors contributing to its national image branding, including the identity and culture of its people. The country of origin image therefore is proposed as an additional variable to create a nation brand image of OTOP.

1.3 Research Questions

- (1) What is the brand image of OTOP in terms of brand personality and the image of the user?
- (2) Do brand associations influence nation brand image?
- (3) Does the country of origin image influence a nation brand image?
- (4) Do brand associations influence brand attitude?
- (5) Does the country of origin image influence brand attitude?
- (6) Does brand attitude influence nation brand image?

- (7) Is brand attitude a mediator variable between brand associations and nation brand image?
- (8) Is brand attitude a mediator variable between the country of origin image and nation brand image?

1.4 Research Objectives

- (1) To explore the brand image of OTOP in terms of the characteristics of brand personality and image of the users of OTOP;
- (2) To investigate the influence of brand associations on nation brand image;
- (3) To investigate the influence of the country of origin image on nation brand image;
- (4) To investigate the influence of brand associations on brand attitude;
- (5) To investigate the influence of the country of origin image on brand attitude;
- (6) To investigate the influence of brand attitude on nation brand image;
- (7) To investigate the mediation of brand attitude between brand associations and nation brand image; and
- (8) To investigate the mediation of brand attitude between country of origin image and nation brand image

1.5 Research Contribution

The findings from this research will have both theoretical and practical contributions:

1.5.1 Theoretical contribution

This research provides the theoretical model related to the brand management of a nation brand.

The Model generated from this research can be a useful tool for academics to understand the factors influencing nation brand image in relation to a cultural product. This is the primary exploratory research which studies the construction of a nation brand image.

This research has found the three elements, consisting of brand associations, country of origin image, and brand attitude, in the realization of the nation brand image in the minds of customers in Thailand and overseas. It has, particularly, presented the country of origin image as a variable in the creation of nation brand image. This is different from the previous research presenting the country of origin as a component of brand associations and looking at the overall picture of the country of origin. This research focuses on the image of the country of origin, resulting in a very clear picture of the formation of nation brand image. It shows that the

country of origin image plays a more important role to the formation of the nation brand image than does the brand associations.

The present research also has found the mediating effect of brand attitude in the relationship between brand associations and the nation brand image, especially for the foreign customers. On the other hand, this mediating effect of brand attitude between these two variables was not found in the model for the Thai customers. This finding is innovative and can be applied as another hypothesis for future research to confirm this mediating characteristic of the brand associations to the brand.

This model demonstrates not only the salient attributes associated with consumer, attitude of consumer towards the brand, and a country of origin image that affects the nation brand image; it also investigates the personality of the brand and image of the user.

Regarding the composition of the four major variables (brand associations, country of origin image, brand attitude, and nation brand image) under investigation, the brand associations have covered all the physical, emotional and organizational components of the product and the results confirmed the influences of these three elements on the brand associations, which will further influence the nation brand image. The brand attitude has covered the beneficial, emotional and social image of products and the results confirmed the influence of these three elements on brand attitude which will further influence the creation of nation brand image.

In addition, this study has designed the measures to determine the country of origin image by adding the culture-image of the country of origin. This cultural image helps creating a clearer picture for cultural products and be proved as one of the components of the country of origin image, whereas in the previous research the country of origin image consists of only two factors, namely macro image and a micro image.

In the nation brand image, the application of the component of brand personality proposed by Aaker (1997) is still effective and is proved to be a good measure.

In summary, the academic contribution of this research is the constructional model for creating a nation brand image and the components of each construct, as well as the mediating influence of the brand attitude to foreign customers

This model can help marketers to understand consumers' mindset in order to build the brand to captivate customers. A brand captivates customers, which is the prime reason that relationships develop between customers and brands. Aaker, Kumar, George & Leone (2011) stated that the more enduring this relationship between customers and brands is, the more valuable it is for the company.

1.5.2 Practical contribution

Findings from the present research are useful for both the government and OTOP entrepreneurs to create marketing strategies for OTOP in domestic and international markets. They can use these findings for their marketing plans and activities to create their product values, to encourage purchase intention on the purchasing decision making process of the customer, to create a positive image for the country OTOP, and finally to know how the Thai and foreign customers feel about the products.

Knowing the influential factors of OTOP brand image in terms of brand associations makes the governments and OTOP suppliers know how their customers recognize their products in terms of the brand itself, its usefulness and the manufacturers of products. This will, in turn, give them information for product positioning. Moreover, the government can employ the research results as a selling point to promote OTOP brand in the marketplace, to create brand value and to communicate to customers, both domestic and overseas.

The understanding of brand associations will help the government and business owners to position the product in the market place (Peter, Debra, Michael & Tuck, 1994). It implies a promise to customers from the organisation members (Aaker, 1996). This is the means by which consumers feel brands satisfy their needs. It will help marketers to create

brand value to customers. This research explores brand associations from three dimensions of the brand (Aaker, D. A., 1996): brand as a product (perceived value); brand as a person (brand personality); and brand as an organisation (organisation association). The practice of brand associations contributes to marketing programmes to differentiate, position and extend brands, to create positive attitudes and feelings toward brands, and to suggest attributes or benefits of purchasing or using a specific brand (Aaker, 1991).

Knowing the attitude of the customer towards the brand, affective, function benefit and social achievement, helps designate particular strengths and drawbacks of the brand in the customer's views, and this information can be used to create and maintain positive attitude toward the brand.

The results of the present study also show the brand attitude of both foreign and domestic customers in the market. Customer attitude is a very important factor in creating the image of the brand, and it contributes to purchasing behavior as well. Both the government and OTOP entrepreneurs can use this information in communicating to their consumers to build a positive attitude toward the brand and to encourage them to purchase the OTOP products.

This research measures the influence of three brand attitude dimensions (Christian & Leheut, 2008); affective dimension (affect), functional dimension (function benefit), and social dimension (social achievement). These salient beliefs suggest the strength and direction of an attitude towards a brand influencing purchasing behaviour.

Knowing the customers' country of origin image of the products makes the government aware of the image of the country related to the products, the micro, macro and cultural images in the perception of international clients. The government can use this knowledge to improve its negative image and enhance the positive image of the country. This information of country of origin image helps communicate the good reputation and identity of the country.

The country of origin image strongly affects the brand image; thus marketers should customise their actions across brands and across countries of production (Koubaa, 2008). Each country may benefit from certain favourable or unfavourable associations with respect to its nature, culture, national identity, etc. (Đorđević, 2008). The government needs to know that this image strengthens favourable associations of the OTOP product. It is also the brand identity.

Knowing the brand personality of the OTOP and personality of the users, in both overseas and domestic markets, provides the government and

OTOP entrepreneurs with important information about their target markets and customers. The product brand personality and personality of the users can be used as a benchmark for market segmentation. The manufacturers can select segments of interest (segmented market) and marketing activities to meet the needs of their target groups. Results of this study reveal if the personality of the brand and that of the users are similar or not and this will allow the government and the OTOP manufacturers to choose to do business with OTOP target users that have the same personality as that of the brand.

The brand personality of OTOP and the image of the user are illustrated in this research. Investigating the similarity or difference between brand personality of OTOP and image of the user, can help marketers to build brand loyalty of OTOP, if it is congruent between brand personality and self-image of the user. Most branded products have a physical, as well as a symbolic character. Driving much of the consumer's purchasing behaviour is the judgment as to whether the given brand, both physically as well as symbolically, is congruent with consumers' self-image (Sengupta, 2005). Marketers must ensure that such symbolism helps to support the self-concept of the target consumer. All the elements of the marketing mix must communicate with the target prospect, the desired clues for consumer perception, and thus create the desired symbolic meaning for the brand (Sengupta, 2005).

The construction of a Nation Brand Image of the present study can also be used to study the nation brand in other countries to encourage recognition of the nation brand, to increase sales, to promote the country and to elevate its reputation.

Precisely, a commodity, such as OVOP of Japan and OTOP of Thailand, can be presented as a nation brand (Simon Anholt's six dimensions of a nation brand). Building a nation brand is vital for place brand and to be marketed internationally. It can bring a large amount of revenue to the nation (Kotler, Jatusripitak & Maesincee 1997).

Thailand's OTOP may require the development of marketing strategies (Srikaew & Baron, 2009). OTOP Brand is a corporate brand used by several producers from all regions of Thailand. OTOP is mainly a cottage industry within different regions – a “social marketing” project. Therefore it is difficult for producers to communicate a clear message of a product to the customer. The clear image, knowing what message is needed to show the product's position with unique associations, is important for the OTOP producer to create value and communicate this value to the customers, so that brand becomes meaningful them.

1.6 Scope of Study

The framework of this research targets both domestic and international tourists which 15 years and older who visit Thailand during 2012 with an attempt to measure the nation brand image of OTOP, a cultural and community product of Thailand. This study examines the foreigners and Thai who are visiting the exhibition of OTOP at OTOP City 2012 (15-23 Dec.) at Muang Thani, Nonthaburi and also at Suvarnabhumi Airport, Thailand. The research studies the brand image of OTOP of Thailand, considering OTOP as handicraft, decorative item and accessory. The intercept mall is used for sampling. 324 for Thai and 167 for foreigner respondents are samples.

1.7 Operational Definition

OTOP brand is a national brand of Thai community products. The government encourages the nation brand in both local and international markets, in order to present the culture and wisdom of local people through the product, which represents not only the tangible products, but also encompasses the ideas and services, with consideration for the survival of natural resources and environment. OTOP brand represents a corporate brand of a Thai commodity of the entrepreneurs involved in community activities in all parts of Thailand (Ministry of Commerce Thailand). OTOP's goal is to help the small businesses and villages to become self-reliant and insulate them from severe economic cycles (Zerrillo & Thomas, 2007).

Brand image is defined as the perceptions and beliefs held by consumers about product and brand. It is the ‘totality’ of the brand from the perception of the consumer (Sengupta, 2005). It includes impressions about its physical features and performance; functional benefits from its utility; the kind of people who use it; emotions and associations aroused by it; imagery and the symbolic meaning it evokes in the consumers’ minds. Brand image is the personality of the brand (Parameswaran, 2006); it can also reflect the type of person who uses the product and appropriateness of a given brand for different usage occasions (Parker, 2005). This research examines brand image as brand personality.

Brand association is anything that is cognitively linked to the brand brand (Peter, Debra, Michael & Tuck, 1994). It implies a promise to customers from the organisation’s members (Aaker, 1996a). Brand associations can take a role as a product or as a brand, or tangible as well as intangible attributes of the products that are valuable to customers, and also affect consumers’ attitude to the brand. In this research, brand associations are classified into three types: perceived value, brand personality and organisation association (Aaker, 1996b)

Country of origin image is defined as the image that consumers associate with the country which product produced from. It is the picture, reputation and stereotype that they attach to the country. In this research, COO image is created by macro-image, culture image and micro-image of the country. The dimension that measures at macro-image level comprises: 1) technological - developed country, industrialisation, technological research; 2) economic - high standard of living, welfare system, high labour costs; 3) political - civilian government, free-market

system, democratic (Ravi, Pascale & Cooksey (2007). The culture image level includes: 1) legacy of country's history; 2) heritage of traditions and culture; 3) colourful cuisine, arts, literature and local people (Stepchenkova, 2009). The measures of micro-level cover three factors: 1) innovation - innovative, technologically advanced; 2) prestige - pride of ownership, up-market, high status; 3) design - reliable, excellent finish, dependable (Ravi, Pascale & Cooksey (2007).

Brand attitude is consumers' evaluation of a brand (Rossiter & Percy, 1987). It is the knowledge and feeling a person has accumulated about the brand. It is also a conclusion based on information and/or experience with a brand. Brand attitude is based on what prospective customers see, hear, experience and learn about brands. The present research comprises three brand attitude dimensions: affect, function-benefit gained and social achieved. It is an examination of the hierarchy-of-effects in the consumers' minds (Peter & Olson, 2008).

A nation brand is a brand of products of the country that represents the COO. It is a symbol or a reputation of a country; respect for a nation is highlighted in the nation brand of the country. Anholt (2005) proposes the concept of nation branding in terms of six dimensions of a nation brand: tourism, export, governance, investment and immigration, culture and heritage, and people. This research aims at encouraging OTOP to become an important nation brand to uplift the economic potential of the country. OTOP is a cultural product which identified, cultivated and fully utilized the local resources including natural, historical, cultural, and human resources (Ministry of Commerce, Thailand). This

research defines it as one of the nation's brands which should be significantly promoted internationally.

Nation brand image are perceptions and beliefs held by consumers about a nation brand (Anholt, 2005). The nation brand image of a country has been presented through its product, tourism, culture and people of the country (Anholt, 2003). This research studies a nation brand in terms of culture. It is the OTOP brand. OTOP represent the culture and wisdom of local people through the product (Ministry of Commerce Thailand). This research uses handicraft, decorative items and accessories, as representatives of OTOP. It explores nation brand image in terms of brand personality.

1.8 Organisation of the thesis

The thesis contains five chapters and is organised as follows:

Chapter 1 contains an introduction and background to the research problem and presents a statement of the research problem. This chapter also includes the research objectives, research questions, significance of the study, scope and limitations of the study.

Chapter 2 involves a critical assessment and evaluation of the literature relating to the brand image, brand associations, brand attitude, country of origin, nation brand, self-image and brand personality.

Chapter 3 presents the research questions and the hypotheses for the questions and techniques to test each of the hypotheses. The population, sampling techniques and data collecting procedure are also presented.

Chapter 4 provides a conceptual framework for the research by presenting the research questions, data collection, techniques and results of the data analysis. Discussions of the results from the field research are presented. The statistical analysis of the research results are also presented. Data relating to each hypothesis is examined and the findings discussed. The confirmation or rejection of research questions and hypotheses is presented.

Chapter 5 presents the discussions, suggestions and concluding remarks. Conclusions are drawn from the results. Theoretical and managerial implications are discussed and the main contributions to knowledge are elaborated. Limitations in the research are acknowledged and suggestions for future research are appended.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Overview

This chapter summarises the literature pertaining to the main areas of the research. It comprises of eight aspects of; nation brand image, nation brand, brand attitude, brand associations, country of origin image, the brand image as brand personality and self-image of customers, the relationships among each variable, and the Customer-Based Brand Equity (CBBE), theory which is the underlying theory for branding nation brand image.

2.2 Nation brand image

Nation brand image is perception and belief held by consumers about a country across the six areas of national competence (tourism, exports, people, governance, culture and heritage, and investment and immigration) (Anholt, 2005). It is defined as the consumers' perceptions and beliefs about products that pass off as a nation's brand. In the globalization era most countries have always been competing to attract money into the country from tourism, exports of goods, services and cultural products. The image of people and governance of the country are also needed. These components are as the key assets of the product to create a nation brand image.

This research studies a nation brand in terms of culture. OTOP represent the culture and wisdom of local people through the product (Ministry of Commerce Thailand). This study uses handicraft, decorative items and accessories, as representatives of OTOP. It explores nation brand image in terms of brand personality. This definition refers to brand image (Parameswaran, 2006; Riezebos, 2003; Yuksel & Uysal, 2006).

Brand image is the personality of the brand. It represents the essence of all the impressions or imprints about the brand that has been etched in the consumer's mind. Brand image can also reflect the type of person who uses the product, and the appropriateness of a given brand for usage on different occasions. In other words, brand image is the 'totality' of the brand from the perception of a consumer. The consumers perceive the image of a brand from marketing communications, their own experience of the branded product, as well as from the people around them expressing their opinions. This includes impressions about its physical features and performance, as well as the functional benefits of using it, or the kind of people who use it, the emotion and association aroused by it, and the imagery and symbolic meaning it evokes in the consumers' minds (Riezebos, 2003). In some cases, the terms 'brand image' and 'brand personality' have been used interchangeably to gauge consumers' perceptions of brands (Yuksel & Uysal (2006). This is agreed to by Riezebos (2003) and Parameswaran (2006), who defined that brand image is regarded as a personality of a brand. In essence, brand personality is "the set of human characteristics associated with a brand". Branding personality is the act of applying human characteristics (i.e., personality traits) to a

brand, stirring up consumers to think of a brand as if it has person-like qualities (Aaker, 1997; Keller, 1998; Ogilvy, 1983; Parker, 2005; and Plummer, 1985).

According to the Brand Building Pentagon (Parameswaran, 2006), which comprises brand appraisal, brand definition, brand articulation, brand measurement and brand expansion, he describes the brand definition and linking with brand image as:

“Brand definition is about putting down what the facets of the brand should be. What should be the brand reasons: rational, emotional? What should be the brand positioning? What space should the brand occupy in consumers’ minds? What should be the brand image? The brand definition exercise is a necessity to conduct consumer research to understand the reasons behind the usage of a product or service”.

(Parameswaran, 2006: p.131)

This stage shows the importance of knowing the brand image in consumers’ minds. Evidently, what the image is, is determined by the consumer and how a marketer can use this at an early stage should be kept in mind while developing the brand package (Parameswaran, 2006).

Obviously, brand image has to measure the brand score on its specific benefits. In addition, brand image also needs to measure what kind of people use the brand and what usage imagery the brand stands for. Therefore, brand image ratings are a measurement of how a brand performs across various parameters, and also measures what kind of people use the brand.

In summary, brand image is the perception of the consumer towards a brand, which includes the product, the imagery and symbolic meaning, and also brand personality. The benefit of brand image is to help marketers define brand definition and design brand identity.

When the country is clear what the nation's brand image should be, it will determine what the brand definition is and also the brand identity. So, to build a nation brand, the government and private sectors need to be clear and share a common vision to communicate its identity to the world. For instance, to increase the symbolic value of products, their distinctive characteristics should be emphasised (Farooqi, 2009, and Ulla Hakala & Lemmetyinen, 2011).

Research involving the nation brand image is found to comply with Anholt's model of six components to measure a national brand: Exports, Culture and Heritage, Governance, Investment and Immigration, Tourism, and People. The country needs to look for a flagship to create a nation brand, and the nation brand image needs to be studied so that the nation brand is developed in the right direction to meet the needs of stakeholders (Zenker & Beckmann, 2013). Research on the nation brand image has been more focused on since 2007 in accordance to importance of building a nation brand

Kemming & kci (2007) have conducted exploratory qualitative research on the Turkish nation brand image. Data were collected through semi-structured in-depth interviews with a total of 34 informants between June 2005 and January 2006 in Turkey and some EU member states: the Netherlands, the UK, Germany,

Spain, Sweden and Slovenia. Questionnaires comprise 15 categories constructed from preliminary data and the literature. These categories are: general image content seen by the informants; stereotypical characteristics of Turkey; tourism image; export products entitled ‘ Made in Turkey ’ / FDI; political image; remarks about referenda / voting scenario; positioning Turkey ’ s nation brand; and tactics/ communicative actions taken by Turkey. The customer informants consider general image, tourism image, economy, politics, and people/culture as the key components of the Turkish nation brand image. However, the findings suggest that Turkey, at the moment, does not appear to be a well-run nation brand. Not only do the poor results indicate room for improvement, but also the management of Turkey in all relevant nation brand dimensions does not seem promising with regard to a successful EU application process.

Fanning, J. (2011) postulates that the nation brand image will be increasingly important in the era of globalization when all countries have been facing a pursuit to the forefront to attract foreign customers in tourism, export, education and other types of investment in order to generate revenue for the country. The nation brand image is not a new notion in international businesses. People have always had ideas, impressions and opinions on the products, and there always are some sorts of associations between the product and its country of origin. The nation brand image has been increasingly attracted the businesses as an important issue in recent years, however. Image of the nation, in general, evokes a series of ideas, attributes, associations and opinions in proportion in the minds of people in other countries, which together form an overall image of the country. When the

proportion is high, a country's nation brand image can be considered strong, and when it is favorable that image is not only strong but it also constitutes an important asset for the country (Fanning, 2011). The author of this study is consequently interested in researching on what constitute a nation brand of Ireland. Fanning, J. (2011) proposes Ireland's national identity as the key asset to its nation brand, and suggests that 'Celtic revival', representing traditional Celtic literature and Celtic art, older than 100 years, can be used to promote Ireland's nation brand. The author further suggests that building a nation brand image with Celtic revival should be done at the national government level by the Industrial Development Authority (IDA), Tourism Ireland, Bord Bia, and Culture Ireland.

Pătrașcu (2014), in his article, suggests that the government of the post-communist countries should define a powerful nation-brand that reflects their values to promote their image in the international market. Romania seems to be clearly aware of the great importance of nation branding and has made various efforts in finding its own brand-image. Romania performed various branding campaigns along the decade of 2001 (2001-2010). Despite its enthusiasm to construct and present a better and more attractive self image, its attempts seem hindered by its own confusion over what strategies should be adopted in the elaboration of its brand. Another obstacle appears to be its reluctance to accept those symbols that are attractive to foreign tourists as part of its brand (like Dracula or the House of the People) because of the existing difference of opinion between what these symbols stand for Romanians and what they represent in the European and international imaginary about Romania and its people.

To create a nation brand in tourism industry, studies in place brand or destination brand must be done carefully. As discussed in Ashton's (2014) study on the development of destination brand image in a case study of the Southland region of New Zealand. Results of this qualitative research has shown that participants in the study suggested that brand concepts, such as the name or symbol that represents the region should be based on local geographical attractions. Furthermore, the uniqueness of the product, such as places, and local attributes and tour experiences should be used in creating a brand image. Finally, the events and festivals held by locals annually can also be added to attract tourists to the marketed destination. The study makes a good contribution to destination marketing strategy and indicates that tourism management in brand development should seek to understand how attributes in holistic, functional, psychological and common uniqueness help in destination brand image development. It makes a managerial contribution by providing better understanding on strategies to implement the destination brand image and hence improves marketing effectiveness and maximizes the benefit to all stakeholders of the business, including customers, employees, shareholders, suppliers, and nonprofit organizations.

Also Zenker & Beckmann (2013) have conducted a study on "Measuring brand image effects of flagship projects for place brand" using the city of Hamburg in Germany as a case study. The study aims to develop the city recognized by the image of a desired city. The findings, however, reveal several important structural differences for the brand image dimensions of the city in contingent upon the type

of flagship project. This study shows that different flagship projects have different image effects for the city brand.

Fensterseifer (2014) has analysed soccer, Brazil's Brand-mage, in the aspect of culture brand image through the American media. A qualitative content analysis of US media articles was employed to identify Brazil's brand-image as it emerged from US media portrayal. *New York Times*, right through the year 2013, was used as the media outlet of choice. The coding sheet containing three main categories, *topic*, *tone*, and *competitive identity* was used to guide data collection from documents. *Topic* refers to the main theme of each article; *Tone* refers to the emotional valence of each article: *positive*, *negative*, or *neutral*; and *Competitive identity* refers to six subcategories of the competitive identity theory: *tourism*, *export brands*, *government*, *culture*, *people*, and *investment* (Anholt, 2006). Findings show that Brazil was portrayed as a soccer nation, passionate about its sports figures, but violent and with great social contrasts. Results also suggest that soccer is Brazil's leading brand-image in the United States. In addition, the study found congruency among the most salient frames employed by the *New York Times* and Anholt's (2006) competitive identity dimensions of people, government and culture. Interestingly, this study did not find supports to Brazilian government ongoing efforts to brand Brazil as a top tourism destination. Tourism was mentioned in the *New York Times* in transient and often in the context of violence, which leads to a conclusion that Brazil's efforts to project its image as a tourism destination were not successful in the United States in 2013.

There are several other studies highlighting the sale image in constructing the nation brand (Fanning, 2011; Kemming & kci, 2007 and Pătraşcu, 2014). Some

research on a particular major nation brand (Ashton, 2014; Fensterseifer, 2014; Zenker & Beckmann, 2013), others on marketing and marketing communication to build the country brand image (Berkowitz, Gjermano, Gomez, & Schafer, 2007).

Berkowitz, Gjermano, Gomez, & Schafer (2007) discussed the use of the 2008 China Olympic Games as an opportunity to create the nation brand of China, to improve the country's image on the world stage and to increase the brand equity of China. Additionally, the 2008 China Olympic Games has not only made the host country and the host cities known to the world, it also helped increase China's GDP and its tourism industries. The 2008 China Olympic Games is an opportunity to create a positive image of the country, showing to the world the convergence of culture and history of China. It helps to improve the image of the country in human rights and reposition China from a country that produces cheap, poor value and poor quality products into producers of global friendly, green, cultured goods and the nation on the cutting edge of technology. The 2008 China Olympic Games can be said as the great sages of China to show off to the world.

It is apparent that the nation brand should be wisely planned and chosen to build a reputation and generate income to the country. For example, the decisions on which product to be promoted as the export flagship to a nation brand and which type of investment is the most attractive for the direct investment in the country must be carefully made.

Apart from Anholt's (2003) six components of nation brand index mentioned earlier, Porter (1990) has recommended 4 conditions to evaluate the products to be used as the flagship in his article "The Diamond of National Advantage". 1) Factor Conditions are the nation's factors of production, such as skilled labour or infrastructure necessary to compete in a given industry. 2) Demand Conditions are the nature of home-market demand for the industry's product or service that is internationally competitive. 3) Conditions of Related and Supporting Industries are such as the presence or absence in the nation of supplier industries and other related industries that are internationally competitive. 4) Conditions of Firm Strategy, Structure, and Rivalry are the conditions in the nation governing, such as how companies are created, organised, and managed, as well as what the nature of domestic rivalry is like.

In addition to selecting products and services as the flagship for its nation brand, the city in the country can be chosen as a flagship to attract tourism and foreign direct investment. As discussed in a study of Nallathiga (2011) stating that a city can be marketed to attract foreign investments. To create a positive image of the city as an investment destination can be done as in common brand promotion and campaigns. Nallathiga (2011) presents two cities, London and Mumbai, in his study: branding London as a Global Financial Center and Mumbai as an Investment Destination. He mentions that to promote foreign investment, the promotion costs, realization of investments and local priorities must be stimulated and supported.

However, competition between the cities prevails not only with respect to attracting the investor but also retaining the investor through good support infrastructure. Apart from the basic services like water, sewerage and solid waste management, other key facilities include transport services, energy/power supply, educational services and recreation facilities.

Additionally, food can be used as a flagship for creating the city brand image. The study of Berg & Sevón (2014) reports that characters of a place affects the experience of food and gastronomy in that place. In the same manner, the food and gastronomy both directly and indirectly affects the characters of the place and its brand image.

The political aspects that involve a nation brand image have also been investigated. There were studies on the political issues of the United States that affect its nation image. The links between nation branding and the nation's political brand has been studied. A study by Rawson (2007) proposes that a nation has a political brand which is a vital component of the entire nation brand and their potential significantly affects the overall brand image of the country. This study used survey questionnaires in examining perceptions towards the United States of America (US). The findings of this research suggest that the perceptions towards the US among those surveyed were largely negative, and anchored in the country's international political actions and policy, as well as in the US President, George W. Bush.

There are also studies on the effects of nation brand on cognitive brand image to determine which of the six components to measure a national brand: Exports,

Culture and Heritage, Governance, Investment and Immigration, Tourism, and People (Anholt, 2003) influences the cognitive brand image. A study by Loureiro, Veríssimo, & Cayolla (2013) using the causal path analysis with the Portuguese respondents revealed that Investment and Immigration, Tourism, and People contribute significantly to a favourable cognitive image. For the Canadian samples, Tourism and People have a significant impact on cognitive image.

It is evident that the creation of a nation brand, both public and private sectors must work together (Anholt, 2007) to create a nation brand from Exports, Culture and Heritage, Governance, Investment and Immigration, Tourism, and People. The nation brand image is the first step to take, leading then to brand equity and value of the nation brand and finally foreign currency and prosperity to the nation (Farooqi, 2009; Fetscherin, 2010; Kotler, Jatusripitak & Maesincee, 1997; and Ulla Hakala & Lemmetyinen, 2011). On the other hand, failures in creating a positive and favourable image of the nation brand will negatively affect the value of a nation brand (Aaker, 2004).

With regards to factors affecting nation brand image, the three variables affecting nation brand image, are brand associations, brand attitude and country of origin image, which are elaborated upon, and discussed in this section.

According to the CBBE model, *brand image* is the key element for building brand equity and the image in consumers' minds, depending mostly on some associations between the consumers and the product (Aaker, 1991; Keller, 1993). This relationship must therefore concentrate on brand associations.

Keller (1993) presents a conceptual model of brand attributes, brand benefits and brand attitudes, which constitute brand associations. The first type is attributes of the products. These can be product-related attributes, such as the product's performance and/or its functions, and non-product related attributes, such as price, packaging, brand personality and a consumer's own experiences with the brand. The second type of brand associations are benefits, which refer to what consumers believe the product or service can do for them. The last type of associations are brand attitudes, referring to consumers' overall evaluation of a brand. These brand associations provide meaning of the brand for consumers. Their favourability, strength and uniqueness determine a consumer's response to a brand, which in turn, determines a brand's equity (Keller, 1993, in Bibby, 2006).

Thus to build a successful brand image for a product, it is important that brand associations be planned for very carefully.

A set of associations or brand associations is described as "anything mentally linked to the brand". Different types of brand associations (e.g., attributes, benefits and mini-attitudes) on the formation of a brand's image affect the resulting image differently, and have impacts on indicators of brand equity (Faircloth, 1996). This idea is supported by Andersson & Robertson (2008), who described that the image will be based on the associations the consumer has of the brand, and these associations can be developed from many different sources of information, such as pricing and advertisements. However, brand associations can also come from the consumers' own experiences (Andersson & Robertson, 2008).

It is found by Faircloth (1996) that brand image is constituted from brand associations (that consist of brand attitude, brand benefits and brand attributes), and that brand attitude affects brand equity only through brand image. In addition, brand benefits are found to be significantly more influential than brand attributes in the creation of brand image.

Figure 2.1 depicts the formation of a brand's image from brand associations

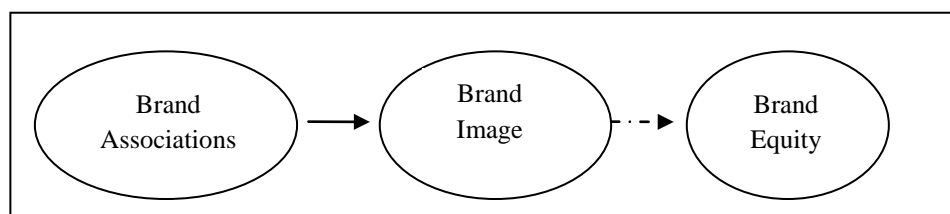


Figure 2.1

Formation of a brand's image and the effects the resulting image has on indicators of brand equity

Therefore, as has been argued in the previous section, it is believed that brand image is developed from brand associations (Aaker, 1991; Keller, 1993; Faircloth, 1996; Andersson & Robertson, 2008).

As to the preferences of consumers, Keller & Lehmann (2003) recognised the existence of the relationship between brand associations and brand attitude in consumers' minds. The model namely brand value chain reveals that brand associations affect brand attitude.

The model of brand value chain (Keller & Lehmann, 2003) infers that marketing programme investment affects the consumer mindset. The elements of consumer mindset comprise brand awareness, brand associations, brand attitude, brand

attachment and brand activity. The authors present the brand value chain that provides not only the details of designing and implementing a brand equity measurement system, but also the detailed road map for tracking value creation. The authors also describe that the customers' mindset is everything that exists inclusively in their minds with regards to the brand, for example, feelings, experiences, images, perceptions, beliefs and attitudes. *Brand awareness* is the extent to which customers recall and recognise the brand, and can identify the products and services associated with it. *Brand associations* are the strength, favourability, and uniqueness of perceived attributes and benefits of the brand. Brand associations often represent the means by which consumers feel brands satisfy their needs. The satisfaction of a brand that serves customers' needs is the key source of brand value. *Brand attitude* is the overall evaluation of the brand in terms of the quality and satisfaction it generates. It depends on various contextual market factors external to the customer. *Brand attachment* is how loyal the customer feels towards the brand. *Brand activity* is the extent to which customers use the brand, talk to others about it and seek out brand information, promotions and events. A good example of brand activity is the development of clubs (e.g., Harley-Davidson) and online brand communities (e.g., Saab).

Among these five key dimensions, there is an obvious hierarchy in the dimensions of value: *Awareness supports associations, which drive attitudes and lead to attachment and activity.*

Thus in consumer mindset, brand awareness affects brand associations and results in brand attitude. Figure 2.2 shows this relationship in consumers' minds.

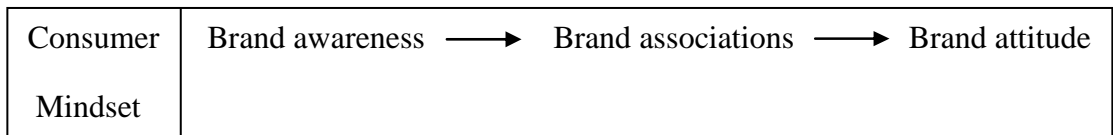


Figure 2.2

The sequence of processes from consumer mindset to the development of brand attitude

The factors affecting the consumers' mindset is presented in Figure 2.3, which demonstrates the relationship of marketing programmes, and the progress of consumers' attitudes towards a brand (Keller & Lehmann, 2003)

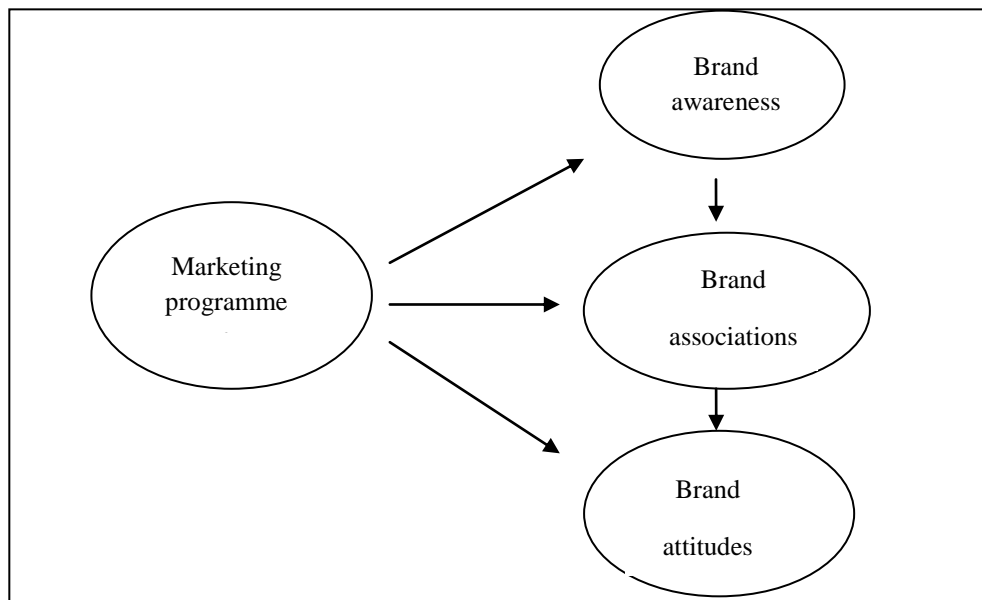


Figure 2.3

The relationship between marketing programmes and the hierarchy about formulating the brand in consumer mindset

This value model (Keller & Lehmann, 2003) suggests that marketing programme investment is the key factor that affects customers' mindset. Faircloth (1996, referred to in Aaker, 1991; Keller, 1993) maintained that the brand image influences brand equity through its components of brand associations and brand attitude.

Figure 2.4 demonstrates the relationship of brand associations and brand attitude in consumers' minds that affects brand image.

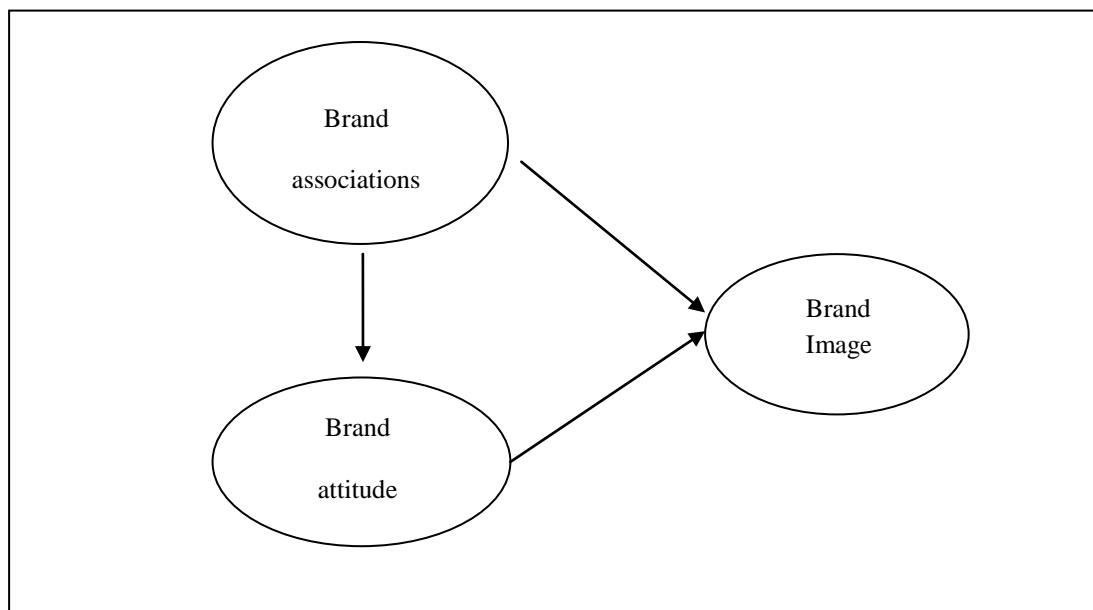


Figure 2.4
The Relationships of brand associations, brand attitude and brand image

With regards to the construction of brand image, the image of the country of origin is included in this study as another important variable influencing a nation brand image.

The term, country of origin image, is defined as the image that consumers associate with the country that produces the products. From the review of relevant literature, it is confirmed that country of origin image is another important variable influencing consumer perceptions of brand images (Ahmed et al., 2002; Hulland, 1999; and Ravi, Pascale & Cooksey, 2006). Thus, the factors contributing to a nation brand image are demonstrated in Figure 2.5.

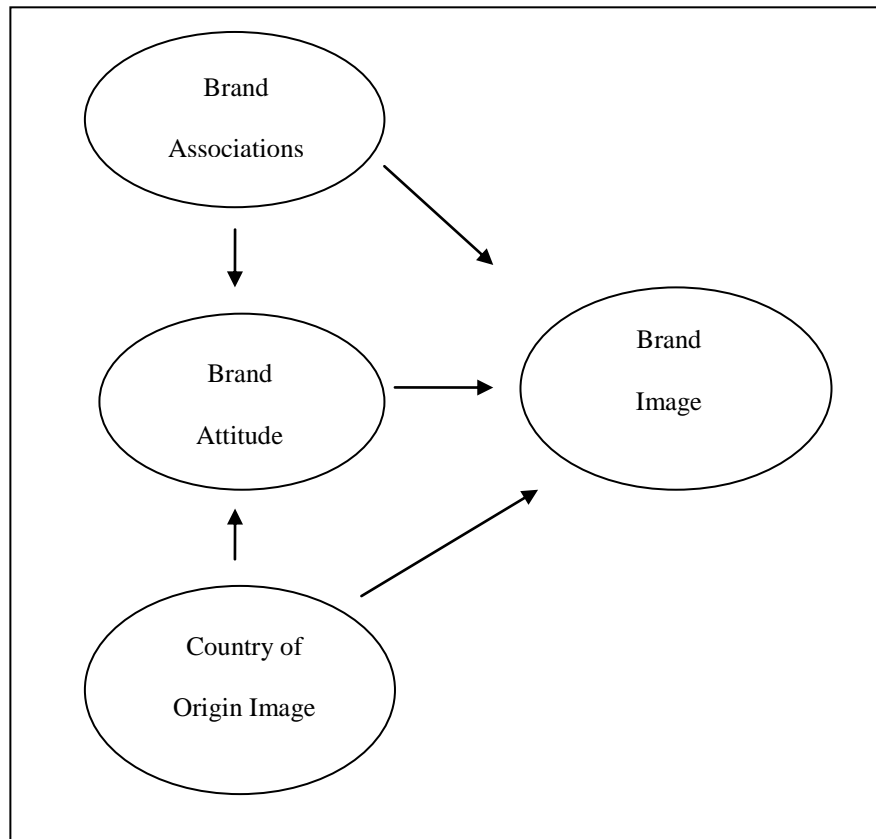


Figure 2.5
Factors contributing to the brand image of Thailand's OTOP

This study focuses on country of origin image as one of the variables affecting the brand image of OTOP (Nagashima, 1970; Hulland, 1999; Ahmed et al., 2002; Ravi, Pascale & Cooksey, 2006). Each country may benefit from certain favourable or unfavourable associations with respect to its nature, culture, national identity, etc. (Đorđević, 2008). OTOP is symbolic of a cultural product (Ministry of Commerce, Thailand). Aaker (2004) suggested that country of origin image is at risk of being dependent on political and cultural forces that affect the image and personality of a country, and it may turn the association into a liability of a product brand image. Therefore, this is why this variable of country of origin image is separated from brand associations. This research aims to encourage a

cultural product (OTOP) to become important as a nation brand in order to boost the economy of the country and recommends that the government should promote it to be internationally recognised for its uniqueness. In fact, there is a lack of studies on nation brand image, and this research fulfills the need to help in further development.

