

The Image of Bangkok as a Fashion City

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Abstract

There are two main purposes of this study. The first purpose was to investigate the perception of and exposure to the project “Bangkok: The Fashion City”, study the image of the project “Bangkok: The Fashion City” by comparing it to the image of Tokyo, Hong Kong (China) and Singapore as a fashion hub. And the second purpose was to segment consumers on the basis of their opinions toward Bangkok as Asia’s fashion hub in an effort to understand the characteristics of consumers in Thailand and abroad and study the characteristics of consumers in Thailand and abroad by considering their opinions toward establishing Bangkok to be Asia’s fashion hub. The participants were selected from those living in 7 capital cities in the following countries: Thailand, Japan, Malaysia, Indonesia, Hong Kong (China), Mainland China and Singapore. The sampling technique employed was quota sampling by sex and age. To make comparisons between the images perceived by people from Thailand, Japan, Singapore and Hong Kong (China), a paired *t*-test and a correspondence analysis were used. In addition, nonhierarchical cluster analysis was conducted to classify the consumer opinions toward Thailand’s fashion industry. Regression analysis and discriminant analysis were used to find factors affecting consumer views on Thailand’s fashion industry. For the findings, we found out that foreigners were not informed of the happenings in the country’s fashion business. Most of the respondents were exposed to this subject via television while those from Malaysia and Singapore obtained the information

via magazines and newspapers. Most respondents agreed that Japan was best suited to serve as a fashion hub in the region, with Hong Kong (China) and Singapore ranked second and third, respectively. Thailand was ranked fourth in this regard. It was found that not only Thais but also Malaysians suggested Thailand be the regional fashion hub. Most consumers agreed to the fact that Japan gained prominence in all aspects of the industry, particularly the quality of the products, compared to Thailand, Hong Kong (China), Singapore and Mainland China. They also found Thailand was prominent in the product’s uniqueness and low prices. According to the findings, consumers could be divided into 3 groups on the basis of their opinions toward Thailand’s fashion industry. The first group, mostly consisting of respondents from Hong Kong (China) and Mainland China, did not agree Thailand should be an ideal fashion hub in Asia. The second group, mostly consisting of respondents from Thailand, Malaysia and Indonesia, believed Thailand was suited to assume this role in this region. The third group, mostly consisting of respondents from Japan and Singapore, found Thailand moderately suited to be a fashion hub in the region.

Key words: Correspondence analysis; Multiple discriminant analysis; Nonhierarchical cluster analysis; Multiple regression analysis; Paired *t*-test; The image of Bangkok as a fashion city

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INTRODUCTION

In light of the Thai government by the Ministry of Industry and Tourism’s policy encouraging Thailand to become another major fashion hub in Asia, the project

Bangkok: A Fashion City was initiated with a view to giving fashion-related entrepreneurs and designers an opportunity to compete internationally and to showcase their products of acclaimed quality. Also, it was hoped that the project could raise sustainable brand awareness of Thai products in the world market. The project was aimed to develop Bangkok to be a fashion leader, a fashion hub in the region and in the world.

For this purpose, the government implemented public relations campaigns and did various supporting projects to enhance the growth potential of the fashion industry in terms of workforce, design, production and marketing.

1. THAILAND'S FASHION INDUSTRY

Currently, Thailand's fashion industry comprises of the textile and garment sector, the jewelry and ornament sector, and the footwear and leather sector. In 2011, Thailand's exported textile and garment was valued more than US \$ 8,275 million. In 2011 the export of jewelry and ornament had a value of US \$12,374 million and leather products worth of US \$262.16 million.

The Thai government organized activities to create a positive image of the country's fashion industry in an effort to build awareness and generate acceptance. This was done through various public relations events to achieve the purposes:

A public relations campaign was implemented through executive interviews, use of mass media such as print media, radio, magazines, websites, folders, signage, and television. The organizing party publicized the progress of their projects.

