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Consumer-based brand equity for Australia as a long haul tourism destination in an emerging market

Purpose: Although the branding literature emerged during the 1940s, research relating to tourism destination branding has only gained momentum since the late 1990s. There remains a lack of theory in particular that addresses the measurement of the effectiveness of destination branding over time. The purpose of the research was to test the effectiveness of a model of consumer-based brand equity (CBBE) for a country destination.

Design/methodology: A model of consumer-based brand equity was adapted from the marketing literature and applied to a nation context. The model was tested by using structural equation modelling with data from a large Chilean sample (n=845), comprising a mix of previous visitors and non-visitors. The model fits the data well.

Findings: This paper reports the results of an investigation into brand equity for Australia as a long haul destination in an emerging market. The research took place just before the launch of the nation's fourth new brand campaign in six years. The results indicate Australia is a well known but not compelling destination brand for tourists in Chile, which reflects the lower priority the South American market has been given by the national tourism office (NTO).

Practical implications:
It is suggested that CBBE measures could be analysed at various points in time to track any strengthening or weakening of market perceptions in relation to brand objectives. A standard CBBE instrument could provide long-term effectiveness performance measures regardless of changes in destination marketing organisation (DMO) staff, advertising agency, other stakeholders, and budget.

Originality/value: This study contributes to the nation-branding literature by being one of the first to test the efficacy of a model of consumer-based brand equity for a tourism destination brand.

Key words: destination branding, consumer-based brand equity, destination marketing organizations, Australia

Paper type: Research paper

Consumer-based brand equity for Australia as a long haul tourism destination in an emerging market

1.　　Introduction

Although the branding literature commenced during the 1940s (see for example Guest, 1942), the first journal articles related to tourism destination branding did not emerge until 1998 (see Dosen *et al*., 1998; Pritchard and Morgan, 1998). While much progress has been made in the past few years (Konecnik and Go, 2008; Murphy *et al*., 2007; McCartney *et al*., 2008; Hudson and Ritchie, 2009; Balakrishnan, 2009; Hankinson, 2009), this field remains in its infancy. A recent review of destination branding publications from 1998 to 2007, identified at least nine major gaps in the literature relating to practical challenges faced by destination marketing organisations (DMO) such as national tourism offices (NTO), state tourism offices (STO) and regional tourism organisations (RTO) (Pike, 2009). In particular, there has been a dearth of research analysing the performance of destination brand campaigns. This is an important gap in the literature, given: i) the increasing level of investment by DMOs in branding initiatives since the 1990s (Morgan *et al*., 2002), ii) the complex political nature of DMO brand decision-making and increasing accountability to stakeholders (Pike, 2009), and iii) the long-term nature of repositioning a destination's image in the market place (see Gartner and Hunt, 1987). The challenge of measuring marketing performance is not however unique to destinations. For example, Australian Marketing Institute president Roger James (2005, p. 29) lamented the lack of mainstream media coverage about the marketing effectiveness of corporate Australia: "We see many examples of outstanding strategic marketing, yet few boards receive comprehensive information about marketing performance". The topic of brand metrics is also rare in the services marketing literature (Kim *et al*., 2003).

The concept of consumer-based brand equity (CBBE) proposed by Aaker (1991, 1996) and Keller (1993, 2003) offers destination marketers a potential performance measure of the extent to which the brand identity has been successfully positioned in the market. As indicated in Figure 1, the brand identity is the aspirational self-image planned and created by the DMO, while brand equity represents perceptions and attitudes held by consumers. The level of congruence between brand identity and brand equity depends on the nature and level of engagement a consumer has with the destination. Perceptions are a function of organic sources (see Gunn, 1988), such as visitation and word of mouth recommendations from others, and induced sources (see Gartner, 1993) such as brand positioning by the DMO and marketing communications activities by intermediaries. CBBE provides an alternative to the financial accounting perspective (see Simon and Sullivan, 1993), which views brand equity as a balance sheet intangible asset. Such a financial value is of little benefit to a destination. However, to date few destination studies have reported applications of the CBBE model (see Konecnik and Gartner 2007; Boo *et al*., 2009).

The proposed CBBE model features four dimensions, which represent latent variables: brand salience, brand associations, brand quality, and brand resonance. *Brand salience* is the foundation of the hierarchy, and is the strength of the destination's presence in the mind of the target when a given travel context is considered. *Brand image* represents the perceptions attached to the destination. *Brand quality* is concerned with perceptions of the quality of a destination's infrastructure, hospitality service, and amenities such as accommodation. *Brand loyalty* represents the level of attachment to the destination. This can be viewed in terms of visitation, intent to visit, and word of mouth referrals to others.

