

# Thailand's Nation Branding:

## A Study of Thai nation-brand equity and capabilities



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## **Abstract**

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**Title:** Thailand's Nation Branding: A study of Thai nation-brand equity and capabilities

### **Problem:**

Which of Thailand's four main sectors that nation brands compete including tourism, FDI, export promotion, and talent attraction that should be develop a main focus in developing a stronger Nation Brand for the country comparing to other four countries in South East Asia?

### **Purpose:**

The purpose of this paper are 1) to study and analyze the current status of Thailand's nation brand equity and 2) To examine the feasibility in each of Thailand's four main sectors that nation brands compete including tourism, FDI, export promotion, and talent attraction by comparing to other four countries in ASEAN in order to generate recommendations for the country in developing a stronger nation branding strategy in the future.

### **Method:**

In order to achieve our purpose, firstly, we chose 'Asset-based Nation brand equity' model to collect the information and perform analysis on the contribution of both nation internal and external assets towards nation brand equity. Secondly, 'Nation brand internal analysis' model was chosen in order to be a guideline for gathering data and performing analysis on Thailand's nation brand capability in each of the 4 main sectors comparing to the other four countries. In addition, due to our research topic and limited time frame, we would rely on secondary sources as our main source of information with some guidance from our primary source. After the analysis had been performed, we had reached the conclusion and generated recommendation for our target group

### **Conclusion:**

For the analysis of Nation brand equity, Thailand has equipped relatively strong internal assets both innate and nurtured as the country is rich with beautiful landscape and fascinating culture together with a strong support for the art from both governmental and private sectors. However, as for external assets, both disseminated and vicarious assets of Thailand still weakly contribute to the strength of the nation equity. Due to these reasons, we have recommended Thai governmental units to set up the organizations to improve the quality of disseminated asset and also start cooperation with private sector in order to come up with external portrayal in popular culture that can effective represent and enhance the country's image.

As for the result of 'Nation brand internal analysis', Thailand has shown moderate to high capability in the Export Promotion sector which was the highest among the other 3 sectors. However, based on the data in the analysis part, there are still lots of things are needed to be done both by Thai governmental units and private sector in order to boost the country's nation brand capability to achieve competitive advantage in the international market in the long run. According to this point, we had listed some recommendations for the governmental units to use as a general guideline in obtaining a strong nation brand that could help the country become more competitive in the global market.

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## List of Abbreviations

APEC	Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation
ASEAN	Association of Southeast Asian Nations
ATM	Automated teller machine
BCG	Boston Consulting Group
BPO	Business Process Outsourcing
CIA	Central Intelligence Agency
COO	Country of Origin
CPI	Corruption Perception Index
CSIC	Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Cientificas
ERC	Economic Review Committee
FDI	Foreign Direct Investment
GDI	Gender-related Development Index
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GEM	Gender Empowerment Measure
GII	Global Innovation Index
HPI	Human Poverty Index
ICT	Information and Communications Technology
IDV	Individualism Index
LCD	Liquid Crystal Display
LNG	Liquefied Natural Gas
MPI	Market Potential Index
MRT	Mass Rapid Transit
OLED	Organic Light Emitting Diode
PDI	Power Distance Index
TCC	Thai Chamber of Commerce
UAI	Uncertainty Avoidance Index
UNDP	United Nation Development Program
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization

# 1. Introduction

## 1.1. Background

In the age of Globalization, the world without boundary created the exchange of goods and culture across countries which led to the flow of products and culture from one country to another. The stream of 'Americanization' that happened several years ago can be considered as one of the early examples of the process of selling products through the penetration of American culture by using 'Hollywood' products as a navigator (Sukchoo 2006 a, 2006 b).

Additionally, during the past few years, we also have witnessed the affluent of South Korean's entertainment business including TV series, films, music, and online games throughout the world especially within Asian region such as Japan, China, Taiwan, and Thailand. This 'Hallyu' or 'Korean Wave' phenomenon is the consequence of South Korean cultural products that have been distributed to many countries, initially, by the activities of private sector which exports films, TV series and Korean music to other countries around the world. And, later on, due to the powerful trend that is happening and bringing in large amount of income to the country, this required the attention from South Korean government to revise its policy related to this area in order to help promoting the wide spread of 'Hallyu' trend (Sukchoo 2006 a, 2006 b).

All those activities could be considered as a part of 'Nation-branding' scheme of South Korea as its entertainment business has played a role of 'communicators for nation brand identity' in promoting South Korea's tourism and exported products sectors by enhancing its 'Nation brand image' among both country's internal and external audiences. The new image has changed the old perception of Asian people towards South Korea from the country that consistently has violent student marches and the demilitarized zone to become the one with trendy entertainers and advance technology (Onishi 2005).

Apart from South Korea, the concept of 'Nation branding' has also gained a lot of attention from many countries around the world as it can be seen that more and more countries committing resource to the development of their nation brand. The examples of those countries are Germany (changing the traditional image of 'mechanical perfection' to 'exciting and surprising'), New Zealand (gaining more reputation for being exotic destination with spectacular Southern Alps and source of produce), and Iceland (making the country recognizable in today's global market via 'Iceland Naturally program'). However, regardless of the successes or failures in the endeavors of those countries, comparing to the amount of real world activity, there is still limited numbers of theories related to this area (Dinnie 2008, p.13).

The idea of Nation branding is a relatively new phenomenon but it has gained more and more important role in both domestic and external markets, as the



countries have to face with global competition. Generally, nations have to create their own country branding scheme in order to fulfill four major objectives: attracting tourists, stimulating inward investment, boosting exports, and attracting higher education students and skilled workers (Dinnie 2008, p.17). The use of nation branding technique is growing from the diversification of branding that steadily increased its scope from basic physical products to diverse nations. What make nation branding different from traditional product branding are the complex, multidimensional nature, and multiple stakeholder groups that must be acknowledged by the nations (Dinnie 2008, p.20).

As for Thailand, the country has long adopted the tourism campaign 'Amazing Thailand' through out the past decade after the failure to replace it with the new 'Thailand Unforgettable' campaign in 2006 (*TAT to scrap new and campaign and return to 'Amazing Thailand'* 2007) and, recently, in October 2003, Thai government has initiated 'Kitchen of the world' campaign in order to promote Thai agri-export sector (Delforge 2004). Although the plan has shown to be effective as it partly contributed to the success of Thailand in becoming one of the world leading in food exporting countries (*Thailand Has the Second Largest Economy in Southeast Asia and is One of the World's Leading Food Exporting Countries* 2008), there are still some controversies toward the implementation of this movement (Delforge 2004) and still lack of attention from the domestic consumers who are considered to be one of the importance players in building the strong nation brand.

Therefore, we would like to use the master thesis opportunity to perform in-depth research and study the concept of nation branding together with an attempt to apply the gaining understanding to the case of Thailand and we believe that it will help us enhance the knowledge that have been learnt through out the year in the International Marketing program as we would have a chance to utilize the contents of all the courses such as marketing issues in international context and contemporary issues in marketing.

## **1.2. Problem Statement**

Which of Thailand's four main sectors that nation brands compete including tourism, FDI, export promotion, and talent attraction that should be a main focus in developing a stronger Nation Brand for the country comparing to other four countries in South East Asia?

## **1.3. Purpose**

- To study and analyze the current status of Thailand's nation brand equity and;
- To examine the feasibility in each of Thailand's four main sectors that nation brands compete including tourism, FDI, export promotion, and talent attraction by comparing to other four countries in ASEAN in order

to generate recommendations for the country in developing a stronger nation branding strategy in the future

## **1.4. Target Group**

The target group of our Master thesis was the Thai governmental units including National planning and economic development unit under Ministry of Finance and Department of Export Promotion under Ministry of Commerce, which are involved in developing the plan and strategy to determine the direction of Thailand's nation brand in the global market. Moreover, it also covered the private sectors that might use the strength of Thailand's nation brand equity to enhance the image of the company's products as the benefit of the country of origin effect.

In addition, we also believe that our research will be useful for academic readers who have an interest in nation branding concepts in order to obtain deeper understanding in this area as, even though it is gaining importance in the real world, there is still lack of the research regarding this issue.



## 2. Methodology

### 2.1. Choice of Topic

At the beginning of our thesis preparation stage, our group attempted to find the research topic that matches with our interest in marketing field and can help enhance our knowledge that we have gained through out the year. At that time, the idea about South Korea came into our mind. As we are Thai students and we have experienced the changing trend in our country for the past decade. We have seen the invasion of Japanese pop culture (J-pop), the booming of Taiwanese TV series and pop stars and, currently, the outburst of all types of Korean culture in the form of TV series, films, music and other Korean products. It generated the strong curiosity in our mind about how could it happen and are there any possibilities for Thailand to accomplish the same successes.

After considerable researches on books, journals, and articles, our group came across the area of 'nation branding' that, to some extent, contributed to the accomplishment of South Korea in international market. In addition, we found that the concept of 'nation brand' itself is very interesting and it covers a very wide area of marketing knowledge such as branding, positioning, cultural influence, country of origin effect, and consumer behavior etc. Subsequently, after we read through the book 'Nation Branding: concepts, issues, practice', we found the content related to Thailand and it mentioned about the current problem of the countries that have 'tourist destinations' as the country's main brand identity but they do not have developed an effective branding strategy that can enable them to differentiate from other competitive countries.

As a result, this triggered the question in our mind about whether it is possible for us to develop a new branding strategy for Thailand, our home country in order to help promoting and also stimulating the improvement of Thailand's economic status. Currently, Thailand has long used the 'Amazing Thailand' scheme to promote the country by focusing on tourist destinations, which seemed to be successful at a certain point, as they have created awareness in the global level. However, we found that this campaign was quite outdated and started to lose its effectiveness as there were more and more new coming competitive countries at the global level with the newly implemented country branding strategies that really catch up with the changing trend around the world. In addition, even though the new coming 'The kitchen of the world' campaign that was launched by Thai government in 2003 to promote Thai agri-export sector has gained some recognition in foreign market, it still lacks of participation from the domestic market.

Therefore, it was our objective to explore Thailand's true potential regarding its competitiveness in 4 main sectors that nation brands compete in order to find the area that was capable to become a basic for the country in developing the new nation branding strategy that would enhance the ability of Thailand to compete in the international level. Initially, we intended to perform internal

analysis by evaluating only characteristics of Thailand itself and then generating the scores for each category. However, we found out that the outcome would be too subjective, as it does not have a standard to compare in order to determine the level of capability in that area. Therefore, we chose to scope down our research into top 5 countries within Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN) including Thailand, Singapore, Malaysia, the Philippines, and Indonesia. The reason why we selected these 5 countries mainly came from the article 'The tigers that lost their roars' which stated that

“...until ten years ago South-East Asia was the world's fastest-developing region, winning the sort of investor attention and breathless column inches that the two new giants now enjoy. The region has, slowly, recovered from the blight of 1997-98. It has recently had several years of strong growth and its governments' finances have been greatly improved. Even so, after all this time the region's five main economies—**Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore and Thailand**—are still notable for the near-absence of companies that could truly be called world-class”

(The economist: the tigers that lost their roars, 28 February 2008)

Even though the article did not directly mention about the nation branding, it did show some concerns about the lacking of world-class brand of the 5 countries that were considered to be the main economies of the region, which, partly, could become one of the factors in the absence of strong nation brand in those countries. In addition, in order to support the remark in the article, we also searched for the actual figure of GDP per capita of each country within South East Asia region as of the year 2007 and, according to the data from Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN) (2008), the ranking of the 10 countries in term of GDP per capita for the year 2007 were as following;

(at current market price in US dollar)

Rank	Country Name	GDP per capita
1	Singapore	35,206.10
2	Brunei Darussalam	31,076.10
3	Malaysia	6,880.20
4	Thailand	3,740.10
5	Indonesia	1,919.60
6	The Philippines	1,652.80
7	Viet Nam	836.7
8	Lao PDR	736.1
9	Cambodia	598.4
10	Myanmar	215.6

Table1: GDP per Capita by Countries in South East Asia Region as of 2007

By using top 5 countries in term of GDP as the criterion, in fact, Brunei Darussalam should be included in the list as its GDP per capita was the second on the list behind Singapore, which was number one. However, based on the general background of the country, we found out that GDP of Brunei Darussalam mostly generated from its oil trading and had less concerns about other factors which would make our research became irrelevant (Central Intelligence Agency: The world fact book 2008 a). Due to this fact, our selected countries still remained the four countries, which were Singapore, Indonesia, Malaysia, and the Philippines.

We believed that, by starting with comparing Thailand to those countries which had similar characteristics and relatively the same level of economic performance; it would give Thailand an opportunity to have a clearer vision of our status in the international perspective and this information would become a fundamental step in developing a strong nation brand for the country in the future.

## 2.2. Conceptual/Theoretical Framework

Due to our choice of topic, this research would include a lot of concepts and terminologies related to nation branding in order to help readers gain more understanding in this area. The descriptions and explanations for some of those words could be slightly different based on the perception of each author.

Therefore, it was necessary that their descriptions and explanation would be provided in the Conceptual and Theoretical Framework section in order to ensure that the readers would understand the message that the research would like to communicate.

According to the purposes, we divided our research into 2 main parts. In the first part, we would study and analyze the current status of Thailand's nation brand equity in order to find out about the position of Thailand in the global market. In this part, we would use 'Asset-based nation-brand equity' to be our framework in gathering data and generating the analysis on Thailand's nation-brand equity by dividing the assets of the country into internal and external. This model belongs to Keith Dinnie, the professor at University of Strathclyde in United Kingdom who is an expert on the emerging field of nation branding (*Temple University Undergraduate program 2008*).By using this model; we would be able to analyze the effects of each component of nation branding on the country's nation-brand equity.

For the second part of the research, we would analyze each of the Thailand's four main sectors that nation brands compete in order to select the area(s) that have feasibility to become a foundation in creating a strong nation branding strategy for the country. In this part, we would use the 'Nation brand internal analysis model' to be our tool in performing an analysis on the capabilities of Thailand across a range of sector-specific indicators. We had made some adjustments to the model because, initially, the model used the scale from one to ten in order to evaluate the nation brand capability in each area which makes the result becomes subjective as it would be difficult to determine the score of each category. Therefore, we formulated an adjustment to the model by changing the one to ten score into 'low, moderate, and high' in order to make it easier for relative comparison with other selected countries. The conclusion of the sectors that Thailand should emphasize its nation branding activities in is the sector (s) that obtains 'high' nation brand capability in most of the criteria in that sector.

Our evaluation of both parts will base on the information that we have gathered from the 'Asset-based nation-brand equity' in the first part together with additional information that we would use the key success factors in the 4 main sectors that nation brands compete from the 'Nation-brand internal analysis' model to be our guideline in collecting information. The conclusion from the second part will be the foundation for our group to generate recommendations for Thailand in order to develop a new nation branding strategy.

Therefore, the model of our conceptual/theoretical framework will be as following;

**Part 1:** Finding the information and generating an analysis about Thailand nation brand equity

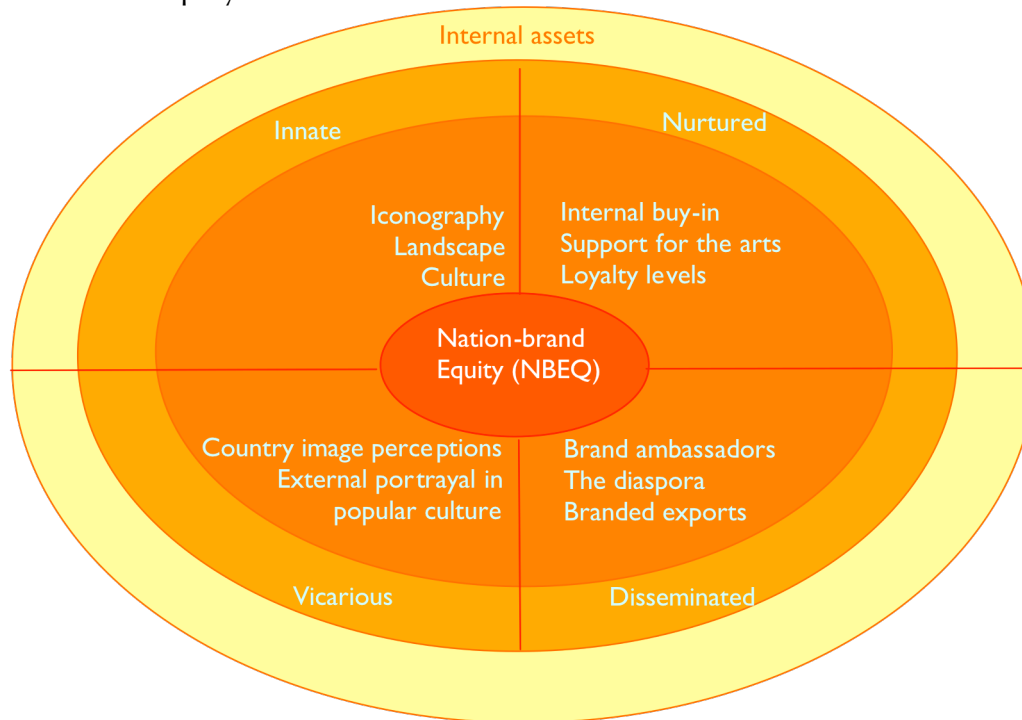


Figure1 Asset-based nation-brand equity (Dinnie 2008, p.68)

**Part 2:** Analyzing each of Thailand’s four main sectors that nation brands compete with other 4 nations in Southeast Asia in order to select the area(s) that have feasibility to become a foundation in creating a strong nation branding strategy for the country.

Nation-brand internal analysis- <i>tourism</i>			
Key success factors	Nation-brand capability		
Customer service levels	Low	Medium	High
Safety	Low	Medium	High
Value for money	Low	Medium	High
Accessibility	Low	Medium	High

Table 2: Nation-brand internal analysis on Tourism

Nation-brand internal analysis- <i>FDI</i>			
Key success factors	Nation-brand capability		
Stable economic and political environment	Low	Medium	High
Skilled workforce	Low	Medium	High
Streamlined administrative procedures	Low	Medium	High
Infrastructure	Low	Medium	High

Table 3: Nation-brand internal analysis on FDI

Nation-brand internal analysis- <i>export promotion</i>			
Key success factors	Nation-brand capability		
High quality brands	Low	Medium	High
Effective COO positioning	Low	Medium	High
Strategic development of target markets	Low	Medium	High
Innovation	Low	Medium	High

Table 4: Nation-brand internal analysis on Export Promotion

Nation-brand internal analysis- <i>talent attraction</i>			
Key success factors	Nation-brand capability		
Favourable residency criteria (for visa, passport,etc.)	Low	Medium	High
Attractive lifestyle	Low	Medium	High
Opportunity for career progression	Low	Medium	High
Reputation for higher education	Low	Medium	High

Table5: Nation-brand internal analysis on Talent Attraction

## 2.3. Data collection

### **Primary Data**

The source of our primary data was an interview with Ms. Dusita Srichoo who has a position of a policy and planning analyst in Secretariat of the Thai Prime Minister in an International Affairs Bureau.

The purpose of our interview was to obtain Ms. Dusita's recommendations for sources of the information that related to Thailand's nation brand as we believed; that, due to her position and responsibilities in Thai government, Ms. Dusita would have an access to the information that is necessary for our research. We determined that, even though we might not be able to obtain the direct information for our questions from the interview, we still use her response as a guideline in continuing our research in those areas.

The interview was conducted via electronic mail in Thai language on the 1<sup>st</sup> of May 2008. We decided to use 'Semi-structured' interview questions in order to collect the data because we would like to scope down the focus of our interview within the area of Thai nation brand and put them in structure in order to make it easier for the respondent to understand while at the same time expand the boundaries of the answers to cover as many types of sources as possible.

The list of questions that we included in the interview was as following;

- What is your current position and what is the position responsible for?



>> The purpose of this question was to see whether Ms.Dusita's position and responsibilities can be helpful for us to gain some information.

- Do you have information or database about how Thai citizens respond to Thai products and traveling domestically?

>> This question was asked because we need the information related to Thai consumers in the Thai market for analyzing 'Internal buy-in' factor which is a part of 'Nurtured assets' in Nation-brand equity analysis.

- In which level of loyalty do those foreigners who are travelers and investors have for Thailand?

>> The aim of the question is to find out whether Thailand has received loyalty from foreigners in any aspects for analyzing 'Loyalty level', a part of 'Nurtured assets'.

- How do Thai people feel about Thai culture, tradition?

>> This question was asked because in order to analyze 'Support for the art' in 'Nurtured assets', we need to discover if Thai people love Thai culture or not, and how they have feelings toward their own culture.

- Does Thailand have anyone or companies to be ambassador for the country?

>> As Ms. Dusita has been working with the Thai government for many years, so we believe that she must have a picture of Thailand, so if we ask the question, we are also confident that she is able to give the list of person or celebrity or company that represent Thailand. Then we will do further searching on those persons and companies to check and analyze whether they could act as Thai ambassador or not. This was used for analyzing 'Brand ambassador', which is one factor in 'Disseminated assets'.

- Do you know the number of Thai who reside outside the country?

>> This question was asked because we wanted to obtain the data about the number of Thai population in other countries, in order to analyze 'The Diaspora' in 'Disseminated assets'.

The details of Ms. Dusita's responses to all the questions were included in the appendix part of the report.

### **Secondary Data**

Due to the nature of our research which we would focus our study on the macro picture of Thailand and also general information about Indonesia, Malaysia, Philippines and Singapore, thus, most of the sources of our secondary data are documentary research from the internet and also from the published books, articles,

and journals. For the information about Thailand, we determined not to rely solely on sources of information that came from each particular country only but also from the globally accepted sources in order to minimize the prejudice for their own country in their data contents.

## 2.4. The thesis research model

The figure presented below demonstrates the steps in our research process and their interrelation, as they have been discussed above.

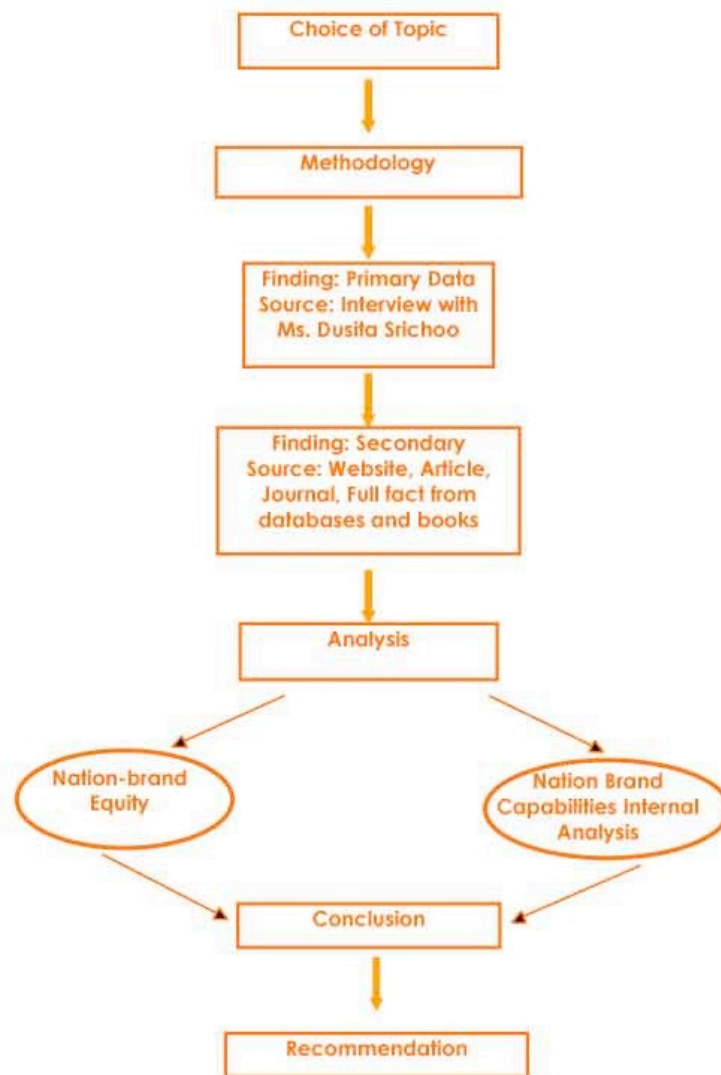


Figure2: The Thesis Research Model

## **2.5. Information analysis**

Firstly, we would qualitatively evaluate each type of Thailand's four assets in nation brand equity model separately by starting with innate, nurtured, disseminated, and vicarious assets respectively. The analysis would be performed by applying the descriptions in the asset-based nation brand equity model with the actual information about Thailand's assets that we gathered in the finding part in order to come up with the conclusion for the level of dedication that each asset has for the strength of nation brand equity. Then, we would summarize all the output of each asset to come up with the conclusion about the current condition of Thailand's nation brand equity.

