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Empirical study of driver's effects on
brand equity of Pokhara based on
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Abstract

Brand equity is one of the most popular and potentially important marketing concepts. The brand equity concept has been defined in numbers of different ways for a number of different purposes but there is no common viewpoint that has been emerged about how to conceptualize brand equity. The researchers do not agree about what are the drivers of brand equity in the context of tourism destination.

The purpose of this thesis is to fill the gap in the literature, by identifying the drivers of brand equity and which would effect on brand equity. This study proposes the conceptual framework for destination brand equity by incorporating various antecedents, including quality service, quality infrastructure, quality environment, cost value, unique image, destination personality, brand awareness, customer satisfaction and destination loyalty.

To accomplish the research purpose, quantitative approach has been used and a descriptive research design was used for this study. A self- administered questionnaire was distributed in the several location of Pokhara city to gather the data. The final samples consist of 152 international tourists. The data was analyzed with SPSS. Credibility of data is verified by reliability and validity. And, later, various methods are used to analyses the data. They are exploratory factor analysis (EFA), correlation analysis and multiple linear regression analysis.

It was discovered that quality environment, cost value, destination personality, unique image, brand awareness and customer satisfaction had a statistically significant effect on brand equity. The finding gave practical implication for tourism manager, authorities and stakeholders of Pokhara. Lastly, the result gave contribution to literature by discovering the drivers of brand equity of destination. And it also clarifies the research gap regarding driver's contributions on brand equity in the context of destination.

Keywords

Destination branding, Brand equity, Destination brand equity, Quality service, Quality infrastructure, Quality environment, Cost value, Unique image, Destination personality, Brand awareness, Customer satisfaction and Destination Loyalty.

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Furthermore, I would like to acknowledge my gratitude to Norway government, my parents and my sister Pratichya Thapa who were there to support me in each and every step of my life. I belong to the country where most of the country's revenue depends upon the tourism. A year ago my country was hit by devastating Earthquake and more than 10 thousand people lost their life and more than one million people were injured and became homeless. Despite this situation, my family and relatives help and support me a lot to collect the data which was required for my thesis. I will be indebted to them for my whole life. During this data collection, I personally get chance to know about the tourism sector of my country and learn more thing in various perspective.

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Bodo, May 2016

PRABAL THAPA

TABLE OF CONTENT

Abstract.....	i
Acknowledgement.....	ii
Figure overview.....	vi
Table overview.....	vi
List abbreviation.....	vii
1.0 Introduction.....	1
1.1 Background	1
1.2 Problem	3
1.3 Research question.....	5
1.4 Contributions.....	6
1.5 Disposition of study.....	6
2.0 Literature Review.....	7
2.1 Brand equity	7
2.2 Drivers of brand equity.....	10
2.2.1 Quality service.....	10
2.2.2 Quality infrastructure.....	10
2.2.3 Quality environment.....	11
2.2.4 Cost value.....	11
2.2.5 Destination personality.....	12
2.2.6 Unique image.....	12
2.2.7 Brand awareness.....	12

2.2.8 Customer satisfaction.....	13
2.2.9 Destination loyalty.....	14
2.3 Research model.....	14
3.0 Research Methodology.....	17
3.1 Research design.....	17
3.2 Data collection and sampling design.....	17
3.3 Pre-test.....	19
3.4 Measurement model.....	20
3.5 Research credibility.....	25
3.5.1 Reliability.....	25
3.5.2 Validity.....	26
3.6 Analysis of the data.....	27
3.7 Sample.....	28
4.0 Analysis and Discussion.....	31
4.1 Measure validation.....	31
4.2 Correlation analysis.....	36
4.3 Test of the hypothesis.....	38
5.0 Conclusion and Implication.....	46
5.1 Conclusion.....	46
5.2 Implications.....	47
5.3 Limitations and future research.....	49
6.0 Reference.....	51
7.0 Appendix.....	62

Appendix 1: First factor rotation analysis.....	62
Appendix 2: Correlation matrix of individual concept.....	64
Appendix 3: Factor loading of individual concept.....	68
Appendix 4: VIF values.....	76
Appendix 5: Measuring customer-based brand equity.....	76

Figure Overview

Figure 1: Research Model..... 15
Figure 2: Result from nine hypotheses..... 44

Table Overview

Table 1: Demographic frequency distribution sample..... 29
Table 2: Factor analysis after excluding variables..... 34
Table 3: Correlation matrix of all concepts..... 37
Table 4: Multiple regression linear analysis..... 40

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

CBBE = Customer- Based Brand Equity

DMO = Destination Marketing Organization

WOM = Word Of Mouth

EFA = Exploratory factor analysis

QI = Quality of infrastructure

CV = Cost value

UI = Unique Image

DP = Destination personality

BA = Brand awareness

BE = Brand equity

CS = Customer satisfaction

DL =Destination loyalty

M = Mean

SD = Standard deviations

VIF = Variance Inflation Factor

MBE = Multidimensional Brand Equity

SPSS = Statistical Package for social science

1.0 Introduction

The purpose of this thesis is to investigate driver of brand equity based on tourism destination and brand equity is employed to measure how consumer assess overall brand (Ford, 2005). In relation to that this chapter starts with a brief (1) background with respect to: why destination brand equity and its components are relevantly important topic to study. (2) Problem discussion section, further discuss about, how this study relates and contributes to previous studies and literature of brand equity and its drivers. (3) Research purpose (4) Contribution specifically lay down to understand and expressed the specific focus of thesis and (5) Disposition of the study.

1.1 Background

Tourism is an important driver of regional economic development as tourism contributes to generate employment and to the enrichment of many related industries (Wang and Hsu, 2010). In an increasingly global competitive tourism industry, a key challenge for destination marketers and authorities is to compete with other destinations competitor and substitute product to draw the attention of the consumer-traveler (Pike and Ryan, 2009). Tourism has become one of the most important sectors for the development of an economy (Ferreira et al., 2009). According to the World Tourism Organization (UNWTO, 2010), in 2010 the number of international tourist arrivals came to 940 million, this is an increase of 7% compared to 2009. Revenues increased to 693 billion Euros in 2010, i.e., rises of 5% compared to 2009. The results of 2009 declined due to the global crisis (Ferreira et al., 2009), However, year 2010 is regarded as strong recovery year for tourism industries and economy (UNWTO, 2010). This makes clear that how tourism industries can play vital role for regional economic development.

According to numerous scholars, the extraordinary growth in the tourism industry has created many challenges in tourism marketing during the last fifty years. The main reason behind this growth was passion and hobby for exploring new destinations around the world. Other reasons are tourists' mounting income and increasing leisure time of people. Nevertheless, the advances technologies in the transportation networks make easy to travel to every corner of the world. To sum up, competition has been rising in the tourism industry (O'Leary and Deegan, 2003; Bornhorst et al., 2010) for the tourists' attention, since destinations are becoming each day more

replaceable (Pike and Ryan, 2004). Thus, the tourists' decision-making process has become more complicated and complex (Echtner and Ritchie, 1993; Bornhorst et al., 2010).

Branding has become one of the big topics in the sector of tourism. Branding has existed for centuries as a way to distinguish the goods of one producer from those of another (Konecnik and Gartner, 2007). People are now more conscious and more concerned about brands before selecting any product. Consumer do not buy a product, rather they buy the images associated with the product (Nunkoo and Ramkissoon, 2011). Thus, establishing a brand is an important objective of marketing. Branding is perhaps the most powerful marketing tools available to contemporary destination marketers confronted with increasing competition (Morgan et al., 2001). Marketing orientation is aware of that consumers are spoilt for choice. Thus all company decision should be made with consumer's needs in mind (Pike and Bianchi, 2016). Competition between tourism industries branding has become an important aspect of tourism industries. The most common definition of a brand (Aaker, 1991, Pg.7) is "*A brand is distinguishing name and/or symbol (such as a logo, trademark, or package design) intended to identify the goods or service of either one seller or a group of sellers, and to differentiate those goods from those of competitors*".

However, destination branding is more complex than design of product names and symbols (Pike, 2005). It has been suggested by many authors that tourism destination branding exemplify the most obvious means by which destination can distinguish themselves from the other large number of competitive destinations over the world (Huong et al., 2015). Destination branding plays vital role to overcome the challenge for destination marketers. Destination branding should feature Destination marketing organization (DMO) marketing communication that strengthens brand identity components to differentiate destination. It should be based on a set of determinant features that appeal to the need of the target segments (Pike and Bianchi, 2016). Destination branding aims to arouse the intent to visit and revisit (Pike and Bianchi, 2016). Moreover, conscious branding strategies magnetize more travelers (Huong et al., 2015). Because of Country branding concept, several countries have been successful to establish as travel destination such as New Zealand, Spain, and Yugoslavia (Huong et al., 2015). Destination competition can be improved through not only promoting their natural and cultural attractions but also by differentiate their destination image through different branding strategies. Branding helps to

institute their unique position in the market and able to attract more international travelers and enhance the sales of tourism service (Huong et al., 2015). So, promotional activities and marketing strategies are essential to build a strong brand image compared to other countries.

The brand equity which is associated with a brand summarized all of the different assets that are part of the brands (Caldwell and Coshall, 2002). Understanding the elements of brand's equity is very essential for a brand manager. Research shows that the concepts of customer based brand equity (CBBE) for particular businesses has orientated since 1990s (Aaker, 1991). The first article in associated with tourism destination was published only after 1990s (Pike and Bianchi, 2016). As a result, brand equity has been popular among the researchers, industrial entrepreneur, destination marketers and as well as academically (Farjum and Hongyi, 2015). According to the CBBE model for the firm, the CBBE methodology which has created to develop product brand could be transform in destination (Konecnik and Gartner, 2007). A better understanding of brand equity is required to develop a strong brand in the market (Yoo and Donthu, 2002). Moreover, it is required to understand how brand equity is influencing the customer behavior and their attitude (Hoeffler and Keller, 2003). After all, a brand can be taken as customer personal choice and their own perceptions which can be varied from each other (Konecnik and Gartner, 2007).

The branding literature has anticipated that the model of consumer-based brand equity (CBBE), developed by Aaker, (1991, 1996) and Keller, (1993, 2003), offers destination marketers a performance instrument with which to evaluate and measure consumer perception of destination brand. According to proposed CBBE model, there are five dimensions to measure the brand equity which are as follows: Brand salience, brand image, brand equity, brand value and brand loyalty (Aaker, 1991, 1996; Keller, 1993, 2003). However, Destination marketing organization (DMO) can receive the practical value by developing and testing such measures (Pike and Bianchi, 2016).

1.2 Problem

It is over 50 years since the topic of branding first emerged in the marketing literature. The research relating to destination branding only appears after the late 1990s (Pike, 2007). The first article journal related to destination brand was published in 1998 (Pritchard and Morgan, 1998) and the first book published in 2002 (Morgan et al., 2002).

It is highly necessary for a brand manager to understand the elements of brand equity in order to compete in the market (Im et al., 2012). An attempt to define the relationship between customers and brands produce the term “Brand equity” in the marketing literature (Wood, 2000). In order to measure the pros and cons of the market perception in the relation to brand objective, CBBE measures could be evaluated from numerous ideas (Pike, 2007). Although measuring the effectiveness of destination brand equity has recently increasing attention in tourism industries (e.g., Boo et al., 2009; Konecnik and Gartner, 2007; Lee and Back, 2008; Pike et al., 2010), there still remain lack of complete theory that evaluate the applicability of brand equity in tourism context (Im et al., 2012). Surprisingly, there are limited studies which have explored the consumer based equity simultaneously in the cognitive psychology theory which is quite unexpected in the literature (Buil et al., 2013). For instance, the concept and meaning of brand equity have elicited much debate (Chaudhuri 1995). Most of researchers found that there is still more research and studies to be done in the field of brand equity which explain more about its concepts and importance (Vazquez et al., 2002).

In other hand, earlier studies where research was done on the brand equity affect on consumer satisfaction and customer loyalty. Although, authors have only focus on perceived quality, brand awareness and brand image as positive drivers influencing brand equity (Farquhar, 1989; Yoo et al., 2000; Kim and Hyun, 2011). There has been limited investigation into the impact of different drivers on brand equity and only some of research has measure the brand equity in the context of destination.

The theories developed so far in the field of CBBE based on tourism only explain limited dimensions of CBBE and some of author had only explore relationship between the customer satisfaction and customer loyalty. The first published journal article related to measurement of destination brand equity appears to be that by Kim, (2001 cited in Kim et al., 2009). For instance, article called “*Customer-based brand equity for destination*” was published by Konecnik and Gartner, (2007) focusing to Croatian-based brand equity for Slovenia. Similarly, “Consumer-based brand equity for destination: Practical DMO performance measure” was Pike, (2007) focusing on short-break destination brand equity for emerging destination. Alike, CBBE for Las Vegas and Atlantic city, in the context of gambling destinations (Boo et al., 2009); Destination brand equity among host community (Pike and Scott, 2009); International visitors to Korea (S.

H. Kim et al. 2009); International visitors to Mongolia (C.F Chen and Myagmarsuren, 2010); short- haul international travelers to Slovenia (Ruzzier, 2010) and Destination Brand equity for Australia (Pike and Bianchi, 2016) in the context of CBBE in short-haul and long-haul market.

Given this background, I am able to comprehend application and drivers of brand equity model is in its infancy and need further more research and clarification. The information provided by existing theories is limited, incomplete and sometimes they are misleading. In most of brand equity conceptual model, they have included five latent variables: destination brand loyalty, brand salience, brand image, brand quality and brand value. These variables do not explain precisely the brand equity model in marketing literature. Tasci et al., (2007) suggest that there is no commonly agreed upon CBBE model in marketing literature and further declare that it cannot be measured fully.

However, I had found that in previous researches, usually there is no such studies has done where it identified the different drivers of brand equity and explain the drivers affecting on brand equity in the context of destination.

1.3 Research question

The main purpose of this study is to identify drivers of the brand equity and estimate which drivers would effects on brand equity for the promising international tourist market of Pokhara as a tourist destination. I develop and test a model to better understand brand equity. I want to establish the drivers of brand equity and investigate the effects of various drivers on brand equity using data from international tourists.

In order to achieve the above stated purpose, the following question is addressed:

- *What are the drivers of brand equity and which would effect on brand equity?*

I have denoted CBBE as brand equity in this research paper. This study shall be limited to International tourists who have been visiting Pokhara city of Nepal. The proposed research question will be investigated using a quantitative approach.

