

Customer-based brand equity index of Kurukshetra

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Abstract

Purpose – This paper aims to analyze the customer-based brand equity index (CBBE-I) of Tourism Brand Kurukshetra.

Design/methodology/approach – For the purpose of this study, the author uses primary and secondary data on destination attractiveness of Tourism Brand Kurukshetra for a sample of 150 tourists including domestic and international. The study used structural equation modeling and factor weighting methods.

Findings – The research presents an investigation into the destination attractiveness index of Tourism Brand Kurukshetra in an emerging market, i.e. Kurukshetra. Tourism Brand Kurukshetra from the brand equity perspective is an attractive destination.

Practical implications – It suggests that the CBBE index of Kurukshetra ought to analyze a longitudinal study to get the proper image of Kurukshetra from a touristic perspective. It provides long-term attractiveness to enhance tourism.

Originality/value – This is the first brand equity study contributed to branding literature of Tourism Brand Kurukshetra. The index is an accomplished way to present the tourism condition of any destination.

Keywords India, Destination branding, Customer-based brand equity index, Tourism Brand Kurukshetra

Paper type Research paper

Introduction

Academicians consider brand equity as a hot topic now a day. The widely accepted definition that brand equity is the “added value endowed by the brand to the product” (Farquhar, 1989). According to Aaker (1991), “A set of assets and liabilities linked to a brand, its name and symbols that adds to or subtracts to from the value provided by a product or service to a firm and/or to that firm’s customers.” Keller (1998) defined brand equity from a consumer’s perspective and coined the concept as customer-based brand equity (CBBE). Hankinson (2004) presented the brand equity from destination perspective with a place model as “relational brand networks”, depicted four types of brand relationships (consumer relationships, primary service relationships, brand infrastructure relationships and media relationships). The concept of CBBE is taken into a tourist destination and named as customer-based brand equity of a tourist destination (CBBETD) by Konecnik (2005).



As the product has brand equity, the destination also has brand equity. If the destination gets poor response, tourists have no motive or the desire to travel a particular destination; hence, the destination does not consider as attractive. The essence is to be successful in the international market; destinations should pay attention to their attractiveness level. Therefore, the aim of this paper get the CBBE index by factor weight and factor percentage and see how much Tourism Brand Kurukshetra is attractive for tourists.

Literature review

Destination branding including nation branding and place branding – overview

[Koththagoda \(2017\)](#) states that a destination should be meaningful to the customer and destination marketers should take care of travelers' expectations to satisfy them and attract new tourists. [Vinh and Nga \(2015\)](#) draw that destination brand awareness, destination brand image, destination perceived quality and destination brand loyalty effect each other positively. [Yang et al. \(2015\)](#) explain that the service performance of a destination and word of mouth impact customer-based brand equity for a tourism destination. [Huong et al. \(2015\)](#) describe customer-based brand equity from the perspective of behavioral intention.

[Gartner \(2014\)](#) traces that dimensions such as awareness, loyalty, quality and value are also important along with the image of a destination. [Zeytonli et al. \(2015\)](#) suggest that brand equity of sports tourism destination from sport tourists' perspective consisting of brand awareness, brand image, perceived brand quality and brand loyalty. [Kobierecki \(2017\)](#) scrutinizes that positive sports diplomacy such as Commonwealth Games is valuable for developing cooperation between countries and enhancing nation branding. [Das and Mukherjee \(2016\)](#) identify a scale with authenticity as an essential dimension of brand equity for medical tourism with the amalgamation of four dimensions, namely, awareness, perceived quality and brand loyalty.

[Adriana \(2014\)](#) deals with place marketing and place branding and that place branding is one of the classical product brands that emerged from place marketing strategies. [Bisa \(2013\)](#) reviews that countries use nation branding to better communicate their unique competitive identity. [Nolte \(2016\)](#) identifies the role of the Pacific Alliance as more suitable to a multi-polar political economy in the international system, where the economic and trade-related dimensions of regionalism are becoming less important than the political and security dimensions. Another study by [Herrschner and Cheer \(2018\)](#) establishes the links between film, tourism and representations of the exotic other in Asia-Pacific contexts because cinema is a virtual journey that may inspire interconnectedness between the two influences the development of representations of people and place.

