



Department of Marketing

**Brand influence on tourists' booking intention across
tourism sectors: Evaluation of customer-based brand equity
within package holidays**

by

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Abstract

The effect and importance of branding are widely discussed within marketing literature. In particular, brand performance and the role of brands for customers' decision-making are acclaimed fields of research. One key theory in this field is customer-based brand equity (CBBE). While it is common that one product is connected to one brand, the service-related tourism industry is an exception, as tourism experiences often comprise a variety of brands. Multi-attribute package holidays include a heterogeneous composition of (online) travel agency, tour operator, transport, accommodation, and destination combined with a high level of uncertainty, due to the intangible nature of services. Despite the prevalence of package sales and consumption, a semi-systematic literature review of 108 academic papers revealed that branding aspects of multi-branded packages are rarely taken into consideration in tourism-related CBBE research.

This research expands both the general CBBE as well as the tourism branding literature. With its focus on bundles in the form of package holidays it explores a seldomly studied context and introduces the concept of customer-based bundle brand equity (CBBBE). Specifically, it elucidates the role of tourism brands in customers' holiday booking choices and allows for subsequent inter-sector comparisons of brand relevance.

By combining qualitative interviews and focus groups (n=34) with a quantitative online experiment (n=402) among travellers this study follows an exploratory sequential mixed methods design to allow for rich and in-depth insights alongside generalisable results. The synthesised findings suggest that the influence of different tourism brands on the customer's booking choices differs between the individual and bundled context. Regarding package holidays, CBBBE is mostly shaped by the transport and accommodation brand, whereas booking intention heavily depends upon the destination brand. In addition, CBBBE was found to be positively related to booking intention.

The adapted measurement tool and subsequent analysis indicate that CBBBE results from CBBE of its attributes (i.e., tourism sector brands). An additive evaluation process (in conjunction with the applicability of multi-attribute utility theory (MAUT))

was revealed since no significant interaction effects between individual attributes were detected. It is recommended that future research set to other types of bundles (e.g., financial services or beauty products) is completed to verify the applicability of the findings across industries and contexts.

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List of Abbreviations

ANOVA	Analysis of variance
AVE	Average variance extracted
BAs	Brand associations
BAT	British American Tobacco
BAw	Brand awareness
BBAs	Bundle brand associations
BBAw	Bundle brand awareness
BBAwAs	Bundle brand awareness and associations
BBL	Bundle brand loyalty
BI	Booking intention
BL	Brand loyalty
CBBE	Customer-based brand equity
CBBBE	Customer-based bundle brand equity
CBDDE	Customer-based destination brand equity
cf.	Confer (Latin)/ Compare
CFA	Confirmatory factor analysis
CFI	Comparative fit index
CMIN/DF	Chi-squared/ Degrees of freedom
DBO	Destination brand orientation
df	Degrees of freedom
DMO	Destination management organisation
DV	Dependent variable
EFA	Exploratory factor analysis
e.g.	Exempli gratia (Latin)/ For example
EMM	Estimated marginal means
et al.	Et alia (Latin)/ and others
EU	European Union
FBBE	Firm-based brand equity
FUR	Forschungsgemeinschaft Urlaub und Reisen (German)/ Research association vacation and travel
H	Hypothesis
IV	Independent variable

M	Mean
MANOVA	Multivariate analysis of variance
MAUT	Multi-attribute utility theory
MCDM	Multiple criteria decision making
MSA	Measure of sampling adequacy
MSC	Mediterranean Shipping Company
n	Sample size
NCL	Norwegian Cruise Lines
NFI	Normed fit index
OPBA	Other proprietary brand assets
OTA	Online travel agency
PBQ	Perceived bundle quality
PQ	Perceived quality
QUAL	Qualitative
QUAN	Quantitative
RMSEA	Root mean square error of approximation
RO	Research objective
SD	Standard deviation
SDN	Service delivery network
Sig.	Significance
SRMR	Standardised root square mean residual
UK	United Kingdom
USA	United States of America
VIR	Verband Internet Reisevertrieb (German)/ Internet travel distribution association

Chapter 1: Introduction

Branding is important for companies and institutions in order to clearly connect products with their producer, to create competitive advantage, and to influence consumer choices in their own favour (Aaker, 1991; Keller, 1993). For companies to benefit from well-informed branding strategies and activities, it is crucial to identify the value (i.e., brand equity) associated with one or multiple brands. One common evaluation approach of brand equity is the model of customer-based brand equity (CBBE) (Veloutsou et al., 2020; Yoo & Donthu, 2001). The purpose of this thesis is to explore and analyse CBBE within bundles in the form of package holidays, and to evaluate CBBE's respective influence on the customer's holiday booking choices. Following an exploratory sequential mixed methods approach, two studies are designed to enable multiple contributions to the current stream of research. The qualitative first study explores how travellers perceive different brands across tourism sectors as well as the role of tourism brands within the customer's travel-related booking choices in the context of package holidays. In the experimental second study, an online survey is administered to a large sample so that a series of hypotheses relating to (1) CBBE within package holidays and (2) booking intention of package holidays can be tested. As there are no existing studies or instruments to quantitatively assess CBBE within package holidays, the phenomenon of interest is named customer-based bundle brand equity (CBBBE) and a specific, reliable, and valid instrument is adapted based on the collected qualitative data and existing academic literature. This chapter outlines the background to the research, research aim and approach, theoretical and managerial contributions, as well as an overview of the chapters within this thesis.

1.1 Background to research

The tourism industry is characterised by vast differences in comparison to other (e.g., product-related) industries as it is split into a variety of interrelated and cooperating tourism sectors, such as tour operators or airlines (Elliott et al., 2016). Thus, it comprises companies and organisations from all sectors related to attractions, facilities, and services for tourists (Medlik, 2002). Each tourism experience (or respectively: vacation) potentially purchasable by the customer comprises multiple branded attributes (e.g., round trip flights and hotel room). From the customer's

perspective, the purchase of pre-arranged package holidays is widespread due to the associated cost reduction, perceived level of security, and time savings (Elliot et al., 2016; Kinberg & Sudit, 1979; Sheng & Pan, 2009). Bundles in the form of package holidays include a heterogeneous composition of tourism sectors such as (online) travel agency, tour operator, transport, accommodation, and destination combined with a high level of uncertainty (Elliot et al., 2016; Cai, 2002). It is rare to find a package holiday exhibiting the same brand across all included tourism sectors and services.

From a market perspective, package holidays represent a popular travel type. For example, on the German market almost half (48,0%) of all holidays are being booked in the form of a package holiday (FUR, 2024; Wilde & Partner, 2024). This prevalence is continuously shaped by further growth with market shares of package holidays well above the pre-Covid-19 level and a significantly increased number of package holiday bookings in 2023 compared to the previous year (FUR, 2024). Based on the relevance of package holidays in tourism practice, it is worthwhile to study travel behaviour in the context of package holidays. However, general research on package holidays is scarce and existing studies tend to focus on pricing and standardisation strategies (Holloway et al., 2009; Kim et al., 2009a), tasks of the tour operator who offers the packages (Picazo & Moreno-Gil, 2018; Medlik, 2002), or the functional value of intermediaries such as travel agencies (Sánchez et al., 2006). In contrast, customer choices between a variety of alternative package holiday options and the role of the included branded attributes (e.g., a British Airways flight bundled with a stay in a Hilton hotel) regarding these choices are seldomly considered. Resultingly, it is of interest which underlying theoretical framework is most suitable for the exploration of package holidays. The characteristics of package holidays (e.g., the inclusion of multiple attributes within one bundle) point towards two potentially suitable theories: service delivery network (SDN) and multi-attribute utility theory (MAUT).

While service delivery networks (SDN) examine how multiple independent service providers contribute interrelated service components to one joint customer-oriented service experience (Tax et al., 2013), multi-attribute utility theory (MAUT) refers to situations in which decision makers are confronted with multiple uncertainty-involving alternatives to choose from “on the basis of two or more criteria or attributes” (Dyer et al., 1992, p.647; Wallenius et al., 2008). In the context of package

holidays, one might argue that a package holiday represents an SDN, as it combines multiple services from different tourism companies such as airlines or hotels. In order to create a package holiday, all actors work together and, thereby, potentially influence the service offerings of other actors. However, it can also be argued that each package holiday is one among multiple available package holidays for a customer to choose from when making vacation choices. This assumption alongside the general intangibility of tourism and services, resulting in characteristics such as risk and uncertainty, indicates a good fit between package holidays and MAUT (Wallenius et al., 2008; Zeithaml et al., 1985). Exemplary attributes differentiating one package holiday from existing alternatives can be found in the included number of services, tourism sectors (e.g., transport, accommodation), their respective tourism sector brands, or the overall bundle price (Anderson et al., 2009; Chiam et al., 2009; Holloway et al., 2009; Westwood et al., 1999). As a consequence, both theories demonstrate characteristics relatable to bundles in the form of package holidays and to tourism in general, as they allow for an exploration of service offerings shaped by a multitude of different actors and attributes. However, both theories have gained little attention in tourism research yet (Helfen et al., 2020; Araya et al., 2023).

As outlined, tourism sector brands can constitute one type of attributes within a package holiday. Based on this, the exploration of package holidays and the specific role of brands within them requires a profound consideration of branding in general as well as in a tourism context. The competition of branded products and services led to a rising interest in ways to assess and compare the underlying value of brands (Aaker, 1991; Keller, 1993). An important indication of the value associated with brands is brand equity, the added value to a product or service that would cease if it was not branded at all (Aaker, 1991; Biel, 1992; Farquhar, 1989; Keller, 1993; Tauber, 1988). The most prominent approaches to brand equity suggest that it emerges on the customer's side resulting in customer preference and an increased purchase intention (Aaker, 1991; Cobb-Walgren et al., 1995; Keller, 1993; Leuthesser et al., 1995; Pappu et al., 2005; Vázquez et al., 2002; Yoo & Donthu, 2001).

Customer-based brand equity (CBBE) is often used to evaluate brand performance in a multitude of contexts and markets (Aaker, 1996b), such as consumer goods (Lassar et al., 1995; Yoo & Donthu, 2001), luxury products (Gabrielli et al., 2012), banking

(Stocchi & Fuller, 2016), or the tourism industry (Berry, 2000; Han et al., 2015). There seems to be general agreement on the fact that CBBE is characterised by a set of underlying dimensions (Veloutsou et al., 2020; Yoo & Donthu, 2001). Within the branding literature, most researchers employ Aaker's (1996) initially proposed dimensions of brand awareness, brand associations, perceived quality, and brand loyalty. Brand awareness represents the "the ability of a potential buyer to recognize or recall that a brand is a member of a certain product category" (Aaker, 1991, p.61). Resultingly, brand awareness is the consequence of successfully anchoring a brand in the customer's mind (Chatzipanagiotou et al., 2019; Pappu et al., 2005; Zeugner-Roth et al., 2008; Yoo & Donthu, 2001). Brand associations describe "anything 'linked' in memory to a brand" (Aaker, 1991, p.109) and the term is often used interchangeably with brand image, which is an individual set of brand associations on the customer's side (Zeugner-Roth et al., 2008; Yoo & Donthu, 2001). Perceived quality is "the consumer's judgment about a product's overall excellence or superiority" (Zeithaml, 1988, p.3). It results from customers' individual perceptions and evaluations of the quality of branded products or services alongside its potential to fulfil its purpose (Aaker, 1991; Zeugner-Roth et al., 2008; Yoo & Donthu, 2001). Lastly, brand loyalty measures "the attachment that a customer has to a brand" (Aaker, 1991, p.39). Therefore, brand loyalty concerns repeat buying patterns and a customer's preference to re-purchase products and services of one focal brand instead of switching brands (Aaker, 1992; Zeugner-Roth et al., 2008; Yoo & Donthu, 2001). All CBBE dimensions are strongly and positively related to each other (Chekalina et al., 2018; Herrero et al., 2017; Im et al., 2012; Lu et al., 2015; Manthiou et al., 2014; Pike et al., 2010; Šerić et al., 2016; Tasci, 2018). In conclusion, brands and their performance can be compared with each other based on their CBBE (Chatzipanagiotou et al., 2019).

The exploration on CBBE has its roots in the context of product branding, especially concerning consumer goods (Farquhar, 1989). When considering the market for consumer goods it is common that one product is connected to one brand, even though one brand can be used for multiple products or whole product ranges. This is equally applicable in the service industry, e.g., in the field of IT, beauty or consulting. Resultingly, CBBE has also been studied in a multitude of service-centred disciplines, such as tourism (Kladou et al., 2015). Most tourism-related CBBE studies investigate

individual tourism sectors (e.g., destinations, accommodation, transport), of which destinations are the most prominent one (e.g., Boo et al., 2009; Elliott et al., 2016; Ferns & Walls, 2012; Im et al., 2012; Pike et al., 2010). However, attempts exist to explore CBBE in other tourism sectors such as aviation (e.g., Chen & Tseng, 2010), attractions (e.g., Han et al., 2015), and hospitality (e.g., Cobb-Walgren et al., 1995). Despite the priorly outlined prevalence of bundled services within tourism, comparisons of CBBE and its effects (e.g., on booking intention) across different tourism sectors as well as branding aspects within package holidays are rarely taken into consideration (Almeyda-Ibáñez & George, 2017; Elliot et al., 2016; FUR, 2024). Due to the manifold mix of tourism sectors, corresponding service providers and brands, as well as the high degree of emotional involvement, the customer's booking behaviour is complex to grasp and predict (Decrop & Snelders, 2004). The question arises, if and in what way tourism brands and their respective CBBE across different tourism sectors influence the customer's holiday booking choices, and how CBBE of the overall package holiday (hereafter referred to as customer-based bundle brand equity (CBBBE)) as well as the customer's booking intention of package holidays vary between differing brand combinations.

1.2 Research aim and objectives

The aim of this thesis is to explore customer-based brand equity (CBBE) across tourism sectors and in the context of package holidays as well as to measure its impact on customer-based bundle brand equity (CBBBE) and travellers' booking intention (BI). Six research objectives address particular areas of this overarching aim:

Research objectives:

1. To explore how brands influence customers' holiday booking choices across five individual tourism sectors - (online) travel agency, tour operator, transport, accommodation, destination - during the holiday planning and booking process.
2. To explore how brands influence customers' holiday booking choices in the context of multi-branded package holidays during the holiday planning and booking process.

3. To adapt a specific, reliable, and valid measurement tool for customer-based bundle brand equity (CBBBE) in the context of package holidays.
4. To analyse differences in (1) CBBBE and (2) booking intention between various bundle designs of package holidays.
5. To explore which theory is more suitable for the investigation of CBBBE in the context of package holidays: (1) service delivery network theory (SDN) or (2) multi-attribute utility theory (MAUT).
6. To analyse the relationship between CBBBE and booking intention.

A detailed elaboration on how each research objective was established based on the current stream of research and the identified research gaps can be found in the final section of the literature review. To facilitate a first understanding key differences between objectives 1 and 2 are shortly summarised: Objective 1 aims to examine how brands influence holiday booking choices across various sectors independently, considering the influence of individual brands within (online) travel agencies, tour operators, transport services, accommodations, and destinations. In contrast, Objective 2 focuses specifically on the context of multi-branded package holidays, where multiple brands collaborate to create one bundled service offering. This separation allows for a deeper investigation into the distinct dynamics and strategies at play in both single-brand and multi-branded contexts, providing valuable insights for researchers, marketers, and industry stakeholders.

1.3 Research approach

To address the research aim and objectives, this thesis adopts a mixed methods approach, specifically an exploratory sequential design, that commences with a semi-systematic literature review, followed by a qualitative study (interviews and focus groups), and a quantitative study (online experiment), which builds on the results of the qualitative first study (cf. Figure 1).

Figure 1: Research approach



Note: Own illustration. QUAL = qualitative; QUAN = quantitative.

The choice of an exploratory sequential design resulted from the exploratory nature of research objectives one and two, which relate to the role of tourism sector brands regarding the customer's holiday booking choices both in the individual and bundled context. No prior research exists to qualitatively explore a multitude of tourism sector brands in both contexts within one joint study, thereby, allowing for direct comparisons. Resultingly, this thesis starts with a qualitative study (interviews), then expands the findings to adapt a specific measurement tool for CBBBE and to measure the impact of tourism sector CBBE on CBBBE and customers' booking intention (research objectives 3-6) using a quantitative study (online experiment).

The first study was conducted in winter 2019 and the second study was undertaken in winter 2022. The extended gap between the two studies can be attributed to the unprecedented challenges posed by the Covid-19 pandemic. During this period, the global outbreak necessitated significant adjustments in personal and professional life both on the researcher's as well as on the participants' side. Additionally, global travel bans were in place, inhibiting the potential to collect meaningful and real-life data throughout the peaks of the pandemic. Lastly, managing a part-time degree alongside full-time employment demanded careful time management and prioritisation of responsibilities, delaying the initiation of the second study until conditions permitted a return to research activities.

1.4 Theoretical and managerial contributions

This thesis extends both the general CBBE as well as the tourism branding literature with its specific focus on bundles (i.e., package holidays). Based on this, it explores a seldomly studied context (i.e., bundles), which is generally applicable both to products and services and results in various implications for theory and practice.

Conceptually, this thesis contributes to the general CBBE literature by exploring and evaluating CBBE in the context of bundles, in this case package holidays, and introducing the concept of customer-based bundle brand equity (CBBBE). It thereby, closes a gap between tourism practice, which is characterised by the prevalence of bundled service offerings (Cai, 2002; Kinberg & Sudit, 1979; Sheng & Pan, 2009) and the literature, which rarely considers comparisons of CBBE and its effects (e.g., on booking intention) across different tourism sectors as well as branding aspects within

package holidays (Almeyda-Ibáñez & George, 2017; Elliot et al., 2016). In addition, this work adds to the current body of knowledge by the adaptation of a specific, reliable, and valid measurement tool for CBBBE, based on existing tools for CBBE in non-bundled contexts. As no existing tools for CBBBE within package holidays or other types of bundles existed, a specific tool is adapted mostly from Zeugner-Roth et al.'s (2008) measurement tool. Their CBBE measurement tool is most suitable, as it had been tested across different types of products and services (incl. flights and restaurants) and, thus, is likely to be applicable across the different bundled tourism sector brands (e.g., accommodation, destination).

Regarding the tourism-related branding and CBBE literature, this thesis adds an exploration and comparison of the role of brands across different tourism sectors when customers are to book holidays or choose between a variety of options. Most existing studies are characterised by a focus on the role of tourism brands within individual tourism sectors such as destinations (e.g., Boo et al., 2009; Elliott et al., 2016; Ferns & Walls, 2012; Im et al., 2012; Pike et al., 2010), transport (e.g., Chen & Chang, 2008; Chen & Tseng, 2010; Mahadin et al., 2022; Uslu et al., 2013), accommodation (e.g., Kayaman & Arasil, 2007; Prasad & Dev, 2000; Šerić & Gil-Saura, 2012; Xu & Chan, 2010), (online) travel agencies (e.g., Kim et al., 2007; Wolfe et al., 2008), or tour operators (e.g., Westwood et al., 1999). The multi-sector approach of this thesis and both of its studies add to the literature by enabling direct comparisons between tourism sectors based on uniform research methods. From a methodological perspective, this thesis extends the field of tourism-related CBBE research to an experimental study, which are still rather rare in the field, as well as to a German sample, thereby, providing evidence from a source market that has not gained a considerable amount of research attention while being associated with one of highest tourism spendings worldwide (cf. Appendix A; UNWTO, 2019). The last tourism-related contribution is that this thesis relates to the theoretical knowledge on the underlying nature of the CBBBE evaluation process in the context of package holidays. Thus, the theories of MAUT and SDN are explored, discussed, and evaluated based on their fit to customer choices and booking intention of package holidays.

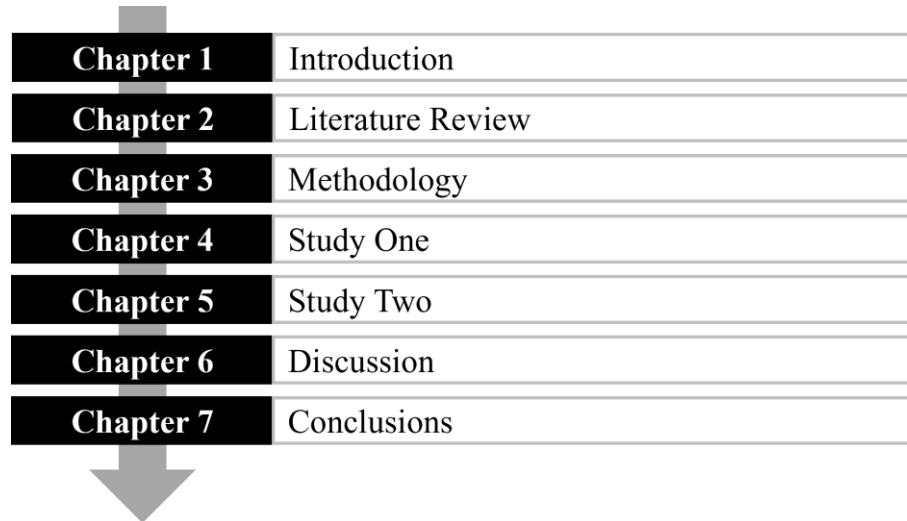
Lastly, this thesis results in managerial implications for tourism companies across the tourism sectors of traditional travel agencies, online travel agencies, tour operators,

transport, accommodation, and destinations. All practical implications directly stem from the synthesised findings of Study One and Study Two. The resulting implications relate to tourism branding practice as well as CBBE/ CBBBE and result in recommendations for action regarding each individual tourism sector.

1.5 Thesis overview

The structure of this thesis comprises seven chapters, as presented in Figure 2. Subsequently, a brief summary of each thesis chapter is provided.

Figure 2: Chapter overview



Chapter 1	Introduction
Chapter 2	Literature Review
Chapter 3	Methodology
Chapter 4	Study One
Chapter 5	Study Two
Chapter 6	Discussion
Chapter 7	Conclusions

Note: Own illustration.

Chapter One has outlined the background to the research. In addition, the thesis aim and objectives were demonstrated, followed by the research approach and contributions. It ends with the outline of the thesis and summarises each chapter's key contents.

Chapter Two points out the nature and key characteristics of the tourism industry. In addition, it illustrates prominent tourism sectors alongside the role of bundling in tourism practice. A review of general branding and tourism branding literature precedes the discussion of brand equity based on its associated models and measures. Lastly, a semi-systematic review of tourism-related CBBE literature is presented before (1) a conceptual model of CBBE within package holidays is proposed and (2) this thesis' research objectives are summarised.

Chapter Three introduces the research design of this thesis. It commences with a discussion of dominant research paradigms and their preponderance in CBBE research and justifies the selection of a pragmatist approach. Subsequently, the chapter outlines mixed methods research, its suitability to the research objectives of this thesis and justifies the adopted exploratory sequential design in which a qualitative study (Chapter 4) is followed by a quantitative study (Chapter 5).

Chapter Four provides a detailed description and discussion of the research objectives, method, instruments, and procedures related to the qualitative first study (Study One). Using personal interviews and focus groups, the role of brands across different tourism sectors (travel agencies, online travel agencies, tour operators, airlines, hotels, destinations) and their influence on the customer's holiday booking choices in the individual vs. bundled context is explored. Finally, a discussion of the findings of Study One is provided, which will later be expanded and matched with the general literature and the findings of Study Two in this thesis' synthesised overall discussion chapter (Chapter 6). Chapter Four concludes by deriving the implications Study One has for Study Two.

Chapter Five measures the impact of tourism sector CBBE on both CBBBE and customers' booking intention by the means of a quantitative study (Study Two). The online experiment alongside its objectives, hypotheses, sampling, and procedures is introduced. Subsequently, the adapted measurement tool for CBBBE within package holidays is presented. Within the experimental study, participants are exposed to one of eight package holiday options, each comprising a different combination of tourism sector brands with either high or low CBBE manifestations across all included tourism sectors (transport, accommodation, destination). Firstly, sample characteristics and manipulation checks are described, followed by exploratory factor analysis (EFA) and confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) to assess reliability and validity of the newly adapted CBBBE measurement tool. Secondly, descriptive statistics are provided. Lastly, multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) and simple linear regression are undertaken to test Study Two's hypotheses and results are presented.

Chapter Six synthesises the two studies: The results of both studies are compared and discussed against the current stream of research in the fields of general and tourism-

related CBBE. Further, connections to research on travel behaviour (e.g., booking intention), MAUT, and SDN are outlined. The chapter points out how both studies have satisfied the research aim and objectives of this thesis. The integration of qualitative and quantitative results is essential within any mixed methods research design and provides valuable insights by interlinking all collected data.

Chapter Seven, the final chapter, presents the conclusions of this thesis. Firstly, the theoretical implications and key contributions are outlined. Secondly, managerial implications for companies across tourism sectors (travel agencies, online travel agencies, tour operators, airlines, hotels, destinations) are provided. Lastly, the limitations and future research potentials are discussed, followed by the conclusion of the thesis.

Chapter 2: Literature review

2.1 Introduction

This chapter commences with the introduction of the tourism industry and its characteristics, especially considering the role of bundling within tourism practice alongside the conceptual fit of both service delivery networks (SDN) and multi-attribute utility theory (MAUT) to bundles. Subsequently, the chapter addresses the theoretical roots, conceptualisations, and dimensions of branding and brand equity, which constitutes the key theoretical foundation of this research. Then, the chapter builds upon the provided basis by presenting the specifics of tourism branding, followed by an extensive analysis and overview of the tourism-related CBBE literature. Finally, the chapter synthesises the main points addressed in order to present a conceptual model of brand performance within package holidays before the research objectives are derived from the research gap in relation to existing studies.

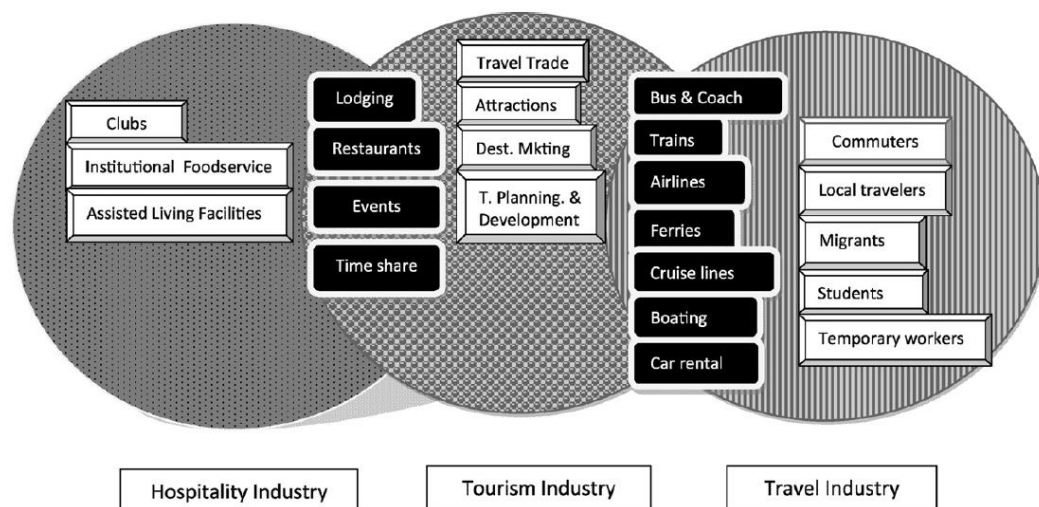
2.2 The tourism industry and its characteristics

Tourism is part of the service industry and it is generally accepted wisdom that people engage in tourism activities within their leisure time (Carr, 2002; Cooper et al., 2008). Thus, tourism is unmistakably differentiated from business travel which is assigned to work time (Holloway et al., 2009). Tourism can be narrowed down to a “temporary movement to destinations outside normal home and workplace, the activities undertaken during the stay, and the facilities created to cater for their [people’s] needs” (Cooper et al., 2008, p.16). Other sources limit the tourism-related absence to a duration of one day up to one year, and point out two key elements of tourism, namely, the journey to the destination (often considered as “travel”) and the stay at the destination including all exploited activities and facilities (Holloway et al., 2009; Page & Connell, 2009). The tourism industry comprises companies and establishments from all sectors related to attractions, facilities, and services for tourists (Medlik, 2002). Due to the constant rise of tourism throughout the last decades all actors of the tourism value chain such as tourism planners, tourism suppliers and tourism intermediaries benefited from a significant increase in demand, which has only come to an abrupt halt due to the Covid-19 pandemic (FUR, 2022; Song et al., 2013).

2.2.1 Delimitation of the tourism industry

The prior section stated that tourism is characterised by the facilities catering to persons (i.e., tourists) that temporarily move to destinations outside their normal location. However, two other industries share this characteristic, namely, the travel and the hospitality industries (Pizam, 2009). Following Medlik (2002), the travel industry refers to companies offering passenger transport services (e.g., flights), whereas the hospitality industry is characterised by its focus on lodging and food-related services (e.g., hotels). Pizam (2009) suggests a graphic model to delimitate the tourism industry from the hospitality and travel industries (see Figure 3).

Figure 3: The relationship between the travel, tourism, and hospitality industries



Note: From Pizam (2009), p.183.

The illustration shows that the hospitality and travel industry can be clearly separated by the nature of the services they represent: While the hospitality industry is concerned with lodging, food, and catering for guests at a location, the travel industry relates to transportation, for example via bus, train, or airplane (Pizam, 2009). In contrast, the tourism industry bridges the gap between both other industries, by including services related to lodging and food, alongside transportation, as well as additional tourist-centred services such as travel trade (e.g., tour operators, travel agencies). Resultingly, the tourism industry can be considered as the broadest and most general term, as it comprises the complete variety of tourism sectors: From accommodation, to transportation, travel trade, and destination (Medlik, 2002).

In addition to the suggested delimitation of the hospitality, tourism, and travel industry, the previous illustration (Figure 3) demonstrates the high level of interaction as well as interdependence between individual industry players (i.e., tourism sectors). It suggests that many tourism sectors transition between two of the three industries, e.g., transportation providers, such as airlines, who are part of both the travel and the tourism industry. As previously stated, the focus of this thesis lies on the broader tourism industry and its key sectors, all of which have “a common function of meeting tourist needs, consisting of tourism-related industries to the extent to which they supply tourist rather than local [...] markets” (Medlik, 2002, p.166f). Agents of one tourism sector alone are barely able to make a complete vacation offer to the customer, as a vacation includes a variety of services and touchpoints along the tourism value chain, such as intermediaries, transportation, destination(s), accommodation, attractions, and activities (Cooper et al., 2008; Holloway et al., 2009). Therefore, a vacation consists of services provided by different tourism sectors in a joint way. The interplay of an unusually high number of different actors and sectors results in vastly heterogeneous service offerings (Holloway et al., 2009).

The most prominent tourism sectors within the literature are the travel agency (online and/or offline), tour operator, transportation, accommodation, and destination sector (Freyer, 2015; Fuchs, 2021; Schulz et al., 2021). **Travel agencies** exist in online and offline settings and represent organisations or companies selling travel services (e.g., accommodation) on behalf of principals (e.g., hotels) as well as related services such as travel insurance or visa organisation (Fuchs, 2021). In return, travel agencies receive a commission for their agency services as their key function is that of a retailer by bringing offer and demand together (Medlik, 2002). Well-known online travel agencies are companies such as Expedia or Booking.com, the websites of which are globally accessible, while traditional offline agency companies and brands mostly tend to focus their activities and stores on individual countries and markets, such as Kuoni travel agencies in Switzerland or TUI ReiseCenter in Germany. **Tour operators** are organisations or persons that buy individual tourism services (e.g., transportation, accommodation) from their suppliers and partners (e.g., airlines, hotels) to combine them to a package of tourism services, which is then sold with a mark-up directly to customers or through intermediaries, such as travel agencies (Schulz et al., 2021).

Resultingly, a tour operator can be considered as a manufacturer of travel products, such as vacations, with activities comparable to other manufacturers assembling product components, such as car manufacturers (Medlik, 2002). For instance, the former tour operator Thomas Cook has received a lot of global attention due to its bankruptcy in 2019. Other popular tour operators are companies such as TUI and DER Touristik (REWE Group). The **transportation** sector comprises carriers of goods and/or people from one point to another for hire via a variety of transport modes, such as air, ground, and waterways (Freyer, 2015). Resultingly, airlines (e.g., Lufthansa, British Airways), rail (e.g., SNCF), bus (e.g., Flixbus), and cruise companies (e.g., MSC Cruises, NCL) are part of the transportation sector as they sell seats or compartments for tourists (Fuchs, 2021). Tourism **accommodation** describes any type of facility offering overnight accommodation for tourists, such as hotels or camping facilities, often combined with ancillary services such as food, spa, or concierge services (Schulz et al., 2021). Well-known accommodation providers are hotel companies such as Hilton, Marriott, and Accor. The last sector of interest in relation to this research is the destination sector. Tourism **destinations** comprise countries, regions, towns, or other areas attracting tourists (Medlik, 2002). Destinations represent the main location of tourist activity and usually account for most of tourists' time and spending (Freyer, 2015).

2.2.2 Service-related characteristics of tourism

As previously outlined, tourism and its sectors share some aspects with product-related industries, especially concerning the manufacturing of tourism packages. However, a variety of characteristics vastly differentiate the service-related tourism industry from product-centred industries. The most prominent differences and aspects are intangibility, inseparability of production and consumption, heterogeneity, and perishability (Zeithaml et al., 1985).

Intangibility describes the fact that services do not provide the possibility to perceive their attributes or quality through any of the customers senses, such as sight, taste, feel, and scent, prior to the purchase (Zeithaml et al., 1985). For example, in relation to tourism sectors and services this characteristic results in the fact that customers cannot know what their flight on an airplane will be like (e.g., regarding food, noise, turbulences, seat neighbours) before they experience the flight. This is closely

intertwined with the next characteristic, namely ***inseparability***, which stands in contrast to products that are produced, sold, and then consumed. Regarding services, the process holds a pivotal difference as these are sold before they are being produced and consumed (or respectively: experienced) at the same time (De Chernatony et al., 2010). Zeithaml et al. (1985) point out that this succession requires the consumer to occupy an active role and be present during the actual production. For example, the production and experience of a hotel stay starts with travellers checking in at the reception and ends with them checking out. Due to this interactive nature of any service delivery consumers can directly influence its outcome not only for themselves (e.g., by being friendly to staff) but also for other consumers consuming the same service at the same time, for example by snoring when flying on a plane. It is from the involvement of the human factor that ***heterogeneity*** accrues (Schulz et al., 2021). The persons involved can either be (1) employees of the service provider or (2) other customers that the consumer gets in contact with before and during the actual service delivery as well as (3) the consumer himself. As every person involved holds their own demands and expectations based on prior experiences and individual perceptions, their personal expectations differ as to what constitutes a satisfying service provision (Freyer, 2015). For example, experienced travellers who did visit many different destinations and hotels are likely to have higher expectations than first-time travellers who lack a personal and subjective benchmark in this relation. Challenges arising from heterogeneity are the difficulty to successfully apply service standardisation across contact points and employees, the projection of employees' behaviour on the service brand as well as inconsistent service evaluation by different or even the same consumers (De Chernatony et al., 2010). The last characteristic of services is ***perishability*** signifying the fact that services are unable to be stored if they are not consumed at the very time of being produced, e.g., an empty hotel room cannot be saved for a time when the establishment is fully booked and then added on top of the overall capacity. Therefore, the synchronisation of service demand and supply is one key task of efficient service providers (Zeithaml et al., 1985).

2.2.3 The role of bundling in tourism

Considering the tourism experience, namely a vacation, from the tourists' point of view, they are confronted with a multitude of companies, each providing individual

elements of a bundle of tourism services, as previously outlined. The complexity of successful service bundling (i.e., the combination of multiple services within one package) has been one central topic since the early stages of tourism research, but until now the terminology for a bundle of tourism services is an area of disagreement among researchers, as presented in Table 1.

Table 1: Terminology for bundled tourism services

Category	Terminology*	Source(s)
Variations of <i>package tour</i>	package tour	Anderson et al. (2009), Becken et al. (2003), Chen et al. (2013), Finsterwalder & Laesser (2013), Holloway et al. (2009), Inbakaran & Jackson (2005), Jin et al. (2012), Wong & Kwong (2004), Yoon & Shafer (1997)
	package-tour	Jin et al. (2012)
	packaged tour	Lepp & Gibson (2008)
	full-/semi-package tour	Yoo et al. (2018)
	basic/ (all-)inclusive package tour	Sheldon & Mak (1987), Wong & Kwong (2004), Yoon & Shafer (1997)
Variations of <i>inclusive tour</i>	inclusive tour	Cooper et al. (2008), Holloway et al. (2009), Medlik (2002), Page & Connell (2009)
	all-inclusive tour	Dudek et al. (2019)
Variations of <i>package travel</i>	package travel	Yoo et al. (2018)
	package travel tour	Yoon & Shafer (1997)
Variations of <i>package holiday</i>	package holiday	Alegre et al. (2013), Alegre & Sard (2015), Anderson et al. (2009), Cooper et al. (2008), Page & Connell (2009), Picazo & Moreno-Gil (2018), Rewtrakunphaiboon & Oppewal (2008), Westwood (1999)
	packaged holiday	Dudek et al. (2019)
Variations of <i>travel package</i>	travel package	Chiam et al. (2009), Harlam et al. (1995), Inbakaran & Jackson (2005), Jin et al. (2012), Kim (2008), Kim et al. (2018), Kim et al. (2019), McCartney (2008), Rewtrakunphaiboon & Oppewal (2008), Tanford et al. (2012), Wong et al. (2013)
	all-inclusive travel package	Yoon & Shafer (1997)
	travel bundle package	Kim et al. (2018)
Variations of <i>tour package</i>	tour package	Frías et al. (2008), Jin et al. (2012), Yoon & Shafer (1997)
	complete/basic tour package	Yoon & Shafer (1997)
Variations of <i>tourist package</i>	tourist package	Alegre & Sard (2015)
	tourist service package	Dudek et al. (2019)
Other	all-inclusive package	Yoon & Shafer (1997)
	holiday package	Dudek et al. (2019), Madlberger (2016), Picazo & Moreno-Gil (2018)
	inclusive holiday	Cooper et al. (2008)

tourism package	Sánchez et al. (2006)
vacation package	Dudek et al. (2019), Kim (2008), Kim et al. (2019), Tanford et al. (2012)
package arrangement	Yoon & Shafer (1997)
packaged vacation	Lepp & Gibson (2008)

Note: Own elaboration. *Terminology is included solely in its singular form to enhance comparability.

Generally, it can be stated that a variety of terms are in use to describe bundled tourism services, which can mostly be clustered as variations of package tour (Chen et al., 2013; Finsterwalder & Laesser, 2013; Jin et al., 2012), inclusive tour (Cooper et al., 2008; Holloway et al., 2009; Page & Connell, 2009), package travel (Yoo et al., 2018; Yoon & Shafer, 1997), package holiday (Alegre et al., 2013; Alegre & Sard, 2015; Picazo & Moreno-Gil, 2018;), travel package (Kim et al., 2018, 2019; Tanford et al., 2012; Wong et al., 2013), tour package (Frías et al., 2008; Jin et al., 2012), tourist package (Alegre & Sard, 2015; Dudek et al., 2019), and other (cf. Table 1).

Monographies and dictionaries commonly declare inclusive tour as the generally accepted terminology of “a package of transport, accommodation and possibly other travel services such as sightseeing, sold as a holiday (vacation) for an inclusive price” (Medlik, 2002, p.90). In contrast, current research seems to be severely divided concerning the appropriate terminology, as most authors tend to preferably use versions of package tour, package holiday, and travel package (cf. Table 1). The most common alternatives package tour and travel package tend to be intuitively associated with actions of movement based on the inclusion of the term “travel”, or respectively “tour”, and thus, the travel industry. To represent this research’s focus on the tourism industry (and not solely the travel industry), the term package holiday is chosen to be used throughout the course of this research to describe a bundle of tourism services representing a vacation for the tourist.

Potentially included service elements of package holidays are transport (e.g., aircraft seat), accommodation, transfers, tour representative(s) at the destination, insurance, car hire, and day trips to attractions (Page & Connell, 2009). Most research on package holidays indicates that such packages require a minimum of two combined tourism services, commonly transportation and accommodation (Dudek et al., 2019; Kim, 2008; Rewtrakunphaiboon & Oppewal, 2008). Other studies tend to base the definition

on the fact that package holidays include every part of a vacation for a pre-paid price, leading to the fact that no money or payment is needed throughout the actual trip, without specifically mentioning the included attributes (Anderson et al., 2009). Another stream of research appears to support the notion of different types of package holidays. Namely, they contrast basic packages, including only transport and lodging, with all-inclusive packages which additionally include all meals, sightseeing, and a tour guide (Sheldon & Mak, 1987; Wong & Kwong, 2004; Yoo et al., 2018; Yoon & Shafer, 1997). Lastly, many studies regarding package holidays fail to include a definition for the phenomenon at all (Alegre & Sard, 2015; Chen et al., 2013; Finsterwalder & Laesser, 2013; Kim et al., 2019; Picazo & Moreno-Gil, 2018; Wong et al., 2013). Thus, the lack of a common ground towards the actual nature of a package holiday is remarkable. This research follows the suggestion of Dudek et al. (2019) and regards a package holiday as a bundle of at least two combined services of different tourism sectors, commonly transport and accommodation. However, it is taken into account that services from more than two tourism sectors can be bundled together and that, ultimately, it is the customer who decides what constitutes parts of their package holiday, or respectively vacation.

From the customer's perspective, the purchase of pre-arranged package holidays is widespread and attractive as it facilitates cost reduction and reduces the individual's effort invested in searching for and comparing multiple services and their providers (Elliot et al., 2016; Kim et al., 2009a; Kinberg & Sudit, 1979; Sheng & Pan, 2009). The bundle price commonly lies below the price customers could obtain by individually booking the elements included within the package holiday (Holloway et al., 2009; Kim et al., 2009a). In addition, the liability lies with the organising party, namely the tour operator, and therefore risks for the consumer are minimized, a certain advantage with regards to the attributed uncertainty of service purchases (Cai, 2002). Considerations of security and minimised risk in the context of tourism have specifically gained momentum since the Covid-19 pandemic, leading to tourists' searching for reliable and renowned service providers and safe tourism experiences (Cervova & Vavrova, 2021; Hartmann & Cao, 2021; Hartmann et al., 2021; Huang, 2023; Satar et al., 2023). The underlying process of creating package holidays includes the tour operator's key tasks to purchase all necessary services from their providers

(e.g., airlines, hotels), to combine them, and to sell the package directly or through intermediaries (e.g., offline or online travel agencies) to its customers (Picazo & Moreno-Gil, 2018; Medlik, 2002). Not only the tour operator but also the intermediary, its professionalism, and the consultation's functional value directly influence the perceived value of the package holiday (Sánchez et al., 2006). However, the vast amount of involved service providers results in a challenge when attempting to standardise processes and to provide a set level of quality along all touchpoints (Holloway et al., 2009). Thus, from a practical perspective one might argue that a package holiday does not only include the services a customer consumes during a vacation but also the organisation and liability provided by the tour operator as well as the specialist consultation of an (online) travel agency. Previously mentioned attempts to define package holidays tend to ignore these pre-trip services, but in practice, these attributes are included in the actual package price, and therefore, deserve more attention within studies on package holidays. Resultingly, this thesis considers a package holiday as a vacation offer in which multiple tourism-related services are bundled together at a pre-paid price. In addition, this specifically includes services before or after the actual trip.

2.2.4 Conceptual fit of SDN and MAUT to package holidays

The previous section summarised studies exploring package holidays. The existing body of knowledge in this regard tends to focus on pricing and standardisation strategies (Holloway et al., 2009; Kim et al., 2009a), tasks of the tour operator offering the package (Picazo & Moreno-Gil, 2018; Medlik, 2002), or the functional value of intermediaries such as travel agencies (Sánchez et al., 2006). More recent studies centre around the customer's side and regard decision-framing (Kim et al., 2018), tourist motivation and goals (Kim et al., 2019; Yoo et al., 2018), or their use of information and booking channels (Dudek et al., 2019). In contrast to this tendency towards more customer-oriented research, customer choices between a variety of alternative package holiday options and the role of the included attributes regarding these choices are seldomly considered. Resultingly, it is of interest which underlying theoretical framework is most suitable for the exploration of package holidays. The characteristics of package holidays (e.g., the inclusion of multiple branded attributes

within one bundle) point towards two potentially suitable theories: service delivery network (SDN) and multi-attribute utility theory (MAUT).

The lack of a simultaneous consideration of multiple underlying attributes and actors related to one service offering is attended to by Tax et al. (2013) resulting in the **service delivery network** (SDN) model which follows the perspective of multiple independent service providers contributing to one customer-oriented service experience comprising a variety of related service components. The literature differentiates between two forms of SDNs: (1) SDNs in which one (or more) service provider(s) bundle(s) components together and offers the resulting package to the customer, and (2) SDNs which are individually created by the customer himself, who is therefore acting as a “resource integrator” (Lusch & Vargo, 2006). However, Tax et al. (2013) evaluate functional SDNs from a rather operational point of view and do not focus specifically on the tourism industry. They underline the importance of identifying the coordinating network “captain”, highlighting the fact that there is further need to take competition among the participating service providers into account. In general, SDNs are applicable to various service industries such as the financial sector (Meester et al., 2010), retail agglomerations like shopping malls (Teller et al., 2016), the health sector (Pikkarainen et al., 2020), public management (Brandsen & van Hout, 2006), and non-profit organisations (Bunger, 2012). Limited attention has been paid to tourism-related SDNs (Helfen et al., 2020). However, individual advances exist and apply SDN to explore human resources in aviation management (Sydow et al., 2020; Ziehe & Helfen, 2021). Key aspects of any SDN are the “actor characteristics, network processes, and structure, which affect the network’s values and functions” (Poocharoen & Ting, 2015, p.591). For this thesis, one might argue that a package holiday represents an SDN, as it comprises service attributes from different tourism companies, such as airlines or hotels. In order to provide the package holiday, all actors work together, and thereby, hold the potential to influence the service offerings of other actors. This is especially true in the case of a coordinating network “captain”, that organises and coordinates all involved actors, which is usually one key task of the tour operator.

However, an alternative concept is identified to be potentially applicable to package holidays: **Multi-attribute utility theory** (MAUT). MAUT relates to individual or group decision makers which are confronted with multiple options to choose from “on the

basis of two or more criteria or attributes” (Dyer et al., 1992, p.647). These associated attributes often include degrees of risk or uncertainty, which differentiates MAUT from multiple criteria decision making (MCDM; Wallenius et al., 2008). MAUT can concern multiple criteria used when considering discrete alternative problems (modest size of choices and attributes, e.g., choosing a location for a new airport) as well as multiple criteria optimisation problems (large number of/ infinite alternatives, e.g., energy planning), resulting in a variety of interdisciplinary application potentials (Wallenius et al., 2008). The decision maker’s key priority lies on the maximisation of utility (or value) which is often estimated and compared across all available options, for example by employing a ranking or numerical comparison (Dyer et al., 1992). Within tourism research, MAUT has not yet gained a significant amount of attention. However, individual studies employ MAUT, for example to estimate the overall sustainability of tourism projects including different ecosystem services (Araya et al., 2023) or to identify optimal travel itineraries based on attributes such as travel time, distances, popularity, and budget (Anranur Uwaisy et al., 2019; Baizal et al., 2018; Saifullah et al., 2019). It can be argued that each package holiday is one among a modest number of generally available package holidays for a customer to choose from when planning to go on vacation. Hence, the setting can be related to a discrete alternative problem as it relates to a modest size of choices and attributes (Wallenius et al., 2008). Further, the intangibility of tourism and services in general, resulting in attributes shaped by risk and uncertainty, indicates a good fit between package holidays and MAUT (Wallenius et al., 2008; Zeithaml et al., 1985). Key attributes differentiating one package holiday from competing alternatives range between, but are not limited to, the included number of services, tourism sectors (e.g., transport, accommodation), their respective tourism sector brands, and the overall bundle price (Anderson et al., 2009; Chiam et al., 2009; Holloway et al., 2009; Westwood et al., 1999).

2.3 Branding & brand equity

The previous sections on package holidays and their differentiating attributes have identified tourism sector brands as one of the factors potentially influencing the customer’s choice between a variety of package holiday options. In order to research brands as differentiating factor, a theoretical foundation on brand definitions, branding

components, as well as consequences of branding is presented in the following sections.

2.3.1 Definition of brands

Branding, along with its effects and importance, is widely discussed within marketing literature and research (Aaker, 1996). Since Greek and Roman times, branding has been a common practice to attribute quality and convey information on a product's origin (Kochan, 1996). However, it has received a lot of research interest only since the twentieth century (De Chernatony et al., 2010). Aaker (1991) was one of the first researchers to provide a general definition for brands. The author highlights that the main purpose of a brand is to differentiate a company's products or services from competing substitutes and to allocate products to one specific producer. Aaker's definition therefore provides direct ties to the initial idea of brands in ancient times signalling the origin of a product and directly linking it to its producer. Ever since, proponents of branding research have pointed out a variety of definitions as to what a brand truly is, some of which are outlined in Table 2.

Table 2: Brand definitions

Author(s)	Definition
Swaminathan et al. (2020, p.25)	[...] The firm perspective views brands as assets and examines the various functions and roles that brands serve for firms, both strategically and financially. The consumer perspective views brands as signals (economic approach) and mental knowledge cues (psychological approach). The society perspective presents brands in societal and cultural contexts affecting individual consumers both directly and indirectly through social forces, structures, and institutions.
Keller & Swaminathan 2020, p.30)	[A brand is] a name, term, sign, symbol, or design, or a combination of them, intended to identify the goods and services of one seller or group of sellers and to differentiate them from those of competition.
Keller (2013, p.31)	A brand is therefore more than a product, because it can have dimensions that differentiate it in some way from other products designed to satisfy the same need. These differences may be rational and tangible [...] or more symbolic, emotional, and intangible.
Kapferer (2012, p.12)	A brand [is] a name that symbolizes a long-term engagement, crusade or commitment to a unique set of values, embedded into products, services and behaviours, which make the organization, person or product stand apart or stand out.
De Chernatony et al. (2010, p. 31)	A brand is a cluster of functional and emotional values that enables organisations to make a promise about a unique and welcomed experience.

Mearns (2007, p.56)	Branding goes beyond how your customers see you. It is the process of defining a point of difference and organizational culture and communicating them internally and externally.
Kotler & Pfoertsch (2006, p.13)	“Brand” comprises various aspects. A brand is a promise, the totality of perceptions [...] about a product, service, or business. It holds a distinctive position in customer’s minds based on past experiences, associations, and future expectations. It is a short-cut of attributes, benefits, beliefs, and values that differentiate, reduce complexity, and simplify the decision-making process.
Anderson & Narus (2004, p.136)	They [brands] facilitate the identification of products, services and businesses as well as differentiate them from the competition.
O’Cass & Grace (2003, p.1)	To the consumer, a brand identifies the source of the product, which in turn assigns legal responsibility to the product maker and provides a promise or bond with the maker of the product.
Bedbury (2002, p.14)	Branding is about taking something common and improving upon it in ways that make it more valuable and meaningful.
Kotler & Gertner (2002, p.249)	Brands differentiate products and represent a promise of value. Brands incite beliefs, evoke emotions and prompt behaviours.
Keller (1998, p.7)	A brand is a set of mental associations, held by the consumer, which add to the perceived value of a product or service.
Hankinson & Cowking (1995, p.47)	A brand is a product or service made distinctive by its positioning, relative to the competition, and by its personality.
Aaker (1991, p.7)	A brand is a distinguishing name and/or symbol (such as logo, trademark, or package design) intended to identify the goods or services of either one seller or a group of sellers, and to differentiate those goods or services from those of competitors.
Farquhar (1989, p.1)	A brand is a name, symbol, design, or mark that enhances the value of a product beyond its functional purpose.

Note: Own elaboration. In chronological order.

Despite differences in the core definition of a brand there are areas of general agreement among the presented definitions. The evolution of brand definitions between 1990 and 2013 demonstrates a preponderance of differentiation as a major feature of branding (Aaker, 1991; Anderson & Narus, 2004; Hankinson & Cowking, 1995; Kapferer, 2012; Keller, 2013; Kotler & Gertner, 2002; Kotler & Pfoertsch, 2006; Mearns, 2007). In contrast, the feature of identification appears mainly in the first half of the period covered in Table 2 (Aaker, 1991; Anderson & Narus, 2004; O’Cass & Grace, 2003). Hankinson and Cowking (1995) further introduce the prerequisite of a brand to be distinctive. Later definitions incorporate this approach by referring to distinctiveness and uniqueness of a brand (De Chernatony et al., 2010; Kapferer, 2012; Kotler & Pfoertsch, 2006). Only a small number of definitions specifically pay tribute to the (potential) customer who is meant to identify a brand and/ or to be aware of its distinctiveness (Keller, 1998; Kotler & Pfoertsch, 2006; O’Cass & Grace, 2003).

In general, it can be stated that brand definitions develop from Aaker's (1991) rather rational approach towards a more intangible and manifold nature (Swaminathan et al., 2020; De Chernatony et al., 2010). The rational approach of early brand definitions is characterised by a competition-related point of view highlighting a company's need for brands to outperform its competitors (Aaker, 1991; Hankinson & Cowking, 1995). In contrast, newer definitions display a rather intangible approach to branding by linking a brand to mental associations, perceptions, promises, and emotional values (Bedbury, 2002; De Chernatony et al., 2010; Kapferer, 2012; Kotler & Gertner, 2002; Kotler & Pfoertsch, 2006; Mearns, 2007). Keller (1998, p.7) states that these intangible factors, such as "mental associations, held by the consumer, [...] add to the perceived value of a product or service".

Keller (2013) takes this overall development in the field of brand definitions into account by incorporating both aspects in his definition. He states that "A brand is therefore more than a product, because it can have dimensions that differentiate it in some way from other products designed to satisfy the same need. These differences may be rational and tangible [...] or more symbolic, emotional, and intangible" (Keller, 2013, p.31). This definition incorporates key points of the variety of definitions considered in Table 2. Nevertheless, one might argue that there are companies and products that are not opposed to competitors and therefore have no need to differentiate themselves from others. De Chernatony et al.'s (2010, p.31) definition tackles this circumstance stating that "a brand is a cluster of functional and emotional values that enables organisations to make a promise about a unique and welcomed experience". This definition is more identification-centred, but still misses the connotation concerning the customer. To overcome these obstacles, this thesis considers a brand as a unique promise including a predefined set of tangible and intangible values that enable the customer to identify the brand and to establish mental associations with it.

2.3.2 Components of branding

According to Aaker (1991) a brand comprises three main components: brand identity, brand positioning, and brand image. Brand identity and brand positioning reflect key tools of a company's brand management, whereas brand image takes the customer's perspective into account (Kapferer, 2012). Thus, all three components take effect

during every brand-related communication between an organisation or company and its (potential) customer.

Brand identity is the first task of branding and determines a brand's meaning, aim and self-image (Kapferer, 2012). Thus, it is located on the supply or sender's side of the brand, as it describes "the image desired by the marketers" (Pike, 2007b, p.53). The design of a brand identity incorporates a variety of features such as mission, vision, competence, legitimacy, name, sign, associations, benefits, and values (Aaker, 1996; Kapferer, 2012; Pike, 2004). Aaker (1996) underpins the brand identity's potential to be the starting point for a long-lasting relationship between an organisation and its costumer if it succeeds to articulate a credible value proposition. Once the brand identity, thus, the nature of the brand, is created it remains to be positioned and communicated for the customer to notice (Kapferer, 2012).

Brand positioning is the way of outlining and displaying the differentiating characteristics of a brand in comparison to its competitors in the same market or category (Aaker, 1996; Kanwal et al., 2019; Kapferer, 2012). Thus, it reflects upon how the customer is confronted with the brand and the location of the brand in the customers mind (Fill, 2002; Upshaw, 1995). Fill (2002) highlights the key objectives of brand positioning as (1) the maintenance of a brand's primacy and (2) the outperformance of competing brands. To facilitate successful brand positioning it is crucial to evaluate which brand attributes, features or benefits are decisive for customers as those should be in the focus of any brand-related activity (Aaker, 1996; Pike & Mason, 2011). Thus, brand positioning is concerned with an intense competition for the customer's attention and an organisation's communication of meaningful brand messages in comparison to its competitors. Once a brand is successfully positioned in the competitive set, it is in the customers' own discretion to evaluate all brands they are confronted with. This leads to the third component of branding: brand image.

Brand image outlines "how customers and others perceive the brand" (Aaker, 1996, p.69). Brand image is based on the customer's individual emotions and attitudes towards, associations with, and perceptions about specific brands (Dobni & Zinkhan, 1990; Keller, 1993; Plumeyer et al., 2017). These perceptions and attitudes result in

the ‘actual’ image of a brand based on the customers past experiences with that brand (Pike, 2007b). In addition, a positive relationship between brand and customer influences the brand image in a positive way (Plumeyer et al., 2017). Nevertheless, one might add that not only positive associations, but also negative associations can potentially have an influence on a customer’s attitude towards a brand. According to Keller (1993) the customer holds an individual memory network of all associations and perceptions concerning specific brands. In contrast to brand identity, brand image resides on the customer’s side and, thus, the receiver’s side of brand communication efforts. Based on these deliberations, a potential gap between brand image and brand identity becomes apparent. Not all aspects of an organisation’s brand identity might be transmitted to the customer-focussed brand image, for example due to mistakes in brand positioning.

2.3.3 Consequences of branding

Based on the prior definitions of brands and brand components it remains to be evaluated why organisations invest manpower, time, and money in branding activities. As previously pointed out, it is crucial to acknowledge branding not only as the link between a product and its producer but moreover around establishing and maintaining a relationship between the company and the customer (De Chernatony et al., 2012; Plumeyer et al., 2019). Kapferer (2012) states that such relationships rest not only on the functional benefits of a product but even more on an emotional connection between the customer and the brand based on positive mental associations, such as trust, respect, or passion. This involvement of intangible values has already been addressed in the prior brand definition. Such intangible associations equip a brand with a pull power tying customers to itself (Kapferer, 2012). This is further supported by the fact that differentiation based on products and their features becomes increasingly difficult as product copies and patent disputes become a growing concern for organisations in many industries.

Within the academic literature on branding, there seems to be general agreement that brands can only create competitive advantage if they are able to reduce the perceived risk of a purchase by conveying trust, emotion, and certitude (Chiang & Jang, 2007; De Chernatony et al., 2010; Kapferer, 2012; Keller, 2013). Customers watch out for signs constituting credible values, such as reliability, trustworthiness, and security,

based on their individual preferences. A positive brand image incorporates these values and has a significant and positive influence on brand trust and perceived quality (Chiang & Jang, 2007). If organisations miss the chance to build and nourish strong and relevant brands, potential customers in choice situations can only rely on tangible factors such as price and availability (Aaker, 1991; De Chernatony et al., 2010; Keller, 2013). In contrast, if a brand addresses and meets the customer's demands, it is likely to be preferred over competing brands that the customer has only a vague idea of. Thus, if a brand successfully differentiates its product(s) from competing substitutes, the customer's decision-making process can be positively influenced and a key competitive advantage emerges (De Chernatony et al., 2010). Increasing the customer's likelihood to purchase a specific product or service is widely considered as one key goal of branding (Fischer et al., 2010).

In order to influence customer choices, branding comprises the generation of added values in terms of intangible features and/or additional attributes that elevate products further within the customers' evaluation process and tempt them to make a purchase. As each customer is equipped with individual and subjective perceptions of what a brand shall represent, these individual demands are difficult to assess (De Chernatony et al., 2010). If a brand accomplishes to appear trustworthy and credible, it further acts as a search cost reducer for the customer by speeding up the search and decision-making process, for example based on positive previous experiences with the brand or recommendations by people the customer trusts (Keller, 2013; Pike, 2007b). Consequently, brands and the customer's perception of those brands affect the customer's behavioural intentions (Fitzsimons et al., 2008; Wang & Hsu 2010). Therefore, organisations engage in branding activities to influence the customer's tendency towards their products and offerings by adding a crucial competitive advantage, namely the brand.

2.3.4 Brand equity

The competitive advantage that potentially accrues from a brand, is often referred to as the value inhabiting a brand or in other terms: brand equity. The literature on brand equity has its roots in the early 1990s when researchers turned their attention to the assessment of a brand's underlying value (Aaker, 1991; Biel, 1992; Farquhar, 1989;

Keller, 1993; Tauber, 1988). An overview of early brand equity definitions is displayed in Table 3.

Table 3: Early definitions of brand equity

Author(s)	Definiton
Tauber (1988, p.26)	The equity of a brand, however, means something much more than consumer perceptions. In financial terms the value of a brand might be the capitalized value of its expected earnings.
Farquhar (1989, p.7)	We define brand equity as the "added value" with which a given brand endows a product.
Aaker (1991, p.15)	Brand equity is a set of brand assets and liabilities linked to a brand [...] that add to or subtract from the value provided by a product or service to a firm and/or to that firms' customers.
Biel (1992, p.7)	Brand equity deals with the value, usually defined in economic terms, of a brand beyond the physical assets associated with its manufacture or provision.
Keller (1993, p.1)	Brand equity is defined in terms of the marketing effects uniquely attributable to the brand.
Leuthesser et al. (1995, p.57)	Brand equity represents the degree to which a brand's name alone contributes value to the offering [...] from the perspective of the consumer.

Note: Own elaboration. In chronological order.

It is generally accepted wisdom that brand equity is the attributable or added value to a product or service that would cease if it was not branded at all (Aaker, 1991; Biel, 1992; Christodoulides & De Chernatony, 2010; Farquhar, 1989; Keller, 1993; Leuthesser et al., 1995; Tauber, 1988). Despite this area of agreement, differences occur concerning the perspective on that value. Numerous scholars consider brand equity to be defined in economic, and thus, financial terms directly benefiting the organisation or firm owning the brand (Ambler, 2003; Biel, 1992; Simon & Sullivan, 1993; Tauber, 1988). An opposing point of view considers brand equity to be established on the customer's side resulting in customer preference and an increase of purchase intention (Aaker, 1991; Cobb-Walgren et al., 1995; Keller, 1993; Leuthesser et al., 1995; Pappu et al., 2005; Vázquez et al., 2002; Yoo & Donthu, 2001). Current approaches support the idea of considering brand equity as an intangible added value to the tangible attributes of a product or service, thus, the perceived difference between the branded product or service and the same product or service being unbranded or branded with a fictional brand from the customer's perspective (De Chernatony et al., 2010; Kapferer, 2012; Keller, 2013).

Only Aaker's (1991) definition incorporates both the firm's and the customer's perspective (see Table 3). Thus, brand equity functions as competitive advantage as it provides value to (1) the customer by enhancing consumer preference and perceptions, purchase intention, and satisfaction as well as to (2) the firm by enhancing brand loyalty, price insensitivity, market share, and efficiency of marketing programmes (Aaker, 1991; Agarwal & Rao, 1996; Cobb-Walgren et al., 1995; Dodds et al., 1991; Erdem et al., 2002). Based on the variety of options towards a definition of brand equity, it is not surprising that Winters (1991, p.70) summarises the situation followingly: "If you ask ten people to define brand equity, you are likely to get ten (maybe eleven) different answers as to what it means."

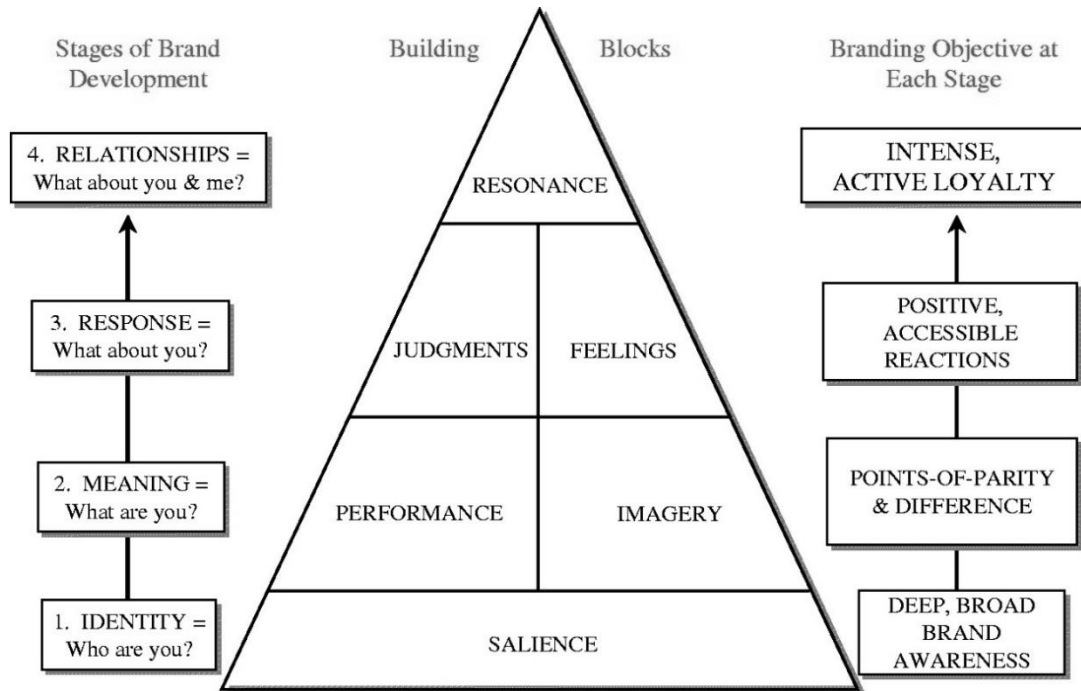
Current research underlines the fact that up to today there is still no existing definition for brand equity commonly accepted throughout the research community (Christodoulides & De Chernatony, 2010). Resultingly, the previously mentioned points of view are still existent: The first is focusing on customer-based metrics and the bond between customers and the respective brand, whereas the other is considering financial measurements of a brand (Kapferer, 2012; Keller, 1993). Based on these two perspectives, the concepts of customer-based brand equity (CBBE) and firm-based brand equity (FBBE) evolved, which the following two sections cover in detail (Christodoulides et al., 2014; Christodoulides & De Chernatony, 2010).

