

Branding Ethiopia as A Tourist Destination: Domestic Tourists Perspective

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ABSTRACT

Domestic tourism is the largest form of tourism in the world, both in terms of tourist flow and revenue. Nevertheless, relatively it is overlooked by governments and scholars of most developing countries. Consequently, this article has tried to contribute to domestic tourism literature by exploring challenges of domestic tourism in Ethiopia, and evaluating the Customer-Based Brand Equity for Tourist to evaluate the Customer-Based Brand Equity for Tourist Destination (CBBETD) of Ethiopia from the perspective of the domestic tourists of Ethiopia. The research was utilized primary data collected through questionnaires. The suitability of the CBBETD model was tested in a survey to 291 domestic tourists of Ethiopia and 37 tourism experts. In line with this, the findings confirmed the research hypotheses concerning the suitability of the model, as it is illustrated both in correlation and regression result, as well as the highest contribution of image for the generation of CBBETD among the Ethiopian domestic tourist. The findings showed that awareness, image, quality, and loyalty all can significantly contribute to the CBBE of Ethiopia as tourist destination. Actually, the image dimension was the one that gathered the highest ranking, followed by quality, loyalty, and awareness. The result further revealed that tourism in Ethiopia, in general, has been rising, but the absence of domestic tourism data at the national level weakens the generalization and was evidence to the level of attention given to the sector. Domestic tourism was found to be misconceived by most tourism experts and businesses. Besides, the theoretical contribution, the practical implications of this research can be relevant for the Ethiopian tourism stakeholders, and in particular to the national Destination Marketing Organization, Ministry of Culture and Tourism. In addition to finding a way of measuring performance, the insights that were collected from the sample of Ethiopian domestic tourists can be helpful to adjust the marketing efforts to this market and maximize brand equity.

Key Words: Brand Awareness, Image, Brand Loyalty, Perceived Quality, Over all Brand Equity, Training, Domestic tourism, Ethiopia.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Tourism is an important sector in the economy of many countries Its importance to the overall economy is a recognized fact (Ondicho, 2000). Tourism as an economic activity has a growing importance for the development of not only a particular region but also the national economy as a whole (Dukic and Stankovic, 2009). Tourism comprises the activities of persons travelling to and staying in a place outside their usual permanent place of residence for not more than one consecutive year for leisure, business and other purposes (UNWTO 2015). It mainly includes all socio-economic activities that are directly and indirectly involved in providing services to tourists which includes services to the transportation sector, hotels and lodging, food and beverage, cultural and entertainment, banking and finance, promotion and publicity services. It is more realistic that the economic and financial benefit of tourism can range from foreign exchange earnings, employment generation, stimulation of infrastructure development, and contribution to local economy.

In the current era, which is heavily influenced by the global pandemic caused by COVID-19, with international tourist arrivals falling by 74% in 2020 (UNWTO 2021), it is crucial for tourist destinations to work on their brand and bear themselves in the eyes of tourists as a safe and secure place to spend their holidays. In the past decades, an increasing number of tourist destinations—cities, countries and regions—have applied marketing and branding practices to attract visitors and investors (Gertner 2011). Destination branding is one of the main topics in tourism marketing in terms of enhancing differentiation and competitiveness. This urgent need for destination branding has led to an increase in the number of investigations done on different destinations' brand equity (Oliveira and Panyik 2015)

Looking into the specific case of Ethiopia, domestic tourism already had a relevant expression prior to the Pandemic but its importance has clearly become more evident due to the public health crisis. The Ethiopian Ministry of Culture and Tourism has launched a marketing campaign targeting the domestic market and inviting residents to travel inside the country, discovering or re-discovering the destination. Given the role of domestic tourism for the country's economic recovery and its contribution for the industry, particularly during the Pandemic, it is found relevant to understand the residents' perceptions of Ethiopia as a destination brand. The main purpose of this study was to employ the model of Customer-Based Brand Equity (CBBE) to Ethiopia as a tourism destination, from the perceptions of its own domestic market. In this paper the concepts of destination branding and Customer-Based Brand Equity is introduced and then applied to the specific case of Ethiopia, as the Customer-Based Brand Equity model is believed to be a powerful metric to understand the strength of the destination brand, allowing to measure its performance over time.

1.1. Overview of the Research Problem

As a country Ethiopia is endowed with numerous tourist attractions ranging from physical to cultural, all of which are important for the country's tourism development. It has unique natural features, with cultural, historical, and religious resources and unique biodiversity; it has great potential for tourism resources (Teshome & Demissie, 2018). Despite huge potential of Ethiopia for growth in tourism; compared to its potential, the tourism sector in Ethiopia is by far in its infancy. According to United Nation World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) (2020), report the direct contribution of Tourism to Ethiopia's GDP in 2020 was only 2.1% of GDP, which was even less than the direct contributions in the two years prior, 2019 and 2018, which were 3.7% and 4.1%, respectively.

The general business problem is mainly associated with the minimal contribution domestic tourism and decline in share of domestic tourism in national economic development, while specific problem is that there is limited knowledge of overall Consumer Based Brand Equity (CBBE) of Ethiopia as a tourist destination for its own citizens (domestic tourists). The existence of tourism potential by itself is not sufficient for the intended growth of the Ethiopian tourism sector. Focusing on international tourism alone is also not the complete answer. While there is an overall consensus on the positive impact of domestic tourism brand marketing and promotion on Ethiopia economy, it remains an insufficiently explored discipline. This therefore is the knowledge gap that is trying to be filled in this research by examining overall Consumer Based Brand Equity (CBBE) of Ethiopia as a tourist destination for its own citizens (domestic tourists).

As was stated in the introduction, the purpose of this thesis is to advance the subject of destination branding research by analyzing the CBBE model as it was first proposed by Konecnik & Gartner (2007) and then applied to Ethiopia's domestic tourist sector. As such, the two research questions and two hypotheses guiding the study are as described below:

Research Question 1: *Can the dimensions of Konecnik & Gartner's model (2007) be used to assess Ethiopia's Customer Based Brand Equity (CBBE) from the perception of its own domestic tourism market?*

There hasn't been any research on the CBBE evaluation from the perspective of Ethiopia's domestic tourism sector that empirically tested the model suggested by Konecnik & Gartner (2007). This model has been

successfully verified in studies that were looking at this subject from the perception of international markets (Yuwo, et al., 2013; Huo, 2017; Cervova & Vavrova, 2021). In this study, only Ethiopian domestic were taken into account, hence it is important to confirm whether the dimensions suggested by Konecnik & Gartner (2007) can be applied to a sample of just domestic visitors in Ethiopia. If there is a significant relationship between these qualities, it will be empirically evaluated. Given that these scales have already undergone testing, the performance measurements for each dimension are mostly taken from the body of existing literature.

