

# Demographic Factors and Brand Experience Affecting Sport Brand Advocacy of Consumers in Khon Kaen Province

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**ABSTRACT:** The purpose of this research was to study the demographic and brand experience factors that affected the brand advocacy in sporting goods businesses. The sample groups were the consumers who have used these services before and currently still used sport. The number of the consumers was 400 persons. The research instrument was a questionnaire. The data were analyzed by using descriptive statistics such as frequency, mean, and standard deviation, t-test, f-test, one way ANOVA and Pearson's Product Moment Correlation Coefficient at 0.05 level of statistical significance. The result of the research indicated that demographic characteristics and brand experience factors had different effects on the consumer sports brand advocacy in Khon Kaen Province significantly at .05 levels.

**KEYWORDS:** Brand Experience, Brand Advocacy

## Introduction

Brand advocacy is the action that customers protect the brand from the criticism of others, as a brand protection and drive the brand against its competitors. In addition, brand advocacy is an expression of brand loyalty and commitment that customers have with the brand, which is the ultimate goal to achieve (Sashi 2012). Besides, the customers can positively advertise and promote the brand to new customers and can also protect the brand from the criticism of others, which is the key to establish brand relationships with new customers (Kang and Hyun 2012). Also, the conversation between new and old customers positively has a profound impact on the success of the brand (Sashi, Brynildsen & Bilgihan 2019). These groups of people will support the brand without a compensation or a gift. When the customers talk positively about the brand with friends or family, the customers will become brand supporters, which, in turn, can help create brand-to-consumer value as well.

The trend of exercise and sports is increasingly popular, which is an important factor that stimulate the market of clothes, shoes, and sports equipment. At present, the market of clothing and sports equipment is growing well with 15-20% growth rate in the past years. Due to the increase of the trend of health and exercise including sport fashion or the trend of dressing in sportswear of the Gen Y and starting working age that has become more popular, the main products that have grown well are running sports and fitness. Until today, Thailand has more than 16 million people exercising or playing sports and tends to increase respectively. They are tagged as an interesting and numerous market that has become so popular brands. Kasikorn Research Center expects sales of sportswear in the country in 2015 to be worth 12,000 million baht and has a chance to reach 15 billion baht in the next year, so the sporting goods business in Thailand is worth studying and researching since it is a business that is increasingly growing according to the trend of Thai people, so in order to study the behavior and predict the behavior of consumers, it is necessary to apply other concepts altogether to be effective and most advantageous.

Due to the above reasons, the researcher is interested in studying factors affecting brand advocacy of consumers in Khon Kaen Province. The study aims at the consumers who have used these services before and currently still used sport in Khon Kaen Province. Researchers hope that the results of this research will cause benefits in the business and academic sectors.

## Objective

To study the demographic and brand experience factors affecting the brand advocacy of consumers in Khon Kaen Province.

## Literature Review

Demographic Concepts and Theories Demography refers to population analysis regarding the structural size, diffusion and population dynamics related to other socioeconomic and cultural factors. Demographic factors can be both cause and effect of marketing phenomena. (Hanna and Wozniak 2001; Shiffman and Kanuk 2003) have similarly defined demographic characteristics, saying that demographic characteristics refer to information about oneself, such as age, gender, education, occupation, income, religion and race, which all influence consumer behaviors, which are generally considered as fundamental traits, which marketers consider to formulate marketing strategies, linked to the needs, preferences and consumption rates of consumers.

Jamil, Hassana, Farid and Ahmad (2017) studied brand advocacy behaviors by examining gender differences from 400 samples through an online survey. Female consumers were found to be more likely to contribute the brand advocacy than male consumers were. On the other hand, males were more concerned with cultural values and less expressive, and were more likely to suppress their emotions when making a purchasing decision. In the line with Keylock and Faulds (2012), studying factors affecting the brand advocacy, found that different demographic factors, family and social factors result in different brand advocacy.

In Thailand, the research by Siriwan (2007) studied the differences between demographic characteristics, namely sex, female and male which tend to differ in behavior and attitudes. Regarding age, different age groups have different consumption tastes, with individual taste changing. Regarding education, people who have higher education result in a higher consumption of better-quality products and higher prices than those with lower education. Regarding occupation, different occupations result in different demands for products and services.

Based on the aforementioned demographic concepts and theories, it is said that different demographic factors affect the behavior of consumers differently. Therefore, this concept is implemented as a study approach for individual factors differed by demographic characteristics, which are fundamental in determining brand advocacy behaviors.

*H1: Different demographic characteristics affect different sporting goods advocacy.*

Brand experience is the sensory attached to the brand, feeling, cognition and behavioral response. Brand experience can be established by a touch point (Meyer & Schwager 2007; Schmitt 2010; Lee & Kang 2012). Colin & Ivens (2002) explain that the customer experience is the emotion felt by the customer with own instincts. It can be evaluated by comparing customer's perception with customer's expectation. These are from the contact point where the trade takes place.