2. METHODOLOGY

This is a quantitative study, in which a questionnaire was used as a primary data collection tool. A confidence interval was set at 95% and sampling error = 0.1. The

minimum sample size was 900. This sample size in this study was 1,050 individuals, with 450 Thais and 600 foreigners. The researcher decided to use non probability quota sampling. The demographic characteristics were delineated as follows:

Group 1 consists of 450 Thai nationals (male 30%, female 70%). The respondents were divided into 5 age groups with a 20% for each group: 18-22, 23-30, 31-40 and 51-59. These respondents were required to have a household income of more than 30,000 baht a month. The sample comprised of 150 Bangkok residents, and 375 respondents from some selected provinces; namely, Chiangmai, Kon Kaen, Chonburi, and Phuket (75 from each province).

Group 2 consisted of foreign nationals from Mainland China, Indonesia, Japan, Malaysia, Hong Kong (China) and Singapore. 100 respondents were drawn from each of those countries. They came from each country's capital city with an above C+ household income. Quotas were based on age and sex as those consumers from Thailand.

Before commencing on data collection, the researcher conducted a pilot survey which had a sample group of 100 consumers in Bangkok. Its aim was to check for validity and continuity of questionnaire contents. For this purpose, the researcher performed a reliability check and found a Cronbach's alpha of 85.7%. Then an effort was made to revise the questions, esp. those probing opinions about Bangkok's suitability to be a fashion hub in Asia.

3. RESULTS

The researcher collected data from 1,055 individuals (455 Thais, 600 foreign nationals). The foreign respondents were from Japan, Malaysia, Hong Kong (China), Singapore, Indonesia, and Mainland China; each of which provided 100 samples. Also, 31.4% of the respondents were company employees; 29% were students; and the rest came from other professions.

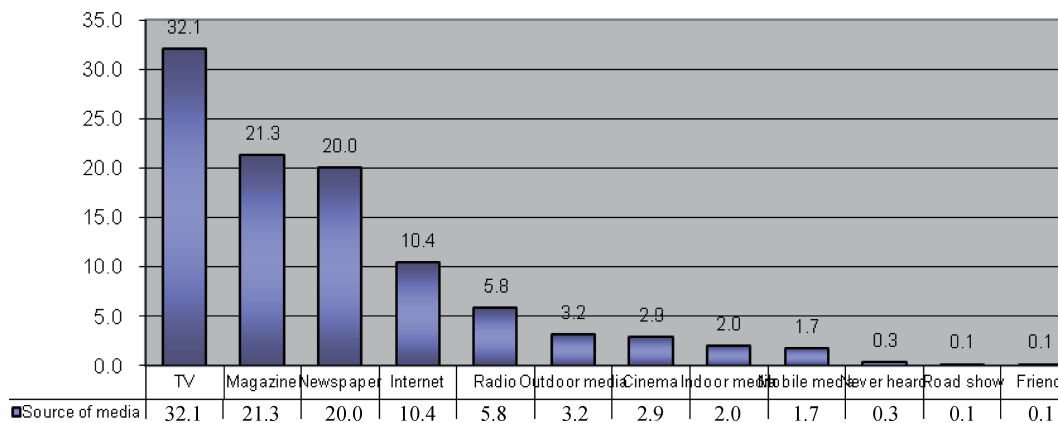


Figure 1
Media Exposure

Most respondents (32.1%) were exposed to fashion news via television. The other media they are exposed to listed in the degree of exposure were magazines (21.3%), newspapers (20%), online (10.4%), radio (5.8%), and the rest including folders, indoor media, and outdoor media. As for the frequency of exposures, during the past 6 months, 25.4% of the respondents had two to four exposures, 20% with ten exposures, and 16% with one exposure. Most of the Thai respondents (37%) were informed of the country's fashion news and happenings at a frequency of over ten exposures in the past six months.

The foreign respondents had rarely seen the news reports. Those from Mainland China (60%) and Hong Kong (China) (44%) never saw news reports about fashion in Thailand. Those from Malaysia (54.5%) had seen it once. Those from Japan, Singapore and Indonesia had seen the news two to four times in the past six months.

