Factors Affecting Tourist Destination Choice: A Survey of International Travelers to Hanoi, Vietnam

Dong Xuan Dam

National Economics University, Vietnam

Email: dongxuandam@gmail.com

Abstract

The study enhances tourism destinations' competitiveness from the tourist's perspective. Departing from the concept of customer-based brand equity (Keller, 1993; Aaker, 1991), our purpose is to construct a linkage between customer-based brand equity for a tourism destination (destination image, destination awareness, quality of destination and destination loyalty) and behavioral intentions for selecting a tourist destination (revisit and/or recommendation to other people), in order to better understand the role of tourism destination branding. This paper carried out a survey of international tourists who selected Hanoi - Vietnam as their holiday destination and our findings show that brand image and brand loyalty play an important role on tourist's decision of returning or recommendation to others while brand awareness and quality have no impact.

Keywords: Customer-based brand equity; tourist behavior; tourists' behavioral intentions; tourist destination.

1. Introduction

Several studies have suggested that tourism destination branding represents the most obvious means by which destinations can differentiate themselves from an enormous number of commodity destinations all over the world (Fyall and Laesk, 2007). Branding is a widely-used concept that has existed for centuries as a way of distinguishing goods or services of one producer from those of another, while modern branding finds its origins in the 19th century (Room, 1992). Accordingly, a brand can be considered as a legal instrument, logo, company, identity system, image, personality, relationship, and/or as adding value. However, since the amount of time on which travelers draw upon for selecting a destination is always limited, they often choose a place with available information about what they might expect to enjoy or experience there. Maja and William (2007) suggested that the range of destination choices is more and more expanding and destinations become increasingly competitive which means more chance for tourists to select a final destination they desire. Therefore, destination management organizations (DMO) try to use a name or symbol to enhance their value. The purpose of studying brand equity from a strategy-based perspective is that destination marketers can improve their marketing productivity by understanding the destination brand perceived by both consumers and suppliers side.

Destination brand equity is the combination of key factors that can be described as the overall utility that tourists place in the destination brand when compared to its competitors. The evaluation of the destination phenomenon from the tourist perspective has attracted both researchers and practitioners. The theoretical conceptualization of such evaluation of a destination (called Customer-based brand equity of Tourism Destination - CBBETD) consisting of awareness, image, quality, and loyalty dimensions is proposed. All equity is based on the feeling, perception of tourist of destination that you have gone or not. The theoretical representation of each proposed dimension is a synthesized review of previous findings from marketing and tourism research as well as the author's approach to each dimension's conceptualization. The evaluation results that can help practices to enhance the destination brand equity have been employed, such as building stronger emotional attachment through destination imagery campaigns and destination loyalty programs. Branding of a product or a destination not only differentiates itself among competing products but also serves as a means of creating additional value.

For a better development of the tourism industry, it is crucial to explore both domestic and international tourism markets and more importantly to exceed the visitors' expectation to attract their return. To achieve this level, the industry needs to understand the visitors' needs, serve them better and satisfy their demands so as to attract their returns. In fact, there are many international visitors to Vietnam yearly, but only 15% to 20 % of the visitors are interested in revisiting (Thu, 2012; Quach, 2013). Vietnam tourism industry appears to focus on the short-term benefits and lack long-term investment as they oversee visitors' feedback on tourist destinations and their evaluation of the services rendered. Vietnam's capital city, Ha-

noi's facilities for tourism actively promoted all its advantages and underutilized potential. However, tourism products are monotonous, repetitive quality of service was not able to fulfill feature, online travel sites and most recently invested only in part on the basis of exploitation. There were policies for branding Hanoi as a "must see" destination, but a huge gap exists between policies and implementation regarding its branding strategy. Most actions at provincial level are quite spontaneous, individualistic, unconcerned, and neglect the overall direction for long-term goals. This gap will be carefully analyzed and addressed by exploring the relationship between the customer-based brand equity on the behavioral intentions while making a choice of their holiday destination.

2. Literature review

2.1. Customer-based brand equity for a tourism destination

From marketing perspective, customer-based brand equity is defined as *"the differential effect that brand knowledge has on consumer response to the marketing of the brand"* (Keller, 1993, 2). In other words, it is the value that consumers apply to the brand based on the impact of the brand components compared to reactions to similar brand components of other versions of the product or service. Conceptually, a tourism destination-based brand is composed of both tangible and intangible components (Aaker, 1991; Konecnik and Gartner, 2007; Boo et al., 2009). Tourists perceive these elements as a unique combination of functional (physical, measurable) and abstract (psychological) components of a destination brand. Depending on kinds of product/service assets and the characteristics of tourist, the attraction, and

value of a tourist destination brand may change over time. For example, Kim et al. (2009) utilized six dimensions - awareness, preference, value, uniqueness, popularity, and price; Boo et al. (2009) employed three dimensions - awareness, image, and quality; Konecnik and Gartner (2007) used four dimensions - awareness, image, quality, and loyalty. According to Aaker (1991) and Keller's (1993) categorization, this study analyzed and proved that CBBE's measurement can be employed by the authors who could claim a customer's evaluation of a brand including awareness, image, quality, and loyalty dimensions.

Destination image

Nowadays, the terms brand and image are part and parcel of the business world. According to studies of customer-based brand equity (CBBE) for a destination, the destination image dimension plays an important role in CBBE for a destination. It is specifically relevant in the evaluation and selection process (Konecnick and Gartner, 2007; Pike, 2007) that is a key factor to indicate destination brand equity (Cai, 2002). Image is a powerful vehicle for promoting destination brand for it would be recalled in a customer's mind whenever he or she considers making destination choice.