For the internal analysis of Thailand's nation brand capabilities, we would analyze by using the indexes conducted by internationally accepted organizations such as World Bank, World economic forum, and United Nations to compare the capabilities of Thailand against other four countries. However, our judgment would not rely solely on the rankings in the indexes but also other supporting data that we gathered from other sources in order to come up with the conclusion about the capabilities of Thailand in each factor. Then, the output of each factor will be summarized to generate the level of capabilities in each sector.

## **2.6. Limitation**

As we selected to use secondary research to be our main data collection method, we are aware of the fact that our research information might not be sufficient. We also realized that it would be better if we could obtain more primary data from Thailand's both public and private sectors about the current status of the country's policy toward creating the country's nation brand image. However, with limited time period and barrier of distance that we are staying in Sweden, it has prevented us from obtaining the best information gathering.

Due to the fact that we both are Thai, we were aware of the risk that our perception might be in favor of our own country, which might have some impacts on our analysis and conclusion. However, with all efforts, we tried to minimize the influence to be as modest as possible. Nevertheless, we believed that, by relying on secondary data from several sources, we would be able to acquire the satisfactory information on wider perspective, which will help us investigate the situation from various points of view and will be able to come up with the conclusion and recommendation without favoritism.

Our group also believed that, even though our research might not be able to provide all the in-depth information about each country which was necessary for the making an evaluation and analysis due to limited time frame and ability to obtain an access to the information, it still can be used as a general guideline

in developing a clearer direction for Thailand in order to strengthen its nation brand in the global market.

### 3. Concepts and Theories

#### 3.1. Concept of Nation brand and Nation branding

According to Dinnie (2008, p.15),

*“Nation brand is defined as the unique, multi-dimensional blend of elements that provide the nation with culturally grounded differentiation and relevance for all of its target audience”.*

This definition indicated the multi-faceted nature of the nation brand and its need to integrate national identity dimension. Moreover, it also implied that Nation brand exists in consumers' mind rather than being a totally controllable construction of marketing functions.

Nation brand also has similarity with any other brands as it has unique characteristics of itself and there is no two nations are alike. However, what makes nation brands different from company brands are their diversity of thought, geographic landscape, language, unique histories and experience, unlimited product life cycle, and the desire of the country's populations to be special and original, all of which contributed to the uniqueness of each country's nation brand identity and help prevent the brand from being imitated or copied by any other countries (Fosher & Jaworski 2003).

On the other hand, nation brand also has its own limitation. In the case of products, after they are being launched, a set of attributes can later be mapped and any adjustments can be made any times in response to consumer demand. However, for nation brands, it is more difficult for the countries to make changes on their geographical landscape or planting a new type of plant if the climate is not suitable (Kotler, quoted in Frost 2004).

Nation brand also has both positive and negative effects on the exported products of the country. In the case of positive effect, the first examples is the perception towards the garment products that, regardless of the place where they were manufactured, by simply putting the 'Italian' designer name on the goods, their image has been improved instantly as the perceived stylishness, price point, and sell-ability has increased. The other example is 'Swiss Made' stamp on the hand watches ranging from the high-end to the third-world counterfeited products that seems to help to reinforce or even elevate their position as high quality, precise, and serious "time pieces (Fosher & Jaworski 2003).

For the negative nation brand effect, Chinese products are very clear examples as they are heavily affected by the power of their nation brand identity which made them usually perceived as poor quality, low value, bargain basement, and imitated products. Even though, in reality, China has produced a lot of goods and distributed to the international market, however, they are covered under Western brand names such as Nike, Reebok, and New Balance. The Western

brand names play an important role to help the products overcome the negative image of “Made in China” tag attached as they contain both positive core value of the brand itself and their own country nation brand effect (Fosher & Jaworski 2003).

As for the concept of Nation branding, there is no clear definition stated about its true meaning except just its purpose and objectives. Partly, it may be because the concept of nation branding just diversified from the product branding concept by adding more complex, multidimensional nature, and multiple stakeholder groups that must be acknowledged by the nations into its attributes (Dinnie 2008, p.20). According to Cromwell (n.d.), the purpose of nation branding is to position the country in the best approach as possible with its given strengths and weaknesses in order to become competitive in the world market, which can be done by gathering the maximum international recognition, strong business interrelationship with foreign market, and a healthy tourism industry. All of these will generate the benefits for the people of the country by providing them jobs, wealth, and also dignity.

Therefore, the major objectives of nation branding can be categorized into 4 main sectors, which are tourism, foreign direct investment (FDI), export promotion, and talent attraction. (The latter one is about how the country attracts high education students and skilled labor to immigrate into the country in order to become the foundation for its economic growth) (Dinnie 2008, p.17).

There are so many obstacles for Nations to implement their branding strategy. Firstly, there will be so many stakeholders involved in the branding process, which might result in the conflict of interest as some of them will not perceive the action as so beneficial to them as others. Secondly, the nation branding is difficult to be controlled by the central authority. The government and industry associations can only play a part as the plan initiators but it requires lots of participation from the people in the society in order to achieve the plan. Thirdly, marketers have less control over country branding because, in addition to countries promoting campaigns, the audiences can learn about the country from the school, media sources (such as newspaper, books, TV, and movies), products purchase, trips abroad, and contacts with people from that countries. Lastly, most of government officials who have to play a part in creating plans for nation branding have limited knowledge required for developing major marketing campaigns which make them usually are being drawn to product marketing approaches (Frost 2004).



### 3.2. Model of asset-based nation-brand equity

Nation-brand equity (NBEQ) is “the tangible and intangible, internal and external assets (or liabilities) of the nation” (Dinnie 2008, p.67). Model of asset-based nation-brand equity is the fundamental for developing strategic nation-branding campaign (Dinnie 2008, p.67). The assets, first, are divided into 2 parts; internal and external assets. While internal assets are comprised of innate and nurture, external assets are comprised of vicarious and disseminated. And “the external assets need to be strategically managed if they are to deliver maximum benefits to the nation” (Dinnie 2008, p.71).

***Innate assets:*** They are what each country has owned for ages and give an authentic taste of the country such iconography, landscape and culture. Iconography of a nation can be visual images, symbols and other unique representational elements that people relate them to that nation, but in present the icon is broaden covering individual, places and also product that people usually relate it to a country, for example Switzerland watch. Dinnie (2008) raised that landscape is foremost part in serving describe the core of a nation and it is key component of nation-brand equity. With poor economic or lacking of advantage country, landscape can bring the uniqueness of the country and give the value to the nation. According to Dinnie (2008), one of the important facets to give sustainable expansion for a nation is by showing the past culture, the root of today culture, while promoting the nation.

***Nurtured assets:*** On the other hand nurtured assets are what each country has developed gradually from people in the country such as internal buy-in, support for the arts, and loyalty levels. Firstly, the reason why internal buy-in is essential is if stakeholders in a nation are not interested in the image and reputations that representing their nation, then they cannot expect other countries recognise their brand. Dinnie (2008) stated that there would be a dissonance when tourist and foreign investors find out that there is a gap between reality and the projected image. Thus, every party in a nation, both public and private sectors, have to participate and support internal buy-in, because each population is a delegate of nation-brand. Secondly, support for the arts, it is from supports of organizations in a nation through encouraging culture’s life, the support could be from private organization donate sponsorship. Lastly, loyalty levels can be increased by various type of customers, which according to Dinnie (2008, p.70), “including the country’s own citizens, trading partners, foreign consumers of the nation’s good and services, international organizations, political allies, tourists and inward investors”.

***Vicarious assets:*** These assets are one of external factors in creating brand equity. From the book of Nation branding, Dinnie (2008) divide vicarious assets into country image perceptions, and external portrayal in popular culture. Country image perception would play important role to help where a nation has negative or outdated perceptions, and guarantee that the negative image will not ruin the overall the nation-brand equity. The negative perceptions could come from high crime, government corruption for example. However, the

government has to have curing action to undertake the real problem before any branding process can be dealt with. At starting point, current country image perception needs to be viewed, assessed and managed powerfully, because if the historical image is still blurred in unenthusiastic way, this original typecast can unclear and have effect on the existing perception of the nation as perception is important asset, or liability in another end, depending on how it be solved. Dinnie (2008, p.71) state that sometimes one fault dimension of image can cause a problem for a nation, even though there is a solidly positive country's image.

Not every part of nation-brand equity can be controlled to shape them in all positive, similarly there is only little action can be exercised over "external portrayals of a country in popular culture" (Dinnie 2008, p.71). External portrayals are what anyone, both inside and outside the country, perceives to the country through public media such as films, music and advertising etc. A nation needs to manage the effect and outcome by create which is positive and helpful to nation-brand, and making less negative portrayals.

***Disseminated assets:*** They are a part of external facet, comprised of brand ambassadors, the diaspora, and branded exports. Firstly, brand ambassadors, Dinnie (2008, p.72) states that it is important for a country that has no resources to implement exclusive promotional campaigns with a network of brand ambassadors, who has a role to express the nation-brand whenever they have chance. Nevertheless, it is crucial to make sure that the selected person is strongly represent the personality of the nation, and show positive aspects as the nation aim to do so. Next, diasporas are a network of future ambassadors waiting for initiation; it is what the country possesses. According to Dinnie (2008, p.72), the people in the network of diaspora can play a significant role to link state-of-art in policy, technological, and managerial expertise and local conditions in their homeland. Moreover, the diasporas can donate to more tangible financial benefit through the provision of FDI and individual remittances. Lastly, branded export is a crucial support in creating reputation for a nation in abroad. It is important that the country need to make sure that its export promotion agency is effectively resourced because it is a key asset in nation-brand equity.

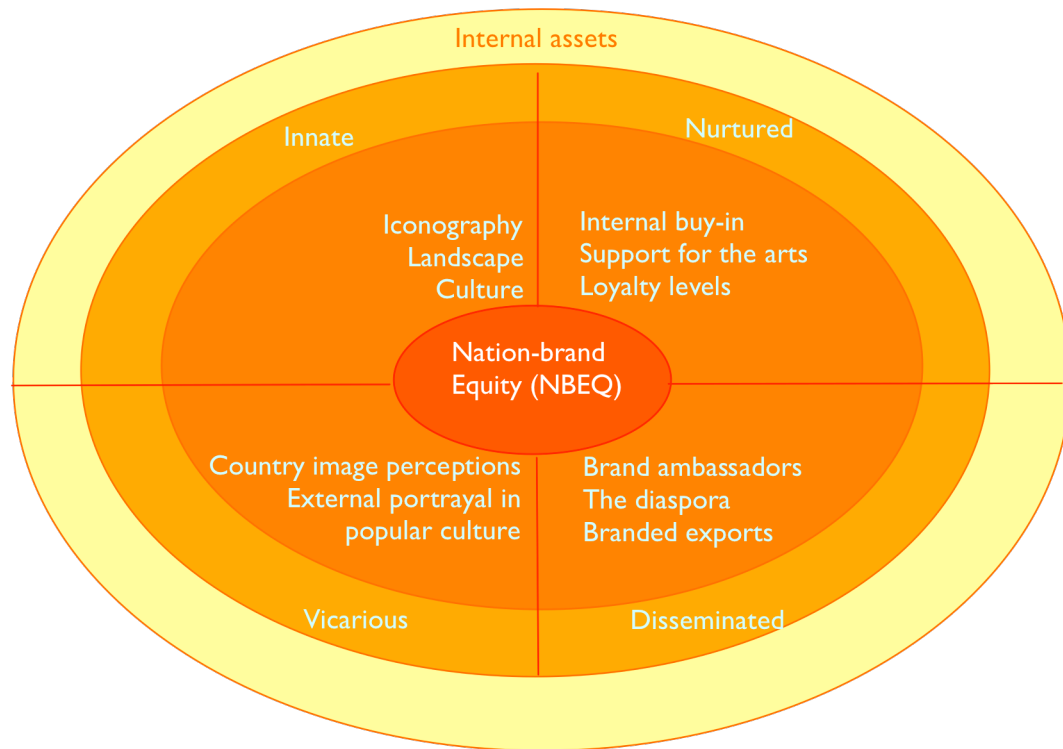


Figure 1: Asset-based nation-brand equity  
(Dinnie 2008, p.68)

### 3.3. Principles of strategy-Internal analysis

Internal analysis needs to be conducted in order to see the capabilities of a nation in promoting nation-brand. The analysis is divided into four sections, tourism, FDI, export promotion, and talent attraction, to estimate the strength of each one. Dinnie (2008) has used the table of nation-brand capability with scale of number from one to ten to make an analysis of each aspect. The high score is meaning that a nation has potential to promote and develop country branding through that aspect; the low score can be interpreted as not have potential to implement branding in that section. Not every nation can occupy all high mark in all modules.

However, we had made some adjustments to the model to make it fit with our purpose of the research that we would like to compare Thailand's nation brand capability with other four countries in the South East Asia region. Therefore, the scale of number from one to ten was changed into scale of 'low, moderate, and high' in order to enable the model to be a guideline in generating relative comparisons among all the five countries. The conclusion of the sectors that Thailand should emphasize its nation branding activities in is the sector (s) that obtains 'high' nation brand capability in most of the criteria in that sector.

The explanation for each section was as following;

**Tourism:** This is a part that any country likes to focus on because they find out that it difficult to compete in other area of nation-brand equity. As a result, most of the countries determined to make tourism as a key development. It is heavily employed by a nation where has rich attractive nature and climate, but lack of other resources. To endorse tourism, there are four factors beyond the control of nation tourism organizations, but the tourism boards can take the first step to try and force overall levels of customer service level. Moreover, levels of safety and law and order are important facets to attract tourists, another two factors are value of money and accessibility, which are also supporting tourism mainstream.

Nation-brand internal analysis- tourism			
Key success factors	Nation-brand capability		
Customer service levels	Low	Medium	High
Safety	Low	Medium	High
Value for money	Low	Medium	High
Accessibility	Low	Medium	High

Table2: Nation-brand internal analysis on Tourism

**FDI:** A nation desires to attract inward investment, to do so, a nation has to implement long term strategy to be certain that the level of FDI is sufficient for contribution to the country's economy. FDI will be high level in the country that has stable political and economic environment, and also where has skilled workforce. Importantly, it is required to have smooth and simple administrative procedures, because if it has slow procedure the investor will shift the country that want to make an investment in. For overall FDI supporting, a nation needs to have efficient modern infrastructure.

Nation-brand internal analysis- FDI			
Key success factors	Nation-brand capability		
Stable economic and political environment	Low	Medium	High
Skilled workforce	Low	Medium	High
Streamlined administrative procedures	Low	Medium	High
Infrastructure	Low	Medium	High

Table 3: Nation-brand internal analysis on FDI

**Export promotion:** This is a key objective of nation-branding strategy (Dinnie 2008, p.222). There are four factors for export promotion 1) high-quality brands 2) effective COO positioning 3) the strategic development of target market 4) high level of innovation.

Nation-brand internal analysis- export promotion			
Key success factors	Nation-brand capability		
High quality brands	Low	Medium	High
Effective COO positioning	Low	Medium	High
Strategic development of target markets	Low	Medium	High
Innovation	Low	Medium	High

Table4: Nation-brand internal analysis on Export Promotion

**Talent attraction:** According to Dinnie (2008, p.222), there are two objectives of talent attraction, which are to invite skilled workers and to invite foreign students to the country's higher education system. In order to attract them with suitable numbers depend on many criteria, including favourable visa and residency regulations, opportunity for career progression and an attractive lifestyle.

Nation-brand internal analysis- talent attraction			
Key success factors	Nation-brand capability		
Favourable residency criteria (for visa, passport,etc.)	Low	Medium	High
Attractive lifestyle	Low	Medium	High
Opportunity for career progression	Low	Medium	High
Reputation for higher education	Low	Medium	High

Table5: Nation-brand internal analysis on Talent Attraction

## 4. Findings

### 4.1. Findings based on Asset-based nation brand equity model

Formal establishment of Thai Kingdom was back in the mid of 14th century and latter the country exercised a constitutional monarchy system. Thailand is only Southeast Asian country which has never been under European control (*Country Insights-Thailand, Introduction 2008 i*). Even though on going king of Thailand, King Bhumibol (Rama IX), does not have much power under Thai's constitutions, however, he is Thai nation's symbol of identity and harmony. The King has gained respect from enormous Thais' population, whenever has political conflict or issues that can terrorize the country stability, he would use his authority to ease the situation and encourage the political continuity (*Country Insights-Thailand, Introduction 2008 i*). King Bhumibol Adulyadej is the world's longest-reigning monarch since 1946 (BBC News 2008).

#### 4.1.1. Thai National Symbols

##### National Flower



*The picture of Ratchaphruek (Tourism Thailand 2007)*

Ratchaphruek or Golden Flower is chosen as national flower because it can be plant everywhere, which known around Thais. The yellow color of itself is shining everywhere in summer time. Most important is yellow color is similar to Thai national religion, Buddhism and the color of Monday, which is Thai His Majesty the King's birthday (Tourism Thailand 2007).

##### National Animal



*The picture of Chang Thai (Tourism Thailand 2007)*

"Chang Thai" (or Thai elephant) is selected as national animal because elephants have been together with Thai life for long history. Thais in the past



used elephants for transportation and in battle. Moreover, 'white elephant' is greatly connected to King of Thailand, and it was portrayed in the former national flag. White elephant is rare animal, thus it usually used for royal duty (Tourism Thailand 2007).

National Architecture: "Sala Thai" (or Thai-style arbor)



*The picture of Sala Thai (Tourism Thailand 2007)*

"Sala Thai" or Thai-style arbor reflects knowledge of Thai people. It is unique from other nations architecture and it maintains the beauty acknowledged by foreign visitors (Tourism Thailand 2007).

#### *4.1.2. Location*

Situated in the heart of the Southeast Asian mainland, Thailand covers an area of 513,115 square kilometers. It is bordered by Laos to the northeast, Myanmar to the north and west, Cambodia to the east, and Malaysia to the south (Office of Prime Minister n.d.).

#### *4.1.3. Topography*

*The North* is a mountainous region characterized by natural forests, ridges, and deep, narrow, alluvial valleys.

*Central Thailand*, the basin of the Chao Phraya River, is a lush, fertile valley. It is the richest and most extensive rice-producing area in the country and has often been called the "Rice Bowl of Asia." Bangkok, the capital of Thailand, is located in this region.

*The Northeastern* region, or Korat Plateau, is an arid region characterized by a rolling surface and undulating hills. Harsh climatic conditions often result in this region being subjected to floods and droughts.

*The Southern* region is hilly to mountainous, with thick virgin forests and rich deposits of minerals and ores. This region is the center for the production of rubber and the cultivation of other tropical crops. Many beautiful tropical islands, dazzling palm-fringed beaches, coral reefs teeming with colorful marine life (Office of Prime Minister n.d.). One in top 10 islands is also located in south of Thailand, Phuket (Travel+Leisure 2007).

#### 4.1.4. Culture

Family: Most of Thais living in extended family under one roof, or at least under several roofs within the same compound. An important feature of Thai notion of family is children taking care of parents in their old age. The younger one has to respect the older one. (The University of Hong Kong 2004)

Food: Thais' culture can be categorized into 4 according to topography, northern, northeastern, central, and southern. The culture distinguish can be seen easily from food variety. In northern part, the food is usually milder than the food in central region. While northeastern food is quite spicy and cooks much of salads and special broiled, minced meat dishes and extensive green chilli. Sticky rice is very popular for northeastern people. Their special dishes are for example fried ants and grasshoppers and frog curry, which are so common for the region. Southern food has the taste of sweet, mild and spicy curried flourish from influence of large Muslim community, and its cuisine cooks a lot of sea animals, such as lobsters, crabs, scallops, fish, and squid. Thai food also received influence from foreign diet, for instance, the egg-based Portuguese sweets introduced in the Ayutthaya period, and bread and cake which entered recently.

'Thai Kitchen World Cuisine', Thai nation project, aims to create country competitiveness in food industry. Thai Kitchen of the World Center is run by Thai government agency to give 'One-stop-service' consultant for Thai food business to make Thai food becoming world-class food effectively. At present, Thai cuisines are in around the world, every continent, Europe, Australia, Middle East, Africa, Asia, and North and South America. From official website of Thai kitchen, there are 13,117 Thai restaurants in 39 countries around the world that has Thai restaurant registered (Thai Kitchen 2006 a, 2006 b, 2006 c).

Architecture: Thai Buddhist architecture has distinctive characteristics reflecting Thai soul from influencing of Indian, Khmer, and other since before 12th century. Khmer architecture was promoted in Early Sukhothai period as using sandstone in construction can be seen. Another example of other nation architecture influence is China, ornamental decoration which especially can reveal on porcelain fragments with variety of colors and adornments. All these architectures still can be found in many Thai temples nowadays (SITE n.d.).



*The picture of the Temple of the Emerald Buddha (Tourism Thailand 2007)*

*Thai handicraft:* It is another standout culture, such as wood carving, khram, basket, cloths, crafts of hill tribe, leather carving, gold & silver ornaments. Thai has its own language, which is one of the oldest languages in East and South-East Asia (SunSITE n.d. g).

*Thai Sports:* Thailand has 4 national sports. First, Thai boxing, which in traditional matches, contestants must pay “homage to their teachers in a praying ritual accompanied by Thai musical instruments the "Pi" (Java pipe), Glawng Chana (drum), and Ching (cymbals)” (SunSITE n.d. h). Second, fish fighting, it is similar to cock fighting. Nowadays, fish fighting can still be discovered in the countryside and on Bangkok's outskirts due to it is not allowed in the city areas (SunSITE n.d. h). Third, kite fighting can be found during summer time, as the southern wind blow to central region. Kite fighting consists of 2 types of kites “ 1) “Pakpao" the female kite, two and a half feet long diamond-shaped, 2) "Chula" the male kite, five to seven feet in length with star-shaped. They are the nation sport symbols and patronized by the Kings of Thailand for centuries (SunSITE n.d. h). Forth, Takraw, it is played in many versions in many part of Southeast Asia. But the most common sport played in Thailand is “hoop takraw”, consisting of 7 players in each team. “Hoops are suspended over the centre and the players must hit the ball through them” (SunSITE n.d. h).

Lumpini boxing stadium (n.d. a, n.d. b) is one of Thailand’s seven standard boxing stadiums, which is located in Bangkok city. It was founded in 1956 and is well-known for promoting Thai boxing art both domestically and internationally. Lumpini boxing stadium has mission to give services to the Royal Thai army officials as it is the Royal Thai Army affairs, to protect and promote Thai boxing, to create the champion of the western boxers in order to promote Thai nation and furthermore (Lumpini Boxing Stadium n.d. a). Boxing matches are broadcast to Thai television.