[Silvanto et al. \(2015\)](#) explain nation branding as a strategy for attracting internationally mobile skilled professionals. [Kam and Tse \(2018\)](#) argue that Colonial History and the related legal systems can form an unintended nation brand which in turn can play an instrumental role in attracting foreign direct investments.

Asia-based brand equity

[Allagui and Al-Najjar \(2018\)](#) explain the way the UAE used images of the first female air fighter (Emirati Major Mariam Al Mansouri) as she represents a positive face for the young nation, that can convey messages about modernity and social change and bring nation branding. [Li and Marsh \(2016\)](#) focus on the role of BRICS countries in building nation branding. [Muslimah and Keumala \(2018\)](#) elaborate the growth of Gereja Ayam (Chicken Church) in Magelang, Indonesia was a formerly insignificant and publicly unknown place but has featured in an Indonesian film *Ada Apa Dengan Cinta 2*. [Yazdani et al. \(2018\)](#) investigate the role of mass media in creating urban branding about tourism at Ardebil

province (Iran) and indicates that the representation of tourism places in the form of tangible facts had the greatest impact on tourism development variable and the establishment of urban branding.

[Kheiri et al. \(2016\)](#) view the effective relationship between destination brand equity and tourists' intention to Iran. [Koththagoda \(2016\)](#) approaches the customer-based brand equity from Sri Lanka and defines its brand resonance, feelings, judgments, performance and salience effect the destination's brand equity except for imagery. [Kashif et al. \(2015\)](#) view that brand loyalty makes Lahore Fort's brand equity. [Akhtar and Husnain \(2015\)](#) investigate the buying behavior of boarding students in Pakistan and show that the factors (basic needs, former experience, friend and family, recommended by celebrities, product design, product quality, product price, brand and discount on price) relate to buying behavior of boarding students. [Yousaf \(2016\)](#) explores stereotypical country images of Pakistan and assesses the extent of their unavailability.

[Vinh et al. \(2017\)](#) examine and approve the causal relationships between components of customer-based brand equity for Vietnam. [Guajardo \(2016\)](#) highlights the changes in Japan's nation brand that Japan's branding for the Tokyo 2020 Olympics is an opportunity for creating a future legacy for Japan, particularly in human resource development. [Kim and Lee \(2018\)](#) understood that the branding effect of a tourist destination is important for Greater Chinese tourists visiting the Seoul Metropolitan area in South Korea. [Ayhan \(2018\)](#) explores the Voluntary Agency Network of Korea (VANK), a Korean NGO, and conducts public diplomacy and nation branding of Korea based on its members' relationships with foreigners. [Nas \(2017\)](#) analyzes Turkey's nation branding campaign initiated in 2015, under the slogan "Turkey: Discover the Potential," and that the Turkish nation is branded as an Eastern civilization in terms of its core values.

[Matyakubova \(2018\)](#) states that Uzbekistan's nation-branding process can accommodate the needs, desires and input of the local population by asking: To what extent does the nation-branding process address Uzbek citizens' needs by looking at the Tashkent City project and that when designing a national brand for the country, leaders ought to first ensure local populations' well-being and treat citizens with due respect.

Destination branding – India

[Kamat \(2010\)](#) describes the Goa tourism industry as a good place to visit but marketers should introduce new forms of tourism, except beach-centric tourism, to retain and attract potential tourists such as village tourism. [Bose et al. \(2018\)](#) explore the customer-based place brand equity (CBPBE) quantitatively, in the context of international relations (public diplomacy) between two places, West Bengal (in India) and Bangladesh and suggests that brand salience and perceived quality dimensions are important for brand engagement of a place and brand loyalty from the point of view of investment. [Venkatachalam and Venkateswaran \(2010\)](#) suggest that the success of countries such as Australia, France and Italy shows that destination can become brands that are contemporary and timeless. For brand "India" to come up with the mentioned countries, it should improve its products and services and focus on intensive stakeholder, consumer and competitor's research. [Khanna \(2011\)](#) evaluates the various initiatives such as the Incredible India Campaign, India Brand Equity Foundation and India Everywhere Campaign launched at the World Economic Forum at Davos 2006 to improve Brand India from the perspectives of Global Indians and Non-Resident Indian. The author analyses that Brand India means a destination full of opportunities but need to be explored more to sustain and attract potential tourists. [Singh et al. \(2012\)](#) identify the gaps in the "Incredible India" centralized campaign and state-wise campaign to promote tourism in India. "Incredible India" campaign can become more

effective by providing clarity to potential tourists, especially foreign tourists. But state-wise tourism campaigns are more systematized with enough information.