Hypothesis 1: *The dimensions of the model that Konecnik & Gartner (2007) presented can also be utilized to evaluate Ethiopia's Customer Based Brand Equity (CBBE) from the perspective of its own domestic tourist.*

Research Question 2: *Is image the dimension influencing Ethiopia's Customer Based Brand Equity (CBBE) the most?*

Image has shown to be a crucial dimension for the Customer Based Brand Equity Tourist Destination (CBBETD) (Konecnik & Gartner, 2007). Some authors, like Cai (2002), emphasize the importance of this dimension when defining destination branding because it has been studied for longer than the construct of destination branding. An attribute-based scale was used to empirically test this dimension. This exercise can generate very interesting insights for the tourism stakeholders, particularly to the Ministry of Culture and Tourism and other institution working in promotion of the Tourism industry of the country. These organizations can evaluate which characteristics are most important to Ethiopia's performance and strength as a travel destination brand and determine whether these characteristics align with the brand's projected image and identity. The way that the residents are identifying the most relevant attributes can also provide support to finetune the marketing efforts directed to the domestic market. This understanding helps destinations achieving competitive advantage by identifying positioning opportunities.

Hypothesis 2: *Image is the core dimension out of the four proposed ones from the perception of Ethiopia's domestic tourist.*

Since these scales have already been empirically confirmed by many writers in the field of Customer Based Brand Equity Tourist Destination (CBBETD), the scale measurements for each of the dimensions were derived from the literature that was already published. Prior to putting the scales to use, the authors conducted an extensive period of research and gathered information using qualitative methods like focus groups with potential tourists and in-depth interviews with destination marketing specialists (Konecnik & Gartner, 2007; Cervova & Vavrova, 2021).

The project consists of three sections preceded by an introduction and summarized in a conclusion. The next section presents theoretical and empirical review of related literature. It provided the theoretical foundations upon which the research is based on and it stated the basic ideas and concepts in relation to the specific issue under study. Section three outlines the research methodology that was adopted in this study. Section four presents the findings of the research that has been analyzed by the method predetermined. Finally, the conclusion section present summary major findings, conclusion, recommendations and implications of the study.

2. RELATED LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Overview of Branding and Tourism

It is important to understand how the marketing concepts apply to the reality of destination branding. For this reason, the present section dives into the existing literature while leveraging on the many contributions from different scholars to build and support this thematic. The following concepts are key to this study and will be presented in a concise manner as there is already extensive and thorough research on them

2.1.1. The Concept of Branding and Brand Equity

Many interpretations of what constitutes a brand derive from David Aaker's work. In fact, one of the most known and cited definitions is from this author (Aaker, 1991, p. 7): "A brand is 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." As Keller (1993)

affirmed the marketing efforts expose the brand, being essential to increase awareness and to build the desired favorable, strong, and unique brand associations in the minds of the consumers.

According to the American Marketing Association, a brand is a name, term, sign, symbol, or design, or a combination of them, intended to identify the goods and service of one seller or group of sellers and to differentiate them from those of competitors. Keller (2004), on his part defines brand as a perceptual entity embedded in reality, but it is also more than that reflecting the perceptions and perhaps even the peculiarity of consumers. This definition states that, brand is what resides in the minds of consumers and the ultimate goal of all efforts in creating a perceived value of products and services in the minds of consumers. Kapferer (2008), support Keller's definition by explaining a brand as a set of mental associations, held by the customer, which add to the perceived value of a product or service. As to Ellwood (2003), brands act as a kind of flag, waving to consumers, creating awareness of the product and differentiating it from other competitors.

Brand equity can be understood as the consumers' perception of the added value of a product or service (Cervova & Vavrova, 2021). This perception is reflected on their behavior since brand equity drives purchase intention and responsiveness to price premiums while prompting brand loyalty (Tasci & Denizci, 2009). Brand equity is defined as the marketing effects or outcomes that accrue to a product with its brand name compared with those that would add if the same product did not have the brand name (Aaker 1991; Keller 2003). The specific effects may be either consumer-level constructs, such as attitudes, awareness, image, and knowledge, or firm level outcomes, such as price, market share, revenue, and cash flow.

Based on the value of brand equity, Aaker (1991), defined "brand equity as a set of brand assets and liabilities linked to a brand, its name and symbol add to or subtract from the value provided by a product or service to a firm and/or that a firm's customer." He stated that, assets and liabilities linked to a brand's name or symbol can be grouped into five dimensions: brand awareness, brand association, brand loyalty, perceived brand quality and other proprietary assets. He suggested that we can generate brand equity by strengthening those dimensions.

2.1.2. Destination Image and Nation Brand

When applying a tourism perspective, the term 'destination image' is used which Crompton (1979, p. 18) defines as "the sum of beliefs, ideas, and impressions that a person has of a destination." The sources of a destination image mirror that of a country image with promotional material in particular greatly influencing how consumers perceive the destination image as tourism services and products are largely intangible (Govers et al., 2007). Foreigner reliance on the promotional material of a destination image is logical but what happens when those in the destination are the ones exposed to it and experiencing the destination daily?

The idea that the image of a country and a destination are depicting the same place meaning they can rarely be separated provides insight into this question. Chaulagain, Wiitala and Fu (2019) found a positive relationship between country image and destination image in the context of Cuba. How one acts towards, feels, and thinks about a country compared to it as a destination is thus unlikely to vary significantly, even for those residing there. This is not necessarily to say they will always agree with how the nation is being depicted as a destination. Overwhelmingly, it has been agreed throughout literature that a destination image primarily comprises of these cognitive and affective dimensions (Baloglu & McCleary, 1999; Wang & Hsu, 2010). By combining both elements, a holistic positive or negative assessment is developed (Baloglu & McCleary, 1999).

There is an agreement that nation branding involves using branding tools and marketing communications techniques to promote a nation's image (Fan, 2006; Gudjonsson, 2005). Nation branding is therefore a highly political activity with place marketers having significant power. However, there are limits to how the nation can be promoted as nation brands must be realistic (Gilmore, 2002; Tatevossian, 2008). It therefore seems logical that nation brands are constantly adapting to remain relevant and accurate, yet this is not always the case as nation brands can be very hard to change (Widler, 2007).

2.1.3. Customer-Based Brand Equity (CBBE)

The concept of Customer-Based Brand Equity (CBBE) has been cemented by David A. Aaker (1991, 1996) and Kevin Lane Keller (1993, 2003) during the 1990s and has been evolving ever since. Keller (1993, p. 2) defined CBBE as “the differential effect of brand knowledge on consumer response to the marketing of the brand”.