Table 1
Countries' Suitability Scores

| Capital/Country | Rank | Percent | Mean Suitability Scores | Skewness |
|-------------------------|------|---------|-------------------------|----------|
| 1.Tokyo/Japan | 1 | 56.7 | 8.94 | -2.43 |
| 2.Hong Kong (China) | 2 | 45.1 | 8.5 | -1.83 |
| 3.Singapore | 3 | 24 | 6.75 | -.87 |
| | 4 | 25.4 | | |
| | 3 | 18.6 | | |
| 4.Bangkok/Thailand | 4 | 18.7 | 6.85 | -.45 |
| | 5 | 18.2 | | |
| | 4 | 20.9 | | |
| 5.Peking/Mainland China | 5 | 19.2 | 6.32 | -.70 |
| | 6 | 21.3 | | |
| 6.Kuala Lumpur/Malaysia | 6 | 21.3 | 4.44 | .34 |
| | 7 | 25.5 | | |
| 7.Manila/Philippines | 8 | 22.7 | 3.89 | .46 |
| | 8 | 25.5 | | |
| 8.Jakarta/Indonesia | 9 | 20.3 | 3.59 | .93 |
| | 9 | 19.2 | | |
| 9.Mumbai/India | 10 | 20.3 | 3.63 | .66 |
| | 10 | 50.4 | | |
| 10.Vietnam | 10 | 50.4 | 2.13 | 1.91 |

56.7% of the respondents rated Tokyo/Japan to be the most suitable city to be a fashion hub in Asia with a mean score of 8.94. This was indicated by the negative skewness of -2.428. The subsequent countries with suitability scores from high to low are Hong Kong (China), Singapore, Bangkok, Peking, Kuala Lumpur, Manila/Philippines, Jakarta/Indonesia, Mumbai/India, and Vietnam, respectively. Thailand received the fourth rank with a mean score of 6.86.

Upon studying consumer groups in each country, 94% of the Japanese surveyed ranked themselves first, and most of the consumers from the other countries also gave Japan the same rating. 86% of those from Hong Kong (China) ranked Japan first, 72% Singapore, 50.2% Thailand, 50% Indonesia, 35% Malaysia, and 31.3% Mainland China rated Japan first. 74% of the respondents from Hong Kong

Those who were exposed to news about Thailand's fashion were from Thailand, Mainland China, Indonesia, Japan, and Hong Kong (China) and saw it on television. Those from Malaysia and Singapore read about it in the newspapers and magazines.

4. ASSESSMENT OF BANGKOK'S IMAGE AS A FASHION CITY

In probing into the issue of Bangkok's suitability to be a fashion hub in Asia, the researcher conducted a comparative study of 10 countries; namely, Peking/Mainland China, Tokyo/Japan, Hong Kong (China), Mumbai/India, Bangkok/Thailand, Singapore, Manila/Philippines, Jakarta/Indonesia, Kuala Lumpur/Malaysia, and Vietnam.

(China) rated the country the second choice as a fashion hub. Those from the other countries also rated Hong Kong (China) second. The respondents from Thailand who rated Thailand third and fourth accounted for 49%, while those who gave Thailand the most likely choice amounted to 23%. Almost all countries rated Vietnam the least likely choice.

Approximately 50% of the respondents agreed that in the future Bangkok would have the ability to become "a regional fashion hub" in Asia. The idea was most agreed to by those from Thailand, and those from Malaysia agreed to it in the second largest proportion. On the other hand, those from Hong Kong (China), Japan, and Mainland China didn't agree with this idea.

The researcher studied the opinions of consumers in Bangkok/Thailand Tokyo/Japan Hong Kong (China)

and Singapore concerning textile and garment, jewelry and ornament, and footwear and leather industries. The respondents were asked to rate each aspect of the industries from 0 to 9. The results yielded quantitative data. A reliability check resulted in a Cronbach's alpha of .83, which was considered high, so the researcher proceeded with the study.

5. CONSUMERS' OPINIONS ON TEXTILE AND GARMENT INDUSTRY

In studying the opinions on textile and Garment industry in countries such as Thailand, Japan, Singapore, and Hong Kong (China), the respondents were expected to rate on a scale of 0 (least agreed) to 9 (most agreed). The scale was a set of 24 questions that were grouped into 6 aspects as follows:

(1) Quality: The questions concern quality, comfort, market characteristics, matching quality with prices, versatility, functions, looks, needs fulfillment.

