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A value co-creation perspective on Customer-Based Brand Equity Model for Tourism Destinations – A Case from Sweden

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This study aims at contributing to the development of the customer-based brand equity (CBBE) concept in a tourism destination setting by taking into account the value-co-creation approach. The components of the proposed model consist of the customers' evaluation of the destination promise in terms of transforming tangible, intangible and social destination resources into tourists' value-in-use. Moreover, destination brand awareness affects the evaluation of the destination promise, which, in turn, determines tourists' behavioural intentions towards the destination. By implementing a web survey and using a linear structural equation modelling approach, the proposed model is empirically validated for the Swedish mountain destination of Åre. Results particularly show the significant contribution of customer benefits and value for money to create destination loyalty. The paper demonstrates that by monitoring unique destination and tourist-specific experience dimensions, destination management can control both the value-in-use for a customer and customer loyalty, thereby upgrade and evaluate its marketing strategy, and, finally, discover promising innovation potentials for highly experiential tourism products.

Keywords: destination branding, customer-based brand equity, value co-creation, Åre

Destinations pursue and implement branding activities to differentiate themselves in globalized and competitive markets in order to convey a unique value proposition, attract visitors, facilitate repeat visitation and readiness to pay a premium-price, and to trigger positive word-of-mouth (Morgan, Pritchard, & Pride, 2004). Destination brand equity modelling and measurement has become the main research stream

in the field of destination branding (Pike, 2009). However, from a theoretical point of view, the concept of consumer-based brand equity in a tourism destination context is still insufficiently elaborated. Tourists' awareness, image, quality, value and loyalty are typical 'brand' constructs which tourism researchers, like Konecnik and Gartner (2007), Boo, Busser and Baloglu (2009) and Pike, Bianchi, Kerr and Patti (2010), adopted from the traditional marketing literature (Aaker, 1996; Keller, 2008). However, the complexity and multi-dimensionality of tourism destinations complicate brand equity measurement (Pike, 2005; Gartner & Konecnik Ruzzier, 2010). Simultaneously, the dominance of traditional producer-centric marketing approaches developed for consumer goods hinders the theoretical advancement of tourism destination branding research (Li & Petrick, 2008), which, by contrast, could strongly benefit from the contemporary service marketing paradigm (Grönroos, 2000, 2009; Vargo & Lusch, 2008; Merz, He, & Vargo, 2009).

Against this background and by applying the value-co-creation framework, the study at hand contributes to the development of the customer-based brand equity (CBBE) theory in a destination context (Li & Petrick, 2008; Qu, Kim, & Im, 2011). The components of the proposed model consist of customers' evaluation of the destination promise in terms of transforming tangible, intangible and social destination resources into tourists' value-in-use (Grönroos, 2000, 2009; Vargo & Lusch, 2008; Baron, Conway, & Warnaby, 2010). Moreover, destination brand awareness affects the evaluation of the destination promise, which, in turn, determines tourists' behavioural intentions towards the destination.

After having introduced the notion of value-co-creation in the context of destination brand management and research, recent research efforts of brand equity measurement in a tourism destination context are critically discussed in the literature review section. The conceptual framework section introduces the proposed model, comprising the brand constructs destination brand awareness, destination resources, customers' benefits, value-for-money, and, destination brand loyalty. Subsequently, five test hypotheses are formulated. By using a linear structural equation modelling approach, the proposed model is empirically validated for the Swedish mountain destination of Åre. The paper concludes by summarizing the gained research results, highlighting managerial implications, discussing research limitations and by sketching the agenda for future research.

Literature Review

The service marketing theory emphasizes the interactive, mutual and reciprocal process of value co-creation vis-à-vis an exchange of output units (Grönroos, 2000, Vargo & Lusch, 2008). Therefore, the value co-creation perspective is central within the new marketing paradigm, which implies that value is created interactively and, according to Vargo and Lusch (2008, p. 7), "the customer is always a co-creator of value".

Similarly, tourism scholars argue that destination stakeholders and tourists co-create places where tourism experiences may occur. According to Mossberg (2007), tourists co-create '*experiencescapes*' through their participation in destination value-

networks and the allocation of own resources, such as time, money, efforts and individual skills. While destinations are viewed as a promise to transform customers' resources, the inherent value concept is communicated through the *brand* which is collectively perceived by homogenous tourist segments (Ek, Larsen, Hornskov, & Mansfeldt, 2008). In the marketing literature, brand equity is defined as the differentiation effect that customers' knowledge of the brand name has on customers' response to a product or a service (Armstrong & Kotler, 2009). Grönroos (2000) especially emphasizes that brand equity is the outcome of continuously developed brand-relationships to the customer. Accordingly, Keller (2008) identifies four stages of brand development, namely brand identity, meaning, response and relationships, which correspond to the customer-based brand equity (CBBE) model, consisting of the dimensions brand awareness, associations, attitudes, attachment and activity, respectively.

