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Consumer-based brand equity for destinations: Practical DMO performance measures

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Consumer-based brand equity for destinations: Practical DMO performance measures

Abstract

Destination marketing organizations (DMO) worldwide are increasingly focusing attention on place branding. However, there has been relatively little research on the topic reported in the academic literature. In particular there is a paucity of research regarding performance measures for destination brand campaigns. This paper reports an attempt to operationalize the concept of consumer-based brand equity (CBBE) for an emerging destination. The purpose was to provide benchmarks at the commencement of a new destination brand campaign, for which the DMO will be able to use to track performance over time.

Key Words:

Destination branding, short breaks, destination marketing organizations, consumer based brand equity, performance measures

Introduction

Although it has been argued that “good management starts with good measurement” (Aaker, 1996, p. 316), discussion about destination marketing performance measures has not been extensively reported in the tourism literature. There has been a tendency in destination marketing to focus on short run measures of performance monitoring (reference with held for refereeing purposes). This may be a function of the relatively high turnover of destination marketing staff, the expectations of government funders and other stakeholders, and a general lack of resources for long-term market research

programs. The problem appears widespread, given a number of studies have highlighted the lack of market research undertaken to monitor the outcome of destination marketing objectives in Australia (see Prosser 2000, Carson, Beattie and Gove 2003), North America (Sheehan & Ritchie 1997, Masberg 1999), and Europe (Dolnicar & Schoesser 2003).

In the emerging field of destination branding there has been little research monitoring the performance of place brand initiatives. The purpose of a brand campaign is to effectively differentiate a product/service in markets crowded with competitors and substitutes. Marketers design a brand identity, which they attempt to position in the consumer's mind in a way that fosters a favorable image. To achieve such a position represents a source of competitive advantage for the firm (Porter, 1980), while making decision making easier for the consumer (Trout & Ries, 1979). DMOs have been focusing more attention on the development of place brands since the early 1990s, with key motivating forces including (reference with held for refereeing): globalisation, increased competition, commodification of services, power of intermediaries, sophisticated consumers, and the increasing cost and divergence of media.

It has been over 50 years since the topic of branding first appeared in the marketing literature (see Gardner & Levy, 1955). Research relating to destination branding did not emerge until the late 1990s, with the first journal article published in 1998 (see Pritchard & Morgan, 1998), and the first book published in 2002 (see Morgan, Pritchard & Pride, 2002). While a growing number of academic tourism conferences have used destination marketing as a theme during the past decade (for a list of

proceedings see Pike, 2004, pp. 1-2), Gnoth (1998) claimed the special track he convened at the 1997 American Marketing Science conference represented the first meeting of practitioners and academics on the topic of destination branding. The first academic conference dedicated to the topic, held at Macau's Instituto De Formacao Turistica (IFT), took place in 2005 (see Dioko & So, 2005). The destination branding literature remains under reported. A decade ago Ritchie and Ritchie (1998, p. 89) bemoaned this dearth of research in their conceptual paper:

...we have "somehow" failed to recognize the significance of the Branding function in our efforts to increase awareness of destinations and to create the positive attitudes that are so essential to the final choice of a travel destination.

In particular there has been almost no research reported that has tracked the effectiveness of destination brand initiatives. This is despite the increasing investment in branding by destination marketing organizations (DMOs), at regional, state and national levels since the early 1990s. Curtis (2001, p.76) for example lamented the lack of ongoing perceptions research to monitor the effectiveness of Oregon's new brand campaign:

In terms of evaluation of the initial campaign, the Tourism Commission essentially took account of two factors; first the number of visitor enquiries received, and second, the number of awards won from the advertising industry for the campaign. Unfortunately, no

consumer evaluation of the image campaign, nor a critical analysis of the campaign's effectiveness was ever conducted.

The challenge of measuring marketing performance is not unique to tourism. For example, Australian Marketing Institute president Roger James (2005, p. 29) lamented the lack of mainstream media coverage about the marketing effectiveness of corporate Australia: “We see many examples of outstanding strategic marketing, yet few boards receive comprehensive information about marketing performance”. It should also be acknowledged the topic of brand metrics is also rare in the services marketing literature (Kim, Kim & An, 2003).