2.3.4.1 Customer-based brand equity

As outlined in the prior section, CBBE considers the value of a brand from the customer's perspective and can be regarded as "the differential effect of brand knowledge on consumer response on the marketing of the brand" (Keller, 1993, p.2). The customer's individual perceptions or knowledge about and attitude towards a brand contribute to its overall brand value, namely CBBE (Christodoulides & De Chernatony, 2010). Several scholars make the claim that CBBE reflects the respective utility a customer associates with a certain brand and its use or consumption (Christodoulides & De Chernatony, 2010; Vázquez et al., 2002). To comprehend and review the concept of CBBE and the field of research around it, it serves well to regard its initial models. Only a small number of scholars set out to suggest a conceptual model towards CBBE (Aaker, 1991; Chatzipanagiotou et al., 2016; Keller, 1993, 2001, 2009).

Keller's (2001, 2009) brand resonance model, displayed in Figure 4, is a key foundation of CBBE-related research (Christodoulides & De Chernatony, 2010). Therein, the creation of a strong and positive CBBE is considered as a set of ascending stages or "brand-building blocks": salience, performance, imagery, judgements, feelings, and resonance (Keller, 2001, 2009). Keller's (2001, 2009) model presumes that the prerequisite of building CBBE is that the customer is aware of the brand, knows it, and can allocate it to certain needs it potentially satisfies (*salience*).

Figure 4: Customer-based brand equity model pyramid



Note: From Keller (2009), p.144.

If a customer knows a brand, he sets out to find out more about the brand's points-of-parity or points-of-difference and looks for indicators of the brand's *performance*, such as features and service effectiveness, and overall brand *imagery*, such as heritage and brand personality (Keller, 2001, 2009). According to Keller (2001, 2009), these brand-related "facts" created on the supply side result in the customer's *judgements*, for example regarding quality and credibility, and *feelings*, such as security and fun, about the brand, thus, the customer's response to it. The final step towards a strong CBBE is consumer-brand *resonance* indicating the relationship between the customer and a brand, which includes levels of brand loyalty and active brand engagement (Keller, 2001, 2009).

In contrast, Aaker's (1991) conceptual CBBE model is more compact than the previously described model. According to Aaker, CBBE comprises five equally weighted dimensions, namely brand loyalty, brand awareness, perceived quality, brand associations and other proprietary brand assets.

Brand awareness refers to “the ability of a potential buyer to recognize or recall that a brand is a member of a certain product category” (Aaker, 1991, p.61) and can be considered as the successful anchoring of the brand in the customer's mind (Pappu et al., 2005). The level of brand awareness directly affects consumers' purchase intentions along with their evaluation of choice options (Aaker, 1992; Keller, 1993). Brand awareness ranges from unawareness to brand recognition to brand recall and, lastly, top of mind (Aaker, 1991; Keller, 1993; Pappu et al., 2005). Brand recognition is given if customers realise that they have previously been confronted with the brand when brand name or symbol are exposed to them, whereas brand recall occurs if customers are able to recall the brand (name) from their memory when given the respective product category (Keller, 1993). This point is further stressed by Cobb-Walgren et al. (1995) stating that advertising equals brand knowledge, brand knowledge equals liking, and is therefore pushing brand equity. This assumption reflects Keller's (2001) interpretation of brand salience (respectively: awareness) as the foundation of the CBBE model pyramid (cf. Figure 4), as customers confronted with a brand they do not know and which they cannot associate with a certain industry or product category do not consider it worth investing time and money.

Brand associations are “anything ‘linked’ in memory to a brand” and need to be differentiated from brand image, which is rather an individual set of brand associations (Aaker, 1991, p.109). Memory in relation to brand associations can be described as a network of connections within the customer's mind based rather on direct (e.g., prior purchase of the same brand) and indirect (e.g., word-of-mouth, advertising) experiences with the brand than on specific product attributes (Keller, 1993; Krishnan, 1996). Brand associations occur in the form of attributes, benefits, or attitudes (Plumeyer et al., 2019). In response to a brand name or symbol, the customer's respective associations get activated and create the customer's overall image of that brand (Aaker, 1991; Krishnan, 1996). Resultingly, each customer builds individual associations with a brand, which can diverge heavily from other customer's

associations with the same brand (Krishnan, 1996). Krishnan (1996) highlights that even the positive or negative manifestation of brand association changes between individuals, meaning that attributes considered in a very positive way by one customer might lead to negative associations for other customers. If positive associations prevail, positive feelings are created, enabling the customer to process information more easily, differentiate between “good” and “bad” brand options and reduce the level of perceived risk (Aaker, 1992). Low and Lamb (2000) found evidence that there is no generic model of brand associations applicable to every product and service but recommend paying attention to the category-based particularities. It is generally accepted wisdom that brand associations attributed to the same brand shall demonstrate a high level of congruence and, thus, portray a cohesive brand image to prevent customer confusion and insecurity (Keller, 1993).

Perceived quality is “the consumer’s judgment about a product’s overall excellence or superiority” (Zeithaml, 1988, p.3) and arises out of the customer’s individual perception and evaluation of the quality of a branded product or service along with its potential to fulfil its purpose in comparison to alternative options (Aaker, 1991). Perceived quality aims at providing a reason to buy for the customer and enhancing the potential of brand differentiation from competitors (Pappu et al., 2005). Yoo and Donthu (2001) highlight the fact that perceived quality solely relies on subjective customer perceptions of a brand and its superiority (or inferiority). Resultingly, the dimension is rather an overall perception based on the individual customer’s personality, needs, and preferences than attributed to factual quality attributes (Aaker, 1991).

Brand loyalty is “a measure of the attachment that a customer has to a brand” (Aaker, 1991, p.39). Therefore, brand loyalty is indicated by repeat buying patterns and a customer’s preference to purchase products and services of one focal brand instead of switching to other brands (Aaker, 1992; Yoo & Donthu, 2001). Pappu et al. (2005) point out that brand loyalty is traceable based on past and future purchase choices as well as the customer’s actual intention to be loyal to a brand. Thus, they are differentiating between a behavioural and an attitudinal approach. Since it is much more expensive for companies to attract new customers instead of keeping existing ones, an economically justified importance is added to pursuing a high level of brand

loyalty as it results in a reduction of marketing expenses (Aaker, 1992). Christodoulides et al. (2014) highlight the fact that some researchers raise the question if brand loyalty is rather an outcome than truly a dimension of brand equity.

Lastly, *other proprietary brand assets* include patents, trademarks, and channel relationships (Aaker, 1991). Aaker (1992, p.28) included this fifth dimension explicitly stating that it “is included for completeness and is usually of lesser importance”. The idea behind this dimension is summarising all assets directly tied to the brand that do not meet the definitions of the other four categories. The criterion for assets to enter this category lies in their nature to “inhibit or prevent competitors from eroding customer form and loyalty” (Aaker, 1991, p.21).

Based on the demonstrated dimensions of brand equity it remains to be added that the dimensions are characterised by a variety of interrelationships among each other as they have direct influence on one another (Aaker, 1991; Keller, 2001). The review of the literature on CBBE shows that the initial models of Aaker (1991) and Keller (1993, 2001) are still considered as the underlying guiding principles of CBBE (Agarwal & Rao, 1996; Christodoulides & De Chernatony, 2010; Lassar et al., 1995; Yásquez, 2002). This notion is supported by other researchers relying on a complete or an incomplete set of the same dimensions (Blackston, 1992; Sharp, 1995). Other CBBE concepts set out to include additional dimensions such as brand meaning, brand benefit clarity and uniqueness, brand sympathy and brand trust (Berry, 2000; Burmann et al., 2009). Summarising, Aaker’s (1991) and Keller’s (2001) approaches underline the high reliance on the customer’s individual perceptions of and attitudes towards a brand and give key suggestions concerning the general nature of CBBE research. All of Aaker’s (1991) CBBE dimensions reappear in Keller’s (2001, 2009) CBBE model verifying numerous overlaps between both approaches. Despite this general agreement, Keller suggests considering an organisation’s internal branding measures (performance, imagery) as a contributing brand-building characteristic towards CBBE, whereas Aaker’s (1991) model seems to indicate that CBBE rather results from dimensions on the customer’s side. Thus, there is less consensus over whether the internal perspective of an organisation’s branding activities is part of CBBE.

2.3.4.2 *Firm-based brand equity*

In contrast to CBBE, FBBE aims at obtaining a financial measurement for the value of a brand as future profits and cashflows origin in high levels of brand equity (Ambler, 2003; Farquhar, 1989; Kapferer, 2012; Keller, 1993; Simon & Sullivan, 1993). FBBE arises from an accounting perspective and sets out to put a concrete number to the brand considering it as an organisation's separate and intangible asset (Feldwick, 1996). The resulting financial worth is intended to appear on a company's balance sheet or to be considered in the context of mergers and acquisitions (McWilliam & De Chernatony, 1991; Oldroyd, 1998). In contrast to accounting's tangible and fact and figure-based nature, the process of financially valuing intangible assets (such as brands) is highly challenging and seldomly objective as it requires many oversimplified – and at times subjective - assumptions, exceptions, and estimates to be made (De Chernatony et al., 2010; Kapferer, 2012; Keller, 2013; Mizik & Jacobson, 2009). An exemplary assumption is that the organisation knows which financial profits they would make if their products were not branded at all, leading to the conclusion that the difference between non-branded profits and branded profits is the financial contribution of the brand and, thus, FBBE (Kapferer, 2012; Keller, 2013; Simon & Sullivan, 1993). It is highly controversial if an objective estimation of fictional non-branded profits is possible and meaningful in practice or rather an unrealistic guess (Keller, 2013). Another qualifying characteristic of financial equity in general is that it cannot be negative, as negative equity is non-existent from an accounting perspective (Kapferer, 2012). Contrarily, and as previously discussed on branding and CBBE, it is yet possible for a brand to cause negative customer associations or even customer aversion. This is something of a paradox, because negative associations or customer aversion subsequently would need to be portrayed as a negative figure on the balance sheet of an organisation instead of a rather neutral value of 'zero'.

As indicated by the prior example on brand associations, it is generally agreed that FBBE is heavily dependent from the customer's perspective on the brand, and thus, is an outcome of CBBE rather than an opposing approach to brand equity (Christodoulides & De Chernatony, 2010; Kapferer, 2012). McWilliam & De Chernatony (1991, p.23) share this perspective by stating that "it is the consumers who decide upon the value of the brand". In other words, if customers do not value a brand,

they ignore its respective offerings and the organisation owning the brand fails in the market and earns no money (Christodoulides & De Chernatony, 2010; McWilliam & De Chernatony, 1991). Resultingly, if CBBE is considered as one essential step towards FBBE and required to evaluate the financial worth of a brand, FBBE cannot be measured or defined without detailed knowledge and measures of CBBE. Further, a positive relationship between CBBE and FBBE yet remains to be scientifically confirmed (Tasci, 2019). FBBE is exposed to further criticism in its suitability to the multidimensional concept of brand equity as “no single number or measure fully captures brand equity” (Keller, 2013, p.380). Keller (2013) highlights that CBBE, and its multiple underlying dimensions is appropriate to capture various and diverse sources and effects of brand equity. In contrast, FBBE seems to be lacking crucial perspectives and theoretical models to entirely evaluate brand equity. Another default lies in the nature of financial equity as an instant ‘snapshot’ of brand value with no reference to the long-term and strategic approach towards branding in general (Aaker, 1996; McWilliam & De Chernatony, 1991). In contrast, brand management is known to be a strategic task to meet long-term objectives, such as loyalty-based relationships with customers, and to leverage profitability (Feldwick, 1996).

Based on these deliberations, CBBE outperforms FBBE in its ability to grasp the multidimensional and long-term oriented construct of brand equity. Another argument to followingly focus on CBBE lies in its nature as a prerequisite of FBBE. A widely accepted practice is to give particular consideration to the consumer perspective, especially within service branding (Agarwal & Rao, 1996; O’Cass & Grace, 2003). As studies on service and tourism branding are still rather underrepresented in contrast to product-related branding research, it is vital to lie the foundation for future research based on the underlying principles of brand equity, namely, the customer-perspective. Christodoulides and De Chernatony (2010) highlight the fact that the concept of CBBE, its underlying dimensions, and their respective usefulness is heterogeneous across industries. Thus, it remains to be reviewed how current tourism-related branding and CBBE research builds upon existing models to measure brand equity.

2.4 Tourism branding

A vast amount of research has been conducted in the field of branding in general along with product-related branding, whereas the branding of services, and specifically tourism, has only lately gained recognition as an individual academic field (Berry & Parasuraman, 1993; Dinnie, 2004; Hankinson, 2004; O'Cass & Grace, 2003). In order to create competitive advantage in the service industry, a strong brand is indispensable, due to the characteristics (e.g., intangibility) previously demonstrated. The lack of tangible attributes describing the service offer makes it impossible for the customer to fully grasp the service and evaluate it before the actual consumption (De Chernatony et al., 2010). Therefore, and due to the heterogenous nature of services, a high level of uncertainty is involved resulting in an increased perceived risk for the customer (O'Cass & Grace, 2003). As outlined before, a strong and relatable brand is key for companies trying to minimize the perceived risk. If a brand can excel at establishing associations such as trustworthiness and reliability within customers' perceptions it eases their discomfort concerning a potential service purchase (O'Cass & Grace, 2003). Thus, brand names, symbols, and slogans foster the attempt to minimise the abstractness of services and create well-defined reference points (De Chernatony et al., 2010; Keller, 2013). A profound understanding of services and their unique characteristics helps to comprehend why Keller (2013) describes branding as "a competitive weapon for services" (p.42).

Nevertheless, it is not sufficient for the service brand to convey a certain cluster of attributes only before the purchase decision is made. The customer needs to experience the pre-set attributes during the service delivery across contact points and employees in order to maintain clear and consistent perceptions of the brand (Kapferer, 2012). As previously outlined, brands are a guiding light for the potential customer and organisations aim at creating a bond between their tourism brand and the customer (respectively: traveller). It is crucial for brands to appear trustworthy for the customer to rely on their satisfying service provision according to their individual needs and expectations and to dismantle the perceived service-related uncertainty (Sannassee & Seetanah, 2015). To investigate the nature of branding across different tourism sectors the following sections evaluate the current state of research within the field of tourism branding. As the field is characterised by a preponderance of research in the destination

sector, this sector is presented individually and followed by a synthesised overview of other tourism sectors.

2.4.1 Destination branding

In general, researchers and practitioners agree that destination branding shares the key characteristics and objectives of general branding and can be defined as a

“set of marketing activities that (1) support the creation of a name, symbol, logo, word mark or other graphic that readily identifies and differentiates a destination; that (2) consistently convey the expectation of a memorable travel experience that is uniquely associated with the destination; that (3) serve to consolidate and reinforce the emotional connection between the visitor and the destination; and that (4) reduce consumer search costs and perceived risk. Collectively, these activities serve to create a destination image that positively influences consumer destination choice.” (Blain et al., 2005, p.337)

Therefore, destination branding aims at the creation of a differentiated position and reaching a high level of competitiveness, respectively brand performance (Benedetti et al., 2011; Hafeez et al., 2016; Hankinson, 2012; Pike & Mason, 2011). The number of substitute destinations offering alike, or equal, benefits is of an unlimited scope and, thus, confirms the necessity of successful branding efforts (Fuller et al., 2007; Pike & Mason, 2011).

Research on destination branding has its origins in 1998 and is on the rise ever since, whereas destination image is already vastly discussed in earlier studies (Hu & Ritchie, 1993; Krishnan, 1996; Mayo, 1973). First proponents of destination-related branding research set out to investigate the relation of and difference between branding and destination image (Cai, 2002). Cai (2002) outlined the interrelationship as a recursive model to bridge the gap between existing research on destination image and branding. The model rests upon four basic conditions of (1) existing organic image, (2) existing induced image, (3) destination size and composition, and (4) positioning and target markets (Cai, 2002). Based on these prerequisites, destination branding comprises many components which hold a substantial influence on each other. Exemplary components are brand elements, attributes, and marketing activities on the destination's side and brand associations, affective components, and attitudes on the

customer's side (Cai, 2002). Thus, as previously outlined for branding and brand image, the same subordination exists in the destination context as destination image is a subcategory of destination branding.

Further studies underpin the importance of destination (also: country or place) image and its resulting associations with the destination (brand) and the destination's overall reputation influencing customer evaluation, purchase choice, and intention to visit or recommend a destination (Kotler & Gertner, 2002; Skinner, 2017; Qu et al., 2011). This even applies to travellers who are making a choice for or against a conference participation as the decision is significantly influenced by the associated host destination's image (Skinner, 2017). In addition, destination image and branding are not only relevant to attract tourists but further affect the settlement of businesses and factories alongside talented professionals or expats, as well as the development of sectoral clusters (Hafeez et al., 2016; Kotler & Gertner, 2002). Therefore, consistent and conscious country branding (also: place branding) is of an utmost importance and countries are advised to invest time and funds to carry out vital analyses (e.g., SWOT), to design a target-group based positioning, to develop an overall branding concept and activities, as well as to control brand performance (Kotler & Gertner, 2002; Pike, 2005).

Hankinson (2004) adds to the general understanding of place brands with a further attempt towards a conceptual framework, namely the relational network brand. This model is clearly structured and lean, especially in contrast to Cai's (2002) model mentioned earlier. In this approach, a place brand should not only consider its owned components, such as brand image and identity, but further focus on relationships and the network it operates in (Hankinson, 2004). Resultingly, a behavioural and economic perspective is included. This approach puts the core brand consisting of brand personality, brand positioning, and brand reality in the centre of attention surrounded by four types of dynamic relationships: consumer relationships, primary service relationships, media relationships, and brand infrastructure relationships (Hankinson, 2004). Together, these components (core brand and relationships) form the place brand and are considered as a relational network brand. One benefit of this concept is its high level of practical relevance, as the variety of individual but complementary organisations are one key constituent of the tourism industry. The complexity arising

from the unique multidimensionality of destinations (which are shaped by their actors and stakeholders) compared to physical goods is further affirmed by Dinnie (2018), Fuller et al. (2007), and Pike (2005). Hankinson (2004) points out, that these additional relationships with stakeholders or business partners directly influence the brand reality (and brand experience) and, thus, must be constantly tracked and monitored.

The high relevance of stakeholder relationships and the stakeholders' support is incorporated by later studies on destination management organisations (DMO) highlighting that, especially due to limited financial resources, stakeholder relationships are of a sheer importance in order to ensure the creation and maintenance of a strong destination brand (Almeyda-Ibáñez & George; 2017; Blain et al., 2005; Fuller et al., 2007; Hankinson, 2009, 2012; Pike, 2005). The consideration of stakeholders is further emphasised in combination with the less-researched and multidimensional destination brand orientation (DBO). DBO involves five dimensions, namely, brand culture, departmental coordination, brand communication, stakeholder partnership, and brand reality (Hankinson, 2012). It combines not only internal and external factors to actively manage in relation to a destination brand but rather puts brand-based management in the centre of all destination management activities attributing weight to the brand's important role for all strategic decisions of a destination (Hankinson, 2012). An empirical study among 90 DMOs in the UK demonstrates the positive impact of DBO on destination brand performance (Hankinson, 2012). Nevertheless, it should be mentioned that the actual customers' or travellers' perspective is not recognised because the sample includes solely tourism professionals.

Challenges of destination branding

There are additional and unique challenges arising for destination branding which exceed the previously mentioned challenges of service branding in general (Almeyda-Ibáñez & George, 2017; Pike, 2005). It is an elaborate task, firstly, to obtain the match between brand promise and actual brand experience at the destination and, secondly, to establish cooperative branding strategies or umbrella brands for a set of regionally close and akin destination brands such as cities or towns (Hankinson, 2009). Cooperative branding is the task "to redefine the size of a destination by bringing

together two or more adjoining communities of similar natural and cultural compositions of attractions” (Cai, 2002, p.734). Harish (2010) adds an overview of strategic options to cooperative branding to the body of knowledge, or as the literature calls it: brand architecture as a hierarchical system of related brands. Brand architecture, like branding, has its roots in a physical goods context but is already extended to the practice of destination branding (Dinnie, 2018; Harish, 2010). Thus, the four brand architecture models from Aaker (2004), namely branded house, sub-brands, endorsed brands, and house of brands, differing from each other in their decreasing degree of hierarchy and power-distribution amongst well-connected brands, already exist in destination practice. However, this model is rarely taken into consideration in other tourism sectors (Ludwig, 2011). The literature recommends to consider destination brand architecture as one determinant and moderator of brand performance, as their interrelationship is already known and proven in non-tourism contexts (Hankinson, 2012).

Further challenges associated with destination branding arise from the often-predominant public-private partnership in which DMOs are organised resulting in complex decision-making and a struggle about who truly oversees the destination brand (Pike, 2005). Additional challenges are, firstly, the lack of knowledge within DMO as to what branding comprises, as many DMOs assume that it is only about establishing a logo and a slogan for their destination and, secondly, the absence of continual measurement of brand-related visitor perceptions (Almeyda-Ibáñez & George, 2017; Blain et al., 2005; Warren & Dinnie, 2017). Even though logos and slogans are a crucial part of destination branding, they are seldomly meaningful or focused enough to successfully differentiate one destination from its competitors (Kladou et al., 2017; Pike, 2005; Warren & Dinnie, 2017). The last challenge to be mentioned at this point is the growing necessity to extend destination branding to digital marketing channels, a task that requires tech-savvy DMOs and trainings that are often difficult to obtain funding for due to priorly mentioned financial restrictions (Parlov et al., 2016).

General nature of destination branding research

Gertner's (2011) study analysing 212 articles on destination marketing and destination branding between 1990 and 2010 states that the field is characterised by its descriptive and at times even subjective nature, a high level of fragmentation, and lacks robust theories along empirical research. Many articles focus solely on the supply side of branding and the operational tasks of DMOs with small regards to the customer's perspective. Those studies considering the customer side mostly regard only one specific geographical target market and, thus, lack generalisability (Gertner, 2011). This attitude towards destination branding is highly contradictory, as many articles mention the importance of customer perceptions but do not carry out any attempt to gather empirical insights from customers. Resultingly, if destinations aim at building competitive brands, it is not sufficient to regard what DMOs or brand managers are doing but rather if their actions are "working" and matching the customer's demands and perceptions. The issue of truly measuring a destination's brand competitiveness suffers from a scarcity of attention but is finally addressed by more recent studies (Almeyda-Ibáñez & George, 2017; Benedetti et al., 2011; Pike & Mason, 2011; Skinner, 2017). One recurring approach to measure destination brand performance is an evaluation of destination brand equity, often in the form of CBBE (Almeyda-Ibáñez & George, 2017; Boo et al., 2009; Gartner & Konecnik Ruzzier, 2011; Pike & Mason, 2011; San Martín et al., 2019; Tran et al., 2019). A detailed review of tourism-related CBBE research follows in the last sections of this chapter. Attempts to measure destination brand performance assume a strongly positive brand performance if customer perceptions and brand identity demonstrate high levels of congruence (Pike & Mason, 2011). Such kind of insights enhance a destination's potential to evaluate its past branding effectiveness and to obtain an indicator of future brand performance (Pike & Mason, 2011).

2.4.2 Tourism branding in non-destination sectors

Apart from destinations, other tourism providers hold an interest in branding activities even though research in these areas is less frequently conducted. Resultingly, this section provides a comparably short overview of a range of branding-related topics in other tourism sectors. Kam Fung So et al. (2014) investigate customer engagement in relation to brand evaluation, trust, and loyalty in the hotel and aviation industry.

Customer engagement comprises the components of a customer's identification, enthusiasm, attention, absorption, and interaction with a brand (Kam Fung So et al., 2014). Their study concludes that not only the actual service experience throughout the consumption process influences individual perceptions and evaluations of that brand but also the customer's possibility to truly engage with the brand (Kam Fung So et al., 2014). Another study in the hotel industry observes the perspective of hotel employees on branding and highlights the importance of internal branding, brand-training, and brand understanding of hotel staff members (King & So, 2015). Resultingly, branding is not only a top-down strategy from a hotel's marketing department but rather needs to be accepted and translated in the service provision of frontline staff. As it is those employees the customer truly engages and interacts with, their behaviour is crucial for a consistent brand image (King & So, 2015). Research on hotel branding accommodates an analysis of brand name, logo, and tagline, already discussed in destination branding. A study on brand signature (such as name and logo) investigates the fact that a favourable brand signature results in a favourable brand attitude, brand awareness, brand reputation and brand performance (Foroudi, 2019). Thus, the customer's perceptions about a hotel's brand name and/or logo hold a significant influence on their perceptions about the hotel itself (Foroudi, 2019). Due to this high influence of the brand signature, hotels need to give ample attention to culturally differences between their global target groups as taste and acceptance of certain imagery and design can differ (Foroudi, 2019). While earlier mentioned destination-based studies indicate that logos and slogans are seldomly meaningful or able to differentiate a destination, the hotel-based study indicates an opposing effect (Kladou et al., 2017; Pike, 2005). This circumstance can be considered as an indicator for differences in a customer's attitude and attention towards brands based on the tourism sector observed.

Attractions are another segment of the tourism industry. A study among museum and gallery visitors concludes that brands are of little relevance in this specific sector as visitors evaluate museums based on functional benefits only (Caldwell & Coshall, 2002). Nevertheless, the fact that museum brands and branding techniques are not as well developed as in other tourism sectors creates an opportunity for those museums who try to create a unique brand identity, as this could be even more of a competitive

advantage in a non-branded segment (Caldwell & Coshall, 2002). Again, this shows that branding relevance and impact differs among the various sectors of tourism, as brands are found to be decisive in a destination context as outlined earlier. Even though the customer's attitude towards brands appears to vary between tourism sectors, there seem to be similarities between attraction and destination branding concerning the underlying stakeholder relationships (Jin & Weber, 2013). As priorly discussed for destination branding, relationships between exhibitors, the exhibition organiser and the destination are crucial brand-defining elements with an impact on exhibition brand preference (Jin & Weber, 2013). Thus, the importance of underlying relationships for brand management applies not only to destination brands but also in other tourism sectors, which is no surprise due to tourism's nature based on a variety of interrelated sectors and involved actors.

The literature review on tourism branding so far demonstrates a lack of research combining multiple tourism sectors into one study of tourism branding. A replication of De Chernatony and McWilliams (1989) brands box model, which is initially residing in the context of physical goods fills this gap and applies it to the tourism industry. To understand the customer's perspective on tourism brands in the field of air transport, tour operating, and attractions, a predefined set of brands is evaluated based on the initial model's two dimensions, namely representationality and functionality (Clarke, 2000). The exploratory study concludes that tourism brands, regardless of the underlying segment, are associated with a high level of both representationality and functionality, strongly in contrast to physical good brands which demonstrate a variety of manifestations and combinations of both dimensions (Clarke, 2000). Thus, tourism brands score higher in both dimensions, indicating that customers regard tourism brands as means to tell others something about themselves and their individual personality (representationality) and attribute a high level of performance ability (functionality) to tourism brands (Clarke, 2000). These findings lead to the assumption that even though brand relevance differs between tourism sectors, the general nature of tourism brands across sectors share common traits (high functionality, high representationality) in the customer's mind.

Summarising, the predominant part of tourism-related research in the field of branding is concerned with *destination branding*. The critique of Gertner (2011) is justified as

the variety of studies demonstrates a high level of fragmentation on individual aspects of branding or target markets with less regard to sound scientific models and extensive empirical studies. It is, thus, a rather practical field of research. In contrast to its practical nature, the underlying holistic tourism industry and a broader approach towards tourism branding across tourism sectors is seldomly considered (Clarke, 2000; Elliot et al., 2016). The prior section demonstrates that brand relevance differs between tourism sectors. Thus, it is crucial to understand how and why the customer's holiday booking choices in one tourism sector heavily relies on brands, whereas in other sectors brands play no major role at all. In addition, multiple studies highlight the importance of internal and external relationships. Nevertheless, no research sets out to investigate the relevance of relationships between multiple tourism providers and the effects of these relationships on tourism branding (Elliot et al., 2016). This fact is even more surprising as tourism services, for example a vacation, almost always require collaborations between various service providers. It is worth investigating if existing concepts, such as brand architecture, are transferable to this collaborative network involving multiple individually-branded tourism service providers. Another striking realisation is that the actual measurement of brand competitiveness and performance suffers from a scarcity of attention but is addressed by more recent studies introducing the concept of brand equity to tourism branding research (Almeyda-Ibáñez & George, 2017; Blain et al., 2005; Pike & Mason, 2011; Skinner, 2017). Based on these deliberations and identified research gaps in general tourism branding literature, the following section of this thesis sets out to investigate the field of tourism-related CBBE research.

2.4.3 Review of tourism-related CBBE research

The previous sections introduced the theoretical foundations of tourism, branding, and CBBE research. Given that CBBE is studied across a multitude of contexts and with multiple theoretical and conceptual perspectives, a detailed and specific overview of tourism-related CBBE research is useful for an exploration of the current status of the field (i.e., findings and methods from a multitude of existing studies) alongside the identification of areas requiring more research. Snyder's (2019) overview of existing types of literature reviews in business and management identified three typical approaches: systematic, semi-systematic and integrative literature reviews. **Systematic**

literature reviews aim to synthesise and compare specific evidence within the literature, mostly relying on quantitative articles and meta-analyses (Snyder, 2019). In contrast, the purpose of **semi-systematic (also: narrative) literature reviews** is to generate a broad overview of a specific research area (e.g., current state, themes, development over time) based on both qualitative and quantitative analyses (Snyder, 2019). Lastly, **integrative (also: critical) literature reviews** aim to assess and critique the literature on a specific topic to enable the identification of new theoretical frameworks or perspectives based on mostly qualitative analyses (Snyder, 2019). For this thesis, a semi-systematic literature review was adopted as it is most suitable for topics emerging from the intertwining of different fields (Almela & Calvet, 2021; Vumbunu et al., 2022). Tourism-related CBBE research combines aspects of tourism and its characteristics alongside a theoretical foundation in the field of general branding and CBBE research. Based on this, the chosen semi-systematic review approach allows for an overview of the field and its broader characteristics, a synthesis of the current body of knowledge, and the identification of new research potentials (Snyder, 2019). After the type of literature review is chosen, it is crucial to ensure a transparent research process following a clear and comprehensible research strategy both of which are described in the next paragraphs (Snyder, 2019).

2.4.3.1 Procedure of the semi-systematic literature review

An in-depth analysis of 108 academic papers in the field of tourism-related CBBE between 1995 and 2023 presents the current state of CBBE research across tourism sectors (cf. Appendix A+B). In accordance with prior sections, a particular focus lies on the tourism sector observed and the prevalence of individual CBBE dimensions within each study. The last update of the analysis took place in May 2023 and resulted from a search of the Scopus database based on the search term “CBBE” in combination with one of the following words: tourism, travel, hotel, hospitality, accommodation, transport, destination, tour operator, travel agency, travel agencies, online travel agency, online travel agencies, holiday, vacation, cruise, or airline. Only peer-reviewed journal articles were included in the review.

After the identification of 108 academic papers, each paper was individually analysed concerning the following points (cf. Appendix A): Tourism sector(s), destination, source market, vacation context, method, means of data collection, sample

characteristics (e.g., travellers, tourism professionals), sample size, data analysis, inclusion of items, scale range, citations (Scopus as of July 2023), and additional key themes. Further, the represented CBBE dimensions within each study were of interest resulting in a collection of: CBBE dimensions in use and number of CBBE dimensions in use (cf. Appendix B). A summary of the conducted semi-systematic literature review is presented now and in later sections of this thesis based on where they are most applicable.

2.4.3.2 Summary of tourism-related CBBE research

Table 4 demonstrates that the majority, namely 58, of recent CBBE studies on tourism demonstrate a focus on destination-related CBBE which is often referred to as CBDDE (Boo et al., 2009; Ferns & Walls, 2012; Im, Kim, Elliot, & Han, 2012; Konecnik & Gartner, 2007; Pike, 2010; Tasci, 2018).

Table 4: Semi-systematic literature review | Summary of tourism-related CBBE research across tourism sectors

Tourism Sector / Context	Number of Sources Set to the Respective Sector/ Context	Most-cited Sources
Accommodation	30	Berry (2000), Cobb-Walgren et al. (1995), Nam et al. (2011)
Attractions	9	Lee & Back (2008), Zeugner-Roth et al. (2008), Lee & Back (2010)
Destination	58	Konecnik & Gartner (2007), Boo et al. (2009), Pike (2009)
(Online) Travel Agency	0	-
Tour Operator	0	-
Transport	5	Chen & Chang (2008), Chen & Tseng (2010), Raza et al. (2020)
Package Holiday	0	-

Note: Own elaboration. Based on a review of 108 papers on tourism-related CBBE (for complete overview see Appendices A+B).

Nevertheless, there are attempts to explore CBBE in other sectors such as aviation (Chen & Tseng, 2010), attractions (Han, Nguyen, & Lee, 2015; Kim & Kim, 2004; Liu & Fang, 2018; Liu, Liu, & Lin 2015; Tsai, Cheung, & Lo, 2010), and hospitality (Cobb-Walgren et al., 1995; Kayaman & Arasil, 2007; Prasad & Dev, 2000; Šerić & Gil-Saura, 2012; Xu & Chan, 2010). It is striking, that no research centres around

CBBE of travel agencies or tour operators as well as package holidays, despite their crucial role in tourism practice. Thus, tourism-related CBBE research is characterised by a preponderance of research in the destination segment, which is consistent with its priorly observed prevalence in tourism branding research in general.

Apart from that, studies seldomly take more than one tourism sector into consideration (Elliot et al., 2016). Research observing multiple sectors sets out to include hotels along with restaurants (Kim & Kim, 2005; Nam et al., 2011; Tasci & Denizci Guillet, 2011, 2016), destinations and attractions (Tasci et al., 2016), attractions and transport (Zeugner-Roth et al., 2008), hotels and transport (Berry, 2000), or attractions and restaurants (Denizci Guillet & Tasci, 2010a). Despite their consideration of different tourism providers, most fail to consider the interrelations, alliances, and/or cooperation between these players and instead merely compare two service providers' CBBE levels. Only Denizci Guillet and Tasci (2010a,b) examine the role of CBBE in a co-branding situation and observe that customer attitude towards one brand directly affects their attitude towards the respective co-brand. Resultingly, co-branding is not always a win-win strategy to leverage CBBE but can lead to its erosion, especially if both brands demonstrate a gap between positive attitudes towards one and negative attitudes towards the other brand (Denizci Guillet & Tasci, 2010a; Tasci & Denizci Guillet, 2016). These findings contradict product-related CBBE considerations in the context of brand alliances, as multiple studies declare brand alliances as a successful tool to increase CBBE levels of all partnering brands without identifying the risk of CBBE erosion by a wrong choice of alliance or co-branding partners (Washburn et al., 2004).

With regard to the underlying CBBE dimensions, a grouping of individual dimensions into one umbrella category ensures consistency with the initial source and eliminates wrong allocations based on varying definitions for the same phenomenon between analysed papers (Dedeoğlu et al., 2019). Most commonly, tourism-related CBBE research relies on the dimensions of brand loyalty, brand image/associations, brand awareness/salience, perceived/brand quality, and brand value (descending order, see Table 5). A considerable amount of research has focused on a combination of four dimensions and is, thus, paying tribute to the fact that CBBE comprises multiple dimensions. The predominant four-dimension-approach commonly includes the

following manifestations: brand awareness, brand image, brand loyalty, and perceived quality (Chi et al., 2020; Kladou et al., 2015; Konecnik & Gartner, 2007; Liu & Fang, 2018; Martínez & Nishiyama, 2019; San Martín et al., 2019). Other scopes of between two (Denizci Guillet & Tasci, 2010b; Prasad & Dev, 2000; Xu & Chan, 2010) and ten (Lee & Back, 2008, 2010) dimensions are less represented.

Table 5: Semi-systematic literature review | Summary of tourism-related CBBE research and its employed CBBE dimensions

Topic of Interest Regarding CBBE Dimensions	Manifestation	Number of Sources Employing the Respective Manifestation	Most-cited Sources
Number of CBBE dimensions	3	13	Cobb-Walgren et al. (1995), Šerić et al. (2014), Huang & Cai (2015)
	4	39	Horng et al. (2012), Kim & Kim (2005), Konecnik & Gartner (2007)
	5	22	Bianchi et al. (2014), Boo et al. (2009), Han et al. (2015)
	6	13	Hsu et al. (2011), Kim et al. (2009b), Tasci (2018)
Measured CBBE dimensions	Brand loyalty	76	Boo et al. (2009), Kim & Kim (2005), Konecnik & Gartner (2007)
	Brand awareness	68	Berry (2000), Cobb-Walgren et al. (1995), Konecnik & Gartner (2007)
	Brand image	64	Boo et al. (2009), Kim & Kim (2005), Konecnik & Gartner (2007)
	Perceived quality	51	Cobb-Walgren et al. (1995), Konecnik & Gartner (2007), Kim & Kim (2005)
	Brand value	21	Bianchi et al. (2014), Boo et al. (2009), Lee & Back (2008)
	Brand associations	21	Cobb-Walgren et al. (1995), Im et al. (2012), Lu et al. (2015)
	Brand quality	18	Boo et al. (2009), Bianchi et al. (2014), Kladou & Kehagias (2014)
	Brand salience	10	Bianchi et al. (2014), Pike (2009), Pike et al. (2010)

Note: Own elaboration. Based on a review of 108 papers on tourism-related CBBE (for complete overview see Appendices A+B). Manifestation specifies how the topic of interest (column 1) is represented within the reviewed literature. Manifestations with less than ten appearances not included.

Apart from the identified key dimensions, individual studies set out to establish additional dimensions. Some of these additional dimensions receive considerable attention, such as brand value (Bianchi et al., 2014; Boo et al., 2009; Frías Jamilena et al., 2017; Kotsi et al., 2018), brand trust (Dedeoğlu et al., 2019; Denizci Guillet & Tasci, 2010a; Evangelista & Dioko, 2011; Lee & Back, 2008, 2010), and brand performance (Duman et al., 2018; Evangelista & Dioko, 2011; Prasad & Dev, 2000; Wong, 2018; Wong & Teoh, 2015). In contrast, other additional dimensions are solely suggested by individual proponents, such as consumer value (Tasci, 2016a, 2016b, 2018, 2019; Tasci & Denizci Guillet, 2011, 2016; Tasci et al., 2016), brand reliability (Hsu et al., 2011; Oh & Hsu, 2014), or self-congruence (Han et al., 2015; Lee & Back, 2008, 2010). As the creation of additional dimensions is rather case-based and their application rare, they lack generalisability. It can, thus, be concluded that four of Aaker's (1991) original dimensions, namely brand loyalty, brand awareness, perceived quality, and brand associations, shape the current state of tourism-related CBBE research. In contrast, the fifth dimension of other proprietary brand assets is not represented within the literature.

CBBE research in tourism evolves around interrelationships and dependencies between its dimensions and testifies strong and positive effects between them (Chekalina et al., 2018; Herrero et al., 2017; Im et al., 2012; Konecnik & Gartner, 2007; Lee & Back, 2008; Lu et al., 2015; Manthiou et al., 2014; Pike et al., 2010; Šerić, Gil-Saura, & Mollá-Descals, 2016; Tasci, 2018). Resultingly, proponents of the field conceptualise and test a multitude of different and rivalling underlying models. Other areas of disagreement are brand loyalty's nature as a dimension of or, on the contrary, an outcome of CBBE (Nam et al., 2011) and the (non-)association of CBBE with the firm's financial performance (Kim et al., 2003; Kim & Kim, 2004, 2005; Tasci, 2009). Both topics are also prominent in general CBBE research (Christodoulides et al., 2014). Resultingly, the discipline still lacks general and operationalizable models, measures, and definitions as most studies follow their own, stand-alone empirical approaches (Frías Jamilena et al., 2016; Kladou et al., 2017).

Despite those outlined disagreements, there are areas of agreement on CBBE antecedents and outcomes. Research on tourism-related CBBE suggests a multitude of drivers (or: antecedents) of CBBE such as marketing communication efforts and

technology (Kasim & Alfandi, 2014; Šerić & Gil-Saura, 2012; Šerić et al., 2016), sustainability and CSR (Gartner, 2014; Martínez & Nishiyama, 2019; Namkung & Jang, 2013), involvement (Kim et al., 2009b; Shafaei & Mohamed, 2015), value-creation (Cano Guervos et al., 2020; Frías Jamilena et al., 2017), customer experience (Van-Dúnem et al., 2023), and authenticity (Lu et al., 2015). Furthermore, empirical evidence appears to confirm the notion that a high level of CBBE results in a significant increase of booking and/ or (re)visit intention (Chi et al., 2020; Ferns & Walls, 2012; Horng et al., 2012; Kim et al., 2008; Lin et al., 2015; Liu et al., 2017, Pike & Bianchi, 2016), customer preference (Cobb-Walgren et al., 1995), overall utility (Ferns & Walls, 2012), brand reputation (Han et al., 2015), firm performance (Kim & Kim, 2004, 2005), brand trust (Han et al., 2015), and satisfaction (Kim et al., 2009b; Liu & Fang, 2018; Nam et al., 2011). Individual observations claim that CBBE effects are moderated by the customer's travel motivation, respectively their reason for travelling, such as novelty-seeking, escaping everyday life, socialization, or boasting (Huang & Cai, 2015). It is generally agreed that CBBE directly influences the tourist's perception and evaluation of tourism offers. Resultingly, decisions for or against bookings with certain tourism providers seem to partly rely on their associated CBBE.

Summarising, the predominant part of tourism-related CBBE research is characterised by its strongly established focus on destinations. Even though individual studies are set to alternative tourism sectors, they fail to take more than one provider into consideration and, thus, fail to represent common bundling practice of tourism services and providers. These manifestations are in line with overall research in the field of tourism branding. Despite this gap between theory and practice, there are common streams of CBBE research from a theoretical point of view. Researchers seem to mainly agree on Aaker's (1991) four original dimensions (brand awareness, brand associations, perceived quality, and brand loyalty) and CBBE's ability to effectively influence the customer's holiday booking choices as well as their booking intention.

2.5 Conceptual model of brand performance within package holidays

As previously outlined, package holidays lack a uniform scientific definition. Nevertheless, it is generally agreed that package holidays comprise multiple tourism

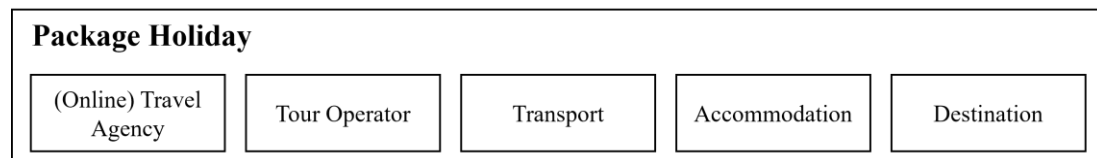
services which are part of a vacation offer at an inclusive price (Anderson et al., 2009; Dudek et al., 2019; Yoo et al., 2018). Whereas some studies approach the phenomenon by setting a minimum number of two combined tourism services (Dudek et al., 2019; Kim, 2008; Rewtrakunphaiboon & Oppewal, 2008), it is worthwhile to consider common practice in the tourism industry. Therefore, the whole package including all attributes the customer obtains for the bundle price are examined (Anderson et al., 2009). This inclusive approach is underpinned by the important role attributed to service providers involved in the configuration, consultation, and sale of package holidays, such as tour operators and intermediating (online) travel agencies (Sánchez et al., 2006). The underlying concepts follow both considerations of SDN and MAUT as the package holiday is (1) based on a network of multiple service providers contributing to one customer-oriented service experience (Lusch & Vargo, 2006; Tax et al., 2013), but (2) also considered as one of multiple options to choose from “on the basis of two or more criteria or attributes” from the customer’s perspective (Dyer et al., 1992, p.647) including relevant degrees of risk or uncertainty (Wallenius et al., 2008).

Thus, the package holiday considered in the framework underpinning this study is not limited to tourism providers in use during the vacation, such as transport and accommodation, but explicitly includes pre- and post-trip services enabling the actual trip, such as tour operators and (online) travel agencies. Lastly and to ensure an all-encompassing approach towards tourism sectors and package attributes, this perspective requires the construct of package holiday to be further expanded and to include the destination as a relevant attribute of the collaborating network as well.

One exemption was made within this all-encompassing approach: The decision not to include attractions as attributes of a package holiday. Even though the semi-systematic literature review pointed out that attractions are a tourism sector in the focus of individual studies, various points can be made to justify their exclusion. First, one might argue that while attractions undoubtedly play a crucial role in shaping the overall holiday experience, they are rather secondary to the fundamental elements of a package, such as transport, accommodation, destination, travel agency, and tour operator. In addition, travellers tend to visit a variety of attractions within one single holiday. Resultingly, multiple attractions and their respective brands (e.g. museum,

leisure park, musical theatre) would have been needed to represent a realistic holiday situation. However, this would have derived from the “one brand for each tourism sector”-logic of the other bundle attributes. By narrowing the scope to these essential components, the study can maintain clarity and consistency in its analysis, enabling a more focused examination of the key determinants of package holiday offerings and consumer choices. Additionally, the exclusion of attractions allows for greater generalisability of findings across diverse destinations and travel contexts, as the appeal and availability of specific attractions may vary considerably across different regions and demographics. Therefore, by prioritising the core attributes of a package holiday, the study can provide valuable insights into the factors that are most likely to influence customer choices regarding package holidays. The resulting attributes of package holidays are illustrated in Figure 5.

Figure 5: Conceptual model | Attributes of a package holiday



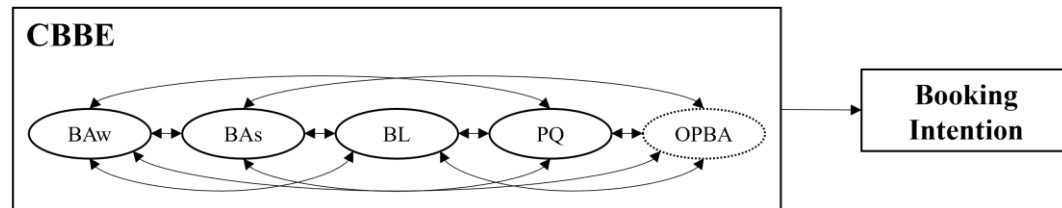
Note: Own illustration.

When confronted with a variety of vacation options in the form of package holidays it is within the customers’ own discretion to choose and book their preferred offer. Research in the field of package holidays preferably revolves around bundle pricing strategies (Alegre & Sard, 2015; Chen et al, 2013; Picazo & Moreno-Gil, 2018; Tanford et al., 2012), influencing factors of pro-package decisions (Anderson et al., 2009; Wong & Kwong, 2004), and the differences between online and offline distribution (Chiam et al., 2009; Dudek et al., 2019; Madlberger, 2016; Tanford et al., 2012). Whereas the outlined research areas have received a vast amount of attention in the context of package holidays, the influence of underlying package attributes and the respective service providers’ brands lack such detailed examination. However, empirical evidence supports the general claim that tourism brands play a major role in the customer’s decision-making process and that high levels of CBBE result in significantly increased levels of booking intention (Chi et al., 2020; Ferns & Walls, 2012; Horng et al., 2012; Lin et al., 2015; Liu et al., 2017, Pike & Bianchi, 2016). To date, no study has looked specifically at the role of brands and CBBE within package

holidays. Therefore, this thesis' conceptual framework aims to occupy this underrepresented area by applying the concept of CBBE to the context of package holidays.

The underlying CBBE construct follows the current stream of tourism-related CBBE research by adopting Aaker's (1991) original dimensions of brand awareness, brand associations, perceived quality, and brand loyalty (e.g., Chi et al., 2020; Kladou et al., 2015; Liu & Fang, 2018; Martínez & Nishiyama, 2019; San Martín et al., 2019). For the sake of completeness, Aaker's (1991) fifth dimension of other proprietary brand assets is included, as CBBE is applied to package holidays for the first time. Subsequently, the dimension could prove to be relevant, even though it was not regarded or of influence in existing tourism-related CBBE studies (cf. Appendix B). Figure 6 illustrates not only the postulated positive relationship between CBBE and the customer's booking intention, but further, how CBBE is characterised by various interrelationships between its dimensions (Chekalina et al., 2018; Herrero et al., 2017; Lu et al., 2015; Manthiou et al., 2014; Šerić, Gil-Saura, & Mollá-Descals, 2016; Tasci, 2018).

Figure 6: Conceptual model | Relationship between CBBE and booking intention



Note: Own illustration. BAw = Brand Awareness, BAs = Brand Associations, BL = Brand Loyalty, PQ = Perceived Quality, OPBA = Other Proprietary Brand Assets.

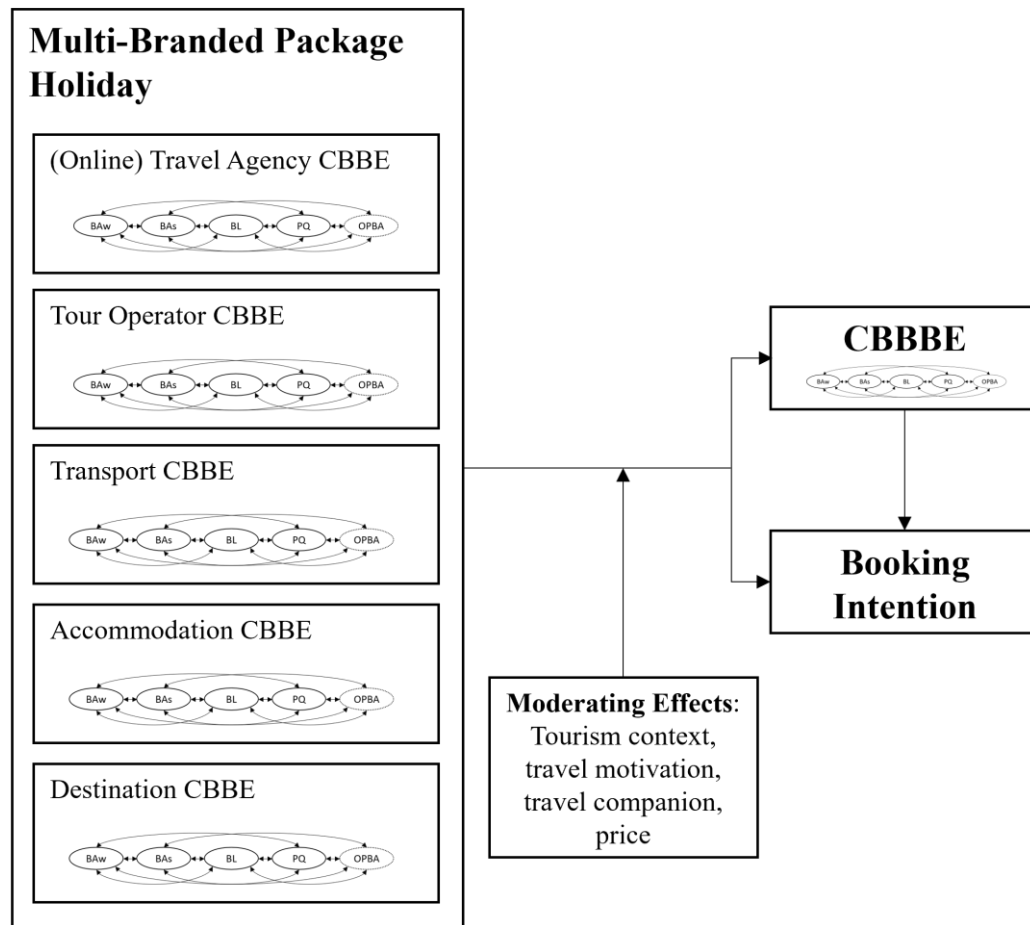
Based on the preceding package holiday attributes and the relationship between CBBE and the customer's booking intention, both approaches are subsequently merged into one joint model. The model follows other studies in the context of package holidays (e.g., Chiam et al., 2009). It is accepted knowledge that package attributes influence customer choice between different bundle options. Nevertheless, the current stream of research neglects brands as a type of attributes and, rather, centres around attributes such as package prices, characteristics, the reputation of involved travel agents, and seals of approval (Chiam et al., 2009). Thus, it is considered worthwhile to extend existing MAUT considerations to package holidays to explore brand performance

across the included tourism sector brands (namely, (online) travel agency, tour operator, transport, accommodation, and destination brands). Concludingly, the model represents how package holiday attributes, their respective brands, and CBBE levels ultimately represent the utility a customer associates with a certain bundle option and how that utility influences their booking intention.

In addition, the suggested model takes into account that the attributes of a package holiday (tourism sector brands and their associated CBBE) influence the overall evaluation of the package holiday. Resultingly, it can be assumed that, based on the principles of MAUT, the customer evaluates the overall utility of the package holiday option not only in terms of the resulting booking intention but also concerning its overall customer-based bundle brand equity (CBBBE), which is shaped by the combination of individual tourism sector brands and their associated CBBE within the package holiday.

Lastly, the model includes a consideration of moderating effects examined in or derived from tourism-related research. It is generally accepted wisdom that CBBE effects are moderated by the customer's travel motivation, respectively their reason for travelling (e.g., Huang & Cai, 2015). Further studies confirmed the moderating influence of the customer's travel companion (e.g., Hartmann et al., 2021; Meffert, 2002). Since most research is pre-set to one specific tourism context, for example stop-over travel (Kotsi et al., 2018), long-haul travel (Bianchi et al., 2014), sport tourism (Tasci et al., 2016), or wine tourism (Gomez et al., 2015), it is worth investigating if and how the tourism context influences the relationship between multi-branded package holidays and the customer's booking intention. The same consideration applies for the frequently considered price and its influence on customer preference (e.g., Chiam et al., 2009; Wong & Teoh, 2015). Therefore, the conceptual model includes four exemplary moderating effects, but is not limited to these. The proposed model is outlined in Figure 7 and demonstrates the relationship between multi-branded package holidays, CBBBE and the customer's booking intention.

Figure 7: Conceptual model | Proposed conceptual model of brand performance within package holidays



Note: Own illustration. BAw = Brand Awareness, BA's = Brand Associations, BL = Brand Loyalty, PQ = Perceived Quality, OPBA = Other Proprietary Brand Assets, CBBBE = Customer-Based Bundle Brand Equity.

The package holiday contains individually branded package attributes (services across different tourism sectors) of (online) travel agency, tour operator, transport, accommodation, and destination as well as their respective CBBE levels, and postulates a joint effect of these attributes on overall CBBBE as well as on the customer's booking intention. Lastly, the model considers moderating factors of this joint effect such as tourism context, travel motivation, travel companion, and package price. Based on the literature review alongside the general discussion of branding and CBBE in combination with tourism research and practice, the next section presents the development this thesis' research objectives.

2.6 Development of research objectives

Brands are “distinguishing names and/or symbols” (Aaker, 1991, p.7) with the purpose to differentiate a company’s products or services from competitor substitutes, and thereby, helping (potential) consumers to identify the origin of products or services (Anderson & Narus, 2004; Hankinson & Cowking, 1995; Kapferer, 2012; Keller, 2013; Kotler & Pfoertsch, 2006; Mearns, 2007; O’Cass & Grace, 2003). In order to fulfil the purpose of differentiation, brands aspire to be distinctive, unique, and linked to strong mental associations as well as emotional values (Bedbury, 2002; De Chernatony et al., 2010; Kapferer, 2012; Kotler & Gertner, 2002; Kotler & Pfoertsch, 2006; Mearns, 2007). Resultingly, a brand is more than a rational name or symbol. It is rather characterised by a set of intangible features (Kapferer, 2012).

The competition of branded products and services in the “real world” led to a rising interest in ways to assess and compare the underlying value of brands, namely brand equity (Aaker, 1991; Biel, 1992; Farquhar, 1989; Keller, 1993; Tauber, 1988). Definitions of brand equity can be separated between two common stances: the financial and the customer-oriented stance. Proponents of the financial perspective have pointed out that brand equity has to be defined in economic terms directly benefiting the owner of the brand, e.g., in the form of price premiums (Ambler, 2003; Biel, 1992; Simon & Sullivan, 1993; Tauber, 1988). However, the more prominent perspective considers brand equity to emerge on the customer’s side resulting in customer preference and an increased purchase intention (Aaker, 1991; Cobb-Walgren et al., 1995; Keller, 1993; Leuthesser et al., 1995; Pappu et al., 2005; Vázquez et al., 2002; Yoo & Donthu, 2001). It is generally agreed that finance-based brand equity (FBBE) cannot be formed without customer-based brand equity (CBBE), and thus, is not to be considered as an opposing approach to but rather as an outcome of CBBE (Christodoulides & de Chernatony, 2010; Kapferer, 2012). In conclusion, “it is the consumers who decide upon the value of the brand” (McWilliam & de Chernatony, 1991, p.23).

Proponents of CBBE have pointed out that customers’ individual perceptions, knowledge, and attitude regarding a brand contribute to its overall brand value (Christodoulides & de Chernatony, 2010). Further, the utility associated with the use

and consumption of the brand's products or services adds to a brand's CBBE (Vázquez et al., 2002). In the literature, there seems to be general agreement on the fact that CBBE results from a set of combined components, namely brand-building blocks or underlying dimensions (Veloutsou et al., 2020; Yoo & Donthu, 2001). The predominant dimensions within the scientific literature are brand awareness, brand associations, perceived quality, and brand loyalty (cf. Appendix B). Brand awareness refers to "the ability of a potential buyer to recognize or recall that a brand is a member of a certain product category" (Aaker, 1991, p. 61) and can be considered as the successful anchoring of the brand in the customer's mind (Chatzipanagiotou et al., 2019; Pappu et al., 2005; Zeugner-Roth et al., 2008; Yoo & Donthu, 2001). Brand associations are "anything 'linked' in memory to a brand" and need to be differentiated from brand image, which is rather an individual set of brand associations (Aaker, 1991, p.109; Zeugner-Roth et al., 2008; Yoo & Donthu, 2001). Perceived quality is "the consumer's judgment about a product's overall excellence or superiority" (Zeithaml, 1988, p.3) and arises out of the customer's individual perception and evaluation of the quality of a branded product or service along with its potential to fulfil its purpose in comparison to alternative options (Aaker, 1991; Zeugner-Roth et al., 2008; Yoo & Donthu, 2001). Brand loyalty is "a measure of the attachment that a customer has to a brand" (Aaker, 1991, p. 39). Therefore, brand loyalty is characterised by repeat buying patterns and a customer's preference to purchase products and services of one focal brand instead of switching to other brands (Aaker, 1992; Zeugner-Roth et al., 2008; Yoo & Donthu, 2001). All CBBE dimensions are highly interrelated and characterised by strong and positive relationships among each other (Chekalina et al., 2018; Herrero et al., 2017; Im et al., 2012; Lu et al., 2015; Manthiou et al., 2014; Pike et al., 2010; Šerić et al., 2016; Tasci, 2018).

Despite this general agreement, there are areas of difference such as the true order or hierarchy of CBBE dimensions. These dimensions can be equally weighted (Aaker, 1991) or shaped as a process, respectively building-blocks, leading from one to the next and, as such, from lower to higher levels of CBBE (Chatzipanagiotou et al., 2019; Keller, 2009; Veloutsou et al., 2020). The resulting (overall) brand equity is considered as the overall strength of the brand (Yoo & Donthu, 2001) and represents the final stage of the CBBE process (Chatzipanagiotou et al., 2019; Veloutsou et al., 2020).

Brands can then be compared with each other based on their overall brand equity (Chatzipanagiotou et al., 2019).

The literature on CBBE has its roots in the context of product branding, and especially consumer goods (Farquhar, 1989). However, the theory is prevalent in a multitude of service-centred disciplines, such as tourism (Kladou et al., 2015). Tourism is defined as a “temporary movement to destinations outside normal home and workplace, the activities undertaken during the stay, and the facilities created to cater for their [people’s] needs” (Cooper et al., 2008, p.16). The tourism industry comprises companies and establishments from all sectors related to attractions, facilities, and services for tourists (Medlik, 2002). However, most tourism-related CBBE studies investigate tourism sectors in isolation (Elliott et al., 2016), of which a consideration of only destination CBBE is the most prominent context. In order to allow for inter-tourism sector comparisons and an exploration of the role of brands across tourism sectors regarding the customer’s holiday planning and booking process, the first research objective (RO) is derived as follows:

RO1: To explore how brands influence customers’ holiday booking choices across five individual tourism sectors - (online) travel agency, tour operator, transport, accommodation, destination - during the holiday planning and booking process.

Nevertheless, individual studies exist where CBBE is used to evaluate co-branding situations in tourism and, thus, the collaboration between tourism providers and its effect on CBBE of the cooperating brands (Denizci Guillet & Tasci, 2010a,b). Regarding co-branding it can be reported that it is not always a win-win strategy. It might leverage CBBE but can also lead to its erosion, especially if both brands demonstrate a gap between positive attitudes towards one and negative attitudes towards the other brand (Denizci Guillet & Tasci, 2010a; Tasci & Denizci Guillet, 2016). However, the field is lacking an exploration of CBBE in the context of bundles, for example in the form of package holidays, which is followingly referred to as customer-based bundle brand equity (CBBBE). Resultingly, the second research objective emerges:

RO2: To explore how brands influence customers' holiday booking choices in the context of multi-branded package holidays during the holiday planning and booking process.

Tourism-related CBBE measurement is predominantly characterised by a four-dimension-approach including the following manifestations: brand awareness, brand image, perceived quality, and brand loyalty (Chi, Huang, & Nguyen, 2020; Kladou, Giannopoulos, & Mavragani, 2015; Konecnik & Gartner, 2007; Liu & Fang, 2018; Martínez & Nishiyama, 2019; San Martín, Herrero, & García de los Salmones, 2019; cf. Appendix B). However, no measurement tool exists to evaluate CBBE in the context of bundles, namely CBBBE. In order to allow for an analysis and evaluation of CBBBE, the third research objective evolves:

RO3: To adapt a specific, reliable, and valid measurement tool for customer-based bundle brand equity (CBBBE) in the context of package holidays.

It is generally agreed that CBBE directly influences the tourist's evaluation of tourism offers. Empirical evidence appears to confirm the notion that a high level of CBBE results in a significant increase of booking and/ or (re)visit intention (Chi et al., 2020; Ferns & Walls, 2012; Horng et al., 2012; Kim et al., 2008; Lin et al., 2015; Liu et al., 2017, Pike & Bianchi, 2016). Booking intention describes "the likelihood that a potential visitor will book" (Tsao et al., 2015, p.102). However, CBBE is also positively related to customer preference (Cobb-Walgren et al., 1995), overall utility (Ferns & Walls, 2012), brand reputation (Han et al., 2015), and satisfaction (Kim et al., 2009b; Liu & Fang, 2018; Nam et al., 2011). Resultingly, customers' decisions for or against certain tourism service bookings partly rely on CBBE of the brand(s) associated with the offer and/ or with the performance of those services. From the customer's point of view, package holidays provide numerous advantages compared to individual services, for example the reduction of invested time and money, minimised risk as the liability lies with the organising party, and higher levels of security due to professional organisation (Cai, 2002; Elliot et al., 2016; Kindberg & Sudit, 1979; Sheng & Pan, 2009). From the industry's perspective, package holidays require a purchase and combination of all necessary services from their providers (such

as airlines and hotels) in order to sell the resulting package, directly or through intermediaries, to its customers (Picazo & Moreno-Gil, 2018; Medlik, 2002). However, most studies regarding package holidays centre around customers' overall impression of bundles, leaving aside the included bundle attributes and their respective influence on booking intention related to the bundle (Sheng & Pan, 2009). Resultingly, the fourth research objective is developed:

RO4: To analyse differences in (1) CBBBE and (2) booking intention between various bundle designs of package holidays.