(2) Design: The questions concern keeping up with global trends, appealing style, modern looks, stylish look, and trend-setting.

(3) Prices: The questions concern reasonable price, luxury items, and high prices.

(4) International Recognition: The questions concern internationally recognized brands, and popularity.

(5) Uniqueness: The questions concern unique identity, and distinctive features.

(6) Suitability to become a hub: The questions concern being a commercial center for textile and garment, being a fashion hub in the region, and having an ideal location, and well-located for a fashion center.

Table 2
Opinions Toward Textile and Garment Industry in Various Countries

| Aspect | Thailand | | Japan | | Singapore | | Hong Kong (China) | |
|------------------|----------|------|-------|------|-----------|------|-------------------|------|
| | Mean | SD | Mean | SD | Mean | SD | Mean | SD |
| 1. Quality | 6.40 | 1.48 | 7.14 | 1.14 | 6.45 | 1.23 | 6.77 | 1.15 |
| 2. Design/Modern | 6.32 | 1.48 | 7.25 | 1.15 | 6.41 | 1.26 | 6.90 | 1.22 |
| 3. Prices | 6.56 | 1.48 | 6.82 | 1.37 | 6.45 | 1.39 | 6.75 | 1.31 |
| 4. International | 5.89 | 1.81 | 7.41 | 1.35 | 6.39 | 1.48 | 6.91 | 1.38 |
| 5. Uniqueness | 6.69 | 1.75 | 7.29 | 1.70 | 6.23 | 1.63 | 6.70 | 1.55 |
| 6. Center | 6.55 | 1.68 | 7.26 | 1.38 | 6.42 | 1.49 | 6.90 | 1.41 |

As for the textile and garment industry, the respondents believed Tokyo/Japan apparently stood out in all the aspects except prices while Thailand was more prominent in uniqueness and suitability of being a hub than

Singapore. Hong Kong (China) was ranked second below Japan; Thailand received the lowest mean scores in three aspects of the image --- international recognition, product design, and product quality.

Table 3
Countries Opinions on Jewelry and Ornament Industry

| Aspects | Thailand | | Japan | | Singapore | | Hong Kong (China) | |
|------------------|----------|------|-------|------|-----------|------|-------------------|------|
| | Mean | SD | Mean | SD | Mean | SD | Mean | SD |
| 1. Quality | 6.70 | 1.50 | 7.04 | 1.21 | 6.47 | 1.21 | 6.75 | 1.20 |
| 2. Design/Modern | 6.57 | 1.50 | 7.00 | 1.26 | 6.41 | 1.29 | 6.78 | 1.25 |
| 3. Prices | 6.73 | 1.48 | 6.77 | 1.41 | 6.45 | 1.39 | 6.71 | 1.33 |
| 4. International | 6.40 | 1.76 | 7.15 | 1.47 | 6.45 | 1.43 | 6.79 | 1.41 |
| 5. Uniqueness | 6.91 | 1.69 | 6.93 | 1.64 | 6.34 | 1.52 | 6.63 | 1.49 |
| 6. Center | 6.79 | 1.66 | 7.06 | 1.46 | 6.43 | 1.48 | 6.80 | 1.45 |

The respondents highly rated Japan's jewelry and ornament industry in all aspects. Thailand was prominent in uniqueness and prices with a rating close to Japan's. The disadvantage of the jewelry and ornament industry in

Thailand was international recognition and modern looks. Singapore had a disadvantage in design while Hong Kong (China) received moderate scores in all aspects.

Table 4
Opinions Toward Footwear and Leather Industry in Various Countries

| Aspects | Thailand | | Japan | | Singapore | | Hong Kong (China) | |
|------------------|----------|------|-------|------|-----------|------|-------------------|------|
| | Mean | SD | Mean | SD | Mean | SD | Mean | SD |
| 1. Quality | 6.45 | 1.51 | 7.18 | 1.20 | 6.49 | 1.32 | 6.77 | 1.27 |
| 2. Design/Modern | 6.36 | 1.51 | 7.16 | 1.23 | 6.42 | 1.35 | 6.62 | 1.32 |
| 3. Prices | 6.56 | 1.57 | 6.84 | 1.45 | 6.42 | 1.46 | 6.74 | 1.43 |
| 4. International | 6.10 | 1.76 | 7.30 | 1.39 | 6.47 | 1.49 | 6.88 | 1.44 |
| 5. Uniqueness | 6.46 | 1.80 | 7.13 | 1.61 | 6.40 | 1.56 | 6.74 | 1.55 |
| 6. Hub | 6.50 | 1.62 | 7.11 | 1.41 | 6.44 | 1.51 | 6.87 | 1.48 |