Of potential value to DMOs in brand effectiveness measurement is the concept of consumer-based brand equity (CBBE) introduced by Aaker (1991, 1996) and Keller (1993, 2003). CBBE provides an alternative to the financial perspective that views brand equity as a balance sheet intangible asset. Rather, CBBE is based on a perspective of equity as the value of the brand to the consumer. This consumer perspective thus provides marketers with a link between past marketing efforts and future sales performance. Long term brand success is related to the extent to which knowledge of the brand has been established by short term marketing initiatives (Keller, 1993). Opportunities exist to examine the efficacy of CBBE for destinations, as a means for DMOs to better understand the effectiveness of brand initiatives and in doing so demonstrate increased accountability to stakeholders.

Destination marketing takes place within a politically charged environment, with DMO staff accountable to government funding agencies, local tourism businesses,

travel intermediaries and host community. Pressure to change brand initiatives can be exerted by such stakeholders. For example, in 2006 a leading New Zealand regional tourism organization (RTO) was forced to curtail marketing activity when the local withdrew half of the organisation's funding (Coventry, 2006). The DMO for Valencia in Spain has been required to issue new advertising contacts every year (Pritchard & Morgan 2002), while in Louisiana, the Department of Culture, Recreation and Tourism (DCRT) has been legislated to review its advertising agency account every three years (Slater, 2002). The Morocco Tourist Board was forced to abort a new brand campaign that had the support of local tourism operators but was resisted by key intermediaries (Vial 1997, in Morgan & Pritchard 1998). Also, the author was present at an RTO meeting where the decision to change the place brand was based, not on any market research, but by the influence of one tourism operator. It is suggested CBBE measures could be analysed at various points in time to track any strengthening or weakening of market perceptions, in relation to brand objectives. A standard CBBE instrument could provide long-term effectiveness performance measures regardless of changes in DMO staff, advertising agency, other stakeholders, and budget. The purpose of this paper is to report the trial of CBBE measurement for destinations.

Literature review

The most often cited definition of a brand is that proposed by Aaker (1991, p.7):

... a distinguishing name and/or symbol (such as a logo, trademark, or package design) intended to identify the goods or services of either

one seller or a group of sellers, and to differentiate those goods from those of competitors.

It is important to recognise that a brand is much more than simply the presentation of such symbols in promotions. Aaker suggested a brand should be viewed from both the supply and demand perspectives. As an example, in a key note address to the 2003 *Taking Tourism to the Limits* conference at the University of Waikato, John Urry used a demand-side perspective when he suggested brands were ‘collective hallucinations’. It is therefore important to recognise the distinction between brand identity and brand image. The former is the image desired by the marketers, while that latter is the actual image held by consumers. Market research is required to determine the congruence of brand image with brand identity.

Aaker (1991) defined brand equity as brand assets and liabilities that add or detract value to a firm and/or its companies. High levels of brand equity can result in increased sales, price premiums, customer loyalty, (Aaker, 1991), lower costs (Keller, 1993), and purchase intent (Cobb-Walgren, Beal & Donthu, 1995). In relation to purchase intent, strong favourability by consumers represents an indicator of future market performance, which has implications for the financial value of the brand. An important impact of branding has been on the balance sheet of firms . Given the difficulty for new brands to gain market dominance, the purchase price of well known brands will include a premium, in the form of goodwill or brand equity. The most common method of placing a value on this intangible brand asset value is by net present value of future earning potential versus that which would be achieved for a non-branded product (for example see www.interbrand.com).

CBBE is based on the view that indicators of market attitudes and behavior toward a brand underpin any financial valuation of brand equity on the balance sheet. The CBBE model appears relevant to DMO stakeholders, for which the financial measure of a destination brand would be of little practical value to stakeholders. The exception is potential licensing opportunities for well established place brands such as 'I ♥ NY'. In terms of brand performance measures, the concept of CBBE offers a structured approach for adaptation by DMOs to identify the extent to which brand identity and image are related, and therefore indicators of future market performance. Keller (1993) described CBBE as a function of brand awareness and brand image. Following Aaker (1991, 1996), Keller (1993, 2003), and the hierarchy of effects (see Lavidge & Steiner, 1961). CBBE for a destination is conceptualized as a hierarchy of brand salience, brand associations, brand resonance and brand loyalty.