Nasreen and Thang (2011) study the contribution of the tourism sector in India. Destination marketers should concentrate on Asian tourism market and technical assistance to improve tourists' experience. They should focus on projecting India as a modern country. Vardhan (2008) evaluates the destination branding and its role in the marketing of tourism in India as reveals that India is lagging behind despite the "Incredible India" brand. Marketers should merge its vision with branding and consider the perspectives of leaders, tourists, citizens, suppliers and public-private partnerships to make it an India that is truly incredible experience.

Conceptual dimensions of consumer-based brand equity

The present research conceptualizes the brand equity and provides a description of the four dimensions of consumer-based brand equity examined in the study:

- (1) *Brand awareness*: This section talks about brand awareness. Brand awareness is a major dimension of brand equity (Aaker, 1991; Keller, 1993). Awareness is the image of a destination that exists in the minds of potential travelers (Gartner, 1993).

Carmen and Alexandrina (2014) explore the demarcation of perceptions with regard to ad's role in tourism means a typical process for forming the positioning of tourism's product promoted in the consumer's mind. Chigora and Zvavahera (2015) work on destination brand equity (CBBE) and analyze the role of destination brand awareness dimension on destination brand loyalty. Valek (2017) explains destination awareness as a tool in attracting new visitors. Jiménez-Esquinas and Sánchez-Carretero (2018) analyze awareness as a promotional tool in a global context of heritage propertization.

- (2) *Brand image*: The destination image is "an interactive system of thoughts, opinions, feelings, visualizations, and intentions toward a destination" (Tasci et al., 2007).

Guzman-Parra et al. (2016) present an analysis of the cognitive attributes of destination image by establishing the relationships between destination image tourist attributes, tourist satisfaction and destination loyalty. Girma (2016) identifies re-image under a cumbersome and difficult situation. Manhas et al. (2016) identify that post-consumption responses formulate destination brand image. Meng and Uysal (2016) formulate destination competitiveness based on tourists' perception to investigate how different phases of tourism/vacation experience affect tourists' perception of destination competitiveness. Amaya-Molinar et al. (2017) also identify the factors of tourist destination competitiveness such as destination marketing and attractions, destination management and security, cultural heritage, ICT adoption and transportation.

Stylidis et al. (2017) examine the contribution of effective components in creating destination image and future behavior. Volić et al. (2017) estimate the storytelling strategy of stakeholders in destination image creation and destination positioning. Lund et al. (2018) also suggest that the circulation of brand stories through online social networks is useful for an image of a destination. Jarratt et al. (2018) analyze the sense of place to make clear distinctive selling points for tourists. Gantina and Swantari (2018) explain that destination image is helpful in increasing perceived value and trip quality. Mariutti and Medeiros (2018) say that culture is associated with the destination image.

