Article

The effect of self-congruity and motivation on consumer-based destination brand equity

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Abstract

Achieving destination appeal and a competitive edge is a priority aim of tourist destination managers. The objective of this study is to help explain the formation of brand equity as a competitive strategy for a tourist destination. A model is proposed, in which complementary variables—internal to the consumer—are taken as antecedents of brand equity, namely, motivation to visit a destination and self-congruity. In achieving this aim, the work responds to key gaps in the literature: the measurement of the effectiveness of destination brand equity as a competitive strategy, the need for greater knowledge regarding the antecedents of destination brand equity, the broadening of the application of the theory of self-congruity in tourism, and the importance of tourist motivation in the consumer's evaluation of a destination's brand. The work finds that both determinants exert an effect on brand equity, albeit in distinct ways: motivation is essential in attracting clients to the destination, while self-congruity is vital for retaining them. The study presents a number of implications of interest to the professional sector.

Keywords

Brand equity, theory of self-congruity, tourist destination, tourist travel motivation

Introduction

Intense competition between tourist destinations calls for destination managers to implement marketing strategies capable of increasing competitiveness. Pike and Page (2014) suggest that the essential goal of all destination marketing organizations is sustained destination competitiveness, and that to attain this requires the cultivation of resources that can create competitive advantage (Zehrer et al., 2016). One of the most important resources is that of brand building for the destination.

Brand management has long been identified as a fundamental component of the marketing mix (Bastos and Levy, 2012), but it was only in the late 1990s that tourist destination branding began to feature in academic research publications (Dosen et al., 1998).

Destination brand management has become a widely used marketing tool in tourism markets thanks to growing competition, similarity of products and the substitution effect in this sector. Many destinations continue to promote similar attributes in their advertising, such as beautiful landscapes, golden sandy beaches, blue seas, and attractive locations (Ekinci et al., 2008; Murphy et al., 2007). Yet for a destination to be chosen by a tourist, it must differentiate itself and stand out as unique in some way (Qu et al., 2011).

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Branding seeks to differentiate a firm's goods and services from those of its competitors by creating a unique proposition that can be communicated effectively via planned marketing activities (Gnoth, 2002).

> It is proposed in the branding literature that the model of consumer-based brand equity (CBBE), developed by Aaker (1991; 1996) and Keller (1993; 2003), offers destination marketers a performance instrument with which to evaluate and measure consumer perceptions of a destination brand. (Pike and Bianchi, 2013: 4)

It is within this context that the measurement of the effectiveness of destination brand equity is attracting increasing interest in the tourism field (Boo et al., 2009; Lee and Back, 2008; Pike et al., 2010; Stojanovic et al., 2018).

However, this issue is lacking in theory to evaluate the applicability of consumer-based brand equity (CBBE) in the tourism context (e.g. Boo et al., 2009; Gartner and Konečnik-Ruzzier, 2011; Pike et al., 2010, Šerić et al., 2017; Tasci, 2016).

Research is also necessary to examine the possible antecedents that could be further developed to improve tourist destination CBBE. The tourism literature has tended to focus on dealing with questions regarding what, when, where, and how tourists make their purchases, while paying little attention to *why* they buy (Sirgy and Su, 2000). This may be due, on the one hand, to the complexity involved in understanding how tourists evaluate a destination brand (Boo et al., 2009), or, on the other hand, to cultural and social changes, and the diversification of desires and reasons among consumers when selecting a destination (Aktaş et al., 2018; Zağralı and Akbaba, 2015). Hence, there is a need to further advance the literature on consumer-based destination brand equity (CBDBE), analyzing the effect of possible antecedents that help in understanding tourist behavior. As exceptions are the works of Ferns and Walls (2012) and Fatemeh (2017) which proposes a model that considers the effect of travel involvement on the brand equity of a tourist destination.

Ekinci and Hosany (2006) suggest using the personality of a destination as the basis for building its brand, to understand visitors' perceptions of that destination and to create a unique identity as a touristic location. Taking this approach, the organizations responsible for destinations can focus marketing campaigns on the latter's distinctive personalities. In this regard, many studies have demonstrated the relevance of the theory

of self-congruity and the need to broaden its application to the tourism sphere (Beerli et al., 2007; Boksberger et al., 2011).

A further variable of marked significance in the tourist behavior literature is that of motivation. It is essential that marketing decision-makers understand the motives that lead tourists to select certain accommodation options or destinations over others (Fodness, 1994; Gee et al., 1984). Identifying these motivations is fundamental as they exert a major influence on the tourist's selection process for a destination and their behavior once there (Esper and Rateike, 2010; Moreno-Gil and Martín-Santana, 2013). However, the search to identify these motivations is not straightforward because tourist behavior is influenced by a great many variables and motivations (Mansfeld, 1992) that operate simultaneously (Baloglu and Uysal, 1996).

Very few works have addressed the question of how tourist motivations affect their evaluation of tourism brands and, ultimately, CBDBE. The majority of authors have focused on examining the effect of certain tourist motives on certain dimensions of CBDBE rather than on the construct itself, such as on destination image (Baloglu and McCleary, 1999), on loyalty (Yoon and Uysal, 2005), and on perceived value (Prebensen et al., 2013).

Therefore, the aim of the present research is to expand the literature on CBDBE and its antecedents, by analyzing the effect of two internal variables—considered fundamental and complementary in consumer behavior—on CBDBE. The study proposes and validates a model that captures how the tourist's motivation to visit a particular destination (measured via its different dimensions) and their self-congruity (both present and ideal) contribute to building CBDBE. One of the main contributions of the work is that it fully addresses all of the constructs analyzed. It is more typical, given the complexity of the dimensions concerned, to test the relationships between these constructs only partially, for specific dimensions.