The aim of the project was to trial the proposed CBBE model as a means of measuring brand equity for Australia as a long haul destination in an emerging market. The intent was to test the model in one market just before the start of a new brand campaign. During 2006, the NTO Tourism Australia launched a new destination brand positioning campaign, which was the third new branding since 2002. The new positioning theme, *Where the bloody hell are you?,* proved controversial in Australia and overseas (Waller *et al*., 2009). By 2008, the initiative had been acknowledged as a failure by the Minister of Tourism, as well as Prime Minister Kevin Rudd who described it as a "rolled gold disaster" (see Russell, 2008, p.13). The latest destination branding strategy for Australia was launched in October 2008.

Take in Figure 1 here

2.   Literature Review

The first journal article reporting research relating to the branding of destinations was Dosen *et al*., (1998) ´s scrutiny of the appropriateness of Croatia's tourism brand. In the same year Pritchard and Morgan's (1998) analysis of the brand strategy for Wales, became the first destination branding case study journal article. Since then, a few studies have examined topics related to destination branding, such as destination brand identity (Konecnik and Go, 2008), destination brand personality (Murphy *et al*., 2007), destination brand image (McCartney *et al*., 2008; Hankinson, 2005), destination experience (Hudson and Ritchie, 2009), strategic branding of destinations (Balakrishnan, 2009) and public diplomacy (Fullerton *et al*., 2009). Although the contribution of these studies is notable, the field of destination branding is still considered to be in its formative years, particularly in relation to the wider branding literature that emerged in the 1940s (see Guest, 1942). A recent review of 74

destination branding publications by 102 authors from 1998 to 2007 identified the following research gaps in the literature (Pike, 2009):

- Case studies of the politics of destination brand decision making. Most DMOs are governed as public-private partnerships, involving public funding and private expertise, which can render the development of a narrow brand positioning theme problematic.

- Destination brand umbrella strategies, providing linkages between DMOs at the national, state and regional levels, and also between the DMO and key stakeholders such as local businesses and travel intermediaries.

- Ownership and involvement of the host community, who are usually active participants of local tourism, both as hosts of visiting friends or relatives, and as occasional local tourists. To what extent then does the tourism brand identity represent local residents' 'sense of place'?

- The extent to which destinations are able to generate different brand positioning strategies to suit the needs of different markets.

- Ownership and involvement of the tourism industry. To what extent have destination brand campaigns enhanced the competitiveness of business-related stakeholders?

- How effectively has customer relationship marketing (CRM) been used to stimulate increased loyalty and repeat visitation?

- The effectiveness of brand slogans and logos, given the suggestion by Gold and Ward (1994) that destination promotion has seen few creative ideas, and that most fail to achieve anything more than 'ephemeral indifference'.

- Brand licensing revenue as an alternative funding source to DMOs at the mercy of political masters for long term funding.

- Measurement of the effectiveness of destination brand performance effectiveness over time.

The last point is particularly critical for strategies involving rebranding and repositioning, such as in the Australian case, given Gartner and Hunt's (1987) proposition that image change for a destination takes place slowly over a long period of time. However, before considering the issue of measurement, it is pertinent to note the rationale for destination branding. The most comprehensive definition of destination branding to date was proposed by Blain, Levy and Ritchie (2005, p. 337), which includes both supply and demand perspectives:

> *Destination branding is the set of marketing activities that (1) support the creation of a name, symbol, logo, word mark or other graphic that readily identifies and differentiates a destination; that (2) consistently convey the expectation of a memorable travel experience that is uniquely associated with the destination; that (3) serve to consolidate and reinforce the emotional connection between the visitor and the destination; and that (4) reduce consumer search costs and perceived risk. Collectively, these activities serve to create a destination image that positively influences consumer destination choice.*

The definition supports Aaker's (1991, 1996) conceptualization of branding comprising the two distinct constructs of brand identity and brand image. Brand identity has an internal focus on the image aspired to in the marketplace. Brand image represents the actual image held by consumers, which might or might not be related to that intended in the brand identity. The concept of brand positioning, introduced by Trout and Ries (1979), serves as a mechanism by which to achieve congruence between the

brand identity and brand image. It is for this reason that the public face of destination branding is commonly the place name, short slogan and supporting imagery. The purpose is to cut through the noise of rival places and substitute products in the market and position the destination into consumer decision sets. While we all have an almost unlimited range of destinations to choose from for any given travel situation, a number of destination studies have supported the proposition of Howard (1963) and Howard and Sheth (1969) that we only actively consider a range of two to six brands in the decision process (see for example Woodside and Sherrell, 1977; Thompson and Cooper, 1979; Um and Crompton, 1990).