*Thai festivals:* Festivals are occurred throughout the year, but the most popular and beautiful festivals are Songkran Festival (Thai New Year), which occurring in April, and everyone throwing water to everyone because of the belief of

water will wash away bad luck, and Loy Krathong, which held under the full moon light in November (SunSITE n.d. f).

Thai Literatures: For Thai literature, one of the most important work is the Ramakian, a uniquely Thai version of the Indian epic, the Ramayana. It was written in 1798 by the first Chakri King, Rama I, and people who wanted to keep oral knowledge of Ayutthaya's. In addition, it is the major historical source of medieval Thai civil traditions. There are many Thai writers with famous works, but who were accepted by international view are Suwanee Sukhontha with her best novel Khao Chu Kan (His Name is Kan), the novel had won a SEATO literary Award, and few writers awarded from the Southeast Asian Writers Award (SEAWRITE) (SunSITE n.d. c).

Music&Film: Thai music has long history back to Sukhothai period and influenced by Indian instruments from contacting with them. In that time, musician had to work hard to memory, as Thais did not have notation. However later, when Thais had contacts with Western nations, they adopted some western instruments such as violin, bass drum, and the organ, and western music notation to maintain Thai music. King Bhumibol is excellent example of Thai musician in international arena. His Majesty the King was conferred Honorary Membership from Institute of Music and Arts of the City of Vienna, he was the first Asian composer receiving the honor (SunSITE n.d. d).

Within recent years, Thai music (T-Pop or Thai pop music) has started to gain popularity in Asia, particularly in Japan market. There are many Japanese websites promoting Thai pop music in Japan such as *Sawasdee-shop.com* (Sawasdee music n.d.), *Thai.cside.com* (Thailand Authority 2007), and *thaipopppers.com* (Thai Popper's Paradise 2008). In 2007, The Tourism Authority of Thailand in Japan had organized "120th Anniversary of Thailand - Japan Diplomatic Relations" which included a mini concert of Ice Saranyu, the famous Thai singer (Royal Thailand Embassy Tokyo, 2007)(*Thailand Week* 2007). One of Thai pop duos, Golf and Mike, is another artists promoted in Asia. They had a concert in the 4th Asia Song Festival, where many top Asian stars joining the festival, in South Korea. This teen duo was one of many Thai singers that obtained lots of influences from both Japanese J-pop and Korean K-pop and portrayed in the looks and sounds of their music (Garcia 2007).

For Film industry, there is one Thai film company listed in Cannes Market, which is Sahamongkol Film International (Film Festival News 2008). Currently there are movies advertised on the website such as Som Tum (a name of Thai dish), Nak, and Queens of Pattani.

There are few Thai movies which have good plot story and have been remade into Hollywood movie. Shutter, is an example of Thai movie accepted in worldwide, which, recently the plot has been bought the rights to be remade by Hollywood. The movie was written by Wongpoom Pisanthanakun (Aurum3, 2008). Another remade Thai movie is Bangkok Dangerous, the original movie was very famous in Asia and nominated in film festivals in Canada and Europe

(Bangkok Dangerous Trailer 2008). The remake of Bangkok Dangerous was starred by Nicolas Cage in a hit man character in Bangkok city.

Moreover, one Hollywood movie was filmed in Thailand and had promoted the country, especially Phi Phi Island, was "The Beach" starred by Leonardo DiCaprio in year 2000. Even though it has drawn a lot of travelers to visit the places featuring in the film, the movie also showed the problem about drug abuse in Thailand, while the film production also caused environmental issues and triggered protest among Thai people (Yahoo Movie 2008).

There were much more movies that were shot in Thailand such as Air America (1990), Casualties of war (1989), Good morning Viet Nam (1987), Heaven and earth (1993), Rambo (1985). However, all of them depicted the sceneries of Viet Nam, Laos, and Cambodia instead of Thailand itself (*Hollywood movies made in Thailand* n.d.)

#### 4.1.5. Thai Organizations:

Ministry of culture has 5 objectives.

1. To be the framework for religion, art, and culture reliance to Thai constitution.
2. To integrate religion, art, and culture to Thai way of life.
3. To assemble networks, and employ all resources for responsibility in religion, art, and culture.
4. Be a medium in development, cooperation and integration in religion, art, and culture for public sectors, private sectors and Thai residents.
5. To enhance prestige, equality, unity, and peaceful to the nation and global.

The Fine Arts Department is responsible; according to its mission (The Fine Arts Department 2005, *Mission and Function*)

1. Proceed according to the Act on Monuments, Artifacts, Art objects and National Museums, together with other related legislation and laws
2. Preserve, conserve, revive, promote, create and disseminate the knowledge, wisdom and Culture of the nation in the areas of :
  - 2.1 Museums, archaeology and monuments
  - 2.2 Literature, history, custom and tradition, national libraries and national archives
  - 2.3 Performing arts, architectural and fine arts
3. Provide education in the areas of dance, music, composition and craftsmanship, both in and out of school

3.1 Provide education up to a Bachelor degree course in the areas of visual and performing arts, both in the Thai and western classical schools, together with contemporary art and cultural education

4. Study and research to preserve cultural heritage via museums, archaeology and monuments, language, literature, history, custom, tradition national libraries, national archives, performing arts, architectural and fine arts

5. Act in other areas mandated by laws to be under the department's jurisdiction or as ordered by the Ministry or the Cabinet.

Moreover, the department has divided some matters for first priorities (The Fine Arts Department 2005, *Mission and Function*).

1. Support systematic and practical studies and researches on local wisdom and culture

2. Support the development of personnel in cultural management, conservation and creativity

3. Prevent further illegal export / import of antiquities

4. Promote creative efforts in local architectural identities

5. Organize special activities on auspicious events for the royal celebrations

Furthermore, Thailand has Thaidance College, which give education for students between 7<sup>th</sup> grade to diploma level, the college provide standard education plus emphasis on Thai tradition art. The college has established for 74 years (Thaidance College n.d.).

From the interview with Srichoo ( D Srichoo 2008, pers.comm 4 May), Thai government does not know exact number of Thai people in oversea due to there are many of them who immigrated to other countries illegally especially United States. Number of Thais who had right to vote in 2006 in oversea according to Ministry of Foreign Affairs was shown only 144,028 persons (Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Kingdom of Thailand 2006). In Thai student Association South Florida had presented that there were Thai students around the world, North America, Europe, Asia, and Australia from the list of Thai student Associations. Moreover, in United States, there was Thai town in Los Angeles, and Thaitownusa's website. In year 2000, number of Thai people in United States were approximately 150,093 people, which represent 0.05% of US. Population (U.S. CENSUS BUREAU 2004).



#### 4.1.6. Thai World Stars



*Paradorn Srichaphand (Buddhist Channel 2005)*

Paradorn Srichaphan, a Thai Pro tennis player, represented Thai culture very well. He is the first Asian male to reach the top 20 in the Association of Tennis Professionals (ATP) tour ranking since 1980. Every games he played, he did not just show good manner courteously, but also thanked the fans by performing the 'Wai', which is the traditional Thai bow, to the four corners of the stadium. Moreover, he is resemble of Land of smile, another image of Thailand, as he always smiles in his tennis match(TIME asia 2006, Paradorn Srichaphan). He received a comment from ATP's CEO Mark Mile that "he's fast becoming one of the best players in the international campaign" (TIME asia 2006).

In Thai film industry, Tony Jaa or Panom Yeerum (I am Tony Jaa 2006), the martial art action actor, played in Thai movies such as Ong Bak and Tom Yum Goong. Both of movies are well-known around the world, even Jackie Chan, a Hollywood star, suggested him for Rush Hour3 and said "I gave the director (Brett Ratner) videos of Tony Jaa because I think Tony Jaa is the most well-rounded of all action stars," (International Herald Tribune 2006).



(Cinematic Intelligence Agency 2005)

## 4.2. Findings based on Internal Analysis model

### 4.2.1. Tourism

#### **Thailand**

Thailand is the only country in Southeast Asia that has a lot of visitors because of its richness of natural beauty, temples, well-known hospitality, famous and unique cuisine, and Thai ancient kingdoms. With all resources it contains, Thailand can attract wide range of travelers (Lonely Planet n.d. c). Thailand's tourism has won many international awards for many years, for example, recently, 2008 Swedish 'Grand Travel Award' for 'World's Best Tourist Country', 2008 Norwegian 'Grand Travel Award' for 'World's Best Tourist Country' and 'Best Intercontinental Airline', and 2007 Destinasian 'Best City Destination for Leisure' Award and et cetera. From the 2007 Destinasian award, Thailand had been comment as "cheap, safe, vibrant, and good food" (Tourism Authority of Thailand 2008 a, 2008b).

Number of foreign travelers and Thai travelers in past 3 years has been increasing, from year 2005 to 2008 in term of both value of money and number of visit. Number of visiting for foreigners is 11.52, 13.82 and 14.46 million in year 2005, 2006, and 2007 respectively. And number of trip for Thais are 79.53, 81.49, and 83.23 million in year 2005, 2006, and 2007 in order (Tourism Authority of Thailand 2008 c).

However, there are still some serious security concerns in Southern provinces of Pattani, Yala, Narathiwat, and Songkla due to ongoing violent rebellion. Moreover, even though Thailand has returned to democratic rule under a coalition government but there is still potentially volatile due to unending political rallies and demonstration in the capital (Lonely Planet 2008 c).

World economic forum (2008.) has made country ranking in travel and tourism aspect into to 3 categories under competitiveness index (the overall) 1) Regulatory framework 2) Environment and infrastructure and 3) Human, cultural, and natural resources. Out of 130 nations, Thailand was ranked 42nd in the overall competitiveness index, 63rd in regulatory framework, 42nd in business environment and infrastructure, and 30th in human, cultural and natural resources. Under regulation and framework index, Thailand was ranked in 115th for safety and security because even though it has moderate level of crime and violence but there are still quite high level of road accidents and some terrorism at the Southern part. Moreover, Travel&Tourism business environment and infrastructure index is comprised of air transport infrastructure, ground transport infrastructure, tourism infrastructure, ICT infrastructure, and price competitiveness in travel and tourism industry. Among all these, Thailand has a very good air transport infrastructure as it has sufficient number of airlines available, good quality roads, present of car rental companies, ATM that accepts visa card, and extent of internet use. Thailand received 11th place for price

competitiveness because the country has low level of extent and effect of taxation, purchasing power parity, and also low hotel price index. The 30th ranking in human, cultural and natural was arisen from human, cultural and natural resources, and affinity for travel & tourism. Thailand has gotten 20th ranking in term of affinity for travel& tourism as its population has a very positive attitude towards foreign visitors together with the tourism openness (World Economic Forum 2008).

## **Indonesia**

Indonesia is an archipelago country which located between the Indian and the Pacific oceans (Central Intelligence Agency: The world fact book 2008 b). It has many beautiful beaches and sceneries for tourists to visit and adventure in the famous cities like Bali and Jakarta.

Firstly, there is high level of terrorism-related incidents in many areas including Central Sulawesi, Aceh, Papua, Maluku, Kalimantan and West Timor which increase the level of security risks for travelers. Second, Indonesia has suffered several natural disasters during the past few years both in the form of tsunami and earthquakes that happened in many areas around the country. Apart from tsunami that struck the country in 2004 and caused many thousands of deaths in Aceh and Northern Sumatra, Indonesia also faced a massive earthquake in the Mentawai Islands, Bengkulu, and Padang, and Jogjakarta. Moreover, Indonesia also contained many mountains that are still highly active including Mt. Merapi in Central Java, Mt Kelud in East Java and Mt Karangetang on Siau Island, north of Sulawesi. Recently, Mt. Kelud just had an eruption and the nearby villagers had to be evacuated. Even though the country is recovering but there is some unpredictability about the future and most of the transportation and infrastructure are also affected (Lonely Planet 2008 a).

According to the travel & tourism (T&T) competitiveness report 2008 developed by World economic forum, out of 130 nations, Indonesia was ranked 80<sup>th</sup> in the overall competitiveness index, 108<sup>th</sup> in T&T regulatory framework, 86<sup>th</sup> in T&T business environment and infrastructure, and 53<sup>rd</sup> T&T in human, cultural and natural resources. Under regulation and framework index, Indonesia was ranked in 108<sup>th</sup> for safety and security as a result of wide span of terrorism and unreliability of polices. Indonesia received 1<sup>st</sup> place for price competitiveness. This is because Indonesia has a very low level of Ticket taxes and airport charges, Purchasing power parity, Extent and effect of taxation, Fuel price levels, and Hotel price index in overall. The 53rd ranking in human, cultural and natural was arisen from human, cultural and natural resources, and affinity for travel & tourism. Indonesia has gotten 56<sup>th</sup> ranking in term of affinity for travel& tourism. For Indonesia, even though the attitude of the people towards foreigners is highly positive, the openness of tourism is considered to be very low (World Economic Forum 2008).

## **Malaysia**

Malaysia has peninsula bordering Thailand and northern one-third of the island of Borneo, bordering Indonesia, Brunei, and the South China Sea, south of Vietnam (Central Intelligence Agency: The world fact book 2008 c) and it is one of the most enjoyable and peaceful countries in South East Asia. The country is very cheerful and lively due to its culture which based on a combination of Malay, Chinese, Indian and indigenous cultures and customs. In additions, Malaysia also has a lot of beautiful beaches, mountains and national parks help its gaining competitive positioning in Asia. However, there are still some dangerous areas for foreigners to visit including the islands and coastal areas of Eastern Sabah as there are high risks of being kidnapped by terrorist groups (Lonely Planet 2008 b).

According to the Travel&Tourism (T&T) competitiveness report 2008 developed by World economic forum, out of 130 nations, Malaysia was ranked 32<sup>nd</sup> in the overall competitiveness index, 37<sup>th</sup> in regulatory framework, 39<sup>th</sup> in business environment and infrastructure, and 23<sup>rd</sup> in human, cultural and natural resources. Under regulation and framework index, Malaysia was ranked in 42<sup>nd</sup> for safety and security as a result of low level of crimes and violence and moderate level of road accident. Moreover, Travel&Tourism business environment and infrastructure index is comprised of air transport infrastructure, ground transport infrastructure, tourism infrastructure, ICT infrastructure, and price competitiveness in travel and tourism industry. The 39<sup>th</sup> place in business environment and infrastructure came from the fact that Malaysia has a relative high quality of ground transport including its roads, port and railways. All of these factors indicated the level of accessibility of the country's tourism. Malaysia received 3<sup>rd</sup> place for price competitiveness. This is because Malaysia has a very low level of Hotel price, Ticket taxes and airport charges, and Fuel price levels. The 23<sup>rd</sup> ranking in human, cultural and natural was arisen from human, cultural and natural resources, and affinity for travel & tourism. Malaysia has gotten 22<sup>nd</sup> ranking in term of affinity for Travel&Tourism. For Malaysia, the country has high level of tourism openness and extension of business trips recommended while there is still modest attitude of the people towards foreigners (World Economic Forum 2008).

## **The Philippines**

The Philippines is an archipelago country which located between the Philippine Sea and the South China Sea, east of Vietnam (Central Intelligence Agency: The world fact book 2008 f). Most of the country is peaceful, stable and relatively safe as the locals are really helpful. The beaches all over the country contain many fantastic reefs and fish. In addition, due to the fact that English is widely spoken, it provides great convenience for the travelers comparing to other countries in Asia (Lonely Planet 2008 d).

However, there are some parts of the country that should be avoided by travelers including most of Mindanao, an island group in the southern Philippines, especially the Zamboanga peninsula, Basilan, Tawi-Tawi and the Sulu archipelago, as there is still ongoing violence among ethnic and religious animosities. In additions, Abu Sayyaf, a Muslim extremist group who have claimed responsibility for attacks on foreigners, also operate in this area which might result in heavy fighting between the group and military units (Lonely Planet 2008 d).

According to the Travel&Tourism (T&T) competitiveness report 2008 developed by World economic forum, out of 130 nations, the Philippines were ranked 81<sup>st</sup> in the overall competitiveness index, 83<sup>rd</sup> in regulatory framework, 84<sup>th</sup> in business environment and infrastructure, and 78<sup>th</sup> in human, cultural and natural resources. Under regulation and framework index, the Philippines were ranked in 113<sup>th</sup> for safety and security as a result of high level of terrorism and road accidents. The Philippines received 9<sup>th</sup> place for price competitiveness. This is because the country has a very low level of Hotel price, purchasing power parity, and Ticket taxes and airport charges. The 78<sup>th</sup> ranking in human, cultural and natural was arisen from human, cultural and natural resources, and affinity for Travel&Tourism. The Philippines have gotten 65<sup>th</sup> ranking in term of affinity for Travel&Tourism. For the Philippines, the country has good attitude towards foreign visitors, however, the level of tourism openness is at the moderate to low level (World Economic Forum 2008).

## **Singapore**

Singapore is a one single island located between Malaysia and Indonesia in South East Asia region (Central Intelligence Agency: The world fact book 2008 d). The country contains an image of the being modernized, efficiency and orderly. However, parts of it still maintain the traditional combination of culture among Chinese, Malay and Indian together with some influences resulted from the colonial era (Lonely Planet 2008 e).

According to the travel & tourism (T&T) competitiveness report 2008 developed by World economic forum, out of 130 nations, Singapore was ranked 16<sup>th</sup> in the overall competitiveness index, 7<sup>th</sup> in regulatory framework, 13<sup>th</sup> in business environment and infrastructure, and 37<sup>th</sup> in human, cultural and natural resources. Under regulation and framework index, Singapore was ranked in 8<sup>th</sup> for safety and security as a result of a very high level of police service and also a low level of crimes and. In areas of infrastructure, Singapore has many of the world best quality in air transport infrastructure, quality of roads and roads density. All of these factors indicated the level of accessibility of the country's tourism. Singapore received 25<sup>th</sup> place for price competitiveness. This is because the country has a very low level of extent and effect of taxation, moderate hotel price, ticket taxes, airport charges, and Fuel price levels. However, the purchasing power parity is considered to be moderate to high. The 37<sup>th</sup> ranking in human, cultural and natural was arisen from human, cultural



and natural resources, and affinity for Travel&Tourism. Singapore has gotten 13<sup>th</sup> ranking in term of affinity for Travel&Tourism. For Singapore, the country has very high level of good attitude towards foreign visitor and tourism openness, however, due to the small size of the country, the extension of business trips recommended is still limited (World Economic Forum 2008).

#### *4.2.2. Foreign Direct Investment*

##### **Thailand**

After Asian Financial crisis in 1997 and 1998, Thailand economic has been cured fully from supporting of infrastructure enhancement, a free-enterprise economy, and pro-investment policies. Thailand is among the best performances in East Asia in year 2002 to year 2004. Thai economy growth in 2007, 4.5% growth, mainly comes from the increasing of export, while domestic consumption was decreased due to uncertain politic situation. GDP per capita in 2007 was estimated by CIA in amount of \$8,000. In 2007 Thai tourism section, it has been strongly recovered from impact of tsunami in 2004. However, in 2006, there was the military coup, it caused insecure political climate, and it was on going until the end of 2007. During the time Thai investment and consumption was decreasing. Thai government had to increase reserve requirement to 30% in order to stimulate capital inflow helping the idle economic in December 2006, and also the government had amendment the rules of foreign-owned businesses in Thailand. 2007 export growth increased nearly 12% even though Thailand got the pressure from appreciating currency. (CIA 2008) (Bhaopichitr 2008)

During the finance crisis in Thailand about 10 years ago, Sahagroup, one leading Thai consumer goods company since 1942, had realised that people in the country had to help consume products those produced domestically in order to bring the wealth back to Thai's economic. Sahagroup is initiator of the Thailand Best Program, which encourages Thais to use Thai's product, and the program is participated by other Thai companies (Thailand Best 2003 a, 2003 b).

In recent years, Thailand political environment has not been smoothly, there was military coup in 2006 and changing in government leaders. Since 1932, Thai nation has had 18 military coups, with recently in 2006. Thaksin Shinawatra, leader of Thai Rak Thai party and prime minister in that time, was removed from the position. Then Thailand was governed by Surayud Chulanont under military rule for more than a year. Continue with general election in December 2007, the pro-Thaksin party with new name, People Power Party (PPP), had won the election with largest number of seats and formed a six-party alliance government. Moreover PPP's leader, Samak Sundaravej, is present prime minister from February 2008. The prime minister accepted that the government image was not very beautiful as he had little freedom in selecting

his cabinet, and news that he was loyal to Mr. Thaksin, who is believed to be PPP's main financier. Additionally, there was criticized by public media as unqualified, unsuitable and dirtied corruption in the government (Economist Intelligence Unit 2008, BBC News 2008).

Although political situation in Thailand is not stability, but foreign investors have good confident in Thai economy, in Thai companies listed in Stock Exchange of Thailand. Furthermore in October 2007, Thai Foreign Minister reviewed that French Foreign Minister Bernard Kouchner had reconfirmed the tightness and value of Thai-French relationship. French companies, 350 companies roughly, in Thailand have told that they are satisfied with Thai's hospitality and interested in big projects in Thailand (Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Kingdom of Thailand 2007 a). However, on 15 May 2008 there was a news revealing that Thai Chamber of Commerce (TCC) had conducted a survey on foreign investors in Thailand. Foreign investors become concerning in Thai investment due to political turbulence and high oil price. The survey was conducted among 156 investors from May 12th to 14th 2008. From the survey, the investors rate Thai political stability for 5.4 out of 10 score, while they gave Singapore, Vietnam and Malaysia 7.3, 6.6, 6.3 respectively. For the time being, Japanese small and medium sized companies remain interest in investing in Thailand (MCOT English News 2008 a, 2008 b).

Currently, Thailand ranks the 84<sup>th</sup> place from the total 179 countries in the Corruption Perception Index 2007, which indicated a relatively high level of corruption. This index was scored by the perceptions of business people and country analysts around the world toward the degree of corruption they see in each country (Transparency International 2008). According to the rating developed by the World Bank group - International Finance Corporation, Thailand received the number 15<sup>th</sup> place in the ranking of easiness in doing business out of 178 countries and 3<sup>rd</sup> place out of 24 countries within East Asia and Pacific region. The development of this index was based on the weighting each country's percentile rankings on 10 topics including starting a business, dealing with licenses, employing workers, registering property, getting credit, protecting investors, paying taxes, trading across borders, enforcing contracts, and closing a business (The World Bank group 2008).

In additions, the market potential index (MPI), which was conducted by Michigan State University – center for business education and research by analyzing 8 dimensions that were chosen to represent market potential of 27 emerging countries, indicates that Thailand is in 17<sup>th</sup> place for the year 2008 in term of commercial infrastructure and, comparing to other countries in South East Asia region, the quality of Thailand's infrastructure came in the third place. This index was developed by measuring main telephone lines per 100 habitants, cellular mobile subscribes (per 100 habitants), number of personal computer (per 1000 habitants), paved road density (km per million people), internet users (per 100 habitants), population per retail outlet, and percentage of household with TV during the year 2006-2007 within the country. The 8 dimensions



comprise of Market size, Market growth rate, Market intensity, Market consumption capacity, Commercial infrastructure, Economic freedom, Market receptivity, and Country risk, all of which are generated from the sources including world bank, U.S. Energy Information Administration, International Telecommunication Union , Euromonitor International , Heritage Foundation , Freedom House , U.S. Census Bureau Foreign Trade Division, and Euromoney (*Market Potential Index for Emerging Markets* 2008).