Japan was prominent in all the aspects except prices which received the lowest score. Thailand had a disadvantage in international recognition and modern design. Singapore was inferior in uniqueness.

In addition to the descriptive statistical study of the image related to the three industries as it was perceived by samples from four countries as shown in Tables 2- 4, the researcher conducted a correspondence analysis and paired *t*-tests.

One-sided paired *t*-tests that were used to compare between Bangkok and Tokyo, and between Hong Kong (China) and Singapore, the image of textile and garment industry in six aspects.

In summary, Japan was more prominent than Thailand in all aspects studied. However, Thailand was more prominent than Singapore in terms of prices, uniqueness, and ability to become a textile and garment hub in Asia whereas Singapore was more prominent than Thailand in product quality, product design, and international recognition.

Moreover, the correspondence analysis technique was used to pinpoint the positions of Thailand, relative to Singapore, Hong Kong (China), and Japan in all the six aspects for the textile and garment industry. The results were illustrated in Figure 2.

Figure 2 shows that Thailand was more prominent in uniqueness and prices whereas Tokyo was more quality and design. Hong Kong (China) was ranked second while Bangkok was found inferior in these aspects. The results of hypotheses testing derived from a comparison of 3 pairs of countries; namely, Bangkok Vs Tokyo, Bangkok Vs Singapore, Bangkok Vs Hong Kong (China), in all six aspects of image perception for the jewelry and ornament business. The comparisons were made by paired *t*-test. It was found that Bangkok was comparable to Tokyo in terms of uniqueness, but Tokyo was more prominent than Bangkok in quality, design, international recognition and being a hub.

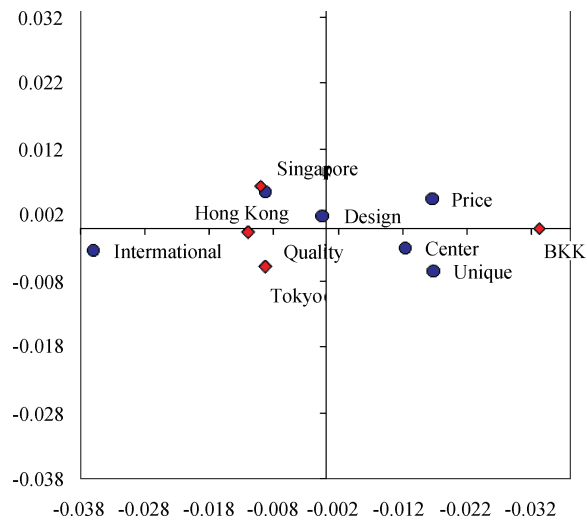


Figure 2
Textile and Garment industry

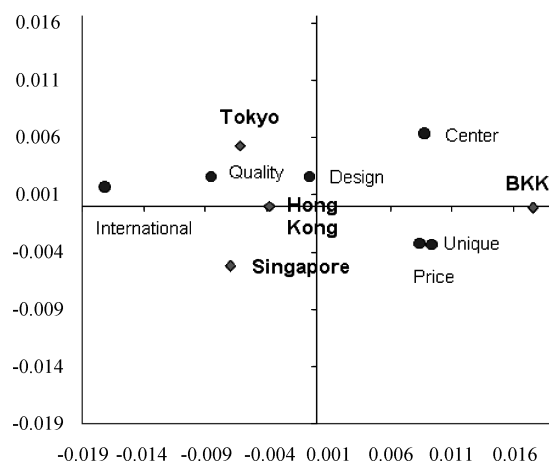


Figure 3
Jewelry and Ornament Industry

When compared to Singapore, Bangkok was more prominent than Singapore in all aspects except for international recognition which both had an almost equal score. As for the Bangkok Vs Hong Kong (China), the respondents found that Hong Kong (China) was more prominent than Thailand in design, prices and suitability of being a hub while the other aspects received approximately similar scores.