2.3 Nation brand

There are several researches which encompass the study of building nation brand, such as place brand and country brand. Some may be confused about the difference between these words. It is to be noted that the essential difference between place brand, nation brand, and country brand, is that place refer to locality; country refers to the land; and nation refers to the people and the connection with each other through their shared culture, ideology and ethnicity (Outhavong, 2007). Table 2.1 is a collection of the work of several authors who define these words:

Table2.1

The definition of place brand, nation brand and country brand

Legend/ Authors	Definition
Place brand	
Dinnie (2003)	Place brand encompasses many disciplines attracting attention in the marketing and branding literature. For example, the fields of sociology, history, national identity, and politics may be regarded as having a potentially important contribution to make to the practice of place branding. Practitioners and academics involved in place branding should therefore be prepared to scan horizons far wider than those associated purely with conventional brand management and brand strategy. The three landmark texts that have made a major contribution to place branding literature are: 1) Destination Branding; 2) Nation Branding; and 3) Global Branding, of both the exports and the countries in order to compete more effectively in the global economy, and to escape from the impoverished status of being a mere supplier nation to richer, more developed countries.
Zenker (2011)	Place brand is the visual, verbal and behavioural expressions of a place, which are embodied in the aims, communication, values and general culture of the place's stakeholders and the overall place design.

Table 2.1 (continued)

The definition of place brand, nation brand and country brand

Legend/ Authors	Definition
Nation brand	
Anholt (2005)	The nation brand is the sum of people's perceptions of a country across the six areas of national competence (Tourism, Exports, People, Governance, Culture and Heritage and Investment and Immigration).
Ulla Hakala & Lemmetyinen (2011)	<p>A nation brand is a unique, multi-dimensional blend of elements that constitute culturally grounded differentiation (Dinnie, 2009). Additionally, the incorporation of location, landscape and social relations, as well as the notion of dynamic relationships connecting people to physical space, make places relational and contextual (Campelo et al., 2010). The main objectives of nation branding are to attract tourism and other businesses, stimulate investments, and create positive perceptions and attitudes in the target markets (Fetscherin, 2010).</p> <p>-The differentiation between branding a country, a region and a city is derived from the analyses of people's evaluation of countries and of regions and cities in particular countries. It concludes that nations should focus on the emotional and representational dimensions of their brands, whereas regions and cities, being smaller in size, should concentrate on the more functional facets (Caldwell and Freire, 2004).</p>
Farooqi (2009)	Nation brand refers to the symbol of the reputation of countries. "Nation branding is a field of theory and practice which aims to measure, build and manage the reputation of countries. It is also called place branding. Some approaches applied, such as an increasing importance on the symbolic value of products, have led countries to emphasise their distinctive characteristics".

Table 2.1 (continued)

The definition of place brand, nation brand and country brand

Legend/ Authors	Definition
Country brand	
Delorie (2004)	A country brand is a national identity that has been proactively distilled, interpreted, internalised among the citizens and projected for international recognition, to construct a favourable national image and enhance a nation's competitiveness.
Fetscherin, (2010)	A country brand belongs to the public domain; it is complex and includes multiple levels, components and disciplines. It entails the collective involvement of the many stakeholders it must appeal to. It concerns a country's whole image, covering political, economic, social, environmental, historical and cultural aspects.
Mathia, Anthony, Kwabena, & Austin (2011)	Country brand is defined as country's values, behaviours and vision. To promote a country brand gives meaning to the brand values and vision and several advantages may be spawned to benefit the country, such as citizenship brand equity, international consumer equity and economic and financial equity.

Thus, place brand looks into a wide range, encompassing destination brand, nation brand and global brand (Dinnie, 2003). It is the visual, verbal and behavioural expression of a place. It communicates the values and culture of the place's stakeholders and the overall place design (Zenker, 2011). Place branding is the specific marketing-instrument that gives added value to a specific product, service or organisation (Martin, Kees & Gorp, 2011).

Nation brand is people's perception of the six areas of national competence (Anholt, 2005). Tourism, Exports, People, Governance, Culture and heritage, and Investment and Immigration, are each capable of being a nation's brand.

Country brand is a national identity and concerns a country's whole image, covering political, economic, social, environmental, historical and cultural aspects. Country brand is a socially-constructed phenomenon that follows a behavioural approach to a country's brand management. The rationale is to enable the engagement of the people of the country in the development of a shared vision, aspirations and national identity, and to mobilise them to behave in ways that promote the desired identity and facilitate the realisation of the vision. Country competitive identity (brand vision, values, behaviour, positioning, country symbols/properties) is espoused through country consensus (Mathia, Anthony, Kwabena & Austin, 2011).

Hence, place brand, nation brand and country brand are surrounded by the dimensions of that place brand, and can have differences among each other. The nation brand involves the people's perceptions (both domestic and foreign

consumers) of a country with regards to the six areas of national competence (tourism, exports, people, governance, culture and heritage and investment and immigration), while country brand relates to the citizens and is projected for international recognition to construct a favourable national image that belongs to the public domain. All of them enhance the competitiveness of the country or nation to surge forward into the global arena.

The main focus of the research on these aspects:

- 1) Place brand: a lot of researches have been performed on brand equity and destination image (Jacobsen, 2009; Mak, 2011).
- 2) Nation brand: some researchers have examined nation brand image measurement, such as Anholt (2005b), and some worked on brand image from the concept of place branding in the case of a nation, such as Ulla Hakala & Lemmetyinen (2011).
- 3) Country brand: certain studies, such as on country equity, country branding (Papadopoulos, 2002) and country brand measurement (Fetscherin, 2010), are some examples.

Most research studies on place brand focus on place brand equity. Some put some highlights on tourism, while many are interested in Investor-based place brand equity (Jacobsen, 2009). There is also research on the identity of the destination under the study (Mak, 2011). Additionally, there are some studies on nation brand that measure power and appeals of the country (Anholt, 2005). Also some studies on the nation brand focus on the concept of place branding (eg. Ulla Hakala & Lemmetyinen Jan, 2011). Studies on the country brand focus on country

equity, country branding (eg. Papadopoulos, 2002) and country brand index (Fetscherin, 2010).

In general, studies on place brand, nation brand, and country brand are similar in terms of purposes of the study: to find ways to create value and establish the country image. Most of them focus on brand equity, brand identity, power and appeal, branding, and brand index.

Details of these researches and their findings are tabulated as follows:

Table 2.2

The past Studies of place brand, nation brand, and country brand.

Legend/ Authors	Aspect of study	Methodology	Findings or disclosure
Place brand			
Jacobsen (2009)	To analyse place brand equity from the foreign direct investor's point of view.	This research is based on literature review.	IPE (Investor-based place brand equity) framework is a new attempt to measure place brand equity.
Mak (2011)	To adopt an identity-centred approach for evaluating Iowa's destination image among industry partners.	Documents analysis and an elite interview with a random stratified sampling. Telephone survey with 200 industry partners. Of the 114 valid responses, the gap between brand identity and brand image of Iowa as a travel destination and respondents' strength of identification with the Iowa Tourism Office, are measured.	Results show a consistency and some dynamic linkages among the three constructs of image building, brand associations and marketing activities.

Table 2.2 (continued)

The past Studies of place brand, nation brand, and country brand.

Legend/ Authors	Aspect of study	Methodology	Findings or disclosure
Nation brand			
Anholt (2005)	To measure the power and appeal of the US brand image by using the Anholt Nation Brands Index	Survey of 10,000 consumers in 10 countries on their perceptions of the US culture, political, commercial and human assets, investment potential and tourist appeal.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - US exports, investment, immigration, tourism, and people rank relatively high in the nation index, while global opinion of US governance and culture and heritage are very low - The Anholt Nation Brand Index (NBI) measures the power and appeal of nation brand image
Ulla Hakala & Lemmetyinen (2011)	To study the concept of place branding in case of a nation	Conducted survey among 178 Finnish university students, who were asked to build a programme for branding Finland. Separate students in small groups of two or three. In all, 75 reports were handed in, of which those (67) targeted at tourism were taken for analysis. The analysis was conducted in accordance with a model modified from Gnoth's (2002)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Nation image is a critical stimulus in motivating tourists to visit a destination. Nation brand is at the crossroads of three levels of identity and a fragmented set of images. The idea is to exploit the right fragments in line with the destination and the target groups. - The theory's contribution is the discussion on the role of branding in the marketing of places, herein called nations. For practitioners, it highlights the importance of managing the brand "bottom up"; in other words, starting from the people.

Table 2.2 (continued)

The past Studies of place brand, nation brand, and country brand.

Legend/ Authors	Aspect of study	Methodology	Findings or disclosure
Country brand			
Papadopoulos (2002)	To discuss the multi-faceted nature of country equity and its country branding.	Surveys and reviews the voluminous research on product-country images and their effects.	Suggests the approaches to strategies for country branding development.
Fetscherin, (2010)	To determine and measure a country brand: the country brand strength index (CBSI)	Uses the objective secondary data to measure country brand with the company-based brand equity approach in terms of exports, as well as immigration.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Countries that are perceived positively (based on NBI) have a stronger country brand (CBSI) and countries perceived negatively (based on the NBI) have a weak country brand. (The NBI measures the perception of people about a country while the newly developed CBSI measures how the country performs in terms of exports, tourism, investment, and immigration.) - Future research should also explore the effect of culture and cultural distance on the country brand and the legitimacy of country or nation brand management.

With regards to the nation brand, the six dimensions of a nation's brand according to Anholt (2003) are described by Đorđević (2008) as follows:

- 1) Tourism dimension is the main marketing tool at the national level. It is a major economic driving force for employment, international visitor expenditures, investments and regional development.
- 2) Export brands dimension is representative of self-esteem of a country, which in turn boosts self-confidence and further success. As an example of Nokia's performance, it labels Finland as a country of high-tech mobile phone technology.
- 3) Investment dimension is aimed at attracting foreign direct investments. There are multitudes of advantages in that the investments bring positive competition, increase quality standards, enrich flow of skills, knowledge and information between countries, increase employment, technological advances and innovations, and so on.
- 4) The coordination of foreign and domestic policies will invigorate the national brand.
- 5) The branding of a country must start from within because a country brand is most frequently promoted by its people, such as through employee morale, team spirit, motivation, sense of belonging and national pride.
- 6) Culture and heritage dimensions penetrate all areas of life, including all scientific endeavours. It is uniquely linked to the country itself. It links the country's past with its present. It shows the spiritual and intellectual qualities of a country's people and institutions. Culture can enhance the country's net asset value with the desired added value.

Culture and heritage, in relation to nation brand, refers to popular, more commercial cultural products and activities, or a culture-related purchase, that originates in that country (Anholt, 2005). Therefore, OTOP studied in this research is a cultural product (Ministry of Commerce, Thailand), and this research defines it as one of the nation's brands which should be significantly promoted internationally.

The Anholt Nation Brand Index adds up to a clear index of national brand power and a unique barometer of global opinion. The Index measures the power and appeal of nation brand image, and tells people how consumers around the world see the character and personality of a brand. Recent studies expound the importance of nation brand on international product marketing and export (Gnoth, 2002; Kotler and Gertner, 2002; Pappu et al., 2007, cited in Richard, Jane, Tito & Murphy, 2010). Rarely research has studied a cultural product as a nation's brand. This research attempts to present OTOP as a cultural product that plays a critical role in the economic, social and political progress of the country and represents nation brand of Thailand.

This research suggests that to present OTOP as a nation brand of Thailand, it will be appropriate to promote OTOP product internationally as well. It is a chance to magnify OTOP in terms of the people, culture and folk wisdom in each Tambon (district) of Thailand. Anholt (2009) opined the concept of nation branding or competitive identity "is just what many developing countries need: a chance to 'change the subject' by focusing on their position in the world, rather than the country's own meaning for itself and a chance to build a new vision for a shared

future; to define the country's goals not in terms of a culturally alien economic model, but according to the values and beliefs of the population itself". In relation to "the Six Dimensions of Nation Brand", OTOP is not only a product of Thailand, but also represents the country's culture and heritage.

2.4 Brand Attitude

Consumers have a variety of different needs and wants that drive their consumption behavioural patterns. Isolating and understanding the needs and wants that relate to likes or dislikes of brands and products are of utmost importance to marketers. At times, consumers base their choices on brand evaluations; if consumers like a brand, they are more likely to purchase it (Parker, 2005). Brand attitude is a key aspect of brand equity (Peter & Olson, 2008). It is consumers' overall evaluation of a brand (Rossiter & 1987). Brand attitudes are summary evaluations that reflect preferences for various products or services. To understand why people hold certain attitudes, it is necessary to access their specific beliefs (O'Guinn, Allen & Semenik, 2009). Some beliefs are more important than others in determining a person's final evaluation of a brand (O'Guinn, Allen & Semenik, 2009). Only the salient beliefs about an object (those that are activated at a particular time and in a specific context) create a person's attitude towards the object (Peter & Olson, 2008).

Beliefs represent the knowledge and feelings a person has accumulated about an object or issue. If marketers know a person's beliefs, it is usually possible to infer attitude (O'Guinn, Allen & Semenik, 2009). A belief is a conclusion based on

information and/or experience with a brand. Both attitudes and beliefs are based on what prospects customers see, hear, experience and learn about brands (Duncan, 2002). The consumers' attitudes toward objects, including a product or brand, during the integration process, combine some of their knowledge, meanings and beliefs about the product or brand to form an overall evaluation. These beliefs may be formed by interpretation process or activated from memory. These beliefs constitute an associative network of linked meaning stored in memory, because people's cognitive capacity is limited and consciously considered at once. The activated beliefs are called salient beliefs. People have many beliefs about various features and attributes of products and brands. Some beliefs are more important than others in determining a person's final evaluation of a brand. These beliefs are the critical determinants of an attitude, and are referred to as salient beliefs (O' Guinn, Allen & Semenik, 2009).

Thus, one key to understanding consumers' attitudes is to identify and understand the underlying set of salient beliefs. In principle, consumers can have salient beliefs about any type and level of meaning associated with a product. Salient beliefs could include tactile, olfactory and visual image, as well as cognitive representations of the emotions and moods associated with using the product. If activated, any of these beliefs could influence a consumer's attitude towards a product. Variations in the set of salient beliefs over time and situations can produce changes in consumer' attitudes to the situation, context, time, mood, and so forth. Consumers have more stable attitudes towards objects that have a stable set of salient beliefs.

The focus on consumers' beliefs about multiple products or brand attributes is a useful tool for investigating attitude formation and prediction. Attitude tracking studies are used to measure consumers' attitudes to indicate the success of brand strategies. For instance, many companies regularly conduct large-scale attitude surveys to monitor consumers' brand attitude over time. When these studies identify changes in consumer attitudes, marketers can adjust their marketing strategies (Peter & Olson, 2008). Multi-attribute Attitude Models are important tools for investigating attitude formation and prediction. Of these, Martin Fishbein's model has been most influential in marketing. Multi-attribute Attitude Models account for the integration process by which product knowledge (evaluations and strengths of salient beliefs) is combined to form an overall evaluation or attitude (Peter & Olson, 2008). The two major elements of Fishbein's Multi-attribute Attitude Model, are the strength and evaluations of the salient beliefs. The strength of beliefs is the perceived probability of association between an object and its relevant attributes. Belief strength is measured by having consumers rate this probability association for each of their salient beliefs as 'extremely dislike' versus 'extremely like' the object. The strength of consumers' product or brand beliefs is affected by their past experiences with the object. Beliefs about product attributes or consequences tend to be stronger when based on actual use of the product. Beliefs that are formed indirectly from mass advertising or conversations with a salesperson, tend to be less influential (Peter & Olson, 2008). Belief evaluation, associated with each salient belief, reflects how favourably the consumer perceives that attribute. Marketers measure the object's component by having consumers indicate their evaluation of favourability towards each salient belief, as 'very bad' versus 'very good'.

Thus, firm beliefs about positive attributes have greater effect on that product or brand than weak beliefs about equally positive attributes. Likewise, a negative view of the object evaluated reduces the favourability of the product or brand in proportion to its belief “weight” (Peter & Olson, 2008).

The tripartite model of attitude combines three response types (thoughts, feelings and actions). In this approach, attitude consists of three related components. The simple and most useful concept of an attitude is proposed by Thurstone and Fishbein (Peter & Olson, 2008). This represents a person’s favourable and unfavourable feelings towards the object in question. This model is called Hierarchy-of-Effects Model.

The Hierarchy-of-Effects Model assumes a sequence of outcomes reflective of three mental stages (Costiuc, 2009 and Vakratsas & Ambler, 1999): 1) cognitive (reflective of awareness and knowledge and knowledge about the object: thoughts), 2) affective (reflective of liking and preference, positive or negative evaluations of the object: feeling); and 3) conative (which includes purchase intent or actual behaviour, intention or actual behaviour towards the object: actions). This sequence assumes that the first stage leads to the second, which then leads to the third, although variations in order do exist among the models (Costiuc, 2009).

Brand attitudes research includes studies on attitudes toward the brand (eg, Christian & Leheut, 2008; Yun & Heitmeyer, 2006), attitudes toward the organization (Jeesun & Chan-Olmsted, 2005), and attitudes of certain consumer groups, such as young adolescents (Christian & Leheut, 2008). There are also

studies on attitudes towards consumer behavior, including behavioral intention, customer loyalty and satisfaction (Fishbein and Ajzen, 1975; Johnson, Gustafsson, Andreassen, Lervik & Cha, 2001; Juhl, Kristensen & Ostergaard, 2002; Kristensen, Gronholdt & Martensen, 2000; Spencer, 1862). In conclusion, brand attitudes are essential psychological factors in building brand loyalty among consumers and responsible for consumer purchasing decision making.

Research on attitudes toward the brand involved in this study utilised Yun & Heitmeyer (2006) which used the Fishbein Attitude Model to study consumer attitude towards product attributes. Jeusun & Chan-Olmsted (2005) which studied brand attitude on the dimension of organisation–public relationships. These two researches on brand attitude revealed two dimensions - product attributes and organisation–public relationships.

Yun & Heitmeyer (2006) investigated whether consumer attitudes towards domestic versus US made apparel differed among consumers in Taiwan. Apparel attributes (product attributes) in this study included price, suitability, ease of care, care instructions label, colour, apparel fibre content, quality, fashionableness, comfort, attractiveness, brand name and appropriateness for occasion. The instrument used was from Shim *et al.*'s study. Some minor changes were made to improve face validity for Taiwanese consumers. Results revealed that consumer attitudes toward Taiwan versus US-made apparel differed significantly among consumers in Taiwan. Consumers in general had more positive attitude towards US-made apparel compared with Taiwan-made apparel with regards to care instructions label, colour, quality, apparel fibre content, fashionableness,

attractiveness, brand name, and comfort apparel attributes. This research is intended to understanding Taiwanese consumers' attitudes towards foreigners-made apparel.

Jeesun & Chan-Olmsted (2005) investigated how the dimension of organisation–public relationships, i.e., trust, control mutuality, commitment and satisfaction, are related to brand attitude formation. This research also compared the effects of organisation–public relationships on brand attitude to those of product-related attribute beliefs, in order to establish a benchmark for analysis. The result in predicting brand attitudes revealed that the explanatory power of organisation–public relationship is less effective than the product-related attribute beliefs. To measure attitude, it used the most widely accepted approach - the Fishbein Model. This attitude modeling is a multi-attribute conceptualisation in which attitudes are a function of the associated attributes and benefits that are salient for the attitude object itself.

Christian & Leheut (2008) constructed tools to measure brand attitude using psychological terms in socio-psychological and analytical models of consumer behaviour. This study worked on adolescent consumers, using Spencer (1862) for the term “attitude”, which is an essential variable both in socio-psychological and analytical models of consumer behaviour. Development of the measurement tools concerning attitude towards the brand was made through an analysis of data collected from 1,397 adolescents. Surveys were conducted based on seven data collections for attitude toward the brand. Attitude toward the brand was expressed by evaluating a particular entity with a certain degree of ‘favour’ or ‘disfavour’,

generally expressed in cognitive, affective and behavioural responses. This study is in relation to the Hierarchy-of-Effects Model (thoughts, feelings and actions). The constructs comprise three elements: object, attribute and raters. Object was represented by the brand, attribute by the attitude and raters by the targets (adolescents). Ten stages of the construction were performed to produce the tool. The construction stages were as follows: specifying the domain of the construct, creating an items sample, first data collection, refining the measure, 2nd, 3rd, 4th, 5th, and 6th data collections, trait reliability and validity and also predictive validity. The data were analysed to establish a valid and reliable measurement scale. For this tool, the solution is a 3-factor scale to evaluate 10 items. The first dimension refers to the affective aspect of attitude (“I like it very much”, “it’s cool”, etc.). The second is related to its utilitarian dimension (“it’s practical”, “it’s efficient”, etc.). Finally, the third dimension represents the social aspect of attitude and is expressed through terms, such as “it helps you become part of a group” and “it enables you to get more respect”. These three dimensions are aspects/causes of attitude towards the brand. The result was analysed to produce a valid and reliability measurement scale of brand attitude of adolescents as consumers.

The present research utilises the approach described by Christian & Leheut (2008), as this tool is the instrument related to the Hierarchy-of-Effects Model (thoughts, feelings and actions). The information examined using this tool reveal three dimensions of, functional, affective, and social dimensions. Moreover, this instrument can work on both functional and symbolic dimensions. And also the adolescent has an understanding of the symbolism of the consumption of products and brands (Holbrook and Schindler, 1994; Elliott and Wattanasuwan, 1998).

In the present study, functional dimensions of brand attitude were measured based on brand attitude indicators of Christian & Leheut (2008). They were used to measure usefulness, necessity, practicality and efficiency of the products under the OTOP brand, representing the nation brand. An example of a research study done to measure functional dimensions of brand attitude was done by Ishida & Taylor (2012). It is designed to measure brand attitudes in the fully utilizes hedonic / utilitarian attitude. The study examines the relationship between brand attitudes and satisfaction judgments and loyalty behaviors. Indicators to measure utilitarian attitudes in this study are effectiveness, helpfulness, functionality, necessity and practicality of products. These measuring indicators were adapted from those of Voss et al. (2003) in his study "Measuring the hedonic and utilitarian dimensions of consumer attitude".

Affective dimensions of brand attitude in this present research include the measure of feelings towards the brand: preferences (like), the impression (appreciate), and coolness (cool). The social achieved dimensions of brand attitude in this present study consists of indicators measuring conformity, being noticeable, and respectability. These indicators were taken from brand attitude indicators of Christian & Leheut (2008). A study done to measure affective dimensions of brand attitude is that of Shukla, Banerjee & Adidam (2013). It is designed to measure the customers' feels toward the product, such as I feel good about it, I love it, I can get a good deal on it.

Another study was done by Yang & Mattila (2014) to evaluate social achieved dimensions to assess customer attitudes on luxury brands. There are indicators measuring consumers' need for uniqueness. The consumers may feel that the brand is common, can be bought anywhere and widely used by public people. The brand is less attractive, if it is considered as a generic type for these types of consumers. The consumers' need for status includes the feeling that the brand conveys the status of the user. Consumers are willing to pay for a status. The product is more valuable if there is some snob appeal: there is more interest in buying the brand name product. Consumers are more confident in making purchases when they are more knowledgeable about the brand.

The affective dimensions and social achieved dimensions are more symbolic dimensions of brand attitude of the product (Christian & Leheut, 2008), as opposed to the functional dimensions. Assessing brand attitude is therefore an evaluation of both functional and symbolic or emotion of the customers toward the brand. A study by Bhat & Reddy (1998) was conducted to measure both functional and symbolic attitudes of a brand. The indicator to measure functional attitude is practicality, and those to measure symbolic attitude include brand characteristics, such as the feel of sophisticated, romantic, successful, unique, stylish, expressive, glamorous, elegant conveyed by the product.

Additionally, there are research studies done to measure the overall attitude toward the brand to estimate the overall strength of the brand: if the consumers' attitude towards the brand is negative or positive and at what degree when a single question is asked. For example, Alden, Kelley, Riefler, Lee, & Soutar, (2013)

examines the consumer brand attitude in national markets, ranging from emerging to developed market on a global company animosity (GCA) and perceived value of global brands (PVG). The research examines the country-level animosity effects on foreign products. The brand attitude is measured by the only seven-point scale question (1 = "I have a negative opinion of [brand]," and 7 = "I have a positive opinion of [brand] ") to assess global brand attitude (GBA). Another study by Hartmann, Iba'n~ez & Sainz (2005), examines the relationship of perceived brand positioning and brand attitude. The attitude is measured by the five-point scale from 1 "very unfavourable" to 5 "very favourable".

In conclusion, the brand attitude can be measured in two ways. The first method is the measurement of the Hierarchy-of-Effects Model, in which thoughts, feelings and actions are measured (Peter & Olson, 2008), and the Belief Evaluation (Peter & Olson, 2008) which assesses of the consumer functional and emotional feels toward the brand, such as research by Christian & Leheut (2008); Hartmann, Iba'n~ez & Sainz (2005); and Ishida & Taylor (2012). The second method is an assessment of the strength of beliefs which measures the overall attitude toward the brand (Peter & Olson, 2008). Some examples of the studies using this method are those done by Alden, Kelley, Riefler, Lee, & Soutar, (2013) and Hartmann, Iba'n~ez & Sainz (2005).

2.5 Brand associations

Brand associations are anything that is cognitively linked to the brand (Peter, Debra, Michael & Tuck, 1994). They are the associations that businesses have

with the brand; all the situations, emotions, memories, images, colours, smells, and so on (Ford, 2005). Brand association represents what the brand stands for, and it implies a promise to customers from the organisation's members (Aaker, 1996a).

Types of brand associations are categorised in accordance with several proponents in the area. Keller (1993), in his CBBE Model, classified brand associations into three major categories: 1) attributes; 2) benefits; and 3) attitude. According to Keller (1993), attributes can be either non-product-related or product-related. The non-product related attributes are price, user and usage imagery, brand personality and feelings and experiences. He describes benefits as functional, experimental and symbolic.

Aaker (1996b) generated basic measures that work across product classes. These measurements of association can be constructed around three perspectives on the brand: brand-as-product (value); brand-as-person (brand personality); and brand-as-organisation (organisational association).

Debra & O'Cass (2002) revealed a number of brand dimensions in terms of branded products. These can be mentioned as intrinsic and extrinsic attributes listed as the following: 1) core product such as reliability, design, quality, features and colour; 2) packaging; 3) price; (in terms of value for money); 4) brand name; 5) image or personality; 6) feelings; 7) country of origin; 8) word-of-mouth; 9) expert opinion; 10) after sales service; and 11) past experience with the brand.

BeleÂn del RÃo, Rodolfo & Iglesias, (2001) examined the associations in connection with their functions. The functional associations refer to the concept that the associations related to the functions represent a greater degree of abstraction than those referring to the attributes, and so are more accessible and remain longer in the consumer's memory (Chattopadhyay & Alba, 1988). BeleÂn del RÃo, Rodolfo & Iglesias (2001) further described a specific feature of the functional associations that they have a positive nature, i.e., the greater the brand value is, the higher is the level of abstraction. They examined the associations between product function and brand function. Product functions are associations related to the physical or tangible attributes, and so are present in all products, even in those sold without a brand or with an unknown brand. Brand functions, on the other hand, are associations related to intangible attributes or images added to the product with its brand name, i.e., they represent benefits that can only be obtained from products with a brand. The researchers measured brand functions through the dimensions of guarantee, personal and social identifications and status.

Chen (2001) summarised types of brand associations into two types: product associations and organisational associations. Product associations can be divided into functional attribute associations (e.g., product attribute, perceived quality and functional benefits) and non-functional attribute associations (symbolic association, emotional association, price/value and user/usage situation). Organisational associations can be grouped into corporate ability associations and corporate social responsibility associations.

Anisimova (2007) established two levels of corporate brand attributes: corporate and marketing-levels. Corporate-level dimensions include corporate activities, corporate associations, organisational values and corporate personality. Marketing-level dimensions comprise functional, emotional and symbolic brand benefits. The results of the study reveal that corporate values, corporate brand personality and functional consumer benefits are the most reliable and consistent predictors of both attitudinal and behavioural loyalty.

Table 2.3 summarises the literature mentioned above about the types of brand association components. Three categories are classified: Brand-as-Product, Brand-as-Person and Brand-as-Organisation.

Table 2. 3
Three Categories of Brand association components

Literature Reference	Brand-as-Product	Brand-as-Person	Brand-as-organisation
Keller (1993)	Product-related attribute	Non-product-related attribute	
Aaker (1996)	Brand value	Brand personality	Organisational associations
BeleÂn del RÃo, Rodolfo & Iglesias (2001)	Product function	Brand function	
Chen (2001)	Functional attribute and functional benefits	Non-functional attribute associations	Organisational associations
Debra & O'Cass (2002)	Intrinsic attributes	Extrinsic attributes	
Anisimova (2007)	Marketing-level - Functional consumer benefits	Marketing-level - Emotional and symbolic brand benefits (brand personality)	Corporate-level dimensions - Corporate values

The determinants and indicators of brand-as-product can be presented as functional measures that comprise product attribute, perceived quality and functional benefits. The indicators that assess these variables are:

- Product attributes, such as design, packaging and price (Debra & O'Cass, 2002).
- Brand value, such as good value for money, reason to buy this brand over competitors' (Aaker, 1996).

The determinants and indicators of brand-as-person include the following:

- Image or Personality (Debra & O'Cass, 2002).
- Brand personality (Aaker, 1996).

The determinants and indicators of brand-as-organisation encompass the following:

- Corporate-level dimensions, which include corporate activities, corporate associations, organisational values and corporate personality (Anisimova, 2007).
- The organisation surrounded by people, values and programmes (Aaker, 1996).

From the above mentioned three types of brand associations, it can be deduced that brand associations can take a role as: 1) brand-as-product: as tangible attributes of the products or intrinsic attributes or brand value or functional consumer benefits; 2) brand-as-person: as non-product-related attributes or brand personality or brand function or non-functional attribute associations or extrinsic attributes or emotional and symbolic brand benefits (brand personality); and 3)

brand-as-organisation: as organisational associations or corporate-level dimensions - corporate values.

This present study employs measures and indicators of Aaker (1996b), to explore brand associations of OTOP.

Regarding brand associations in the aspect of brand-as-product, a qualitative study in brand associations was conducted by Debra & O'Cass (2002) focusing the aspect of brand-as-product. Data were collected using a one-hour personal interview with four female and two male informants, all at the age range of 25-71 years. Results show that the consumers are associated to brand in core product in the measures of reliability, design, quality, features and colour. The brand association measure in augment product is after sales service. O'Cass & Debra (2003) has found brand associations in brand-as-product for service goods in the measures of price and core service. In addition, Anisimova (2007) indicates that the construct of functional benefits of automobile business to brand attitude and brand loyalty of the customers are consistent quality, value of money, fuel efficiency, aesthetical appealing car features, individuality and practicality.

Brand associations in the aspect of brand-as-person in a qualitative study done by Debra & O'Cass (2002) reveal that customers are associated to brand in the measures of brand name, brand image or personality and feelings. O'Cass & Debra (2003) has found brand associations in brand-as-person for service goods in the measures of as personal image and brand name. Brand associations in brand-

as-person for automobile business found in a study by Anisimova (2007) are the measures of emotional benefits including driving pleasure, a feeling of serenity, youthful spirit, a feeling of adventure, and a sense of oneness with a car.

Measures of brand associations in the brand-as-organization, Anisimova (2007) studied the effect of corporate brand attribute on attitudinal of consumers of an automobile manufacturer in Australia used a seven-point Likert scale. Indicators are used that as a good corporate citizen, a successful manufacture, a company at the forefront technology, a manufacturer of outstanding product, a manufacturer with strong environment awareness, a manufacturer of stylish product, and a committed player in the Australian automobile market.

Associations can take many forms, and products can be positioned in many ways - by attributes, intangible benefits or lifestyle associations (Peter, Debra, Michael & Tuck, 1994). Parker (2005) described that brand attributes are either product-related, i.e., features needed for performing the product function, or non-product related, for example, brand personality and user imagery. Thus, product function represents tangible attributes as well as brand personality, while user imagery provides intangible benefits or lifestyle associations (emotional and symbolic brand benefits). Customers are more likely to use tangible attributes to decide whether competing products are different (physical differentiation) and intangible (emotional and symbolic), to decide how they are different. Intangibles are important in brand building for two reasons: they are hard for competitors to copy and they are more likely to attract consumers emotionally. Thus, brand-as-product

differentiates its brand from another and brand-as-person implicates brand emotion.

Marketers use brand associations to differentiate, position and extend brands, create positive attitudes and feelings towards brands and present attributes or benefits of purchasing or using a specific brand. Consumers use brand associations to help in processing, organising, and retrieving information in memory and to aid them in making purchase decisions (Aaker, 1991 in George & Jr., 2000).

Furthermore, consumers do not always rely on all the attributes available to them. They often find one attribute is more important than another. In other words, the consumer attaches more value to some attributes than to others. The attributes most important to the consumer are shown at the top of the hierarchy and the least important ones at the bottom. This attribute-ranking is called the “hierarchy of attributes”. The higher an attribute is placed in the hierarchical list, the greater the influence this attribute has on the evaluation of the branded article by the consumer. Attributes are descriptive features that represent a consumer’s perception of a product, and what the consumer ascribes to the brand. Consumers can use different attributes in order to form a picture of a branded article (Riezebos, 2003). A branded article should minimally require a product (goods or service) and a brand (name, picture or logo).

2.6 Country of Origin Image

The term, *country of origin image*, is defined as the image that consumers associate with the country that produces the products, such as its picture, reputation and stereotype that businessmen and consumers attach to products of a specific country. This image is created by variables, such as representative products, national characteristics, economic and political background, history and traditions (Nagashima, 1970).

Country of origin image constitutes a strong brand that provides interest, energy and differentiation to a target brand. The brand's association with a country or region implies higher quality because the country or region has a history of making the best within a product class. A country of origin brand can do more than creating credibility; it can also provide emotional and self-expressive benefits (Aaker, 2004). Country of origin is also a great cultural reservoir for brands; for example, Coca-Cola stands for America, as does IBM, Nike or Levi's. In other cases, Canon and Technics deny their Japanese origin, whereas Mitsubishi, Toyota and Nissan emphasise it. Country of origin is known to associate well in the minds of consumers (Aaker, 1991; Keller, 1993). For instance, consumers might associate countries like France and Spain with the intangible attributes of "reliability" and "durability", to different degrees (Ravi, Pascale & Cooksey, 2006). Evian exports actually represent a part of French culture. Culture is one of the brand identity prisms (Kapferer, 2004). Brand origin is recognised as having significant impact on brand image perception. The effect of country image on brand image is very powerful. It may overcome the power of well-known brands in shaping brand image in consumers' minds. Marketers should customise their

actions across brands and across countries of production (Koubaa, 2008). Yet, it is important that the higher the level of the image of a country, i.e., the more positive the perception of the country is in the minds of the consumers, the better the position of domestic companies and their products on the international market will be (Đorđević, 2008).

In this study, the image of country of origin (Thailand) is promoted as one of the variables that affects the brand image of Thailand's OTOP. Therefore, this variable is separated from brand associations. OTOP represents a nation brand of Thai community products. To consider it a nation brand, OTOP must be described by single or specific descriptors, such as certain product exports (country of origin) or the people and their cultures.

With regards to nation brand, it must also include economic profiles, governments, public policies and even national cuisines (Outhavong, 2007). Each country may benefit from certain favourable or unfavourable associations with respect to its nature, culture, national identity, etc. (Đorđević, 2008). There are risks, however, to rely heavily on these attributes of country of origin because political and cultural implications can affect the image and personality of a country, turning the associations into a liability (Aaker, 2004). A huge number of academic studies have shown that positive images of a country influence consumers' evaluations of products from that country (Bilkey and Nes, 1982; Ozsomer and Cavusgil, 1991; Papadopoulos and Heslop, 1993; and Peterson and Jolibert, 1995).

Following increased globalisation, numerous studies have been carried out on the so-called *country of origin effect*: The national image of the producing country has consequences upon the buyers' quality perceptions of the product. Yet, the

country of origin concept has shifted nowadays towards the country of brand concept due to increasingly frequent outsourcing initiatives, when components are produced and assembled all over the world, in countries with cheap labour. The brand is eventually the only part that maintains the national origins of the product (Ravi, Pascale & Cooksey, 2006, summarised from Hulland, 1999 and Jaffe & Nebenzahl, 2001).

Nation or country branding has been highlighted both in products of a country, as well as the country itself. In the 1990s, Kotler attempted to show the pathway leading to increased tourism, investments or exports for cities, regions or countries by approaching the topic of place branding and marketing in his book, *The Marketing of Nations*, 1997 (Đorđević, 2008). In 2002, Anholt compiled a special issue dedicated to the topic of nation branding. This initiative remains unique in the area of state branding. He is well known for the study of country branding, since he participated in the collective work, *Destination Branding*, first published in 2001 (Đorđević, 2008). More recently, he published the book, *Brand New Justice*, which can be regarded as a manual for developing countries striving to increase their national wealth by means of effective branding (de Vicente, 2004 in Đorđević, 2008). Many countries now need to reassess the way they identify themselves and communicate that identity to the world, in the light of their changing population. It is one of the biggest tasks facing governments today and is an acute challenge for the way in which countries and regions understand and manage their international reputation, and for internal purposes (Anholt, 2007).

In 1997, British industrialists, government agencies and advertising agencies focused their branding strategy on the realities that a state experienced in order to provide the country with a hip and trendy image (Olins, 1999 and Đorđević, 2008). For instance, some “state brands” have managed to market themselves powerfully, and among these campaigns, one can mention Scotland the Brand, Deutschland Europe, and The New Zealand Way (Jaffe & Nebenzahl, 2001, in Đorđević, 2008). A “country brand” is defined as a symbolic construct, which emphasises the positively memorable, attractive, unique, relevant and sustainable qualities of a nation (Allan, 2004, in Đorđević, 2008).

There are a number of studies on country of origin research. They can be categorised in four groups, according to their purposes.