Population of Thailand consists of 65.49 million people. Of the total population, it comprises of people age between 15 to 64 years old for 70.3%, which 22,763,274 are male and 23,304,793 are female. The median age of the population is 32.8 years old. For the literacy aspect, Thai people with age 15 and above can read and write, which results from the literacy rate of 92.6% of the whole population (Central Intelligence Agency: The world fact book 2008 e). However, in view of World Bank (Bhaopichitr 2008) Thailand need to have an improvement in knowledge and skill due to the World Bank's Knowledge Economy Index 2007 informed that Thailand has the rank of 56<sup>th</sup> after Malaysia, which in the 40<sup>th</sup>. The index tells that Thailand has slow improvement in knowledge as in 1995, the nation occupied 48<sup>th</sup> in ranking while Malaysia was in 53<sup>rd</sup>. This index is measured from Economic Incentive Regime, Innovation, Education and ICT level. As recovery from Asian Financial crisis in 1997 and 1998, Thailand's infrastructure has been developed very well and been good support for Thai's economic growth.

From the 2006-2007 survey of foreign investors' confidence in Thailand that was worked by Board of Investment, Thailand between February and March 2007 via questionnaires, one result from the questionnaires from 530 foreign companies in Thailand stated that the foreign investors were very satisfied with the attractiveness of investment incentive programs and the BUILD unit. Furthermore, the investors were also happy with the One Stop Service Center for Visas and Work permits and the Industrial Estates Authority of Thailand, which improved from year 2005 survey (Foreign satisfaction survey from BOI n.d.).

One Stop Service Center was created to facilitate foreign investors in visa extension and issuance of work permits, including work permit extensions, issuance of re-entry permits, and changes in type of visa to non-immigrant for all nationals (The Royal Thai Embassy n.d.). Thailand has been maintain and encouraging foreign direct investment to stimulate economic development, technology transfer, and employment. Thailand are welcome all nations in the investment because to avoid reliance on certain source of investment (U.S. Department of States 2006).

## Indonesia

After the Asian economic crisis in 1997, Indonesia was the country with the most effect in the region with the negative GDP growth of 13.1% in 1998. During that time, the government took part in debt restructuring program by purchasing a large portion of private assets and then later on sold them out, earning an average of 29% return, which helped the country recover from the crisis. In additions, Indonesia also recapitalized its banking sector, improved oversight of capital markets, and took actions in stimulating growth and investment in the country, particularly in infrastructure development. Currently, the GDP growth of the country has been relatively stable at the average percentage of 5% per annual since 2003 until now, which mostly generated from domestic consumption (*Country Insights – Indonesia Economy 2008 a*).

However, Indonesian authorities still have to find the best way to manage the ongoing fiscal costs which are the result of the 1997 crisis. The country's external debt was up to 49% of the GDP in 2005, which also consequently resulted in high amount of interest payment placed on the government expenditure annually. This could be considered as a great burden for Indonesian fiscal authorities (*Indonesia Country Profile 2007*). In order to improve the financial situation, Indonesian government has established many procedures to reform its financial sector including tax and customs modification, introduction of treasury bills, improved capital market supervision, and the release of new investment law in 2007, which clarified the rules regulating foreign direct investment and established a more transparent system for arbitration of disputes between residents and non-residents (Central Intelligence Agency: The world fact book 2008 b) (*Country Insights – Indonesia Risk assessment 2008 b*).

Regardless of all those attempts, Indonesia is still suffering with poverty and unemployment, inadequate infrastructure, corruption, a complex regulatory environment, and unequal resource distribution among regions. The country also has a problem in privatization of more than 100 state-owned enterprises which have monopolies in many key economic sectors. The non-bank financial sector including pension funds and insurance is still susceptible and capital markets are underdeveloped (Central Intelligence Agency: The world fact book 2008 b).

By locating on the Pacific 'Ring of Fire', Indonesia continues to in danger of volcanic and tectonic disasters. In addition to the destructive tsunami in Aceh province in December 2004, the country had to face with many new disasters in 2006 and early 2007 including a major earthquake near Yogyakarta, an industrial accident in Sidoarjo, a 'mud volcano' in East Java, a tsunami in South Java, and major flooding in Jakarta, all of these unfortunate events caused Indonesia additional damages in the billions of dollars (Central Intelligence Agency: The world fact book 2008 b).

Indonesia has an independent republic government type with President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono acts as both head of government and chief of states. Yudhoyono was the first president who came from direct popular votes on 20 September 2004 with the 5-year service term. President Yudhoyono's Democratic Party (PD) holds 55 of the 550 seats in the House of Representatives (DPR), making it the fourth-largest political party represented in the legislature as of 2008. The People's Consultative Assembly (MPR) has 678 members, consisting of the 550 members of the DPR and the 128 representatives of the House of Regional Representatives (DPD), which includes four members from 32 of Indonesia's 33 provinces. Since 2004, all seats in the DPR and DPD have been held by legislators elected by the citizenry. Previously, some seats had been reserved for representatives of the armed forces. The military has been a significant political force throughout Indonesian history, though it had ceded its formal political role by 2004 (U.S Department of State Bureau of East Asian and Pacific Affairs 2008 a).

Population of Indonesia consists of 231.6 million people (The Economist Intelligence Unit 2008 a). Of the total population, it comprises of people age between 15 to 64 years old for 65.7%, which 78, 330,830 are male and 77,812,339 are female. The median age of the population is 27.2 years old. For the literacy aspect, Indonesian people with age 15 and above can read and write, which results from the literacy rate of 90.4% of the whole population (Central Intelligence Agency: The world fact book 2008 b). The estimated amount of work force was 94.2 million (2005 estimated) and out of which are in agricultural sector for 46.5%, industrial sector 11.8%, and service sector 41.7% (U.S Department of State Bureau of East Asian and Pacific Affairs 2008 a).

Corruptions, bloated bureaucracy and lack of transparency remain major deficiency in the business climate of Indonesia. Currently, the country ranks the 143<sup>rd</sup> place from the total 179 countries in the Corruption Perception Index 2007, which indicated a relatively high level of corruption (Transparency International 2008). According to the rating developed by the World Bank group - International Finance Corporation, Indonesia also received the number 123<sup>rd</sup> place in the ranking of easiness in doing business out of 178 countries and 20<sup>th</sup> place out of 24 countries within East Asia and Pacific region (The World Bank group 2008). In additions, the market potential index (MPI), which was conducted by Michigan State University – center for business education and research by analyzing 8 dimensions that were chosen to represent market potential of 27 emerging countries, indicates that Indonesia is in 19<sup>th</sup> place for the year 2008 (*Market Potential Index for Emerging Markets* 2008).

After the economic crisis in 1997, the infrastructure investment in Indonesia declined steadily and has not yet been recovered. However, in November 2006, the Indonesian government announced that it will launch 110 infrastructure projects value at 16.5 billion USD and is working on 120 regulations to encourage infrastructure investment. Still, tighter restrictions have been introduced in the telecommunications sector (U.S Department of State Bureau

of East Asian and Pacific Affairs 2008 a). Under the new regulations, foreign investors can own up to 65% of mobile-telephone operators (compared with a previous limit of 95%) and 49% of fixed-line phone companies, down from 95%. There had been fears of even tighter restrictions, largely as a result of growing nationalist ire at Singaporean interests in the local telecoms industry. This would create a great negative effect on the foreign investment in the telecommunications and transport sectors (two weak points in Indonesia's poor infrastructure network) as an improvement in Indonesia's infrastructure will be retarded, results in making foreigners more reluctant to invest in other sectors (The Economist Intelligence Unit ViewsWire 2007).

Nevertheless, the ranking of the commercial infrastructure in 27 emerging countries within the market potential index also stated that Indonesia is on 23<sup>rd</sup> place. In addition, comparing to other countries in South East Asia region, the quality of Indonesia's infrastructure came in the last place (*Market Potential Index for Emerging Markets* 2008).

## **Malaysia**

Malaysia today is a middle-income country with a multi-sector economy based on services and manufacturing. Even though Malaysia was one of the countries in Asia that was affected by the economic crisis in 1997, which made its country's GDP reduced by 8% in 1998. However, in July 2005, Malaysian government implemented new financial policy by eliminating the connection between the country currency 'ringgit' from the US dollar. This new policy has made the value of national currency more stable and helped prevent the negative effect from currency swing, which could have an impact on the country's export (U.S Department of State Bureau of East Asian and Pacific Affairs 2008 b). The move from fixed peg to floating peg for the ringgit in 2005 led to the appreciation of currency in 2006 by 7% against US dollar (*Malaysia Country Profile* 2007, p.17). However, even though it might have positive effect for the country as it maintains the prices of imported products, the 'unpegged' currency also resulted in the form of inflation in 2007 (Central Intelligence Agency: The world fact book 2008 c).

Despite all the above, Malaysian economy continues to grow within the next few years as the GDP maintains the growth of 5.5% in 2006 and 5.7% in 2007 (Central Intelligence Agency: The world fact book 2008 c), which mainly are the result of increase in consumer spending within the country, improvement in external demand for the country's export (especially palm oil), and a booming of tourism related activities and agriculture sector (*Malaysia Country Profile* 2007, p.17).

Malaysian government type is constitutional monarchy, which, currently, has Paramount Ruler Sultan MIZAN Zainal Abidin as Chief of State (the 'Yang-di-Pertuan Agong') and Prime Minister ABDULLAH bin Ahmad Badawi as Head of the government. The paramount ruler was elected by and from the hereditary

rulers of nine of the states for five-year terms and the next election will be held in 2011, however, in practice election is based on principle of rotation among rulers of states. In the case of Prime Minister, he will be designated from among the members of the House of Representatives; following legislative elections, the leader of the party that wins a plurality of seats in the House of Representatives becomes prime minister (Central Intelligence Agency: The world fact book 2008 b).

Dr. Mahathir Mohamad was Prime Minister of Malaysia for 22 consecutive years between 1981 and 2003. During the time that he was in the position, Mahathir emphasized economic development especially in the export sector, as well as large scale infrastructure projects. In 2004, Abdullah Ahmad Badawi won an election as his political party, United Malays National Organization (UMNO), taking 110 of 219 seats in the lower house of parliament and he will be in the position until the next election in 2009. Since taking office, Abdullah, an Islamic scholar, has promoted the concept of "Islam Hadhari" or "civilizational Islam," emphasizing the importance of education, social harmony, and economic progress (U.S Department of State Bureau of East Asian and Pacific Affairs 2008 b). At present, the ability of opposition parties to compete with UMNO is still limited due to the heterogeneity of their political policies as they are only linked together by their duty against the government (Country Insights – Malaysia Risk assessment 2008 c).

Population of Malaysia consists of 27.2 million people (The Economist Intelligence Unit 2008 b). Of the total population, it comprises of people age between 15 to 64 years old for 63.3%, which 8,026,755 are male and 7,965,332 are female. The median age of the population is 24.6 years old. For the literacy aspect, Malaysian people with age 15 and above can read and write, which results from the literacy rate of 88.7% of the whole population (Central Intelligence Agency: The world fact book 2008 c).

Malaysia is considered to have a low level of corruption comparing to other countries in South East Asia region. Currently, the country ranks the 43<sup>rd</sup> place from the total 179 countries in the Corruption Perception Index 2007 (1<sup>st</sup> the lowest and 179<sup>th</sup> the highest) (Transparency International 2008). According to the rating developed by the World Bank group - International Finance Corporation, Malaysia also received the number 24<sup>th</sup> place in the ranking of easiness in doing business out of 178 countries and 4<sup>th</sup> place out of 24 countries within East Asia and Pacific region (The World Bank group 2008). In additions, the market potential index (MPI), which was conducted by Michigan State University – center for business education and research by analyzing 8 dimensions that were chosen to represent market potential of 27 emerging countries, indicates that Malaysia is in 14<sup>th</sup> place for the year 2008 (*Market Potential Index for Emerging Markets* 2008).

In additions, the development of infrastructure of Malaysia is in a relatively good condition as the ranking of the commercial infrastructure in 25 emerging



countries within the market potential index also stated that Malaysia is on 9<sup>th</sup> place which is relative high in the list. Comparing to other countries in South East Asia region, the quality of Malaysia's infrastructure came in the second place (*Market Potential Index for Emerging Markets* 2008). This is a result of the policy of Dr. Mahathir who initiated a lot of major infrastructure projects during the time that he was on his position as the Prime Minister for 22 years (U.S Department of State Bureau of East Asian and Pacific Affairs 2008 b).

## **The Philippines**

The economy of the Philippines has improved slightly from year to year since the economic crisis in 1997. In 2001, the improvement has been slowed down by the country's political issue and global tech-sector slowdown. This was because the country's export relies heavily on the manufactures of computer chips and electronics as they accounted for 90% of total merchandise exported. Then, since 2005, the Philippines' economy has improved at the rate around 5-6% per year due to the increase in electronics exports, growth in the business process outsourcing (BPO) industry and increase remittance inflow from oversea workers. In overall, there seems to be a positive future for the Philippines as a result of high growth in export sector (*The Philippines Country Profile* 2007, p.11), increased government and private construction expenditures, a strong information communications technology industry, improved post-drought agricultural harvests, and powerful private consumption (U.S Department of State Bureau of East Asian and Pacific Affairs 2008 c). However, there are still some obstacles for the long term growth for The Philippines' economy which cause by widespread poverty, crumbling infrastructure and education systems, and trade and investment barriers (*Country Insights – The Philippines Economy* 2008 j).

In additions, for the foreign direct investment sector, there were flows of large funds into manufacturing and service sectors which resulted in the growth in FDI in the first three months of 2007 at the percentage of 18.5 over the same period from last year. On the other hand, this also indicates the potential economic problem for The Philippines as the country will become vulnerable to external factors as the result of weakness in macroeconomic and structural aspects of the government (*The Philippines Country Profile* 2007, p.11).

Currently, The Philippines are governed by republic government type with President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo acts as both chief of state and head of government. Arroyo was elected as the president for the first time in 2001 and, on 14 May 2007, her coalition won the majority of the seats in the House of Representatives, gubernatorial seats, and city mayoral seats and will remain in position until May 2010 (U.S Department of State Bureau of East Asian and Pacific Affairs 2008 c). However, the Arroyo administration has not been able to clear its name from corruption charges and still has to continue facing rebellions and coup attempts against her government. The most serious one was in 2006,

when discovery of a coup attempt led to declaration of a state of emergency by the president (*The Philippines Country Profile 2007*, p.6).

After the election, the government has to face threats from terrorist groups, including three terrorist groups on the U.S. Government's Foreign Terrorist Organization list. The major one is terrorist Abu Sayyaf Group (ASG), which gained international notoriety with its kidnappings of foreign tourists in the southern islands, remains a major problem for the government, along with members of the Indonesian-based Jemaah Islamiyah (JI). However, in August 2006, the Armed Forces of the Philippines began a major offensive against ASG and JI on the island of Jolo. This offensive was remarkably successful and resulted in the deaths of Abu Sayyaf leader Khadafy Janjalani and his deputy, Abu Solaiman (U.S Department of State Bureau of East Asian and Pacific Affairs 2008 c). Currently, an international monitoring team continues to watch over a four-year-old cease-fire agreement between the government and the separatist Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) who were demanding greater autonomy for the large Muslim population in the southern province. The negotiation is still continuing between two sides with the Government of Malaysia acting as principal mediator (*Country Insights – The Philippines Economy 2008 j*).

Population of The Philippines is estimated to reach 92,681,453 in July 2008. Of the total population, it comprises of people age between 15 and 64 years old for 61.7%, which 28,524,176 are male and 28,652,155 are female. The median age of population is 23 years old. For the literacy aspect, Filipino people with age 15 and above can read and write, which results from the literacy rate of 92.6% of the whole population that is one of the highest among developing countries (Central Intelligence Agency: The world fact book 2008 f) (U.S Department of State Bureau of East Asian and Pacific Affairs 2008 c). The estimated amount of work force was 36.2 million (2007 estimated) and out of which are in Service sector (including commerce and government) for 50%, Agriculture sector 35%, and Industry sector 15% (U.S Department of State Bureau of East Asian and Pacific Affairs 2008 c).

Currently, even though The Philippines are having higher rate of foreign investment compared to the same previous last year, it is still strongly affected by the political instability and a business climate marked by corruption, which will limit the country's growth potential (*Country Insights – The Philippines Economy 2008 j*). According to the Corruption Perception Index 2007 developed by Transparency International organization, The Philippines are ranked at 131<sup>st</sup> place from the total 179 countries around the world (Transparency International 2008). Moreover, according to the rating developed by the World Bank group - International Finance Corporation, the Philippines received the 133<sup>rd</sup> place in the ranking of easiness in doing business out of 178 countries and 21<sup>st</sup> place out of 24 countries within East Asia and Pacific region (The World Bank group 2008).



In additions, the market potential index (MPI), which was conducted by Michigan State University – center for business education and research by analyzing 8 dimensions that were chosen to represent market potential of 25 emerging countries, indicates that the Philippines are in 18<sup>th</sup> place for the year 2008 (*Market Potential Index for Emerging Markets 2008*).

Inadequate infrastructure remains one of the major constraints for the growth of The Philippines' economy. One of the most important reasons is the lack in development of the power sector as the amount of supply is unreliable and prices are among the highest in Asia. This is the result of the unorganized agreement between the huge state-run electricity Napocor and independent generating firms since the 1990s. It promises profitable supply contracts for the private sector entities while leaving the overcapacity and increasing costs for the state-run firm, which were passed on to the consumers in the form of additional charges and also to the taxpayers in the form of huge losses for Napocor (*The Philippines Country Profile 2007*, p.14).

Due to the unreliable amount of electrical supply, the industrial sector of The Philippines is concentrated within the urban area, especially in metropolitan Manila region. Moreover, the problem of weak linkage between the central and rural economy is also fostered by insufficient transportation and communication networks. For agricultural sector, The Philippines' agriculture is also far behind their true capability which is due to inadequate infrastructure and lack of financial support from the government (U.S Department of State Bureau of East Asian and Pacific Affairs 2008 c).

Nevertheless, the ranking of the commercial infrastructure in 25 emerging countries within the market potential index also stated that the Philippines are on 22<sup>nd</sup> place which is almost the lowest in the list. In addition, comparing to other countries in South East Asia region, the quality of the Philippines' infrastructure came in the second to the last place (only higher than Indonesia) (*Market Potential Index for Emerging Markets 2008*).

## **Singapore**

Singapore is proved to have a success in their economic growth with average 8% growth from 1960 to 1999. The country had been hit hard by the economic slow down in the United States, Japan, and European Union during 2001-2003 due to its heavy reliance on the export of electronics components which created strong negative effect on the country's economy when this sector encountered a fall in the global market. In additions, in 2003, the country's economy also affected by wide spread of Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS) during the first half of the year which drew back the ability to regain their former status. However, from 2004 to 2006, the country's economy expanded continuously with the average of 8% per year as it was driven by the growth in the world demand for electronics, pharmaceuticals, other manufactured goods and financial services (*Country Insights – Singapore Economy 2008 d*).

For political condition, Singapore has been governed continuously from the year 1959 until now by the People's Action Party (PAP) as they always gained the highest majority votes in all the elections which resulted in the largest amount of seats in the parliament. PAP has governed under a philosophy of 'guided democracy' which controversial issues have been managed by the technocrats. Therefore, ethnic divisions have been successfully contained and, with the strong punishments, the level of crimes and corruption tends to be lower than most authoritarian states (*Country Insights – Singapore Government 2008 e*).

The overwhelming votes for the PAP (66.6% in 2006 election) indicates the general level of satisfaction with the party's governing policy as it had led the country through many of dramatic economic transformation with in the past four decades. The party has maintained a remarkable degree of social structure and equity together with the gradual increase in country's wealth without the charges of corruption (Singapore Country Profile 2007).

Population of Singapore consists of 4.6million people (Central Intelligence Agency: The world fact book 2008 d). Of the total population, it comprises of people age between 15 to 64 years old for 76.5%, which 1,717,357 are male and 1,809,462 are female. The median age of the population is 38.4 years old. For the literacy aspect, Singaporean people with age 15 and above can read and write, which results from the literacy rate of 92.5% of the whole population (Central Intelligence Agency: The world fact book 2008 d). The estimated amount of work force was 2.73million (2007 estimated) and out of which are in Manufacturing sector 20.7%, and service sector 67.7% (U.S Department of State Bureau of East Asian and Pacific Affairs 2008).

Singapore also ranks the fourth from the total 179 countries in the Corruption Perception Index 2007, which was developed by Transparency International Organization (Transparency International 2008). Moreover, according to the rating developed by the World Bank group - International Finance Corporation, Singapore also received the number one place in the ranking of easiness in doing business out of 178 countries around (The World Bank group 2008).

In additions, the market potential index (MPI), which was conducted by Michigan State University – center for business education and research by analyzing 8 dimensions that were chosen to represent market potential of 27 emerging countries, indicates that Singapore is in 3<sup>rd</sup> place for the year 2008 (*Market Potential Index for Emerging Markets 2008*).

Singapore's advanced and efficient infrastructure has played an important role in attracting investment from more than 7,000 multinational corporations from the United States, Japan, and Europe as foreign firms are found in almost all sectors of the economy (U.S Department of State Bureau of East Asian and Pacific Affairs 2008).

Nevertheless, the ranking of the commercial infrastructure in 27 emerging countries within the market potential index also stated that Singapore is on 5<sup>th</sup> place which is the highest among countries in South East Asia region. In addition, comparing to other countries in South East Asia region, the quality of Singapore's infrastructure came in the first place (*Market Potential Index for Emerging Markets 2008*).

#### 4.2.3. Export Promotion

##### **Thailand**

On estimated number in 2007, Thailand had export value of \$143.1 billion, for rice, textiles and footwear, fishery products, rubber, jewelry, automobiles, computers and electrical appliances. Main export country partners are United States (15%), Japan (12.7%), China (9%), Singapore (6.4%), Hong Kong (5.5%) and Malaysia (5.1%) in year 2006 (Central Intelligence Agency 2007). In addition, the European Union (EU) countries also account for a large amount of Thailand's export (15%) while the UK is the largest purchaser with the amount of 3% of total export. Australia is also growing in importance as currently it accounts for 2% of Thailand's total export (Thailand country profile 2007). In last few years, Thai economic is moving due to rising export, 15 %, 17.4%, 18.5% growth in year 2005, 2006, and the first quarter of 2007 respectively. In 2006, Thai exports of goods and services accounted for 68.6% of GDP of the nation (*Country Insights – Thailand economy 2008 h*).

For the import side, Japan is the most important trading partner of Thailand which account for 20% of Thailand's total import. Next are China (10.6%), Malaysia (6.6%), UAE (4.5%), and Singapore (4.5%) (Thailand country profile 2007).

Most of Thai labor force, 40%, is worked in agriculture. Thailand is a major world rice exporter, as of 2005, Thailand held around 40% of the world rice market share (United States Department of Agriculture 2008). Thai government has registered trademark for Thailand's fragrant rice in a name of Hom Mali, which is known as Jasmine rice. The government registered in the name because to differentiate Hom Mali from Thai Jasmine rice, which a company in United States had registered (Food Market Exchange 2003). The uniqueness of Thai Hom Mali is "the only naturally fragrant rice truly indigenous to Thailand". Grown only in a selected part of the Northeastern region of Thailand, Thai HOM MALI Rice is as white as the color of the jasmine flower. Its natural scent is the distinct aroma of the pandanus leaves. "When cooked, it is soft and tender in texture, with a hint of sweetness in its flavor" (Economic Overview n.d., p. 3). There are clear characteristics of Hom Mali. It is long grain rice with average width to average length ratio must be at least 1:3. "Hom Mali must contain between 12.0 and 19.0 per cent amylose and at most 14 per cent moisture" (Food Market Exchange 2003). There are 5 types of Hom Mali, Klong Luang 1,

Supanburi, Dok Mali 105, Pisanulok 1, and Patumthani 1. Each type of Hom Mali has unique characteristics. Jasmine rice is Thailand's unique rice specialty, which sold at a higher price and with fewer competitors because of its unique flavor and texture (Linnemann & Suwannaporn 2007, p.2).



