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The missing link in building customer brand identification: The role of brand attractiveness

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HIGHLIGHTS

- Investigates the role of brand attractiveness in developing customer brand identification (CBI).
- Examines a model that includes traditional brand identity building blocks and brand encounter factors.
- Brand prestige, brand distinctiveness, and memorable brand experiences affect CBI indirectly through brand attractiveness.
- The inclusion of brand attractiveness generates results challenging prior research findings on CBI development.
- This study advances theoretical and practical understanding of driving CBI development.

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ABSTRACT

The brand management literature has long acknowledged the strategic importance of managing brand identity. However, prior empirical research has largely ignored brand attractiveness in building such identity in the eyes of consumers. Focusing on the airline industry, this study investigates the role of brand attractiveness in fostering customer brand identification. The empirical testing of the conceptual model suggests that brand prestige, brand distinctiveness, and memorable brand experiences have a significant indirect effect on customer brand identification through brand attractiveness, while brand social benefits contributes directly to such identification. The results also challenge prior literature by providing strong support for including brand attractiveness in identification development. When brand attractiveness is incorporated in the model, the effects of brand prestige, brand distinctiveness, and memorable brand experiences became non-significant in predicting customer brand identification. The findings highlight the importance of projecting a brand identity that is attractive to target consumers in order to achieve customer brand identification.

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1. Introduction

The power of branding is well documented in tourism and hospitality, particularly in the airline industry, a sector that is highly competitive. According to the International Air Transport Association (IATA), about 1300 new airlines have been established in the last 40 years (Cederholm, 2014). While mergers of major U.S. airlines have reduced the number of key players from 11 in 2005 to just six in 2015, airlines based in the Persian Gulf are shaking up the North American market by offering high-quality service at lower prices. In 2014, Emirates, Qatar Airways, and Etihad Airways boosted its number of U.S. flights by 47%, and now serve 11 cities (McCartney, 2014). According to a recent branding report, the most valuable airline brand in 2014 was Emirates, with a brand value of US$6.6 billion, a 21 percent increase over 2013 (Brand Finance, 2015). Such brand proliferation, with new competitors evolving the traditional airline business model, suggests a stronger focus on the brand value proposition is needed for those airlines wanting to remain a viable entity.

A strong airline brand generates positive outcomes in terms of consumers' brand preference and purchase intention (Chen & Chang, 2008). As such, how to create a strong brand has been a

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recent topic of discussion in the literature (Lin, 2015; Voorhees, White, McCall, & Randhawa, 2015). While customer retention tactics, such as frequent flyer programs and other customer loyalty schemes, have been widely used to generate customer loyalty, the effectiveness of these practices has been questioned (Dowling & Uncles, 1997). Some researchers even describe frequent flyer programs as "a failure in competitive strategy" (Kearney, 1990, p. 31). More recently, scholars have suggested that managing the corporate brand identity represents a particularly important aspect of branding for airlines (Balmer, Stuart, & Greyser, 2009), as brand identity helps consumers develop a stronger relationship with the brand through customer brand identification (CBI).

The concept of CBI provides a comprehensive understanding of how customer–brand relationships develop (Bhattacharya & Sen, 2003; He, Li, & Harris, 2012). CBI is defined as a consumer's psychological state of perceiving, feeling, and valuing belongingness with a brand (Lam, Ahearne, Hu, & Schillewaert, 2010, 2013). The brand relationship literature suggests that consumers do not buy brands merely because they work well. People also buy brands because of the meanings the brands add to their lives (Fournier, 1998) and to express their self-concept (Sirgy, 1982). In the broader consumer context, empirical studies indicate that identification with a company or brand increases product use (Kuenzel & Halliday, 2008) and repurchase frequency (Bhattacharya, Rao, & Glynn, 1995). Within hospitality research, recent studies demonstrate that CBI engenders positive consumer evaluation of, and satisfaction with, a hotel brand, ultimately increasing brand loyalty (Nam, Ekinci, & Whyatt, 2011; So, King, Sparks, & Wang, 2013). Tourism research also supports the significant role of identity from the perspective of place (Hallak, Assaker, & Lee, 2015; Pike & Page, 2014; Pritchard & Morgan, 2001), thus emphasizing the broad impact of identification when explaining tourism phenomena.

The marketing literature suggests that the extent to which a consumer identifies with a brand is directly influenced by two categories of factors. The first category includes brand characteristics reflected in the brand's identity, most predominantly brand prestige (e.g., Ahearne, Bhattacharya, & Gruen, 2005; Carlson, Donavan, & Cumiskey, 2009; Stokburger-Sauer, Ratneshwar, & Sen, 2012) and brand distinctiveness (e.g., Carlson et al., 2009; Tian, Bearden, & Hunter, 2001). These factors represent deliberate organizational marketing actions or brand management activities aimed at creating and communicating a favorable identity of the brand. The second category involves factors that are primarily salient through customer-brand interactions including social benefits (e.g., Coulter, Gummerus, Liljander, Weman, & Pihlström, 2012; Gwinner, Gremler, & Bitner, 1998) and memorable brand experiences (e.g., Brakus, Schmitt, & Zarantonello, 2009; Zarantonello & Schmitt, 2013), which represent experiences that customers have with a service brand. Although these factors have received relatively little attention in the context of CBI, they are particularly important in understanding CBI with service brands where the transactions are fundamentally characterized by human interactions.

While the literature tends to support the influence of these factors on CBI, the assumption that these factors are relevant to all consumers may not be entirely reasonable. For example, the prestige of a brand such as Emirates Airlines or the distinctiveness of a brand such as Southwest Airlines may not necessarily lead directly to CBI for all airline consumers. Theoretical reasoning holds that before identifying with the brand, the individual must first perceive it to be attractive (Marin & de Maya, 2013). However, in the competitive airline industry, how to create an attractive brand in such a price-driven industry remains unanswered. Furthermore, although the strong, loyal, and active customer base of Emirates and Southwest Airlines suggests that customers are drawn to certain airline brands, the brand elements that contribute to CBI for these brands are unclear. For CBI to develop, brand attributes, such as brand prestige and distinctiveness, must first be perceived as attractive (Ahearne et al., 2005; Marin & de Maya, 2013). Furthermore, for an experiential brand, such as an airline, perceptions of the brand's ability to provide opportunities for social interaction (benefits) and memorable experiences are also believed to be core attributes that enhances brand attractiveness and subsequent CBI, however empirical evidence to support is currently lacking.