- (3) *Perceived quality*: Perceived quality is not the real quality of the product but the consumer's subjective and self-evaluation of the product (Zeithaml, 1988). Pike *et al.* (2010) explain destination quality as tourists' perceptions of the quality of a destination's infrastructure, hospitality services and amenities such as accommodation. Konecnik and Ruzzier (2006) investigate the customer's perspective on a tourism destination through the previous visitation. Hennessey *et al.* (2007) consider the relationship between perceived quality and price-value, satisfaction and behavioral intentions. Sarwar *et al.* (2012) explore that perceived quality is affected by cost, service quality, treatment types and availability and marketing. Rahman (2012) tests tourist's perception and that selection of a destination is based on destination brand image, internet adoption followed by customer's satisfaction. Hossain (2013) explore both cues (perceived intrinsic and extrinsic cues) that can be used to strengthen the perceived quality of a destination. Hossain (2013) reveals an association between the perceived intrinsic cue and perceived quality, between perceived warranty and perceived quality and between perceived price and perceived quality is positive. Shen (2016) contributes by bonding among perceived value, tourism experience and future behavioral intention. TAN *et al.* (2017) examine the cleanliness of the destination, ease of assessing a clinic or a hospital, the friendliness of local people and the ease of communication with local people are the determinants of perceived quality which lead to satisfaction.
- (4) *Brand loyalty*: Aaker (1991) opines brand loyalty as: "the attachment that a customer has to a brand." From destination perspective, it is defined as the intention of tourists to return to a destination and willingness to recommend it to others (Myagmarsuren and Chen, 2011; Nam *et al.*, 2011; Pike and Bianchi, 2013). Chigora and Zvavahera (2015) say that the effective source of brand loyalty is media propaganda and attitudinal effects is the common sources. According to Bédiová and Ryglová (2015), tourist overall satisfaction is single-minded by destination image and attribute satisfaction. Hallak *et al.* (2017) identify that destination loyalty is created by perceived quality. Khuong and Duyen (2017) point out that destination image, perceived value and perceived service quality are directly and indirectly affected tourist destination satisfaction and tourist return intention. Virkar and Mallya (2018) analyze that accessibility, service quality, perceived value and destination image are the dimensions of the transport system creating tourist satisfaction. Aliman *et al.* (2016) establish that destination image, tourist expectations, costs and risks and social-security are necessary elements to satisfy tourist satisfaction. Milošević *et al.* (2016) explore the satisfaction with services offered on tourist destinations. Carla *et al.* (2017) analyze that that destination image, perceived quality and perceived value are influential factors on satisfaction and revisit intention. Gavurova *et al.* (2018) relate the customer's brand experience and loyalty to the brand, its image and willingness to recommend the brand to others.

Research methodology

The emerging market of Kurukshetra, India was chosen for the study. During 2017, questionnaires were extended to approximately 150 tourists and all the responses are valid. The questionnaire was developed in English and then translated into Hindi by the researcher. The questionnaire was pretested with a convenience sample of 30 visitors in Kurukshetra, which resulted in minor changes in wording to some questions. The

instrument was divided into two sections. The first section contained the demographic profile of tourists and the second section asked the participants to indicate their opinion on CBBE variables of Kurukshetra and to rate them using a five-point Likert scale anchored at “strongly disagree” (1) to “strongly agree” (5). SPSS 21 and AMOS 21 have been used for data analysis. The data have been analyzed for reliability using Cronbach’s alpha test. The descriptive and analytical tests used for finding patterns in data were frequency distribution and structural equation modeling method.

Objectives

The study has the following objectives:

- The brand awareness significantly affects Tourism Brand Kurukshetra and if affects, how much.
- The brand image significantly affects Tourism Brand Kurukshetra and if affects, how much.
- The perceived quality significantly affects Tourism Brand Kurukshetra and if affects, how much.
- The brand loyalty significantly affects Tourism Brand Kurukshetra and if affects, how much

Data analysis and interpretation

The researcher conducted data collection over three months during the first half of 2017. Subsequently, the researcher worked with a sample of 150 valid questionnaires. The largest group of respondents were young (40 per cent; N = 60). Respondents’ smaller group were slightly the ones between 35 and 44 age (35.3 per cent; N = 53). Next, respondents group between the age of 25 and 27 (18.28 per cent; N = 87) follow and a group of respondents between the age of 45 and 54 (30 per cent; N = 20). Gender distribution was almost unbalanced, with the majority of men (87.3 per cent; N = 131), followed by women (12.7 per cent; N = 19). In the case of education, the greatest group was a group of tourists with graduate (53.3 per cent; N = 80), followed by postgraduate and above (43.3 per cent; N = 65) and others including professional certificates (3.3 per cent; N = 5). Only the minimum shares represented other educational groups. From the perspective of social status, the greatest group consisted of government employed tourists (72 per cent; N = 108), followed by private serviced tourists (18.7 per cent; N = 28), students/researchers (5.3 per cent; N = 8), businessperson (2.7 per cent; N = 4) and house makers (1.3 per cent; N = 2). Mostly tourists traveled with friends and relatives (91.3 per cent; N = 137) and by independent tourists (8 per cent; N = 12). The biggest information source about Kurukshetra is by friends and relatives (85.3 per cent; N = 128) followed by TV ads/program sources (8.7 per cent; N = 13), by print media (5.3 per cent; N = 8) and through the internet (0.7 per cent; N = 1). The most used travel mode was the road (72 per cent; N = 108) followed by train (26.7 per cent; N = 40) and by multiple modes (1.3 per cent; N = 2). The stay in Kurukshetra was short with majority coming (48 per cent; N = 72) only for one day trip followed by 4-7 nights (30.7 per cent; N = 46) and 1-3 nights (21.3 per cent; N = 32). Tourists associate Bhagavad-Gita with Kurukshetra very much (98.7 per cent; N = 148) and somewhat (1.3 per cent; N = 2). All tourists (100 per cent; N = 150) considered Bhagavad-Gita important.

