

Towards a Conceptual Framework for Tourists' Destination Knowledge and Loyalty

Introduction

Branding has become the buzzword of both academic and business communities in recent years. Traditionally, our knowledge regarding the power of brands has primarily focused on commercial goods and services (e.g., banks, insurance companies). However, the impacts of brands on place, more specifically, as tourism locales, has not been fully explored. In the meantime, destination marketers are constantly seeking effective strategies to position themselves favorably against their competitors and to communicate with (potential) tourists efficiently. Thus, both knowledge inquiry and strategic needs have given rise to an emerging stream of research on destination branding (Cai, 2002; Morgan, Pritchard, & Pride, 2004).

The American Marketing Association defined a brand as “a name, term, sign, symbol, or design, or a combination of these intended to identify the goods or services of one seller or group of sellers and to differentiate them from those of competition” (cited in Kotler & Armstrong, 2001, p. 301). Branding is thus the efforts “to create, maintain, protect, and enhance” (Kotler & Armstrong, 2001, p. 301) one particular brand to secure sustainable competitive advantage.

Marketing scholars have long emphasized the importance of branding (e.g., Allison & Uhl, 1964; Gardner & Levy, 1955). Many have approached branding issues from a strategic perspective, where managing and leveraging brands is viewed as a marketing strategy to sustain competitive advantage. Research topics falling into this domain include

the management of brand equity (Aaker, 1991, 1992), brand extension (Broniarczyk & Alba, 1994; Keller & Aaker, 1992), brand personality (Aaker, 1997), and so on.

Another group of researchers have attempted to investigate how customers process, utilize, and respond to brand-related information. Their research questions thus become:

(1) What do consumers know about a brand?; and (2) How is this knowledge influenced by and associated with other factors? (Keller, 2003). Along this thread of research, at least two research streams have emerged: customers' brand knowledge, and brand loyalty.

While numerous papers have been published on these two respective issues, few studies have investigated their connections beyond intuitive assertions (Aaker, 1992; Lessig, 1973). Even fewer have tried to extend the discussion in a tourism destination context (Cai, 2002), where the "brandability" of destinations has only been recently realized (Morgan et al., 2004). Put simply, in both general marketing and tourism literature, there still lacks discussion on the role of customers' brand knowledge in their loyalty building, despite the apparent conceptual connection. The present paper follows the consumer-based line of brand research, and tries to associate brand knowledge with brand loyalty via a multidisciplinary approach. Of particular interest is the predictive power of repeat visitors' destination knowledge on their future brand choice. Specifically, the purpose of this paper is three-fold:

- To provide a conceptualization of destination knowledge, building on extant branding and destination image studies;
- To discuss the relationship between tourist destination knowledge and loyalty by reviewing and bridging related literature; and

— To shed some preliminary light on brand knowledge and loyalty measurement and management.

Conceptual Framework

This section focuses on the conceptual constituents of destination knowledge and tourist destination loyalty. Keller's (1993) work on customer-based brand equity and extant tourism literature on destination image provide the theoretical foundation for our conceptualization of tourists' destination knowledge. For destination loyalty, the authors also resort to tourism, hospitality, and leisure literature. Figure 1 presents a general framework for the relationship between destination knowledge and destination loyalty. Based on this framework, a model depicting detailed relationships between the two constructs and the interrelationships among their components is proposed.

INSERT FIGURE 1 ABOUT HERE

Destination knowledge

Keller (2003) defined consumer brand knowledge as all descriptive and evaluative brand-related information stored in a consumer's memory. He maintained that brand knowledge is multi-dimensional as it incorporates all kinds of personal meaning that consumers associate with a brand. Broadly speaking, this includes brand awareness, attributes, benefits, images, thoughts, feelings, attitudes, experiences, and so on. Brand knowledge is the source and antecedent of brand equity (Keller, 2003), which is "the sum of factors (or 'dimensions') contributing to a brand's value in the consumer's mind" (Konecnik & Gartner, 2007, p. 401).