1.4 Contributions

The intended contribution of this study is to close the gap in knowledge by identifying drivers of brand equity and their effects on brand equity. By studying the drivers influencing on brand equity, there were three expected contributions to the literatures. First as far as I know there was only one previous study which had researched drivers of brand equity in the context of tourist (i.e. Im et al., 2012). This study is builds on the past model (Im et al., 2012) and extended the literature with five concepts. They are quality environment, cost value, unique image, destination personality and customer satisfaction. Out of these concepts, destination personality has negative effects on brand equity and remaining concepts have positive effect on brand equity. In this way this study enriches the destination brand equity model. Second, I have shown empirically that these five concepts are related in a statistical significant way to brand equity. Third, by studying these effects will contribute to practice and after knowing the factors influencing brand equity of destination, tourism managers will be able to strengthen marketing strategies. Basically, a practical contribution is to show managers of DMO and tourism authorities that they can use six drivers (quality environment, cost value, destination personality, unique image, brand awareness and customer satisfaction) to increase the brand equity of destinations. This study helps to enhance the knowledge of destination brand equity and tried to help tourism authorities and destination marketing organization (DMO) to understand how to evaluate the strategies for enhancing strong brand equity.

1.5 Disposition of study

This thesis is built up with five chapters. Chapter one expressed the background, problem, research question and contribution. Chapter two discussed the literature review, justified nine hypotheses and presented a proposed research model. Chapter three focused on the research methodology, sampling design, research credibility, describing the factor analysis and presented final sample. Chapter four presented the analysis and discussed the findings related to theoretical background in the research. Lastly, chapter five expressed the conclusion, implication and further research.

2.0 Literature Review

This chapter presents literature review provides deeper insight regarding previous research and literature that has been done in the field of destination brand equity along with the describing the different drivers of brand equity. Then, hypotheses are justified and at the end this chapter, the research model will be presented that will pictorially capture, what is this study all about.

2.1 Brand equity

In the field of marketing literature brand equity has become one of the fundamental theories. Since the past decades, brand equity has become one of the main attractions to marketing researchers, Destination Marketing Organization (DMO) and administrative leaders have taken as the major insubstantial strength of the marketing field. Many definition of brand equity have been proposed by scholar and authors. One of the most widely accepted definition defines that brand equity is the “added value endowed by the brand to product” (Farquhar, 1989). According to Aaker, (1991, Pg. 7) brand equity is a set of brand assets and liabilities linked to a brand, its name and symbol that add to or subtract from the value provided by product or service to firm and/ or to that firm’s customers. Brand plays a vital role to recognize the main purpose of brand identity and brand image. Keller defines brand equity as “the differential effect of brand knowledge on consumer response to the marketing of brand” (Keller, 2003, Pg. 48). Basically, branding is all about endowing product and services with the power of brand equity. Likewise, Keller, (1993) used the term consumer-based brand equity to refer to brand equity and stressed that CBBE occurs when consumer is familiar with the brand and holds some favorable, strong and unique brand associations in their memory.

Similarly, Clow and Baack, (2005) advice that brand equity is one of the features of the products which make the product stand out and attracts more users in the market with a higher price than the product without any brand. A product with a brand name is more popular and long lasting in the market then a product without any brand. Brand equity is not only giving a name to products but it also gives you the proprietorship and make realization how worth the product is in the market. At the same the value of the brand equity always remains intangible (Yoo and Donthu, 2001; Abratt and Bick, 2003). Blackston, (1995), on the other hand, explains brand equity as brand value and brand meaning, where brand meaning implies brand saliency, brand

associations, and brand personality and where brand value is the outcome of managing the brand meaning.

Despite, the different view, most spectators agree that brand equity includes the marketing effects uniquely attributable to a brand. In other words, brand equity explains why different outcomes result from the marketing of branded product or service than if it were unbranded (Keller, 2003). These several definitions imply that brand equity is the incremental value of a product due to brand name (Srivastava and Shocker, 1991).

According to Kim and Kim, (2005), there are three types of viewpoints to understand the brand equity in a better way. They are: the customer-based perspective, the financial perspective and the combined perspective. This study focuses on the customer perspective of brand equity. The customer-based brand equity (CBBE) approach is the main perspective and majority of academics and scholar has preferred in marketing research (Farjum and Hongyi, 2015). Existing literature on brand equity has focused on the perspective of cognitive psychology (Christodoulides et al., 2015 and De Chernatony and Cottam, 2006). Moreover, Motameni and Shahrokhi, (1998) stated that CBBE as marketing perspective there are always both pros and cons in everything that exist in this world. Likewise, CBBE also has its own pros and cons. The main pros of the CBBE is the long term income, pursuing of new outlets for the distribution of products by customers themselves, high price margin and better efficiency of marketing communications whereas, cons are that there is also chances of not getting popularity among the consumer and get satisfied with the product that does not have any brand (Keller, 2003).

Destination Branding

Destination are geographically defined place with a compilation of assets ranging from the natural to the socio-cultural, what Tasci and Gartner, (2007) refers to an image capital (Gartner and Ruzzier, 2011). As far as a tourism destination being treated as a brand (Cai, 2002; Gnoth, 2002; Morgan et al., 2002) the question arises whether its valuation from the customer's perspective, can be similar to what is proposed in the mainstream marketing literature, or is it dissimilar enough to be considered as a separate form of branding (Gartner and Ruzzier, 2011). There is a debate about adaptability of brand theory (Anholt, 2002; Kotler and Gertner, 2002; Papadopoulous and Heslop, 2002). The effect of brand valuation on destination would be indirect and measured more through changes in the number of tourists who choose the

destination, their expenditure level, and length of stay. Despite uncertainty of transferability of brand concept to a tourism destination, the growing popularity of the destination branding is undeniable (e.g., Boo et al., 2009; Pike et al., 2010; Saraniemi and Ahonen, 2008). Gartner and Ruzzier, (2011) state that, an underperforming destination brand would expect to receive fewer tourists, with shorter length of stay, and lower level of tourist spending than one that has strong and positive connection with the market.

However, there has been a lack of empirical research investigating the application of the branding to destination management organizations (DMOs) at different levels, from national and state tourism offices to regional tourism organizations, to develop a country, region, or individual destination as brand (Im et al., 2012). A review of destination branding for several countries and regional brands highlights a number of general ingredients for success such as brand identity and brand personality, right target market, positioning, communication channel and partnership among various levels of stakeholders (Im, 2003).

Destination brand equity

Brand equity is not a straightforward concept when it comes to destination. Most of the marketing literature deals with brand equity from the perspective of a single product or a collection of similar product from a single producer marketed under the same name (Gartner and Ruzzier, 2011). Destinations, as people and products, can be branded (Princhard and Morgan, 1998). The power of branding is in making people aware of the destination and then linking positive associations to it (Nickerson and Moisey, 1999).

Some of the authors have developed a model which conceptualizes destination brand equity. According to Kim et al., (2009) findings, the influence of involvement on destination brand equity has significant effect on satisfaction and further finds influence of satisfaction on behavioral intentions, which is operationalized as revisit intentions and willingness to spend money.

Gartner and Ruzzier, (2011) in their study proposed a customer-based brand equity model for tourism destination, encompassing the dimensions of awareness, image, quality, and loyalty, to verify the difference between renewal and repeat tourists for a tourism destination Slovenia, from the perspective of German tourists.

Im et al., (2012) develops a conceptual framework for destination brand equity that goes beyond image by adapting and expanding a multidimensional consumer-based brand equity scale for application with in tourism context.

Chen and Myagmarsuren, (2010) proposes a destination brand equity model by incorporating various antecedents, include perceived service quality, destination awareness and destination image as the perceptual brand equity, and destination loyalty as the behavioral brand equity.

2.2 Drivers of Brand equity

2.2.1 Quality service

Quality service is important for destination marketing and it influences on the choice of destination (Ahmed, 1991). Quality service is reflected in a consumer's evaluation view of a service encounter (Cronin and Taylor, 1994). If consumer perceive that quality service offered was according to their expectation and also meet service promises then they also perceived to have been treated fairly and reasonably (Berry et al., 1994; Bitner, 1995; Zahirik and Rust, 1992). Brand quality has been used interchangeably with quality service by consumer (Aaker, 1991; Zeithaml, 1988). Hellier et al., (2003) developed and tested a structural equation model and reported that perceived service quality had significant influence on perceived equity. With background in the theory, I argued that a tourist perception's of quality service influence the brand equity. On the basis of this I deduct the following hypothesis.

Hypothesis 1: Quality service positively effects brand equity.

2.2.2 Quality infrastructure

Tourism infrastructure is a component of regional touristic product. It is the combination of basic device, building and service institutions, whose existence is vital to the proper operating society (Panasiuk, 2007). Good infrastructure makes rourist to stay longer and could be use as attraction for tourist (Panasiuk, 2007). In tourism sector, the transportation and communication are crucial means of access to the region of touristic perception and movement. Quality is a very subjective term but it can be made operational through a variety of scale measures (Gartner and Ruzzier, 2011). Quality is often viewed as simply meeting or exceeding expectations (Gartner and

Ruzzier, 2011). Maintaining or increasing quality levels is a prerequisite for enhancing product brand equity (Gartner and Ruzzier, 2011). Thus, I hypothesized that more good quality infrastructure perceived by tourist, the more chance to enhance the brand equity. On the basis of this I deduct the following hypothesis.

Hypothesis 2: Quality infrastructure positively effects brand equity.

2.2.3 Quality environment

Some tourist spend their leisure time engaging in simply enjoying the environment (Faraji rad and Aghajani, 2010). Environment consists of surrounding, circumstance of destinations. The quality of the environment, both natural and man-made, is essential to tourism (United Nation Environment Programme). The quality of the environment, both natural and man-made, is essential to tourism (Sunlu, 2003) Thus, I hypothesize perception of good quality environment can influence the brand equity. In other word, if the destinations have good quality of environment then, brand equity can be enhancing. On the basis of this I deduct the following hypothesis.

Hypothesis 3: Quality environment positively effects brand equity.

2.2.4 Cost value

The cost value refers to the benefits customers suppose they receive relative to the cost associated with its consumption (Mc Dougall and Levesque, 2000). In other word, perceived value is defined as “the consumer’s overall assessment of utility of a product or service based on perception of what is received and what is given” (Zeithaml, 1988). However, if the brand does not generate value, it will usually be vulnerable to competitors (Aaker, 1996). Therefore, the theory argues that tourist who has perceived the favorable cost value, would enhance the brand equity. On the basis of this I deduct the following hypothesis.

Hypothesis 4: Cost value positively effects brand equity.

2.2.5 Destination personality

Destination personality is derived from brand personality. Brand personality refers to “set of human characteristics associated with a brand” (Aaker, 1997). It evokes emotional links between brand and consumers (Landon, 1974). However, destination personality is a relatively new development in academic research, but studies of destination image can be found since 1970s (Ekinici and Hosany, 2006). Brand personality can influence consumer preference and patronage (Sirgy, 1982; Malhotra, 1988). Thus, I hypothesize that if the consumer can associate more personality with destination then it will lead to enhance the brand equity. On the basis of this I deduct the following hypothesis.

Hypothesis 5: Destination personality positively effects brand equity.

2.2.6 Unique image

Uniqueness is defined as the degree to which customers feel the brand is different from competing brand (Netemeyer et al, 2004). If the brand is not perceived as unique from rival it will have a difficult time in supporting a higher price relative to other brands. Brand uniqueness is considered a “core/primary” CBBE facet (Aaker, 1996; Agarwal and Rao, 1996). Opposite to common image, unique image is highlighted as a constructed that envisages the overall image of destination (Echtner and Ritchie, 1993). Uniqueness is predominantly significant due to its influence on differentiation among similar destination in the consumer’s mind (Cai, 2002; Ritchie and Ritchie, 1988). However, one of purpose of branding is to differentiate the product from competitors. Thus, I hypothesize that if tourist perception regarding destination is unique then it will enhance the brand equity. On the basis of this I deduct the following hypothesis.

Hypothesis 6: Unique image positively effects brand equity.

2.2.7 Brand awareness

Awareness reflects the presence of the brand in the mind of customers (Aaker, 1996). Increasing awareness is one kind of process to expand the market reach of the brand. According to Aaker, (1996) brand awareness reflects both the knowledge and the salience of the brand in the

consumer's mind. Destination brand awareness is the ability to recognize and recall a brand and it is regarded as main component of brand's effect on tourism industries (Huong et al., 2015). Awareness is prerequisite for brand equity since consumers must be aware that the brand exists. Buil et al., (2013) proposed that brand awareness have a positive, through indirect, influence on brand equity. However, theory argues that if consumers are aware about the brand then more possibility to build strong the brand equity. Thus, I hypothesize, that the more awareness about brand leads to more chances to enhance the brand equity. On the basis of this I deduct the following hypothesis.

Hypothesis 7: Brand awareness positively effects brand equity.

2.2.8 Customer satisfaction

Customer satisfaction is a comparison between expectation and perception of experience (Upamannyu and Sankpal, 2014). Consumer satisfaction is needed to long-term business success and it is one of the most frequently researched topic in the marketing (Nam et al., 2011). Since success of the business is depending on the consumer satisfaction, much of the research on consumer satisfaction investigates its impact on consumer's post consumption evaluations such as behavioral and attitudinal loyalty (Cooil, et al., 2007). Weber, (1996) has anticipated consumer satisfaction as a fundamental pillar of marketing theory and as a key influence over future purchase intensions, market share and word of mouth (WOM) communication. However, Parasuraman et al., (1998) reported that a customer's overall satisfaction may be related to their assessment of not only service quality but also product feature and price (Hoang et al., 2015). Chuchill and Surprenant, (1982) expressed that customer satisfaction is an expectation before purchase and perception about performance after purchase. However, I hypothesize that satisfied customer leads to enhance the brand equity. On the basis of this I deduct the the following hypothesis.

Hypothesis 8: Customer satisfaction positively effects brand equity.

2.2.9 Destination loyalty

The brand loyalty of the customer-based is the one of the core characteristics of a brand's equity (Aaker, 1991). The ability to create customer loyalty is a major goal of brand management (Boo et al., 2009). Keller, (2003) operationalized brand loyalty as the main source of customer-based brand equity. Generally, brand loyalty has been considered either an attitude or behavior (Odin et al., 2001). Although loyalty has been an important research area in tourism (Oppermann, 2000), there is no definition of destination brand loyalty within the concept of destination brand equity. In the field of tourism industries Back and Parks, (2003) reported that brand loyalty has been considered as a consequence of multi-dimensional cognitive attitude toward a specific brand. However, Yoo et al, (2000); Atilgan et al, (2005) reported that brand loyalty has been found to be one of the main drivers of brand equity. Moreover, loyal consumers indicate more favorable responses to brand equity. As a result, brand loyalty will contribute to growing brand equity. On the basis of this I deduct the following hypothesis.

Hypothesis 9: Destination loyalty positively effects brand equity.