According to Baloglu and McCleary (1999) and Baloglu and Mangaloglu (2001), destination image represents a person's knowledge, feelings, and global impression about an object or destination. Perceptions of destination as reflected by the associations are stored in the tourist's memory. Based on the perceptions, the image is a determinant in the behavior of tourists during the different moments which involve their experience or memory in process

that the organizations responsible for; include the decision process of choosing a destination; the process of comparison of expectations with experience, preceding the state of satisfaction and perceived quality; the process of revisiting and recommending the destination to other people who are willing to pay to pay attention one more time (Galí and Donaire, 2005). These processes are complex since a place or a destination is a composite product whose image consists of multiple dimensions as well as processes. Moreover, several current studies (Tasci and Gartner, 2007; Bosque and Martin, 2008; Bosque et al., 2009; Nguyen, 2012) also confirmed destination image as a factor that influences the consumer behavior during the pre-purchase (decision-making process of destination choice), during the purchase (antecedent of satisfaction), and post-purchase (recommendation and intention to revisit).

Destination awareness

The concept of destination awareness has been mostly examined and placed under the research agenda of tourism decision process (Woodside and Lysonski, 1989) which is itself part of consumer behavior studies. It is considered the ability to recognize and recall a brand (Aaker, 1991; Berry, 2000; Berry and Seltman, 2007), reflected in the salience of the brand in the customer's mind (Aaker, 1991), and it is the main element of a brand's effect on tourism (Oh, 2000). Awareness of the destination not only stems from the tourist's experience but may also exist in the form of image that makes the destination included into the perceived opportunity set. Brand awareness is considered one of the major components of a brand's effect in hospitality and tourism (Kim and Kim, 2005),

especially in the consumer's decision-making (Kwun and Oh, 2004; Oh, 2000).

Destination quality

According to Konecnik and Gartner (2007), brand quality is a strong and influential component of customer-based brand equity when applied to a destination. It is defined as *"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, 238). It is often used interchangeably with perceived quality and is defined as travelers' perception of a destination's ability to fulfill their expectations and the performance on salient quality attributes. Keller (2003) proposed seven distinct dimensions of product quality including performance, reliability, durability, features, conformation quality, serviceability, and style and design.

Destination brand loyalty

Customer loyalty is considered an important goal by any marketer as it determines long-term viability or sustainability of a company. Despite the extensive investigation of the loyalty concept in marketing literature, destination loyalty has rarely been studied and there exist few published studies. Many authors argue that loyalty should not be neglected when examining destination brands and some studies partly introduce it (Oppermann, 2000; Bigne, Sanchez and Sanchez, 2001). From an operational perspective, destination loyalty may be defined as a potential traveler's attachment to a destination brand. It implies that previous experiential familiarity influences today's and tomorrow's tourism decisions, especially destination choice in the future (Aaker, 1991). Destination brand equity stems from travelers placing more

confidence in one brand than they do in a competitor's brand. This is translated into loyalty and a willingness to pay a premium price even when lower priced options are available. The degree of destination loyalty is frequently reflected in tourists' intentions to revisit the destination and in their willingness to recommend it (Oppermann, 2000; Chen and Tsai, 2007).

2.2. Tourist behavioral intention (TBI)

The concept of purchase or behavioral intentions has been widely used in the tourism research as a predictor of subsequent purchase, a signal of customer loyalty and the results of customers' evaluation of destination after comparing with others (Oppermann, 2000). As a matter of fact, it is more costly to attract new customers than to retain existing ones. Oppermann (2000) went further by suggesting that previous destination experience can shape a positive or negative factor on destination, affect the demand for information and level of awareness and evaluation of image of the destination. He proposed that by analyzing tourists' repeat visiting data, destinations can determine the composition of its customers with respect to the visitors' repeat intention. In fact, understanding the determinants of customer loyalty can facilitate management's focus on the major factors leading to customer retention. Its measures of loyalty have frequently been used in leisure settings (Alcaniz et al., 2005; Chang et al., 2010; Dai et al., 2008; Hsu et al., 2010), which is the context of the current study. Conventional wisdom suggests that satisfaction leads to repeat purchase and positive word-of-mouth (WOM) recommendation in the post-consumption phase.

Bendall-Lyon and Powers (2004) confirmed that the outcome variables of "*intention to return to the service provider*" and *"word-of-mouth communication"* are two of the most used indicators for measuring behavioral intentions, which is generally supported in the literature (Soderlund, 2006). These are the two most important behavioral consequences in destination image and post-consumption behavior studies. Accordingly, the travelers' intentions result from their perceptions of previous travel experiences. Jang and Namkung (2009) explained that travel motivation is an effective predictor of tourist behavior because travelers' mindsets significantly influence their trips in the future. This finding indicates the importance of measuring tourist perceptions and identifying the dimensions of destination brand equity that influence travelers' tourism intentions (Boo et al., 2009; Kim and Kim, 2005; Stokburger Sauer, 2011).

2.3. Conceptual model

Based on the basic theories of destination brand equity of Aaker (1991, 1996); Keller (1993, 2003); Konecnik and Gartner (2007); Boo et al. (2009); Kim et al. (2009); a hypothesized model of destination brand equity on the behavioral intentions was developed based on the proposed conceptual model.

The concept of perceived value or subject value evolved from early studies. Rational choice theory holds that people weigh the possible benefits of their actions against the cost incurred. This study proposes that tourists' enduring travel involvement has positive impact on their formation of destination brand equity, which is a combination of key factors that can derive the overall utility that tourists place into the destination brand. Other studies also sug-

gest that customer-based destination brand equity has positive impact on tourists' intentions. (Bigne´ and Andreu, 2004; Kim et al., 2009). However, the meaning of each dimension and its impacts are perhaps functions of perspectives by particular sets of responders in certain contexts. This paper focuses on examining the relationship between *Customer-based brand equity for Tourism Destination and Behavioral Intentions key constructs (destination image, destination awareness, quality of destination and destination loyalty) and behavioral intentions for selecting a tourist destination (revisit and recommendation to other people)*. Accordingly, four following hypotheses will be tested using data collected upon international tourists in Hanoi.