Similarly in a tourism context, Gnoth (2007) conceptualizes the destination brand as a representation of the functional, emotional and symbolic values of the destination, as well as the benefits, which tourists are promised to receive as the result of their service consumption (Gnoth, 2007, p. 348). Core values, like the cultural, social and natural dimensions of destination resources, are, therefore, utilized as inputs for service provision aimed at satisfying tourists' needs.

In the destination context brand equity is typically studied from the customers' perspective. Particularly, the research literature on tourism destinations applies Aaker's (1996) and Keller's (1993) multidimensional conceptualization of customer-based brand equity (CBBE). Moreover, the customer-based brand equity concept is considered to be more relevant and valuable from the managerial point of view than the strict financial evaluation of brand equity (Pike, 2009). Consequently, destination brand equity research, primarily, focuses on the development of destination brand performance models, thus, better enabling the measurement of the marketing effectiveness on the level of tourism destinations, as well as the prediction of the future performance of the destination as a brand.

The issue of destination brand equity measurement has only recently attracted attention. By applying Aaker's (1996) and Keller's (1993) CBBE concept, tourism scholars view the customer-based brand equity model for a tourism destination (CBDDBE) as "the sum of factors contributing to a brand's value in the consumer's mind" (Konecnik & Gartner, 2007, p. 401). More precisely, Konecnik and Gartner (2007) were the first ones to apply the CBBE model in a destination context. The authors argue that image should not be viewed as the single factor explaining tourists' decision making process; thus, the image construct has been isolated from other brand dimensions. Their recently replicated model is validated as a higher-order construct, while awareness, image, quality and loyalty are specified as model sub-dimensions (Gartner & Konecnik Ruzzier, 2010). While Gartner and Konecnik Ruzzier (2010) validate a measurement model, Boo et al. (2009) and Pike et al. (2010) specify their CBDDBE as a structural model examining causal relationships between model dimensions.

Boo et al. (2009) complement Konecnik and Gartner's (2007) concept with the dimension of destination brand value, arguing for its importance in creating customer loyalty. The authors test their model with visitor samples from two destinations

(casino gambling). Original model dimensions include awareness, image, quality, value and loyalty. However, the authors reveal that tourists' previous experience overshadows the image dimension, while the importance of the value dimension on loyalty increases. Thus, Boo et al. (2009) validate an alternative model which supports the existence of four isolated constructs: awareness, experience, value and loyalty. Pike et al.'s (2010) study is the other example of previous CBDBE validation. The authors examine relationships between brand salience (awareness), image, quality and loyalty. Nevertheless, despite its importance, destination brand equity research is still in its infancy, and the few studies conducted so far (Konecnik & Gartner, 2007; Boo et al., 2009; Pike et al., 2010; Gartner & Konecnik Ruzzier, 2010) show both similarities and substantial differences regarding model structure and measurement: while these CBDBE studies are similar in terms of model constructs (the only exception being brand value, which is specified as an isolated dimension by Boo et al. (2009)), there are substantial differences at the level of construct operationalization (Table 1).

Table 1: Differences and similarities in CBDBE model operationalization

	Study			
Construct	<i>Konecnik and Gartner (2007)</i>	<i>Boo et al. (2009)</i>		<i>Pike et al. (2010)</i>
Awareness	Top-of-mind awareness			
Image	Attribute-based items	Customers' self-image	Re-specified as brand experience construct	Customer's self-image
Quality	Attribute-based items, including price perception and value for money	Overall measures	measured by customers' self-image and overall quality items	Attribute-based items
Value		Price perception and value for money		
Loyalty	Willingness to return and intention to recommend			

Therefore, as demonstrated in Table 1, only for the awareness and brand loyalty constructs there is agreement between CBDBE studies in terms of conceptualization and measurement. However, all cited authors point at the lack of research in brand measurement, which they explain is the result of the complexity and multidimensionality of tourism destinations (Ek et al., 2008).

Conceptual Framework

The following section discusses the theoretical basis behind the proposed model of customer-based brand equity for tourism destinations (CBDBE) from a value co-creation perspective. First, the five model dimensions are introduced, including destination brand awareness, destination resources, customers' benefits, value for money, and destination loyalty. Second, a set of literature-based hypotheses is presented.