Brand salience is the foundation of the hierarchy, which rather than general awareness represents the strength of the destination's presence in the mind of the target when a given travel context is considered. After all, awareness is simply the ticket to enter the market, with consumers aware of countless destinations. A consumer's attitude towards products can vary depending on the purchase situation (Miller & Ginter, 1979), in the same way attitude towards a destination will likely depend on the type of travel occasion (Crompton, 1992). Salience concerns unaided top of mind for a consumer, rather than that which can be recalled or recognized as a result of prompting such as point of sale collateral. There is a body of literature (initiated by Woodside & Sherrell 1977) suggesting the number of destinations a

traveler will actually consider in the purchase process is limited to four plus or minus two destinations. These destinations in the decision set represent *brand salience*.

Brand associations are anything linked in memory to the destination. Therefore, it is important to be remembered for the right reasons. Since destination attractiveness is a function of the benefits desired by a traveler and the ability of the destination to provide them (reference with held), associations need to be measured in terms of attributes deemed determinant for a given travel context. Destination image is arguably the most published topic in the tourism literature. Extensive reviews (see Chon 1990, Echtner & Ritchie 1991, Pike 2002, Gallarza, Saura, & Garcia 2002) show the most popular measurement approach is structured surveys using scales of cognitive attributes and affective benefits.

Brand resonance represents a willingness to engage with the destination. This can be viewed in terms of visitation or at least stated intent to visit. The highest level of the hierarchy is *brand loyalty*, a topic that has received little attention in the tourism literature despite its importance. Loyalty is represented by repeat visitation and word of mouth (WOM) recommendations. In this way the CBBE hierarchy incorporates perceptual and behavioral measures. There has been criticism in the marketing literature of what has been failure in market research to link attitudinal data with measures of actual behaviour (see Schultz & Schultz, 2004).

Most of the destination branding papers published since 1998 have a strong practical focus on reporting the brand development process (see for example Crockett & Wood 1999, Curtis 2001, Hall 1999, Morgan, Pritchard & Pride 2002, Pride 2002). Other

than Curtis' report on the development of Oregon's brand during the 1980s and 1990s, there has been little analysis of the effectiveness of destination brands over time. To date there has been little published about i) how an emerging destination can develop a brand as a means for establishing a differentiated identity (Pritchard & Morgan, 1998), and ii) what performance indicators may be used to measure the performance of a brand campaign. These are significant research gaps given the complex nature of branding a multi-attributed place in heterogeneous markets (reference with held for refereeing). This paper reports the attempt to use CBBE as a brand performance measure for an emerging destination in the state of Queensland, Australia.

There are 14 tourism regions officially recognised and supported by the state tourism organization (STO), Tourism Queensland (see www.tq.com.au). The STO provides financial and human resources to each RTO for the development of destination brands. In recent years most RTOs have developed new brand campaigns for use in the Brisbane market. Brisbane, the state capital, is the most important market in terms of visitor arrivals for numerous contiguous destinations in Queensland and northern New South Wales. The paper focuses on the Coral Coast, which has been categorized by the STO as an 'emerging destination'. It has been suggested "for peripheral and especially for poor and developing places, branding is not an indulgence but a crucial statecraft" (Pritchard, 2005). Situated approximately 350 kilometers north of Brisbane, the 'Coral Coast' label, which does not yet exist on many maps, was introduced by the Burnett Shire Council to capitalize on the region's greatest strength, which is an undeveloped coastline at the southern starting point of the Great Barrier Reef (see www.coralcoast.org). The foundation of a brand is its name (Keller, 2003),

and the destination brand name introduced in 2003 by the RTO, Bundaberg Region Ltd, is 'Bundaberg, Coral Coast and Country', which recognizes the geographic diversity of a region covering 26,000 square kilometres, including a large rural hinterland, for which Bundaberg (population 45,000) is the largest city, and 11 shire councils.

The travel context of the study was narrowed to short break holidays by car for residents of Brisbane. While there is no universally accepted definition of a short break in the tourism literature, the most common is a trip of 1-3 nights duration (Edgar, 2001). However, this potentially misses those taking a break of four or five nights, which may not be viewed as the annual holiday. Following White (2000) a short break is for this research defined as a non-business trip of between one and five nights away from home. In other parts of the world, short breaks have emerged as one of the fastest growing travel segments in recent years, but there has been little research attention in Australasia, even though almost two decades ago, Mackay's (1988) analysis of Australian's attitudes towards travel identified 'mini breaks' as one of seven major opportunities for tourism and travel marketers. The lack of attention in the tourism literature towards Australian domestic short breaks is surprising given the importance of drive tourism in Australia, where BTR (2002) estimated 76% of domestic travel is undertaken by car. Intrastate drive tourism is also significant, with 70% traveling within the state of residence. The mean length of stay for these travelers was three nights. In Queensland, BTR estimated short breaks of 1-3 nights represented 68% of the drive market, while short tours of 4-7 nights represented a further 19%. There has been little if any growth in Australian domestic visitor nights in recent years, which has been attributed to a trend towards longer working hours and