Ruzzier (2010) sees this concept as construct that allows an assessment of the demand-side perspective over the branding process. CBBE is believed to be a powerful way of measuring the brand performance (Pike, 2007, 2010). The way this model and its dimensions relate to the destination branding field has been studied by different authors (see Konecnik & Gartner, 2007; Boo, Busser & Baloglu, 2009; Im et al., 2012; Pike, 2013; Gartner, 2014; Yang, Li & Liu, 2015; Almeyda & George 2020; Cervova & Pavlu, 2018; Cervova & Vavrova, 2021). It is common to find in the literature references to these dimensions as constituents of Customer-Based Brand Equity for Tourism Destinations (CBBETD).

Konecnik & Gartner (2007) were the first to propose and test this model for a destination using four dimensions (awareness, image, quality, and loyalty). They suggested and empirically proved that there is a relationship between the four dimensions, and that each would influence CBBETD in a different manner with image being the heavy weight among them. The authors have identified a scarcity of research mainly on the dimensions of awareness, quality, and loyalty as these were frequently absorbed into the concept of image. Konecnik and Gartner presented strong arguments as to why these dimensions should be considered separately from image. Over time more scholars have chosen to use this model as the basis of their research, which adds strength to Konecnik and Gartner’s model. This has motivated the choice of the dimensions for the conceptual model to be presented further ahead in the dissertation.

The chosen dimensions for the present study are awareness, image, quality, and loyalty as in the research of Konecnik & Gartner (2007). It has been empirically tested in a number of previous studies. With Konecnik & Gartner’s brand equity model, this study sets out to test the measurement of customer-based brand equity of Ethiopia as a tourist destination with domestic tourists. In the following sub-section, the four dimensions will be analyzed for a better understanding of their relevance.

2.1.3.1. Awareness

Aaker (1991, 1996) defined brand awareness as the capacity of recognizing or recalling a brand as belonging to a given product category, which mirrors the salience of that brand in the consumers’ mind. Awareness can be measured, for instance, through recognition, recall, top-of-mind awareness (ToMA), brand dominance and brand knowledge (Aaker, 1996; Im et al., 2012; Dias & Cardoso, 2017). Awareness is a crucial dimension for brand equity (Keller, 2003). This concept is particularly important for tourism destinations as it is a necessary pre-requisite for the purchase decision, despite not leading necessarily to it nor being the only component influencing the process (Konecnik & Gartner, 2007). Awareness is a pre-requisite because tourists can only consider the destinations that they are aware of. Having a visual identity, such as one symbol or logo, associated to a destination name can be a strategy for Destination Marketing Organizations (DMOs) to boost awareness of the destination brand they are promoting, increasing the likelihood of reaching the consideration set of as many tourists as possible (Im et al., 2012).

2.1.3.2. Image

Destination image is a complex and multidimensional concept (Milman & Pizam, 1995) that has emerged in the literature long before destination branding and has been studied thoroughly over the past decades (see e.g., Echtner & Ritchie, 1993; Cai, 2002; Gallarza, Gil & Calderon, 2002; Pike, 2002a). Destination image is one more concept for which literature lacks a consensual definition. However, there seems to be a general acceptance of the assumption that image has a significant impact in the tourists’ assessment and selection of a destination, which necessarily implies that the purchase decision is highly influenced by this dimension (Ruzzier, 2010). In order to increase the demand for a tourism destination, Destination Marketing Organizations and other tourism stakeholders try their best to develop a positive image of the destination (Milman & Pizam, 1995). According to authors such as Cai (2002) and Konecnik & Gartner (2007), destination image is paramount for the

development of a destination branding strategy and a core source of brand equity (Keller, 2003). It is suggested that this component exerts particular influence over the loyalty dimension and that it is the most important component of the CBBETD model (Konecnik & Gartner, 2017; Cervova & Vavrova, 2021).

2.1.3.3. Quality

For the purpose of this study, and similarly to what can be found in other research (e.g., Pike, 2010), quality and perceived quality are considered and used interchangeably. In the field of destination branding, quality stems from the tourist's evaluation of the destination products and experience. It is understood that this assessment happens in terms of excellency and superiority (Im et al., 2012). A universally accepted definition of quality is still to be found in the literature, but authors can mostly agree on its complex nature and difficult operationalization (Konecnik & Gartner, 2007). Similarly, to the image dimension in CBBETD studies, quality is often measured by resorting to attribute-based scales where tourists evaluate the perceived quality of a destination brand after being exposed to specific cues. These usually involve the evaluation of given attributes in terms of quality and the pricing of destination products.

2.1.3.4. Loyalty

Loyalty can be understood as the eagerness to engage with the brand or the extent to which a consumer identifies itself with it (Pike, 2010). It is linked to the desired goal of having consumers (tourists) expressing preference by visiting a destination repeatedly and recommending it to others – word of mouth (WoM). This dimension has been included in almost every research that was mentioned earlier in table 1. It is believed to be a high contributor for the formation of CBBE and, therefore, should not be ignored in its assessment (Oppermann, 2002; Ruzzier, 2010). This study conceptualizes brand loyalty on the level of attachment to the destination in terms of visitation, intent to visit and word-of-mouth referrals to others. In this context the current study of destination branding, if visitors are satisfied with a destination, they may develop an emotional relationship with a destination, and become advocates of it. Visitor may be willing to suggest this destination to others and they are obviously showing their commitment. Positive word-of-mouth is one of the important elements that contribute to a brand (Sarkar, 2011).

2.4. Previous Studies on Branding and Domestic Tourism

Evaluations of the Customer-Based Brand Equity for Tourist Destination (CBBETD) of nation from the perspective of the domestic tourists have been studied for almost three decades, although it is difficult to collect systematic evaluations of all type nation branding equity and structure. It is widely believed that in the tourism sector, destination awareness is one of the main perceptual indicators of tourist behavior (Woodside & Lysonski, 1989). Konecnik (2010) pointed out having the relationship between destination brand awareness with brand equity. Similarly, in some studies (e.g., Pike et al., 2010; Myagmarsuren & Chen, 2011), they suggested a positive impact of destination brand awareness on brand equity in their proposed research models. Moreover, although the relationship between destination brand awareness and destination perceived quality has not been considered in tourism literature; in marketing literature, Keller (1993) indicated that it is the customer's awareness and associations that lead their perception of the quality of the brand.