Brand attractiveness is consumers' positive evaluation of the brand's identity in relation to how it helps consumers fulfil their self-definitional needs (Bhattacharya & Sen, 2003; Currás-Pérez, Bigné-Alcañiz, & Alvarado-Herrera, 2009; Mael & Ashforth, 1992). Therefore, brand attractiveness represents a fundamental aspect of the identification process. While prior research tested a conceptual model of CBI that includes brand attractiveness and some of its predictors (Currás-Pérez et al., 2009), the indirect or mediating effect of brand attractiveness was not hypothesized nor empirically evaluated. However, such knowledge can advance theoretical understanding of the role brand attractiveness plays in building CBI, as well as how it interacts with other established CBI-related factors. Furthermore, brand attractiveness insight can also inform practitioner thinking with respect to key drivers that underpin a customer's connection to a brand. Building on previous research (Currás-Pérez et al., 2009; So et al., 2013; Stokburger-Sauer et al., 2012), this study empirically examines the role of brand attractiveness on a customer's identification with an airline brand. On the basis of the above discussion and review, we propose a conceptual model to guide this research (Fig. 1).

2. Literature review

2.1. Customer brand identification

The tourism and hospitality industry has extensively adopted branding strategies to set products and services apart from competitors (Choi & Chu, 2001; So & King, 2010), emphasizing the particular relevance of CBI in examining customer–brand relationships. However, tourism and hospitality scholars have described CBI as "an important but underutilized construct" (Martínez & Rodríguez del Bosque, 2013, p. 91), representing a strong psychological attachment that is potentially enduring and indicative of future behavior (So et al., 2013).

The conceptual root of CBI lies in social identity theory, which holds that the self-concept consists of a personal identity that includes idiosyncratic characteristics such as abilities and interests and a social identity that encompasses salient group classifications (Ashforth & Mael, 1989; Tajfel & Turner, 1985). Identification is essentially a perceptual construct implying identity fit and identity matching, with individuals developing a social identity by classifying themselves and others into social categories (e.g., organizational membership and sport clubs) (Mael & Ashforth, 1992). Identification occurs when an individual sees him- or herself as psychologically intertwined with the characteristics of the group. Social identity theory posits that three components typically constitute identification: A cognitive component (i.e., cognitive awareness of membership), an evaluative component (i.e., positive or negative value connotations attached to membership), and an emotional component (i.e., affective investment in the awareness and evaluations) (Tajfel, 1978). Consistent with this theory, we integrate the multidimensional perspective into our conceptualization of CBI (Lam et al., 2013).

The notion of extending the self-concept is evidenced in Belk's (1988) work, which supports the compelling premise that possessions are a major contributor to, and reflection of, consumers'

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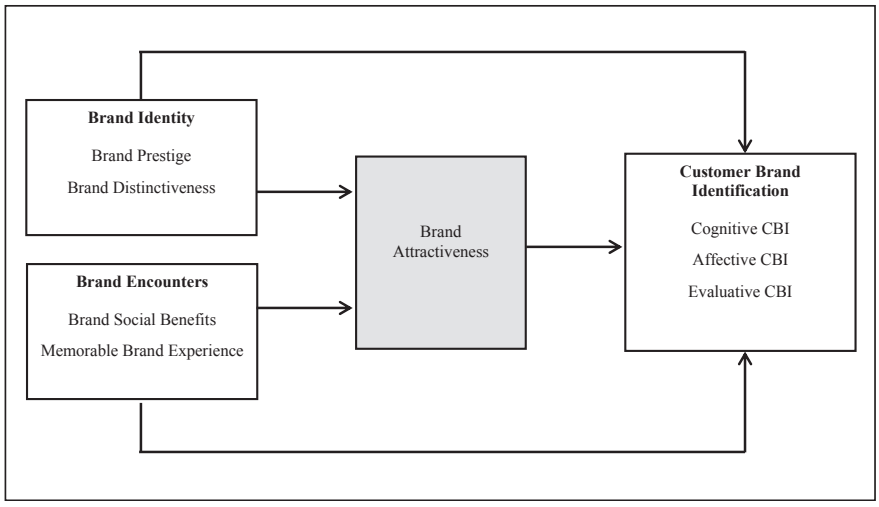

Fig. 1. Proposed conceptual model.

identities. Scholars also posit that strong consumer–company relationships are based on consumers' identification with companies or brands that help them satisfy important self-definitional needs (Bhattacharya & Sen, 2003). Although recent tourism and hospitality studies have integrated the identification concept from a branding perspective (Martínez & Rodríguez del Bosque, 2013; So et al., 2013), brand attractiveness, an important factor that drives such identification, is yet to be examined.

2.2. Brand attractiveness

Previous CBI research found that common antecedents, such as brand prestige, affect CBI directly. However, consumers would identify differently given that prestige, for example, can be perceived differently across groups of consumers. This is because identification is more likely to occur when the customer finds the company or brand to be attractive (Ahearne et al., 2005), and an attractive brand identity could enhance the consumer's self-evaluation (Marin & de Maya, 2013). Thus, a consumer who perceives the identity of a brand to be attractive is more likely to identify with the brand and incorporate that identity. In the consumption of a product or service that is highly visible, such as air travel, brand attractiveness is expected to play a significant role in CBI given the hedonic qualities associated with the enhancement of one's self. When a customer sees the construed external image of a company as attractive, believing that the attributes that distinguish the company are positive and socially valued by relevant others, identification with that company is strengthened (Ahearne et al., 2005). Thus, favorable perceptions of the attractiveness of a brand's identity are likely to lead to stronger identification with that company. On this basis, we propose:

Hypothesis 1. Brand attractiveness is positively related to customer brand identification.

2.3. Brand identity

Brand identity is defined as the distinctive and relatively enduring characteristics of a brand (Balmer & Balmer, 2001; Bhattacharya & Sen, 2003; He et al., 2012), often implying a promise to customers (Ghodeswar, 2008). Brand management authorities have suggested that a brand identity must resonate with customers, differentiate the brand from competitors, and signify what the organization can and will do over time (Aaker & Joachimsthaler, 2000). The branding literature has a tendency to conceptualize brand identity as an internal construct that emanates unilaterally from the organization—what managers want the brand to be—and that requires stability over time (Aaker, 1996; da Silveira, Lages, & Simões, 2013; Kapferer, 2008). When that corporate brand identity is communicated to and interpreted by the consumer, it will create brand meaning or a brand image that customers hold in their mind (Urde, 2013). As such, the key to successful brand-building is to understand how to develop a brand identity – to know what the brand stands for and to effectively express such an identity (Aaker, 1996), thus inducing CBI. While theoretical constructs such as value congruity (e.g., Tuskej, Golob, & Podnar, 2013), self-brand congruity/similarity (e.g., Lam et al., 2013; Stokburger-Sauer et al., 2012), perceived quality (e.g., He & Li, 2011; Lam et al., 2013), and trust (e.g., Keh & Xie, 2009) have been identified as relevant to building a strong and favorable brand identity and, therefore, developing CBI, marketing scholars have concluded that a brand tends to have a strong and attractive identity when the identity is more distinctive and more prestigious (Bhattacharya & Sen, 2003; Dutton, Dukerich, & Harquail, 1994; He et al., 2012; Stokburger-Sauer et al., 2012). Therefore, this study focuses specifically on the two most salient brand identity characteristics: brand prestige and brand distinctiveness.