More specifically, Keller (1993, 1998) conceptualized brand knowledge in terms of two major components: brand awareness and brand image, based on the "associative

network memory model” constructed by cognitive psychologists (Anderson, 1983). Basically, consumers’ brand knowledge is considered as part of their long-term memory, which is conceptually modeled as a network with each unit as a node and the connections between nodes as links (Anderson, 1983). Under the guideline of the FRAN (“Free Recall Associative Network”) metaphor, a brand (in the form of a name, logo, or other representations) is one node in memory, and brand associations are various informational nodes linked with one brand node (Keller, 1998). Thus, the ease and likelihood of memory retrieval (brand awareness) and the favorability, strength, and uniqueness of the associations between nodes in the memory network (brand image) distinguish brands from each other.

Building on a strong legacy of destination image studies, tourism destination branding research has started to adopt Keller’s conceptualization (Cai, 2002). Consistent with Cai (2002), this paper defines destination branding as the identification and management of a consistent set of brand elements through positive destination image building and awareness creation.

Destination Awareness

Brand awareness refers to “what someone knows or thinks they know about a destination” (Konecnik & Gartner, 2007, p. 403). Destination awareness is not simply whether consumers have heard about a destination, but the likelihood the destination will appear in tourists’ destination choice set (Crompton, 1992).

Different brands vary in their brand awareness in terms of both their depth and breadth (Keller, 1998; Hoeffler & Keller, 2002). Depth of brand awareness is represented by how likely a brand element (brand name, logo, symbol, or else) will come to mind and

the ease of such occurring. Higher depth of destination awareness means potential tourists are more likely to think of a certain destination over others in travel planning. For instance, many American tourists may easily think of Orlando, Florida when planning a family vacation. The breadth of destination awareness, on the other hand, is the range of travel purposes in which the destination name may come to mind (Keller, 1998). Higher breadth of brand awareness means potential tourists will think of certain destination across a variety of settings whenever appropriate. For instance, Las Vegas may appear in the consideration set of tourists who are planning a gaming tour, a gourmet tour, a conference and convention tour, a shopping tour, etc.

According to Keller (1993), a high-level brand awareness is related to at least three things: (1) the representativeness of the brand in its product category (i.e., when customers think of one product, how likely they will think of that particular brand); (2) the membership of the brand in consumers' choice set when making a purchase decision (i.e., whether that brand is one of a pool of consumers' brand options under consideration), and (3) the formation and strength of brand association in image building (i.e., brand awareness provides the possibility of image formation).

Some tourism researchers have adopted the concept of brand awareness in their studies. For instance, Ritchie and Smith (1991) reported dramatically increased levels of awareness and a substantially modified image of Calgary because of the 1988 Calgary Olympic Winter Games. Other scholars have also explored the role of destination awareness in travelers' decision making processes (Oppermann, 1998; Woodside & Carr, 1988).

Destination Image

Keller (1993, p. 3) defined brand image as “perceptions about a brand as reflected by the brand associations held in consumer memory”, while brand associations are in turn defined as “the other informational nodes linked to the brand node in memory and contain the meaning of the brand for consumers.” He further pointed out that there exist three major categories of brand associations: attributes, benefits, and attitudes. Brand attributes are descriptive features characterizing a product. Brand benefits are the personal values and meanings attached to the attributes, and brand attitudes are consumers’ overall evaluations of a brand.

As indicated earlier, tourism destination image (TDI) have drawn substantial research attention in the past three decades (Cai, 2002; Gallarza, Saura, & Garciaet, 2002; Ritchie, 1996). Although little consensus has been reached on the definition of TDI, most researchers seem to agree that destination image is the overall perception/impression of a place (Ahmed, 1996; Bigné, Sánchez, & Sánchez, 2001). For instance, Fakeye and Crompton (1991, p. 10) maintained that image is “the mental construct developed by a potential visitor on the basis of a few selected impressions”, and it is “the total perception of the destination...” Despite the lack of cognitive psychology connotation, this view loosely mirrors Keller’s definition of brand image. It can thus be argued that tourism and marketing scholars share similar thoughts on what image is.

Interestingly, conceptualizations of image components similar to Keller’s typology have emerged in the tourism literature. Gartner (1993, p. 193) posited that destination image is “formed by three distinctly different but hierarchically interrelated components: cognitive, affective, and conative.” A perusal of this model reveals that this typology is

parallel to Keller's attributes/ benefits/ attitudes categories (Cai, 2002), though more consistently and indigenously grounded in the tourism literature. The current paper hence adopted Gartner's conceptualization of destination image, and divides destination image into cognitive, affective, and conative dimensions. Keller's brand image conceptualization, as well as other TDI literature will also be considered when necessary, to enrich and clarify Gartner's model.