- 1) The first group addresses “country of origin effect”, such as the effect of country of origin on product evaluation (Masood, Donald & Davis, 1995), the effect of country image on the formation of consumer product perceptions (Alain & Ahmed, 1999), country of origin effect on consumers' perception of brand personality (Mare & Toncar, 2009), and the incidental emotions and cognitive appraisals associated with country of origin effects (Durairaj & Chen, 2006). These studies focus on both the cognitive as well as emotional factors.
- 2) The second group addresses “brand image construction”, for example, brand equity and country of origin (Ravi, Pascale & Cooksey, 2006; Norjaya, Mohd & Mohamad, 2007); country of origin, brand image perception and brand image structure (Koubaa, 2008); and product-

country image and marketing efforts on retailer-perceived brand equity (Artur, Karen, Adamantios & Zeugner-Roth, 2009). Most of these studies focus on country of origin and product-country image that affect brand image perception and brand equity.

- 3) The studies in the third group address tourism as destination branding or place branding. For example, study of place branding and public diplomacy (Zerrillo & Thomas, 2007), and ‘Nation Branding’ in Asia (Anholt, 2008).
- 4) The studies in the fourth group address the country of origin as a “country brand”. For example, the study in the case of New Zealand Lamb brand (Roxanne & Babcock, 2004), the country brand and corporate brand (Đorđević, 2008).

The study in tourism, in particular, is increasingly being referred to as “destination branding”. Destination branding is fairly close to the kind of branding found in the commercial sphere, and makes use of many commercial techniques, such as corporate identity, public relations, advertising, graphic design, and so forth. This is so because in the end, one is still attempting to promote a product or service that is on sale to the audience one is targeting.

With regards to the country of origin (COO) image from documentation, research in this area is divided into three major groups: 1) the influence of COO image on the country product, product branding, tourism, investment; 2) the influence of COO image on consumer behavior, and 3) the factors that influence COO image.

The first group comprises the supplementary studies to the country of origin effect, which investigate the influence of COO image on the country product, product branding, tourism and investment. Such research has examined the COO image for links to tourism and the country product (Hakala, Lemmetyinen & Kantola, 2013). Others are those studying linkages between the COO image and product and brand (eg. Paswan & Sharma, 2004; Pereiraa, Hsub & Kundub, 2005 and Ravi, Pascale & Cooksey, 2007). There are some studies demonstrate linkages with foreign products (Han and Terpstra, 1988; Wall and Heslop, 1986).

The second group is the studies on influence of the COO image on consumer behavior. Kaynak & Kara (2002) studied the influence of product-country image on consumer behavior; Lin & Chen (2006) and Chen (2006) investigated the influence of COO image on the purchasing decision making; and Kaynak & Kara (2002) examined the influence of COO image on ethnocentric behavior.

The third group is the research on the factors that influence the country of origin image, such as the influence of culture on COO image (Balabanis, Mueller & Melewar, 2002) and the influence of lifestyle on COO image (Kaynak & Kara, 2002). Others are research studies on branding, such as that on marketing communications, marketing communications tool for creating COO image (White & Absher, 2013). Several other different research studies have been done to generate or measure the country of origin image, but most share similar issues of country of origin image measures/indicators.

Balabanis, Mueller & Melewar (2002) investigated the influence of culture on the COO image. In this study, COO image scale is composed of six dimensions of 1) cognitive and affective attributes about a country and its people; 2) conation (perceived similarity and desired level of interaction with a country); 3) general negative attributes of a country's product; 4) positive attitude about the promotion/distribution image of a country's products; 5) general positive attributes of a product; and 6) attributes of a specific product. Resulting from the study, it is believed that, if the COO image is positive, it will create a "halo" effect for products emanated from the country. And if COO image is negative, a "black cloud" effect will occur. Concerning the culture components, this study used Hofstede's cultural dimensions theory to identify the five value-based cultural dimensions comprising: power distance, uncertainty avoidance, masculinity/femininity, individualism/collectivism and Confucian dynamism.

Kaynak & Kara (2002) investigated product-country image, lifestyles and ethnocentric behaviors of Turkish consumers. This empirical research was designed to understand Turkish consumers' product country image. Perception of product of the consumers in the importing countries of Turkish products (Japan, USA, Russia, and China) was used as indicators to measure the country of origin image.

Paswan & Sharma (2004) investigated the relationship between accurate knowledge of brand-country of origin (COO) and COO image, in a franchising context. The researchers employed factor analysis to cluster COO (USA) image dimensions. The factors of COO (USA) image compose of six factors: public at large, public-negative, product-character, similarity, product-value, and product-

market. Indicators for COO image in franchise business, such as fast food (eg. KFC, McDonald's) and drinks (eg. PepsiCo, Coke) of the consumers in India were found to base mostly on COO image, country of origin, public at large and product-character.

Pereiraa, Hsub, & Kundub (2005) studied the country of origin image (COO image) using COO image that were created and tested by Parameswaran & Pisharodi (1994) using the confirmatory factor and incremental fit analyses. Pereiraa, Hsub, & Kundub (2005) used this COI with the customers in the three countries: China, Taiwan, and India toward the German and US automobile products. Results of the study confirmed the effectiveness of the COO image created. However, the validity of the COO image scale was not as effective as expected for the Indian samples and required additional modifications to the COO image measure.

Indicators that were found to effectively measure the general country attribute (GCA) are quality of being friendly and likable, artistic and creative, well-educated, hard working; having technical education; achieving high standards; raising standard of living; having technical skills, similar political views; being economically similar, culturally similar, and participating in international affairs.

Indicators that measure the general product attribute (GPA) include the characteristics of unreasonably expensive, imitation, attractive, luxurious products, long lasting, high technology, good value, easily available, and prestigious products, informative and intensely advertising, having meticulous workmanship, known mainly for industry products, sold in many countries, wide

range of models, cheaply put together, ease of service, and no needs for frequent repairs.

Additionally, indicators that measure the specific product attribute (SPA) of automobile found in the study were comfort, fuel economy, attractive exterior styling, easily handled, workmanship, little maintenance, easy to get parts, quality service, made to last, and overall excellence.

White & Absher (2013) studied a prominent sports team that affects the perception of the country by foreigners. The professional sports team of focus in this research is the Manchester United Football Club (MUFC), and the COO is England. In this research, the COO image scale (adapted from Knight et al., 2003) comprises 10 items including well educated people, high technical skilled workforce, reasonably and inexpensive products, highly technical products, products with meticulous workmanship; imitation products, not innovations, worldwide distributed product; frequent repaired products; informative advertising; friendly (home country) in international affairs.

Lin & Chen (2006) explored the effect of the COO image, product knowledge, and product involvement on the consumer purchase decision. The researchers, then verified the effect of these three variables on consumer purchase decisions, and chose product involvement as the moderate variable between the country-of-origin image and product knowledge on the consumer purchase decision. COO image measurement includes eight dimensions, (adopted from the measurement referred to and revised by Chen (2000) from Martin and Eroglu (1993) and Nagashima (1970), including economics development level, political and democratic level, industrialization level, living standard, technology developing

level, product quality, self-confident level for owning this product, and product reliability.

It can be seen that the research done on COO image by different researchers has varied in indicators/measures they focused on. For example, Balabanis, Mueller & Melewar (2002) measured the entire COO image involving recognition of the country and its people, experience with the country, attributes of the country's product in general and attributes of a specific product under the study. While, Kaynak & Kara (2002) measured only the perception of products of the countries under the study; and Paswan & Sharma (2004) analyzed and grouped the main indicators of COO image into public opinion and nature of the product. The measures of COO image of Pereira, Hsub, & Kundub (2005) included the nature of the social culture of the people, expertise of labor and work on political and economic relations with foreign countries, the image on the characteristics of products and production, concentrations in advertising and services provided. The research performed by White & Absher (2013) used the COO indicators comprising the country's public image, specialization of labor, the country products and production, worldwide product distribution, advertising of product key features, and being friendly to the host country. And finally, in a study by Lin & Chen (2006) the concepts of measuring the COO image are divided in the macro and micro levels. The macro level includes indicators of economics development level, political and democratic level, industrialization level, living standard, technology developing level; while the micro level includes those in product quality, self-confidence level for owning the product, and product reliability.

Considering the indicators of COO image of the research discussed above, the researchers measured the COO image using macro level indicators, including the economic, political, and social status, contacts with foreign countries. Some research has characterized the measure adding public characteristics. The micro level indicators used in some studies are product characteristics and production, specialization of labor and value for pricing. There is also research on advertising and product distribution that might be considered as marketing mix that distinguishes the product itself.

The COO image in this present research measures macro-country and micro-country images. These variables were developed by Ravi, Pascale & Cooksey (2007), in “Country Image and Consumer-Based Brand Equity: Relationships and Implications for International Marketing”. This research examines the relationship between consumers’ country-level and product-level images of a country, and the equity they associate with a brand from that country. Results from mall intercept surveys are conducted in an Australian state capital city. Canonical correlation analysis is used. The result indicates that the consumer-based equity of a brand is significantly associated with the macro- and micro- images of the country of origin of the brand. The macro-level image is deeply concerned about issues, such as: 1) technological - which involves developed countries, industrialisation and technological research; 2) economic - which is associated with high standard of living, welfare system and high labour costs; and 3) political - which entails civilian government, free-market system and democracy. The factors at micro-level are: 1) innovation - that engages innovative and technological advancement;

2) prestige - that implies pride of ownership, up-market and high status; and 3) design - that focuses on reliability, excellent finish and dependability.

With regards to studying nation brand image in the present study, OTOP is representative of a case study; yet this research includes culture as one of the indicators to measure macro-images of the country of origin. Culture is essentially the aspect initiated in the study. As summarised from Stepchenkova (2009), the indicators for the culture dimension include: 1) country's history; 2) traditions and culture; and 3) cuisine, arts and literature and local people.

Stepchenkova (2009) conducted a study based on Dynamic Destination Image Index (DDII). The findings were derived through content analysis of relevant media materials dated back into the past and the destination image theory. The Dynamic Destination Image Index (DDII) in this study was constructed from two dissimilar destinations, Aruba on the US market and Russia on the UK market. Both separated DDII studies used newspapers as a source of media content. The results indicate that models that include the DDII series perform significantly better than the restricted models with traditional economic variables.

2.7 The brand image as brand personality and self-image of customers

Brand image represents the essence of all impressions or imprints about the brand that have been etched in the consumers' minds. It includes impressions about its physical features, its performance and the functional benefits of using it; impressions about the kind of people who use it; the emotion and association

aroused by it; and the imagery and symbolic meaning it evokes in the consumers' minds. The brand image is indeed the 'totality' of the brand from the perception of the consumer. It is truly a 'complex symbol' and it defies oversimplifications that equate it to one of its 'bits', like its physical features or emotional association alone (Sengupta, 2005: 139).

Brand image is currently seen as the personality of a brand (Parameswaran, 2006). In essence, brand personality is "the set of human characteristics associated with a brand" (Parker, 2005, summarised from Ogilvy, 1983; Plummer, 1985; Aaker, 1997; Keller, 1998). Brand personality is the act of applying human characteristics (i.e., personality traits) to a brand, inducing consumers to think of a brand as if it had person-like qualities.

Since the 1980's, consumer personality has been transposed to brand personality by ascribing to the product a personality (Parker, 2005). Similarly, marketers can also simplify brand personality with the personality of the user (Guthrie, Kim & Jung, 2008).

Brand personality provides an enduring point of differentiation, particularly in categories where products have reached functional equivalence, and/or when symbolic consumption motivates market behaviour. It enhances the favourability of a brand image (Parker, 2005). Brand personality is the articulation of the personality traits possessed by the brand. Brand personality considers the brand as a person and defines the traits the brand has, such as young or mature, college girl or housewife, outgoing or home-bound (Parameswaran, 2006). It is advisable, currently, that while developing a brand definition, the desired brand personality

be defined (Parameswaran, 2006). Most branded products have a physical, as well as a symbolic character. Brand personality is a highly promising concept, both in theoretical and practical relevances, when it comes to positioning a brand with non-functional value. The dividing line between consumer self-concept and brand personality is a thin one. Consumer self-concept and personality of the brand the consumer chooses must be closely matched (Sengupta, 2005). Consumers prefer certain brands when the brand personality parallels the consumers' own personality or the personality they hope to achieve (Craik, 1993; Malhotra, 1981; Sirgy, 1982).

Self-concept or self-image of a person is normally made up of the person's basic physical and emotional characteristics; of the image of his/her 'real' self; and 'ideal' self, the 'self' he/she would like to be, which includes his/her aspirations. Based on this assumption, a consumer would: 1) buy a product consistent with his/her self-image; 2) avoid product inconsistent with his/her self-image; and 3) trade-up to a product that enhances his/her self-image (Sengupta, 2005).

Some research studies revealing congruity between brand image and consumer self-image are such as those done by Abel, Buff & O'Neill (2013); Hogg, Cox & Keeling (2000); Marquardt (2005); and Parker (2009).

Hogg, Cox & Keeling (2000) investigates the relationship between self-image and product/brand imagery of self-concepts of alcoholic soft drinks. In this exploratory study the self-monitoring scale is used to explore the link between the social and psychological determinants of self-presentation in the pursuit of self-

esteem and maintenance of self-identity. The relationship between self-concept and product symbolism is also examined in the study. The qualitative and quantitative research methods are employed in data collection. Results from the qualitative design phase support the view that individuals may prefer one product over others in different situations, and that brands that have similar images to consumers' views of the self are usually preferred. High self-monitors, in particular, was reported by the subjects in selecting drinks that helped support the image they wished to project within different consumption situations. In addition, results from both the qualitative and quantitative phases suggested that there is a strong relationship between consumers' self image and brand image of the alcoholic soft drink brands, and this directly affects brand evaluation and choices of the consumers. However, findings from survey questionnaires suggested that the image congruence hypotheses may work in either a positive or negative direction with consumers appearing to avoid negatively valued products to avoid self-abasement.

In his research, Marquardt (2005) has studied the consistency of brand personality and the personality of the users, and also the link towards the customers' perceived value of the brand. He explores how consumers' self image is related to their chosen brands. The study specifically investigates to which degree the consumers' actual and/or ideal self-image is congruent with the images of their preferred brands, and how this impacts the consumers' level of perceived value. The research combines qualitative interviews with exploratory empirical studies to examine this relationship from the consumer's viewpoint. Preliminary findings demonstrate congruence between individual's self-image and brand image,

predicting that as congruence increases, consumer value (customer-based brand equity) will also increase.

Parker (2009) maintains that brand personality and brand user-imagery are often used interchangeably in self-congruity theory research. He conducted a study comparing the brand personality and brand user-imagery constructs (BPC and UIC) in congruity theory to examine their relationship in the image congruence model. A total of 272 survey questionnaires were launched to measure the subjects' self-image perceptions and subjects' perceptions of brand personality and user-imagery, using the personality scale dimensions and indicators of Aaker's (1997). Participants marked their responses on a five-point Likert scale (1 = strongly agree to 5 = strongly disagree). Analysis involved correlation and multiple regressions are employed to address the research questions. Correlation analyses demonstrated the strength of association between UIC and BPC congruity indicator scores for each analysed brand. Stepwise multiple regressions were used to explore the relationship between the distances between self-image, brand personality, user-imagery and brand attitude towards the eight selected brands. Overall, results suggested that unique self-brand congruity (UIC and BPC) based on different brand image drivers increased the explanatory power in most brand attitude models. The usefulness of the self-brand congruity model is enhanced by making salient the importance of isolating different brand image facets as the basis of self-brand congruity measurement.

Most research in the past focused on the relationship between a consumer's self-image and various tangible products. Abel, Buff & O'Neill (2013), however, focused on the service product and the actual and ideal self congruities. The study

investigates the extent to which the actual and ideal self congruities (image) are associated with health club patronage. A two-part study was designed consisting of on-site (health club) data collection and online survey distribution from voluntary 309 respondents. Data analysis was conducted using Qualtrics, Excel (XLStat), and SPSS. Profile graphs were created to map and compare actual self-image, ideal self-image, and the health club image. Factor analysis and the generalized Euclidean Distance model were employed to understand item loading, calculate correlations, and test for significance. The findings reveal that consumers' actual self-image, rather than ideal self-image, was more strongly associated with their perception of their health club's brand image and thus, served as a stronger indicator of health club patronage. Health club members in the study exhibited a greater tendency to match the image they currently held of themselves with the brand image of their patronized health club. The findings seem to suggest then that health clubs would do well to develop and promote a brand image that is aligned more closely with members' actual self-images rather than attempting to develop a brand image that correlates more strongly to members' idealized self-images.

In addition, the aspects of mental, psychological and social needs which are the characteristic of social-symbolism and self-symbolism are used to measure self-image in the several research [(Hogg, Cox & Keeling (2000); Abel, Buff & O'Neill (2013)], and the users' personality is used for measuring self-image (Parker, 2009).

In a study conducted by Hogg, Cox & Keeling (2000), the self-monitoring scale indicator developed for quantitative and qualitative measures by the researchers was used to measure both social-symbolism and self-symbolism of alcoholic products, resulting in four key indicators. First, evaluation consists of characteristics of friendly, modern, wannabe, fruity, informal; second, activity includes playful, fun and excitable; third, potency contains energetic, light-hearted; and last, novelty contains youthful and childish characteristics.

Abel, Buff & O'Neill (2013) used the semantic differential scale developed by Ross (1971) to determine the actual and ideal self image of the health club industry. The scale consists of 20 items, including excitable vs. calm, personal vs. impersonal, masculine vs. feminine, insecure vs. confident, humorous vs. serious, positive vs. negative, follower vs. leader, dominating vs. submissive, popular vs. unpopular, extravagant vs. economical, mature vs. immature, unsuccessful vs. successful, sporty vs. businesslike, weak vs. strong, interesting vs. dull, happy vs. sad, friendly vs. unfriendly, bold vs. shy, young vs. old, and modest vs. vain.

While Parker (2009) used the brand personality developed by Aaker (1997) to measure self-image. The study focuses on consumers' symbolic personality and personality of the brand. The brands in the study are divided into public brands: Nike, Banana Republic, Abercrombie & Fitch, Birkenstock and private brands: Sony, Tropicana, Nabisco, and Charmin. The criteria utilized to select the brands were frequency of being mentioned, relative homogeneity of the product categories, and distinctiveness of image.

It can be concluded that the self-congruity concept can be utilized in marketing activities to ensure consumers' interest and loyalty to the brand, both for tangible and intangible products and for both products and services [(Abel, Buff & O'Neill, 2013; Hogg, Cox & Keeling, 2000; Marquardt, 2005; and Parker, 2009)]. In addition the self-image measures can be designed by the researchers interested in measurement-based psychological research in the aspects of social-symbolism, self-symbolism and personality.

This research explores whether brand OTOP is congruent with consumers' self-image. Measuring brand personality is accomplished by utilising the brand personality scale (Aaker, 1997), to measure both brand image and self-image.

Aaker (1997) considered human personality by conducting consumer behaviour studies on brand personality. The theoretical framework of the brand personality construct is by determining the number and nature of dimensions of brand personality. The "Big Five" dimensions of brand personality were explored: sincerity, excitement, competence, sophistication and ruggedness; and the measurement scales were also developed. The brand personality framework (Aaker, 1997) is shown in Figure 2.6.

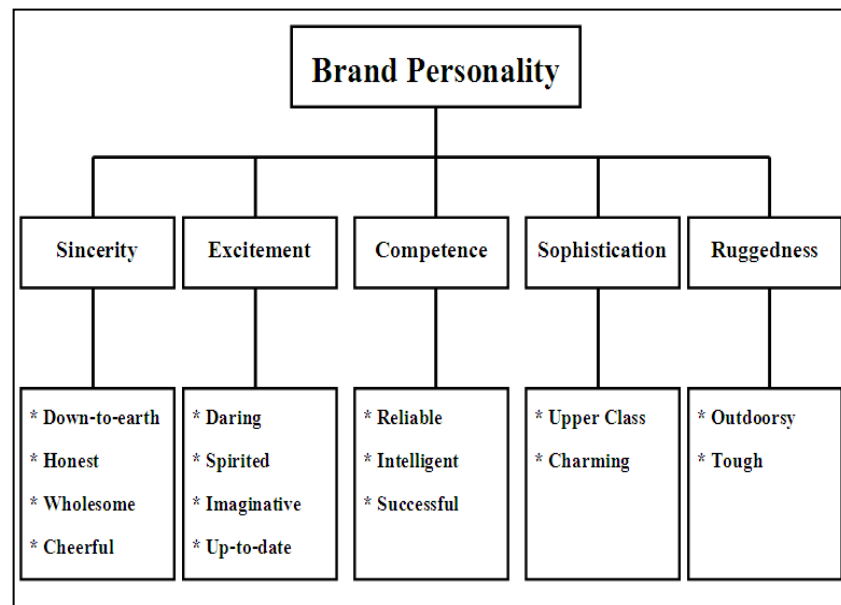


Figure 2.6
Brand Personality framework (Aaker, 1997)

The “sincerity” dimension is represented by four facets: down-to-earth, honest, wholesome and cheerful; “excitement” is described as daring, spirited, imaginative and up-to-date; “competence” dimension describes the brand personality by three facets: reliable, intelligent and successful; “sophistication” dimension is composed of two facets: upper class and charming; and two facets of “ruggedness” are: outdoorsy and tough.

The appropriate positioning strategy and brand image are very important in brand management. These aspects are within the brand concept (Park, Jaworski & MacInnis, 1986). Positioning strategy is proposed by the entrepreneur while brand image is perceived by the customer.

2.8 The relationship between brand associations, country of origin image, brand attitude and brand image

The key variables in this study include brand associations, country of origin image, brand attitude and brand image. The research is conducted on the interrelationships between these variables as follows:

2.8.1 The relationship between brand associations and brand attitude

The relationship between brand association and brand attitude, according to Keller & Lehmann (2003), concerns mostly about the consumer mindset about the brand. Firstly, when brand awareness and brand association are created, the consumers have positive brand attitude which is further supported by product attribute (Keller, 1993 and Kotler, 1991). This concept is used as a model in several studies and most importantly in a study by Faircloth, Capella & Alford (2001) in which the brand equity model is created through brand association, brand attitude and brand image. The present study is based on this model created by Faircloth, Capella & Alford (2001). Details are discussed in Section 2.9 (the underlying theory for branding nation brand image).

There are other several studies that support the relationship between brand association and brand attitude. Jeessun & Chan-Olmsted (2005) investigate the relationship between perceptions of organization association, product-related attributes and brand attitude; Patrick Hartmann, Iba'n~ez & Sainz

(2005) investigate the relationship between the perceptions of functional brand attributes, emotional benefits and brand attitude; and Cass & Grace (2003) investigate the relationship between perceptions of brand association and brand attitude in services business. Findings of all the mentioned studies support the relationship of brand association with the brand attitude.

Further, Jeesun & Chan-Olmsted (2005) found that public relationship has less influence on brand attitude than does the product attribute. This study investigates how various dimensions of organization–public relationships are related to brand attitude formation and compares the effectiveness of organization–public relationships to that of product-related attributes in shaping brand attitudes. The organization–public relationships used in this study are trust, control mutuality, commitment and satisfaction. The researchers selected ‘Sony’ and its brand of personal computers, VAIO, as the product of focus. A convenience sample of 233 students in a south-eastern US university participated in a two-day intercept survey that took place in a public area and forums on the university campus. Questionnaires from the students who already had Sony VAIO computers, those who had never purchased Sony’s products before and those who answered ‘not familiar at all’ to either question of familiarity with the company Sony or with Sony’s products in general were excluded from the analysis. As a result, the final sample contained 178 valid cases. The results of the survey showed that while both organization–public relationships and product-related attributes were significantly related to attitude towards the brand,

among the dimensions of organization–public relationships only ‘satisfaction’ was a significant predictor of brand attitude. In addition, the explanatory power of organization–public relationships was found to be weaker than that of product-related attribute beliefs in predicting brand attitude.

In addition, Patrick Hartmann, Iba'n~ez & Sainz (2005) investigate the influence of Green branding effects, with respect to brand positioning, on brand attitude. The researchers used functional brand attributes and emotional benefits, which are the brand association itself (Peter, Debra, Michael & Tuck, 1994), as the indicators for brand association which will be useful for brand positioning (Aaker, 1991). The exploratory and confirm factor analysis methods were employed. Attitudinal effects of extracted dimensions were assessed in the scope of a structural equation model, developed from the measurement model. The participants were 160 students in the final year of the Business Administration degree at a university in the Spanish Basque Country. Participants rated how strongly they would associate the brand with its certain attributes or characteristics with the five-point scales, from 5 = “very much” to 1= “not at all”, The indicators contain both verbal indicators such as comfortable, high quality, safe and environment sound and modern as visual indicators, such as urban, mountain, family and shoreline. Results indicate an overall positive influence of green brand positioning on brand attitude. Further findings suggest distinct functional and emotional dimensions of green brand positioning with the interaction of both dimensions in the formation of

brand attitude. Highest perceptual effects were achieved through a green positioning strategy that combined functional attributes with emotional benefits.

In investigating brand perception of consumers, Cass & Grace (2003) studied the composition of service brand dimension as defined in the minds of consumers and investigated the importance of such components. Incongruence between the service brand dimensions and purchasing decisions in terms of relationships between service brand association, service brand attitude and intention to buy was investigated. The study was conducted using both qualitative and quantitative methods. The qualitative phase was an unstructured interview lasting approximately one hour with four females and two males. The survey questionnaire was administered to a convenience sample of 70 bank consumers intercepted on a university campus. The results indicate a significant relationship between brand association and brand attitude in services brands.

In a study on personal computers, Jeesun & Chan-Olmsted (2005) found that the organization-public relationship that influence brand attitude was 'satisfaction' which was a significant predictor of brand attitude. Another study done by Cass & Grace (2003), studying the services brand, also designates influences of brand association on brand attitude. A study on green branding of Patrick Hartmann, Iba'n~ez & Sainz (2005) found that functional brand attributes and emotional benefits influence brand attitude. It can be confirmed from the literature review that brand association

influences brand attitude for merchandise, services and green marketing products.

2.8.2 The relationship between country of origin image and brand attitude

In general, the country of origin image is a part of the brand association (Aaker, 1991; Keller, 1993). In this study, the researcher separated country of origin image from brand association since the role of country of origin image has a major influence on the customers' perception on the product in the international market (Koubaa, 2008; Đorđević, 2008), and a positive image of the country of origin has great influence on evaluation of the country's product (Bilkey and Nes, 1982; Ozsomer and Cavusgil, 1991; Papadopoulos and Heslop, 1993 and Peterson and Jolibert, 1995). More importantly, several other studies suggest that the country of origin image should be included as one of the variables that influence consumer perceptions of brand images (Ahmed et al., 2002; Hulland, 1999; and Ravi, Pascale & Cooksey, 2006).

The relationship between the country of origin image and brand attitude has been established in several research studies (e.g. Ahmed, Johnson, Ling, Fang & Hui, 2002; Ahmed, Johnson, Yang, Fatt, Teng, & Boon, 2004; Sadrudin, Alain & Petersen, 2011; And Shir, Michael & Sun, 2011). Results of these studies reveal the effects of country of origin on consumer brand attitude in several types of products, whether it is the high

involvement product such as cars or low involvement product products such as bread and coffee and service products such as cruise-line packages, as well as technology products such as computers. However, several other previous studies have found that the product attribute has more influence on brand attitude than the country of origin. Others reveal that brand attitude is created from the integration between the meaning of brand attitude and that of country image attitude.

Guercini & Ranfagni (2013) found that brand image is created independently from the country image and maintained that brand attitude was cultivated from the cross fertilization between the meanings of brand attitude and country image attitude.

Shir, Michael & Sun (2011) posited country of origin salience as an exogenous latent variable leading to the consumer brand attitude. Research data were collected at the capital city of Malaysia, Kuala Lumpur in 2009 with a total of 200 valid responses of car owners. The results reveal that country of origin salience is significant in brand attitude of both Proton and Perodua, the Malaysian automobile. It is obvious that Malaysian consumers are aware that these brands are locally produced and this has a strong impact on their brand attitude towards both Proton and Perodua.

Ahmed, Johnson, Ling, Fang & Hui (2002) examined country of origin and brand effects on consumers' quality perceptions, attitude, and purchase intentions in the service industry product. International cruise-line packages (Singapore), Star Cruise (Malaysia) and Royal Caribbean Lines (USA) were selected as the brands and countries for the study. A total

sample of this study was 192: 52% Singaporeans and 48% foreigners. Personal interviews focusing on “Cruising experience” were conducted with travelers at three locations in Singapore: Singapore Cruise Center, the SIA Millennium travel Fair, and Singapore's Changi Airport. MANOVA was used to analyze the data. Country effects were found to be stronger than brand effects for quality and attitude ratings, and there was no significant difference between the local and foreign respondents.

Ahmed, Johnson, Yang, Fatt, Teng, & Boon, (2004) examined the influence of country of origin image and product attribute on brand attitude in terms of consumers' evaluation of domestic and foreign food products in a newly-industrialized nation. Products under the study are bread and coffee which are categorized as low-involvement products. A total sample of 236 consumers in Singapore is involved in the study. The results indicate that COO does matter when consumers evaluate low-involvement products, but in the presence of other extrinsic cues such as price and brand, the impact of COO is weak and brand becomes the determinant factor. In addition, the results suggest that a country's positive image in some product categories is not necessarily carried over to other product categories.

Sadrudin, Alain & Petersen (2011) studied the product brand and country brand of Denmark, as perceived by young Canadian consumers. A total of 187 respondents completed the questionnaire. The products under study were jeans, computers, butter biscuits and bed lamps, each of which is associated with a Danish or non-Danish sounding brand name. Denmark is

generally perceived by young Canadian consumers as a less attractive country than Canada as a COO, in the account of design or the assembly of technologically simple or complex products. Findings establish that product-country congruency has a much greater impact on consumer evaluations than COO. Additionally, results reveal the reasons why technological complexity, brand-country congruency and country of manufacture fail to show statistical significance with young Canadian consumers' perceptions. These findings are consistent with those found in a study of Ahmed, Johnson, Yang, Fatt, Teng, & Boon (2004).

2.8.3 The relationship between country of origin image and brand image

Country of origin has been much discussed on the international market, particularly in relation to the perception of the brand in the customer's mind. Country of origin is considered as a component of brand association (Aaker, 1991; Keller, 1993). Recognition of brand image in the mind of the customers is initiated from brand association and shift to the brand attitude (Keller & Lehmann, 2003), and brand attitude then influences brand image (Faircloth, Capella & Alford, 2001, Pantin-Sohier, 2009). Many studies on brand awareness among consumers in the international market have hold that the country of origin is one variable that can influence brand image (Nagashima, 1970; Hulland, 1999; Ahmed et al., 2002; Ravi, Pascale & Cooksey, 2006). Further studies have been done on

the effects of country of origin and country of origin image on brand image and consumer purchasing decisions.

Also, the relationship between country of origin (COO) knowledge and country of origin (COO) image is of interests of several studies. For example, Paswan & Sharma (2004) investigate the relationship between accurate brand-COO knowledge and COO image in a franchising context. Accuracy of brand-COO knowledge is found to be positively related to COO image. On the contrary inaccurate brand-COO knowledge leads to a confusing and somewhat negative image about COO. Antecedents to the brand-COO knowledge are also investigated in this study. Factors such as social class, education and overseas travels were found to positively influence brand-COO knowledge. This investigation was conducted in an emerging market, India. 695 questionnaires were distributed across five Indian metropolitan cities: Mumbai, Delhi, Kolkata, Chennai, and Bangalore. Scale items for the country of origin (COO) image were adopted from Pisharodi and Parameswaran (1997), and Parameswaran and Yaprak (1987). A total of 22 items were included in the questionnaire capturing the two broad dimensions, general country attributes and general product attributes. The US franchises: KFC, McDonald's, Pepsi, and Coke are the products of the study. Results indicate that accuracy of brand-COO knowledge is better contributing to both the brand and the COO. In addition, accuracy of brand-COO knowledge gives people a more balanced perspective of COO image.

Several studies have been done to examine the relationship between consumer perception of COO image and the product and brand, that between COO image and the consumer purchase decisions and between COO image and brand image. These studies investigate consumer perception of the local product in an international market and the ethnocentrism of the local people toward foreign products. Lin & Chen (2006) find that the country-of-origin image has a significantly positive effect on consumer purchase decision. Kaynak & Kara (2002) state that product-country image differs by levels of socio-economic and technological development of the country. Guercini & Ranfagni (2013) affirm that brand image is created independently from the country image, and also Kim (2006) posits that country image does not have any significant impact on brand image.

The country of origin image has been found to affect consumer purchase decision and product-country image in several research studies. The COO image is also confirmed in several studies as an influential factor for the brand image and the COO knowledge is found relevant and in line with the country of origin image. The relationship between the country of origin image and brand image, however, needs further studies to confirm the hypothesis since some research has found these two variables independent from each other.

Lin & Chen (2006) conduct a theory and practice based study to explore the influences of country-of-origin image, product knowledge and product

involvement on consumer purchase decisions. Taiwan, China and the USA were selected as the country-of-origin of the products of insurance and catering services. Data were collected by means of structured questionnaires from a total convenience sample of 396 consumers in the Taipei. Stepwise regression analysis was adapted to test the hypothesis. The main findings were listed as follows: the country-of-origin image, product knowledge and product involvement, all have a significantly positive effect on consumer purchase decision; the country-of-origin image has a significantly positive effect on consumer purchase decisions with regards to of product involvement; and product knowledge has significantly positive effect on consumer purchase decisions with regards to degrees of product involvement.

Kaynak & Kara (2002) investigate the product-country images, lifestyles and ethnocentric behaviors of Turkish consumers. Data are collected by means of interviews with consumers in the fifth largest Turkish City of Konya. Findings indicate that Turkish consumers had significantly different perceptions of product attributes for the product coming from countries of different levels of socio-economic and technological development. Also, results reveal that there were several lifestyle dimensions apparent among the Turkish consumers, which were closely correlated with their ethnocentric bias.

Guercini & Ranfagni (2013) investigate how companies entering the Chinese market integrate their brand image and country image, how they

redefine this integration in the corporate rebranding process adopted to develop the new market, and what they achieve in terms of commercial and economic results. The research adopted an analysis of the cases of Alpha and Beta. Alpha is a multinational company specialized in the production of chocolate, while Beta is one of the world's largest companies in tire industry. The cases are emblematic in the way the two companies combine brand attributes and country image attributes. The case analysis shows that: initially in the corporate rebranding strategy defined for China, brand image is created independently from the country image; the impact of the integration on brand attitude is sought by producing a cross fertilization between the meaning of brand attitude and that of country image attitude; the level of integration (country-of-manufacture, country-of-design) embodies the aim of the integration itself; and the differentiation of the country image for different brands passes through a phase of focalization. The study identifies practices that managers can consider in the definition of the integration strategies involving brand image and country image that accompany their rebranding processes in the Chinese market.

Kim(2006) investigates different effects of the country image on consumers' brand image.

Products under the study are electronic goods and research samples are 328 people, aged over 20 years, who are interested in buying electronic goods. Questionnaires are distributed to the research samples at malls in a Midwest city of the US. ANOVA is used to analyze the relationship

between variables. Findings revealed that country image does not have any significant impact on brand image. This result indicates that country image can work more constructively when the nationality of the product is identified accurately. The researcher has suggested that marketing activities should be organized to promote the country image, and posits that the country image of South Korea has been improved a lot since the 1988 Seoul Olympics.

2.8.4 The relationship between brand associations and brand image

According to Consumer Based Brand Equity (Aaker, 1991 and Keller, 1993) brand association is one of the important determining factors in modeling brand image. Brand associations is found to be related to brand image in several research studies (Andersson & Robertson, 2008; Silva & Alwi, 2008). The researchers agree that brand image is developed from brand associations and the composition of brand associations, including the function and emotion association that influence brand image are further investigated. Andersson & Robertson (2008) reveal in their study that brand associations involved both functional and emotional attributes in clothing and outfits products. In online books retailing, Silva & Alwi (2008) found that consumers are interested in functional attribute of technology, including personalization, security, and customer care.

Andersson & Robertson (2008) investigate brand association of Acne Jeans using consumer segments (students that possessed Acne clothes with

the students that did not own Acne garment) to see if brand attribute affect brand image differently for customers from different segments. Survey questionnaire are distributed to a sample of 130 students at Stockholm University. The measures of brand association of Acne Jeans include quality, well-tailored, exclusive, mass-produced, commonplace, stand out in a crowd, individuality, Swedish origin, innovative design, familiar designer Jonny Johansson and individual style, and Jonny Johansson and creative design. The results showed that the students who possessed Acne clothes associated the brand with high quality, well-tailored apparel and innovative design to a higher extent than the students who did not own Acne garment. In comparison to the students that possessed Acne items, a larger proportion of the students that did not own Acne clothes disaffiliated the brand as representing a Swedish origin, and a larger proportion of these students rejected the brand as representing exclusivity and mass-production.

Silva & Alwi (2008) examine the relationship of brand attributes and corporate brand image of bookstores offering a wide range of books, including academic books, children's books and fiction both online and offline. The criteria for including the sample for this study were "sufficient experience" with the chosen online and offline bookstores (e.g. at least have bought any type of books from both contexts of bookstores in a particular period; use online store's web site at least once a month; have bought a book at least three times in the last year through the online store's web site; have visited offline store at least once a month ; and have bought

a book at least three times from the offline store in the last year. Analysis of Structure Equation Model was employed for the collected data. Results showed that brand attribute in the online bookstores that significantly influenced the corporate brand image were personalization, security, and customer care.

\Some researchers in this area group brand association into two components of functional and emotional associations (BeleÂn del RÃ, Rodolfo & Iglesias, 2001; Debra & O. 'Cass, 2002; Keller, 1993), while some scholars group them into three components adding organizational association (Aaker, 1996; Anisimova, 2007; Chen, 2001). Results from the reviewed literature confirm influences of brand association, both functional and emotional associations, on brand image. However, to the researcher knowledge, the research done into the influences of organizational association on brand image has not yet been investigated so far.

2.8.5 The relationship between brand attitude and brand image

According to the consumer based brand equity model (Aaker, 1991 and Keller, 1993) brand attitude influences the brand image, and this is supported in the research of Faircloth (1996) and Pantin-Sohier (2009). Variables in Faircloth's (1996) study consist of brand associations, advertising, brand attitude, brand image, and brand equity. The study has built the measurement parameters for brand equity by qualitative means,

indicating a significant brand association effect on brand image and brand attitude. Brand benefits appear to create more positive brand images and brand attitudes than either attributes or mini-attitudes, while advertising stimulus is not found to have a significant effect on brand image or brand attitude.

On the other hand, attitude toward the advertising has a positive impact on brand image, but not on brand attitude. The analysis of structural equation (structural equation modeling) shows that brand attitude affects brand equity only through brand image.

Pantin-Sohier (2009) investigates the influence of brand attitude on brand image and finds that attitude towards brand functions, such as color and shape of the product packages, affect brand image in terms of brand personality. This research was carried out on two mass consumption products: bottle of mineral water and tin of coffee. Foreign brands were studied to avoid familiarity. The brands under the study are unknown brand to the sample group before the study. Independent variables under the study are color and shape of the brand packages and dependent variables are brand personality, using Aaker's (1991) brand equity model. The total sample size of 638 was included, 361 for the water brands and 277 for the coffee brands. Results of an analysis of structural equation model confirm high-quality suitability of the data to the model. The multivariate analyses of variance (MANOVA) were also performed to test the hypothesis. Regarding the bottle of mineral water, the results indicate that the shape of the product has an influence on one of the five brand personality dimensions: sophistication. The brand of mineral water with

the tall elongated bottle seems more sophisticated to the consumers than the brand with a small round shaped bottle. While the color affects two dimensions of the brand personality: sophistication and excitement. The brand of water in the red bottle is considered more sophisticated and more exciting than when it is packaged in the blue bottle. For the tin of coffee, results show that color influences two dimensions of brand personality: excitement and sophistication. In terms of shape, only the primitiveness dimension is affected by varying the contours of the product. The brand is thus deemed more primitive in the rectangular coffee tin than in the cylindrical one. This research shows the direct influence of color and shape on the functional and symbolic associations of the brand image for both product categories.