2.4. Brand prestige

An important driver of brand attractiveness is brand prestige, which is the status or esteem associated with a brand (Stokburger-Sauer et al., 2012). Individuals tend to maintain a positive social identity by affiliating with a prestigious company or brand as such affiliation provides social opportunities and social prestige (Ahearne et al., 2005; Ashforth & Mael, 1989). This thinking is evident in the airline industry in the conspicuous consumption of seat classifications, particularly between business and first class, or airline club membership levels. Identification with a brand that has a prestigious identity enables consumers to view themselves in the reflected glory of the company, enhancing their sense of self-worth and social status (Bhattacharya & Sen, 2003). In turn, such prestige affects the attractiveness of a brand's identity in the eyes of the consumer. Consistent with earlier literature (e.g., Bhattacharya & Sen, 2003; Hwang & Han, 2014), we posit that the more prestigious consumers perceive a company's brand to be, the more

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attractive that identity is to them and the more likely they will identify with the brand. Thus, we propose:

Hypothesis 2. Brand prestige is positively related to brand attractiveness.

Hypothesis 3. Brand prestige is positively related to customer brand identification.

2.5. Brand distinctiveness

Scholars explicitly note that the brand management of tourism services lacks differentiation, creating customer confusion, contradicting the intended function of branding (Bailey & Ball, 2006; Kim, Jin-Sun, & Kim, 2008; So & King, 2010). Brand distinctiveness is a core attribute for tourism brand sustainability, particularly in a highly competitive and fragmented industry such as the airlines. Brand distinctiveness is defined as the perceived uniqueness of a brand's identity (Stokburger-Sauer et al., 2012).

Social identity theory holds that individuals need to distinguish themselves from others in social contexts (Tajfel & Turner, 1985). Similarly, the theory of uniqueness suggests this need as a vital element of people's drive to feel positive about themselves (i.e., self-esteem) (Snyder & Fromkin, 1977). Additionally, the theory of optimal distinctiveness holds that people try to address the tension between their need to be similar to other people and their need to be unique by identifying with groups that satisfy both needs (Brewer, 2003). In the context of consumer behavior, individuals have a need for uniqueness, which is defined as an individual's pursuit of differentness relative to others that is achieved through acquiring, using, and disposing of consumer goods for the purpose of developing and enhancing personal and social identity (Tian et al., 2001). The branding literature has noted that "distinctiveness is an important organizational characteristic from an identity attractiveness perspective" (Bhattacharya & Sen, 2003, p. 80), and thus the more distinctive consumers perceive a company's identity to be on dimensions that they value, the more attractive that identity is to them. Further, the distinctiveness of a brand may be a key precursor to a consumer's desire to identify with that brand (Stokburger-Sauer et al., 2012). Therefore, consumers are more likely to identity with brands with identities that are distinctive from their competitors if the distinctiveness is not perceived as undesirable or negative. On this basis, we propose:

Hypothesis 4. Brand distinctiveness is positively related to brand attractiveness.

Hypothesis 5. Brand distinctiveness is positively related to customer brand identification.

2.6. Brand encounters

The extant literature provides strong support for the relevance of brand prestige and brand distinctiveness in creating a desirable brand identity, which are realized through various brand management practices under the control of the organization. However, in the context of experiential brands such as an airline, the brand's perceived attractiveness is not simply a matter of how the organization portrays itself, but also how consumers perceive their interactions with the brand, whereby the organization serves as a facilitator. For this reason, marketing scholars suggest that to better comprehend the nature of the ties that bind consumers to brands, consideration of consumers' actual interactions or encounters with the brands are meaningful as they are thought to be integral to why consumers identity with some and not others (Fournier, 1998; Stokburger-Sauer et al., 2012; Thompson, Rindfleisch, & Arsel, 2006). The customer engagement literature also suggests that consumers' loyalty toward a service brand can be enhanced not only through the consumption experience, but also through customer engagement or interactions beyond the service encounter (So, King, Sparks, & Wang, 2016). To capture customers' encounter with the service brand and other customers, this study includes two separate theoretical constructs, namely brand social benefits and memorable brand experiences.

2.7. Brand social benefits

Brand social benefits, defined as the social interaction opportunities and gains afforded by a brand (Stokburger-Sauer et al., 2012), represent an important factor in developing CBI, particularly in an airline context. A recent study of airline branding strategies by SimpliFlying, a leading airline branding consultancy, showed that a main objective of social media branding is to build customer–brand relationships and create greater interaction with customers. The marketing literature supports the notion that certain brands provide social benefits in the form of social and cultural meaning (Thompson et al., 2006). Such meanings enable the creation of social reference groups, which offer brands an important source of user imagery associations (e.g., the typical user's demographic and psychographic associations) (Escalas & Bettman, 2003). Social interactions between the customer and the brand as well as interactions between customers bode well for the development of brand loyalty (So et al., 2016) and brand communities, which are structured social relationships among admirers or users of a brand (Muniz & O'Guinn, 2001). As an example, tourists like to interact with others through online travel blogs for self-enhancement via online social connections or to increase social status (Wu & Pearce, 2016). Thus customers who feel that the brand can provide social interaction benefits are more likely to form positive associations, resulting in enhanced brand attractiveness. Similarly, consumers' perception that a brand provides social benefits leads to identification with the brand of interest (Stokburger-Sauer et al., 2012). Therefore, we propose:

Hypothesis 6. Brand social benefits are positively related to brand attractiveness.

Hypothesis 7. Brand social benefits are positively related to customer brand identification.

2.8. Memorable brand experience

In addition to the aforementioned antecedents, in a tourism context, memorable brand experiences are an extremely important contributor to CBI given the central role the service encounter plays in a customer's evaluation of the brand (e.g., Grace & O'Cass, 2004). Empirical research supports the importance of creating a memorable tourism or destination experience (Hudson & Ritchie, 2009; Kim & Ritchie, 2014; Kim, Ritchie, & McCormick, 2010). The marketing literature has conceptualized brand experiences as "subjective, internal consumer responses (sensations, feelings, and cognitions) and behavioral responses evoked by brand-related stimuli that are part of a brand's design and identity, packaging, communications, and environments" (Brakus et al., 2009, p. 53). Such responses are not homogeneous, as some brand experiences occur spontaneously without much reflection and are short-lived while others occur more deliberately and last longer (Brakus et al., 2009). Some brands do not occupy a salient position in memory even with frequent use, while others, even when used infrequently, can leave an indelible, affectively charged memory,

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allowing the consumer to relive the positive experience periodically (Stokburger-Sauer et al., 2012). Given the significant role that service encounters play in shaping customers' perceptions (Grace & O'Cass, 2004; So & King, 2010), previous customer experiences with the airline are expected to influence the perceived attractiveness of the brand. Further, brands that offer memorable experiences are more likely to lead to individuals' intertwining of brand-related and self-related thoughts (Davis, 1979), thus contributing to CBI (Stokburger-Sauer et al., 2012). Therefore, on this basis, we propose:

Hypothesis 8. Memorable brand experiences are positively related to brand attractiveness.