It has been suggested that the effectiveness of destination brands can be measured by brand equity. From a marketing perspective, Keller (2003) championed the value of the CBBE model for marketers i) as a bridge between understanding the effectiveness of past marketing efforts and predicting future performance, and ii) in measuring the level of congruence between the brand identity and brand image. The development of CBBE by Aaker (1991, 1996) and Keller (1993, 2003) represented a shift in thinking about brand equity as an intangible financial value on a firm's balance sheet. Such a measure must ultimately be underpinned by consumer attitudes towards the brand. The four key constructs in the CBBE model are highlighted in Figure 2. The direction of the arrows indicates that CBBE is the exogenous second order construct and the other four constructs are endogenous first order constructs.

Take in Figure 2

There have been few applications testing the CBBE model in relation to place brand and destination branding. Examples in the wider tourism marketing literature have to date been limited to conference attendee brand equity (Lee and Back, 2008), and hotel brand equity (Cobb-Walgren, *et al*., 1995; Kim *et al*., 2003; Kayaman and Arasli, 2007;

Kim *et al*., 2008). The first destination CBBE studies were Croatian-based brand equity

for Slovenia (Konecnik and Gartner, 2007), short break destination brand equity for an

emerging destination (Pike, 2007), and CBBE for Las Vegas and Atlantic City, in the

context of gambling destinations (Boo *et al*., 2009). This shows that the application and

testing of the CBBE model needs further work.

While the most common measurement approach has traditionally been structured

surveys using scales of cognitive attributes and affective benefits, there is not yet a

universally accepted index of scale items due to a lack of replication studies. This

should not be surprising given the wider marketing literature has not reached consensus

on brand image measurement (see Martinez and de Chernatony, 2004). For this reason

and to extend the work of Boo *et al*. (2009), this study has limited destination image to

the constructs of social and self image, which have both a presence in the literature and

replication value.

Thus, the aims of this study were to: i) evaluate the suitability of the CBBE model

for a long haul destination in an emerging market, and ii) test the relationships among

the proposed dimensions of destination CBBE. The hypotheses guiding the study are

highlighted in Figure 3.

Take in Figure 3 here

3.   Conceptual Framework

We propose associative relationships among the four consumer-based brand equity

dimensions of brand salience, brand image, perceived quality and brand loyalty. Brand

salience is a key dimension of brand equity (Keller, 2003) and represents the strength of

awareness of the destination for a given travel situation. The aim is not to achieve

general awareness per se, but to be remembered for the reasons intended (Aaker, 1996).

Of interest is decision set inclusion since a consumer will be aware of a multitude of

destinations. Brand salience is commonly measured by unaided or awareness or aided brand recall.

Brand image is anything linked in memory to a brand (Aaker, 1991, p. 109), as proposed in the associative network memory model, in which memory consists of nodes and links (Anderson, 1983). A node contains information about a concept, and is part of a network of links to other nodes. When a given node concept is recalled, the strength of association determines what other nodes that will be activated from memory. A destination brand represents a potential node, with which a number of associations with other node concepts are linked. Greater awareness or brand salience of a destination will enhance the image of the brand. Previous research has found a positive relationship between brand awareness and brand image (Baloglu, 2001). Thus, we propose the following hypothesis:

Hypothesis 1: Brand salience will have a positive influence on brand image

Brand loyalty is considered a main dimension of brand equity but has attracted little interest in the destination literature (Oppermann, 2000). Brand loyalty has been succinctly defined as "the attachment that a customer has to a brand" (Aaker, 1991, p.39). Loyalty is both attitudinal in terms of intent to purchase, and behavioural through word of mouth referrals and repeat purchase. Unfortunately however, there is a lack of agreement about the scale items for each construct (Kim *et al*., 2008). It is the position of this paper that an attachment is possible with or without previous visitation. Previous research suggests a positive relationship between brand image and brand destination loyalty (Hosany et al., 2006). Thus, the following hypothesis is stated:

Hypothesis 2: Brand image will have a positive influence on brand loyalty

Brand quality is another key dimension of brand equity (Aaker, 1996; Keller, 2003), and has been used interchangeably with customer perceived quality. Perceived quality

has been defined as the "perception of the overall quality or superiority of a product or service relative to relevant alternatives and with respect to its intended purpose" (Keller, 2003, p. 238). Perceptions of quality for a destination brand are likely to be enhanced by brand saliency because of the consumer's awareness of the brand and inclusion in a consideration set. Thus, we propose the following hypothesis:

Hypothesis 3: Brand salience will have a positive influence on perceptions of quality

Previous research has considered elements of perceived quality such as destination infrastructure as impacting brand performance (Buhalis, 2000). Further, perceived quality has been found to positively relate to brand loyalty (Jayanti and Ghosh, 1996). Thus, the following hypothesis is stated:

Hypothesis 4: Perceived quality will have a positive influence on brand loyalty

3.   Research Methodology

Initially it was planned to undertake a cross-cultural evaluation of brand equity for Australia, and involve samples in the closest and most important market (New Zealand), an established long haul market (USA) and an emerging long haul market (Chile) from a continent that has been recognised for its potential development (Fraser, 2009). However, the decision was made to test the model's suitability in one market first. This way, adjustments based on findings could be made to the model before re-testing in other markets.

The emerging market of Chile was chosen for the initial study for a number of reasons. Firstly, there is precedence of using emerging markets to explore trends in destination marketing (Konecnik and Gartner, 2007; Pike, 2007). Secondly, government initiatives such as the recent free-trade agreement have increased awareness and exchange between the two countries (Fraser, 2009). Thirdly, this has launched

travel and tourism opportunities. Qantas, for example, launched a new Santiago/Sydney air service in October 2008. Although Latin America was not at the time one of Tourism Australia's 23 key target markets, the NTO also supports over 40 travel agents in South America who are part of the Spanish language 'El Aussie Specialist' program (see http://www.specialist.australia.com/america/index.asp?uid=79067389). Tourism Australia has also participated in Feria International De Tourismo in Argentina, which attracts up to 70,000 trade and consumer visitors from Chile, Brazil, Paraguay Uruguay and Argentina.

During October 2008 invitations were extended electronically to approximately 3000 faculty and post graduate students at Chile's Adolpho Ibanez University School of Business who had international travel experience. The questionnaire was developed in English, and then translated into Spanish by one of the research team. This version was then back translated by a colleague in Chile and pre-tested with a convenience sample of five Chilean visitors in Australia, which resulted in minor changes in wording to some questions. An online Spanish language survey instrument was developed and a URL hosted by the faculty of an Australian university. The instrument was divided into four sections. The first page contained: two filter questions asking participants if they had visited another country in the past five years and their likelihood of taking an international vacation during the next 12 months; and two top of mind unaided awareness questions to identify the size and composition of the participant's decision set. No mention of Australia was made on this opening page. The second page asked participants to indicate if they had previously visited Australia and to rate the destination on an index of CBBE scale items (see Table 3) using a seven point scale anchored at 'very strongly disagree' (1) to 'very strongly agree' (7). The third section contained a battery of scale items related to cognition, affect and conation, for a

separate paper. The final page contained demographic questions as well as an open ended question asking if the participant would like to make any further comments about what appeals to them in a holiday destination.

5. Results and Data Analysis

A total of 845 useable responses were received, after 8 participants had been removed due to high levels of missing data. For the remainder of the sample there were few instances of missing data, for which mean values were substituted. The characteristics of these participants are summarised in Table 1, the key points of which are that 76.5% were male, 97.2% were aged between 25 and 64 years, 77% were married, and 70.2% had dependent children. While the characteristics do not enable the data to be generalised to the wider Chilean population, the purpose was to achieve a purposeful sample of residents with recent international travel experience. It is suggested the sample is suitable for destination brand equity model testing, given that 758 participants (90%) had taken a holiday in another country during the previous five years. The mean likelihood of taking a holiday in another country in the next 12 months, measured using a seven point scale was 5.2.