Specifically, cognitive image refers to the beliefs or knowledge about a destination's attributes, whereas affective image is one's feeling and attachment to the destination (Echtner & Ritchie, 1991; Baloglu & Brinberg, 1997). In Gartner's terms (1993, p. 196), conative image is "analogous to behavior" as it is the "action component" of image. Eventually, the cognitive (beliefs) and affective (feelings) evaluations, and arguably together with the conative evaluations, form an overall image of the destination (Baloglu & McCleary, 1999a).

Destination loyalty

Brand loyalty has been an important research issue among marketing scholars for decades, and has received renewed interest in recent years. This is partly due to the emergence of the relationship marketing paradigm (Gronroos, 1994; Sheth & Parvatiyar, 1995). Hospitality and tourism scholars have also prioritized "loyalty" as a subject of special practical importance for research (Iwasaki & Havitz, 1998; Shoemaker & Lewis, 1999).

Loyalty used to be interpreted naively as synonymous with repeat purchase. Day (1969) argued that genuine loyalty is consistent purchase behavior rooted in positive attitudes toward the brand. His two-dimensional (i.e., attitudinal and behavioral)

conceptualization of loyalty suggested a simultaneous consideration of attitudinal loyalty (the psychological commitment to a brand) and behavioral loyalty (behavioral consistency in using a brand). A number of later researchers operationalized loyalty from this composite approach (Dick & Basu, 1994; Iwasaki & Havitz, 1998; Petrick, 2004; Pritchard, 1991).

In the leisure and recreation field, Backman and Crompton (1991) conceptualized psychological attachment and behavioral consistency as two dimensions of loyalty. Psychological attachment is one's affective response and general attitude toward a certain brand, whereas behavioral consistency assesses such things as intention of repurchase and intensity of purchase. Based on respondents' score on these two dimensions, four segments of individuals can be found, including low loyalty, latent loyalty, spurious loyalty, and high loyalty. Subsequent tourism and leisure studies have evidenced support of this operationalization (Backman & Veldkamp, 1995; Baloglu, 2001). A recent stream of research on tourist destination loyalty (Kozak, Huan, & Beaman, 2002; Niininen & Riley, 2003; Oppermann, 1999) has since adopted this typology.

A General Framework

The above discussion introduced the composition of brand knowledge and brand loyalty respectively. Previous literature has suggested that brand knowledge, in terms of brand awareness and image, could strengthen brand loyalty (Aaker, 1992; Keller, 1998). For instance, Keller (1993, p. 8) asserted that "high levels of brand awareness and a positive brand image should increase the probability of brand choice, as well as produce greater consumer (and retailer) loyalty and decrease vulnerability to competitive marketing actions." Aaker (1992) maintained that five brand equity assets (brand loyalty, brand

awareness, perceived brand quality, brand image/associations, and other proprietary assets) are sources of the value that brand equity creates for brand-owners. He suggested that in some cases (though not always), loyalty can be influenced by or result from brand awareness and brand image, as well as other brand equity assets. A general framework is hence developed based on the linkage between destination knowledge and loyalty (see Figure 1), and the following section will further pursue this idea.

Proposed Conceptual Model and Measurement

Proposed Construct Relationships

Despite the extensive interests on destination image, explaining the dynamic formation process of destination image remains a challenge (Baloglu & McCleary, 1999a; Gallarza et al., 2002). Baloglu and McCleary's study (1999a, p. 890) supported the idea that an overall image is formed as a result of both perceptual/cognitive evaluations and affective evaluations, although affect was found to serve more likely "as an intervening variable between perceptual/cognitive evaluations and overall image." However, both their conceptual and empirical tests defined destination image as a two-dimensional structure (cognitive and affective), while the conative dimension of image was not included in their investigation.

Despite the controversy on whether destination image is a two-dimensional (i.e., cognitive and affective) or three-dimensional (i.e., cognitive, affective, and conative) construct, TDI researchers seem to have agreed that there exists a hierarchical relationship between different components of image. Research has found that cognitive image establishes a foundation for further affective appraisals, and that both cognitive and affective image lead to overall image (Baloglu & McCleary, 1999a). Additionally, Gartner

(1993, p. 196) postulated that conative image “depends on the images developed during the cognitive stage and evaluated during the affective stage.” Following this logic, it is hypothesized that cognitive, affective, and conative images are hierarchically interrelated, with one building on top of the other. More formally,

Hypothesis 1a: Tourists' cognitive image significantly influences their affective image.