Tourism is characterised by a high level of interaction and interdependence between different tourism sectors, e.g., accommodation, transport, and destination (Pizam, 2009). An individual service provider within one sector can seldomly provide a complete vacation offer to the customer, as a vacation includes a variety of services and touchpoints (Cooper et al., 2008; Holloway et al., 2009). Resultingly, the industry is characterised by highly heterogenous service offerings. Customers are confronted with a multitude of companies, each providing individual elements of a bundle of tourism services (Holloway et al., 2009). A package holiday can include services such as transport (e.g., aircraft seat), accommodation, transfers, tour representative(s) at the destination, insurance, car hire, and day trips to attractions (Page & Connell, 2009). Previous research has defined "two or more organizations that, in the eyes of the customer, are responsible for the provision of a connected, overall service" as a service delivery network (SDN) (Lusch & Vargo, 2006; Tax et al., 2013, p.455). Within any SDN it is crucial to identify the network coordinator and to take competition among the participating service providers into account (Tax et al., 2013). However, the SDN approach is often lacking the customers' perspectives (Tax et al., 2013). Even though SDN have not been transferred to package holidays yet, their rules and forms are generally applicable to this form of bundled tourism services. However, MAUT is identified as a potential alternative concept describing CBBE and CBBBE within package holidays as decision makers are confronted with multiple alternatives to choose from "on the basis of two or more criteria or attributes" (Dyer et al., 1992, p.647). Such attributes differentiating one package holiday from others range between but are not limited to the included services (e.g., transport, accommodation), their respective tourism sector brands, and the overall bundle price (Anderson et al., 2009;

Chiam et al., 2009; Holloway et al., 2009; Westwood et al., 1999). Further, the intangibility of tourism services, resulting in attributes shaped by risk and uncertainty, suggests a good fit between package holidays and MAUT (Wallenius et al., 2008; Zeithaml et al., 1985). Subsequently, this thesis' fifth research objective is to explore both concepts regarding their suitability to CBBE in the context of package holidays in order to suggest a theoretical foundation that could be adopted by future studies:

RO5: To explore which theory is more suitable for the investigation of CBBE in the context of package holidays: (1) service delivery network theory (SDN) or (2) multi-attribute utility theory (MAUT).

Lastly, and as previously outlined, it is generally accepted that a high level of CBBE results in a significant increase of booking and/ or (re)visit intention (Chi et al., 2020; Ferns & Walls, 2012; Horng et al., 2012; Kim et al., 2008; Lin et al., 2015; Liu et al., 2017, Pike & Bianchi, 2016). Resultingly, it is worth investigating if this relationship also exists between CBBE and booking intention, leading to the sixth and last research objective:

RO6: To analyse the relationship between CBBE and booking intention.

Summarising, this research project is set to examine a total of six research objectives some of which are shaped by an explorative nature while others focus on the evaluation and analysis of relationships. Following chapters are set to describe how each research objective is addressed by this thesis' empirical studies.

2.7 Summary

Based on a review of academic literature and the current stream of research, this research proposes the development of a conceptual model for brand performance within package holidays based on the CBBE framework combined with a consideration of both SDN and MAUT. The described model includes seven constructs: (online) travel agency CBBE, tour operator CBBE, transport CBBE, accommodation CBBE, destination CBBE, CBBE, and booking intention.

Branding aims at the creation of a differentiated position and reaching high levels of competitiveness, respectively brand performance. Especially in the tourism industry, which is characterised by high levels of immateriality and uncertainty, brands serve as

a guiding light by providing more tangible associations, perceptions, and relationships to the customer. This potential can be exploited by tourism companies to generate competitive advantage and to increase the customer's booking intention. Research on branding issues in individual tourism sectors (e.g., transport, destination) prevails, whereas the actual combination of tourism services, which is common and of advantage in tourism practice, is seldomly represented in the scientific discourse. Therefore, an application of the CBBE framework to bundled tourism services (i.e., package holidays) allows the evaluation of (1) brand performance across all involved package attributes, and (2) the relationship between multi-branded package holidays and the customer's booking intention.

Chapter 3: Methodology

3.1 Introduction

This chapter describes the underlying methodology of the research project and starts with a discussion of research philosophy in general as well as in relation to this research project. Next, a general overview of research approaches in business research is followed by a detailed review of relevant literature and its respective choice of research design and methods. Based on these deliberations, the mixed methods approach, and specifically the exploratory-sequential design, of this research project is outlined and described based on its fit to the predefined research objectives.

3.2 Research philosophy

Every research project is linked to the overall nature of the project alongside the researcher's choice between a variety of options and their associated research philosophy (Saunders et al., 2019). Research Philosophy is a topic deeply intertwined with beliefs, assumptions, and (the development of) knowledge (Saunders et al., 2019). Researchers, and their readers, must be aware of any underlying (individual and subjective) beliefs as they influence the research process, means of data collection, inquiry methods, and evaluation of findings (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018). Even though underlying assumptions are not explicitly outlined in many fields of research, an understanding of the main characteristics supports a detailed analysis and understanding of either another's or one's own research (Creswell & Creswell, 2018).

3.2.1 Ontology, epistemology, and axiology

In order to differentiate between different research philosophies (also referred to as paradigms) it is crucial to understand which differences prevail and in between which opposing extremes they are positioned (Heron, 1996). Three main types of research assumptions give a first indication towards a research philosophy: ontology, epistemology, and axiology (Saunders et al., 2019). **Ontology** describes the 'nature of reality', thus, what is considered real or true (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018; Crotty, 1998). Common ontological perspectives range between the assumption of one, singular reality (or truth) in contrast to multiple, differing realities arising from multiple perspectives (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018). **Epistemology** considers the attitude towards knowledge, therefore, what constitutes legitimate and valid

knowledge, and how to obtain it (Burrell & Morgan, 2016; Rathnasiri, 2003). Epistemology influences the choice of methods, for example if only objective and numeric facts are considered sound knowledge, researchers are likely to choose a quantitative research approach (Saunders et al., 2019). **Axiology** is concerned with the role of values and ethics. It describes the extent to which “the impact of own values and beliefs on research [are] a positive thing” (Saunders et al., 2019, p.134). Thus, if researchers want to impede personal interference of their own values or attitudes with their research, they use all possible checks to eliminate bias (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018). Heron (1996) highlights that it is important for researchers to clarify their values, to derive how research-related judgments are influenced by these values, and to specify whether a value-free or value-bound approach is applied.

3.2.2 Opposing research paradigms

Resulting from potentially conflicting beliefs, a dominant research paradigm (also: school of thought) arises when a community of scientists in one field of research share the same ontological, epistemological, and axiological assumptions. These shared assumptions are basic and taken-for-granted as they build the framework for conducting research (Saunders et al., 2019). Adherence to these assumptions ensures the approval of a research project’s findings by the peer group (Deshpande, 1983). The variety of presumed assumptions among different fields of research results in a “multidimensional set of continua between two opposing extremes”, namely objectivism and subjectivism (Saunders et al., 2019, p.134; Niglas, 2010), as displayed in Table 6.

Table 6: Philosophical assumptions as a multidimensional set of continua

Assumption type	Continua with two sets of extremes	
	Objectivism	Subjectivism
Ontology	Reality is singular, true, and external (universalism).	Multiple realities are socially constructed, nominal, and decided by convention (relativism).
Epistemology	Assumptions are adopted from the natural sciences. Knowledge equals generalisable facts based on numbers and observable phenomena.	Assumptions are adopted from the arts and humanities. Knowledge equals context-based, specific opinions based on written, spoken, and virtual accounts with attributed meanings.

Axiology	Research is value-free, as it and the researcher are (morally) neutral.	Research is value-bound, as (the researcher's) values shape research.
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Note: Adapted from Saunders et al. (2019), p.135.

Objectivism occupies a neutral approach to research in which the researcher holds an external position towards their project and inhibits their own values and beliefs from influencing the process. They aim at obtaining one truth, which is based on generalisable facts (Saunders et al., 2019). In contrast, **subjectivism** is open towards different points of views and accepts the prevalence of multiple realities (Saunders et al., 2019). As subjectivist research is value-bound, it searches for rich and context-based knowledge and underlying meanings (cf. Table 6). Although these extremes seem incompatible, a variety of schools of thought were established that share some beliefs, whereas they reject others. Therefore, philosophical paradigms are less independent and exclusive from each other, than might be assumed (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). The manifold range of paradigms is too broad to include herein. Therefore, this section limits itself to the two opposing paradigms along the continuum of extremes: positivism and interpretivism.

Positivism is premised on rational, objective reasoning and adopts the belief in a single reality, which exists whether the researcher acknowledges it or not (Crook & Garratt, 2005). Any subjective form of interpretation is strictly rejected as the positivist approach to research is of confirmatory and deductive nature, thus verification-oriented (Deshpande, 1983; Crook & Garratt, 2005). The research objective of a positivist is to gain generalisable, replicable, and precise results (Schrag, 1992).

In contrast, **interpretivism** is descriptive, exploratory, and discovery-oriented, thus, of an inductive nature (Deshpande, 1983; Crook & Garratt, 2005). Interpretivist research aims at gaining a deep and rich understanding of a phenomenon and accepts subjective interpretation (Saunders et al., 2019). The major limitation of interpretivism is its potential bias, as researchers interpret the findings based on their own beliefs and assumptions and may oversee discoveries not aligned with their worldview (Deshpande, 1983; Crook & Garratt, 2005). Therefore, the generalisation of findings is strictly limited to impossible.

3.2.3 Dominant research paradigm in tourism-related CBBE research

In order to contribute to the current state of knowledge in a certain discipline it is recommended to identify the dominant philosophical paradigm and adhere to it. Nevertheless, the dominant paradigm is open for challenges and critique as the level of support among researchers can shift due to current developments or trends (Hirschman, 1986). The field of tourism is particularly heterogenous, as it is crossing a variety of disciplines (e.g., management, geography, psychology, economics) and is affected by both the social and the natural sciences (Echtner & Jamal, 1997; Leone & Schulz, 1980; Rathnasiri, 2003).

Research on CBBE in a tourism-related context started much later than ‘general’ CBBE research related to consumer goods (Kim & Kim, 2005). The chronologically first studies follow a strictly deductive approach to confirm former CBBE findings in a tourism-related context, for example luxury hotels, chain restaurants, and destinations (Kayaman & Arasil, 2007; Kim & Kim, 2005; Konecnik & Gartner, 2007; Pike, 2007b). Even though research philosophy is not directly addressed within these studies, clear indicators of the deductive approach are detectable. From an ontological perspective, these first studies accept the one existing truth of CBBE, for example its four dimensions, namely brand loyalty, brand awareness, perceived brand quality, and brand image (Aaker, 1996). Instead of questioning the applicability of these dimensions to tourism, research follows the scientific method and adapts a given theoretical model to a new context (Kayaman & Arasil, 2007; Kim & Kim, 2005; Konecnik & Gartner, 2007; Pike, 2007b). Kim & Kim (2005, p.552) state that “every effort was made to get a representative sample” and other studies share this approach by relying exclusively on numerical findings (Kayaman & Arasil, 2007; Konecnik & Gartner, 2007; Pike, 2007b). From an epistemological point of view, only measurable and generalisable facts constitute knowledge. The lacking acceptance of alternative ways to contribute knowledge is supported by the implications for future research, as more sophisticated and developed measures (Kim & Kim, 2005; Konecnik & Gartner, 2007), more representative sampling, an examination across various tourism segments (Kayaman & Arasil, 2007), and a repetition of the applied methodology in the future (Pike, 2007b) are suggested. Based on these deliberations and the work of Pansiri

(2005), positivism is identified as the dominant paradigm in early tourism-related CBBE studies.

Recent studies share the value-free, objective, and deductive approach of positivism, highlighting its continuous predominance (Kotsi et al., 2018; Tasci, 2018; Dedeoğlu et al., 2019). Nevertheless, newer studies demonstrate a more open approach to methodology and theory development as their research process includes surveys with open, unaided questions (Kotsi et al., 2018), repertory grid analyses to define survey items or attributes (Pike, 2007a), as well as qualitative interviews or focus group discussions as part of a mixed methods design (Hsu et al., 2011; Frías Jamilena et al., 2017). Even though alternative research procedures and non-numerical findings arise, the focus remains on obtaining measurable and potentially generalisable outcomes.

To conclude, tourism-related CBBE research still centres around theory refinement rather than theory generation, a critique attributed to marketing research in general (Deshpande, 1983; Hunt, 1994). Proponents of a more interpretivist approach to marketing point out that assuming a rational, objective behaviour of human beings and the assumption that laboratory-like setting equal settings of everyday life only lead to pseudo-reality findings (Crotty, 1998; Rathnasiri, 2003; Hunt, 1994). In order to overcome this fundamental limitation of a strictly positivist approach, Pansiri (2006) and Silcock (2015) suggest a consideration of the philosophical paradigm of pragmatism to enhance practice-oriented research and pay tribute to the emotional involvement and highly individual travel background and motivation of travellers.

3.2.4 Philosophical paradigm of this research project

The objective of this research project is to explore and evaluate the role of brands regarding the customer's holiday booking choices and booking intention in the context of package holidays. In practice, the purchase of pre-arranged package holidays is widespread and attractive for potential customers (Kinberg & Sudit, 1979). As I¹ have been interested in this specific topic long before deciding to pursue a PhD, I testify that the question and resulting research objective(s) are directly derived from my

¹This section represents the author's individual worldview and research philosophy. Therefore, it is written in the first person.

experience within the tourism industry. It has always been the question itself that concerned me most: “How important are different brands within package holidays for the customer’s holiday booking choices? Is there one brand acting like a guiding-light or are all brands involved equally important?” Once confronted with the task of writing my research proposal, I engaged with the literature and the research within the field. The focus therein lies on the theory of CBBE applied to singular touristic segments, such as hotels or destinations. Surprisingly, no study considers package holidays, which bundle multiple of these attributes together. This circumstance demonstrates the high discrepancy between academic tourism-related research and the “real” tourism industry. Thus, I aim to close the resulting research gap and to generate practice-relevant findings.

Based on these deliberations on my research approach, I further outline how this constitutes my allegiance to pragmatism. From an ontological perspective, I agree with Azzopardi and Nash (2014, p.156) in stating “truth is what works” in everyday practice. I consider reality to be complex and rich and to differ between multiple perspectives (Saunders et al., 2019). I do not believe in researching for the sake of research. Rather, I share the epistemological view that knowledge conveys practical meaning in specific contexts to solve problems and enable success (Silcock, 2015). The same applies to the choice of theory and discipline to focus on, which in my case clearly derives from my initial research question (Pansiri, 2005, 2006). Further, I agree with Howe (1988) in rejecting the “incompatibility thesis”, according to which research paradigms and methodologies cannot be mixed. Conversely, I consider a methodology as suitable if it generates relevant findings and solves a problem, regardless of its underlying methods (Murphy, 1990; Onwuegbuzie & Leech, 2005; Silcock, 2015). Consequently, I apply a combining methodology (i.e., mixed methods design) and exploit the strengths of qualitative as well as quantitative methods to answer the research questions in the best way possible. My goal is to openly explore the customer’s holiday booking choices in relation to tourism brands, to verify the fit of CBBE, SDN, and MAUT to package holidays, and to test the findings quantitatively in order to deduce substantial, reliable, and practical recommendations for the tourism industry (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018). Axiologically, I am a reflexive researcher and open to consider multiple stances: (1) a biased perspective, based on my practical

experience in tourism and the personal interviews with participants, and (2) an unbiased perspective, based on numerical and generalisable outcomes (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018).

On the surface, the dominant (positivism) and my own (pragmatism) paradigm appear to be very contradictory. Nevertheless, the quality of tourism research benefits from an increasing variety of represented research philosophies (Dunn & Wickham, 2012). Personally, I agree with Pansiri (2006) and consider a shift of tourism research towards actual tourism practice worthwhile. Although my ontology, epistemology, axiology, and methodology differ from the dominant paradigm, my research project results in measurable and numerical findings. As members of the dominant paradigm (positivism) are said to focus on the scientifically correct procedure and interpretation of measurable facts, rather than the underlying meanings and richer information, it can be argued that for extreme positivists it might not even be detectable that I do not share their philosophical stance.

3.3 Quantitative, qualitative, and mixed methods research

It is generally agreed that three distinguishable research approaches, namely quantitative, qualitative, and mixed methods research constitute the guiding principle or “plan” of studying a specific topic (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). **Quantitative research** is often associated with a deductive approach and processes data in the form of numbers to test existing theories (Saunders et al., 2019; Walliman, 2017). The resulting statistical analysis aims at pointing out relationships or similarities amongst different variables or making forecasts based on the overall number of cases (Walliman, 2017). Due to highly standardised data collection, quantitative research facilitates the processing of a high number of participants in a relatively short time. Therefore, quantitative research commonly facilitates the generation of generalisable outcomes (Saunders et al., 2019).

In contrast, **qualitative research** sets out to understand and explain observed phenomena rather than counting data (Doz, 2011; Pratt, 2009). Therefore, it aims at obtaining descriptive data, like spoken words or observed behaviour from people, in order to gain rich insights on the perspective and behavioural patterns of individuals (Pratt, 2009; Taylor et al., 2015). To enhance data broadness and depth, qualitative

research is open(-ended) in its nature and adaptable to special requirements of the research setting, a fact that Pratt (2009) outlines as its key strength. Resultingly, a qualitative approach is specifically useful in inductive approaches, which set out to build new theories or formulate hypotheses (Taylor et al., 2015).

The third research approach to be considered is ***mixed methods research***. The mixed methods approach involves a combination of the primarily described quantitative and qualitative research to benefit from their individual strengths and balance their weaknesses (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Further, the combination of both approaches serves the principles of validity, reliability, and triangulation. ***Validity*** outlines which conclusions can be drawn from the gained data, in other words: It represents the credibility of the findings and the correctness of their interpretation (Saunders et al., 2019; Walliman, 2017). ***Reliability*** describes the dependability based on the correct, scientific collection and organisation of data in order to enable the potential that different researchers following the same scientific test setting would make consistent observations (Saunders et al., 2019; Walliman, 2017). To enhance both validity and reliability, researchers combine different methods, sources, or types of data related to the same phenomenon and compare if the respective observations lead to the same findings (Walliman, 2017; Taylor et al., 2015). This approach characterises the concept of ***triangulation*** and leads to a verification of findings and a broader understanding of observations (Saunders et al., 2019; Taylor et al., 2015). Saunders et al. (2019, p.170) outline a researcher's choice between a variety of options "from simple, concurrent forms to more complex and sequential forms" based on the overall nature and philosophy of their mixed methods research project. Nevertheless, successful research requires not only academic skills but also a practical understanding of and experience with the correct choice and application of its "tools", namely research methods to collect, analyse, and interpret data (Walliman, 2017; Creswell & Creswell, 2018).

3.4 Dominant research designs in tourism-related CBBE research

In general, researchers are confronted with a multitude of choices regarding each research project, for exampling regarding the overall philosophy, approach, and methods to apply (Saunders et al., 2019). The selection of a suitable research approach

is facilitated by a detailed consideration of the field of research (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). To allow for an overview of this research project's respective field, Table 7 summarises prevalent research approaches and methods used by existing literature in the field of tourism-related CBBE research.

Table 7: Dominant research methods in tourism-related CBBE research

Research Method	Number of Sources	Most-cited Sources
Qualitative	3	Bailey & Ball (2006), Zavattaro et al. (2015), Guha Roy et al. (2018a)
Quantitative	81	Cobb-Walgren et al. (1995), Nam et al. (2011), Boo et al. (2009)
Mixed Methods	17	Konecnik & Gartner (2007), Pike (2009), Horng et al. (2012)
Conceptual	7	Berry (2000), Xu & Chan (2010), Gartner (2014)

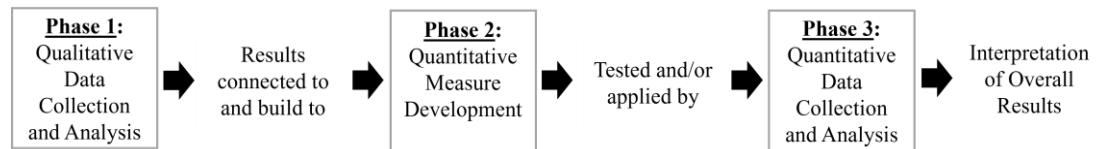
Note: Own elaboration. Based on a literature analysis of 108 papers on tourism-related CBBE (for complete overview cf. Appendix A).

As presented in Table 7, most research in the field of interest pursues a quantitative approach by conducting surveys of different kinds (e.g., face-to-face, online or telephone), and by assessing meaning and generalisability in relation to the pre-set hypotheses based on counting data and statistical analysis (e.g., Chekalina et al., 2018; Chi et al., 2020; Dedeoğlu et al., 2019). Commonly, these quantitative studies analyse the relationships between CBBE dimensions (Boo et al., 2009; Nam et al., 2011) and/or between CBBE and its outcomes, such as booking intention and customer preference (Cobb-Walgren et al., 1995). In contrast, stand-alone qualitative research is rarely conducted and tends to be applied in the context of comparing theory-based brand equity definitions and constructs with in-use definitions and knowledge of industry professionals (Bailey & Ball, 2006; Zavattaro et al., 2015) or for scale development purposes (Guha Roy et al., 2018a). However, various publications pursue a mixed methods approach (e.g., Frías Jamilena et al., 2017; Kim et al., 2015; Wong, 2018). Existing mixed methods studies tend to aim for the adaptation of existing general CBBE measures to the tourism context (Gartner & Konecnik Ruzzier, 2011; Hsu et al., 2011; Konecnik & Gartner, 2007) or to individual tourism sectors such as hotels (Kam Fung So & King, 2010). Subsequently, it can be stated that the field of tourism-related CBBE research is characterised by a strong focus on quantitative studies.

3.5 Choice of research design: Exploratory sequential mixed methods

The combination of qualitative (Study One) and quantitative (Study Two) research is commonly referred to as mixed methods approach and allows researchers to benefit from the individual strengths and to balance the weaknesses of both approaches (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). In general, mixed methods research can be divided into three constituent designs: the convergent design, the explanatory sequential design, and the exploratory sequential design (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018). The **convergent design** (also: concurrent or parallel design) describes a parallel collection and comparison of two sets of results, usually one of qualitative and one of quantitative nature, to ultimately merge and combine both studies for one joint data interpretation. The main objective behind this design is the complete illumination and understanding of a research area or problem (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018). In contrast, the **explanatory sequential design** is divided into two distinct research phases, usually a first quantitative study followed by a second qualitative study to explain or expand on the first study's findings (Saunders et al., 2019). This design particularly benefits quantitative studies which led to unexpected results, as the additional qualitative phase allows for an attempt to explain and explore the results obtained (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018). Like an explanatory sequential design, the **exploratory sequential design** follows a sequential timing (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). However, an exploratory sequential design typically begins with a qualitative data collection and analysis phase that is used as a preparation and source of input for a quantitative study (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018). Between both studies, researchers are enabled to conduct a development phase (e.g., to develop or adapt a quantitative instrument or new variables) which directly builds upon the previously obtained exploratory results (Saunders et al., 2019). Resultingly, the final quantitative phase not only tests the new instrument but also assesses the relationships or variables of interest (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018). Figure 8 presents the typical process and phases of an exploratory sequential mixed methods design.

Figure 8: Procedure of an exploratory sequential mixed methods design



Note: Own illustration adapted from Creswell & Plano Clark (2018, p.66).

The research design of this research project follows the general procedure of an exploratory sequential mixed methods design, as it starts with a qualitative study, followed by the adaptation of a quantitative measure and instrument to be then tested in a subsequent quantitative study. Finally, the overall results of all phases are to be connected and discussed in detail, both in relation among each other as well as in relation to the predefined research objectives.

Regarding the first study, it needs to be highlighted, that most existing research focuses on only one tourism sector, as previously outlined in the literature review. Resultingly, this research project explores a topic that has not received vast amounts of research interest yet. The lack of prior studies indicates a need for qualitative research and the resulting rich and descriptive data in order to understand and explain the role of brands both in an inter-tourism sector comparison as well as in the new context of package holidays. A first inductive and qualitative study is appropriate to explore the customers' holiday booking choices and the respective performance of tourism brands. Thus, the first study aims to address the first and second research objective:

RO1: To explore how brands influence customers' holiday booking choices across five individual tourism sectors - (online) travel agency, tour operator, transport, accommodation, destination - during the holiday planning and booking process.

RO2: To explore how brands influence customers' holiday booking choices in the context of multi-branded package holidays during the holiday planning and booking process.

The fact that no current secondary data is available underlines the importance of collecting rich and qualitative primary data. The gathered data ultimately serves as the foundation to result in a formulation of specific hypotheses leading to a second,

quantitative study. Thus, the subsequent, quantitative study tests those hypotheses and intends to obtain generalisable results concerning the remaining research objectives:

RO3: To adapt a specific, reliable, and valid measurement tool for customer-based bundle brand equity (CBBBE) in the context of package holidays.

RO4: To analyse differences in (1) CBBBE and (2) booking intention between various bundle designs of package holidays.

RO5: To explore which theory is more suitable for the investigation of CBBBE in the context of package holidays: (1) service delivery network theory (SDN) or (2) multi-attribute utility theory (MAUT).

RO6: To analyse the relationship between CBBBE and booking intention.

The individual designs, procedures, and results of both studies are discussed in detail in the subsequent chapters of this thesis: Chapter 4 presents the qualitative Study One, while Chapter 5 covers the quantitative Study Two.

3.6 Summary

This research makes use of a sequential exploratory mixed methods design in order to reinforce the advantages and to balance the disadvantages of quantitative and qualitative research. Even though this approach contrasts the latest stream of tourism-related CBBE research, which rather pursues stand-alone quantitative approaches, there are various reasons justifying a mixed methods approach. First, no prior research set out to explore CBBE in the context of package holidays indicating a need for rich, descriptive data to ensure the detailed understanding of this research project's specific foundation. Second, and due to the lack of research interest in said field, the literature review does not allow the formulation of specific hypotheses – a gap to be closed by qualitative data obtained throughout the first study. Third, as no research centres around CBBE in package holidays it is desirable to then obtain more generalisable quantitative data based on hypothesis-testing in a second study. This data aims to ultimately result in important insights not only relevant for tourism researchers but also for tourism practitioners. Lastly, the chosen mixed methods approach enables data

triangulation to ensure sound results based on rigour and relevance. The next chapter presents the qualitative Study One including detailed descriptions of the chosen method, the sample, means of data collection, and key results.

Chapter 4: Study One | Qualitative interviews & focus groups

4.1 Introduction

The first study follows a qualitative approach and is set to specifically explore the role of tourism brands regarding the customer's holiday booking choices and booking intention (1) across five individual tourism sectors - (online) travel agency, tour operator, transport, accommodation, destination – as well as in relation to (2) multi-branded package holidays. The gathered data ultimately serves to result in a formulation of specific hypotheses leading to a second, quantitative study (Study Two), discussed in the following Chapter 5. Therefore, this chapter includes detailed descriptions of the chosen qualitative method, the sample, means of data collection, and key results.

4.2 Method: Qualitative interviews and focus groups

Qualitative research involves a multitude of potentially applicable methods, such as surveys, interviews (individual or groups), case studies, and ethnography (Saunders et al., 2019). Whereas surveys or case studies can demonstrate either a qualitative or quantitative nature, the other methods are of a sheer qualitative nature (Saunders et al., 2019). As the outlined first study of this research is known to be followed by a subsequent quantitative study to meet the requirements of the mixed methods design, the “sheer” qualitative method of interviews is chosen for Study One to obtain rich and detailed descriptive data that will later be complemented by quantitative data.

Interviews are a method based on an interviewer asking clear and outcome-oriented questions to a respondent that is willing to answer (Saunders et al., 2019). The form of an interview can be structured, semi-structured or unstructured depending on the degree of formality of the interview and the interviewer's freedom to add or leave out questions (Saunders et al., 2019). Further, the researcher can choose between a variety of interview situations as they can be conducted in person (face-to-face), via telephone, or online (mail, online forum, social media) as well as individually or in (focus) groups (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). In contrast to individual interviews, focus group discussions describe a type of group interview that emphasises the interaction between participants to generate in-depth insights (Kitzinger, 1995). One or more moderators provide guidance to the group and assure that the correct procedure is followed, based

on a questioning route (Litosseliti, 2003). Focus groups assess consumer reactions, emotions or opinions as the immediate response is observable and followed by participant discussions (Kamberelis & Dimitriadis, 2013). Table 8 outlines key advantages and limitations of interviews as a research method.

Table 8: Key advantages and limitations of interviews

Advantages	Limitations
Useful when participants cannot be directly observed.	Provides indirect information filtered through the views of participants.
Interviewees can provide historical information.	Takes place in a pre-determined place rather than the natural setting.
Researcher holds control over the line of questioning.	Researcher's presence may influence biased responses.
	Not all people are equally articulate and perceptive.

Note: Adapted from Creswell & Creswell (2018), p.188.

On the one side, interviews benefit from direct and open participant reactions, the provision of historical information or insights, and the fact that control of the process lies with the researcher (or: moderator). On the other side, there are certain limitations related to this method, such as potential researcher's bias, different levels of participant responsiveness, and unnatural settings (cf. Table 8). The recognition of potential limitations allows researchers to continuously take them into account when defining the specific research procedure and interview guideline. Therefore, disadvantages and bias are to be kept at a minimum.

Current qualitative or mixed methods research on tourism-related CBBE is characterised by a prevalence of focus groups (e.g., Hsu et al., 2011; Kam Fung So & King, 2010; Kim et al., 2015; Zeugner-Roth et al., 2008) and/or individual interviews (e.g. Gartner & Konecnik Ruzzier, 2011; Horng et al., 2012; Hsu et al., 2012; Konecnik & Gartner, 2007; Zavattaro et al., 2015) in order to adapt existing CBBE models and measurements to tourism settings based on the obtained qualitative data. This thesis follows current research practice by conducting both individual interviews and focus groups. The availability of both options facilitates participant acquisition based on their personally preferred interview situation (alone vs. in a group setting), as well as the obtainment of an adequate sample size.

4.2.1 Sampling

Sampling includes researcher choices regarding the persons to observe or interview within their planned studies (Miles et al., 2019). The conceptual framework, research questions, and other foci of a study (e.g., identified gaps in existing studies) enable informed sampling decisions (Silverman, 2020). Qualitative research, as opposed to its quantitative counterpart, tends to work with small samples of people set to a certain context in order to gain in-depth insights and data (Miles et al., 2019). The most common sampling strategies are random sampling (i.e., randomly choosing participants for a study), purposive sampling (i.e., participant selection based on pre-defined characteristics for a study's sample), and convenience sampling (i.e., participant selection based on their associated easiness to be accessed) (Miles et al., 2019).

The sample of Study One consists of German tourists, as Germany ranks among the three countries with the highest tourism spending worldwide (UNWTO, 2019). The two preceding nations are China and the USA, which are both already widely represented in tourism-related CBBE research (cf. Appendix A). In contrast, only a scarcity of two studies explores CBBE in relation to a German source market (namely: Gartner & Konecnik Ruzzier, 2011; Konecnik & Gartner, 2007), while the source markets China (Huang & Cai, 2015; Lin et al., 2015; Tasci & Denizci Guillet, 2016; Tsai et al., 2010; Xu et al., 2021; Yang et al., 2015) and USA (Kim et al., 2021; Lu et al., 2015; Prasad & Dev, 2000; Tasci, 2016c, 2018; Tasci et al., 2018) gain a vast amount of research attention.

In order to gain meaningful data and to allow later comparison between different tourist segments, participants are previously asked to fill out a demographic form. This procedure not only allows insights concerning the participant's socio-demographics but also their usual travel companion(s). The consideration of travel companion is confirmed as worthwhile within current streams of research (e.g., Kim et al., 2019). Namely, the predefined categories are tourists that travel (1) alone and with friends, (2) as a couple, and (3) as a family. As the interview guideline includes an evaluation of different exemplary package holidays, it is a mandatory requirement for all participants either to have prior experience with the selection and booking of package holidays, or to consider package holidays as a form of travel offering, they are likely

to book in the future. Resultingly, participants are selected based on their fulfilment of characteristics and criteria that are needed in the sample to allow for meaningful results, a strategy commonly referred to as purposive sampling (Silverman, 2020).

Upon a persons' consent to participate in the study, they indicated if they preferred an individual or focus group interview. This process was chosen to increase participant comfort and later talkativeness throughout the interview. As previously outlined, not all persons are equally articulate when part of a group and their level of active participation might vary. Therefore, focus groups should provide a certain level of homogeneity to facilitate open interactions and a sense of togetherness between participants (Kitzinger, 1995). The individual tends to open up about their personal beliefs and attitudes more easily in a group of persons that are alike to them, e.g., in age, education, or cultural background (Litosseliti, 2003). Therefore, the subsequent focus group were designed to include only participants within one shared travel companion category. Hence, three focus groups resulted including participants that commonly travel (1) alone and/or with friends, (2) as a couple, or (3) as a family. The number of participants per group is restricted to a maximum of eight (Kitzinger, 1995). As the participants and the researcher are German, all interviews were held in German to ensure mutual understanding and validity.

4.2.2 Data collection

Interviews and focus groups took place between September and November 2019. The qualitative study was conducted in collaboration with the International School of Management (ISM) Munich² and was assisted by advanced students enrolled in a bachelor's degree. The assisting students³ were either participants of the study and/or assigned tasks related to the process of data collection and transcription. In addition, participants meeting the predefined sampling criteria (i.e., 18+ years old, German, likely to travel abroad for their holidays, and considering package holidays as a form of travel offering, they are likely to book in the future) were acquired among and via

² When qualitative data was collected, the author was employed at the International School of Management (ISM) in Munich, which supported data collection by the approval to integrate the study in a bachelor's course and by providing a professional location to carry out interviews.

³ The author of this thesis extends her gratitude to the students who assisted with Study One, even though they remain unnamed for anonymity reasons.

students and their network. All involved students received credit for the participation in the course and freely chose this course among other options. Students and participants were not entitled to any form of remuneration.

In general, it is recommended that interviews take place in a relaxed, neutral, and comfortable setting that facilitates a communicative atmosphere (Litosseliti, 2003; Kitzinger, 1995). Therefore, interviews and focus groups took place at ISM Munich. Participant(s) and the interviewer were placed at tables, able to establish eye contact. In order to foster wellbeing, refreshments were available. Every interview was tape-recorded by at least two recorders as the audio files' quality is crucial for the following transcription. As transcripts build the foundation for later data analysis and interpretation, the acoustics in the chosen location were tested in advance.

4.2.3 Bias

Bias describes any threat to unprejudiced consideration of questions, statements, results, or other aspects (Saunders et al., 2019). In research, bias occurs when erroneous procedures are in place in order to select or encourage a desired or expected outcome over others (Walliman, 2017). Bias can occur both on the participant and researcher (interviewer) side of an experiment and is negatively related to a study's reliability (Saunders et al., 2019). Researcher bias includes any factor inducing bias in the recording of responses whereas participant bias induces false responses (Saunders et al., 2019). Past studies have stated that researchers can bias studies and their results unintentionally (Rosenthal, 1976; Venkatesan, 1967). However, precautions can be taken to mitigate the risk of interviewer bias in qualitative studies.

Firstly, it is crucial that interviewers are rigorously trained to ensure that they understand the research objectives, maintain neutrality, and adhere to established protocols (Silverman, 2020). This precaution was fulfilled by the interviewer being the author of this thesis and profoundly familiar with its research objectives and procedures. Additionally, the use of a structured interview guideline with predefined questions helps maintain consistency across interviews, which reduces the likelihood of interviewer bias (Miles et al., 2019). To meet this prerequisite a detailed interview guideline was predefined (cf. following section 4.2.4). Furthermore, employing techniques such as reflexivity, where interviewers critically reflect on their own biases

and assumptions, can enhance awareness and minimise their influence on the interview process (Silverman, 2020). As the interviewer was aware of potential bias and assumptions alongside the crucial role of a correct scientific procedure, utmost care was invested to facility neutrality. Overall, the outlined precautions contribute to enhancing the credibility and trustworthiness of Study One and its findings by addressing and minimising interviewer bias.

4.2.4 Interview guideline

The starting point of each interview design is a profound level of knowledge in the field of research, followed by considering which information the participant needs in order to contribute to the conversation (Saunders et al., 2019). It is crucial that each participant answers intuitively to encourage an interview or focus group discussion based on individual experiences. Therefore, all participants were informed during the selection process that the discussion centres around tourist booking behaviour and that they should be able to recall their last vacation and the respective booking process. Apart from this, no further information was provided.

The goal of Study One was set to the examination of research objectives 1 and 2, namely,

RO1: To explore how brands influence customers' holiday booking choices across five individual tourism sectors - (online) travel agency, tour operator, transport, accommodation, destination - during the holiday planning and booking process.

RO2: To explore how brands influence customers' holiday booking choices in the context of multi-branded package holidays during the holiday planning and booking process.

Therefore, the specific consideration of both research objectives was crucial for the design and realisation of purposive interviews. The interview procedure followed a detailed questioning route, which functioned as a guideline including the topics to be addressed, possible questions, complementing probes, timings, and materials to be used (Litosseliti, 2003). All questions aimed at being open-ended, neutral, easy to understand and arranged in a funnel design starting from more general and simple

questions to more specific or complex ones (Litosseliti, 2003). This pre-set structure supported the collection of research question-oriented data of a profound and rich nature.

The implemented interview guideline follows a semi-structured design loosely rested on Meffert's (2002) guideline used in a comparable context: the importance of tourism brands from the customer's perspective. Nevertheless, Meffert's research is not fully comparable as it dates to a time when online booking was non-existent. Moreover, the focus was primarily set on single-branded and pre-defined package holidays lacking an in-depth exploration of unaided brand recall from participants. Therefore, minor adjustments to the interview guideline were necessary to ensure the optimal fit to the current state of the tourism industry as well as to the research objectives. According to research objectives 1 and 2, the qualitative study set out to investigate (1) the travellers' prior travel experience, (2) their overall familiarity with tourism brands, and the role of brands across different tourism sectors. Lastly, an (3) evaluation of exemplary package holidays was discussed. The complete interview guideline and accompanying materials can be found in Appendix D. The following overview shortly presents the specific sections and order of the interview guideline.

Part 1: Prior travel experience

The first part of the interview centred around the participants' last vacation and their general booking behaviour within a tourism setting. The section was set to serve as an introduction to the context of interest and to set the scene for the following discussion. General topics addressed in relation to the participants' last holiday were the type of travel organisation (packaged holiday vs. individual booking), the destination, and travel companion(s).

Part 2: Tourism brand familiarity and influence on booking behaviour

The second part explored the role of tourism brands throughout the priorly discussed last holiday of the participants and their general familiarity with tourism brands. In order to facilitate a specific and more structured answer to the rather abstract question of the role of tourism brands, participants were first asked to remember their last holiday and fill out a short brand questionnaire. The brand questionnaire (cf. Appendix

D) solely included an evaluation of brand importance across different tourism sectors during the booking phase of the participants' last holiday on a scale from unimportant to very important. An "I don't know" option was included to increase validity, e.g., for the case that certain sectors were not represented in the participants' last holiday.

Upon questionnaire completion, the included tourism sectors (namely (online) travel agency, tour operator, transport, accommodation, and destination) were discussed and ranked based on their respective brand influence on the participants booking process to provide an orientation for the following discussion. The subsequent discussion explored why certain sectors rank at certain positions as well as how and why brands influenced the customer's specific booking intention and procedure. In addition, this interview part investigated the participants' awareness (unaided, i.e., knowledge of a brand or product without prompting) of tourism brands in each of the tourism sectors in focus. For example, participants were asked which tour operator brands they know. Lastly, individual perceptions of and associations with the mentioned brands were discussed in detail based on the participant's prior travel experience. All mentioned brands and their respective associations (positive vs. negative) were written down in a pre-set template (see Figure 9), which built the foundation for the last interview section.

Figure 9: Template 1 - Collection of mentioned tourism brands (unaided)

Travel agency	Online travel agency	Tour operator	Transport	Accommodation	Destination

Note: Own illustration. During the interview, brands within the template were additionally labelled as (+) strong/ positive association or (-) „No-Go“/ negative association.

Part 3: Evaluation of exemplary package holidays

The third section built on the previously mentioned brands (to ensure the participants' familiarity with them), as the researcher bundled these brands to create exemplary package holidays to address RO2 ("To explore how brands influence customers' holiday booking choices in the context of multi-branded package holidays during the holiday planning and booking process."). In the first step, three key tourism sectors

(transport, accommodation, and destination) vastly represented in CBBE research (cf. Appendix A) were considered in the packages. This was done to reduce complexity for the participants and to ensure that they were able to intuitively compare all options at this stage. The underlying pattern followed the inclusion of one negatively associated brand in one tourism sector and two positively associated brands in the other two tourism sectors of the exemplary packages to facilitate differentiated choice options (cf. Figure 10). For example, this resulted in package option 1 including a negatively perceived transport brand alongside a positive accommodation and a positive destination brand, as outlined at the bottom of Figure 10.

Figure 10: Template 2 - Creation of exemplary package holidays (three attributes)

Stage 1

Package no.	Transport	Accommodation	Destination
1			
2			
3			

Instruction on brand allocation

Package no.	Transport	Accommodation	Destination
1	-	+	+
2	+	-	+
3	+	+	-

Note: Own illustration. Brands derived from Template 1. For “+” a strong/ positive brand was included, for “-” a No-Go/ negative brand was included.

Participants were then asked to imagine that they want to book their next summer vacation and were provided with the three exemplary package options. The resulting discussion explored the booking intention across options, discovered the options that participants were most (or least) likely to book, and the reasons behind their choices. Based on their preferred option participants were confronted with extended exemplary package holidays comprising all five types of tourism sectors from (online) travel agency to destination, as presented in Figure 11.

Figure 11: Template 3 - Creation of exemplary package holidays (five attributes)

Stage 2

Package No.	(Online) travel agency	Tour operator	Transport	Accommodation	Destination
1	Expedia.de	alltours			
2	Lastminute.de	TUI			
3	TUI Reisecenter	alltours			

Note: Own illustration. Transport, accommodation, and destination brands were derived from the most popular package holiday in the prior stage 1 and remained the same across all three package options. If (online) travel agency or tour operator brands were mentioned in Template 1, they replaced the default brands inserted by the researcher in the respective categories.

A first pre-test of the interview guideline pointed out the fact that unaided brand awareness in the sectors of (online) travel agency and tour operator might be low, and participants might struggle to recall brands. Therefore, default brands (i.e., brands preselected by the researcher) were included in Template 3 (cf. Figure 11), to ensure continuation of the interview. If participants were able to recall brands in these sectors, the fallback option was replaced by the mentioned brands in the respective sections. Again, the following discussion centred around the booking intention across options and resulted in the identification of the preferred package option.

Part 4: Conclusion

Lastly, participants were asked if they want to add something to the discussion or if something relevant (from their point of view) was not represented therein. To conclude, participants were thanked for their participation and offered a later update on the findings of the study. The complete interview guideline is included in Appendix D.

4.2.5 Research ethics

Ethical standards constitute the foundation of a researcher's conduct, especially, in relation to research participants involved in a specific project during data collection (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). It is generally accepted wisdom, that research-related ethical conduct is characterised by a participant's (1) informed consent, (2) right to withdraw, (3) right to privacy, confidentiality, and anonymity, as well as (4) avoidance of harm (Saunders et al., 2019). These criteria were assessed by the researcher and the

ethics committee of the Department of Marketing (Strathclyde Business School, SBS) before approving the study. At the beginning, all participants received detailed information on the research project, its purpose, and the underlying procedure via the participant information sheet and consent form (cf. Appendix C). Based on this, all participants gave ***informed consent*** and were aware of their ***right to withdraw*** without harm or negative consequences. In the case of withdrawal all respective recordings of the participant would have been destroyed. The ***right to privacy*** was ensured by the de-identification of all gathered data. Therefore, participant identity was only known to the researcher and the assisting students. In addition, all data was securely stored and protected from unauthorised access by using a password-locked computer and locked cabinet for file storage. Lastly, the ***avoidance of harm*** was guaranteed both by the withdrawal option at any given time throughout the interview, and by the attested low-risk setting and environment.

The qualitative study was conducted in accordance with the ethical standards and code of conduct predefined by the University of Strathclyde. A risk assessment and formal application was made to the ethics committee of the Department of Marketing (Strathclyde Business School, SBS), which resultingly approved the qualitative study including in-person interviews and focus groups.

4.2.6 Data analysis

In the first step of data analysis, all audio-recorded interviews were transcribed. Paralanguage statements such as pauses, laughter and repetitions of questions were not included in the transcripts. As this research comprises two languages, namely, English as the written language and German as the language of data collection and analysis, the research procedure required a translation between both languages at some point (Temple & Young, 2004). All interviews and focus groups were held in German, as previously described, as both the researcher and the respondents are native speakers of German. The communication in the mother tongue of the participants as well as the author facilitated a comfortable atmosphere, ease for participants to ask questions (e.g., for clarification purposes), and supported the general level of interaction. Resultingly, the obtained data can be assumed to be as accurate as possible and potential misunderstandings kept at a minimum. In addition, the interviews benefited from a rich exchange based on the use of native expressions without risking to lose the

specific meaning of statements and terms non-existent in the target language English (Müller, 2007).

Subsequently, the German transcripts of interviews were not translated into English prior to data analysis and only selected text passages were translated for their presentation in the following results section concerning Study One to enhance the discussion of results (Temple & Young, 2004). To allow for transparency for potential readers that might be in command of both German and English, the selected text passages in the results section were included both in German and English. Concerning the respective text passages, the author who has studied and lived both in Australia and the United Kingdom relied on her own language skills with regards to translations and data analysis (Chidlow et al., 2014).

In a second step, all transcripts were qualitatively analysed with the assistance of the software-tool NVivo. The process loosely followed Mayring's model of qualitative content analysis (Mayring, 2014; Mayring & Brunner, 2013). All transcripts were coded by allocating relevant participant statements (units of data) to pre-set categories which corresponded to the research objectives and the conceptual model. Thus, the overall category development followed a deductive approach, where categories were pre-specified based on the relevant theory and literature review and followingly the data was matched with them (Saunders et al., 2019). The resulting starting categories were: (1) brand influence, (2) customer-based brand equity (CBBE), (3) tourism sectors, and (4) brands mentioned. The last category had the purpose to discover brands that participants unaidedly recall. The resulting insights of this category are specifically needed for Study Two's bundle development. Table 9 summarises the four main categories and presents a short definition to clarify what was eligible for falling under the respective category.

Table 9: Main categories of coding guideline

Main category	Description
Brand influence	The influence of brands on the customer's booking intention. It can also be related to importance or relevance of brands when a potential traveller compares different travel options. Brand influence ranges from unimportant (low) to very important (high).
CBBE	The value of a brand from the customer's perspective, can be regarded as "the differential effect of brand knowledge on consumer response on the marketing of the brand" (Keller, 1993, p.2).
Tourism sectors	The tourism industry's sub-sector of interest.
Brands mentioned	Brands the participant unaidedly recalls.

Note: Own elaboration.

Subsequently, subcategories were created based on the same deductive approach. Subcategories describe second-order codes, which were required to detail entries and for a nuanced data analysis, for example, to differentiate between dimensions of CBBE and between different tourism sectors (Miles et al., 2019). One additional subcategory, namely, brand aversion, was created inductively based on the data and involves relevant content that did not fit in any of the predefined categories.

For three (sub)categories, further magnitude coding proved useful to indicate the direction (high vs. low, positive vs. negative) of its content. Magnitude describes the manifestation of statements within a (sub)category for example to differentiate if comments on brand influence related to a high or a low influence of the respective brand or if a mentioned brand was described in a positive or negative way (Miles et al., 2019). Magnitude coding helps researchers to clearly label data to find important insights, spot patterns, and understand hidden trends easier based on the direction of the coded content (Silverman, 2020). Table 10 presents the four main categories and their respective subcategories. The complete coding guideline, including definitions for all subcategories and exemplary sentences to match each (sub)category, is included in Appendix E.

Table 10: Subcategories and magnitude categories of coding guideline

Main category	Subcategory	Magnitude category
Brand influence	Individual brands	Low
		High
	Multi-branded bundles	Low
		High
CBBE	Alternative influencing factors	
	Brand aversion*	
	Brand awareness	
	Brand associations	
	Brand loyalty	
	Perceived quality	
	Other proprietary brand assets	
Tourism sectors	Accommodation	
	Destination	
	Tour operator	
	Transport	
	Travel agency	
	Online travel agency	
	Other	
Brands mentioned		Positive
		Negative

Note: Own elaboration. *Inductively created based on the data.

The detailed coding structure allowed not only content analysis but also for simultaneous coding, which describes the allocation of multiple codes to one single unit of data and results in overlapping codes (Miles et al., 2019). Even though this practice is generally recommended to account only for a smaller extent of the overall qualitative analysis, it led to meaningful options of cross-code analyses in this study (Miles et al., 2019). The cross-code analysis, which resulted from filtering simultaneously coded units of data according to their specific and combined codes (e.g., data coded with “brand influence”, “individual brands”, and “accommodation”), was crucial to identify similarities and differences, for example of brand influence across different tourism sectors. To facilitate such differentiated analysis, simultaneous coding was used where applicable.

4.3 Results & Discussion

Study One was set to specifically explore the role of tourism brands regarding the customer's holiday booking choices and booking intention (1) across five individual tourism sectors - (online) travel agency, tour operator, transport, accommodation, destination – as well as in relation to (2) multi-branded package holidays (RO1+2). The subsequent sections present the sample characteristics followed by key results regarding both research objectives.

4.3.1 Sample characteristics

In order to collect a suitable and broad amount of qualitative data, 19 interviews and 3 focus groups were conducted. In total, the study comprised 34 participants who were equally distributed across the three types of usual travel companions: alone/ with friends (n=12), with partner/ spouse (n=11), and with family/ own children (n=11). Table 11 provides an overview of demographics and travel background of the sample.

Table 11: Overview of interviewed travellers

Participant Number	Interview situation	Usual travel companion	Gender	Age (Years)	Last holiday destination
B-I1-1	Individual	A/F	Male	27	France & Spain
B-I1-2	Individual	A/F	Male	25	Czech Republic (Prague) & Japan
B-I1-3	Individual	A/F	Female	23	Spain (Ibiza)
B-I1-4	Individual	A/F	Male	22	Spain (Malaga)
B-I1-5	Individual	A/F	Male	19	England (London)
B-I1-6	Individual	A/F	Female	20	England (Brighton)
B-I1-7	Individual	A/F	Male	24	Italy (Lake Garda)
B-I2-1	Individual	P/S	Female	22	Italy (Florence)
B-I2-2	Individual	P/S	Male	24	Costa Rica & Panama
B-I2-3	Individual	P/S	Female	21	Croatia
B-I2-4	Individual	P/S	Male	20	USA (Florida)
B-I2-5	Individual	P/S	Male	23	Germany (Fleesensee)
B-I2-6	Individual	P/S	Female	22	Jordan
B-I3-1	Individual	F/C	Female	50	Mexico
B-I3-2	Individual	F/C	Female	46	Dubai
B-I3-3	Individual	F/C	Male	37	Mongolia
B-I3-4	Individual	F/C	Male	44	Maldives

B-I3-5	Individual	F/C	Female	39	Spain (Grand Canary)
B-I3-6	Individual	F/C	Female	57	Italy
FG1-B1	Focus Group 1	A/F	Male	23	Turkey (Bodrum)
FG1-B2	Focus Group 1	A/F	Male	22	Netherlands (Amsterdam)
FG1-B3	Focus Group 1	A/F	Female	21	Italy (Rimini)
FG1-B4	Focus Group 1	A/F	Female	21	Spain (Andalusia) & Portugal
FG1-B5	Focus Group 1	A/F	Female	21	China (Shanghai & surroundings)
FG2-B11	Focus Group 2	P/S	Female	22	Cruise (Mediterranean)
FG2-B12	Focus Group 2	P/S	Female	26	Italy
FG2-B13	Focus Group 2	P/S	Male	28	USA (Los Angeles)
FG2-B14	Focus Group 2	P/S	Male	21	Switzerland
FG2-B15	Focus Group 2	P/S	Female	21	France (Nice)
FG3-B10	Focus Group 3	F/C	Female	52	France (South)
FG3-B6	Focus Group 3	F/C	Male	65	Turkey (Antalya) & Cruise (Mediterranean)
FG3-B7	Focus Group 3	F/C	Female	52	Greece (Crete)
FG3-B8	Focus Group 3	F/C	Male	59	France
FG3-B9	Focus Group 3	F/C	Male	39	Italy (Island of Elba)

Note: Author's own. A/F = alone/with friends, P/S = with partner/spouse, F/C = with family/own children.

4.3.2 The role of brands across individual tourism sectors

Regarding the role of brands in their individual holiday booking choices, the interviewed travellers showed a broad consensus across almost all types of tourism sectors. In order to facilitate in-depth insights into differences and similarities between tourism sectors, the results are divided into the six tourism sectors of travel agency, online travel agency, tour operator, transport, accommodation, and destination. This allows for a detailed overview of the results concerning the first research objective:

RO1: To explore how brands influence customers' holiday booking choices across five individual tourism sectors - (online) travel agency, tour operator, transport, accommodation, destination - during the holiday planning and booking process.

As previously indicated, all selected text passages (direct quotations) are included both in German and English for transparency reasons. In addition, the detailed discussion

of Study One's results with regards to the relevant literature can be found in the overall discussion in Chapter 6.

Travel Agency

In the tourism sector of travel agencies, interviewees shared a common stance and agreed on the non-existent role that the travel agency brands play for their holiday choices. Even if they had consulted a travel agency before, they demonstrated low levels of brand awareness and only choose outlets based on the location and/ or prior experiences with the agency.

Ein Reisebüro explizit würde mir nicht einfallen, aber, keine Ahnung, wenn ich an einem Reisebüro vorbeilaufe, da war irgendwie so ein Angebot „499 EUR in die Türkei all inclusive“, dann würde ich, wenn dann so ein Angebot schon fix wäre, dann würde ich dann auch rein gehen.

I don't recall any specific travel agency, but, no idea, if I would walk past a travel agency and there was a promoted offer "499 EUR to Turkey all inclusive", then I would go in if it were a fixed offer. [B-I2-3]

Es ist ein TUI Reisebüro, aber ich bin nicht hingegangen, weil es ein TUI Reisebüro ist, sondern weil es hier in Kissing ist und wir da schon seit 15 Jahren oder so [hingehen]. [...] Aber die Marke TUI... ich wäre da auch hingegangen, wenn es ein Alltours oder was auch immer Reisebüro gewesen wäre.

It's a TUI travel agency, but I didn't go there because it's a TUI travel agency, I went there because it's here in Kissing [German town] and we've been going there for 15 years or so. [...] But the TUI brand... I would have gone there even if it had been an Alltours or whatever travel agency. [B-I2-4]

Lokale Reisebüros einfach. Gut ich habe zwar gesagt die Marke ist mir wichtig und gleichzeitig kann ich dir da nicht mal eine Marke sagen. Das ist ein Widerspruch in sich.

Simply: Local travel agencies. Well, I said the brand is important to me and at the same time I can't even tell you a brand. That is a contradiction in itself.

[B-I3-4]

Das Reisebüro hat das Jahr davor einen guten Job gemacht hat und da sind wir wieder hingegangen.

The travel agency did a good job the year before and that's where we went again. [FG1]

Further, almost all interviewees refrain from using travel agencies as a place to book their holidays. This may be one reason why the data for this tourism sector is not as rich as for most of the other tourism sectors.

Weil es einfach überhaupt nicht zutrifft, also bei uns [...] kommt halt Reisebüro meistens gar nicht in Frage, dass wir da jetzt reingehen. Ich finde es auch irgendwie ein bisschen altmodisch, muss ich ganz ehrlich sagen.

Because it simply doesn't apply at all. At least for us [...] travel agencies are usually out of the question [...]. I find it somehow a bit old-fashioned, I have to say quite honestly. [B-I1-2]

Ich muss sagen ich buche nicht über Reisebüros und im Endeffekt wüsste ich jetzt gar keine wirkliche Marke außer jetzt sowas wie TUI.

I have to say I don't book through travel agencies and in the end, I don't know any real brand except something like TUI. [B-I1-3]

Ich war persönlich noch nie in einem Reisebüro. [...] Also erscheint mir das sehr unwichtig.

Personally, I have never been in a travel agency. [...] So, it seems very unimportant to me. [B-I1-6]

Die sieht man ja immer noch an jeder Ecke. Und ich frag mich immer [...], also ich weiß meine Oma bucht übers Reisebüro.

You still see them on every corner. And I always ask myself [...], I know my grandmother books through a travel agency. [FG2]

Based on the interviewed travellers' comments, it can be derived that travel agency brands do not play a major role in the customer's holiday booking choices. In addition, most of the sample has never consulted travel agencies and does not consider using them in the future.

Online Travel Agency

In contrast to the sector of travel agencies, all participants deemed the brand of online travel agencies as an important aspect when booking a holiday. Many highlighted that brands minimise their perceived level of uncertainty and make them trust in the actual provision of the booked services. Many statements can be related to brand associations and perceived quality.

Also was Flüge betrifft, mag ich Skyscanner am allerliebsten. Ich schau in Zukunft nicht wo anders, weil irgendwie alles finde ich im Vergleich schlechter. Ehm, und für Hotels schaue ich eigentlich immer bei Booking.

As far as flights are concerned, I like Skyscanner best. I don't look anywhere else in the future, because somehow, I find everything worse in comparison. For hotels, I always look at Booking. [FG2]

Also, ich würde immer Booking.com präferieren.

I would always prefer Booking.com. [FG3]

Natürlich, Airbnb oder Booking.com ist eine Marke. Weil ich sie verwende, [sind sie] mir wichtig, damit kann ich umgehen. Aber letztendlich ist das Entscheidende, was die Marke mir dann auch anbietet.

Of course, Airbnb or Booking.com is a brand. Because I use them, they are important to me, I can deal with that [know how to use the site]. But at the end of the day, what matters is what the brand offers me. [FG3]

Naja, also eigentlich ist es ja so, wenn man an Unterkunft mieten denkt schießt einem ja sofort Airbnb in den Kopf, und dann haben wir natürlich dort geschaut.

Well, actually, it's like this: when you think of renting an accommodation AirBnB directly comes to your mind, and then of course we looked there. [B-I1-3]

Man weiß ja auch irgendwie, wenn man jetzt über zum Beispiel Booking.com gebucht hat oder Expedia, es ist wirklich dort und man kann sich auch darauf verlassen und darauf vertrauen. Ich glaube das Schlimmste ist eine Buchungsseite zu haben, die man nicht kennt und im Endeffekt klappt das alles nicht.

You simply know, if you have booked via Booking.com or Expedia, for example, it [the accommodation] really exists. You can also rely on it and trust it. I think the worst thing is to have a booking site that you don't know, and, in the end, everything doesn't work out. [B-I1-3]

Ja, da finde ich es schon viel wichtiger, dass ich die Seite kenne, z.B. Trivago, da fühle ich mich viel sicherer, wenn ich die Seite kenne.

Yes, I find it much more important that I know the site, for example Trivago, I feel much safer when I know the site. [B-I1-5]

Ich liebe halt Airbnb irgendwie.

I kind of love Airbnb. [B-I2-3]

Es ist einfach wichtig, dass man da jetzt nicht bei wem auch immer bestellt, sondern vielleicht seriöse oder große Portale, da ist einfach die Sicherheit größer.

It is simply important that you do not book with whomever, but perhaps reputable or large online portals, because the security is simply greater. [B-I2-4]

Das ist sehr wichtig für mich, dass die Seiten bekannt sind, dass die vertrauensserweckend sind, dass ich ein Gefühl der Sicherheit habe, dass ich nicht betrogen werde, dass mein Geld gut angelegt ist, dass die Bilder echt sind.

That's very important for me, that the sites are known, that they inspire confidence, that I have a feeling of security, that I'm not being scammed, that my money is well spent, that the pictures are real. [B-I3-2]

Sehr wichtig, weil die Marke besonders im Internet Vertrauenswürdigkeit [bringt]. Also ich würde nie auf einer Seite buchen, die ich nie gehört habe. Selbst wenn sie super seriös ist und super Angebote hat, dann denkst du besonders im Internet: "ja keine Ahnung, die sitzen auf den Cayman Islands oder sonst wo oder [es gibt] keine Beschwerdeline". Bestell ich nicht. Also dann, wenn ich im Internet bestelle, dann bestelle ich bei Booking.com oder Opodo, weil das die Marken sind, die einfach für mich bekannt sind und da hast du nie Probleme mit denen.

Very important because the brand brings trustworthiness, especially on the internet. So, I would never book on a site that I've never heard of. Even if it's super professional and has super offers, then especially on the Internet you think, "yeah, I don't know, they're sitting on the Cayman Islands or somewhere or there's no complaint hotline." I don't book [there]. So, when I book via the Internet, I book with Booking.com or Opodo, because those are the brands that are simply known to me, and you never have problems with them. [B-I3-4]

In addition, individual participants point out that they are very loyal to certain online travel agencies because of their unique added value, for example in terms of usability or loyalty programmes.

Ja, da suche ich immer auf Booking, wie es bewertet ist usw. sieht man dort dann immer. Aus dem Grund wäre es mir dann wichtig auf so einer Seite wie Booking zu suchen, weil die Referenzen dort meistens auch stimmen.

I always search on Booking; you can always check how it [the hotel] is rated and so on. For this reason, it would be important to me to search on a site like Booking, because the reviews there are usually true. [B-I2-1]

Flüge suche ich meistens über Google Flights, weil man es dort immer am besten sieht. Es gibt verschiedene Graphikansichten oder ein Viereck mit den

Tagen, an denen es am günstigsten ist. Deswegen finde ich das am besten und günstigsten bei Flügen.

I usually search for flights via Google Flights because it has the best visualisation. There are different graphic indicators or a square with the days when it is cheapest. That's why I find that the best and cheapest for flights.

[B-I2-2]

Ich sag jetzt mal Flixbus oder so kriegt man als Student halt Rabatte oder bei Booking.com, wenn man halt immer wieder darüber bucht, dann wird es ja auch immer günstiger, dann bekommt man Mögliche, späten Check-In oder was weiß ich.

For example, with Flixbus you get student discounts, or on Booking.com, if you just book with them again and again, then it is always cheaper, then you get additional options, such as late check-in etc. [FG1]

Lastly, some participants refer to past experiences. If those were good, they tend to book with a certain online travel agency again, whereas bad experiences result in a rejection of the respective brand.

Ich habe über Hostelworld gebucht, die habe ich auch schon öfters benutzt, weil es eine gute Seite ist, um Hostels zu finden.

I booked through Hostelworld. I have used them many times because it is a good site to find hostels. [FG1]

Bei mir war es so ich habe echt eine schlechte Erfahrung gemacht mit AirBnB. Wir haben damals ein Haus gebucht aber haben dann eine E-Mail bekommen, dass es ein Betrug war. Da wurden tausend Euro von uns abgezogen. Und seitdem nie mehr mit Airbnb. Da sind eben viele, viele private Anbieter, deswegen. Ich würde nicht mehr über Airbnb buchen.

I had a really bad experience with AirBnB. We booked a house but then got an email that it was a scam. Still, we were charged one thousand euros. And since then, never again with Airbnb. There are just many, many private providers, that's why. I would no longer book through Airbnb. [FG1]

[Es gibt] einfach gewisse Seiten, mit denen ich gute Erfahrungen gemacht habe und es Seiten gibt, mit denen ich nicht so gute Erfahrungen gemacht habe und somit natürlich definitiv die Relevanz gestiegen ist.

There are certain sites that I've had good experiences with and there are sites that I haven't had such good experiences with, so of course the relevance [of the brand] has definitely increased. [B-I2-5]

To summarise, the online travel agency brand plays a relevant role in the respondent's travel-related booking choices. It stands out, that the brand's influence differs a lot between online travel agencies (of which the brand is relevant to the customer) and traditional travel agencies (of which the brand was found to be rather irrelevant to most customers), even though both types of travel agencies (online and offline) provide comparable services to the customer.

Tour Operator

Most participants do not attribute a major role to tour operator brands. They demonstrate a matter-of-fact attitude towards this industry sector and point out that the offers of various tour operators are rather undifferentiated. Resultingly, the interviewees generally do not identify unique levels of perceived quality.