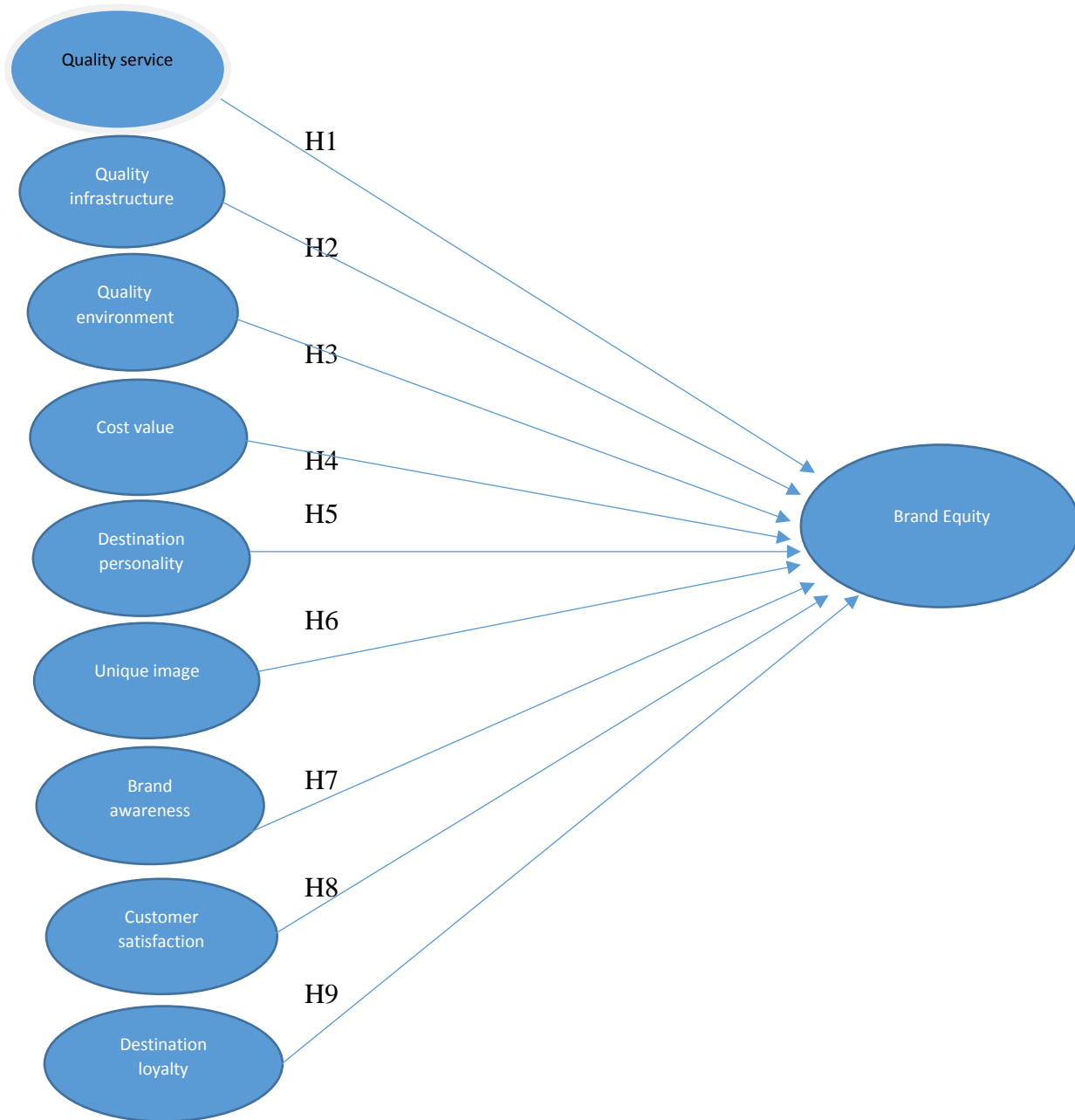
2.3 Research Model

In this thesis the aim was to determine drivers and its effects on brand equity. This study therefore addressed the following research question:

- *What are the drivers of brand equity and which would effects on brand equity?*

To examine my research question I developed a research model illustrated by Figure 1.

Figure 1: Research Model



According to Im et al., (2012) the factor affecting brand equity are brand awareness, brand image, brand awareness and brand loyalty. The finding of the study shows that brand awareness, brand associations and brand loyalty are positively effects brand equity. Furthermore, my proposed research model had integrated six independent variables to the model, which explained the dependent variable: Quality service, quality infrastructure, quality environment, cost value, destination personality and customer satisfaction. As a result, this model argues that if tourist has a positive perception toward dependent variable, then they will enhance the brand equity of destination.

3.0 Research Methodology

The purpose of this study is to examine the perception of international tourists who have visited Pokhara and determining the drivers which affects the brand equity. This chapter includes (1) research design, (2) Data collection and sampling design (3) measurement of concept, (4) the research credibility, (5) the data analyses methods that are used, and (6) present sample.

3.1 Research design

The research design outlines are essential to obtain an understanding, explanation and to make a prediction, or to control some phenomena (Huong et al., 2015). Research design gives a framework or blueprint for the study and it suggest to make observations and analysis them. Business research method can be categorized on the either function basis or technique basis. However, based on function, there are three kind of research including exploratory, descriptive and casual studies. This study employed a descriptive design using a cross-sectional sample survey. In my study, I investigate different variables effects on brand equity. A survey was administered to a selected sample from a population of International tourist who has been to Pokhara for the visiting purpose. The term ‘survey’ is commonly applied to a research methodology designed to collect data from a specific population, or a sample from that population, and typically utilizes a questionnaire or an interview as the survey instrument (Robson, 2002).

3.2 Data Collection and Sampling design:

There is difference between population and sample drawn from population (Easterby-Smith et al., 2012). The population refers to the universe of units from which the sample is to be selected. The sample refers to a subset of the population, which is selected for investigation (Gauri and Gronhaug, 2010). Data collection is the essential and a keystone for research as it helps to provide the empirical evidence of support the findings (Remenyi et al., 1998). In this section, I describe how I collect evidence in the form of quantitative data, and the challenges I face during the period of data collection. To make inference about a population, sample is drawn from the population to draw conclusions about the population (Easterby-Smith et al., 2012).

The targeted population was international tourists who visited Pokhara. The survey was conducted in the Pokhara city, focusing on the tourist area for eight days period from 7th April 2016 to 14 April 2016. I used a convenience sample. A self-administered questionnaire was distributed in several locations which are mostly populated by international Visitors, such as Phewa Tal (Fewa lake), Peace Stupa Temple, Sarangkot, Lakeside, Pamey, Hallanchowk Market, Lakeside view Restaurant and Bar and shopping centers of Pokhara. At first, I introduce myself and explained about my Master's Research paper and the purpose of my survey. Each respondent was instructed to complete the survey in a correct way.

During the period of eight days while collecting data, I found most of the International tourist in Restaurant, walking on streets, shopping in a Mall or on open places enjoying the nature of Pokhara. Based upon my personal experience, only those people were ready or interested in survey that was in open place and spending their leisure time. I was able to collect the data 140 tourists was surveyed while visiting Pokhara. It was somewhat challenging to convince respondent to participate in survey. The first challenge was to start the conversation. Before I started the conversation, they felt disturbed and annoyed which was not really good sign to communicate. Second they find my questions too lengthy and didn't have enough time to complete my questionnaire. Third challenge was the language. Most of tourist have language problem and they didn't understand English language because they were from non-English speaking country. In addition, recently Nepal was hit by devastating earthquake which affected in the arrival of tourist as well in tourism of whole country.

Despite some challenges, I got the chance to meet some wonderful people who were ready to help me in anyways. Among those 139 respondents some of them were very cooperative and participate enthusiastically and help me to collected data. Some of them were critically analyzing the questionnaires and gave comments about how to improve tourism in Pokhara.

Also, I distributed questionnaire through email. I had collected the email address of tourist who had been to Pokhara via one of the local travel agencies. I constructed questionnaires with a tool called Google survey and then I sent questionnaires through the email. In addition, respondents were asked to forward questionnaires to their relatives and friends who have been to Pokhara. The advantage of email questionnaires is that many people can be covered in a survey and more efficient to gather the more sample from respondents (Sekaran and Bougie, 2009). A set of

questionnaires along with instruction was distributed to 50 respondents. Out of which, I received the respond from 13 respondents. So in total I collected from data 153 respondents.

Sampling process can be divided into two groups, probability and non-probability sample, where probability sampling has a stronger credibility in general (Easterby-Smith et al., 2012). In my research I have chosen non-probability convenient sample because non probability sampling helps to obtain some preliminary information in a quick and inexpensive way (Sekaran and Bougie, 2009). Moreover, probability sampling is often impractical, time consuming and expensive (Cooper and Schindler, 2008).

Pokhara city is one of the famous places to visit in Nepal. Here, people come to visit from the different part of the world. So, the population of interest was considerably large. The survey questionnaires were distributed in English language and targeted population for this study was international tourists who were there for visit or visited the Pokhara.

Overall, the survey went very well as expected. Since the questionnaires were created in English language and all tourists were not so fluent in English which was quite challenging and made out of interest to participate the survey. Hence, it is difficult to control how the respondent understand and answer the questionnaires (Bryman and Bell, 2007). Due to limitations of research time and cost, the research instrument was conducted using merely an English version of the questionnaires. In that only English speaker could respond to the questionnaires. This limitation and challenges might result to some extent in sampling bias.

3.3 Pre-test

Before starting my final data collection, I conducted two pre-tests. In the first pre-test, total 14 respondents answered my survey and 15 respondents for the second pre-test. The reason behind doing pre-test was to make sure that the survey was measuring the right way that I wanted to measure, also to test the validity of measures and to make sure questions were understandable for the respondent or not. For the pre-test a self-administered questionnaire was distributed through email to those people who have been travel Pokhara. I conducted factor analysis test to identify whether the items have a convergent validity. Those items were removed or replace which have problem in validity and the items which does not work as I expected to do.

3.4 Measurement Model

This part of the study aims to measure the relevant attributes of the destination brand equity using a structured questionnaire. This section was developed to measure the respondent's perception toward quality service (QS), quality infrastructure (QI), quality environment (QE), cost value (CS), destination personality (DP), unique image (UI), customer satisfaction (CS), destination loyalty (DL) and brand equity (BE) toward the Pokhara city as travel destination. I created the questionnaire simple and short so that respondent feels convenient to answer. I tried to use published measures. The concepts are measure through the statement and respondent are asked to rate the statement on five-point Likert scale, where 1= Strongly Disagree; 2= Disagree; 3= Neither /Nor; 4= Agree; 5=Strongly Agree.

Quality services

Quality service means tourist's overall appraisal of the standard of the service delivery (Hellier et al., 2003). Quality service was measured to identify how tourist perceived the level of service served by destination and how tourist feels welcoming during their stay in Pokhara. To operationalize "quality service" concept, I have chosen six measures. The concept was measured based on previous research (Hutchinson et al., 2008) and modified to fit on this study. The respondents were asked to respond to six statements:

"Service providers are courteous and polite in Pokhara"

"Service providers provided prompt service"

"Service providers are always willing to help"

"Service providers are knowledgeable about service offered"

"Service providers are professional"

"Service providers have ability to communicate with a guest"

Quality infrastructure

Quality infrastructure was measured to identify the tourist's overall assessment of the quality of infrastructure of Pokhara. To operationalize the "quality infrastructure" concept I have chosen four measures. The concept was measured based on Beerli and Martin, (2004) and modified to fit on this study. The respondents were asked to respond to four statements:

"Pokhara offers good quality hotels and lodges"

"Pokhara offers good cafes and restaurants"

"Pokhara maintains good quality communication and network facilities"

"Pokhara offers good Bars and clubs"

Quality environment

Quality environment was measured to identify the tourist's overall assessment of the condition of environment of Pokhara through tourist experience. To operationalize the "Environment" concept, I have chosen five measures. The concept was measured based on Wang and Hsu, (2010); Stylos and Andronikidis, (2013); Lee et al., (2012); Beerli and Martin, (2004) and modified to fit on this study. The respondents were asked to respond to five statements:

"Pokhara has a clean environment"

"Pokhara has a nice landscape that makes a beautiful environment"

"Pokhara has beautiful lakes and mountains"

"Pokhara has lovely natural scenery"

"Pokhara has an abundance of flora"

Cost value

Cost value was measured to identify tourist's overall assessment of the net worth of service, based on benefits acquired (Munhurrun et al. 2015). To operationalize "Cost value" concept, I have chosen four measures. The concept was measured based on Hallmann et al. (2015); Lee et al. (2012); Eggert and Ulagu, (2002) and modified to fit on this study. I asked respondent to respond to three statements:

“It is worth spending money in Pokhara”

“Expenses in Pokhara are low compared to other destinations”

“Compared to the price we pay we get reasonable quality”

Destination personality

Product/brand personality reflects the “set of human characteristics associated with brand” (Aaker, 1997). The brand personality study also measured the degree of positive or negative attitude toward each brand in comparison to other brand (Aker, 1996, Pg. 144). In my study, I am going measure concept destination personality. It is defined as the set of human characteristics related with a destination as perceived from a tourist rather than a local resident or Destination Management Organization (DMO) prospective (Ekinici and Hosany, 2006). To operationalize concept, I have chosen five measures. The items were used in previous research Diamantopoulos et al., (2005). I asked respondent to respond to five statements.

“Pokhara is an exciting place”

“Pokhara is an adventurous place”

“Pokhara is an outdoorsy place”

“Pokhara is a cheerful place”

“Pokhara is family oriented place”

Unique image

Unique image was measured on how tourists perceived Pokhara as unique place to visit as compared with other destination (Qu et al., 2011). Qu et al., (2011) has suggested unique image as new component of destination brand associations. To operationalize the concept, I have chosen seven measures. I asked respondent to respond to seven statements.

“Native people of Pokhara are unique”

“The environment in Pokhara is unique”

“The customs of local people are unique in Pokhara”

“Scenery and natural wonders are unique in Pokhara”

“Pokhara offers many unique local attractions”

“Pokhara has a unique cultural and historical attraction”

“Cultural events and festivals in Pokhara are unique”

Brand awareness

Brand awareness refers to the strength of brand’s presence in consumer’s mind. Brand awareness was measured to identify tourist’s ability to recognize and recall a Pokhara as travel destination. The concept was measured based on previous studies Pike and Bianchi, (2016) and Huong et al., (2015). To operationalize the brand awareness concept, I have chosen five measures. I asked respondent to respond five statements.

“Pokhara has a good name and reputation”

“The characteristics of Pokhara come to my mind quickly”

“When I am thinking of an international holiday, Pokhara comes to my mind”

“I have seen a lot of advertising promoting Pokhara holidays”

“The brand Pokhara is easy to recognize among the other destination brand”

Customer Satisfaction

Customer satisfaction was measured on how much the tourist had satisfied by visiting Pokhara. The concept was measured based on Hutchinson et al., (2008); Bosque and Martin, (2008); Gallarza and Saura, (2006) and Rufin et al., (2011). To operationalize the concept, I have chosen four characteristics. I asked respondent to respond to four statements.