Hypothesis 1b: Tourists' affective image of a destination significantly influences their conative image.

Hypothesis 1c: Tourists' overall image is significantly and positively related to their cognitive image.

Hypothesis 1d: Tourists' overall image is significantly and positively related to their affective image.

Hypothesis 1e: Tourists' overall image is significantly and positively related to their conative image.

Empirical tests on this group of hypotheses will, first of all, validate the dimensionality of destination image by structuring the relationship between overall image (a higher-order construct) and its subsections. This may end the debate on whether destination image is a two-dimensional versus three-dimensional construct. Secondly, the results may validate the hierarchical structure of destination image, if it exists at all.

Although extant marketing literature has indicated that enhanced brand knowledge, in terms of high levels of brand awareness and positive image, may contribute to increased brand loyalty on an overall level (Aaker, 1992; Keller, 1998), empirical tests of the relationships between brand awareness, image, and the dimensions of brand loyalty are

still lacking. As already mentioned, evidence can be found that brand image is related to brand loyalty (e.g., Abdullah, Al-Nasser, & Husain, 2000; Bloemer & de Ruyter, 1998; Lessig, 1973; Tidwell & Horgan, 1992). For instance, Lessig's (1973) study on store image showed that image information could help predict store loyalty. An experimental study by Tidwell and Horgan (1992) revealed that brand loyalty is related to both consumers' self-image and their brand image/attitude. Cai et al. (2004) also reported a significant and positive association between visitors' affective image and loyalty. Nevertheless, Bloemer and de Ruyter (1998, p. 503) indicated that "the exact relationship between store image and store loyalty has remained inconclusive."

Theoretically, brand awareness is also believed to be related to loyalty (Aaker, 1992). Following Keller's (1993) conceptualization, brand awareness and brand image may influence brand loyalty in a separate and parallel manner.

Somewhat surprisingly, the literature is also divided on the relationship between brand awareness and image. On one hand, since no image may exist without prior awareness, it may be argued that brand awareness is an antecedent of image, and holding a certain level of brand awareness is a prerequisite for image formation. Keller (1993, p. 3) pointed out that "brand awareness affects consumer decision making by influencing the formation and strength of brand associations in the brand image." On the other hand, one might argue that different level of awareness could hardly predict the valence of one's destination image. Milman and Pizam's (1995) study revealed that destination-aware respondents did not have a more positive image than those who were not aware of the destination. All in all, it seems awareness provides a necessary, though not sufficient

condition for the creation of a brand image. It seems more discussion and empirical evidence are needed to clarify the relationship between awareness and image.

Finally, within the loyalty construct, the attitude-behavior linkage has been well documented in the loyalty literature (Ajzen, 2000; Albarracin, Johnson, Fishbein, & Muellerleile, 2001; Fishbein & Ajzen, 1975). It is hence hypothesized that attitudinal loyalty leads to behavioral loyalty.

Specifically,

Hypothesis 2a: Tourists' destination awareness significantly and positively influences their attitudinal loyalty.

Hypothesis 2b: Tourists' overall destination image significantly and positively influences their attitudinal loyalty.

Hypothesis 2c: Tourists' attitudinal loyalty significantly and positively influences their behavioral loyalty.

INSERT FIGURE 2

Measurement Issues

Destination knowledge

Destination awareness Two of the most popular measures of brand awareness are brand recognition and brand recall (Aaker, 1992; Hoeffler & Keller, 2002). These have also been respectively termed as “aided” or “unaided recall.” Brand recognition “relates to consumers’ ability to confirm prior exposure to the brand when given the brand as a cue” (Keller, 1993, p. 3). In research practice, recognition is usually examined by an aided awareness test (e.g., Have you ever heard of San Antonio, Texas?) (Aaker, 1996). Brand recall “relates to consumers’ ability to retrieve the brand when given the product category,

the needs fulfilled by the category, or some other type of probe as a cue” (Keller, 1993, p. 3). Common recall tests include spontaneous awareness tests (e.g., What ski destination names can you think of?), and top-of-mind tests (e.g., the first destination mentioned in a recall task). Aaker (1992, p. 30) proposed that brand awareness at the recognition level “can provide the brand with a sense of the familiar and a signal of substance and commitment”, while brand awareness at the recall level “affects choice by influencing what brands get considered and selected.”