H1: Destination brand awareness is positively related to tourists' behavioral intention;

H2: Destination brand image is positively related to tourists' behavioral intention;

H3: Destination brand quality is positively related to tourists' behavioral intention,

H4: Destination brand loyalty is positively related to tourists' behavioral intention

3. Research methodology

3.1. Sample design

To investigate brand extension of customer-based brand equity for a tourist destination within four destinations and their intentions in the future that were selected to cross-check the hypotheses. Hanoi is the destination was selected because it is a capital and is located in the North of Vietnam. This is a large city (the second biggest city after Saigon). This is the most important political center and also is the second city by population density in Vietnam. Hanoi

is quickly developing with the significant new infrastructure in the urban areas. Many modern buildings have been built recently as the economy has developed. Moreover, Hanoi is one of the main tourist attractions in Vietnam as its famous heritage site Ha Long Bay; the reputation of beauty of Sapa and Bac Ha; and historical Dien Bien Phu are in close proximity.

The sample was designed based on area, random and convenience sampling. Constructs of the interest were measured based on a review of previous studies and pre-test for face validity and reliability, and then were integrated into the final questionnaire sent out to the target sample. After being gathered, data was analyzed using structural equation modeling in which the issues of research are empirically answered. Its design was based on the combination of convenience sampling method. Firstly, the population of the study needs to be chosen. The study draws a random sample of 160 respondents (international tourists) visiting various attractions in Hanoi.

3.2. Measures

Scale development was performed following the suggestions of research process as mentioned above. The main method to help gain the study's aim is quantitative to have better understanding the destination brand equity and its relationships with tourist's behavioral intention. All of these steps in the development of the measurement instrument are important because no previous research on a destination area includes the expected four dimensions of the concept.

A combination of three methods was used for generating the variables needed to be used. First, for each dimension, relevant variables

from previous studies were employed. In line with researchers' suggestions special care was taken when defining the variables of brand image, brand awareness, brand quality, brand loyalty and its related dimensions. These variables are specific, and measures were customized for the unique characteristics of specific brand categories. The most commonly used variables found in previous studies were then adapted for investigation of Hanoi, Vietnam.

The study instrument only employed closed-ended questions. For each proposed dimension, a related set of variables was utilized. The variables were measured on a bipolar 7-point semantic differential Likert type scale where 1 = strongly disagree and 7 = strongly agree. All scales included a neutral point of no agreement or disagreement with the statement. The use of semantic type scales is a common procedure in the social sciences to allow the use of nominal (or ordinal-level data to be treated as interval-level data) which can then be subjected to higher order analytical techniques. There are five main constructs in the theoretical model. These are: (1) destination image; (2) destination awareness, (3) destination perceived-value; (4) destination loyalty; (5) behavioral intentions.

3.3. Research methods

Item generation began with theory development and a literature review. Items were evaluated through interviews with practitioners. For the development and exploratory evaluation of the measurement scales for the exploratory factor analysis on entire set and reliability estimation Cronbach's Alpha, we employ some popular methods. Cronbach's alpha is one of the most widely used metrics for reliability evaluation (Koufteros et al., 2001). Exploratory factor analysis (EFA) was then used to determine how many latent variables underlie the complete set of items. Based on EFA results, linear regression was utilized to test the relationships between customer-based brand equity and international tourists' behavioral intentions.

The overall fit of a hypothesized model can be tested by using the maximum likelihood Chi-square statistic provided in the Amos (a software package for SEM, version 21st) output and their fit indices such as the ratio of Chi-square to degrees of freedom, goodness-of-fit index (GFI), the root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA), comparative fit index (CFI), normed fit index (NFI). Structural equation modeling (SEM) evaluates how well a conceptual model that includes observed variables and hypothetical constructs fits the obtained data (Hoyle, 1995). A hypothetical construct accounts for the inter-correlations of the observed variables that define that construct (Bollen and Lennox, 1991).

4. Data analysis

4.1. Descriptive statistics

The sample for this study included 160 usable questionnaires which had been returned and had completed data on all the questions. There were 76 (47.5%) male and 84 (52.5%) female respondents. Across ranges of age, the dominant age group of the respondents was less than 30 years old (50.6%) and 41-50 (22.5%) that follows; 27 (16.9%) were aged 31-40, only 16 (10%) participants were 51-60 years old and none was over 60 years old. Nearly 50.6% (81/160) of the interviewers was European residents. In terms of the respondents' region residence, it was distributed: Asia 17.5%, Australia

Table 1: The factor loadings

Item	Component				
	1	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
1.9. The image that I have of Hanoi is as good or even better than other similar destinations	.749				
1.1. In general Hanoi is a safe place to visit	.726				
1.8. Local people are friendly	.674				
1.7. Restful and relaxing place to visit	.672				
1.4. Good tourist accommodations is readily available	.667				
1.10.Overall Hanoi image is very positive	.636				
3.8. The quality of Hanoi is very favorable	.556				
3.5. Appealing local food (cuisine)		.843			
3.2. High quality of infrastructure		.815			
3.1. High quality of accommodation		.807			
3.4. High quality of services		.776			
3.7. The quality of Hanoi is very reliable		.717			
3.6. The quality of Hanoi is outstanding		.644			
4.4. I recommend Hanoi to other people who seek advice			.757		
4.3. If there is another travel destination as good as this one, I prefer to visit Hanoi			.734		
4.1. I consider myself a loyal traveler to Hanoi			.725		
4.5. I encourage my friends/relatives to visit Hanoi			.716		
4.2. I will visit Hanoi instead of other travel destinations if they are similar			.691		
4.6. I will visit Hanoi again in the future			.669		
2.1. I can picture what Hanoi looks like in my mind				.752	
2.4. I can quickly recall the marketing about Hanoi				.724	
2.5. Some characteristics of Hanoi come to my mind quickly				.688	
2.2. I am aware of the place as a travel destination				.678	
1.5. Hanoi has good museums and art galleries					-.906
1.2. Good quality restaurant					-.717
1.6. Food is similar to mine					.643