Other contributions made by the present study respond to some of the gaps in the literature regarding the measurement of the effectiveness of CBBE in tourist destinations, the extent of the application of self-congruity theory in tourism, and the importance of tourists' motivations in their evaluation of destination brands (as motivations shape tourists' decisions when selecting destinations).

The relevance of CBDBE in a tourism operating environment that is ever more competitive

calls for destination managers to be given guidance as regards those elements that make the strongest contribution to improving CBDBE. Such guidance needs to take into account, in particular, the specific nature of a destination—its unique characteristics—and how to take full advantage of these using the appropriate promotional tools.

Literature review

Consumer-based destination brand equity

In the marketing literature, brand equity is a fundamental, basic concept in brand management (Aaker, 1991; Stojanovic et al., 2018). One of the most widespread applications of the brand equity concept is its use as a measurement of brand performance. One variation on this concept—beyond the business context and more directly relevant to the case of tourist destinations—is that of CBBE, proposed by Aaker (1991, 1996) and Keller (1993, 2003).

According to Keller (1993), CBBE can be conceptualized as ' . . . the differential effect of brand knowledge on consumer response to the marketing of the brand' (p. 2).

Most research on CBDBE measurement identifies the following dimensions: (a) brand awareness, (b) brand quality, (c) brand image, and (d) brand loyalty. Some authors add a further dimension, perceived value (Table 1A in Appendix 1 sets out the various studies that have used the different dimensions).

Brand awareness is a reflection of the extent of the brand's presence in the mind of the target audience, along a continuum (Aaker, 1996). Awareness is a key element of brand equity, as, without it, brand value cannot be generated or increased (Gartner and Konečnik-Ruzzier, 2011). In the tourism context, consumers must first know of a place, in some context, before they can begin to think of it as a potential destination (Gartner and Konečnik-Ruzzier, 2011). Awareness thus plays an important role in the traveler's destination choice (Chon 1992; Um and Crompton, 1990) and is an important dimension of CBDBE.

Of all these dimensions explored in the academic literature, brand image is the most extensively studied (Gartner and Konečnik-Ruzzier, 2011). Brand image has also been identified as an important source of brand equity (Keller, 2003; Lassar et al., 1995) and has been defined as the reasoned or emotional perceptions

consumers attach to specific brands (Dobni and Zinkhan, 1990; Keller, 2003). A destination's brand image is therefore considered to be an important dimension of its brand equity.

Meanwhile, brand quality has been used interchangeably with consumer perceived quality (Aaker, 1991; Zeithaml, 1988). Perceived quality is defined as the 'perception of the overall quality or superiority of a product or service relative to relevant alternatives and with respect to its intended purpose' (Keller, 2003: 238). In conceptualizing a destination brand equity model, perceived quality is one of the constructs most frequently used by tourism researchers.

Aaker defines brand loyalty as 'the attachment a customer has to a brand' (Pike and Bianchi, 2013: 3). At the heart of brand management is the ability to create customer loyalty (Boo et al., 2009). While it is essential to attract new customers, retaining existing customers is also a fundamental goal of brand management—as well as being less costly than expanding the customer base (Reichheld et al., 2000). Both Keller (2003) and Aaker (1991) positioned brand loyalty as the primary source of customer-based brand equity.

A number of authors have used brand loyalty as a dimension of destination brand equity. Yet despite the fact that loyalty constitutes an important research area in tourism (Baloglu, 2001, 2002; Nininen and Riley, 2003), no consensus has been reached as to the definition of destination brand loyalty within the concept of destination brand equity (Boo et al., 2009). Brand loyalty is typically regarded as a composite measure that covers both the behavioral and attitudinal dimensions of loyalty (Boo et al., 2009; Pike, 2010; Qu et al., 2011). In the present study, attitudinal loyalty of brand equity, rather than behavioral brand loyalty, is conceptualized to reflect consumer perceptions, consistent with CBDBE theory (Im et al., 2012).

McDougall and Levesque assert that the perceived value of a service comprises 'the results or benefits customers receive in relation to total costs (which include the price paid plus other costs associated with the purchase)' (McDougall and Levesque, 2000: 394). Zeithaml and Bitner (2000) find that perceived value is an overall evaluation of a service's utility, based on customers' perceptions of what is received, at what price. Elsewhere in the literature, destination brand value is considered a principal dimension of brand equity (Boo et al., 2009).

The effect of self-congruity on CBDBE

Taking a person's self-concept or self-image to refer to 'all of the individual's thoughts and feelings about themselves as an object' (Rosenberg, 1979: 7), self-congruity may be defined as 'the combination or degree of alignment between the image of the product/brand and the self-concept of the consumer' (Sirgy, 1985). The relationship between congruity and self-concept has been explained via the theory of self-congruity (Sirgy, 1986), which proposes that the consumer's behavior is determined by the congruity that derives from a psychological comparison between the image they have of the product/service/destination and their self-concept.

There have been found to be four types of self-congruity: actual self-congruity, ideal self-congruity, social self-congruity, and ideal social self-congruity (Sirgy, 1985). Of these, actual and ideal self-congruity are the most commonly used expressions of self-concept in consumer studies in marketing and tourism. As actual-self and ideal-self have found the most empirical support in the research to date (Hosany and Martín, 2012), these dimensions are taken as the basis for the present study.

Few studies center on the theoretical development of self-congruity. Among the few that do is that of Litvin and Goh (2002), who assert that self-congruity is a valid theory within the tourism context. Elsewhere, Sirgy and Su (2000) propose a model that integrates self-congruity and functional congruity to explain and predict travel behavior. Of those works that provide empirical applications are those that relate self-congruity to pretravel variables such as visit motivation and destination choice (Ahn et al., 2013; Beerli et al., 2007; Litvin and Goh, 2002) and those that relate it to post-purchase variables such as satisfaction, revisit intention, and recommendation intention (Liu et al., 2012; Usakli and Baloglu, 2011). Elsewhere, Hosany and Martín (2012) jointly investigate the relationship between self-congruity, travelers' experience, satisfaction, and recommendation intention (see Table 1).