*Thai Hom Mali* (Food Market Exchange 2003)

In 2003, Thailand exported a total of 786,000 tons of Hom Mali which is equal to about 18% of total rice exports. Out of all the exported Hom Mali, 19.48 per cent went to the USA, 18.73 per cent to Hong Kong, and 14.48 per cent to China (Food Market Exchange 2003). Currently, American and European people eat more rice as consumption per capita increased mainly in northern European countries, such as the Netherlands (8.9 kg), France (7.4 kg), Finland (6.9 kg), Norway (6.5 kg), Belgium (5.8 kg), Germany (5.6 kg), Ireland (5.1 kg), Denmark (5.0 kg) and the U.K. (4.1 kg). In the U.K., there is an increase in rice consumption partly because consumers move away from the traditional meal toward international cuisine such as Indian, Mexican and Asian foods. In the U.S.A., rice has changed from being only a side dish because of the fast-growing Asian-American and Hispanic-American population. Moreover, there is also an increase in health awareness among American consumers in general, with the perception of rice as a healthy food, and a great number of restaurants serving rice dishes, has made rice more accepted by Americans (Linnemann & Suwannaporn 2007, p.3).

Looking into proportion of export structure in 2007, principle manufacturing products accounted for 78.1%, and agricultural products accounted for 10% (EXIM Bank 2007). However, Thailand has to rely on importing high value of material for manufacturing products such as computer components, and automobile. This is because of the country still lacks of innovation on high productivity, but Thailand gains advantage from low labor costs (Macro picture of Thai industries p.1).

According to the 2008 Boston Consulting Group (BCG) new global challenger report, there are 2 Thai companies that are playing an important part in operating large businesses at the global level which can influence the direction of the future globalization. The first one is Charoen Phokphand Foods Company with food and beverage industry (*The tigers that lost their roars* 2007) that covering animal feed production, animal farming, meat processing and the manufacturing of food products. Currently, the company has operating units in

other countries including a Thai restaurant business in China, a Turkish subsidiary for livestock business (mainly chicken) and aquatic feed production and distribution along with aquatic farming in China (*Charoen Phokphand Foods public company limited 2008, p.7*). Moreover, Charoen Phokphand Foods also are expanding into other industries such as telecoms, convenience stores, and car making (*The tigers that lost their roars 2007*). The other company is Thai Union Frozen Products Company which is a producer and exporter of frozen and canned seafood. The company also operates its own can production and printing businesses, and has holdings in fruit and vegetable canning companies and in animal feed operations (*Thai Union Frozen Products Company 2007, p.6*). Nevertheless, BCG has opinion that they do need to have stronger brand replacing exporting volume commodities (Economist.com 2008).

Thai airways International Public Company Limited is the national company, has flight both domestic and intercontinental from its home base in Bangkok (Thai Airways n.d.). The flight attendants of the airline are greeting customers in Thai way and Thai tradition. Share of Thai Airways 53.77 percent is owned by Thai Ministry of Finance. Thai Airways has received 2nd place award from THE WOLRD AIRLINE AWARDS, after Singapore Airlines for year 2007. Thai Airways has stepped up from 4th place in year 2006 (SKYTRAX 2008 b). The awards are the world's premier recognition of Quality for the airline industry and recognized around the world. The Awards are done by SKYTRAX Research, which established in 1989, and is specialist Research Advisors in UK to the air transport industry (SKYTRAX 2008 a). From the total revenue of the company in 2007, the biggest part of 39.8% came from the countries in Asia region, the second one is from European countries which accounted for 26.5% while domestic market came in the third place with 10.7% (*Thai Airways International public company 2007, p.6*).



*The picture of Thai Airways (Pattaya Daily News 2008)*

Thailand is also the number 4 country in Asia in terms of beer production behind China, Japan, and Korea. The country's leading beer manufacturing company is Boon Rawd Brewery which has the international recognized brand 'Singha beer'. Currently, the brand is now available in 25 countries through more than 40 distributors. There is a great opportunity for exporting to the



international market especially in the countries that grow favorable on Thai food and contain tremendous expansion of Thai restaurants such as the US and some countries in Europe including UK, France, Sweden, and Switzerland. In United States, there are more than 4,000 Thai restaurants. In addition, Singha beer is widely accepted in the international market as a good compliment drink that goes well with Thai dishes (Cioletti 2005).



*The picture of Singha Beer (Silom Village and Patpong Street 2006)*

Red Bull is a drink company, which 51% of its share is hold by Thais, Chaleo Yoovidhya and Son Chalerm, and another 49% is own by an Austrian, Dietrich Mateschitz, who doing marketing work for Red Bull (Forbes 2006).

According to Global Innovation Index (GII) 2007 which was conducted by World business and INSEAD, Thailand is ranked at the 34<sup>th</sup> place out of 107 countries around the world. The index indicates a country's ability to adopt and benefit from leading technologies, increased human capacities, organizational and operational developments, and enhanced institutional performance and it was developed by measuring the eight innovation 'pillars' in each country and these pillars are grouped in 2 categories which are inputs and outputs. The 'inputs' factors are institutions and policies, human capacity, infrastructure, technological sophistication, and business markets and capital. The 'outputs' factors are the benefits that the nation derives from the inputs in terms of knowledge creation, competitiveness and wealth generation. The model uses a combination of objective data drawn from a variety of public and private sources such as the World Bank, International Telecommunications Union (e.g. university enrollment rates, GDP growth rates, the level of penetration of new technologies) and subjective data drawn from the World Economic Forum's annual Executive Opinion Survey (Caulkin & Dutta 2007).

Thai government has established the National Innovation Agency (NIA) in 2003 by the Ministry of Science and Technology in order to help stimulate the level of innovation of Thai products in the three major strategic areas including Bio-business, Energy and Environment, and Design and Branding. In addition, NIA

also created knowledge-driven innovation by investing in acquisition of the new knowledge, researchers, and patents (National Innovation Agency 2007).

## **Indonesia**

The majority of Indonesia's export products are oil and gas, electrical appliances, plywood, textiles, rubber which sum up to the total amount of 118.4 billion USD in 2007 (Central Intelligence Agency: The world fact book 2008 b). This amount considered to be 29% of the country's GDP.

The largest amount of export products are oil & gas, which account to 22.8% of total exports. Next are mineral products (11.5%), machinery & electrical equipment (11%), and textile (9%) (The Economist Intelligence Unit 2008 a).

More than 75% of the country's exports are sent to the countries within the Asia Pacific region and, among all those countries, Japan is the primary export market which accounts for 21% of total exports. The others are Singapore (9%), South Korea (8%), China (8%), and Malaysia (4%). For the countries outside this region, the US is the number one with 12% of Indonesian export (Indonesia Country Profile 2007).

On the import side, Singapore is the most significant, providing 16% of total imports followed by Japan with 12% of the total, ASEAN countries (20%), the US (7%), and China (10.5%). Thailand, South Korea, Australia, Saudi Arabia have an approximately 5% share each (Indonesia Country Profile 2007).

Indonesia is Asia's second largest oil producer and the world's largest exporter of liquefied natural gas (LNG), which is the main product of PERTAMINA Indonesian State owned gas and Oil Company. Currently, out of total 24 million tons that Indonesia exports each year, 12 million tons go to Japan and this amount is increasing as the result of Japan-Indonesia economic partnership (Krismantari 2007).

According to the Indonesian Science Research and Technology Landscape to Strengthen the National Innovation System (PERISKOP) study, Indonesia still lack of local and regional innovation system and there is little interaction between firms and research institutions. Moreover, the country's technological capability to absorb and improve upon complex imported technologies is limited and most of technologies transferred to Indonesia were in private sector only. Due to this reason, in 2007, the country has developed 'Sub-national innovation system policy and programs' in order to support the development of innovation at the regional level (Taufik 2007). However, the program is still in planning stage and there is lots of work to be done in order to educate the people about the objectives and course of action of the program.

In additions, Global Innovation Index (GII) 2007 which was conducted by World business and INSEAD, Indonesia is ranked at the 48<sup>th</sup> place out of 107 countries around the world (Caulkin & Dutta 2007).



## Malaysia

Malaysia is one of the world's largest exporters of semiconductor devices, electrical goods, and information and communication technology (ICT) products (U.S Department of State Bureau of East Asian and Pacific Affairs 2008). In 2007, the total amount of export was 169.9 billion USD which was equal to 100 % of the country GDP (Central Intelligence Agency: The world fact book 2008 c). The value of export composed of electronic 37.6 %, electronic machinery 13.5%, chemicals and chemical products (5.6%), crude oil (5.2%), and palm oil (3.7%) (The Economist Intelligence Unit 2008 b).

The major trading partner of Malaysia is the US which accounts for almost 20% of the total export. The rest of export products are sent to countries within Asia-Pacific nations including Singapore (16%), Japan (10%), China (7%), Hong Kong (6%) and Thailand (5%) (*Malaysia Country Profile 2007*, p.17).

For imports, Japan is Malaysia's most important trading partner, with a share of 15% followed by the US with 13% share, Singapore (12%) , China (12%), Taiwan (6%), South Korea (5%), Thailand (5%), and Germany (5%) (*Malaysia Country Profile 2007*, p.17).

As the Malaysian biggest part of export products is electronic and electronic machinery, it created the possible problem due to the lack of diversification of the country's export base as the economy will particularly exposed to the global crash in the ICT sector. Malaysian authorities themselves also aware of this issue and have attempted to create more diversification among the export product by investing budget in the automotive sector in order to enhance its export presence in the global market. However, those attempts have not shown much success. Nevertheless, Malaysian government still continuously shows a favorable attitude towards foreign investment in the high-tech and export-oriented sectors. The recent demonstration is the implementation of the new regulation that allow new ventures that are established in the manufacturing sector can now be wholly owned ventures of any foreign company (*Malaysia Country Profile 2007*, p.21).

Malaysian authorities have created the country's Vision 2020 effort, which attempted to place Malaysian country brand in the same range with developed nations. Currently, there are several indicators that contributed to the progress of making the "Made in Malaysia" label to convey connotations of quality, excellence and innovation. For example, Malaysian cars manufacturers such as Proton and Perodua have shown a remarkable commitment to quality, design and innovation. In additions, Malaysia has also given the world celebrated brands including shoemaker Jimmy Choo, actress Michele Yeoh, the Shangri-La Hotel chain, YTL Corp, and Sapura Corporation (Sya 2004). Moreover, Petroliam Nasional Berhad (Petronas) is Malaysia's national petroleum corporation which is an integrated international oil and gas company with business interests in 35 countries. The company primarily operates in Asia, Africa and South America (*Petroliam Nasional Berhad 2006*, p.4)

Among all the Malaysian companies, the best performer is YTL conglomerate which is huge in construction. The firm also owns a British water firm, Wessex Water, operates hotels and up market shopping malls, runs a high-speed rail link from central Kuala Lumpur to the city's airport and owns a chain of power stations. Recently, YTL also have acquired many foreign firms including Laura Ashley, a fashion designer; Costain, a builder; Lec, a fridge maker; and Agusta, a motorbike-maker (The tigers that lost their roars 2007).

According to Global Innovation Index (GII) 2007 which was conducted by World business and INSEAD, Malaysia is ranked at the 27<sup>th</sup> place out of 107 countries around the world (Caulkin & Dutta 2007).

### **The Philippines**

The current export balance of The Philippines for the year 2007 is equal to 48.38 billion USD, which is 33.57 % of the country's GDP. This amount comprises of semiconductors and electronic products, transport equipment, garments, copper products, petroleum products, coconut oil, and fruits (Central Intelligence Agency: The world fact book 2008 f).

Nowadays, around two-third of the export revenue are generated from electronic shipments, however, the percentage of growth reduces sharply comparing the previous year (from 15% in 2006 to 6%) (U.S Department of State Bureau of East Asian and Pacific Affairs 2008). The increase in electronic manufacturing export sector has replaced the amount of garments, copper concentrates, coconut oil and sugar. The Philippines' largest export partners are the US and Japan as both of them account for 18% of the total exports. The others are the Netherlands (10%), China (9%), Hong Kong (8%), Singapore (7%), Malaysia (6%) and Taiwan (5%) (*The Philippines Country Profile 2007*, p.14).

On the import side, the US (19%) and Japan (17%) are the major trading partners followed by Taiwan, Singapore and Hong Kong which have shares of 8%, 8% and 4% respectively. The Chinese mainland has a 6% share. Exports from the EU account for 8% and Saudi Arabia for 4.6% share of Filipino imports (*The Philippines Country Profile 2007*, p.14).

One of fastest growing segments for the Philippines in the past few years is Business Process Outsourcing (BPO) industry, which totaling an estimated 10% of the global outsourcing market and generating an estimated \$5 billion in revenues during 2007 (equivalent to about 3.5% of Philippine GDP) (U.S Department of State Bureau of East Asian and Pacific Affairs 2008). Generally, BPO is the process that one company hires the other company to handle business activities for them, which can be domestically or internationally (offshore outsourcing). The areas of outsourcing are expanding from only typical call-center and customer service into more complicated activities including financial and administration (F&A) processes, human resources (HR) functions, accounting and payroll (*BPO- What is Business Process Outsourcing?* n.d.). In

the past, India used to be the sole player in this field due to the capabilities of its population as they acquire both required skills and also fluency in English, which is a basic qualification in most business.

However, during the past few years, the Philippines is quickly gaining positions in international level as, in 2006, consultancy A.T. Kearney placed the Philippines on the 4<sup>th</sup> place behind India, China and Malaysia in the ranking of the most desirable global services locations which are competitive for business process outsourcing. The country obtained the high score from its large, educated talent pool and English language skills, though it still has some weaknesses in the area of infrastructure. Moreover, in spite of delivering traditional low-value-added call centers service, the Philippines are maintaining a good reputation in more higher-end outsourcing such as legal services, Web design, medical transcription, software development, animation, and shared services as the country has the large pool of creative designers, lawyers and professionals in accounting and finance (Shameen 2006).

One of Filipino brands that have its presence in the international market is San Miguel. San Miguel Corporation is engaged in providing a range of products and services in the food, beverage, packaging and property businesses. The company is Southeast Asia's largest publicly listed food, beverage, and packaging company. The Company's product portfolio includes beer, hard liquor, carbonated and non-carbonated, non-alcoholic beverages, processed and packaged food products, meat, poultry, dairy products and a number of packaging products. Founded in 1890 under a royal grant from Spain as a brewery, the company has over 100 facilities in the Philippines, Southeast Asia, China, and Australia (*San Miguel Corporation 2007, p.4*).

The business division that generated the most revenue for the company was food, which contributed to 52.15% of the total revenue in 2006. This followed by beverage (40.34%) and food (7.51%) division respectively. Most of the revenues were generated from domestic market as it summed up to 62.8% of the total revenue, then Australia contained the next 30.4%. The rest was from other countries within the Asian region including China (3.1%), Indonesia (1.2%), Vietnam (1%), and Thailand (0.2%) (*San Miguel Corporation 2007, p.10*).

Even though the company contains various types of products and services, the product that is most recognized under 'San Miguel' brand is a beer. According to its public intentions for brand development as stated by President Faustino Galang, the company would like to increase its presence abroad, particularly in the Asia-Pacific, starting with advertising San Miguel as the "Great Asian Beer." (Sauer 2002). However, the result of this strategy might not be so successful as the brand is usually recognized as Spanish beer and often be compared with the competitors with Spanish-based origin such as Moritz and Estrella (Ray 2006). In addition, it was also a part of company's marketing decision to promote itself with the Spanish images like one depicts the Running of the Bulls, another

shows vivid red scenes from the annual tomato-throwing festival La Tomatina, and the third features Els Castelletts, the 'human towers' which appear at Spanish festivals (Mason 2003).

According to Global Innovation Index (GII) 2007 which was conducted by World business and INSEAD, the Philippines are ranked at the 66<sup>th</sup> place out of 107 countries around the world (Caulkin & Dutta 2007).

## **Singapore**

In 2007, Singapore export goods and service accounted for 202 percentage of the country's GDP, which equal to 450.6 billion US dollar. Most of the country's export commodities comprised of machinery and equipment (including electronics), consumer goods, chemicals, and mineral fuels (Central Intelligence Agency: The world fact book 2008 d).

The electronics industry of Singapore is very successful as the country is a home to the world's top three wafer foundry companies, the world's top three sub-contract assembly-and-test companies, and four of the world's top 10 fab-less IC design companies. In additions, Singapore also obtained 10% global market share for semiconductor wafer foundry output and 25% global market share for both printers and disk drives.

Singapore's reputation in the electronic industry can be seen in the quantity and scope of facilities currently located in the country. The country has more than 14 semiconductor wafer fabrication plants (including two 300mm fabrication plants), 20 assembly and test operations, and 40 IC design centers (U.S. Commercial Service 2008).

Electronics industry is the main driver of Singapore's manufacturing and export sector as it is the largest contributor of value-added (VA) per annum, fixed asset investment, and job creation from new investment. The production of computer equipment accounted for nearly 10% of the global electronics output. Currently, there is an electronic component technology that is being developed in Singapore, which is the Organic Light Emitting Diode (OLED) that will soon replace Liquid Crystal Display (LCD) used in flat screen monitor in televisions and personal computers. Even though currently the revenue generated from OLED panels is less that US\$1 billion but it is expected that the world wide market for this product will reach US\$5 billion within the next five years (U.S. Commercial Service 2008).

For the country of origin positioning strategy, Singapore has developed the program called 'Made in Singapore' which enhance the country image perceptions towards Singapore products. The program is a showcase of Singapore's distinction in manufacturing sector which contributes to the country's exceptional GDP growth over the year. The 'Made in Singapore' brand emphasizes on the country's cost-competitiveness, efficiency, technological expertise and innovative spirit. It represents quality, reliability,

and value in the products that carry this mark which resulted in greater esteem for the Singapore-based companies both products and services. (Singapore Economic Development Board 2008 c)



*Made In Singapore Logo* (Singapore Economic Development Board 2008)

The examples of the achievement of 'Made in Singapore' program are the decision of Philips company to set up the Philips Innovation Centre for designing and developing the latest range of DVD recorders, LCD TVs and audio products, HP company to use Singapore as the major manufacturing site for its wide range of printers and high-end super computers, Motorola's selecting Singapore to design and manufacture its award winning mobile phones for the international market (Singapore Economic Development Board 2008 a).

The major export partners of Singapore are located within Asia and more than 25% of its exports are to other South East Asian economies. Malaysia has the highest share of 13% of the country's total exports which makes it Singapore's most important trading partner. The others are Indonesia (9.2%), China (9.7%), Hong Kong (10.1%), and Japan (5.5%). In additions, the US is Singapore's second most important trading partner which accounts for 10.2% of the country's total export (Singapore Country Profile 2007).

On the other hand, Singapore import value of 396 billion US dollar is also close to the amount of export and they also spread within South East Asia region. Yet again, Malaysia is the number one trading partner for import products as it obtains 13% of Singapore's imports. The others are Indonesia (6.2%), China (11.8%), and Japan (8.3%). For the countries outside Asia, the US comes in the first place with 12.7% of the country's total imports.

However, Singapore is aware of its vulnerability to external impacts due to the high degree of trade openness as export sector accounts for the large degree of the country's GDP. Moreover, the concentration in manufacture of Information, Communication, and Technology (ICT) goods and component is also another cause of vulnerability. Therefore, Singapore's authorities have made a lot of investment in skill diversification and research & development to move the country from manufacturing-based export hub to a knowledge-based economy. They established an Economic Review Committee (ERC) in 2001 to analyze the country's area of comparative advantage and advise the government to diversify the economy to become the regional center for financial, business consulting and other high value-added services (Singapore Country Profile 2007).

For the well-known brands of Singapore, Singapore Airlines is the world's fourth-largest international carrier, which engaged in passenger and cargo air



transportation, airport terminal services, engineering services, training of pilots, air charters and tour wholesaling and related activities (*Singapore Airline Limited Overview* 2008) and, is perhaps the region's best-known brand around the world. Keppel and SembCorp, the world's two largest makers of offshore oil drilling-rigs, dominate their industry (*The tigers that lost their roars* 2007).

According to Global Innovation Index (GII) 2007 which was conducted by World business and INSEAD, Singapore is ranked at the 7<sup>th</sup> place out of 107 countries around the world which makes Singapore become the leader within South East Asia region. This is the result of the investment in the power of human capital and technology for innovation that was done by the government for 20 years. The strategy is to recruit worldwide talent by developing high quality educational institutions that help formulating successful national technology and innovation plans (Caulkin & Dutta 2007).

#### 4.2.4. Talent Attraction

##### **Thailand**

To enter Thailand, "there are 6 types of visa to be considered transit visa, tourist visa, non-immigrant visa, diplomatic visa, official visa, courtesy visa. Non-immigrant visa is for who want to enter the country for

- 1) Performing official duties (Category "F")
- 2) Conducting business / to work (Category "B")
- 3) Investing with the concurrence of the Thai Ministries and Government Departments concerned (Category "IM")
- 4) Investing or performing other activities relating to investment, subject to the provision of the established laws on investment promotion (Category "IB")
- 5) Studying, to come on a work study tour or observation tour, to participate in projects or seminars, to attend a conference or training course, to study as a foreign Buddhist monk (Category "ED")
- 6) Working as a film-producer, journalist or reporter (Category "M")
- 7) Performing missionary work or other religious activities with the concurrence of the Thai Ministries or Government Departments concerned (Category "R")
- 8) Conducting scientific research or training or teaching in a research institute (Category "RS")
- 9) Undertaking skilled work or to work as an expert or specialist (Category "EX")
- 10) Other activities (Category "O") as follows:  
to stay with the family, to perform duties for the state enterprise or social welfare organizations, to stay after retirement for the elderly, to receive medical treatment, to be a sport coach as required by Thai Government, to be a contestant or witness for the judicial process" (Ministry of Foreign Affairs Kingdom of Thailand, Kingdom of Thailand 2007 b, 2007c).

For this non-immigrant visa, the applicant need evidence of finance at approximately \$700 per person, and \$1,300 per family, and need other

certificate, official letter, or letter from company depending on the purpose of entry. There is visa fee \$70 for single entry, and \$170 for multiple entries, and they are valid for 3 months, but for multiple-entry visas can be valid for 1 year. The granted visa is originally for not more than 90 days unless exceptional from the Office of Immigration Bureau, and the request for extension of stay is possible (Ministry of Foreign Affairs Kingdom of Thailand 2007 b, 2007 c).

During the finding process, there is not enough information about each types of visa provided in the website of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and most parts also contains only the explanation in Thai language which might prohibit the potential applicants from applying for visa.

The population of Thailand composed of Thai 75%, Chinese 14%, other 11% and around 90% of the population is Buddhists (Central Intelligence Agency 2008 e). Thai lifestyle in the capital and other big cities including Bangkok, Chiang Mai, and Phuket is rather frantic because the businesses are operating 24 hours a day. In the city like Bangkok, people are living under the air pollution caused by cars, motorcycles, and factories and there are constant traffic jams on the streets. In addition, despite all the hardships, Thai people prefer to live in a city as it is a centre of almost everything including educational institutions and business centers (*Thai Lifestyle* 2003).

According to the Human Development Index (HDI) developed by United Nation Development Program (UNDP), Thailand is placed at 78<sup>th</sup> out of 177 countries which is in the group of medium human development countries. This index provides a composite measure of three dimensions of human development: living a long and healthy life (measured by life expectancy), being educated (measured by adult literacy and enrolment at the primary, secondary and tertiary level) and having a decent standard of living (measured by purchasing power parity, PPP, income). For the Human Poverty Index (HPI), Thailand is on number 62<sup>nd</sup> place out of 108 countries around the world, which indicated a moderate quality of living for the country (the higher, the better). This index is developed by measuring 4 main sectors including (1) severe deprivation in health by the proportion of people who are not expected to survive age 40 (2) Education by measuring the adult illiteracy rate (3) a decent standard of living by measuring the outweighed average of people without access to an improved water source and (4) proportion of children under age 5 who are underweight for their age (Human Development Report 2008 d).