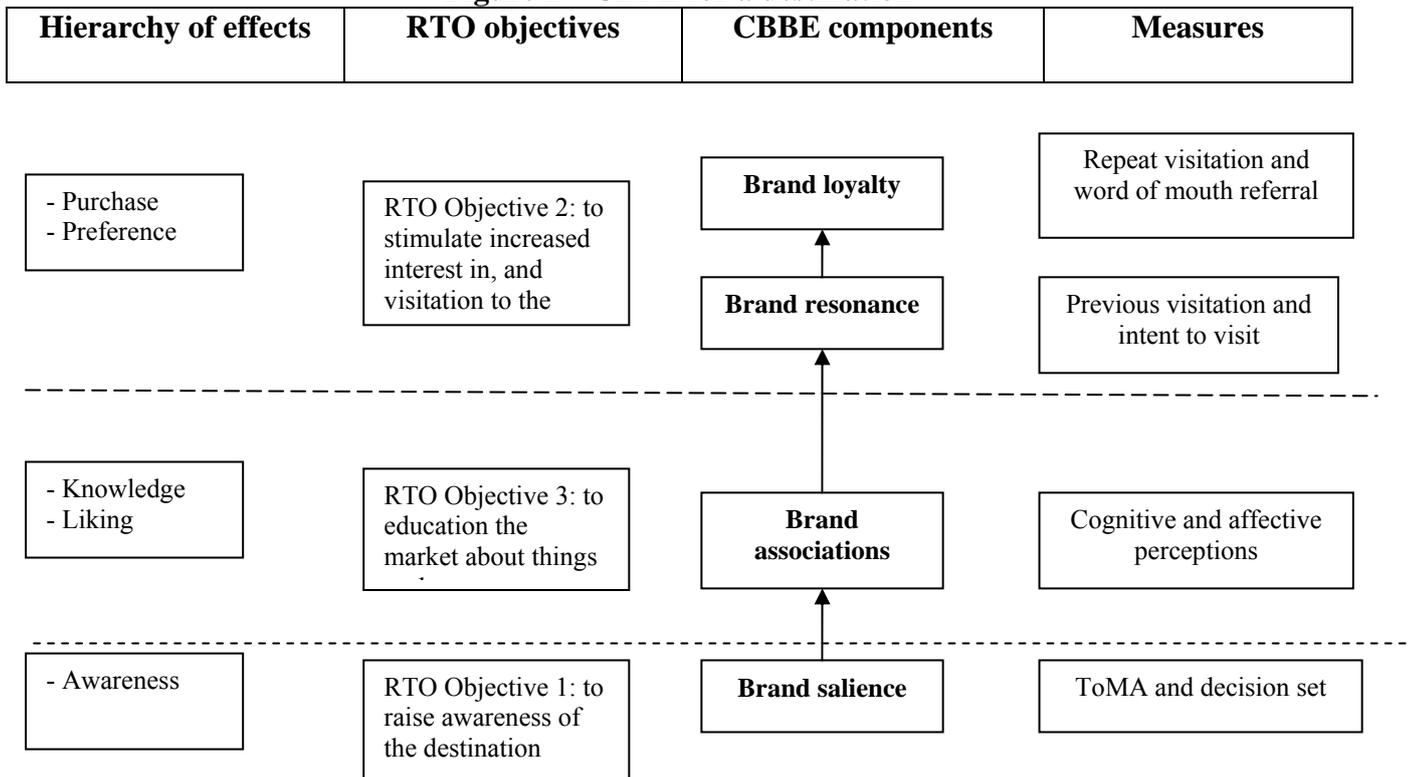
increasing competition for leisure time (Tourism Forecasting Council, 2000, 2001). TFC forecast total domestic visitor nights to increase by 0.3% annually until 2012. However, the past and forecast growth rate of short breaks is less clear within published aggregated data associated with domestic tourism.