Na gut, also Reiseveranstalter. [unv.] Irgendjemand veranstaltet die Reise, sonst kommen Sie nicht weg. Mir ist egal wer das ist, Hauptsache das, was ich will, ist da dabei.

All right then, tour operator. Someone is organising the trip, otherwise you won't get away. I don't care who it is, the main thing is that I get what I want. [FG3]

Schon wieder kenne ich keine Reiseveranstalter und das ist mir wirklich nicht wichtig.

I don't know any tour operators and I really don't care. [B-I1-5]

Generell würde es beim Reiseveranstalter dann darauf ankommen, was geboten ist. Aber ansonsten ist es [die Marke] mir nicht wirklich wichtig,

außer dass ich auf den Preis oder evtl. wie sie mit Tieren umgehen oder den Ruf achten würde.

In general, concerning a tour operator it depends on what they offer. But apart from that, it [the brand] is not really important to me, except that I would pay attention to the price or maybe how they treat animals or their reputation. [B-I2-2]

Wir sind schon mit Alltours geflogen, wir sind schon mit 1, 2, 3 geflogen, wir sind schon mit DERTOUR geflogen, wir sind schon mit Neckermann geflogen, das hat sich jetzt alles nicht so groß unterschieden. Deswegen für mich, [...] macht das jetzt nicht so den Unterschied.

We've already booked with Alltours, we've already booked with 1, 2, 3, we've already booked with DERTOUR, we've already booked with Neckermann, it doesn't make that much difference. So, for me, [...] it doesn't make that much of a difference. [B-I2-4]

Es ist mir eigentlich egal, wer alle diese pauschalen Reisen organisiert. Ich kenne das Reisebüro und um ehrlich zu sein, ist es mir egal, wer das organisiert.

I don't really care who organises all these package holidays. I know the travel agency and, to be honest, I don't care who organises it. [B-I3-1]

Reiseveranstalter ist mir unwichtig, weil ich da außer Thomas Cook gar keinen anderen nennen könnte.

The tour operator is unimportant to me because I could not name any, except Thomas Cook. [B-I3-4]

However, there are individual participants opposed to the previously outlined perspective. This mainly relates to special interest holidays⁴ and partly results from the bankruptcy of Thomas Cook, which received a lot of media coverage in the time before

⁴ Special interest holidays are a generic term for holidays for people with particular interests, such as arts, education, various hobbies, sports and outdoor activities (Medlik, 2011, p.154).

this study took place. The statements in this section refer to an increased consideration of a brand's awareness, perceived quality, and associations.

Aber da wäre mir einfach nur wichtig, dass der Reiseveranstalter ja, dass der halbwegs seriös ist oder man den zumindest mal gehört hat, ums mal so zu formulieren. Man sollte es mal gehört haben, dann ist es eigentlich ok. Die Marke insofern nur wichtig, dass es irgendeine Marke ist.

It would only be important to me that the tour operator is halfway serious or that I have at least heard of it, to put it that way. Then it is actually okay. The brand matters only up to the point that it is in fact a recognisable brand. [B-I2-4]

Wenn der Reiseveranstalter gut ist, dann wird auch die Reise höchstwahrscheinlich gut werden. Also dann sieht man tolle Sachen, sieht man das Wichtigste, was man sehen muss.

If the tour operator is good, then the trip will most likely be good. So, then you see great things, you see the most important things you need to see. [B-I2-6]

[Wir reisen] viel mit Radreisen also da kommt es tatsächlich stark auf die Reiseveranstalter an, dass sie da gute Angebote haben. Die machen auch Kinder- und Familienreisen. Das ist vielleicht auch für Sie interessant, da machen wir zum Beispiel sehr viel über Pedalo Reisen.

We do a lot of bike tours; there it really depends on the tour operators and that they have good offers. They also do children's and family trips. That might also be interesting for you, because we book a lot through Pedalo Reisen, for example. [B-I3-6]

Ich habe zum Beispiel eine Sprachreise mit einer Sprachschule gemacht, das habe ich mit EF [Education First] gemacht und da war mir das irgendwie voll wichtig, dass der Reiseführer, also der Reiseveranstalter kompetent rüberkommt. Und ich fand das voll beeindruckend, ich habe da viel verglichen und ich fand echt die haben das mit Abstand am besten vom Marketing her gemacht.

For example, I did a language trip with a language school, I did it with EF [Education First], and it was really important to me that the tour guide, the tour operator, came across as competent. And I found that very impressive, I compared a lot and I really thought they did the best marketing by far. [B-I2-3]

Naja, wenn man zum Beispiel einen guten Reiseveranstalter hat, wie jetzt angenommen sowas wie TUI, weiß man, man kommt ans Ziel, und wenn man jetzt betrachtet, zum Beispiel Thomas Cook, die Leute kamen nicht mehr weg. Also ich glaube jetzt zwar nicht, dass es so negativ belegt war davor aber ich glaube durch sowas merkt man schon eigentlich wie wichtig das ist, da drauf aufzupassen, weil im Endeffekt steht man dann in einem Land und kommt nicht mehr raus.

Well, if you have a good tour operator, for example, like TUI, you know you'll get to your destination, and if you look at Thomas Cook, for example, people couldn't get away. So, I don't think that it was perceived so negatively before, but I think through something like that you actually realize how important it is to watch out for it, because in the end you're in a country and you can't get out. [B-I1-3]

Wäre ganz cool, wenn sie nicht pleitegehen, während ich im Urlaub bin aber das jetzt eben eher, auch weil das Thema jetzt gerade aktuell ist, aber vorher wäre ich jetzt nicht auf das Thema gekommen. Jetzt würde ich vielleicht ein bisschen aufpassen wo ich buche und inwieweit das eventuell eine Tochter von Thomas Cook ist oder so.

Would be quite cool if they do not go bankrupt while I'm on vacation, but that just came up because the topic is still very present at the moment. Otherwise, I would never have thought of this. Now I would perhaps watch out where I book and to what extent that is possibly a subsidiary of Thomas Cook or so. [FG1]

In consequence, it seems that the role of the tour operator brand is rather small. Nevertheless, this tourism sector is the only sector in which differences based on the

segmentation criterion usual travel companion can be reported. Whereas statements of participants associated with travelling alone/ with friends as well as those travelling with their family tend to point to a subordinate role of brands in this sector, the segment of persons travelling with their partner/ spouse is rather undecided on the role of tour operator brands. Overall, it can be derived that crises (such as the Thomas Cook bankruptcy) and special interest travel potentially favour a rise of attention on tour operator brands.

Transport

The majority of interviewees attribute a high relevance to the transport-related brand, for example airlines or bus operators. Most state safety of travel as one of the main concerns. The statements are associated with brand awareness, associations, and perceived quality.

Die Lufthansa ist wie Tempo für Taschentücher. Die Lufthansa für Fliegen.

Lufthansa is like Tempo representing handkerchiefs. Lufthansa represents flying. [FG3]

Ich fliege lieber mit bekannten Fluglinien, in dem Fall war es Lufthansa und das war für mich wichtig.

I prefer to fly with well-known airlines, in this case it was Lufthansa and that was important for me. [B-I3-1]

Aber das ist schon ganz klar die Marke. Sicherheit und das ist gerade beim Fliegen natürlich ein besonderes Bedürfnis. [...] Für mich bürgt dieser Name, diese Marke, tatsächlich für Sicherheit.

That is quite clearly the brand. Safety, and that is of course a particular need when flying. [...] For me, this name, this brand, really does guarantee safety. [FG3]

Diese No-Names. Mir fällt jetzt der Name nicht ein. Ich hatte den Namen auch noch nie gehört und sofort wieder vergessen. [...] Das wurde als Flug angeboten, du konntest weder sehen, haben die eigene Maschinen oder was ist es eigentlich genau [...] ganz merkwürdig [...] Das würde ich nie buchen,

wenn ich nicht weiß, was es ist. Das geht nicht. Ich zahle jetzt mit Sicherheit viel zu viel, aber da fühle ich mich dann besser.

These no-names. I can't think of the name now. I had never heard the name and immediately forgotten again. [...] That was offered as a flight, you could neither see, do they have their own machines or what is it exactly [...] quite strange [...] I would never book that if I don't know what it is. I can't. For sure, I now pay way too much, but that makes me feel better. [FG3]

Bei mir liegt es daran, dass wenn ich weiß, dass es eine unangenehme Anreise wird, dann komme ich unentspannt im Urlaub an. Und dann ist eigentlich schon der halbe Urlaub gelaufen. [...] Vielleicht auch weil da der Sicherheitsaspekt mit dabei ist. Also gerade beim Flugzeug oder so. Und ich ja schon eigentlich will, dass da alles sicher ist.

For me, it's because if I know it's going to be an unpleasant journey, then I arrive at the vacation unrelaxed. And then half of the vacation is already ruined. [...] Maybe also because the safety aspect is involved. Especially with airplanes or something like that. And I actually want everything to be safe. [FG2]

Ich bin bei Airlines sehr vorsichtig, weil ich Flugangst habe und deswegen buche ich fast nur Lufthansa damit ich keine Panik bekommen.

I am very cautious with airlines because I have a fear of flying and, therefore, I book almost only Lufthansa so that I do not panic. [FG1]

Ich schau schon immer so nach den typischen Seiten, wie Lufthansa. Erst einmal so das, was man kennt, Und ja, wenn es dann nicht zufriedenstellend ist, dann schau ich mal weiter.

I always look for the typical providers, like Lufthansa. First, those you know, and yes if it is not satisfactory, then I look further. [FG2]

Ich würde jetzt nicht bei irgendeinem Busunternehmen buchen, das ich noch nie gehört habe. Wenn ich Flixbus schon kenne.

I would not book with any bus company that I have never heard of, if I already know Flixbus. [FG1]

Sobald ich bekannte Marken sehe, wie Flixbus, dann stoppe ich und vergleiche gar nicht mehr. Weil ich eben weiß, dass Flixbus da irgendwo die Kosten-Führerschaft hat. Und [ich] gute Erfahrungen damit habe und dann schaue ich auch nicht weiter, dann nehme ich diese Marke, die ich schon kenne. Genau darum, glaube ich, ist es sehr wichtig.

As soon as I see well-known brands like Flixbus, I stop and compare no longer. Because I know that Flixbus is the cost leader. And I have good experience with it and then I don't look any further, then I take this brand that I already know. That's why I think it's very important. [FG1]

Es ist eine Frage der Sicherheit, also wegen der Airline, wenn ich mit Ryanair fliege, habe ich schon oft gehört, dass es nicht gerade perfekt ist, aber mit Lufthansa oder Emirates da fühle ich mich viel sicherer und besser.

It is a question of safety concerning the airline: when I fly with Ryanair, I have often heard that it is not exactly perfect, but with Lufthansa or Emirates I feel much safer and better. [B-I1-5]

Zum Beispiel Air Canada ist ja auch Star Alliance Member, das ist sicher auch nicht verkehrt. Also da dachte ich mir, als ich das Angebot gesehen hab, zu einem akzeptablen Preis und auch noch bei einem Star Alliance Member, da war sozusagen die Marke das entscheidende Kriterium, dass man sagt, ja ok, das nehme ich. Bei einem anderen hätte ich vielleicht noch länger überlegt, ob es das wert ist [...]. Aber bei einem Star Alliance Member, wenn das der günstigste Preis ist, dann macht man das natürlich.

Air Canada, for example, is a Star Alliance member, which is certainly not wrong. So, when I saw the offer at an acceptable price and from a Star Alliance member, I thought the brand was the decisive criterion, so to speak, that I said, “yes, okay, I'll take it”. With another [airline], I might have thought longer about whether it was worth it [...]. But with a Star Alliance member, if that's the cheapest price, then of course you do that. [B-I2-4]

Individual participants point out the influence of travel distance on the role of the transport brand. They state that the longer the distance to be covered, the higher the brand relevance in this tourism sector.

Zum Beispiel bei Langstreckenflügen, hier ist es mir jetzt eher wichtig, dass ich mit einer Airline fliege, der ich vertraue, mit der ich gute Erfahrungen gemacht habe, als wenn ich jetzt nur zwei Stunden im Flieger sitze. Dass ich auch weiß, dass mein Gepäck auch wirklich ankommt und so weiter.

For example, on long-haul flights, it is more important to me that I fly with an airline that I trust, with which I have had good experiences, than if I am only two hours on the plane. That I also know that my luggage will really arrive and so on. [FG1]

Bei so Langstreckenflügen schon, halt schauen, dass man irgendwie mit jemandem [unterwegs] ist, wo der Service gut ist, weil dann ist einfach die Zeit im Flugzeug einfach deutlich länger. Also das ist dann lang genug, dass ich sage, ok das ist es mir Wert, dass das irgendwie jemand Gescheites ist.

On long-haul flights, yes, you want to make sure that you're with someone where the service is good, because the time on the plane is significantly longer. So that's long enough for me to say, "Okay, that's worth it to me", that this is someone good. [B-I1-1]

Die Marke ist mir unwichtig. Also z.B., wenn ich nach Amerika fliege, ist es mir schon wichtig. Wenn ich jetzt aber nach Berlin fliege oder mit dem Bus fahre, ist es mir nicht so wichtig. Da muss man bisschen unterscheiden. Also für Langstrecken wäre es mir wichtig, dass ich eine gute Fluggesellschaft habe.

The brand is unimportant to me. So, for example, when I fly to America, it is important to me. But when I fly to Berlin or take the bus, it's not so important to me. You have to differentiate a bit. So, for long-haul flights, it would be important for me to have a good airline. [B-I2-1]

Other persons highlight that they are willing to pay a price-premium for a transport service by a renowned brand.

Ja, weil dann meistens auch ein Leistungsversprechen [mit der Marke] verbunden ist, also Servicefreundlichkeit, geht schonmal los das du am Terminal einsteigen kannst und nicht mit einem Bus so aufs Rollfeld fährst. Ja, deswegen buche ich die ganzen Billigheimer nicht, weil mich das nervt ohne Ende. Du kriegst eine Zeitung mit dazu, diese Marken haben dann häufig auch ein Leistungsversprechen dahinter. Ein Getränk umsonst und dann ist es auch wurscht, wenn ein Flug 50 oder 100 Euro mehr kostet. Also, mir zumindest.

Usually, a certain service level is connected to the brand. Serviceability starts when you board the plane via the terminal and not with a bus. That's why I don't book all the cheap airlines because it annoys me to no end. You get a newspaper with it; these brands then often have a value proposition behind it. A drink for free and then, at least for me, it does not matter if a flight costs 50 or 100 euros more. [B-I3-4]

Also wenn ich jetzt die Möglichkeit habe einen Lufthansa Flug zu bekommen, und zahle 30 oder 40 Euro mehr als für EasyJet, Ryanair oder Vueling, würde ich immer definitiv die Marke wählen.

If I have the opportunity to get a Lufthansa flight and pay 30 or 40 euros more than for EasyJet, Ryanair or Vueling, I would always and definitely choose that brand. [B-I1-3]

As reported in other tourism sectors before, some participants refer to past experiences with exemplary transport brands and how these experiences shape their future holiday booking choices in a positive or negative way. Most statements relate to brand loyalty.

Ich würde als erstes immer bei Flixbus gucken, ob es diese Strecke, die ich suche, da gibt, weil die einfach das größere Angebot haben. Und erst wenn ich Sie dann nicht finde, dann würde ich vielleicht woanders gucken. Ich würde dann wahrscheinlich erst auf was ganz anderes erst gehen, wenn ich gesehen habe bei Flixbus gibt's das einfach nicht. Aber für gewöhnlich gibts das halt bei Flixbus.

First, I would always look at Flixbus, whether they offer the route I'm looking for, because they simply have the larger offer. And only if I do not find it there, then I would maybe look somewhere else. I would probably go to something completely different only when I saw they don't have it at Flixbus. But usually, they have it at Flixbus. [FG1]

Ich finde es schon sehr wichtig. Ich habe positive und negative Erfahrungen gemacht eigentlich, zum Beispiel mit Lufthansa immer sehr positiv. Zum Beispiel British Airways kann ich nicht empfehlen.

I think it's [the brand] very important. I have made both positive and negative experiences. For example, with Lufthansa always very positive. For example, British Airways I cannot recommend. [FG2]

Ich buche am liebsten bei Lufthansa. Da habe ich die besten Erfahrungen gemacht.

I prefer to book with Lufthansa. There I have made the best experiences. [FG3]

Ich würde sagen, bei der in Deutschland mit der Bahn hat man nicht so die große Auswahl aber gerade bei den Airlines kann man sich das natürlich auch ein bisschen aussuchen und da entwickelt man nach Jahren seine Favoriten.

I would say, with trains in Germany you don't have much choice but especially with airlines you can of course choose a bit and there you develop your favourites in the course of time. [B-I2-5]

Beim Billigflieger habe ich immer den Eindruck wie so eine Buslinie, der es total egal ist, ob ich dasitze oder nicht. Die schubsen dich hin- und her. Und ich denke bei Lufthansa die sind schon ein bisschen freundlicher. Finde ich schon. Bisschen mehr Service.

With budget airlines, I always have the impression of a bus line that doesn't care whether I'm sitting there or not. They push you back and forth. And I

think with Lufthansa they are a bit friendlier. I think so. A bit more service.

[B-I3-5]

Overall, the results demonstrate that the transport brand plays a key role in the customer's holiday booking choices. The participants especially relate this relevance to the perceived safety and/or service quality and point out that the factor of travel distance is connected to the role of brands within this tourism sector.

Accommodation

The tourism sector of accommodation was found to be the only sector in which participants were strongly divided based on the role of brands when making choices between different tourism offerings, for example in relation to hotel bookings. On the one hand side, many deemed the influence and relevance of brands high. The statements include references to brand awareness and perceived quality.

[...], wenn ich jetzt irgendwo hinfahre und dann ist da einmal das Hilton Hotel beispielsweise als Marke, das mir irgendwas sagt und auch für Qualität steht, und daneben ein anderes Hotel, das ich noch nie gehört habe und die kommen beide in Frage, dann würde ich mich für wahrscheinlich die Marke entscheiden.

[...] if I go somewhere and then there is a Hilton hotel, for example, as a brand that I have heard of and that also stands for quality, and next to it another hotel that I have never heard of [...], then I would probably choose the brand. [FG3]

Das Hotel ja, das Hotel ist sehr wichtig und wenn ich irgendwo verreise, wo ich mich natürlich nicht so gut auskenne, dann ist es natürlich wichtig, dass das Hotel vielleicht eine gute Marke ist.

The hotel, yes, the hotel is very important and if I'm traveling somewhere I don't know my way around, then of course it's important that the hotel is maybe of good brand. [B-I3-2]

Naja, man hat ja, wenn man in den Urlaub fährt sehr hohe Erwartungen eigentlich, wenn man sich die Zeit nimmt und das Geld aufwendet, und ich

finde, wenn man halt einen guten Namen wählt, womit schon viele Leute gute Erfahrung gemacht haben, [...] welche sehr positiv belegt sind, macht das doch schon nochmal einen deutlichen Unterschied. Ich glaube jeder der in den Robinson Club fährt weiß, dass es was Gutes ist, oder jetzt das einfach nur als Beispiel, aber definitiv, also auch bei Hotels.

Well, you have very high expectations when you go on vacation, actually, if you take the time and spend the money. I think if you choose a good name, with which many people have already made good experiences, [...] which are regarded positively, that makes a clear difference. I think everyone who goes to Robinson Club knows that it's something good. [B-I1-3]

Also ich meine, wenn es ein ganz, ganz billiges Hotel oder sowas ist, also ich habe jetzt keine Marke oder so. Wenn es generell super, super billig ist, dann weiß ich nicht ob ich unbedingt [buchen würde]. Da hätte ich zu große Angst, dass da irgendwie Kakerlaken im Bad sind.

So, I mean, if it's a really, really cheap hotel, and I don't have a brand or anything. If it's generally super, super cheap, then I don't know if I [would book] necessarily. I would be too afraid that there would be cockroaches in the bathroom. [B-I1-6]

Ob es jetzt ein Hilton ist oder ob es ein Novotel ist oder Anantara. Da weißt du einfach das eine gewisse Mindestqualität immer drinsteckt. Es gibt natürlich Unterschiede, aber du weißt einfach die haben ihre Levels und die halten sie einfach knallhart ein oder Magic Life oder Robinson Club. Du weißt eigentlich ist es völlig [Schimpfwort entfernt] egal in welchen Robinson Club du gehst, du weißt immer es passt überall. Den einzigen Unterschied macht dann die Umgebung aus.

Whether it's Hilton, or Novotel, or Anantara. You just know that there is always a certain minimum quality. There are differences, of course, but you just know that they have their standards, and they just stick to them, or Magic Life, or Robinson Club. You know, it doesn't really matter which Robinson

Club you go to; you always know it [the service level] fits everywhere. The only difference is the environment. [B-I3-4]

Ich glaube es [ist] schon wichtig, dass wenn man im Urlaub ist [...] manche Marken, vor allem bei Hotelketten.

I think brands are important when you're on vacation, especially hotel chains. [B-I3-5]

Interestingly, many participants do not mention the term brand, even though they were clearly asked for the role of brands. They rather refer to hotel chains, which are one type of branded accommodation, and especially value their consistent standard of service provision which related to perceived quality.

Ja, weil wenn es natürlich Hotels gibt, dann bevorzuge ich persönlich eher Hotelketten. Also weil man davon ausgehen kann, dass die halt ihre Standards haben und die halt auch erfüllen.

I personally prefer hotel chains, because you can assume that they have their standards and meet them. [B-I1-2]

Also auf manche großen Ketten kann man sich halt irgendwie verlassen. Da weißt du das ist immer, das ist jetzt nichts Besonderes, das ist immer gleicher Standard.

So, you can kind of rely on some of the big [hotel] chains. You know that it's always the same, it's nothing special, it's always the same standard. [B-I1-1]

Ganz allgemein, wenn man so an größere Hotelkette denkt, ist es manchmal ganz praktisch, wenn man weiß auf welchem Niveaustandard, dass man sich ungefähr verlassen kann. Also, man weiß zumindest was einen erwartet.

In general, when you think of larger hotel chains, it is sometimes quite practical if you know which level of standard you can approximately expect. So, you know at least what is to be expected. [B-I1-7]

[...] Oder ein Holiday Inn Hotel und da fühlt man sich einfach besser, weil man denkt, dass es auf der ganzen Welt die gleichen Kategorien sind und

dass, wenn man das von München kennt, es dann in Dubai genauso gut ist, und deshalb wähle ich lieber die bekannten Ketten.

[...] Or a Holiday Inn hotel and there you just feel better because you think that it's the same categories all over the world and that if you know that from Munich, then it's just as good in Dubai and that's why I prefer to choose the well-known chains. [B-I3-2]

Often, those participants demonstrating high levels of brand relevance point out positive past experiences (of themselves or their peers) and, thus, brand loyalty.

Wenn ich zwei [Hotels] im Angebot habe wo ich [weiß], das eine Hotel gehört zu der Hotel-Kette und ich habe da schon mal gute Erfahrungen gemacht, dann werde ich eher das buchen.

If I have two on offer where one hotel belongs to the hotel chain and I've had good experiences there before, then I'm more likely to book that. [FG3]

Wenn du da [Robinson Club] mal warst, dann warst du da und kannst dir eigentlich sicher sein, dass egal wo das ist, das auch wieder ein guter Urlaub wird.

If you've been there [Robinson Club] once, [...] you can actually be sure that no matter where it is, that's going to be another good vacation. [FG2]

As primarily pointed out, on the other hand, there are many participants who do not perceive the accommodation brand as crucial.

Unwichtig, weil ich mich schlicht und einfach nicht daran erinnern kann von welcher Marke meine Unterkunft kam. Das war mir eigentlich ziemlich egal. Ich habe das einfach über die Online-Plattform gebucht. Welches Hostel das wirklich war, weiß ich gar nicht.

Unimportant, because I simply cannot remember from which brand my accommodation was. That was actually quite irrelevant to me. I just booked it through the online platform. I don't know which hostel it really was. [FG1]

Also klar, [...] man will, dass es ordentlich und sauber ist. Aber die Marke spielt da nicht so eine große Rolle, sondern eher die Bewertungen.

Sure, [...] you want it to be neat and clean. But the brand doesn't play such a big role, rather the reviews. [FG2]

Mir ist es nicht so wichtig. Ich erinnere mich auch nicht mehr daran, wie das Hotel hieß, wo ich dann geschlafen hab, weil es war alles in Ordnung. Ich glaube, wenn ich eine negative Erfahrung damit gemacht hätte, dass ich es mir eher gemerkt [hätte].

It is not so important to me. Also, I don't remember what the name of the hotel was [...] because everything was fine. I think if I would have had a negative experience with it, then I would probably remember it. [FG1]

Allgemein würde ich aber eher sagen, dass es [die Marke] mir weniger wichtig ist, weil ich guck eigentlich, welches Angebot das Beste ist.

In general, I would say that [the accommodation brand] is less important to me, because I actually look at which offer is best. [FG2]

Generell schaue ich nicht wirklich drauf. Ganz ehrlich [...], eher wie bewerten das andere. Was ist dabei, wo liegt das. Fotos wie sie aussehen, Meerzugang dabei und so weiter und so fort.

In general, I don't really look at it [hotel brand]. Honestly [...], rather how do others evaluate it, what's included, where is it located. What do the pictures look like, sea access, and so on and so forth. [FG1]

Die Marke ist mir hierbei nicht so wichtig. Hauptsache es ist gepflegt und sauber. Es kann von mir aus auch gerne eine kleine Pension sein, wenn es gemütlich ist.

The brand is not so important to me. The main thing is that it is neat and clean. It can also be a small guesthouse if it is cozy. [B-I2-1]

Die Marke der Unterkunft oder vom Hotel ist mir egal.

I don't care about the brand of the accommodation or the hotel. [B-I2-2]

Die Marke ist mir eigentlich nicht so wichtig. Mir ist wichtig, dass das alles passt.

The brand is actually not that important to me. For me, it's important that everything fits. [B-I3-4]

Some participants of this group (that does not pay attention to accommodation brands) refer to hotel chains as well. For them, a hotel's association with a renowned hotel chain does not influence their booking choices. Moreover, some are even averse to brands based on their individual brand associations.

Also allein [fahre ich] eher in Hotels, die nicht zu irgendeiner großen Kette gehören. Und wo ich meistens dann nach einem Urlaub mich auch nicht an die Namen erinnere außer es war eine negative Erfahrung. [...] Wenn es in Ordnung war, würde ich da eventuell ja wieder hinfahren. Da brauche ich den Namen nicht unbedingt merken, weil dann [ist] es ja nicht problematisch, wenn ich aus Versehen wieder dort lande.

I tend to stay in hotels that don't belong to any big chain. And I usually do not remember the names after a vacation unless it was a negative experience. [...] If it [the experience] was okay, I would possibly go there again. I don't necessarily need to remember the name, because then it wouldn't be a problem if I accidentally ended up there again. [FG1]

Wenn ich jetzt in die Steiermark oder nach Südtirol fahre, schaue ich vielleicht lieber, dass ich ein familiengeführtes Unternehmen habe, wo jetzt nicht irgendeine Marke ist.

If I go for example to Styria or South Tyrol, I might prefer to make sure to choose a family-run company [hotel] that does not belong to any brand. [FG1]

Deswegen spielt das für mich zum Beispiel überhaupt keine Rolle. Ganz im Gegenteil, überhaupt keine Rolle! Gerade bei Hotels sind ja oft die, die eben nicht zu einer Kette gehören die charmantesten. Das ist das, was mich jetzt vielmehr reizt.

That's why it doesn't matter to me at all, for example. Quite the opposite, no role at all! Especially with hotels, those that do not belong to a chain are often the most charming ones. That's what appeals to me now. [FG3]

Klar, es gibt Marken, die sagen einem was. Also in Amerika Best Western oder diese Holiday Inn, das sind so große Ketten, die da rumschwirren. Und mein einziger [Gedanke] war, ahja, die kennt man so ungefähr und man merkt, dass das irgendwie ähnlich ist zu den ganzen anderen. Aber im Großen und Ganzen ist es kein Fokus, ich such eher was gut liegt, der Preis, was schön aussieht. Und ob da dann Best Western davorsteht oder nicht, ist mir dann egal.

Of course, there are brands that tell you something. In the US, Best Western or Holiday Inn, those are the big chains that are buzzing around. And my only [thought] was, ah, well you know them roughly and you realize that this is somehow similar to all the others. But in total, it's not a focus, I'm looking more for what's well located, the price, what looks nice. And I don't care whether it has Best Western on its front or not. [B-I2-4]

Lastly, some participants of those paying no attention to brands still highlight exceptions that are sometimes contradicting their prior statements and position.

Wobei ich in Australien auch viel Hostels war und da dann schon, weil ich hatte so eine Karte wo ich dann irgendwann Rabatt bekommen habe nach dem fünften Besuch. Da habe ich dann schon auf den Namen geschaut. Was für ein Hostel das war, weiß ich leider nicht mehr. Das hat auch gut funktioniert, das war das einzige Mal wo ich mich daran erinnern kann das ich so ein bisschen nach der Marke geschaut habe.

[...] I had a card where I got a discount after the fifth hostel stay. Then, I paid attention to the [hostel] name. Unfortunately, I no longer remember which hostel that was. That worked well. It was the only time where I can remember that I looked a bit for the brand. [FG1]

Ansonsten, welches Hotel ich richtig cool finde, ist Motel One. Also da würde ich vielleicht schon mehr zahlen, dafür, dass ich dahin könnte. Aber das ist jetzt auch das einzige.

Otherwise, which hotel I find really cool, is Motel One. So, maybe I would pay more for the fact that I could stay there. But that is the only one. [FG2]

[...] Aber häufig ist es so, dass Marken immer einen gewissen Qualitätsstandard versprechen.

But it is often the case that brands promise a certain quality standard. [B-I3-4]

To sum up, the participants are divided on the role that brands play for their accommodation choices, as some state that brands do play a role in their travel-related booking choices while others neglect brands in the context of their travel considerations. This disagreement is observable across all interviewed travellers. Thus, it does not seem to be related to any of the traceable segmentation criteria, such as age, gender, and usual travel companion. Nevertheless, even those that do not consider brands as a decisive factor mention exemptions from this behaviour. Lastly, all participants agree on an accommodation brand's association with predefined service levels and standards.

Destination

Regarding the role of the destination brand within their holiday booking choices, the interviewed travellers showed a broad consensus: They deemed the importance of the destination brand as very high.

Ich finde es schon wichtig, wo ich in fahre, weil ich will auch Städte und Länder sehen. Es gibt natürlich immer so Zeiten, wenn man sagt, man möchte einfach mal raus. Aber es ist ja meistens so, dass wenn ich reise, dass ich dann mir gewisse Destinationen aussuchen.

I think it's important where I go because I want to see cities and countries. Of course, there are always times when you say you just want to get out. But usually it's the case that, when I travel, I choose certain destinations. [FG2]

Das ist ja tatsächlich das wichtige, wohin. Also egal ob Elba oder sonst was, gibt ja viele schöne Sachen.

That is actually the important thing: where to travel to. No matter if Elba or somewhere else, there are many beautiful options. [FG3]

Es gibt ja Leute, die sagen "Ich fahre jetzt in Urlaub und dann schaue ich mal was gerade hergeht und egal wohin." Das kann ich gar nicht nachvollziehen. Für mich ist der Urlaubsort ganz zentral und das ist auch etwas, was eigentlich als erstes steht "Wo wollen wir hin?" und danach richtet sich dann alles andere.

There are people who say, "I'm going on vacation now and then I'll see what's going on and wherever." I can't understand that at all. For me, the destination is the focus, and it is also what comes first "Where do we want to go?" and then everything else is based on that. [FG3]

[Die] Destination [ist] sehr wichtig, weil ich meine, da will ich ja hin.

The destination is very important because, I mean, that's where I want to go. [B-I1-1]

Ich [meine] es gibt glaube ich auch Leute, die sich sagen ok ich nehme jetzt ein random Ticket und reise in das nächstbeste Land, aber ich, das wäre mir zu spontan tatsächlich und von daher ist halt für mich dann doch das Land wichtig. Ich hatte jetzt halt bei unseren Reisen klar vor Augen Japan wollte ich schon immer hin und deswegen war das für mich wichtig.

I think there are people who say "Okay, I now take a random ticket and travel to the next best country". But for me that would be too spontaneous. That's why the country is important for me. For our travels, I clearly had Japan in mind, I always wanted to go there and, therefore, that was important to me. [B-I1-2]

Bei mir ist es schon so, dass immer so diese klassischen Destinationen in den Kopf kommen. Ich würde jetzt nie einfach so sagen, ok gut, wenn man die Wahl hat, jetzt zwischen Griechenland und Türkei, würde ich immer nach

Griechenland, also schon wichtig. Auch aufgrund politischer Dinge, aber primär eigentlich auch einfach aufgrund des Landes [...]. Die Leute wissen, warum sie nach Ibiza fliegen, wegen der Clubs und einfach die Stadt als Marke.

I always have these typical destinations in mind. [...] If you have the choice between Greece and Turkey, I would always go to Greece, so it is important. Also because of political things, but primarily because of the country [...]. People know why they fly to Ibiza: because of the clubs and simply the city as a brand. [B-I1-3]

Das ist das Ausschlaggebende ja, also die Destination ist das A und O einer Reise meiner Meinung nach.

That's the crucial thing, yes, so the destination is the be-all and end-all of a vacation in my opinion. [B-I1-5]

Wenn ich in den Urlaub fahre, besteht der ganze Urlaub [daraus] wo ich hinfahre und von dem her ist das meiner Meinung nach die wichtigste Entscheidung. Für mich persönlich. Ich suche meinen Urlaub nicht danach aus, ob ich einen Partyurlaub oder einen Strandurlaub mache, sondern ich suche mir erst das Land aus und sehe ich, worauf ich Lust habe oder so.

When I go on vacation, the whole vacation consists of where I go, and from that point of view, I think that's the most important decision. For me personally. I don't choose my vacation according to whether I'm going on a party vacation or a beach vacation, but I choose the country first and then see what I feel like doing there. [B-I1-6]

Mir ist an sich halt das Zielgebiet wichtig, also ich will nicht einfach irgendwo hin. Ich mach mir da vorher genaue Überlegungen, wo ich hinwill.

For me, the destination is important, so I don't just want to go anywhere. I consider in detail where I want to go. [B-I2-3]

Wenn man eine Destination wählt, hat es seine Gründe, aber manchmal ist das auch so, dass man sagt ich möchte einfach verreisen und mir passt nur der

und der Termin und ich bin begrenzt mit Zeit oder Budget und dann ist das natürlich nicht das allerwichtigste, aber es ist wichtig.

When you choose a destination, it has its reasons, but sometimes you say I just want to travel and I am restricted to a certain date and I am limited with time- or budget-wise and then of course that [the destination] is not the most important [factor], but it is important. [B-I3-2]

Das Image, das man mit dem Land verbindet, ist für mich die Marke und welches Image verbindest du mit den Malediven? Ja, Strand und Meer und deswegen fährst du dahin, weil wenn du das erzählst, du warst auf den Malediven, dann sagt jeder „Hey geil“ und jeder hat eine feste Vorstellung und ein festes Bild.

The image that you associate with the country for me is the brand and what image do you associate with the Maldives? Yes, beach and sea, and that's why you go there, because when you tell people that you've been to the Maldives, then everyone says, "Hey cool" and everyone has a fixed idea and a fixed image. [B-I3-4]

Die Destination ist natürlich das Hauptmerkmal, wenn ich eine Reise buche, weil ich ja erstmal überlege: wo will ich hin?

The destination is of course the main feature when I book a trip. First, I think about where I want to go. [B-I3-6]

Some statements indicate that the high relevance of destination brands is not restricted to positive outcomes in the form of holiday bookings and visits. Rather, negatively associated brands make travellers refrain from visiting the corresponding destinations.

Was mich nicht reizt, ist die Türkei. Einfach wegen der ganzen Lage, wie es da aussieht und was die da machen, momentan.

What doesn't appeal to me is Turkey. Simply because of the whole situation, how it looks there and what they are doing at the moment. [FG2]

Ich würde liebend gerne nach Istanbul, ist eine der schönsten Städte, die ich je gesehen habe. Aber ich würde nicht nach Istanbul im Moment fahren. Wir

wollten letzten Jahr nach Sri Lanka und dann waren da gerade die Anschläge. Deswegen haben wir Sri Lanka dann gelassen. [...] Das hat uns dann abgeschreckt, einfach weil das war dann so frisch gerade in unserer Reiseplanung, dass wir gesagt haben „ne“.

I would love to go to Istanbul, it is one of the most beautiful cities I have ever seen. But I would not go to Istanbul at the moment. We wanted to go to Sri Lanka last year and then there have been the attacks. That's why we didn't go to Sri Lanka. al [...] That scared us off, simply because that was so recent in our travel planning that we said "no". [FG3]

Es geht gar nicht nur um die Sicherheitslage [...]. Ich würde jetzt zum Beispiel auch nicht nach China wollen, weil ich das System da nicht gut finde. Und da auch kein Geld hintragen wollte. Es kommt auch so auf die demokratischen Verhältnisse an.

It's not just about the security situation [...]. I wouldn't want to go to China, for example, because I don't like the system there. And I wouldn't want to spend my money there either. It also depends on the democratic conditions. [FG3]

Resultingly, the participants mainly mention the destination brand as a key influence when they choose where to spend their next holiday. It needs to be underlined that the influence applies in both directions, meaning that a destination yielding positive associations tends to result in visits, whereas a destination with negative associations tends to be neglected. This might indicate that unknown destinations with no set level of associations have the potential to outperform negatively associated destinations.

Summarising, the interviewed travellers concurred with the scientific consensus that brands play a role in tourism-related booking choices. However, this role differs on the individual sector level. Brands highly influence decisions in the sectors of online travel agency, transport, and destination, whereas they matter less in the sectors of travel agency, and tour operator. Lastly, the results did not demonstrate a specific tendency in the sector of accommodation, as most participants were rather undecided.

4.3.3 The role of brands within package holidays

As outlined by research objective two,

RO2: To explore how brands influence customers' holiday booking choices in the context of multi-branded package holidays during the holiday planning and booking process.

the following section sets out to explore the role of brands in bundled tourism services, namely package holidays. The findings will later be compared to the statements concerning individual (unbundled) tourism sectors and brands.

Brand priority within package holidays

First, participants were asked to choose between package holidays consisting of three branded sectors (transport, accommodation, and destination). A minimised number of sectors was included at this first stage to reduce complexity for the participants and to ensure that they were able to intuitively compare all options. When confronted with three exemplary package holidays to choose from, most interviewees justified their choice with the preponderance of the destination brand, followed by the accommodation brand, and next the transport brand.

Ich würde das erste nehmen, weil die Destination [ist] was für mich wichtig ist.

I would take the first [package] because the destination is what's important to me. [FG1]

Hier würde ich trotzdem das erste Paket mit Island nehmen, da die Destination bei mir das Ausschlaggebende ist.

Still, I would take the first package to Iceland, because the destination is the deciding factor for me. [B-I1-5]

Ich glaube ich würde Japan nehmen, einfach weil ich da hinwill und dann ist mir eigentlich alles andere egal.

I think I would take [the package to] Japan, simply because I want to go there and then I don't really care about anything else. [B-I1-1]

Einerseits die Destination Spanien, wo ich noch nicht war und weil das relativ leicht zu erreichen ist und dadurch auch günstiger. Und als Transport habe ich Easyjet genommen [...]. Also ich würde lieber bei der Unterkunft mehr Geld ausgeben als beim Transport.

On the one hand, the destination Spain, where I have not been yet and because it is relatively easy to reach and therefore cheaper. And as transport I take Easyjet [...], I would rather spend more money on accommodation than on transport. [B-I1-7]

Am wichtigsten ist mir der Ort, dann die Unterkunft und dann der Transport.

The most important thing for me is the destination, next accommodation, and then transport. [B-I2-2]

Hauptsächlich wegen der Destination. Der Transport wäre mir jetzt [egal], also ich meine ich hatte vielleicht zweimal schlechte Erfahrungen mit Condor, deshalb kann ich darüber hinweg schauen. Hauptsache ich komme an mein Ziel und das Sun City war so schön, das Hotel, deshalb.

Mainly because of the destination. The transport would not matter to me, I mean I might have had two bad experiences with Condor, but I can overlook that. The main thing is that I get to my destination and the Sun City, the hotel, was so nice. That's why. [B-I2-6]

Nach der Destination fallen dann die ganzen anderen Punkte an und da ist es wichtig sicher anzukommen und eine schöne Unterkunft zu haben.

After the destination all the other points come up and it is important to arrive safely and to have a nice accommodation. [B-I3-2]

Every package holiday option included a mix of positively as well as negatively associated brands based on the individual respondent's prior statements throughout the interview, as previously described. The inclusion of this aspect resulted in rich discussions and demonstrated that the majority of participants tend to accept negatively associated brands within the bundle regarding the tourism sector of transport. One recurring explanation for this was the short time travellers spend on a

plane in comparison to the long time they spend in a hotel or at the destination. Most participants chose this respective package (consisting of a negatively associated brand for transport alongside positively associated brands for destination and accommodation) rather than the other options which were including no-go brands in the sectors of accommodation or destination.

Ich würde Transport nach hinten stellen, weil ich glaube, wenn ich dann da bin und hab einen tollen Flug aber bin 14 Tage in einem [Schimpfwort entfernt] Hotel, dann glaube ich, das wäre wesentlich schlimmer.

I would put transport last because I think that when I've arrived and had a great flight but am in a bad hotel for 14 days that would be a lot worse. [FG2]

Ich will lieber nach Italien als sonst wo hin. Und dann würde ich doch EasyJet in Kauf nehmen.

I'd rather go to Italy than anywhere else. For this, I would put up with EasyJet. [FG3]

Dann würde ich den schlechten Flug auf mich nehmen. Da wäre es mir wichtiger, in einer schönen Stadt zu sein, in die ich gerne möchte und auch schön zu wohnen.

Then I would take the bad flight. It would be more important for me to be in a nice city, where I would like to go and to be accommodated nicely. [B-I2-1]

Also ich würde auch das erste Paket buchen, obwohl ich ja vorhin als Destination Costa Rica angegeben haben. Aber es ist ja tatsächlich eine Horrervorstellung für mich, wenn ich dort in einem TUI Hotel bleiben müsste, weil das eine komplett andere Reise wäre, als wie ich sie wahrscheinlich machen würde.

So, I would also book the first package, although I have just indicated Costa Rica as a [likeable] destination. But it is actually a horror for me if I had to stay there in a TUI hotel because that would be a completely different trip from what I would actually like to do. [FG1]

Also das ist von vornherein ausgeschlossen wegen Indien, weil mir einfach die Destination am wichtigsten ist.

This one is ruled out from the start because of India, because the destination is most important to me. [B-I2-3]

Ok, also nach Russland brauch ich nicht. Also [Paket] 3 auf keinen Fall, weil nach Russland... das hängt davon ab wo natürlich, [...] ich mein klar gibt's schöne Städte in Russland, aber nein.

I don't need to go to Russia. So [package] three definitely not, because to Russia... that depends on where, of course, [...] I mean sure there are nice cities in Russia, but no. [B-I2-4]

In a second step, the respondent's preferred package of step one was supplemented by the additional sectors of (online) travel agency and tour operator. Again, the resulting package holiday options included a personalised mix of likable and unlikable brands. Unfortunately, this step including five tourism sectors seemed to have been too abstract or complex for most of the participants. First, many were not aware of the specific differences between tour operator and (online) travel agencies as well as their respective tasks. Further, many demonstrated low levels of brand awareness and, thus, were unable to recall brands in these sectors in an unaided or aided way. Also, as described in the prior results section regarding RO1, some interviewees shared negative associations with travel agencies and/ or tour operators in general, which led to a rejection of all packages. Lastly, some pointed out that the actual holiday experience (transport, accommodation, and destination) mattered, but not who booked or organised it for them.

Also wirklich vollkommen egal. Weil da kenne ich mich auch zu wenig aus, ob jetzt irgendwie einer besonders gut ist oder besonders schlecht.

It really doesn't matter at all. Because I don't know enough about whether some are particularly good or particularly bad. [B-I1-1]

Schwierig, wenn man sich die noch nie angesehen hat die Seiten kann man das nicht objektiv [bewerten].

Difficult, if you have never looked at the sites you cannot evaluate them objectively. [B-I3-6]

Wobei ich sagen muss, dass die Reiseveranstalter überhaupt keine Rolle gespielt haben, da ich mich damit nicht beschäftige.

I must say that the tour operators have not played a role at all, since I do not consider them. [B-I1-4]

Ehrlich gesagt, weil tatsächlich ist mir die Buchungsseite fast wichtiger als der Reiseveranstalter, weil letztlich die kriegen das Geld und die müssen liquide sein.

Honestly, the booking site is almost more important to me than the tour operator, because they ultimately get the money, and they have to be solvent. [B-I2-4]

Allgemein finde ich diese Sache mit Reisebüro und Reiseveranstalter fast schon überflüssig gerade bei diesen Destinationen [...] und deshalb wären mir die Reisebüros und Reiseveranstalter ziemlich unwichtig.

In general, I find travel agencies and tour operators almost superfluous, especially for these destinations [...] Therefore, the travel agencies and tour operators would be rather unimportant to me. [B-I3-2]

Das ist jetzt relativ egal, weil ich glaube, dass es einfach nur der- oder diejenige, die alles organisiert. Und dann weiß ich ganz genau [...], da habe ich die Fluglinie, da habe ich eine Unterkunft. Und dann ist es mir egal wer das bucht.

It doesn't really matter to me because I think it's just the party which organises everything. And then I know exactly [...], I have airline, I have accommodation. And then I don't care who books it. [B-I3-5]

Travel distance

As in the previous consideration of individual tourism sectors, some participants applied travel distance as an additional criterion to make their choice. Those

participants tend to evaluate package options including no-go airline brands as unbearable for long-haul destinations but acceptable for shorter distances, for example within Europe.

Wenn ich mir vorstelle, mit Ryanair nach Costa Rica zu fliegen. Wenn ich ankomme, dann komme ich an und hab gar keinen Bock mehr.

When I imagine flying to Costa Rica with Ryanair. When I arrive, I won't feel like I am on vacation anymore. [FG2]

Zum Beispiel Easy Jet mochte ich zwar nicht aber dadurch, dass man nach Amsterdam ja eh nur eine Stunde fliegt, ist das halt ertragbar und von daher würde, wäre Option eins eher, käme in Frage.

For example, I did not like Easy Jet but by the fact that the flight to Amsterdam takes only one hour, that is bearable and therefore it would be option one. [B-I1-2]

Das ist schwierig. Dann würde ich riskieren wieder mit Ryanair zu fliegen, weil das ist bestimmt eine kurze Strecke so von der Zeit [...].

That is difficult. Then I would risk flying with Ryanair again, because that is certainly a short route timewise [...]. [B-I3-1]

The exploration of booking choices and intention in the context of package holidays set out to identify the role of each included tourism sector and, specifically, its respective brand. In general, the majority of the interviewees agrees on the major role of the destination brand, followed by the accommodation, and then the transport brand. Further, the travellers tend to accept negatively associated brands in the sector of transport rather than destination or accommodation. This aspect supports the identified assumption of a prioritisation of brands within travel-related bundles.

Nevertheless, in some areas of exploration, these findings on package holidays contradict the results related to the role of brands on the individual sector-level. The destination brand has been identified to occupy a key role for the customers' holiday booking choices in both the individual as well as bundled context. In contrast, the interviewees changed their perspective regarding transport and accommodation brands

in the course of the interview. On the individual level, the transport brand was deemed important, and participants were undecided on the role of the accommodation brand, whereas the opposite was true related to package holidays. When confronted with bundled tourism services, the travellers tend to prioritise the accommodation brand and neglect the transport brand. Lastly, the participants were able to give clear statements on the sectors of (online) travel agency and tour operator in their individual consideration, but when added to exemplary package holidays both sectors seemed to be of no major relevance to them as the interviewees “don't care who books it” [B-I3-5].

4.3.4 Results relating to customer-based brand equity

In order to evaluate the applicability of CBBE to the context of package holidays, the data gathered by Study One was compared with the theoretical foundation of CBBE, with a specific focus on its constituting dimensions. The results of the personal interviews and focus groups confirm the dimensions of customer-based brand equity, their relevance in tourism research, as well as their applicability to package holidays. The dimensions of brand awareness, brand associations, brand loyalty, and perceived quality are useful to comprehend the role of brands in travel-related booking choices as well as the evaluation of bundled tourism services. All gathered material matched the prominent four dimensions, whereas no data was found to be associated with the dimension of other proprietary brand assets. For the sake of completeness, Aaker's (1991) fifth dimension of other proprietary brand assets was included in the suggested conceptual model (cf. section 2.5), as CBBE is explored within package holidays for the first time. Subsequently, the dimension could have proved to be relevant, even though it was not regarded or of influence in existing tourism-related CBBE studies (cf. Appendix B). However, during coding and data analysis based on the deductive categories related to CBBE (cf. coding guideline, Table 10, section 4.2.5) none of the obtained data from Study One could be matched with the dimension of other proprietary brand assets, thereby supporting the literature's general reluctance of it. Table 12 provides an overview of the number of mentions and statements concerning each CBBE dimension across all interviews.

Table 12: Prevalence of CBBE dimensions across all interviews

CBBE dimension	Total (Number of interviews)	Mentions (Number of interviews)	Statements (Number of coded data points)
	22		
Brand awareness		19	57
Brand associations		22	168
Perceived quality		19	67
Brand loyalty		20	73
Other proprietary brand assets		0	0

Note: Author's own. The total number of interviews includes three focus groups. Mentions refer to the number of interviews in which the gathered material matched the respective dimension. In contrast to the number of dimension-related individual statements (cf. coded data points), a consideration of mentioning interviews facilitates the understanding of dimension occurrence across all interviews.

Subsequently, key results concerning the prevalent dimensions are discussed individually, with a focus on the identified characteristics of each dimension and their relevance on customers' tourism-related choices and bookings.

Brand awareness

Within the personal interviews, it was evident that participants considered if they know a brand in the corresponding tourism sector when evaluating holiday options. Brand awareness describes the customer's ability to recognize or recall brands as well as allocating them to the right service category (Aaker, 1991). Participants pointed out various aspects related to this dimension and its role in their holiday booking choices, such as being sceptical when confronted with unknown brands (Participants B-I1-3; B-I1-6; B-I2-6) and preferring brands they know (B-I1-2; B-I1-3; B-I1-5; B-I1-6; B-I2-4; B-I3-2; B-I3-3). Others pointed out that they heard of brands from their peers and would therefore consider them for their own holiday choices (B-I2-6). Additional participants stated that knowing brands minimises the perceived service-related risk and, therefore, adds safety and peace of mind to their holiday-related decisions (Participant B-I1-5; B-I3-4). This underlines that travellers search for a certain level of familiarity with tourism brands in their decision-making process.

Brand associations

Regarding brand associations, all interviewees shared various impressions and beliefs concerning certain brands as well as how these assumptions shape their holiday booking choices. Brand associations include individual attributes, benefits, or attitudes that are linked to a certain brand within the customer's mind, which resultingly shape the overall brand image (Aaker, 1991; Krishnan, 1996; Plumeyer et al., 2019). The respondents discussed that they were able to differentiate between the presented services and package holidays based on their individual brand associations (B-I1-5; B-I1-6; B-I1-7; B-I2-1; B-I3-2). Based on this, they admitted that some options caused positive feelings, comparable to anticipation (B-I1-5; B-I2-1; B-I3-4). These positive associations resulted in a preference for the respective offers (B-I1-4; B-I1-7; B-I2-4; B-I3-5). In contrast, negatively associated brands tended to spark aversion and rejection of service bookings with those brands (B-I1-2; B-I1-6; B-I2-1; B-I2-2; B-I3-4). In some cases, the existing brand associations could be traced back to prior experiences of the travellers themselves or their peers. This applied for positive (B-I1-5; B-I1-6; B-I2-2; B-I2-4; B-I2-6; B-I3-4) as well as negative brand associations (B-I1-1; B-I1-2; B-I1-4; B-I1-5; B-I3-2; B-I3-5). The mentioned associations covered a variety of manifestations some of which shall be listed here: the customer segment a brand attracts (B-I2-1; B-I3-4; B-I3-6), the respective price level (B-I1-6; B-I1-7; B-I2-1; B-I2-2; B-I2-3; B-I2-4; B-I3-4), the quality of its advertisements (B-I2-2; B-I3-5; B-I2-3), and the usability of their website (B-I2-3; B-I3-5). The findings indicate that customers evaluate and compare tourism brands as well as holiday offers based on their individual associations with the corresponding brands.

Perceived quality

Based on the interviews, travellers assessed and compared tourism brands regarding the service level they are likely to provide (B-I1-2; B-I3-2; B-I2-2; B-I2-4; B-I3-2; B-I3-4; B-I3-5; FG2-B13). This represents the dimension of perceived quality, which refers to the perceived potential of a branded service to fulfil its purpose in comparison to alternatives (Aaker, 1991). Participants stated that quality-related assumptions helped them to compare and to narrow down the presented travel options (B-I1-2; B-I1-7; B-I2-4; B-I3-1). Apart from facilitating the decision, a high level of perceived

quality represented safety (B-I2-4; B-I3-2), reliability of the service provision (B-I1-1; B-I1-7; B-I2-1; B-I2-3; B-I2-5; B-I2-6; B-I3-2; B-I3-4; B-I3-5), and encouraged trust (B-I1-3, B-I2-3; B-I2-4; B-I2-5; B-I3-2; B-I3-6). In some cases, the interviewees pointed out that they would be willing to pay price premiums if they perceive the quality of a potential service provision higher than of its alternatives (B-I1-4; B-I3-4). Resultingly, perceived quality is an important reference point for the customer's travel decisions.

Brand loyalty

Regarding brand loyalty, many of the interviewed travellers discussed tourism brands which they tend to choose on a regular and recurring basis. Thus, these statements are referring to brand loyalty, which is characterised by repeat buying patterns throughout past and future purchases of one focal brand (Aaker, 1992; Pappu et al., 2005; Yoo & Donthu, 2001). Most participants highlighted that they are loyal to brands with which they share positive and satisfactory prior experiences (B-I1-2; B-I1-4; B-I1-6; B-I2-2; B-I2-3; B-I2-4; B-I2-5; B-I2-6; B-I3-1; B-I3-4; B-I3-6). Some of them attribute their loyalty to attractive loyalty programmes (B-I1-2; FG1) or to unique added values certain brands offer, for example related to usability (B-I2-1; B-I2-2; B-I3-2), punctuality (B-I2-5), or price (B-I2-5). When compared to the previous statements concerning the dimension of brand associations, it becomes apparent that associations and loyalty partly seem to result from overlapping factors, such as prior experiences. This finding points towards Christodoulides et al.'s (2014) notion, that brand loyalty might rather be an outcome of associations and, resultingly, of brand equity.

While Study One was developed to derive implications for Study Two, the findings also support the conceptual model and the theoretical foundation for the second study. A detailed discussion of Study One's findings in relation to the relevant literature as well as the results of Study Two follows in chapter 6 of this thesis, which is designed as a synthesised overall discussion chapter in line with the exploratory sequential mixed methods design of this research.

4.3.5 Implications for Study Two

Study One addressed the following research questions, in order to create the foundation of the subsequent Study Two:

RO1: To explore how brands influence customers' holiday booking choices across five individual tourism sectors - (online) travel agency, tour operator, transport, accommodation, destination - during the holiday planning and booking process.

RO2: To explore how brands influence customers' holiday booking choices in the context of multi-branded package holidays during the holiday planning and booking process.

Based on the in-depth exploration of RO1 and RO2, the results were expected to feed the design of Study Two, which aims to address the remaining research questions (RO3-RO6). It was crucial to get these additional insights, as the existing body of research did not cover studies in the context of bundles (and respectively, package holidays) or provide a sound foundation for the development of hypotheses for Study Two. This section provides the implications for Study Two derived from the findings of Study One. Further and more general theoretical and practical implications will be outlined in chapter 7 (Conclusion).

Applicability of CBBE in the context of bundles

The findings of Study One attest the applicability of CBBE in the context of bundles. Moreover, the qualitative study supports the need of bundle-centred CBBE research, as its findings revealed that the role of tourism brands across different sectors differ and change between individual and bundled contexts. One example is the tourism sector of transport, in which brands played a major role for the customer's holiday booking choices when considered individually but lost relevance when the participants were confronted with bundles of different tourism-related services. As no prior work set out to explore CBBE within package holidays, the findings of Study One reinforce the existence of the research gap and its relevance. In accordance with the general field of tourism-related CBBE research (see section 2.4.3), the findings indicate that Study Two can neglect the CBBE dimension of other proprietary brand assets, as no qualitative data was found to match it.

Package holiday design: Ideal bundle size

The overall aim of the first study was to gather insights concerning a convenient and practicable package design for Study Two, as no comparable study of CBBE within package holidays (CBBBE) exists to the best of the researcher's knowledge. The first implication concerns the ideal bundle size, and thus, how many tourism sectors to include in each package holiday option. Based on Study One, it can be derived that many participants were confused if the offered bundles included more than three attributes, namely tourism sector brands. Often, this was based on the insufficient participant knowledge about the sectors of (online) travel agencies and tour operators or general neglect of their relevance. In order to provide assessable package holidays and to facilitate meaningful results, the included tourism sectors in Study Two are limited to three tourism sectors: transport, accommodation, and destination. This approach is also in line with real-life holiday choices because customers tend to look for vacation offers via their preferred distribution channels or organisers, such as (online) travel agencies or directly with tour operators but are then confronted with package holidays comprising the three focal sectors of transport, accommodation, and destination.

Package holiday design: Travel distance

Another implication concerning bundle design results from the factor of travel distance. The findings of Study One support previous studies (Pike & Bianchi, 2016; Pike et al., 2010; Kotsi et al., 2018) in stating that travel-related booking choices are highly influenced by the distance that needs to be covered between travellers' home and their destination. For example, participants attached specific weight to transport brands in the case of long-haul flights requiring more hours aboard a plane compared to short- or medium-range flights. Resultingly, it is recommended to take the influence of travel distance into account when designing packages for Study Two. For example, one could specify flight times per package holiday in order to increase comparability between bundles and minimize confounding effects.

Package holiday design: Brand collection

The last implication to be derived revolves around the specific brands to be included in Study Two's package holidays. Study One facilitated the collection of a vast number of statements concerning the participant's unaided brand recall and the respective customer-based brand equity. In order to allow a meaningful evaluation of package holidays throughout the second study, it is crucial to ensure that the general level of respondents' knowledge concerning the included brands is known to the researcher. Thus, all statements concerning specific brands as well as the brands themselves were collected and analysed to generate an initial selection of brands to be potentially included in the package holiday design for Study Two. To simplify the overview, all brands were collected and then clustered according to the respective tourism sector and the magnitude of their customer-based brand equity (positive vs. negative associations). In addition to building a potential basis for Study Two's package holidays, the collected data confirmed the notion that customer-based brand equity is subjective and can lead to opposite evaluations of different customers. Table 13 provides an overview of the tourism sector brands collected in Study One.

Table 13: Tourism sector brands collected in Study One

Tourism Sector	Brand	Positive CBBE	Negative CBBE	Mentions
Transport	Air China		X	2
Transport	Air China	X		2
Transport	Air France	X		3
Transport	Deutsche Bahn	X		3
Transport	EasyJet		X	8
Transport	Emirates	X		10
Transport	Eurowings		X	2
Transport	Flixbus	X		2
Transport	Lufthansa	X		18
Transport	Ryanair		X	6
Transport	Thai Airways	X		2
Transport	Turkish Airlines	X		2
Accommodation	Hilton	X		2
Accommodation	Hilton		X	4
Accommodation	Kempinski	X		2
Accommodation	Motel One	X		3
Accommodation	Novotel	X		3
Accommodation	Robinson Club	X		3
Destination	Afghanistan		X	2
Destination	Egypt		X	2
Destination	Amsterdam	X		4
Destination	Asia		X	2
Destination	France	X		4
Destination	India		X	5
Destination	Italy	X		3

Destination	Japan	X		2
Destination	Canada	X		3
Destination	Madagascar	X		2
Destination	New York	X		3
Destination	Qatar	X		2
Destination	Russia		X	4
Destination	Scandinavia	X		4
Destination	Spain	X		2
Destination	South America		X	2
Destination	South America	X		4
Destination	Thailand		X	2
Destination	Turkey		X	4
Destination	USA		X	3
Destination	USA	X		3

Note: Author's own. Brands with less than two mentions were excluded.

4.4 Summary

The overall aim of Study One, based on the previously presented research objectives (RO1+RO2), was (1) to confirm the applicability of CBBE to package holidays, as well as (2) to explore the role of brands in travel-related booking choices, and (3) to derive implications for the research design of Study Two.

So far, and to the best of the author's knowledge, no prior study set out to compare how brands influence customer choices across individual tourism sectors as well as in relation to package holidays. Thus, it was important to assess similarities and differences between both contexts to identify whether the role of brands changed when confronted with individual versus bundled tourism sector brands. Regarding similarities, brands influenced the travellers' booking choices and intention across individual and bundled tourism services. Nevertheless, the role of brands in specific tourism sectors, such as transport, varied between individual and bundled scenarios.

Chapter 5: Study Two | Online experiment

5.1 Introduction

This chapter introduces the second, experimental, study of this thesis, building upon Study One's findings and the literature review. The previous chapters indicate that CBBE (of tourism sectors and services) is a recognised prerequisite for travellers' booking intention. However, tourism-related CBBE research neglects the existence of bundles in the form of package holidays and, therefore, suitable measurement tools for this context have not been provided yet. Thus, this study sets out to adapt a measurement tool for customer-based brand equity (CBBE) applicable to bundles in the form of package holidays based on existing tools for non-bundle contexts. The adaptation of the measurement tool enables the analysis of differences in customer-based bundle brand equity (CBBBE) and booking intention between various bundle designs of package holidays as well as the analysis of the relationship between CBBBE and booking intention. Resultingly, Study Two relates to the following predefined research objectives:

RO3: To adapt a specific, reliable, and valid measurement tool for customer-based bundle brand equity (CBBBE) in the context of package holidays.

RO4: To analyse differences in (1) CBBBE and (2) booking intention between various bundle designs of package holidays.

RO5: To explore which theory is more suitable for the investigation of CBBBE in the context of package holidays: (1) service delivery network theory (SDN) or (2) multi-attribute utility theory (MAUT).

RO6: To analyse the relationship between CBBBE and booking intention.

In accordance with this work's exploratory sequential mixed methods design, the design of Study Two was strongly influenced by Study One and a review of the literature on (tourism-related) CBBE. Specifically, Study One informed Study Two by suggesting the applicability of CBBE to package holidays (and to bundles in general) and the need of bundle-centred research. Further, results of the qualitative study provided a foundation for Study Two's hypotheses as well as implications for the

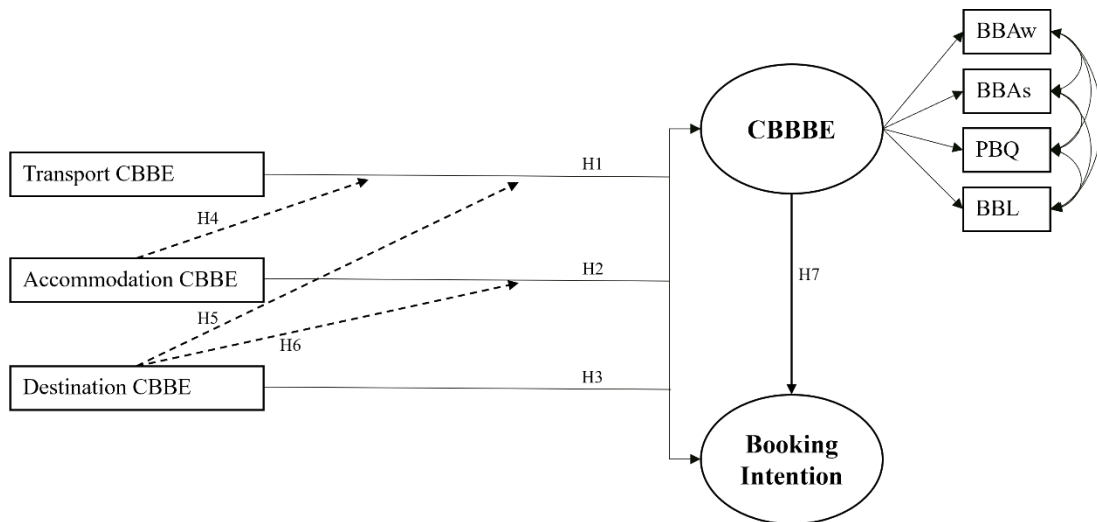
bundle design (e.g., number of tourism sectors, brands to potentially be considered, travel distance) within Study Two. Resultingly, the presented bundles within the experimental design combined the tourism sectors of accommodation, transport, and destination and a set of corresponding brands. Each of the included brands could exhibit a positive (high CBBE) or negative (low CBBE) manifestation, leading to a total of eight conditions (2x2x2).