Similarly, perceived quality for a destination brand are likely to be enhanced by brand awareness in proposed models that were suggested by Myagmarsuren & Chen (2011). The empirical results (e.g., Konecnik, 2010; Pike, 2010) confirmed that there is a positive relationship of brand awareness on destination perceived quality. Addition, Konecnik (2010), in his study found that the destination brand image and destination perceived quality was positive. Similarly, the empirical studies (e.g., Myagmarsuren & Chen, 2011; Aliman, 2014) demonstrated a positive and direct impact of destination brand image on destination perceived quality. The results from the studies (e.g., Boo, 2009; Pike, 2010; Bianchi, 2011; Aliman, 2014) confirm that destination brand image has a positive impact on brand loyalty destination. On the other hand, the literature review has shown that perceived quality represents the antecedent step leading to brand loyalty (Keller and Lehmann, 2003). In the tourism sector, the empirical evidences in many studies (e.g., Boo, 2009; Pike, 2010) have shown that there is positive and direct impact of destinations perceived quality on destination brand loyalty.

In Indonesian context, Hartanto, et al., (2013), conducted study to examines in detail the use of customer-based brand equity for a tourism destination (CBBETD) as a strategic tool for use with a specific city (Bandung City). A sample of 400 visitors to Bandung was surveyed, and empirical psychometric assessment was run. The components of customer-based brand equity for a tourism destination were found to be: awareness, image, quality and loyalty. The successful adaptation of the scale is encouraging as it provides strategic insight on strengthening destination positioning in the minds of both current and future tourists.

In Croatia context, Lenka and Jitka (2021), conducted study to verify and modify the model of customer-based brand equity for a tourism destination (CBBETD) and its attributes for the destination of Croatia from the perspective of Czech tourists, among whom primary research was conducted using the CAWI method (n = 451). The main CBBE dimensions were extracted using factor analysis and a model with four dimensions (awareness, image, quality and loyalty) was created. The identified attributes explain between 55% and 82% of the variability of a given dimension. Although the study results follow the published models of CBBETD, the attributes in each dimension and the subdimension in the image dimension reflect the specificities of the destination of Croatia. Thus, the results of the paper extend the economic theory with another model and are also applicable in the field of destination management.

In more recently, Portugal context, Daniela, (2022), conducted study to test for the first time the applicability of the CBBE model to the case of Portugal, from the perception of its own domestic tourism market. The conceptual model and scales are rooted in existing literature, however, adapted to the reality of Portugal as a destination brand. The suitability of the proposed model was tested in a survey to 483 residents in Portugal, and the results support the premise that it could be done successfully, therefore providing robustness to the model. In addition to finding a way of measuring performance, the insights that were collected from the sample of Portuguese residents can be helpful to adjust the marketing efforts to this market and maximize brand equity.

This chapter has reviewed the relevant literature pertaining to the topics of branding, brand equity, destination images; nation branding, customer-based brand equity model (CBBEM); and domestic tourism. Notably, it was identified that country and destination images are subjective due to stemming from multiple sources and that these images influence attitudes and behaviors. Nation branding and the associated campaigns which harness these place images were also identified as influencing both domestic and international audiences. Therefore, the value of involving nation citizens in nation brand development and promotion has been explored throughout literature. Although nation branding involves many stakeholders, governments and place marketers have significant autonomy over how the nation is perceived thus bear much responsibility for developing and maintaining a strong brand. Additional key findings from this chapter include the identification that a link between a tourist's self-concept and a nation brands' personality can result in greater attachment to the nation brand, and behavioural intentions can be used to evaluate the success of a tourism destination. In last section, empirical findings were reviewed with respect to the objectives of this study. Studies carried out with respect to the Customer-Based Brand Equity for Tourist Destination (CBBETD) of nation from the perspective of the domestic tourists were compared and contrasted. The chapter concluded with a conceptual framework that defines the study.

3. RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODS

The primary aim of this study was to test the hypothesized relationship between brand equity dimensions of Ethiopia as a tourist destination by taking all Ethiopian citizens as a population. To achieve this objective, causal (explanatory) research design was used. The research assessed the causal relationship between the brand equity dimensions. The type of research approach employed in this study was quantitative research approach method for the fact that it involves generation of data in quantitative form for analysis. It helps to understand the nature of the relationship between the independent and dependent variables.

The study assessed the Consumer Based Brand Equity (CBBE) dimensions of Ethiopia as a tourist destination by taking citizens of the country as a test group. The research was utilized primary data collected through questionnaires. The brand equity questions were adopted from Konecnik & Gartner (2007) and then adjusted to

fit for the context of the study. The suitability of the CBBETD model was tested in a survey to 291 domestic tourists of Ethiopia and 37 tourism experts. To select the respondents the researcher used non probabilistic convenience sampling technique coupled with judgment sampling.

The data collected was analyzed with the aid of descriptive statistical techniques such as frequencies, percentages and mean score. More so, multiple linear regressions were used to establish the relationship between study variables and to test the hypotheses using Statistical Package of Social Sciences Version 22. Diagnostic and assumption tests result confirming authenticity, acceptability and usability of the data collected, before been used for further analysis in inferential statistics

4. DATA PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

4.1 Response Rate

The researcher distributed 384 questionnaires and 291 questionnaires were completed and returned. This represents a response rate of 75.8% which was considered a very good representative to provide enough information for analysis and to derive conclusions.

Table 1: Response Rate

Response rate	Sample size	Percentage (%)
Returned questionnaires	93	24.2
Un-returned questionnaires	291	75.8
Total	384	100

Source, (Own Survey, 2024)

4.1 General information of respondents

This section assesses general information of respondents. Respondents were asked about their gender, age, and level of education attained.

Table 2: General Information of the respondent

Main factor	Factor level	Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Male	216	74.2
	Female	75	25.8
	Total	291	100
Age	18 – 29 years	23	7.9
	30 - 40 years	114	39.2
	41-50 years	132	45.4
	Over 50 years	22	7.6
	Total	291	100
Educational qualification	Primary	16	5.5
	Secondary	58	19.9
	Diploma	35	12.0
	BA Degree	89	30.6
	MSC or above	93	32.0
	Total	291	100
Monthly Income	Less than 5000 Birr	10	3.4
	5,001 – 10,000 Birr	40	13.4
	10,001 – 20,000 Birr	48	16.5
	20,001 - 40,000 Birr	64	22.0
	> 40,000 Birr	129	44.3
	Total	212	100

Table 4.2 show that 216 (74.2%) were male while 75 (28.3%) were females. This shows that the number of males were higher than the number of female respondents indicating that males are more travelers/visitors in Ethiopia. The age distribution was 132 respondents (45.4%) were age between 41 - 50 years, 114 respondents (39.2%) were age between 29 - 40 years, 22 respondents (7.6%) were over 55 years, while the remaining 23 respondents (7.9%) were age between 18 – 25 years. These shows though there are proportional respondents exist between three age intervals though still the age intervals of 40-50 are the leading visitors.