Exploratory research undertaken by Tourism Queensland during 2002 found that while Bundaberg had strong name recognition in the Brisbane market as the home of Bundaberg Rum and Bundaberg Ginger Ale, the region lacked a clear identity as a tourism destination. Consumer focus groups suggested three key barriers to visiting the region were the perception there was ‘nothing to do’, the driving distance, and lack of nightlife, restaurants, cafes and shopping (Tourism Queensland, 2003). In response to these findings, a new destination brand was launched in February 2003. For most destinations a positioning slogan is a key component of the brand campaign, with the purpose being to link the destination in memory to important travel associations. The new positioning theme was ‘Take time to Discover Bundaberg, Coral Isles and Country’. The objectives of the new brand were i) to raise awareness of the destination, ii) to stimulate increased interest in, and visitation to the region, and iii) educate the market about things to do. This purpose of this research project, which was undertaken independently of Tourism Queensland, was to provide structured data that the RTO could use to monitor the effectiveness of the brand campaign over time, relative to the objectives. It was felt CBBE could be adapted to suit this aim.

Figure 1 shows the links between the proposed CBBE, hierarchy of effects, the proposed operational measures, and the RTO objectives. High levels of brand

awareness (salience) and brand image (associations) should increase the probability of brand choice (resonance and loyalty). Thus CBBE enables DMOs to monitor the impact of marketing initiatives on brand value to the consumer.

Figure 1 – CBBE for a destination



Researchers have assumed a range of dependent variables as measures of brand equity. These have for example included financial performance (see Kim, Kim & An, 2003), market share (see Mackay, 2001), and a composite scale of stated preferences (see Washburn & Plank, 2002). Correlations between independent and dependent variables are then used to indicate validity of the CBBE model. However, in this case financial performance is not practical and there is no data on market share in the Brisbane short break holiday market. Short break visitors are generally captured within aggregate domestic data. A limitation of the study therefore is that it is not

possible to test relationships between the proposed CBBE measures and a dependent variable representative of CBBE.

Methods

The research took place during the Autumn months of April to June 2003. Autumn in subtropical Brisbane provides ample opportunities for domestic short breaks by car including school and university holidays, Queensland Labour Day, Easter weekend and ANZAC day public holiday. April is the second most popular holiday month in Australia (BTR, 2002).

The project was of a longitudinal design, which is rare in the tourism literature (Oppermann, 1995). The first of two questionnaires was mailed to a systematic random sample of 3000 Brisbane households during March 2003. *Brand salience* was operationalized by using two unaided questions to elicit the top of mind awareness (ToMA) destination and decision set composition, in the context of short breaks by car. Other items were used to explore the characteristics of short breaks, including the importance of short breaks, the number of short breaks taken per year, the likelihood of taking a short break within the next three months, maximum comfortable drive time, and a battery of 36 destination attribute importance items. Twenty attributes were selected from a previous investigation of short breaks in New Zealand that involved personal interviews with consumers using Repertory Grid, and interviews with tourism decision makers. These were supplemented with a further 16 attributes selected from published studies that featured an Australian focus. Participants were offered an incentive prize of a short break holiday at a mystery destination, and advised that a second and final questionnaire would be sent to them in July. A total of

523 completed questionnaires were received, representing a useable response rate of 19%. This was considered a satisfactory response given the request to participate in a second questionnaire. Characteristics of participants, which are show in Table 1, were generally similar to those of the Brisbane census population. However, there was a higher ratio of females and a lower level aged 18-24 years.

Table 1 - Characteristics of Participants

		n	Valid %
Gender	Male	199	38.0%
	Female	324	62.0%
	Total	521	
	Missing	2	
Age	18-24	16	3.1%
	25-44	212	40.6%
	45-64	244	46.7%
	65+	50	9.6%
	Total	522	
Missing	1		
Annual household income	Less than \$78,000	372	73.2%
	\$78,000 or more	136	26.8%
	Total	508	
	Missing	15	
Marital status	Single	57	10.9%
	Married/permanent partner	395	75.7%
	Separated, divorced, widowed	70	13.4%
	Total	522	
	Missing	1	
Number of dependent children	0	283	54.1%
	1-2	182	34.8%
	3+	56	10.7%
	Total	521	
	Missing	2	
Highest level of education	High school	211	40.6%
	TAFE	123	23.7%
	University graduate	164	31.5%
	Other	22	4.2%
	Total	520	
	Missing	3	