The chapter commences with the presentation of the conceptual model for the experimental study. Subsequently, hypotheses will be derived from the literature and Study One's findings. Based on the hypotheses and a discussion of experimental research and its procedures, the chosen factorial design is introduced. The final section of this chapter presents the Study Two's findings.

5.2 Design and hypotheses

The aim of the experiment is to analyse the relationship between CBBE of tourism sectors within package holidays, CBBE, and customers' booking intention. The model demonstrates the proposed relationships that will be investigated in the study, as outlined in Figure 12.

Figure 12: Model for experimental study (Study Two)



Note: Own illustration. H4, H5, and H6 represent interaction effects; CBBE = customer-based brand equity, CBBBE = customer-based bundle brand equity, BBAw = bundle brand awareness, BBAs = bundle brand associations, PBQ = perceived bundle quality, BBL = bundle brand loyalty.

Firstly, it is hypothesised that CBBE of the individual tourism sector brands included in a package holiday is positively related to package holiday CBBE (CBBBE) and booking intention. This assumption is based on the existing body of knowledge, including a multitude of studies stating the positive influence of CBBE on booking, or respectively visit, intention across the tourism sectors included in this study: accommodation (Cobb-Walgren et al., 1995; Huang & Cai, 2015; Kim et al., 2008; Liu et al., 2017; Lu et al., 2015; Hsu et al., 2011), transport (Zeugner-Roth et al., 2008), and destination (Chi et al., 2020; Ferns & Walls, 2012; Horng et al., 2012; Kim et al., 2009b; Kladou & Kehagias, 2014; Pike & Bianchi, 2016). Further, the hypotheses stem from the SDN approach as package holidays involve multiple service providers across tourism sectors that together create the overall service offering and directly affect the customers' perception (Tax et al., 2013). Thus, it can be assumed that each individual tourism sector brand (and its respective CBBE) represented in the package holiday is contributing to and is positively related to CBBBE as well as booking intention of the package holiday. As previously outlined in the context of Study One's implications for Study Two, the included tourism sectors in Study Two are limited to three tourism sectors: transport, accommodation, and destination. From this, the following hypotheses are derived:

H1a: CBBBE is higher if Transport CBBE is high than if Transport CBBE is low.

H1b: Booking Intention is higher if Transport CBBE is high than if Transport CBBE is low.

H2a: CBBBE is higher if Accommodation CBBE is high than if Accommodation CBBE is low.

H2b: Booking Intention is higher if Accommodation CBBE is high than if Accommodation CBBE is low.

H3a: CBBBE is higher if Destination CBBE is high than if Destination CBBE is low.

H3b: Booking Intention is higher if Destination CBBE is high than if Destination CBBE is low.

Secondly, it is proposed that interaction effects between the relationships of individual tourism sector brand's CBBE with CBBBE as well as booking intention exist. These hypotheses stem from the recognition that the included tourism sectors forming the package holiday (as a type of SDN) are not isolated but that their effects on CBBBE and customer booking intention depend on the contribution and perception of the other included brands to whom they are connected within a package holiday (Gummesson, 2008; Wilkinson 2008). As proposed by the results of Study One, it could be reported that most respondents share the stance that "The most important thing for me [the traveller] is the destination, next accommodation, and then transport" [B-I2-2]. Resultingly, the hypotheses assume that destination CBBE moderates the effects of both other tourism sectors' CBBE on CBBBE and booking intention and strengthens these relationships. Further, it is proposed that accommodation CBBE moderates the effect of transport CBBE and weakens its effect, as respondents in Study One tended to accept negatively perceived transport brands if the associated accommodation brand was likeable [FG2]. This indicates that in the case of high accommodation CBBE, transport brands account for smaller effects. Based on this, the following hypotheses evolve:

H4a: Accommodation CBBE moderates the effect of Transport CBBE on CBBBE: The influence of Transport CBBE on CBBBE is weakened with a high level of Accommodation CBBE.

H4b: Accommodation CBBE moderates the effect of Transport CBBE on Booking Intention: The influence of Transport CBBE on Booking Intention is weakened with a high level of Accommodation CBBE.

H5a: Destination CBBE moderates the effect of Transport CBBE on CBBBE: The influence of Transport CBBE on Package Holiday CBBE is strengthened with a high level of Destination CBBE.

H5b: Destination CBBE moderates the effect of Transport CBBE on Booking Intention: The influence of Transport CBBE on Booking Intention is strengthened with a high level of Destination CBBE.

H6a: Destination CBBE moderates the effect of Accommodation CBBE on CBBBE: The influence of Accommodation CBBE on Package Holiday CBBE is strengthened with a high level of Destination CBBE.

H6b: Destination CBBE moderates the effect of Accommodation CBBE on Booking Intention: The influence of Accommodation CBBE on Booking Intention is strengthened with a high level of Destination CBBE.

Lastly, it is suggested that CBBBE is positively related to booking intention. This follows the literature-guided argumentation for hypotheses H1-H3 stating the positive influence of tourism-related CBBE on booking, or respectively visit, intention (Chi et al., 2020; Cobb-Walgren et al., 1995; Ferns & Walls, 2012; Huang & Cai, 2015; Horng et al., 2012; Hsu et al., 2011; Kim et al., 2008, 2009b; Kladou & Kehagias, 2014; Liu et al., 2017; Lu et al., 2015; Pike & Bianchi, 2016; Zeugner-Roth et al., 2008) as well as the findings of Study One, in which respondents declined to book package holidays including negatively perceived tourism sector brands: “So [package] number 1 is out of the question, because I am neither a fan of Robinson Club, nor of RyanAir” [FG2]. Resultingly, the final hypothesis is developed:

H7: CBBBE is positively related to Booking Intention: The higher CBBBE, the higher Booking Intention.

The following section discusses experimental research and issues related to bias, validity, and procedures.

5.3 Experimental research

Traditionally, science is about the discovery of absolute truths (Field & Hole, 2003). Research questions leading to these truths are often answered by an observation of the real world, without the researcher’s interference with it, for example by applying correlational methods, or a manipulation of the environment and observation of the outcome of this manipulation, namely the experimental method (Field & Hole, 2003). Experimentation with humanity’s surroundings and the environment has a long history and is concerned with “the relationship between subjects and the experimental treatments they receive” (Honeck et al., 1983, p.2; Shadish et al., 2006). Thus, experiments test hypotheses, analyse differences among the effects of various

treatments, and evaluate the cause of effects (Petersen, 1985). If a cause precedes and triggers an effect while no other explanation for the effect can be identified, a causal relationship exists between cause and effect (Shadish et al., 2006). Resultingly, experiments are a method to analyse causal relationships by the manipulation of one, or more, independent variable (IV; also called manipulations, conditions, or factors) and the following observation of a dependent variable (DV) (Field & Hole, 2003). If differences in the dependent variable occur between different manifestations of the independent variable, researchers could assume that the independent variable was responsible for those differences (Perdue & Summers, 1986). Within experiments, different techniques exist to decrease the probability of alternative causes for the effect (Shadish et al., 2006).

In order to discover cause and effect relationships, researchers have to be in full control of the experiment (White & McBurney, 2013). The level of control differentiates an experimental setting from other forms of research approaches (Oehlert, 2010). Correspondingly, experimenters must know and control all variables related to the experiment. This also applies to irrelevant variables that are commonly held constant in order to diminish their influence on subject responses and to isolate “true” effects of the independent variable (Field & Hole, 2003; Venkatesan, 1967). A randomised assignment of participants to the experimental or control group (also called treatment conditions) is required to limit the risk of alternative and potentially unknown influencing factors regarding the results of the experiment (Creswell & Creswell, 2018; Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018; Field & Hole, 2003; White & McBurney, 2013).

While designing experiments, researchers should bear in mind all aspects potentially affecting the results of the experiment. Such aspects can be found in considerations of bias and validity. The next sections discuss the effects of bias on experimental research as well as procedures to minimise its influence.

5.3.1 Bias

Bias describes any tendency preventing unprejudiced consideration of a question, statement, result, or comparable aspects (Saunders et al., 2019). In research, bias occurs when erroneous sampling or testing is in place in order to select or encourage a desired or expected outcome over others (Walliman, 2017). The potential of bias to

significantly affect experiments is a general area of agreement among researchers (White & McBurney, 2013). Bias can occur both on the participant and researcher side of an experiment and is negatively related to a study's reliability (Saunders et al., 2019). Reliability describes the dependability and the correct scientific collection and organisation of data to enable the potential that different researchers following the scientific test setting would make consistent observations (Saunders et al., 2019; Walliman, 2017). Researcher bias includes any factor inducing bias in the recording of responses whereas participant bias induces false responses (Saunders et al., 2019). Past studies have stated that researchers can bias experiments and their results unintentionally (Rosenthal, 1976; Venkatesan, 1967). However, precautions can be taken to minimise the risk of bias. Experimenters can adhere to a single-blind procedure in which it is unknown which participant is allocated to which experimental group or condition (Oehlert, 2010). A double-blind procedure is advised to diminish participants' inclination to cooperate to please the researcher or to sabotage the experiment based on the researcher's person or identity (Kirk, 2009; Oehlert, 2010).

Within this study, a single-blind procedure resulted from the randomised allocation of participants to experimental conditions. Such single-blind procedure implies that a researcher does not know which subject is assigned to which group and does not interfere with or influence any participants or procedures throughout the experiment while participants know the researcher's identity, for example from the study introduction (White & McBurney, 2013). In addition, the experiment was designed as an online experiment, minimising the direct association of the study with the researcher as a person. The researcher was not acquainted with any of the respondents, a fact further reducing the potential risk of bias (Orne, 1962). However, as mandated by ethical considerations, the name and associated university of the researcher were included in the written introduction page of the study. No form of direct communication took place between the researcher and participants, but the knowledge of the researcher's name and institution prevented the establishment of a "true" double-blind procedure. Nevertheless, the researcher not only has to be aware of bias but should further consider the validity of the experimental study (Saunders et al., 2019). The next section addresses the nature and role of validity within experimental research.

5.3.2 Validity

Validity represents the credibility of findings and the correctness of their interpretation, in other words: It is concerned with the question if results of a study represent true findings and are transferable to individuals outside the study (Saunders et al., 2019). Researchers should account for the internal, external, construct, and face validity when designing an experimental study (Shadish et al., 2006). This section outlines existing types of validity in detail.

Internal Validity

Internal validity describes the extent to which results of a study represent truth in the studied population and, thus, are not influenced by other factors, for example methodological errors (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Experimenters strive for internal validity of their studies, meaning that all findings can be attributed to the manipulation researched and not to alternative influencing factors (Creswell & Creswell, 2018; Saunders et al., 2019). Resultingly, internal validity is directly related to the exploration of cause and effect within the experiment. Table 14 summarises major threats to internal validity that can potentially affect the quality of experiments alongside potential ways to overcome them: history, maturation, regression to the mean, selection, mortality (study attrition), diffusion of treatment (cross contamination of groups), compensatory/ resentful demoralisation, compensatory rivalry, testing, and instrumentation.

Table 14: Threats to internal validity

Threat	Description	Potential Response
History	Time passes during an experiment, events beyond the experimental treatment can occur and influence the results.	The researcher can have all groups experience the same external events.
Maturation	Participants may mature or change during the experiment, thus influencing the results.	The researcher can select participants who mature and change at the same rate during the experiment.
Regression to the mean	Participants with extreme scores are selected for the experiment. Naturally, scores change and regress toward the mean over time.	A researcher can select participants who do not have extreme scores as entering characteristics for the experiment.

Selection	Participants can be selected who have certain characteristics predisposing them to certain outcomes.	The researcher can select participants randomly so that characteristics are likely to be distributed equally among experimental groups.
Mortality (study attrition)	Participants drop out during an experiment. The outcomes are unknown for these subjects.	A researcher can recruit a large sample to account for dropouts or compare dropouts with those who continue.
Diffusion of Treatment (cross contamination of groups)	Participants across experimental groups communicate with each other. This can influence how both groups score on the outcomes.	The researcher can keep the two groups as separate as possible during the experiment.
Compensatory/resentful demoralisation	The benefits of an experiment may be unequal or resented when only the experimental group receives the treatment (e.g., therapy).	The researcher can provide benefits to all groups, e.g., after the experiment ends.
Compensatory rivalry	Participants in the control group feel that they are being devalued, because they do not experience the treatment.	The researcher can take steps to create equality between the groups, such as clearly explaining the value of the control group.
Testing	Participants become familiar with the outcome measure and remember responses for later testing.	The researcher can have a longer time interval between administrations or use different items on a later test.
Instrumentation	The instrument changes between a pre-test and post-test, thus impacting the scores on the outcome.	The researcher can use the same instrument for the pre-test and post-test measures.

Source: Adapted from Creswell & Creswell (2018, p.170f).

Although the names of individual threats differ between works of renowned researchers, their descriptions and suggested responses are congruent (Field & Hole, 2003; Creswell & Creswell, 2018; Saunders et al., 2019). This study counteracted the main threats to internal validity with multiple measures concerning the research design and experimental procedure. First, a randomised allocation of participants to experimental conditions ensured that “the subsequent experiences of the [...] groups are identical in all respects, except for the focal variable” and eliminated alternative explanations (Easterby-Smith et al., 2012, p.45). The key role of randomised group assignment and the resulting elimination of alternative factors when performing experiments is generally agreed upon among researchers as a valid solution regarding the threat of selection (see Table 16; Winer, 1999). Second, the experiment was realised in an online setting as this facilitates similar experiences across all subjects

and groups, the recruitment of large sample sizes, the separation of participants throughout the experiment, and the equality of the research instrument. Therefore, the chosen online execution addressed the threats of history, mortality, diffusion of treatment, and instrumentation. The experiment's between-group design (cf. section 5.3.1) eliminated the risk of participant familiarisation with the instrument and its measures, thus the threat of testing. The instrument development has taken into consideration both a randomisation of items and the overall time needed to complete the survey in order to minimise the threat of regression to the mean and maturation. Lastly, in comparison to medical experiments, the study was characterised by an absence of a real no-treatment group, as all experimental groups received one of the eight package holidays (see section 5.3.1). In addition, individual subjects were unaware of the existence of other conditions. Both aspects preclude the threat of compensatory rivalry and demoralisation. Overall, the results of this study could be expected to demonstrate a high level of internal validity. However, the issue of external validity, which concerns the generalisability of results, has to be taken into additional consideration (Field & Hole, 2003; Creswell & Creswell, 2018; Saunders et al., 2019).

External Validity

External validity describes the potential generalisation of a study's findings to other contexts and beyond the study itself (Easterby-Smith et al., 2012; Saunders et al., 2019; White & McBurney, 2013). The level and role of external validity in experiments has seen a lot of debate between advocates of internal and external validity, especially concerning the comparison of field and laboratory settings as well as the adequacy of student samples (Field & Hole, 2003; Winer, 1999). However, there seems to be general agreement that the generalisation of research findings to other populations or contexts, as well as the researcher's consideration thereof, is of utmost importance (Saunders et al., 2019). The interpretation of generalisability is manifold and three recurring themes emerge, namely statistical generalisability, robustness, and realism. ***Statistical generalisability*** is characterised by the scope of the result's generalisability to a larger population (Lynch, 1982). ***Robustness*** specifies to which extent a cause-and-effect relationship identified in an experimental setting can potentially be replicated with alternative participants, contexts, and at another time (Lynch, 1982). Lastly, ***realism*** captures if the experimental design, conditions, and procedures are

realistic and, thus, suitable in their representation to the real world (Lynch, 1982). The outlined principles of generalisability are closely connected to major threats to external validity. Table 15 summarises these threats, namely interaction of selection and treatment, interaction of setting and treatment, and interaction of history and treatment, as well as potential responses to these threats (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). The threats result from the characteristics of subjects selected for participation, the uniqueness of the setting, and the experiment's timing (Creswell & Creswell, 2018).

Table 15: Threats to external validity

Threat	Description	Potential Response
Interaction of selection and treatment	Due to the narrow characteristics of experimental subjects, the researcher cannot generalise to individuals who do not share those characteristics.	The researcher restricts claims about groups to which results cannot be generalised and/or conducts additional experiments with groups with different characteristics.
Interaction of setting and treatment	Because of the characteristics of the setting of participants in an experiment, a researcher cannot generalise to individuals in other settings.	The researcher needs to conduct additional experiments in new settings to see if the same results occur as in the initial setting.
Interaction of history and treatment	Because results of an experiment are time-bound, a researcher cannot generalise the results to past or future situations.	The researcher needs to replicate the study at a later time to determine if the same results occur as in the earlier time.

Source: Adapted from Creswell & Creswell (2018, p.172).

For this study, considerations of statistical generalisability and robustness will be covered in the sample as well as data collection and analysis sections of this chapter. Realism is addressed in section 5.4.1 on study development.

Construct Validity

Construct validity (also called factorial validity) is the degree to which a measure assesses the underlying theoretical construct it is supposed to measure (Field & Hole, 2003; White & McBurney, 2013). Thus, it relates to whether a study's items and constructs are measuring what they claim to measure (Saunders et al., 2019). In other words, construct validity concerns the ability of multiple items (respectively: indicators) representing one latent construct to manifest the respective construct (Hair et al., 2019a). Within this study, a pre-test (see section 5.4.2) as well as exploratory

and confirmatory factor analysis (see section 5.4.3.2) were conducted to assess if construct validity can be inferred and to verify the effectiveness of treatment manipulations.

Face Validity

Face validity describes a subjective assessment of item content and meaning before the actual study is carried out. The goal of face validity is that anyone who reviews a measure would agree that it appears to be measuring what it's supposed to measure and commonly is considered as the first step to evaluate the overall validity of a model or test (Backhaus et al., 2015). Resultingly, it is of particular importance in the development stage of a measurement tool and/or survey (Hair et al., 2019a). This study's items were directly derived from an extensive literature review and reviewed by academic experts (see section 5.4.1.2 for a detailed description of measurements). In addition, a pre-test was conducted to ensure the adequacy of the measurement. Based on this, face validity was presumed for all variables and the resulting scales. Even though face validity is sometimes referred to as "the most important validity test" (Hair et al., 2019a, p.677) it is important to note that the other existing types of validity must be assessed to ensure overall validity.

5.3.3 Experimental design

A pre-set plan and structure are essential for any type of experiment (Field & Hole, 2003; Myers & Hansen, 2006). The resulting experimental design is "the set of rules by which the treatments to be used in an experiment are assigned to the experimental units" (Petersen, 1985, p.6). Any experimental design is not only determined by a study's research questions and hypotheses but takes additional factors into account, such as the type of information sought and potential practical considerations of running the experiment (Myers & Hansen, 2006; Shadish et al., 2006). The following section outlines the experimental design adopted in this study.

Marketing research is characterised by a preponderance of true or quasi-experiments (Cash et al., 2016; Creswell & Creswell, 2018; Ryals & Wilson, 2005). ***True experiments*** provide researchers with full control over all aspects related to the included variables and effects, allowing them to assume causality (i.e., relationships between two or more variables, in which one causes an effect on the other), high

internal validity, and quality of evidence (Honeck et al., 1983; Keppel, 1991; White & McBurney, 2013). In contrast, in *quasi-experiments* “the researcher lacks the full control over the scheduling of experimental stimuli” (Campbell & Stanley, 1963, p.34), which results in high external validity (cf. section 5.3.2 on validity). However, internal validity is reduced in quasi-experimental settings, as researchers are confronted with the challenge to guarantee that their reported effects resulted from their manipulations of the independent variable (Cash et al., 2016; Easterby-Smith et al., 2012).

For the purpose of this study, a true experimental design was deemed suitable, and participants were randomly allocated to the pre-set conditions (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). This allowed the researcher to minimise effects of irrelevant extraneous variables (other than the IV of the study) and to infer causality (Cash et al., 2016). Based on these deliberations and the full control over all aspects within the experiment, the researcher could claim that the results of the study represent what was actually intended to be measured. Given that CBBE has not been applied and measured within bundled products or services yet, the conduction of a true experiment appeared to be the most prudent decision. True experiments can be realised in a variety of ways of which the most prominent forms (i.e., between-group and within-subject design) are summarised in Table 16.

Table 16: Forms of true experiments

Form	Between-Group Design	Within-Subject Design
Description	Between-groups (or <i>independent measures</i>) designs use separate groups of participants for each of the different conditions in the experiment.	In within-subject (or <i>repeated measures</i>) designs, each participant is exposed to all conditions of the experiment.
Benefits	• Simplicity: Participant understanding and data analysis • No carry-over effects like fatigue or practice • Useful if impossible for participant to go through all conditions (e.g., medication) • Relatively free from restrictive statistical assumptions	• Economy: Time- and effort-wise, fewer subjects • Effects tested over time and after multiple treatments • Sensitivity: Easier to detect experiment-induced differences

Drawbacks	• High investment of time & effort • Large participant numbers needed • Relative insensitivity to experimental manipulations • No certainty that all groups are comparable in advance (especially in an online survey)	• Carry-over effects between experimental conditions • Attrition: Requires longer questionnaire • Restrictive assumptions to be met by study and data (e.g., sphericity)
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Note: Adapted from Field & Hole (2003).

A between-group design was deemed to be the most appropriate for the experiment given the risk of carry-over effects between conditions (e.g., a participant already evaluated the first package holiday and knows which questions and/ or tasks to expect concerning the next package holiday) as well as practicality of the survey (e.g., concerning the invested time for participants). A questionnaire including all conditions was considered unreasonable for participants due to the overall number of eight conditions and required time to complete the survey.

Resulting from the conceptual model and its three independent variables, namely accommodation CBBE, transport CBBE, and destination CBBE (cf. Figure 12, section 5.2.), a multi-factorial design was derived for the experiment given the aim of investigating the effects on CBBE and booking intention of different tourism sectors' CBBE when bundled together as a package holiday (White & McBurney, 2013). Factorial designs measure the effects of all independent variables (main effects) on one or more dependent variable, and provide interaction effects between those independent variables, resulting in a provision of more information compared to alternative experimental designs (Myers & Hansen, 2006). Interaction effects occur when "treatment effects are not constant but vary over levels of other factors" (Shadish et al., 2006, p.264). However, interaction effects remain more difficult to identify and often require larger sample sizes (Field & Hole, 2003; Hair et al., 2019a). Still, in contrast to other experimental designs, factorial designs require fewer actual subjects as each participant covers multiple independent variables (Shadish et al., 2006). From a logical perspective, there exists no suitable alternative to a multi-factorial design, as this study's focus was set to CBBE. Package holidays, by definition, comprise multiple tourism sectors and their corresponding brands.

Factorial designs use two or more independent variables (factors) each with at least two levels (e.g., two different manifestations such as positive or negative) per factor

(Field & Hole, 2003). However, it is not advised to combine more than three independent variables and the design should be as simple as possible (Field & Hole, 2003). For each Factor, two levels existed: a brand with either high or low CBBE. Resultingly, Factor A (accommodation CBBE) had two levels, as did Factor B (transport CBBE), and Factor C (destination CBBE). When these three two-level factors were combined, eight groups emerged based on the two-by-two-by-two (2 x 2 x 2) design (White & McBurney, 2013). Table 17 provides an overview of all eight experimental groups.

Table 17: Experimental groups

Group (or: condition)	Transport	Accommodation	Destination
1: ALL HIGH	High CBBE	High CBBE	High CBBE
2: Transport LOW	Low CBBE	High CBBE	High CBBE
3: Transport HIGH	High CBBE	Low CBBE	Low CBBE
4: Accommodation HIGH	Low CBBE	High CBBE	Low CBBE
5: Accommodation LOW	High CBBE	Low CBBE	High CBBE
6: Destination LOW	High CBBE	High CBBE	Low CBBE
7: Destination HIGH	Low CBBE	Low CBBE	High CBBE
8: ALL LOW	Low CBBE	Low CBBE	Low CBBE

Resultingly, six brands were needed: two brands for each tourism sector one of which demonstrates a high level of CBBE (meaning it is rather positively associated by respondents) and one a low level of CBBE (rather negatively associated by respondents). The ultimate choice of brands is described in section 5.4.1 (study development).

5.3.4 Sampling

Sampling includes all researcher choices regarding study participants (cf. section 4.2.1 for a more detailed description). As previously outlined in the context of Study One, popular sampling strategies are random sampling (i.e., randomly choosing participants for a study), purposive sampling (i.e., participant selection based on pre-defined characteristics for a study's sample), and convenience sampling (i.e., participant selection based on their associated ease of access) (Miles et al., 2019). Researchers

employing quantitative studies generally strive for answers to general questions and rules applicable to a large number, or preferably all, of people (Field & Hole, 2003). For most studies it is impossible to collect data from the whole population, resulting in the relevance of randomised participant assignment to experimental groups to control unidentified confounding variables (Keppel, 1991; Myers & Hansen, 2006). Access to potential participants within the population or its subsets constitutes a key challenge of sampling (Myers & Hansen, 2006). Especially in the social sciences, many studies overcome this challenge by employing student samples, although this practice is commonly criticised due to its lacking generalisability to population subsets in other phases of life (Field & Hole, 2003). As previously outlined, this study followed a between-group design to allow the randomised allocation of respondents to experimental groups. In line with Study One, the sample is set to German tourists that like to travel abroad for their holidays and was drawn from a subset population. In contrast to the alternative option of using a student sample, the utilisation of a broader sample (e.g., concerning socio-demographic criteria) of real travellers was considered to result in more meaningful results that are better suited to represent holiday choices based on a higher level of generalisability to the population of interest.

Another aspect to be considered regarding sampling is how to motivate potential subjects to join the study (Orne, 1962). In the case of non-student samples, for example when recruiting participants via consumer panels and platforms, some form of remuneration is commonly provided for each participant. The sample of the main study was recruited via Prolific, a UK-based platform to recruit participants for scientific studies and, thereby, follows the practice of existing studies employing market research platforms or panels to acquire study participants (Kim et al., 2021; Kim & Qu, 2017; Tasci, 2016c). In comparison to potential alternatives, this database provided access to the largest available number of German subjects (Prolific, 2022). To ensure representation of the German travel-inclined population, questions (and filters in the database) about travel behaviour, nationality, and country of residence were added to filter out respondents who did not meet the study's requirements. Further, Study One has not indicated differences between respondents based on different gender, age, or travel companionship, resulting in no predefined requirements in any of these characteristics.

A vast line of research set out to provide guidance related to minimum sample size requirements for multivariate studies (Hair et al., 2019a; Huberty & Petoskey, 2000; Ito 1962; Läuter, 1978; Mace, 1964; Olson, 1974; Pillai & Jayachandran, 1967; Stevens, 2002; Tabachnick & Fidell, 2001; Volicer, 1984). The required sample size is directly related to the statistical power sought. Volicer (1984, p.304) suggests that researchers benefit from designing “a study in such a way as to make the power of the test relatively high”. Three factors influence the statistical power of tests, namely *effect sizes*, *alpha* (α), and *sample size* (Hair et al., 2019a). Based on the *effect size*, researchers are able to identify if the observed relationships can be considered as meaningful, whereas *alpha* measures the strength of the evidence (Hair et al., 2019a). It is generally accepted wisdom that power (i.e., the probability of identifying treatment effects existing in the sample) increases with larger *sample sizes* (Läuter, 1978). However, the largest sample size is not always suggested, as extremely large sample sizes lead to overly sensitive statistical tests resulting in a significance of any observed effect (Hair et al., 2019a). Experiments should reach at least alpha levels of .05 and power levels of .80 (Cohen, 1988; Field & Hole, 2003). The sample size should surpass 30 participants within each experimental group to minimise issues with the corresponding statistical power (Hair et al., 2019a; Myers & Hansen, 2006). Further, the sample size requires more cases (subjects) per group than dependent variables (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2001). However, both the underlying conceptual model of the study and the chosen type of data analysis have to be taken into consideration when planning sample sizes.

The presented conceptual model for Study Two (cf. Figure 12, Section 5.2) includes three independent (transport CBBE, accommodation CBBE, and destination CBBE) and two dependent variables (CBBBE and booking intention) presupposing data analysis via a three-way multiple analyses of variance (MANOVA). Further, the experimental design led to eight experimental groups based on its 2x2x2 design. In line with Hair et al. (2019) as well as Tabachnick & Fidell (2001) this would have resulted in a minimum total of 240 (=8x30) participants. The most regarded sources for determining power and sample size for multivariate studies aiming at the application of MANOVA for data analysis are Läuter (1978) and Cohen (1988). However, existing studies only investigated one-way MANOVA designs, and no

evidence is in place for providing guidance on the determination of power levels and sample sizes for data analysis based on two- or three-way MANOVA (Young, 2006). Further, only a limited number of methods are known to calculate the power of MANOVA, especially in comparison to methods available for ANOVA (Hair et al., 2019a). This study followed the suggestion of Hair et al. (2019a) and the calculation of the minimum sample size by means of G*Power. G*Power is a statistical software that provides several procedures for performing power analyses in multivariate designs including calculations of the required minimum sample size for this study's three-way MANOVA approach (Faul et al., 2007, 2009). In order to compute the minimum required sample size, the following settings were made in G*Power:

- Effect size (f^2) = .0625 to allow the identification of medium effects (Cohen, 1988)
- Alpha (α) = .05 (Cohen, 1988; Hair et al., 2019a)
- Power = 1 – error probability beta (β) = .8 (Cohen, 1988; Field & Hole, 2003; Hair et al., 2019a)
- Number of groups = 8
- Number of predictors (IV) = 3
- Response variables (DP) = 2

A minimum total sample size of 170 subjects resulted from the calculations, using the recommended O'Brien & Shieh (1999) algorithm in combination with the Hotelling-Lawley T2 approximation (F-transformation) according to McKeon (1974). As the computed sample size was lower than the initially proposed number of 240 participants (see above following Hair et al., 2019a and Tabachnick & Fidell, 2001), the initially suggested sample size of 240 participants was considered to be appropriate. However, the risk of study attrition (e.g., by participants not completing the whole survey) potentially resulting in incomplete datasets, prompted the pursuit of over 240 participants to ensure a minimum of 240 complete and valid datasets.

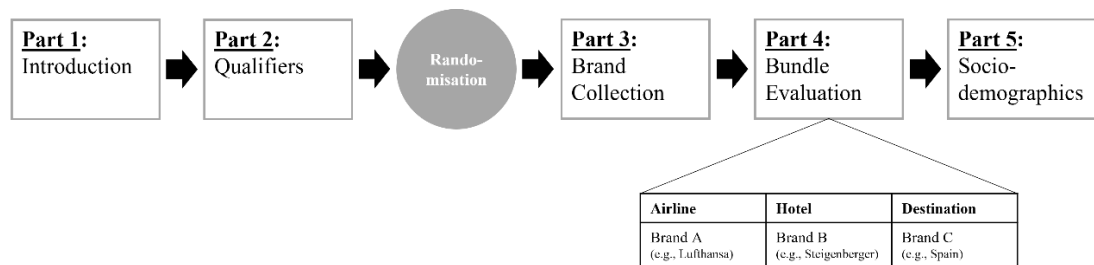
5.4 Experiment | Influence of tourism sector CBBE on CBBBE and BI

This section presents the development of the survey design and instrument to measure the influence of tourism sector CBBE on CBBBE and booking intention and the associated pre-test. Lastly, the findings of the experiment are discussed.

5.4.1 Study development

This study used a between-group design to examine three interacting independent variables (transport CBBE, accommodation CBBE, and destination CBBE) with two manifestations (high, low) and two dependent variables (CBBBE, booking intention). The initial survey flow (structure of the instrument) is presented in Figure 13 and can be broken down into five parts: (1) introduction, (2) qualifying questions, (3) brand collection, (4) bundle evaluation, and (5) socio-demographics. It needs to be noted that subsequent adjustments (specifically the deletion of part 3: brand collection) were made to the survey flow based on the results of the pre-test, which are justified and described in section 5.4.2.

Figure 13: Initial survey flow of experimental Study Two



Note: Own illustration.

First, participants were informed about the author's identity and institution, the academic nature of the study, and voluntary nature of participation including electronic consent. Next, participants were asked to indicate their current country of residence and the type of holidays they usually undertake, such as travelling abroad. After this, the subject was randomly allocated to one of the eight experimental groups. The following part included personalised brand collection from each participant, e.g., participants in group 1 ("ALL HIGH", cf. Table 17, section 5.3.3) were asked for tourism sector brands they associate with high levels of CBBE. This procedure followed the process applied in Study One and the participant was prompted to think of a summer holiday within Europe in order to reduce the potential influence of travel distance associated with the package holiday (based on Study One's implications for Study Two). Further, the collection of brands from the participant fostered the realism of the study and, thus, tackled a key issue of external validity. For instance, in group 1 ("ALL HIGH") the question concerning the tourism sector of transport was "Please name an airline brand that you have positive associations with, and which offers high

quality services”. In group 8 (“ALL LOW”) the corresponding question was “Please name an airline brand that you have negative associations with, and which offers services of a poor quality”. Resultingly, the mentioned brands per tourism sector represent either high levels or low levels of CBBE. The rationale for collecting brands from the subject relates to the highly subjective nature of brand evaluation from the customer’s perspective (De Chernatony et al., 2010; Yoo & Donthu, 2001). In contrast to this, an administration of pre-set bundles might have resulted in a flawed measurement of cause-and-effect relationships, as perceptions and evaluations of brands may differ between individual subjects (e.g., one participant is a loyal customer of a hotel brand, while another participant loathes the brand due to bad experiences in the past). However, an “I don’t know” option was included following Bianchi et al. (2014) to allow for an alternative survey route if participants could not think of any tourism sector brands. The inclusion of such option is suggested, as forced responses lead to a decreased reliability and validity of study findings as well as an increased likelihood of random error (Bianchi et al., 2014; Durand & Lambert, 1988). If the “I don’t know” option was selected in one of the explored tourism sectors, the fourth part of the survey provided a pre-set package holiday (cf. next section 5.4.1.1 on the configuration of the pre-set bundles). If brands were provided for all three tourism sectors, a tailor-made package based on the previously mentioned brands was created to be evaluated by the subject. The bundle presented to the participant was then evaluated in relation to the corresponding booking intention of the package holiday as well as the underlying CBBE dimensions for the overall package in order to compute CBBE during data analysis (cf. section 5.4.1.2 for detailed information on measurements). Lastly, subjects were asked to provide their socio-demographic information, such as age, gender, education, and profession.

The survey of this experimental study was available online in order to maximise the potential of obtaining the targeted sample size and to benefit from both presentational and interactive advantages compared to paper-based surveys (De Vaus, 2002; Easterby-Smith et al., 2012). Further, online surveys counter potential issues with social desirability bias and deliver more accurate and representative datasets. The survey was available in German and English language. To ensure the accuracy of translations, the survey was translated from English to German by the researcher and

back-translated into English by a fellow academic researcher. Both persons were fluent in both languages (Brislin, 1980). The online survey tool Qualtrics has been used to programme the survey as it enables the required randomised allocation of subjects to experimental conditions as well as the real-time creation of tailor-made bundles based on a subject's mentioned tourism sector brands throughout the third part of the survey.

5.4.1.1 Pre-set package holidays (bundles)

As previously outlined, a pre-configured set of package holidays was presented to those participants selecting the “I don't know” option for at least one of the tourism sectors throughout brand collection (survey part three). To ensure realism, and thus generalisability to the real world in the context of external validity, the brands included in the pre-configured packages needed to be derived from tourism practice. Further, a triangulation with the brand collection resulting from Study One was conducted. However, representative market studies exploring the tourism industry and travel behaviour of German travellers such as FUR (2022) and YouGov (2022) were weighted more than results from the qualitative Study One in the decision for or against the inclusion of certain brands in the pre-set package holidays. In the destination sector, European medium-haul destinations were sought as travellers' propensity to book package holidays is highest in these destinations compared to short- and long-haul destinations (VIR, 2020). Also, at the time of data collection, Covid-19 was still present, and restrictions prevented long-haul holidays. Therefore, a consideration of long-haul destinations might have skewed the experiment's results. Table 18 summarises the final brand repository for Study Two.

Table 18: Brand repository for Study Two

Tourism Sector	Brands	CBBE Level	Justification	Fit with Study 1
Transport	Lufthansa	High	Best rated airline brand in Germany in 2021 (YouGov, 2022)	Yes
Transport	Ryanair	Low	Worst airline ranked by customer score (Hobbs, 2022)	Yes
Accommodation	Steigenberger	High	Best rated hotel brand in Germany in 2021 (YouGov, 2022)	No

Accommodation	Sunshine Plaza	Low	Made-up brand to ensure low level of CBBE (this is in line with other researchers' approach, e.g., Denizci Guillet & Tasci, 2010b, and Washburn et al., 2004, using made-up brands for control purposes)	n.a.
(European) Destination	Spain	High	Favourite and most visited holiday destination in 2021 with 6.3 million visits (FUR, 2022) Ranked first among planned holiday destinations abroad of Germans in 2022 (BAT, 2022)	Yes
(European) Destination	Bulgaria	Low	Destinations in Eastern Europe suffer from proximity to war in Ukraine and "most significant declines in bookings apply for trips to Baltic countries, Bulgaria and, of course, Russia" (Eversmeier, 2022) Comparable to Spain regarding travel distance, flight time, and topography (sun & beach as well as cultural offer)	No

Note: Own elaboration.

As presented in Table 18, a made-up brand was used to represent a low CBBE brand. This procedure resulted from the non-existence of suitable and appropriate studies on unliked or negatively associated accommodation brands. Further, it is in line with other researchers' approach (Denizci Guillet & Tasci, 2010b; Washburn et al., 2004). As a made-up brand is unknown to the participants, it can be assumed that it is associated with a lack of brand awareness, brand associations, perceived quality, and brand loyalty. In general, brands characterised by low manifestations of these four CBBE dimensions are associated with a low level of CBBE. Due to the lack of profound studies to provide a low CBBE hotel brand, employing a made-up brand was deemed to be the best way to create a controlled experimental situation to investigate consumer evaluation of CBBE of package holidays.

Based on the deliberations on the tourism sector brands to be used for the pre-configured package holidays, Table 19 provides an overview of the allocation of the previously identified brands across experimental groups.

Table 19: Allocation of tourism sector brands to experimental groups

Group (or: condition)	Transport	Accommodation	Destination
1: ALL HIGH	Lufthansa	Steigenberger	Spain
2: Transport LOW	Ryanair	Steigenberger	Spain
3: Transport HIGH	Lufthansa	Sunshine Plaza	Bulgaria
4: Accommodation HIGH	Ryanair	Steigenberger	Bulgaria
5: Accommodation LOW	Lufthansa	Sunshine Plaza	Spain
6: Destination LOW	Lufthansa	Steigenberger	Bulgaria
7: Destination HIGH	Ryanair	Sunshine Plaza	Spain
8: ALL LOW	Ryanair	Sunshine Plaza	Bulgaria

5.4.1.2 Measurements

After being presented either the tailor-made or pre-configured package holiday and, thus, the study's three nominal independent variables, participants completed a questionnaire that comprised items to measure both dependent variables (CBBBE and booking intention), attention checks, and socio-demographic information. This section presents the measurements adopted within the experimental study.

CBBBE (or: package holiday CBBE, bundled CBBE)

At the time this research was conducted, no scale for CBBE within package holidays or other bundles (CBBBE) existed. This study's CBBBE scale was adapted from Zeugner-Roth et al.'s (2008) reflective CBBE construct including eight items across the dominant CBBE dimensions: brand awareness, brand associations, perceived quality, and brand loyalty. Table 20 summarises the definitions of the included CBBBE dimensions (i.e., constructs).

Table 20: Definition of CBBBE dimensions

CBBE		
Dimension (Construct)	Definition	Definition adapted from
Bundle Brand Awareness (BBAw)	Bundle brand awareness refers to the customer's ability to recognize or recall the brands included in a bundle of products or services.	Aaker (1991)
Bundle Brand Associations (BBAs)	Bundle brand associations relate to any (positive or negative) thoughts and ideas within the customer's mind linked to the brands included in a bundle of products or services.	Aaker (1991)
Perceived Bundle Quality (PBQ)	Perceived bundle quality refers to the customer's evaluation of a bundle's overall excellence or superiority.	Zeithaml (1988)
Bundle Brand Loyalty (BBL)	Bundle brand loyalty is an indicator of the customer's attachment to a brand and often accompanied by repeat buying patterns and customer preference.	Aaker (1991)

Zeugner-Roth et al.'s (2008) suggested and tested scale is most suitable, as it has been tested across different types of products and services (incl. flights and restaurants) and, thus, is of a rather general nature as well as applicable across the different bundled tourism sector brands. Further, they follow the widely accepted scale of Yoo & Donthu (2001). However, in order to expand the underlying items to more than two items in each CBBBE dimension, the scale was extended by adding additional items from CBBE research both with and without a relation to tourism. All items had to be slightly reworded to suit the context of bundles (e.g., "the brands within this package holiday" instead of "Spanish brands"). Table 21 provides a detailed summary of this study's items and the studies they originated from.

Table 21: Dependent variable measurements

Dependent Variable (Construct)	Items	Sources
Customer-based bundle brand equity (CBBBE)	BBAw I can recognize the brands within this package holiday among other competing brands.	Zeugner-Roth et al., 2008 (based on Yoo & Donthu, 2001); Chatzipanagiotou et al., 2019
	I am aware of the brands within this package holiday.	Zeugner-Roth et al., 2008 (based on Yoo & Donthu, 2001)

	I have heard of the brands within this package holiday.	Chatzipanagiotou et al., 2019
	I am quite familiar with the brands within this package holiday.	Chatzipanagiotou et al., 2019
BBA	Some characteristics of the brands within this package holiday come to my mind quickly.	Zeugner-Roth et al., 2008 (based on Yoo & Donthu, 2001)
	I can quickly recall the symbols or logos of the brands within this package holiday.	Zeugner-Roth et al., 2008 (based on Yoo & Donthu, 2001)
	The brands within this package holiday have strong associations.	Chatzipanagiotou et al., 2019
	The brands within this package holiday have favourable associations.	Chatzipanagiotou et al., 2019
	It is clear what the brands within this package holiday stand for.	Chatzipanagiotou et al., 2019
PBQ	The likely quality of the brands within this package holiday is extremely high.	Zeugner-Roth et al., 2008 (based on Yoo & Donthu, 2001)
	The likelihood that the brands within this package holiday would be functional is very high.	Zeugner-Roth et al., 2008 (based on Yoo & Donthu, 2001)
	The brands within this package holiday are good quality.	Chatzipanagiotou et al., 2019
	The brands within this package holiday have excellent features.	Chatzipanagiotou et al., 2019
	Compared to other brands in their category, the brands within this package holiday are of very high quality.	Chatzipanagiotou et al., 2019
BBL	I consider myself to be loyal to the brands within this package holiday.	Zeugner-Roth et al., 2008 (based on Yoo & Donthu, 2001)
	The brands within this package holiday would be my first choice.	Zeugner-Roth et al., 2008 (based on Yoo & Donthu, 2001)
	I will not buy other brands if the brands within this package holiday are available for booking.	Yoo & Donthu, 2001
Booking Intention	The likelihood of booking this package holiday is ...	Tsao et al., 2015 (based on Dodds et al., 1991)
	The probability that I would consider booking the package holiday is ...	Tsao et al., 2015 (based on Dodds et al., 1991)
	My willingness to book the package holiday is ...	Tsao et al., 2015 (based on Dodds et al., 1991)

Note: BBAw = bundle brand awareness, BBAs = bundle brand associations, PBQ = perceived bundle quality, BBL = bundle brand loyalty.

Resultingly, the construct of CBBBE was measured as a composite of its dimensions which included a total of 17 items. However, the issue of question order bias has to be taken into account whenever a “sequence of two or more questions deal with the same or similar issues” (Thau et al., 2021). As the items for each CBBE dimension were characterised by commonalities in their formulations and the overall number of items was rather high, the order of items could potentially influence the data and answers obtained due to underlying priming effects (Van de Walle & Van Ryzin, 2011; Hjortskov, 2017). In order to counter question order bias, the 17 CBBBE-related items were displayed to each subject in a randomised order.

The dependent variable CBBBE was measured using a 7-point Likert scale anchored from 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree). Using a 7-point Likert scale is in line with Zeugner-Roth et al. (2008), Chatzipanagiotou et al. (2019), as well as much of the tourism-related CBBE research (cf. Appendix A). In addition, the implementation of a 7-point Likert scale provides a maximised sensitivity to identify significant differences (Diefenbach et al., 1993; Jaeschke & Guyatt, 1990), coverage of hypothesised space (Green & Rao, 1970), and reliability (Cicchetti et al., 1985; Finn, 1972).

Booking Intention

Booking intention describes the customer’s likeliness to book a specific package holiday and was measured using three items adapted from Tsao et al. (2015), see Table 21 above. Their study is not related to CBBE but examines hotel bookings and is realistic to apply to package holidays. Further, their scale builds upon Dodds et al.’s (1991) widely accepted product-related scale for willingness to buy. Items had to be slightly reworded to suit the context of bundles (e.g., “package holiday” instead of “hotel”). The dependent variable booking intention is metric and was evaluated on a 7-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (very low) to 7 (very high). The usage of the 7-point Likert scale was derived from the original study (Tsao et al., 2015). Further, it allowed a uniform scale design across the whole survey and resulted in a higher quality of results, as respondents were not confused by a confrontation with different sets of scales throughout survey completion.

Attention Checks

The datasets of subjects that do not pay attention while answering survey questions potentially lead to distorted findings and challenge the validity of studies (Bowling et al., 2016; Maniaci & Rogge, 2014). Resultingly, attention checks are a popular tool to filter out careless or distracted participants prior to data analysis (Kung et al., 2018; Maniaci & Rogge, 2014). Attention checks are suggested to appear early in a survey and are characterised by an obvious correct response (Kung et al., 2018). Regarding validity, studies have explored the effects of using attention checks and verified that the inclusion of such items does not affect the overall scale validity of a study (Kung et al., 2018). This study included two instructed-response items (namely: “Please select option 2 to show that you are paying attention.” and “Please select option 5 to show that you are paying attention.”), which are the predominant form of attention checks (Bowling et al., 2016; Ward & Pond, 2015). The attention checks were anchored in a 7-point Likert scale like the rest of the measurement items for dependent variables. One attention check was placed early in the survey, among the items on booking intention, whereas the other was placed among the items related to CBBBE.

5.4.1.3 Research Ethics

As outlined in section 4.2.4 in relation to Study One, ethical standards form the foundation of a researcher’s conduct, especially, with regards to research participants (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Within research contexts, ethical conduct includes a participant’s (1) informed consent, (2) right to withdraw, (3) right to privacy, confidentiality, and anonymity, as well as (4) avoidance of harm (Saunders et al., 2019). For Study Two (as for Study One before) these criteria were assessed by the researcher and the ethics committee of the Department of Marketing (Strathclyde Business School, SBS) before approving the study. At the beginning of the survey, all participants received detailed information on the research project, its purpose, and the underlying procedure via the introduction text (cf. Appendix F). Based on this, all participants gave informed consent and were aware of their right to withdraw without negative consequences. In the case of withdrawal all respective data of the participant would have been deleted. The right to privacy was ensured by the anonymity of survey responses. Therefore, participant identity was unknown to the researcher. Lastly, the avoidance of harm was guaranteed both by the withdrawal option at any given time

throughout the survey, and by online environment allowing participants to complete the survey where and when they preferred.

The experimental Study Two was conducted in accordance with the ethical standards and code of conduct predefined by the University of Strathclyde. A risk assessment and formal application was made to the ethics committee, which resultingly approved the quantitative study (online experiment). A pre-test, which is described in the next section, was conducted after Study Two received ethical approval and prior to the main study.

5.4.2 Pre-test

The pre-test was conducted prior to the main study as the purpose of pre-tests is to identify potential issues regarding the survey design and the participants' understanding of it (Bell & Waters, 2014). The application of pre-tests enables the researcher to obtain insights regarding internal and construct validity, potential threats to validity, and the likely reliability of results and data within the following main study (Saunders et al., 2019). Further, such preliminary analysis ensures that the survey serves the research questions and hypotheses to be answered and assesses the effectiveness of treatment manipulations (Saunders et al., 2019). This study's pre-test was conducted in two steps and included two of the eight experimental conditions (namely, "ALL HIGH" and "ALL LOW", cf. Table 19). The first step was to have a group of seven experts test the survey and provide feedback on its quality and potential issues with completion or understanding of the questions, instructions, and contents. This procedure allowed to make necessary adaptations to the survey before the actual pre-test was started. For example, the instruction displaying the package was extended to include the information "Please assume that the price is within your travel budget." to minimise the influence of subjective price assumptions.

As participants of pre-tests should be as similar as possible to those targeted in the main study (Saunders et al., 2019), the pre-test survey link was administered via the Germany-based platform SurveyCircle. The database offers to find participants for research projects free of charge and is the largest community for online research (SurveyCircle, 2022). Instead of payments, registered users collect points with each

study participation. The gathered points can be redeemed to find participants for the user's own studies and to rise in the community's survey ranking.

Results of the pre-test

The pre-test was conducted in July 2022 and completed by 132 respondents. After exclusion of incomplete datasets and datasets not meeting the study requirements (German, liking to travel abroad for holidays, aged 18+ years) or failing the attention checks, a total of 112 respondents remained. However, a disbalance existed, as most respondents failed to provide tourism sector brands in order to allow for the presentation of a tailor-made package holiday. Table 22 summarises the distribution of experimental conditions and the prevalence of tailor-made package holidays in contrast to pre-configured package holidays.

Table 22: Distribution of experimental conditions in pre-test of Study Two

Experimental Condition	Package Type	Frequency	Percentage of Total (%)
ALL LOW	Tailor-made	6	5.4
	Pre-configured	47	42.0
ALL HIGH	Tailor-made	21	18.8
	Pre-configured	38	33.9
Total		112	100

The identified challenge associated with the provision of tourism brands from participants is predominantly set to the ALL LOW condition. This indicates that most participants in this group were unable to recall negatively associated brands. One potential reason for this could be that persons tend to remember the name of strong brands but not of weak brands. As brand awareness is one key dimension of CBBE, it can be assumed that a low level of CBBE is associated with minimum brand awareness and results in customers forgetting brand names of weak brands. As previously outlined, the alternative route including pre-configured package holidays was only intended to serve as a fallback option for participants failing to provide brand names. However, Table 22 shows that the task to insert brand names expected too much from most participants (75.9%). Resultingly, for data analysis of the pre-test those subjects

(24.1%) providing brand names and confronted with tailor-made package holidays were excluded from data analysis to maximise validity and reliability of findings as well as fostering the comparability between experimental groups. The final pre-test sample size included 85 subjects.

The average age of the pre-test sample was 27.32 (SD = 8.14) and 72.9% were female. The sample was well-educated (61.2% holding a bachelor's degree, 11.8% holding a master's degree) and inclined to travel in the year the study took place (52.9% travelled abroad within the last three months; 24.7% planned to travel abroad in the remainder of the year). The most common travel companions of the sample are partners/spouses (45.9%), followed by friends (27.1%) and family (with own parents, 18.8%).

Both constructs of CBBBE and booking intention were calculated based on the measurements described in section 5.4.1.2. The composite and latent construct of CBBBE calculated as a summated scale computed from the average mean of its constituent latent constructs (i.e., BBA_w, BBAs, PBQ, BBL) and booking intention was calculated based on its three corresponding items. The reliability of both dependent variables was evaluated based on their associated Cronbach's alpha which should surpass a value of .7 for the measurement to be considered reliable (Hair et al., 2019a). Based on this, reliability was tested for the dependent variables CBBBE ($\alpha = .91$) and booking intention ($\alpha = .98$), as well as for individual CBBBE dimensions: bundle brand awareness ($\alpha = .89$), bundle brand associations ($\alpha = .78$), perceived bundle quality ($\alpha = .92$), and bundle brand loyalty ($\alpha = .78$). Therefore, the measurement tool appeared to be reliable and the construct valid in its representation of CBBBE. Nevertheless, the final evaluation thereof remains to be made based on the results of the main study.

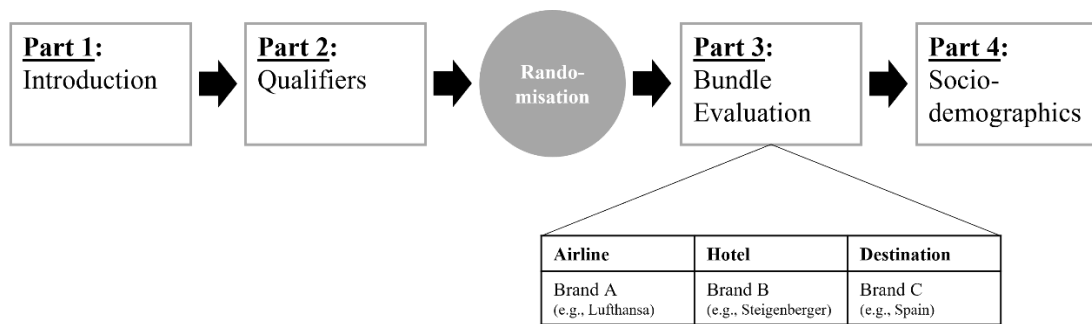
In order to evaluate the effectiveness of the manipulation within the experiment, the difference of both outcome variables (i.e., CBBBE, booking intention) between both experimental conditions within the pre-test has to be compared. The t-test is a statistical test that is commonly used for such comparisons of the means of two groups with significant test results indicating relevant differences between the observed values (Hair et al., 2019a). The dependent variable CBBBE revealed a significant difference between means of both experimental conditions ($M_{ALL\ LOW} = 3.11$, $n = 47$;

$M_{ALL\ HIGH} = 4.04$; $n = 38$, $t(61) = -4.44$, $p_{2\text{-tailed}} < .00$, $d = .92$). The same applied for the dependent variable booking intention ($M_{ALL\ LOW} = 2.76$, $n = 47$; $M_{ALL\ HIGH} = 4.32$; $n = 38$, $t(83) = -4.17$, $p_{2\text{-tailed}} < .00$, $d = 1.71$). Resultingly, it can be concluded that the treatment manipulations were effective within the pre-test and the ALL HIGH condition led to higher manifestations of both dependent variables than the ALL LOW condition.

Implications for main study

The pre-test and its findings resulted in one key adaptation of the survey flow for the main study. Due to the participants inability to provide negatively associated tourism sector brands, part three, and thus brand collection, has been removed from the survey, resulting in the distribution of only pre-configured package holidays across all experimental conditions. Figure 14 presents the final survey flow.

Figure 14: Final survey flow of experimental Study Two



Note: Own illustration. The final and complete survey can be found in Appendix F.

However, this procedure does neglect the highly subjective evaluation of brands from the participant's point of view. Even though the "ALL LOW" condition was rated significantly lower than the "ALL HIGH" condition in both dependent variables and associated effect sizes were large, a manipulation check was required to ensure that the allocated experimental condition is in line with the subject's attitude and perception concerning the included brands (e.g., to identify if a subject does not perceive all brands within the "ALL HIGH" bundle in a positive way, resulting in less reliability of findings). Three additional items were included at the end of bundle evaluation (now survey part three) to overcome this shortcoming. The manipulation check items collected the subject's individual evaluation of each tourism sector CBBE included in the respective package holiday. The item was identically phrased for all included

brands and was formulated similarly to the questions initially presented during brand collection: “[Brand Name] has favourable associations and offers high quality services”. The manipulation check items were measured using a 7-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree) in line with all other measurement items. The positioning of these three items at the end of bundle evaluation minimised the risk of question order bias, as respondents were first asked to evaluate the overall bundle before reflecting on individual brands in detail. The final and complete survey can be found in Appendix F.

5.4.3 Data analysis and results

To test Study Two’s hypotheses, a 2x2x2 between-subject factorial design was applied. Three independent variables (transport CBBE, accommodation CBBE, and destination CBBE) each with two levels (high and low) were manipulated resulting in eight experimental conditions. This allowed for the measurement of individual and joint effects of the three independent variables on two dependent variables: CBBE and booking intention. Following the recommendations of Hair et al. (2019) and calculations in G*Power concerning group size (8 groups, 30 participants each), a minimum sample size of 240 participants was targeted, as previously described (see section 5.3.4).

5.4.3.1 Sample and manipulation checks

The study was conducted in October 2022 and completed by 433 respondents. Participants were recruited via the online platform Prolific, a UK-based platform to recruit participants for scientific studies and, thereby, followed the practice of existing studies employing market research platforms to acquire study participants (Kim et al., 2021; Kim & Qu, 2017; Tasci, 2016c). After exclusion of incomplete datasets and datasets not meeting the study requirements (e.g., liking to travel abroad for holidays) or failing the attention checks, a total of 405 respondents remained.

5.4.3.1.1 Manipulation checks

The three independent variables (transport CBBE, accommodation CBBE, and destination CBBE) were manipulated at their two levels (i.e., high CBBE, low CBBE), resulting in eight experimental conditions. A manipulation check was performed to ensure that the allocated experimental condition matched the subject’s attitude and

perception concerning the included tourism sectors' CBBE. This step was crucial for the study's reliability as well as data quality, as brand evaluations are highly subjective (cf. Study One; De Chernatony et al., 2010; Yoo & Donthu, 2001). The manipulation check items followed the items measuring the dependent variables. Resultingly, if an independent variable (transport CBBE, accommodation CBBE, or destination CBBE) within the presented package holiday was pre-set as "HIGH" but a participant selected a scale point on the "LOW" side (1-3) of the scale the manipulation check was failed. Correspondingly, the manipulation check was failed if an independent variable was pre-set as "LOW", but a participant selected a scale point on the "HIGH" side (5-7) of the scale (cf. section 5.4.2 for detailed information on manipulation check design). Of all participants, 152 failed to satisfy the manipulation checks, as their individual brand evaluation differed from the pre-configured allocation to the experimental groups. One potential reason for this could be the highly subjective nature of brand evaluation, resulting in the fact that one brand can be loved by one customer but hated by another customer (e.g., based on prior experiences). One option to proceed with data analysis would have been the exclusion of these cases (Hair et al., 2019a). However, this would have led to a vast reduction of sample size. To facilitate meaningful results and a proper sample size, these 152 participants were manually allocated to the experimental condition most suitable to their subjective brand evaluations. For example, if participants were allocated the survey in the "ALL HIGH" condition but evaluated the included brands transport CBBE (scale point = 6), accommodation CBBE (1), and destination CBBE (5), they were then manually allocated to the "Accommodation LOW" condition. If a participant selected the scale point "4", the pre-set level of the independent variable was maintained. However, three participants selected "4" in all three manipulation checks and were dropped from the sample to prevent false allocations. Resultingly, the final sample included 402 subjects.

5.4.3.1.2 Sample characteristics

Table 23 demonstrates the distribution of participants across experimental groups. Even though the distribution shows a tendency toward the "ALL HIGH" condition, this does not influence the later data analysis since no group size falls below the minimum of 30 participants (Field, 2018; Hair et al., 2019a). In addition, the identified inequality of group sizes does not present a problem as long as the assessment of

assumptions does not result in unequal variances and covariances across groups, which will be tested prior to data analysis (Field, 2018).

Table 23: Distribution of experimental conditions in Study Two

Experimental Condition	Frequency	Percentage of Total (%)
1: ALL HIGH	77	19.2
2: Transport LOW	45	11.2
3: Transport HIGH	40	10.0
4: Accommodation HIGH	36	9.0
5: Accommodation LOW	49	12.2
6: Destination LOW	44	10.9
7: Destination HIGH	60	14.9
8: ALL LOW	51	12.7
Total	402	100

The average age of the main study's sample was 30.55 (SD = 9.70), and 48.3% were female (51.0% male, 0.7% other). The sample was well-educated (31.3% holding a bachelor's degree, 20.9% holding a master's degree) and inclined to travel in the year the study took place (61.6% travelled abroad in the summer of 2022; 9.7% planned to travel abroad in the remainder of the year). The most common travel companions of the sample are friends (31.8%), followed by partners/spouses (31.6%) and family (with own parents, 14.2%). Table 24 summarises the key sample characteristics across experimental groups. No vast or relevant group differences were identified.

Table 24: Sample characteristics across groups

Experimental Condition	Sample Characteristics
1: ALL HIGH	Age (Mean): 32.58 years (SD = 10.91) Gender: Male (54.5%), Female (45.5%), Other (0.0%) Common Travel Companion: alone (9.1%), friends (32.5%), partners/spouse (31.2%), family (with own parents, 9.1%), family (with own children, 15.6%), strangers (1.3%)
2: Transport LOW	Age (Mean): 30.64 years (SD = 9.22) Gender: Male (60.0%), Female (40.0%), Other (0.0%) Common Travel Companion: alone (15.6%), friends (28.9%), partners/spouse (24.4%), family (with own parents, 22.2%), family (with own children, 4.4%), strangers (0.0%)
3: Transport HIGH	Age (Mean): 31.05 years (SD = 11.63) Gender: Male (52.5%), Female (47.5%), Other (0.0%)

	Common Travel Companion: alone (22.5%), friends (22.5%), partners/spouse (22.5%), family (with own parents, 17.5%), family (with own children, 10.0%), strangers (0.0%)
4: Accommodation HIGH	Age (Mean): 30.97 years (SD = 9.20) Gender: Male (41.7%), Female (55.6%), Other (2.8%) Common Travel Companion: alone (11.1%), friends (33.3%), partners/spouse (38.9%), family (with own parents, 13.9%), family (with own children, 2.8%), strangers (0.0%)
5: Accommodation LOW	Age (Mean): 29.20 years (SD = 9.86) Gender: Male (49.0%), Female (49.0%), Other (2.0%) Common Travel Companion: alone (6.1%), friends (38.8%), partners/spouse (18.4%), family (with own parents, 18.4%), family (with own children, 18.4%), strangers (0.0%)
6: Destination LOW	Age (Mean): 28.23 years (SD = 8.71) Gender: Male (40.9%), Female (56.8%), Other (2.3%) Common Travel Companion: alone (9.1%), friends (22.7%), partners/spouse (43.2%), family (with own parents, 13.6%), family (with own children, 4.5%), strangers (0.0%)
7: Destination HIGH	Age (Mean): 30.78 years (SD = 7.81) Gender: Male (56.7%), Female (43.3%), Other (0.0%) Common Travel Companion: alone (6.7%), friends (35.0%), partners/spouse (40.0%), family (with own parents, 10.0%), family (with own children, 8.3%), strangers (0.0%)
8: ALL LOW	Age (Mean): 29.73 years (SD = 9.52) Gender: Male (47.1%), Female (52.9%), Other (0.0%) Common Travel Companion: alone (11.8%), friends (37.3%), partners/spouse (33.3%), family (with own parents, 13.7%), family (with own children, 3.9%), strangers (0.0%)

5.4.3.2 Measurement assessment (EFA and CFA)

Measurement assessment is crucial within theory testing and development research in order to obtain an empirical estimate of all relevant constructs (Gerbing & Anderson, 1988). As previously described, all items and constructs have been derived from the literature based on a semi-systematic literature review of tourism-related CBBE publications. However, multiple items had to be rephrased to ensure their fit in the context of bundles in the form of package holidays. As CBBE has not been regarded in the context of bundles before, a thorough examination of the measurement tool was necessary.

Following accepted approaches and procedures, this study's respondents were confronted with multiple measures, commonly referred to as a scale, which were suggested to be indicators of multiple underlying constructs (Churchill, 1979). For the purpose of data analysis, each construct is represented by a composite score as it is shaped by the respondents' scores on the associated measures. Such composite score is commonly calculated as an unweighted sum (in other words: summated scale) computed from the average mean of the included items and constitutes an estimate of the respective construct (Gerbing & Anderson, 1988; Hair et al., 2019a). However, before composites are calculated, it is indispensable to assess if multiple measures that shape a scale can be considered as alternative indicators of the same underlying construct (Gerbing & Anderson, 1988). The required measurement assessment for this study follows the recognised two-step procedure incorporating a combination of an exploratory factor analysis (EFA) followed by a confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) (Anderson & Gerbing, 1988; Crick, 2023, Fabrigar et al., 1999). Resultingly, this section serves the third research objective:

RO3: To adapt a specific, reliable, and valid measurement tool for customer-based bundle brand equity (CBBBE) in the context of package holidays.

The following sections start with a description of the conducted EFA followed by the results of the CFA, and a general assessment of reliability and validity regarding this study's obtained data.

5.4.3.2.1 Exploratory factor analysis

Exploratory factor analysis (EFA) is a statistical tool to reveal the underlying factors (in this case: CBBBE dimensions and booking intention) that explain the variation in a set of observed variables and assists researchers in the development of new as well as the confirmation of existing theories and models (Gerbing & Anderson, 1988; Hair et al., 2019a). Further, EFA can be used to develop or adapt measurement tools as it points out the items that best represent the underlying dimensions by assessing the factor structure underlying the specific scale set of a study (Backhaus et al., 2021). Thereby, EFA allows for an evaluation of the scales regarding their potential to correspond with the latent variables they are meant to measure (Crick, 2023).