Building on previous studies, and in line with the work of Aaker (1996), it is worth highlighting that the main feature of self-congruity is that the consumer prefers brands whose personality is congruent with their own. Therefore, it is to be expected that the closer the match between the personality of the destination and the tourist's self-concept, the more positive their evaluation of that destination brand. The following hypothesis is thus proposed:

H1: Self-congruity exerts a positive influence on CBDBE.

In view of the findings of the extant literature, identifying that self-congruity affects not only the overall measure of CBDBE but also its respective dimensions, the research question underpinning the present study examines which of those dimensions are the *most* influenced by this determinant. The aim is to guide destination managers on the most efficient way to improve each of the dimensions of CBDBE.

RQ1: On which dimensions of CBDBE does self-congruity exert the greatest effect?

The effect of motivation on CBDBE

From the consumer behavior perspective, motives are the reasons that lead to purchasing behavior (Assael, 1984); and, once activated, they become true motivations (Kagan, 1972). In contrast to the classical attitudinal models of consumer behavior (e.g. Ajzen and Fishbein, 1980), Bagozzi (1992), defends the need to include "motivation to achieve an aim" as a mediator in the relationship between attitudes and behaviors, rendering this motivation a principal antecedent of consumption behavior in Self-Regulation Theory. In the tourism sphere, motivations are the basis on which an individual feels predisposed to make a trip; and the need to travel generates the motivation to travel (Kozak, 2002). There is extensive literature addressing tourists' motivation from a conceptual perspective (Gee et al., 1984; Jafari, 1989; Middleton, 1990), which seeks to identify the reasons behind their behavior. Some studies have endeavored to probe tourists' travel motivations. Among the most widely discussed motives in the literature are those proposed by Gray (1979), who differentiates between *wanderlust* and *sunlust*, those of Crompton (1979), who identified *push* and *pull* motives, and, more recently, those proposed by Fodness (1994): (1) search for knowledge, related to experiences of other cultures and visits to places of historical interest; (2) utilitarian function, linked to the idea of escaping from routine and stress; (3) social function, related to interaction with others and building interpersonal relations; and (4) self-expression and enhancement of the ego.

Table 1. Studies on self-congruity in tourism.

Authors	Dimensions of self-congruity	Type of scale	Dependent variables
Empirical applications			
Chon (1992)	Actual self-congruity; ideal self-congruity	Likert-type scale	Satisfaction
Litvin and Kar (2004)	Actual self-congruity; ideal self-congruity	Likert-type scale	Satisfaction
Kastenholz (2004)	Actual self-congruity	Semantic differential	Recommendation intention; revisit intention
Beerli et al. (2007)	Actual self-congruity; ideal self-congruity	Semantic differential	Destination choice
Murphy et al. (2007)	Actual self-congruity; ideal self-congruity; social auto-congruity; ideal social auto-congruity	Likert-type scale	Visit intention/satisfaction with the destination
Usakli and Baloglu (2011)	Actual self-congruity; ideal self-congruity	Likert-type scale	Recommendation intention; revisit intention
Liu et al. (2012)	Actual self-congruity; ideal self-congruity	Likert-type scale	Destination loyalty (first visit vs. repeat visits)
Hosany and Martín (2012)	Actual self-congruity; ideal self-congruity	Semantic differential	Experience of the destination/ satisfaction/ Recommendation intention
Ahn et al. (2013)	Actual self-congruity; ideal self-congruity	Likert-type scale	Destination choice
Theoretical studies			
Litvin and Goh (2002)	Assert that self-congruity is a valid theory for the tourism sector		
Sirgy and Su (2000)	Propose a model that integrates self-congruity with functional congruity to explain and predict travel behavior		

Source: Own elaboration.

Several authors have noted the importance of marketing leaders understanding the motivations that lead tourists to make their decisions when it comes to selecting accommodation or destinations (Fodness, 1994; Sangpikul, 2008; Van der Merwe et al., 2011). A number of studies on travel destinations have indicated a clear influence of motivation on destination image (Esper and Rateike, 2010; Khan et al., 2017) or on the affective component of destination image (Baloglu, 1997; San Martín and Rodríguez del Bosque, 2008).

With regard to loyalty, Yoon and Uysal (2005) examined the relationships between several *push* and *pull* travel motivations, on the one hand, and satisfaction with, and loyalty toward, the destination, on the other hand. They found that push motivations exerted a positive and significant effect on destination loyalty. Later, Schofield and Thompson (2007) obtained similar results between push motivations and destination revisit intention.

Other works have focused on the effect of motivations on perceived value. Yoon and Uysal (2005) indicate that motivation is the driving force behind all behaviors and that it directly affects the tourist's overall evaluation of the destination. Elsewhere, Prebensen et al. (2013) found that *push* motivations had a direct, positive and significant effect on the perceived value of the destination and an indirect effect via tourist involvement. Along similar lines, Mahatoo (1989) demonstrated that the greater the association between the consumer's perceptions of a given brand and his or her motivations, the greater the likelihood they would prefer that brand over others. Similarly, Ponnam (2011) asserts that consumers prefer those brands that are more closely related to their motives, demonstrating that consumer motivations are a major antecedent of CBBE. Therefore, it is to be expected that the effect of motivation can be observed in CBDBE.

On this premise, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H2: Tourist motivations exert a positive influence on CBDBE.

According to the present literature review, then, tourist motivations exert an effect not only on the CBDBE construct but also on its

dimensions. The second research question of this study therefore seeks to analyze the dimensions on which motivation has the greatest impact. The aim here is to assist destination managers in identifying the most efficient way of improving them.