Recall and recognition are two memory tests commonly practiced by cognitive psychologists. Both of them target the same information in a consumer’s mind, while recognition (by directly presenting the stimulus) provides better facilitation than recall (by indirectly hinting the stimulus) (Ashcraft, 2002). From a memory process perspective, recall is harder in that it essentially requires two tasks: retrieval and recognition. In other words, before making a decision on whether we have been exposed to that particular information before (recognition), we need to retrieve that information somewhere from the memory first. As a result, recognition is a more sensitive memory test in that it requires a lower threshold than recall.

Note that brand awareness does not have to be measured as a dichotomy (i.e., aware vs. unaware). Since the present discussion focuses on repeat visitors, subjects may all be somewhat aware of the destination, but vary substantially in their level of awareness. Some researchers have used Likert-type scales (Yoo, Donthu, & Lee, 2000), though, instruments allowing researchers to effectively capture both the depth and breadth of brand awareness are still hard to find.

Destination image To date, most TDI studies have used structured approach, although a combination of structured and unstructured methodologies is preferred to completely measure destination image (Baloglu & Mangalolu, 2001; Echtner & Ritchie, 1993). Specifically, cognitive image is traditionally measured by a structured multi-attribute list using semantic differential and/or Likert type scales (Baloglu & Mangalolu, 2001; Echtner & Ritchie, 1993; Bigné et al., 2001). Typically, researchers will develop a list of (cognitive) image attributes and ask participants to rank them. The attributes are then statistically grouped into several dimensions using data reduction or grouping techniques (Gallarza, et al., 2002). Attempts to generate universal dimensions of destination attributes have not been successful (Chalip & Green, 1997; Echtner & Ritchie, 1993).

In terms of affective image, Baloglu and Brinberg (1997) refined the measurement techniques by introducing affective space structure as proposed by Russel and his colleagues' (Russel, 1980; Russel & Pratt, 1980; Russel, Ward, & Pratt, 1981; Russel & Snodgrass 1987). In their research, four pairs of adjectives (pleasant-unpleasant; relaxing-distressing; arousing-sleepy; and exciting-gloomy) (Russel & Pratt, 1980) were used to solicit participants' affective evaluations on a 7-point bipolar scale.

Very few researchers have examined the conative dimension of destination image. Dann (1996) recommended a qualitative approach, employing two open-ended questions related to tourists' own projected image of a destination, and responses to pictorial stimuli. Pike and Ryan (2004) equated conative image as behavioral intention, and measured respondents' conative perception by asking their likelihood of visiting each destination within the next 12 months.

Overall image is generally measured in a structural fashion (Baloglu & McCleary, 1999b; Bigné et al., 2001). Bigné et al. (2001) applied a single five-point item in assessing the overall image by asking respondents: “How would you describe the image that you have of...?,” with responses ranging from highly unfavorable (1) to highly favorable (5). Similarly, Baloglu and McCleary (1999b) used a 7-point scale ranging from 1 (very negative) to 7 (very positive) to measure overall image.

Destination loyalty

The problems in loyalty measurement remain unsolved for both marketing and tourism and hospitality researchers (Petrick, 2004; Knox & Walker, 2001). Many studies have suffered from “definitional inconsistencies and inadequate operationalization” (Knox & Walker, 2001, p. 112) such as confusing repeat purchase with brand loyalty, or complicating loyalty per se with its antecedents or consequences. The liberal use of the concept has resulted in some obvious methodological confusion.

Due to the difficulties in measuring attitudinal loyalty, many previous studies have chosen to focus on the behavioral aspect of loyalty (Petrick, 2004). It has been suggested that behavioral measures of loyalty provide “a more realistic picture of how well the brand is doing vis-à-vis competitors, and the data generated facilitate calculation of customer life-time value, enhance prediction of probabilities, and assist in developing cost-effective promotions” (O’Mally, 1998, p. 49). Some frequently used measures of behavioral loyalty include:

- Frequency (number of purchases, uses, or participation over a specified time-period) (Iwasaki & Havitz, 1998; Petrick, 2004);

- Price premium (the amount a customer will pay for the brand in comparison to another brand offering similar benefits) (Aaker, 1996);
- Sequence of brand use (whether the brand purchase shows undivided loyalty, unstable loyalty, or no loyalty at all) (Iwasaki & Havitz, 1998; Pritchard, Howard, & Havitz, 1992); and
- Proportion of purchase (the percentage of purchase of a particular brand) (Iwasaki & Havitz, 1998).