Resultingly, the application of EFA improves the measurement instrument's validity and reliability and is useful when prior theoretical or empirical evidence concerning a research topic of interest is scarce (Backhaus et al., 2021; Fabrigar et al., 1999).

5.4.3.2.1.1 Assessment of sample adequacy

Prior to executing an EFA and then the inter-item correlations to be inspected, the adequacy of the sample had to be tested (Backhaus et al., 2021; Crick, 2023; Hair et al., 2019a). The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin index of sampling adequacy was .916, above the thresholds of .5 (acceptable) and .9 (marvellous), supporting the sample's adequacy for this study (Backhaus et al., 2021; Field, 2018). In addition, Bartlett's Test of Sphericity was computed to identify significant correlations within the data's correlation matrix (Crick, 2023; Hair et al., 2019a). Bartlett's Test of Sphericity was significant ($p=.000$) indicating inter-item correlations within the data (Crick, 2023). Lastly, the Measure of Sampling Adequacy (MSA) was consulted to assess whether the sample was adequate to provide reliable results for the included items (Backhaus et al., 2021). The MSA lie above the cut-off of .5 and close to 1 for all observed variables, ensuring their appropriateness (Backhaus et al., 2021). Resultingly, no objections against the sample's adequacy were found, as summarised in Table 25.

Table 25: EFA | Assessment of sample adequacy

Indice	Cut-off	Value
Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Index of Sampling Adequacy	>.5 / .9	.916
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	<.05	.000
Measure of Sampling Adequacy	>.5	>.816 ^a

Note: ^aMSA values across all observed variables ranged between .816 and .955.

5.4.3.2.1.2 Results of the exploratory factor analysis

For this study, EFA was conducted in SPSS Statistics 27 to assess factor loadings of the 17 CBBBE items and three booking intention items identified in the literature but not tested or explored by prior studies in the context of package holidays. An EFA requires the choice of the underlying model-fitting procedure, namely, to determine which procedure to use in order "to fit the common factor model to the data (Fabrigar et al., 1999, p.277). Principal axis factoring was conducted to specify the underlying factors in the data, as (1) solutions provided by alternative model-fitting procedures are usually very similar, and (2) principal axis factoring is less likely to produce

improper solutions compared to its alternatives, such as maximum likelihood factoring (Fabrigar et al., 1999; Field, 2018).

Based on the prior semi-systematic literature review and the results of Study One, correlations between the factors were expected before the analysis was conducted. In line with the literature, an oblique rotation was utilised on the data as required when inter-factor correlations can be assumed (Backhaus et al., 2021; Fabrigar et al., 1999; Hair et al., 2019a). Four factors with eigenvalues, representing a measure of the variance explained by each individual factor, over 1 (Field, 2018; Hair et al., 2019a) explained more than half (66.66%, cf. Table 26 for individual percentages) of variance in the data. No cross-loading items (i.e., having two factor loading values within .2 of each other) were identified in the data (Hair et al., 2019a). Cross-loading items commonly imply that items were created insufficiently or that a factor structure was flawed (Backhaus et al., 2021). In the case of cross-loading items, it is advised to exclude these items from further data analysis to increase construct validity (Hair et al., 2019a). However, as no cross-loading items were detected, no elimination was needed. Table 26 presents factor loadings all of which lie above the threshold of .4 (Backhaus et al., 2021).

Table 26: EFA | Results of the exploratory factor analysis

Items	Factors & Loadings			
	1 BBAwAs	2 PBQ	3 BBL	4 BI
I can recognize the brands within this package holiday among other competing brands.	.773			
I am aware of the brands within this package holiday.	.846			
I have heard of the brands within this package holiday.	.762			
I am quite familiar with the brands within this package holiday.	.764			
Some characteristics of the brands within this package holiday come to my mind quickly.	.738			
I can quickly recall the symbols or logos of the brands within this package holiday.	.628			
The brands within this package holiday have strong associations.	.617			
It is clear what the brands within this package holiday stand for.	.706			

The brands within this package holiday have favourable associations.	.542				
The likely quality of the brands within this package holiday is extremely high.	.925				
The likelihood that the brands within this package holiday would be functional is very high.	.563				
The brands within this package holiday are good quality.	.954				
The brands within this package holiday have excellent features.	.805				
Compared to other brands in their category, the brands within this package holiday are of very high quality.	.869				
I consider myself to be loyal to the brands within this package holiday.	.766				
The brands within this package holiday would be my first choice.	.574				
I will not buy other brands if the brands within this package holiday are available for booking.	.719				
The likelihood of booking this package is...				.944	
The probability that I would consider booking this package holiday is...				.993	
My willingness to book this package holiday is...				.861	
Percentage of variance explained	16.38	37.29	4.20	8.79	

Note: BBAwAs = bundle brand awareness and associations; PBQ = perceived bundle quality; BBL = bundle brand loyalty; BI = booking intention; Extraction method = principal axis factoring; rotation = oblique; n=402. Only factor loadings above the threshold of .4 are displayed.

As presented in Table 26, EFA pointed out a three-dimension model of CBBBE rather than the four-dimension model derived from the literature review. A three-dimension approach is not the most prominent one within the literature. However, it is not uncommon and has been followed repeatedly within the tourism-related CBBE literature which supports its general applicability (cf. semi-systematic literature review in section 2.4.3.2). Based on the obtained eigenvalues and factor loadings, the dimensions of bundle brand awareness and bundle brand associations were merged into one factor: bundle brand awareness and associations (BBAwAs). This follows the practice of existing studies merging these two dimensions (e.g., Kim et al., 2008; Uslu et al., 2013, Washburn, 2002; Yoo & Donthu, 2001; Zeugner-Roth et al., 2008).

In addition, the results of EFA identified one item (“The brands within this package holiday have favourable associations.”) to be associated with the dimension perceived bundle quality (PBQ) rather than its initial dimension bundle brand associations

(BBAs) based its corresponding factor loading (.54). It is generally recommended to carefully consider how to proceed in this case. While it is not uncommon for items to switch between factors, some researchers point out that potential threats to construct validity might arise from such action (Hair et al., 2019a). The decision how to proceed usually follows a combined consideration of statistical results, theoretical reasoning, and interpretation (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2001). The results of EFA identified no cross-loading of the item of interest. Further, its factor loading regarding the factor PBQ clearly surpassed the threshold of .4 (Backhaus et al., 2021). In addition, the measurement tool included additional items from different sources (for a detailed description see section 5.4.1.2 on measurements), which relates to this specific item from Chatzipanagiotou et al. (2019). Such adapted combination of items might result in a better fit between the item and another (and not the initially assumed) factor. Content wise, it is crucial that items within a factor share a common theme or concept (Kline, 2011). It might be argued, that even though the item contains the word “associations”, the adjective “favourable” is more suitable to the nature of items within the PBQ factor summarising positive aspects and characteristics indicating superiority of the included brands such as “functional”, “good quality”, or “excellent features” (see Table 26). Lastly, and as previously described, EFA is a tool designed to explore the underlying structure of a set of observed variables (items) and to ultimately identify latent factors that may be influencing those variables (Hair et al., 2019a). In this case EFA identified the item of interest to be associated with another factor than initially planned, thereby, fulfilling its purpose to identify the association between the item and the PBQ factor. Based on the outlined deliberations, the item (“The brands within this package holiday have favourable associations.”) was switched to the PBQ dimension.

In line with the literature, EFA has proven to be a useful preliminary technique to assist in the development of new as well as the confirmation of existing theories and models (Hair et al., 2019a). However, a subsequent confirmatory analysis was required to evaluate, and potentially refine, the emerging scales (Churchill, 1979; Gerbing & Anderson, 1988).

5.4.3.2.2 Confirmatory factor analysis

Confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) can be used to test the underlying factor structure of a set of multi-item measures, or in other words, whether the observed indicators

(i.e., variables) are measuring a latent construct (i.e., factor) (Crick, 2023; Hair et al., 2019a). Latent constructs describe underlying constructs that are not directly observable (Backhaus et al., 2015). CFA serves multiple purposes such as (1) confirming theoretical models by testing whether the model accurately represents the data and (2) evaluating validity of a measurement tool by examining whether the indicators accurately measure the latent constructs (Hair et al., 2019a). CFA is only applicable to reflective constructs (Backhaus et al., 2015). Within reflective measurement models, it is assumed that changes in the measured values of the indicators (variables) are caused by the latent variable (Backhaus et al., 2015). In contrast, formative constructs are thought to be caused by their indicators (Backhaus et al., 2015). Within this study, all latent factors were considered to be reflective: BBAwAs, PBQ, BBL, and BI are defined by their indicators and cause them.

CFA was conducted in AMOS 28 based on the four-factor (BBAwAs, PBQ, BBL, and BI) solution revealed by the EFA. Four fit indices exist to examine the fit of the measurement model, namely Chi-squared/ degrees of freedom (CMIN/DF), comparative fit index (CFI), root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA), and standardised root square mean residual (SRMR) (Backhaus et al., 2015).

Relative chi-squared (CMIN/DF) measures the goodness of fit and is computed by the chi-square minimum by degrees of freedom. The CMIN/DF is considered as adequate and indicates a good model when (1) its value lies below 3 and (2) the test is non-significant (Backhaus et al., 2015). CMIN/DF is sensitive, for example to the sample size and number of variables (Hair et al., 2019a). Therefore, a combination of multiple fit indices is needed to obtain all-encompassing evidence of the model fit (Hair et al., 2019a). With regards to this study, the CMIN/DF was 2.848, lying below the threshold of 3, thereby indicating a good model fit. The significant Chi-Square test is deemed unproblematic, since (1) its requirement are often not fulfilled in practical settings and as such should be treated with caution, and (2) the more robust indices RMSEA and SRMR (see below) indicate an acceptable model fit (Backhaus et al., 2015).

The incremental **fit index CFI** represents goodness of fit on a range between 0 and 1 (Backhaus et al., 2015; Bentler, 1990). CFI should reach a value above .90 to indicate

a good fit (Hair et al., 2019a; Hu & Bentler, 1999). The reported CFI (.949) surpassed the threshold of .90 and suggested a good model fit.

RMSEA is an absolute fit index. Based on its underlying logic, the model fits worse when values are higher (Kline, 2005). The value should be close to 0 and indicates (1) an adequate fit in the range between .05-.08, as well as (2) a good fit below .05 (Backhaus et al., 2015; Kline, 2005). The obtained RMSEA was .068 pointing towards an adequate model fit.

The absolute **fit index SRMR** examines the difference between observed and predicted measurements and allows for a comparison of models (Backhaus et al., 2015). Like with RMSEA, the model is assumed to fit better, the lower its value is (Hair et al., 2019a). A value below .08 reveals a good model fit (Backhaus et al., 2015). Based on the SRMR being .061, a good model fit was indicated. Table 27 displays all fit indices for the measurement model. As all fit indices lie within the recommended ranges, the overall model was considered to be of an adequate to good fit, and therefore valid in its representation of CBBBE and booking intention.

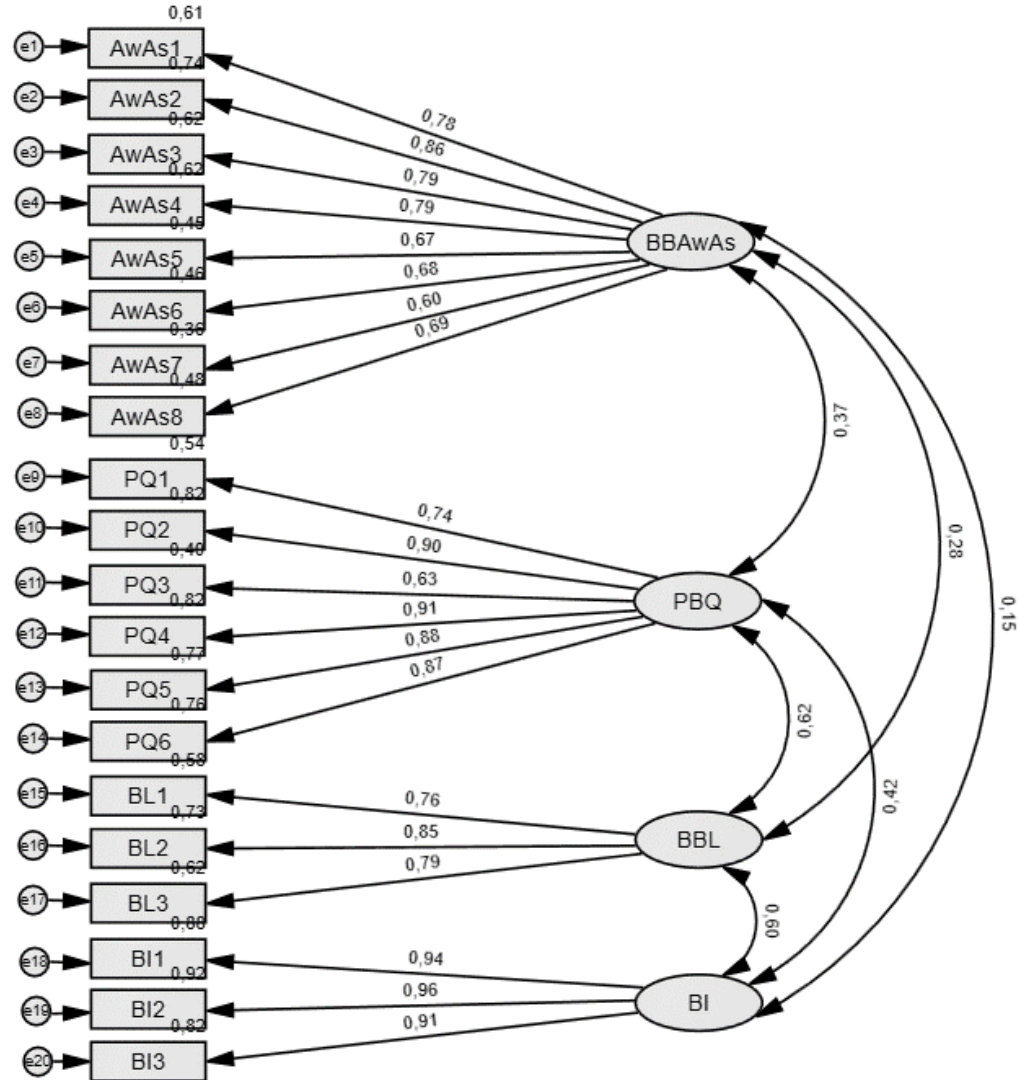
Table 27: CFA | Fit indices for the measurement model

Index	Cut-off	Value
CMIN/DF	<3	2.848
Chi-squared		467.122
Sig.	>.05	.000
CFI	>.90	.949
RMSEA	<.08	.068
SRMR	<.08	.061

Note: CMIN/DF = relative chi-squared; Sig. = significance; CFI = comparative fit index; RMSEA = root mean square error of approximation; SRMR = standardised root square mean residual.

Figure 15 presents the measurement model.

Figure 15: CFA | Measurement model based on confirmatory factor analysis



Note: Figure displays results of CFA from AMOS 28 graphic output. Estimated values stem from the standardised solution using Maximum Likelihood (ML) estimation method. Small circles represent measurement error terms (e), rectangles represent indicator variables (items), large ovals represent latent constructs. Estimated values at rectangles and ovals are squared multiple correlations (SMCs), estimates at arrows reflect factor loadings. BBAwAs = bundle brand awareness and associations; PBQ = perceived bundle quality; BBL = bundle brand loyalty; BI = booking intention.

5.4.3.3 Assessment of reliability and validity

Following both factor analyses, a general assessment of construct reliability and validity was employed. The corresponding tests examine factor loadings, scale reliability, convergent validity, and discriminant validity, which are discussed in detail below (Hair et al., 2019a).

Factor loadings demonstrate the strength of the relationship between observed indicators and the respective latent constructs (Backhaus et al., 2015). Regarding construct validity, factor loadings provide insights about the extent to which the observed indicators are measuring the intended construct(s). Specifically, factor loadings of observed variables should be statistically significant and exhibit high standardised loading estimates above .50 (Hair et al., 2019a). In contrast, there is no fixed cut-off for factor loadings of latent variables (BBAwAs, PBQ, BBL, BI) in CFA due to their dependence on a variety of factors such as the number of variables used for each latent variable and the complexity of the overall model (Hu & Bentler, 1999; Kline, 2011). In addition, based on the hypothesised relationships, all factor loadings should be positive, as it was presumed that all variables are positively related to their associated factor, i.e., CBBBE dimension (Backhaus et al., 2015). Factor loadings of the observed variables, all of which are positive and surpass the cut-off of .5, and t-values are summarised in Table 28. All factor loadings were found to be statistically significant with p-values below .001.

Table 28: CFA | Standardised factor loadings and t-values

Items	Factors			
	1 BBAwAs	2 PBQ	3 BBL	4 BI
I can recognize the brands within this package holiday among other competing brands.	.784*** (18.263)			
I am aware of the brands within this package holiday.	.858*** (20.997)			
I have heard of the brands within this package holiday.	.790*** (18.489)			
I am quite familiar with the brands within this package holiday.	.788*** (18.396)			
Some characteristics of the brands within this package holiday come to my mind quickly.	.672*** (14.759)			
I can quickly recall the symbols or logos of the brands within this package holiday.	.680*** (14.994)			
The brands within this package holiday have strong associations.	.596*** (12.688)			
It is clear what the brands within this package holiday stand for.	.693*** (15.386)			

The brands within this package holiday have favourable associations.	.738*** (16.983)
The likely quality of the brands within this package holiday is extremely high.	.903*** (23.169)
The likelihood that the brands within this package holiday would be functional is very high.	.635*** (13.921)
The brands within this package holiday are good quality.	.907*** (23.345)
The brands within this package holiday have excellent features.	.879*** (22.150)
Compared to other brands in their category, the brands within this package holiday are of very high quality.	.872*** (21.850)
I consider myself to be loyal to the brands within this package holiday.	.762*** (16.975)
The brands within this package holiday would be my first choice.	.852*** (19.852)
I will not buy other brands if the brands within this package holiday are available for booking.	.787*** (17.757)
The likelihood of booking this package is...	.940*** (24.912)
The probability that I would consider booking this package holiday is...	.959*** (25.820)
My willingness to book this package holiday is...	.906*** (23.384)

Note: *** $p < .001$; Values in brackets represent t-values.

For the purpose of subsequent data analysis, each construct is represented by a composite score based on the individual scores of its included variables. Such composite score was calculated as an unweighted sum (in other words: summated scale) computed from the average mean of the included items and constitutes an estimate of the respective construct (Gerbing & Anderson, 1988; Hair et al., 2019a). Resultingly, four constructs (BBAwAs, PBQ, BBL, BI) were individually calculated from the items identified to shape them based on both preliminary analyses (EFA and CFA).

In line with existing studies applying CFA, **scale reliability** (also: internal consistency) was tested using Cronbach's (1951) alpha of the latent variables (Kayaman & Arasil, 2007; Lu et al., 2015; Pike et al., 2010). Cronbach's alpha is a coefficient indicating how closely related a set of items are. It ranges from 0 to 1, with higher values indicating greater reliability (Hair et al., 2019a). A value above the threshold of .70

indicates that the items consistently represent the same latent construct. However, Cronbach's alpha may underestimate reliability (Hair et al., 2019a). Table 29 summarises the means, standard deviations, and Cronbach's alpha of all constructs. Scale reliability was attained for all constructs.

Table 29: Reliability of constructs

Construct	M	SD	Scale Range	Number of Items	α
BBAwAs	4.72	1.14	1-7 ^a	8	.90
PBQ	4.04	1.26	1-7 ^a	6	.96
BBL	2.53	1.27	1-7 ^a	3	.85
BI	3.77	1.68	1-7 ^b	3	.95

Note: ^a 1 ("strongly disagree") to 7 ("strongly agree"); ^b 1 (very low) to 7 (very high).

Convergent validity relates to the requirement that indicators (items) of a specific construct should share a high level of variance (Hair et al., 2019a). This evaluation requires a calculation of the average variance extracted (AVE) for each construct, with a score above .50 representing high variance within a construct (Backhaus et al., 2015). Table 30 displays the AVE values for all constructs which were part of the CFA. Convergent validity was attained for all constructs.

Table 30: Average variance extracted

Construct	AVE	$\sqrt{\text{AVE}}$
BBAwAs	.54	.74
PBQ	.69	.83
BBL	.64	.80
BI	.88	.94

Note: AVE calculation = Sum of squared factor loadings of all items within the respective construct divided by the number of items within that construct (e.g., BBAwAs AVE = $(0,78^2 + 0,86^2 + 0,79^2 + 0,79^2 + 0,67^2 + 0,68^2 + 0,6^2 + 0,69^2)/8$).

Discriminant validity refers to the extent to which a construct is distinct from other constructs (Hair et al., 2019a). Thereby it assesses whether a construct is truly measuring what it is meant to measure, rather than something else (Backhaus et al., 2015). Discriminant validity is tested by examining the inter-factor correlation coefficients and the square root of AVE (cf. Tables 30 + 31) which should surpass the value of the inter-factor correlation coefficient (Fornell & Larcker, 1981; Hair et al.,

2019a). The inter-factor correlation coefficients are summarised in Table 31. All correlation coefficients lie below the square root of each of the AVEs indicating that discriminant validity applies to all constructs.

Table 31: Inter-factor correlations

	BBAwAs	PBQ	BBL
PBQ	.37***		
BBL	.27***	.62***	
BI	.15**	.42***	.60***

Note: **p<.01, ***p<.001

Lastly, to allow for the following data analysis (i.e., MANOVA) based on this study's conceptual model, the composite construct of CBBBE needed to be calculated. Following Hair et al. (2019a), CBBBE is a reflective and latent construct and was calculated as a summated scale computed from the average mean of its constituent latent constructs (BBAwAs, PBQ, BBL). The reliability of CBBBE was evaluated based on its associated Cronbach's alpha as presented in Table 32 (Hair et al., 2019a).

Table 32: Reliability of CBBBE construct

Construct	M	SD	Scale Range	Number of Items	α
CBBBE	3.76	.95	1-7 ^a	3	.67

The value (.67) lay slightly below the threshold of .70. However, a variety of research appears to confirm the notion that such small discrepancy is acceptable as some researchers caution against using automatic cut-off criteria when it comes to Cronbach's alpha (Cho & Kim, 2014; Cortina, 1993). Further, the construct CBBBE consisted of only three variables (BBAwAs, PBQ, and BBL) and Cronbach's Alpha is known to increase with the number of underlying variables (Cortina, 1993; Peterson, 1994). Resultingly, the obtained value was deemed acceptable, even though it is marginally below the threshold of .70, and reliability was assumed for the CBBBE construct.

5.4.3.4 Descriptive statistics

The means and standard deviations of the dependent variables CBBBE and booking intention were analysed, as presented in Table 33, to obtain a first overview of the data.

Table 33: Means and standard deviations for DVs across conditions of Study Two

Condition		CBBBE ^a	Booking Intention
1: ALL HIGH (i.e., transport CBBE = high, accommodation CBBE = high, destination CBBE = high)	M	4.69	4.99
	N	77	77
	SD	.86	1.54
2: Transport LOW (i.e., transport CBBE = low, accommodation CBBE = high, destination CBBE = high)	M	3.65	4.07
	N	45	45
	SD	.79	1.58
3: Transport HIGH (i.e., transport CBBE = high, accommodation CBBE = low, destination CBBE = low)	M	3.57	3.03
	N	40	40
	SD	.77	1.48
4: Accommodation HIGH (i.e., transport CBBE = low, accommodation CBBE = high, destination CBBE = low)	M	3.54	2.70
	N	36	36
	SD	.58	1.37
5: Accommodation LOW (i.e., transport CBBE = high, accommodation CBBE = low, destination CBBE = high)	M	4.02	4.58
	N	49	49
	SD	.74	1.38
6: Destination LOW (i.e., transport CBBE = high, accommodation CBBE = high, destination CBBE = low)	M	4.22	3.25
	N	44	44
	SD	.78	1.43
7: Destination HIGH (i.e., transport CBBE = low, accommodation CBBE = low, destination CBBE = high)	M	3.15	3.69
	N	60	60
	SD	.72	1.51
8: ALL LOW (i.e., transport CBBE = low, accommodation CBBE = low, destination CBBE = low)	M	2.84	2.72
	N	51	51
	SD	.56	1.33
Total	M	3.76	3.77
	N	402	402
	SD	.95	1.68

Note: ^aSummated scale computed from the average mean of the latent constructs BBAwAs, PBQ, and BBL following Hair et al. (2019a).

Regarding CBBBE, the “ALL HIGH” condition displays the highest ($M = 4.69$) and the “ALL LOW” condition the lowest value ($M = 2.84$). In relation to booking intention, the “ALL HIGH” condition is again associated with the highest mean ($M = 4.99$). However, the “Accommodation HIGH” condition reaches the lowest mean (M

= 2.70) for booking intention with a value just slightly smaller than the “ALL LOW” condition’s mean ($M = 2.72$).

5.4.3.5 Multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA)

Multivariate Analysis of Variance (MANOVA) is an extension of the univariate analysis of variance (ANOVA). While ANOVA, examines for statistical differences on one metric dependent variable by one or more nominal or categorical independent variable/s, MANOVA extends this by examining statistical differences regarding multiple metric dependent variables (Hair et al., 2019a). MANOVA compares whether the dependent variables, both from a joint (multivariate) and individual (univariate) perspective, differ by different groups (i.e., levels) of the nominal independent variable/s (Field, 2018).

MANOVA was conducted in SPSS Statistics 27 to analyse the individual and combined effects of transport CBBE, accommodation CBBE, and destination CBBE (nominal independent variables) on CBBE and booking intention (metric dependent variables). Thus, it tests hypotheses 1-7. For this experiment, the execution of MANOVA has manifold advantages, as it (1) allows for the analysis of a combination of several independent and dependent variables, (2) provides more statistical power than ANOVA, and (3) controls the error rate of the experiment in the case of inter-correlation between dependent variables (Field, 2018; Hair et al., 2019a). However, a MANOVA requires multiple preliminary checks to ensure that the procedures of MANOVA are valid by meeting the following assumptions: independence of observations, equality of variance-covariance matrices among groups (also: homoscedasticity), non-multicollinearity, linearity, and multivariate normality (Hair et al., 2019a; Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2009).

5.4.3.5.1 Assessment of assumptions

The ***independence of observations*** (i.e., non-correlation of responses in each group with each other by some characteristic of the group) ensures that significant differences between groups result from the study’s IVs and no other potentially influencing factors (Hair et al., 2019a). For this study, independence of observations was attained by the random assignment of participants to experimental conditions (Field, 2018). A violation of the assumption of ***homoscedasticity*** (i.e., homogeneity of the population

covariance matrices) could result in classical MANOVA procedures which are either too conservative or too liberal and require the use of alternative procedures (Hair et al., 2019a). Homoscedasticity was tested by (1) a non-significant Box's test (.441), indicating no significant differences between experimental groups and (2) additional univariate Levene's tests regarding the homoscedasticity of the error variances of both dependent variables, which were also non-significant as displayed in Table 34. Resultingly, the assumption of homoscedasticity has been met (Hair et al., 2019a) and the inequality of group sizes is not deemed to pose a problem for later data analysis.

Table 34: MANOVA | Multivariate and univariate tests of homoscedasticity across groups

Multivariate Test				
Box's Test of Equality of Covariance Matrices				
Box's M	21.669			
F	1.014			
df1	21			
df2	376179.210			
Sig.	.441			
Univariate Test				
Levene's Test of Equality of Error Variances				
Dependent Variable	F	df1	df2	Sig.
CBBBE	1.958	7	394	.060
BI	.371	7	394	.919

Further, the assumptions regarding **multicollinearity** (i.e., dependent variables in a model are very highly correlated resulting in redundancy alongside logical and statistical problems) and **multivariate outliers** (i.e., a combination of unusual scores on at least two variables) had to be tested to ensure the validity of subsequent MANOVA procedures (Hair et al., 2019a). Both were found to be no issue based on the inspection of the inter-construct correlations as both dependent variables (CBBBE and BI) were moderately ($r < .8$) correlated ($r = .490$, $p = .000$, $N = 402$) and the Mahalanobis distance (10.58) lay below the threshold of 13.82 (Hair et al., 2019a; Pallant, 2013). This was in addition to the visual examination of the linear relationship between dependent variables for each experimental group (i.e., across each level of the independent variables) within SPSS. The difference between original and trimmed

means (i.e., a small, designated percentage of the largest and smallest values is removed from the dataset before calculating the average) of both dependent variables was minimal, confirming the **normality** of their distribution (Field, 2018). The satisfaction of the normality assumption (i.e., any linear combination of the dependent variables must follow a normal distribution) was further tested (Field, 2018). Skewness is based on the asymmetry of the distribution and analyses to which extent the actual distribution deviates from the normal distribution (Hair et al., 2019a). Kurtosis describes the deviation of the shape of a distribution from a normal distribution in terms of whether the centre of the distribution (the peak) is more pointed or flatter than in the normal distribution (Field, 2018). The inspection of skewness and kurtosis that were both below ± 1 satisfied this criterion, as the multivariate distribution is commonly considered to be normal if skewness ranges between ± 2 and kurtosis between ± 7 (Field, 2018; George & Mallery, 2010; Hair et al., 2019a; Schmider et al., 2010). The values of trimmed means, skewness and kurtosis for both DVs are summarised in Table 35.

Table 35: MANOVA | Trimmed mean, skewness, and kurtosis of DVs

	CBBBE	Booking Intention
Mean	3.761	3.765
5% Trimmed Mean	3.745	3.743
Difference	0.016	0.022
Skewness	.240	.034
Kurtosis	-.343	-.939

5.4.3.5.2 Hypotheses testing

As all preliminary requirements were met, MANOVA was computed to analyse the individual and joint effects (interactions) of transport CBBE, accommodation CBBE, and destination CBBE (independent variables) on CBBBE and booking intention (dependent variables). Four indicators are available to measure significant differences between dependent variables across experimental groups: Pillai's trace, Wilks' lambda, Hotelling's T^2 , and Roy's largest root (Field, 2018). For the subsequent analysis, Pillai's trace was chosen, as it is considered to be most robust and suitable to unequal cell sizes (i.e., different participant numbers across experimental groups) when all underlying assumptions of MANOVA are met (Hair et al., 2019a). However,

in most situations all four measures demonstrate comparable or even identical results (Field, 2018; Hair et al., 2019a). In practice, MANOVA returns an output where the results of multiple tests are reported in the following order: multivariate test results and univariate test results. The next section adheres to this order.

Multivariate tests regarding combined DVs (CBBBE and booking intention)

MANOVA requires a first set of multivariate tests which is performed to assess the overall relationships between all predictors and outcome variables in a joint approach (Hair et al., 2019a). These multivariate tests serve to address the overall applicability of the underlying conceptual model with regards to all included variables.

The initially performed multivariate tests regarding the combined DVs (CBBBE and booking intention) resulted in significant main effects of all independent variables on CBBBE and booking intention: transport CBBE ($V = 0.23$, $F(2, 393) = 59.42$, $p = .000$), accommodation CBBE ($V = 0.15$, $F(2, 393) = 35.57$, $p = .000$), and destination CBBE ($V = 0.18$, $F(2, 393) = 44.41$, $p = .000$). In contrast, no significant interaction effects were discovered. Table 36 summarises the test statistics for main effects and interactions.

Table 36: MANOVA | Multivariate tests for group differences regarding combined DVs (CBBBE and Booking Intention)

Effect		Value	F	Hypo-thesis df	Error df	Sig.	η_p^2
Transport CBBE (TRA)	Pillai's Trace	.232	59.420	2.000	393.000	.000	.232
Accommodation CBBE (ACC)	Pillai's Trace	.153	35.570	2.000	393.000	.000	.153
Destination CBBE (DEST)	Pillai's Trace	.184	44.414	2.000	393.000	.000	.184
TRA x ACC	Pillai's Trace	.001	.138	2.000	393.000	.871	.001
TRA x DEST	Pillai's Trace	.009	1.856	2.000	393.000	.158	.009
ACC x DEST	Pillai's Trace	.005	1.074	2.000	393.000	.343	.005
TRA x ACC x DEST	Pillai's Trace	.002	.490	2.000	393.000	.613	.002

Note: TRA = transport CBBE, ACC = accommodation CBBE, DEST = destination CBBE, x = interaction effect, η_p^2 = partial eta squared

For each effect, only Pillai's trace is included in Table 36 as the three alternative measures yielded identical results concerning the (non-)significance of effects.

Univariate tests regarding individual DVs (CBBBE and booking intention)

The next set of MANOVAS's univariate tests set out to address the hypotheses regarding the relationships between the three IVs (transport CBBE, accommodation CBBE, and destination CBBE) and the individual DVs (CBBBE and booking intention). The results pertaining to each hypothesis are presented individually in the following section and are later summarised in Table 37 and Table 38.

H1a: CBBBE is higher if Transport CBBE is high than if Transport CBBE is low.

The univariate tests attested a significant main effect of Transport CBBE on CBBBE ($F(1, 394) = 119.03, p = .000$). Resultingly, the hypothesis was supported.

H1b: Booking Intention is higher if Transport CBBE is high than if Transport CBBE is low.

The univariate tests attested a significant main effect of Transport CBBE on BI ($F(1, 394) = 19.83, p = .000$). Resultingly, the hypothesis was supported.

H2a: CBBBE is higher if Accommodation CBBE is high than if Accommodation CBBE is low.

The univariate tests attested a significant main effect of Accommodation CBBE on CBBBE ($F(1, 394) = 68.77, p = .000$). Resultingly, the hypothesis was supported.

H2b: Booking Intention is higher if Accommodation CBBE is high than if Accommodation CBBE is low.

The univariate tests revealed a non-significant effect of Accommodation CBBE on BI ($F(1, 394) = 2.79, p = .096$). Resultingly, the hypothesis was not supported.

H3a: CBBBE is higher if Destination CBBE is high than if Destination CBBE is low.

The univariate tests attested a significant main effect of Destination CBBE on CBBBE ($F(1, 394) = 19.42, p = .000$). Resultingly, the hypothesis was supported.

H3b: Booking Intention is higher if Destination CBBE is high than if Destination CBBE is low.

The univariate tests attested a significant main effect of Destination CBBE on BI ($F(1, 394) = 88.23, p = .000$). Resultingly, the hypothesis was supported.

In addition, the univariate tests were concerned with the interaction-related hypotheses regarding the individual consideration of DVs. Interaction effects and their corresponding hypotheses are only included for the purpose of completeness, as their univariate test results are not to be interpreted if their respective prior multivariate tests resulted in non-significance (Hair et al., 2019a).

H4a: Accommodation CBBE moderates the effect of Transport CBBE on CBBBE: The influence of Transport CBBE on CBBBE is weakened with a high level of Accommodation CBBE.

The univariate tests revealed a non-significant interaction effect of Accommodation CBBE on the effect of Transport CBBE on CBBBE ($F(1, 394) = 0.19, p = .660$). Resultingly, the hypothesis was not supported.

H4b: Accommodation CBBE moderates the effect of Transport CBBE on Booking Intention: The influence of Transport CBBE on Booking Intention is weakened with a high level of Accommodation CBBE.

The univariate tests revealed a non-significant interaction effect of Accommodation CBBE on the effect of Transport CBBE on BI ($F(1, 394) = 0.19, p = .665$). Resultingly, the hypothesis was not supported.

H5a: Destination CBBE moderates the effect of Transport CBBE on CBBBE: The influence of Transport CBBE on Package Holiday CBBE is strengthened with a high level of Destination CBBE.

The univariate tests revealed a non-significant interaction effect of Destination CBBE on the effect of Transport CBBE on CBBBE ($F(1, 394) = 2.64, p = .105$). Resultingly, the hypothesis was not supported.

H5b: Destination CBBE moderates the effect of Transport CBBE on Booking Intention: The influence of Transport CBBE on Booking Intention is strengthened with a high level of Destination CBBE.

The univariate tests revealed a non-significant interaction effect of Destination CBBE on the effect of Transport CBBE on BI ($F(1, 394) = 2.50, p = .115$). Resultingly, the hypothesis was not supported.

H6a: Destination CBBE moderates the effect of Accommodation CBBE on CBBBE: The influence of Accommodation CBBE on Package Holiday CBBE is strengthened with a high level of Destination CBBE.

The univariate tests revealed a non-significant interaction effect of Destination CBBE on the effect of Accommodation CBBE on CBBBE ($F(1, 394) = 0.38, p = .537$). Resultingly, the hypothesis was not supported.

H6b: Destination CBBE moderates the effect of Accommodation CBBE on Booking Intention: The influence of Accommodation CBBE on Booking Intention is strengthened with a high level of Destination CBBE.

The univariate tests revealed a non-significant interaction effect of Destination CBBE on the effect of Accommodation CBBE on BI ($F(1, 394) = 0.99, p = .320$). Resultingly, the hypothesis was not supported.

Table 37 summarises the univariate test statistics for main effects and interactions.

Table 37: MANOVA | Univariate tests for group differences regarding individual DVs (CBBBE and Booking Intention)

Effect	Dependent Variable	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	η_p^2
Transport CBBE (TRA)	CBBBE	65.437	1	65.437	119.029	0.000	0.232
	BI	42.500	1	42.500	19.827	0.000	0.048
Accommodation CBBE (ACC)	CBBBE	37.805	1	37.805	68.767	0.000	0.149
	BI	5.970	1	5.970	2.785	0.096	0.007

Destination CBBE (DEST)	CBBBE	10.677	1	10.677	19.421	0.000	0.047
	BI	189.119	1	189.119	88.226	0.000	0.183
TRA x ACC	CBBBE	0.106	1	0.106	0.193	0.660	0.000
	BI	0.403	1	0.403	0.188	0.665	0.000
TRA x DEST	CBBBE	1.451	1	1.451	2.640	0.105	0.007
	BI	5.345	1	5.345	2.494	0.115	0.006
ACC x DEST	CBBBE	0.210	1	0.210	0.382	0.537	0.001
	BI	2.128	1	2.128	0.993	0.320	0.003
TRA x ACC x DEST	CBBBE	0.295	1	0.295	0.536	0.464	0.001
	BI	0.249	1	0.249	0.116	0.734	0.000

Note: TRA = transport CBBE, ACC = accommodation CBBE, DEST = destination CBBE, x = interaction effect, η_p^2 = partial eta squared.

Partial eta squared (η_p^2) denotes the proportion of variance that the predictor (e.g., IV) can explain in the DVs that is not already explained by other predictors. It is, thus, a measure of the variance that a factor accounts for after the effects of all other factors have been partialized out and well suited for evaluating which predictor is most important (Hair et al., 2019a). As illustrated by Table 37, the univariate tests provided evidence that CBBBE is mostly shaped by transport CBBE ($\eta_p^2 = .23$) and accommodation CBBE ($\eta_p^2 = .15$), based on their large effect sizes (Cohen, 1988). In contrast, destination CBBE ($\eta_p^2 = .05$) accounted only for a small proportion of CBBBE's variance. Regarding the second dependent variable (BI), destination CBBE ($\eta_p^2 = .18$) was the most important factor when it comes to booking intention, whereas transport CBBE ($\eta_p^2 = .05$) and accommodation CBBE ($\eta_p^2 = .01$; non-significant effect) played only minor roles in comparison. A more detailed interpretation of these results related to partial eta squared follows in Chapter 7 Discussion (section 6.3.4.2).

In addition, a pairwise comparison of estimated marginal means was conducted to supplement the prior univariate tests. This comparison provided the mean differences and the significance level of each mean difference between both levels of each individual IV. For all IVs the level HIGH led to higher mean values of both DVs than the level LOW, see Table 38. The results validate the results of the previous tests, by revealing significant differences for both outcome variables except regarding the IV accommodation CBBE in relation to the dependent variable booking intention ($p = .096$).

Table 38: Pairwise analysis of means

Dependent variable	Independent Variable	Level of IV (I)	Level of IV (J)	Mean Difference (I-J)	Sig.
CBBBE	TRA	LOW	HIGH	-.827	.000
		HIGH	LOW	.827	.000
	ACC	LOW	HIGH	-.629	.000
		HIGH	LOW	.629	.000
	DEST	LOW	HIGH	-.334	.000
		HIGH	LOW	.334	.000
BI	TRA	LOW	HIGH	-.667	.000
		HIGH	LOW	.667	.000
	ACC	LOW	HIGH	-.250	.096
		HIGH	LOW	.250	.096
	DEST	LOW	HIGH	-1.407	.000
		HIGH	LOW	1.407	.000

Lastly, a comparison of mean scores both of CBBBE and booking intention across the eight bundle designs (package holidays) completed the overall evaluation. Table 39 summarises the estimated marginal means (EMM) of outcome variables across all package holiday options within Study Two.

Table 39: Overview of estimated marginal means across bundle options

Package Holiday Option	Transport CBBE	Accommodation CBBE	Destination CBBE	EMM CBBBE	EMM BI
1: All HIGH	+	+	+	4.69	4.99
2: Transport LOW	-	+	+	3.65	4.07
3: Transport HIGH	+	-	-	3.57	3.03
4: Accommodation LOW	+	-	+	4.02	4.58
5: Accommodation HIGH	-	+	-	3.54	2.70
6: Destination LOW	+	+	-	4.22	3.25
7: Destination HIGH	-	-	+	3.15	3.69
8: All LOW	-	-	-	2.84	2.72

Note: “+” = high CBBE, “-” = low CBBE, EMM = estimated marginal mean. The CBBBE scale ranged from 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree). The Booking Intention scale ranged from 1 (very low) to 7 (very high).

Concerning CBBBE it can be noted that every additional tourism sector brand with a respective high CBBE included in a package holiday led to an increase of the CBBBE

manifestation associated with the respective package holiday (i.e., bundle). The highest CBBBE manifestation was associated with the “ALL HIGH” package holiday, whereas the lowest CBBBE manifestation resulted from the “ALL LOW” option. The second highest CBBBE manifestation was associated with the “Destination LOW” package holiday, which combined high transport CBBE, high accommodation CBBE, and low destination CBBE. This fact supported the predominant effect of accommodation CBBE and transport CBBE on CBBBE, as the CBBBE manifestation ($EMM = 4.22$) of the “Destination LOW” bundle surpassed those of the other package options combining two high CBBE tourism sector brands (“Transport LOW”, “Accommodation LOW”).

In line with the findings on CBBBE, booking intention increased with each additional high CBBE tourism sector brand and the highest manifestation of booking intention was associated with the “ALL HIGH” package holiday. However, the “Destination HIGH” package holiday (incl. low transport CBBE, low accommodation CBBE, high destination CBBE) outperformed not only the other packages including one high CBBE tourism sector brand but also the “Destination LOW” package holiday exhibiting two high CBBE tourism sector brands (high transport CBBE, high accommodation CBBE, low destination CBBE).

5.4.3.6 Regression

Simple linear regression estimates the relationship between two quantitative variables and analyses the strength of their relationship (Field, 2018; Hair et al., 2019a). Subsequently, simple linear regression was used to test if customer-based bundle brand equity (CBBBE) significantly predicts booking intention (Hypothesis 7):

H7: CBBBE is positively related to Booking Intention: The higher CBBBE, the higher Booking Intention.

The results indicate that CBBBE has a positive effect on booking intention, $\beta = .490$, $p = .000$, explaining 24% of variance ($R^2 = .240$), indicating a medium effect size (Field, 2018).

5.5 Summary of results

Based on the results of this experiment, H1-3 (except H2b) were supported as almost all main effects of the three independent variables (transport CBBE, accommodation CBBE, destination CBBE) on both independent variables (CBBBE, BI) showed a positive and significant relationship. This also applied to the univariate tests which allowed for a detailed analysis of the relationships between individual IVs and individual DVs. For all independent variables (transport CBBE, accommodation CBBE, destination CBBE) it can be stated that a high level of CBBE led to higher manifestations of both dependent variables than a low level of CBBE. However, even though the effect of accommodation CBBE on both combined DVs in the overall model was stated positive and significant, the univariate tests led to the conclusion that no significant relationship exists between accommodation CBBE and the outcome variable booking intention. Furthermore, no significant interaction effects were found, with all tests clearly failing to reach significance, leading to the rejection of H4-H6. Lastly, H7 concerned the relationship between both dependent variables within the model: CBBBE and booking intention. The hypothesis was supported based on the positive, significant relationship between both variables. Table 40 presents an overview of the hypotheses of Study Two and the outcome of their tests.

Table 40: Summary of hypotheses and test outcomes

Hypothesis	Result
H1a: CBBBE is higher if Transport CBBE is high than if Transport CBBE is low.	Supported
H1b: Booking Intention is higher if Transport CBBE is high than if Transport CBBE is low.	Supported
H2a: CBBBE is higher if Accommodation CBBE is high than if Accommodation CBBE is low.	Supported
H2b: Booking Intention is higher if Accommodation CBBE is high than if Accommodation CBBE is low.	<i>Not supported</i>
H3a: CBBBE is higher if Destination CBBE is high than if Destination CBBE is low.	Supported
H3b: Booking Intention is higher if Destination CBBE is high than if Destination CBBE is low.	Supported
H4a: Accommodation CBBE moderates the effect of Transport CBBE on CBBBE: The influence of Transport CBBE on CBBBE is weakened with a high level of Accommodation CBBE.	<i>Not supported</i>
H4b: Accommodation CBBE moderates the effect of Transport CBBE on Booking Intention: The influence of Transport CBBE on Booking Intention is weakened with a high level of Accommodation CBBE.	<i>Not supported</i>

H5a: Destination CBBE moderates the effect of Transport CBBE on CBBBE: The influence of Transport CBBE on Package Holiday CBBE is strengthened with a high level of Destination CBBE.	<i>Not supported</i>
H5b: Destination CBBE moderates the effect of Transport CBBE on Booking Intention: The influence of Transport CBBE on Booking Intention is strengthened with a high level of Destination CBBE.	<i>Not supported</i>
H6a: Destination CBBE moderates the effect of Accommodation CBBE on CBBBE: The influence of Accommodation CBBE on Package Holiday CBBE is strengthened with a high level of Destination CBBE.	<i>Not supported</i>
H6b: Destination CBBE moderates the effect of Accommodation CBBE on Booking Intention: The influence of Accommodation CBBE on Booking Intention is strengthened with a high level of Destination CBBE.	<i>Not supported</i>
H7: CBBBE is positively related to Booking Intention: The higher CBBBE, the higher Booking Intention.	Supported

This chapter investigated the individual and joint effects of travel sector CBBE on CBBBE and booking intention by conducting an online experiment. As prior tourism-related CBBE research neglected the analysis and exploration of bundles in the form of package holidays, this chapter started with the presentation of a suitable measurement tool for customer-based bundle brand equity (CBBBE). The resulting tool was tested and enabled the analysis of differences in CBBBE and booking intention between various bundle designs of package holidays as well as the analysis of the relationship between CBBBE and booking intention. Based on the study's results, positive and significant main effects between tourism sector CBBE (transport, accommodation, and destination) and (1) CBBBE as well as (2) booking intention were detected but no significant interaction effects between the influence of these three tourism sectors on both dependent variables were revealed. In addition, a positive and significant effect of CBBBE on booking intention was found. The next chapter discusses the results, implications, and limitations of Study One and Study Two in a synthesised way.

Chapter 6: Discussion

6.1 Introduction

The following discussion chapter is structured in a synthesised way and integrates both empirical studies by a joint discussion of their results related to the research aim and objectives of this research project. The first section of this chapter reiterates the research aim and objectives, which serve as a foundation for the structure of the following sub-sections of the discussion, each addressing one specific objective of this thesis. Finally, the chapter concludes by a summary of the findings.

6.2 Overall research aim and objectives

The overall aim of this thesis was to explore CBBE across tourism sectors and in the context of package holidays as well as to measure its impact on CBBBE and booking intention. Six research objectives were formulated, each of which addresses a particular area of this overarching aim. This chapter discusses the research findings of both conducted empirical studies in relation to the following research objectives.

Research objectives:

1. To explore how brands influence customers' holiday booking choices across five individual tourism sectors - (online) travel agency, tour operator, transport, accommodation, destination - during the holiday planning and booking process.
2. To explore how brands influence customers' holiday booking choices in the context of multi-branded package holidays during the holiday planning and booking process.
3. To adapt a specific, reliable, and valid measurement tool for customer-based bundle brand equity (CBBBE) in the context of package holidays.
4. To analyse differences in (1) CBBBE and (2) booking intention between various bundle designs of package holidays.
5. To explore which theory is more suitable for the investigation of CBBBE in the context of package holidays: (1) service delivery network theory (SDN) or (2) multi-attribute utility theory (MAUT).
6. To analyse the relationship between CBBBE and booking intention.

6.3 Discussion of findings

As previously outlined, the integration of qualitative and quantitative findings is essential within any mixed methods design as it enhances both width and depth of the knowledge resulting from data collection (Bryman, 2007; Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018). Hence, the findings of both empirical studies are discussed following an integrated approach. The discussion's structure follows the six research objectives. Therefore, it is split into six sub-sections, each addressing one specific objective. Originally, Study One (qualitative interviews) was designed to cover research objectives one and two, whereas Study Two (quantitative online experiment) was related to research objectives three to six. However, where applicable, findings from both studies concerning each objective are combined to comply with the exploratory sequential mixed methods design of this thesis. Lastly, the chapter concludes by summarising the overall findings and discussion of this thesis.

6.3.1 Brand influence on booking choices across tourism sectors

Study One advances empirical research on brand influence across different tourism sectors, thereby responding to corresponding calls in this field of research from Elliot et al. (2016) for the application of a multi-sector approach within tourism research, and Ainscough (2006) to strive for broader sample characteristics, for example regarding age or income, instead of studying niche samples, such as veteran travellers. By the means of qualitative interviews, the role of tourism brands for customer's vacation choices (e.g., holiday bookings) was explored to identify similarities and differences (e.g., regarding brand relevance, knowledge, and associations) across individual tourism sectors. In comparison to existing studies, this study's combination of multiple tourism sectors within one study is a novel approach, as most studies focus on individual sectors without taking tourism practice based on interrelationships and collaboration between tourism providers into account (Clarke, 2000; Elliot et al., 2016). Resultingly, comparisons between tourism sectors have only been feasible by contrasting existing studies against each other. However, such comparisons are only useful to a limited extent due to the heterogenous nature and high level of fragmentation concerning contexts, methods, and theoretical frameworks applied across the available studies (Gertner, 2011). This thesis is one of the first to combine different tourism sectors within one study to facilitate a direct comparison on how

tourism brands influence customer's holiday booking choices across tourism sectors (cf. RO1).

The field of tourism branding is characterised by a preponderance of research in the destination sector (Elliot et al., 2016). In addition, studies set to the sectors of transport (Mahadin et al., 2022; Raza et al., 2020; Uslu et al., 2013) or accommodation (Álvarez-García et al., 2020; Kim et al., 2021; Liu et al., 2023) are popular, whereas the sectors relating to online travel agencies (Kim et al., 2007; Wolfe et al., 2008), travel agencies (Ng et al., 2006; Westwood et al., 1999; Wolfe et al., 2008), and tour operators (Westwood et al., 1999) are seldomly of interest. This contrasts the crucial role of all tourism sectors in practice (Picazo & Moreno-Gil, 2018; Pizam, 2009). In addition, prior tourism branding research tends to focus on merely quantitative measurements of tourism brand influence (Chekalina et al., 2018; Chi et al., 2020; Dedeoğlu et al., 2019) with minimal attention on how and why customers' decision-making is influenced by these brands (Zavattaro et al., 2015). Study One allowed for an in-depth exploration of tourism brands over a range of tourism sectors as it considered the following tourism sectors: (online) travel agency, tour operator, transport, accommodation, and destination. In accordance with research objective one ("To explore how brands influence customers' holiday booking choices across five individual tourism sectors during the holiday planning and booking process"), the nature of all tourism sector brands' influence on customers' booking choices is first discussed individually for each sector followed by a comprehensive discussion on differences and similarities between the examined tourism sectors.

Travel agency

As Study One has revealed, the (traditional) travel agency brand does not seem to emerge as an aspect that consumers deem as particularly important when making vacation choices. This finding is in line with prior studies (e.g., Westwood et al., 1999). Even those customers having consulted a travel agency in the past tended to be unaware of the brand associated with it, even though they used it for past bookings and very likely visited the agency's office to do so. Key decisive factors for or against the use of a certain travel agency were rather the location of the store as well as prior experiences with the agency's service provision. These findings support the general

literature on factors that influence consumer choices between using a travel agency and/or the internet, or in other words: attributes that customers seek in a travel agency (Cheyne et al., 2006). These attributes can be subdivided by their relation to the travel agency per se, such as its location, or the travel agent (consultant) rendering the service, such as their knowledge (Ng et al., 2006). In addition to location, other studies identified further relevant attributes concerning the agency such as availability of parking and travel reward programmes (Ng et al., 2006), assurance and good deals (Cheyne et al., 2006), as well as its reputation and certified status (Wolfe et al., 2004). In contrast, travel agent related attributes include their knowledge, experience, helpfulness, and friendliness (Ng et al., 2006; Wolfe et al., 2004).

Apart from brand influence and attributes concerning travel agencies, the theme of actual travel agency usage emerged. The majority of participants in Study One agreed to the fact that they completely refrain from consulting traditional travel agencies. However, some participants outlined that they sometimes use travel agencies or travel agencies in combination with their online counterparts. The overall lack of agency-inclined customers might be a possible explanation of the scarcity of research in the travel agency sector. However, in practice many traditional travel agencies do exist (FUR, 2022) and inherently need customers to be profitable. Resultingly, it is worthwhile investigating what generally differentiates travel agency users from non-users. Individual studies examined that travel agency customers tend to be older and part of upper income groups (Wolfe et al., 2004). Both criteria were not supported by Study One, as a no clear connection between age or income and travel agent usage could be derived from the results.

Online travel agency

Regarding online travel agencies (OTA), the results of Study One reveal a relevant consideration of the OTA brand when customers intend to book a tourism service or holiday. Surprisingly, this contrasts the priorly discussed minor role of the traditional travel agency brand, even though both types of travel agencies share their key role as distribution channels (i.e., intermediaries between potential travellers and tourism service providers, such as airlines) and offer comparable services (Cheyne et al., 2006; Westwood et al., 1999; Wolfe et al., 2004). Many participants explained that they

commonly book tourism services online and pay attention to the OTA brand because it decreases uncertainty and increases trust concerning the intangible tourism service about to be booked. As previously outlined, customers tend to rely on personal attributes related to the travel agent when consulting traditional travel agencies. It seems that the OTA brand replaces these personal attributes and assumes their role, as the online environment minimises the potential of personalised consultation and factors such as reliability and trust must be conveyed from alternative attributes such as the brand. So far, the consideration of the brand as a key aspect underpinning customers' holiday booking choices in the context of OTA has been neglected within the literature. In contrast, most studies focus on attributes such as the amount of information, personalised services (e.g., e-mails, customised websites), complaint management, and features to compare offers (Wolfe et al., 2004) or web features, user friendliness, availability of low fares, and security (Kim et al., 2009b). Of these, low fares and security have been found to be the most important attributes for customers (Kim et al., 2009b).

Another arising topic when exploring Study One's findings concerned customer loyalty to certain OTAs, which is mostly related to value-adding criteria, such as usability of the website, availability of loyalty programmes, and past experiences. These value-adding criteria mirror some of the OTA attributes adopted by prior studies (Kim et al., 2009b). In addition, the criteria demonstrate parallels to the attributes sought in traditional travel agencies as pointed out by the prior discussion as well as existing literature (Cheyne et al., 2006; Ng et al., 2006). Resultingly, traditional and online travel agencies share key characteristics such as their service offering, their categorisation as a distribution channel, and the importance of certain attributes, such as past experiences, from the customers' perspective. However, the brand's role differs greatly between both types of travel agencies (offline/traditional vs. online). While the traditional travel agency brand plays no role, the OTA brand seems to be crucial for the customers' holiday booking choices.

Tour operator

The findings of Study One indicate that customers do not attribute a major role to tour operator brands when making holiday booking decisions. In fact, participants inhabited an unemotional (i.e., matter-of-fact) attitude towards this sector and highlighted that offers of different tour operators are often identical or at least undifferentiated. Both aspects correspond with Westwood et al.'s (1999) statements on the insignificance of tour operator brands for holiday choices as well as the fact that tour operators are interchangeable and often offer package holidays including the same hotels. It is striking that throughout the last 20 years, tour operators continuously fail “to build a meaningful and lasting brand-based relationship with their customers” (Westwood et al., 1999, p.239). This shortcoming is surprising given the fact that tour operators possess a lot of power and influence within the tourism industry, for example, concerning demand flows, distribution channels, and pricing (Picazo & Moreno-Gil, 2018). However, their key role among actors on the supply side is not mirrored from the demand side's point of view.

Individual participant statements illustrated exceptions concerning the minor role of the tour operator brand, mostly in the context of special interest holidays and the bankruptcy of Thomas Cook. It is generally accepted knowledge that crises of any kind negatively affect tourism demand and might lead to a change in priorities regarding holiday-related choices (Alegre & Sard, 2015). In times of crisis, risk tolerance of customers often decreases. Resultingly, travellers seek for factors conveying reliability and security, such as brands. Based on this, travel context or crises might favour an increased customer attention on tour operator brands.

In addition, the role of the tour operator brand is the only aspect of Study One in which slight differences across groups were noticed. While customers travelling alone or with friends as well as those travelling with their family agreed on the subordinate role of tour operator brands, persons travelling with their partner were rather undecided. However, the consensus among most participants illustrates that, especially concerning sun and beach holidays, the tour operator brand is not relevant for the customers' holiday booking choices.

Transport

Concerning transport brands, the results of Study One suggest a large influence on the customers' booking choices. While most participants referred to airlines, this also seems to be applicable to long distance bus providers based on individual participant statements. The findings support prior studies attesting the critical role of airline brands from the customer's point of view (Ainscough, 2006; Chen & Chang, 2008; Forgas et al., 2010; Saleem et al., 2017). Multiple participants referred to safety concerns associated with the arrival and departure to/ from a destination when outlining why the airline brand played a major role within their decision making. Airline security and safety have gained a lot of attention after 9/11 and are key factors customers reflect upon before making air travel decisions (Gilbert & Wong, 2003; Hussain et al., 2015). The impact of safety is especially high among leisure travellers (Ringle et al., 2011), which were in the focus of Study One. Hence, a high level of airline safety leads to a decreased perceived risk and increases trust in the airline as well as confidence in the resulting decision (Forgas et al., 2010; Mahadin et al., 2022; Saleem et al., 2017). Based on their attention to airline safety, participants indicated a willingness to pay price-premiums for flights operated by renowned airlines which corresponds with other studies' findings (Chen & Tseng, 2010; Hussain et al., 2015).

In addition to safety, travel distance played a major role concerning the role of the transport brand. Participants of Study One outlined that the longer the distance to be covered, the higher the relevance of the airline brand. If participants know the travel distance to be long and associated with many hours aboard an airplane, they indicated to rather book with a well-known brand associated with high service levels. In contrast, for short-distance flights, they were willing to accept low-cost carrier brands representing a reduced level of service quality. So far, travel distance has only gained a scarce level of attention within tourism research, all of which was set to the destination sector (Pike & Bianchi, 2016; Pike et al., 2010; Kotsi et al., 2018). These existing studies compared either (stopover) destinations in the context of long-haul travel (Kotsi et al., 2018; Pike et al., 2010), or differences in destination brand equity between short- and long-haul markets (Pike & Bianchi, 2016).

Lastly, the factor of past experiences emerged concerning airline choices. Participants referred to the substantial role of past experiences with airline brands and highlighted that positive experiences increase their likelihood to rebook with certain airline brands, whereas negative experiences make them refrain from booking with the corresponding brands in the future. This corresponds with the level of satisfaction obtained throughout past experiences which ultimately results in brand loyalty and rebooking intentions (Forgas et al., 2010; Saleem et al., 2017). From this, it can be derived that it seems to be crucial for airlines to identify customer expectations and strive to meet (or exceed) them to maximise satisfaction (Hussain et al., 2015). Within the literature, other factors such as switching costs (Chen & Chang, 2008) and frequent flyer programmes (Ali et al., 2015; Ringle et al., 2011) were deemed relevant in the context of airline brands and their effect on the customer choice. However, these factors were not mentioned by any of the participants within Study One.

Accommodation

Study One's findings reveal that accommodation is the only sector for which no clear picture on the influence of brands on customers' holiday booking choices can be drawn. Participants were strongly divided with many deeming the influence and relevance of hotel brands high and others explaining the opposite by illustrating even brand-averse behaviours. This indecisiveness among participants (i.e., some watching out for accommodation brands while others refraining from using them) opposes the general literature recognising the importance of hotel brands for the customers' decision-making (Álvarez-García et al., 2020; Cobb-Walgren et al., 1995; Huang & Cai, 2015; Kim et al., 2008; Liu et al., 2017). In addition, the disagreement was observable across all interviewed travellers. Resultingly, no connection to potential segmentation criteria (e.g., age, gender, usual travel companion) or interview situation (e.g., interviews vs. focus groups) could be identified.

Those participants characterised by their focus on hotel brands often referred to positive past experiences resulting in brand loyalty. This finding corresponds with the high relevance of past experiences not only in the transport sector (Forgas et al., 2010; Saleem et al., 2017) but in the service industry in general (Beales et al., 1981; Berry, 2000; Fodness & Murray, 1998). Several studies exist to verify the role of past

experiences in the hotel industry and to point out the connection to successful branding (Kam Fung So & King 2010; Sun et al., 2017; Xu & Chan, 2010).

A topic emerging across participants is a reference to hotel chains (or: hotel groups) which commonly represent a predefined service level and standard. It is striking that within the literature only a minority of studies explore the customer's perspective of hotel chains (Álvarez-García et al., 2020; Rahimi & Kozak, 2017; Sun et al., 2017). Within Study One, multiple participants appreciated the standardised nature of hotel chains as it decreases the uncertainty associated with a hotel booking. In line with Whitla et al. (2007) it can be concluded that a satisfying service experience in one outlet of a hotel chain positively influences the customer's intention to stay at other outlets of the same hotel chain due to the assumption of an identical level of service. Resultingly, service consistency across all outlets is one of the most important aspects for successful hotel chains (De Chernatony & Segal-Horn, 2003; Tepeci, 1999). However, other participants stated that the affiliation of a hotel with a large hotel chain does not influence their booking choices. Beyond that, a third group of participants could be identified who was even averse to hotel chains in general. This group tends to choose hotels based on their non-affiliation with renown brands and rather opts for smaller and often family-owned businesses. The advantages of such outlets were seen in their individuality, authenticity, and uniqueness. However, the same applied to hotel chains like to hotel brands in general: participants were strongly divided concerning the role brands play in accommodation choices.

Destination

Regarding destinations, the results of Study One illustrate a large influence of the brand when customers intend to book a holiday. All participants showed a broad consensus and deemed the destination brand as very important. The destination branding literature supports the crucial role of destination brands regarding customers' decision-making and (re)visit intentions (Chi et al., 2020; Pike & Bianchi, 2016; San Martín et al., 2019; Tasci, 2018). The influence of the destination brand mainly relies on the traveller's associations with that very destination. Many participants mentioned that they associate individual destinations with distinct mental pictures of that destination, e.g., if it is offering nice beaches or a vivid nightlife. These deliberations

were then matched with their vacation desires (e.g., relaxation or clubbing). Resultingly, visit intention of a certain destination rises if destination associations reflect a traveller's subjective vacation desires. Within the literature, a set of destination-related associations is often referred to as destination image (Tasci, 2018). Since the 1970s, a considerable amount of research has focused on destination image and substantiated its importance within the traveller's decision-making, for example regarding visit intention and destination brand loyalty (Bianchi & Pike, 2011; Gartner & Konecnik Ruzzier, 2011; Im et al., 2012; Konecnik & Gartner, 2007; San Martín et al., 2019; Tasci 2018).

It needs to be noted that destination-related associations and image do not revolve solely around positive characteristics. Some participants stated that negatively associated destination brands make them refrain from visiting the respective destination. Such negative associations were often related to the political system in place as well as safety concerns. Across different product or service settings, empirical evidence appears to confirm the notion that negative brand associations result in a decreased purchase intention (Veloutsou et al., 2020). Resultingly, negatively perceived destinations are associated with a minimisation of visit intention. Hence, the high relevance of destination brands is not restricted to positive outcomes in the form of actual holiday bookings and visits but can also result in negative outcomes, such as rejection. Negative associations and feelings towards brands are a topic of interest that has not gained a lot of attention within the literature (Farhat & Chaney, 2021; Godfrey et al., 2011; Miller et al., 2012; Zarantonello et al., 2016). However, the findings of Study One are consistent with Farhat & Chaney's (2021) exploration of destination brand hate as a form of anti-loyalty ultimately resulting in a vast reduction of visit intention. In conclusion, the role of destination brands within customers' holiday booking choices is crucial as it can affect the resulting choices not only on a positive but also in a negative way. A destination yielding positive associations is likely to be visited, whereas a destination with negative associations may never be chosen.