Regarding the educational qualification, 93(32%) of the respondents achieved Second Degree, 89 (30.6%) respondents achieved first Degree, 35(12%) of the respondents achieved Diploma while 58 (19.9%) achieved secondary education.

The respondents that were involved in the study were asked about their monthly net income and the result shows those 129 (44.3% were earn monthly net income greater than 40,000 Birr; 64 (22%) were earn monthly net income of 20,001 - 40,000; 48 (16.5%) were earn monthly net income 10,001 - 20,000 Birr; 40 (13.4%) were earn monthly net income greater than 5,001 - 10,000 Birr and the remaining 10 (3.4%) were earn monthly net income less than 5,000 Birr. This result revealed that there is significance age difference in terms of domestic tourists as those who earn higher monthly net income are higher chance of visiting.

4.3 Domestic Tourists' Perception of Ethiopia as a Tourist Destination

In order to analyze the respondents overall Customer Based Brand Equity of tourist destination, a total of 30 questions were grouped into the four dimensions of CBBE which are brand awareness, brand loyalty, perceived quality and image. The descriptive parts of this study analyzed using descriptive statistic of mean and standard deviation and the result is presented in Table 4.3.

Table 4.3: Summary of Descriptive statistics for study variables

Variables	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	STD
Brand Awareness	291	1	5	3.20	0.91
Image	291	1	5	3.82	0.78
Perceived Quality	291	1	5	2.82	0.84
Brand Loyalty	291	1	5	3.88	0.76
Overall Brand Equity	291	1	5	3.45	0.83

Source, (Survey data, 2024)

The finding revealed that respondents' awareness of Ethiopia as a tourism destination is actually quite low as most of the respondents' awareness is in question as they were in dilemma to recognize the Ethiopia as a tourism destination (Grand mean 3.20). The total standard deviation aggregate was also found to be 0.91, which is close to one implying that there were some variations among response of respondents when assessing their perception of Ethiopia's Brand Awareness. The concerned organs (Ministry of Culture and Tourism) should promote symbols or logos associated with Ethiopia as a tourism destination aggressively to encourage local tourists. As indicated on the table 4.3, the grand mean response for domestic tourists' perception of Ethiopia's image is 3.82, which is considered high. The total standard deviation aggregate was also found to be 0.78, which is implying that there is little variation among response of respondents when assessing their perception of Ethiopia's image. As indicated on the table 4.3, the grand mean response for domestic tourists' perception of perceived quality is 2.82, which is considered low. The grand mean response for domestic tourists' perception of brand loyalty is 3.88, which is considered high implies that the overall brand loyalty for the Ethiopia as tourist destination was perceived positively even though aggressive marketing strategy in terms of promoting the Ethiopia as a tourist destination is a must to implement. The overall brand equity was got grand mean 3.48 which was perceived nearly neutral.

4.4. Correlation Results

The study conducted correlation analysis to test the strength of relationship or association between the research variables from the primary data. The findings of the study are presented in Table 4.4.

Table 4.4: Model Correlation

		CBBE
Brand Awareness	Pearson Correlation	.673**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000
Image	Pearson Correlation	.792**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000
Perceived quality	Pearson Correlation	.700**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000
Brand Loyalty	Pearson Correlation	.632**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000
CBBE	Pearson Correlation	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	
	N	291

Source, (Survey Data, 2024)

The results in Table 4.4 show that a positive and significant correlations of high intensity between Customer Based Brand Equity (CBBE) and image ($r=0.792$; $p<0.001$), CBBE and quality ($r=0.700$; $p<0.001$), CBBE and brand awareness ($r=0.673$; $p<0.001$) and CBBE and loyalty ($r=0.632$; $p<0.001$). The observed relationship between CBBE and image is the one of highest magnitude, which confirms the second research hypothesis (H2). After image, CBBE and quality, CBBE and loyalty, and CBBE and awareness.

4.5. Analysis of Regression Results

4.5.1. Assumptions Test for Multiple Linear Regressions

Multicollinearity Test: Multicollinearity occurs when there are two or more independent variables that are highly correlated with each other (Simon, 2004). Variance Inflation Factor was checked for indication of multicollinearity where their numerical values were all well below the cut-off value of 10 suggested by Neter, et al., (1996). Based on this rule of the thumb, there was no collinearity among the independent variables.

Table 4.5: Multicollinearity test for the Study Variables

Variable	Tolerance	VIF
Brand Awareness	.477	2.096
Image	.526	1.900
Perceived quality	.492	2.032
Brand Loyalty	.506	1.976

Source, (Survey data, 2024)

Heteroscedasticity: Heteroscedasticity in a study usually happens when the variance of the errors varies across observation (Long & Ervin, 2000). The most commonly used method is Breusch-Pagan test which was used to test the null hypothesis that the error variances are all equal versus the alternative that the error variances are a multiplicative function of one or more variables. Breusch-Pagan tests the null hypothesis that heteroscedasticity is not present. If sig-value is less than 0.05, reject the null hypothesis. (Sazali, et al., 2010). In this study, the sig-value for fitted values CBBE model was 0.153 and chi-square value of 5.61, which are indicating that heteroscedasticity was not a concern.

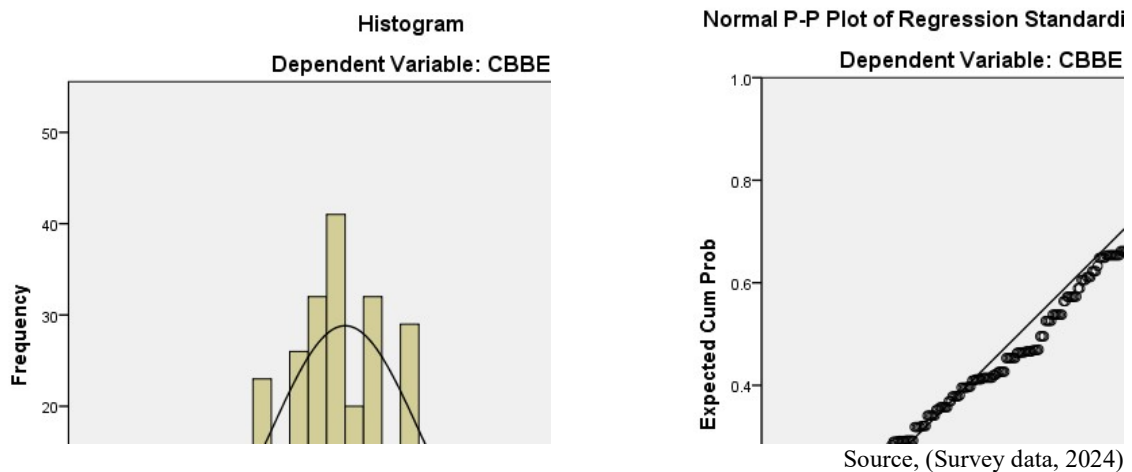
Table 4.6: Breusch-Pagan for Heteroscedasticity