In addition, Gender-related Development Index (GDI) stated that Thailand on 14<sup>th</sup> place out of 156 countries which indicated low level of gender disparity in basic human development in the country. This index compared between male and female percentage of (1) life expectancy at birth (2) adult literacy rate and (3) combined primary, secondary and tertiary gross enrolment ratio. Lastly, Thailand ranked at 73<sup>rd</sup> place out of 93 countries for the gender empowerment measure (GEM). This measurement reveals whether women take an active part in economic and political life. It tracks the share of seats in parliament held by



women; of female legislators, senior officials and managers; and of female professional and technical workers- and the gender disparity in earned income, reflecting economic independence. Therefore, this indicated that Thai women, compared to other countries, moderate to low participate in the economic and political aspects of the country (Human Development Report 2008 d).

Thailand's cultural heritage makes its Hofstede cultural dimension become very unique as it has equally high Power Distance (PDI) and Uncertainty Avoidance (UAI). The power distance index (PDI) of 64 indicates a moderate level of inequality of power and wealth in the society. Then, together with uncertainty avoidance index (UAI) which makes this population adopt and implement strict rules, laws, policies and regulations to control everything. Therefore, with these 2 factors, Thailand tends to have rule-oriented society which still has the inequality of power growing inside.

In addition, Thailand also has a very low individualism index (IDV) of 20 which indicates that the society is more like collectivists who enjoy having a close long-term commitment to the member group and loyalty is the most important concern. For the masculinity, Thailand has the lowest ranking among Asian and the world as it has only 34 comparing to 53 of Asian average and 50 of the world average. This created the society of less insolence and competitiveness and the existence of traditional male and female roles with the population (Geert Hofstede - ITIM 2003).

Thailand has only 2 universities on the list of the top 400 Times Higher Education – QS World University Rankings. Chulalongkorn University is on 223rd and Mahidol University is on 284th. The list was developed by Quacquarelli Symonds, which is the leading global career and education network and it was conducted by gathering responses from peer review questionnaires from professors and experts from the universities and institutions around the world. The areas that the questionnaires were conducted including arts and humanities, engineering & IT, life science and biomedicine, natural science, and social science (QS top universities 2008).

Thailand has many universities and higher education institutions. According to Webometrics Ranking of World Universities, which is created by a research group belonging to Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas (CSIC), the largest public research body and is under Ministry of Education in Spain (Webometrics Ranking of World Universities 2008 a, 2008 b), Thailand has 152 universities and higher education institutions. From its ranking, Thailand has 3 institutions in its top 500 world ranking, and 9 institutions in its top 1,000 world ranking. In addition, Webometrics has ranked top 100 universities in Southeast Asia, and there are 16 Thai universities in that top 30, and 40 Thai universities in total top 100 Southeast Asia universities (Webometrics Ranking of World Universities 2008 c, 2008 d).

The Ministry of University Affairs (MUA) of Thailand is an organization responsible for most degree granting institutions of the country (both public and private). The MUA has involved in regional and international activities due to its account for such as ASEAN, APEC and UNESCO. The MUA has provided exchange programs between Thai universities and countries in the Greater Mekong Sub region (Cambodia, Lao PDR, Myanmar, Southern China, Thailand and Vietnam). There are more than 350 international programs offered for Thai students and international students who want to study in program using English as a medium of instruction (Kanjaniyot&Nilphan n.d.)

Moreover, Thailand is the home of Asian Institute of Technology (AIT), and more than 1,000 students from Asia and other continentals join courses. Another example showing that Thai universities are accepted by international education institutions, SASIN Graduate Institute of Business Administration, which working with Chulalongkorn University, has joint programs with well-known universities in United States such as Northwestern University and the University of Pennsylvania (Sunsite Thailand n.d. a).

## **Indonesia**

In order to work in Indonesia, it requires to have the 'Long Stay permit' (KITAS) or 'Entry visa required for work authorization purposes' (VITAS) and the 'Expatriate work permit' (IKTA) (note: there are no sufficient information provided in the official websites of Indonesian governmental units for the application process for the immigrant type of visa and, for other external sources, most of the data are in Indonesian language). The application of KITAS obliges for documents from both the applicant and the Indonesian sponsoring company. The examples of documents including record of Deed of establishment of limited liability company (PT), record of receipt from Minister of Justice & Human Rights for the Company's approval, Record of SP PMA License (Notification Letter of Foreign Direct Investment), Record of last 6 months current Investment Activity report (LKPM), Record of Appointment letter or Minutes of the General Shareholders Meeting for the position of Director, Record of Tax payer number (NPWP), Company organization structure/chart, Record of slip payment of Expertise and Skill Development fund (DPKK). The application process is very complicated and requires numerous contacts with Indonesian authorities including the Regional Department of Manpower, The Directorate General of Immigration, the Regional Immigration office, the Regional Municipal office of population service, the Residential Chief of the Village, and the police headquarters for foreigner supervision (Expat Web Site Association Jakarta, Indonesia 2008).

The Indonesian sponsoring company initiates the work permit application process by submitting a Foreign Man Power Utilization Plan (RPTK) to the Department of Manpower, which generally processes the RPTK in ten business days. Once the RPTK application process is complete, the Indonesian sponsoring company must file a TA-01 Work Recommendation Application to

the Department of Manpower in Jakarta, which usually issues an approved Worker Recommendation in four business days (Indonesia Business Immigration Summary 2007).

With the approval of the TA-01, the foreign worker will obtain his or her VITAS (the entry visa required for work authorization purposes) at the Indonesian Embassy or Consulate in his or her country of legal residence or citizenship. The Indonesian sponsoring company, or the company's authorized representative, is required to pay a Special Skills Development Fund (DPKK) fee of US\$1,200 to the Department of Manpower at the time the Department of Manpower issues the approval of the Worker Recommendation (TA-01) (Indonesia Business Immigration Summary 2007).

Once the DPKK fee has been paid, the Department of Manpower will take an additional seven to ten business days to finalize the work permit application. Once the work permit application has been approved, the foreign worker may enter Indonesia with his or her VITAS to begin employment. Upon admission to Indonesia with his or her VITAS, the sponsoring company or immigration supplier in Indonesia should assist the worker in applying for his or her Long-Stay Visa (KITAS) and obtain a Multiple Exit and Re-Entry Permit (MERP). This process can take approximately eight business days to conclude (Indonesia Business Immigration Summary 2007).

Through out our research process, there is no indication of student type of visa for persons who have intention to have their education in Indonesia exist.

Currently, Indonesia's way of life is undergoing a transitional stage. After the first-ever direct election in 2004, the country has been opening to the booming of conservative religious thought and the rise of fundamentalists, who want the religion to return to its stricter Arab root. Over the past four years, many of provincial subdivisions across Indonesia have used the more permissive political climate to implement Shari'a-based bylaws that include bans on alcohol and prohibitions on women going out alone at night. Some places have put on the sign that prohibits women who do not wear headscarf from entering as it becomes mandatory for women to wear headscarf when going out in public places. These changes have tremendous effect on the Indonesian who are non-Muslim or belong to heterodox Islamic sections. In 2007, several Ahmadiyah mosques have been forcibly closed or destroyed by mobs, as have dozens of Christian house churches. In West Java, three women are serving three-year prison terms for running Christian kindergarten classes also attended by Muslim children. Under this circumstance, foreign direct investment fell 46% year-on-year between January and November 2006 (Beech 2007) (Williamson 2007).

According to the Human Development Index (HDI) developed by United Nation Development Program (UNDP), Indonesia is placed at 107<sup>th</sup> out of 177 countries which is in the group of medium human development countries. For the Human Poverty Index (HPI), Indonesia is on number 47<sup>th</sup> place out of 108

countries around the world, which indicated a moderate quality of living for the country (the higher, the better). In addition, Gender-related Development Index (GDI) stated that Indonesia is on 80<sup>th</sup> place out of 156 countries which indicated moderate level of gender disparity in basic human development in the country (Human Development Report 2008 a).

Based on its cultural heritage, Indonesia has a relatively high Hofstede cultural dimension of power distance (78) and moderate uncertainty avoidance (48). The combination of these two indexes results in the form of highly rule-oriented society with laws, rules, regulations, and controls in order to reduce the amount of uncertainty, while inequalities of power and wealth have been allowed to grow within the society. These cultures are more likely to follow a social order system that does not allow significant upward mobility of its citizens (Geert Hofstede - ITIM 2003).

For the education system, according to the report of the United Nations Special Reporter on the Right to Education in Indonesia which evaluated the quality of education system in Indonesia in four schemes including availability, accessibility, acceptability, and adaptability. Except for acceptability, there are several limitations in the country's educational practice. Firstly, for the availability issue, there are not enough spaces in public schools so many children are forced to go to the private schools and 20-25% of the children have to be educated in religious, primarily madrasa, schools. In additions, Indonesian students are suffering greatly from unavailability of qualified and committed teachers. One of the reasons might be because teaching in Indonesia is a low-paid and low-prestige profession which forces eighty per cent of teachers to have parallel jobs. This situation is facilitated by the teaching time of 2.5 daily and 15 weekly hours (South Asia Human Rights Documentation Centre 2007).

For accessibility, the quality of education in Indonesia is placed at the bottom in South-East Asia. The report cites a study by the Central Independent Monitoring Unit in listing current deficiencies including poor teacher training, an overloaded and unintegrated curriculum, high repetition rates, need for schools to rely on parental financial contributions even in poor communities, and the fact that 40 percent of students in the first six grades do not even have text books (South Asia Human Rights Documentation Centre 2007).

Next, the level of adaptability in Indonesian education system is relatively low as the current system consists of a single school curriculum taught in one language (Bahasa Indonesia), uniform testing, and centralized hiring and deployment of teachers by the government. It does not match with the diverse needs and aspirations of Indonesia's many communities which probably the cause of the high drops out rate (South Asia Human Rights Documentation Centre 2007).

Nevertheless, according to Academic of the world ranking of the 20 top universities belonging to South East Asia pacific region developed by

cybermetrics lab of webometrics.info, as of the year 2007, there are 2 Indonesian universities on the 12th (Gadjah Mada University) and 13th (Institute of technology Bandung) place in the list, which equal to 939th and 1046th of the world ranking, and, in total, there are 14 Indonesian universities on the list of 100 universities. This ranking is developed based on the global performance and visibility of the universities results from the Scholar database represent papers, reports and other academic items (Cybermetrics Lab 2007).

On the list of the top 400 Times Higher Education – QS World University Rankings, there are 3 Indonesian universities including Universitas Gadjah Mada (360<sup>th</sup>), Bandung Institute of Technology (369<sup>th</sup>), and University of Indonesia (395<sup>th</sup>) (QS top universities 2008).

## **Malaysia**

The information about visa application documents and process is provided in English in the official website of immigration department of Malaysia. There are 2 types of visa for persons who have intention to stay in Malaysia for a long period of time including student visa, expatriate visa. The student visa is for any foreigner who wishes to study in Malaysia and is required to obtain Student Pass. Foreign students are allowed to study in Public or Private Educational Institutions which have been approved by the Ministry of Home Affairs after they have received acceptance letter from that particular institution. There is no bank statement required for applying this visa (Immigration Department of Malaysia 2008).

The expatriate visa is for a person who is (1) manager in foreign-owned private companies and firms operating in Malaysia or (2) managers and professionals which have academic qualifications, practical experience, skills and expertise related to the respective jobs or (3) capable of technical jobs that require specific technical or practical skills such as Welder, Mould Maker, Tool & Die Maker, Manufacturing Systems Designer, Food/Nutrient Technologist, Fashion Designer, Specialist In Furniture Design & Ergonomics, Heat Setting Technician, Sewing Specialist, Craftsman/Engraving And Product/Flavoring Specialist (Immigration Department of Malaysia 2008).

For the lifestyle of Malaysia, this country is an interesting paradox between fundamental Islamic beliefs and a passion for technology and new innovation. Although Malaysian cities are tremendously modern and tech-oriented, traces of Islam still exist underneath the surface (*Travel the road* 2003). Malaysia is a multiracial and multicultural population. Most of the population can be classified into 3 major ethnic groups including Malays (57%), Chinese (25%) and Indians (7%). Malaysia is a kingdom of 13 states which have an influence from its colonial era from British, Portuguese, and Dutch. This created the lifestyle of various communities in Malaysia nowadays (My Malaysia books 2008).



According to the Human Development Index (HDI) developed by United Nation Development Program (UNDP), Malaysia is placed at 63<sup>rd</sup> out of 177 countries which is in the group of high human development countries. For the Human Poverty Index (HPI), Malaysia is on number 16<sup>th</sup> place out of 108 countries around the world, which indicated a relatively good quality of living for the country (the higher, the better)(Human Development Report 2008 b).

In addition, Gender-related Development Index (GDI) stated that Malaysia is on 63<sup>rd</sup> place out of 156 countries which indicated moderate level of gender disparity in basic human development in the country. Lastly, Malaysia ranked at 63<sup>rd</sup> place out of 93 countries for the gender empowerment measure (GEM). This measurement reveals whether women take an active part in economic and political life. It tracks the share of seats in parliament held by women; of female legislators, senior officials and managers; and of female professional and technical workers- and the gender disparity in earned income, reflecting economic independence. Therefore, this indicated that Malaysian women relatively little participation in the economic and political aspects of the country (Human Development Report 2008 b).

Based on its Muslim religion, Malaysia has a very high Hofstede cultural dimension of power distance (95), moderate masculinity (45) and relatively low uncertainty avoidance (35). These factors signified the society that has high inequality between the social class while at the same time open to the new changes (Geert Hofstede - ITIM 2003).

For education sector, Malaysia might be viewed as an emerging competitor with 2% of the world market in 2006. The number of foreign students in Malaysia has risen around 30% between 2006 and 2008 as the figure released by the Immigrant department indicated a total of 65,000 foreign students enrolled in international schools and both private and public institutions of higher education in 2007, compared with 48,000 in 2006. Dr Mohamed Nasser, Higher Education Ministry Marketing and International Education Division director, stated that this might be the result of the country's new identity 'Malaysia Education'. Currently, most of the foreign students came from China (15,000), the Middle East (9,000), and African countries. 'Communication-wise' is one of the strengths in Malaysia education which due to the multicultural population and its colonialism experience. For example, Chinese students will have fewer problems in adapting themselves as the locals are also speaking Hokkien, Cantonese and Mandarin, and this also apply to the Indonesian students who speak Bahasa Indonesia (Chow 2008). The other strength is the similarities in religion and socio-culture (Muslim) which can be applied to countries in the Middle East.

One of Malaysia's strategies in gaining higher 'brand' visibility is by opening Malaysian branch campus in the foreign countries like Botswana. Its Gaboroned-based campus can be used as an ideal point of entry for additional recruitment from regional African countries such as Namibia and Kenya.



Ministry of Education of Malaysia aimed at attracting 100,000 overseas students by the year 2010. Comparing to Singapore, with a lower cost of living and a growing number of foreign partnerships and multi-lingual provision, Malaysia is well on its way to becoming an increasingly competitive player in higher education (Lasanowski & Verbik 2007) .

Nevertheless, according to Academic of the world ranking of the 20 top universities belonging to South East Asia pacific region developed by cybermetrics lab of webometrics.info, as of the year 2007, there are 5 Malaysian universities on the 14th (Universiti Sains Malaysia), 15th (Universiti Teknologi Malaysia), 16th (Multimedia University), 18th (Universiti Putra Malaysia), and 19th (University Malaya) place in the list, and, in total, there are 18 Malaysian universities on the list of 100 universities. This ranking is developed based on the global performance and visibility of the universities results from the Scholar database represent papers, reports and other academic items (Cybermetrics Lab 2007).

On the list of the top 400 Times Higher Education – QS World University Rankings, there are 4 Malaysian universities including Universiti Malaya (246<sup>th</sup>), Universiti Sains Malaysia (307<sup>th</sup>), Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia (309<sup>th</sup>), and University Putra Malaysia (364<sup>th</sup>) (QS top universities 2008).

### **The Philippines**

In the official website of the republic of Philippines, there are 4 categories of Visa for the person who has an intention to stay for a long period of time in the Philippines including student visa, treaty trader/investor visa, pre-arranged employment visa, and immigrant visa. The application processes for each type of visas are provided in English and divided into steps which are uncomplicated to understand.

The student visa is special type of visa provided for persons who wish to have their education in the Philippines. The application starts by student applying to the preferred school with the supporting documents including academic record and bank statement. After being accepted, the chosen school will pass on the application to the department of foreign affairs which will send the result of Foreign Service post (FSP) in the country of that student for the issuance of visa (The official website of the Republic of the Philippines 2008).

The treaty trader/investor visa is for foreigner who seeks admission for the purpose of developing and directing the operations of an enterprise in the Philippines where (a) he has invested or is actively in the process of investing a substantial amount of capital or where (b) his employer has invested or is actively in the process of investing a substantial amount of capital, provided that such employer is a foreign person or organization of the same nationality as the applicant and that the applicant is of an overall supervisor or executive (The official website of the Republic of the Philippines 2008).

The pre-arranged employment visa is for foreigners who are proceeding to the Philippines to engage in any lawful occupation, whether for wages or salary or for other forms of compensation where a bonafide employer-employee relationship exists. In determining the existence of an employer-employee relationship, the following elements are generally considered: (1) selection and engagement of employee; (2) payment of wages; (3) the power of dismissal and (4) the employer's power to control the employee with respect to the means and methods by which the work is to be accomplished. The professions that are qualified for this type of visa are professors and teacher for educational institutions, doctors and nurses for hospitals, scientists, professionals and other workers for banking, commercial, industrial, agricultural and other business enterprises (The official website of the Republic of the Philippines 2008).

The immigrant visa can be categorized into quota and non-quota groups. For quota group, only 50 applicants are approved annually for the persons whose countries accept Filipinos as immigrants on a reciprocal basis. The Philippine Consulate General receives the completed immigrant visa application with enclosures indicated below and, in turn, is forwarded through the Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA) for appropriate action by the concerned agencies in the Philippines. Non-quota immigrant visa is available for (a) Spouse of a Filipino citizen (b) Unmarried Children under 21 years old of a Filipino citizen and (c) Natural Born citizens of the Philippines who have acquired foreign citizenship (The official website of the Republic of the Philippines 2008).

The Philippines are an archipelagic nation made up of 7,107 islands with Manila, the capital city, located on Luzon Island. Filipinos called Manila 'the city of our affection' as it is the place that has all things for all Filipinos. It is the seat government administration, the fashion center, the intellectual pace-setter, the fountain head of all religious and educational movements; and also, enormous shopping arcades. It is politics and art; markets and churches; banks and universities, basically, the whole life (*Manila Lifestyle* n.d).

The country's national language is Pilipino, while English is also widely spoken and is extensively used in business and government as all business, governmental and legal transactions are conducted in English, making the Philippines the third-largest English-speaking country in the world. Chinese and Spanish are other major languages spoken by some groups, aside from about 100 regional dialects. The way to describe Filipinos is that they look like Asian, write and speak English like American, and worship like Spaniards (*Manila Lifestyle* n.d). This is a combining influence which caused by the fact that majority of Philippine people are descendants of Indonesians and Malays who migrated to the islands and have been ruled by Spanish and American for almost 400 and 70 years, respectively (U.S Department of State Bureau of East Asian and Pacific Affairs 2008).

The largest ethnic minority now is the mainland Asians (called Chinese) followed by Americans and Spaniards and, as a result of intermarriage; many Filipinos have some Asian mainland, Spanish, American, Arab, or Indian ancestry, which results in mixture of the cultures within the country (U.S Department of State Bureau of East Asian and Pacific Affairs 2008). As, even though they might be educated in English and Takalog (national language), the Filipinos also maintain many of Asian traditions and norms. For example, it is still unacceptable to be publicly drunk and it is important to retain a reasonable measure of self-control whenever they drink and it is uncommon for women in the Philippines to drink alcoholic beverages at social events (*Country Insights – the Philippines Economy* 2008 j).

According to the Human Development Index (HDI) developed by United Nation Development Program (UNDP), the Philippines are placed at 90<sup>th</sup> out of 177 countries which is in the group of medium human development countries. For the Human Poverty Index (HPI), the Philippines are on number 37<sup>th</sup> place out of 108 countries around the world, which indicated a relatively good quality of living for the country (the higher, the better) (Human Development Report 2008 e).

In addition, Gender-related Development Index (GDI) stated that the Philippines are on 26<sup>th</sup> place out of 156 countries which indicated low level of gender disparity in basic human development in the country. Lastly, the Philippines are ranked at 45<sup>th</sup> place out of 93 countries for the gender empowerment measure (GEM). Therefore, this indicated that the Philippines' women, compared to other countries, moderately participate in the economic and political aspects of the country (Human Development Report 2008 e).

Based on its cultural heritage, the Philippines have a very high Hofstede cultural dimension of power distance (95) and relatively high masculinity (65). The combination of these two indexes results in the form of the society that inequalities of power and wealth have been allowed to grow within the organizations and institutions. Moreover, the values of men and women in this society are different as men seem to obtain the prestige position. These cultures are more likely to follow a social order system that does not allow significant upward mobility of its citizens, especially for women (Geert Hofstede - ITIM 2003).

The education system of the Philippines is strongly influenced by its American colonization period, which results in the form of the establishment of a public school system which has English as the language of instruction and is modeled on the US system. The United States has left the largest imprint on the education system in a number of ways. The first one is the extensive, relatively non-elitist system of higher education, to which access is widely available (comparative to other South East Asian nations). The other one is indirect influence through the large number of academic staff who has earned graduate degrees from U.S.

universities. All of these factors play the part in making the Philippines' education has long been leader in the region in term of education (Clark 2004).

The new constitution of 1987 prescribed that both Filipino and English is the official languages of communication and instruction. English continues to be widely used from the higher primary level onwards, due to a shortage of materials and resources in Filipino, as well as Filipino-speaking teachers. In academic year 2002/03 there were 1,479 institutions of higher education registered in the Philippines, of which 1,305 (88 percent) were in the private sector. The rest are public institutions of higher education which include 111 chartered state universities and colleges, 44 local universities and colleges, 12 government schools (usually technical, vocational and education training institutions offering higher education programs), five special institutions (mainly providing training in areas such as military science and national defense), and two Commission on Higher Education (CHED)-supervised post-secondary education institutions (Clark 2004).

According to Regional and Global Ranking of South-East Asia of the 20 top universities belonging to the South-East of Asia developed by Cybermetrics lab of webometrics.info, as of the year 2007, there is one Philippines's university (University of the Philippines Diliman) on the 17th place in the list, which equal to 1191<sup>st</sup> of the world ranking and, in total, there are 13 Philippines universities on the list of 100 universities. This ranking is developed based on the global performance and visibility of the universities results from the Scholar database represent papers, reports and other academic items (Cybermetrics Lab 2007).

On the list of the top 400 Times Higher Education – QS World University Rankings, there is one Philippines university on 398<sup>th</sup> place which is University of the Philippines (QS top universities 2008).

## **Singapore**

Singapore has established the Global Investment Program (GIP) for foreign investors, entrepreneurs and business executives who desire to set up and conduct businesses in Singapore. Under this program, the country's Economic Development Board will assist in linking up foreign entrepreneurs and investors with local business networks and also provides a range of immigration facilitation for their entry and stay in Singapore (Singapore Economic Development Board 2008 b).

One of the examples is Permanent Residence for investors who are interested in starting up a business or investing in Singapore. The persons that are qualified for this Visa are the investor him/herself and his/her immediate family which including spouse and unmarried children with age of 21 and below. The criteria for a qualified investor are substantial business track record, an entrepreneurial background, and a business proposal and investment plan (Singapore Economic Development Board 2008 b).