Table 1: Participants' Characteristics

		n	Valid %
Gender	Male	643	76.5
	Female	197	23.5
	Total	840	
	Missing	5	
Age	18 – 24	6	0.7
	25 – 44	514	61.3
	45 – 64	301	35.9
	65 +	18	2.1
	Total	839	
	Missing	6	
Marital status	Single	124	14.8
	Married/Live in partner	644	77.0
	Divorced/separated/ widowed	68	8.1
	Total	836	
	Missing	9	
Number of dependent children	0	246	29.6
	1-2	329	39.6

	3+	256	30.8
	Total	831	
	Missing	14	
Household income	Less than US$25,000	86	10.3
	US$25,000 – US$50,000	233	27.9
	US$50,001 – US$99,999	313	37.5
	US$100,000+	202	24.2
	Total	834	
	Missing	11	
Education	High school	3	0.4
	University	450	53.8
	Other	384	45.9
	Total	837	
	Missing	8	

The top 10 unaided destination preferences are listed in Table 2, where it can be seen that the five most popular destinations accounted for 50% of all destinations elicited from participants. Australia was the tenth most popular choice. A total of 117 participants (13%) had previously visited Australia. Given the perceptual foundations of CBBE, the data therefore provided an opportunity to test the model from the perspective of non-visitors as well as previous visitors among travellers in a long haul market. The mean number of destinations in participants' decision sets was 3.6, which is consistent with previous studies reported in the tourism and marketing fields.

Table 2: Top of mind awareness preferred destination

Rank	Destination	n	Per cent
1	USA	138	16.3%
2	Brazil	114	13.5%
3	Mexico	71	8.4%
4	Italy	54	6.4%
5	Spain	53	6.3%
6	Argentina	49	5.8%
7	Caribbean	38	4.5%
8	France	27	3.2%
9	Greece	25	3.0%
10	Australia	24	2.8%

The means for the individual scale items are shown in Table 3. There were mixed results, with a number of positive results and with the means for five items being below

the scale mid-point. Independent-samples t-tests found significant differences between previous visitors and non-visitors, at <.05, for all items. As can be seen, the means were higher for those participants who had previously visited Australia. The Cronbach alpha for each construct ranged from .93 to .81, which indicates excellent to very good internal consistency reliability (Kline, 2005). The skewness and kurtosis values were considered satisfactory. Although the skewness statistic was between -1.0 to -1.5 for four items, Hair *et al.* (2010) suggest that noticeable effects are unlikely to occur in large samples when the ratio of the item's mean to its standard deviation is greater than 4. The brand salience scale items indicate Australia has strong aided brand recall, but low salience, even among previous visitors. Perceptions of quality were high, particularly for previous visitors. Brand image items were moderately positive for all participants. Brand loyalty items were marginally positive for previous visitors, but negative for non-visitors.

Table 3: Scale items

	N	Mean	Std.	A	Mean visitors	Mean non visitors
Brand salience				.81		
This destination has a good name and reputation (Boo et al (2008)	845	6.1	1.1		6.5	6.0
The characteristics of this destination come to my mind quickly (Boo et al (2008, Konecknic and Gartner 2007)	839	4.8	1.8		6.1	4.6
This destination is very famous (Boo et al (2008)	840	4.7	1.6		5.3	4.6
When I am thinking of an international holiday, this destination comes to my mind immediately (Boo et al 2008)	838	2.7	1.6		3.8	2.5
I have seen a lot of advertising promoting Australian holidays (Konecknik and Gartner, 2007)	836	3.1	1.6		3.4	3.0
Perceived quality				.93		
High quality accommodation (Konecknic and Gartner 2007)	837	5.6	1.3		6.1	5.4
High levels of cleanliness (Konecknic and Gartner 2007)	833	5.8	1.2		6.4	5.7
High level of personal safety (Konecknic and Gartner 2007)	833	5.8	1.2		6.4	5.6
High quality infrastructure (Konecknic and	836	5.9	1.1		6.4	5.8

Gartner 2007						
Brand image				.92		
This destination fits my personality (Boo et al 2008)	838	4.0	1.8		4.9	3.9
My friends would think highly of me if I visited this destination (Boo et al 2008)	842	4.3	1.8		4.7	4.2
The image of this destination is consistent with my own self image (Boo et al 2008)	841	4.3	1.7		5.0	4.2
Visiting this destination reflects who I am (Boo et al 2008)	838	3.6	1.8		4.3	3.5
Brand loyalty				.88		
This destination would be my preferred choice for a vacation(Boo et al 2008)	838	3.2	1.6		4.0	3.0
I would advise other people to visit this destination (Boo et al 2008 Konecknic and Gartner 2007, Chi and Qu 2008)	828	4.0	1.8		5.6	3.7
I intend visiting this destination in the future (Konecknic and Gartner 2007, Chi and Qu 2008)	839	4.6	1.9		5.2	4.7
This destination provides more benefits than other destinations (Konecknic and Gartner, 2007)	835	3.5	1.5		4.4	3.4