Other measures used in leisure or tourism studies include duration of stay (Park, 1996; Iwasaki & Havitz, 1998) and intensity (time devoted to purchase, use, or participation certain activity) (Park, 1996; Iwasaki & Havitz, 1998).

Comparatively, the measurement of attitudinal loyalty suffers even more problems. Previous literature has suggested that attitudinal loyalty could be measured in terms of attitude toward the brand or brand providers (Dick & Basu, 1994; Morais, Dorsch, & Backman, 2004), attachment (Backman & Crompton, 1991; Petrick, 2004), commitment (Bloemer & Ruyter, 1998), involvement (Iwasaki & Havitz, 1998; Knox & Walker, 2001) and so on. Despite semantic differences, most studies have essentially measured the same subject under different labels. Notably, Pritchard and his colleagues' 13-item psychological commitment instrument (Pritchard, 1991; Pritchard, Harvitz, & Howard, 1999), among other attitudinal loyalty scales, provides a theoretically grounded and methodologically sound scale in measuring attitudinal loyalty.

Implications and Conclusion

Managerial Implications

The fierce competition in destination marketing today has made it imperative to retain tourists and encourage future visits. This research note suggests that a tourist with a higher level of awareness and a positive image of a destination could be more loyal to the place than others, and hence will be more likely to return.

Although the present paper approaches branding issues from a consumer cognition perspective, some strategic implications for DMOs and tourism service providers may also be explored. First of all, the conceptualization of destination knowledge in this paper may provide a general guideline for destination brand management. Specifically, destinations are recommended to expand the depth and/or breadth of destination awareness by improving brand recall and recognition across settings (Keller, 1999). They should also focus their marketing efforts on improving the strength, favorability, and uniqueness of brand associations to build positive destination image (Keller, 1999).

Also, destination marketers are recommended to deliberately design the knowledge structures that they would like to create in tourists' minds (Keller, 1993). For instance, instead of competing randomly with all destinations available in a market, they should position themselves in certain product category(s) first. They also need to answer the question "what kind of image do you want tourists to have?" in terms of cognitive, affective, and conative attributes. Successful image promotion is not only about demonstrating basic destination facts to the customers, but also about creating emotional attachment and facilitating travel decisions. Thus, instead of showcasing numerous pictures of tourist attractions, destination promotion materials need to focus more on emotion and atmosphere themes.

Finally, destination marketers need to adopt a broader and long-term view in strategic decision-making (Keller, 1993). Again, this stresses the importance of consistency in destination information conveyed to tourists. Marketing activities should not be considered as separate or isolated. Nor should the experience offerings from each tourism sector be fragmented. All of these should be planned and designed in a holistic manner, to intentionally adjust the breadth and depth of destination awareness and build the image appropriately. It is hence suggested that a destination marketing plan should include a “branding” section, with baseline data on customers’ present destination knowledge and loyalty level, and a detailed plan on collaborative efforts of destination brand design. Over time, DMOs may continuously compare tourists’ brand knowledge with the baseline data, to ensure the brand building process is being successful.

Future Research

The present paper provides a preliminary conceptual model of destination knowledge and destination loyalty. Obviously, empirical tests are needed to examine the hypothesized relationships between the constructs mentioned. Research will also help create better “brand metrics”, which have been considered as critical in brand research (Keller, 2001).

Further, novelty-seeking is traditionally considered as a key motive for tourists’ destination choice (Lee & Crompton, 1992). For sensation-seeking tourists, a favorable impression or a satisfying experience does not necessarily result in revisit behavior. Novelty-seeking and loyalty thus seem to present two conflicting mechanisms behind tourists’ travel decisions. Future research on the role of and interaction between novelty-

seeking and loyalty in destination choice should help in explaining tourists' information-processing and decision-making behaviors.

Finally, the conceptualization of destination knowledge in this paper is theoretically based on cognitive psychology. Nevertheless, factors related to brand knowledge and loyalty may be considered from a broader socio-psychological background. For instance, future studies on the relationships between destination knowledge and loyalty may take cultural, gender, and individual personality differences into consideration. Furthermore, multidisciplinary efforts, such as anthropological or ethnographic perspectives may provide fresh viewpoints in future studies (Keller, 2003).