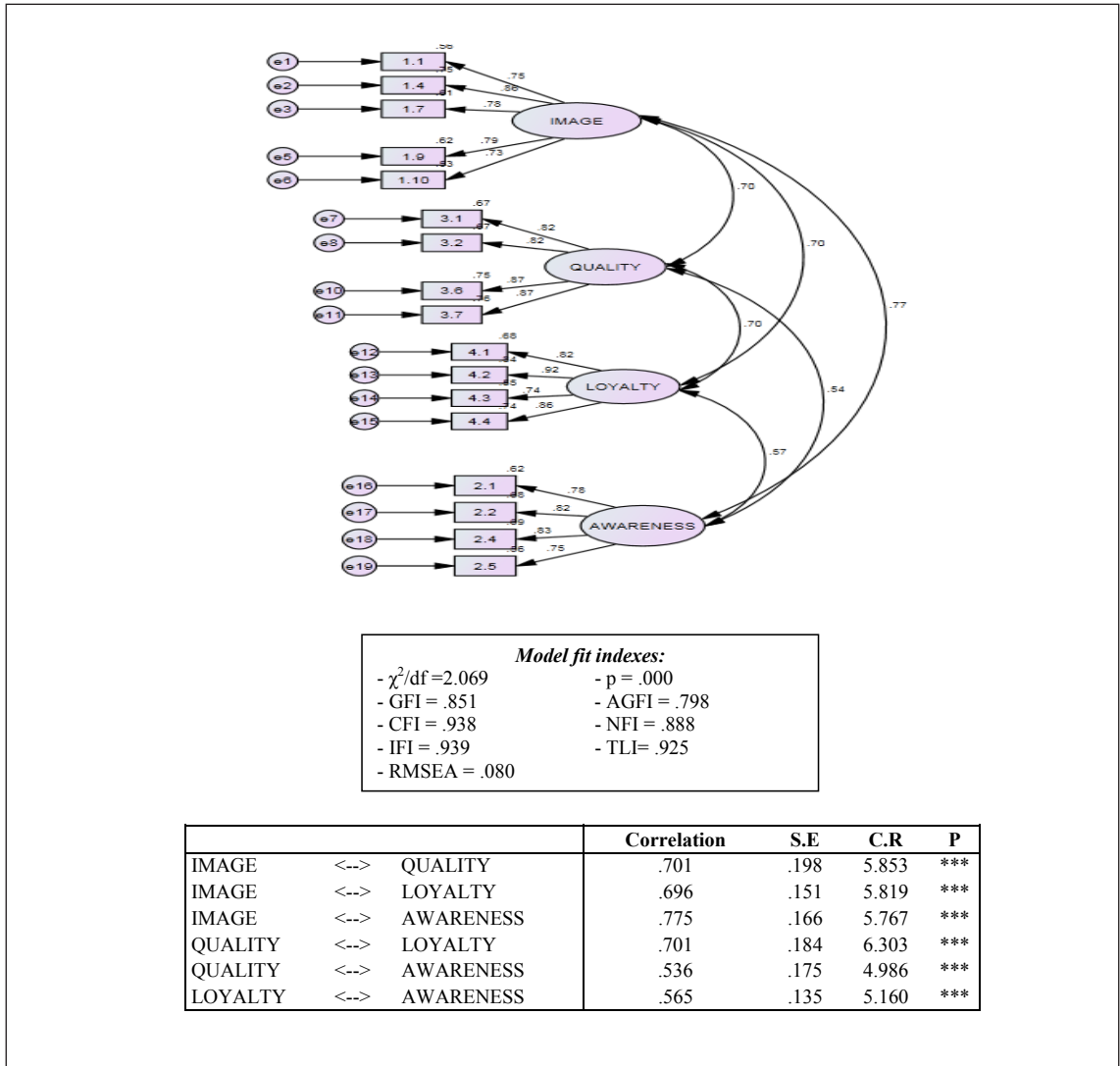15.6%, Americas 11.9% and Africa 4.4%.

4.2. Exploratory measurement results

Exploratory factor analysis (EFA) was used to determine how many latent variables underlie the complete set of items. An EFA was used to reduce the forty-two items to a smaller, more manageable set of underlying factors. This is helpful for detecting the presence of meaningful patterns among the original variables and for extracting the main service factors.

An important tool for interpreting factors is the rotation of factors. Two methods can be used to identify the factors, namely the orthogonal rotation method and the oblique rotation method. Hair et al. (1995) suggested that if the

Figure 1: Confirmatory factor analysis results of four constructs

Model fit indexes:
- χ²/df =2.069   - p = .000
- GFI = .851   - AGFI = .798
- CFI = .938   - NFI = .888
- IFI = .939   - TLI= .925
- RMSEA = .080

			Correlation	S.E	C.R	P
IMAGE	<-->	QUALITY	.701	.198	5.853	***
IMAGE	<-->	LOYALTY	.696	.151	5.819	***
IMAGE	<-->	AWARENESS	.775	.166	5.767	***
QUALITY	<-->	LOYALTY	.701	.184	6.303	***
QUALITY	<-->	AWARENESS	.536	.175	4.986	***
LOYALTY	<-->	AWARENESS	.565	.135	5.160	***

goal of the research is to reduce the number of original variables, regardless of how meaningful the resulting factors may be, the appropriate solution would be an orthogonal.