Destination brand awareness: Aaker (1996) distinguishes between six levels of brand awareness: 1) brand recognition is the consumer's ability to recognize the name of the brand when the brand name is mentioned. 2) Brand recall is the ability to independently bring to mind the brand name if asked to name brands within a certain product category. 3) Top-of-mind awareness occurs if the brand name is mentioned first in a recall task. 4) Brand dominance is a situation when only one brand name is recalled. 5) Brand knowledge comprises what a customer knows about the brand. Finally, 6) brand opinion is the highest level of awareness, when a customer has a very individual opinion about the brand. In a tourism destination context, brand awareness and brand salience, defined as "the strength of awareness of the destination for a given travel situation" (Pike et al., p. 439) are considered as the first dimension of the tourism destination brand equity model (Boo et al., 2009; Pike et al., 2010).

The destination resources, the customers' benefits and value for money together comprise the perceived destination brand promise, which is proposed as the core component of the CBDBE model. The focus on value co-creation implies that the resources of service providers as perceived by the consumer as well as expected, experienced and obtained service outcomes should be clearly distinguished. Following Keller's (2008) brand association dimensions, including functional and intangible product attributes, promised benefits and price, we propose that the destination brand promise should include customers' evaluation in terms of tangible, intangible and human resources provided by the destination, tourists' benefits from destination visitation (value-in-use), and the price-based value as the destination's value-in-exchange (value for money). These resource, benefit and value concepts are discussed next.

Destination resources: Intangible, tangible and human resources for tourism consumption are widely addressed in the tourism literature. Attribute-based items are typically used to measure such constructs as destination image and quality (Gallarza, Saura, & Garcia, 2002; Chekalina & Fuchs, 2009; Chekalina, Fuchs, & Lexhagen, 2013). However, there is little consistency neither in the interpretation, nor in the operationalization of image and quality constructs among existing CBDBE studies (Konecnik & Gartner, 2007; Boo et al., 2009; Pike et al., 2010). More concretely, destination brand image either depicts the perception of destination attributes or the evaluation of how well the destination image reflects customers' self-image. Moreover, it is problematic to delineate image and quality concepts on the level of construct operationalization, since previous research traditionally employs a mix of image and quality attributes. The proposed value co-creation perspective aims to resolve this issue, since attribute-based image and quality relate to the customers' perception of promised, experienced and remembered performance on the level of destination

resources which contribute to the formation of tourists' benefits from destination visitation (Larsen, 2007).

Customers' benefits: Attitude formation is based on the affective interpretation of stimuli perceived at service encounters including tangible and process quality, brand-relationships and interpersonal-relationships between customers and service employees (Palmer, 2010). Importantly, Palmer (2010) emphasizes the essential inclusion in destination branding of non-functional expectations communicated through brands. Interestingly, the author also acknowledges the possibility to operationalize customer experience consistent with Vargo and Lusch's (2008) notion of value-in-use. Accordingly, the proposed approach discloses the transformation of destination resources from the value-in-use of destination visitation: the availability of resources is unique for every destination, while the configuration of experienced resources is unique for the visitation context of every tourist (Komppula, 2005; Zabkar, Brencic, & Dmitrovic, 2010; Moeller, 2010). Thus, value-in-use represents tourists' state of being as the result of visiting a destination.

Value-for-money: Boo et al. (2009) specify destination brand value as a separate CBDDBE model dimension, which directly and positively influences destination loyalty. The authors adopt the price-based definition of value as the customers' perception of the balance between the product's price and its utility. Therefore, from the value-co-creation perspective the price-based value constitutes the value-in-exchange and allows for considering the customers' own resources used as an input for the service process. However, it has to be acknowledged, that customers' resources include not only money, but also time, efforts and skills (Fuchs, 2004; Chen & Tsai, 2007; Moeller, 2010).

Destination brand loyalty: satisfied customers repurchase if they become loyal based on both a positive attitude and behaviour towards a brand (Back & Parks, 2003; Nam, Ekinci, & Whyatt, 2011). Thus, customers with strong beliefs about the superiority of a brand are emotionally attached and committed and even tolerate higher prices (Alegre & Juaneda, 2006).