Comparison of brand influence on booking choices across individual tourism sectors

The first part of Study One addressed research objective one and explored brand influence on customers' holiday booking choices to identify similarities and differences across individual tourism sectors. As in previous studies, the results confirm that brands play a role in tourism-related choices. The general picture emerging from the discussion is that the role of brands differs between the addressed tourism sectors. Decisions set to the sectors of OTA, transport, and destination are strongly associated with the corresponding tourism sector brands. In contrast, brands play a minor role regarding traditional travel agencies and tour operators. The difference between OTA and traditional travel agency is of special interest here, as these two tourism sectors offer comparable services. One explanation for the higher OTA brand importance might be that the OTA brand replaces the personal attributes of the travel agent, who is not present in an online setting. No common tendency could be derived for the role of accommodation brands, as participants tended to be undecided concerning brand relevance within their booking choices regarding hotels.

An interesting side finding was that participants across groups and potential segmentation criteria (e.g., age, gender, travel companion) shared consistent views on most topics of interest. Only the consideration of tour operator brands pointed out a difference based on participant characteristics. Tour operator brands were unimportant for participants commonly travelling alone or with friends as well as those travelling with their family, whereas persons travelling with their partner tended to be undecided. The homogeneity across groups opposes existing studies praising the applicability of the segmentation criterion of travel companion in the context of package holidays (Kim et al., 2019; Meffert, 2002). A possible explanation might be that while travel companion serves as a segmentation criterion concerning aspects such as information processing (Kim et al., 2019), it does not seem to be applicable in the context of branding across tourism sectors.

Lastly, it can be summarised that a variety of additional themes emerged from the data analysis and results of Study One, which were often reappearing across multiple of the discussed tourism sectors (e.g., tour operators, destinations). Such recurring themes

were mostly related to customer-based brand equity and its dimensions of brand awareness, brand associations, perceived quality, and brand loyalty (Aaker, 1996). In contrast, no participant statements pointed to the dimension of other proprietary brand assets, reinforcing the dismissal of this dimension by existing studies within the marketing literature. Additional themes within the data concerned the following topics (in no specific order): brand influence, brand aversion, tourism sector usage, travel distance, and past experiences.

6.3.2 Brand influence on booking choices regarding package holidays

Tourism is characterised by a high level of interaction and interdependence between different tourism sectors, such as accommodation, transport, and destination (Pizam, 2009). However, individual service providers within one sector can seldomly create an all-encompassing vacation offer for the customer, as a vacation commonly includes multiple services and touchpoints (Cooper et al., 2008; Elliot et al., 2016; Holloway et al., 2009). To comply with this characteristic feature of the tourism industry, the second part of the qualitative Study One expanded its multi-sector approach to the consideration of bundles in the form of package holidays. By this, it addresses RO2: “To explore how brands influence customers’ holiday booking choices in the context of multi-branded package holidays during the holiday planning and booking process”. A package holiday requires a minimum of two combined tourism services such as transport, accommodation, transfers, insurance, or day trips to attractions (Dudek et al., 2019; Picazo & Moreno-Gil, 2018; Yoo et al., 2018). By considering all tourism sectors ((online) travel agency, tour operator, transport, accommodation, destination) previously discussed concerning RO1, the package holidays within Study One extend the common consideration of bundles including only transport and accommodation (Dudek et al., 2019; Kim et al., 2018; Rewtrakunphaiboon & Oppewal, 2008) or transport and travel agent (Chiam et al., 2009). This allows not only for a broader overview but a new perspective on package holidays as a vacation offer explicitly including services before or after the actual trip (such as consultation from a travel agency) as well. With its focus on relationships between multiple tourism sectors jointly creating a service bundle and the effects of these relationships on tourism branding, the study is responding to calls from Ainscough (2006), Chiam et al. (2009), Kim et al. (2018), and Elliot et al. (2016). In addition, most prior studies on package

holidays evaluated price management (Alegre et al., 2013; Alegre & Sard, 2015; Cozzio et al., 2023; Kinberg & Sudit 1979; Picazo & Moreno-Gil, 2018), quality deterioration (Chen et al., 2013), perceived value (Sánchez et al., 2006), or holiday experiences (Major & McLeay, 2013). Less studies consider all bundle attributes (here: tourism sector brands) and their role when a customer intends to book a vacation (Chiam et al., 2009; Tanford et al., 2012). In addition, a discussion of booking intention regarding different package holidays was in focus when exploring how brands are considered by customers' choices. In accordance with research objective two, the role of brands in tourism service bundles (package holidays) is discussed followed by a comparison of similarities and differences with the prior discussion on brand relevance regarding individual (unbundled) tourism sectors. Lastly, additional emerging themes are outlined.

Brand relevance within package holidays

Regarding package holidays, the findings of Study One lead to the conclusion that destination brands inhibit a dominant role in the customer's booking choices. Prior studies concur with the crucial role of the destination brand within package holidays (Westwood et al., 1999; Yoon & Shafer, 1997). Resultingly, a package holiday is deemed bookable or generally interesting only if the destination brand and its brand associations correspond with the customer's holiday expectations and desires. Results of Study One implied that other tourism sector brands are only relevant if this condition regarding the destination brand is met. And even then, only two tourism sectors brands are deemed relevant from the traveller's point of view, namely the accommodation brand, and to a lesser extent the transport brand. The relevance of hotels and airlines for package evaluation is supported by existing studies, even though they focused rather on reputation, trustworthiness, and quality, instead of the respective brand (Chiam et al., 2009; Wong & Kwong, 2004). Resultingly, consumers tend to prioritise brands from destination brand to accommodation brand to transport brand (in descending order), all of which influence the customer's booking choices regarding package holidays. It is important to note that this priority order is derived from Study One and does not fully match the findings of Study Two. This will be discussed thoroughly at a later point with regard to RO4. The brands of the remaining tourism sectors (travel agency, OTA, tour operator) were deemed irrelevant. This finding

supports existing studies, in which travel agencies and tour operators were identified as the least (or not at all) important attribute of package holidays (Ainscough, 2006; Chiam et al., 2009; Westwood et al., 1999).

Participants of Study One explained the identified indifference concerning travel agency, OTA, and tour operator brands with the fact that the actual holiday experience is what matters but not who they book with or who organises the vacation. Individual statements in this regard clearly mirror the findings of Westwood et al. (1999) indicating that the organising parties do not matter as long as the vacation meets the traveller's individual needs. Their study further stipulates that most tourism brands (in contrast to, e.g., clothing brands) do not function as indicators of status, leading to the fact that travellers focus more on destination brands (e.g., to show off where they've been to) and less on tour operators. It can be assumed that the rise of social media and the search for "instagrammable" vacation spots has added even more weight to this circumstance (Avelino Barbosa et al., 2021; Hudson & Thal, 2013; Unger, & Grassl, 2020). In addition, the customers' indifference concerning travel agency, OTA, and tour operator brands approves prior studies' focus on only a small number of tourism sectors such as transport and accommodation which shape the "actual" holiday (Ainscough, 2006; Dudek et al., 2019; Kim et al., 2018; Rewtrakunphaiboon & Oppewal, 2008). However, existing studies commonly fail to include a consideration of destination brands, which have proven highly relevant throughout Study One.

As outlined, the results on brand relevance within package holidays align with the general literature. However, individual opposing studies exist regarding package holidays in which no relationship between airline brand and hotel brand on booking intention could be identified (Ainscough, 2006). In contrast, the respondents of Study One all shared a common perspective that destination brand, accommodation brand, and transport brand play crucial roles in their decision-making. One potential explanation for this discrepancy might be Ainscough's (2006) inclusion of specific price information as an additional attribute of the package holiday. Regarding package holidays, the price of the bundle has been identified as a key decision criterion in past studies (Ainscough, 2006; Chiam et al., 2009; Rewtrakunphaiboon & Oppewal, 2008; Tanford et al., 2012). However, most of these studies do not revolve around brands and their influence on the customer's holiday booking choices. Especially in the

context of tourism-related branding and CBBE most research refrains from including specific price considerations: Prices are either not considered at all (Boo et al., 2009; Cobb-Walgren et al., 1995; Hsu et al., 2011; Kam Fung So & King, 2010; Kayaman & Arasil, 2007; Kim & Kim, 2005; Kim et al., 2008; Konecnik & Gartner, 2007; Lu et al., 2015; Nam et al., 2011; Prasad & Dev, 2000; Zeugner-Roth et al., 2008), or accounted for by assessing the general willingness to pay a surcharge for services from the associated tourism brands (Kim et al., 2009b; Wong & Teoh, 2015). Throughout both studies of this thesis, specific price information was not provided. Instead, participants were asked to assume that all presented package holidays were available for a price within their usual travel budget. However, these indications will be further addressed within the later sections discussing the findings concerning RO4.

When comparing brand relevance within package holidays (i.e., bundles including multiple tourism sector brands) with the prior section's discussion of brand relevance across individual tourism sectors, Study One's findings on destination brands correspond across both contexts (individual vs. bundle) by demonstrating a preponderance of the destination brand and its influence on travellers' booking choices. In addition, both travel agency as well as tour operator brands were not mentioned to be important when consumers consider which vacation choices to make both in the individual and bundles consideration. However, in other areas of interest, the findings do not align similarly. Regarding the role of brands within the accommodation sector, participants were undecided on the role of the accommodation brand during the individual consideration. However, when confronted with package holidays, customers tended to pay a considerable amount of attention to the accommodation brand which was only surpassed by the destination brand. In addition, the transport and OTA brand were deemed highly important on the individual level but less relevant when bundled together with services from other tourism sectors. Hence, an increased relevance of hotel brands is accompanied by a decreased relevance of airline brands within package holidays throughout the course of Study One. A possible explanation might be a consideration of the actual time spent with both service providers (a relevant factor which participants mentioned in the context of negative associations): Travellers spend only some hours on a plane but multiple days in a hotel or resort. Resultingly, when bundled together, the proportion of overall

vacation time associated with a service outperforms criteria priorly identified concerning individual tourism sectors (e.g., airline safety). The divergence in the role tourism sector brands play according to the individual or bundled context supports prior studies' calls for the exploration of tourism branding in the specific context of package holidays (Alegre & Sard, 2015; Elliot et al., 2016).

Additional aspects affecting customer's holiday-related choices

In line with the literature (Farhat & Chaney, 2021) and the discussion on RO1, not only the importance of positive brand associations but also the risks associated with negative brand associations in the context of package holidays was revealed. When package holidays include positively as well as negatively associated tourism sector brands, travellers' choices depend on sacrifices regarding at least one of the tourism sectors. Study One revealed that negatively associated brands within package holidays tend to be accepted in the transport sector but not as much in the accommodation or destination sector. As priorly indicated, participants explained this with the time spent with the respective service provider. A flight takes only some hours; in contrast travellers stay at a hotel and in a destination for multiple days. Resultingly, when forced to choose between package holidays (all possible combinations included one negatively perceived brand alongside two positively perceived brands across transport, accommodation, and destination) the booking intention is always highest if the negatively associated brand is set to the transport sector. This aspect confirms the identified prioritisation of brands within travel-related bundles and corresponds with the transport brand's minor role for the customers' holiday booking choices regarding package holidays. For participants of Study One, the transport brand was less important than both destination and accommodation brands. Resultingly, because it matters less, a negatively perceived transport brand is more acceptable from the travellers' perspective.

Another recurring theme was the influence of travel distance regarding bundle-related booking choices. Especially when confronted with negatively associated brands, travellers put an emphasis on this additional criterion to make a choice between different package holidays. For example, though absolute "no-go" airline brands were deemed unbearable for long-haul vacations, they were acceptable for short-haul

destinations (e.g., within Europe). The emergence of travel distance is in line with the prior discussion on the role of brands across individual tourism sectors as well as individual advances of destination branding literature (Pike & Bianchi, 2016; Pike et al., 2010; Kotsi et al., 2018). In contrast to existing studies, this research expands the relevance of travel distance to the context of package holidays and suggests its applicability to it.

Regarding package holidays, an additional theme emerged, namely the confusion of travellers concerning tour operators and travel agencies as well as their respective tasks related to package holidays. Many travellers fail to identify differences between both tourism sectors. Surprisingly, this topic was only identified regarding package holidays and not during the prior discussion of individual tourism sectors. However, the findings can be related back to Westwood et al. (1999, p.247) who criticised a “complete lack of knowledge about their [tour operator, travel agency] relationship” and the resulting confusion among travellers. In addition, brand awareness in both sectors is rather poor, often resulting in travellers’ inability to recall brands in both sectors.

6.3.3 Measurement tool for CBBBE within package holidays

In order to establish a sound foundation for this research, its theoretical basis, and its methods, the tourism-related CBBE literature from 1995 – 2023 was reviewed. One key finding of the literature analysis was the fact that no study set out to explore CBBE in the context of bundles in the form of multi-branded package holidays despite their prevalence in tourism practice (Elliot et al., 2016; Picazo & Moreno-Gil, 2018; Yoo et al., 2018). Resultingly, no existing measurement tool was available, and the literature analysis pointed out the need for an adaptation of a specific, reliable, and valid measurement tool for customer-based bundle brand equity (CBBBE) in the context of package holidays based on the existing body of knowledge (RO3). The suggested measurement tool considered the main streams of current tourism-related CBBE literature (cf. Appendix A+B) and was initially set to comprise four dimensions (Chi et al., 2020; Horng et al., 2012; Van-Dúnem et al., 2023) with items anchored on a 7-point Likert scale (Dedeoğlu et al., 2019; Nam et al., 2011; Van-Dúnem et al., 2023) based on four of Aaker’s (1996) initial CBBE dimensions (BAw, BAs, PQ, BL). Aaker’s (1996) dimension of brand associations ranks only sixth among the most used

CBBE dimensions in the tourism-related literature (cf. Appendix B). However, brand image (rank three) is known to be an individual set of brand associations (Aaker, 1991). Existing research tends to use both terms interchangeably and to use comparable measurement items even though both dimension names differ. Resultingly, the name brand associations was chosen within this study's measurement tool, as it corresponds with Aaker's (1996) initial set of dimensions.

Based on these prerequisites, the CBBBE measurement tool was adapted from Zeugner-Roth et al.'s (2008) CBBE scale, which had priorly been tested across different products and services, including flights. The measurement tool was further expanded by items adapted from Chatzipanagiotou et al. (2019), to ensure more than two items in each dimension. All items were slightly reworded to suit the context of package holidays. Section 5.4.1.2 provided a more detailed description of the CBBBE measurement tool.

EFA and CFA were utilised to test the proposed measurement tool of CBBBE in the context of package holidays. As EFA pointed out a three-dimension model of CBBBE rather than the four-dimension model derived from the literature review, the measurement tool was changed to three dimensions for the subsequent data analysis. Comparatively, most tourism-related CBBE studies rely on a four-dimension approach (Chi et al., 2020; Horng et al., 2012; Van-Dúnem et al., 2023). However, prominent tourism (Cobb-Walgren et al., 1995; Kim et al., 2008, 2021; Pike, 2007b, 2009; Šerić et al., 2014; Raza et al., 2020) and non-tourism studies (Washburn & Plank, 2002; Yoo & Donthu, 2001) share a three-dimension approach. It is striking, that those tourism-related CBBE studies relying on three dimensions are all set to non-destination tourism sectors, such as hotels (cf. Appendix B; e.g., Huang & Cai, 2015; Šerić & Gil-Saura, 2012). This indicates that differences across tourism sectors and contexts are worthwhile to be considered when adapting or developing measurement instruments for new settings and/or contexts (Boo et al., 2009).

Within the adapted three-dimension CBBBE measurement tool, the prior dimensions of bundle brand awareness and bundle brand associations were merged to one factor: bundle brand awareness and associations. This finding confirms earlier studies attesting "the inseparability of brand awareness and brand associations" (Yoo &

Donthu, 2001, p.6). The close link between brand awareness and brand associations can also be related back to Keller's (1993) definition of brand knowledge as a combination of brand awareness and brand image (Xu & Chan, 2010). Although the three-dimension approach contrasts Aaker's (1991) original CBBE model, vast empirical evidence confirms the notion that brand awareness and brand associations can often be merged into one dimension (Yoo & Donthu, 2001; Yoo et al., 2000; Washburn & Plank, 2002). In tourism settings, awareness alone, in comparison to non-awareness, is not always related to significantly higher visit intentions of tourists (Fesenmaier et al., 1993; Milman & Pizam, 1995; Xu & Chan, 2010). A participant of Study One explained that "if you have never looked at the sites [websites of tourism providers] you cannot evaluate them [tourism providers]" [B-I3-6]. Resultingly, familiarity, which is awareness combined with associations, is what matters and significantly impacts interest and intent to visit a destination (Horng et al., 2012; Milman & Pizam, 1995). Moreover, brand awareness needs to be completed not only by associations per se but explicitly by positive associations to increase visit or booking intention, such as the associations one study participant described: "Lufthansa is like Tempo⁵ representing handkerchiefs. Lufthansa represents flying." [FG3]. In contrast, brand awareness combined with negative associations leads to well-known but unliked brands, resulting in a deconstruction of CBBE and a decrease of purchase intent (Veloutsou et al., 2020). These deliberations underline the interwoven concepts of brand awareness and brand associations leading to their joint consideration as one dimension within this study. Lastly, the CFA supported the adequate fit, reliability, and validity of the three-dimension measurement tool for CBBE within package holidays, confirming its suitability. No prior studies set out to explore CBBE in bundles (CBBBE), in this case package holidays. Resultingly, this thesis is the first to adapt, test, and apply a measurement tool for CBBBE.

⁵ Tempo was the first German brand for paper handkerchiefs. In the course of time, the brand name became a generic name. In colloquial language, any type of paper handkerchiefs are often referred to as "Tempo".

6.3.4 CBBBE and BI across various bundle designs of package holidays

MANOVA and comparisons of estimated marginal means were conducted to analyse differences in customer-based bundle brand equity (CBBBE) and booking intention (BI) between various bundle designs of package holidays (RO4). Each package holiday consisted of a combination of three tourism sector brands (transport, accommodation, destination). For each tourism sector, two brands were available: one brand representing a high level of CBBE and one brand representing a low level of CBBE. Resulting from all possible combinations within this design, eight exemplary package holidays were derived (two transport brands x two accommodation brands x two destination brands = eight possible combinations). For a detailed description of the research design and pre-set combinations, see section 5.4.1.

6.3.4.1 *Discussion of hypothesised relationships*

It was hypothesised that CBBBE as well as booking intention are significantly higher if transport CBBE, accommodation CBBE, or destination CBBE is high than if they are low. Five of the resulting six hypotheses were supported as followingly outlined.

H1a: CBBBE is higher if Transport CBBE is high than if Transport CBBE is low.

H2a: CBBBE is higher if Accommodation CBBE is high than if Accommodation CBBE is low.

H3a: CBBBE is higher if Destination CBBE is high than if Destination CBBE is low.

Positive and significant relationships between (1) transport CBBE, (2) accommodation CBBE, as well as (3) destination CBBE and CBBBE were identified in this study. Resultingly, CBBBE is shaped by CBBE of all tourism sector brands bundled together as a package holiday. Most CBBE studies focus on only one tourism sector and fail to consider cooperation between or joint service bundles of different tourism sector brands (Elliot et al., 2016). As no prior studies set out to evaluate CBBE within bundles before, there is no specific literature available to directly compare to the obtained results. However, connections can be made to the literature on CBBE in co-branding

situations (e.g., McDonalds restaurants within Disneyland) stating that customer attitudes towards individual brands affect the customer attitudes towards co-brands as well as towards the co-branding pair/ composite brand (Besharat & Langan, 2013; Denizci Guillet & Tasci, 2010a,b; Dickinson & Barker, 2007; Simonin & Ruth, 1998; Tasci & Denizci Guillet, 2016). The resulting composite brand equity of co-branding pairs is commonly referred to as cobrand equity within the literature (Tasci & Denizci Guillet, 2016). A recent attempt exists to unify the wording (i.e., by the introduction of a specific term) for brand equity across different types of brand collaborations (e.g., sponsoring, influencer marketing, product placement), suggesting the concept of shared brand equity (Cornwell et al., 2022). By definition, shared brand equity describes “the extent to which semantic/ associative knowledge between brands is linked, is widely represented in a linguistic community, and affects community member brand responses” (Cornwell et al., 2022, p.3). Thus, shared brand equity as well as cobrand equity demonstrate similarities to CBBBE, such as the involvement of two or more brands, a resulting “common” brand equity, and its effects on customers and their decision-making (Cornwell et al., 2022; Tasci & Denizci Guillet, 2016). However, co-branding and other types of brand collaborations commonly relate only to specific joint marketing activities within the marketing mix and do not result in actual products or service experiences. In contrast, CBBBE concerns purchasable bundles of (tourism) services and the underlying CBBE of all involved brands “merging” together to provide that joint service bundle, in this case a package holiday. The resulting CBBBE is positively related to tourism sector CBBE of all included brands. Resultingly, parallels exist between CBBE in co-branding situations, brand collaborations, and in bundles. In all three contexts, CBBE of individual brands influence CBBE of the resulting brand combination, be it cobrand equity, shared brand equity, or CBBBE.

H1b: Booking Intention is higher if Transport CBBE is high than if Transport CBBE is low.

H3b: Booking Intention is higher if Destination CBBE is high than if Destination CBBE is low.

Positive and significant relationships between (1) transport CBBE as well as (2) destination CBBE and booking intention were identified in this study. This is consistent with empirical evidence within the literature stating that high levels of tourism sector CBBE results in a significant increase of booking and/ or (re)visit intention (Chi et al., 2020; Ferns & Walls, 2012; Horng et al., 2012; Kim et al., 2008; Lin et al., 2015; Liu et al., 2017, Pike & Bianchi, 2016). Most tourism-related CBBE studies in the destination sector (Boo et al., 2009; Chekalina et al., 2018; Im et al., 2012; Konecnik & Gartner, 2007; Pike et al., 2010) or airline sector (Chen & Tseng, 2010; Uslu et al., 2013) explore only CBBE and its dimensions without considering its actual consequences. However, several studies support the positive relationship between destination CBBE and (re)visit intention generally (Chi et al., 2020) as well as in different contexts such as pre-trip information search (Ferns & Wells, 2012), culinary tourism (Horng et al., 2012), and short-haul/ long-haul trips (Bianchi & Pike, 2011; Pike & Bianchi, 2016). The same relationship exists between airline CBBE and booking intention, even though research on this is scarce in the literature (Chen & Chang, 2008). Resultingly, this study's findings concerning the significant and positive relationship between (1) transport CBBE as well as (2) destination CBBE within package holidays and booking intention correspond with the results of earlier studies individually covering the tourism sectors of transport and destination.

H2b: Booking Intention is higher if Accommodation CBBE is high than if Accommodation CBBE is low.

The relationship between accommodation CBBE and booking intention failed to reach significance in this study ($p = .096$). This result does not support the general literature underpinning the positive relationship between tourism sector CBBE and booking intention or (re)visit intention (Chi et al., 2020; Ferns & Walls, 2012; Horng et al., 2012; Kim et al., 2008; Lin et al., 2015; Liu et al., 2017, Pike & Bianchi, 2016). The positive relationship has been established by various studies in the accommodation industry (Álvarez-García et al., 2020; Cobb-Walgren et al., 1995) and across different types of hotels, such as upscale hotels (Lin et al., 2015; Liu et al., 2017; Oh & Hsu, 2014), mid-priced hotels (Kim et al., 2008), and hotel chains (Álvarez-García et al., 2020; Huang & Cai, 2015). Hence, this study's findings concerning the non-significant relationship between accommodation CBBE and booking intention regarding package

holidays did not find support for the results of earlier studies individually covering the accommodation sector. In addition, a discrepancy between the first and the second study of this research project emerges. Multiple study participants of Study One highlighted that regarding package holidays they “would put transport last because [...] when [they]’ve arrived and had a great flight but [are] in a bad hotel for 14 days that would be a lot worse” [FG2] and that it would be “a horror [...] to stay in a TUI hotel because that would be a completely different trip from what [they] would actually like to do” [FG1]. Both statements illustrate the stance that the hotel brand, and its respective CBBE, are important influencing factors for the booking intention of any package holiday.

Contrary to the literature (and the general observations of Study One) no significant relationship between accommodation CBBE and booking intention was identified in Study Two. A possible reason for this discrepancy might be the pre-configured nature of the package holiday options. All interviews in Study One discussed package holidays which were directly created based on the participant’s subjective “likeable” (i.e., high CBBE) and/ or “unlikeable” (i.e., low CBBE) tourism sector brands. Initially, this tailor-made design was meant to be adapted in Study Two’s online experiment as well. However, the pre-test of Study Two pointed out that most participants failed to provide tourism sector brands, especially when they were asked to name negatively perceived brands. To overcome this obstacle, the online experiment were conducted offering only pre-configured (and no tailor-made) package holidays. Regarding the accommodation sector, a made-up brand (“Sunshine Plaza”) was used to ensure a low level of CBBE in contrast to the high CBBE brand (“Steigenberger”) and in line with prior studies (e.g., Denizci Guillet & Tasci, 2010b; Washburn et al., 2004). Potentially, participants did not perceive the made-up brand as negative (enough). Resultingly, the two included hotel brands (with respective high or low CBBE) might not have been sufficiently distinct to cause a significantly different manifestation of booking intention (dependent variable). Further, this assumption can be related back to the results of Study One, with multiple participants mentioning a brand aversion when it comes to hotels: “Especially with hotels, those that do not belong to a chain are often the most charming ones. That's what appeals to me now” [FG3] or “I might prefer to make sure that I choose a family-run company [hotel] that

does not belong to any brand” [FG1]. These deliberations point towards a potential explanation of the non-significant relationship between accommodation CBBE and booking intention within Study Two.

6.3.4.2 *Additional reflections on CBBE and BI across bundles*

The prior section discussed the existence of positive relationships between tourism sector CBBE (bundle attributes) and CBBE as well as booking intention. In addition, it is of interest to investigate and compare how (much) each individual attribute of the bundle shapes (i.e., influences) the resulting CBBE and booking intention. Due to the lack of comparable studies, the deliberations mainly rely on the findings of Study Two.

The findings of Study Two provided strong evidence that CBBE is mostly shaped by transport CBBE and accommodation CBBE. In contrast, destination CBBE accounts only for a small proportion of CBBE’s variance. A possible explanation for this might be found in the nature of a destination. In contrast to accommodation (hotels) or transport providers (airlines), a destination does not offer a specific service that consumers can purchase and claim for themselves. Rather, a destination is the location where the vacation takes place and key services, e.g., at hotels, are used or consumed by the customer (Freyer, 2015; Medlik, 2002). The difference between destinations and other tourism sectors are reflected in the general literature on package holidays, which often only considers non-destination bundle attributes such as transport, accommodation, and other travel services such as sightseeing or car hire (Dudek et al., 2019; Kim, 2008; Medlik, 2002; Page & Connell, 2009; Rewtrakunphaiboon & Oppewal, 2008). Based on this, it can be argued whether destinations are truly part of the actual package (and, therefore, CBBE) or rather an indispensable additional information shaping especially the customer’s booking intention of any package holiday. This line of thought is strengthened by the fact that destination CBBE is the most important factor when it comes to booking intention, whereas transport CBBE and accommodation CBBE (non-significant effect) play only minor roles in comparison. The dominance of the destination brand regarding booking intention has been recognised by prior studies on package holidays (Westwood et al., 1999). In addition, this finding is supported by the remarks of multiple participants in Study One, such as “I would take the first package to Iceland, because the destination is the

deciding factor for me” [B-I1-5] or “I would take [the package to] Japan, simply because I want to go there and then I don't really care about anything else” [B-I1-1]. Resultingly, even though five out of six hypothesised relationships (except: accommodation CBBE → booking intention) were supported in Study Two, the individual influence of each tourism sector CBBE differs between sectors and outcome variables. These findings support multiple studies on CBBE within co-branding situations, which explored brand dominance and came to the conclusion that individual brands within co-branding situations sometimes possess more influence on the resulting cobrand equity than their co-brands (Denizci Guillet & Tasci, 2010a,b). Regarding package holidays, the tourism sector brands hold different weights within the customer's booking choices. It seems that CBBE is predominantly shaped by transport CBBE and accommodation CBBE, while booking intention mainly depends on destination CBBE.

Concerning CBBBE, the results of Study Two indicated that every additional tourism sector brand with a respective high CBBE included in a package holiday leads to an increase of the CBBBE manifestation associated with the respective package holiday (i.e., bundle). The highest CBBBE manifestation was associated with the “ALL HIGH” package holiday, whereas the lowest CBBBE manifestation resulted from the “ALL LOW” option. Based on this, the total number (sum) of high CBBE tourism sector brands within a bundle positively relates to CBBBE. In line with the literature on bundle evaluation by consumers, an additive nature of CBBBE can be inferred (Yadav, 1994). Further, the fact that the “ALL HIGH” package holiday resulted in the highest CBBBE manifestation might be explained by the fit between its included brands. As all included tourism sector brands demonstrated high CBBE they shared a high level of brand awareness in combination with positive associations, high perceived quality, and brand loyalty. Resultingly, all brands within the “ALL HIGH” bundle were characterised by positive characteristics, resulting in a consistent overall nature of the bundle, and, therefore, corresponded with the highest specification of CBBBE. This finding is contrary to existing studies in the context of co-branding, where results revealed a decrease rather than an increase of cobrand equity for brands with a presumable good fit based on a quality-price criterion (Tasci & Denizci Guillet, 2016). Following these surprising results, Tasci & Denizci Guillet (2016) questioned

the choice of a quality-price criterion to evaluate brand fit and suggested alternative variables such as brand identity, personality, and values associated with the brand. The findings of Study Two might indicate that a differentiation between high and low CBBE serves well to evaluate brand fit between different brands within a package holiday.

In line with the findings on CBBE, booking intention increases with each additional high CBBE tourism sector brand within a bundle and the highest manifestation of booking intention was associated with the “ALL HIGH” package holiday. However, the “Destination HIGH” package holiday (incl. low transport CBBE, low accommodation CBBE, high destination CBBE) outperformed not only the other packages including one high CBBE tourism sector brand but also the “Destination LOW” package holiday exhibiting two high CBBE tourism sector brands (high transport CBBE, high accommodation CBBE, low destination CBBE). This partly contradicts the prior findings related to CBBE and its additive nature but underlines the crucial influence of the destination brand on booking intention. In accordance with Yadav (1994), the resulting difference between the influence of individual tourism sector brands (bundle attributes) indicates not only an additive but a weighted process underlying the customer’s evaluation process concerning package holidays (bundles). A possible explanation can be related back to the discussion of the role of brand associations in tourism-related CBBE research. It is generally accepted knowledge that negative brand associations result in a decrease in purchase or respectively booking intention (Veloutsou et al., 2020). Resultingly, as the influence of destination CBBE on booking intention is higher than the influence of both other tourism sector CBBEs, a negatively perceived destination brand negatively affects booking intention more than two positively perceived accommodation and transport brands positively influence it jointly. Multiple participants of Study One share this point of view, as they tend to quickly filter out package holiday offers based on unliked destination brands: “This one is ruled out from the start because of India, because the destination is most important to me” [B-I2-3], “[Package] three definitely not, because to Russia... that depends on where, of course, [...] I mean sure, there are nice cities in Russia, but no” [B-I2-4]. Within the general marketing literature, negative associations and feelings towards brands, often resulting in abusive (Miller et al., 2012), aversive (Godfrey et

al., 2011), or hateful brand relationships (Grégoire et al., 2009; Kucuk, 2008; Zarantonello et al., 2016), are a rather new concept (Farhat & Chaney, 2021). Tourism-related studies on this concept are rarer still. However, individual advances confirm the notion that negative feelings towards a specific destination brand minimise (re)visit intention and are to be considered as a form of anti-loyalty (Farhat & Chaney, 2021). Hence, regarding destination brands it needs not only to be considered how a liked brand increases booking intention of a package holiday, but also how an unliked brand has the power to decrease booking intention, even if it is bundled together with two likeable transport and accommodation brands. Resultingly, the overview on estimated marginal means illustrates and supports the prior individual observations concerning CBBBE and booking intention in relation to bundle design. From the customer's perspective, a weighted-additive evaluation process is revealed, meaning that CBBBE and booking intention both result from the total number of high CBBE tourism sector brands within a bundle but that the individual influence of each included tourism sector brand varies.

6.3.5 Theory exploration: SDN vs. MAUT in the context of CBBBE

So far research regarding the overall impression of bundles often neglects the attributes of the bundle in focus and their respective influence on customers' booking choices and intention (Sheng & Pan, 2009). Instead, various studies focus on the specific influence of price information (Tanford et al., 2012). This thesis set out to establish which theoretical framework is most suitable for the investigation of CBBBE in the context of package holidays. Based on a review of the literature on package holidays, two theories were deemed potentially appropriate: service delivery network (SDN) and multi-attribute utility theory (MAUT). Resultingly this section addresses RO5: "To explore which theory is more suitable for the investigation of CBBBE in the context of package holidays: (1) service delivery network theory (SDN) or (2) multi-attribute utility theory (MAUT)".

6.3.5.1 *Evaluation of the fit between SDN and CBBBE*

Service delivery network (SDN) examines how multiple independent service providers contribute related service components to one joint customer-oriented service experience (Tax et al., 2013). In general, SDNs are applicable to various service industries such as the financial sector (Meester et al., 2010), retail agglomerations like

shopping malls (Teller et al., 2016), the health sector (Pikkarainen et al., 2020), public management (Brandsen & van Hout, 2006), and non-profit organisations (Bunger, 2012). Only a scarcity of attention has been given to tourism-related SDNs (Helfen et al., 2020). However, individual advances applying SDNs to explore human resources in aviation management exist (Sydow et al., 2020; Ziehe & Helfen, 2021). Key aspects of any SDN are the “actor characteristics, network processes, and structure, which affect the network’s values and functions” (Poocharoen & Ting, 2015, p.591).

For this thesis, one might argue that a package holiday represents a service delivery network, as it comprises service attributes from different tourism companies such as airlines or hotels. In order to provide the package holiday, all actors work together and, thereby, hold the potential to influence the service provision of other actors. This is especially true in the case of a coordinating network “captain” (Tax et al., 2013). When compared with Poocharoen & Ting’s (2015) key SDN aspects, tourism sector brands and their respective level of CBBE represent actor characteristics, whereas the resulting CBBBE represents the actual value (in the form of outcome) of the network. The results of Study Two indicated that the individual influence of each tourism sector CBBE differs between sectors. Findings indicate that CBBBE is predominantly shaped by transport CBBE and accommodation CBBE but less by destination CBBE based on the respective effect sizes associated with each tourism sector CBBE. This validates former research, stating the need to take competition among different actors within a SDN into account (Tax et al., 2013). Resultingly, this study adds to existing SDN-related studies, which are commonly set to non-tourism industries (e.g., Brandsen & van Hout, 2006; Bunger, 2012; Pikkarainen et al., 2020; Teller et al., 2016) while studies on SDN in tourism are rare and fail to extend the concept to package holidays and/or the customer’s holiday-related decision making (Helfen et al., 2020; Sydow et al., 2020; Ziehe & Helfen, 2021).

Also, the results of Study One included comments supporting the suitability of SDN to CBBBE within package holidays, such as participants stating they would book a package holiday “mainly because of the destination. The transport would not matter to

me, I mean I might have had two bad experiences with Condor⁶, but I can overlook that. The main thing is that I get to my destination and the Sun City, the hotel, was so nice. That's why.” [B-I2-6]. Another participant revealed that “the country is most appealing to [them] and together with the tour operator, accommodation, [...] and transport [they] find this example okay. But primarily because of the destination.” [B-I1-4]. Both statements indicate that customers tend to consider all tourism sector brands within the package as well as the fact that individual actor characteristics (in this case destination and hotel brand) shape the relevance of other actor's characteristics (here: Condor as an airline brand) regarding the overall network value (here: CBBBE). Thus, it supports the interrelated nature of SDNs in which actors hold the potential to influence not only the service provision of other actors (here: tourism brands) but also the role these actors inhibit for the customer's holiday booking choices (Tax et al., 2013).

6.3.5.2 *Evaluation of the fit between MAUT and CBBBE*

Multi-attribute utility theory (MAUT) applies to situations in which individual or group decision makers are confronted with multiple alternatives to choose from “on the basis of two or more criteria or attributes” (Dyer et al., 1992, p.647). Commonly, the associated attributes involve certain degrees of risk or uncertainty (e.g., the intangibility of services), which differentiates MAUT from multiple criteria decision making (MCDM; Wallenius et al., 2008). MAUT can be related to multiple criteria discrete alternative problems (modest size of choices and attributes, e.g., choosing which hotel to book) as well as multiple criteria optimisation problems (large number of/ infinite alternatives, e.g., how to enable climate-neutral vacations), which results in a broad variety of interdisciplinary fields of application (Wallerius et al., 2008). The key interest of the decision maker lies on a maximisation of utility or value both of which are often estimated and compared across all available alternatives by a ranking or numerical comparison (Dyer et al., 1992). In the context of marketing and branding, consumer preference and market share for different brands across product classes can be explained by MAUT based on multiple brand attributes and brand-specific effects

⁶ Condor is a German airline.

(Srinivasan, 1979). In tourism research, MAUT has not yet gained a significant amount of attention. However, individual advances exist regarding the evaluation of sustainable tourism around ecosystem services (Araya et al., 2023) and the optimisation of travel itineraries (Anranur Uwaisy et al., 2019; Baizal et al., 2018; Saifullah et al., 2019).

Regarding CBBBE within package holidays, it might be argued that a package holiday is one of a modest number of alternatives for a customer to choose from when planning to go on vacation. Hence, the setting can be related to a discrete alternative problem (Wallenius et al., 2008). Further, the intangibility of tourism and services in general, resulting in attributes shaped by risk and uncertainty, indicates a good fit between package holidays and MAUT (Wallenius et al., 2008; Zeithaml et al., 1985). Key attributes differentiating one package holiday from competing alternatives are the included services (e.g., transport, accommodation), their respective tourism sector brands, as well as the bundle price (Anderson et al., 2009; Chiam et al., 2009; Holloway et al., 2009; Tanford et al., 2012). The results of Study Two support this line of thought, as each included tourism sector CBBE significantly influences CBBBE. Furthermore, an additive evaluation process was revealed on the customer's side, as CBBBE increases with the total number of high CBBE tourism sector brands within a package and the individual influence of each included tourism sector brand varies (cf. prior discussion on CBBBE based on bundle design). In addition, the occurrence and elicitation of differing attribute weights within MAUT is a sub-section that has gained considerable attention with which the findings of Study Two (i.e., partial eta squared, η^2 , associated with the influence of tourism sector CBBE on both CBBBE and BI) align (Delquíé, 1993, 1997; Keeney, 2002; Pöyhönen & Härmäläinen, 2001; Wallenius et al., 2008). Resultingly, a bundle's value or utility (here: CBBBE) is seldomly simply a sum of its attributes but rather a weighted combination of them based on the customer's individual preferences (Yadav, 1994).

6.3.5.3 *Conclusive evaluation of SDN vs. MAUT regarding CBBBE*

The prior deliberations outlined that CBBBE within package holidays is shaped by characteristics both attributable to SDN as well as MAUT. The results of Study Two confirmed the notion that, from the customer's perspective, a weighted-additive evaluation process is in place and CBBBE is predominantly shaped by transport CBBE

and accommodation CBBE. In addition, no significant interaction effects were found between the influence of the three factors (transport CBBE, accommodation CBBE, destination CBBE) on CBBBE. This points out a key difference between CBBBE and co-branding situations, in which attitudes towards one brand within a co-branding partnership affect the customer attitudes towards co-brands (Besharat & Langan, 2013; Denizci Guillet & Tasci, 2010a; Tasci & Denizci Guillet, 2016). The opposite was found to apply to bundles in the form of package holidays, in which no tourism sector brand influences the effect of any other tourism-sector brand on CBBBE. Thus, it can be derived that each factor influences CBBBE on its own rather than the effects of any other factor's effect on CBBBE. This contrast the interrelated nature of SDN and advocates for MAUT to be the more suitable theoretical foundation of CBBBE and its creation. Hence, rather than actors creating a bundle together, the included tourism sector brands and their respective CBBE represent attributes whose combination directly affects CBBBE of each potential package holiday available to a customer. Resultingly, MAUT serves well to explore the demand side, their perceptions, associations and booking intention of package holidays. In contrast, SDN might be a useful approach to examine package holidays and their creation from the supply side as it acknowledges all interrelated actors crucial to the actual provision of the joint service experience.

6.3.6 The relationship between CBBBE and BI

In order to address RO6 ("To analyse the relationship between CBBBE and booking intention"), it was hypothesised that booking intention is significantly higher if CBBBE is high than if it is low. A positive and significant relationship between CBBBE and booking intention was identified in this study. This finding supports the existing literature on the significant and positive influence of tourism sector CBBE on booking intention (Chi et al., 2020; Ferns & Walls, 2012; Horng et al., 2012; Kim et al., 2008; Lin et al., 2015; Liu et al., 2017, Pike & Bianchi, 2016). As priorly outlined, CBBBE of package holidays is shaped by the included tourism sector brands within the package holiday and their respective CBBE. Transport CBBE (Chen & Chang, 2008), accommodation CBBE (Cobb-Walgren et al., 1995; Huang & Cai, 2015; Kim et al., 2008; Lin et al., 2015; Liu et al., 2017; Oh & Hsu, 2014), and destination CBBE (Bianchi & Pike, 2011; Chi et al., 2020; Ferns & Wells, 2012; Horng et al., 2012; Pike

& Bianchi, 2016) each individually positively relate to booking intention. Hence, it is a logical conclusion that their combination (CBBBE) exhibits the same positive relationship to booking intention. This logical conclusion has now been verified by the results of Study Two. No prior studies set out to explore CBBE in bundles (CBBBE), in this case package holidays, before. Resultingly, this thesis is the first to analyse and confirm the relationship between CBBBE and booking intention.

6.4 Summary of findings

This thesis aimed at exploring brand influence on tourist's booking intention across tourism sectors, both individually and in the context of package holidays (bundles). This broader aim was designed to understand if tourism brand influence differs across tourism sectors and how potential differences shape travellers' holiday booking choices. Subsequently, this thesis followed an exploratory-sequential mixed methods approach. First, to explore tourism brand influence in the individual or bundled context by the means of a qualitative study (Study One, interviews and focus groups) and then to analyse actual effects of tourism brands within package holidays on customer's booking intention by employing a quantitative study (Study Two, online experiment). In addition, the topic of interest (package holidays) was considered against the background of two theoretical foci. First, to explore and evaluate how customer decisions concerning multi-branded package holidays can be related both to CBBE (individual tourism sector) and to CBBBE (bundle). Second, to evaluate which theory better suits CBBBE in the context of package holidays: SDN or MAUT.

Study One identified that brands play a vital role in holiday booking choices. However, the influence of brands differs between the individually explored tourism sectors: While brands carry a lot of weight in the sectors of OTA, transport, and destination, they play a minor (or: no) role regarding traditional travel agencies and tour operators. Solely concerning the accommodation sector, no uniform indication of relevance could be derived, as participants were divided in this regard. Over the course of Study One, the focus was extended from individual sectors to multi-branded package holidays. Regarding package holidays, it was revealed that destination brand, accommodation brand, and transport brand influence the customer's booking choices. In contrast, the brands in the remaining tourism sectors (travel agency, OTA, tour operator) were

found to be irrelevant from the traveller's point of view. The role of tourism sector brands differed between the individual and bundled context, thereby supporting prior studies' calls for the specific exploration of package holidays (Ainscough, 2006; Alegre & Sard, 2015; Elliot et al., 2016).

In order to perform Study Two, a specific, reliable, and valid measurement tool for CBBBE in the context of package holidays was required, adapted, tested and its applicability confirmed. Subsequent analyses demonstrated an overall additive nature underlying both CBBBE and booking intention: The more "high CBBE" tourism sector brands were included in a bundle, the higher both outcome variables manifested. However, differing weights across the individual tourism sector brands were pointed out, as CBBBE is mostly shaped by transport and accommodation brands, whereas booking intention mainly relies on the destination brand. The identified priority of the destination brand regarding package holidays and their respective booking intention corresponds with the same finding in Study One. It needs to be noted that no significant effect of the accommodation brand on booking intention could be identified. This might be related back to Study One and the participants' indecisiveness along with contrasting views regarding the role of the accommodation brands in the individual and bundled context as well as the identified brand aversion solely observed in the accommodation sector. From this circumstance a call for further research on this matter can be derived. Lastly, a positive relationship between CBBBE and booking intention of packages holidays was identified.

Lastly, the findings indicated that customers tend to evaluate CBBBE of package holidays based on a weighted-additive evaluation process. No interrelations (in the form of interaction effects) were to be found between the influence of all included tourism sector brands, implying that tourism sector brands influence CBBBE on their own and not the effect of any other tourism-sector brand. This circumstance contrasts the interrelated nature of SDN. Resultingly, MAUT was derived to be the more suitable theoretical foundation for CBBBE and its underlying evaluation process.

Chapter 7: Conclusions

7.1 Theoretical implications & key contributions

This thesis extends both the general CBBE as well as the tourism branding literature with its focus on bundles (i.e., package holidays). Resultingly, it explores a seldomly studied context, which is generally applicable both to products and services. Based on this research's focus on a context that has only gained scarce attention within the literature so far, various implications for theory and practice evolve. This final chapter outlines theoretical implications alongside key contributions of this thesis and highlights managerial implications as well as limitations and future research potentials. The first section addresses theoretical implications and contributions concerning the general CBBE literature followed by tourism-related branding and CBBE research.

7.1.1 Contributions to general CBBE literature

This thesis conceptually contributes to the existing body of CBBE research by ***exploring and evaluating CBBE in the context of bundles***. Study One identified the transferability of CBBE and its underlying dimensions to bundles in the form of package holidays. Resultingly, the novel phenomenon was labelled as customer-based bundle brand equity (CBBBE). Parallels between CBBBE and shared brand equity as well as cobrand equity, such as the inclusion of a minimum of two brands and a resulting “common” brand equity (Cornwell et al., 2022; Tasci & Denizci Guillet, 2016), have been identified by this thesis. However, CBBBE can be considered as a different phenomenon, as it does not relate to specific joint marketing and/or communication activities but rather to actual products or service experiences. Even more, CBBBE concerns purchasable bundles of products or services and the underlying CBBE of all involved brands “merging” together to create the respective bundle brand equity. By its focus on bundles in the form of package holidays, Study Two further contributes to the tourism-related CBBE literature, by ***evaluating CBBE/CBBBE within package holidays***. Even though prior tourism-related CBBE studies exist across a variety of individual tourism sectors such as destination (e.g., Boo et al., 2009; Elliott et al., 2016; Ferns & Walls, 2012; Im et al., 2012; Pike et al., 2010), aviation (e.g., Chen & Tseng, 2010), attractions (e.g., Han et al., 2015), and hospitality (e.g., Cobb-Walgren et al., 1995), this study adds to the existing knowledge by

applying CBBE within the context of package holidays. In addition, existing studies on package holidays tend to focus on pricing and standardisation strategies (Holloway et al., 2009; Kim et al., 2009a), tasks of the tour operator offering the package (Picazo & Moreno-Gil, 2018), or the functional value of intermediaries such as travel agencies (Sánchez et al., 2006), but fail to connect their findings or theoretical foundation to CBBE. By exploring and evaluating CBBE in a bundled context, this thesis extends existing findings identifying booking and/ or (re)visit intention as an outcome of CBBE (e.g., Chi et al., 2020; Ferns & Walls, 2012; Horng et al., 2012; Kim et al., 2008; Lin et al., 2015; Liu et al., 2017, Pike & Bianchi, 2016) and confirms the positive relationship in the context of package holidays.

Further, this thesis is the first to ***empirically confirm the elimination of other proprietary brand assets*** as a CBBE dimension. The dimension constitutes one of Aaker's (1996) initial CBBE dimensions, however, it is common practice among marketing researchers to ignore it within their studies and measurement tools. In contrast, Study One set out to explore all of Aaker's (1996) initial CBBE dimensions including the dimension other proprietary brand assets. Throughout Study One, all participants statements were matched with Aaker's (1996) five CBBE dimensions: brand awareness, brand associations, perceived quality, brand loyalty, and other proprietary brand assets. However, no empirical evidence was found to match the fifth dimension. This finding suggests and confirms the neglect of other proprietary brand assets within the general CBBE literature.

Additionally, based on the literature and the findings of Study One, a ***specific, reliable, and valid measurement tool for CBBE*** has been adapted based on existing studies and tools, as well as subsequently tested and confirmed. The tool follows a three-dimension (BBAwAs, PBQ, BBL) approach and was refined based on Zeugner-Roth et al.'s (2008) adaptation of the prominent CBBE measurement tool of Yoo & Donthu (2001) accompanied by additional items. Thereby, this thesis not only adds a novel context to the CBBE literature but also contributes a specific measurement tool adapted to the context of CBBE.

7.1.2 Contributions to tourism-related branding and CBBE literature

Regarding tourism-related branding, this thesis responded to calls from Elliot et al. (2016) and Ainscough (2006) stating the need to ***explore and compare brand influence across different tourism sectors within one study***. The fields of tourism in general as well as tourism branding are characterised by a highly fragmented nature which minimises inter-study comparability (Gertner, 2011; Hartmann & Lederer, 2021). In addition, existing brand-related studies mostly explore individual tourism sectors, most prominently destinations (Elliot et al., 2016), but also transport (Chen & Chang, 2008; Chen & Tseng, 2010; Mahadin et al., 2022; Uslu et al., 2013), accommodation (Kayaman & Arasil, 2007; Prasad & Dev, 2000; Šerić & Gil-Saura, 2012; Xu & Chan, 2010), online travel agencies (Kim et al., 2007; Wolfe et al., 2008), travel agencies (Ng et al., 2006; Westwood et al., 1999; Wolfe et al., 2008), and tour operators (Westwood et al., 1999). Resultingly, this thesis is one of the first to combine multiple different tourism sectors within one study. It thereby facilitates a direct comparison of multiple aspects. First, Study One explored the role tourism brands across tourism sectors inhabit when customers are confronted with vacation choices and booking scenarios. Second, Study Two analysed the relationships between tourism sector CBBE within package holidays and (1) CBBE as well as (2) booking intention.

From a ***methodological perspective***, this thesis extends the field of tourism-related CBBE research to an additional ***experimental study***, which are still rather rare in the field as well as to a ***German sample***, thereby, serving evidence from a source market that has not gained a considerable amount of research attention while being associated with one of highest tourism spendings worldwide (cf. Appendix A; UNWTO, 2019). As German tourists contribute significantly to the global tourism economy, it is beneficial to understand the influencing factors behind their travel choices as their experiences can have implications for businesses, tourism boards, and policymakers worldwide who seek to attract and cater to German tourists. In addition, Germany is part of the European Union (EU) and exploring the travel behaviour of German tourists can provide insights that may be comparable or generalisable to other European markets. Thereby, findings from Germany may help to identify broader trends within the EU, making the research more relevant to a larger audience.

A further shortcoming of most research regarding package holiday is its neglect of the destination brand as a part of the actual bundle. Throughout Study One and Study Two, the destination brand was included in all discussed and evaluated packages and has proven to be crucial for the customer's bundle evaluation. Thereby, both studies extend those that investigated package holidays without considering destination(s) as a part of the actual package (e.g., Dudek et al., 2019; Finsterwalder & Laesser, 2013; Sánchez et al., 2006) and those that have explored only destination brands (e.g., Boo et al., 2009; Konecnik & Gartner, 2007; Pike, 2009). Resultingly, this thesis adds to the knowledge on package holidays by ***identifying the indispensability of the destination brand as an essential bundle attribute.***

Lastly, this thesis contributes to the theoretical knowledge on the underlying nature of the CBBBE evaluation process in the context of package holidays. The exploration and evaluation of CBBBE from the customer's perspective (Study One and Study Two) revealed a weighted-additive evaluation process when it comes to CBBBE. Furthermore, no significant interrelations between individual tourism sector brands and the influence of other tourism brand's influence on CBBBE have been identified. Based on these discoveries and additional deliberations, the discussed findings ***identified MAUT (and not SDN) as the most suitable theoretical foundation concerning the CBBBE evaluation process*** in the context of package holidays.

7.2 Managerial implications

The theoretical implications and findings of this thesis directly translate into multiple relevant practical implications across all tourism sectors. Implications for each sector are addressed individually in this section based on the synthesised findings of Study One and Study Two.

The results of Study One indicated a potential segmentation between users and non-users of ***traditional travel agencies***, which is consistent with the findings of existing studies (Wolfe et al., 2004). However, existing findings were expanded by the rich and in-depth findings of the qualitative Study One, for example when it comes to the reasons for or against the use of travel agencies from the customer's perspective. Based on this research's observations, travel agencies are recommended to conduct market research to clearly identify their potential customers based on their propensity to book

vacations via travel agencies. This allows for focused marketing efforts resulting in a target-oriented use of resources. In addition, existing customer groups known to be advocates of travel agency usage are suggested to be nurtured, for example by the implementation of loyalty programmes, referral initiatives, and marketing events. Study One further demonstrated that some of the travel agency attributes predominant in the literature, such as the location and staff (Ng et al., 2006), outperform the travel agency brand regarding the customer's holiday booking choices. Hence, travel agencies should focus on finding attractive and well-situated office spaces alongside well-trained travel agents instead of solely relying on a brand to attract customers. Especially in Germany, where individual travel agencies are rare compared to brand-associated travel agencies, for example as a part of cooperations, franchise, or chains (FUR, 2022), business owners are suggested to contrast the costs of being associated with a renowned brand with the actual benefits (e.g., profit increase, synergies of joint marketing efforts) to facilitate a successful management of financial resources. Lastly, travellers have found to be ignorant of the differences between travel agencies and tour operators, a circumstance that has already been criticised by Westwood et al. (1999). Resultingly, travel agencies are advised to emphasise their respective tasks and benefits for the customer (e.g., independent consulting, time saving, overview of market and prices, expertise, personal support) throughout their marketing activities. This might not only result in a clearer differentiation from tour operators but also in an increase of potential users of travel agencies: those who did not understand their role before might change their mind when confronted with the specific advantages associated with travel agency usage.

Regarding **online travel agencies (OTA)** a large influence of brands was concluded from the results of Study One. Travellers pay attention to OTA brands when booking individual tourism services as they decrease the uncertainty inherent to tourism and services in general. Consequently, OTA are advised to focus their marketing efforts on image campaigns in order to boost brand awareness and initiate positive associations, both of which were found to be a key factor positively associated with the role of brands for the customer's holiday booking choices. The findings of Study One suggest that once an OTA brand is known and positively perceived, travellers are likely to employ it for their bookings of tourism services. However, it is crucial that a

customer's first trial of an OTA for a holiday-related booking results in customer satisfaction based on criteria such as website usability, comparability of prices and offers, as well as availability of loyalty programmes (Kim et al., 2009b; Wolfe et al., 2004). Only then, customer loyalty can be initiated. Resultingly, not only branding but also customer retention (e.g., by the implementation of excellent complaint management processes; Matilla & Mount, 2003) is suggested to be a key focus of OTA marketing efforts, as a customer once lost is likely to search for a new "go-to" OTA brand. A combination of a strong brand alongside satisfied and loyal customers facilitates an OTA's potential to permanently defend its market position and relevance. In addition, the lack of personal relationship and service was identified as a shortcoming of OTA in comparison to traditional travel agencies. Study One's findings alongside recommendations of Wolfe et al. (2004) suggest that OTA should set off to enable personalisation throughout the online booking process, for example by launching chatbots which provide travellers with travel suggestions and recommendations based on individual preferences. Even though this might not equal the personal consultation in traditional travel agencies, it would be a starting point to minimise said shortcoming.

In line with the findings on traditional travel agencies, ***tour operator*** brands were found to be of no specific relevance within travellers' booking choices. Further, most customers are unable to differentiate tour operators from travel agencies. Both findings support earlier studies, such as Westwood et al. (1999). It is advised that tour operators increase their branding efforts and to outline the advantages of booking package holidays with a tour operator (e.g., liability, insurance, value for money, troubleshooting, safety). As many travellers do not know about the advantages, they do not understand the role of the tour operator. It might be assumed that in line with other safety-concerned tourism sectors (such as airlines; Chen & Chang, 2008; Forgas et al., 2010; Saleem et al., 2017) the role of tour operator brands in the customer's holiday booking choices has a potential to increase once such benefits are clearly recognised by the customer.

Tour operators are the creators of package holidays. Resultingly, findings concerning package holidays directly involve implications for tour operators as well. Within package holidays, the destination brand was found to be the key influencing criterion

of the customer's booking intention. In contrast, airline and hotel brands were found to play minor roles. However, Study One identified that additional subjective requirements and preferences are included in such choices, especially regarding the accommodation brand. Hence, marketing and sales efforts of tour operators should revolve around the destination brand. In the first instance, the destination brand can serve as a filter to reduce the amount of available offers for individual customers. Once the destination is set, default high CBBE transport and high CBBE accommodation brands can be added to the bundle to provide the customer with a starting point associated with high booking intention. However, an option to downgrade in individual (or all) included tourism sectors should be installed in the booking process. This allows for customers to make tailor-made adjustments to the bundle. For example, the airline brand could be individually downgraded to a low CBBE brand, if the airline is irrelevant to the customer, and result in a price reduction concerning the overall package. Such options empower travellers and allow for subjective trade-off considerations within bundles (e.g., between price savings and renown brands). It can be assumed that travellers appreciate more tailor-made options and processes, resulting in a higher loyalty to the tour operator as well. From a technological perspective, dynamic packaging represents an on-demand bundle of up-to-date services and prices instead of a pre-fixed bundle and price, which are usually printed in a catalogue for the whole season (Ayazlar, 2014; Carroll et al., 2007). By employing the suggested logic (starting with an all high CBBE bundle, complemented by downgrading options) in dynamic packaging, the customer is first presented with a highly bookable offer which can then be adjusted to individual preferences. In addition, up to now the price of a package holiday commonly serves as the sole influencing factor when generating a ranking or list of available dynamically packaged holidays. Hence, tour operators are equipped with an alternative order logic when offering package holidays to the customer. A positive side effect of this new order logic is anchoring (Niedrich et al., 2001; Simonson & Drolet, 2004): It is likely that the first displayed package holiday (including only high CBBE brands) is associated with the most expensive price which is then set as the "default option" (reference price) in the mind of the customer. All following options are recognised to be cheaper, which might result in a more positive overall evaluation (Nasiry & Popescu, 2011; Popescu & Wu, 2007).

Brands in the tourism sector of **transport** (such as airlines) have a strong influence on customers' booking choices. This is mostly due to safety concerns (Gilbert & Wong, 2003; Hussain et al., 2015), which especially persist among leisure travellers (Ringle et al., 2011). Travellers were found to be willing to pay price-premiums to fly with an airline associated with high levels of trust and a minimum level of perceived risk. Resultingly, it is suggested that airlines continue to focus their marketing activities on emotional and brand-oriented messages (e.g., excellent service experiences) in combination with safety-assuring indicators (e.g., up-to-date aircrafts). As customers tend to consider airline brands in their travel-related choices, it is even more important for airlines to be part of their relevant set. Flights tend to be booked individually, online, and directly with airlines (FUR, 2022). Resultingly, if airlines fail to be remembered, their websites will not be accessed, and no booking process started. In addition to these general suggestions, exceptions were identified based on the actual distance of travel. This points out parallels to studies on the influence of travel distance regarding destinations (Pike & Bianchi, 2016; Pike et al., 2010; Kotsi et al., 2018). If travellers look for short-haul flights, brand relevance decreases because the time spend on board is rather short and doesn't require high service levels. This leads to the recommendation for short-haul airlines to focus on attractive pricing rather than image-oriented marketing activities, whereas medium- and long-haul airlines should closely monitor and foster their brand and its associations. To some extent, this supports the general practice of airlines to introduce multiple brands, each catering to different travel distances and/ or target groups (e.g., Lufthansa and Eurowings).

The results of both studies underline that **airline** brands play a major role in the customer's holiday booking choices. This implies that in today's competitive airline industry, fostering a strong brand image and delivering high-quality services are imperative for sustained success and competitiveness. In an era where customer experience reigns supreme, providing exceptional service is non-negotiable. Airlines that prioritise brand building and service excellence not only attract repeat business but also enjoy positive word-of-mouth referrals and enhanced customer satisfaction. Based on this existing knowledge which has been confirmed by both studies, the current developments in the industry are surprising. Esteemed airlines such as Lufthansa have spent the last years introducing severe austerity measures resulting in

reduced service levels and customer dissatisfaction. For example, the Net Promoter Score, a key performance indicator measuring the satisfaction and recommendation propensity of customers, plummeted to an all-time low after the pandemic and continues to decrease throughout the last years (Business Insider, 2023; Nowack, 2024). This development poses a significant threat to the relevance and vitality of airline brands. Austerity measures such as cost-cutting initiatives may initially appear as prudent financial strategies, yet they can inadvertently erode brand equity and customer loyalty. Diminished service offerings, such as reductions in in-flight amenities or customer support, not only tarnish the overall passenger experience but also dilute the unique value proposition that airlines strive to convey through their brands. In an industry where differentiation is crucial, commoditising services through austerity measures risks relegating airlines to mere price-driven commodities, undermining efforts to build distinctive brands. In an era where consumers place increasing emphasis on experiential value and personalised service, neglecting service quality can lead to dissatisfied customers and tarnished reputations, ultimately compromising long-term competitiveness. Thus, the current prevalence of austerity measures within the airline industry underpins the urgent need for carriers to reassess their strategies and prioritise investments in maintaining service excellence to safeguard the relevance of their brands.

Considering the **accommodation** sector, no uniform approach to branding could be identified. Hotel customers were found to be divided into three segments: those focussing on hotel brands (especially due to positive past experiences), those being indifferent regarding hotel brands, and those being averse to hotel brands. Resultingly, hotels are recommended to invest into a thorough examination of their specific target group, its expectations, and perceptions. Only then, both targeted marketing activities and overall service experiences can be designed in a meaningful way to cater to customer needs. Hotels trying to please all three identified customer segments at once risk to drift towards a stuck-in-the-middle scenario, while hotels setting themselves to one segment based on a detailed and focused marketing strategy are likely to facilitate a specific and relevant positioning. This indicates that branding considerations might even result in the decision not to actively brand a hotel. In contrast, if a hotel is part of a hotel chain, cooperation, or franchise system associated with a corresponding brand,

it is key for the hotel to fulfil the unified service standards of that brand (De Chernatony & Segal-Horn, 2003; Tepeci, 1999). If these standards are not met, hotels risk customer disappointment, and ultimately customer loss for all hotels associated with that very brand.

Across all tourism sectors, the **destination** brand was shown to be most influential from the customer's perspective. However, destination marketing organisations (DMO) need to take into account that there are positive, as well as negative associations attributable to a destination brand which shape a traveller's visit intention (Farhat & Chaney, 2021). A destination yielding positive associations is likely to be visited, whereas a negatively associated destination is rejected by potential visitors. It is suggested that destination marketing efforts continue to foster positive associations across a variety of contexts (e.g., food, culture, sports, business) to attract different traveller segments. However, based on the findings it might be hypothesised that even good marketing campaigns could be unable to outperform persisting negative associations (e.g., regarding the political system or safety concerns). Based on this assumption, it is key for destinations to profoundly investigate their destination image before individual marketing activities are planned and executed. This allows for a marketing strategy and operationalisation to be tailored to the specific situation, even if the result may be the discontinuation of marketing activities in certain source markets and/ or target groups.

7.3 Limitations & Future Research

This thesis makes substantial contributions to the general CBBE as well as tourism branding literature as indicated above. Despite this, each research and its design are characterised by inherent limitations. At the same time, these limitations point at distinct areas of future research. Limitations and future research potentials concerning Study One, Study Two, as well as the overall thesis are outlined in this section.

7.3.1 Study One

One key limitation of the first study was its qualitative nature, as qualitative research is characterised by its potential to explore rich and in-depth insights rather than to reveal generalisable results (Miles et al., 2019). A convenience sample was acquired for this study and is associated with inherent limitations such as participant self-

selection (Malhotra & Birks, 2006). However, the convenience approach was supplemented with a purposive approach as potential participants were filtered by their general propensity to travel and to book a package holiday. In addition, sampling underwent a diligent planning and realisation procedure to ensure as much equal distribution as possible across potential segmentation criteria such as common travel companions (e.g., travelling alone or with friends, partner/spouse, family), age, and gender (Silverman, 2020).