There are not many research studies have been done on the relationship between brand attitude and brand image, and most some have been done on consumer based brand equity to measure brand attitude which measures both the attitude towards the brand as a whole and particular attitude of interest such as attitudes on product attributes. With regards to brand image measurement, the previous research has measured the overall brand image and brand image in the measure of brand personality.

2.8.6 The mediator effect of brand attitude

There has, so far, been no research done on the mediating effect of brand attitude between brand associations and the country of origin image on

brand image. This present research intends to present the mediating effect of brand attitude since it has been found to play an important role on brand equity (Aaker, 1991; Faircloth, 1996; Keller, 1993). When considering the formation of a brand within a customer's mind, brand attitude is formed from brand association and it in turn influences brand equity (Keller, & Lehmann, 2003). Brand attitude is found to build brand equity through a brand image (Faircloth, 1996) and brand attitude has mediating effect through brand associations and brand image. Moreover, brand attitude has a major influence on purchases in the consumer intention (Fishbein and Ajzen, 1975), customer loyalty and satisfaction (Johnson, Gustafsson, Andreassen, Lervik & Cha, 2001; Kristensen, Gronholdt & Martensen, 2000; Juhl, Kristensen & Ostergaard, 2002).

Given the importance of brand attitude on brand equity and consumer behavior, this research is aimed to examine the role of mediator variable of brand attitude towards brand association and brand image and its role on the country of origin image and brand image.

2.9 The customer-based brand equity (CBBE) theory: the underlying theory for branding nation brand image

The CBBE theory is the underlying theory for branding nation brand image in this study.

The CBBE theory approaches brand equity from the perspective of the consumer, whether the consumer is an individual or an organisation. It is the power of a brand that exists in what customers have learned, felt, seen and heard about the brand, from their experiences over time. It is the power of the brand that lies in the minds of customers (Keller, 2008). So, to build brand equity or add value to products and services, marketers should ensure that customers have the right type of experiences with products and services in their accompanying marketing programmes. It is the desire, thoughts, feeling, images, beliefs, perceptions, opinions, and so on, in the minds of customers, that are linked to the brand. Similarly Riezebos (2003) described that this is the answer to what the brand means to customers, and how the brand knowledge of customers affects their response to marketing activities. Thus, CBBE theory is the measure of brand equity that comes to the minds of customers.

The literature acknowledges that the measure of brand equity has two perspectives: consumer-based and financial-based. Nevertheless, Kusum, Donald & Neslin (2003) considered that these two perspectives are linked because firm-level outcomes, such as incremental volume, revenue, price command, cash flow and profit, are the aggregated consequences of consumer-level effects, such as positive image, attitude, knowledge and loyalty. Thus, the measurements of brand equity involve image, attitude, knowledge and loyalty (consumer perspective). Hence, 'consumer-based' means measurement of cognitive and behavioural brand equity at the individual consumer level through a consumer survey. In contrast, for financial-based measures, information is collected from the financial market, accounts and store-level data scanning without contacting consumers; then dollar

metrics and financial brand equity are identified at the firm or brand level (Boonghee & Donthu, 2001).

This research follows the CBBE model of Aaker (1991) and Keller (1993, 2003). According to this model, *brand image* is the key element for building brand equity, image being settled in the consumers' minds based mostly on some associations between the consumers and the product (Aaker, 1991; Keller, 1993). This share therefore concentrates on brand associations.

Aaker (1991) consumer-based brand equity

According to David Aaker's brand Equity Model (Aaker, 1991), the 5 factors for Brand Equity include Brand Loyalty, Brand Awareness, Perceived Quality, Brand Associations, and Other Proprietary Assets.

1. Brand Loyalty: customer's loyalty to the product gives the values to the brand as follows

- Reduce marketing costs, which is cheaper than the cost of finding new customers
- Earn certain income from regular customer purchases
- Attract new customers by giving information of the brand to build product awareness among new customers
- Take longer for the customers to switch to a competitor's brand.

2. Brand Awareness: This list can be used as an indicator whether the brand is widely known to the customers.

- What about the product that reminds the customers about it, such as the brand or the product itself.

- Familiarity and association of the brand to the consumers
 - Symbol of detail and value proposition of the brand
 - The brand embedded as an option in the customer' mind
3. Perceived Quality: Consideration for the brand and quality of the brand can be measured under the following conditions.
- The reason for the purchase is quality
 - Products are different from other brands
 - Price is the complex measure indicating the status at play and brand can be competitive to others by its quality
 - Availability in different sales channel
 - The number of line / brand extension
4. Brand associations: Associations triggered by a brand can be considered by five basic measuring aspects.
- Brand name is able to retrieve associations from the consumer's brand
 - Associations contribute to brand differentiation in relation to competition
 - Brand associations play a role in the buying process
 - Brand associations create positive attitude
 - The number of brand extensions in the market
5. Other proprietary assets: patents and intellectual property rights

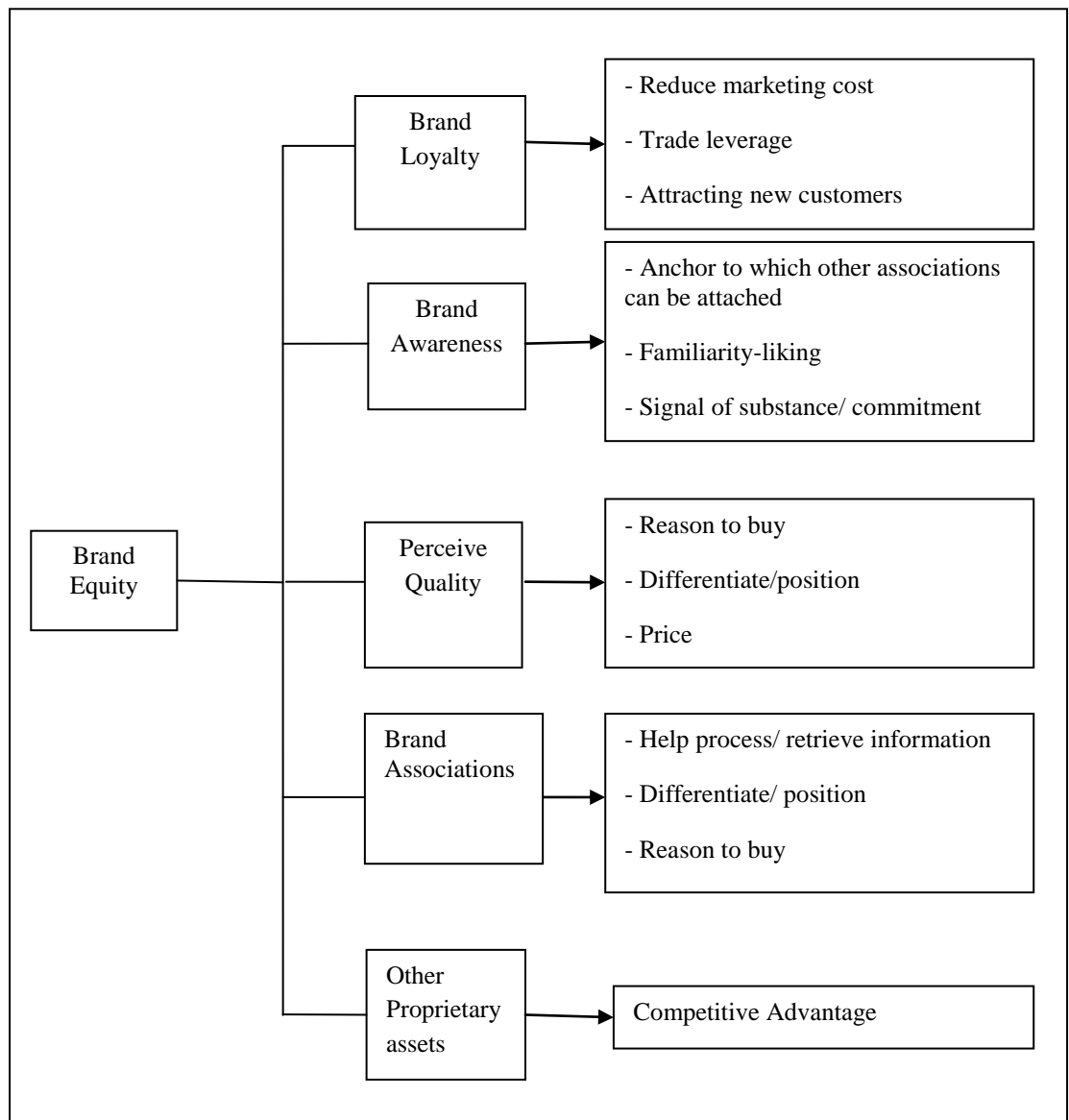


Figure 2.7
Aaker's Brand Equity Model
 (Summarized by European institute for Brand Management.2009)

Keller (1993) suggested that the concept of brand equity is from the perspective of the individual consumer. CBBE is defined as the differential effect of brand knowledge on consumers in response to the marketing of the brand. Brand knowledge is conceptualised according to an associative network model in terms

of two components of brand awareness and brand image. Brand equity from this perspective occurs when the consumer is familiar with the brand and holds some favourable, strong and unique brand associations in memory. Brand awareness relates to brand recall and recognition of performance by consumers. Brand image refers to the set of associations linked to the brand that consumers hold in memory. The CBBE is considered in more detail by discussion of how it can be built, measured and managed.

According to this model, consumer's perception of the brand strength includes four aspects: Brand Awareness, Brand Associations, Perceived Quality and Brand Loyalty. Considering the sequence of brand recognition within the mind of the customer, Brand Awareness comes first and before Brand Associations, followed by Brand Image (Keller, 1993). Brand Image, if fact, is the key element for building Brand Equity (Keller, 1993; Faircloth, 1996).

Keller's (2003) consumer-based brand equity

Keller's (2003) consumer-based brand equity pyramid shows that brand equity is driven in a sequence of brand salience, brand performance, brand imagery, consumer judgments, consumer feelings, and consumer-brand resonance. Specifically, the CBBE model views brand building as an ascending series of steps, from bottom to top (Figure 2.8).

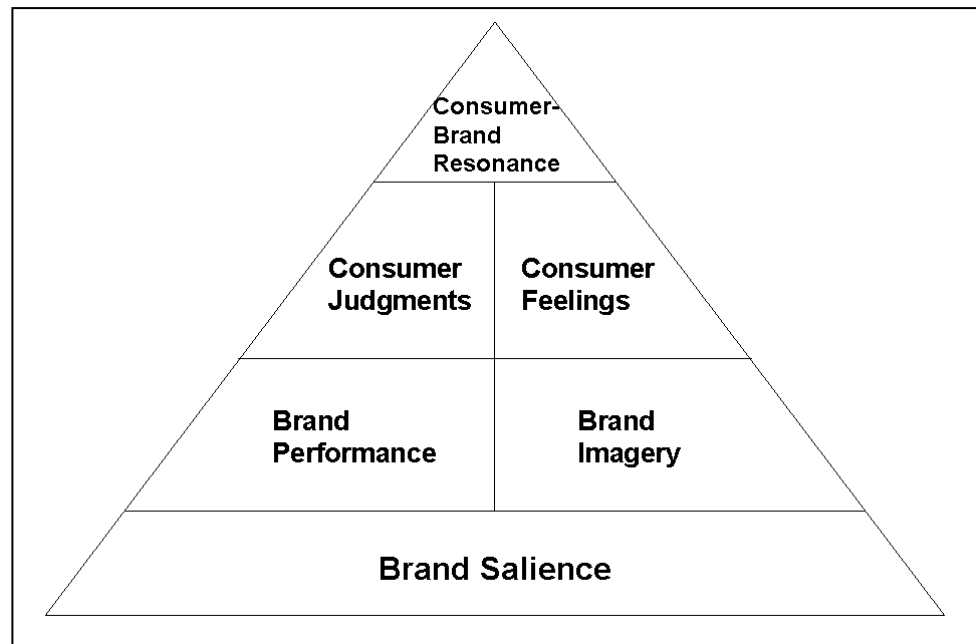


Figure 2.8
Consumer-based Brand Equity Pyramid (Keller, 2003)

Keller's model (2003) emphasizes the duality of brands. The rational route to brand building is on the left hand side of the pyramid, whereas the emotional route is on the right hand side. The creation of significant brand equity requires reaching the top or pinnacle of the brand resonance. Brand salience is how easily and often customers think of the brand under various purchase or consumption situations. Brand performance is how well the product or service meets customers' functional needs. Brand imagery describes the extrinsic properties of the product or service, including the ways in which the brand attempts to meet customers' psychological or social needs. Brand judgments focus on customers' own personal opinions and evaluations. Brand feelings are customers' emotional

responses and reactions with respect to the brand. Consumer-brand resonance is the reputation power and the value of the brand.

In this study, Keller's (2003) model was applied as shown in Figure 2.9.

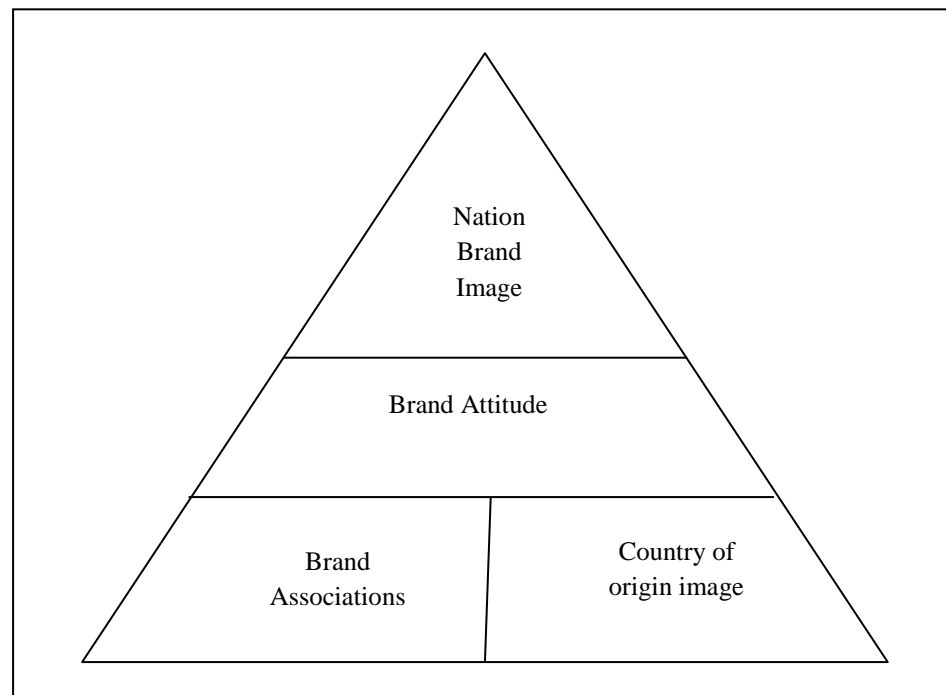


Figure 2.9
Application of Consumer-based Brand Equity Pyramid (Keller, 2003 combination with Aaker, 1991; and Keller, 1993) on the factors that influence the creation of nation brand image

Brand Association and Country of Origin have the same key concepts as Brand Salience in that the brand is recognized by the consumers with the product, its quality, the businesses or manufacturers of branded goods, as well as the image of its country of origin. It represents both functional (usefulness) and emotional (psychological and social aspects) recognition of the product. The salient about the product and brand create a person's attitude towards it (Peter & Olson, 2008).

Brand Judgments and Brand Feelings are, in fact, the same as Brand Attitude. The consumers' attitudes toward product or brand, through the integration process, combine some of their knowledge, meanings and beliefs about the product or brand to form an overall evaluation. Those beliefs are the critical determinants of an attitude, and are referred to as salient beliefs (O' Guinn, Allen & Semenik, 2009). Consumers can have salient beliefs about any type and level of meaning associated with a product. These are feelings of customers to the brand: preferences, dislikes, as well as strength of the brand that customers perceive. Nation brand image is the first step leading to Brand Equity (Parameswaran, 2006).

It is the distinctive characteristics that brand should be emphasised (Farooqi, 2009, and Ulla Hakala & Lemmetyinen, 2011). Equity initiates the power of the brand, and it is comparable to Consumer-brand resonance. Brand Equity; however, is the foundation of brand resonance to capture customer loyalty; that is, the brand is embedded in the customer's mind.

Faircloth, Capella & Alford (2001) used the conceptual model of Aaker (1991) and Keller (1993) in creating brand equity. The study provides partial explanatory by demonstrating impact of brand image mitigation on brand attitude. It verified the relationship of these variables and put forward the reduced conceptual model of brand equity. The model proposes three routes to brand equity creation, directly through brand image and brand attitude and indirectly from brand attitude through brand image (Figure 2.10).

Regarding the relationship between brand association and brand image, Faircloth, Capella & Alford (2001) refer to the conceptual model of Aaker (1991) and Keller (1993) which is supported by the research of Krishnan (1996), Lassar, Mittal and Shama (1995) and Kwon (1990). Faircloth, Capella & Alford (2001) also refer the conceptual model of Keller (1993)

on the relationship between brand association and brand attitude, which is supported by the studies of Collins and Loftus (1975) and Anderson (1983).

Regarding the influence of brand attitude on brand image and brand equity, Faircloth, Capella & Alford (2001) support the relationship of these variables based on the conceptual model on consumer's perception of the brand of Aaker, (1991); And Keller, (1991) leading to the hypothesis in his research to explain the indirect effect through brand image of brand attitude on brand equity.

In their study, Faircloth, Capella & Alford (2001) collected data from the focused group and interviews to identify the brand associations and the criteria that product consumers would use in marketing purchase choices of *polar fleece sweater*, the experiment product. The focused group consisted of 105 undergraduate business major students from a medium size Midwestern university. The key informant interviews were held with product development and marketing personnel of two international polar fleece manufacturers. The quantitative data from 105 business major students were analyzed, using the Structure Equation Modelling. Results showed that brand attitude had a significant influence on brand image, and brand image significantly influence brand equity. It can also be concluded that the theory model adequately predicts

the empirical relationships between these variables and the indirect effect of brand attitude on brand equity. Results showed that brand attitude have a significant positive but indirect effect on brand equity through the brand image construct.

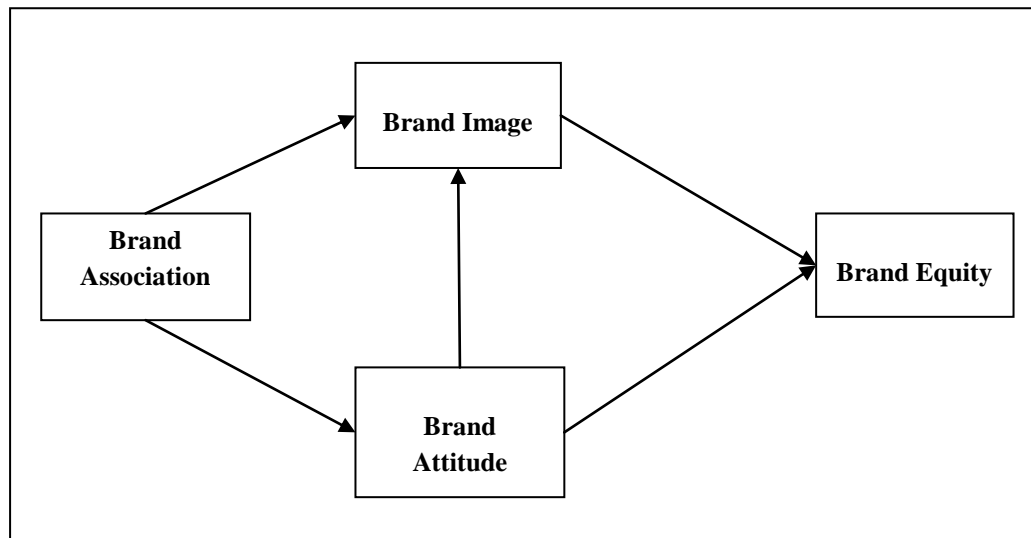


Figure 2.10

Brand and brand attitude impacts on brand equity adapted from Aaker (1991) and Keller (1993)

Source: Faircloth, Capella & Alford (2001)

The CBBE model upholds that brand image constructs brand equity. Thus, it is necessary to explore, measure and also manage the steps to build a strong brand. It answers what the brand means to the customer. By giving meaning to the brand, a product with a brand name can have significantly more value to a customer than the same product without a brand name. Brand value is made by the intended meaning of a brand (Riezebos, 2003). Consumers can have the image of a brand from brand-added value and marketing programmes. The marketing activity associated with the programme then affects the customers' mindset with respect to

the brand (Rajiv & Vriens, 2006). This research investigates the factors that construct brand image in the consumers' mindset.

Additionally, the author proposes a model for building nation brand image. Nation brand was referred to many times during the year 2000 (Anholt, 2005; Delorie, 2004; Dinnie, 2003; Farooqi, 2009; Fetscherin, 2010; Martin, Kees & Gorp, 2011; Mathia, Anthony, Kwabena, & Austin, 2011; Outhavong, 2007; Ulla Hakala & Lemmetyinen, 2011; Zenker, 2011). This study proposes to highlight the important factors in creating nation brand image.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Overview

This chapter presents the research methodology in answering the research questions, and subsequently testing the hypotheses. In doing so, this chapter elaborates on the population of the data collection, selected sampling techniques and the data collection procedure.

This study takes the quantitative approach for the purpose of verifying the development model of Thailand's nation brand image. **Handicraft, decorative items and home accessories**, are the representatives of OTOP. The study reviews the existing creation of brand image of OTOP in Thailand. It investigates the relationship between consumers' mindset and nation brand image. Also suggested, are new variables of COO image in building up nation brand image.

Details present as follow:

- 1) Research framework
- 2) The research process
- 3) The hypotheses
- 4) The Hypothesized Model
- 5) Research design

- 6) Measurement of variables/instrumentation
- 7) The instruments and pilot study

3.2 Research framework

The research framework of this study is as discussed in the previous chapter. This conceptualisation is best represented through the following model (Figure 3.1).

Research framework

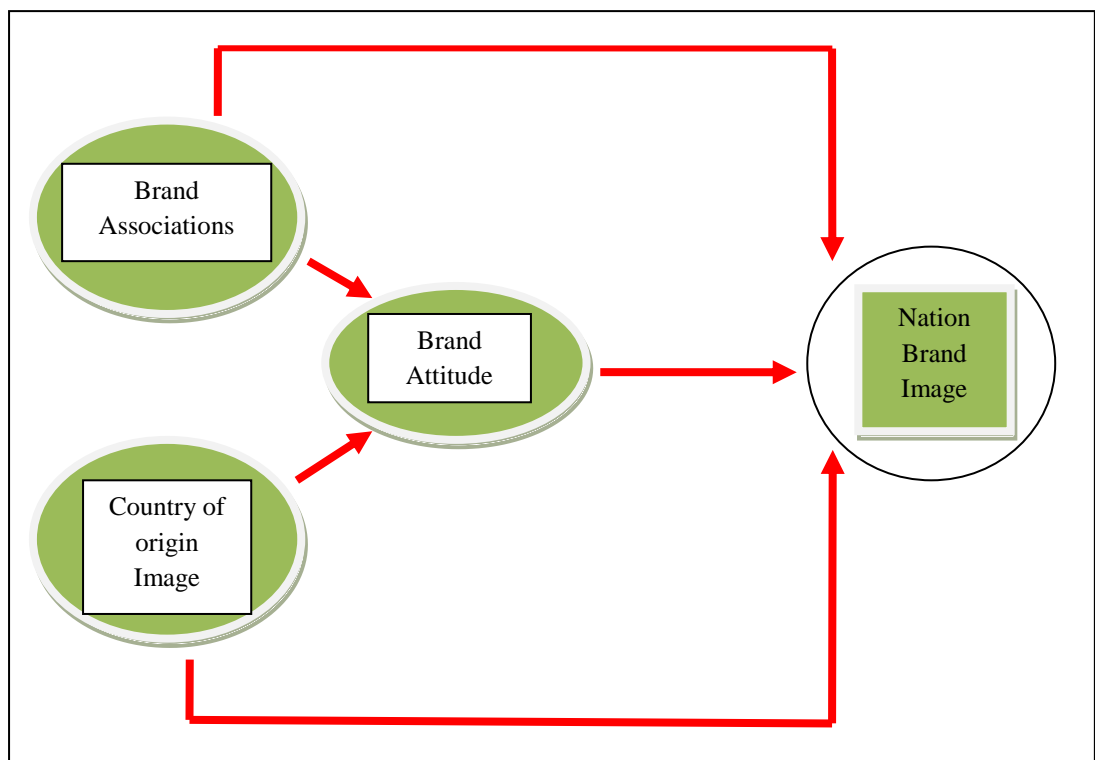


Figure 3.1
The model illustrates nation brand image build-up

This research employs the concept of CBBE model (Aaker, 1991; Keller, 1993) and applies it using nation brand (Anholt, 2005), to examine the brand image of nation brand. Nation brand image is represented by personality of a brand (Parameswaran, 2006; Parker, 2005, summarised from Ogilvy, 1983; Plummer, 1985; Aaker, 1997; Keller, 1998).

Two independent variables (brand associations and COO image) are predictors of the dependent variable (nation brand image) through the mediator variable (brand attitude). Also, two independent variables are considered, each of which directly affects the dependent variable.

The relevant research recognises that brand image is constituted by brand associations (Aaker, 1991; Keller, 1993; Faircloth, 1996; Andersson & Robertson, 2008). Also noted is that brand attitude affects brand equity only through brand image (Faircloth, 1996). It concurs with Keller & Lehmann (2003), that brand associations affect brand attitude in consumers' mindset.

3.3 The research process

This research was conducted on the basis of the concepts of hypothetic-deductive method. Deductive reasoning is a key element in the hypothetic-deductive method. In deductive reasoning, it starts with a general theory and then applies this theory to a specific case (Sekaran & Bougie, 2009). This method involves seven steps of:

- 1) Identifying a broad problem area,

- 2) Defining the problem statement,
- 3) Hypothesizing,
- 4) Determining measures,
- 5) Data collection,
- 6) Data analysis,
- 7) The interpretation of the results.

3.4 The hypotheses

Developing hypotheses are examined as to their contribution or influence in explaining why the problem occurs and how it can be solved. The network of associations identified among the variables is then theoretically intertwined (Sekaran & Bougie, 2009). The scientific hypothesis must meet two requirements. The first is that the hypothesis must be testable. The second is that a hypothesis must be falsifiable, that is, it might be possible to disprove the hypothesis. It means that the hypothesis cannot be confirmed, there is always a possible that future research will show that it is false. Hence, falsifiable hypothesis emphasizes the tentative nature of research findings (Sekaran & Bougie, 2009). Researchers can only prove the hypotheses until they are disproved.

The primary dependent variable in this research is nation brand image. The independent variables are brand associations and COO image. In addition, brand attitude is tested as a mediator variable. The hypotheses are showed in Figure 3.2.

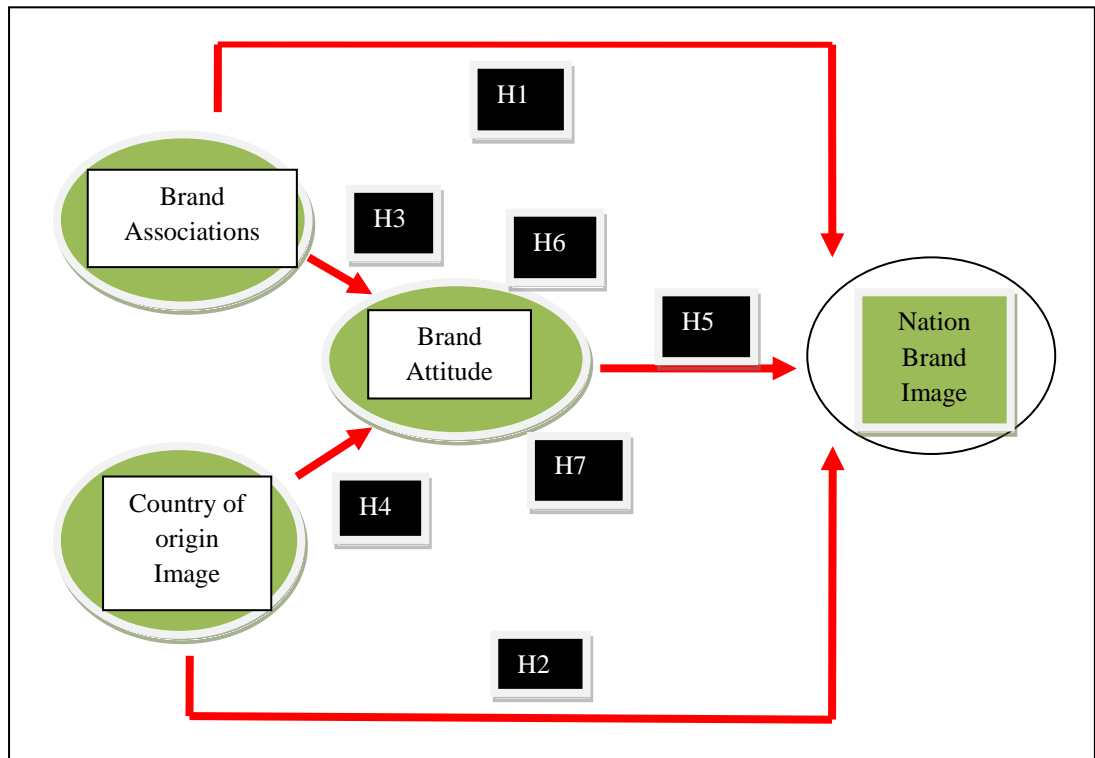


Figure 3.2
The research hypotheses showing the relationship among various variables

H1: Brand associations are related to nation brand image

Relationship between these two variables was developed from the model of brand associations and brand image according to the consumer based brand equity of Aaker (1991) and Keller (1993) and has also been supported by the studies of Faircloth (1996) and Andersson & Robertson (2008).

H2: Country of origin image is related to nation brand image

Country of origin image is the variable developed from the country of origin which is originally a component of brand associations (Aaker, 1991; Keller, 1993). Country of origin image has been found to influence the brand image (Aaker, 1991; Andersson & Robertson, 2008; Faircloth, 1996; Keller, 1993).

Country of origin image is, therefore, a very important factor for the sale of goods in foreign markets (Đorđević, 2008) in the globalization era when products are produced and distributed to customers across the world and the brands are commonly associated with their country of origin (Ravi, Pascale & Cooksey, 2006, summarised from Hulland, 1999 and Jaffe & Nebenzahl, 2001). Several research studies suggest that country of origin be studied as another variable of brand image in the customers' mind (Nagashima, 1970; Hulland, 1999; Ahmed et al., 2002; Ravi, Pascale & Cooksey, 2006).

Moreover, Koubaa (2008) maintains that the country of origin image has a strong influence on the nation brand image. There also are some studies investigating the country of origin by examining the country image (Cayla & Eckhard, 2008; Kaneva, 2007; Nuttavuthisit, 2007). This present study aims, especially, to investigate the nation brand image. The country of origin image is, therefore, assigned as an important variable in relation to nation brand image. The nation brand in this study refers to the brand that makes the country well known. It embraces culture, citizens, domestic investment and tourism business of the country (Anholt, 2005).

H3: Brand associations are related to brand attitude.

Keller & Lehmann (2003) have discussed the hierarchical structure of brand attitude that brand associations are factors that create brand attitude in the customers' mind. Customers must have certain associations to the brand and these associations are gradually developed into the brand attitude. Moreover, the brand equity model of Faircloth (1996), which was based on the brand equity

model of Aaker (1991) and Keller (1993), also supports the relationship between brand associations and brand attitude. Faircloth's model also confirmed that brand attitude influences brand equity through the mediating effect of brand image. It can, therefore, be confirmed that brand associations are related to brand attitude.

H4: Country of origin image is related to brand attitude

As already mentioned in H2 that the country of origin image is derived from the country of origin of the brand, which is one component of brand associations. Further, there is a confirmed relationship between brand associations and brand attitude, and this, therefore, confirms the relationship between the country of origin image and brand attitude. The relationship between these factors of country of origin image and brand attitude is, especially, very important in the study of a nation brand with a focus on product sales in foreign markets (Gnoth, 2002; Kotler and Gertner, 2002; Pappu et al., 2007, cited in Richard, Jane, Tito & Murphy, 2010).

H5: Brand attitude is related to nation brand image

This research defines the hypothesis based on the brand equity model of Faircloth (1996), which validates the relationship between brand attitude and brand image. In the present research, nation brand is investigated according to Anholt's (2005) six areas of national competence. Thailand OTOP is selected as a nation brand representing cultural and unique local area product (Ministry of Commerce, Thailand), creating sustainable income for rural people (Rado, 2008) and

representing the product of local knowledge and use of local resources (Fujita, 2006).

H6: Brand attitude has mediating effect on the relationship between brand associations and nation brand image.

This hypothesis of the mediating effect of brand attitude on the relationship between brand associations and nation brand image is derived from the hierarchical formation of the brand in consumer mindset proposed by Keller & Lehmann (2003). They explain that brand associations form brand attitude and brand attitude influences brand equity through brand image (Faircloth, 1996), and that brand associations and brand attitude influence brand equity (Aaker, 1991 and Keller, 1993). It can be seen that brand attitude is a variable related to both brand associations and brand image. Additionally, brand attitude has a very important role on consumer intention (Fishbein and Ajzen, 1975) and purchasing decision, satisfaction and loyalty to the brand of the consumers (Johnson, Gustafsson, Andreassen, Lervik & Cha, 2001; Kristensen, Gronholdt & Martensen, 2000; Juhl, Kristensen & Ostergaard, 2002). The present study intends to validate the mediating effect of brand attitude on the nation brand image.

H7: Brand attitude has mediating effect on the relationship between brand country of origin image and nation brand image.

As discussed in H2, the country of origin image has been studied separately as another variable from brand associations, and the relationships between brand attitude and brand image has been approved in several studies in H4, and finally

with the importance of nation brand and brand attitude discussed in H6, it is essential to investigate brand attitude as the mediator variable between the country of origin image and nation brand image.

3.5 The Hypothesized Model

The hypothesized model is a structural equation modeling (SEM). SEM use to investigate the causal relationships among the constructs. LISREL program provides for measurement of estimated error, a goodness of fit index, and analysis within a theoretical framework designed of focus on empirical data. In addition, it is possible to examine the mediating effect of the mediator variable. SEM analysis is known as causal modeling (Jeffrey, Kent, Kevin & Shimeall, 2005) which was developed in the mid-late 1980's in the social sciences arena as a method for modeling complex relationships. SEM can be easily understood if the researcher has grounding in basic statistics, correlation, and regression analysis. It uses to depict relationships among observed variables, with the same basic goal of providing a quantitative test of a theoretical model hypothesized by the researcher. More specifically, theoretical model can be tested in SEM that hypothesizes how sets of variables define constructs and how this constructs are related to each other (Schumacker & Lomax, 2010).

There are several common types of SEMs (Jeffrey, Kent, Kevin & Shimeall, 2005):

- 1) CFA - commonly tests whether a pre-existing theoretical model is in line with a particular set of observations.
- 2) Path analysis, known as causal modeling, tests causes and effects of groups of factors or features.
- 3) Structural regression models are used to elucidate the underlying factors or constructs of observed variables and model the relationship between these theoretical constructs.

In this research, SEM was performed to explore nation brand image. It is a family of statistical models that seek to explain the relationship among multiple variables. It examines the structure of interrelationships expressed in a series of equations (Hair, Black, Babin & Anderson, 2010). In this present research, two independent variables (brand associations and COO image) are predictors of the dependent variable (nation brand image) through the mediator variable (brand attitude). Also, two independent variables are considered, each of which directly affects the dependent variable.

The hypothesized model can be expressed visually. Figure 3.3 shows the diagram corresponding to this hypothesized mode.

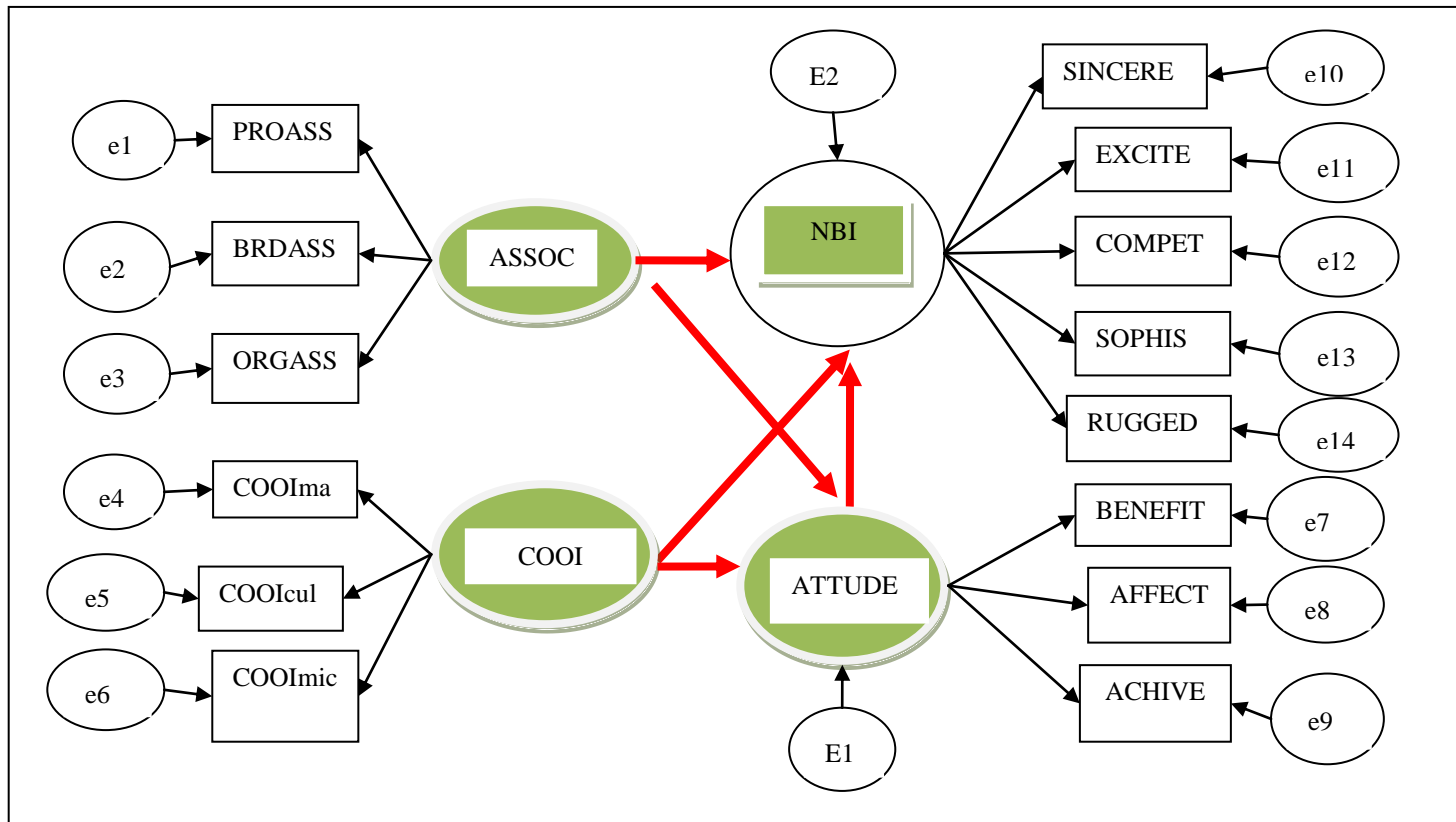


Figure 3.3
The hypothesized model

In this research, thus exogenous latent variables include brand associations (ASSOC) and Country of origin image (COOI); while endogenous latent variables are contributed by brand attitude (ATTUDE) and nation brand image (NBI; NBT for Thai respondents, NBF for overseas respondents). Figure 3.4 demonstrate the relationships between exogenous latent variables and endogenous latent variables. And mediator variable is Brand attitude.