Reliability

The data reliability is enough for further analysis. Reliability is defined as “the degree to which measures are free from error and therefore yield consistent results” (Peter 1979).

There are two types of reliability, i.e. test-retest reliability based on longitudinal study and internal consistency reliability and equivalence reliability based on the cross-sectional study. Internal consistency reliability is commonly used by coefficient alpha. It was developed by Cronbach (1951). Cronbach's alpha enhances the quality of research. The overall Cronbach's α of the study is 0.753 (Nunnally, 1978).

Model fit

The model exhibited a good fit to the data which is calculated by confirmatory factor analysis. The model fit (Table I) indicated as χ^2 (460.380), degrees of freedom (119), significant level (0.000) and normed chi-square (3.869).

Structural equation modeling

The structural equation model was used to analyze the standard coefficient of CBBE factors (Table II and Figure 1). All factors are acceptable (brand awareness = 0.111, brand image = 0.157, perceived quality = 0.249 and brand loyalty = 0.498) at a significant level of 0.05. The corrected R^2 refers to the explanatory power of the predictor variable(s) in the respective construct. All the factors explain 98.8 per cent of Tourism Brand Kurukshetra ($R^2 = 0.988$), can be described as strong.

Customer-based brand equity index of Tourism Brand Kurukshetra

CBBE Index is calculated by the factor weighting method and factor percentage.

Customer-based brand equity index (customer-based brand equity index) by factor weight

This index is calculated by the factor weighting scheme (Table III). The findings indicate that brand loyalty (CBBE-I value = 4.35) significantly affects Tourism Brand Kurukshetra, followed by perceived quality (CBBE-I value = 4.32), brand image (CBBE-I = 4.09) and least

Table I.
Model fit index

	Final scale	Cut-off criteria
<i>Absolute fit measures</i>		
Chi-square	460.380	Smaller the better
Degrees of freedom	119	Adjusts for sample size
Significant level	0.000	Less than 0.05
<i>Parsimony measures</i>		
Normed chi-square	3.869	Less than 5

Table II.
Structural equation modeling

Sr. no.	CBBE variables	Standard coefficient	Accepted or rejected at significant level
1	Brand awareness	0.111	Accepted
2	Brand image	0.157	Accepted
3	Perceived quality	0.249	Accepted
4	Brand loyalty	0.498	Accepted
	CBBE index of Tourism Brand Kurukshetra	98.8 %	

Notes: $\chi^2 = 460.380$; $df = 119$, $p = 0.000$; R^2 (CBBE Index of Tourism Brand Kurukshetra) = 0.988; significant ($p < 0.05$)

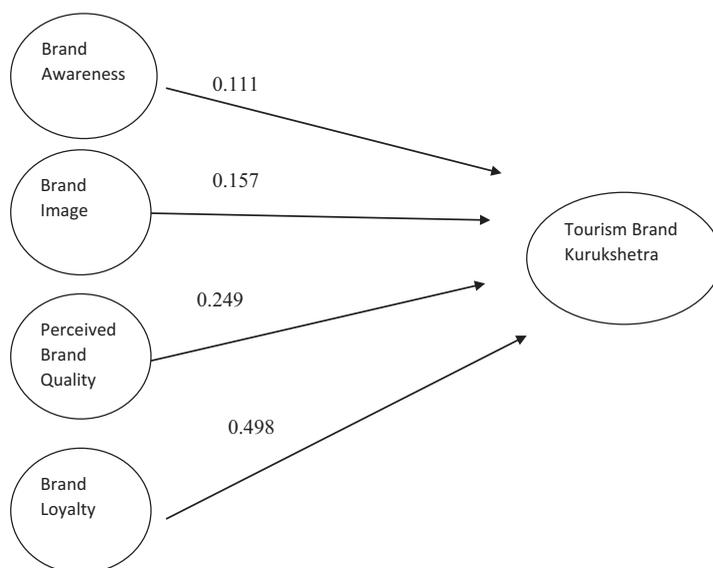


Figure 1.
Structural equation modeling

Sr. no.	Factors	CBBE-I value
1	Brand awareness	3.78
2	Brand image	4.09
3	Perceived quality	4.32
4	Brand loyalty	4.35
	Aggregate value of CBBE index	4.14
	CBBE index of Tourism Brand Kurukshetra	82.8 % (4.14)