A correspondence analysis was performed to compare the positions in Figure 3 which confirmed consumers from 7 countries considered Thailand's jewelry and ornament industry was prominent in prices and uniqueness whereas Tokyo and Hong Kong (China) gained more prominence in quality, design, international recognition.

Comparing consumer opinions on Bangkok and other countries was done by paired *t*-test. The result showed the sample saw Tokyo and Hong Kong (China) were more prominent than Thailand in all aspects in footwear and leather industry. But when compared to Singapore, Bangkok was seen as possessing distinctive feature in prices where Singapore gained wider acceptance as an international city (Figure 4).

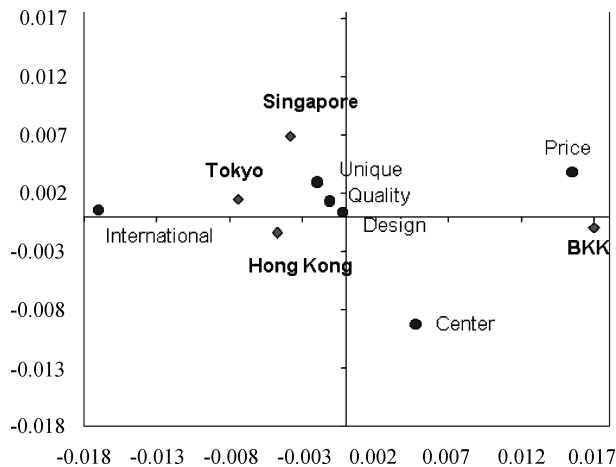


Figure 4
Footwear and Leather Industry

In Figure 4, a correspondence analysis was used Thailand has a competitive advantage in prices, but Hong Kong (China) and Tokyo are strong in quality, design, and uniqueness.

6. CLASSIFICATIONS OF CONSUMERS BASED ON OPINIONS

Consumer Classifications based on their Opinions on textile and garment industry, jewelry and ornament industry, and footwear and leather in Thailand.

Table 7
Means and SD's of Opinions in Six Aspects

| Aspects | Groups | | | | | | Total | |
|-----------------|--------|------|------|------|------|------|-------|------|
| | 1 | | 2 | | 3 | | Mean | SD |
| | Mean | SD | Mean | SD | Mean | SD | | |
| 1.Quality | 3.66 | 1.01 | 7.45 | 0.56 | 5.69 | 0.66 | 6.50 | 1.37 |
| 2.Design | 3.69 | 1.05 | 7.33 | 0.64 | 5.61 | 0.63 | 6.42 | 1.36 |
| 3.Prices | 4.07 | 1.34 | 7.43 | 0.64 | 5.91 | 0.69 | 6.60 | 1.29 |
| 4.International | 3.09 | 1.08 | 7.15 | 0.84 | 5.20 | 0.91 | 6.10 | 1.58 |
| 5.Uniqueness | 3.86 | 1.37 | 7.46 | 0.76 | 6.10 | 1.00 | 6.68 | 1.42 |
| 6.Hub | 3.76 | 1.36 | 7.59 | 0.65 | 5.70 | 0.82 | 6.60 | 1.48 |

The researcher classified the 1,038 samples from 7 nations into groups according to their opinions on six aspects of Thailand's fashion; namely, product quality, product design, prices, international recognition, uniqueness, and Thailand's suitability as a fashion hub. To do this, nonhierarchical cluster sampling or K-Means cluster Analysis was used to group people with similar views. The technique required us to standardize the six variables before classifying. Then the standardized variables were used in grouping. Table 14 shows the resulting three clusters.