“My choice to visit Pokhara was a wise one”

“I really enjoyed this trip”

“This tourism experience in Pokhara was exactly what I expected”

“I am delighted to have visited Pokhara”

Destination Loyalty

Destination loyalty was measured on how tourists are loyal to visit the Pokhara again in future. The concept was measured based on Martin, (2005); Campon et al., (2013) and Huong et al., (2015). The respondent was asked to answer the four statements using a five-point Likert scale, ranging from (1 = definitively no) to (5=definitively yes). I have chosen four measures. I asked respondent to respond to four statements.

“I am willing to pay a higher price for Pokhara than other Place”

“I will encourage my family and friends to visit Pokhara”

“I will recommend Pokhara if someone asks me for advice”

“I will tell other people positive things about this place”

Brand Equity

Brand equity is regarded as a global preference for the brand over similar alternative (Farquhar, 1989; Aaker, 1991). From the customer-based perspective, brand equity reflects how customers perceive and react differentially to brand versus unbranded offerings (Yoo et al., 2000). According to Yoo et al., (2000) Multidimensional Brand Equity (MBE) scale was developed by adopting Aaker’s, (1996) four dimension (brand loyalty, brand awareness, perceived quality, and brand association). The MBE model was extended from Aaker’s model by separating the dimension of Brand equity (MBE) from overall brand equity (OBE) to investigate how individual MBE is related to OBE (Im et al., 2012). Brand equity measure was based on Yoo et al., (2000) and Yasin et al., (2007). This scale measures the incremental value of the specific brand due to the brand name in comparison with an unbranded product with the same characteristics (Buil et al., 2013). To operationalize the concept, I have chosen four measures. I asked respondent to respond to four statements.

“Even if another destination had the same feature as Pokhara, I would prefer to travel Pokhara”

“If there is another destination as good as Pokhara, I prefer to travel to Pokhara”

“If another destination is not different from Pokhara in any way, it seems smarter to travel Pokhara”

“It makes sense to travel Pokhara instead of any other countries, even if they are the same”

3.5 The research credibility

This section includes identifying how much our measurements have credibility. When we measure something we want to make sure measures are valid. However, measurements often contain errors (Ghauri and Gronhaug, 2010). There are many validation scales that can be used in research but finding the right one for your purpose is sometimes difficult (Pallant, 2013). In my research most of the items have been used in previous research, while some items are created by me. So it is important that the items that I have chosen for my measurement should have credibility. To find my research credibility I operated with reliability and validity.

3.5.1 Reliability

The reliability of the data was tested by performing reliability test with SPSS. Reliability is the level of which we can trust the data, and concern the data collection method and how the data is used (Johannessen, 2009). A vital feature is to make sure that the investigate process go through as it is thought not involved any wrong assumptions. Reliability is supposed to give quality to the research but we cannot exclude a risk of biased quality (Saunders et al., 2009). Another feature of reliability that can be assessed is internal consistency, stability and goodness of measure (Sekaran and Bougie, 2009). This is the degree to which the items that make up the scale are all measuring the same underlying attributes (Pallant, 2013). Internal consistency of instrument can be measured in many ways. In this survey, internal reliability of the research was measured by the Cronbach's alpha coefficient (Easterby-Smith et al., 2012). This data delivers an indication of the average correlation among all of the items that make up the scale. Value range from 0 to 1, higher the value indicates the greater reliability (Pallant, 2013). In contrast, A value greater than 0.70 will indicate that the research has an acceptable level of reliability (Easterby-Smith et al., 2012). The internal reliability of the concepts ranged between a Cronbach's alpha of 0.754 to 0.910 and was well above the recommended level of 0.70.

3.5.2 Validity

Validity determines whether the research measures what it was intended to measure or how truthful the research results are (Golafshani, 2003). The validation of a scale includes the pool of empirical evidence regarding its use (Pallant, 2013). The main type of validity I have discussed are internal and external validity (Easterby-Smith et al., 2012), convergent and discriminant validity (Sekaran and Bougie, 2009).

In my research, there are ten concepts: quality service, quality infrastructure, quality environment, cost value, unique image, destination personality, brand awareness, customer satisfaction, destination loyalty and brand equity. These concepts and items of measuring concepts are also developed from previous research (Aaker, 1996; Keller, 2003; Yoo et al. 2000; Buil et al. 2013) and I have included some items created by myself which will measure the concept because I have added the items according to name suggested for measurements.

Internal validity refers to the assurance of result being correct. To maximize the internal validity, it requires the elimination of reasonable alternative explanation for any difference observed between groups (Pallant, 2013). I ensured that the survey was distributed to the right population. I had distributed the questionnaires in different location of Pokhara where tourists are most populated. In addition I conducted two pre-test to develop a survey which had accurate measures and questions which the respondent could understand. Moreover, to improve the internal validity I made sure that my research model was logic (Yin, 2014). All of the constructs in this research are based on previous research.

The external validity refers to whether the data and the results in this study can be conveyed to the population, and the results can be generalized beyond the main study and other context (Johannessen, 2009). One indicator of external validity is the sample used in the study. My research has used a non-probability with convenience sample and there is not high level of external validity. In addition, the questionnaires are distributed in English so that everyone understands the common language (Crystal, 2012). Another indicator of good validity was how survey was answered. In my survey, questionnaire was distributed in the different location of Pokhara city and some questionnaires are sent by email address thorough internet via with help of local travel agencies by which respondent will have enough time to think and give an answer.

Convergent validity refers to which extent multiple methods for measuring the same construct yield similar result (Ghauri and Gronhaug, 2010). I have evaluated the factor loading to indicate

the convergent validity. The factor loadings should at least express a value of 0.50, preferably a value over 0.70 (Hair et al., 2010). After investigation the results of the data reveals the factor loading varied from 0.493 to 0.870.

Discriminant validity refers to the degree to which items of construct are distinct to the measure of different concepts. Quality service, quality of infrastructure, quality environment, cost value, destination personality, brand awareness, unique image, customer satisfaction and destination loyalty variables are independent of each other, and signify nine different phenomena. In my research I have carried out a correlation analysis to test the discriminant validity of the different concepts. The correlation analysis discovers covariance between the nine concepts. In my research, the result reveals none of the concepts in the correlation analysis exceeded the maximum level of 0.80 (Hair et al., 2010). This indicates that the requirement for discriminant validity was fulfilled.

3.6 Analysis of the data

In this part I will describe how I had interpreted the collected data from the survey. To analysis the data, I have used the SPSS (Statistical Package for social science) software. First of all, I had entered the data into excel and exported it into SPSS. Through the SPSS first I interpreted descriptive statistics followed by exploratory factor analysis, reliability analysis, a correlation analysis, and to test the hypothesis I implemented a multiple linear regression analysis.

Exploratory factor analysis (EFA)

An exploratory factor analysis is used to examine pattern in the correlation between variables (Johannessen, 2009). This analysis helps me to find out if the answers to different items/measures have a tendency to group together. In addition, it helps me to determine which measures to keep and remove, and which measures to take into other representing a concept. In detail, using the principal component analysis with VARIMAX rotation process, I had remove those items which has factor loading lower than 0.4 and with serious cross-loading on more than one factor to get at an underlying concept, and to facilitate interpretations (Rummel, 1970).

Moreover, it is easier to focus on some important factors rather than having to consider too many variables that may be insignificant (Young and Pearce, 2013).

Correlation analysis

In my research, I have used a correlation analysis to evaluate the discriminant validity. Correlation examines the strength of the linear relationship between two variables (Ghuri and Gronhaug, 2010). It is measured with the correlation coefficient r . The correlation coefficient can take the values from -1 to +1 (Ghuri and Gronhaug, 2010).

Multiple linear regression analysis

Multiple linear regression is not just one technique to explore the relationship between one continuous dependent variable and a number of independent variable (Pallant, 2013). In multiple regression two or more independent variable are applied to explain the dependent variable. A linear regression analysis is indicated as multivariate analysis (Easterby-Smith et al., 2012). In my research, to test my hypothesis I had conducted the multiple linear regression.

3.7 Sample

A total of 152 respondents answered my survey. There were 72 males which are 47.4 % of the sample and 80 females which is 52.6% of total respondents. The data contains slightly more female than male respondents. The age range of the respondent was age of 13 to 73 years old. All the respondents were international tourists who were there to visit Pokhara. The sample consists of 36 different nationalities. The majority of respondents came from United States and Germany with total of 16 (10.5%) each.

Participants from Asia and European have majority in number. Total Asian 45 (29.6%), European 71 (46.7%), American were 28 (18.4%), Australia 8 (5.2%). Out of total respondents, tourist from France had stayed 210 days which was the longest one and five respondents had stayed only 1 days in Pokhara, which was the shortest staying among the participates. In addition, most of the respondent's education qualification is college level which was 76. 25 of them have High school and 45 respondents have Master Degree/PHD. Table 1 illustrates the demographic frequency distribution sample.

Table 1: Demographic frequency distribution sample

Classification	Variable	Numbers	Percentage
Country of residence	Argentina	3	2.0
	Australia	8	5.3
	Austria	1	0.7
	Bangladesh	1	0.7
	Belarus	1	0.7
	Brazil	1	0.7
	Canada	8	5.3
	China	10	6.6
	Denmark	7	4.6
	Finland	1	0.7
	France	11	7.2
	Germany	16	10.5
	Holland	3	2.0
	Hong Kong	2	1.3
	India	4	2.6
	Indonesia	2	1.3
	Israel	4	2.6
	Italy	1	0.7
	Japan	10	6.6
	Korea	3	2.0
	Malaysia	2	1.3
	New Zealand	1	0.7
	Philippines	2	1.3
	Poland	1	0.7
	Romania	1	0.7
	Russia	6	3.9
	Scotland	2	1.3

	Slovakia	1	0.7
	Spain	3	2.0
	Sri Lanka	2	1.3
	Switzerland	1	0.7
	Taiwan	1	0.7
	Thailand	2	1.3
	Ukraine	3	2.0
	United Kingdom	11	7.2
	United State	16	10.5
Gender	Female	72	
	Male	80	
Education	Primary School	3	2.0
	High School	25	16.4
	College	76	50.0
	Master Degree/ PHD	45	29.6
	Others	2	1.3
	Missing	1	0.7
Total		152	100%

4.0 Analysis and discussion

In this chapter, the data collected was presented analyzed and discussed. It includes (1) Measure validation which test the validity of the measures (2) Correlation analysis represent the correlation between variables and (3) Test of the hypothesis determines whether hypothesis are supported or not.

4.1 Measure Validation

I conducted exploratory factor analysis to test the factor structure of the measures of quality service, quality infrastructure, quality environment, cost value, unique image, destination personality, brand awareness, customer satisfaction and destination loyalty.

At first I conducted factor analysis of individual concept because I want to see whether the concepts alone had convergent validity and internal reliability or not. It examine the question asked in survey, was consistent with what it was supposed to be measuring. However, I conducted a factor rotation analysis, to get clearer pattern between the variables (Johnnessen, 2009). It will help to exclude those variables which describe the several factors (Johnnessen, 2009). In addition, factor analysis is useful for placing variables into meaningful categories (Yong and Pearce, 2013). The factor analysis's of individual concept is illustrated in appendix 3a to 3j.

Factor rotation analysis of all variables (EFA)

Furthermore, I conducted factor loading analysis to examine the measures of all variable at once. In this research I used varimax rotation, which highlights the correlation between the factors. This helps me to remove those variables which may have high cross loadings on several factors (Johannessen, 2009). The rotated component matrix (Appendix 1) shows that there are some variables which has cross loading on more than one factor. In other word, rotated component matrix table indicates that the measures were spread over 11 factors. Factor one explained 42.79% of total variance, factor two explained 6.86 % of total variance, factor three explained 5.94% of total variance, factor four explained 4.86 % of total variance, factor five explained 3.88 % of the total variance, factor six explained 3.47 % of total variance, factor seven explained 2.51 % of the total variance, factor eight explained 2.28 % of the total variance, factor nine explained 2.712 % of the total variance, factor ten explained 1.86 % of the total variance and factor eleven

explained 1.76% of the total variance. Most of the variance is captured by Factor one. Factor one was capturing measures which are related to “quality infrastructure”, “cost value”, “destination personality”, “brand awareness”, “customer satisfaction” and “destination loyalty”. Factor two was capturing measures which are related to “quality service”, “quality outdoor activities”, “cost value”, “unique image”, “unique adventure”, “destination personality” and “brand awareness”. Factor three was capturing measures which are related “unique image” and “destination personality”. Factor four was capturing measures which are related to “quality service”, “cost value”. Factor five was capturing measure which is related to “quality environment”, “quality outdoor activities”, “cost value”, “unique image” and “destination personality”. Factor six was capturing measures which are related to “quality infrastructure”, “quality environment”, “quality outdoor activities”, “cost value”, “destination personality” and “brand equity”. Factor seven was capturing measures which are related to “brand awareness” and “brand equity”. Factor eight was capturing measures which are related to “brand awareness” and “destination loyalty”. Factor nine was capturing measures which are related to “quality outdoor activities” and “cost value”. Factor ten was capturing measures which are related to “destination personality” and “destination loyalty”.

After performing the factor varimax rotation analysis, I had decided to omit twelve variables and two concepts from my model, because convergent validity was not fulfilled, they had high cross loading factors and they were not related to the concept it was supposed to be connected with. The first variable I excluded was a measure for quality service “Service providers are courteous and polite in Pokhara”. This variable had cross loading on factor two (0.358) and four (0.653). Although the variable had a factor loading of 0.653 on factor four. It was related to another concept. The second variable I excluded was measure for quality infrastructure “Pokhara offers good cafes and restaurants”. This variable had cross loading on factor one (0.383) and six (0.617). Although the variable had a factor loading of 0.617 on factor six, it was related to another concept. Third, fourth and fifth variables I excluded was measure for quality environment “Pokhara has a clean environment”, this variable had cross loading factor on five (0.362) and six (0.450). “Pokhara has a nice landscape that makes a beautiful environment”, this variable had cross loading factor on five (0.735) and six (0.410). Although, the variable had a factor loading 0.735 on factor five, it indicates that it also measures other concept. “Pokhara has

an abundance of flora”, this variable had high cross loading on five (0.465), six (0.419) and eleven (0.530).

The sixth variable I excluded was measure for cost value “It is worth to spend money in Pokhara”. This variable had cross loading factor on one (0.374), two (0.396), five (0.376) and six (0.380). The seventh variable I excluded was measure for unique image “Cultural event and festivals in Pokhara are unique”. This variable had cross loading factor on two (0.515) and three (0.550). The eighth variable I excluded was measure for destination personality “Pokhara is family oriented place”. This variable had cross loading factor on one (0.375), three (0.359) and six (0.420) and this variable was not at all related to other measure for destination personality. The ninth and tenth variable I excluded was measure for brand awareness “Pokhara has a good name and reputation”, this variable had cross loading factor on one (0.432) and (0.356) and “The characteristics of Pokhara come to my mind quickly”, this variable had cross loading factor on one (0.473) and seven (0.366). The eleventh and twelve variable I excluded was measure for destination loyalty “I am willing to pay a higher price for Pokhara than other place”, this variable had cross loading factor on one (0.354) and ten (0.643). Although, variable had a factor loading 0.643 on tenth factor, it shows that it measures more than one concept. “I will encourage my family and friends to visit Pokhara”, this variable had cross loading factor on one (0.614) and eight (0.400). Although, variable had a factor loading 0.614 on one factor but it was related to the other measures for loyalty.

