

Abstract

The research aim of this study is to contribute 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 recently developed by service marketing scholars (Grönroos, 2000, 2009; Vargo & Lusch, 2004a, 2008a). By doing so it is proposed that the core component of the revised CBBE model consists of customers' evaluation of the destination promise in terms of the transformation of tangible, intangible and social destination resources into tourists' value-in-use defined as the benefits, tourists are promised to receive in the result of tourism service consumption processes (Gnoth, 2007).

Furthermore, it is proposed that destination brand awareness influences the evaluation of the destination promise, which, in turn, affects both behavioural intentions and the actual behaviour of tourists towards the destination. The proposed CBBE model was empirically tested for international visitors of the leading Swedish ski resort of Åre. Data was collected by employing a web-questionnaire. The measurement model has been validated by considering construct reliability, indicator reliability and discriminant validity (Brown, 2006). Hypothesized relationships between the constructs of the proposed CBBE model have been tested using a linear structural equation modelling (SEM) approach (Byrne, 2001).

To sum up, exemplarily for a Swedish ski destination, the paper shows 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 innovation potentials for highly experiential tourism products.