Breusch-Pagan / Cook-Weisberg test for heteroskedasticity Ho: Constant variance Variables: fitted values of Customer Based Bran Equity (CBBE) chi2(1) = 5.61 Prob > chi2 = 0.153
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Source, (Survey data, 2024)

Normality: The other assumption of multiple regressions is normality which assumes that residuals (errors) are approximately normally distributed. In order to make valid inferences from regression analysis, the residuals of the regression should follow normal distribution. A simple way to check this assumption is to plot normal P-P for the dependent variable to confirm the obtained result (Asghar & Saleh, 2012). This is a graphical procedure that plots the cumulative probabilities (values range from 0 to 1) on the X-axis and the expected probabilities given the normal curve on the Y-axis. If the sample were exactly normally distributed, the points would lie on a straight diagonal line. If the sample were exactly normally distributed, the points would lie on a straight diagonal line. The diagram below shows Normal P-P Plots and Histogram for CBBE Model in which the points would lie on a straight line confirming the data was normally distributed.

Figure 4.1: Normal P-P Plot Histogram of CBBE Model



Source, (Survey data, 2024)

4.5.2 Analysis of Regression Results

Model Summary: Coefficient of determination explains the percentage of variation in Customer Based Brand Equity model that is explained by all the four dimensions (brand loyalty, image, perceived quality, and brand awareness. The table 4.12 below preset the model summary.

Table 4.7: Model Summary for Customer Based Brand Equity

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.851 ^a	.724	.720	1.429

a. Predictors: (Constant), Brand Loyalty, Image, Perceived quality, Brand Awareness

b. Dependent Variable: CBBE

Source, (Survey data, 2024)

As indicated in the above Table 4.7, R has a value of 0.851, representing the simple correlation between the four independent variables (image, perceived quality, and brand awareness) and Customer Based Brand Equity model. R-square on the other hand explains the percentage of variation in Customer Based Brand Equity model that is explained by the four independent variables. The result shows that the four independent variables (brand loyalty, image, perceived quality, and brand awareness) that were studied, explain 72.0% of variation in Customer Based Brand Equity model as represented by the R² value. The remaining 28% of the variability in CBBE model is left unexplained by the explanatory variables used in the study.

ANOVA Result: The result in ANOVA Table shows that the sum of squares of the regression is 1511.169 at 4 degrees of freedom and a mean square of 377.792. The residual sum of squares is 576.197 with 282 degrees of freedom and mean square value of 2.043. The test for the joint significant which is given by the F statistic is by [F(4,282) = 184.898; p = .001], it is statistically significant. This imply that the independent variables, that are brand loyalty, image, perceived quality, and brand awareness, considered were relevant in explaining the Customer Based Brand Equity model.

Table 4.8: ANOVA For Customer Based Brand Equity Model^a

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	1511.169	4	377.792	184.898	.000 ^b
	Residual	576.197	282	2.043		
	Total	2087.366	286			

a. Dependent Variable: CBBE

b. Predictors: (Constant), Brand Loyalty, Image, Perceived quality, Brand Awareness

Source: (Survey data, 2024)

Regression Coefficients: The findings in Table 4.9 show the coefficients of the regression. According to the findings, all the four CBBE dimensions (image, perceived quality, and brand awareness) are significant in predicting the Customer Based Brand Equity model since the p values were less than 0.05.

Table 4.9: Coefficients for Customer Based Brand Equity model^a

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	-1.179	.457		-2.580	.010
	Brand Awareness	.108	.035	.136	3.075	.002
	Image	.484	.048	.458	10.130	.000
	Perceived quality	.231	.042	.241	5.524	.000
	Brand Loyalty	.151	.036	.168	4.148	.000

a. Dependent Variable: CBBE

Source: (Survey data, 2024)

Image has positive and significant effect on Customer Based Brand Equity model with a beta value (beta =.484) and t value of 10.130 which is significant. Similarly, perceived quality has also positive and significant effect on Customer Based Brand Equity model with a beta value (beta =.231) and t value of 5.524 which is also statistically significant. Likewise, brand loyalty has also positive and significant effect on Customer Based Brand Equity model with a beta value (beta =.151) and t value of 4.148, which is also statistically significant. Lastly, brand awareness has also positive and significant effect on Customer Based Brand Equity model with a beta value (beta =.108) and t value of 3.075 which is also statistically significant.

When these beta coefficients are substituted in the equation, the model becomes

$$Y = 0.108BA + 0.484I + .231PQ + 0.414BL + 0.224AS - 2.795$$

Where: Y is the Ethiopia's Customer Based Brand Equity model from the perception of its own domestic tourism market, BA is brand awareness, I is image, PQ is perceived quality, and BL brand loyalty. This means that holding other factor constant one unit increase in brand awareness of domestic tourist result in 0.108 unit increases in the Ethiopia's Customer Based Brand Equity, one unit increase in country image of domestic tourist result in 0.484 unit increase in the Ethiopia's Customer Based Brand Equity, one unit increase in perceived quality of domestic tourist result in 0.231 unit increase in the Ethiopia's Customer Based Brand Equity, and one unit increase in brand loyalty of domestic tourist result in 0.151 unit increase in the Ethiopia's Customer Based Brand Equity level.

4.6. Discussion of Result

The fundamental tenet of the CBBE-model is that consumers' feelings, thoughts, and behaviors regarding a brand determine how strong that brand is (Keller, 2001). Prior to achieving consumer brand resonance, a brand must elicit from consumers the appropriate emotional responses, and in order to do so, the brand's identity and meaning must be acceptable. Customers may view this product as pertinent and their preferred type of product if it has the correct meaning and identity. The best tourist destinations have local visitors who are so emotionally invested in the brand that they act as "spokesmen" for it. The model states that even though marketers play a huge part and need to design the most effective brand-building programs possible, the success of those marketing efforts ultimately depends on customers' responses (Keller, 2001).

In the fiercely competitive tourism sector, marketing to international tourists is essential for success, but focusing on domestic tourists also has a significant impact on the economy of the target nation. In many nations, brand-building initiatives are being used as a result of these promotional strategies to increase the country's appeal to domestic tourist. According to this line of reasoning, the study used the Konecnik & Gartner CBBE model (2007) as a research framework to ask what are the key variables that influence consumer-based brand equity. This model is the most widely adopted by researchers and practitioners alike. Thus, the study used this model to evaluate Ethiopia's Brand Equity as a tourist destination from domestic tourists.