RQ2: On which of the dimensions of CBDBE do tourist motivations exert the greatest effect?

Methodology

Spain is considered one of the most significant tourist destinations worldwide, based on the volume of tourists visiting from other countries (UNWTO, 2015), and also one of the most representative. British tourists constitute the largest market for Spanish tourism (Frontur, 2015), hence the present study uses a target population of British tourists who are in Spain to undertake a tourism activity.

The sample was obtained via independent quota sampling based on gender and age. These two variables are the most widely used, both generally and particularly in the case of the British public (Moser and Stuart, 1953). The independent quota sampling procedure yields non-biased samples and fairly accurate overall estimates (Moser and Stuart, 1953). Given the operational need to select a limited number of quota control variables, the selection focused on those quotas most frequently used in the literature for this type of sample (Moser and Kalton, 2017). The survey respondents were recruited from among British visitors who were nearing the end of their stay in Spain, which ensured that their experience was both recent and complete. The tourists were visiting some of the most popular destinations in Spain: Andalusia, Catalonia, Canary Islands, Balearic Islands, the Autonomous Community of Valencia, the Autonomous Community of Madrid, the Autonomous Community of Castilla y León, and Asturias.

For the fieldwork, an external firm specializing in market research and personal surveys was brought in. The firm in question has an extensive resource infrastructure and trained personnel across the different Spanish regions.

Once the cities representing each territory were chosen, the researchers delivered several briefing sessions for the interviewers assigned by the firm to each area. The sessions were designed to explain the tourist recruitment and interviewing process in detail, with particular emphasis on answering any queries about the

Table 2. Sociodemographic characteristics of the sample.

Variable	Categories	% of sample
Gender	Male	47.1
	Female	52.9
Age	18–44	56.1
	45–65	30.2
	Over 65	13.7
Employment status	Employed	57.1
	Retired	21.1
	Other	21.7
Monthly family income	Up to 1200€	3.3
	1201 to 2400€	20.7
	2401 to 5000€	67.7
	Over 5000€	8.5

questionnaire. Between two and three interviewers were assigned to each territory, and they all had a high level of proficiency in English.

The sample tourists were randomly selected from among British tourists who happened to be close to various hotels in each of the cities. The interviewers explained that they were conducting a study about the tourism sector in Spain and invited them to participate by responding to the questionnaire.

A total of 503 valid interviews were carried out. With the number of responses obtained and for a 95% confidence interval in the case of estimations of a proportion where $p = q = 0.5$ and assuming a simple random sampling, the sample error was $\pm\ 3.12\%$.

The fieldwork was conducted between July and September 2014. As the constructs of motivation, self-congruity, and CBDBE are stable over time (as per their definitions in the literature review), we expect the results of the present study to remain valid.

Table 2 shows the sociodemographic characteristics of the sample. In terms of visit duration, 45.7% of the tourists planned to stay at the destination for more than 4 days, and 61.2% were visiting Spain for the first time. The estimated budget that tourists in the sample had allowed for their stay was typically more than €600 (56.9%). Finally, 36.8% of the sample had come on the trip with a partner, compared to 23.1% who were visiting with friends.

Measures

The dependent variable in the research was CBDBE. Each construct in the destination brand model required scale items that were destination-

specific. Multiple items were used to measure each dimension of destination brand awareness, destination brand image, destination brand quality, destination brand loyalty, and destination brand value. As noted earlier, Table 1A (see Appendix 1) sets out the different measurement scales used, together with the authors who have applied them in previous literature.

The independent variables were self-congruity and travel motivations. In both cases, scales previously validated in the literature were used (see Appendix 1—Tables 1B and 1C). With regard to the self-congruity scale, it is important to consider that, in the literature, two methods have been developed for measuring this concept. The traditional method of measuring self-image congruence is based on tapping the subject's perception of the product-user image, the subject's perception of his or her self-image in relation to the product-user image, mathematically computing a discrepancy or ratio score with each image dimension, and then summing the discrepancy scores across all dimensions (e.g. Malhotra, 1981). In contrast to traditional approaches, other methods assume that self-image congruence is a holistic, gestalt-like perception and, therefore, helps to alleviate problems associated with the traditional method (Sirgy et al., 1997). Direct, holistic measures do not cue subjects to a specific image category or dimension. Thus, the new method guides subjects to indicate their global perception of degree of match or mismatch between how they see themselves (self-image) and the product-user image. Taking this approach is the measure proposed by Chon (1992), who used a five-item Likert-type scale to measure the dimensions 'actual self-congruity' and 'ideal self-congruity'. We opted for this new method of measuring self-congruity, using the scale developed by Sirgy et al. (1997) and previously adapted from the original of Chon (1992).

The marketing literature identifies four dimensions of self-concept to explain and predict behavior: (1) actual self-concept ("me as I am"), how a person sees himself or herself; (2) ideal-self-concept ("the good me"), how a person would like to see himself or herself; (3) social self-concept, how consumers think others see them; (4) ideal social self-concept, how a person would like to be perceived by other people (Belch and Landon, 1977; Dolich, 1969; Hughes and Guerrero, 1971; Sirgy, 1982). In our study, we opted to focus on actual-self and ideal-self, as do (as noted by Hosany and Martín, 2012) the

Table 3. Results of the confirmatory factor analysis (convergent validity).