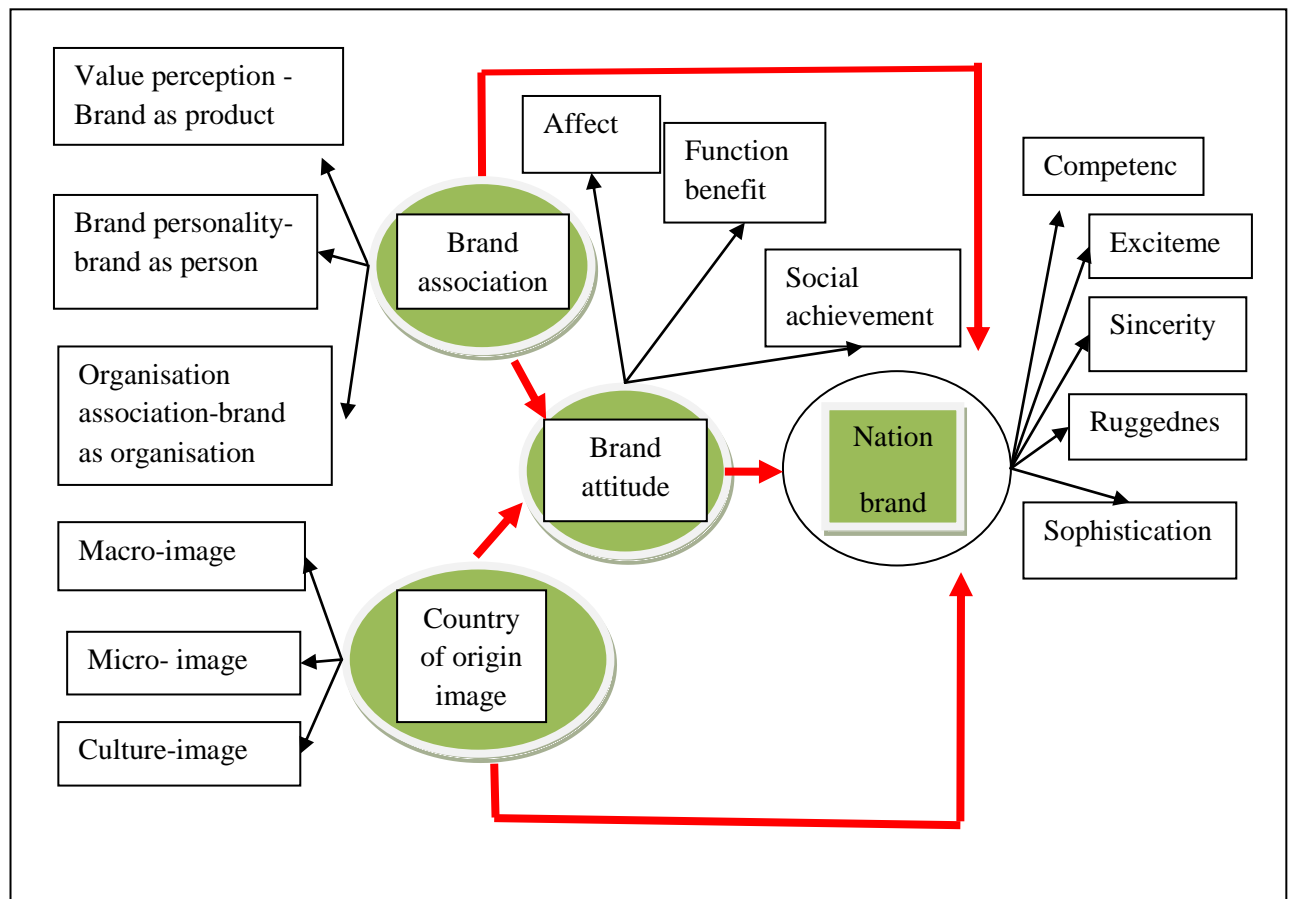


Figure 3.4
The relationships between exogenous latent variables and endogenous latent variables

The brand association (ASSOC) in the model encompasses three components, i.e., brand as product (PROASS), brand as person (BRDASS), and brand as organisation (ORGASS). The components of Country of origin image (COOI) in the Model include three components, i.e., macro-image (COOImac), culture image (COOIcul), and micro-image (COOImic).

Brand attitude in the model contains three components, i.e., functional dimension (BENEFIT), affective dimension (AFFECT), and social achievement dimension (ACHIVE). Nation brand image (NBT for Thai respondents, and NBF for

overseas respondents) consists of components, i.e., sincerity (SINCERE), excitement (EXCITE), competence (COMPET), sophistication (SOPHIS), and ruggedness (RUGGED).

3.6 Research design

Having identified the variables in a problem situation and developed the theoretical framework, the next step is to design the research in such a way that the requisition data can be gathered and analyzed to arrive at a solution (Sekaran & Bougie, 2009). Since this research aimed to investigate the cause-effect relationship between influential factors affecting a nation brand image and explain the interrelationships among the structural framework. Thus the quantitative research was used in this research. The quantitative approach is to test the cause-effect relationship and generisation (Neuman, 2006).

Population

The population refers to the entire group of people, events, or things of interest that the researcher wishes to investigate. It is the group of people, events, or things of interest for which the researcher wants to make inferences (based on sample statistics) (Sekaran & Bougie, 2009). The target population in this present research is tourists visiting Thailand, overseas tourists and Thai tourists.

For Thai community products, a review found that the target markets for Thai community products are mostly general consumers and tourists (Mesomboonpoonsuk, 2009, 2011; Boonratana, 2011). Moreover, the main objective of nation branding is to attract tourists (Fetscherin, 2010). The brand image is the way that consumers, both domestic and international, actual or potential, perceive nation brand (Mathia, Anthony, Kwabena & Austin, 2011). In addition, Ulla Hakala & Lemmetyinen (2011) suggested that in practice, in marketing a nation brand, it is important to manage the brand from the “bottom up”; in other words, starting from consumers. Therefore, this research is conducted on both overseas and Thai consumers.

Sample frame

Sample frame is a list of elements in the research population (Sekaran, 2003). An element is a single member of the population. In the present research each tourist visited Thailand is an element. Of those are both foreigner and Thai.

Sample Size

A sample is a subset of the population. It comprises some members selected from it. Information obtained from a subset of the population is known as the static (from sample). Researcher then attempts to make an inference about the population parameter with the knowledge of the

relevant sample static. A critical assumption in the process is that the sample chosen is representative of the population (Aaker, Kumar, Day & Leone; 2011). The three main considerations for sample size are the statistic analysis planned, the expected variability within subsets in the sample, and the traditional in the research area regarding what constitutes an appropriate sample size (Clegg, 1999).

In 2007, 14.46 million overseas and 83.23 million Thai tourists visited Thailand (Tourism Authority of Thailand), This research utilises the sample size table of Krejcie & Morgan (1970); the samples total 384 tourists with sample size of +/- five percent precision level, where confidence level is 95 percent and $p = .5$ (size of population is 97.69 million, sample size is 384). And with the proportion of foreign tourists and Thai visited Thailand in 2007, therefore, approximately 60 foreign and 324 Thai tourists are the samples.

In cross-cultural research, it is necessary that the samples from different countries be closely matched in terms of socio-economic and demographic characteristics (Brislin & Baumgardner, 1971 and White & Absher, 2013). The data of this study were, therefore, collected from 60 foreign and 324 Thai respondents, using the questionnaires being piloted and validated as discussed in section 3.7. The one-way ANOVA was performed to compare means of the two sample groups.

Because of the two groups of respondents mentioned above, one way ANOVA was used to test the attitude towards the variables that construct nation brand image. The result reveals that Thai and foreign consumers have different views about Thailand's image, both macro-image and culture image of Thailand, and also attitude (Affect) towards OTOP brand at the significance level of 95 percent.

Tables 3.1- 3.4 show the results of ANOVA which tests attitude towards the variables that construct nation brand image for 384 Thai and foreign respondents.

Table 3.1

Results of ANOVA testing of attitude toward the brand association construct for Thai and overseas respondents

Brand associations	Thai (n= 324)		Overseas (n= 60)		Sig.
	Mean	S.D.	Mean	S.D.	
PROASS (Brand as product)	3.73	0.600	3.67	0.699	0.444
BRDASS (Brand as person)	3.79	0.624	3.68	0.582	0.184
ORGASS (Brand as organisation)	3.38	0.637	3.33	0.543	0.522
ASSOC (Brand Association)	3.64	0.484	3.56	0.485	0.244

Table 3.2

Results of ANOVA testing of attitude toward the brand attitude construct for Thai and overseas respondents

Brand attitude	Thai (n= 324)		Overseas (n= 60)		Sig.
	Mean	S.D.	Mean	S.D.	
BENEFIT (Benefit)	3.74	0.677	3.56	0.561	0.053
AFFECT (Affect)	3.32	0.763	3.65	0.645	0.002
ACHIVE (Social Achievement)	3.22	0.893	3.15	0.676	0.592
ATTUDE (Brand Attitude)	3.42	0.650	3.43	0.490	0.745

Table 3.3

Results of ANOVA testing of attitude toward country of origin image construct for Thai and overseas respondents

Thailand Image	Thai (n= 324)		Overseas (n= 60)		Sig.
	Mean	S.D.	Mean	S.D.	
THMAC (Macro-Image)	2.95	0.772	3.36	0.485	0.000
THCUL (Culture Image)	4.24	0.673	4.54	0.592	0.001
THMIC (Micro-Image)	3.57	0.641	3.52	0.652	0.553
THIMAGE (Thailand's Image)	3.59	0.548	3.81	0.440	0.004

Table 3.4

Results of ANOVA testing of attitude toward OTOP brand image construct for Thai and overseas respondents

OTOP Brand Image	Thai (n= 324)		Overseas (n= 60)		Sig.
	Mean	S.D.	Mean	S.D.	
Sincere (Sincerity)	3.56	0.618	3.70	0.542	0.096.
Excite (Excitement)	3.47	0.692	3.43	0.515	0.653
Compete (Competence)	3.61	0.702	3.50	0.603	0.256
Sophis (Sophistication)	3.37	0.812	3.32	0.566	0.679
Rugged (Ruggedness)	3.32	0.790	3.68	0.644	0.001
NBI (Nation Brand Image)	3.78	0.487	3.79	0.410	0.846

Thus, this research involves two groups - Thai and overseas respondents to analyse a model for building up nation brand image.

Gathering an additional 100 samples of overseas respondents was performed. A total of 160 overseas samples were collected. The complete sample for analysis was carried out for 157 samples.

Thus, this research was conducted for 324 Thai and 157 overseas respondents to analyse the model, which is categorised into two groups of respondents.

For SEM, sample sizes in the range of 100 to 400 are suggested, subject to model complexity and basic measurement model characteristics (Hair, Black, Babin & Anderson, 2010). Bentler and Chou suggested that a ratio as low as five subjects per variable would be sufficient for normal and elliptical distributions, when the latent variables have multiple indicators and that a ratio of at least 10 subjects per variable would be sufficient for other distributions (Bentler & Chou, 1987, cited in Schumacker & Lomax, 2010).

Sampling

There are two major of sampling design; probability and non-probability sampling. In probability sampling, every element in the population has a known, nonzero probability of selection. As well, a probability sample has an element of true randomness in the selection process. Each member of the population has an equal probability of being selected. While non-probability sampling, a sampling technique in which units of the sample are selected on the basis of personal judgment or convenience. Technically, no appropriate statistical techniques exist for measuring random sampling error from a non-probability sample. Nevertheless, researchers sometimes find non-probability samples suitable for a specific researcher purpose. Non-probability samples are sometimes pragmatic and are used in business research (Zikmund, Babin, Carr, & Griffin; 2013). Many studies do not use random-sampling methods to select a sample. The

author chose convenience sampling, which suits the purpose of the study (Gall et al., 1996; Kinder, 2010).

Research data were collected by means of the mall-intercept approach. This face-to-face data collection at the popular shopping centers has been used more often since 1985 (Bush & Hair, 1985). The mall-intercept is a data collecting method based on the concept of Random Sub-Selection and Rotation. It is a survey whereby respondents are intercepted in shopping in malls. The process involves stopping the shoppers, screening them for appropriate respondents, and either administering the survey on the spot or inviting them to a research facility located in the mall to complete the interview. Although this method may not be representative of the population in general, shopping mall customers do constitute a major share of the market for many products. (<http://www.surveyanalytics.com/mall-intercept-method.html>).

In collecting data, the mall-intercept approach was used. The places on site are the OTOP trade fairs and also OTOP outlets in department stores, shopping centres and at the airport in Bangkok and surrounding areas. Participants included adolescents over 15 years in the intercept survey of the study, since adolescents have a grasp of the symbolism of the products and brands and can evaluate products on the basis of multiple attributes (functional, perceptual and social) (Roedder, 1999; Christian & Leheut, 2008).

Analytical Data

Structural Equation Modelling (SEM) was used to analyse the model. SEM analysis is known as causal modelling (Jeffrey, Kent, Kevin & Shimeall, 2005). SEM was developed in the mid-late 1980's in the social sciences arena as a method for modelling complex relationships.

There are several common types of SEMs (Jeffrey, Kent, Kevin & Shimeall, 2005):

- 1) CFA - commonly tests whether a pre-existing theoretical model is in line with a particular set of observations.
- 2) Path analysis, known as causal modelling, tests causes and effects of groups of factors or features.
- 3) Structural regression models are used to elucidate the underlying factors or constructs of observed variables and model the relationship between these theoretical constructs.

In this research, SEM was performed to explore nation brand image. It is a family of statistical models that seek to explain the relationship among multiple variables. It examines the structure of interrelationships expressed in a series of equations (Hair, Black, Babin & Anderson, 2010)

The technique to test the hypotheses in the current study utilised LISREL programme. Statistical significance levels of $p < .05$ for statistical tests were achieved in the hypotheses' tests.

In the general strategic framework for testing structure model, Joreskog (1993) distinguished among three scenarios (cited in Byrne, 2010). There are namely strictly confirmatory, alternative model, and model generating. In strictly confirmatory scenario, the researcher postulates a single model based on theory, collects the data, and then tests the fit of the hypothesised model to the sample data. As of the results of this test, the researcher either rejects or fails to reject the model. It is not further modified the model. During the alternative model case, the researcher proposes several alternative models, all of which are grounded in theory. Following analysis of a single set of empirical data, researcher selects one model as most appropriate in representing the sample data. Lastly, the model generating scenario represents the case where the researcher, having postulated and rejected a theoretically derived model on the basis of its poor fit to the sample data, proceeds in an exploratory (rather than confirmatory) method to modify and reestimate the model. In this instance, is to locate the source of misfit in the model and to determine a model that better describes the sample data. Really Joreskog (1993) recommended that the ultimate objective for testing structure model is to find a model that is both substantively meaningful and statistically well fitting (cited in Byrne, 2010).

Statistical assumptions for SEM

Linearity

SEM assumes that the variables are linearly related to one another. Because correlations represent only the linear association between variables, nonlinear effects will not be represented in the correlation value. If a nonlinear relationship is detected, the most direct approach is to transform one or both variables to achieve linearity (Hair, Black, Babin & Anderson, 2010).

A standard practice is to visualize the coordinate pairs of data points of two continuous variables by plotting the data in a scatterplot (Schumacker & Lomax, 2010). Scatterplot is the representation of the relation between two metric variables portraying the joint value of each observation in the two dimensional groups. It shows the dotted line that is linear line (Muala, 2010).

Homoscedasticity

Homoscedasticity is desirable because the variance of the dependent variable being explained in the dependence relationship should not be concentrated in only a limited range of the independent values. Homoscedasticity refers to the assumption that

dependent variable(s) exhibit equal levels of variance across the range of independent variable(s). The dispersion of values for the dependent variable should be as large as for small values of the independent values as it is for moderate and large values. In a scatterplot, it is seen as an elliptical distribution of points (Hair, Black, Babin & Anderson, 2010).

Normality

The most fundamental assumption in multivariate analysis is normality, considering the characteristics of the data distribution for an individual metric variable, and its correspondence to the normal distribution, the criteria for statistical methods. If the variation from the normal distribution is sufficiently large, the results of all statistical tests are invalid, because normality determination is connected with F and t statistics (Hair, Black, Babin & Anderson, 2010).

Univariate normality for a single variable is easily tested. Multivariate normality (the combination of two or more variables) is more difficult to test. Researchers should always assess the normality for all metric variables included in the analysis (Hair, Black, Babin & Anderson, 2010).

The shape of any distribution can be described by two measures: skewness and kurtosis. Skewness is used to describe the balance of the distribution. The unbalance is that it is shifted to one side (right or left). A positive skewness denotes the distribution shifted to the left, whereas a negative skewness reflects a shift to the right. Kurtosis refers to the “peakedness” (also termed leptokurtic) or “flatness” (that is termed platykurtic) of the distribution compared to the normal distribution. In the statistical programme, the skewness and kurtosis of a normal distribution are given values of zero. Then, the values above or below zero denote departures from normality. Positive skewness values indicate the distribution shift to the left and the negative values denote a rightward shift. Likewise, negative kurtosis values indicate a platykurtic distribution, whereas positive values represent a leptokurtic distribution (Hair, Black, Babin & Anderson, 2010).

Another way to describe a distribution of data is by using a box-and-whisker plot (sometimes called box plot). It is a diagram that utilises the upper and lower quartiles along with the median and the two most extreme values (lower and upper) to depict a distribution graphically. This diagram can also show outliers. The researcher can determine about the skewness from the box plot (Black, 2011).

This research provides two models to construct nation brand image - Thai and overseas model.

In conclusion this research has employed the concept of consumer based brand equity model and applied using a nation brand. SEM is performed to analyse the model. Two groups of respondents are examined, Thai and overseas consumers. The measures and indicators are deployed by previous studies i.e., Brand association dimensions (Aaker, 1996); Brand attitude dimensions (Christian, & Leheut, 2008); Macro-and Micro-image level measurement (Ravi, Pascale, & Cooksey, 2007); Culture image level measurement (Stepchenkova, 2009); and Brand Personality facet (Aaker, 1997). The pretest, 30 samples are performed; 26 Thai and 4 foreigners. The respondents totally for 324 Thai and 157 overseas are conducted to analyse the model.

3.7 Measurement of variables/instrumentation

Measurement is the process of describing some property of a phenomenon of interest, usually by assigning numbers in a reliable and valid way. The numbers convey information about the property being measured and researcher must have a rule for assigning a number to an observation in a way that provides an accurate description (Zikmund, Babin, Carr, & Griffin; 2013). The three major criteria for evaluating measurements are reliability, validity, and sensitivity. **Reliability** is an indicator of a measure's internal consistency. A measure is reliable when

different attempts at measuring something converge on the same result. Internal consistency represents a measure's homogeneity. **Validity** is the accuracy of a measure or the extent to which a score truthfully represent a concept. The four basic approaches to establishing validity are face validity (A scale's content logically appears to reflect what was intended to be measure), content validity (the degree that a measure covers the breadth of the domain of interest), criterion validity (the ability of a measure to correlate with other standard measures of similar constructs or establish criteria), and construct validity (exists when a measure reliable measures and truthfully represents a unique concept; consists of several components including face validity, content validity, criterion validity, convergent validity, and discriminant validity). **Sensitivity** of a scale refers to an instrument's ability to accurately measure variability in a concept. Sensitivity is generally increased by adding more response points or adding scale item (Zikmund, Babin, Carr, & Griffin; 2013).

In this study, the 1-5 Likert scale of occurrence which 1 = Strongly Disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Neither Agree nor Disagree, 4 = Agree, and 5 = Strongly Agree was used to collect data. The interval scale containing five or more categories of response as interval is normally used in business research (Zikmund, Babin, Carr, & Griffin; 2013). With the Likert scale, respondents indicate their attitudes by checking how strongly they agree or disagree with carefully constructed statements, ranging from very negative to very positive attitudes toward some object. The number of alternatives may range from three to ten or more (Zikmund, Babin, Carr, & Griffin; 2013).

This research has employed the concept of consumer based brand equity model and applied using a nation brand. The research instrument consists of five sections. Sections one, two, and three present brand associations, brand attitude and COO image measures, respectively. The fourth section measures OTOP brand image and employs brand personality scale to determine the image of OTOP. The final section is the questionnaire used to collect demographic data, as follows:

3.7.1 Brand associations measures

This research classifies brand associations into three types: brand as a product (perceived value), brand as a person (brand personality) and brand as an organisation (organisational association). This research explores brand associations from these three dimensions (Aaker, 1996).

According to Aaker (1996), “brand equity ten” (the ten measures of brand equity) are structured and motivated by the four dimensions of brand equity: loyalty, perceived quality, associations and awareness. For this tool, the two major efforts that measure brand equity across product classes are utilised. The first is brand asset valuator of Young & Rubicam (Y&R) Agency. This measurement uses a 32-item questionnaire to measure brand equity for 450 global brands and over 8,000 local brands in 24 countries. The second is taken from researchers who have measured brand equity annually in the form of perceived quality, brand knowledge and user satisfaction for US brands in 39 categories. With respect to the

five categories of brand equity mentioned above, the key associations/differentiation components of brand equity usually involve image dimensions that are unique to a product class or a brand. The challenge then, is to generate general measures that work across product classes. Measurement of associations/differentiation can be structured around three perspectives of the brand: brand as product (value), brand as person (brand personality), and brand as organisation (organisational associations).

Measures of Aaker's (1996) brand associations were used in this study due to three reasons. The first reason is that it is a measure that aims to determine brand equity directly, and this is in line with the purposes of the present research that aims to create brand image and develop it into brand equity. The second reason is these measures are proved to be sensitive to changes in brand equity. That is when brand equity changes, the measures should detect that change. For example, if brand equity falls because of a competitor action, the measures should be responsive to the change. The third reason is that the measures are applicable across brands, product categories, and markets. Aaker (1996) developed the above-mentioned measures and the quality of these measures has been confirmed in several other and his own studies, and especially in the work of Young & Rubicam (Y & R) Agency and the research of his own.

Table 3.5 demonstrates brand association dimensions, measures and indicators.

Table 3.5

Brand association dimensions, measures and indicators

Brand association dimensions (Aaker, 1996)	Measures	Indicators	Research instrument reference of measure and indicators
Brand as product	Perceived value	-This brand provides good value for money -There are reasons to buy this brand over competitors'	Aaker (1996)
Brand as person	Brand personality	-This brand has a personality -This brand is interesting -I have a clear image of the type of person who would use the brand.	Aaker (1996)
Brand as organisation	Organisation association	-This brand is different from competing brands. -This brand is basically the same as competing brands.	Aaker (1996)

3.7.2 The brand attitude measures

In principle, brand image is the totality of the brand from the perception of consumers, in both functional and symbolic dimensions. To measure these dimensions, the present research utilises Christian & Leheut (2008). This research aims to develop a measure of brand attitude that encompasses the customers' attitudes according to the hierarchy-of-effects model (thoughts, feeling and actions). This sequence of attitude forming in the customers' mind represents functional dimension (thoughts), affective dimension (feeling), and social dimension (actions). Costiuc (2009) and Vakratsas & Ambler, (1999) explain the sequence of outcomes reflective of three mental stages as follows. 1) Cognitive stage (thoughts) reflects awareness and knowledge in the customers' mind and knowledge about the object. 2) Affective stage (feeling) reflects like and preference, positive or negative evaluations of the object. 3) Social stage of attitude (actions) is a reflection which includes purchase intent or actual behavior, intention or actual behavior towards the object. This gives the researcher a very clear picture of the sequence of attitude forming and the steps to further develop a model to assess the actions to occur. Costiuc (2009) has described that this sequence occurs in a hierarchical order.

The Cronbach's Alpha of the three elements of brand attitude developed by Christian & Leheut (2008), are at a reliable level (functional dimension =0.907, affective dimension = 0.877, and Social dimension =0.772).

Table 3.6 demonstrates brand attitude dimensions, measures and indicators.

Table 3.6

Classification of brand attitude dimensions, measures and indicators

Brand attitude dimensions (Christian, & Leheut, 2008)	Measures	Indicators	Reference of Research instrument of measure and indicators
Functional dimension	Functional benefit	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - It's useful. - It's necessary. - It's practical. - It's efficient. 	Christian & Leheut (2008)
Affective dimension	Affect	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - I like it very much. - I appreciate it. - It's cool. 	Christian & Leheut (2008)
Social dimension.	Social achievement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - It helps you become part of a group. - It allows you not to go unnoticed. - It allows you to get more respect 	Christian & Leheut (2008)

3.7.3 Country of origin image measures

The COO image measures macro- and micro-country images. These variables were developed by Ravi, Pascale & Cooksey (2007), in "Country image and Consumer-based Brand Equity: Relationships and Implications for International Marketing". The author examined the relationship between consumers' country-level and product-level images of a country,

and the equity they associate with a brand from that country. The result indicates that the consumer-based equity of a brand is significantly associated with the macro- and micro-images of the COO of the brand.

In the assessment of COO image (Ravi, Pascale & Cooksey; 2007), respondents were asked to indicate the extent to which they agreed or disagreed with a series of statements given (country and product from a country). For the country image scale, macro- and micro-country image scales were used with the help of a pilot study using exploratory factor analysis (EFA). Second-order confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) was used to establish the dimensionality of respondents' country image perceptions at both macro- and micro-levels. These measures tested the hypothesis that both macro- and micro-country image are significantly associated with consumer-based brand equity. The study was conducted in Australia using a small intercept survey with a convenience sample ($n = 539$) of consumers from a major business and shopping area in the Adelaide central business district. The questionnaire was pre-tested using a judgement sample of 20 actual consumers and was subsequently revised to improve readability and understanding. The data were collected in 2002 by trained research assistants using systemic sampling: every 10th shopping mall consumer was approached to complete the survey questionnaire.

The measures of macro-image level that result from second-order CFA - standardised parameter estimates and goodness-of-fit measure are technological, economic and political. The dimensional measures of macro-level are as follows:

- Technological: developed country, industrialisation, technological research.
- Economic: high standard of living, welfare system, high labour costs.
- Political: civilian government, free-market system, democratic.

Ravi, Pascale & Cooksey (2007) has developed the valid and reliable measure for country of origin image through the process of validating the theory, testing and confirming the results statistically using the second-order CFA examination. The validation of the proposed measure was conducted in three countries of different sizes, including Japan, Malaysia, and China. All the fit indices suggest that the second-order CFA models fit the data adequately, for both macro and micro country images, for all the three countries. All factors exhibit high reliability (ranging from 0.75 to 0.96) for each of the three countries. All factor loadings are large, and indicate convergent validity for each second-order CFA model. For the discriminant validity, the average variance extracted for each dimension is greater than the squared correlation between the dimension and any other dimensions in each second-order CFA model.

Since OTOP is representative of the culture of the country, accordingly, this research adds culture as one of the measures. For culture measurement, the indicators are used from, “A Proposal for a Dynamic Destination Image Index (DDII): Concept, Construction and Validation”

(Stepchenkova, 2009). The indicators of culture dimension include: 1) country's history; 2) tradition and culture; and 3) cuisine, arts and literature and local people.

Stepchenkova (2009) demonstrated how DDII indices can be constructed. Two separate DDII studies were conducted for two dissimilar destinations: (1) Aruba on the US market; and (2) Russia on the UK market. Both studies used newspapers as a source of media content. To validate the DDII-Aruba and DDII-Russia, each index was used in a separate econometric model of tourism demand. The results indicate that models that include the DDII series perform significantly better than the restricted models with traditional economic variables. The research also suggests that the DDII can be useful for destination positioning, assessing the effectiveness of promotional campaigns and potentially, forecasting tourism demand to the destination.

The measure of the cultural image developed by Stepchenkova (2009) is adopted in this study because it is consistent with the objective of the present research in measuring the destination image of Thailand OTOP among tourists (Mesomboonpoonsuk, 2009, 2011; Boonratana, 2011). The index of destination image in this study includes images of culture and history, economic development, social issues, internal affairs, foreign affairs, safety, and tourism. The index has been checked, using the reproducibility or inter-coder agreement method for reliability and checked for the criterion validity.

Micro-level measures resulting from second-order CFA - standardised parameter estimates and goodness-of-fit measure (Ravi, Pascale & Cooksey; 2007) are innovation, prestige and design. The dimension measures of micro-level are as follows:

- Innovation: innovative, technological advancement.
- Prestige: proud to own, up-market, high status.
- Design: Reliable, excellent finish, dependable.

Tables 3.7 - 3.9 present COO image measurement, macro-image, culture image and micro-image level.

Table 3.7

Country of origin image measurement; macro-image level

Macro-image level measurement	Indicators	Research instrument reference of measure and indicators
Technological	developed country industrialisation technological research	Ravi, Pascale, & Cooksey (2007)
Economic	high standard of living welfare system	
Political	high labour costs	
	civilian government free-market system democratic	

Table 3.8

Country of origin image measurement; culture image level

Culture image level measurement	Indicators	Reference of research instrument measure and indicators
Culture	country's history traditions and culture cuisine, arts and literature, local people.	Stepchenkova (2009)

Table 3.9

Country of origin image measurement; micro-image level

Micro-image level measurement	Indicators	Reference of research instrument measure and indicators
Innovation	innovative technologically advanced	Ravi, Pascale, & Cooksey (2007)
Prestige	proud to own up-market high status	
Design	reliable excellent finish dependable	

3.7.4 The image of user and brand personality measures

This research employs the measurement of image of the user and brand personality from “This brand is for me: brand personality and user imagery-based self-congruity” (Parker, 2005). The brand personality aspect utilises brand personality scale (Aaker, 1997) to measure both brand and self-image.

A measure of brand personality, based on the human personality, was developed by Aaker (1997) and it has been widely accepted and used in research in brand personality. The "Big Five" dimensions of this measure include Sincerity, Excitement, Competence, Sophistication, and Ruggedness. These five dimensions were confirmed for reliability, validity and generalization measurement scale using the CFA method. A good model fit indicators are CFI = .98, GFI = .91, AGFI = .86, RMSR = .07, and Chi-square = 8216.806 (with 819 degree of freedom; $p < .01$). The factor congruence correlations for the five factors are high, ranging from 0.97 to 0.99. These consequently, provide supports for the stability of the five-factor structure.

Table 3.10 demonstrates brand personality scale (BPS); brand facet and indicators.

Table 3.10

Brand personality scale (BPS); brand facet and indicators

Brand Personality facet	Indicators	Reference of research instrument measure and indicators
Sincerity	Down-to-earth Honest Wholesome Cheerful	Aaker (1997)
Excitement	Daring Spirited Imaginative Up-to-date	
Competence	Reliable Intelligent Successful	
Sophistication	Upper Class Charming	
Ruggedness	Outdoorsy Tough	

3.7.5 Demographic data

The consumer groups of different age, gender, ethnicity, income, occupation, family life-cycle, lifestyle, interests and values are included in this present study to understand differences between functional and symbolic value with regards to the different needs of these consumer groups.

3.8 The instruments and pilot study

A questionnaire is a list of carefully structure questions, which have been chosen after considerable testing with a view to eliciting reliable responses from a particular group of people. Questionnaire design is concerned with a type of questionnaire, there wording, the order in which they are presented and the reliability and validity of the responses. It is essential that researchers pilot or test their questionnaires as fully as possible before distributing those (Collis & Hussey, 2014).

Two versions of the questionnaire, Thai and English, were used in data collection. Both versions were checked for accuracy of the two languages using the Back Translation by experts in Thai and English languages. Back translation is performed to ensure the translation is conceptually equivalent to the source. The back-translation is created by an independent linguist with no knowledge of the source text. Review and reconciliation of a back-translation against the source may indicate an error either in the harmonized forward translation or in the back translation. Following the reconciliation step, the original translators are notified of the findings and are asked to make necessary corrections to the forward translation or confirm that finding is simply a back translation error (Gawlicki, Brandt, Heinzman, McKown, Pollitz, & Talbert, 2013).

In this study, the back translation was done by two lecturers in a well-known university in Thailand, both of which hold a Ph. D. from an English speaking country. The forward translation was conducted by a Thai lecturer teaching at

Faculty of Business Administration Thailand, and the back-translation version was done by the Thai lecturer teaching at Faculty of Liberal Arts. This is in accordance with the instructions of the Geisinger (2003) suggesting that two different bilingual language experts were employed in the back translation process, to verify the translated source against the original version.

The questionnaire was carried out with 30 samples. Data was collected at OTOP products shop in Songkhla province. Cronbach's Alpha was used to test the reliability of measurement scales.

Descriptive statistics of a pilot test

The demographic data of a pilot test is presented in Table 3.11. The percentage of male and female respondents is 37.9 and 62.1. About 53.6 percent of the respondents hold Bachelor's degrees. About 50.0 percent are single. Most of the respondents are Government servants, Owner/Self-employed, Manager/Executive, and Student (20.7, 17.2, 13.8, 10.3 percent, respectively). All participants in the study are older than 15 years. Most of the respondents, are 26-35 years old (36.7 percent) and 36-45 years old (23.3 percent), Household income per month of the respondents are almost lower than 20,000 Baht and 20,001 - 50,000 Baht (34.5, 31.0 percent, respectively).

Table 3.11
The demographic data of a pilot test

(n=30)

Personal Background	Frequency (30)	Percent (%)
<i>Gender</i>		
Male	11	37.9
Female	19	62.1
<i>Education level</i>		
Primary School Graduate	1	3.6
High School Graduate	7	25.0
Bachelor's Degree	15	53.6
Master's Degree or higher	5	17.9
<i>Marital status</i>		
Single	14	50.0
Married but have no kids	5	17.9
Married and have kids	6	21.4
Divorced/Widowed	3	10.7
<i>Occupation</i>		
Manager/Executive	4	13.8
Retired	2	6.9
Professional/Technical	2	6.9
Student	3	10.3
Business employee	2	6.9
Manufacturing employee	2	6.9
Government servants	6	20.7
Owner/Self-employed	5	17.2
Others	3	10.3
<i>Age</i>		
15-25 years old	4	13.3
26-35 years old	11	36.7
36-45 years old	7	23.3
46-55 years old	2	6.7
56-65 years old	4	13.3
More than 6	2	6.7
<i>Household income per month (Baht)</i>		
Lower than 20,000	10	34.5
20,001-50,000	9	31.0
50,001- 80,000	3	10.3
80,001-110,000	1	3.4
110,001-140,000	3	10.3
140,001-170,000	0	0.0
170,001- 200,000	1	3.4
More than 200,000	2	6.9
<i>nationality</i>		
Thai	26	86.7
Foreigners	4	13.3

In pilot test, 30 samples were taken; 26 Thai and 4 foreigners (Malaysian tourists, Chez Republic, and Chile) at Hatyai International Airport, with convenience sampling. The two versions of the questionnaire were found to be appropriate. The process, the word, format and the alphabets are as follows:

1. Process:

- Period of time of less than 10 minutes per person for responding to the questionnaire is appropriate.
- The proportion of the respondents - Thai and foreign tourists by convenience sampling at Hatyai Airport was 6.5:1. The information available from the Tourism Authority of Thailand indicates a proportion of 5.4:1 of Thai and foreign tourists. So both sample sizes are acceptable.
- As for the foreign tourists, two out of nine interviewed have heard about OTOP, and two of four Malaysian tourists know about OTOP, but those from Chez Republic and Chile do not know of OTOP. Therefore, collection of data from OTOP shops or exhibitions or event displays or airport, are appropriate.
- All Thai tourists know of OTOP.

2. Questionnaire wording:

- The English version is easily understood. Everyone can easily answer the questions. Only one question about the micro-image of Thailand regarding welfare has to be answered descriptively.

- The Thai version is also easily understood. Four tourists suggested that some questions may be worded in the style that everyone can understand. They are listed as follows:
- The questions in Section 1 about brand associations: questions No. 2 and 6.
- Question in Section 2 about Thailand's Micro-Image: question No. 5.
- Question in Section 4 about question No. 6 - "Household income per month" should be replaced with "your income per month".

3. Format of the questionnaire

- The research format is easy to answer.

4. Reliability Test

Reliability refers to the accuracy and precision of the measurement and absence of differences in the results if the research were repeated (Collis & Hussey, 2014). In pilot test of this research, the reliability for each variable was performed using Cronbach's Alpha method. Cronbach's Alpha coefficient is one of the most widely used tests for checking the internal reliability of multiple-item scales. Each item is correlate with every other item that relates to the construct across the sample and the average inter-item

correlation is taken as the index of reliability (Collis & Hussey, 2014).

The results of the Cronbach's Alpha are as follows:

Brand associations	0.614
Brand attitude	0.904
OTOP brand personality	0.915
Thailand's macro-image	0.896
Thailand's culture image	0.914
Thailand's micro-image	0.889
OTOP user personality	0.906
<i>Overall indicators</i>	<i>0.957</i>

High reliability indicator constructs are highly interrelated, indicating that all of them seem to measure the same thing. Reliability between 0.6 and 0.7 is acceptable provided that other indicators of a model's construct validity are good (Hair, 2006). Reliability is also an indication of convergent validity; a high Cronbach's Alpha is an indicator of convergent validity (Nunnally, 1978; Reimer & Kuehn, 2005).

CHAPTER FOUR

RESULTS AND ANALYSIS

4.1 Overview

This chapter presents the analysis of the data and results from the study. It provides the characteristics of the samples, results of the statistical analyses, and discussion of the findings in detail.

The data analysis was carried out with descriptive statistics, multiple regression, and path analysis. SEM is use to analyse data with LISREL. Finally, the research hypotheses were tested. Findings are discussed for each hypothesis.

Details are presented as follows:

- 1) Personal background of the sample both Thai consumers and overseas consumers.
- 2) Brand image of OTOP as visualised by Thai and overseas consumers
- 3) Brand image of OTOP consumers both Personality of Thai and overseas consumers
- 4) Nation brand image model both Thai and overseas consumers and Hypothesis testing

4.2 Personal background of the sample

4.2.1 Personal background of Thai consumers

Table 4.1 summarises the personal background of the Thai people who are part of this study. The percentage of male and female respondents is 37.0 and 63.0. About 60.5 percent of the respondents hold Bachelor's degrees. About 65.4 percent are single. Most of the respondents are employees, business employees, students, and managers/executives (22.5, 17.6, 14.8, 11.7, 11.7, percent, respectively). All participants in the study are older than 15 years. Most of the respondents, are 26 - 35 years old (36.4 percent) and 15 - 25 years old (25.9 percent), Household income per month of the respondents are almost 20,001 - 50,000 Baht, lower than 20,000 Baht, and 50,001 - 80,000 Baht (29.9, 20.4, 16.7, percent, respectively). Details presents in Table 4.1.