Figure 1 shows the proposed CBDDBE model integrating destination awareness, three destination promise dimensions comprising the destination resources (i.e. tangible, intangible, and social destination resources, respectively), the customers' evaluation of the destination's effort to satisfy tourists' needs and its potential to improve the tourists' state of being (i.e. customers' benefits), as well as value-for-money, and, finally, destination loyalty. The relationships between the proposed theoretical constructs are specified as hypotheses based on theoretical considerations or previous empirical confirmation:

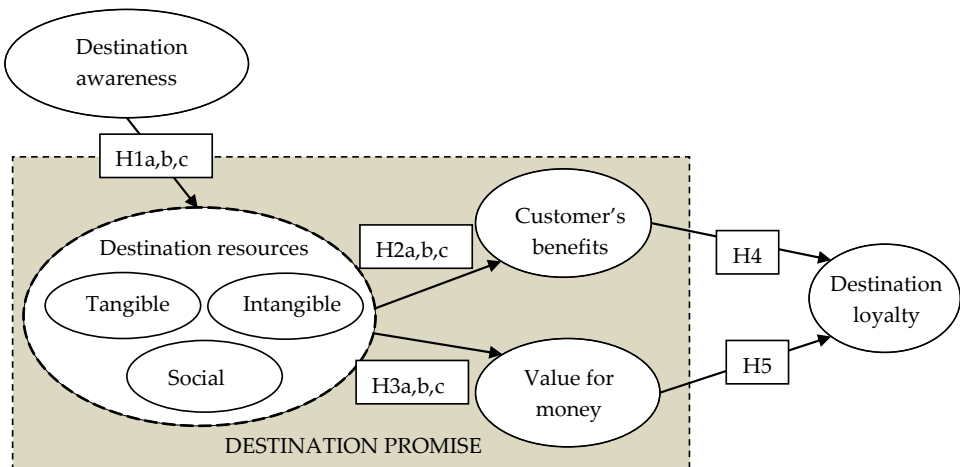


Figure 1. Customer-based destination brand equity model (CBDDE)

- *H1: the stronger the destination awareness, the more positive customers' perception of a) tangible, b) intangible and c) social destination resources (Boo et al., 2009)*
- *H2: the more positive the perception of a) tangible, b) intangible and c) social destination resources, the more positive customers' perception of benefits (Klenoski, Gengler, & Mulvey, 1993; Chen & Tsai 2007; Yoon & Uysal, 2005)*
- *H3: the more positive the perception of a) tangible, b) intangible and c) social destination resources, the more positive customers' perception of value for money (Boo et al., 2009)*
- *H4: the more positive the customer perception of benefits, the stronger the loyalty to a destination (Chi & Qu, 2008; Pike et al., 2010)*
- *H5: the more positive the perception of value for money, the stronger the loyalty to a destination (Chi & Qu, 2008; Zabkar et al., 2010).*

Research Design

The study has been designed for international tourists with previous experience of the Åre ski destination. Thus, since Aaker (1996) points out, that top-of-mind awareness is difficult to measure when the consumer already has direct experience of the product, the top-of-mid metrics of brand awareness employed in previous CBBE studies in a tourism destination context (Konecnik & Gartner, 2007; Boo et al., 2009; Pike et al., 2010) cannot be directly utilised. Therefore, the survey adopts the metrics of brand knowledge and brand presence utilised by Lehman, Keller and Farley (2008) to measure the awareness level of the CBBE model. Eight awareness items were formulated as statements and were rated on a five point Likert agreement scale, ranging from 1 (i.e. strongly disagree) to 5 (i.e. strongly agree).

Boo et al. (2009) view destination brand performance as the way it meets tourists' functional needs. Thus, we use an attribute-based approach to measure destination image and quality, respectively: for *intangible* resources six items are employed

to measure pull motivation, quality and attribute satisfaction (Chi & Qu, 2008; del Bosque & Martín, 2008). Item-rating: 1=strongly disagree to 5=strongly agree. For *tangible* resources a totality of 36 items are deduced from the literature with a focus on ski destinations (Hudson & Shephard, 1998; Weiermair & Fuchs, 1999; Faullant, Matzler, & Füller, 2008; Komppula & Laukkanen, 2009). Item-rating: 1=completely dissatisfied to 5=completely satisfied. Finally, four *social destination resource* items are used based on existing scales for pull motivation, destination image, quality, and attribute satisfaction (Yoon & Uysal, 2005; Konecnik & Gartner, 2007). Items are rated on a 5-point Likert type scale (1=strongly disagree to 5=strongly agree).

The benefits of the destination were operationalized by four emotional value items based on the findings of the qualitative study by Klenoski et al. (1993) regarding the value of ski destinations. The value for money was operationalized with two items adopted from Boo et al. (2009), which capture the level of prices and the value-for-money. The items were formulated as statements and rated on a five point Likert agreement scale, ranging from 1 (i.e. strongly disagree) to 5 (i.e. strongly agree).

Similar to Pike et al. (2010) we consider the willingness to recommend and to come back to the destination region (Konecnik & Gartner, 2007; Boo et al., 2009) as items of destination loyalty. Moreover, an additional item measures the degree of destination attachment. Items are rated on a 5-point Likert type scale (1=strongly disagree to 5=strongly agree).