A factor loading can be used as an indicator in interpreting the role each item plays in defining each factor. Factor loadings are in essence the correlation of each item to their underlying factor. According to Hair et al. (1995), in a sample of 160 respondents, factor loadings of value greater than 0.50 are required to retain an item. This study was based on the cutoff value by Hair et al. (1995).

Depending on the result of EFA, five factors with new items and new names were checked against Cronbach's alpha and Cor-

rected Item-Total Correlation. Cronbach's alpha is one of the most widely used measures for evaluating reliability (Koufteros, 1999). The Cronbach's alpha value for each measure is shown at Table 1. The reliability for each construct was significantly high as above the value of .82, which is considered satisfactory for basic research. However, Cronbach's alpha has several disadvantages, including the fact that it is inflated when a scale has a large number of items, and it assumes that all the measured items have equal reliabilities (Gerbing and Anderson, 1987). In addition, Cronbach's alpha cannot be used to infer unidimensionality (Gerbing and Anderson, 1987). That's the reasons why the data continued to check Regression to eliminate bad items.

4.3. Confirmatory factor analysis results

To refine the initial measures and test the internal consistency of the scale, a combination of exploratory factor analysis, confirmatory analysis (each construct individually) and item-to-total correlations were used. Based on the results of these analyses, those items that had low item-to-total correlations were eliminated, as well as the items that had low factor loadings.

The fit of the four factor model (Destination Image, Destination Quality, Destination Loyalty, and Destination Awareness) was assessed. An examination of the overall fit statistics for the measurement model, as shown in Figure 1, indicated that the model provided acceptable fit to the data, with CMIN/df = 2.069 (<3). Even though the value of GFI (0.851), AGFI (0.798) were quite low but CFI (0.938), IFI (0.939), TLI (0. 925) stand out to indicate that model fits data well and RMSEA (0.080) which satis-

fied the threshold of 0.08 (Browne and Cudeck 1993). In short, the measurement model of this study appears to have an acceptable fit.

In Figure 1, all factor loadings reveal estimates to be both reasonable (from 0.725 to 0.918) and statistically significant (P-value <0.001); all standard errors appear also to be in good order. All standard parameters are above this threshold (>0.6). The feasibility of estimates, the appropriate standard errors and statistically significant parameters provide evidence for the adequacy of the parameter estimates.
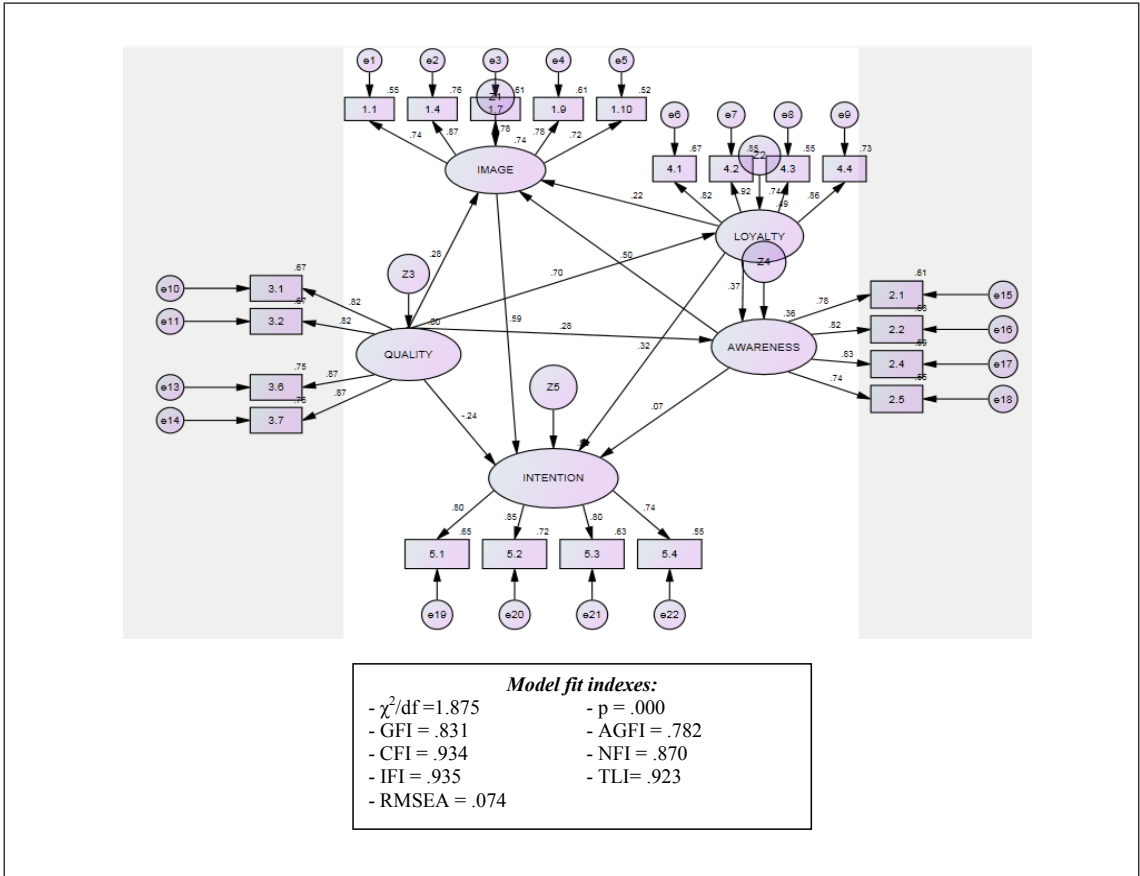
All the estimate correlations between the measures had value between 0.5-0.85. Discriminant validity is assessed through correlations between constructs with a cutoff value of 0.85. Value of correlations from CFA model between variables show that all of correlation scores are lower than 0.85, which means all of these constructs are different from each other.