Table 4.1
The personal background Thai respondents

(n=324)		
Personal Background	Frequency (324)	Percent (%)
<i>Gender</i>		
Male	120	37.0
Female	204	63.0
<i>Education level</i>		
Primary School Graduate	3	0.9
High School Graduate	57	17.6
Bachelor's Degree	196	60.5
Master's Degree or higher	68	21.0
<i>Marital status</i>		
Single	212	65.4
Married but have no kids	32	9.9
Married and have kids	77	23.8
Divorced/Widowed	3	0.9
<i>Occupation</i>		
Manager/Executive	38	11.7
Farming/Fishing	2	0.6
Retired	2	0.6
Professional/Technical	10	3.1
Housewife	20	6.2
Student	48	14.8
Business employee	57	17.6
Manufacturing employee	12	3.7
Government servants	73	22.5
Owner/Self-employed	38	11.7
Others	24	7.4
<i>Age</i>		
15-25 years old	84	25.9
26-35 years old	118	36.4
36-45 years old	67	20.7
46-55 years old	49	15.1
56-65 years old	6	1.9
<i>Household income per month (Baht)</i>		
Lower than 20,000	66	20.4
20,001-50,000	97	29.9
50,001- 80,000	54	16.7
80,001-110,000	45	13.9
110,001-140,000	22	6.8
140,001-170,000	11	3.4
170,001- 200,000	7	2.2
More than 200,000	22	6.8

4.2.2 Personal background of overseas consumers

Table 4.2 summarises the personal background of overseas consumers who are included in the study. The proportion of male and female is 53.5 and 46.5 percent respectively. About 75.8 percent of the respondents have a Bachelor's Degree. About 45.9 percent are single and 34.4 percent are married and have kids. The occupations of most of the respondents are managers/executives, professionals/technical, and business employees (45.9, 10.8, 10.2 percent, respectively). All participants in the study are older than 15 years. Most of the respondents, are 26-35 years old, 36-45 years old, and 46-55 years old (33.8, 30.6, 19.1 percent respectively). Household income per month of most of the respondents are 20,001-50,000 Baht, 140,001-170,000 Baht, 110,001-140,000 Baht, 50,001-80,000 Baht, and 80,001-110,000 Baht, (15.9, 15.3, 14.0, 13.4, and 12.7 percent, respectively). The sample group is diverse, comprising American, Canadian, Swedish, British, Irish, German, French, Swiss, Greek, Hellenic, Austrian, South African, Mexican, Iranian, Japanese, South Korean, Taiwanese, Chinese, Indian, Singaporean, Malaysian, Filipino, Myanmar and Laotian tourists.

Table 4.2
Personal background of overseas respondents

(n=157)		
Personal Background	Frequency (157)	Percent (%)
<i>Gender</i>		
Male	84	53.5
Female	73	46.5
<i>Education level</i>		
Primary School Graduate	2	1.3
High School Graduate	6	3.8
Bachelor's Degree	119	75.8
Master's Degree or higher	30	19.1
<i>Marital status</i>		
Single	72	45.9
Married but have no kids	30	19.1
Married and have kids	54	34.4
Divorced/Widowed	1	0.6
<i>Occupation</i>		
Manager/Executive	72	45.9
Retired	4	2.5
Professional/Technical	17	10.8
Housewife	7	4.5
Student	13	8.3
Business employee	16	10.2
Manufacturing employee	5	3.2
Government servants	2	1.3
Owner/Self-employed	14	8.9
Other	8	5.1
<i>Age</i>		
15-25 years old	18	11.5
26-35 years old	53	33.8
36-45 years old	48	30.6
46-55 years old	30	19.1
56-65 years old	6	3.8
More than 65 years old	2	1.3
<i>Household income per month (Thai Baht)</i>		
Lower than 20,000	10	6.4
20,001-50,000	25	15.9
50,001- 80,000	21	13.4
80,001-110,000	20	12.7
110,001-140,000	22	14.0
140,001-170,000	24	15.3
170,001- 200,000	14	8.9
More than 200,000	18	11.5
Missing data	3	1.9

4.3 Brand image of OTOP

The brand image of OTOP, as visualised by the customers as brand personality, is categorised according to Aaker (1997), who suggested the evaluation using mean and standard deviation.

4.3.1 OTOP brand personality as visualised by Thai consumers

Table 4.3 below presents the OTOP brand personality as visualised by Thai consumers. The most accepted personality is represented by ‘competence’, while the least accepted by ‘ruggedness’.

Table 4.3
Brand image of OTOP in terms of brand personality as visualised by Thai consumers

(n = 324)			
Brand personality facet	Trait	Mean	Standard deviation
<i>Sincerity</i>		<i>3.56</i>	<i>0.618</i>
	Down-to-earth	3.66	0.891
	Honest	3.66	0.823
	Wholesome	3.84	0.753
	Cheerful	3.08	0.867
<i>Excitement</i>		<i>3.47</i>	<i>.692</i>
	Daring	3.20	0.924
	Spirited	3.77	0.835
	Imaginative	3.65	0.910
	Up-to-date	3.26	0.887
<i>Competence</i>		<i>3.61</i>	<i>0.702</i>
	Reliable	3.75	0.823
	Intelligent	3.34	0.919
	Successful	3.74	0.852
<i>Sophistication</i>		<i>3.37</i>	<i>0.812</i>
	Upper Class	3.15	0.961
	Charming	3.59	0.863
<i>Ruggedness</i>		<i>3.32</i>	<i>0.790</i>
	Outdoorsy	3.40	0.910
	Tough	3.25	0.862

4.3.2 OTOP brand personality as visualised by overseas consumers

The viewpoint of overseas customers is summarised in Table 4.4. Overseas consumers prefer a high degree of ruggedness and a lower degree of sophistication.

Table 4.4
Brand image of OTOP in terms of brand personality as visualised by overseas consumers

(n = 157)			
Brand Personality Facet	Trait	Mean	Standard Deviation
<i>Sincerity</i>		3.32	0.721
	Down-to-earth	3.44	0.779
	Honest	3.35	0.861
	Wholesome	3.34	0.931
	Cheerful	3.15	0.928
<i>Excitement</i>		3.06	0.723
	Daring	2.92	0.851
	Spirited	3.06	0.849
	Imaginative	3.30	0.950
	Up-to-date	2.97	0.820
<i>Competence</i>		3.13	0.867
	Reliable	3.10	0.904
	Intelligent	3.18	0.966
	Successful	3.10	1.005
<i>Sophistication</i>		3.01	0.939
	Upper Class	2.86	1.100
	Charming	3.15	0.935
<i>Ruggedness</i>		3.53	0.883
	Outdoorsy	3.56	1.002
	Tough	3.50	0.931

4.4 Brand image of OTOP consumers

4.4.1 Personality of Thai consumers

Table 4.5 summarises personality of Thai consumers using mean and standard deviation. Thai consumers show a high level for sincerity and a low level for sophistication.

Table 4.5
Personality as estimated by Thai consumers

(n = 324)

Thai consumers s' personality facet	Trait	Mean	Standard deviation
<i>Sincerity</i>		<i>4.01</i>	<i>0.526</i>
	Down-to-earth	3.84	0.778
	Honest	4.15	0.691
	Wholesome	4.04	0.667
	Cheerful	4.01	0.755
<i>Excitement</i>		<i>3.84</i>	<i>0.547</i>
	Daring	3.77	0.753
	Spirited	3.95	0.650
	Imaginative	3.96	0.729
	Up-to-date	3.69	0.831
<i>Competence</i>		<i>3.89</i>	<i>0.568</i>
	Reliable	4.22	0.643
	Intelligent	3.78	0.721
	Successful	3.67	0.798
<i>Sophistication</i>		<i>3.15</i>	<i>0.854</i>
	Upper Class	2.79	1.035
	Charming	3.51	0.867
<i>Ruggedness</i>		<i>3.62</i>	<i>0.791</i>
	Outdoorsy	3.75	0.938
	Tough	3.49	0.926

4.4.2 Personality of overseas consumers

Table 4.6 below summarises the personality of overseas customers, determining the mean and standard deviation. Overseas customers self-assess their personality to be high for sincerity and low for sophistication.

Table 4.6

Overseas consumers' personality

		(n = 157)	
Foreigner consumers' Personality Facet	Trait	Mean	Standard Deviation
<i>Sincerity</i>		<i>4.074</i>	<i>0.53</i>
	Down-to-earth	4.08	0.81
	Honest	4.34	0.67
	Wholesome	3.98	0.82
	Cheerful	3.87	0.75
<i>Excitement</i>		<i>3.71</i>	<i>0.55</i>
	Daring	3.67	0.68
	Spirited	3.76	0.70
	Imaginative	3.71	0.74
	Up-to-date	3.69	0.77
<i>Competence</i>		<i>3.80</i>	<i>0.57</i>
	Reliable	3.95	0.67
	Intelligent	3.83	0.69
	Successful	3.61	0.70
<i>Sophistication</i>		<i>3.35</i>	<i>0.71</i>
	Upper Class	3.17	0.86
	Charming	3.52	0.76
<i>Ruggedness</i>		<i>3.75</i>	<i>0.75</i>
	Outdoorsy	3.74	0.84
	Tough	3.75	0.84

4.5 Image of brand and consumers

4.5.1 Brand image and consumer image in terms of brand personality as visualised by Thai consumers

It is noted that for Thai consumers, consumer image is high on sincerity while brand personality shows high on competence.

Table 4.7
Personalities of OTOP and Thai consumers

Personality	<i>OTOP brand</i> <i>(Mean)</i>	<i>Thai User</i> <i>(Mean)</i>
Sincerity	3.56	4.01
Excitement	3.47	3.84
Competence	3.61	3.89
Sophistication	3.37	3.15
Ruggedness	3.32	3.62

4.5.2 Brand image and consumer image in terms of personality as visualised by overseas consumers

The study of overseas customer personality and OTOP brand personality shows that customers choose sincerity, while ruggedness is chosen for brand.

It is further noted that the majority of both Thai and overseas consumers have self-visualised image of sincerity while Thai consumers prefer the brand image of competence and ruggedness.

Table 4.8
The personalities of OTOP and overseas consumers

Personality	<i>OTOP brand</i>	<i>Overseas customers</i>
Sincerity	3.32	4.07
Excitement	3.06	3.71
Competence	3.13	3.80
Sophistication	3.01	3.35
Ruggedness	3.53	3.75

4.6 Nation brand image model

The study divides the analysis of OTOP nation brand image (handicraft products, in particular) into two groups as mentioned in Chapter 3, i.e., Thai and overseas consumers. The viewpoint expressed by the two consumers groups upon the image of Thailand's OTOP with regards to macro-, micro- and culture images, affect and attitude, are different.

4.6.1 The descriptive statistics of the main variables

The three important factors influencing the nation brand image in this study are brand attitude, country of origin image, and brand associations. In this section the statistics of mean and standard deviation of the three variables are presented. (Mean and standard deviation of these three variables have been presented and discussed in section 4.3 Brand image of OTOP, 4.4 Brand image of OTOP consumers, and 4.5 Image of brand and consumers).

For the three elements of brand associations, the Thai consumers believe that the brand as person can associate the brand with consumers the most at an average of 3.79, followed by brand as product at an average of 3.73 and brand as organization at the lowest average of 3.38. While the foreign consumers consider brand as product and brand as person relating to the brand at an average of 3.35, and brand as organization at the lowest average of 3.24. The total average attachment of the brand to customers

for Thai consumers (3.64) is higher than that of the foreign customers (3.31). Details are presented in Table 4.9.

Table 4.9
*Mean and Standard deviation of brand association;
 Thai and overseas consumers*

Component of brand associations	Thai (n = 324)		Overseas (n = 157)	
	Mean	Standard Deviation	Mean	Standard Deviation
Brand as product	3.37	0.60	3.35	0.76
Brand as person	3.79	0.62	3.35	0.69
Brand as organization	3.38	0.64	3.24	0.73
Average of brand associations	3.64	0.48	3.31	0.59

Regarding the three elements of country of origin image, the Thai and foreign consumers consider the association between the country of origin image (Thailand) and the brand in the same way. The Thai consumers deem culture at the highest average, followed by micro image and macro image at an average of 4.24, 3.57, and 2.95, respectively; and those for the foreign consumers with an average of 4.18, 3.37, and 3.25, respectively. Details are shown in Table 4.10.

Table 4.10

*Mean and Standard deviation of Country of origin image;
Thai and overseas consumers*

Component of Country of original image	Thai (n = 324)		Overseas (n = 157)	
	Mean	Standard Deviation	Mean	Standard Deviation
Macro image	2.95	0.77	3.25	0.60
Micro image	3.57	0.64	3.37	0.64
Culture Image	4.24	0.67	4.18	0.74
Average of Country of original image	3.59	0.55	3.60	0.56

Regarding the three components of brand attitude, the Thai consumers hold the highest attitude on benefits at an average of 3.74, followed by Affective attitude towards the product at an average of 3.32, and social achieve at an average of 3.22. For the overseas consumers, emotional attitude toward the brand is at the highest average of 3.14, followed by benefits at 2.98 and social achieve at the minimal average at 2.83. Details are shown in Table 4.11.

Table 4.11

Mean and Standard deviation of brand attitude; Thai and overseas consumers

Component of Brand attitude	Thai (n = 324)		Overseas (n = 157)	
	Mean	Standard Deviation	Mean	Standard Deviation
Benefit	3.74	0.68	2.98	0.88
Affect	3.32	0.76	3.14	0.80
Social achieve	3.22	0.89	2.83	0.88
Average of Brand attitude	3.42	0.65	2.98	0.73

4.6.2 The Nation brand image model

This section presents the data management process and data analysis, the model and goodness of fit of structure model, and measurement variable test, both of the Thai and overseas consumers and finally the hypothesis testing for both the Thai and overseas consumers.

Here below detail the process of analysing the models.

4.6.2.1 Data screening

The purpose of data screening is to eliminate spurious data that may affect the data characteristics and influence the results. At this stage, missing data detection and outliers were conducted.

Missing data detection and outliers

The statistical analysis of data is affected by missing data values in variables. In fact, all analysis provides the results for variables in the dataset, as some values are missing. It is, therefore, reasonable to eliminate the items with data unavailability. Researchers can have the option of deleting subjects which have missing values, replacing the missing values, or using robust statistical procedures that accommodate the presence of missing data (Schumacker & Lomax, 2010).

Outliers or influential data points can be defined as the data values that are extreme or atypical, on either the independent or dependent variables, or both. Outliers can occur as a result of observation errors, data entry errors, instrument errors based on layout or instructions, or actual extreme values from self-reported data. Outliers affect the mean, standard deviation and correlation coefficient values (Schumacker & Lomax, 2010).

The study examined the target groups who completed the questionnaire. The target groups were selected from those who fully provided the information, particularly for all observed variables. Meanwhile, biased responses and outliers were also identified, for example, the response with the same scale for all items or extreme responses given, etc. Such target groups were eliminated, and finally, 324 and 157 successfully completed sets of questionnaires were obtained for Thai and overseas respondents respectively.

4.6.2.2 Statistical assumptions

SEM assumes that the variables are

- 1) *Linearity*
- 2) *Homoscedasticity* and
- 3) *Normality*

Appendix C depicts the linearity, homoscedascity, and normality, of Thai and overseas datasets.

In addition to examining the normal probability plot, statistical test for normality can be used to assess normality. It is a rule of thumb based on skewness and kurtosis values. The statistic value (Z) is calculated. The most commonly used critical values are ± 2.58 (.01significance level) and ± 1.96 , which correspond to .05 error level.

And with regard to Kline (2005), the absolute values of skewness and kurtosis should not be greater than 3 and 10 respectively.

Regards to the univariate and multivariate normality, univariate normality for a single variable is easily tested. Multivariate normality is the combination of two or more variables. In the simple sense, if the individual variables are normality and that their combinations are also normal. However, the reverse is not necessary true (two or more univariate normal variables are not necessarily multivariate normal) (Hair, Black, Babin & Anderson, 2010).

In this research, for Thai respondents, the mean and standard deviations show a range of variables that are non-significant. Table 4.12 illustrates this result.

Table 4.12

Summary of univariate statistics for the studied variables

(N = 324)

Variable	Mean	St. Dev.	Skewness	Kurtosis
PROASS	3.73	0.60	-0.12	0.31
BRDASS	3.79	0.62	-0.38	0.21
ORGASS	3.38	0.64	0.34	0.94
BENEFIT	3.74	0.68	-0.37	0.22
AFFECT	3.32	0.76	-0.06	0.52
ACHIVE	3.21	0.89	-0.27	-0.09
COOI _{mac}	2.95	0.77	-0.12	-0.24
COOI _{cul}	4.24	0.67	-0.70	0.04
COOI _{mic}	3.57	0.64	-0.23	0.09
SINCERE	3.56	0.62	-0.33	1.35
EXCITE	3.47	0.69	-0.51	0.99
COMPET	3.61	0.70	-0.54	1.49
SOPHIS	3.37	0.81	-0.38	0.67
RUGGED	3.32	0.79	-0.31	0.47

Table 4.13 below shows the statistic value (Z). It is noted that the hypothesis of zero skewness and kurtosis is rejected for BRDASS, ORGASS, COOI_{cul}, SINCERE, EXCITE, COMPET, SOPHIS and RUGGED. Thus, these variables exhibit non-normal distribution.

Table 4.13
Test of univariate normality for the studied variables.

(N = 324)

Variable	Skewness		Kurtosis		Skewness and Kurtosis	
	Z-Score	P-Value	Z-Score	P-Value	Chi-Square	P Value
PROASS	-0.93	0.35	1.16	0.25	2.22	0.33
BRDASS	-2.79	0.00	0.84	0.40	8.49	0.01
ORGASS	2.51	0.01	2.64	0.01	13.29	0.00
BENEFIT	-2.72	0.01	0.90	0.37	8.19	0.02
AFFECT	-0.45	0.65	1.72	0.08	3.17	0.20
ACHIVE	-2.01	0.04	-0.23	0.82	4.09	0.13
COOImac	-0.92	0.36	-0.91	0.36	1.68	0.43
COOIcul	-4.75	0.00	0.27	0.78	22.62	0.00
COOImic	-1.69	0.09	0.47	0.64	3.09	0.21
SINCERE	-2.39	0.02	3.35	0.00	16.92	0.00
EXCITE	-3.63	0.00	2.74	0.01	20.68	0.00
COMPET	-3.82	0.00	3.57	0.00	27.35	0.00
SOPHIS	-2.77	0.01	2.07	0.04	11.95	0.00
RUGGED	-2.24	0.02	1.60	0.11	7.55	0.02

Test of Multivariate Normality for Observe Variables

Skewness			Kurtosis			Skewness and Kurtosis	
Value	Z-Score	P-Value	Value	Z-Score	P-Value	Chi-quare	P-Value
26.39	18.35	0.00	281.30	13.45	0.00	517.80	0.00

In practice, however, the assumption of a multivariate normal data distribution often does not hold. Another option would be to fit the SEM to the normal scores rather than the original data. LISREL programme should normalise the data.

(<http://www.ssicentral.com/lisrel/techdocs/Session4.pdf>)

Data transformations provide the principle means of correcting nonnormality and heteroscedasticity. For nonnormal distribution, the two most common patterns are flat distributions and skewed distributions. For the flat distribution, the most common transformation is the inverse (e.g., $1/Y$ or $1/X$). Skewed distributions can be transformed by taking the square

root, logarithms, squared or cubed (X^2 or X^3) terms or even the inverse of variable (Hair, Black, Babin & Anderson, 2010). There are normally two reason to transform data. The first is to correct violations of the statistical assumptions underlying the multivariate technique. And the second is to improve the relationship (correlation) between variables (Hair, Black, Babin & Anderson, 2010)

Table 4.14 shows the normalised data sets with LISREL.

Table 4.14
Univariate normality normalised using LISREL method.

Variable	Skewness		Kurtosis		Skewness and Kurtosis	
	Z-Score	P-Value	Z-Score	P-Value	Chi-Square	P Value
PROASS	-0.40	0.69	-0.15	0.88	0.18	0.91
BRDASS	-0.28	0.78	-0.49	0.63	0.32	0.85
ORGASS	-0.01	0.99	-0.03	0.98	0.00	1.00
BENEFIT	-0.35	0.72	-0.61	0.54	0.49	0.78
AFFECT	-0.26	0.79	-0.47	0.64	0.28	0.87
ACHIVE	-0.07	0.94	-0.96	0.34	0.92	0.63
COOImac	0.00	1.00	0.05	0.96	0.00	0.10
COOIcul	-2.35	0.02	-2.92	0.01	14.06	0.00
COOImic	-0.11	0.91	-0.15	0.88	0.03	0.98
SINCERE	-0.13	0.90	-0.11	0.91	0.03	0.99
EXCITE	-0.08	0.94	-0.17	0.87	0.03	0.98
COMPET	-0.30	0.77	-0.51	0.61	0.35	0.84
SOPHIS	-0.21	0.83	-0.50	0.62	0.29	0.86
RUGGED	-0.24	0.81	-0.21	0.83	0.10	0.95

Likewise, for foreign respondents, the mean and standard deviations show the range of variables that are non-significant. Table 4.15 illustrates the result.

Table 4.15
Summary of univariate statistics for the observed variables
 (N = 157)

Variable	Mean	St. Dev.	Skewness	Kurtosis
COOImac	3.25	0.60	0.33	-0.566
COOIcul	4.18	0.74	-0.65	0.098
COOImic	3.37	0.64	0.22	-0.220
PROASS	3.35	0.76	-0.25	0.326
BRDASS	3.35	0.69	-0.20	0.707
ORGASS	3.24	0.74	-0.08	0.611
BENEFIT	2.98	0.88	-0.02	-1.009
AFFECT	3.14	0.80	0.12	-0.610
ACHIVE	2.83	0.88	-0.09	-0.371
SINCERE	3.32	0.72	0.10	-0.384
EXCITE	3.06	0.72	-0.07	-0.662
COMPET	3.12	0.87	-0.15	-0.524
SOPHIS	3.04	0.94	-0.26	-0.859
RUGGED	3.53	0.88	-0.37	-0.035

Table 4.16 shows the statistics value (Z). It is found that the hypothesis of zero skewness and kurtosis is rejected for COOIcul, BENEFIT, and SOPHIS. Hence, these variables are non-normal distributions.

Table 4.16

Test of univariate normality for the observed variables.

Variable	Skewness		Kurtosis		Skewness and Kurtosis	
	Z-Score	P-Value	Z-Score	P-Value	Chi-Square	P Value
COOI _{mac}	1.70	0.09	-1.90	0.06	6.51	0.040
COOI _{cul}	-3.17	0.00	0.42	0.68	10.23	0.01
COOI _{mic}	1.14	0.25	-0.50	0.62	1.55	0.46
PROASS	-1.33	0.18	0.94	0.35	2.63	0.27
BRDASS	-1.03	0.30	1.64	0.11	3.75	0.15
ORGASS	-0.44	0.66	1.48	0.14	2.38	0.30
BENEFIT	-0.09	0.93	-5.18	0.00	26.85	0.00
AFFECT	0.66	0.51	-2.13	0.03	4.96	0.08
ACHIVE	-0.46	0.65	-1.04	0.30	1.29	0.52
SINCERE	0.55	0.58	-1.09	0.27	1.49	0.47
EXCITE	-0.38	0.70	-2.42	0.02	5.99	0.05
COMPET	-0.80	0.42	-1.70	0.10	3.52	0.17
SOPHIS	-1.36	0.17	-3.76	0.00	15.96	0.00
RUGGED	-1.91	0.06	0.06	0.95	3.64	0.16

Relative multivariate kurtosis = 1.034

Test of multivariate normality for continuous variables

Skewness			Kurtosis			Skewness and Kurtosis	
Value	Z-Score	P-Value	Value	Z-Score	P-Value	Chi-square	P-Value
30.48	6.30	0.00	231.62	2.72	0.01	47.09	0.00

Similarly, LISREL programme should normalise the data.

(<http://www.ssicentral.com/lisrel/techdocs/Session4.pdf>)

Table 4.17 shows the normalised data using LISREL programme.

Table 4.17

Test of univariate normality for continuous variables

(N = 157)

Variable	Skewness		Kurtosis		Skewness and Kurtosis	
	Z-Score	P-Value	Z-Score	P-Value	Chi-Square	P Value
THMAC	0.11	0.92	-0.07	0.95	0.02	0.99
THCUL	-1.83	0.07	-2.21	0.03	8.21	0.02
THMIC	-0.01	1.00	0.04	0.97	0.00	1.00
PROASS	-0.04	0.97	0.02	0.98	0.00	1.00
BRDASS	0.02	0.98	0.16	0.87	0.03	0.99
ORGASS	0.39	0.70	0.66	0.51	0.59	0.74
BENEFIT	0.17	0.87	-0.65	0.51	0.46	0.80
AFFECT	-0.03	0.98	-0.11	0.92	0.01	0.99
ACHIVE	0.21	0.84	-0.19	0.85	0.08	0.96
SINCERE	-0.03	0.98	-0.02	0.98	0.00	1.00
EXCITE	0.11	0.92	-0.04	0.97	0.01	0.99
COMPET	0.01	0.99	-0.19	0.85	0.04	0.98
SOPHIS	-0.04	0.97	-0.27	0.79	0.07	0.97
RUGGED	-0.40	0.69	-0.78	0.44	0.76	0.68

Thus, after being transformed, the non-normal items showed an acceptable level of normality, which is less than 3 for skewness and less than 10 for kurtosis.

4.6.3 Descriptive statistics of latent construct

After the data screening was completed, the descriptive statistics for four latent constructs and its observed variables (items) were analysed as maximum, mean and standard deviations, as presented in Table 4.18 below.

Table 4.18 shows the mean value of five constructs consisting of 52 items; brand association (ASSOC), seven items, brand attitude (ATTUDE), 10 items, Country of origin image (COOI), 20 items, and OTOP brand image of Thai people (NBT), 15 items.

Brand association has the higher mean (3.64), while brand attitude shows the lowest mean value (3.42). The highest standard deviation is also found for brand attitude (0.650) and brand association presents the lowest standard deviation (0.484). The minimum and maximum means for four constructs ranges between 1 to 5.

Table 4.18
Descriptive statistics variable for Thai respondents

	ASSOC	ATTUDE	COOI	NBT
Minimum	2	2	2	1
Maximum	5	5	5	5
Mean	3.64	3.42	3.59	3.47
Std. deviation	0.484	0.650	0.548	0.593

Table 4.19 presents similar data analysis results as Table 4.18, with the data for overseas respondents. The mean value of five constructs consists of 52 items; i.e., brand association (ASSOC), seven items, brand attitude

(ATTUDE), 10 items, Country of origin image (COOI), 20 items, and OTOP brand image with data from overseas respondents (NBF), 15 items.

Thailand's image has the highest mean (3.60), while brand attitude shows the lowest mean value (2.98). The highest standard deviation is also found for brand attitude (0.730) and Thailand's image presents the lowest standard deviation (0.558). The minimum and maximum means for four constructs ranges between 1 to 5.

Table 4.19

Descriptive statistics variable with data for overseas respondents

(n=157)

	ASSOC	ATTUDE	COOI	NBF
Minimum	1.00	2.00	2.00	2.00
Maximum	5.00	5.00	5.00	5.00
Mean	3.31	2.98	3.60	3.21
Std. Deviation	0.590	0.730	0.558	0.711

4.6.4 Multicollinearity test

Multicollinearity results from analysis of variables in the data set are highly correlated (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2001). The high level correlation means the two sets of variables measure the same thing. The results of

multicollinearity statistics can affect data analysis, particularly in terms of interpretation of analytical results.

Table 4.20 presents the result of multicollinearity test for observed variables (Thai respondents) based on the assessment of tolerance value ranging from 0.53 to 0.69, and variance inflation factor (VIF) value of between 1.44 and 1.90. As a result, the tolerance value is substantially > 0.10 , and VIF value is < 10 . This result is acceptable due to the fact that it is irrelevant with multicollinearity among the variables in the data set.

Table 4.20

The multicollinearity test among observed variables (Thai Respondents)

Variable	Tolerance	VIF
Brand Association (ASSOC)	0.64	1.57
Brand Attitude (ATTUDE)	0.53	1.90
Country of origin Image (COOI)	0.69	1.44

*Dependent variable: NBT

Table 4.21 shows the result of multicollinearity test among observed variables (overseas respondents) based on the assessment of tolerance value ranging from 0.49 to 0.55, and VIF value ranging between 1.81 and 2.01. As a result, the tolerance value is substantially > 0.10 , and VIF value is < 10 . This result is acceptable due to the fact that it is free from multicollinearity among the variables in the data set.

Table 4.21

The multicollinearity test among observed variables using data for overseas respondents

Variable	Tolerance	VIF
Brand Association (ASSOC)	0.49	2.02
Brand Attitude (ATTUDE)	0.50	1.98
Country of origin image (COOI)	0.55	1.81

*Dependent variable: NBF

The above mentioned data provide the results for the properties of information from two samples groups. The following is the summary of measurement and the structure model together with hypothesis test.

The summary is divided into two sections: Section 1 comprises SEM, a model for building nation brand image for Thai consumers; while Section 2 is for overseas consumers. The latent variable and the pattern of relationship for variables in both groups are identical; details are given in Table 4.22. Exogenous latent variables include brand association (ASSOC) and Country of origin Image (COOI); while endogenous latent variables are contributed by brand attitude (ATTUDE) and nation brand image (NBT) for Thai respondents, and NBF for overseas respondents.

The brand association (ASSOC) in the model encompasses three components, i.e., brand as product (PROASS), brand as person (BRDASS), and brand as organisation (ORGASS). The components of

Country of origin Image (COOI) in the Model include three components, i.e., macro-image (COOImac), culture image (COOIcul), and micro-image (COOImic).

Brand attitude in the model contains three components, i.e., functional dimension (BENEFIT), affective dimension (AFFECT), and social achievement dimension (ACHIVE). Nation brand image (NBT for Thai respondents, and NBF for overseas respondents) consists of components, i.e., sincerity (SINCERE), excitement (EXCITE), competence (COMPET), sophistication (SOPHIS), and ruggedness (RUGGED).

Table 4.22
Variables under consideration in this study

Construct	Descriptive	Dimension of construct
Brand association (ASSOC)	Exogenous latent variable	Brand as product (PROASS) Brand as person (BRDASS) Brand as organisation (ORGASS)
Country of origin image (COOI)	Exogenous latent variable	Macro-image (COOImac) Culture image (COOIcul) Micro-image (COOImic)

Table 4.22 (Continued)
Variables under consideration in this study

Construct	Descriptive	Dimension of construct
Brand attitude (ATTUDE)	Endogenous latent variable	Functional dimension (BENEFIT) Affective dimension (AFFECT) Social achievement dimension (ACHIVE)
Nation brand image (NBT - Thai respondents; NBF - overseas respondents)	Endogenous latent variable	Brand personality: Sincerity (SINCERE) Excitement (EXCITE) Competence (COMPET) Sophistication (SOPHIS) Ruggedness (RUGGED)

4.6.5 Measurement variable test

4.6.5.1 Measurement of variable test for Thai consumers

Reliability test and validity test

The SEM, reliability and validity tests were performed to examine the tool used in hypothesis is measurement, to given the confidence in indicator and

result of model fitness. This section deals with the examination of constructs and indicator.

Regards to this research, the model has four constructs of nation brand image, brand attitude, Thailand's image, and brand association. Nation brand image consists of five personalities of sincerity, excitement, competence, sophistication, and ruggedness. Brand attitude is constitute of benefit, affect, and social achieve. Country of origin image has four indicators, i.e., macro-, culture and micro-image. Lastly, brand associations comprise of three indicators; brand as product, brand as person and brand as organization.

In SEM, Confirm Factor Analysis (CFA) is used to provide a confirmatory test of the measurement theory. A measurement theory specifies how measured variables represent a latent construct that is not measured directly (Hair, Black, Babin & Anderson, 2010). A measurement model should be valid and fit. Also, overall measurement model/CFA should be executed for all latent variables - exogenous and endogenous. The model constructs from four latent variables are shown in Table 4.23.

A measurement theory is used to specify how sets of measured items represent a set of constructs. The key relationships link constructs to variables (factor loading estimates) and construct to each other (construct relations), as described by Hair, Black, Babin & Anderson (2010).

CFA was used to confirm the factor loadings of the four constructs (nation brand image, brand attitude, Thailand's image, and brand association). Hair, Black, Babin, Anderson & Tatham (2006) provide a guideline to interpret factor loadings, where factor loadings with a value of +.50 or greater are considered very significant; a loading of +.40 is considered most important; while +.30 is considered significant.

The lowest factor loading of 0.37 in the current study is achieved by THCUL whereas other indicators show factor loading of more than 0.50, and hence, such indicators are important as observed variables measuring latent variable; details are given in Table 4.23.

Table 4.23
Factor loading and measurement error for each construct

Construct (Factor)	Indicator	Standardised loading
Brand association (ASSOC)	PROASS	0.64
	BRDASS	0.75
	ORGASS	0.55
Country of origin image (COOI)	COOI _{mac}	0.80
	COOI _{cul}	0.37
	COOI _{mic}	0.85
Brand attitude (ATTUDE)	BENEFIT	0.76
	AFFECT	0.77
	ACHIVE	0.70
Nation brand image (NBT)	SINCERE	0.70
	EXCITE	0.80
	COMPET	0.83
	SOPHIS	0.78
	RUGGED	0.74

Reliability Test

Reliability is the extent to which a variable or a set of variables is consistent with what it is intended to measure (Hair, Black, Babin, Anderson & Tatham, 2006). Reliability measures the degree to which a set of indicators of a latent construct is internally consistent within their measure. Highly reliable indicator constructs are highly interrelated, indicating that all of them seem to measure the same thing.

Reliability measurement for the research model focuses on two indicators, i.e., Cronbach's Alpha and Construct Reliability (CR). Both indicators in combination measure how consistency of latent variable is determined. Cronbach's Alpha and CR measure the reliability, although CR is preferred since it eliminates the problem of either over or underestimation (Piriyakul, 2010). Hair, Black, Babin & Anderson, (2010) suggest that the Coefficient Alpha remains a commonly applied estimate, although it may understate reliability. Different reliability coefficients do not produce dramatically different reliability estimates; in SEM, a slightly different CR value is often used. CR is computed from the sum of factor loadings (L_i) for each construct and the sum of the error variance term for a construct (e_i) (Hair, Black, Babin & Anderson, 2010).

$$\text{Construct reliability (CR)} = \frac{(\sum_{i=1}^n L_i)^2}{(\sum_{i=1}^n L_i)^2 + (\sum_{i=1}^n e_i)}$$

The rule of thumb for either reliability estimate is that 0.7 or higher is considered high reliability. Reliability between 0.6 and 0.7 may be acceptable provided that other indicators of a model's construct validity are good. High construct reliability indicates that internal consistency exists, meaning that the measures all consistently represent the same latent construct (Hair, Black, Babin & Anderson, 2010).

Table 4.24 summarises Cronbach's Alpha values and CR for each construct. Cronbach's Alpha value of brand association (ASSOC) is the lowest, i.e., 0.60, while brand attitude (ATTUDE) is the highest at 0.78. For CR, brand association (ASSOC) is the lowest at 0.69 and CR of nation brand image (NBT) is the highest at 0.88. The rule of thumb for reliability of latent variables shows consistency. All consistently represent the same latent construct.

Table 4.24
Reliability of research instruments- Cronbach Alpha and Construct Reliability

Variable Name	No. of Items	Cronbach's Alpha	No. of constructs	Construct Reliability (CR)
Brand association	7	0.60	3	0.69
Country of origin image	20	0.62	3	0.73
Brand attitude	10	0.78	3	0.79
Nation brand image	15	0.77	5	0.88
Total items	52	0.85		

Validity Test

Construct Validity Test

One of the primary objectives of CFA/SEM is to assess the construct validity of a process measurement theory. Construct validity is the extent to which a set of measured items actually reflects the theoretical latent construct that those items are designed to measure. Thus, it deals with the accuracy of measurement. The three most widely accepted forms of validity are convergent, discriminant, and nomological. Convergent validity scale is correlated with other relevant scales; discriminant validity scale is sufficiently different from other related scales; and nomological validity scale “predicts” as theoretically suggested (Hair, Black., Babin & Anderson, 2010).

Covergence validity

There are several ways to estimate the relationship of convergent validity for the items measured.

- ***Factor loading***

In the common construct, high factor loadings would indicate high convergence validity. The rule of thumb suggests that standardised loading estimates should be at least 0.5 or ideally 0.7 or higher. (The rationale behind this rule is the context of an

item's communality). The square of standardised factor loading represents the scale of variation in an item, which is explained by the latent factor, and is termed as the variance extracted from that item. (Hair, Black, Babin & Anderson, 2010).

- ***Average Variance Extracted (AVE)***

Average Variance Extracted (AVE) is a summary indicator of convergence. It is calculated as below (Hair, Black, Babin & Anderson, 2010).

$$\text{Average Variance Extracted (AVE)} = \frac{\sum_{i=1}^n (L_i)^2}{n}$$

It is recommended that the thresholds exist if CR > 0.6 and AVE > 0.5; then construct internal consistency is evidenced (Fornell & Larker, 1981).

Reliability is also an indicator of convergence validity.

- ***Discriminant validity***

Discriminant validity is the extent to which a construct is truly distinct from other constructs. Thus, high discriminant validity provides evidence that a construct is unique and captures some phenomena that other measures do not (Hair, Black, Babin & Anderson, 2010). In assessing discriminant validity in the data analysis, the discriminant validity exists when both composite

construct correlations are not higher than their reliability estimate (Gaski, 1984).

Table 4.25 shows convergence validity taking into consideration the AVE.

Table 4.25
Test of Convergent validity of the hypothesised model

Factor	Indicator	Standardised loading	Standardised loading2	Measure -ment error	Average variance extracted (AVE)
Brand Association (ASSOC)	PROASS	0.64	0.41	0.59	0.42
	BRDASS	0.75	0.56	0.44	
	ORGASS	0.55	0.30	0.70	
Country of origin Image (COOI)	COOI _{mac}	0.80	0.64	0.36	0.50
	COOI _{cul}	0.37	0.14	0.86	
	COOI _{mic}	0.85	0.72	0.28	
Brand Attitude (ATTUDE)	BENEFIT	0.76	0.58	0.42	0.55
	AFFECT	0.77	0.59	0.41	
	ACHIVE	0.70	0.49	0.51	
Nation Brand Image (NBT)	SINCERE	0.70	0.49	0.51	0.60
	EXCITE	0.80	0.64	0.36	
	COMPET	0.83	0.69	0.31	
	SOPHIS	0.78	0.61	0.39	
	RUGGED	0.74	0.55	0.45	

In the study, four factors (Latent variables) are brand association (ASSOC), Country of origin image (COOI), brand attitude (ATTUDE), and nation brand image (NBT). Among the measurement for all four factors, the measurement error of over 50 percent includes PROASS, ORGASS, THCUL, ACHIVE and SINCERE. However, in the

consideration of factors in the construct as a whole, it is noted that the latent variable of ASSOC alone shows the AVE to be lower than 0.50. However, when considering that the CR of ASSOC is 0.69, which is higher than 0.60, hence the measure for ASSOC can be acceptable (Fornell & Larker, 1981). Meanwhile, the other three latent variables, i.e. COOI, ATTUDE and NBT, are equal and higher than 0.5; 0.50, 0.55 and 0.60, respectively. Hence, the accuracy of measurement is acceptable.

Table 4.26 presents the inter-correlation among exogenous and endogenous variables in the study. Referring to the correlation coefficient for all dimensions, latent variables are in the range of 0.39 - 0.75. All constructs are significant at 0.001 level. The principle of correlation coefficient is the indication of strength of the association between any two metric variables. The relatively weak correlation with a range of 0.20 - 0.70 is sufficient to show the association between theoretically related constructs (Mayer, 1991).

In the study, the relationship between brand attitude (ATTUDE) and nation brand image (NBT) variables show a correlation coefficient of 0.75, indicating a marginally high relationship between the two variables.

Table 4.26

Correlation and correlation square matrix between exogenous and endogenous variables

Variable name	1	2	3	4
Brand association (1)	1.00	0.39 (0.15)	0.60 (0.36)	0.56 (0.31)
Country of origin image (2)	0.39 (0.15)	1.00	0.55 (0.30)	0.60 (0.36)
Brand attitude (3)	0.60 (0.36)	0.55 (0.30)	1.00	0.75 (0.56)
Nation brand image (4)	.56 (0.31)	0.60 (0.36)	0.75 (0.56)	1.00

* Correlation is significant at 0.001(2-tailed)

() = (Correlation)²

An AVE of lower than 0.5 indicates that on average, more error remains in the items than variance, as explained by the latent factor structure imposed on the measure.