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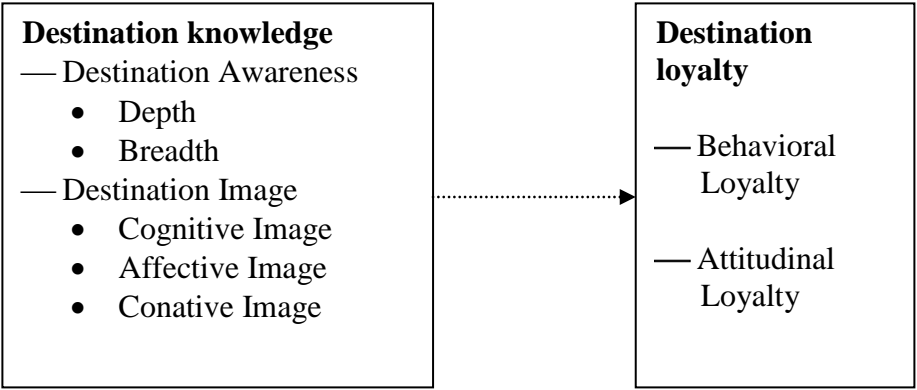


Figure 1. A Conceptual Framework of Destination Knowledge and Destination Loyalty

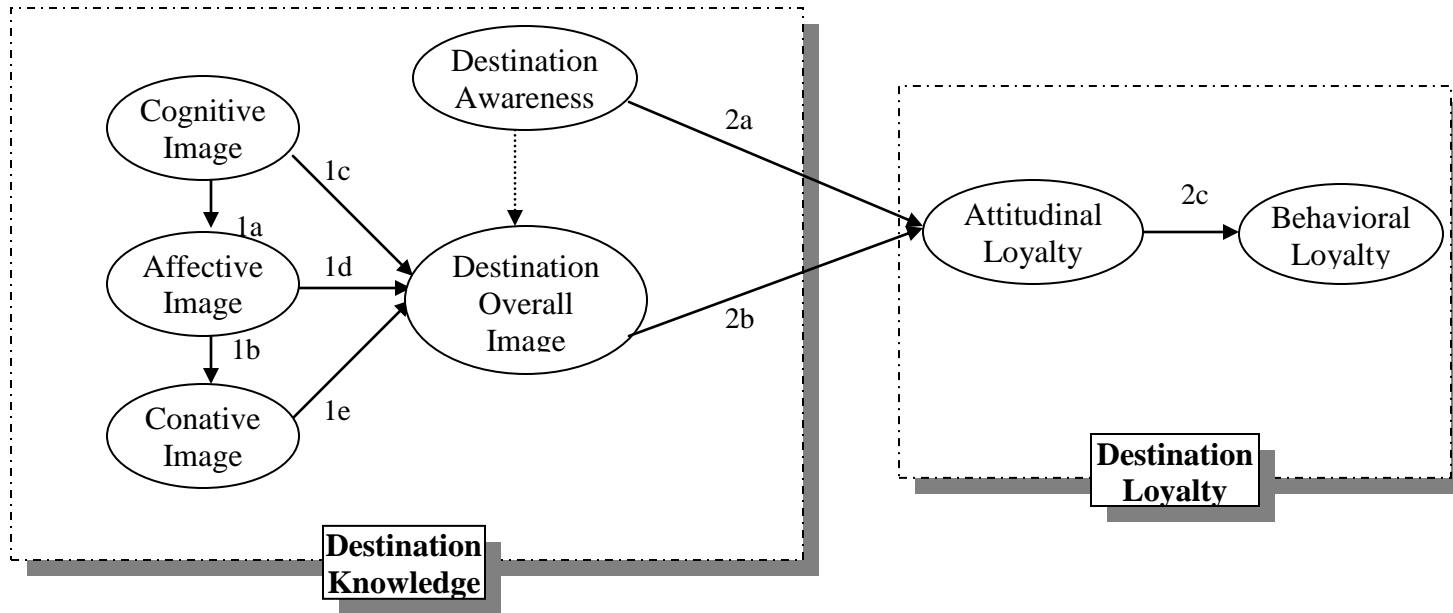


Figure 2. A Model of Destination Knowledge and Destination Loyalty