Hypothesis 9. Memorable brand experiences are positively related to customer brand identification.

The above discussion suggests that, from a conceptual perspective, brand attractiveness is proposed to be a result of brand management actions undertaken by the organization including portraying brand prestige and brand distinctiveness, as well as co-produced encounters with the brand including customer-brand interactions that create brand social benefits and memorable brand experiences. The attractiveness of the brand's identity in turn leads to CBI. Thus, we propose:

Hypothesis 10. (a) Brand prestige, (b) brand distinctiveness, (c) brand social benefits, and (d) memorable brand experiences have an indirect effect on customer brand identification.

Next, we describe the research design, data collection procedure, and the measurement instrument adopted for this study.

3. Method

To test our hypotheses, we adopted a quantitative method comprising an online survey questionnaire measuring customers' perceptions of airline brands.

3.1. Procedure

The examination of the proposed conceptual model was part of a larger study examining airline brand management. To access research data, a sample was drawn from a reputable online consumer panel of over 500,000 members managed by a privacy law-compliant market list company in Australia. As this study focused on the examination of airline brands, only individuals who had traveled by air domestically and/or internationally in the past 12 months were qualified to participate in the survey.

Quota sampling was employed to obtain a sample size of 600 respondents, with equal representation of males and females. Each respondent received an invitational e-mail with a click-through survey link. Upon agreement to participate, respondents received detailed information about the research. They were subsequently asked to indicate an airline brand that they had recently used, and then, using a 7-point Likert scale, to indicate the extent to which they agreed or disagreed with the items with respect to the identified brand. In addition, it is important to note that in survey research, haphazard responses, lack of attention to details, or skipping instructions introduces random errors to the data, reduces the power of the analyses, and may increase the probability of making a Type II error. Therefore, we included two attention-checking questions. Further, as this study uses a single method for data collection, we controlled for common method variance by adopting both procedural and statistical remedies (Podsakoff, MacKenzie, & Podsakoff, 2012). Procedural remedies included dispersing similar items throughout the questionnaire via randomization and avoiding common scale attributes by using a combination of anchor labels and scale types (i.e., semantic differential scale and Likert scale) (MacKenzie & Podsakoff, 2012). Statistical remedies are discussed in the results section.

As an incentive, participating respondents were entered into a drawing for a shopping gift card. A two-week data collection period resulted in completion of 1108 surveys. Careful preliminary screening of the data eliminated 506 cases owing to incomplete responses, a completion time below 5 min, or selection of an incorrect response to an attention check item, thus ensuring the quality of the data (Meade & Craig, 2012). A final sample of 602 respondents remained for subsequent analysis. As a forced-response option was used, the data set contained no missing values. In determining the minimum sample size, we used the power analysis proposed by MacCallum, Browne, and Sugawara (1996), whereby the null and alternative root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA), degrees of freedom of the final measurement model, and alpha level and desired power are used to calculate a minimum sample size (Preacher & Coffman, 2006). This computation yielded a minimum sample size of 97 for the proposed model. Therefore, our final sample of 602 cases well exceeded the required minimum sample size.

3.2. Survey instrument

A comprehensive review of previous research on CBI and its antecedents and consequences resulted in identification of numerous scales that had been validated in the marketing and tourism literature. The use of previously validated scales ensured reliability and validity of the measurement.

Specifically, three items from Stokburger-Sauer et al. (2012) measured brand prestige while three items were adapted from Currás-Pérez et al. (2009) to measure brand distinctiveness. In addition, four brand social benefits items were borrowed from Stokburger-Sauer et al. (2012). To measure memorable brand experiences, three items were adapted from Stokburger-Sauer et al. (2012), while three items borrowed from Currás-Pérez et al. (2009) measured brand attractiveness. Unlike most previous brand identification studies (e.g., Kim, Han, & Park, 2001; Stokburger-Sauer et al., 2012), which treat CBI as a unidimensional construct, we adopted a multidimensional approach to conceptualizing CBI (e.g., Bagozzi, Bergami, Marzocchi, & Morandin, 2012; Lam et al., 2013) and measured three distinctive dimensions—cognitive, affective, and evaluative—to capture the full conceptual domain of the CBI concept. Two items, originating with Bagozzi and Dholakia (2006) and Bergami and Bagozzi (2000), were adopted from Lam et al. (2013) to measure cognitive CBI, while two items borrowed from Bagozzi et al. (2012) and Bagozzi and Lee (2002) measured affective CBI. Two items developed by Crocker and Luhtanen (1990) were adapted from Bagozzi et al. (2012) and Dholakia, Bagozzi, and Pearo (2004) to measure the evaluative dimension of CBI. Consistent with these authors, we treated the three dimensions as reflective indicators of CBI.

4. Results

Table 1 presents the demographic characteristics of the sample. Approximately 61.3% of the respondents were female and 59.6% were between age 30 and 60, with 29.7% over age 60 and 10.7% under 30. Annual income levels varied, with 22.3% of the sample earning under AUD$20,000, 35.2% earning between AUD$20,000 and AUD$50,000, and 42.5% earning over AUD$50,000. In terms of the highest education level achieved, 23.4% of the respondents had undergraduate degrees, 14.8% had postgraduate degrees, 37.3% held other types of tertiary qualifications, 23.4% were high-school qualified, and 1% had completed primary school. Qantas was the

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Table 1
Descriptive summary of participants.

Sociodemographic variable	n	%
Age (n = 512)		
18–29	55	10.74%
30–39	84	16.41%
40–49	94	18.36%
50–59	117	22.85%
≥60	162	31.64%
Gender (n = 512)		
Male	198	38.7%
Female	314	61.3%
Annual income (n = 512)		
Less than AU$20,000	114	22.27%
AU$20,001 - AU$50,000	180	35.16%
AU$50,001 - AU$80,000	120	23.44%
More than AU$80,000	98	19.14%
Education (n = 512)		
Primary school	5	0.98%
High school	120	23.44%
TAFE - other	102	19.92%
Diploma	89	17.38%
Undergraduate degree	120	23.44%
Postgraduate degree	76	14.84%

number one airline that respondents said they were considering when completing the questionnaire (33%), followed by Jetstar (22%), Virgin Blue (19%), and Singapore Airlines (8%). The remaining 18% indicated other airlines such as Delta Air Lines, Air New Zealand, Cathay Pacific, British Airways, and Emirates. As the indicated airline brands included a combination of full-service and low-cost airlines from both Australia and other countries, the sample was deemed appropriate for this study.