With regards to AVE, the rationale behind this rule can be understood in the context of an item's communality. The square of a standardised factor loading represents how much variation in an item is explained by the latent factor, and is termed the variance extracted from that item. Thus, if a loading of 0.71 squared equals 0.50, then this means that the factor is explaining 50 percent of variation in the item; the other 50 percent being error variance (Hair, Black, Babin & Anderson, 2010). In this research,

there are four factors where the measurement error is over 50 percent (PROASS, ORGASS, THCUL, ACHIVE and SINCERE).

The discriminant validity is the extent to which a construct is truly distinct from other constructs. Thus, high discriminant validity provides evidence that a construct is unique and captures some phenomena other measures do not (Hair, Black, Babin & Anderson, 2010). Fornell and Larcker (1981) suggest that the square correlations between the constructs should be less than the variance explained by each construct.

Table 4.27 presents discriminant validity of all four latent variables, with brand attitude variable having square correlations between the constructs = 0.56, which is higher than the AVE of construct of 0.55. There exists a relationship with nation brand image. For brand association, country of origin image, and nation brand image, these variables are truly distinct from other constructs. It means that their characteristics are different from other variables.

Table 4.27
Discriminant Validity Test

The square correlations & the average variance extracted	Brand associations	Country of origin image	Brand attitude	Nation brand image
Brand association (AVE) = .42	1.00	0.15	0.36	0.31
Cuntry of origin image (AVE) = 0.50	0.15	1.00	0.30	0.36
Brand attitude (AVE) = 0.55	0.36	0.30	1.00	0.56
Nation brand image (AVE) = 0.60	0.31	0.36	0.56	1.00

* Correlation is significant at 0.001(2-tailed)

In summary, construct validity of the latent variables in the study, i.e., brand association, has a convergent validity marginally lower than the threshold, while Country of origin image and brand attitude variables have a discriminant validity marginally higher than the threshold as follows:

- 1) With convergent validity, the AVE reflects the brand association measure used in the study, i.e., PROASS, BRDASS and ORGASS, as constructs with 42 percent of brand association. The acceptable construct should measure a latent variable of over 50 percent; while the measures for other latent variables should determine over 50 percent of

the explored variables. However, the factor loading for each construct of brand associations include PROASS, BBDASS, and ORGASS of 0.64, 0.75, and 0.55, respectively (Details in Table 4.25). All three observed variables are considered acceptable latent variables, namely ASSOC (Hair, Black, Babin, Anderson & Tatham, 2006)

- 2) For discriminant validity, the comparison of AVE and square correlations for each latent variable shows that the brand attitude construct has minor correlation with latent variable construct, namely nation brand image. The internal construct of both variables, i.e., either variable pair, may show correlation and can establish the internal construct of both latent variables. However, considering AVE, it appears that the construct of ATTUDE, i.e., BENEFIT, AFFECT and ACHIVE, can explain the latent variable to an extent of 55 percent, and for the NBT, i.e., SINCERE, EXCITE, COMPET, SOPHIS and RUGGED variables can be explained to an extent of 60 percent (details in Table 4.25).

4.6.5.2 Measurement of variable test for overseas consumers

Reliability Test and Validity Test; the original model

A measurement model should be valid and fit. Also, overall measurement model/CFA should be executed for all latent variables - exogenous and endogenous.

The model constructs from four latent variables are shown in Table 4.28.

Hair, Black, Babin, Anderson & Tatham (2006) provide a guideline to interpret the factor loading, where factor loadings with a value of +.50 or greater are considered very significant; a loading of +.40 is considered most important; and a loading of +.30 is considered significant.

The lowest factor loading for the model appears two variables, ORGASS and COOIcul which factor loading are equal (0.57) and COMPET has the highest factor loading of 0.90. All measures have factor loading greater than 0.5, and hence with importance of being observed variable to determine latent variable. Details are given in Table 4.28.

Table 4.28

Demonstrates the factor loading and measurement error of each construct

Construct (factor)	Indicator	Standardised loading
Brand association (ASSOC)	PROASS	0.80
	BRDASS	0.68
	ORGASS	0.57
Thailand's image (COOI)	COOImac	0.83
	COOIcul	0.57
	COOImic	0.85
Brand attitude (ATTUDE)	BENEFIT	0.75
	AFFECT	0.79
	ACHIVE	0.77
Nation brand image (NBF)	SINCERE	0.82
	EXCITE	0.88
	COMPET	0.90
	SOPHIS	0.81
	RUGGED	0.65

Reliability test

Reliability measurement for research models can be performed using two indices, i.e., Cronbach's Alpha and CR.

The rule of thumb for either reliability estimate is that 0.7 or higher suggests good reliability. Reliability between 0.6 and 0.7 may be acceptable provided that other indicators of a model's construct validity are good. High construct reliability indicates that internal consistency

exists, meaning that the measures all consistently represent the same latent construct (Hair, Black, Babin & Anderson, 2010).

Table 4.29 exhibits Cronbach's Alpha values and construct reliability of each construct, the lowest Cronbach's Alpha of brand association (ASSOC) being 0.82, and nation brand image (NBF) being the highest at 0.95. The construct reliability shows CR of brand association (ASSOC) is the lowest at 0.73 while CR of nation brand image (NBF) is the highest at 0.91. Given the rule of thumb, reliability of latent variables studied show consistency. All the consistent results represent the same latent construct.

Table 4.29

Reliability of research instruments - Cronbach's Alpha and Construct Reliability

Variable name	No. of items	Cronbach's Alpha	No. of construct	Construct Reliability (CR)
Brand Association	7	0.82	3	0.73
Country of origin image	20	0.92	3	0.80
Brand Attitude	10	0.92	3	0.81
Nation Brand Image	15	0.95	5	0.91
Total Items	52	0.85		

Validity test

Construct validity test takes into account convergence validity, considering:

- Factor loading
- AVE
- Discriminant validity

Table 4.30 summarises the factor loading and AVE, while Table 4.31 shows the discriminant validity test.

Table 4.30

Test of convergent validity of the hypothesised model

Factor	Indicator	Standardised loading	Standardised loading²	Measurement error	Average variance extracted (AVE)
Brand association (ASSOC)	PROASS	0.80	0.64	0.36	0.47
	BRDASS	0.68	0.46	0.54	
	ORGASS	0.57	0.32	0.68	
Country of origin image (COOI)	COOI _{mac}	0.83	0.69	0.31	0.58
	COOI _{cul}	0.57	0.32	0.68	
	COOI _{mic}	0.85	0.72	0.28	
Brand attitude (ATTUDE)	BENEFIT	0.75	0.56	0.44	0.81
	AFFECT	0.79	0.62	0.38	
	ACHIVE	0.77	0.59	0.41	
Nation brand image (NBF)	SINCERE	0.82	0.67	0.33	0.91
	EXCITE	0.88	0.77	0.23	
	COMPET	0.90	0.81	0.19	
	SOPHIS	0.81	0.66	0.34	
	RUGGED	0.65	0.42	0.58	

In the current study, the four latent variables comprise brand association (ASSOC), Country of origin image (COOI), brand attitude (ATTUDE), and nation brand image (NBF). Among the measures for all four constructs, three show over 50 percent measurement error, i.e., BRDASS, COOIcul, and RUGGED. However, considering all the constructs as a whole, AVE is higher than 0.5 for a single measure except ASSOC. When considering the CR, it is noted that all the measures are over 0.73, and therefore have convergent validity.

Table 4.31 exhibits the inter-correlation among exogenous and endogenous variables in this study. As for the correlation coefficient for all dimensions, latent variables are in the 0.60 - 0.78 range. All constructs are significant at 0.001 level. The principle of correlation coefficient is the indicator of the strength of association between any two metric variables. The relatively weak correlation with a range of 0.20 - 0.70 is sufficient to show the association between theoretically related constructs (Mayer, 1991).

The correlation between Country of origin image (COOI) and nation brand image (NBF) variables has a correlation coefficient of 0.77, while brand attitude (ATTUDE) and nation brand image (NBF) have a correlation coefficient of 0.78. Both pairs of variables are marginally highly correlated.

Table 4.31

Correlation and correlation square matrix among exogenous and endogenous variables

Variable	1	2	3	4
Brand Association (1)	1.00	0.61 (0.37)	0.66 (0.44)	0.65 (0.42)
Country of origin Image (2)	0.61 (0.37)	1.00	0.60 (0.36)	0.77 (0.59)
Brand Attitude (3)	0.66 (0.44)	0.60 (0.36)	1.00	0.78 (0.61)
Nation Brand Image (4)	0.65 (0.42)	0.77 (0.59)	0.78 (0.61)	1.00

* Correlation is significant at 0.001(2-tailed)

() = (Correlation)²

Considering in combination with AVE to test the discriminant validity, Hair, Black, Babin & Anderson, (2010) and Fornell and Larcker (1981) suggested that the square correlations between the constructs should be less than the variance explained by each construct.

Table 4.32 presents discriminant validity of all four latent variables, which find only Country of origin image (COOI) with square correlations between the constructs of 0.59, which is higher than the AVE for a construct, which is 0.58.

Table 4.32
Discriminant validity test

Square correlations & the AVE	Brand Association	Country of origin Image	Brand Attitude	Nation Brand Image
Brand Association (AVE) = 0.47	1.00	0.44	0.37	0.42
Country of origin Image (AVA) = 0.58	0.37	1.00	0.36	0.59
Brand Attitude (AVA) = 0.81	0.44	0.36	1.00	0.61
Nation Brand Image (AVA) = 0.91	0.42	0.61	0.59	1.00

* Correlation is significant at 0.001(2-tailed)

In summary, construct validity of latent variables in the model for overseas consumers show a convergent validity which is higher than the threshold, but only Country of origin image shows discriminant validity marginally higher than the threshold. However, considering AVE of this latent variable, the observed variables of Country of origin image (COOI_{mac}, COOI_{cul} and COOI_{mic}) characteristics show 58 percent (Table 4.30).

4.6.6 Goodness of fit of Structural Model

A model establishing nation brand image comprises four latent variables: (1) brand association; (2) Country of origin image; (3) brand attitude; and (4) nation brand image.

The structure of brand association (ASSOC) variable constitutes three constructs, i.e., PROASS, BRDASS and ORGASS. The structure of Country of origin Image (COOI) variable encompasses three constructs, i.e., COOImac, COOIcul and COOImic; the structure of brand attitude is represented by BENEFIT, AFFECT and ACHIVE. The structure of nation brand image (NBT for Thai consumers; and NBF for overseas consumers) consists of five constructs, i.e., COMPET, EXCITE, SINCERE, RUGGED and SOPHIS.

As mentioned in Chapter 2, the variables in the buildup of image of nation brand are brand associations, Country of origin image and brand attitude, as illustrated in Figure 4.1, which shows the structure of variables and their correlation.

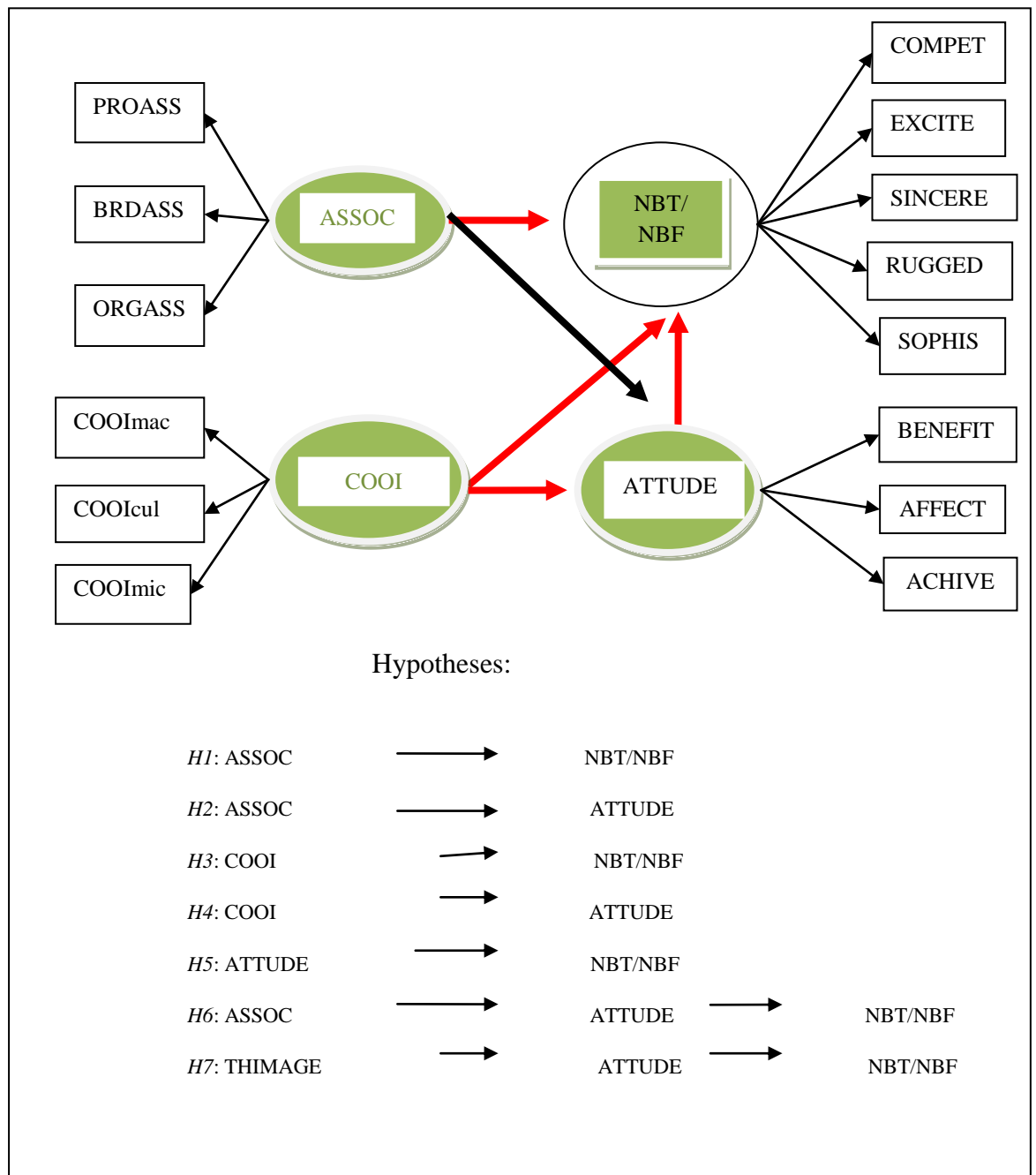


Figure 4.1
Nation brand image model and hypotheses

Goodness-of-fit (GOF) indicates how well a specified model reproduces the observed covariance matrix among the indicator items. There are a number of alternatives available to the researcher. Each GOF measure is unique, but the measures are classed into three general groups: absolute measures, incremental measures and parsimony fit measures (Hair, Black, Babin & Anderson, 2010).

Absolute fit indices provide the most basic assessment of how well the researcher's theory fits the sample data (Hair, Black, Babin & Anderson, 2010). Absolute fit indices are Chi-square (χ^2) statistic, Goodness-of-fit index (GFI), ROOT MEAN SQUARE ERROR OF APPROXIMATION (RMSEA), ROOT MEAN SQUARE RESIDUAL (RMR), STANDARDISED ROOT MEAN RESIDUAL (SRMR), AND NORMED CHI-SQUARE (χ^2 : *df* ratios).

Incremental fit indices assess how well the estimated model fits relative to some alternative baseline model. They are NORMED FIT INDEX (NFI), TUCKER-LEWIS INDEX (TLI), COMPARATIVE FIT INDEX (CFI), and RELATIVE NONCENTRALITY INDEX (RNI).

Parsimony fit indices provide information about which model among a set of competing models is best, considering its fit relative to its complexity. They are ADJUSTED GOODNESS OF FIT INDEX (AGFI), PARSIMONY NORMED FIT INDEX (PNFI).

GOF which utilized in this study, the model in the building up of nation brand image is acceptable in accordance with the conditions listed by Hair, Black, Babin & Anderson (2010). Considering both models for Thai as well as overseas consumers in the same hypotheses with the only difference being in the sample group data collection, the *absolute fit indices* uses in decision making for a goodness of fit models include χ^2 statistic, **RMSEA**, and **SRMR**. *The Incremental fit Indices* (assess how well the estimated model fits relative to some alternative baseline model) consider in CFI. And the *Parsimony fit indices*, PNFI is well thought-out.

Table 4.33 reveals the original model in the building up of nation brand image in this study. For Thai model it is good enough in agreement with the conditions set by Hair, Black, Babin & Anderson (2010). The *absolute fit indices* which used in decision making for a goodness of fit models include χ^2 statistic, **RMSEA**, and **SRMR**, can accept GOF. The *incremental fit indices* can accept a GOF under the condition of SRMR being 0.078. Considering the *Parsimony fit indices*, it is found that PNFI being 0.75. Thus the established model can effectively. While the overseas model it is not good enough in accordance with the conditions listed by Hair, Black, Babin & Anderson (2010). The absolute fit indices are not acceptable by χ^2 statistic and RMSEA; neither are the incremental fit indices, CFI. However, when considering the general criteria proposed by other scholars with determined by the NFI, CFI, SRMR, as shown in Table 4.34, the model can be accepted which are indicative of poor fit.

Considering the criteria of other scholars shown in Table 4.34, The proposed model for the Thai consumers as determined by the χ^2/df , RMSEA, NFI, CFI, SRMR, GFI, AGFI can be accepted through the Absolute fit indices, Incremental fit indices and Parsimony fit indices. For the overseas consumers the model determined by the NFI, CFI, SRMR, is accepted that known as indicative of poor fit. Hair, Black, Babin & Anderson, (2010) describes that to put the RMR, SRMR, and RMSEA into a category of indices sometimes known as badness-of-fit measures in which high values are analytic of poor fit.

Table 4.33
*Goodness of fit of structural model: Thai overseas sample group
(The original model)*

Model	Goodness-of-fit Indices					
Cutoff Value	Absolute fit indices		Incremental fit indices		Parsimony fit indices	
(Hair, Black, Babin & Anderson, 2010).	χ^2 statistic Significant p -value expected (N > 250)		CFI 0.92 or higher (N > 250)		PNFI High values represent relatively better fit.	
	Significant p -value even with good fit (N < 250)		Above 0.95 (N < 250)			
	RMSEA					
	Value <.07 with CFI of 0.92 or higher (N > 250)					
	Value < 0.08 with CFI above 0.95 (N < 250)					
	SRMR					
	0.08 or less (with CFI above 0.92) (N > 250)					
	0.08 or less (with CFI of 0.95 or higher) (N < 250)					
Thai						
(n= 324; m= 14)	χ^2 statistic	191.36	CFI	0.98	PNFI	0.75
	(p -value = 0.000)					
	df	71				
	RMSEA	0.078				
	SRMR	0.043				
Overseas						
(n= 157; m= 14)	χ^2 statistic	291.55	CFI	0.94	PNFI	0.72
	(p -value = 0.000)					
	df	71				
	RMSEA	0.16				
	SRMR	0.078				

Note: n= observations; m= number of observed variable

Table 4.34 The Threshold of Goodness-of-fit (GOF) accepted in academic circles

Table 4.34

The Threshold of Goodness-of-fit (GOF) accepted in academic circles

Fit indices	Cutoff value	Sources	Thai Original Model	Overseas Original Model
χ^2	Small and not significant p>0.05	Hair et al. (1998; 2006), Bollen(1989), Joreskog and Sorbom(1996)	191.36 P=0.00	291.55 9=0.00
χ^2/df	< 3	Hair et al. (1998; 2006)	2.70	4.11
RMSEA	< 0.08	Hair et al. (1998; 2006), Browne and Cudeck(1993)	0.078	0.16
NFI	> 0.90	Hair et al. (1998; 2006), Mueller (1996).	0.97	0.93
CFI	> 0.90	Hair et al. (1998; 2006), Mueller (1996).	0.98	0.94
SRMR	< 0.08	Hair et al. (1998; 2006), Hu and Bentler(Hu & Peter, 1999)	0.043	0.078
GFI	> 0.90	Hair et al. (1998; 2006), Hu and Bentler(Hu & Peter, 1999)	0.92	0.75
AGFI	> 0.80	Durande-Moreau and Usunier(1999), Harrison-Walker (2001)	0.87	0.63

Figures 4.2 and 4.3 present the correlation among latent variables in each construct and correlation of each latent variable for Thai and overseas sample groups for the original model.

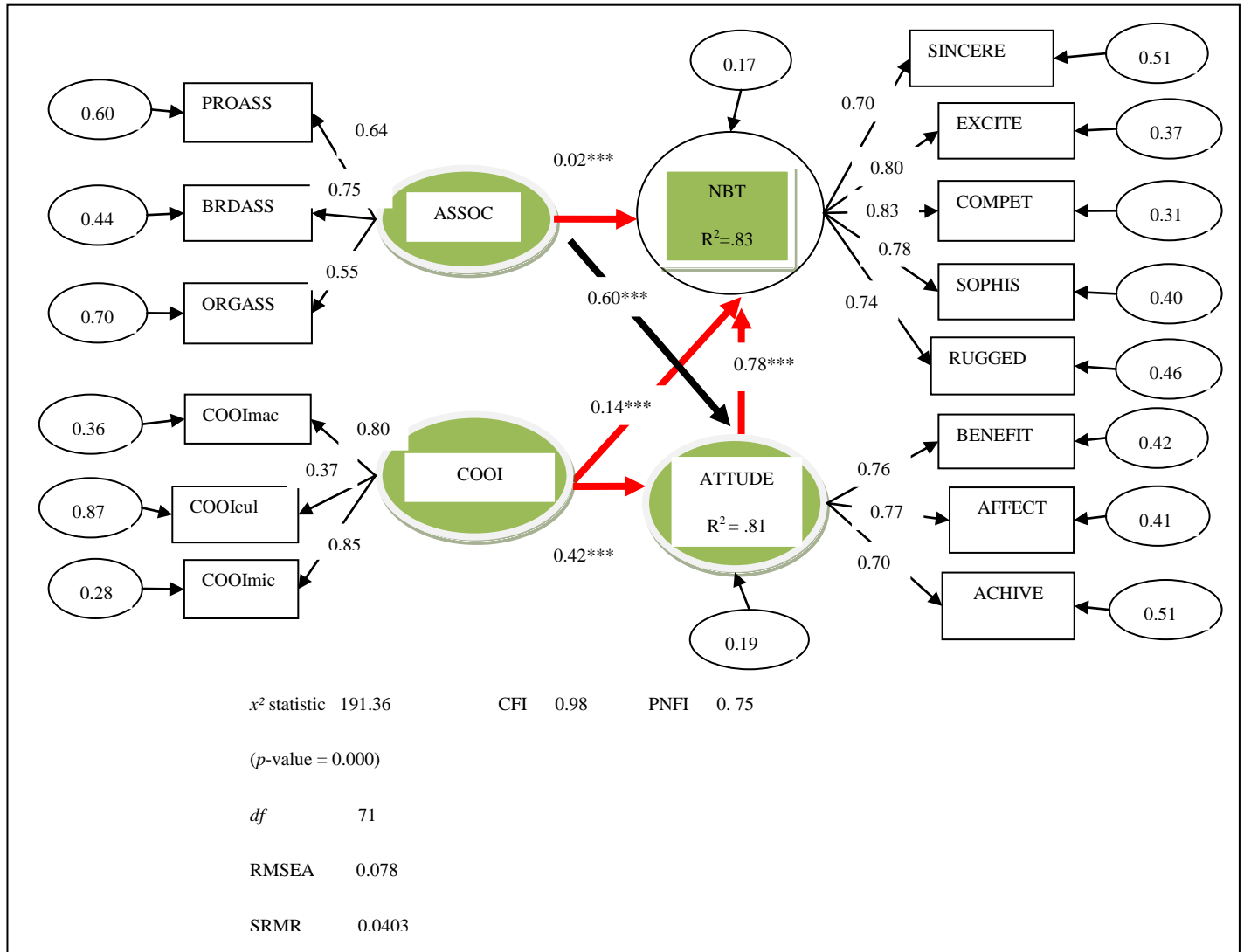


Figure 4.2
Correlation among latent variables for each construct and the latent variable in Thai sample group (standardised coefficients of the SEM Model); the original model

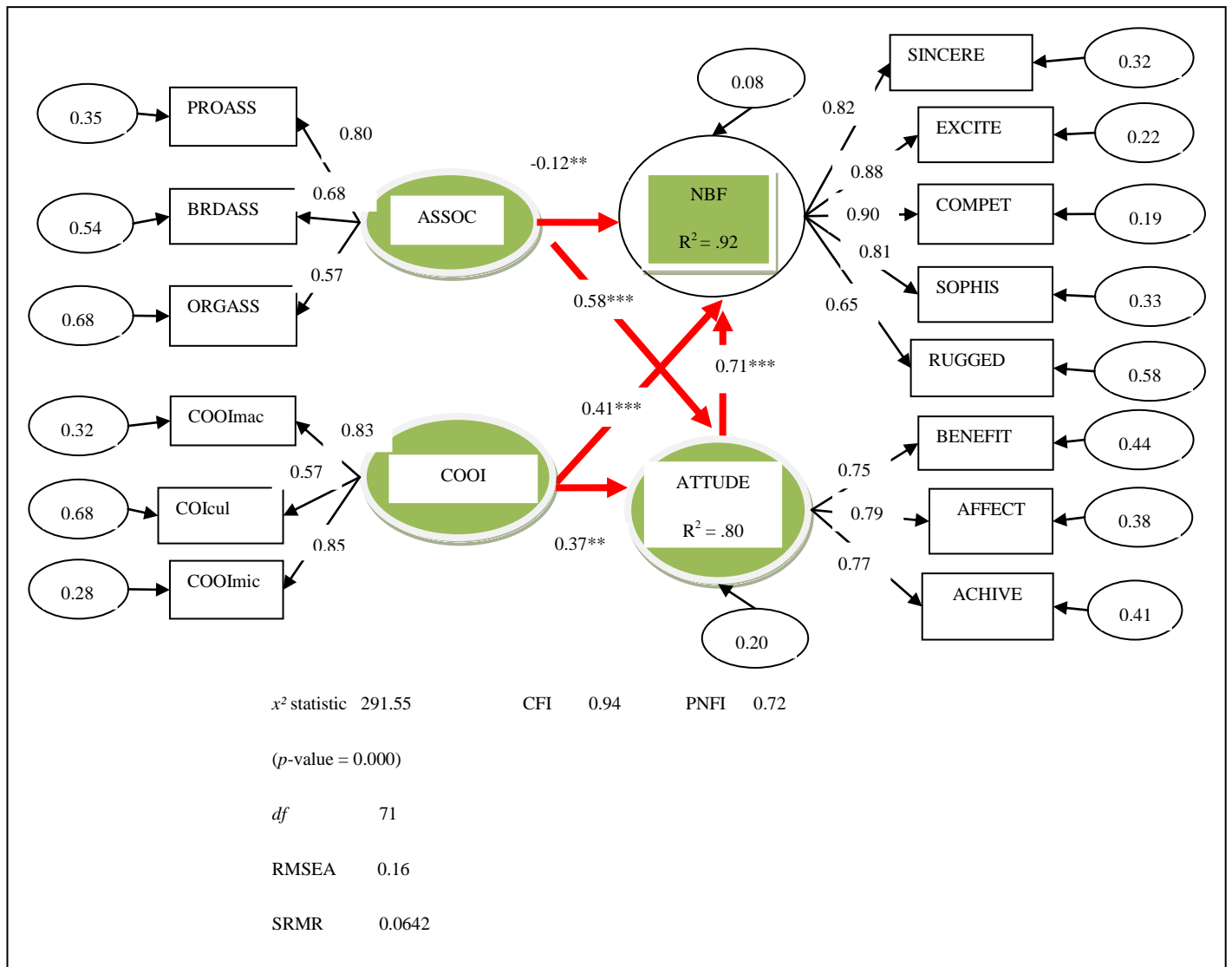


Figure 4.3
Correlation among latent variables for each construct and the latent variable in overseas sample group (standardised coefficients of the SEM Model); the original model

4.6.7 Hypothesis testing

In this research, there are five direct hypotheses to be established: 1) brand associations and nation brand image; 2) brand associations and brand attitude; 3) Country of image and nation brand image; 4) Country of origin image and brand attitude; and 5) brand attitude in relation to nation brand image. In addition, there is the mediating effect of brand attitude in the relationship between brand associations and nation brand image, and also the mediating effect of brand attitude in the relationship between Country of origin image and nation brand image. The hypothesis diagram present in Figure 4.1.

This research aims at testing the following hypotheses:

- H1:* Brand associations are related to nation brand image;
- H2:* Thailand's Image is related to nation brand image;
- H3:* Brand associations are related to brand attitude;
- H4:* Thailand's Image is related to brand attitude;
- H5:* Brand attitude is related to nation brand image;
- H6:* Brand attitude has a mediating effect on the relationship between brand associations and nation brand image; and
- H7:* Brand attitude has a mediating effect on the relationship between Thailand's image and nation brand image.

4.6.7.1 Nation Brand Image Model for Thai Observations

Tables 4.35 and 4.36 show the estimated unstandardised and standardised structure path estimates for NBT (Thai observations) for direct effect.

A direct effect represents the effect of an independent variable (exogenous) on a dependent variable (endogenous). Figure 4.32 shows the hypotheses test in determining the significance of each path coefficient, estimate of regression weight, standard error of regression weight and t- value.

According to hypotheses testing results as shown in Table 4.37, all hypotheses are supported. H1, H2, H3, H4 and H5 are strongly supported at 0.001 level.

The significant path coefficient (standardised parameter estimate) between brand associations and nation brand image is $\beta = 0.02$, S.E. = 0.07, t-value = 7.02; Country of origin image and nation brand image is $\beta = 0.14$, S.E. = 0.07, t-value = 6.92; brand associations and brand attitude is $\beta = 0.60$, S.E. = 0.08, t-value = 7.81; Country of origin image and brand attitude is $\beta = 0.42$, S.E. = 0.07, t-value = 5.91; and brand attitude and nation brand image is $\beta = 0.78$, S.E. = 0.19, t-value = 4.13.

Tables 4.35

*Structure parameter estimates; total effect for nation brand image model:
Thai respondents (NBT)*

Structure relationship	Unstandardised parameter estimate	Standard error	t-value	Standardised parameter estimate	Status
H1: ASSOC → NBT	0.49	0.07	7.02	0.02	Sig***
H2: COOI → NBT	0.47	0.07	6.92	0.14	Sig***
H3: ASSOC → ATTUDE	0.60	0.08	7.81	0.60	Sig***
H4: COOI → ATTUDE	0.42	0.07	5.91	0.42	Sig***
H5: ATTUDE → NBT	0.78	0.19	4.13	0.78	Sig***

*Significant at 0.05 level

**Significant at 0.01 level

***Significant at 0.001 level

Indirect effect or mediating effect occurs when a third variable intervenes between two predictor constructs. In this research, the mediating effect is tested between brand associations (ASSOC) and Country of origin image (COOI), and is mediated by brand attitude (ATTUDE) with nation brand image (NBT/NBF).

The mediating effect of brand attitude is tested and the results are shown in Table 4.38. This indicates that brand attitude is not the mediating effect in the relationship between brand associations and nation brand image, and also is not the mediating effect in the relationship between Thailand's image and nation brand image. Thus H6 and H7 are not supported.

Table 4.36

Direct and indirect impact (mediating effect) of hypothesis model

<i>H</i>	Exogenous	Mediator	Endogenous	Direct effect (std estimate)	Indirect effect (std estimate)	Total effect	Mediating hypothesis
<i>H6</i>	Brand associations	→ Brand attitude	→ Nation brand image	0.49	0.47	0.96	Not Mediating
<i>H7</i>	Thailand image	→ Brand attitude	→ Nation brand image	0.47	0.33	0.80	Not Mediating

Note: Indirect effect > Direct effect = Mediating effect

4.6.7.2 Nation Brand Image Model for Foreign Observations

Table 4.37 shows the estimated unstandardised and standardised structure path estimates for NBF (foreign observations) for direct effect. It shows the hypotheses test, in determining the significance of each path coefficient, estimate of regression weight, standard error of regression weight and t-value.

According to hypothesis testing, H1, H2, H3, H4, and H5 are supported. While H1 and H4 are supported at 0.05 level; H2, H3 and H5 are strongly supported at 0.001 level.

The significant path coefficient (standardised parameter estimate) between brand associations and nation brand image is $\beta = -0.12$, S.E. = 0.11, t-value = 2.69. Brand associations and brand attitude is significant at $\beta = 0.58$, S.E. = 0.14, t-

value = 4.25; Country of origin image and nation brand image is β 0.41, S.E. = 0.12, t-value = 5.43; Country of origin image and brand attitude is β = 0.37, S.E. = 0.13, t-value = 2.84; and brand attitude and nation brand image is β = 0.71, S.E. = 0.21, t-value = 3.39.

Table 4.37

Structure Parameter Estimates; Total Effect for Nation Brand Image Model: Foreign people (NBF)

Structure relationship	Unstandardised parameter Estimate	Standard error	t-value	Standardised parameter estimate	Status
H1: ASSOC → NBF	0.29	0.11	2.69	-0.02	Sig**
H2: COOI → NBF	0.67	0.12	5.43	0.41	Sig***
H3: ASSOC → ATTUDE	0.58	0.14	4.25	0.58	Sig***
H4: COOI → ATTUDE	0.37	0.13	2.84	0.37	Sig**
H5: ATTUDE → NBF	0.71	0.21	3.39	0.71	Sig***

*Significant at 0.05 level

**Significant at 0.01 level

***Significant at 0.001 level

The mediating effect of brand attitude was tested and the results are shown in Table 4.38. Results indicate that brand attitude is the mediator in the relationship between brand associations and nation brand image, while it has no mediating effect between Country of origin image and nation brand image. Thus H6 is supported but H7 is not.

Table 4.38

Direct and indirect impact (mediating effect) of hypothesis model

<i>H</i>	Exogenous	Mediator	Endogenous	Direct Effect (std estimate)	Indirect effect (std estimate)	Total effect	Mediating hypothesis
<i>H6</i>	Brand Associations	Brand Attitude	Nation Brand Image	0.29	0.41	0.70	Mediating
<i>H7</i>	Thailand Image	Brand Attitude	Nation Brand Image	0.67	0.26	0.93	Not Mediating

Note: Indirect Effect > Direct Effect = Mediating Effect

4.6.8 Summary of research finding

Results show that for the Thai model, brand associations are significantly correlated with brand attitude and nation brand image. There is not a mediating effect between brand associations and nation brand image.

For the overseas model, brand associations show significant correlation with nation brand image, although the correlation exists for brand attitude and nation brand image. Also detected is the correlation between brand associations and nation brand image through brand attitude, while Country of origin image shows direct correlation with nation brand image without the intervention of brand attitude.

Results of hypothesis tests for the two models are given in Table 4.39, while diagrams representing the correlation are shown in Figures 4.4 and 4.5.

Table 4.39

Summarised hypothesis test for both Thai and overseas respondents

Hypothesis	The relationships	Thai Model	Foreign Model
Hypothesis 1	Brand associations are related to nation brand image.	Supported	Supported
Hypothesis 2	Brand associations are related to brand attitude.	Supported	Supported
Hypothesis 3	Thailand's image is related to nation brand image.	Supported	Supported
Hypothesis 4	Thailand's image is related to brand attitude.	Supported	Supported
Hypothesis 5	Brand attitude is related to nation brand Image.	Supported	Supported
Hypothesis 6	Brand attitude has mediating effect on the relationship between brand associations and nation brand image	Not Supported	Supported
Hypothesis 7	Brand attitude has mediating effect on the relationship between Thailand's image and nation brand image.	Not Supported	Not Supported

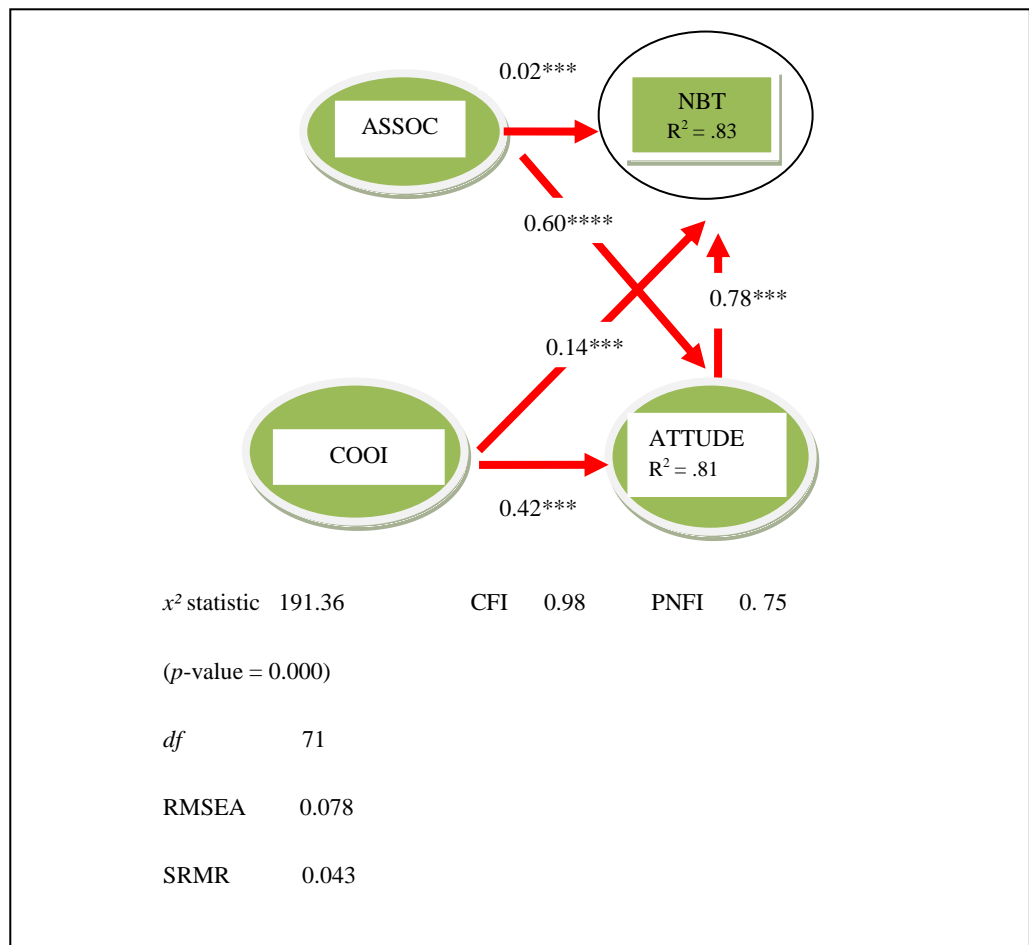


Figure 4.4
Model for Thai respondents

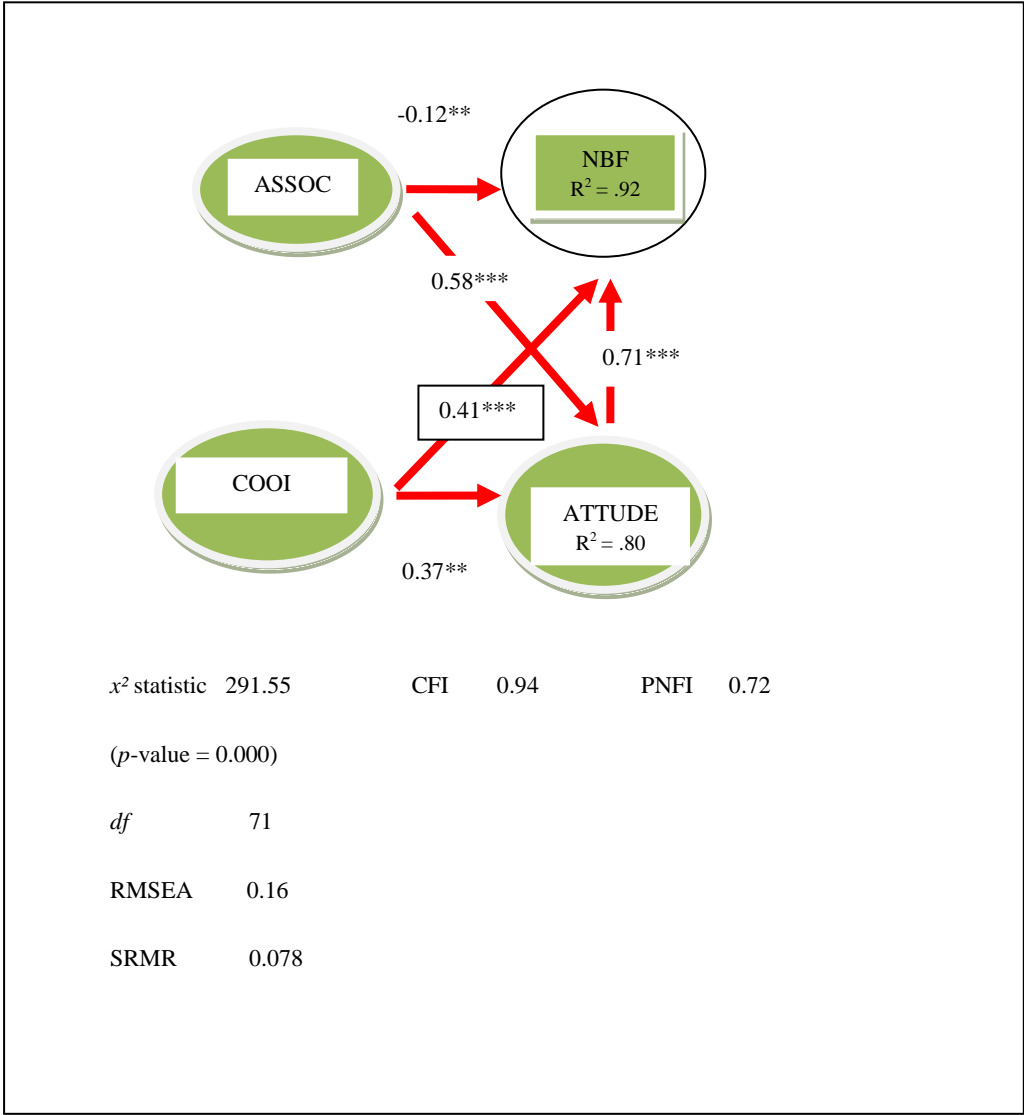


Figure 4.5
Model of overseas respondents

CHAPTER FIVE

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

5.1 Overview

This chapter provides an overall description of the study's results. It discusses the research findings regarding the relationship between each variable used in the present study to fulfill the objectives of the study. The research contributions and implications for both government and business sectors are suggested. The academic implications are highlighted as well. Finally, future researches are suggested.