Further, the travel context throughout Study One demonstrated a notable focus on sun and beach holidays, even though individual participants deviated to other contexts while discussing their prior travel experiences. So far, little research exists on the role of brands across different travel contexts. Resultingly, further studies should explore the role of brands regarding other travel contexts (such as city trips, special interest travel, cruises, luxury, or group travel) to allow for inter-contextual comparisons.

7.3.2 Study Two

Regarding the limitations of Study Two, experimental research is characterised by a limited generalisability due to its focus on differences and similarities across experimental conditions (in this case: eight different package holidays) instead of representativeness of a population (Field & Hole, 2003). However, the focus of this thesis lay on the identification, evaluation, and comparison of CBBBE based on different combinations of tourism sector brands. In relation to the corresponding research objectives, an experimental design was deemed to be the most appropriate research approach as (unlike correlative designs, e.g., structural equation modelling) it allows for a controlled manipulation of independent variables. Due to the nature of the experiment, no other elements or influencing factors were taken into account and the conducted analyses did not control for any other effects, for example common control variables such as age or gender. Future studies could set out to evaluate CBBBE using different methodological approaches to illuminate further aspects and perspectives on the topic.

Secondly, participants evaluated both CBBBE and booking intention of their allocated package holiday. An alternative research design would have been an actual choice setting in which participants are confronted with multiple bundles and asked to choose

their preferred option (conjoint design). For this thesis, such design has not been deemed suitable, as it would not allow for the analysis of two outcome variables (CBBBE, booking intention). Further, a choice situation was considered as less realistic in the context of vacations in contrast to its applicability in other industries such as fast-moving consumer goods (FMCG). However, Study Two could be extended and adapted to a choice design by future studies in line with Chiam et al. (2009). This would allow for inter-method comparisons and triangulation of the results.

Further limitations were identified regarding the specific design of the package holidays included in Study Two. First, all packages included only three tourism sectors (transport, accommodation, destination) in contrast to the six tourism sectors discussed throughout Study One. The evaluation of bundles including six tourism sectors was demonstrated to be complex for most participants of Study One. In combination with the finding that travel agency, OTA, and tour operator brands were not considered as relevant from the customer's point of view and the general literature on package holidays, these three sectors were eliminated for Study Two to increase participant-friendliness of the online experiment. Second, opposing the initial plan, no tailor-made packages (based on each participant's subjective set of brands representing high/ low CBBE) were included in Study Two, as the pre-test showed most of the participants' failure to provide brand names. In order to allow for meaningful and comparable results, a consistent set of eight pre-configured package holidays has been chosen for Study Two. Third, the creation of pre-configured package holidays used real tourism sector brands resulting in high levels of brand awareness across all brands (except for the made-up low CBBE hotel brand due to the lack of representative data on real-life worst hotel brands). The use of real brands is supported by the literature and facilitates meaningful results (Tasci & Denizci Guillet, 2016). For Study Two, it was considered to be more realistic to include as many existing brands as possible, even if this meant that brand awareness of these brands existed and potentially impacted upon the results. Based on these limitations, future research is recommended to replicate Study Two on the basis of tailor-made package holidays and/or an inclusion of unknown brands. This would allow for the best possible fit of the presented bundle(s) to a participant's subjective brand perceptions (both negative and positive) and knowledge. However,

such research should be aware of the need to filter out a considerable number of participants, namely those unable to provide brand names across all tourism sectors. Resultingly, the budget to obtain a suitable sample size would have to be higher than the budget available for Study Two.

Similarly to Study One a convenience sample was used throughout Study Two and contains inherent limitations such as participant self-selection (Malhotra & Birks, 2006). However, and as before, the convenience approach was extended by purposive aspects in the form of screening questions concerning participation criteria (living in Germany, adults, propensity to travel abroad and to book a package holiday). Data was collected from subscribed members on the market research platform Prolific all of which fulfilled the participation criteria and were paid for their participation. The possibility of individual participants altering their response behaviour to pass the screening questions in order to earn money exists and needs to be noted. However, sampling via a market research platform has been considered to be more suitable than its alternatives, such as the use of a student sample. Numerous researchers have criticised student samples regarding their inherent threat to external validity and generalisability of findings due to their non-representativeness and unique characteristics affecting study results (Burnett & Dunne, 1986; Calder et al., 1981; Wells, 1993). Due to these limitations, a student sample has not been deemed adequate for Study Two. Future studies might set out to collect data in actual booking situations (e.g., in travel agencies or based on OTA data) or during the vacation experience (e.g., at airports or in hotels).

7.3.3 Overall (Study One and Two)

Concerning the overall thesis, its focus on German samples in both studies is one key limitation. While focusing on a German sample allowed to establish evidence from a source market that has not gained a considerable amount of research attention even though its association with one of highest tourism spendings worldwide (alongside the US and China; UNWTO, 2019), the findings of this thesis are by no means transferrable to other source markets, as travel behaviour and brand equity commonly vary between different markets (Denizci Guillet & Tasci, 2010a; Hartmann & Cao, 2021). Future research should set out to explore and evaluate travel-related CBBE as

well as CBBBE across different source markets. Thereby, a bridge to existing studies in the general intercultural context might be built.

Another all-encompassing limitation was the global Covid-19 pandemic, due to which the tourism industry experienced an unprecedented crisis. Worldwide travel bans and restrictions severely affected the demand and supply side (Cervova & Vavrova, 2021; Hartmann & Cao, 2021; Hartmann et al., 2021; Huang, 2023; Satar et al., 2023). The pandemic started in early 2020, right after data collection of Study One was completed. Study Two was conducted in autumn 2022 after most restrictions were lifted. Existing research confirms the notion that crises of any kind negatively affect tourism demand and might lead to a change in priorities regarding holiday-related choices (Alegre & Sard, 2015). Even though no data was collected during or close to the worst times of the pandemic (such as lockdowns), an influence of the crisis on actual travel behaviour and attitudes towards travel in general cannot be discarded. It is proposed that comparable studies on the role of brands within package holidays are conducted in the future, potentially following a longitudinal approach.

Further, the decision not to include attractions (and their corresponding brands) as attributes of a package holiday is one limitation of this thesis. By prioritising the core attributes of a package holiday, both studies provided valuable insights into the factors that were most likely to influence customer choices regarding package holidays. However, this thesis and its findings can serve as a starting point for future studies to revolve around alternative attributes of package holidays, e.g. attractions and their associated brands, and to explore how these attributes shape the resulting CBBBE and booking intention.

Lastly, both studies were characterised by their disregard of the influence of price, as specific price information was not provided at any point. Instead, participants were requested to assume that all presented package holidays were available for a price within their usual travel budget. However, the price of the bundle has been identified as a key decision criterion in past studies with no specific focus on tourism branding or CBBE (Ainscough, 2006; Chiam et al., 2009; Rewtrakunphaiboon & Oppewal, 2008; Tanford et al., 2012). It is suggested for subsequent studies to bridge the gap between tourism-related CBBE literature and the price criterion. This would allow for

an exploration not only (1) of the influence of specific price information on customers' booking intention concerning multi-branded package holidays, but also (2) if price information can be identified as a part (attribute) of a package, a moderator, or a mediator in this context.

7.3.4 Additional future research potentials

The prior deliberations outlined highly relevant future research potentials based on the limitations of this thesis. However, additional topics emerged from the findings as well as contributions.

First, the novel phenomenon of CBBBE should be transferred to and tested across other types of bundles, for example in service industries, such as consulting or finance, but also in product industries, such as FMCG. Those studies planning to expand CBBBE research in the context of package holidays are suggested to consider not only sun and beach holidays but other travel contexts such as city trips, cruises, or special interest travel. In addition, the focus of the package holiday's creator (tour operator) as well as the fixed nature of packages could be shifted to consumers choosing and booking their own set of tourism services. Such individually created packages might be related to dynamic packaging practices within the online environment (Ayazlar, 2014; Carroll et al., 2007) or prove not to be de facto packages at all as some travellers prefer to book individual tourism services which then constitute their vacation but were not purchased in any bundled form (individual travel). A difference between "real" customised bundles and simple sets of multiple individual tourism services emerges which could be explored with or without a focus on the included tourism sector brands.

Across both studies, the influence of negatively perceived brands emerged to be of utmost importance. Resultingly, it might be worthwhile for future research to explore if negative brand equity exists and how it shapes customers' holiday booking choices in comparison to brand equity. Potential starting points for such research initiatives can be found in the existing literature on brand hate, negative brand relationships, as well as unliked brands (Godfrey et al., 2011; Miller et al., 2012; Veloutsou et al., 2020; Zarantonello et al., 2016).

Regarding tourism-related CBBE research, this thesis's findings in the accommodation sector were surprising: (1) participants of Study One tended to be

undecided about the role of hotel brands within their holiday booking choices, (2) no significant relationship between accommodation CBBE and booking intention regarding package holidays was found. Future research should set out to verify the role of accommodation brands individually as well as within package holidays. In addition, hotel brand aversion emerged as a theme throughout Study One and offers potential to be explored more thoroughly. As brand aversion in general, and thereby the preference of unbranded services in comparison to branded services, only appeared to exist in the accommodation sector, future studies could explore how such aversion is established and the reason for its non-existence in other tourism sectors.

Lastly, this thesis was the first to reflect on SDN and MAUT in the context of multi-branded package holidays. Tourism researchers are advised to extend these reflections to other tourism-related contexts and settings, for example to deliberations of the supply side or actual tourist experiences, as both theories demonstrated high levels of suitability to the overall nature of tourism as well as its underlying processes, services, and networks.

7.4 Concluding remarks

In conclusion, this thesis expands both the general CBBE as well as the tourism branding literature. With its focus on bundles in the form of package holidays it explores a seldomly studied context, which is applicable to both products and services. Specifically, it elucidates the role of tourism sector brands in customers' holiday booking choices and allows for subsequent inter-sector comparisons of brand relevance.

The findings suggest that the influence of different tourism sector brands on the customer's holiday booking choices differs between the individual and bundled context. Regarding package holidays, CBBE is mostly shaped by the transport and accommodation brand, whereas booking intention heavily depends upon the destination brand. In addition, CBBE was found to be positively related to booking intention. Accommodation CBBE did not have a significant relationship with booking intention, calling for further research on that specific sector and relationship.

The adapted measurement tool and subsequent analysis indicates that CBBE results from CBBE of its attributes (i.e., tourism sector brands). An additive evaluation

process (in conjunction with the applicability of MAUT) was revealed with no significant interaction effects between individual attributes. It is recommended that future research in other forms of bundles is completed to verify the findings' applicability across industries and contexts.

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Appendix A: Semi-systematic Literature Review of Tourism-Related CBBE Research - General Study

Information

Overview based on 108 peer-reviewed articles published between 1995 and 2023.

Note^A: D = Destination; M = Method; C = Citations (Scopus as of July 2023)

Note^B: Method codes: qual = Qualitative; quan = Quantitative; mix = Mixed; con = Conceptual/ theoretical; exp = Experimental.

Note^C: Data collection codes: SA = Self-administered survey; IP = In-person interview; O = Online survey; FG = Focus group; T = Telephone interview; D = Delphi; PA = (Consumer) Panel; NP = Non-probabilistic sampling; Q = Quota sampling; CONV = Convenience sampling; R = Random sampling; P = Purposive sampling.

Note^D: Data analysis codes: A = Analysis of means; R = Ranking/preferences; G = Repertory grid; I = Importance-performance analysis; Q = Conjoint analysis; S = Constant sum; F = Factor analysis; T = T-tests; C = Cluster/discriminant analysis; SEM = Structural equation modelling; PLS = Path modelling/ partial least squares; REG = Regression analysis; COR = Correlation analysis; V = Variance analysis; CO = Coding; CONT = Content analysis; QFD = Quality function deployment; E = Euivalence analysis; O = Other

Study	Tourism sector	D ^A	Source market	Vacation context	M ^{A,B}	Data Collection ^C	Sample	Sample Size	Data Analysis ^D	Items incl.	Scale	C ^A	Additional key themes
Abbasi et al. (2022)	Destination	Pakistan	Pakistan, International	-	quan	P, O, SA	tourists/visitors	270	PLS, SEM	yes	5-point Likert	12	social-media based brand equity, communication, satisfaction
Álvarez-García et al. (2020)	Hospitality (Hotel)	Spain	-	-	quan	R, O	consumers	374	F, SEM	yes	5-point Likert	1	purchase intent, satisfaction, recommendations

Bailey & Ball (2006)	Hospitality (Hotel)	U.K.	-	-	qual	SA	experts	11	CO	-	-	101	hotel consultants
Berry (2000)	Hospitality (Hotel), Transport (Airline, Car Rental)	-	-	-	con	-	-	-	CONT	-	-	1008	customer experience, customer trust, interrelations
Bianchi & Pike (2011)	Destination	Australia	Chile	long-haul	quan	O	students, consumers	341	F, COR	yes	7-point Likert	62	attitudinal destination loyalty, previous visitors vs. non-visitors
Bianchi, Pike, & Lings (2014)	Destination	South America (Chile, Brasil, Argentina)	Australia	long-haul	quan	O	consumers	112	T, V, COR, F, SEM, PLS	yes	7-point Likert	120	attitudinal destination loyalty
Boo et al. (2009)	Destination	US (Las Vegas, Atlantic City)	-	-	quan	O	tourists/visitors	510	F, COR, SEM	yes	7-point Likert	441	destination brand model
Cano Guervos et al. (2020)	Destination	Spain	United Kingdom	sun and beach/ cultural/ rural tourism	quan	IP	tourists/visitors	503	SEM	no	7-point Likert	13	geographical context, proximity, spatial spillover-effect, service-dominant Logic
Cervova & Vavrova (2021)	Destination	Croatia	Czech Republic	-	mix	FG, P, O	consumers	451	F	yes	5-point Likert	1	COVID-19 pandemic

Chekalina et al. (2018b)	Destination	Sweden	-	-	mix	IP, O	tourists/visitors	522	F, SEM	yes	5-point Likert	5	destination promise, value-in-use, satisfaction
Chekalina et al. (2018a)	Destination	Sweden (Åre)	Inter-national	-	quan	O	tourists/visitors	1,984	F, SEM, PLS	yes	5-point Likert	58	tourism destination brand equity pyramid, interrelations
Chen & Chang (2008)	Transport (Airline)	Taiwan	-	-	quan	CONV, SA	tourists/visitors	480	F	no	5-point Likert	132	brand preference, switching costs, purchase intention
Chen & Myagmarsuren (2010)	Destination	Mongolia	Inter-national	-	quan	CONV, SA	tourists/visitors	128	F, SEM	yes	5-point Likert	68	tourist satisfaction, interrelations
Chen & Tseng (2010)	Transport (Airline)	Taiwan	Inter-national	-	quan	CONV, SA	tourists/visitors	249	F, SEM	yes	5-point Likert	60	interrelations
Chi et al. (2020)	Destination	Vietnam	Inter-national	-	quan	CONV, IP	tourists/visitors	531	COR, SEM, PLS	yes	7-point Likert	78	travel intention
Cobb-Walgren et al. (1995)	Hospitality (Hotel)	U.S.	-	-	quan	SA	students	90	Q, F, REG	no	7-point	716	consumer preference/utility, usage intention, choice, service-product comparison

Das & Mukherjee (2016)	Destination	India	Inter-national	medical tourism	mix	CONV, IP, O, SA	tourists/visitors	30 (IP); 344 (O); 252 (SA)	F, SEM	yes	7-point Likert	34	authenticity, reliability, trust, value for money, quality of residents
Dedeoğlu et al. (2019)	Destination	Turkey (Alanya)	Domestic, Inter-national	-	quan	CONV, SA, IP	tourists/visitors	478	T, F, SEM	yes	7-point Likert	47	brand trust, brand satisfaction, interrelations
Denizci Guillet & Tasci (2010a)	Attraction (Theme park), Hospitality (Restaurant)	Hong Kong	Western, Asia-Pacific, China	-	quan	R, IP	tourists/visitors, consumers	357 (148 Chinese, 98 Western, 75 Asia-Pacific)	ANOVA	yes	7-point Likert	11	Disney-McDonald's partnership, co-branding (brand alliance), cross-cultural perceptions, customer experience
Denizci Guillet & Tasci (2010b)	Hospitality (Hotel, Restaurant)	Hong Kong	Western, Asia-Pacific, China	-	quan	R, IP	tourists/visitors, consumers	401 (219 Chinese, 131 Western, 51 Asia-Pacific)	ANOVA	no	-	21	co-branding, hotel-restaurant partnerships
Duman et al. (2018)	Destination	Sarajevo	Turkey + Inter-national	-	quan	NP, SA, O	tourists/visitors	286 (Turkey); 193 (International)	F, REG	yes	5-point Likert	19	affective + cognitive factors
Evangelista & Dioko (2011)	Destination	China (Macau)	Inter-national	-	quan	IP	tourists/visitors	979	F, SEM, COR	no	7-point Likert	15	interpersonal influence

Ferns & Walls (2012)	Destination	US (Midwest)	-	pre-trip information search	mix	SA	consumers	195	F, SEM, COR	yes	5-point Likert	111	travel involvement, visit intention, pretrip information search, destination experience
Frías Jamilena et al. (2017)	Destination	Spain	UK	-	quan	Q, IP	tourists/visitors	503	F, SEM	yes	-	66	destination experience (pre trip, on trip, post trip), value-creation
Gartner & Konecnik Ruzzier (2011)	Destination	Slovenia	Germany	-	mix	T	consumers	376	F, SEM, PLS	yes	5-point Likert	133	renewal and repeat market
Gartner (2014)	Destination	-	-	-	con	-	-	-	-	-	-	72	sustainable development
Gómez et al. (2015)	Destination	Spain	-	wine tourism	quan	R, IP	tourists/visitors, experts	598 (tourists); 219 (experts)	SEM, PLS	yes	7-point Likert	117	destination of origin
Guha Roy et al. (2018a)	Destination	India	Inter-national	medical tourism	qual	IP	tourists/visitors	90	CO, CONT	-	-	4	scale development
Guha Roy et al. (2018b)	Destination	India	-	medical tourism	mix	SA	tourists/visitors	270 research papers; 550 (SA); 2000 (SA)	CONT, F, SEM	no	7-point Likert	4	-

Guha Roy et al. (2022)	Destination	India	Inter-national	medical tourism	quan	IP	tourists/visitors	535; 410	F, SEM	no	7-point Likert	1	political, cultural, economic, legal and social influences
Han et al. (2015)	Hospitality (Restaurant)	England, UK	UK	-	quan	CONV, IP, SA	consumers	313	F, SEM	yes	7-point Likert	127	brand reputation, brand trust, visit purpose
Herrero et al. (2017)	Destination	Spain (Cantabria)	Inter-national	-	quan	Q, IP	tourists/visitors	253	SEM	yes	10-point Likert	42	hierarchy of destination brands, country destination image, interrelations, familiarity
Horng et al. (2012)	Destination	Taiwan	Inter-national	culinary tourism	mix	IP, CONV, SA	tourists/visitors, experts	6 (IP), 407 (SA)	A, COR, REG	yes	5-point Likert	201	travel intention, destination familiarity
Hsu et al. (2011)	Hospitality (Hotel)	China (12 major cities)	Domestic + Inter-national	business, leisure	mix	FG, SA	tourists/visitors	18 (FG); 1346 (SA)	F, COR, SEM	yes	7-point Likert	118	upscale hotels, traveller subgroups, brand choice
Hsu et al. (2012)	Hospitality (Restaurant)	Taiwan	Domestic	-	mixed	IP, P, SA	experts (IP), tourists/visitors (SA)	11 (IP), 226 (SA)	QFD, COR	no	-	20	quality function deployment (QFD), preferences

Huang & Cai (2015)	Hospitality (Hotel)	U.S.	China (middle class)	-	quan	IP	consumers	601	F, SEM	no	7-point Likert	70	multinational hotel brands, consumer response, travel motives, travel intent
Huang (2023)	Hospitality (Restaurant)	Taiwan	-	-	quan	-	experts (restaurant managers)	386	SEM	no	7-point Likert	0	COVID-19 pandemic, corporate social responsibility, e-word-of-mouth
Im et al. (2012)	Destination	Korea	Malaysia	-	quan	SA	consumers	326	F, SEM	yes	5-point Likert	138	interrelations
Kam Fung So & King (2010)	Hospitality (Hotel)	Australia	Domestic (55%) + International	-	mix	FG, R, SA, IP	tourists/visitors	288	COR, F, PLS	yes	-	138	internal & external brand management, customer satisfaction, interrelations
Kashif et al. (2015)	Destination	Pakistan (Lahore Fort)	International	-	quan	IP, SA	tourists/visitors	237	COR, R, F, PLS	-	5-point Likert	27	developing country context, interrelations
Kasim & Alfandi (2014)	Destination	Malaysia	Saudi Arabia; United Arab Emirates	-	quan	P, SA	consumers	405	F	no	5-point Likert	5	marketing communication as information source, satisfaction, WOM

Kayaman & Arasli (2007)	Hospitality (Hotel)	Turkey (North Cyprus)	Turkey (48%), International	-	quan	P, SA, IP	tourists/visitors	345	T, F, COR, PLS	yes	5-point Likert	240	5-star hotels, interrelations
Kim & Kim (2004)	Hospitality (Restaurant)	South Korea (Seoul)	South Korea	-	quan	CONV, IP, SA	consumers	394	A, T, REG	yes	7-point Likert	86	firm's performance, quick-service restaurants
Kim & Kim (2005)	Hospitality (Hotel, Restaurant)	South Korea	-	-	quan	SA, IP	tourists/visitors	513 (hotel); 394 (restaurant)	F, REG	yes	7-point Likert	371	luxury hotels, chain restaurants, firm's performance
Kim & Qu (2017)	Destination	South Korea	International	pleasure travel	quan	P, R, O	consumers	563	REG	yes	7-point Likert	12	influence of reference group/s
Kim et al. (2003)	Hospitality (Hotel)	South Korea (Kimpo)	Luxury	-	quan	IP, SA	tourists/visitors, consumers	513	COR, F	yes	7-point Likert	275	financial performance, luxury hotels
Kim et al. (2008)	Hospitality (Hotel)	U.S.	-	-	quan	CONV, SA, IP	tourists/visitors	264	F, V, SEM	yes	7-point Likert	149	midpriced hotels, revisit intention
Kim et al. (2009b)	Destination	South Korea	Japan	-	quan	CONV, SA	consumers	369	F, SEM, V	yes	-	64	involvement, satisfaction, revisit intention, willingness to spend money
Kim et al. (2015)	Destination	Asia (Korea, China, Japan)	Malaysia	Asia inbound tourism	mix	FG, CONV, IP	students (qual), consumers (quan)	326	F, T, A	yes	5-point Likert	55	muslim travel, tour planning, gift giving

Kim et al. (2021)	Hospitality (Hotel)	-	United States of America	-	exp	P, O	consumers	411	V (ANOVA)	yes	7-point Likert	9	branded amenities, ingredient branding
Kladou & Kehagias (2014)	Destination	Rome	Inter-national	Urban/cultural tourism	quan	R, IP	tourists/visitors	382	F, COR, SEM (PLS)	yes	5-point Likert	97	cultural brand assets, revisit intention, recommendation
Kladou et al. (2015)	Destination	-	-	-	con	-	-	64 research papers	CONT	-	-	24	
Konecnik & Gartner (2007)	Destination	Slovenia	Germany + Croatia	-	mix	IP, D (qual) R, T (quan)	consumers (qual, quan), experts (qual)	376 (Germany); 401 (Croatia)	T, V, F, COR, SEM	yes	5-point Likert	478	interrelations
Köseoglu et al. (2019)	Hospitality	-	-	-	con	-	-	-	CONT	-	-	3	researcher's performance
Kotsi et al. (2018)	Destination	Dubai	France + Australia	stopover during long haul travel	quan	O	consumers	365 (France) ; 403 (Australia)	A, T, COR, F, SEM	yes	7-point Likert	37	travel context, previous visitors vs. non-visitors
Lee & Back (2008)	Attraction (Event)	-	-	Conference	quan	O	tourists/visitors	213	F, SEM	yes	7-point Likert	135	attendee behavior, interrelations
Lee & Back (2010)	Attraction (Event)	-	-	Conference	quan	O	tourists/visitors	213 (AC), 208 (RC)	F, SEM	yes	7-point Likert	58	regional and annual conferences
Lin et al. (2015)	Hospitality (Hotel)	China (Zhuhai)	China	-	quan	-	consumers	193	A, REG, COR	-	5-point Likert	n.a.	repurchase intention, upper-class hotels

Liu & Fang (2018)	Attraction (Night Markets)	Taiwan	Inter-national	-	quan	IP	tourists/visitors	348	REG, SEM	no	7-point Likert	12	tourist satisfaction, interrelations
Liu et al. (2015)	Attraction (Museum)	Taiwan	-	-	quan	CONV, SA	tourists/visitors	367	F, SEM	no	5-point Likert	42	interrelations
Liu et al. (2017)	Hospitality (Hotel)	China (Macau)	Asia (89,9%) + Inter-national	-	quan	CONV, SA, IP	tourists/visitors	327	F, REG	yes	7-point Likert	134	luxury hotels, purchase intention, brand attitude, first time vs. repeat guests
Liu et al. (2020)	Hospitality (Hotel)	China	-	-	mix	P, FG, O	experts (hotel executives), staff	925 (experts) ; 1,978 (staff)	F, SEM	yes	7-point Likert	18	hotel executive brand identity, physical facility quality, employee-based brand equity (EBBE)
Liu et al. (2023)	Hospitality (Hotel)	Taiwan	-	-	quan	IP, O	consumers	597 (staff); 399 (consumers)	F, SEM	no	7-point Likert	0	employee perspective, customer engagement, visit intention
Lu et al. (2015)	Hospitality (Restaurant)	-	U.S.	-	quan	PA, O	consumers	228	F, SEM	-	5-point Likert	160	ethnic restaurants, authenticity perception, choice intention, interrelations
Mahadin et al. (2022)	Transport (Airline)	International	United Arab Emirates	-	quan	CONV, SA	tourists/visitors	197	F	yes	5-point Likert	1	advertising, sales promotion, overall brand equity

Manthiou et al. (2014)	Attraction (Festival)	US (Midwest)	-	public festival	quan	SA	tourists/visitors	224	F, SEM	yes	7-point Likert	27	interrelations
Martínez & Nishiyama (2019)	Hospitality (Hotel)	-	Spain	-	quan	CONV, IP	consumers	382	F, V	yes	7-point Likert	47	corporate social responsibility
Nam et al. (2011)	Hospitality (Hotel, Restaurant)	-	U.K.	-	quan	SA	consumers	378	F, COR, T, SEM	yes	7-point Likert	47 2	consumer satisfaction
Namkung & Jang (2013)	Hospitality (Restaurant)	United States of America	-	-	exp	O	tourists/visitors	512	V (ANOVA)	no	7-point Likert	17 3	green practices, restaurant types
Oh & Hsu (2014)	Hospitality (Hotel)	China	Asia, Europe, North America	-	quan	SA	tourists/visitors	1,346 (801 Asia, 148 Europe, 239 North America)	A, COR, E	-	7-point Likert	44	cross-cultural context, upscale hotels
Pike (2007b)	Destination	Australia	Australia (Brisbane)	domestic short break	quan	SA	consumers	523 (2003) + 308 (2007)	COR, R, A	no	7-point Likert	10 7	Destination marketing organizations (DMO), performance measures, brand campaigns, longitudinal designs

Pike (2009)	Destination	Australia	Australia	domestic short break	mix	SA	consumers	523 (2003) + 308 (2007)	CONT, A, F	yes	7-point Likert	236	brand equity tracking, longitudinal designs
Pike (2010)	Destination	Australia	Australia (Brisbane)	short break by car	quan	SA	consumers	523 (2003) + 447 (2007)	A, R	no	7-point Likert	100	brand equity tracking, longitudinal designs, decision set, destination attributes
Pike & Bianchi (2016)	Destination	Australia	New Zealand, Chile	short haul, long haul	quan	O	consumers	858 (New Zealand) ; 845 (Chile)	A, F, COR, REG, SEM	yes	7-point Likert	68	purchase intent
Pike et al. (2010)	Destination	Australia	Chile	long haul	quan	O	students, staff (university)	845	F, REG, SEM	yes	7-point Likert	178	previous visitors vs. non-visitors
Prasad & Dev (2000)	Hospitality (Hotel)	-	U.S.	-	quan	PA (hypothetical)	consumers	-	A, R	-	-	177	hotel chains, satisfaction, return intent, preference, awareness-performance matrix
Rani (2019)	Destination	India	India, International	-	quan	CONV, SA	tourists/visitors	150	F, SEM	no	5-point Likert	4	-

Raza et al. (2020)	Transport (Airline)	International	Pakistan	-	quan	R, SA	tourists/visitors	387	F, SEM	no	7-point Likert	14	turnover intention, consumer citizenship behaviour, customer engagement
Saeed & Shafique (2020)	Destination	Pakistan	International	-	quan	CONV, O	tourists/visitors	153	PLS, SEM	no	5-point Likert	8	intention to select, social media
San Martín et al. (2019)	Destination	Spain	Domestic + International	-	quan	CONV, Q, IP	tourists/visitors	667 (416 domestic, 251 international)	V, SEM, F	yes	10-point Likert	80	tourist satisfaction, interrelations, multi-group analysis
Satar et al. (2023)	Destination	India	-	-	quan	CONV, SA	tourists/visitors	318	PLS, SEM	yes	7-point Likert	1	COVID-19 pandemic, consumer-brand-engagement, consumer-brand-experience, consumer-value cocreation, emotional attachment
Šerić & Gil-Saura (2012)	Hospitality (Hotel)	Croatia (13 hotels in Dalmatia)	International	-	quan	SA	tourists/visitors	101	T, VAR, PLS	yes	5-point Likert	48	high-quality hotels, guest perceptions, integrated marketing communications

Šerić et al. (2014)	Hospitality (Hotel)	Italy (Rome)	Inter-national (incl. Domestic)	-	quan	IP, SA	tourists/visitors	335	F, V, COR, O, SEM	-	5-point Likert	89	advanced technology, integrated marketing communication, interrelations, upscale hotels
Šerić et al. (2016)	Hospitality (Hotel)	Italy (Rome)	Inter-national (incl. Domestic)	-	quan	IP, SA	tourists/visitors	335	F, T, PLS, V	-	5-point Likert	19	perceived information, information and communication technology, upscale hotels, interrelations
Shafaei & Mohamed (2015)	Destination	-	-	Islamic tourism	con	-	-	-	-	-	-	46	muslim travel, involvement, travel motivation
Sijoria et al. (2019)	Hospitality (Hotel)	-	India	-	mix	P, IP, SA, O	tourists/visitors, consumers	572	CO, CONT, F, SEM	yes	5-point Likert	38	e-word-of-mouth, online reviews, satisfaction, trust
Sürücü et al. (2019)	Hospitality (Hotel)	Turkey	-	-	quan	SA	tourists/visitors	918	F, SEM	no	7-point Likert	83	physical quality, employee behavior, satisfaction, trust

Tasci (2016a)	Destination	U.S. (Orlando)	-	-	quan	O	consumers	2,388	F, COR	no	7-point Likert, 10-point Likert	7	consumer value, brand value, perceived price
Tasci (2016b)	Destination	-	-	-	con	-	-	100 research papers	-	-	-	30	consumer value, satisfaction
Tasci (2016c)	Destination	United States of America	United States of America	-	quan	O	consumers	2,353	A	no	10-point Likert	4	additional value of brand names, Crimmins's method, competitor analysis
Tasci (2018)	Destination	U.S. (NY City, Miami, Orlando, Las Vegas, Tampa)	U.S. (95%), Inter-national	-	quan	R, O	consumers, (tourists/visitors)	2,318	A, REG, PLS, VAR	yes	10-point scale	51	customer satisfaction, cross-brand/cross-market validity, consumer value, brand value, interrelations
Tasci (2019)	Destination	U.S. (NY City, Miami, Orlando, Las Vegas, Tampa)	Inter-national (sample 95% U.S.)	-	quan	O	consumers	2418	A, R	yes	10-point scale	8	finance-based brand equity

Tasci & Denizci Guillet (2011)	Hospitality (Hotel, Restaurant)	-	Hong Kong	-	exp	SA	students	46	T, COR	-	7-point Likert	32	co-branding, transfer/spillover effect, familiarity, compatibility, complementarity
Tasci & Denizci Guillet (2016)	Hospitality (Hotel, Restaurant)	Hong Kong	China, International	-	exp	SA	tourists/visitors	519 (259 Chinese, 174 Western, 86 Asia-Pacific)	T, COR	yes	7-point Likert	7	co-branding, retail, brand dominance
Tasci et al. (2018)	Destination, Attraction (Olympic Games)	U.S. (Orlando)	U.S.	sport tourism	quan	R, O	consumers	2401 (1183 sport tourists, 1218 non-sport tourists)	T, REG	yes	7-point Likert, 10-point Likert	14	sport tourists vs. non-sport tourists, visitors vs. non-visitors; Olympic Games
Tran et al. (2019)	Destination	Vietnam (Hoi An)	Vietnam	-	quan	CONV, O	tourists/visitors	319	F, SEM	-	5-point Likert	38	interrelations, developing economy
Tsai et al. (2010)	Attraction (Casino)	China (Macau)	China, Hong Kong, Taiwan	-	quan	CONV	consumers	204	T	yes	7-point Likert	32	firm's performance
Uslu et al. (2013)	Transport (Airline)	-	Turkey, Japan	Turkish Airlines	quan	SA	tourists/visitors	400	F	yes	5-point Likert	n.a.	intercultural perspective

Van-Dúnm et al. (2023)	Attraction (Festival)	Portugal	-	festival tourism	quan	R, SA	tourists/visitors	329	SEM	yes	7-point Likert	0	festivals, antecedents, consequences, intent to revisit, intent to recommend
Vinh et al. (2017)	Destination	Vietnam (Danang City)	South Korea	-	quan	R	tourists/visitors	252	F, SEM	-	5-point Likert	n.a.	interrelations
Wong (2018)	Destination	Malaysia	Inter-national	-	mix	PA (Delphi), NP (quan), SA (quan)	experts (PA), tourists/visitors (quan)	1093	F, SEM	-	5-point Likert	24	destination competitiveness
Wong & Teoh (2015)	Destination	Malaysia	Inter-national	-	quan	SA	tourists/visitors	1,093	F, COR, SEM, PLS	no	5-point Likert	29	brand selection, price selectivity, willingness to pay more
Xu & Chan (2010)	Hospitality (Hotel)	-	-	-	con	-	-	-	-	-	-	177	quality of experience, service performance, advertising, word-of-mouth
Xu et al. (2021)	Destination	China	China	-	quan	R, SA	tourists/visitors	993	F, SEM	yes	5-point Likert	8	tourism area life cycle theory
Yang et al. (2015)	Destination	-	China	Outbound travel	quan	IP, O	tourists/visitors	502	F, SEM	yes	-	58	customer experience, service performance, word-of-mouth, advertising

Yuwo et al. (2013)	Destination	Indonesia (Bandung City)	Domestic (excl. Bandung City), International	-	quan	IP, O	tourists/visitors	400 (incl. 343 domestic)	F, V, A	-	-	n.a.	city branding
Zavattaro et al. (2015)	Destination	U.S. (South)	-	-	qual	P, T	experts	12	CO	-	-	73	destination marketing managers
Zeugner-Roth et al. (2008)	Attraction (Restaurant), Transport (Airline)	Spain, U.S.	Spain	-	mix	FG, SA	students	2 (FG); 322 (SA)	CO (qual), T, A, SEM	yes	7-point Likert	121	home country image, consumer preference

Appendix B: Systematic Literature Review of Tourism-Related CBBE Research - Dimensions

Overview based on 108 peer-reviewed articles published between 1995 and 2023.

Note: The row “prevalence within the literature” summarises the number of articles adopting the corresponding CBBE dimension. In total, 55 CBBE dimensions were identified. Table does not include dimensions represented in less than three studies.

CBBE dimensions		Brand loyalty	Brand awareness	Brand image	Perceived quality	Brand value	Brand quality	Brand associations	Brand salience	Familiarity	Consumer value	Brand satisfaction	Brand resonance	Brand trust	Perceived value	Brand performance	Self-congruence	Staff behaviour/ service	Brand judgements	Brand feelings
Prevalence within the literature		76	68	64	51	22	18	18	10	7	7	7	6	6	5	5	4	4	3	3
Study	Number of dimensions																			
Abbasi et al. (2022)	5	x	x	x	x							x								
Álvarez-García et al. (2020)	5	x		x	x										x					
Bailey & Ball (2006)	5	x	x		x			x												
Berry (2000)	n.a.																			
Bianchi & Pike (2011)	5	x		x		x	x		x											
Bianchi, Pike, & Lings (2014)	5	x				x	x	x	x											
Boo et al. (2009)	5	x	x	x		x	x													
Cano Guervos et al. (2020)	5	x	x	x	x										x					

Cervova & Vavrova (2021)	4	x	x	x			x												
Chekalina et al. (2018b)	6	x	x									x							
Chekalina et al. (2018a)	5	x	x																
Chen & Chang (2008)	4	x	x		x			x											
Chen & Myagmarsuren (2010)	4	x	x	x	x														
Chen & Tseng (2010)	4	x	x	x	x														
Chi et al. (2020)	4	x	x	x	x														
Cobb-Walgren et al. (1995)	3		x		x			x											
Das & Mukherjee (2016)	4	x	x		x														
Dedeoğlu et al. (2019)	6	x	x			x	x					x		x					
Denizci Guillet & Tasci (2010a)	7	x	x	x		x	x							x					
Denizci Guillet & Tasci (2010b)	2		x							x									
Duman et al. (2018)	8			x					x				x			x		x	x
Evangelista & Dioko (2011)	5			x		x								x		x			
Ferns & Walls (2012)	4	x	x	x											x				
Frías Jamilena et al. (2017)	5	x	x	x		x	x												
Gartner & Konecnik Ruzzier (2011)	4	x	x	x	x														
Gartner (2014)	n.a.																		

Gómez et al. (2015)	4	x	x	x											x				
Guha Roy et al. (2018a)	n.a.																		
Guha Roy et al. (2018b)	6	x	x		x			x											
Guha Roy et al. (2022)	5	x	x		x			x											
Han et al. (2015)	5		x					x									x		
Herrero et al. (2017)	4	x	x	x	x														
Horng et al. (2012)	4	x	x	x	x														
Hsu et al. (2011)	6	x	x	x	x														
Hsu et al. (2012)	3		x		x			x											
Huang & Cai (2015)	3		x					x					x						
Huang (2023)	4	x	x	x	x														
Im et al. (2012)	4	x	x	x				x											
Kam Fung So & King (2010)	5		x																
Kashif et al. (2015)	4	x	x	x				x											
Kasim & Alfandi (2014)	2		x	x															
Kayaman & Arasli (2007)	4	x	x	x	x														
Kim & Kim (2004)	4	x	x	x	x														
Kim & Kim (2005)	4	x	x	x	x														
Kim & Qu (2017)	4		x	x		x	x												
Kim et al. (2003)	4	x	x	x	x														
Kim et al. (2008)	3	x	x		x														
Kim et al. (2009b)	6		x			x													
Kim et al. (2015)	4	x	x	x				x											
Kim et al. (2021)	3	x		x	x														
Kladou & Kehagias (2014)	5	x	x				x	x											

Kladou et al. (2015)	n.a.																		
Konecnik & Gartner (2007)	4	x	x	x	x														
Köseoglu et al. (2019)	n.a.																		
Kotsi et al. (2018)	5	x	x	x		x	x												
Lee & Back (2008)	10	x	x			x						x		x			x	x	
Lee & Back (2010)	10	x	x			x						x		x			x	x	
Lin et al. (2015)	4		x	x	x														
Liu & Fang (2018)	4	x	x	x	x														
Liu et al. (2015)	5	x	x	x	x	x													
Liu et al. (2017)	4	x	x	x	x														
Liu et al. (2020)	n.a.																		
Liu et al. (2023)	n.a.																		
Lu et al. (2015)	4	x	x	x	x														
Mahadin et al. (2022)	n.a.																		
Manthiou et al. (2014)	5	x	x	x			x								x				
Martínez & Nishiyama (2019)	4	x	x	x	x														
Nam et al. (2011)	5																x	x	
Namkung & Jang (2013)	3			x	x														
Oh & Hsu (2014)	7	x	x	x	x														
Pike (2007b)	4	x						x	x					x					
Pike (2009)	3	x						x	x										
Pike (2010)	4	x						x	x					x					
Pike & Bianchi (2016)	5	x		x		x	x		x										
Pike et al. (2010)	4	x		x	x				x										
Prasad & Dev (2000)	2		x													x			

Rani (2019)	4	x	x	x	x														
Raza et al. (2020)	3	x	x		x														
Saeed & Shafique (2020)	4	x	x	x			x												
San Martín et al. (2019)	4	x	x	x	x														
Satar et al. (2023)	5	x				x	x	x	x										
Šerić & Gil-Saura (2012)	3	x		x	x														
Šerić et al. (2014)	3	x		x	x														
Šerić et al. (2016)	3	x		x	x														
Shafaei & Mohamed (2015)	n.a.																		
Sijoria et al. (2019)	1																		
Sürücü et al. (2019)	4		x	x														x	
Tasci (2016a)	5			x	x	x				x	x								
Tasci (2016b)	n.a.											x							
Tasci (2016c)	6	x		x		x	x			x	x								
Tasci (2018)	6	x		x		x				x	x	x							
Tasci (2019)	6	x		x	x	x				x	x								
Tasci & Denizci Guillet (2011)	6	x		x	x	x				x	x								
Tasci & Denizci Guillet (2016)	6	x		x	x	x				x	x								
Tasci et al. (2018)	5	x		x	x	x					x								
Tran et al. (2019)	4	x	x	x	x														
Tsai et al. (2010)	4	x	x	x	x														
Uslu et al. (2013)	3	x	x		x			x											
Van-Dúnem et al. (2023)	4	x		x	x				x										
Vinh et al. (2017)	4	x	x	x	x														
Wong (2018)	6													x			x		x

Wong & Teoh (2015)	6												x			x			x	x
Xu & Chan (2010)	n.a.																			
Xu et al. (2021)	6	x	x	x			x							x						
Yang et al. (2015)	4	x	x	x			x													
Yuwo et al. (2013)	4	x	x	x			x													
Zavattaro et al. (2015)	n.a.																			
Zeugner-Roth et al. (2008)	3	x	x		x															

Appendix C: Participant Information Sheet and Consent Form (Study 1)

Participant Information Sheet

Participant Information Sheet

[FOR USE WITH STANDARD PRIVACY NOTICE FOR RESEARCH PARTICIPANTS]

Name of department: Marketing

Title of the study: Research Project Travel Choice

Introduction

This research is being undertaken as a part of a PhD thesis by Kim Hartmann, doctoral student at the University of Strathclyde, Department of Marketing, and associate program director B.A. Tourism & Event Management at the International School of Management (ISM) Munich.

What is the purpose of this research?

The purpose of this investigation is to better understand to which extent tourism brands influence the customer's decision-making process. Different stages of the tourism value chain (e.g. accommodation, transport, tour operators) will be investigated and compared according to the influence of brands within travel choices.

Do you have to take part?

Your participation in this project is voluntary. If you do agree to participate, you can withdraw from participation at any time during the project without comment or penalty. Your decision to participate will in no way impact upon your current or future relationship with ISM International School of Management or with any external bodies. All data gathered will be coded to ensure anonymity.

What will you do in the project?

Your participation will involve an interview alone or in groups. Single interviews will take approximately 40 minutes and group discussions up to 120 minutes. If you prefer one of the mentioned interview situations over the other this will be considered. The interview will be conducted at ISM Munich, Karlstraße 35, 80333 Munich.

Why have you been invited to take part?

Participants from Germany that have prior travel experience and remember their last vacation are invited to join the research project. The participants will be divided into focus groups according to their common travel companion (1) alone or with friends, (2) with partner / spouse, (3) with family.

What are the potential risks to you in taking part?

There are no risks beyond normal day-to-day living associated with your participation in this project.

What information is being collected in the project?

Demographic details will be collected at the beginning of the interview but not traceable back to your person. The interview will be audio recorded and everything said will be transcribed. The transcript will not include personal or identifiable data. Participants can be

asked to participate in the interview and/or to undertake tasks associated with the transcription process. If you prefer one of the mentioned roles this will be considered.

Who will have access to the information?

All comments and responses are anonymous. The names of individual persons are not required in any of the responses. All interviews will be audio recorded. All data will be de-identified, handled with the highest respect of confidentiality and anonymity of the participants. Only the researchers will have access to the information.

Where will the information be stored and how long will it be kept for?

The data will be stored safely and only accessible by the researchers in order to facilitate its analysis and evaluation. It will be stored until the successful completion of the PhD project and subsequent publications. Personal information will only be retained for as long as it is necessary, thus until the interviews are realized.

Thank you for reading this information – please ask any questions if you are unsure about what is written here.

Please also read our [Privacy Notice for Research Participants](#)

What happens next?

Please contact the researcher team to find out more about the project or if you have questions concerning the provided information. If you would like to participate, please send an e-mail to _____. You will then be asked to complete a consent form to confirm your participation.

If you are not interested in participating, we thank you very much for your attention.

If you are interested in the results of this study, the final PhD thesis will be submitted to participants (after official publication) if they signed up for this option throughout the research project.

Researcher contact details:

Kim Hartmann, PhD Student
Department of Marketing
University of Strathclyde
kim.hartmann@strath.ac.uk

Chief Investigator details:

This research was granted ethical approval by the Ethics Committee of the Department of Marketing.

If you have any questions/concerns, during or after the research, or wish to contact an independent person to whom any questions may be directed or further information may be sought from, please contact:

Dr. Samantha Murdy | Senior Lecturer
Director of Undergraduate Programme
Department of Marketing | University of Strathclyde
Stenhouse Wing | Strathclyde Business School | Room 510 | 199 Cathedral Street | Glasgow G4 0QU
Email: samantha.murdy@strath.ac.uk

Consent Form

Name of department: Marketing

Title of the study: Research Project Travel Choice

- I confirm that I have read and understood the Participant Information Sheet for the above project and the researcher has answered any queries to my satisfaction.
- I confirm that I have read and understood the Privacy Notice for Participants in Research Projects and understand how my personal information will be used and what will happen to it (i.e. how it will be stored and for how long).
- I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw from the project at any time, up to the point of completion, without having to give a reason and without any consequences.
- I understand that I can request the withdrawal from the study of some personal information and that whenever possible researchers will comply with my request. This includes the following personal data:
 - audio recordings of interviews that identify me,
 - my personal information from transcripts.
- I understand that anonymised data (i.e., data that do not identify me personally) cannot be withdrawn once they have been included in the study.
- I understand that any information recorded in the research will remain confidential and no information that identifies me will be made publicly available.
- I consent to being a participant in the project.
- I consent to being audio recorded as part of the project.

(PRINT NAME)	
Signature of Participant:	Date:

Appendix D: Demographic Form & Interview Material (Study 1)

Demographic Form

Research Project Travel Choice

Please indicate your gender:

- ☐ Male
- ☐ Female
- ☐ Other: _____
- ☐ I prefer not to answer.

Please insert your age (in years): _____

Please indicate your marital status:

- ☐ Single (never married)
- ☐ Single (divorced, separated, or widowed)
- ☐ De facto / In a relationship
- ☐ Married
- ☐ Other: _____

Please indicate your highest level of education completed (German system):

- ☐ Haupt-/ Realschulabschluss
- ☐ (Fach-)Abitur
- ☐ Bachelor's/ Master's degree
- ☐ Doctoral degree
- ☐ Other: _____

Are you currently studying?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

Who are you most commonly traveling with on holiday?

- ☐ Alone
- ☐ Friends
- ☐ Partner/ Spouse
- ☐ Family (with your parents)
- ☐ Family (with your children)
- ☐ Other: _____

Interview Guideline

1. Travel types / experience – approx. 5 min

1.1 Introduction

„Our discussion will focus on the last vacation you can recall. We want to find out how decisions in travel matters are made, which criteria influence your travel choices, how the overall process is structured, and which considerations play a major role.”

1.2 Types of travel: packaged holidays vs. individual booking

- „Please remember your last holiday. Where did you travel to? With whom?“
- „Do you tend to book bundled travel components (package holiday) or do you combine the individual components (flight, accommodation, tours) on your own?“
- Follow-up: „Why do you prefer ____? How would you explain this?“

2. Brand influence throughout the booking process – approx. 20 min

2.1 Brand questionnaire: Booking relevance of brands along the tourism value chain

„Please remember your last vacation(s), as before. Did the brands of different service providers have an influence on your travel choice? In other words: How important were they for your travel choice? Please complete the questionnaire. Following, we will discuss your answers.“

(Brand questionnaire is handed out and completed, the interviewer offers to answer questions BUT it is crucial that no actual brands are mentioned, results are collected)

- (optional) Follow-up: „Which additional brands are important when you book a holiday? Please add these at the end of the questionnaire.”

2.2 Discussion of the results

- „We now establish a joint ranking of all questioned brands based on their importance for your travel choice.“

(Answers are structured and ranked)

- “The further procedure will focus on the main categories (= usually included in a packaged holiday): travel agency, booking page online/ online travel agency, tour operator, transport, accommodation provider, destination/ country”

Main categories are addressed following these questions (*Blank = insert category*):

- „Why is ____ at ____ position / rank? Can you mention specific reasons for this?“
- „Certainly, you were considering multiple options and offers before booking. Which ____ do you know? Which brands did you come across?“ *(Write down mentioned brands on cards)*
- „Which ____ were worth considering? Which are an absolute ‘no-go’?“ *(Structure cards according to worth considering / no-go)*
- „Why did you choose the ____ you chose? Why not others?“ *(Write down reasons and arguments to deduct criteria defining strong / weak brands for the quantitative phase)*

3. Appeal of different packaged holidays – approx. 10 min

Individual assessment

„Please imagine the following situation: You want to book your next summer vacation. I will now provide you with several travel options including the provider of each travel component. These are e.g., hotel, tour operator, airline etc. Please think carefully about the alternatives and decide which of the package tours you would be most likely to book.“

(exemplary packages are bundled based on the brands mentioned by the participant in part 3.2 (to ensure familiarity with them), individual evaluation)

Choice reasoning

- „You decided to book package ___. Why do you prefer this option? What is attractive about it?“
- “What differentiates this packaged holiday from the alternatives? Which are key differences? What are similarities?”
- Follow-up: „Which group of travellers is likely to book/ consider this package tour?“
(if examples are needed, pictures of traveller stereotypes are displayed, e.g., groups of women/ men, family, couple, pensioners)

4. Conclusion

„Do you want to add something to today’s discussion? Did we forget anything?“

„Thank you very much for your participation. Please leave your contact details in case you want to stay updated about the findings.“

Brand questionnaire

Period of research

Date:

Guidelines

Please remember your last vacation(s). **Did the brands of the different service providers have an influence on your travel choice?** In other words: **How important were they for your travel choice?**

Please complete the relevance of the brand in each category below according to the following scale:

1 = *unimportant* | **2** | **3** | **4** | **5** = *very important*

Please read all categories on the left-hand side before you start your overall evaluation. The results will then be discussed in detail.

The interviewer and research team will be pleased to answer any questions you may have, e.g., if something is unclear. Please do not hesitate to ask them before completing this form.

Criteria

During my travel choice, I consider the **brand** of the following categories as...

	(1) = unimportant	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5) = very important	I don't know.
1. Travel Agency	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
2. Booking page online / Online travel agency	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
3. Tour Operator	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
4. Transport (e.g., airline, railway operator, bus operator)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
5. Accommodation Provider (e.g., hotel, apartment)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
6. Cruise Line / Ferry Company	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
7. Destination / Country	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
8. Attractions or events at the destination	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
9. Mobility (e.g., car rental / sharing)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
10. Insurance Provider	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

11. Which additional brands are important when you book a holiday? Please add below.

Template for exemplary package holidays

Template 1: Collection of mentioned brands (unaided, throughout the interview)

Travel agency	Online travel agency	Tour operator	Transport	Accommodation	Destination

Note: During the interview, brands were labelled as (+) strong / positive association or (-) „No-Go“ / negative association.

Template 2: Creation of exemplary package holidays with 3 tourism sectors

Package No.	Transport	Accommodation	Destination
1			
2			
3			

Instruction on brand allocation in template 2

Package No.	Transport	Accommodation	Destination
1	-	+	+
2	+	-	+
3	+	+	-

Note: Brands result from Template 1. For (+) a strong / positive brand was included, for (-) a „No-Go“ / negative brand was included.

Template 3: Creation of exemplary package holidays with 5 tourism sectors

Package No.	(Online) travel agency	Tour operator	Transport	Accommodation	Destination
1	Expedia.de	alltours			
2	Lastminute.de	TUI			
3	TUI Reisecenter	alltours			

Note: Transport, accommodation and destination were derived from the most popular package holiday from Template 2's options and stayed the same in all three package options. If (online) travel agency or tour operator brands were mentioned in Template 1, they replaced the specified brands in these categories.

Appendix E: Coding Guideline (Study 1)

Category	Subcategory	Magnitude category	Description	Typical example
Brand influence	Individual brands		The influence of brands on the customer's booking intention. It can also be related to importance or relevance of brands when a potential traveller compares different travel options. Brand influence ranges from unimportant (low) to very important (high).	
			One tourism-related service and brand (e.g., flight operated by Lufthansa).	
		Low	Individual tourism sectors where brands play a minor role in the customer's decision-making.	I don't know any tour operators and I really don't care. [B-I1-5]
		High	Individual tourism sectors where brands play a major role in the customer's decision-making.	I prefer to fly with well-known airlines, in this case it was Lufthansa and that was important for me. [B-I3-1]
	Multi-branded bundles		A package of transport, accommodation and possibly other travel services [...] sold as a holiday for an inclusive price (Medlik, 2011) including multiple tourism brands.	
		Low	Bundled tourism services in which certain brands play a minor role in the customer's decision-making.	It doesn't really matter to me because I think it's just the party which organises everything. And then I know exactly [...], I have airline, I have accommodation. And then I don't care who books it. [B-I3-5]
		High	Bundled tourism services in which certain brands play a major role in the customer's decision-making.	Still, I would take the first package to Iceland, because the destination is the deciding factor for me. [B-I1-5]
	Alternative influencing factors		All other factors influencing the customer's booking intention.	Sure, [...] you want it to be neat and clean. But the brand doesn't play such a big role, rather the reviews. [FG2]

Brand aversion	Comments underlining a customer's rejection of brands.	If I go for example to Styria or South Tyrol, I might prefer to make sure that I choose a family-run company [hotel] that does not belong to any brand. [FG1]
CBBE	The value of a brand from the customer's perspective, can be regarded as "the differential effect of brand knowledge on consumer response on the marketing of the brand" (Keller, 1993, p. 2).	
Brand awareness	The ability of a potential buyer to recognise/ recall that a brand is a member of a certain product or service category (Aaker, 1991). Brand awareness ranges from unaware to recognition to recall to top of mind.	I would not book now with any bus company that I have never heard of, as I already know Flixbus. [FG1]
Brand associations	Anything 'linked' in memory to a brand, such as attitudes, benefits, or attributes (Aaker, 1991). Brand associations can be positive as well as negative.	The image that you associate with the country for me is the brand and what image do you associate with the Maldives? Yes, beach and sea, and that's why you go there [...]. [B-I3-4]
Brand loyalty	The attachment that a customer has to a brand (Aaker, 1991). Brand loyalty can relate to the behavioural (past and future choices) as well as the attitudinal (intention to be loyal) approach (Pappu et al., 2005).	As far as flights are concerned, I like Skyscanner best. I don't look anywhere else in the future [...]. For hotels, I always look at Booking. [FG2]
Perceived quality	The customer's judgement (or perception) about a product's or service's overall excellence or superiority (Zeithaml, 1988; Donthu, 2001). The perceived potential to fulfill its purpose in relation to alternative options, and thus, better or worse (Aaker, 1991).	It is a question of safety concerning the airline: when I fly with Ryanair, I have often heard that it is not exactly perfect, but with Lufthansa or Emirates I feel much safer and better. [B-I1-5]
Other propriety brand assets	All assets directly tied to the brand that do not meet the definitions of the other four categories, such as trademarks, patents, or channel relationships (Aaker 1991).	<i>No participant statements matched with this category.</i>

Tourism sectors	The tourism industry's sub-sector of interest.	
	Accommodation	I personally prefer hotel chains, because you can assume that they have their standards and meet them. [B-I1-2]
	Destination	The destination is of course the main feature when I book a trip. First, I think about where I want to go. [B-I3-6]
	Tour operator	All right then, tour operator. Someone is organizing the trip, otherwise you won't get away. [FG3]
	Transport	I am very cautious with airlines because I have a fear of flying and therefore, I book almost only Lufthansa so that I do not panic. [FG1]
	Travel agency	I don't recall any specific travel agency, but, [...] if I would walk past a travel agency and there was a promoted offer "499 EUR to Turkey all inclusive", then I would go in if it were a fixed offer. [B-I2-3]
	Online travel agency	It is simply important that you do not book with whomever, but perhaps reputable or large online portals, because the security is simply greater. [B-I2-4]
	Other	Beforehand, we weren't sure whether it would be Mein Schiff, AIDA or MSC. We chose MSC simply because it was the cheapest with the most suitable travel date. [FG2]
Brands mentioned	Brands the participant unaidedly recalls.	
	Positive	I kind of love Airbnb. [B-I2-3]

Negative	Brands the participant unaidedly recalls and perceives in a negative way.	What doesn't appeal to me is Turkey. Simply because of the whole situation, how it looks there and what they are doing at the moment. [FG2]
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Appendix F: Questionnaire (Study 2)

Exemplary questionnaire for the first experimental condition („All HIGH“).

INTRODUCTION

Dear participant,

this study is being undertaken as a part of a PhD thesis by me, Kim Hartmann, doctoral student at the Department of Marketing, Strathclyde Business School. The purpose of this research project is to better understand travellers' decision-making in relation to package holidays.

Your participation in this research study is voluntary. If you do agree to participate, you can withdraw from participation at any time during the project without comment or penalty. It is important to respond to all statements and that each person responds individually. There are no right or wrong answers, I only ask that you respond honestly and to the best of your knowledge.

The procedure involves filling out an online survey that will take approximately 7 minutes. Your responses will be confidential, and no information that could personally identify you (such as your name, email address or IP address) will be collected. All data is stored in a password protected electronic format. The results of this study will be used for scholarly purposes only.

If you have any questions about this research study, please contact me via e-mail (kim.hartmann@strath.ac.uk). This research was granted ethical approval by the Ethics Committee of the Department of Marketing, Strathclyde Business School.

This study has predefined participation criteria (see below) and includes attention tests. If you do not meet these, you may be excluded from the study.

ELECTRONIC CONSENT: Please select your choice below.

Clicking on the "agree" button below indicates that:

- you have read the above information.
- you voluntarily agree to participate.
- you are at least 18 years of age.
- you live in Germany.
- you generally like to spend your vacation abroad.

If you do not wish to participate in the research study, please decline participation by clicking on the "I disagree." button.

☐ I agree. ☐ I disagree.

*** New Page ***

QUALIFIER

Do you generally like to travel abroad for your holidays?

☐ Yes

☐ No

Did you travel abroad for a vacation in the summer of 2022??

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ Not yet, but I will spend an upcoming vacation abroad this year (2022)
- ☐ No

Please indicate your current country of residence.

- ☐ Germany
- ☐ Other: ____

Who are you most commonly traveling with on holiday?

- ☐ Alone
- ☐ Friends
- ☐ Partner / Spouse
- ☐ Family (with your parents)
- ☐ Family (with your children)
- ☐ Family (with more than two generations)
- ☐ Strangers (e.g., group travel)
- ☐ Other: ____

*** New Page ***

PACKAGE HOLIDAY EVALUATION (start of randomised survey part, this is 1 of 8 options)

Now, please imagine you want to book your next summer holiday within Europe.
Then evaluate the package holiday below.
In doing so, please assume that the price is within your travel budget.

Airline	Hotel	Destination
Lufthansa	Steigenberger	Spain

Please answer the following questions.

	very low 1	2	3	4	5	6	very high 7
The likelihood of booking this package holiday is ...	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
The probability that I would consider booking this package holiday is ...	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Please select option "2" to show that you are paying attention.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
My willingness to book this package holiday is ...	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

*** New Page ***

Again, please imagine you want to book your next summer holiday within Europe.
Then evaluate the package holiday below.
In doing so, please assume that the price is within your travel budget.

Airline	Hotel	Destination
Lufthansa	Steigenberger	Spain

Please answer the following questions.

	very low 1	2	3	4	5	6	very high 7
The price of this package holiday would have to go up quite a bit before I would switch to a different package holiday including other brands.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I am willing to pay a higher price for this package holiday than for different package holidays including other brands.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I am willing to pay a lot more for this package holiday than for different package holidays including other brands.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I can recognize the brands within this package holiday among other competing brands.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I am aware of the brands within this package holiday.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I have heard of the brands within this package holiday.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Some characteristics of the brands within this package holiday come to my mind quickly.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I can quickly recall the symbols or logos of the brands within this package holiday.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
The brands within this package holiday have strong associations.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
The brands within this package holiday have favourable associations.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
It is clear what the brands within this package holiday stand for.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

*** New Page ***

Again, please imagine you want to book your next summer holiday within Europe.
Then evaluate the package holiday below.
In doing so, please assume that the price is within your travel budget.

Airline	Hotel	Destination
Lufthansa	Steigenberger	Spain

Please answer the following questions.

I am willing to pay ____% more for this package holiday over different package holidays including other brands.

Surcharge in percent (%) 0% ----- 100% (Slide Bar)

*** New Page ***

Again, please imagine you want to book your next summer holiday within Europe.
Then evaluate the package holiday below.
In doing so, please assume that the price is within your travel budget.

Airline	Hotel	Destination
Lufthansa	Steigenberger	Spain

Please answer the following questions.

	very low 1	2	3	4	5	6	very high 7
The likely quality of the brands within this package holiday is extremely high.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Please select option "5" to show that you are still paying attention.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
The likelihood that the brands within this package holiday would be functional is very high.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
The brands within this package holiday are good quality.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
The brands within this package holiday have excellent features.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Compared to other brands in their category, the brands within this package holiday are of very high quality.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I consider myself to be loyal to the brands within this package holiday.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
The brands within this package holiday would be my first choice.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

I will not buy other brands if the brands within this package holiday are available for booking.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
It makes sense to buy the brands within this package holiday instead of other brands, even if they are the same.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Even if other brands have the same features as the brands within this package holiday, I would prefer to book this package.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
If there are other brands as good as the brands within this package holiday, I prefer to book this package.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
If other brands are not different from the brands within this package holiday in any way, it seems smarter to book this package.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

*** New Page ***

Lufthansa has favourable associations and offers high quality services.

☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5	☐ 6	☐ 7
I strongly disagree						I strongly agree

Steigenberger has favourable associations and offers high quality services.

☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5	☐ 6	☐ 7
I strongly disagree						I strongly agree

Spain has favourable associations and offers high quality services.

☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5	☐ 6	☐ 7
I strongly disagree						I strongly agree

*** New Page ***

SOCIO-DEMOGRAPHICS

Please indicate your gender.

- ☐ Female
- ☐ Male
- ☐ Other: ____
- ☐ I prefer not to answer.

Please insert your age (in years, no decimals).

____ years

Please indicate your relationship status.

- ☐ Single (never married)
- ☐ Single (divorced or widowed)
- ☐ In a relationship
- ☐ Married
- ☐ Other: ____
- ☐ I prefer not to answer.

Please indicate your highest level of education completed (German system).

- ☐ Secondary school diploma (Hauptschulabschluss)
- ☐ Secondary school diploma (Realschulabschluss)
- ☐ Baccalaureate/ (Fach-)Abitur
- ☐ Bachelor's degree
- ☐ Diploma
- ☐ Master's degree
- ☐ Doctorate / Habilitation
- ☐ Other: ____
- ☐ I prefer not to answer.

Which of the following describes your current occupation? Multiple answers possible.

- ☐ Employed (full-time)
- ☐ Employed (part-time)
- ☐ Self-employed
- ☐ Out of work and looking for work
- ☐ Out of work but not currently looking for work
- ☐ Homemaker
- ☐ Student (incl. full-time, part-time, dual)
- ☐ Retired
- ☐ Unable to work
- ☐ Other: ____

☐ I prefer not to answer.

*** New Page ***

EXIT

Thank you for taking part in this study.

Please click the button below to be redirected to Prolific and to register your submission.