In addition to using the procedural remedies for common method variance, statistical analyses were also employed. We used a confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) to examine whether a single factor accounted for all of the variance in the data (e.g., Baldauf, Cravens, Diamantopoulos, & Zeugner-Roth, 2009; Mossholder, Bennett, Kemery, & Wesolowski, 1998). The analysis was conducted in a CFA with all 22 items loading onto a single common factor. Using a Satorra-Bentler scaled chi-square difference test (Muthén & Muthén, 2005), we compared the results of the common factor model with the CFA results of the proposed measurement model. The results show that the proposed measurement model fits significantly better than the common factor model ($\Delta\chi^2 = 2334.522$, $df = 28$, $p < 0.001$). The results of the analysis indicate that common method variance was not a major issue in this study.

The collected data were analyzed through structural equation modeling (SEM), with an initial examination of the measurement model followed by testing the hypothesized structural relationships contained in the conceptual model (Anderson & Gerbing, 1988). In addition, analysis tested the indirect effects of the four predictors on CBI, all using Mplus 7.11. The main advantage of Mplus lies in its offering of a wide choice of models, algorithms, and estimators, including robust estimators such as Maximum Likelihood Robust (MLR) or Satorra-Bentler's Maximum Likelihood Mean Adjusted (MLM), which are appropriate for data that do not meet the assumption of multivariate normality (Muthén & Muthén, 2012).

4.1. Measurement model

To assess the measurement model, we conducted a CFA with all nine measured constructs being modeled as correlated first-order factors. As our preliminary analysis suggested that the data did not follow a multivariate normal distribution, we tested the measurement model using the MLM estimator in Mplus. Unlike the standard maximum likelihood estimation implemented in AMOS, MLM is a maximum likelihood estimator that provides robust standard errors and mean-adjusted χ^2 test statistic that are equivalent to Satorra-Bentler (SB) χ^2 and standard errors produced in EQS (Bentler, 2005), making it efficient in dealing with non-normal data. The global fit statistics presented in Table 2 indicate a good model fit, with $\chi^2 = 431.112$, $df = 181$, $\chi^2/df = 2.38$, $p < 0.05$, comparative fit index (CFI) = 0.98, Tucker-Lewis index (TLI) = 0.97, standardized root mean square residual (SRMR) = 0.028, and RMSEA = 0.048 with 90% C.I. = [0.042, 0.054] and PCLOSE = 0.715.

As Table 1 indicates, standardized factor loadings for all 22 items were above 0.70 (Hair, Black, Babin, Anderson, & Tatham, 2006) and the critical ratios for all factor loadings were greater than 2.57 (Netemeyer, Bearden, & Sharma, 2003), providing support for convergent validity.

We tested discriminant validity of the constructs in two ways. First, we compared the squared correlations of the factors with the average variance extracted for each of the factors (Fornell & Larcker, 1981). As Table 3 shows, the average variance extracted for each factor is greater than its squared correlations with other factors, providing support for discriminant validity. Second, we tested whether the correlation between constructs is significantly less than one (Anderson & Gerbing, 1988; Bagozzi & Heatherton, 1994). The results of this analysis show that all 95% confidence intervals do not include 1.0, discriminant validity is further supported (Anderson & Gerbing, 1988).

All eight factors achieved the recommended level of construct reliability (i.e., $\alpha > 0.7$) (Hair et al., 2006). The AVEs of these factors also exceeded the 0.5 cut-off (Fornell & Larcker, 1981), demonstrating sufficient indicator reliability. Overall, results of the measurement model indicate that the scales were reliable and valid measures of their respective constructs.

4.2. Structural model

To test the hypotheses, the proposed structural model was estimated using MLM in Mplus. To control for the possibility that age, gender, and length of relationship with the brand affected the reported scores of brand attractiveness and CBI, we tested the hypothesized model with and without control variables. As the pattern of results was largely similar and none of these variables was significant in the analysis, we report the findings of the model without control variables (Becker, 2005; Carlson & Wu, 2011). The results indicate that goodness-of-fit statistics were overall above the satisfactory level, with $\chi^2 = 444.962$, $df = 191$, $\chi^2/df = 2.33$, $p < 0.05$, CFI = 0.98, TLI = 0.97, SRMR = 0.029, and RMSEA = 0.047 with 90% C. I. = [0.041, 0.053] and PCLOSE = 0.802, demonstrating a good fit for the hypothesized model. The critical ratios of the structural paths were examined for hypothesis testing. The results suggested that brand prestige (H2: $\beta = 0.317$, $t = 5.371$, $p < 0.001$), brand distinctiveness (H4: $\beta = 0.303$, $t = 4.626$, $p < 0.001$), and memorable brand experiences (H8: $\beta = 0.321$, $t = 5.53$, $p < 0.001$) significantly predict brand attractiveness, collectively explaining 73.8% of its variance. Brand social benefits (H6: $= \beta -0.002$, $t = -0.048$, $p = 0.962$) was not statistically significant in predicting brand attractiveness. In addition, brand social benefits (H7: $\beta = 0.413$, $t = 6.546$, $p < 0.001$), and brand attractiveness (H1: $\beta = 0.291$, $t = 3.784$, $p < 0.001$) significantly predict CBI. However, brand prestige (H3: $\beta = 0.097$, $t = 1.509$, $p = 0.131$), brand distinctiveness (H5: $\beta = 0.087$, $t = 1.377$, $p = 0.169$), and memorable brand experience (H9: $\beta = 0.074$, $t = 0.999$, $p = 0.318$) were non-significant in predicting CBI. Collectively, the model accounts for

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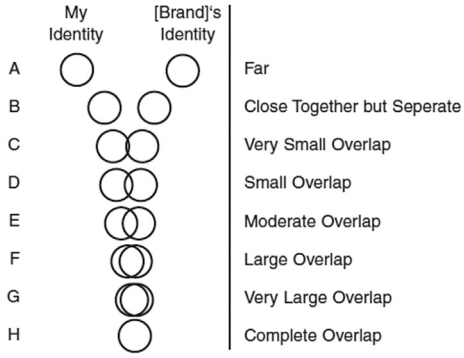
Table 2
Results of the measurement model.