Singapore also has a 'Student pass', which allows a foreigner to stay in Singapore for the purpose of study. However, there are also some exemptions that provide permission for foreigners to study in the country regardless of a student pass, which are (1) a Dependant's Pass holder studying in a Government/ Government-Aided/ Independent school/ Foreign System School/ Kindergarten registered with MOE or Childcare centre licensed by MCYS; (2) Immigration Exemption Order holder; or (3) Visitor who has been granted a short term Social Visit Pass at the Singapore Checkpoint and wish to attend a short course that can be completed within the validity of the initial Social Visit Pass granted to him/her at the Singapore Checkpoint or 30 days, whichever is shorter (Immigration and Checkpoint Authority – Singapore Government 2008).

In addition, for applicants who receive acceptance from the polytechnic and universities which are members of institute of Higher Learning in Singapore, the application for student pass can be applied on the internet by using Student's Pass On-Line Application and Registration (SOLAR) system, which provide convenience for applicants as it required merely 10 minutes to fill in the application online (Immigration and Checkpoint Authority – Singapore Government 2008).

According to the Human Development Index (HDI) developed by United Nation Development Program (UNDP), Singapore is placed at 25<sup>th</sup> out of 177 countries which is in the group of high human development countries. For the Human Poverty Index (HPI), Singapore is on number 7<sup>th</sup> place out of 108 countries around the world, which indicated a very high quality of living for the country (the higher, the better) (Human Development Report 2008 c).

According to Fortune Magazine's list of best cities, Singapore is rated as the second best city in the world in terms of quality living because several reasons including (1) Singapore provides a safe environment, wide choice of housing, first-class medical services and excellent education, all of which ensure a high standard of life; (2) being globally connected, Singapore has an extensive telecommunications network that is complimented by state-of-the-art computer systems; (3) Public transport in Singapore is comparable to the best in the world with buses and the Mass Rapid Transit (MRT) servicing almost every corner of the island (*Singapore Lifestyle* n.d.).

The country's strategic position in Southeast Asia and a large international community makes Singapore truly cosmopolitan, a combination of the best of east and west makes for an ideal place to live in. Although Singapore is a multicultural society as the population composed of Chinese 76.8%, Malay 13.9%, Indian 7.9%, other 1.4% (Central Intelligence Agency 2008 d), English is the main working language (*Singapore Lifestyle* n.d.).

Hofstede's cultural dimension of Power Distance Index of Singapore is relatively high (75) while the other dimensions including Individualism, Masculinity,

Uncertainty Avoidance, and Long term orientation are relatively low (Geert Hofstede - ITIM 2003).

According to career progression rankings developed by Financial Times for the top 100 full time global MBA programs for the year 2008, there are universities in Singapore on the list including INSEAD (18<sup>th</sup>) and Nanyang business school (70<sup>th</sup>) and they are only 2 universities in South East Asia region that are included in the list (Financial Times MBA 2008).

The observatory on borderless higher education report for the year 2007 stated that, currently, Singapore owns 2% share of the global education market as it has gradually become more popular education destination. Only in 2002 alone, Singapore managed to recruit the estimated 15,000 Chinese students which made Chinese students accounted up to 30% of total foreign enrolments in the country (Lasanowski & Verbik 2007).

Due to the country's characteristic as an English-speaking nation, Singapore has certain advantages over other competitors. In 1997, Singapore's Economic Development Board (EDB) has very publicly invited foreign institutions to invest in the country by establishing partnership programs and branch campuses in collaboration with 'local' universities and polytechnic colleges. The University of Chicago's Graduate School of Business (US) and INSEAD (France) are amongst the more internationally well-known institutions to have done so. In additions, Singapore's demography is another one of important factors which make the country become attractive destination for international students. The population that consists of ethnic Indians, Malays and Chinese enables Singapore to provide regional students with a 'Western' education in a familiar socio-cultural environment (Lasanowski & Verbik 2007).

According to Academic of the world ranking of the 20 top universities belonging to South East Asia pacific region developed by cybermetrics lab of webometrics.info, as of the year 2007, Singapore's universities are at the top 1<sup>st</sup> (National University of Singapore) and 2<sup>nd</sup> (Nanyang Technological University) position on the list. This ranking is developed based on the global performance and visibility of the universities results from the Scholar database represent papers, reports and other academic items (Cybermetrics Lab 2007).

In addition, Singapore is the only one country in South East Asia region that has universities on the list of the top 100 Times Higher Education – QS World University Rankings. Singapore's universities that are on the list are National University of Singapore (33<sup>rd</sup>) and Nanyang Technological University (69<sup>th</sup>) (QS top universities 2008).



## 5. Analysis

### 5.1. Nation-brand Equity (NBEQ) Analysis

#### 5.1.1. *Internal assets*

As stated in findings Thailand has long history for 9 centuries, and Thais, in the beginning, had merged Khmer, and Indian culture, which later nurtured to unique Thai own style of culture, such as architecture, music and literatures. For Thai iconography, Thai Majesty the King is excellent individual that foreigners can relate to Thai nation as he is the world's longest-reigning monarch and has power to unite Thai nation together.

Thai nature, particularly beaches and islands in southern part of the country, is beautiful not just for people in the country, but also for other views from abroad. When foreigners think of islands, Thailand would be one in top ten list that they will like to come and visit. From findings, both fact and opinion from BCG, that Thailand is one of the flourish natures, it gives Thailand to own wonderful landscape as Dinnie said good landscape can help the nation and it is a core potential factor to create nation-brand equity even lacking of economic capability.

Most two famous cultures those have proved by international arena are Thai food and one of Thai nation sport, 'Muay Thai' or Thai boxing. Thai food has variety of taste, sweet, mild, spicy and curried. The cuisine has been developed and blended other nations those had influence in the past to the differentiation of taste. Muay Thai or Thai boxing has characters differ from international boxing. Contestants have to pay respect to the teacher in a praying ritual accompanied by Thai musical instruments. The fighting features of Thai boxing are also distinct. Due to all innate assets stated are recognised worldwide and with good impression from outside the country, hence, Thailand has strong innate assets to create nation-brand equity.

#### 5.1.2. *Nurtured asset*

Moving from innate assets, what Thais have originally, it has to have continuous actions. People in the nation must constantly deploy their culture and assets with care, so that they will not be extinct. Internal buy-in, Dinnie stated, in the country will resonance the country image. From number of trip travelled in Thailand by Thais in last three year that increasing every year can be interpreted that people in the nation is love to travel in the country. When foreign tourists come to Thailand, they will be travelling mingle with local people. This will create the impression for the tourists that Thailand is truly nice place to travel. Not like if foreign tourists travel in Thailand and see most of travellers are not Thai.

Thai boxing (Muay Thai) that famous around the world is well natured by Thai stakeholders by Thai organizations such as Lumpini boxing stadium that be supporter for the art of Thai boxing and held many boxing matches in Bangkok. Tourists can enter and experience real Thai boxing. The Thailand Best Program can be represented that Thai citizens use Thai products intensively because the program that founded by private organization, Sahagroup, and joined by other companies in Thailand for 10 years. If the program was not welcome by Thai consumers, the Thailand Best could not be until present. Thai public Ministry duty to maintain Thai value with Thai society without disappeared. The Fine Arts department has responsible for preserve all history places, and cultures, also provide education to new Thai generation. Thaidance College educate Thai student not just standard education but also the Thai music and dance that is nation proud.

As a result of loyalty level can be determined by Thai citizens, trading partners, any parties from international, so from gathered findings Thailand has been accepted from Norwegian and Swedish travellers as the country has gain awarded from the two countries for many years, this can be proof that those nations have loyalty to Thai tourism industry. Foreign investors remain confident in Thai economy even though the political situation in country has not in a good side from views of both Stock Exchange of Thailand and Thai Foreign Minister. But with recently survey from Thai Chamber of Commerce (TCC) showed that there are reluctant among foreign investors toward Thai currently political and economic as well this could mean the investors have some instable loyalty to Thailand. Consequently, nurtured assets of Thailand is not strong but relatively strong due to the reason that not all the assets is fully nurtured.

### *5.1.3. Disseminated asset*

Brand ambassadors are who can strongly represent the nation and can express the nation-brand whenever they have chance. One Thai can well represent this idea of Brand ambassador is Paradorn Srichaphan. Since he is very famous Thai Tennis player in World class, he had chance to show Thai value to the world. From the fact that he had good manner in every match, and perform Thai bow, Wai, in the match, this give foreigners some experience of Thai culture. Above all, foreigners will have good perception toward Thai people and Thailand. Another Thai Brand ambassador is Tony Jaa or Panom Yeerum. He is accounted for Thai Brand ambassador because of he is a good representative for Thai art-Muay Thai- in globally. In his films, he performed Thai way of fighting and created the fame for Thai boxing again. He is accepted from world-class film industry as Hollywood.

Two more Thai companies, which have brand welcomed by foreign consumers, are Thai Airways and Beer Singha. Thai Airways, the only Thai nation Airline that have flight around global, is majority own by Thai government. The awards the airlines received from organizations from other nations can be stated customers in many nations are welcome and happy with service from Thai Airways. Therefore, there are many opportunities that foreign customers of Thai

Airways can know about Thai culture from the flight attendant's dress and Thai greeting of Wai. Singha Beer is Thai beer that is promoted with Thai food in many Thai restaurants around the world. Its packaging is very standing out that showing Thai art.

The diaspora of Thai is in many continentals. It could be the reason that Thai Airways and Singha beer from Thailand is well-known in other nations. In the beginning of exploring international market, it might be more difficult if there were not much Thai in other nations to consume Thai products in overseas. From the number of 13,117 Thai restaurants around the world that just listed with Thai Kitchen and Thai student Association in North America, Europe, Asia and Australia can confirm that there are enough Thai members outside the country waiting for expanding of Thai's brands. However, from our research, we have not found any indicators that there were any official organizations cooperating with Thai diasporas.

Besides Thai Airways and Singha Beer, Thailand has few more brands those export its product to world market. Red bull is another Thai brand, but since it was marketed by the Austrian businessman who has 49% of its share, so it may cause many consumers know Red Bull as non-Thai brand. For that reason, Red bull should not be Thai brand ambassador. There are two Thai giant companies in world food market that have been commented by BCG that has potential growth named Pokphand Food and Thai Union Food. But the problem is that they are still lacking of brand power.

From overall analysis of Disseminated assets, we think Thailand should have weak level for this asset because Thailand has only two brand ambassadors, which the number is very, and both of the ambassadors have just gained reputation. It could be only short fame. As well as Singha Beer, it is popular but not the top highest brand in the world. Exception for Thai Airways, which is only one strong brand in international market. By doing so, we assume that Thailand is own weak level of disseminated assets.

#### *5.1.4. Vicarious asset*

Kingdom of Thailand owns several of images in world media both positive and negative, for instance, the Land of Smile, Good Cuisine, beautiful islands and rich nature, and negative image in corruption. Recently Thailand has been perceived as poor economic and instable political from many countries. However, there are still good perception toward Thai tourism as the nation is trusted from foreign travellers.

As for the external portrayal in pop culture of Thailand's image, through out several decades, Thailand has been used as a location for many film productions. However, it did not help promoting the image of the country as it was used as a substitute of the neighbouring countries like Viet Nam and Cambodia instead. Until recently that the movie 'the Beach' which showed beautiful scenery of Thailand has helped Thailand people promote the country

in a good way, even though there is also some scene in the movie telling story about drug abuse in Thailand. Due to Thai movie industry has started presenting itself in International level and some movies have been accepted such Shutter, Bangkok Dangerous or Ong Bak, it would help create recognition about Thailand in near future. Ong Bak is one of the proofs that movie can promote Thai culture because Muay Thai or Thai boxing portrayed in the movies has gained reputation in the international level after the movie was out.

Another popular culture factor is Thai modern pop music. According to the findings it seems like many sectors, both public and private sectors, in the country has coordinated with many countries in Asia in order to support Thai music. With the help of the facilitation of Internet access connecting every corner of the world, the promotion of Thai music can be done easily as it allows anyone to enter or gain access to new Asian music. However, without a doubt, there is high competition around global. One of the obstacles that are preventing Thai music from gaining true recognition in the international level is that the fact that T-Pop is a modern music which has obtained a lot of influences from Japanese and Korean music, and, consequently, contains not much distinction from other Asian pop music.

## 5.2. Internal Analysis

### 5.2.1. Tourism

In this section, we would use the tourism and travel competitiveness index 2008 developed by World Economic Forum to be a basis for our analysis together with other supporting facts and information that we had already mentioned in the finding part. The tourism and travel competitiveness index was sub categorized into various sub sections which apt for our analysis.

#### Customer service level

By comparing the affinity index for tourism and travel of each country, we found that Thailand came the second among the group just after Singapore. This is due to Thai people has a very positive attitude towards foreign visitors comparing to other countries which makes them able to develop high quality of service to travelers whoever come to the country. However, the ranking of Thailand is only 2 places different from Malaysia which comes in the third place. Therefore, the capability of Thailand's nation brand in this section is considered to be moderate to high.

Tourism & Travel Index – Affinity (out of 130 countries)					
Country	Thailand	Singapore	Malaysia	Indonesia	The Philippines
Ranking	20	13	22	56	65

Table6: Tourism & Travel Index – Affinity

### Safety

Thailand came in the last place in this section as there is high level of road accidents together with terrorisms in the Southern part of the country and political unrest within the past few years. However, when comparing to other countries, Thailand still has not been too far behind from Indonesia and the Philippines. Due to this reason, Thailand has moderate nation brand capability in this section.

Tourism & Travel Index – Safety & Security (out of 130 countries)					
Country	Thailand	Singapore	Malaysia	Indonesia	The Philippines
Ranking	115	8	42	108	113

Table7: Tourism & Travel Index – Safety & Security

### Value for money

In this section, we used ‘price competitiveness’ index to represent the value for money in each country because the price competitiveness index was developed by comparing the cost of traveling with the value that travelers receive in return. Thailand comes in the second to last in this section which is because, even though the country has a relatively low level of extent and effect of taxation, purchasing power parity, and also low hotel price index, when comparing to less developed countries like Indonesia, Malaysia and the Philippines, it still a little bit lower. Therefore, the capability of Thailand’s nation brand in this section is moderate.

Tourism & Travel Index – Price competitiveness (out of 130 countries)					
Country	Thailand	Singapore	Malaysia	Indonesia	The Philippines
Ranking	11	25	3	1	9

Table8: Tourism & Travel Index – Price competitiveness

### Accessibility

In this section, we used ‘tourism & travel business environment and infrastructure’ index to indicate the level of accessibility of each country because the index was developed by comparing the availability and quality of the transportation and infrastructure in each country. Thailand comes in the third place as it has sufficient number of airlines available, good quality roads, present of car rental companies, ATM that accepts visa card, and extent of internet use. However, when comparing to Singapore, which has higher quality of air transport and Malaysia, which has good quality of ground transport, Thailand’s nation brand capability is considered to be moderate.

Tourism & Travel Index – Accessibility (out of 130 countries)					
Country	Thailand	Singapore	Malaysia	Indonesia	The Philippines
Ranking	42	13	39	86	84

Table9: Tourism & Travel Index – Accessibility

### 5.2.2. Foreign Direct Investment

#### Stable economic and political environment

The economic sector of Thailand has been drawn back by the unpredictable political climate which lessens its attractiveness in perception of foreign investors while comparing to Singapore and Malaysia that have more stable economic and political environment. In the case of Singapore, the country's economy has been growing at the highest rate among 5 countries at the rate of 8% and its political environment is very stable due to the strong government that gained majority votes through out the decades. For Malaysia, after the country's currency was unpegged from US dollar, its economy has been improving continuously together with the growing in the amount of export.

However, when put side by side with Indonesia, Thai economy is still in much better condition. It is because, even though Indonesia has a relatively good economic condition, the country is still suffering from the high level of poverty, inadequate infrastructure, natural disasters, and political unrests and terrorisms that took place all over the country. As for the Philippines, the country is also facing the similar situation as there is also a widespread of poverty, poor infrastructure and education system. In addition, high level of Muslim terrorists which attacked numbers of tourists from times to times also caused the negative image for the country in the eyes of potential investors.

Therefore, the capability of Thailand's nation brand in this section is considered to be moderate.

#### Skilled workforce

Here we selected some of population characteristics which could signify the current situation of the work force in each country. The population at the working age could represent the amount of workforce available in the country. The median age is the average age of the people in the country, which if it is too high, the country might have a problem of workforce availability in the future. For the literacy rate, it indicated the percentage of the population who can read and write, which is considered to be a fundamental factor for the amount of skilled workforce in that country.



Country	Thailand	Singapore	Malaysia	Indonesia	The Philippines
Population at the working age (15-64 years old)	45 Million	25 Million	15 Million	155 Million	56 Million
Median Age	32.8	38.4	24.6	27.2	23
Literacy rate	92.6%	92.5%	88.7%	90.4%	92.6%

Table10: Skilled workforce

By comparing among 5 countries in terms of capable workforce, Thailand's nation brand capability in this section is considered to be in the middle level due to several reasons. In the case of Singapore and Malaysia, even though they have relatively the same level of literacy rate but, according to the limitation of population at the working age, this might result in shortage in labor supply and the higher cost of labor. However, Indonesia and the Philippines seem to be very competitive in this section as they have plenty of labor force at workable age together with high literacy rate.

### Streamlined administrative procedure

In this section, we selected Corruption Perception Index, which developed by International Transparency group to compare the level of corruption in each country. In addition, we also presented the easiness of doing business index rated by World Bank group - International Finance Corporation which was developed by comparing the easiness in each process of starting and operating business in each country.

Country	Thailand	Singapore	Malaysia	Indonesia	The Philippines
Corruption Perception Index (1=lowest corruption, 179= highest)	84	4	43	143	131
Easiness of Doing business index (1= easiest, 178= hardest)	15	1	24	123	133

Table11: Corruption Perception and Easiness of Doing Business Index

In this section, even though Thailand is very competitive in terms of administrative procedure comparing to other 4 countries as it just come in the second place next to Singapore for the easiness in doing business. This indicates the convenience of foreigners in investing and starting business in Thailand due to the supporting administrative procedure provided by the government in the areas such as licensing, worker employment, property registration, and investor protection. However, this positive might be deficient by the perception of investors toward level of corruption in the country which seems to be at relatively high level comparing to Singapore and Malaysia. Therefore, in this section, Thailand’s nation brand capability is at moderate to high level.

### Infrastructure

In this section, we used ‘Commercial infrastructure’ index which is a part of market potential index developed by Michigan State University – center for business education and research to be a basic in comparison about the quality and availability of infrastructure in each country.

Market Potential Index (MPI) – Commercial infrastructure (out of 27 countries)					
Country	Thailand	Singapore	Malaysia	Indonesia	The Philippines
Ranking	17	5	9	23	22

Table12: Market Potential Index (MPI)

The quality of infrastructure of Thailand when comparing to others countries is considered to be moderate especially in relation with Singapore and Malaysia. This is because those 2 countries have a very well developed infrastructure systems including telecommunication, transportation, and media that enhance their capabilities in attracting investment from foreign countries. Part of this is the result of the stability in political situation in the countries and also the relatively low level of corruption that usually is the main obstruction in creating effective infrastructure for the country. However, Thai infrastructure is still in a much better condition when put side by side with Indonesia and the Philippines that currently still having erratic political situation and also high level of poverty which avert their governments from allocating in fund in this area.

### *5.2.3. Export Promotion*

#### High quality brand

For the availability of high quality brands in the country, when comparing to other 4 countries, the level of high quality brands of Thailand that are present in the international market is considered to be moderate to high. This is because among all the 5 countries, there is still a shortage in the existence of high quality and well-known brands in the global level. This is due to the fact that, even

though all these countries are the major exporters of many types of products, they are still lack of the strong brand names that can represent their countries' images. In additions, since most of products are only small component parts in electronic equipment (Singapore, Malaysia, and the Philippines) and agricultural produces (Indonesia and Thailand) which have enormous amounts of suppliers competing in the same market and there are not many differences in product's characteristics, it is difficult for each company to develop its own brand that can obtain recognition from the buyers in the international level.

In the case of Thailand, even though the main product of the country is also a normal agricultural product like jasmine rice, Thai government has been trying to create a specific trademark of 'Thai Hom Mali' rice in order to differentiate it from products of other competitors. With the unique characteristics that it contains, Thai Hom Mali rice are getting its mark in the international market including the US, Hong Kong, and China.

For National airlines, Thailand is competing side by side with Singapore. Thai Airways Company received the 2<sup>nd</sup> place in the world airlines award next to Singapore Airline in 2007 and it is growing very fast as it moved up from the 4<sup>th</sup> place in 2006. As more than 60% of the company's revenue was generated from international market, the brand 'Thai Airways' are spreading the good image of Thai good quality service to other countries.

In addition, by looking at beer production business, Thailand's Singha beer is maintaining stronger point in the international level when compared to the Philippines's San Miguel beer as it contains a clearer image that represents the characteristic of Thais while San Miguel chose to depict the reflection of Spain. Moreover, Singha beer also has better distribution channel as it can spread through the Thai restaurants that are present in many countries around the world due to its widely accepted quality as a good compliment drink with Thai foods.

#### Effective Country of Origin positioning

Under this section, Thailand has a very strong nation brand capability as its Hom Mali (Jasmine) rice has its unique characteristics which gain more reputation among international consumers. The fragrance and texture help differentiate itself from other types of rice in the market. Moreover, it is widely recognized by the global market that Thailand is the world's biggest rice exporter.

For Singapore, even though the country is the major exporter of semiconductor wafer fabrication, but they are only the small components inside the electronic equipments which make it difficult to be recognized by the end users of the product about their origin. This situation also happened with Indonesia, the Philippines and Malaysia as their main export products are electronic shipments which are very identical in nature and consumers are usually unable to identify only the brand name of the equipment. Even though, in the case of Indonesia

which the other main export product of the country is oil & gas, the specification of the product make it become famous only within a small group of buyer countries but not at the global level.

Nevertheless, the Philippines are gaining reputation in their Business Process Outsourcing (BPO) service as they are becoming one of the major contenders in the market. The educated skill work force and the fluency in English of Filipinos labor enable the country to differentiate itself from the other countries that provide similar types of services. But again, due to anonymous of the origin of the people who perform the service (via telephone calls or on the internet), it is still difficult for the Philippines to become recognized as the origin country of the service.

#### Strategic development of target market

Thailand's main export partners are the United States, Japan, China, Singapore, Hong Kong, and Malaysia while, for the import side, Japan is the most important trading partner of Thailand which account for 20% of Thailand's total import. Next are China, Malaysia, UAE, and Singapore. This signified the strategic planning of the target market of Thailand as the country's currency is depend on US dollar so that the surplus balance of export to the US will make benefit the country in term of the constant flow of US currency into Thailand's economy. In addition, for other trading partners, we found that both import and export are in the same groups which help balancing the amount of capital inflow and outflow from the country in order to keep the stability of trade balance. The same strategy is also applied by Singapore and the Philippines as they also select their target market to be within the same group with their suppliers in order to maintain the trading balance.

However, in the case of Malaysia, due to the fact that the country has detached its currency from the fluctuation of US dollar, it decided not to have the same correlation of the percentage of import and export within the same group of countries. As a result, Malaysia has the US as their major export partner while imports from Japan the most. For Indonesia, the country also does not apply the same trade balance strategy as the rankings of the major import and export partners do not correlate together. This factor could cause problem of capital flow of Indonesia.

Therefore, by comparing to other 4 countries, we conclude that Thailand has a moderate to high level of nation brand capability in strategic development of the target market.

#### Innovation

In this section, we used Global Innovation Index (GII) which was conducted by World Business and INSEAD University to be a basis in our analysis. This was

because the index was developed by comparing both factors and actual performance of each country in term of innovativeness.