From related literature review on brand experience affecting the brand advocacy, the study by Bilro, Loureiro & Guerreiro (2019) focus on brand experience and emotional attachment to the brand advocacy. In online reviews of customers of 15,000 restaurants, hotels and nightlife clubs in 11 cities in the United States. The results of the study show differences among customers who have had a positive brand experience are more likely to contribute the brand advocacy than those who have never had a positive brand experience. Additionally, a recent study by Kumar & Kaushik (2020) found that brand experience affects different brand advocacy behaviors and re-consumption intentions.

Brand advocacy is when a customer had purchased a product or used a service, the advocacy are widely spread. Consumers who use the product or service feel loyal to the brand. In creating a positive customer experience, it will help to create a positive preference, loyalty and

advocacy. Also, it can stimulate the curiosity of those who have never known the brand before so the brand will be known due to the advocacy among loyal customers or on online social media until repurchasing occurs which can expand the network endlessly by the aid of old and new customers (Suwannasarn 2017).

Based on the concept and theory of brand experience mentioned above, it is said that different brand experience affects different brand advocacy. Therefore, this concept is implemented as a study approach.

*H2: Different brand experience affects different sporting goods advocacy.*

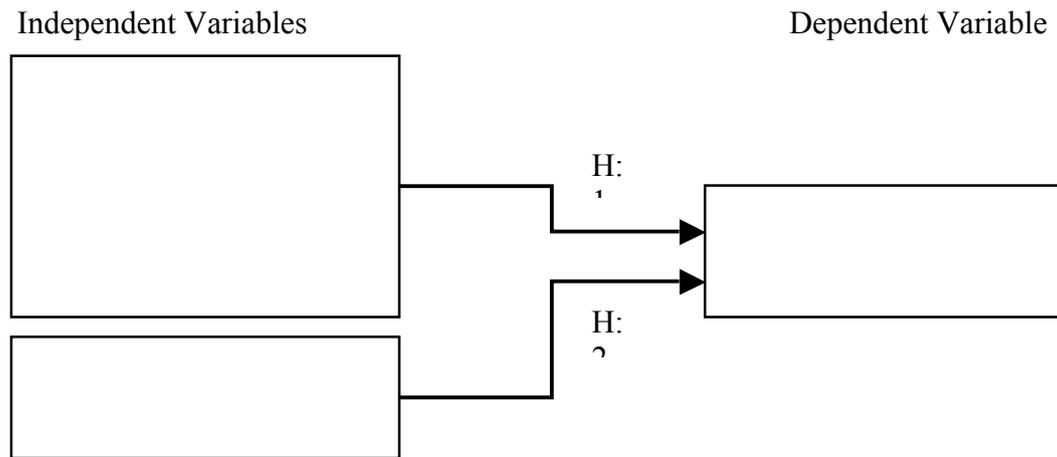


Figure 1. Framework of the Study

## Methodology

Population used in this study is the consumers who have used these services before and currently still used sport in Khon Kaen Province. Due to large population, Yamane's formula (1973) was used to calculate the sample size, resulting in the sample size of 400 samples in this study. Purposive sampling was used to select the sample based on the researcher's own decision. The characteristics of the selected groups were according to the objective of the research, that is, they have used these services before and currently still used sport.

**Research Instrument:** The tool used in this research was a questionnaire to test validity and reliability. Regarding, validity, questionnaires were presented to 3 experts. After that, reliability was tried out by using an improved questionnaire with a population with similar characteristics to 30 samples. By finding Cronbach's Alpha coefficient of alpha coefficient, it was found that the maximum is .902 and the minimum is .878. All values greater than .70 indicate that the data analyzed is highly reliable (Zikmund, Babin, Carr, & Griffin 2010).

**Data Analysis:** Quantitative analysis was used in this research when the researcher analyzed data by using a statistical package. In this study, the researcher used statistics to analyze the data, including frequency, percentage, mean, standard deviation. The inferential statistics include T-test, one way ANOVA and Pearson's Product Moment Correlation Coefficient with statistical significance at .05 to test the hypothesis.

**Data Collection:** This survey research using questionnaires to study the demographic and brand experience factors affecting the brand advocacy towards sporting goods in Khon Kaen Province by collecting data from secondary and primary data obtained from questionnaires to analyze the data: 1) the researchers provided the complete questionnaire to customers themselves. The target group can fill in the information themselves, 2) to edit data, the researchers will check the completeness and relevance of the answers in the questionnaire, 3) the researcher will take the correct questionnaire into the coding

as predefined and 4) data processing was done by distributing the frequency of all variables and calculating percentage, mean and various parameters.

## Result

Demographic data were found that the majority of the samples were 214 males, 53.5 percent, and 186 females, 46.5.

Regarding samples' age, 181 people are aged between 20-30 years old, 45.3 percent, followed by 134 people aged between 31-40 years old, 33.5 percent, 53 people aged between 41-50 years old, 13.3 percent, 30 people aged between 51-60 years old, 7.5 percent, and 2 people aged over 60 years old, 0.5 percent.