The second questionnaire was mailed to the 486 stage one participants who agreed to participate in stage two. Again, an incentive prize of a short break holiday at a mystery destination was offered. This resulted in 308 completed questionnaires, representing a useable response rate of 63%. To measure *brand associations*, participants were asked to rate the perceived performance of a competitive set of five destinations selected from the decision set findings of the first questionnaire, across 13 cognitive scale items, and two affective scale items. The cognitive items were selected from the results of the first questionnaire. The two affective scales were selected following Russel, Ward and Pratt (1981) who suggested two dimensions, 'sleepy/arousing' and 'unpleasant/pleasant', could be sufficient to measure affect towards environments. These two dimensions have been supported by Walmsley and Jenkins (1993) and Hanyu (1993). *Brand resonance* was measured by asking participants to list any destinations visited for a short break since the first questionnaire, to list the preferred destination for their next short break, and to indicate the likelihood of visiting each of the five destinations within the next 12 months. A separate paper (reference withheld for referring purposes) reports the longitudinal nature of the decision sets, stated intent and actual travel.

Results

In the first questionnaire, participants indicated a strong familiarity with this type of holiday, indicating a mean of three short breaks per year. Sixty one per cent had taken a short break during the previous three months. The unaided awareness question in the first questionnaire elicited a total of 86 ToMA destinations from participants. For reporting succinctness the list has been categorized in Table 2 by RTO geographic boundary. The most popular destination region was the Sunshine Coast, which was

listed by almost half of the sample (45%). Only 11 participants (2%) listed Coral Coast destinations as their ToMA destination.

Table 2 – Unaided ToMA destinations

Region	Frequency	Valid Percent
Sunshine Coast	231	45.1%
Gold Coast	96	18.8%
Northern New South Wales	57	11.1%
Fraser Coast	33	6.4%
Darling Downs	20	3.9%
Brisbane/Moreton Bay islands	17	3.3%
Coral Coast	11	2.1%
Discovery Coast	7	1.4%
Capricorn Coast	7	1.4%
Other New South Wales	6	1.2%
Other	27	5.3%
Missing	11	
Total	523	

The mean number of destinations listed in decision sets was 3.8, with two thirds of participants indicating a range of between two and four destinations. This is consistent with the overseas literature on destination decision sets. Including the ToMA destinations, over 120 places were elicited from participants. This clearly indicates the range of available destinations, and therefore competition, is extensive. Practically, the decision set size and composition has serious implications for those destinations not listed, such as the Coral Coast, given half of the sample indicated a likelihood of taking a short break within the next three months. These destinations are less likely to be considered in the selection process. Coral Coast destinations were listed 58 times in decision sets, although not necessarily by 58 different participants. The findings highlight a major weakness of the destination in terms of *brand salience*, which is the foundation of the CBBE model.

While the Coral Coast did not rate well in terms of unaided awareness, more favourable results emerged when participants were prompted to recall the destination. Table 3 shows the perceived performance of the Coral Coast in the second questionnaire across the cognitive attributes was generally favorable. The Cronbach alpha for the 13 Coral Coast attribute performance items was .93. With the exception of one attribute, 'within a comfortable drive', the means were above the scale midpoint. However, this attribute may play a major role in decision making given the mean maximum comfortable drive time to a short break destination indicated by participants was four hours. This is about the minimum driving time to the Coral Coast from Brisbane's northern suburbs. Indeed the results identified a strong correlation between 'within a comfortable drive' and likelihood of visiting (.5, $p < .001$). From a positioning perspective, of the competitive set of destinations, the Coral Coast rated highest on one attribute – 'relaxing, uncrowded and not touristy', and second equal for 'friendly locals' and 'good value for money'. For the two affect items the Coral Coast was rated the most 'sleepy' of the five destinations, which could be keeping with the leadership position held on the cognitive attributes 'relaxing' and 'friendly locals'. However, correlations between these items were weak. While the destination was rated favorably on the 'pleasant' dimension, the mean of 5.0 was the lowest of the competitive set of destinations.