Construct	Dimension	CR	AVE
Motivation	Utilitarian	0.76	0.51
	Social	0.86	0.65
	Self-expression	0.72	0.57
	Knowledge	0.81	0.61
Self-congruity	Actual self-congruity	0.85	0.74
	Ideal self-congruity	0.93	0.87
CBDBE	Awareness	0.77	0.53
	Perceived quality	0.77	0.53
	Image	0.67	0.50
	Revisit loyalty[a]	0.71	0.57
	Recommendation loyalty[a]	0.82	0.70
	Perceived value	0.86	0.55

Note: SB $\chi^2 = 1152.83$; df = 449; *p*-value = 0.00; RMSEA = 0.06; SRMR = 0.07; GFI = 0.98; CFI = 0.89; RNI = 0.91; CBDBE: consumer-based destination brand equity; CR: composite reliability.
[a]The loyalty dimension is measured using two subdimensions to capture the facets of revisit and recommendation.

majority of consumer studies in marketing and tourism, which operationalize self-concept in terms of two components (actual and ideal), because they receive the most empirical support in the literature.

Results

Prior to testing the hypotheses regarding the role of self-congruity and travel motivations as antecedents of CBDBE, the psychometric properties of the measurement scales were evaluated for the different dimensions of the three constructs. A second-order confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) was used for this purpose. As the data did not fulfill the condition of multivariate normality, maximum likelihood (ML) estimation was applied, with *p*-values obtained via bootstrap. This procedure is based on obtaining a predefined number of samples based on the initial sample of cases, employing random selection with replacement (2000 samples in our case). The model is then estimated on each of those 2000 samples. This approach delivers less biased estimations than ML under conditions of non-normality and for samples $n \geq 200$, as is our case (Nevitt and Hancock, 2001).

In the case of the first-order constructs, composite reliability (CR) indicator achieved values above 0.70 in all cases, with the exception of destination image, which was slightly under this value. Variance extracted (AVE), however, was consistently over 0.50 (see Table 3). The scales

Table 4. Correlations between constructs and their confidence interval.

Constructs			Correlation	95% CI		p-Value
				Below	Above	
Motivation	<–>	Self-congruity	0.20	0.04	0.36	0.01
CBDBE	<–>	Self-congruity	0.36	0.27	0.46	0.00
CBDBE	<–>	Motivation	0.61	0.45	0.74	0.00

Note: CBDBE: consumer-based destination brand equity.

Table 5. Coefficients for the relationship between constructs and their respective dimensions.

Construct	Dimension	Standardized coefficients
Self-congruity	Actual self-congruity	0.98***
	Ideal self-congruity	0.96***
Motivation	Utilitarian	0.47***
	Social	0.36***
	Self-expression	0.49***
	Knowledge	0.56***
CBDBE	Awareness	0.67***
	Perceived quality	0.95***
	Destination image	0.98***
	Loyalty	0.98***
	Perceived value	0.73***

Note: CBDBE: consumer-based destination brand equity.
***$p < 0.01$.

can therefore be considered to present convergent validity.

Examining discriminant validity, the confidence intervals for the correlations between the different dimensions of the three constructs did not, in any instance, contain one. This indicates that the information provided by the different dimensions was unique (Anderson and Gerbing, 1988). Furthermore, the correlations between the three constructs also suggested the existence of discriminant validity between them, as shown in Table 4.

Finally, with regard to the second-order constructs, in all cases positive and significant coefficients were obtained for each of their respective dimensions (see Table 5). This, in line with the literature review, suggests the existence of content validity.

With the psychometric properties of the scales examined, the theoretical hypotheses—regarding the antecedent role played by self-congruity and travel motivations in CBDBE—were tested. The Structural Equation Model presented overall goodness-of-fit indicators within the recommended limits (Del Barrio and Luque, 2012; Hair et al., 2009), except for the χ^2 value which was

affected by the sample size (SB $\chi^2 = 1152.83$, g.l. $= 449$, p-value $= 0.00$; RMSEA $= 0.06$; SRMR $= 0.07$; GFI $= 0.98$; CFI $= 0.89$; RNI $= 0.91$).

H1 proposed that self-congruity has a direct and positive influence on CBDBE. The results of the data analysis confirm this hypothesis, in the light of the positive and significant coefficient obtained for the relationship between the two constructs ($\beta_{\text{self-con}\rightarrow\text{CBDBE}} = 0.25$, t-value $= 4.37$). Similarly, the data analysis also provided empirical support for H2, which proposed that travel motivation exerts a direct and positive effect on CBDBE ($\beta_{\text{Motivation}\rightarrow\text{CBDBE}} = 0.56$, t-value $= 4.64$; see Figure 1).

In making a comparison between the relevance of self-congruity and tourist motivation in the formation of CBDBE, it can be concluded that motivation constitutes the principal determinant of this construct, with significant differences presenting in their respective coefficients via the χ^2 difference test ($\Delta\chi^2 = 40.91$; p-value $= 0.00$).