English, Swedish and Russian questionnaires were prepared by native speakers, thus, addressing the target markets of the destination of Åre. A pre-test with 44 students allowed a split-half test to check item-reliability. Finally, a web-survey was implemented to reach international guests after having visited the destination. Target markets were examined by overnight stays reported by the stakeholders SkiStar Åre and Holiday Club Åre, representing 96% of the international guest-base. Findings justified a proportional-stratified-sampling strategy (Creswell, 2009): E-mails were randomly selected from CRM-databases of these stakeholders for each sample strata. As the goal was an accuracy of 95% at a significance of 5%, target sample size was $N=384$. In total, 5,668 web survey invitations were disseminated. Data were anonymously collected during April-May 2010. While 100 out of 487 respondents did not complete it, the number of completed questionnaires is $N=387$ (i.e. response-rate: 9%): the share of missing values was highest for items measuring tourists' perception of tangible attributes. This can be explained by the service heterogeneity characteristics, implying that only core destination components are used by the majority of respondents. Items with more than 10% of missing-values were removed, resulting in an exclusion of 25 out of 36 tangible attribute-items. Missing-value imputation was performed as suggested by Hair, Black, Babin and Anderson (2010): missing values of resource variables were substituted by means. For remaining variables, a list-wise deletion of cases with missing-values was performed. As a result, the number of usable cases is 248. Z-score-examination revealed outliers ($z>3.29$) being substituted with "*the next highest score plus one*" (Field, 2005, p. 116). Finally, exploratory Factor Analysis (VariMax) examined factor structure, communalities, KMO-criteria and Cronbach's Alpha separately for the CBDDE model constructs, which could potentially have underlying dimensions, including *tangible destination resources* (two fac-

tors emerged, labelled “Skiing” and “Service”), *intangible destination resources* (one factor), *social destination resources* (one factor), *destination awareness* (one factor, three items, including “Åre has a good reputation”, “I have heard about Åre from friends and relatives” and “I often find information about Åre on the internet” with factor loadings below 0.5 were dropped from the analysis) (Hair et al., 2010).

Empirical Results

The sample (N=248) is composed of 66% males and 47% of tourists travelled with children. Age structure is evenly distributed: 3% are up to 25 years old; 19% 26-35 years old; 47% 36-45 years old; 26% 46-55 years old; 4% 56-65 years old, and 1% 66-75 years old. The sample comprises international tourists from Norway (31%), UK (16%), Finland (14%), Denmark (13%), Russia (12%), Estonia and Latvia (5%) and others (9%). The distribution of highest education-level completed is: 1% primary school, 5% secondary school, 7% vocational school, 34% college and 51% master/doctorate degree, 2% others. Finally, 30% visited the mountain destination Åre for the first time, 13% 2 times, 17% 3-4 times, 14% 5-6 times and 26% visited the destination more often.

In order to validate the measurement constructs, Confirmatory Factor analysis was employed (AMOS ver. 21): all unstandardized and normalized loadings were statistically different from zero and t-values > 1.96 and > 0.50 (Hair et al., 2010). Overall model-fit revealed that most fit-statistics were slightly below recommended thresholds (Brown, 2006). Thus, measurement model adjustment was performed. An examination of standardized loadings (i.e. < 0.50), standardized residuals (i.e. > 2.58) and modification indices suggested the removal of three items (i.e. “Åre is a luxury winter resort”, “Åre is a famous site for international winter sports competitions”, and “Åre is known as one of the world’s top ski resorts”). Additionally, discriminant validity analysis suggested the need to increase the extracted variance value for the “Skiing” factor, which was achieved by removing the two “Safety in the ski area” and “Transportation at the mountain area (e.g., ski lifts, chair lifts, cable cars)”. The list of retained CBDBE model measurement items with respective means and standard deviations is displayed in Appendix 1.

As a result of the performed adjustments, the model-fit improved substantially: Goodness of Fit Index (GFI) = 0.852; Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA) = 0.058 (LL 0.051; UL 0.065); Standardized root mean residual (SRMR) = 0.059; Normed-Chi-Square (χ^2/df) = 1.834 (640.068/349); Tucker-Lewis Index (TLI) = 0.92; Comparative Fit Index (CFI) = 0.93; Adjusted Goodness of Fit Index (AGFI) = 0.81. Although Goodness of Fit Index (GFI = 0.852) is slightly below the recommended threshold, all other indexes satisfy cut-off requirements (Steenkamp & Baumgartner, 2000; Hair et al., 2010). Moreover, the estimated model shows satisfactory measurement results (Table 2).