Regarding samples' monthly income, 216 people gain monthly income between 10,000 - 20,000 baht/month, 54.0 percent, followed by 128 people gaining monthly income less than 10,000 baht/month, 32 percent, 45 people gaining monthly income between 20,001 - 30,000 baht/month, 11.3% and 11 people gaining monthly income more than 30,000 baht/month, 2.8%.

Regarding samples' educational background, 218 had bachelor's degree 54.5 percent, followed by 152 people having lower degree, 38.0 percent, and 30 people having postgraduate degree, 7.5 percent.

Regarding experience of using sporting goods of the sample, 226 people use Nike, 56.5 percent, followed by 189 people using Adidas product, 47.3 percent, 138 people using PUMA product, 34.5 percent, 124 people using New Balance product, 31 percent, 53 people using FILA product, 13.3 percent, 32 people using Under Armor product, 8 percent, 22 people using REEBOK product, 5.5 percent, and 12 people using ASICS product, 3 percent.

Regarding sporting goods that were purchased in the past 6 months of the sample, 181 people purchased Nike product, 45.3 percent, followed by 152 people purchasing Adidas product, 38 percent, 82 people purchasing New Balance product, 20.5 percent, 60 people purchasing FILA product 15 percent, 47 people purchasing PUMA product 11.8 percent, 39 people purchasing Under Armor product, 9.8 percent, 20 people purchasing REEBOK product, 5 percent, and 17 people purchasing ASICS product, 4.3 percent.

## Data Analysis

**Sex:** it was found that females exhibited the same level of the brand advocacy behavior as males did, then the duality was not tested.

**Age:** when classified by age, it was found that different age groups showed no difference in the brand advocacy behavior, so the duality was not tested.

**Income:** when classified by income, it was found that the different incomes resulted in a statistically significant difference in the brand advocacy behavior at .05. So, the duality was tested by the Scheffe method. There are 2 pairs, namely the group with income more than 30,000 baht per month having the brand support behavior more than the group with income less than 10,000 baht per month, and the group with income more than 30,000 baht per month having the brand advocacy behavior more than the group with income between 10,000. - 20,000 baht per month.

**Educational Background:** when classified by educational background, it was found that the different educational background showed statistically significant difference in the brand advocacy behavior at .05. So, the duality was tested by the Scheffe method. There is a pair that people with bachelor's degree had more brand advocacy behavior than those having lower degree.

Table 1 shows the results of the analysis of the test of variance

Variables	Brand Advocacy		t	P
	$\bar{x}$	S.D.		
Sex	3.85	0.49	1.509	.099
Age	3.82	0.95	1.031	.422
Income	3.71	0.72	2.142	.008*
Educational Background	3.88	0.60	1.443	.028*

\* Statistical significance at 0.05

Results of the demographic factors showed that different income and educational background distribute different brand advocacy, except for gender and age, with statistical significance level at .05.

Table 2 shows the relationship between factors of brand experience and brand advocacy.

The relationship between factors of brand experience and brand advocacy		Brand Advocacy	Brand Experience
Brand Advocacy	Pearson Correlation	1	.083**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	400	400
Brand Experience	Pearson Correlation	.083**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	400	400

\*\* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed)

Regarding brand experience, from the Parson Correlation coefficient analysis,  $y = .083$  was found, meaning that those who had brand experience had a high correlation with positive brand advocacy with statistical significance at .05 because the value obtained from the analysis is near 1 and is positive.

## Discussion

The study of factors affecting sport brand advocacy of customers in Khon Kaen Province provides a better understanding of existing consumers' behaviors. It was found that respondent different brand experiences, income, and educational background had significantly different effect on brand advocacy behaviors, to be able to predict upcoming customers' phenomena and behaviors effectively. Therefore, it can be useful in marketing planning or can develop marketing strategies. In addition, this study brings academic benefits, leading to further study on brand advocacy, which can lead to further academic and knowledge progress.

The results of this study are consistent with previous study conducted by Jamil, Hassana, Farid and Ahmad (2017), finding that demographic differences in gender were found to differently contribute the brand advocacy. This study are also similar to Keylock and Faulds

(2012), which studies factors affecting brand advocacy, found that different demographic factors in family and social factors result in different brand advocacy.

In addition, Siriwan (2007) studied the differences in demographic characteristics affecting consumer tastes and expressive behaviors. In addition, this study found that different brand experience also affects different brand advocacy behaviors, which is similar to the Bilro, Loureiro & Guerreiro (2019), which looked at the differences between customers who previously had a positive brand experience and those who never had a positive brand experience. Additionally, a recent study by Kumar & Kaushik (2020) studied brand experience affects different brand advocacy behaviors and re-consumption intentions.

## Marketing Suggestion

**This research found three important differences:** income, educational background, and brand experience. When consumers are different and diverse in demographic characteristics, it is an important for brands to use this diverse information to formulate different strategies to fit the demographic characteristics of their target market by considering the factors of brand experience. In order to do so, the brand must be easily-accessed and consumer engagement is most prioritized including increasing communication channels between brands and consumers.

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