Continuing the analysis of the antecedent role of self-congruity and motivation on CBDBE, a model was proposed in which this construct was eliminated from the second order and direct relationships were established between both antecedents and each of their first-order dimensions. As can be seen in Table 6, in all cases self-congruity and motivation are significant determinants for each of the dimensions of CBDBE, with the exception of the relationship between motivation and intention to revisit the destination. These results do not corroborate those obtained by Yoon and Uysal (2005) or those of Schofield and Thompson (2007). However, these authors examined the effect of motivations only on destination loyalty intentions, without taking the other dimensions of brand equity into account. By contrast, the present research demonstrates the importance of considering all of the dimensions of brand equity, as the results may vary if only analyzing one dimension in isolation.
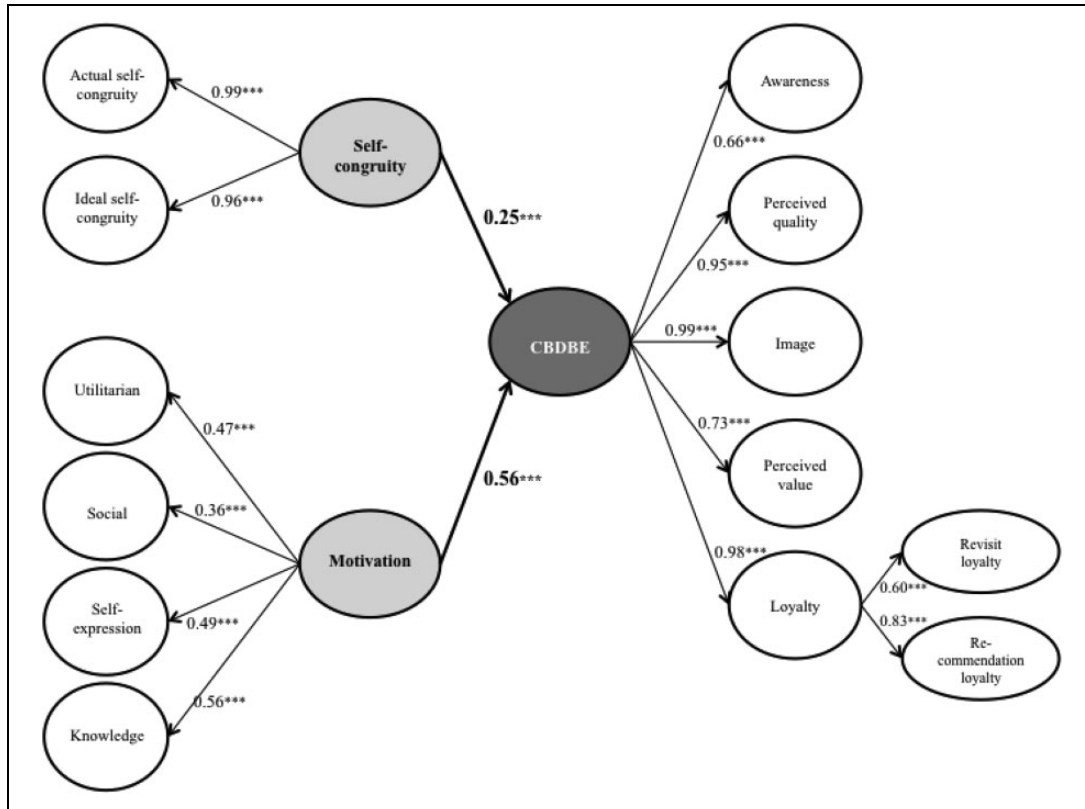
Figure 1. Standardized coefficient for the antecedents of CBDBE. CBDBE: consumer-based destination brand equity. *Note:* ***p < 0.01.

Table 6. Standardized coefficients for the dimensions of CBDBE.

Antecedent	Dimension of CBDBE	Standardized coefficient	*p*-Value
Self-congruity	Awareness	0.182	0.002
	Perceived quality	0.249	0.000
	Image	0.184	0.002
	Revisit loyalty	0.578	0.000
	Recommendation loyalty	0.134	0.009
	Perceived value	0.169	0.004
Motivation	Awareness	0.345	0.000
	Perceived quality	0.508	0.000
	Image	0.556	0.000
	Revisit loyalty	0.112	0.133
	Recommendation loyalty	0.447	0.000
	Perceived value	0.500	0.000

Note: SB χ^2 = 1045.16; *p*-value = 0.00; RMSEA = 0.05; SRMR = 0.06; GFI = 0.98; CFI = 0.92; IFI = 0.92; CBDBE: consumer-based destination brand equity.

To analyze the effect of self-congruity on the different dimensions of CBDBE, SB scaled difference χ^2 tests were applied (Satorra and Bentler, 2001). A test for the overall equality of the coefficients in the relationship between self-congruity and the different dimensions of CBDBE showed that the null hypothesis, that the effect of self-congruity on the different dimensions of CBDBE is equal for each dimension, should be rejected (SB scaled difference = 63.84; df = 5; *p*-value < 0.001). In particular, when partial SB scaled difference tests were conducted on the equality of the coefficients in the relationship between self-congruity and the dimensions of CBDBE, two by two (Appendix 2), significant differences were only obtained for the coefficient

of the relationship with revisit intention and the coefficients of the remaining dimensions of CBDBE (p-value < 0.001). This suggests that, although self-congruity is a significant determinant of all the dimensions of CBDBE, its main effect is centered on the tourist's intention to revisit the destination.

As regards the effect of motivation on the dimensions of CBDBE, the overall SB scaled difference test for equality of effect of motivation on all of the dimensions of CBDBE also indicated that the null hypothesis, that the coefficient of motivation on the different dimensions of CBDBE is equal in all cases, should be rejected (SB scaled difference = 12.82; df = 5; p-value = 0.025). The post hoc comparisons showed that there were significant differences between the motivation coefficient relative to revisit intention, compared to the coefficients for perceived quality, image, recommendation, and perceived value (Appendix 3). These same differences presented again when the motivation coefficient was compared to awareness. Thus, it can be concluded that motivation is a principal determinant of perceived destination quality, perceived value of the stay, overall destination image, and, finally, recommendation intention.

Discussion and conclusions

It is a priority objective among tourist destination managers to ensure their destinations are appealing and thus competitive, and the literature finds that achieving greater brand equity equates to the achievement of competitive advantage (Pike and Page, 2014). The present research highlights several gaps in the literature on the application and development of CBDBE, namely: (a) testing the effectiveness of CBDBE as a competitive strategy in the tourist destination context; (b) examining the extent of the application of self-congruity theory in the tourism sphere; (c) analyzing the importance of tourists' motivations in their evaluation of destination brands; and (d) proposing and validating a theoretical model of two complementary variables, internal to the customer, as antecedents of CBDBE. Hence, in addressing these gaps, the present study makes the following contributions:

First, the applicability of CBDBE as a competitive strategy is tested in the tourism context, along with its effectiveness as a measure of destination branding—rarely used in the studies to date on tourist destinations (Boo et al., 2009; Gartner and Konečnik-Ruzzier, 2011; Pike et al., 2010). More specifically, the work

demonstrates that CBDBE can be measured by using the following dimensions: brand awareness, brand image, brand quality, brand loyalty, and perceived value of the destination brand. This finding supports those previously obtained in other studies (Bianchi et al., 2014; Pike and Bianchi, 2013).