Table III.
CBBE index (CBBE-I) by factor weight

by brand awareness (CBBE-I value = 378). Finally, the aggregate value of the CBBE Index of Tourism Brand Kurukshetra is 4.14 out of 5 (82.8 per cent), perceived to be high.

Customer-based brand equity index (customer-based brand equity index) by factor percentage

The results of the CBBE Index by factor percentage (Table IV) suggest that the most attractive factor is brand loyalty (95.5 per cent), followed by perceived quality (83.3 per cent), brand image (57.3 per cent) and least by brand awareness (14.8 per cent). Overall, the single aggregated value of the CBBE index for Tourism Brand Kurukshetra was 98.8 per cent (4.95).

Sr. no.	Factors	Variables explained Tourism Brand Kurukshetra (%)
1	Brand awareness	14.8
2	Brand image	57.3
3	Perceived quality	83.3
4	Brand loyalty	95.5
	CBBE index of Tourism Brand Kurukshetra	98.8 % (4.95)

Table IV.
CBBE Index (CBBE-I) by factor percentage

Comparison of both customer-based brand equity indices

When comparing both the methods, it states that both methods revealed the same conclusion. Both methods concluded that brand loyalty significantly affects Tourism Brand Kurukshetra. As a whole, both methods stated that Kurukshetra is an attractive city (factor weight = 4.14/82.8 per cent and factor percentage = 98.8 per cent/4.95).

Discussion and implications

Discussion

Customer-based brand equity is an important topic not for product but also for destination branding. Researchers and scholars continue their work in this area. Regarding Kurukshetra City, it is one of the most potential destinations in Haryana and may get a good number of tourists especially foreigner tourists. Nevertheless, studies on Kurukshetra are still limited and need more attention to get its right status in the tourism aspect. Therefore, the researcher wants to examine the relationship between dimensions of customer-based brand equity and the status of Kurukshetra with a sample of 150 tourists. The findings indicate that destination brand loyalty has the highest positive impact, followed by perceived quality and brand image, and brand awareness has the lowest positive influence on Tourism Brand Kurukshetra.

Managerial implications

The research indicates that brand awareness has the lowest impact on the city. Therefore, Kurukshetra city should aware the tourists about its marketing campaigns. Marketing efforts could not convey the messages properly and need better methods such as TV channels, travel magazines, organizing events and word-of-mouth.

The result also indicates there is a higher impact of perceived quality than brand awareness on the destination. Therefore, Kurukshetra City should improve the product (service) quality. It is necessary to improve the quality of products (services) which is possible with the help of tourism services-providers such as the government, business firms and citizens. Their cooperation makes the city empowered and may get its deserving status in destination branding.

Conclusion

The paper aims to investigate the CBBE index of Tourism Brand Kurukshetra in an emerging market. These researches conclude as brand loyalty affects Tourism Brand Kurukshetra significantly and makes it an attractive city.

The major contribution of the present research lies in the fact that the destination attractiveness of the Tourism Brand Kurukshetra brand has been conducted by two methods for the first time. Destination marketers and governments can take some guidance from the results of this study, as it provides useful insights about a popular destination brand in Haryana (India). The study advocates that several strategies should be used to improve the above-mentioned sites which will positively impact the number of visitors to the destination.

Moreover, brand loyalty and brand image appear reasonable to use them more intensely to create a link with tourists. Therefore, Kurukshetra should adopt and incorporate the above sites as tourist-centered orientation, to increase Tourism Brand Kurukshetra.

Limitations and future research

This research is not untouched from limitations. First, the equity model is tested within a small sample size of 150 tourists. Therefore, the generalizability of the findings is limited. It is better to test this model on a large scale to get the generalizability. Second, the research is tested on domestic tourists. Hence, future research should examine from the perspectives of international tourists. Third, this study does not consider the relationships among the dimensions of customer-based brand equity. Therefore, further studies should measure the casual relationships between brand equity dimensions.

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