The first concept I omitted was quality outdoor activities. This concept was created by me and all the measures for this concept had high cross loading factors. The second concept I excluded was unique adventure image. This concept represents another phenomenon which it was not supposed to represent.

After eliminating these twelve variable and two concepts from the factor analysis, I conducted a new rotation analysis presented in table 2. In the following rotation analysis, I suppressed value less than 0.40, in order to create a table that was easier to grip.

Table 2: Factor rotation analysis after excluding variables (EFA)

	Component						
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
SP_Promt			,789				
SP_Help			,675				
SP_Knowledge			,870				
SP_Professional			,825				
SP_ability			,697				
Quality_Hotels					,735		
Quality_communication					,717		
Bars_club					,745		
lakes_mountain							,777
Natural_scenery							,761
Expenses_low	,493						
Pirice_Quality	,585				,420		
Unique_Native		,671					
Unique_environment		,733					
Unique_Custom		,730					
Unique_naturalwonder		,693					,403
Unique_attraction		,749					
Unique_cultrualattraction		,728					
Adventurous_Place	,587						
Outdoorsy_Place	,703	,407					
Cheerful_place	,701	,416					
Internationalholiday_mind						,625	
Advertising_promotion						,723	
Recognize_destination						,784	
Same_Prefer				,712			
Good_Prefer				,814			
Notdifferent_Smarter				,770			
Travelpokhara_similar				,649			
Visit_wise	,627						
Enjoyed_Trip	,718						
Experience_expected	,450						
Delighted	,667						
Recommended	,742						
Positive_things	,710						

According to rotation analysis after the excluding twelve variables and two concepts, the factor analysis indicates seven factor. Previously the variables were extracted on eleven factors. Compared to this previous factor analysis there was not much difference in the explained variance. Factor one indicated a slightly lower explained variance in the new analysis. And, the other factor which explained variance percentage increased.

In the new analysis the measures for quality service was loading on factor three. The factor loading varied from 0.675 to 0.870. Cronbach alpha was 0.859. The concept had an excellent convergent validity, where all factors loading are above 0.70 and the Cronbach alpha value was also above 0.70. This indicates reliability was excellent. Therefore, I concluded that the measures of quality service could be computed into one concept.

Quality infrastructure was loading on factor five. The factor loading varied from 0.717 to 0.745. Cronbach alpha was 0.783. Internal reliability for measure was good enough. Therefore, I concluded that the three measures of quality infrastructure could be formed into one concept.

Quality environment was loading on factor seven. The factor loading varied 0.761 to 0.777. Cronbach alpha was 0.878. This shows a pretty good internal reliability for the measures. Hence, I concluded that the two measures of quality environment can be formed in one measure.

Cost value however, had cross loading on factor one and five. The loading on factor one varied from 0.493 to 0.585. Cronbach alpha was 0.778. The size of the factor loading on factor five had 0.420. Although, concept was based on previous research and Cronbach alpha value was above 0.7. This shows internal reliability was good enough. I concluded these two variables could be formed in one concept.

Unique image was loading on factor two. The loading factor varied from 0.671 to 0.749. Cronbach alpha was 0.867. This implies a pretty good internal reliability. This shows that these measures can be formed as one single concept.

Destination personality however, had cross loading on factor one and two. The loading on factor one varied from 0.587 to 0.701 and the loading on factor two varied from 0.407 to 0.416. Cronbach alpha was 0.852. Although, concept was based on previous research and Cronbach alpha is high. Therefore, I concluded, these variables can be computed in one concept.

Brand awareness was on factor six. The factor loading on factor varied from 0.625 to 0.784. Cronbach alpha was 0.754. This indicates that the measures had good internal reliability and all variables had taken from previous study Pike and Bianchi, (2016) and Huong et al., (2015). Hence, I concluded these measures can be computed in one concept.

Brand equity had loading on factor four varied from 0.649 to 0.814. The Cronbach alpha was 0.910. This indicated the internal reliability is excellent. Moreover, all the variables were taken from previous research (Im et al., 2012). Hence, I conclude these measures can be formed as one concept.

Customer satisfaction had loading on factor one. The loading varied from 0.450 to 0.718. Cronbach alpha was 0.888. Hence, the measures had excellent internal reliability and all the variables had taken from previous study Hutchinson et al., (2008); Bosque and Martin, (2008); Gallarza and Saura, (2006) and Rufin et al., (2011). Therefore, I concluded that these measures can be computed in one concept.

Destination loyalty had loading on factor one. The factor varied from 0.710 to 0.742. Cronbach alpha was 0.855. The value of Cronbach alpha is above 0.7 and the measures had favorable internal reliability. Hence, I conclude, these measures can be formed in one concept.

4.2 Correlation analysis

The discriminant validity was determined by the correlations between the factors in my study. A r value of 0.20 indicated weak correlations, a value of 0.30 to 0.40 were relatively strong correlations, whereas a value of 0.50 or higher indicated a very strong correlation (Johannessen, 2009). A correlation coefficient stronger than 0.70 could indicate that there would be problem of multicollinearity later in the multiple linear regression analysis (Johannessen, 2009). Multicollinearity issue indicates independent variable being too strongly correlated with each other. Nevertheless, Hair et al., (2010) argue that the correlation would not cause problem before the r value exceeds a value of 0.90. In initial, I conducted the correlation analysis of individual concept of its each variable. All tables can find in Appendix table 2a to table 2j.

Table 3: Correlation matrix of all concepts

	M	SD	BE	QS	QI	QE	CV	DP	UI	BA	CS	DL
BE	3.39	0.90	1.000									
QS	3.96	0.82	0.293	1.000								
QI	3.92	0.80	0.459	0.452	1.000							
QE	4.47	0.73	0.448	0.325	0.398	1.000						
CV	3.60	0.89	0.406	0.463	0.443	0.217	1.000					
DP	4.18	0.71	0.443	0.452	0.472	0.468	0.561	1.000				
UI	3.94	0.78	0.442	0.380	0.416	0.487	0.416	0.640	1.000			
BA	3.48	1.09	0.568	0.220	0.343	0.227	0.262	0.359	0.226	1.000		
CS	4.25	0.77	0.570	0.481	0.527	0.535	0.535	0.724	0.578	0.373	1.000	
DL	3.95	0.82	0.475	0.452	0.399	0.399	0.519	0.650	0.384	0.384	0.721	1.000

Note: QS= Quality of service; QI= Quality of infrastructure; CV= Cost value; UI= Unique Image; DP= Destination personality; BA= Brand awareness; BE= Brand equity; CS= Customer satisfaction; DL=Destination loyalty; M= Mean; SD= Standard deviations.

Lastly, I conducted correlation between different concepts. In my research correlation matrix determine the discriminant validity of measures presented in the correlation matrix Table 3. A r value of 0.20 indicated weak correlation, a value of 0.30 to 0.40 indicates relatively strong correlations, whereas a value of 0.50 or higher indicated a very strong correlation (Johannessen, 2009). Moreover, a correlation coefficient stronger than 0.70 implies that there would be problem of multicollinearity later in the multiple linear regression analysis (Johannessen, 2009). The correlation matrix indicates that there were high correlations between the ten factors, which varied 0.220 to 0.724. According to table correlation matrix between “destination personality and customer satisfaction” and “customer satisfaction and destination loyalty” exceeded the r above

the value 0.70. Hair et al., 2010 claim that the correlation coefficient would not cause a problem before the correlation coefficient before two variables exceeds a value of 0.90. In my study, none of the correlation coefficients in the matrix exceeded the value of 0.724. This indicates discriminant validity is favorable.

Even though the rotation analysis empirically expressed seven factor. I could see from the correlation matrix that the ten factors seem to be distinct. In sum, the correlation matrix showed that the independent variables were a bit strong correlated, especially there was a strong relationship between customer satisfaction and destination loyalty ($r = 0.721$). Followed by customer satisfaction and destination personality had high correlation (0.724). These coefficients indicated a very strong relationship between the variables, expressing that these factors could overlap with each other. However, all independent concepts were all below 0.90, which means the concepts were valid for regression analysis.

4.3 Test of the hypothesis

In this part, I test my hypothesis of research model. To test the hypothesis, multiple regression analysis was conducted. A multiple linear regression analysis is used to predict an interval scale dependent variable from a combination of several predictor variables (Morgan and Griego, 1998). A multiple linear regression analysis helps to find the independent variable, which are contributing to prediction of the dependent variable. It is expressed as the unstandardized regression coefficient B (Johannessen, 2009). And, the significance level p indicates if the B is making a statistically significant contribution to explaining the dependent variable. According to Easterby-smith et al., (2012) the common by used significant levels is 0.05. In other words, if the p value is less than 0.05, the conclusion is that the independent variable is making significant contribution in explaining the dependent variable (Pallant, 2013). Moreover, to support hypothesis we can use one-tailed significance test. It is appropriate to use a one-tailed test when there is strong theoretical argument for a relationship (Abelson, 1995).

However, if the independent variables are strongly correlated with each other than a problem can be occurs in a multiple linear regression analysis results (Johannessen, 2009). This is referred to as a multicollinearity problem. In other words, there could be problem of the variables overlapping each other. We can assess the level of multicollinearity through measuring the

variance inflation factor (VIF). The value of VIF indicates the multicollinearity level. If VIF values are above 10, it would indicate a problem of multicollinearity (Pallant, 2013). If the research consists of high multicollinearity, the independent variables may have difficulty clarifying the dependent variable. The highest VIF value was between brand awareness and customer satisfaction, with a value of 3.18. All of the VIF values were less than 10. This indicated that multicollinearity is not large issue in this research. Hence, I continued with multiple linear regression analysis of my proposed research model. The VIF value was expressed in table 4 in appendix.

Multiple linear regression

First, in order to carry out multiple regression analysis quality service, quality infrastructure, quality environment, cost value, destination personality, unique image, brand awareness, customer satisfaction and destination loyalty as independent variable, whereas, brand equity is the dependent variable.

The results showed that six out of nine of the independent variables have statistically significant impact on brand equity. Quality of environment, cost value, destination personality, unique image, brand awareness and customer satisfaction, all these variables have statistically significant.

In addition, to determine if the model was good enough, I look upon at the multiple regression coefficients adjusted R^2 (Johannessen, 2009). This coefficient refers how much of the variation in dependent variable, could be explained by the independent variables. The value varied 0 to 1 where 1 indicated that the independent variable has a great influence on the dependent variable (Pallant, 2013). The adjusted R^2 indicated that this model expressing all independent variable explained 50.1% of the variation in brand equity. This analysis was used to assess the hypothesis stated in the theoretical chapter, illustrated in figure 1.

Table 4: Multiple regression linear analysis

Independent variable	Overall brand equity					Adjusted R ² = 0.501
	B	Std. Error	Beta	t-value	P value	
Quality of service	-0.08	0.079	-0.07	-1.040	0.300	
Quality of infrastructure	0.110	0.083	0.098	1.322	0.188	
Quality of environment	0.212	0.091	0.171	2.342	0.021*	
Cost value	0.139	0.079	0.136	1.766	0.080**	
Destination personality	-0.21	0.124	-0.16	-1.713	0.089**	
Unique image	0.166	0.092	0.144	1.803	0.073**	
Brand awareness	0.331	0.054	0.396	6.112	0.000*	
Customer satisfaction	0.305	0.122	0.260	2.504	0.013*	
Destination loyalty	0.038	0.121	0.028	0.314	0.754	

Note: Result significant at ** $p < 0.05$ (one-tailed), * $p < 0.05$

Hypothesis 1 stated “Quality service positively effects brand equity”. The results indicated quality service do not have a statistically significant impact on brand equity ($B = -0.08$, $Beta = -0.07$, $t = -1.040$, $p = 0.30$). Therefore, hypothesis was rejected. I conclude that quality service do not have a statistically significant effect on brand equity. It means quality service does not effect on brand equity of Pokhara. As per literature service quality is reflected in a consumer’s evaluative perception of service encounter (Cronin and Taylor, 1994). When consumer perceived that their expectation meets with service what they had received, then, they also perceive to have been treated fairly and reasonably (Berry et al., 1994; Bitner, 1995; Zahorik and Rust, 1992). In contrast, perceived equity has been empirically confirmed to be a significant variable in a

consumer's service evaluation process (Hellier et al., 2003; Szymanski and Henard, 2001). According to previous research, Buil et al., (2013) has identified perceived quality has positive influence on brand equity. In addition, Hutchinson et al., (2008) reveals perceived service quality has direct positive effect on perceived equity. But in my study, result reveals that quality service is driver which does not influence on brand equity.

Hypothesis 2 stated "Quality infrastructure positively effects brand equity". The results indicated quality infrastructure do not have a statistically significant impact on brand equity ($B = 0.118$, $Beta = 0.098$, $t = 1.322$, $p = 0.188$). This indicated that hypothesis was rejected. I conclude that quality infrastructure do not have any significant effect on brand equity. In contrast, quality infrastructure is not an influential driver when it comes to measure brand equity. This shows that to build or enhance the brand equity, quality infrastructure does not play role. In previous research Beerli and Martin, (2004) authors has measures concept infrastructure to assess the destination image and to determine effect on customer satisfaction and consumer behavior. None of them have shows the effect of quality infrastructure as a driver on brand equity. This result reveals that quality infrastructure does not plays role to enhance the strong brand equity.

Hypothesis 3 stated "quality environment positively effects brand equity". The result indicates quality infrastructure has statistically significant impact on brand equity ($B = 0.212$, $Beta = 0.171$, $t = 2.34$, $p = 0.02$). This shows that hypothesis was supported. Quality environment indicated positive relationship with brand equity. Quality environment is influential variable when it comes to measure brand equity. This shows that the more favorable condition of environment, destination has the more positive build up for brand equity. In previous research Wang and Hsu, (2010); Stylos and Andronikidis, (2013); Lee et al., (2012); Beerli and Martin, (2004) authors has measures concept environment to assess the destination image and to determine effect on customer satisfaction and consumer behavior. As per literature, creating positive brand image leads to strong, favorable and unique associations to the brand in memory (Keller, 2003). In my studies, I had tried to measure the effect of quality environment on brand equity.

Hypothesis 4 specified "Cost value positively effects brand equity". The results shows cost value has a statistically significant impact on brand equity ($B = 0.139$, $Beta = 0.136$, $t = 1.766$, $p = 0.080$). This indicated that hypothesis was supported. Cost value indicated it is an influential

driver when it comes to measure brand equity. Previous studies have suggested that cost value may be a better predictor of repurchase intentions than satisfaction (Cronin et al., 2000; Chen and Chen, 2010). Cost value shows positive effect on brand equity and also statistically significant as predicted. According to literature, cost value is considered as important construct in relationship marketing and for gaining competitive edge (McDougall and Levesque, 2000).