To examine the model structure, the sample was randomly split into two groups of 300 and 545 using the SPSS select cases function. A confirmatory factor analysis using Amos 16.0 resulted in a moderate fit (n = 300) with three attributes omitted due to cross-loading. Two items were omitted from the brand salience dimension ('This destination has a good name and reputation', 'When I am thinking of an international holiday this destination comes to my mind immediately') and one item from brand image ('Visiting this destination reflects who I am'). While the Chi square statistic was significant and the CMNI/DF ratio was 4.1, other model fit indices were positive (GFI = .954, AGFI = .932, CFI = .972, RMSEA = .06). The respecified (see Figure 4) model was then tested using the larger sub-sample, and produced a good fit (CMIN/DF = 2.7, GFI = .953, AGFI = .930, CFI = .976, RMSEA = .056). The standardised regression weights, which are listed in Table 4, demonstrate convergent validity. As can be seen, all four hypotheses were supported, and two additional associations were apparent. First, the data identified a positive relationship between perceptions of quality and brand

image. Second, there was a direct positive association between brand salience and brand loyalty.

Table 4: Standardised regression weights

Brand salience/perceptions of quality	.50
Perceptions of quality/brand loyalty	.08
Brand salience/brand image	.47
Perceptions of quality/brand image	.13
Brand image/brand loyalty	.40
Brand salience/brand loyalty	.44
Brand salience	
The characteristics of this destination come to my mind	.79
This destination is very famous	.79
I have seen a lot of advertising promoting Australian holidays	.56
Perceptions of quality	
High quality accommodation	.83
High levels of cleanliness	.92
High level of personal safety	.88
High quality infrastructure	.93
Brand image	
This destination fits my personality	.88
My friends would think highly of me if I visited this destination	.77
The image of this destination is consistent with my own self image	.93
Brand loyalty	
This destination would be my preferred choice for a vacation	.76
I would advise other people to visit this destination	.84
I intend visiting this destination in the future	.69
This destination provides more benefits than other destinations	.79

6. Discussion and Conclusions

Although the branding literature emerged during the 1940s, research relating to tourism destination branding has only gained momentum since the late 1990s. There remains a lack of theory that addresses the measurement of the effectiveness of a destination brand over time. One of the reasons for this is that relative to products, destination brands are far more multi-attributed and multidimensional. Branding a destination necessitates the development of a brand identity that encapsulates the sense of place experienced by the host community and visitors, from a diverse and eclectic range of natural and cultural resources, commercial attractions and amenities. Destination brands for geographically large nations such as Australia also involve a

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complex umbrella brand relationship with the brand identities developed for state tourism offices and regional tourism offices. In addition, destination brands have rarely been designed to appeal to one geographic or psychographic target market. The diverse interests of stakeholders such as local tourism businesses and travel intermediaries require careful consideration, if a united cooperative approach to selling the destination is to be achieved. As well as being heterogeneous in terms of needs and requirements, such markets are also dynamic and evolve over time. Monitoring effectiveness is multiple markets requires large resources.

The aims of this study were to: i) evaluate the suitability of a CBBE model for Australia as a long haul destination in Chile, an emerging market, and ii) test the relationships among the proposed dimensions of destination CBBE. The research took place just before the launch of the nation's fourth new brand campaign in six years, and at the commencement of a direct air service between Sydney and Santiago. Following Konecknik and Gartner (2007), Pike (2007) and Boo, Busser & Baloglu (2009), the CBBE model was adapted from the wider marketing literature. An online Spanish language survey attracted a large sample (N = 845) of Chilean international travellers, who were a mix of previous visitors to Australia as well as non-visitors.

Confirmatory factor analyses indicated the CBBE model fit the data. Brand salience is the foundation of the model, and represents more than simply awareness. Rather, salience is concerned with active consideration for a given travel situation. The brand salience indicators suggested that Australia is a well known but not compelling destination brand for participants. This construct was also strongly associated with brand loyalty. These results were supported by the unaided top of mind awareness destination preferences elicited, where Australia was only listed by 2.8% of participants. While previous studies (Pike 2009) have found strong associations between top of mind