4.4. Structural equation model

A full structural equation model is shown in Figure 2 where specification is done and parameters are estimated.

The model's overall fit with the data was evaluated using common model goodness-of-fit measures estimated by AMOS. Overall, the model exhibited a reasonable fit with the data collected. The model fit was assessed by using other common fit indices: goodness-of-fit index (GFI), adjusted fit index (CFI), comparative fit index (CFI) and the root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA). The model exhibited a fit value exceeding or close to the commonly recommended threshold for the respective indices values of 0.831, 0.782, 0.934, 0.870, 0.935, 0.923 for the GFI, AGFI, CFI, NFI, IFI, TLI

Figure 2: Full structural equation model

Model fit indexes:
- χ^2/df =1.875
- GFI = .831
- CFI = .934
- IFI = .935
- RMSEA = .074
- p = .000
- AGFI = .782
- NFI = .870
- TLI= .923

are satisfactory with respect to the commonly recommended value of equal to 1.0. RMSEA (0.074) which satisfied the threshold of 0.08 (Browne and Cudeck, 1993). In short, the structural model is considered to fit the sample data reasonably.

The results offer strong support for the hypothesized model relationships. The results of the tests of the hypothesized relationships between constructs are presented at Table 2.

Under study, since the sample is large (N=160) and presumption of multiple normality is made for maximum likelihood estimation technique, t-value (denoted by C.R in Amos output) is z-value. Thus a C.R value exceeding 1.96 represents a level significance of 0.05 or P-value must less than 0.05. The assessment hypothesis is based on results in Table 2 where standardized estimates and their significance level are provided. A positive sign of parameter estimate indicates a positive direct effect.

Based on the result of regression linear, our following hypothesis: *"Destination brand image is positively related to tourists' behavioral intention" (H2)* and *"Destination brand loyalty is positively related to tourists' behavioral in-*

Table 2: Results of hypothesis testing

Hypothesis			Estimate	S.E.	C.R.	P	
INTENTION	←	QUALITY	.242	.102	2.061	.039	Supported
INTENTION	←	IMAGE	.587	.158	3.392	.000	Supported
INTENTION	←	LOYALTY	.317	.126	2.723	.006	Supported
INTENTION	←	AWARENESS	.067	.138	.526	.599	Not Supported

tention" (H4) are supported by data. It means that image of destination and the loyalty about destination of customers could affect customers' intention in the future. This finding confirms a positive relationship between destination brand image and behavioral intention. In other words, if the tourists are satisfied with the image of destination and perceive this brand as of good value, the positive image of the brand will be imprinted in their minds and 58.7% respondents would like to revisit or positively recommend the destination. Compared with other factors, destination brand image had the strongest influence on customers' intention in the future. On the other hand, if the tourists are loyal to the destination, they are likely to repurchase far more times in the future. In contrast, the data does not support our hypothesis: "*Destination brand awareness is positively related to tourists' behavioral intention*" (H1) and "*Destination brand quality is positively related to tourists' behavioral intention*" (H3), which is an unexpected result due to the previous literature review on the relationship between brand awareness, brand quality and behavioral intention of tourist.

5. Discussion and conclusion

5.1. Discussion

This study sets out to develop a conceptu-al model that explains how customer-based brand equity for tourism destination can affect behavioral intentions of international tourist to Hanoi. The findings demonstrated that hypotheses 2 and 4 were supported by the data while hypothesis 1, 3 was not supported. This means that if DMOs or authorities or marketers in general focus on building brand equity of destination, offer a high-quality products/services, especial a positive image of the destination brand will be imprinted in their minds; more tourist are more likely to come back to Hanoi or recommend this destination to their friends or relatives.

These findings were consistent with previous consumer-based brand equity studies conducted in a consumer context. However, the results of the theoretical model derived from the structural equation modeling showed that there was no significant relationship between destination brand awareness and tourists' intention. This means that whether the tourists recognize the brand name that compared with the other certain product category or recognize the brand name to a highly developed cognitive structure based on detailed information or not, there was no influence on their behavioral intention in the future. The acceptable explanation is the real quality of products/services, the beauty of