Table 3 – Brand associations

Cognitive attributes	Mean Coral Coast performance	Std.	Rank of Coral Coast in competitive set
Pleasant climate	5.9	1.1	4
Good fishing and boating	5.7	1.3	3
Relaxing, uncrowded and not touristy	5.6	1.2	1
Good value for money	5.5	1.1	2 =
A safe destination	5.5	1.4	4
Places for walking and experiencing nature	5.4	1.2	4
Friendly locals	5.4	1.3	2 =
Suitable accommodation	5.2	1.3	5
Good beaches	5.1	1.6	5
Lots to see and do	5.0	1.3	5
High levels of service	4.9	1.2	4
Good cafes and restaurants	4.7	1.3	4
Within a comfortable drive	3.6	1.7	5
Affective attributes			
Sleepy/arousing	3.8	1.4	5
Unpleasant/pleasant	5.0	1.3	5

Significantly, 92 per cent of participants had previously visited their ToMA destination. However, while 51 per cent of stage two participants indicated having visited the Coral Coast during the previous five years, the mean likelihood of visiting the Coral Coast within the next year was 3.0. This was the lowest of the competitive set of destinations, following the Sunshine Coast (6.0), Gold Coast (5.5), Northern New South Wales (4.3), and Fraser Coast (3.9). These findings suggest a low level of *brand resonance* in terms of an indicator of future performance.

At the time of writing, key results had been presented to four tourism-related organizations in the Coral Coast region: Bundaberg Region Ltd, Burnett Shire Council's Tourism Industry Advisory Group, the Coral Coast Chamber of Commerce and Tourism, and the Bargara Progress Association. The results were of concern, but,

given the exploratory findings of the STO's consumer focus groups, were not a complete surprise to the local tourism community. As a result of the research Bundaberg Region Ltd changed the focus of its domestic marketing plan in 2004 to position the destination in the Brisbane market as "an attractive, accessible and affordable short-break destination" (www.tq.com.au). Also, results were presented to the management of ten competing RTOs, where it was found the results represented the first data on short break holiday perceptions. Since four of these destinations had recently developed new brands, the data therefore provides benchmarks for each to track the future effectiveness of the campaigns in this market over time. It is planned to conduct a future survey to track any changes in CBBE for the competitive set of destinations.

Conclusions

DMOs are increasingly engaging in place branding in the attempt to differentiate from competing destinations. A destination brand comprises the supply-side desired identity and the demand-side image of the destination held by the consumer.

Therefore a model of brand equity is required for DMOs as a means of measuring the effectiveness of this investment. The paper reports the attempt to measure CBBE for an emerging destination. The results provide measures of brand salience, brand associations and brand resonance for a competitive set of destinations in their most important market, in the context of short breaks by car. While the focus of the research has been benchmarking CBBE for an emerging destination, it is suggested the CBBE model offers a practical and structured approach towards measuring performance of branding initiatives by DMOs, at all levels, in other parts of the world. There is a growing view that branding is the core of marketing strategy, and that all

short term marketing initiatives should focus on developing favourable *brand salience* and *brand associations* in the long term (Keller, 1993). Linking the brand's attributes to consumer needs will lead to enhanced *brand resonance*.

For the Coral Coast, the results indicate the destination held weak CBBE in its most important market at the time of the launch of a new brand campaign. While the hierarchy of *brand salience*, *brand associations* and *brand resonance* does not provide a single measure of CBBE, the structure of the results does provide indicators, related to the brand campaign objectives, for which the effectiveness of future promotional activity can be evaluated. For example, the first objective of the new destination brand campaign was to increase awareness of the region. *Brand salience* is the foundation of the hierarchy. In the hierarchy, this was operationalized through unaided ToMA/decision set questions to measure salience rather than simply awareness per se. The second objective was to stimulate interest in and travel to the destination. *Brand resonance* was operationalised by stated intent to visit for the next 12 months and actual visitation. While half of the sample had visited the destination in the previous five years, the stated intent to visit was the lowest of the competitive set of destinations. The results clearly highlight the challenge facing the destination in what is a crowded and competitive market. The third objective was to educate consumers about what there is to see and do. *Brand associations* were measured by asking participants to rate the performance of a competitive set of destinations across a list of determinant attributes. The attribute-based approach of the CBBE model enables destination marketers to identify positioning opportunities for competitive advantage. This is underpinned by *brand salience* and ultimately reflected in *brand resonance* and *brand loyalty*. An understanding of each is required to understand the

level and sources of CBBE. In this way the model is generic and applicable to different types of destinations across different travel contexts. The results highlighted a positioning opportunity on the attributes 'relaxing', 'good value' and 'friendly locals'. These could be used more explicitly in future brand promotions, since the easiest route to the mind is to reinforce positively held perceptions rather than to attempt to try to change opinions. Repeating the methodology at a future point in time will enable an effective assessment of success for each of the destination's three brand objectives. For an emerging destination with very little formal market research, it is suggested the hierarchy provides an important means of accountability to stakeholders.

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