Global Innovation Index (GII) (out of 107 countries)					
Country	Thailand	Singapore	Malaysia	Indonesia	The Philippines
Ranking	34	7	27	48	66

Table13: Global Innovation Index (GII)

According to Global Innovation Index, Thailand is at the third place among 5 countries. However, it is not so far away from Malaysia which comes at the second place. Currently, Thai government has already established the National Innovation Agency (NIA), which will help stimulate the level of innovativeness in the country. In addition, Thailand is applying the same strategy with Singapore by recruiting talent people from other countries by promoting the educational institutions beginning with other neighboring countries like Burma, Laos, Cambodia, and Vietnam in order to stimulate the level of innovation of the country. Therefore, we conclude that the level of nation brand's capability in this section is at moderate to high level.

#### 5.2.4. Talent Attraction

##### Favorable residency criteria

In this section, Thailand's nation brand capability is still considered to be low. First, the country does not have specific visa types for students or professional immigrants unlike Singapore and Malaysia. Even the Philippines also have separated student visa category for people who are interested in having their education in the country. In the case of Thailand, both student and investor visa is included as sub categories in the 'non-immigrant' visa category which make it difficult for the potential applicant to obtain sufficient information. In addition, the website of Thailand Ministry of foreign affairs is still lack of the information that is necessary for the potential applicants of the visa and some of the information has not been translated into English. All of these factors signified the problem of Thailand in providing convenience for the potential talented people.

##### Attractive Lifestyle

It is difficult to judge whether which country's lifestyle is more attractive than the other, therefore, in this section, we used Human Development Index which was developed by the United Nations in order to be a basis for comparing the quality of life in each country which is considered to be one of the main factors that makes the lifestyle in that particular country become attractive.

Human Development Index (HDI) (out of 177 countries)					
Country	Thailand	Singapore	Malaysia	Indonesia	The Philippines
Ranking	78	25	63	107	90

Table14: Human Development Index (HDI)

According to the Human Development Index, Thailand came at the 3<sup>rd</sup> place among the 5 countries behind Singapore and Malaysia. This indicates a moderate nation brand capability of Thailand in the issues concerning the quality of life for the people who live in the country including life expectancy, education, and a standard of living. In addition, by comparing to Singapore and Malaysia which their lifestyles are the combination of various cultures including Chinese, Indian, and Malay with different in traditions and ways of life, Thai society that composed mostly of Buddhists and contains less varieties in cultural background within the society seem to be less attractive.

For the Philippines, even though the country also has variety in cultures and ways of life due to the differences in cultural backgrounds of the population and also the influences from the colonial era, the danger of the continuous foreigners' kidnappings and the chaos caused by Muslim terrorists in many parts of the country drive away the temptation of the potential immigrants from moving into the country. This factor also applied to the case of Indonesia as there are still lots of political turmoil in the country together with the strong impact of the Muslim traditions on the way of life which might make it difficult for the foreigners to adjust themselves.

Therefore, with all those factors, we conclude that Thailand has moderate nation brand capability in this section.

#### Opportunity for career progression

It is rather difficult to determine the easiness of career progression in each country. Therefore, we would like to rely on the economic performance and also the Hofstede cultural dimension as the basis in making an analysis.

By looking at the economic situation, Thailand comes in the third place behind Singapore and Malaysia according to the GDP growth rate and also the overall stability of the country's economy within the past few years. For Indonesia and the Philippines, due to the fact that they are still in struggling phase in overcoming to their problems both in economic and political sectors, there seem to be less room for the career progression for the immigrants who move in.

Then, by considering the Hofstede index of each country, Singapore is the country with the lowest uncertainty avoidance, and masculinity among the group. This signified that the country's society is opened to the changes and also



they have low inequality between the social class together with low discrimination against women. Therefore, there seems to be a good chance for career progression for foreigners regardless of genders to get moving in the company. Moreover, Singapore is the only one country in the group that has the universities included in the world top 100 full time MBA with high career progression.

In the case of Malaysia, the country has relatively high power distance and relatively low uncertainty avoidance which makes the society opens to any changes that might come with the new joiners of the company. However, Malaysia still has certain inequality between male and female which also result in relatively high degree of gender disparity index developed by the United Nations. The same case also applied to the Philippines and Indonesia as the countries also have very high power distance and also relatively high masculinity, these two factors caused inequality between men and women in the society and make it difficult for women to have career progression at the same pace with men.

For Thailand, the power distance and uncertainty avoidance are relatively low when compared to other countries in the group which signified that the country is opened to the changes that come with foreign workers. In addition, Thailand also has low masculinity level and also very low gender disparity index which indicated that Thai society has hardly any discrimination against women so that it is not so difficult for them to have strong career progression in the organization.

Therefore, due to all the above factors, we concluded that Thailand has a moderate to high nation brand capability in this section.

#### *Reputation for higher education*

Currently, both Singapore and Malaysia are the only two countries in the group that have their present in the global education market as they obtain equally percentage of market share of 2%. For Singapore, the country can be considered as the leader in the group for the higher education as it is the only one country that has universities present in the top 100 Times higher education. Singapore has used its strength as an English speaking nation together with the strategy to create partnerships with foreign institutions that are well-known in the global level. For Malaysia, the country also uses the advantage of its social structure which composed of people from different cultures to attract students who speak the same language (such as China). In addition, Malaysia also increases their brand awareness in foreign countries by setting up branches of their campus in other countries. For Malaysia, the country has 4 universities at the ranking in the range between late 200s to beginning of 300s in the world top 400 Times higher education list.

For Indonesia and the Philippines, the two countries have their universities almost at the last place in the top 400 list while the Indonesian universities are a little bit higher in the rank. However, when comparing between the two in overall, the educational system of the Philippines seems to be better as there is no indication of insufficient education provided as in the case of Indonesia.

Thailand has 2 universities on the list at the ranking of 223<sup>rd</sup> and 284<sup>th</sup> in the list, which indicates relatively good quality of higher education in the country. In addition, Thailand's Ministry of University Affairs also provides exchanges programs for the students in Greater Maekhong Sub region who wish to have education in Thailand.

Therefore, when comparing to other countries in the group, Thailand's reputation for higher education has a medium to high nation brand capability because of, even though the quality of education of Thailand is good, its present in the global level is still relatively lower than Malaysia which has created stronger brand recognition in the world market.

## 6. Conclusion

### 6.1. Nation-brand Equity

From analysing the four sub-aspects of Nation-Brand Equity, the result turns out that Thailand brand equity is in medium level.

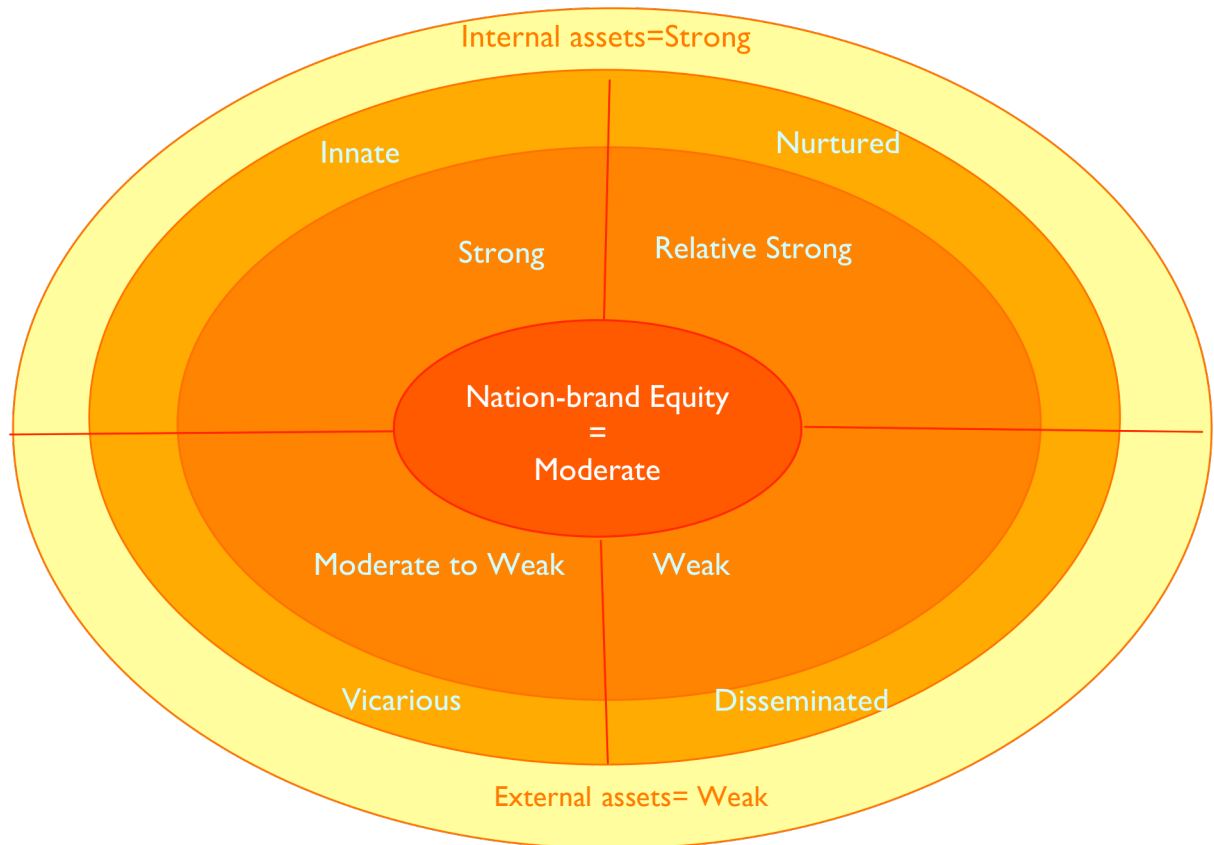


Figure3: Conclusion of Thai Nation-brand Equity

Beginning with internal assets, according to the analysis, Thailand has quite long history and has blended and developed the influences from other countries to form unique culture and tradition within Thai value leading to strong level of innate asset. While nurtures asset is also deserved relative strong degree because even though Thailand has some problem in economic situation and some political issues, but Thailand had only few concern from foreign investors. Including with Thai companies are trying to encourage Thais to use Thai products and some organizations carries out Thai culture supporting with the aim of holding on Thai value with Thai life. Therefore, it could be concluded that the internal assets of Thailand have greatly contributed to the strength of the country's brand equity.

Then, from external assets analysis, it could be seen that Thailand's disseminated asset weakly contributed to the nation's brand equity due to several factors. First, currently, Thailand has only two persons that can be considered as the country's brand ambassadors which are Paradorn Srichaphan and Tony Jaa who represent Thai value and shows it to other nations in the form of sport and entertainment activity. Similarly, Thailand still has just two authentic Thai brands, Thai Airways and Singha Beer, which are capable in gaining acceptance in the international level. Even though this amount might be relatively high comparing to other countries with in South East Asia region, it is still considered to be very little when measure up to other countries outside the region.

Moreover, with the number of 13,117 Thai restaurants around the world besides Thailand, it might signify the country's ability to extend the knowledge about Thai culture and traditions in the other nations through numbers of Thai people who are working and living in each of those countries. However, there was still lack of indication that there were any official organizations that connected all of those Thai diasporas together.

However, under vicarious asset section, it has moderate to weak level of contribution to the country's brand equity which due to negative images of the corruption, instable political situation and poor economic viewed by other nations. Nevertheless, this matter has been alleviated as the nation has also occupied positive view on Thai tourism and landscape. Along with the beginning stage of promoting, at present, Thai movies and Thai music in international level of entertainment sector in Thailand seem to have a prospect future even though it still cannot obtain a distinguish stand point in the global market as they have not been successful in producing positive image of Thailand.

## 6.2. Internal Analysis

We have summarized the result of internal analysis on Thailand's nation brand capabilities in 4 sections that 5 countries within ASEAN compete as following;

### Tourism

Key success factors	Nation brand capabilities
Customer Service Level	Moderate to High
Safety	Moderate
Value for money	Moderate
Accessibility	Moderate
<b>Overall</b>	<b>Moderate</b>

Table15: Conclusion of Thai Nation-brand Capability on Tourism

### Foreign Direct Investment

Key success factors	Nation brand capabilities
Stable economic and political environment	Moderate to High
Skilled work force	Moderate
Streamlined Administrative procedure	Moderate to High
Infrastructure	Moderate
<b>Overall</b>	<b>Moderate</b>

Table16: Conclusion of Thai Nation-brand Capability on FDI

### Export Promotion

Key success factors	Nation brand capabilities
High Quality brand	Moderate to High
Effective country of origin positioning	High
Strategic development of target market	Moderate to High
Innovation	Moderate to High
<b>Overall</b>	<b>Moderate to High</b>

Table17: Conclusion of Thai Nation-brand Capability on Export Promotion

## Talent Attraction

Key success factors	Nation brand capabilities
Favorable residency criteria	Low
Attractive Lifestyle	Moderate
Opportunity for career progression	Moderate to High
Reputation for higher education	Moderate to High
<b>Overall</b>	<b>Moderate</b>

Table18: Conclusion of Thai Nation-brand Capability on Talent Attraction

Therefore, our conclusion about the sector that Thailand has the most potential in developing a stronger nation branding strategy in the future by comparing to other four countries in ASEAN including Singapore, Malaysia, the Philippines, and Indonesia is the Export Promotion sector. As it is the only one sector that Thailand has a moderate to high nation brand capability in overall. This is due to Thailand's outstanding nation brand capabilities in the country of origin positioning that help increase its competitiveness in this sector among other countries within the selected group. For other 3 sectors, Thailand comes up with only moderate nation brand capability because the country does not have any exceptional qualifications in those areas.

The result that we obtained from the model has stimulated our awareness about the actual current capabilities of Thailand's nation brand based on the stand point of the external parties when they compared the country with others within the same region. In the past, we usually thought about each capability of the country separately and never realize about their contribution to the strength of nation brand in overall. In addition, this outcome also indicated that Thailand can be mostly considered as a 'moderate' country that does not have many particular aspects that can be used in promoting the nation brand.

Therefore, to come up with a strong nation branding strategy, it is more important for Thailand to put more affords in terms of investments for the improvement in the Export Promotion sector in relation to the areas that still in 'moderate to high' condition in order to enable the country to obtain a competitive advantage that will last in the long run.



## 7. Recommendation

### Enhancing Thai Nation-brand Equity

According to our conclusion on the nation brand equity of Thailand, we found that the external assets' contribution to the strength of the country's brand equity is still weak to moderate. Therefore, it is necessary for Thai governmental units to aim their investment on improving the quality of this type of asset both in the form of disseminated and vicarious assets.

For the disseminated assets, Thai governmental units should initiate program that in search of Thai persons who have capability to become the country's brand ambassadors that can represent image of Thai culture and traditions. Once the person is found, Thai governmental units should also organize the utilization of his international recognition to be in the most beneficial way to the country's image in the long run. Furthermore, Thai governments should develop an official organization for Thai diaspora who is currently living in other countries in order to encourage unity and enforce the value of Thai culture and tradition. This organization could also play a part in facilitating the business cooperation among Thai people as it would act as a channel of communication.

Firstly, in order to overcome the negative perception towards the country, Thai governmental units should emphasize on communicating the actual condition within the country to facilitate comprehensive understanding of the potential investors and travelers who might have an interest in Thailand. As, if the doubt has been clarified, it is likely that a false pessimistic perception would be eliminated. In addition, the advertising campaigns and media promotions are also necessary for transmitting the assenting side of the country to the mind of external parties. Currently, the tourism authority of Thailand has initiated several programs to promote country's landscape, culture, and foods. What they could do next is to widen the marketing channels and come up with more innovative campaigns that can enhance the awareness of Thai nation brand in international level. This could be connected to the external portrayal in popular culture of the country.

Currently, both movies and music industry of Thailand have not been fully utilized in promoting the country's internal assets. In fact, these two items have an ability to convey the powerful message to the international audiences as they carried both sounds and images which are the types of media that have strong impacts on the mind of viewers. However, in the past, there were some foreign made films that presented negative aspects of Thailand. Therefore, it is necessary for Thai governmental units to support and cooperate with private sector in order to encourage the creation of movies and music that contain unique characteristics of Thai culture and tradition which would help differentiate themselves from other competitors in the market. One of the suggestion for the private sector who could play a part is Sahamongkol Film

International since the company has gain some experience and reputation in the international market.

Moreover, it is also essential for Thai government not to overlook an importance of promoting awareness among the country's own people about the value of Thai culture and internal assets. The people's perception would result in their behaviors which could help promoting Thailand's image by portraying Thai culture and tradition in the international level. This would enhance persuasiveness of the messages that were presented via other media. One of the things that could be done by Thai Ministry of Culture is initiating campaigns to promote the consumption of Thai movies and music among the country's citizens by tailoring to the preference and characteristics of each group.

### **Emphasizing on Export Promotion**

Based on the conclusion from the internal analysis model, we recommended Thailand's governmental units to focus their investment in nation brand on the export promotion sector. In the past, Thailand used to promote the country in several areas without focusing into any particular sector, which resulted in unsuccessful attempts to create a strong country image in international level. It might be said that the country has not made any trade off in order gain a competitive advantage that would last in the long run.

Currently, even though Thailand's nation brand capability in the export promotion sector is in the moderate to high level, there are still many parts in the key success factors that needed to be improved in order to boost the country's competitiveness in that area. Therefore, we have come up with the recommendations for Thailand in each factor as following;

#### *High quality brands*

At present, Thailand has Thai Hom Mali rice, Thai Airways and Singha beer which are considered to be the country's high quality brand products. However, only these three brands were not sufficient enough to make Thailand become a competitive contender in the global market. Even though Thailand has two conglomerates which are Thai Union Food and Charoen Phokphand Foods that already have their business operations in the international level, they are still facing the problem of lacking in the leading brand product that can represent both the company's image and the country. The other problem is the case of 'Red bull', which the license and brand name was sold to an Austrian man and not so many people in the international market can recognize that it is a Thai brand name.

Therefore, we recommended Thai governmental units to take part in promoting the country's own high quality brands by cooperating with the private sector in order to develop a program that acknowledges people about the importance of the national quality brands and also provides guideline for those companies to

create a brand that can truly represent the country's image and being recognized in the international level.

#### Effective country of origin positioning

Even though, currently, Thailand is the world's number one rice exporter and it has registered its own trademark on fragrance 'Hom Mali' rice, it still can not guarantee the country's positioning in the long run as Viet Nam which is the second largest rice exporter is not so far behind.

What Thai governmental units should do is to support a research and development program in order to improve the quality of Thai rice to facilitate the country's ability to differentiate its product from other competitors in the market while at the same time also strengthen the image of Thailand as the country of origin of high quality rice. Still, it is also a duty of the government to initiate marketing campaign that enhances the image of Thai rice in the international level.

#### Strategic development of target market

Although, currently, Thailand has developed a good strategic plan for its target market by maintaining high level of export to the United States and European Union countries in order to sustain the stability of the country's currency due to the fact that the value of Thai Baht is attached to the value of US dollar. It is also important for Thailand to expand the amount of export into the other market within the same region to facilitate the growth of sizable home market which would become a stepping stone for Thai local companies to create strong brands that are capable to compete at the international market level.

Therefore, what Thai governmental units have to do is to create stronger relationship with other countries in South East Asia in order to encourage the flow of products and stimulate the creation of world-beating businesses within this region. The additional action can be taken by performing a research about the product categories that are in need among the regional countries and have a potential for the market growth in the future.

#### Innovation

This is the most important key success factor in the export promotion sector. Lack of innovativeness can result in the incapability of the local companies to develop strong brands that can compete in the world market. This is also an attribute which makes Thailand remains in the risk that its trading partners might switch to other countries that are capable to produce the same products since the level of uniqueness in the country's export products is low. Even though Thailand's position on the Global Innovation Index is not so far behind Malaysia which came at the second place in this region, there are still so many

things to do for the country to keep up and become a contender who can wrestle at the same level as the regional leader like Singapore.

Owing to those reasons, we recommended Thai government units to make more investment to promote the creation of country's own technology and also a higher quality of education system in the country. The process might be done by setting up a special unit with its main duty is to monitor and maneuver research and development activities that will help stimulate the level of innovativeness among the country's population.

Due to our limited time and accessibility to more intricate information in each area, all of the above recommendations might be just a general guideline for Thai governmental units to use in finding the direction to create a strong branding strategy for the nation. There are still more in-depth researches needed to be performed in order to gain better understanding in each area which is a fundamental requirement in tailoring a successful plan for the country. In addition, it is essential for the governmental units to be aware of the importance of cooperation from private sector that can help them coping with various obstacles which could be generated from the continuously changing external environment in order to achieve an outcome that contributes the most for the strength of the nation's brand.

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## 9. Appendix

### Semi-structured interview with Ms. Dusita Srichoo

On 1st of May 2008, we sent out an email to Ms. Dusita Srichoo, who works as a secretariat of the Prime Minister in the International Affairs Bureau, Thai Government House. Her position is a policy and planning analyst (level 7). The language medium used in email was Thai. In the email, we asked Ms. Dusita for the sources of information that we need for our research, as we believe that she should have useful information or at least in-depth knowledge about Thailand since her position is to analyse all information that the Prime Minister has to use.

The questions are listed as below;

- What is your current position and what is the position responsible for?
- Do you have information or database about how Thai citizens response to Thai products and travelling domestically?
- In which level of loyalty those foreigners have for Thailand in the form of travellers and investors?
- How do Thai people feel about Thai culture and tradition?
- Does Thailand have anyone or companies to be ambassador for the country?
- Do you know number of Thai who residence outside the country?

We received her response via email on 4<sup>th</sup> May 2008, and she gave answer and advices on website for us for further searching.

Question 1:

- What is your current position and what is the position responsible for?

Answer:

Secretariat of the Prime Minister of International Affairs Bureau, Thai Government House, as Policy and Planning analyst, level 7.

#### Job Description

- prepare talking points for the Prime Minister when meeting with foreign guests, both from the government and business sectors
- propose fact and choices for the Prime Minister's consideration on international issues
- arrange Prime Minister's trip aboard
- arrange foreign visit to Thailand as guest of the government

Question 2

- Do you have information or database about how Thai citizens response to Thai products and travelling domestically?

Answer:

She provided the website to get statistic of Thai travellers and OTOP, which is website for One city One product project.

Question 3:

- In which level of loyalty those foreigners have for Thailand in the form of travellers and investors?

Answer:

Ms. Dusita Srichoo advised us to see comment from foreign travellers in <http://www.tourismthailand.org/traveler-testimonial/> .

Question 4:

- How do Thai people feel about Thai culture, tradition?

Answer:

She said that she can suggest website of public sectors that work directly with Thai culture and history place, and the Thai dance college which gives traditional education to students.

Question 5:

- Does Thailand have anyone or companies to be ambassador for the country?

Answer:

For entertainment, from her knowledge, she said Tony Jaa can represent Thailand, and, for sport, Paradorn Srichaphan is a good representative. There are two brands she suggested that many foreigners must know, Singha beer and Red Bull.

Question 6:

- Do you know number of Thai who residence outside the country?

Answer:

She said she has a friend who is working in Consular of Foreign Affairs and dealing with Thai citizens foreign countries. Her friend said Thai government does not have exactly number of Thai people who reside out of Thailand due to the reason that there are many Thai immigrant to other nations illegally. Thai people who move to other countries hardly report to Thai consular about their present residence. She has only number of Thai people who report to vote outside Thailand to the Thai embassies. However, she cannot give the present number due to it is official used only, thus Ms. Dusita Srichoo gave the link website to get number of people who can vote outside Thai Kingdom in year 2006.

Question 7:

- Are there any cooperation among governmental units in for information sharing?

Answer:

Yes, we have some information sharing between organizations in the area which have to deal with each other, but for other units, there is rarely cooperation.