Figure 3: Results of direct effects and standardized coefficient

Notes:
*** Significant at 0.001 level
** Significant at 0.01 level
* Significant at 0.05 level
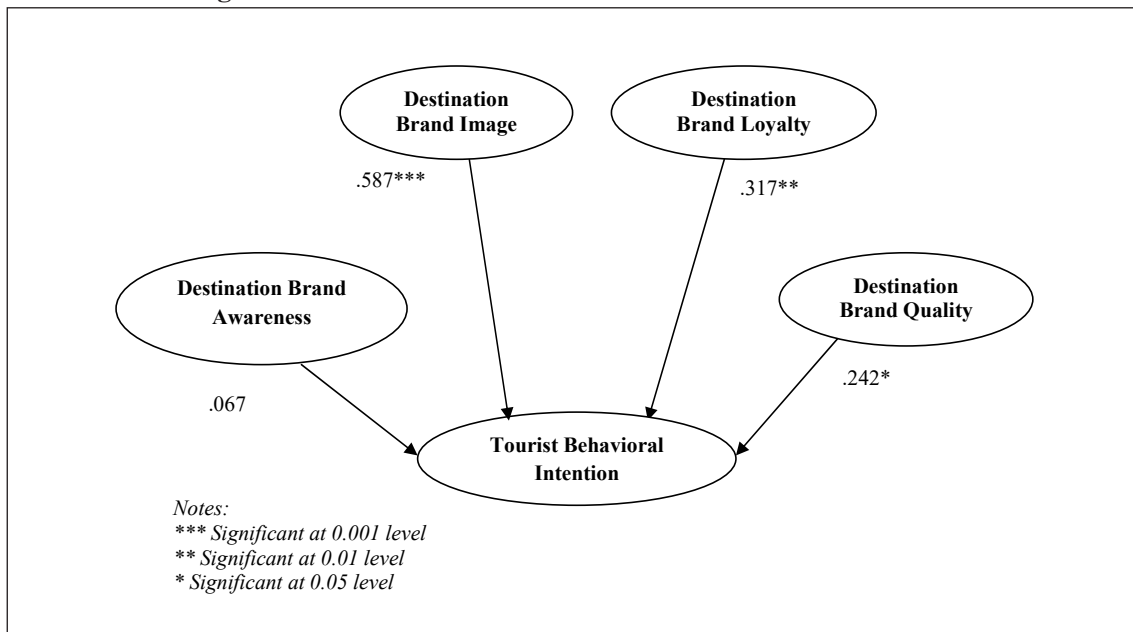
sightseeing effect to tourists' loyalty that really influence on their intention to be back or have word-of-mouth to other people. The tourists could quickly recall the destination based on information they got or they could easily to picture what Hanoi looks like; but their feeling, their perception are more important.

The findings also showed that destination image critically the most important to behavioral intentions of international tourist in Hanoi. This means that if DMOs or destination marketers want to attract more international tourist to Hanoi or let them come back one more time or have positive word-of-mouth from them; DMOs or destination marketers have to build a strong destination brand image. In other words, if the tourists' knowledge, feelings, and global impression about an object or destination, or they have really good memory about destina-

tion, they may to consider returning to Hanoi or encourage their friends to do so. Additionally, according to the data, the respondents thought of Hanoi as a safe, restful and relaxing place to visit, having good and available accommodations, having delicious food that is similar their expectations, and having the characteristics that make them willing to revisit Hanoi if they have the chance in the future.

5.2. Conclusion

Firstly, the study potentially adds to a better understanding of the factors for the successful inter-relationship between customer-based brand equity for tourism destination and behavioral intentions of international tourist. As summarized, there are two relationships to consider: (i) Higher evaluation of the destination brand image directly increases the tourists' behavioral intention; and (ii) higher tourists'

loyalty to a destination directly increases the tourists' behavioral intention.

This study develops a model that describes that the most important factor to tourists' behavioral intention is destination brand image with the five items indicated. The test of the model provides strong empirical support for the pattern of influences it portrays. In particular, these findings confirm the social exchange construct that is theorized by customer-based brand equity for tourism destinations, which can be applied to the relationship with tourists' behavioral intention.

Finally, this study was intended to initiate the development of theoretical foundations of the relationship among destination branding and tourist behavior. It not only helps researchers test and develop a stable model in order to generate a more solid relationship among destination branding and tourist behavior, but also provides useful insights to local government and tour operators in better planning and managing tourism activities to maximize both visitors' satisfaction and profitability of tourism enterprises, and at the same time sustain natural resources in long term. Especially the study pointed out the effective way to promote its existing potential characteristics to be a key economic sector in Vietnam generally and in Hanoi particularly. That all contributes to attracting international tourists to Hanoi through destination competitive strategies in order to ensure long-term relationships between tourists and their destinations, and to enhance the relationship management techniques and practices to build tourist loyalty within the context of destination branding.

References

Aaker, D.A. (1991), *Managing brand equity: Capitalizing on the value of the brand name*, New York: The Free Press.

Aaker, D.A. (1996), *Building Strong Brands*, New York: Free Press.

Alcaniz, E. B., Garcia, I. S. and Blas, S. S. (2005), 'Relationships among residents' image, evaluation of the stay and post-purchase behavior', *Journal of Vacation Marketing*, 11(4), 291-302.

Baloglu, S. and K. McCleary (1999), 'A Model of Destination Image Formation', *Annals of Tourism Research*, 26(4), 868–897.

Baloglu, S. and M. Mangaloglu (2001), 'Tourism Destination Images of Turkey, Egypt, Greece, and Italy as Perceived by US-Based Tour Operators and Travel Agents', *Tourism Management*, 22, 1-9.

Bendall-Lyon, D. and Powers, T.L. (2004), 'The impact of structure and process attributes on satisfaction and behavioral intentions', *Journal of Services Marketing,* 18(2), 114-121.

Berry, L. L. (2000), 'Cultivating service brand equity', *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science*, 28(1), 128-137.

Berry, L. L. and Seltman, K. D. (2007), 'Building a strong services brand: lessons from Mayo Clinic', *Business Horizons*, 50(3), 199-209.

Bigne, J. E., Sanchez, M. I. and Sanchez, J. (2001), 'Tourism image, evaluation variables and after purchase behavior: inter-relationship', *Tourism Management*, 22(6), 607-616.

Bollen, K. A. and Lennox, R. (1991), 'Conventional Wisdom on Measurement: A Structural Equation Perspective', *Psychology Bulletin*, 110, 305-314.

Boo, S., Busser, J. and Baloglu, S. (2009), 'A model of customer-based brand equity and its application to multiple destinations', *Tourism Management*, 30(2), 219-231.

Bosque, I. and Martín, H. (2008), 'Tourist satisfaction: A cognitive-affective model', *Annals of Tourism Research*, 35, 551-573.

Bosque, I., Martín, H., Collado, J. and Salmones, M. (2009), 'A framework for tourist expectation', *International Journal of Culture, Tourism and Hospitality Research*, 3, 139-147.