Table 5
Number and Percentage of Each Group

| Groups | Number | Percentage |
|--------|--------|------------|
| 1 | 95 | 9.03 |
| 2 | 602 | 57.22 |
| 3 | 355 | 33.75 |
| Total | 1,052 | 100.0 |

Table 6
Final Cluster Centers

| | Cluster | | |
|---------|---------|------|-------|
| | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| Quality | -2.05 | 0.68 | -0.59 |
| Design | -1.99 | 0.67 | -0.59 |
| Prices | -1.93 | 0.62 | -0.53 |
| Inter | -1.91 | 0.65 | -0.58 |
| Unique | -1.99 | 0.55 | -0.40 |
| Hub | -1.93 | 0.66 | -0.61 |

To investigate whether people in different groups had different opinions, the researcher used one-way ANOVA technique with the significance level of .05. It was found different groups had significantly different opinions concerning Thailand's being a fashion hub in all the six aspects for textile and garment, jewelry and ornament, and footwear and leather industries.

7. THE OPINIONS OF EACH GROUP

Tables 6-7 summarized the findings from the study of various countries' opinions on the project *Bangkok: a Fashion Hub*.

Group 1 believed Thailand was not suited to be a center for fashion in Asia. Most respondents (9% or 95 samples) found Thailand had a low readiness level to take the role of a regional fashion hub. This was made evident by its low means of below 4. Particularly, the area of brand's international recognition had a mean of 3.09 out of 9. The second lowest score lay in the areas of product quality and design. In other words, the consumers in this group found fashion products from Thailand inadequate or of poor quality, having no distinct design, not unique, and unsuitable to become a regional fashion hub.

The respondents in this group constituted 9% of the total sample and were from Hong Kong (China), Mainland China, and Singapore.

Group 2 agreed that Thailand was suited to be a fashion hub in Asia. This group consisted of 602 individuals or 57.22%. They gave Thailand high scores on all the six aspects ranging from high to low as follows: suitability to be a fashion hub in Asia, Uniqueness, quality, and prices.

80% of the respondents in this group were from Thailand and Malaysia. Those from Thailand, Malaysia, and Indonesia believed products from Thailand were of good quality and thus the country could possibly become a fashion hub.

Group 3 believed Thailand was relatively suited to become a hub for fashion. This group consists of 355 respondents which made up 33.75% of the total sample. They gave a moderate rating on all aspects.

Over 85% of Japanese respondents were in this group; and over 40% of those from Singapore and Hong Kong (China) were also in the category. The respondents from these countries were not confident about Thailand's suitability to be a center of fashion in Asia, on the grounds that no brands indigenous to Thailand had been known and accepted at the international level.

8. USE OF MULTIPLE DISCRIMINANT ANALYSIS TECHNIQUE TO UNDERSTAND GROUP DIFFERENCES

The K-mean cluster analysis technique divided the samples into 3 groups. The researcher attempted to comprehend what opinions differentiated them by doing the discriminant analysis. The dependent variable was the numbers assigned to each of three groups ($D = 1, 2, 3$); the independent variables were mean scores on opinions in six aspects, three countries, and seven sample countries. The equation depicting the relationship is as below:

$$\hat{D} = a + b_1 \text{Quality_Thai} + b_2 \text{Design_Thai} + b_3 \text{Prices_Thai} + b_4 \text{Inter_Thai} + b_5 \text{Unique_Thai} + b_6 \text{Hub_Thai} + b_7 \text{Japan} + b_8 \text{Malaysia} + b_9 \text{HongKong} + b_{10} \text{Singapore} + b_{11} \text{Indonesia} + b_{12} \text{Mainland China}$$

In the above equation, the indicator variables are Japan, Malaysia, Hong Kong (China), Singapore, Indonesia and Mainland China while Thailand is used as the base.

The researcher decided to use stepwise analysis since relationships between some variables were detected.

According to the analysis, eight independent variables should be included in the equation in order to establish significance in difference among groups. They were product quality, design, prices, international recognition, uniqueness and Thailand's suitability to become a fashion hub, Japan, and Indonesia. Since there were three groups, the equation could be expressed in two forms. The first equation had the eigenvalue of 4.309 (or 97.7% of variance). Thus, this function was used to establish group differences.