Composite-Reliability (CR) supports the model as all CR-values rank above the threshold-value of 0.7 (Hair et al., 2010). All estimates are significant (i.e. t-values > 1.96) and show high values (i.e. Standardized loadings > 0.50). Moreover, Squared-Multiple-Correlation (SMC) demonstrates respectable portions. Average Variance

Extracted (AVE), ranks above recommended threshold of 0.5 (Hair et al., 2010). Finally, results confirm convergent validity, as the indicators of the latent constructs share high proportions of common variance. Overall, CFA results are satisfactory: convergent validity is confirmed, while discriminant validity is confirmed for most of the model dimensions (Table 3).

As a next step, the measurement model is transformed into a structural model to test the hypothesized relationships between the validated CBDDBE model constructs (Reisinger & Turner, 1999). A linear structural equation model (SEM) using maximum likelihood (ML) estimation is applied (Hair et al., 2010). Figure 2a displays the path diagram and shows standardized estimates and squared multiple correlations (R^2).

Table 2: CBDDBE Measurement Model: Test Statistics

Constructs	Scale Items	Composite Reliability	Standardized Loadings	t-Value (CR)	SMC	AVE
Awareness (AW)	AW1	0.85	0.871	-*	0.758	0.66
	AW2		0.898	14.326	0.807	
	AW3		0.638	10.764	0.407	
Tangible destination resources. Skiing (SKI)	SKI1	0.85	0.622	-	0.387	0.60
	SKI2		0.753	9.505	0.567	
	SKI3		0.840	10.329	0.705	
	SKI5		0.859	10.483	0.738	
Tangible destination resources. Service (SER)	SER1	0.80	0.699	-	0.489	0.50
	SER2		0.702	10.011	0.492	
	SER3		0.712	9.457	0.507	
	SER4		0.715	9.422	0.512	
Intangible destination resources (INT)	INT1	0.85	0.654	-	0.427	0.55
	INT2		0.803	10.729	0.645	
	INT3		0.875	11.019	0.766	
	INT4		0.775	10.145	0.600	
	INT6		0.538	7.528	0.289	
Social destination resources (SOC)	SOC1	0.79	0.767	-	0.589	0.50
	SOC2		0.579	8.315	0.336	
	SOC3		0.698	10.245	0.488	
	SOC4		0.754	11.439	0.568	

Customers' benefit (BEN)	BEN1	0.89	0.807	14.435	0.651	0.68
	BEN2		0.828	13.973	0.685	
	BEN3		0.854	14.696	0.729	
	BEN4		0.806	-	0.650	
Value for money (VFM)	VFM1	0.90	0.959	17.339	0.919	0.83
	VFM2		0.855	-	0.731	
Loyalty (LOY)	LOY1	0.83	0.768	-	0.589	0.61
	LOY2		0.803	12.821	0.644	
	LOY3		0.781	11.318	0.611	

*- indicates: paths fixed to one to estimate parameters

The goodness-of-fit statistics for the path model, however, do not fully satisfy the recommended thresholds (GFI = 0.773; RMSEA = 0.084 (LL 0.078; UL 0.091); SRMR = 0.21; Normed-Chi-Square (χ^2/df) = 2.76 (1002.94/363); TLI = 0.83; CFI = 0.85; AGFI = 0.73). Furthermore, not all hypothesized paths have been statistically confirmed.

Examination of modification indices revealed that the model fit can be substantially improved by allowing plausible correlations between the four destination resource dimensions. Thus, in the revised model (i.e. Figure 2b) "Skiing" (SKI), "Service" (SER), "Intangible destination resources" (INT) and "Social destination resources" (SOC) constitute the sub-dimensions of the second-order construct DRES ("Destination resources").

As a result of the performed model revision, which is fully compliant with the theory, the Goodness-of-Fit statistics of the path model reach a satisfactory level: GFI = 0.83; RMSEA = 0.065 (LL 0.058; UL 0.072); Normed-Chi-Square (χ^2/df) = 2.04 (750.65/368); SRMR = 0.077; TLI = 0.90; CFI = 0.91; AGFI = 0.80.