The finding of this study supports all the proposed relationships that are identified in the Konecnik & Gartner CBBE model (2007). From the proposed relationships, the existing relations between image and perceived quality with overall brand equity were relatively the strongest. This indicated that of all the four constructs proposed by the model, these relationships are the most significant and strong one. But also, brand loyalty and brand awareness had strong positive relation with brand equity. Thus, building of a good national image, improved perceived quality, brand loyalty and awareness does necessarily guarantee success of efficient brand equity creation for the Ethiopian tourism industry when promoting it to the domestic tourists. Because of these when formulating a tourism development strategy and programs that are targeted to domestic tourists, the policy makers' first emphasis should be on developing image, perceived quality, brand loyalty and brand awareness.

Overall, the results disclosed in this chapter answer the research questions and confirm the hypotheses, given that reliability was confirmed as well as positive and significant relation of each dimension with CBBE. There was indeed a dimension that was impacting the most the creation of CBBE, and, as hypothesized based on previous results found in the literature, image is the one exerting the most influence over CBBE. The observed relationship between CBBE and image is the one of highest magnitude, which confirms the second research hypothesis (H2). After image, CBBE and quality, CBBE and loyalty, and CBBE and awareness. Therefore, it should be noted that building strong national image, creating an excellent perceived quality and excellent brand loyalty and awareness is the basis for any brand building activity that focuses on domestic tourists. The empirical result helps tourism management professionals to prioritize their limited resource when building the brand of the Ethiopia as tourist destination and maximize the benefit that is reaped from this limited resource.

5. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Conclusion

Domestic tourism is the largest portion of tourism all over the world and has several economic and socio-cultural potentials to enhance sustainable development. It promotes cross-cultural interaction, aids in the development of nationalism, fosters international tourism, assists less developed regions, and leaves one with little to no cultural anxiety, among other things. Domestic tourism in Ethiopia, like most developing nations, has been all but ignored as a crucial component of the growth of the tourism industry. As a result, this research conducted as it may aid in bringing domestic tourism to the attention of the government and academics and act as a catalyst for other findings.

First the study has an objective to identify the constraints and challenges in relation to domestic Tourism development of the Ethiopia. In line with this, as discussed in this study, Ethiopia has several domestic tourism potentials comprising of its untapped natural and cultural tourism resources, the expanding infrastructure and the large, multiethnic, religious and young people. However, issues like the wrong attitude of tourism experts towards domestic tourism, ignorance from public and private organizations, the lack of domestic tourism development and promotion plans, low per capita income, and others are having a negative effect on the development of domestic tourism in the nation. Ethiopians were found to have a weak visitation culture, and both intrapersonal and structural barriers prevented them from taking part in domestic tourism. Problems with awareness, high local living expenses, inaccessibility, a lack of discretionary income, and a negative attitude towards tourism are a few of these constraints. As a result, for effective domestic tourism, tourism in general, and overall development of the country, major intervention must be made to mobilize the resources and prospects of the country, reduce travel-related restrictions, and increase domestic tourist participation.

Furthermore, the study also aimed to evaluate the Customer-Based Brand Equity for Tourist Destination (CBBETD) of Ethiopia from the perspective of the domestic tourists of Ethiopia. The chosen dimensions for the present study are awareness, image, quality, and loyalty as in the research of Konecnik & Gartner (2007). It has been empirically tested in a number of previous studies. With Konecnik & Gartner 's brand equity model, this study sets out to test the measurement of customer-based brand equity of Ethiopia as a tourist destination with domestic tourists. In line with this, the findings confirmed the research hypotheses concerning the suitability of the model, as it is illustrated both in correlation and regression result, as well as the highest contribution of image for the generation of CBBETD among the Ethiopian residents. In theoretical terms, this study adds value by contributing to the advancement of the recent field of studies that is destination branding. The majority of research that has been conducted to date only takes into account the opinion of the international tourism market. The model proposed by Konecnik & Gartner (2007) has been successfully applied to different destinations with the necessary fitting to their particular characteristics (Ruzzier 2010; Yuwo, Ford & Purwanegara, 2013; Konecnik et al., 2014; Huo, 2017; Cervova & Pavlu 2018; Cervova & Vavrova, 2021).

Some writers have acknowledged the significance of widening the analysis and recommended that future research should undertake these assessments again while taking other stakeholders' perspectives, such as those of the destinations' residents, into consideration (Cervova & Pavlu, 2018; Cervova & Vavrova, 2021). The current study embraced the challenge of filling this gap in the literature, and as a result, it has helped to expand the destination branding industry. Despite the necessary changes to the variables, the findings support the idea put forth by Konecnik & Gartner (2007) that awareness, image, quality, and loyalty can all contribute to the CBBE of a particular location under certain conditions. These findings help close the performance measurement gap for destination brands while also strengthening the model's robustness.

The results of the survey that has been conducted to a sample of Ethiopian residents (Ethiopia's domestic tourism market) have shown that this segment holds a positive image of the tourism destination. Actually, the image dimension was the one that gathered the highest ranking, followed by quality, loyalty, and awareness. Nevertheless, as evidenced by Pike (2002b) the recognition of a destination's appealing attributes does not grant its success. Proof of that can be found in this study's results for the brand awareness test where participants have been asked the whether the characteristics of Ethiopia as a tourist destination come to my mind quickly.

Surprisingly, respondents' awareness of Ethiopia as a tourism destination is actually quite low as most of the respondents' awareness is in question as they were in dilemma to recognize the Ethiopia as a tourism destination (Grand mean 3.20). These findings give clue for concerned organs (Ministry of Culture and Tourism) to promote symbols or logos associated with Ethiopia as a tourism destination aggressively to encourage local tourists.

5.2. Implication of the Study

The study presents different theoretical and practical implications. Firstly, it contributes for the wider understanding of the Consumer based Brand Equity by examining its measurements and dimensions from destination branding perspective by taking domestic tourists of Ethiopia as a test group. Domestic tourism keeps economic activity and cash flows within a nation and can help strengthen areas of a country which are highly dependent on the tourism industry during an economic downturn (Pierret, 2011). In order to enhance revenues from tourism, the relevant government bodies like, Ministry of Culture and Tourism must develop effective country branding strategies to stand out in potential tourists' minds as viable choice possibilities. It is vital for country to create a brand which immediately generates images and expected experiences which will enhance the chance of travelers choosing that country over others competing for their business. Therefore, promoting domestic tourism, by using brand building frameworks as a tool, has multidimensional benefits for the overall economy in general and the tourism sector in particular. This study contributes a lot in adopting this brand equity framework for domestic tourism context in Ethiopia. The main aim of this brand building activities has to be increasing domestic tourism revenue, expanding domestic tourism volume, enhancing efforts to address seasonality, promote equitable geographic spread of domestic travel, and entrench a culture of tourism among Ethiopians.