Hypothesis 5 specified “Destination personality effects brand equity”. The result reveals destination personality has statistically significant impact on brand equity however, there is negative relationship between destination personality and brand equity ($B = -0.21$, $Beta = -0.168$, $t = -1.713$, $p = 0.089$). This indicated that hypothesis was rejected. According to literature, a distinctive brand personality can help to create unique and favorable associations in consumer memory, and enhance brand equity (Keller, 1993; Phau and Lau, 2000). Brand personality influence consumer preference and helps to support for decision making (Sirgy, 1982; Malhotra, 1988). In contrast, my investigation shows destination personality does not play important role to build brand equity. Although, past researchers had investigated, effect of brand personality on consumer behavior (Ekinici and Hosany, 2006). None of them had investigated the brand personality as a driver influencing the brand equity.

Hypothesis 6 specified “unique image positively effects brand equity”. The findings indicates unique image has statistically significant impact on brand equity ($B = 0.166$, $Beta = 0.144$, $t = 1.803$, $p = 0.073$). This indicated that hypothesis was accepted. Unique image indicated positive relationship and it influence brand equity. The result reveals that the distinct characteristics plays more important role to build brand equity.

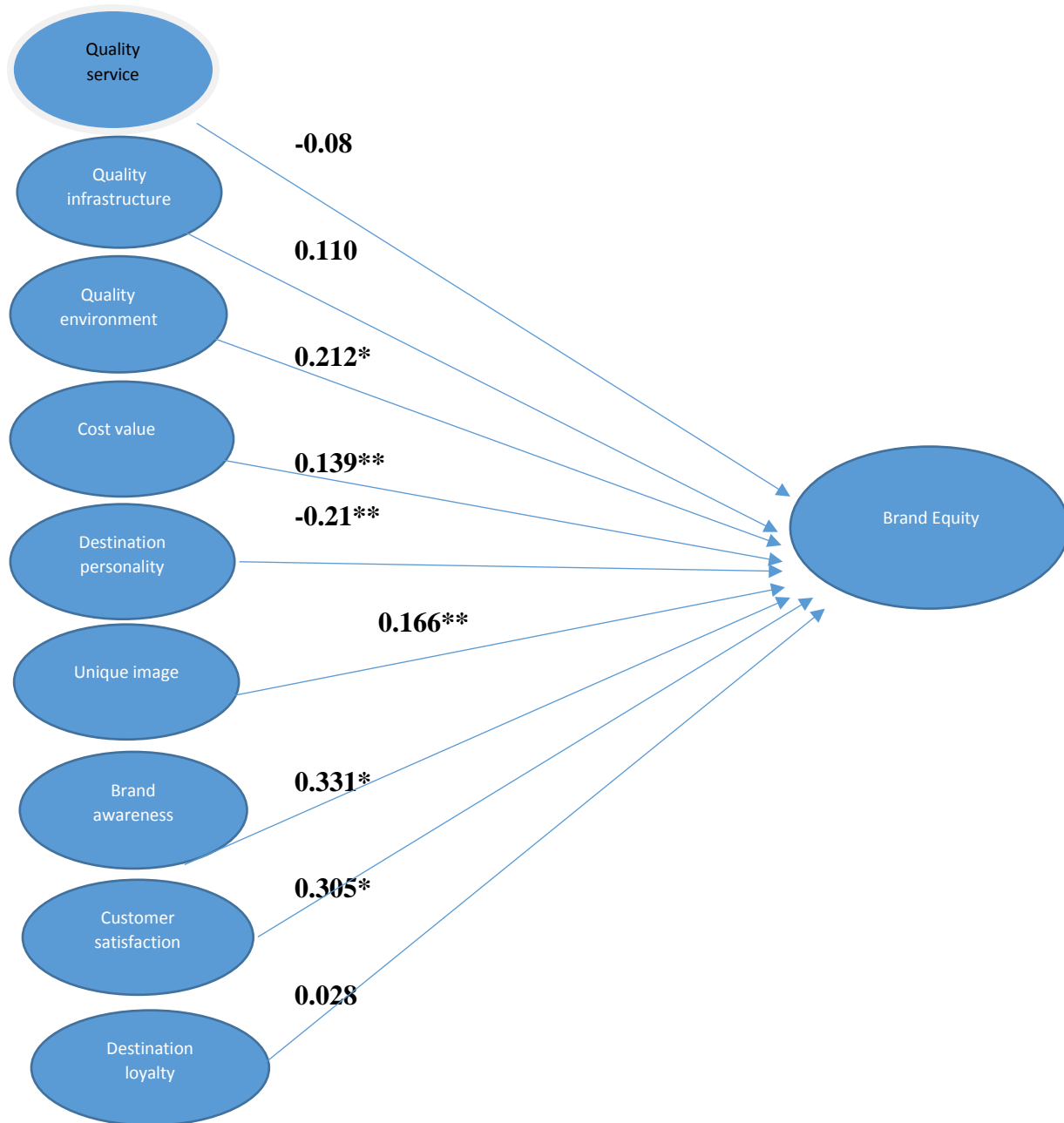
Hypothesis 7 stated “Brand awareness positively effects brand equity”. The results shows brand awareness has statistically significant impact on brand equity ($B = 0.331$, $Beta = 0.396$, $t = 6.112$, $p = 0.000$). This indicates that hypothesis was accepted. Brand awareness shows positive effect on brand equity as predicted. Brand awareness plays important role to build up positive brand equity. As noted in the literature, Brand awareness includes brand recognition and brand recall. According to Keller, (2003) consumer’s decisions are mostly made in settings away from the point of purchase then, brand recall is more important. Moreover, if the customers have ability to recognize and recall then in future it is more possible to make decision. However, at point of consumption brand recall might be less important but still it often depends on what they

remember or recall about the brand given that they are able to recognize it there (Keller, 2003). In my study, Brand awareness plays vital role to enhance the brand equity.

Hypothesis 8 stated “Customer satisfaction positively effects brand equity”. The results shows customer satisfaction has statistically significant impact on brand equity ($B = 0.305$, $Beta = 0.260$, $t = 2.504$, $p = 0.013$). This indicates that hypothesis was accepted. Customer satisfaction plays important role to enhance the brand equity. The more tourists are satisfied with their visit or with their experience, the more chances to enhance the brand equity.

Hypothesis 9 specified “Destination loyalty positively effects brand equity”. The results indicates destination loyalty do not have statistically significant impact on brand equity ($B = 0.038$, $Beta = 0.028$, $t = 0.314$, $p = 0.754$). This shows that hypothesis was rejected. Aaker, (1991) believes that focusing on brand loyalty is an effective way to manage equity. In contrast, as per literature, repeat tourist can generate value of destination by reducing marketing cost and leveraging trade. Previous research Yoo et al., (2000) and Im et al., (2012) has found that brand loyalty is main driver of brand equity and brand loyalty positively affects the brand equity. But, in my study, empirical result shows that destination loyalty does not effect on brand equity.

Figure 2: Results from nine hypotheses



Note: Result significant at **p < 0.05 (one- tailed), * p < 0.05

The figure shows that quality service, quality infrastructure, quality environment, cost value, unique image, destination personality, brand awareness, customer satisfaction and destination loyalty are independent variable and brand equity is dependent variable. Unstandardized regression coefficient is expressed to find the independent variable, that contributing to brand equity. In contrast, every unit change in the independent variable, the dependent variable changes by X units (Pallant, 2013). Quality environment, cost value, unique image, destination personality, brand awareness, customer satisfaction has statistically significant effects on brand equity. The diagram shows that unstandardized regression coefficient for cost value is 0.212, destination personality is -0.21, unique image is 0.166, brand awareness is 0.331 and customer satisfaction is 0.305.

5.0 Conclusion and Implications

This is last chapter of the thesis. This chapter includes (1) conclusion, which summarize all the findings of my thesis, (2) Implication which describe all possible suggestion to tourism manager and authorities and (3) limitation and future research.

5.1 Conclusion

The aim of this research was to investigate what are the drivers of brand equity and its effects on brand equity. In other words, this study I tried to understand factors that contribute to brand equity and explore drivers of brand equity. Therefore, I examined the following research questions: “What are the drivers of brand equity and which would effect on brand equity?”

Altogether, nine hypotheses were derived from the research literature. The proposed research model was based on destination brand equity model (Im et al., 2012). Model implies that brand awareness, brand image, brand association and brand loyalty had effect on brand equity. But, in this study the quality service, quality infrastructure, quality environment, cost value, destination personality, unique image and customer loyalty were implied to research model.

The study results were discussed and some important suggestions were made for tourism destination managers and practitioners to attract and maintain brand equity of destinations. Furthermore, Limitation of the study, and possibilities for further research was also considered. The data was collected through distributing self-administrated questionnaires in several locations of Pokhara city. In other hand, the online survey also helps me to collect the more data. I find the email address of international tourist who has been to Pokhara via local travel agencies. The variable was based on measures from published research. The statements were designed with Likert five scales, ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree. My final sample consists of 152 international tourists. The data was analyzed with SPSS, where I performed a descriptive statistics, convergent validity, discriminant validity and Reliability to test the validity of data.

Based on my research the following results were made:

First, I conducted descriptive statistics analysis. The statistic reveals that out of 152 respondent female tourists are more than male tourists. The oldest tourist was age of 73 and youngest is age

of 13. The sample consists of tourist of 36 different nationalities. According to continent, tourists from Europe are largest in number and tourists from Australia are lowest in number. Moreover, longest stayed tourist in Pokhara was 210 days and shortest stayed tourist was 1 day.

Second, I conducted multiple linear regression analysis of my research model which is based on Aaker, (1996) and Keller, (2003) implied the dimension of CBBE. This analysis examined that concepts of quality service, quality infrastructure and destination loyalty did not influence the brand equity in the context of Pokhara city. Whilst, environment, perceived cost value, destination personality, unique image, brand awareness and customer satisfaction are important predictor and key determinants of brand equity in the context of Pokhara city.

In sum, my research has contributed to the literature by following way:

First, there is scarcity of empirical research on brand equity based on tourism industries. It is an infant and there is no commonly agreed upon the brand equity model in marketing literature (Tasci et al., 2007). So this study is one of few studies which have identified the drivers of brand equity and examine the effects of driver on brand equity. The framework enriches brand equity research addressing some limitations regarding other consumer-based brand equity studies and this study interprets new variables and extended the literature with five concepts. They are: quality environment, cost value, unique image, destination personality and customer satisfaction. Second, I have shown empirical study which revealed that higher the quality environment, cost value, unique image, and customer satisfaction of the brand, the greater the likelihood that there will higher brand equity and also shows the destination personality has negative effect on brand equity. Third, the research has contributed to the better understanding of tourism branding. In other word, the result had let to practical implication for tourism manager and authorities, who wants to develop destination as brand and helps to understand drivers to evaluate the strategies for enhancing strong brand equity.

5.2 Implication

The major findings of the research have significant managerial implication for Pokhara Tourism branding manager, experts and market makers. Result can provide tourism managers with useful insight into strong brand building efforts. A part from that, tourism development in Pokhara is essential to see a further growth in the effort of both tourism managers and tourism authorities.

Result provides empirical evidence of the benefits that brand equity can offer to tourism industries. Moreover, this research also contributes to the understanding of brand equity creation process from international based. Now days, there is growing number of brand competing in international market so, it is essential to do empirical research based on international prospective (Buil, et al., 2013). This research can provide a framework for identifying brand equity's drivers and its importance to a destination's market. A manager of tourism destination goal is to increase the value of destination brand and this study can helps tourism authorities to know how drivers of brand equity contribute to increment value of destination. Moreover, attract more new tourist and need to make sure that in future they revisit again and recommend others. Hence, there is a need to understand how tourist can get satisfied and how they can become loyal to the destination. The results from empirical analysis have several implications for tourism destination manager.

The finding reveals that the most statistically significant driver of brand equity is brand awareness. By keeping mind, managers should give important to create brand awareness of destination as means of building strong brand equity. Tourism manager should give more priority to increase a level of familiarity or recall of destination. Manager should understand significance of brand awareness and concentrate in advertising and promotion campaign which are specialized to trigger target tourist.

The analysis also reveals that customer satisfaction is one of the key predictor of brand equity. Therefore, Manager should keep in mind the how tourist can be satisfied and should established consumer satisfaction as one of its main priorities.

Unique image makes positive contribution to build strong brand equity. Uniqueness can trigger more tourists and give advantage or strength to destination. However, manager should make focus on building distinct characteristic of destination to enhance the strong brand equity. Every place has its own uniqueness and feature that need to be recognize by tourism stakeholders and should be used as boost up tools for building strong brand equity.

Destination personality is the only one driver that influences the brand equity but has negative relation with brand equity. It shows that Pokhara has negative brand personality among the international tourist that it has a negative effect on brand equity. Destination managers of Pokhara should try to change the brand personality of Pokhara. They should concentrate on

developing efficient communication method to start a distinctive and attractive personality for their places. In the case of Pokhara it needs to launch more communication activities through which tourist can express and relate their identity with destination personality.

The result also revealed that environment is a positive predictor of brand equity. Meaning, quality of environment is strength of Pokhara. Although environment is natural but managers or related authorities should be concerned about preservation of natural environment and need to make rules and policies for sustainable environment. Now days, not only natural but artificial good quality of environment can be maintained to attract more tourists and added value to destination.

Beside these, manager of tourism should keep in mind about cost value. The analysis shows that Cost value influence the brand equity. Every tourist wants their visit to be worth. Its tourism manager job is to make sure that how make tourist feel worth about their staying or visit and gain more benefits by their visit. Destination managers should take note of the significant role of cost value in stimulating strong brand equity.

Lastly, in general destination management should understand the significance of all the drivers of brand equity as an essential antecedent for building strong brand equity. Insights into the importance of the drivers enable tourism managers to increase their saliency for tourists. This leads to enable the identification of destination brand that compete against other destinations from tourist perspective. Destination managers can therefore influence a quality environment, cost value, destination personality, unique image, brand awareness and customer satisfaction and thus affect to build strong overall brand equity of destination.

5.3 Limitations and Future Research

The present study has certain limitations that need to be considered for future research. Firstly, this study was conducted within one city of Nepal. Finding must be interpreted with care and caution when attempting to generalize to other contexts. Therefore, this study subject to criticism of generalisability associated with single city. A comparative study in a different destination would be nice to verify my findings.

As it was applied quantitative method for this study, empirical in nature, perhaps, by applying qualitative method for data collection might have provided in-depth insight of the study. Further researcher should consider using qualitative approach to get clearer and in-depth of the study.

My Sample consists of international tourist from several countries. In my study, I had collected data from 36 different countries with different continent. Perhaps it would have better if my sample were from one continent like Asia, Europe or America. Meaning Asian tourist and European tourist might have different perception regarding the brand equity of destination and distinct view. Further research should consider using sample from one continent at the time.