Construct and item	M (SD)	SL	C.R.	Rho	AVE
Brand prestige (BPRE)				0.92	0.80
BPRE1. [Insert brand name] is very prestigious.	4.38 (1.44)	0.87	55.37		
BPRE2. [Insert brand name] is one of the best brands of airlines.	5.03 (1.36)	0.90	82.52		
BPRE3. [Insert brand name] is a first-class, high-quality brand.	4.81 (1.49)	0.92	100.45		
Brand distinctiveness (BDIST)				0.93	0.81
BDIST1. [Insert brand name] is different from the other brands in the airline sector.	4.67 (1.27)	0.89	58.73		
BDIST2. [Insert brand name] is different from the rest of its competitors.	4.70 (1.30)	0.90	78.92		
BDIST3. [Insert brand name] stands out from its competitors.	4.91 (1.31)	0.90	88.99		
Brand social benefits (BSB)				0.90	0.69
BSB1. [Insert brand name] offers me the opportunity to socialize.	3.79 (1.34)	0.75	27.99		
BSB2. I feel a sense of kinship with other people who fly with [Insert brand name].	3.96 (1.50)	0.87	60.51		
BSB3. I gain a lot from interactions with other customers/users of [Insert brand name].	3.66 (1.34)	0.79	39.40		
BSB4. Being a customer of [Insert brand name] makes me feel like I belong to a special group.	4.04 (1.50)	0.90	79.62		
Memorable brand experiences (MBE)				0.92	0.80
MBE1. I have had a lot of memorable experiences with [Insert brand name].	4.69 (1.37)	0.85	46.22		
MBE2. Thinking of [Insert brand name] brings back good memories.	4.81 (1.35)	0.92	92.01		
MBE3. I have fond memories of [Insert brand name].	4.78 (1.37)	0.91	76.26		
Brand attractiveness (BA)				0.95	0.85
BA1. I like what [Insert brand name] represents.	5.25 (1.18)	0.94	111.07		
BA2. I think that [Insert brand name] is an attractive brand.	5.29 (1.21)	0.91	79.79		
BA3. I like what [Insert brand name] embodies.	5.13 (1.16)	0.92	79.55		
Cognitive customer brand identification (CCBI)				0.84	0.72
CCBI1. We sometimes identify with a brand. This occurs when we perceive a great amount of overlap between our ideas about who we are as a person and what we stand for (i.e., our self-identity) and of whom this brand is and what it stands for (i.e., the brand's identity). Imagine that the circle at the left in each row represents your own personal identity and the other circle, at the right, represents [Insert brand name]'s identity. Please indicate which case (A, B, C, D, E, F, G, or H) best describes the level of overlap between your identity and [Insert brand name]'s identity. (Select the Appropriate Letter)	3.55 (1.76)	0.79	35.25		
CCBI2. To what extent does your own sense of who you are (i.e., your personal identity) overlap with your sense of what [Insert brand name] represents (i.e., [Insert brand name]'s identity)? Completely different 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Completely similar	3.80 (1.45)	0.90	55.12		
Affective customer brand identification (ACBI)				0.94	0.89
ACBI1. How attached are you to [Insert brand name]? Not at all attached 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Attached very much	4.24 (1.66)	0.93	84.07		
ACBI2. How strong would you say your feelings of belongingness are towards [Insert brand name]? Not at all strong 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Very strong	4.16 (1.63)	0.96	154.94		
Evaluative customer brand identification (ECBI)				0.90	0.82
ECBI1. I am a valuable customer of [Insert brand name].	4.25 (1.53)	0.93	57.57		
ECBI2. I am an important customer of [Insert brand name].	3.86 (1.56)	0.88	51.73		



Note: $\chi^2 = 431.112$, df = 181, $\chi^2/df = 2.38$, $p < 0.05$; CFI = 0.98; TLI = 0.97; SRMR = 0.028; RMSEA = 0.048 with 90 Percent C. I. = [0.042, 0.054] and PCLOSE = 0.715; M = mean; SD = standard deviation; SL = standardized loading; C.R. = critical ratio; Rho = composite reliability; and AVE = average variance extracted.

74.4% of the variance in CBI, indicating the predictive quality of the model. Table 4 presents the results. In addition, Fig. 2 provides a graphical depiction of the hypothesized theoretical model.

4.3. Testing for indirect effects

The hypothesized model suggests that brand attractiveness transmits the effect of the four CBI antecedents on CBI, implying mediation (MacKinnon, Fairchild, & Fritz, 2007). However, as our study adopts a cross-sectional design which does not involve time precedence in measurement of the presumed causes, mediators, and outcomes, we use the term indirect effect instead of mediation (Kline, 2015). Analyses were conducted to test the indirect effects of brand prestige, brand distinctiveness, brand social benefits, and memorable brand experience on CBI through brand attractiveness. The results presented in Table 4 show that brand prestige (H10a: $\beta = 0.092$, $t = 2.977$, $p < 0.01$), brand distinctiveness (H10b: $\beta = 0.088$, $t = 2.850$, $p < 0.01$), and memorable brand experience (H10d: $\beta = 0.094$, $t = 3.340$, $p < 0.01$) had a significant indirect effect on CBI, while the indirect effect of brand social benefits was not significant (H10c: $\beta = -0.001$, $t = -0.048$, $p = 0.962$).

Conventional methods of significance testing for indirect effects

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Table 3
Discriminant validity analysis from CFA.

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
1. BPRE	**0.80**							
2. BDIST	0.65	**0.81**						
3. BSB	0.47	0.46	**0.69**					
4. MBE	0.58	0.48	0.63	**0.80**				
5. BA	0.65	0.61	0.46	0.59	**0.85**			
6. CCBI	0.35	0.31	0.40	0.36	0.39	**0.72**		
7. ACBI	0.47	0.44	0.51	0.49	0.49	0.59	**0.89**	
8. ECBI	0.33	0.35	0.43	0.36	0.38	0.37	0.48	**0.82**

Note: BPRE = brand prestige; BDIST = brand distinctiveness; BSB = brand social benefits; MBE = memorable brand experiences; BA = brand attractiveness; CCBI = cognitive customer brand identification; ACBI = affective customer brand identification; ECBI = evaluative customer brand identification; the bold diagonal elements are the variance shared between the constructs and their measures. Off diagonal elements are the squared correlations between constructs.

assume a normal distribution of the product term in the population (Preacher & Hayes, 2004), which is often violated, leading to biased or unreliable results (MacKinnon, Lockwood, & Williams, 2004). Research examining different methods for testing indirect effects has resulted in the use of asymmetric confidence intervals derived from bootstrapping being recommended (MacKinnon, 2008; MacKinnon et al., 2004). The bias-corrected bootstrap method has proved to be the best method for generating confidence intervals for statistical inference in mediation analysis (MacKinnon et al., 2004). Therefore, we used this method to further examine the indirect effects of the four proposed theoretical constructs on CBI. As the use of estimator MLM does not provide a bootstrap option we used the normal maximum likelihood procedure. The results of the bootstrap analysis based on 1000 draws indicate that three antecedents, including brand prestige (H10a: 90% C. I. for indirect effect [0.021, 0.155]), brand distinctiveness (H10b: 90% C. I.

Table 4
Standardized structural estimates and tests of hypotheses.