Table 3: Discriminant validity of the CBDBE model measurement scale

	AWAR	SKI	SERV	INT	SOC	BEN	VFM	LOY
AWAR	0.660							
SKI	0.067	0.600						
SERV	0.019	0.251	0.500					
INT	0.004	0.295	0.334	0.550				
SOC	0.019	0.323	0.714	0.456	0.500			
BEN	0.094	0.517	0.426	0.255	0.389	0.680		
VFM	0.095	0.460	0.356	0.255	0.343	0.476	0.830	
LOY	0.107	0.521	0.318	0.183	0.275	0.612	0.468	0.610

(the bold diagonal elements show AVE values; off-diagonal elements show squared correlations between model constructs)

The unstandardized loadings of the four sub-dimensions of the second-order construct “DRES” are all statistically significant, and Standardized Loadings are varying between 0.675 for “Intangible destination resources” and 0.812 for the “Social destination resources”. The AVE Value for the DRES construct amounts at 0.59 (Hair et al., 2010). All proposed relationships between the model constructs are statistically significant (Table 4). The hypothesized hierarchical structure of the CBDDBE model could be empirically confirmed, thus, the proposed approach can be considered as plausible, reliable and valid (Hair et al., 2010). However, in order to re-test the revised model the survey instrument should be improved prior to collection of a new data sample. Particularly, the perception of both, tangible, intangible, and, social destination resources should be consistently operationalized with similar scales.

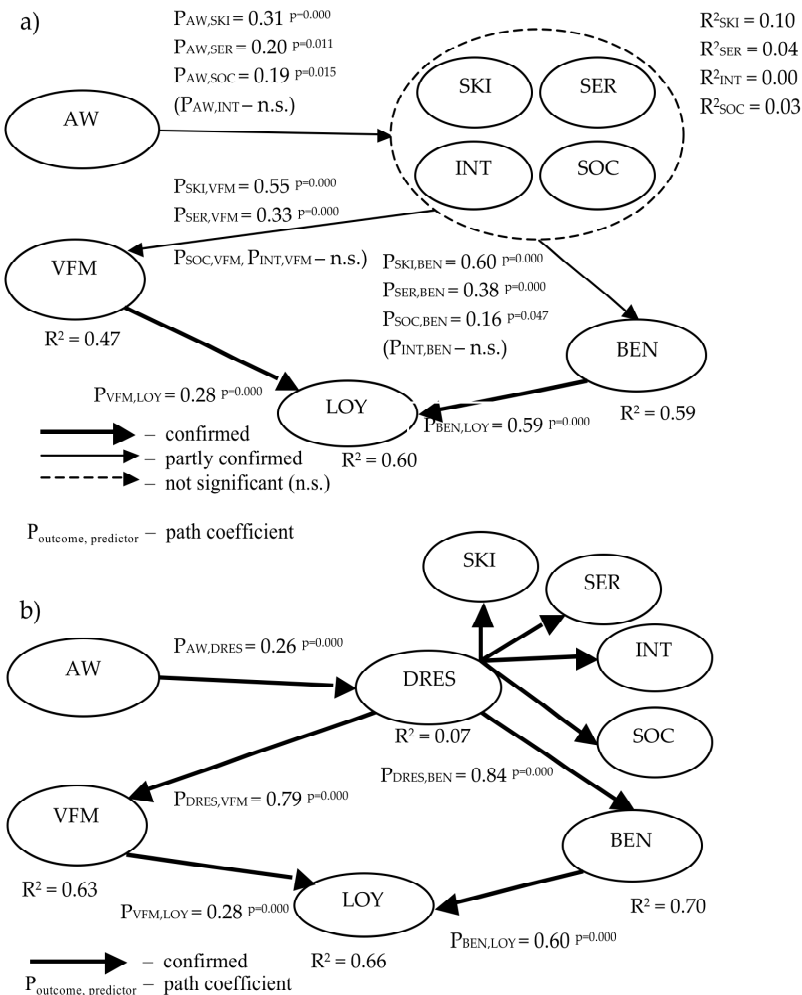


Figure 2. Standardized path estimates for the original (a) and revised (b) CBDDBE structural model

Table 4: Structural parameter estimates for the revised CBDBE model

Structural Relationships	Unstandardized	Standard	t-Value	Standardized
	Parameter Estimate	Error		Parameter Estimate
H1: AW → DRES	0.119	0.035	3.447	0.265
H2: DRES → BEN	1.192	0.148	8.045	0.841
H3: DRES → VFM	1.335	0.170	7.876	0.794
H4: BEN → LOY	0.816	0.117	6.985	0.596
H5: VFM → LOY	0.119	0.035	3.447	0.265

Conclusions, Implications and Future Research

The study at hand continues recent research on transferring the concept of customer-based brand equity into a tourism destination context (Konecnik & Gartner, 2007; Boo et al., 2009; Pike et al., 2010). Theoretical concepts of the CBBE model were revised by taking into account the co-created value-in-use of a tourism stay (Grönroos, 2000; Vargo & Lusch, 2008). Thus, the proposed approach integrates the concept of destination experience as the central component of the 'perceived destination promise' of the CBDBE model. This new dimension reflects the hierarchical levels of the destination experience, emphasizing the process of transformation of tangible, intangible, and social destination resources into customers' set of benefits from destination visitation (value-in-use).