Furthermore, findings were based on consumer's perceptions and future studies which could link these perceptual measures with consumer behavior by showing relationship between brand equity and actual behavior. Future researcher should review the model and try to find relation between the brand equity and consumer behavior.

Lastly, this study's variable measures consist of unsteadiness. Some of the variable has six measures while some of them have only two measures. For example "quality service" has six measures. While, "cost value", "quality environment", "destination loyalty" has only two measures after excluding measures according to factor rotation analysis. In future researcher should review and improve the questionnaires. Future researcher should perhaps add measure to "cost value", "quality environment" and "destination loyalty" to make sure that the measures have more credibility and reliability.

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7.0 Appendix

Appendix 1: First Factor rotation analysis

	Component										
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
SP_Courteous		,358		,653							
SP_Prompt				,847							
SP_Help				,691							
SP_Knowledge				,852							
SP_Professional				,801							
SP_ability				,705							
Quality_Hotels						,783					
Cafe_restaurant	,383					,617					
Quality_communication						,685					
Bars_club						,710					
Clean_environment					,362	,450					
Landscape					,735	,410					
lakes_mountain					,828						
Natural_scenery					,840						
abundance_flora					,465	,419					,530
Hiking_trekking		,480			,382						
Boating					,393	,455					
Paragliding		,397									
Quality_adventuresport						,382			,438		
Sunrise_sunset					,621				,385		
Worth_Spending	,374	,396			,376	,380					
Expenses_low				,351					,601		
Pirice_Quality	,421								,605		
Unique_Native			,680								
Unique_environment			,682								
Unique_Custom			,814								
Unique_naturalwonder			,617		,495						

Unique_attraction			,698							
Unique_cultrualattra ction			,737							
Unique_eventfestival		,515	,550							
Unique_adventuresp ort		,732								
Unique_trip		,836								
Unique_explore		,678								
Unique_hiking		,878								
Unique_trekking		,790								
Exiting_place			,434		,404					,364
Adventurous_Place	,418		,394							
Outdoorsy_Place	,520	,369	,404							
Cheerful_place	,577		,488							
Family_place	,375		,359			,420				
Goodname_reputatio n	,432	,356								
Character_mind	,473						,366			
Internationalholiday_ mind								,566		
Advertising_promotio n								,715		
Recognize_destinati on								,758		
Same_Prefer							,773			
Good_Prefer							,822			
Notdifferent_Smarter							,790			
Travelpokhara_simil ar						,372	,679			
Visit_wise	,676									
Enjoyed_Trip	,698									
Experience_expecte d	,459									
Delighted	,616									
Willing_highprice	,354									,643
Encourage	,614							,400		
Recommended	,713									
Positive_things	,649									

Appendix 2: Correlation matrix of individual concept.

2a: Correlation matrix “quality service”

Correlation Matrix

		SP_Promt	SP_Help	SP_Knowledge	SP_Proffession al	SP_ability
Correlation	SP_Promt	1.000				
	SP_Help	0.584	1.000			
	SP_Knowledge	0.574	0.631	1.000		
	SP_Professional	0.525	0.571	0.663	1.000	
	SP_ability	0.569	0.408	0.507	0.469	1.000

According to the correlation Matrix of “quality service” it indicated that there is high correlation between the five different variables, which varied 0.408 to 0.663. So, none of the correlation coefficients in the matrix exceeded the r value of 0.663. It shows that the requirements for discriminant validity were fulfilled for “quality service”.

Appendix 2b: Correlation Matrix “quality of infrastructure”

Correlation Matrix

		Quality_Hotels	Quality_commu nication	Bars_club
Correlation	Quality_Hotels	1,000		
	Quality_communication	,523	1,000	
	Bars_club	,611	,519	1,000

Similarly, correlation matrix “quality of infrastructure” indicated that there is no high correlation between four variables, which varied from 0.40 to 0.645. It shows that there is coefficient which is not higher than 0.70. Correlation matrix “quality of infrastructure” shows that there is high correlation between five variables, which varies from 0.519 to 0.611. But it does not exceed the 0.70, which shows discriminant validity requirement is fulfilled.

Appendix 2c: Correlation matrix “quality of environment

Correlation Matrix

		lakes_mountain	Natural_scenery
Correlation	lakes_mountain	1,000	
	Natural_scenery	,783	1,000

Correlation matrix “quality of environment” indicated that correlation is 0.783. The value does not exceed the 0.90, which shows discriminant validity is fulfilled.

Appendix 2d: Correlation matrix “cost value”

Correlation Matrix

		Expenses_low	Pirice_Quality
Correlation	Expenses_low	1,000	
	Pirice_Quality	,643	1,000

Correlation matrix “cost value” indicates that correlation is 0.643 the value does not exceed 0.70, which shows discriminant validity is fulfilled.

Appendix 2e: Correlation matrix “unique image”

		Unique_Native	Unique_environment	Unique_Custom	Unique_naturalwonder	Unique_attraction	Unique_culturalattraction
Correlation	Unique_Native	1,000					
	Unique_environment	,653	1,000				
	Unique_Custom	,454	,514	1,000			
	Unique_naturalwonder	,487	,633	,520	1,000		
	Unique_attraction	,505	,548	,425	,558	1,000	
	Unique_culturalattraction	,479	,495	,402	,479	,689	1,000

Correlation matrix “unique image” indicated that correlation varies from 0.402 to 0.689. There is high correlation but it does not exceed 0.70, which illustrate discriminant validity is fulfilled.

Appendix 2f: Correlation matrix “destination personality”

Correlation Matrix

		Exiting_place	Adventurous_Place	Outdoorsy_Place	Cheerful_place
Correlation	Exiting_place	1,000			
	Adventurous_Place	,697	1,000		
	Outdoorsy_Place	,644	,655	1,000	
	Cheerful_place	,677	,651	,676	1,000

Correlation matrix “destination personality” indicated that correlation varies from 0.644 to 0.697. There is high correlation but the value does not exceed 0.90, which illustrate discriminant validity is fulfilled.

Appendix 2g: Correlation matrix “brand awareness”

Correlation Matrix

		Internationalholiday_mind	Advertising_promotion	Recognize_destination
Correlation	Internationalholiday_mind	1,000		
	Advertising_promotion	,374	1,000	
	Recognize_destination	,594	,581	1,000

Correlation matrix “brand awareness” indicated that correlation varies from 0.374 to 0.594. There is high correlation but the value does not exceed 0.70, which shows discriminant validity is satisfied.

Appendix 2h: Correlation matrix “brand equity”

Correlation Matrix

		Same_Prefer	Good_Prefer	Notdifferent_Smarter	Travelpokhara_similar
Correlation	Same_Prefer	1,000			
	Good_Prefer	,843	1,000		
	Notdifferent_Smarter	,661	,710	1,000	
	Travelpokhara_similar	,623	,675	,796	1,000

Correlation matrix “brand equity” indicated that correlation varies from 0.623 to 0.843. There is high correlation but the value does not exceed 0.90, which indicates discriminant validity is fulfilled.

Appendix 2i: Correlation matrix “customer satisfaction”

Correlation Matrix

		Visit_wise	Enjoyed_Trip	Experience_expected	Delighted
Correlation	Visit_wise	1,000			
	Enjoyed_Trip	,679	1,000		
	Experience_expected	,495	,675	1,000	
	Delighted	,705	,824	,648	1,000

Correlation matrix “customer satisfaction” indicated that correlation value varies 0.495 to 0.824. There is high correlation but it does not exceed 0.90, which shows discriminant validity is fulfilled.

Appendix 2j: Correlation matrix “destination loyalty”

Correlation Matrix

		Recommended	Positive_things
Correlation	Recommended	1,000	
	Positive_things	,751	1,000

Correlation matrix “destination brand equity” indicated that correlation had 0.751. There is high correlation but it does not exceed 0.90, which shows discriminant validity is fulfilled.

Appendix 3 : Factor loading of individual concept

Appendix: 3a: Factor loading of quality concepts

Quality of service	Factor loading	Cronbach’s Alpha	Variance explained %
Service providers are courteous and polite.	0.786	62.48%	
Service providers provide prompt service	0.811		
Service providers are always willing to help	0.817		
Service providers are knowledgeable about services offered	0.830		
Service providers are professional	0.799		
Service providers have good ability to communicate with guest	0.692		

According to appendix table 3a, the sample of factor loading of “quality service” has been extracted in one factor. This indicates that all items lie in one concept. Factors varied from 0.692

to 0.830 with Cronbach alpha of 0.878. The concept “quality service” had an excellent convergent validity, where all the factors loading are higher than 0.70, except one item “service providers have good ability to communicate with guest” have 0.692. However, Cronbach alpha values greater than 0.70 indicated that this concept had an acceptable level of reliability (Easterby-Smith et al. 2012).

Appendix 3b: Factor loading quality infrastructure

Quality Infrastructure	Factor loading	Cronbach’s Alpha	Variance explained %
Pokhara offers good quality hotels and lodge	0.844	0.878	65.90%
Pokhara offers good café and restaurant	0.809		
Pokhara maintains good quality communication and network	0.708		
Pokhara offers good bars and clubs	0.877		

According appendix Table 3b, the factor loading of “quality infrastructure” has been extracted in one factor. This indicates all items contain in one concept. Factor varied from 0.708 to 0.877. Cronbach alpha is 0.878. The concept “quality infrastructure” had an excellent convergent validity, where all the factors loading are higher than 0.70. In addition, Cronbach alpha values are greater than 0.70 indicated that these concepts had an acceptable level of reliability (Easterby-Smith et al., 2012).

Appendix 3c: Factor loading quality environment

Quality Environment	Factor Loading	Cronbach's Alpha	Variance explained %
Pokhara has clean environment	0.534	0.827	64.088%
Pokhara has nice landscape	0.876		
Pokhara has beautiful lakes and mountain	0.883		
Pokhara has lovely natural scenery	0.884		
Pokhara has an abundance of flora	0.769		

As per appendix table 3c, the factor loading of “quality environment” has been extracted in one factor. This shows that all items contain in one concept. Factor varied from 0.534 to 0.884 with Cronbach alpha 0.827. The concept “quality environment” had an excellent convergent validity, where all the factors loading is higher than 0.70 and Cronbach alpha values greater than 0.70 indicated that these concepts had an acceptable level of reliability (Easterby-Smith et al., 2012).

Appendix 3c: Factor loading cost value

Cost Value	Factor loading	Cronbach's Alpha	Variance explained %
It is worth spending money in Pokhara	0.808	0.794	71.33%
Expenses in Pokhara are low compared to	0.832		

other destinations			
Compared to the price we pay we get reasonable quality	0.891		

According to appendix table 3d, the loading factor of “cost value” have extracted in one factor. This indicates items contain in one concept. Factor varied from 0.808 to 0.832 with the Cronbach alpha of 0.794. The concept “cost value” had an excellent convergent validity, where all the factors loading is higher than 0.70 and Cronbach alpha values greater than 0.70 indicated that these concepts had an acceptable level of reliability (Easterby-Smith et al., 2012).

Appendix 3d: Factor loading of Unique image

Unique image	Factor loading	Cronbach's Alpha	Variance explained %
Native people of Pokhara are unique	0.760	0.886	59.74%
The environment in Pokhara is unique	0.806		
The customs of local people are unique in Pokhara	0.723		
Scenery and natural wonder are unique in Pokhara	0.774		
Pokhara offers many unique local attraction	0.809		
Pokhara has unique cultural attractions	0.812		
Cultural events and festival in Pokhara are unique	0.721		

Appendix 3e: Factor loading Destination personality

Destination personality	Factor Loading	Cronbach's Alpha	Variance explained %
Pokhara is an exciting place to visit	0.860	0.816	66.53%
Pokhara is an adventurous place to visit	0.853		
Pokhara is an outdoorsy place to visit	0.837		
Pokhara is a cheerful place to visit	0.880		
Pokhara is a family oriented place	0.620		

The factor loading of “destination personality” have extracted in one factor. This shows all items remain in one concept. Factor varied from 0.660 to 0.880 with Cronbach alpha of 0.816. The concept “Destination personality” had an excellent convergent validity, where all the factors loading is higher than 0.70 and Cronbach alpha values greater than 0.70 indicated that these concepts had an acceptable level of reliability (Easterby-Smith et al., 2012).

Appendix 3f: Factor loading of Brand awareness

Brand awareness	Factor loading	Cronbach's Alpha	Variance explained %
Pokhara has a good name and reputation	0.752	0.816	59.90%
The characteristics of Pokhara comes to mind quickly	0.842		
When I am thinking of an international holiday, Pokhara comes to my mind	0.786		
I have seen a lot of advertising promoting	0.622		

Pokhara holiday			
I recognize Pokhara as a travel destination among other place	0.847		

The factor loading of “Brand awareness” have extracted in one factor. This shows all items remain in one concept. Factor varied from 0.622 to 0.847 with Cronbach alpha of 0.816. The concept “Brand awareness” had an excellent convergent validity, where the factors loading is higher than 0.70 and Cronbach alpha values greater than 0.70 indicated that these concepts had an acceptable level of reliability (Easterby-Smith et al., 2012).

Appendix 3g: Factor loading of Brand awareness

Brand awareness	Factor loading	Cronbach’s Alpha	Variance explained %
Pokhara has a good name and reputation	0.752	0.816	59.90%
The characteristics of Pokhara comes to mind quickly	0.842		
When I am thinking of an international holiday, Pokhara comes to my mind	0.786		
I have seen a lot of advertising promoting Pokhara holiday	0.622		
I recognize Pokhara as a travel destination among other place	0.847		

The loading factor of “brand equity” have extracted in one factor. This shows all items contain in one concept. Factor varied from 0.763 to 0.948 with Cronbach alpha of 0.882. The concept “brand equity” had an excellent convergent validity, where the factors loading is higher than 0.70

and Cronbach alpha values greater than 0.70 indicated that these concepts had an acceptable level of reliability (Easterby-Smith et al., 2012).

Appendix 3h: Factor loading of Brand equity

Brand equity	Factor loading	Cronbach's Alpha	Variance explained %
Even if another place had the same feature as Pokhra I would prefer to travel to Pokhara	0.881	0.910	78.87%
If there is another place as good as Pokhara, I prefer to travel to Pokhara	0.911		
If another place is not different from Pokhara in any way, it seems smarter to travel to Pokhara	0.891		
It makes sense to travel Pokhara instead of any other place, even if there are the similar	0.869		

The factor loading of “customer satisfaction” have extracted in one factor. This shows all items remain in one concept. Factor varies from 0.804 to 0.920 with Cronbach alpha of 0.888. The concept “customer satisfaction” had an excellent convergent validity, where the factors loading is higher than 0.70 and Cronbach alpha values greater than 0.70 indicated that these concepts had an acceptable level of reliability (Easterby-Smith et al., 2012).