awareness destination preference and previous visitation, this was not the case in this study. Also, it should be noted that the mean for previous visitors was below the scale mid point for two of the salience scale items. On this basis it is suggested that low brand salience probably reflects the lower priority the South American market has been given by the national tourism office (NTO). The positive results for the awareness scale items lead to the suggestion that future advertising by the national tourism office should take advantage of this and focus on a call to action rather than image building. There were strong associations between brand salience and brand image, and between brand salience and perceptions of quality. Of the four constructs, the best results for Australia were found in the perceptions of quality scale items. Even those participants who had not previously visited Australia hold strong perceptions. However, the association between this construct and brand loyalty was very weak. The results for the image items suggest that, just as with two salience items, participants need to be convinced this is a destination catering to their needs, due to the strong association with brand loyalty. Brand loyalty is at the pinnacle of the CBBE model, and manifests in a likelihood of visiting and a willingness to recommend the brand to others.

Traditionally, research projects investigating market perceptions towards destinations have analysed destination image in isolation. Little is known about the relationships between a destination's brand image and the three other dimensions. Conceptually, the research enhances understanding of i) the suitability of the CBBE model for measuring destination branding performance, and ii) the relationships between the latent variables in the model. Following Keller (2003) it is also suggested that the results provide insights towards future performance. Given that the research was undertaken at the commencement of a new brand campaign and direct air service between Chile and Australia, the data provides benchmarks for future performance

tracking. It is equally a limitation as the model requires further testing during and after campaign implementation. It would also be interesting to measure the impact of a controversial branding campaign, whose advertising was banned and modified internationally, on consumer-based brand equity for Australia as a destination (Waller *et al*., 2009).

Destination marketing takes place within a politically charged environment, with DMO staff accountable to government funding agencies, local tourism businesses, travel intermediaries and host community. Pressure to change brand initiatives can be exerted by such stakeholders. It is suggested that CBBE measures could be analysed at various points in time to track any strengthening or weakening of market perceptions in relation to brand objectives. A standard CBBE instrument could provide long-term effectiveness performance measures regardless of changes in DMO staff, advertising agency, other stakeholders, and budget. At the time of writing the researchers planned to replicate the study at a later date. Such replication studies using structural equation modelling have been rare (Kline, 2005).

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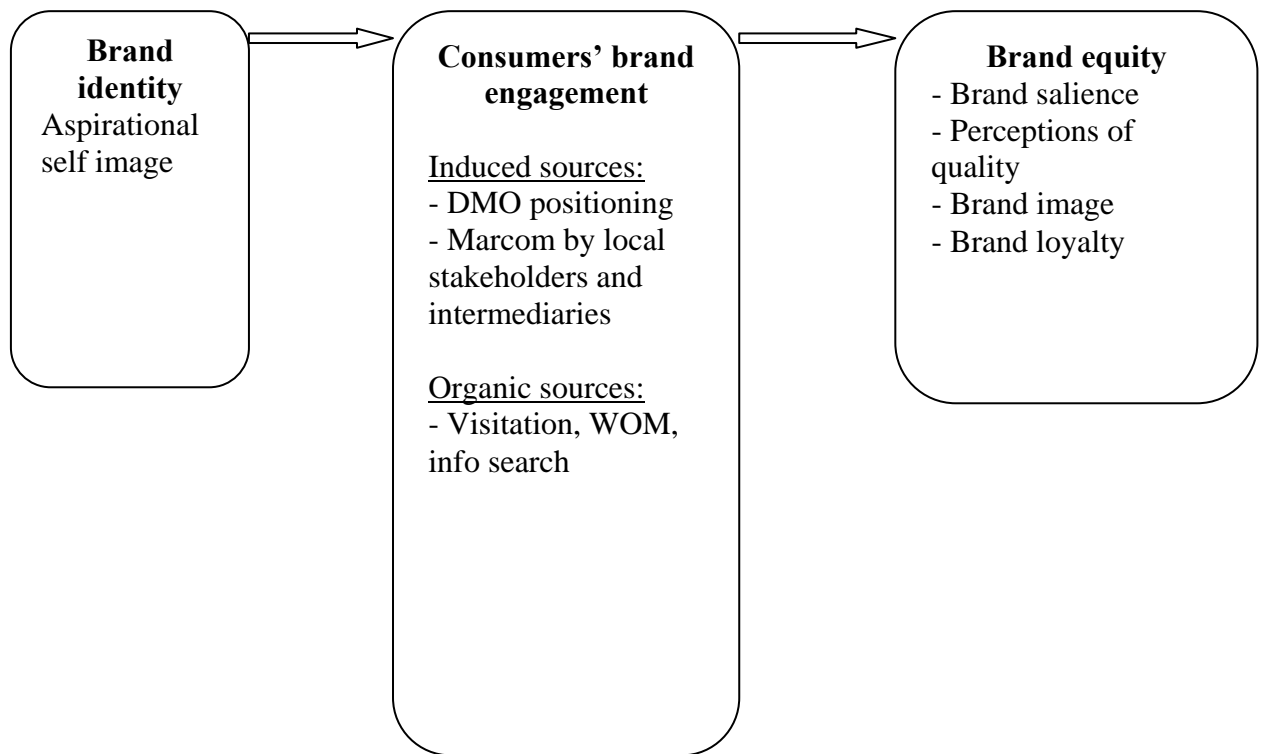
Figure 1: Brand equity as a performance measure