Pertinent to this, the findings of this study provided helpful insight for Ministry of Culture and Tourism (MoCT) on the identification of major factors or dimensions which influence the perception of domestic tourists towards branding Ethiopia as a tourist destination. It also creates awareness of domestic tourists in regards to obtaining relevant information about the country's valuable tourism places and heritages as well as the importance of destination branding. For that reason, the study will have great contribution to the decision makers in the government and other stake holders in the county's tourism sector. It may also serve as a spring board for further study in future on the same subject in different contexts.

As a result, the conclusion provides a crucial foundation for developing and implementing tourist promotion plans to the governmental and non-governmental agencies in charge of developing Ethiopia's domestic tourism policies. By determining which CBBE dimension is most pertinent and useful to create the country's destination brand, the study sheds further light on the previously underappreciated notion of destination branding and its application to encourage domestic tourism in the nation. The study also offers a methodology for measuring, analyzing, and monitoring any strengthening or weakening of marketing strategy in connection to national brand objectives over time.

5.3. Recommendations

Based on the results of the study the researcher forwards the following recommendations for practitioners and future researches.

First and foremost, the Customer Based Brand Equity Model offers practitioners a structured way to assess the promotion work they were doing to develop the domestic tourist industry. The standard CBBE instrument delivers effective performance metrics for the city's destination branding initiatives, regardless of changes in personnel, other stakeholders, or money. Additionally, it assists them in organizing their effort to reduce cost and maximize desired benefit by identifying the constructs that have the greatest impact on producing the desired outcome. So, I advise destination brand building experts to use this model as a planning and evaluation framework for their brand building activities, but they must proceed with caution.

Secondly, since the positive and significant direct relationship between them and the overall Brand Equity was proven to be applicable, the researcher recommends special focus should have to be placed up on the

improvement of image building, perceived quality, awareness creation and brand association of the country. There is definitely some room for improvement in the promotion of the tourism destination. It is recommended that Ministry of Culture and Tourism of Ethiopia and other concerned institutions working in promotion of tourism industry to revisits their strategy for the internal market to increase their awareness of the country as a touristic destination. Therefore, it should be noted that building strong national image, creating an excellent perceived quality and excellent brand loyalty and awareness is the basis for any brand building activity that focuses on domestic tourists.

Furthermore, the government and private sector should pay adequate attention to domestic travel and incorporate it in their plans for the overall development of both the industry and the nation. Studies on domestic tourism will be valued for revealing the size and values of the market, as well as the characteristics, reasons behind people's behavior, and types of domestic travel demand and supply, among other things. Through the planning of events, the provision of training, media communications, and speeches at social gatherings like Edir and Ekub, serious measures must be taken to promote awareness of domestic tourism and modify public image of it.

In addition to aggressively promoting domestic travel and destinations via various media, domestic tourism development and marketing methods need to be developed. Most importantly, sustainable domestic tourist development requires coordinated efforts from all tourism stakeholders. The government and other stakeholders must improve infrastructure, encourage the creation of tour clubs like "know your country" in educational institutions, professional settings, and for-profit businesses, organize low-cost tour packages, offer domestic incentive trips for workers, plan social and youth tourism packages, and consistently provide higher-quality services at lower prices in order to improve the poor travel habits of the general populace. The country's domestic tourism industry would also benefit from the development of potential tourist attractions, the expansion of low-cost hotels and youth hostels in destination locations, and improvements to national security.

The researcher further advises that comprehensive changes be made to the tourism industry, which mainly deals with infrastructure issues like the lack of a well-established library in or close to popular tourist destinations that would aid visitors in learning more about those locations. It is advised to plan, participate in, and present enormously entertaining and awareness-raising events. It is possible for tourist destination centers to present this event alone or in collaboration with other organizers. For instance, Gumma Awards hosts an annual event here in Ethiopia. A deal to arrange the stage so that it serves as a representative of some of the tourist centers might be made for this program.

5.4. Limitations and recommendations for future works

As with many studies, there are limitations in the current study. The fact that the model has limits might be viewed as a chance for future study to maintain perfecting the model's underlying assumptions and closing existing gaps. As was mentioned previously, the lack of research on the best way to assess the effectiveness or ineffectiveness of destination brands is a sign that more study is necessary to address this issue. Since destination branding is a relatively new concept, research into the creation of an appropriate measurement scale is still in its infancy.

In this master's thesis, four dimensions are taken into account, and the variables from the literature that make it possible to measure the model are used. However, numerous writers and destinations have successfully demonstrated the CBBE model's validity and usefulness for assessing destination brand performance (Konecnik & Gartner, 2007; Boo, et al., 2009; Ruzzier, 2010; Pike, 2013; Yuwo, et al, 2013; Pike & Bianchi, 2016; Huo, 2017; Pike et al., 2018; Cervova & Vavrova, 2021). Each conceptual models used in these researches was modified to fit the needs of the location, and the writers took many factors and dimensions into consideration. This means that the current work is not exhaustive, and it is acknowledged that various dimensions and sub-dimensions may have been taken into account. In reality, encouraging greater inquiry and investigation was one of the objectives, and as a result, the limits that are being noted here can readily become potential for future works.

It would be vital to update the scales that are used to measure each dimension because the ones that are now in use provide numerous subtleties depending on the characteristics of the destination under consideration. A scale that may be more homogeneous among various destinations would increase the suggested model's robustness in terms of dependability. Additionally, it is generally discouraged to include words like "beautiful," "good," "interesting," and so forth on scales because they can skew the results. It would be fascinating to find out whether and which other models could help to explain how the CBBE part of Ethiopia became a popular tourist destination. Other methods, such structural equation modelling (SEM), can be used to evaluate the same model or a different one on a larger scale.

Lastly the researcher recommends future researchers to conduct other related studies in the area by considering the limitations such as expanding the sampling size incorporate with deferent parts of the country in order to make it more representative and timelier. If the study had used quota sampling, it might have provided a more accurate and representative portrayal of the Ethiopia domestic tourist sector. Unfortunately, it was not able to do so, but it is acknowledged as a need for development in order to be more in line with the age and gender characteristics of the population (Ethiopian residents). Future study is encouraged to improve this component, possibly on a larger scale. This study's analyses on marketing strategies and issues related to domestic tourist marketing are rather brief because the study is primarily concerned with domestic tourism development potentials and challenges. Therefore, elements that influence domestic tourism marketing practices should receive a lot of attention in future research on the same topic. Having said that, it is also understood that the findings of the current study only represent the viewpoint of a select number of people, and that further research—such as the kind just described—would be required to generalize the findings.

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Conflicts of interests

This original research work has not published elsewhere and has no conflicts of interest.