Appendix 3i: Factor loading Customer satisfaction

Customer satisfaction	Factor loading	Cronbach's Alpha	Variance explained %

My choice to visit Pokhara was wise one	0.826	0.888	75.57%
I really enjoyed this trip to Pokhara	0.920		
This tourism experience in Pokhara was exactly what I expected	0.804		
I am delighted to have visited Pokhara	0.920		

The loading factor of “Destination loyalty” have extracted in one factor. This indicates all items remain in one concept. Factors varied from 0.646 to 0.910 with Cronbach alpha of 0.811. The concept “loyalty” had an excellent convergent validity, where the factors loading is higher than 0.70 and Cronbach alpha values greater than 0.70 indicated that these concepts had an acceptable level of reliability (Easterby-Smith et al., 2012).

Appendix 3j: Factor loading of Destination loyalty

Loyalty	Factor loading	Cronbach’s Alpha	Variance explained %
I am willing to pay a higher price to visit Pokhara than to visit other places	0.646	0.811	67.63%
I will encourage my family and friends to visit Pokhara	0.866		
I will encourage Pokhara if someone ask me for advice	0.910		
I will tell other people positive things about Pokhara	0.843		

Appendix 4: VIF Values

	QS	QI	QE	CV	UI	BA	DP	CS	DL
QS		1.43	1.48	1.44	1.487	1.49	1.49	1.48	1.47
QI	1.56		1.59	1.59	1.620	1.58	1.62	1.60	1.62
QE	1.57	1.54		1.52	1.507	1.57	1.57	1.49	1.57
CV	1.68	1.70	1.68		1.735	1.73	1.66	1.72	1.70
UI	1.89	1.89	1.81	1.89		1.89	1.68	1.87	1.89
BA	1.24	1.21	1.24	1.24	1.24		1.23	1.24	1.22
DP	2.846	2.848	2.83	2.71	2.52	2.82		2.64	2.74
CS	3.171	3.140	3.02	3.161	3.14	3.18	2.958		2.704
DL	2.363	2.382	2.382	2.339	2.37	2.33	2.29	2.02	

Note: QS= Quality of service; QI= Quality of infrastructure; CV= Cost value; UI= Unique Image; DP= Destination personality; BA= Brand awareness; CS= Customer satisfaction; DL= Destination loyalty.

Appendix 5: Measuring customer-based brand equity

Aaker (1991) and Keller (1993) developed the foundation for consumer-based brand equity research. According to Agarwal and Rao (1996) there are two different methods to measure brand equity; direct and indirect method. In like manner, recognizing the potential resource of the brand equity is one the indirect method to measure the brand equity. It is very important for the company or organization to have sufficient information about the potential resources to manage the brand in the competitive market (Keller, 1993). Correspondingly, Agarwal and Rao (1996) recommend that author, Aakar, and Keller specify the various types of indirect methods to evaluate the brand equity depending on their structure or background.

Aaker's brand equity model

Aaker (1996) provided the most comprehensive brand equity model which consists of five different assets that are the source of the value creation. The major assets categories are: brand loyalty; brand name awareness; perceived brand quality; brand association; brand assets. Figure 1 provides a compact overview of how brand equity generates value. According to Aaker several aspects of the definition has been elaborated.

- **Brand loyalty**

Loyalty is representation by repeat visitation and word of mouth (WOM) recommendations (Pike, 2007). In this way the CBBE hierarchy incorporates perceptual and behavior measures. Behavioral loyalty implies that previous experiential familiarity influences today's and tomorrow's tourism decisions, especially destination choice, or many destinations rely heavily on repeat tourists (Huong et al. 2015). Moisescu (2005) discussed based on Aaker's model that Brand loyalty generates value by reducing marketing costs and leveraging trade (Farjum and Hongyi, 2015). Loyal customers expect the brand to be always available and entice other advising them to use it. Retaining existing customer is much less costly than attracting new one. Aaker (1992) believes that focusing on Brand loyalty is often an effective way to manage equity.

- **Brand name awareness**

Brand awareness is a key and essential elements of brand equity which is often overlooked (Aaker, 1996). Awareness to the brand name is very important because it help consumer to embed the brand to their attention. Brand awareness refers to "the ability of a potential buyer to recognize or recall that a brand is a member of certain product category" (Aaker, 1991), and it is main element of brand's effect on tourism as well (Huong et al. 2015). Basically, brand awareness has two sections, brand recall and brand recognition. Brand recall means the capability of the customer to improve the product use and the capability of customer to verify the experience with the brand of a destination is called brand recognition.

- **Perceived brand quality**

Aaker (1992) explained that perceived quality provided value by providing a reason to buy, differentiation the brand compare to other brand. Perceived quality is the main output of the product's overall quality or power (Zeithaml, 1988). Moreover, perceived quality reflects a measure of "goodness" that spread over all elements of the brand like coating sugar to add

sweetness in the products (Aaker, 1996). Quality is a very subjective term but it can be made operational over a various scale measure, as can be brand equity dimensions (Konecnik and Gartner, 2007). There numerous researchers but among all Fick and Ritchie (1997); Murphy, Pritchard and Smith (2000) and Weiermair and Fuchs (1999) are the frontier in the field of Tourism Research and also explore the quality as a distinctive variables (Gartner and Ruzzier, 2011).

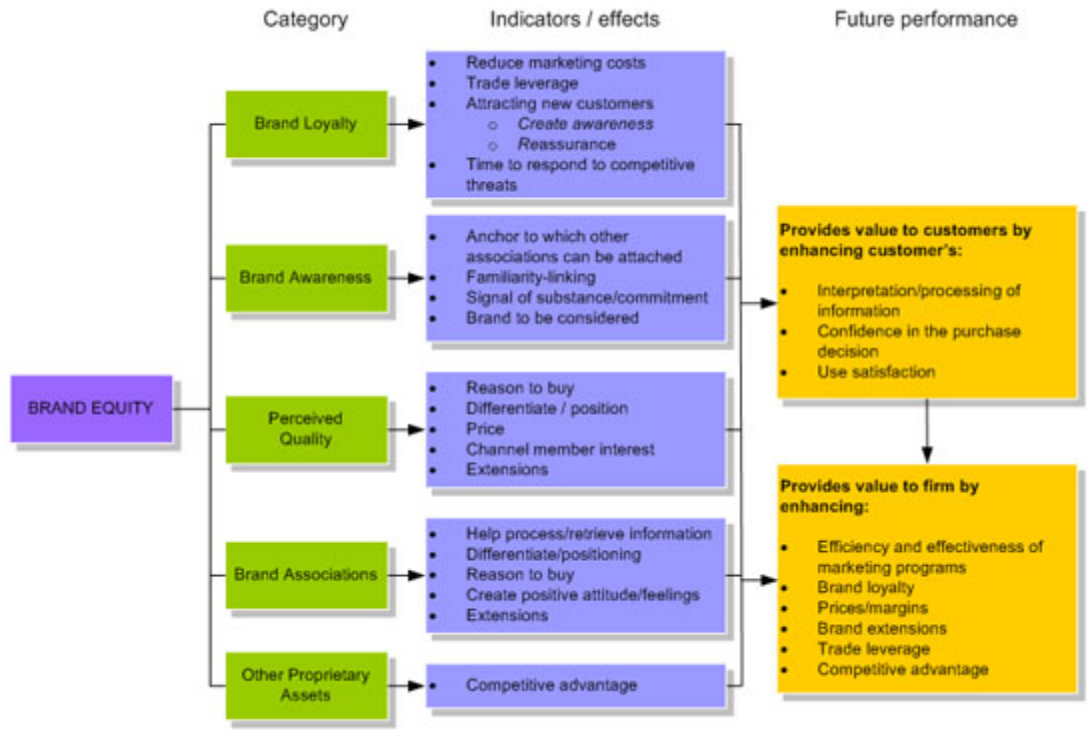
- **Brand associations**

Brand association or brand image is perhaps the most accepted aspect of brand equity (Farjum and Hongyi, 2015). It includes product attributes, customer benefits, uses, users, life-styles, product classes, competitors and countries. Generally, brand association is used in order develop the categories and reclaim the more information in the mind of customers which helps them to make decision while making purchases (Aaker, 1991, 1992).

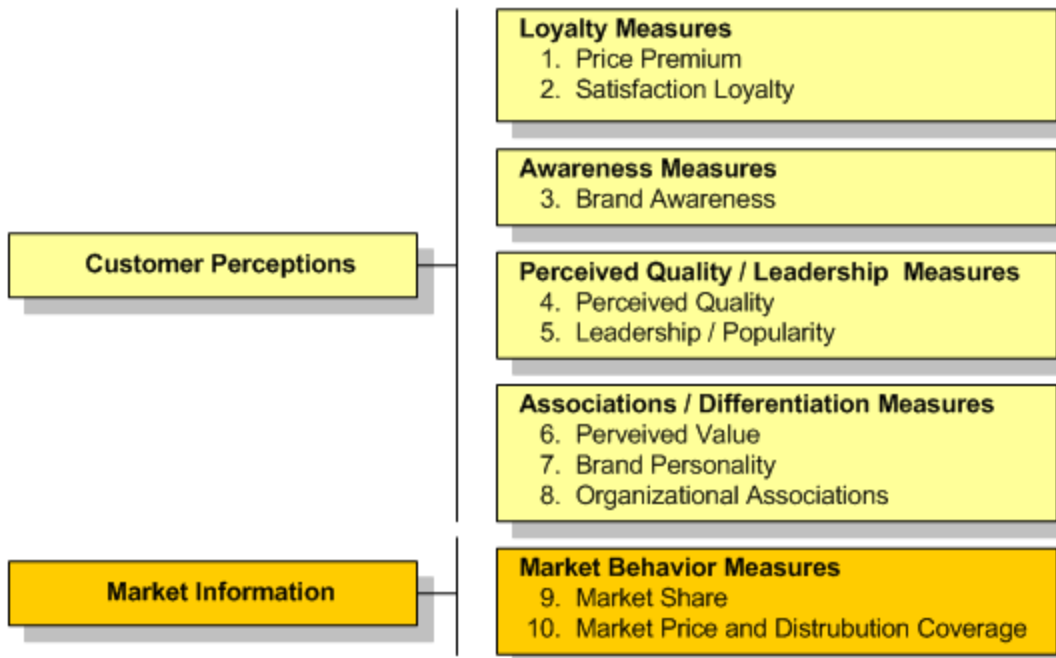
- **Brand assets**

Brand assets refers to patents, trademark and channel relationship which can provide strong competitive advantage. If the brand's name or symbols should change, some or all of the assets or liabilities could be affected and even lost, although some might be shifted to the new name and symbol (Aaker, 1996, pg. 8).

Aaker's brand equity model



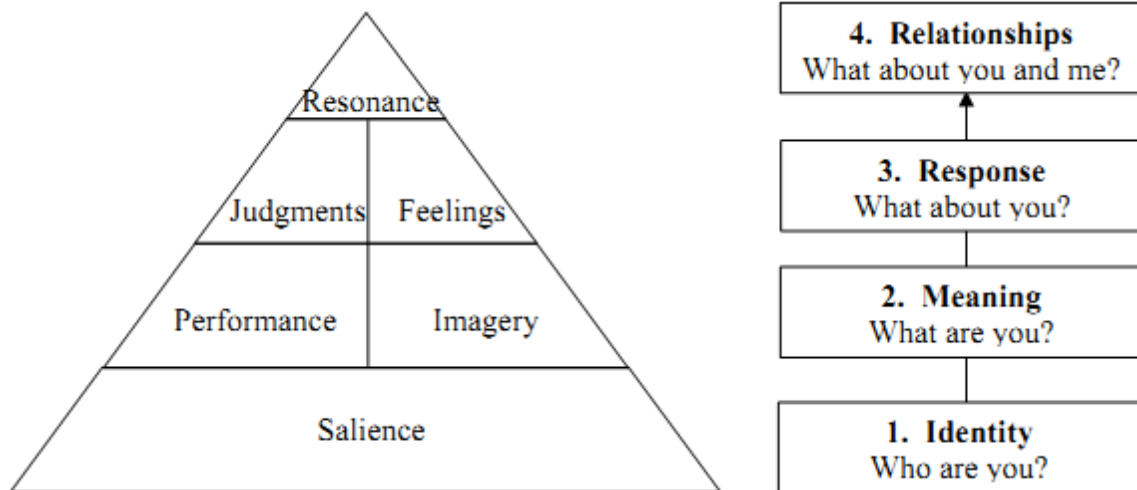
The brand equity ten (Aaker, 1996)



Keller's brand equity pyramid

Keller (1993) defined consumer-based brand equity at individual level taking brand knowledge as starting point, which is conceptualized as an associative network, where the associations are nodes. In 2003, Keller defines CBBE as “*the differential effect that brand knowledge has on consumer response to the marketing of that brand*”. The conception behind the brand equity is to form how customers think and feel about the product or service relying on positive experience. By keeping this in mind, Keller has proposed the “brand building block” with customer that was assembled in a pyramid. It identifies six elements, they are brand salience, brand performance, brand imagery, brand feelings, brand judgments and brand resonance.

Keller's building brand pyramid



In the bottom and first stages describe about the Saliency. It refers to measurements of awareness of brand (Keller, 2003). For example, how often and how easily the brand is evoked under various situation or circumstance. In other words, to what extent brand can be easily recalled or recognized. Building brand awareness includes making sure that customer understand the products or service category in which the brand competes (Keller, 2001, cited in Farjum and Hongi, 2016). However, Kerri-Ann et al (2008) explained that the first step to create strong brand to ensure the brand identity. In the context of tourism, Brand saliency general awareness which represent the strength of destination’s presence in the mind of the target. After all, awareness is first step and simply the ticket to enter the market (Pike, 2007).

In second stage, pyramid explains by linking tangible and intangible brand association. Brand is characterized in either functional (brand performance) or abstract (imagery) association (Farjum and Hongi, 2015). Brand performance refers how well the product or service meets customer’s more functional need (Keller, 2003) whereas brand imagery refers to the way people think about a brand abstractly, rather than what they think the brand actually does. In addition, imagery refers to more intangible aspect of brand and consumer can form imagery from their experience or indirectly through advertising or by other source of information, such as word of mouth.

Brand response represents third step in the Keller’s model and include judgment and feelings. In other word, it represents opinions and evaluations of the brand based on a combination of association identified in brand meaning. Judgment contains overall quality, credibility,

consideration and superiority. In other hand, brand feelings are emotional responses of customers and reaction to brand according to experience and information (Farjum and Hongi, 2015). These feelings can be mild or intense and positive and negative (Keller, 2003)

The final step of the model represents the relationship and level of identification that the customer has with the brand. Keller (2003) state that brand resonance describes the nature of this relationship and the extent to which customers feel that they are in sync with brand. Brand resonance indicates the relationship between the customer and brand. There are four elements of brand resonance. They are categories as follows:

- Behavior loyalty
- Attitudinal attachment
- Sense of community
- Active engagement.