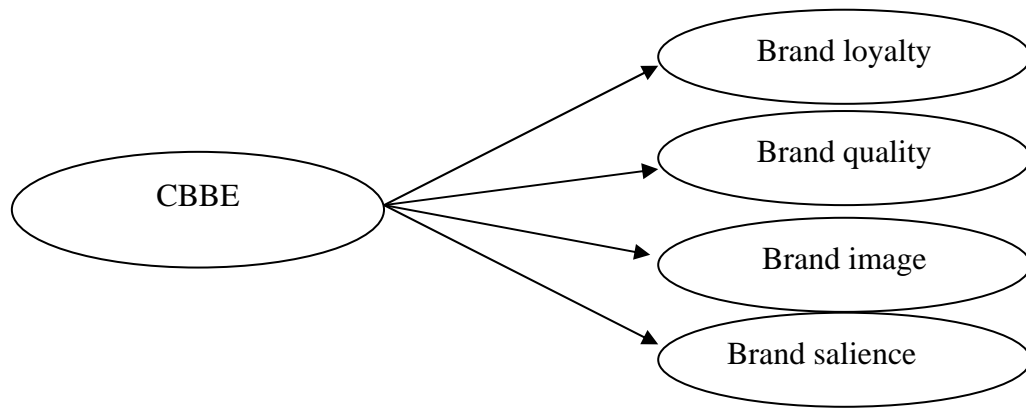| Brand identity
Aspirational self image | → | Consumers' brand engagement

<u>Induced sources:</u>
- DMO positioning
- Marcom by local stakeholders and intermediaries

<u>Organic sources:</u>
- Visitation, WOM, info search | → | Brand equity
- Brand salience
- Perceptions of quality
- Brand image
- Brand loyalty |

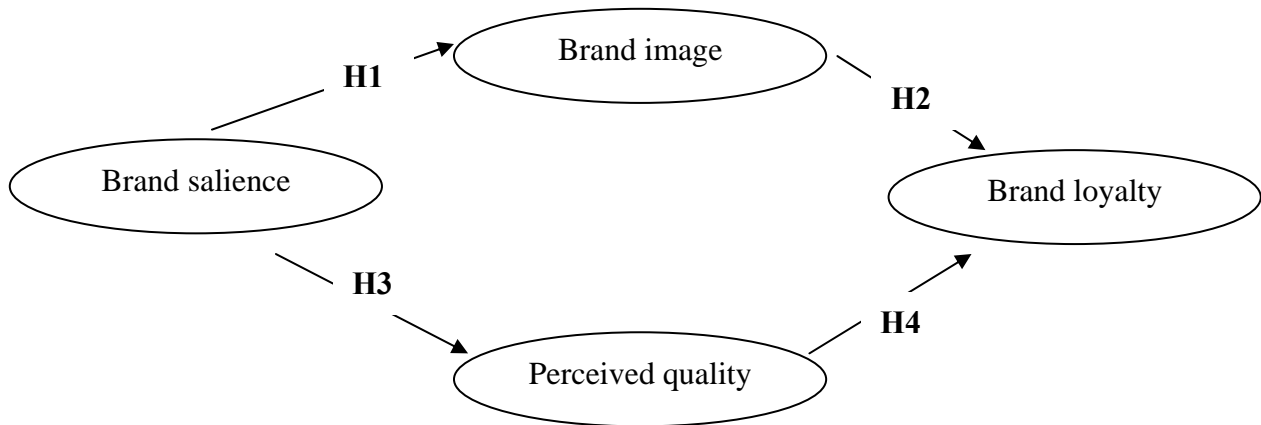**Figure 2: CBBE dimensions**

Figure 3: CBBE model for destinations

Figure 4: Revised destination CBBE model