Structural path	Standardized coefficient	Critical ratio	Conclusion
Direct effects			
Brand attractiveness → customer brand identification (H1)	0.291***	3.784	Supported
Brand prestige → brand attractiveness (H2)	0.317***	5.371	Supported
Brand prestige → customer brand identification (H3)	0.097	1.509	Not supported
Brand distinctiveness → brand attractiveness (H4)	0.303***	4.626	Supported
Brand distinctiveness → customer brand identification (H5)	0.087	1.377	Not supported
Brand social benefits → brand attractiveness (H6)	−0.002	−0.048	Not supported
Brand social benefits → customer brand identification (H7)	0.413***	6.546	Supported
Memorable brand experiences → brand attractiveness (H8)	0.321***	5.530	Supported
Memorable brand experiences → customer brand identification (H9)	0.074	0.999	Not supported
Indirect effects			
Brand prestige → customer brand identification (H10a)	0.092**	2.977	Supported
Brand distinctiveness → customer brand identification (H10b)	0.088**	2.850	Supported
Brand social benefits → customer brand identification (H10c)	−0.001	−0.048	Not supported
Memorable brand experiences → customer brand identification (H10d)	0.094**	3.340	Supported
R^2			
Brand attractiveness: 0.738 (73.8%)			
Customer brand identification: 0.744 (74.4%)			
Fit statistics: $\chi^2 = 444.962$, $df = 191$, $\chi^2/df = 2.33$, $p < 0.05$, CFI = 0.98, TLI = 0.97, SRMR = 0.029, and RMSEA = 0.047			

Note: ***$p < 0.001$, **$p < 0.01$, *$p < 0.05$.

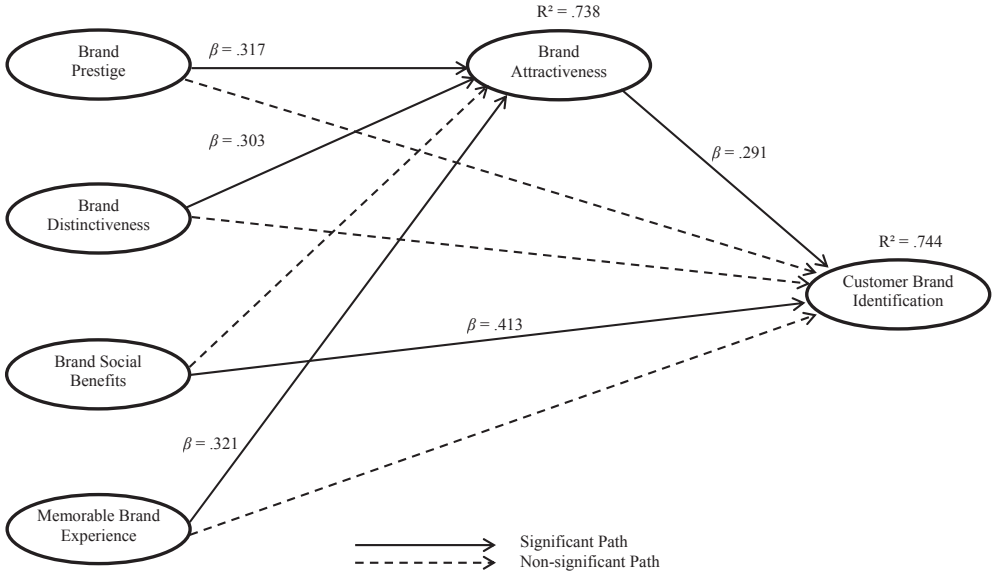

Fig. 2. Results for the final structural model.

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for indirect effect [0.019, 0.126]), and memorable brand experiences (H10e: 90% C. I. for indirect effect [0.027, 0.137]) have a significant indirect effect on CBI. Therefore, further evidence is provided in support of H10a, H10b, and H10d.

4.4. Additional analysis

To further illustrate the critical importance of brand attractiveness in the development of CBI, we compared models with and without brand attractiveness with other components contained in the model being held constant. The results showed that when excluding brand attractiveness and only modeling the four antecedents as direct predictors of CBI, all four constructs were significant in predicting CBI. However, in the model that included brand attractiveness as a partial linking variable, three of the four well established antecedents became non-significant, suggesting that the results changed substantially after including brand attractiveness in the model. Therefore, the results provide strong evidence in support of the need for incorporating brand attractiveness in developing CBI.

5. Discussion

Extensive prior research supports the importance of CBI in building strong and loyal consumer–brand relationships (Bhattacharya & Sen, 2003; He et al., 2012). Extending a recent study conducted by Stokburger-Sauer et al. (2012), the present study proposed and empirically tested a conceptual model of CBI formation that explicitly considers brand attractiveness and contributes to the literature on CBI by simultaneously testing its direct and indirect predictors. In doing so, both theoretical and practical implications are derived.

5.1. Theoretical implications

Our results indicate that CBI antecedents such as brand prestige, brand distinctiveness, and memorable experiences directly enhance customer brand attractiveness. Consistent with previous research (e.g., Stokburger-Sauer et al., 2012), the perceived status or esteem associated with an airline brand enhances customers' evaluation of a brand's attractiveness. Consumption of brands that are considered highly attractive offers additional benefits to customers, such as maintaining social prestige or positive social identity. Brand distinctiveness was also found to make the brand's identity more attractive, as consumption of unique brands allows consumers to distinguish themselves from others in social contexts (Tajfel & Turner, 1985), thus increasing the desire to identify with that brand. Furthermore, the extent to which brand experiences are memorable also informs the perceived attractiveness of the brand. Results showed that memorable brand experiences formed the most important predictor of brand attractiveness, suggesting that while brand identity characteristics primarily constructed through external communications (e.g., brand prestige, brand distinctiveness) enhance brand attractiveness, memorable brand experiences play a more influential role in forming consumers' perceptions of the attractiveness of the airline brand's identity. This finding reinforces the well-established thinking of Berry (2000) that for service brands, “regardless of how well the brand is presented, nothing will salvage a weak brand experience”. Such finding is also consistent with empirical research that highlights the critical role of the customer's experience in building a strong service brand (So & King, 2010; King & Grace, 2008, p. 36). Overall, the results suggest that brand attractiveness is not only a viable construct in airline brand management but also, given the significance of its direct and intermediary effect on CBI, a necessary construct for understanding how customers develop a connection to the brand.

Contrary to our expectations, brand social benefits did not significantly predict brand attractiveness. However, the directional path from brand social benefits to CBI was significant. Providing opportunities for consumers to engage in social interactions with other consumers through online or offline brand communities (Muniz & O'Guinn, 2001) can help consumers identify with the brand. Virgin Atlantic Airways has experienced success with this tactic, launching Vtravelled in 2009, a social media platform whereby customers moderate the conversation and exchange information, stories, and advice. While the site may lead to some sales, its main benefit lies in its ability to reinforce the brand's commitment to its customers, gather new customer insights, and provide customers with social benefits associated with the brand (Barwise & Meehan, 2010).

Compared to other antecedents examined in this study, social benefits are not considered as brand-identifying characteristics, as they are not a core attribute that defines what the brand is and what it provides. Since social benefits do not contribute to the brand's identity, the results of this study suggest they are not considered when assessing the attractiveness of the brand. However as social benefits are facilitated through the customer's association with the brand, they are still considered to be extremely important in defining the customers' relationship with the brand given that their positive impact manifests in strengthening the individual's connection or identification with the brand.