Second, with regard to self-congruity, two trends are identified that have become quite widespread in recent years, related to the relevance of self-congruity in explaining tourist behavior. The first of the two trends is linked to the strategy of differentiating destinations on the basis of symbolic attributes. Here, tourists perceive destinations differently, depending on the extent to which their characteristics match those of the typical visitors to those destinations. In this sense, coherence is required between the stereotypical image of the destination and the tourist's self-concept (Sirgy and Su, 2000). The second trend is that of making public the tourist's consumption of tourism. While there has always been a tendency for tourists to voice their views about the trips they have taken, within their immediate circle, the arrival of social networks has boosted this public display of an individual's travel experiences. In the light of this public exposure, self-congruity acquires more relevance in explaining tourist behavior. The findings of the present study show that self-congruity (both ideal and real) affects the tourist's post-consumption evaluation. From a theoretical perspective, this reinforces the validity of applying self-congruity theory in tourism (Boksberger et al., 2011). The study indicates that a high level of tourist self-congruity with the chosen destination contributes significantly to the brand equity of the destination they have visited. Hence, the work provides additional support to those prior studies that have defended the relevance of self-congruity in explaining tourist behavior (e.g. Beerli et al., 2007; Sirgy and Su, 2000). Some studies have concluded that self-congruity fails to predict tourist behavior in terms of recommendation intention (Kastenholz, 2004), or they differ in the results obtained, depending on the chosen methodology. The work of Litvin and Goh (2002), for example, supports this claim. They applied two different methods to test the effect of self-image on travel behavior and found that the results varied depending on the method used. More specifically, when they followed Chon's method, they found that self-image did indeed affect travel behavior; but when Malhotra's method was applied, there was no such

validation (Litvin and Goh, 2002). The present research is valuable in offering additional support for the former perspective, namely that this variable is indeed relevant in the tourism sphere.

Furthermore, this study contributes to the literature by being the first to analyze the effect of self-congruity on all five of the dimensions of CBDBE in the same investigation. The work concludes that this variable exerts a significant effect on all of them, but is particularly useful for explaining destination revisit intention among tourists. Therefore, while there may be several factors (within tourism motivations) that lead a tourist to visit new locations, if destinations seek to retain tourists for the future, they need to offer a symbolic image that is coherent with the self-concept of their main target public. In this sense, those tourism managers who understand how self-congruity works may be in a position to develop effective positioning strategies that increase profitability (Sirgy, 1986).

Third, the present investigation demonstrates that the tourist's motivations for travelling exert a significant effect on the assessment of the brand that they make once they have visited the chosen destination. The effect of tourist travel motivations on the entire CBDBE construct is shown, unlike other previous studies that demonstrate the effect of motivations on only some of the dimensions of brand equity. Specifically, the previous literature supports the effect of motivations on destination image (Esper and Rateike, 2010; Lee, 2009; San Martín and Rodríguez del Bosque, 2008), on loyalty or tourist behavioral intentions (Schofield and Thompson, 2007; Yoon and Uysal, 2005), and on perceived value (Prebensen et al., 2013; Yoon and Uysal, 2005). The present findings indicate that consumers award higher scores in terms of quality, image, perceived value, and awareness for those destinations that offer a closer fit with their motives to visit the destination. However, the findings also demonstrate that the effect of motivation on destination revisit intention is not significant, but motivation *is* a major determinant of intention to recommend the destination, helping to attract new clients to destinations that provide a good fit with their motivations.

In summary, and in line with the recommendation of Murphy et al. (2007), who highlight the need for more in-depth studies on the role of motivation and self-congruity as determinants of tourist behavior, the findings of this investigation improve the existing knowledge on the antecedents of CBDBE, which can, in turn, contribute to improving destination brand equity and to

achieving higher levels of competitiveness for tourist destinations (e.g. Line and Runyan, 2014; Pike and Page, 2014). This is a noteworthy contribution to the literature, as the majority of works on CBDBE focus only on proposing relationships between the different dimensions of CBDBE (Boo et al., 2009; Chen and Myagmarsuren, 2010; Pike and Bianchi, 2013; Pike et al., 2010).

Managerial implications

There are a number of implications for the professional sector in the present work, particularly for the public agencies responsible for managing and developing tourist destinations. First, the effectiveness of the proposed brand equity scale for tourist destinations points to the kind of activities that destination managers should be undertaking to improve consumer evaluations of the destinations they have visited. This is a fundamental strategic variable when aiming to heighten the competitiveness of a destination.

Second, the significant and positive effect we identified between self-congruity and destination brand equity requires managers to pre-identify image perceptions of their destination among their target audiences, and then use that information to design a positioning plan that enables them to create destination brands that closely resemble the self-concept of each target audience. The more that managers can successfully align the image of the destination desired by tourists with the manner in which these tourists conceive themselves, the better placed the managers will be to contribute to improving destination brand equity. One action that managers might consider taking in this regard might be to design exclusive experiences (differentiated from those of other destinations) that are highly congruent with the image desired by tourists, such as events, festivals, or other promotional activities such as storytelling, which emphasizes emotional and symbolic ideas (Megehee and Woodside, 2010).

There are several destinations that are carrying out this strategy of alignment between the self-concept of their target audience and the positioning of the city. Examples include Salzburg, with its emphasis on music festivals, Brighton and its orientation toward multiculturalism and the LGTB public, Hollywood and Bollywood as film-related destinations, or Basque the Country and its gastronomic appeal, with more than 20 Michelin-starred restaurants.