Browne, M.W. and Cudeck, R. (1993), 'Alternative ways of assessing model fit', In Bollen, K.A. & Long, J.S. (Eds.) *Testing structural equation models*, Newbury Park, CA: Sage, 136–162.

Cai, L. A. (2002), 'Cooperative branding for rural destinations', *Annals of Tourism Research*, 29(3), 720-742.

Chang, K.C., Chen, M.C., Hsu, C.L. and Kuo, N.T., (2010), 'The effect of service convenience on post-purchasing behaviors', *Industrial Management and Data Systems*, 110 (9), 1420-1443.

Chen and Tsai (2007), 'How destination image and evaluative factors affect behavioral intentions?', *Tourism Management*, 28(4), 1115-1122.

Dai, H., Salam, A.F. and King, R. (2008), 'Determinants and influences of service convenience in electronic mediated environment (EME): an empirical study of Chinese consumers', *Proceedings of the 15th Americas Conference on Information Systems,* AMCIS, San Francisco, California, USA.

Fyall, A. and A. Leask (2007), 'Destination marketing: Future issues-Strategic challenges', *Tourism and Hospitality Research*, 7, 50-63.

Galí, N. and Donaire, J. (2005), 'The social construction of the image of girona: A methodological approach', *Tourism Management*, 26, 777-785.

Gerbing, D. W. and Anderson, J. C. (1987), 'Improper solutions in the analysis of covariance structures: Their interpretability and a comparison of alternate respecifications', *Psychometrika*, 52, 99-111.

Hair, J.F., Anderson, R.E., Tatham, R.L. and Black, W.C. (1995), *Multivariable data analysis reading*, USA: Prentice Hall International Editions.

Hoyle, R. H. (1995), *Structural Equation Modeling: Concepts, Issues, and Applications, Thousand Oaks*, CA: Sage.

Hsu, C.L., Chen, M.C., Chang, K.C. and Chao, C.M. (2010), 'Applying loss aversion to investigate service quality on logistics: a moderating effect on service convenience', *International Journal of Operations and Production Management*, 30(5), 508-525.

Jang, S. C. and Namkung, Y. (2009), 'Perceived quality, emotions, and behavioral intentions: application of an extended Mehrabian Russell model to restaurants', *Journal of Business Research*, 62, 451-460.

Keller, K. L. (1993), 'Conceptualizing, measuring and managing customer-based brand equity', *Journal of Marketing*, 57(1), 1-22.

Keller, K. L. (2003), *Strategic brand management: Building, measuring, and managing brand equity*, New Jersey: Prentice Hall.

Kim, S., Han, H. S., Holland, S. and Byon, K. (2009), 'Structural relationships among involvement, destination brand equity, satisfaction, and destination revisit intentions', *Journal of Vacation Marketing*, 15(4), 349-365.

Kim. H. and Kim, W. G. (2005), 'The relationship between brand equity and firms' performance in luxury hotels and chain restaurants', *Tourism Management*, 26, 549-560.

Konecnik, M. and Gartner, W. (2007), 'Customer-based brand equity for a destination', *Annals of Tourism Research*, 34(2), 400-421.

Koufteros, X. A. (1999), 'Testing a model of pull production: A paradigm for manufacturing research using structural equation modeling', *Journal of Operations Management*, 17, 467- 488.

Koufteros, X. A., Mark Vonderembseb and William Dollb (2001), 'Concurrent engineering and its consequences', *Journal of Operations Management* 19, 97–115.

Kwun, J. and Oh, H. (2004), 'Effects of brand, price, and risk on customers' value perceptions and behavioral intentions in the restaurant industry', *Journal of Hospitality and Leisure Marketing*, 11(1), 31-49.

Maja and William (2007), 'Customer-based brand equity for a destination', *Annals of Tourism Research*, 34(2), 400-421.

Nguyen, Thi Bich Thuy (2012), 'The relationship between Destination Image and motivations of international tourists to Danang', *Journal of Science and Technology*, Danang University, 2(51), 136-145.

Oh, H. (2000), 'The effect of brand class, brand awareness, and price on customer value and behavioral intentions', *Journal of Hospitality and Tourism Research*, 24(2), 136-162.

Oppermann, M. (2000), 'Tourism destination loyalty', *Journal of Travel Research*, 39, 78-84.

Phuong Giang Quach (2013), 'Examining international tourists' satisfaction with Hanoi tourism', *Tourism Research*, EMACIM master thesis, University of Lapland.

Pike, S. (2007), 'Consumer-based brand equity for destinations: Practical DMO performance measures', *Journal of Travel and Tourism Marketing*, 22(1), 51-61.

Room, A. (1992), 'In Branding: A Key Marketing Tool', in *History of Branding*, J. Murphy (ed.), Houndmills: Macmillan, 13–21.

Soderlund, M. (2006), 'Measuring customer loyalty with multi-item scales: a case for caution', *International Journal of Service Industry Management,* 17(1), 76-98.

Stokburger-Sauer, N. E. (2011), 'The relevance of visitors' nation brand embeddedness and personality congruence for nation brand identification, visit intentions and advocacy', *Tourism Management*, 1, 1-8.

Tasci, A. and Gartner, W. (2007), 'Destination image and its functional relationships, *Journal of Travel Research*, 45, 413-425.

Thu, H. (2012), *80-85% international tourists don't want return Vietnam*, retrieved on December 5th 2012, from <http://www.thesaigontimes.vn/Home/xahoi/sukien/88284/80---85-du-khach-quoc-te-khongmuon-quay-lai.html>.

Woodside, A.G. and Lysonski, S. (1989), 'A general model of traveler destination choice', *Journal of Travel Research*, 27, 8-14.