While previous research on CBI tends to emphasize its traditional antecedents as direct predictors (Stokburger-Sauer et al., 2012) as well as outcomes of CBI (He et al., 2012), the concept of brand attractiveness has received little attention in empirical research. Our findings show that brand attractiveness significantly influences the consumer's development of CBI with an airline brand—a finding consistent with the argument that when a customer perceives the construed external image of a company as attractive, the customer is more likely to identify with that company (Ahearne et al., 2005; Marin & de Maya, 2013).

Prior research has predominantly treated CBI antecedents as direct predictors of the outcome variable. Our study proposes that in addition to having direct effects, these antecedents also exert an indirect influence on CBI through brand attractiveness. Our results show that brand prestige, brand distinctiveness, and memorable brand experiences have a significant indirect effect on CBI through brand attractiveness, indicating the linking role of brand attractiveness in these relationships. This finding extends knowledge of CBI by highlighting the importance of creating and maintaining a brand identity that is attractive to target consumers in order to realize CBI.

While previous research provided an important contribution to the literature by testing potential drivers of CBI, our study, building on earlier work (Stokburger-Sauer et al., 2012), examined how several important drivers perform with and without the inclusion of brand attractiveness in the overall theoretical model. Consistent with previous studies, our results indicated that in the absence of brand attractiveness, all traditional antecedents were shown to significantly affect CBI. However, with the inclusion of the brand attractiveness construct, our results show that of the four antecedents tested only one remained significant. These important findings provide evidence that a more complete understanding of CBI formation requires consideration of the customer's perception of the attractiveness of the brand. With previous empirical research consistently asserting the positive outcomes associated with CBI, including enhanced brand evaluations (So et al., 2013), increased product use (Kuenzel & Halliday, 2008), and greater repurchase frequency (Bhattacharya et al., 1995), understanding how that

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identification forms as a result of perceived brand attractiveness is important.

5.2. Practical implications

From a practical point of view, this study reinforces the need for brand managers to be cognizant of the impact that creating a brand identity that reflects prestige, distinctiveness, and delivers memorable brand experiences has on consumer behavior. In an industry that has often competed on the basis of price, the results of this study illuminate why airline brands, such as Emirates and Southwest Airlines, consistently outperform their competitors. Both brands exemplify prestigious and distinctive identities that manifest in memorable experiences which are in distinct contrast to other airlines that provide the same level of functional utility. To this end, it is anticipated that the results of this study provide direction to brand managers of all airlines who seek to build a loyal consumer base.

Specifically, the significant effect of brand distinctiveness suggests that, in building CBI, airline companies need to create a unique and clear identity that targeted customer segments desire. Such a distinct identity allows a sustainable differentiation of the offering (Baumgarth & Schmidt, 2010) and enhances the attractiveness of the brand. External brand communications focusing on the brand's visibility and reputation can increase the prestige of the brand, enhancing brand identification (Kuenzel & Halliday, 2008).

The results of this research suggest that in attempting to generate CBI, airline brand managers need to understand their customer groups' preferences with respect to characteristics of the brand's identity, so that attractive elements of the identity can be communicated or projected. Furthermore, airline brands need to also create memorable experiences by, for example, developing product offerings, creating policies and procedures, designing service delivery systems, and rewarding and empowering staff. In addition, by training and marketing internally to service employees they are able to create superior, special, and emotional consumption experiences for the customer, which bodes well for CBI. Therefore, from a practical perspective, the fundamental finding of this study suggests that inducing CBI requires consideration of both external and internal brand management aspects to ensure that the brand is perceived as attractive, thereby driving consumer preference.

6. Limitations and future research

Several limitations are inherent in this study. First, the study's cross-sectional design yields results that imply predictive relationships rather than causality. Second, although self-generated validity is more commonly found in studies adopting intention measures (Fitzsimons & Morwitz, 1996; Morwitz & Fitzsimons, 2004; Morwitz, Johnson, & Schmittlein, 1993), the use of a self-reported survey instrument could lead to reactive effects of measurement that potentially affect the validity of the results (see also Chandon, Morwitz, & Reinartz, 2005). Third, as the study was limited to Australian travelers, some caution is necessary when generalizing the results to other populations. Fourth, as the study sample included a relatively high percentage of respondents over the age of 60, the sample may not be completely representative of the wider population. Similarly, the use of a quota sampling approach may also affect the generalizability of the results. Finally, although the results indicated sound psychometric properties of the measurement scale, the use of a survey may introduce measurement error into the research data, which could also affect the results of this study.

A number of possible areas for future research can be identified. First, a longitudinal research design could formally test the time-ordering effect of the relationships contained in the proposed theoretical model—for example, investigating how traditional CBI antecedents measured in time one affect brand attractiveness measured in time two, which in turn determines CBI measured in time three. Such an approach could reduce the potential of common method variance and allow a stronger argument for causal inference based on the study results. Second, because this study specifically examined airlines as the sample product, to further validate the influence of the antecedents on CBI, particularly the linking role of brand attractiveness, future research could examine other hospitality and tourism sectors such as hotels, restaurants, and destinations to provide a better understanding of the extent to which the relationships may differ depending on the study context. Third, future studies could extend to consumers of different nationalities and cultural backgrounds to determine whether the antecedents of CBI would exert a drastically different influence on brand attractiveness and CBI in other populations and cultural settings. Fourth, as this study found that memorable brand experiences represent an important factor determining the attractiveness of the brand, future research could use a qualitative approach to examine how such an experience is formed and what characteristics constitute a memorable experience from the consumer's perspective. Fifth, future research could also apply complexity theory (Woodside, 2014; Woodside, Prentice, & Larsen, 2015; Wu, Yeh, & Woodside, 2014) to systematically model contrarian cases and multiple realities. For example, analysis can be conducted using cases with high brand social benefits but low CBI and/or cases with low brand social benefits but high CBI. Also, as our study findings are based on symmetrical modeling, future studies could adopt Boolean-based asymmetric analytics (Ragin, 2008) to solve the symmetric analytic problems (Wu et al., 2014). While the use of null hypothesis significance testing and symmetrical testing in this study represents an important first step that is required to empirically examine the overall relationships contained in the proposed theoretical model proposed, future research could apply complexity theory to examine a similar model in order to deepen our understanding of the nature of these relationships. Furthermore, while previous research has provided evidence in support of the significant outcomes of CBI, future studies could also incorporate into the present framework some relational outcomes variables, such as brand relationship quality (e.g., customer satisfaction, trust, and commitment) (Hollebeek, 2011; Hultman, Skarmeas, Oghazi, & Beheshti, 2015), as well as actual behavioral outcome measures, such as purchase behavior or brand use frequency. Empirical research testing the influence of brand attractiveness on CBI and these outcome variables could provide meaningful insight into hospitality and tourism literature and practice.

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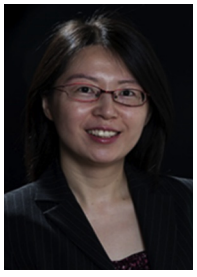

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