By monitoring the brand equity dimensions, as highlighted by the proposed approach, destination management can implement brand development strategies and support customer loyalty through functional destination attributes. Moreover, destination management may evaluate and upgrade its marketing measures and discover potentials to improve destination offers by knowing those destination resources which are particularly responsible for the formation of tourists' emotional experiences (Grisaffe & Nguyen, 2011). Thus, destination managers may effectively inter-link knowledge-bases about destination resources and tourists' value-in-use. Finally, this link can be communicated through the brand. More concretely, the Swedish mountain destination of Åre identified the attributive dimensions behind emotional benefits (of destination visitation), value for money and loyalty, namely, skiing, service quality, intangible destination resources (e.g., family-friendliness, tidiness, safety), and interaction with other tourists. Put differently, the results show which experience dimensions are most important in the formation process of value co-creation and destination loyalty. Furthermore, the dimensions that make up co-created emotional value, such as fun, thrill and variety, were empirically identified. Thus, the proposed

approach allows for individual destination actors in the value-network (e.g. hotels, restaurants, activity providers) to evaluate their contribution in the creation of the total destination experience.

To conclude, the study at hand shows various limitations. First, the operationalization of the customers' benefits component of the destination brand promise emphasized the emotional value of the ski holiday, while, of course, other aspects of value-in-use, such as social value, remained outside the model. Thus, future research should improve the measurement of the complex value-in-use construct in a destination-context. The second limitation arises from testing the model only for actual visitors as it was challenging to reach potential visitors for a local destination in their sending countries, resulting in a potential bias in terms of awareness. Thirdly, although Gartner and Konecnik Ruzzier (2010) argue that in the case of repeat visitation destination awareness becomes less important, the operationalization of the awareness construct has to be improved. Thus, it should be considered that destination-based brand knowledge builds on a variety of information sources, such as brochures, media publications, travel-agencies and e-word-of-mouth from relatives, friends and the use of social media. Finally, the generalizability of the study results remains an issue. Thus, with regard to future research it is suggested to test the model separately for different markets (i.e. a-priori segments) in terms of country of origin, age groups and purpose of visitation, what especially requires efforts to increase the sample size. Since destinations are a representation of value networks (Lusch, Vargo, & Tanniru, 2010), the proposed CBDDE model is likely relevant also in a broader service context, as the focus continuously shifts from a particular firm to a value network of products, service providers, contexts, and systems which co-create the value-in-use for a particular customer.

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Appendix 1
Item statistics for the CBDBE model

Scale Items	Mean	Std. Deviation
I see a lot of ads about Åre (AW1)	3,26	1,190
I often read about Åre in newspapers and magazines (AW2)	2,96	1,145
Many people know the Åre ski resort (AW3)	3,49	1,301
Snow reliability (SK11)	4,10	0,953
Number and variety of ski slopes (SK12)	4,30	0,824
Overall quality of alpine skiing (SK13)	4,22	0,798
Overall quality of skiing experience (SK15)	4,24	0,776
Overall quality of accommodation (e.g., hotel, cabin, apartment) (SER1)	4,28	0,716
Service level of the staff in accommodation facilities (SER2)	4,18	0,765
Quality of food and beverages (SER3)	4,03	0,716
Service level of the staff in restaurants and bars (SER4)	4,04	0,783
Åre has a peaceful and restful atmosphere (INT1)	4,13	0,892
Åre is family-friendly (INT2)	4,47	0,664
Åre is clean and tidy (INT3)	4,43	0,662
Åre is safe and secure (INT4)	4,39	0,755
Landscape and scenery are beautiful in Åre (INT6)	4,44	0,674
Employees were friendly and professional (SOC1)	4,24	0,733
I liked the behaviour of other tourists (SOC2)	3,92	0,749
It was easy to interact and communicate with other tourists (SOC3)	3,91	0,764
Local people were hospitable and friendly (SOC4)	4,24	0,716
Åre is a thrilling winter destination (BEN1)	3,88	0,873
Åre offers various winter experiences (BEN2)	4,06	0,777
Åre offers fun and excitement (BEN3)	4,08	0,772
Åre brings you the joy of achievement (BEN4)	3,96	0,836
Compared to other skiing destinations, visiting Åre is good value for money (VFM1)	3,83	0,985
Overall, Åre as a skiing destination has reasonable prices (VFM2)	3,71	0,930
I will come back to Åre in winter within 2 years (LOY1)	3,83	1,199
I consider Åre to be my first choice of a ski resort (LOY2)	3,28	1,338
I will encourage friends and relatives to visit Åre in winter (LOY3)	3,98	1,018