Table 8
Standardized Canonical Discriminant Function Coefficients

| | Function | |
|--------------|----------|-------|
| | 1 | 2 |
| Japan | -0.02 | 0.89 |
| Indonesia | 0.11 | 0.26 |
| Quality_Thai | 0.33 | 0.15 |
| Design_Thai | 0.17 | 0.12 |
| Prices_Thai | 0.16 | 0.04 |
| Inter_Thai | 0.22 | -0.21 |
| Unique_Thai | 0.17 | 0.23 |
| Hub_Thai | 0.26 | -0.19 |

$$\hat{D} = 0.333 \text{Quality_Thai} + 0.169 \text{Design_Thai} + 0.16 \text{Price_Thai} + 0.217 \text{Inter_Thai} + 0.263 \text{Hub_Thai} - 0.017 \text{Japan} + .106 \text{Indonesia}$$

Table 8 shows that factors contributing to people's differing opinions on Thailand's fashion lie in quality, suitability to be a fashion hub, international recognition, product design, and prices, respectively. However, in the mind of Japanese consumers, Thailand was not ready to become a fashion hub with regards to product quality, product design, etc. Indonesians looked at Thailand more positively than Thais in this regard.

9. THE STUDY OF FACTORS AFFECTING THAILAND'S SUITABILITY TO BE A FASHION HUB

The multiple regression technique was employed to determine the dependent variable --- Thailand's suitability scores for being a fashion hub. The independent variables were opinions on Thailand's three industries in terms of quality, design, prices, international recognition, and uniqueness. A stepwise regression was used.

Table 9
Coefficients in Step 4 (Model 4) Stepwise Multiple

Regression Analysis

| Model | Unstandardized Coefficients | | Standardized Coefficients | t | p-value | |
|-------|-----------------------------|------------|---------------------------|-------|---------|------|
| | B | Std. Error | Beta | | | |
| 4 | (Constant) | 1.88 | 0.13 | | 14.21 | 0 |
| | Quality_Thai | 0.26 | 0.06 | 0.41 | 4.64 | 0 |
| | Design_Thai | 0.15 | 0.05 | 0.23 | 3.04 | 0.00 |
| | Unique_Thai | -0.07 | 0.03 | -0.11 | -2.28 | 0.02 |
| | Prices_Thai | -0.09 | 0.04 | -0.13 | -2.16 | 0.03 |

The equation depicting the relationship is as follows:

$$\begin{aligned} \text{Fashion hub score} \\ = 1.879 + .261\text{Quality} + .151\text{Design} \\ - .068\text{Unique} - .087\text{Prices} \end{aligned}$$

As manifested by the standardized coefficient, it was confirmed that the factors affecting fashion hub scores ranged from high to low in magnitude as quality, design, prices and uniqueness. In other words, for a country to become a fashion hub, the product quality and design must be prioritized first and second, respectively. However, uniqueness may not be a factor in becoming a fashion hub.

10. SUMMARY

The research findings show that consumers in foreign countries have a low awareness of the project *Bangkok: The Fashion City*; most of those living in Thailand received news via television. The consumers in Japan, Hong Kong (China) and Singapore obtained information via magazines and newspapers. The consumers in Malaysia, Thailand, Singapore, Hong Kong (China) and Mainland China wished to see Thailand as Asia's fashion hub in the foreseeable future. Those with similar viewpoints were from Malaysia, Thailand, Singapore and Indonesia; on the contrary, those from Japan, Hong Kong (China) and Mainland China had dissenting ideas.

The factors affecting the conception that Thailand had all the potentials to become a fashion hub were product quality and design. And this fact was not restricted to textile, jewelry, or footwear and leather products. The opinion ratings on product quality ranged from low to moderate. Upon a correspondence analysis to understand the image of Thailand, it was found that Thailand had a good image on prices and uniqueness whereas Japan excelled in all aspects of goods, esp. product quality and design. Also, Hong Kong (China) was ranked second in that respect.

11. RECOMMENDATIONS

Thailand should intensify their public relations efforts with a clear message in various vehicles. In doing so,

an emphasis should be given to areas where an image of inadequate quality and design prevail. These nations fall into Group 1 --- namely Japan, Hong Kong (China) and Mainland China. People from these nations found Thailand was not suited to be a fashion hub and should improve the product's quality and design. As for Malaysia and Indonesia, Thailand's fashion was thought of positively and their people suggested Thailand should promote Thailand's fashion products and maintain the good image as perceived in those countries.

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