The details present by objective.

5.2 First objective: To explore the brand image of OTOP and the image of the user in terms of the characteristics of brand personality.

OTOP personality for the Thai consumers

Most OTOP prospects for the Thai consumers are women, civil servants, private employees, students, administrators and independent business operators. Most of them hold a bachelor's degree, are at the age range of 15-

35 years, and have an approximately household income per month of less than THB 20,000 - 80,000.

OTOP brand personality for handicraft as visualised by Thai consumers shows the highest mean is for competence (mean=3.61, standard deviation=0.702), followed by other personalities, i.e., sincerity (3.56, 0.618), excitement (3.47, .692), sophistication (3.37, 0.812), and ruggedness (3.32, 0.790). And the personality of OTOP consumers shows highest mean for sincerity (mean=4.01, standard deviation=0.53), followed by other personalities in descending order, i.e., competence (3.89, 0.57), excitement (3.84, .55), ruggedness (3.62, 0.79) and sophistication (3.15, 0.85).

It is noted that the brand personality for consumers follows the same trend, although not identical. That is brand personality for Thai consumers are ranked in the order of competence, sincerity, excitement, sophistication, and ruggedness. The means of all these aspects of brand personality are not greatly different, ranging from 3.61 to 3.32. The user's personality aspects of the Thai consumers are ranking in the order of sincerity, competence, excitement, ruggedness and sophistication. The means of all 5 aspects of user's personality range from 4.01 to 3.15.

When consider these results together with the results of Confirm Factor analysis, The customers of OTOP products can be categorized into 5 personality groups of competence, excitement, sophistication, ruggedness, and sincerity (with standardised loading in an descending order: 0.83, 0.80, 0.78, 0.74, and 0.70). All five aspects of personality are able to determine OTOP brand image at the level of 60 percent for Thai consumers.

OTOP personality for the overseas consumers

The target OTOP foreign consumers are both men and women in an almost equal number. They are from a variety of ethnic groups, with the career as executive businessmen, professionals, artisans and private employees. Most of them hold a bachelor's degree, are at the age range of 26 to 45 years, and have an approximate household income per month of less THB 170,000. The nationality of consumers varies: Americans and Canadians in North America, Mexicans in South America, while Europeans include Swedish, British, Irish, German, French, Swiss, Greek, Hellenic and Austrian. Asian consumers comprise of Japanese, South Korean, Taiwanese, Chinese, Indian, Singaporean, Malaysian, Filipino, Myanmarese and Laotian. The consumers from the Middle East are Iranian and South Africans from the African continent.

OTOP brand personality for handicraft as visualised by overseas consumers shows the highest mean is for ruggedness (mean=3.53, standard deviation=0.88), followed by other personalities in descending order: sincerity (3.32, 0.721), competence (3.13, 0.87), excitement (3.06, 0.72) and sophistication (3.01, 0.939). And the personality of OTOP consumers shows highest mean for sincerity (mean=4.07, standard deviation=0.53), while other personalities follow in descending order: competence (3.80, 0.57), ruggedness (3.75, 0.75), excitement (3.71, 0.55) and sophistication (3.35, 0.71).

It is noted that the personalities of brand and of consumers are in a similar trend, although not identical. That is the brand personality in the eyes of

foreign customers is ranging from ruggedness, sincerity, competence, excitement, and sophistication. The means of all these aspects of brand personality are not greatly different, ranging from 3.53 to 3.01. The user's personalities of the foreign consumers are ranking in the order of sincerity, competence, ruggedness, excitement, and sophistication. The means of all 5 dimensions of user's personality range from 4.07 to 3.35.

When these results were considered with the results of Confirm Factor analysis on the nation brand image, the foreign customers of OTOP products can be categorized into 5 personality groups of competence, excitement, sincerity, sophistication, and ruggedness (with standardised loading in an descending order: 0.90, 0.88, 0.82, 0.81 and 0.65, respectively). All five aspects of personality are able to determine OTOP brand image at levels of 91 percent for overseas consumers.

Thus the consumer personalities follow the same trend for Thai and overseas consumers. The consumers possess five personalities, which have similar means. The factor analysis in combination shows the influence of different aspects of personality towards nation brand image. The producers can specify the target groups to suit the segmentation in five market components based on users' personality. The OTOP handicraft products can be developed to fulfill all five personalities.

In addition, the results from the Confirm Factor analysis signify that these five aspects of brand personality have an influential power for the Thai consumers in determining the brand image of OTOP at 60 percent and at 91

percent for the foreigners. The consumer groups organized according to these five personalities can be considered as the target groups that can influence the nation brand image of Thailand OTOP. Grouping the target market using the personalities as the psychological measure of the market segmentation is currently more popular because this provides the outstanding and varied target customers and helps the marketers in setting the appropriate Marketing Mix for the target customers.

The brand personality is like people with different personalities. Marketers link the personality of the people to the brand (Parker, 2005) to create a brand that has a personality in consistent with that of the target customers. Parameswaran (2006) suggests that it is essential that marketers create a brand personality. This is why brand personality is included as one aspect of brand image. If the brand personality matches the personality of the customers, or the personality they want to be perceived by others, this will make customers in favor of the brand (Craik, 1993; Malhotra, 1981; Sirgy, 1982), and will increase the brand value in the customer's mind (Marquardt, 2005). Moreover, knowing the brand personality help draw marketing activities of the brand to the customer's attention and build loyalty to the brand. This knowledge of brand personality can be applicable for both products and services [(Abel, Buff & O'Neill, 2013; Hogg, Cox & Keeling, 2000; Marquardt, 2005; and Parker, 2009)].

The results of this study show that personality of Thailand OTOP is in consistent with the personality of the user, although not as a close match. For

both the Thai and foreign customers, the consistency of the users' own personality and brand personality has been recognized. The OTOP entrepreneurs need to try tuning the match between the brand and user personalities.

As a result, it is recognised that the five groups of OTOP brand classified according to five brand personalities are clear and distinct, as visualised by both Thai and overseas consumers. The OTOP entrepreneurs can classify the target group by selecting either group or different groups.

To the present there has been no studies on grouping of customers based on personality, neither have the studies on the personality of Thailand OTOP brand from a review of this area of study. Most studies on OTOP products, have been done mainly on the buying behavior of customers (eg Jantarach, Sillabutra & Isaranurug, 2007; Siri-umpai, 2012; Usanit, 2011) and on how to promote OTOP. In practice, the government agencies responsible for the OTOP products are Ministries of Interior, and Ministries of Commerce to generate income for the locals. The promoted activities involve creating standard for the OTOP products, organizing the manufacturer group, making the distribution sales centers, providing sales centers to foreign countries, and varied activities in promoting the OTOP products.

Furthermore, The Ministry of Industry of Thailand and Institute for Small and Medium Enterprises Development have designated the target group for OTOP products; for e.g., for those who prefer a modern lifestyle - decoration and

household goods, handicraft items with focus on product creativity, conveying arts, culture, local wisdom and symbol-identity in combination with contemporary Thai style. Hence, the entrepreneurial groups operating OTOP may employ the market segmentation criterion based on the combination of modern lifestyle with the personality to capture the five target groups. The products should therefore show evidence of innovation regarding arts, culture, and local wisdom with unique identity showing contemporary Thai culture. It is expected that the customers may accept new product brands, provided brand personality is in congruity with customers' personality (Hassan, H. and Rahman, M.S., 2012; Sengupta, 2005).

Therefore, OTOP producers should emphasise cultural marketing, the positioning of OTOP products should be oriented with Thai culture and can be connect with tourism. When it is linked, it can provide opportunities and challenges in many aspects, e.g., maintaining and conserving the cultural heritage, achieving a better state of economic and social well-being for all sectors of a community, providing the tourists with a quality experience, and achieving sustainable tourism development (Jamieson, W., 2000).

The positioning of OTOP has designated to be innovative goods exhibiting arts, culture, and local wisdom, with a unique identity and show-casing contemporary Thai style. Therefore, the examination of brand image is essential for the benefit of marketing strategies planning. The examination of brand personality and that of consumers', is also important to improve the effectiveness of brand positioning strategy (Jamal and Goode, 2001).

5.3 Second objective: To investigate whether brand associations influence nation brand image.

This objective aims at examining the significant role of brand associations on nation brand image.

This study notes that brand associations influence nation brand image.

The main model for correlation between brand associations and nation brand image originates from the concept proposed by Aaker (1991) and Keller (1993), which is the base for creation of brand equity. Presently, there were researches that also supported the concept, for example, Faircloth (1996) who found that brand image is created from brand associations. In his research, brand associations are constituted by brand attitude, brand benefit and brand attribute. The components of brand associations in three issues here been differently grouped, the overall picture are similar or may be differently classified (Aaker, 1996; Anisimova, 2007; BeleÂn del RÃÂo, Rodolfo & Iglesias, 2001; Chen, 2001; and Keller, 1993). There are also other researches that confirm the relationship between brand associations and brand image e.g., research by Andersson & Robertson (2008) that brand associations influence brand image.

In the study of brand associations, sub-issues are studied in the creation of brand image, e.g., Park, Jaworski & MacInnis (1986) and Sirgy & Samli (1985), who supported the idea of brand associations with influence on brand image in functional and symbolic dimensions, which affect the creation of brand image.

The study of brand image later developed towards corporate brand image, e.g., Rui & Alwi (2008), who noted that brand associations affect the corporate brand image. It is obvious that basically, brand associations influence brand image and can be implemented for other brand images, e.g., a corporate brand image (Rui & Alwi, 2008). The current study aims at developing nation brand image.

In this study, brand associations are constituted by brand as a product, brand as a person and brand as an organisation. Considering the components of brand associations all three measures in this study for the measurement of brand association for Thai model, measuring 42 percent ($AVE = 0.42$). Brand as a person is the one with the greatest influence, followed by brand as a product and brand as an organisation (with factor loading weights of 0.75, 0.63 and 0.56, respectively). While for overseas model, all three components measure brand associations totally 56 percent overall ($AVE = 0.56$), with brand as a product showing the greatest influence, followed by brand as an organisation and brand as a person (with factor loading weights of 0.87, 0.71 and 0.65, respectively). However, all three components show significant influence on all aspects.

As a result, Thai consumers appreciate OTOP brand which reflects astuteness, while overseas consumers accept OTOP brand by considering utility, function, uses and appearance.

The results of this research are beneficial in marketing communications to both the Thai and foreign consumers and to create a brand image of Thailand OTOP. For the Thai consumers the most important association between the brand and the nation brand image is brand as a person, as a results the best way to make the customers to feel good and have a good image of the product is to stimulate their

pride of the Thai culture, such as neatness and refinement of the product. While foreign customers associate with the brand as a product, attracted to the physical features of product itself, so to establish the good image of the brand should be done through the design, packaging, ingredients, materials and functional use of the product.

Riezebos (2003) states that consumers prioritize the brand attributes according to their individual hierarchy of attributes. The product attributes are highly influential to brand assessment, and this concept is consistent with Parker (2005) who comments that if customers like the brand as a product, that is the brand is different from other brands in its physical attributes. If the customers care for the brand as a person, that is they are interested in the brand emotionally and take the brand as a symbolic attribute, taking it as specific goods. In this case it is difficult for the competitors to imitate the brand in the customer's mind. OTOP brand is associated more to the Thai customers as the specific goods than to the foreign consumers. This is because the Thai consumers have assimilated Thailand OTOP as a product of culture emerging from local knowledge and specifically characterized to its original area. The foreign customers, on the other hand get less of this types of emotional information and perception than do the Thai consumers. They are therefore more interested in physical attributes of the OTOP brand than its emotional attributes. To this finding, it is recommended that the involved agencies, both governmental and private promote OTOP product in terms of its cultural attributes, building the emotional perception to make the product unique and consequently make it more a value-added product as a product with good image.

The correlation coefficient of the nation brand image and brand associations of the Thai consumers was at 0.02 and that of the foreign consumers was at -0.12, both at a statistically significant level. This shows that for the Thai consumers, brand associations positively influence the nation brand image. On the other hand, there was a negative correlation between the nation brand image and brand associations for the foreign customers. In addition, brand as a product is the element of the brand associations that is most influential to the nation brand image for the foreign customers. It is, therefore, essential that OTOP operators focus more on developing the product that meets the foreign consumers' interest, in its physical appearance and functional elements, such as materials, design and packaging. Only after having positive brand associations, in physical aspects they then can be able to create emotional associations to the brand, appreciating its unique identity as a product of culture.

Regarding nation brand image, brand personality is explained (Parameswaran, 2006) using human personality basis (Parker, 2005; Ogilvy, 1983; Plummer, 1985; Aaker, 1997; Keller, 1998). The current study shows that Thai consumers recognise the brand image influenced by competence, excitement, sophistication, ruggedness and sincerity, respectively (with factor loadings of 0.83, 0.80, 0.78, 0.74, and 0.70). All these five components explain nation brand image at 60 percent ($AVE = 0.60$), which is similar to the personality visualised by overseas consumers, i.e., competence, excitement, sincerity, sophistication, and ruggedness (with factor loadings of 0.90, 0.88, 0.82, 0.81, and 0.65, respectively). All five personalities explain nation brand image at 91 percent ($AVE = 0.91$). It is noted that the five major OTOP personalities can be selectively created by producers.

But all personalities must be distinctly expressed in terms of arts, culture and local wisdom with uniqueness and identity of Thai cultural contemporary lifestyle (Ministry of Industry Thailand and Institute for Small and Medium Enterprises Development).

Segmented market strategy should be implemented by OTOP producers to achieve advantage in competing for target groups, and to respond to needs, using marketing mix to fulfill the target groups' demand. A brand with a symbolic concept is one designed to associate the individual with a desired group, role or self-image (Park, Jaworski & MacInnis, 1986). The positioning of OTOP to become a product associated with arts, culture and local wisdom with uniqueness and identity of Thai cultural contemporary lifestyle, can distinctly enhance the value via clear product images that make a difference from other items. A well-communicated image should help establish a brand's position. This potential impacts the importance of managing image over time (Park, Jaworski & MacInnis, 1986).

5.4 Third objective: To investigate whether the country of origin image influences nation brand image.

This objective aims to examine the significant role of the COO image on nation brand image. In this context, the COO image is Thailand's image. It is appreciated that country of origin image can influence the nation brand image for Thai as well as overseas consumers.

The result shows a positive coefficient between country of origin image and nation brand image. Among Thai consumers, the level of influence has standardised coefficient of 0.14 and 0.41 for overseas consumers. Thus, for overseas consumers, country of origin image greatly influences nation brand image.

The studies conducted on country of origin image that influence the brand image were given prominence during the 1990s, particularly branding, which had an increasing role for the country's reputation in the international arena. The concept was later utilised in developing the tourism industry which brought in huge revenues (summarised from Anholt, 2003, 2005a, 2005b, and 2007; Đorđević, 2008; Hulland, 1999; Jaffe & Nebenzahl, 2001; Koubaa, 2008; Mare & Toncar, 2009; Ravi, Pascale & Cooksey, 2005, 2006, 2007).

It is further found that the country of origin image affects nation brand image, which is in congruity with research conducted by Koubaa, 2008; Mare & Toncar, 2009; Norjaya, Mohd & Mohamad, 2007; and Ravi, Pascale & Cooksey, 2006. The effect of country of origin image on brand image is very strong (Koubaa, 2008). It additionally notes that for Thai customers, the level of influence upon country of origin image shows a standardised coefficient of 0.14, while for overseas consumers, the standardised coefficient is 0.41. Therefore, overseas consumers are highly influenced by the country of origin image. Thus, Aaker (2004) expresses an opinion that the importance of country image should be recognised since political and cultural pressures can affect the image and personality of a country. Whenever the image is unfavourable, it can become disadvantageous for the country, which is in line with the results of studies

conducted on overseas consumers. Country of origin's micro- and macro-images can highly influence country of origin image. For Thailand, country of origin image is positively correlated with OTOP brand image.

For Thai customers, it is noted that brand associations (coefficient = 0.02) is less influence than country of origin image (coefficient = 0.14). For overseas customers, country of origin image is also more important than brand associations (coefficient = 0.41 and -0.12, respectively). In addition, brand associations also have a negative influence on the nation brand image of OTOP. It is apparent that for a nation brand, country of origin image is more influential than the brand associations. However, the operators should build up functional, emotional and social aspects of brand associations so that they help influence the nation brand image in a positive way.

In the study of country of origin image as visualised by Thai consumers, using three measures, i.e., macro-, culture and micro-images, country of origin image evolves at 50 percent (AVE = 0.50). Country micro-image has the greatest influence in setting up country of origin image as well, followed by country macro-image, and culture image (factor loadings of 0.85, 0.80 and 0.37, respectively), while for overseas consumers, Country micro-image has a greater influence in setting up country image as well, followed by macro-images and culture image, and (factor loadings of 0.85, 0.83 and 0.57, respectively). All three measures depict country of origin image at 58 percent (AVE = 0.58). It was found that the country micro-image is the most influential factor on the country of

origin image. This includes the production of a nation brand with the prestige uniqueness, such as the brand is innovative with advanced technology; the brand conveys pride of ownership of goods from that country; and the brand is of high status goods, reliable and sold in up-market. It is essential that the production of a nation brand be drawn to the public or international attention because this is a more influential factor to the nation brand image than other aspects of country of origin image, especially for foreign customers. Promoting the nation brand in the international markets needs a joint effort of both public and private sectors to help create the micro-image of the goods produced in the country as a nation brand.

As for the macro-image of the country which is the second most influential factor to the nation brand image, the government should give appropriate attention to the country macro-image, such as the country stance as developed, industrialized with high technology, democratization of the country and a good welfare system.

For the cultural factors that influence the nation brand image, the government should promote the greatness of the country history, its rich culture, colourful cuisine, arts and literature, and the people. The government should invest in creating the attractive image of the country to attract money into the country through exports, direct investment, education and tourism (Fanning, 2011).

5.5 Forth objective: To investigate whether brand associations influence brand attitude.

This objective aims to examine the significant role of brand associations on brand attitude.

It is noted that brand associations have an influence on brand attitude, which is significant at a level of 0.001 for all consumers. The level of influence of brand associations upon brand attitude for Thai consumers is higher than for overseas counterparts (Thai consumers have standardised coefficient of 0.60, and for overseas consumers, standardised coefficient is 0.58).

A number of researches support the correlation between brand associations and brand attitude, stating that brand associations enhance the attitude towards product brand, e.g., Keller & Lehmann (2003); and Jeessun & Chan-Olmsted (2005). Additionally, Jeessun & Chan-Olmsted (2005) reported that product-related attribute beliefs influence brand attitude at a high level, the explanatory power of organisation–public relationship is less effective than the product-related attribute beliefs. Results of a study by Chan-Olmsted (2005) show that brand as a product is more influential than brand as an organization to the brand image for both foreign and domestic customers. This finding is in consistent with the findings of the present study, and both confirm that the functional attribute of the product has a major influence toward the customers' brand attitude.

As for the symbolic component of brand associations, e.g., logos, signatures, and product pictures, research conducted by Valentin, Maria & Carbon (2011) report that the brand identifiers (such as logos, signatures and product pictures) are not affected by brand attitude.

However, in this research brand as a person, in emotional and symbolic dimensions was found as the second influential factor toward brand attitude for the Thai customers, following the brand as a product, while the foreign consumers

perceived brand as a person as the third priority of influence after the brand as product and brand as organization, both at a statistically significant level.

The brand attitude as visualised by Thai consumers, is measured with three components, i.e., function benefit, affect and social achievement. All three measures determine brand attitude at 55 percent ($AVE = 0.55$). Affect has the greatest influence, followed by function benefit and social achievement (factor loadings of 0.77, 0.76 and 0.70, respectively). For overseas consumers, affect is influential in setting up brand attitude, followed by social achievement and function benefit (factor loadings of 0.79, 0.77 and 0.75, respectively). All three measures determine brand attitude at 81 percent ($AVE = 0.81$). It can be suggested that the emotional attribute of brand associations has the highest influence on the formation of brand attitude for both Thai and foreign customers. Nevertheless, among the foreign customers the attribute of social achievement has a higher influence on brand attitude than that of the Thai customers. For Thai customers the functional benefit plays a more important role than does the social achievement in forming brand attitude in the customers' mind.

For affective and social achievement dimensions, a number of researches conducted on the environmental relevance, e.g., Rios, Martí'nez, Moreno & Soriano (2006), noted that environmental attributes have a role in the formation of brand attitudes, and also found that functional attributes have a greater influence on brand attitude than environmental attributes.

The results of the present research are consistent with those presented in the research done by Rios, Marti'nez, Moreno & Soriano (2006) in that the functional attribute of brand associations had a higher influence over the organization attribute, thus confirming that the OTOP operators should give more attention in developing the functional attribute of the product. However, OTOP entrepreneurs can use the social attribute in environment concerns, linking the product with brand associations in terms of environmental and social benefits. CSR (Corporate Social Responsibility), for example, is one scheme for environmental support currently used among world leading businesses.

For Thailand OTOP, the corporate social responsibility should focus on such roles as creating sustainable jobs and income for the rural households in the OTOP areas and conservation and improvement of local natural resources and the existing indigenous knowledge. These social care schemes are relevant to the concept of social marketing stating that businesses need to consider the needs and interests of customers and be committed to delivering value to their customers in maintain and improving the well-being of customers and for the better society in general (Kotler and Armstrong, 2003).

5.6 Fifth objective: To investigate whether the country of origin image influences brand attitude.

It is noted that country of origin image has an influence on brand attitude at the significance level of 0.001. for Thai and 0.01 for overseas. The level of influence for country of origin image on brand attitude among Thai

consumers is higher than among overseas consumers (standardised coefficient for Thai consumers = 0.42, while it is 0.37 for overseas consumers).

Some research findings support the correlation between the COO image and brand attitude, and also that the COO image is significant for brand attitude, e.g., Shir, Michael & Sun (2011) who reported that COO salience is an exogenous latent variable which leads to the consumer brand attitude.

Ahmed, Johnson, Ling, Fang & Hui, (2002) noted the significance of COO image affects the attitude of consumers at level higher than product brand. Also noted is that a positive COO image compensates for a weak brand.

Ahmed, Johnson, Xia, Chen, Han & Boon, (2004) noted that the COO image is relative to brand attitude in terms of product attributes. This complies with the findings by Kaynak & Kara (2002) who pointed out that consumers accept overseas products depending on product attributes of the country's brand representing socio-economic and technological development. In addition, Ravi, Pascale & Cooksey (2006) raised an example that consumers might associate countries like France and Spain with the intangible attributes of "reliability" and "durability" to different degrees.

It is acknowledged that the reputation of a country can affect the attitude towards brand. For overseas consumers, the country's reputation is more influential than the attribute of the product. However, the attitude towards the brand also depends on the level of social, economic, and technological development of COO.

Findings of the present research revealed that for the nation brand, country of origin image is more influential to brand attitude over the brand associations for both consumers in the country and foreign visitors.

5.7 Sixth objective: To investigate whether brand attitude influences nation brand image.

The correlation between brand attitude and brand image is derived from brand equity, as described by Aaker (1991) and Keller (1993), and the research by Faircloth (1996). This research, the author finds that brand attitude has an influence on nation brand image for Thai and overseas consumers at significance level of 0.001. The influence level of brand attitude towards nation brand image is higher for Thai consumers than overseas counterparts (standardised coefficient for Thais = 0.78 while for overseas consumers 0.71).

The components of brand attitude are constituted by three dimensions, i.e., functional, affective and social achievement dimensions. All three dimensions affect the image regarding brand personality. As found in this present research that among the elements of brand attitude, affective element, such as the feelings of like and good impression toward the OTOP brand, is the most influential factor to both Thai and foreign consumers at a statistically significant level. While the functional element has a minor influential role for the Thai consumers and the social achievement is the second influential role for the foreign consumers.

Further, brand image and the nation brand image are positively correlated in the element of brand personality. This finding is consistent with findings of the research done by Pantin-Sohier (2009) which found that brand attitude in terms of functions and packaging of the product affects the brand personality. In this study Pantin-Sohier (2009) focused on the functional attributes while this present used the tripartite model of attitude types (thoughts, feelings and actions) and found that the attitude of all three levels influence the nation brand image and the affective elements have the highest influential weight in brand attitude.

In addition, researches have detailed the inverse relationship between brand attitude and brand personality, i.e., brand personality influences brand attitude. For example, the work of Guthrie, Kim & Jung, (2008) noted that customer groups with different personalities can affect the attitude towards brands of cosmetics. However, the current study does not undertake an investigation on inverse relationship between brand personality and brand attitude. This research utilises brand personality as a measure of brand image (Parameswaran, 2006; Parker, 2005).

5.8 Seventh objective: To examine whether brand attitude has a mediator effect between brand associations and nation brand image.

This objective aims to examine whether brand attitude has a significant role as an indirect effect or mediating effect between brand associations and nation brand image.

For Thai customers, it appears that brand attitude is not the mediator for the relationship between brand associations and nation brand image.

In the case of overseas consumers, brand attitude is the mediator for the relationship between brand associations and nation brand image.

It can be summarized that for Thai consumers, brand attitude has not a mediator effect between brand associations and nation brand image but for overseas consumers brand attitude has a mediator effect between brand associations and nation brand image.

Results from the pilot test of the research tools, as presented in Chapter 3\show that 100 percent of the Thai consumers know Thailand OTOP brand, while only 22.22 percent of foreign consumers know it. This might be a reason for a direct effect of brand associations on nation brand image of the OTOP products for the Thai consumers. On the other hand, there is no such relationship among the foreign consumers who are not familiar with and have no knowledge of the OTOP brand. Without the present of brand associations resulting from brand awareness and brand knowledge (Keller, 1993), the brand attitude take the influential role in the formation of nation brand image for the foreign consumers. As stated by O'Guinn, Allen & Semenik, (2009) that brand attitude is the evaluation of one's feelings and the feeling of like or dislike the brand is rooted in the experience of seeing, hearing, seeing it.

The reason for brand attitude to function as mediator variable in the current study, since the hierarchy of consumer mindset about brand (Keller, & Lehmann, 2003)

the model reveals that brand associations' effect to brand attitude and also the development model from CBBE model (consumer based brand equity model) (Aaker, 1991; Keller, 1993; Faircloth, 1996). This study proposes an additional hypothesis to test whether brand attitude functions as a mediator variable of brand associations and brand image. Thus it is the presentation of new finding (mediator effect of brand attitude) the hypothesis is true for overseas consumers and can perform the function of hypothesis model for further researches especially for international marketplace.

In addition, the role and importance of brand attitude towards the formation of brand, for example, brand equity (Aaker, 1991; Keller, 1993; Faircloth, 1996), brand image (Guthrie, Kim & Jung, 2008; Parameswaran, 2006; Parker, 2005), or even behavioural intentions (Fishbein and Ajzen, 1975) are noted. There exists research that links the attitude about corporate image (Nguyen & Leblanc, 2001) and behavioural intentions regarding customer loyalty and customer satisfaction (Johnson, Gustafsson, Andreassen, Lervik & Cha, 2001; Kristensen, Gronholdt & Martensen, 2000; Juhl, Kristensen & Ostergaard, 2002).

The proposal about this hypothesis should be studied and the results must be verified with similar studies prior to its acceptance as a new theory, since this model reveals a mediator effect of brand attitude between brand associations and nation brand image for overseas consumers.

5.9 Eighth objective: To examine whether brand attitude has a mediator effect between country of origin image and nation brand image.

In the case of Thai consumers, it indicates that brand attitude is not the mediator for the relationship between country of origin image and nation brand image. And also in case of overseas consumers, it appears that brand attitude has not a role to be the mediator variable between country of origin image and nation brand image. It can be summarised that both Thai and overseas consumers brand attitude has not a mediating effect between Country of origin image and nation brand image. Country of origin image has a direct effect on nation brand image.

The results can consider that Country of origin image is significance important directly for nation brand image in both Thai and overseas consumer mindset.

5.10 Conclusion

This research is well formulated in promoting the study of factors influencing the formation of nation brand image, with regards to the role of brand associations, country of origin image and brand attitude, and also the role of mediator variable of brand attitude in formulating nation brand image.

Brand associations, country of origin image and brand attitude are the three influential factors in creating a nation brand image for both the Thai and foreign consumers. In details, these three factors influence the nation brand image at 83

percent ($R^2 = 0.83$) for Thai customers and 92 percent for foreign consumers ($R^2 = 0.92$). Brand associations and country of origin image influence the formation of brand attitude at 81 percent ($R^2 = 0.81$) for Thai customers and at 80 percent ($R^2 = 0.80$) for foreign consumers. In brief, these three factors have very high influential power on the formation of the nation brand image.

In creating the brand image of a nation brand, marketers both public and private sectors must establish these three factors in the customer's mind. The most influential factor is brand attitude, followed by country of origin image and brand associations. In terms of the country of origin image, it is noted that the image concerning the production (micro-image) is a more important factor than the macro-image and cultural image of the product.

In the formation of brand associations, the most important influential factor is the emotional attributes of the product for the Thai consumers and its functional attributes for foreign clients. For the formation of brand attitude, the affective attributes of the product are more influential to the customers than the benefits and social achievement of the product. For the foreign customers the social achievement is more influential than benefits while benefits are more important for brand attitude for the Thai customers.

Considering the composition of the nation brand image by checking out the brand personality, these five characters including sincerity, excitement, competence, sophistication, and ruggedness represent the elements of brand personality by 60 percent ($AVE = .60$) for the Thai consumers and 91 percent for the foreign

consumers. All the five personality attributes have a major influence on the nation brand image at a standardised loading higher than .70. Therefore, it is suggested that marketers group their customers according to these five customer's brand personality.

In addition, the proposed model has the goodness of fit of structure model at an acceptable level for the Thai customers, but at a moderately low level for the foreign customers. This might be due to the fact that the foreign sample of the study comprised varied nationalities with different ethnic groups from all regions around the world. In this regards, Brislin & Baumgardner (1971) and White & Absher (2013) has suggested that in cross-cultural research, sample should be selected from the countries with a similar or close relationship of socio-economic and demographic characteristics.

In checking the Measurement model for the Thai consumers, the construct validity of the latent variable, brand associations, has a convergent validity marginally lower than the threshold, while country of origin image and brand attitude variables have a discriminant validity marginally higher than the threshold. Although the AVE of the three elements of brand associations: brand as a product, brand as a person and brand as an organization, influence brand associations by 42 percent, all of them have the factor loading at the acceptable levels of 0.64 , 0.75, and 0.55, respectively. Recommendations for further study in this aspect are that the researchers modify the model by adding more questions in the brand as organization component, raising more questions about the benefits of corporate

social responsibility, and likewise for the brand as product by raising more questions about the physical benefits of the product. For the discriminant validity, brand attitude was found to have a marginal internal construct with the nation brand image. However, all the three elements of brand attitude can explain the latent variable to an extent of 55 percent, and the five elements of nation brand image can explain the latent variable to an extent of 60 percent. It is recommended that these findings concerning the internal constructs between brand attitude and nation brand image should be taken care of for researchers interested in using the proposed model.

In checking the Measurement model for the foreign consumers, all the latent variables have convergent validity, while country of origin image was found to have discriminant validity, having a marginal internal construct with the nation brand image. The three components of country of origin image can, however, explain the latent variable to an extent of 58 percent, and the five elements of nation brand image can explain the latent variable to an extent of 91 percent. For further study the researchers need to bring the internal construct of such variables to their attention.

5.11 Contribution

5.11.1 Academic Contributions

- 1) The results put up a model for creating the nation brand image, which can be used for both domestic and foreign consumers. The

model consists of brand attitude, country of origin image and brand associations, sorted by priority. In addition, this model has also built up the hypothesis that, for the foreign customers, the brand attitude acts as the mediator between brand associations and nation brand image.

2) It can be observed that the attention to each component of the variables by the domestic and foreign consumers differs in priority. For example, for brand associations, the foreign consumers featured brand as a product at the first priority, while the Thai consumers prioritized brand as a person. As for brand attitude, the foreign consumers featured the role of social achievement of the brand as more important than its functional benefits, but the Thai consumers focused on the functional benefit over the social achievement. For the nation brand image, foreign consumers prioritized the personality in sincerity over sophistication, while the Thai consumers focused more on sophistication. Finally, for the country of origin image both Thai and foreign consumers featured all components in the same order of importance.

3) For the variable country of origin image, both Thai and foreign consumers prioritized all components in the same order. The most important element is micro image which concerns the production of the goods of the country, followed by the macro image and the

cultural image. These results suggest that the micro image of country of origin that are important for sales of products in overseas markets are such as manufacturing technology, expertise in manufacturing, quality and reliability of the products. All these micro images of the country of origin can be generated by the collaboration of both public and private sectors. The macro image also has been weighted very high too, although slightly less than the micro image. The findings of the present study postulate that the country of origin image is an important element of the nation brand image and also state which of its components plays the largest contribution to the image of the brand. These findings are expected to make a good base for further research concerning the influential effects of the country of origin image on the nation brand image and can be extended in further research on the influential effects of the image of the manufacturing country on the nation brand image. In addition, this research has included the element of cultural image which has not been investigated in other studies. The cultural image is proved to be eligible as a component of the country of origin image and it can be used as a component of or an indicator for the country of origin image.

- 4) This research is built up from the formation of brand image of general products to the development of a model for creating the nation brand image. The nation brand under the study is Thailand OTOP, which represents a cultural product. The proposed model

is hoped to be applicable for the development of other types of products and businesses such as major exporting products, tourist attractions and direct investment in the state's flagship industry.

5.11.2 Business Contribution

- 1) The target groups for OTOP products are identified with appropriately market opportunity through personality based for market segmentation, being able to select 5 groups of OTOP target market, creatively positioning of product, with emphasis on Thai culture and contemporary style. The OTOP products are cultural items. The country of origin image can reflect the product characteristics benefiting the producers, and OTOP sellers can identify the target groups according to their personality.
- 2) Brand association issues that influence the formation of nation brand image in marketing communications are identified. A clear message should be communicated to consumers. For Thai consumers, information should be provided focusing on product personality and emotionality. Secondly, the usefulness of the product to the consumer and OTOP's usefulness to society must be taken into consideration. For overseas customers, the presentation of the product should focus primarily on product efficacy, followed by the emotion it invokes and its usefulness to

community. The acknowledgement of the above information should benefit the marketing activities of both producer and the government.

3) Thailand OTOP needs an improvement in its brand associations that were viewed negatively by the foreign consumers and therefore damaged the nation brand image. The functional and emotional factors of the products are the two most important attributes of OTOP that need to be improved. OTOP manufacturers and operators need a thorough communication and contact with the local manufacturers in sharing mutual benefits, using and conserving the local natural resources and wisdom, creating sustainable income for locals. In this way the OTOP brand associations will have a better picture and will in turn improve the nation brand image, which is a very important component to the brand.

4) The importance of country of origin image (Thailand's image) on OTOP brand image is identified. Thailand's image possesses a positive influence on OTOP product image. Thailand's image is highly influential for overseas consumers in the formation of nation brand image. The public sector should look after country image. The image which has a strong influence as visualised by overseas consumers, includes Thailand's micro-, macro- and culture images. The public sector should publicise the country

image in such aspects for international marketing. The public sector should establish a positive image and look after the country image.

Furthermore Thailand's micro-, macro- and culture images are also influential towards country of origin image. The influence has a different level for Thai and overseas consumers. However, both groups of consumers are highly interested in the characteristics of Thailand's culture image in the cultural items.

- 5) Building of cooperatives in the organisation involved in the OTOP industry. There should be cooperatives among tourism agencies, small and medium scale enterprises and development of export promotion agencies, etc., to strengthen the OTOP entrepreneurs with a distinct sales strategy in compliance with the product image. For e.g., in Peru, the Handicraft and Tourism Centres of Technological Innovation, with the cooperation of the Ministry of Industry, Tourism, Integration and International Negotiations (Ministerio de Industria Turismo, Integración y Negociaciones Internacionales –MITINCI-) has established this organisation to cooperatively enhance the competitiveness of handicraft production in the external, internal and tourism markets. With this purpose, they work together with the artisans, associations and enterprises in that area (APEC OVOP, 2008).

5.12 Future research

- 1) Further research should be carried out for other product items with nation brand to confirm this model. The study should be performed on the model for domestic as well as overseas consumers.
- 2) Comparative tests should be executed on Thai and overseas consumers to see whether the differences exist using SEMs in multi-groups' analysis.
- 3) The literature reviews noted the availability of research report on brand attitude and brand personality indicating brand personality is influential over brand attitude, e.g., the report by Guthrie, Kim, & Jung, (2008) who recognized that customer group with different personality have different attitude toward brand. The study was conducted on cosmetic. Hence it is suggested that further research should test the inverse relationship between brand attitude and brand image.

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