According to our results, the self-congruity between the image of the tourist and the

destination will primarily contribute mainly to tourist loyalty of the latter, when considering the dimensions of brand equity. Promotional campaigns should thus focus on what the tourists themselves aspire to be, and how the destination can adapt to what they need to become their ideal self. At the same time, destinations need to invest more in affective components rather than more functional components, with the aim of raising their capacity to generate a feeling of belonging among tourists that, in turn, builds a strong relationship with the destination. In short, it is important to implement integrated marketing communications activities that are aligned with tourists' self-concepts. This will help create a greater level of perceived congruity between the promotional messages and the destination, generating value for the tourist and improving the effectiveness of the communication (Pool et al., 2016). In this way, the tourists will perceive greater brand equity—a goal toward which destination managers should work.

Similarly, the effect of motivations on CBDBE also demonstrates the efforts that need to be made by destination managers to offer those activities that are best suited to the motivations that lead tourists to visit a given destination. Understanding tourist motivations will enable managers to understand their behaviors and satisfy their needs. Motivations—around utility, socialization, self-expression or knowledge—may differ, depending on the tourist. Therefore, destination managers can (with the support of public and private entities) offer information about the activities, resources, and wider offer of the destination that match the different types of motivation that will encourage tourists to visit it. They can also gather information from the tourists who visit each destination about their motivations for doing so and the order of priority among these different motives. Destination managers can use this information to identify any weaknesses in their promotional efforts, particularly where tourists are unable to identify any motivation that the destination in question might satisfy.

As with any research of this nature, the present work has certain limitations that may point to future lines of research. For example, the study only examined perceptions of brand equity among British tourists visiting Spain. Future studies may use samples comprising tourists of other nationalities visiting Spain. The study also selected only one destination as the basis for testing the effect of self-congruity and motivation on CBDBE. In future studies, we intend to use different destinations to test this effect. A further limitation is that in the measurement of the self-congruity construct, only two of the dimensions are included, namely, ideal and real self-congruity. Future investigations could also examine the social auto-congruity and ideal social auto-congruity dimensions.

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Appendix 1

Measurement scales

Table 1A. Dimensions of CBDBE.

Awareness	
This destination has a good name and reputation.	Boo et al. (2009); Kladou and Kehagias (2014); Pike and Bianchi (2013); Pike et al. (2010)
This destination is very famous.	(Boo et al. 2009; Kladou and Kehagias 2014; Pike and Bianchi 2013; Pike et al. 2010)
The characteristics of this destination come to mind quickly.	Boo et al. (2009); Ferns and Walls (20120; Kladou and Kehagias (2014); Konecnik and Gartner, 2007; Pike and Bianchi (2013); Pike et al. (2010)
When I am thinking about having fun, this destination comes to mind immediately.*	Boo et al. (2009); Kladou and Kehagias (2014); Pike and Bianchi (2013); Pike et al. (2010)
Perceived quality	
This destination provides tourism offerings of consistent quality.	Boo et al. (2009)
This destination provides quality experiences.	Boo et al. (2009); Kladou and Kehagias (2014)
I can expect superior performance from this destination's offerings.*	Boo et al. (2009)
This destination performs better than other similar destinations.	Boo et al. (2009)
Image	
The image that I have of this destination is as good as, or even better than, that of other similar destinations.	García et al. (2012)
The overall image of the destination is very positive.	García et al. (2012)
Loyalty	
I intend to go back to this destination within the next 5 years.	Im et al. (2012)
Overall, I feel loyal toward this destination.	Boo et al. (2009); Ferns and Walls (2012); Im et al. (2012)
I will recommend this destination to anyone who asks for my advice.	Im et al. (2012)
I will encourage my friends/family to visit this destination.	Boo et al. (2009)
Perceived value	
This destination has reasonable prices.	Boo et al. (2009); Pike and Bianchi (2013)
Considering what I paid for this trip, this destination offers real value-for-money.	Boo et al. (2009); Pike and Bianchi (2013)
The costs of visiting this destination are a bargain compared to the benefits I received.	Boo et al. (2009); Pike and Bianchi (2013)
This destination is economical.	Boo et al. (2009)
This destination is a good deal.	Boo et al. (2009)

Note: CBDBE: consumer-based destination brand equity.
*Item removed due to presenting low R^2 in the CFA.

Table 1B. Dimensions of tourist motivation.

Utilitarian	To relieve stress and tension.	Fodness (1994); Moreno-Gil
	To escape from daily routine.	and Martín-Santana (2013)
	For rest and relaxation.	
Social	Seeking fun and adventure.	
	To do exciting things.	
	For fun and entertainment.	
Self-expression	To go to places friends have visited.	
	To travel to places that are in fashion.	
	To go to places that are comfortable to be in, with good hotels and restaurants.*	
Knowledge	Cultural enrichment.	
	To get to know different cultures and lifestyles.	
	To discover new and different places.	

*Item removed due to presenting low R^2 in the CFA.

Table 1C. Dimensions of self-congruence.

Actual self-congruence	The personality of this destination is consistent with how I see myself.	Chon (1992);
	The personality of this destination is a mirror image of me.	Malär et al.
Ideal self-congruence	The personality of this destination is consistent with how I would like to be.	(2011);
	The personality of this destination is a mirror image of the person I would like to be.	Sirgy et al. (1997)

Appendix 2

SB scaled differences (self-congruity)

Below the main diagonal, χ^2 for the restricted model. Above the main diagonal, SB scaled difference between the free model and the restricted model.

Free model
SB $\chi^2 = 1045.2$
Normal $\chi^2 = 1114.7$
df = 431

	Awareness	Quality	Image	Revisit loyalty	Recommendation loyalty	Value
Awareness		Diffᶜ = 0.7447 df = 1 p-Value = 0.388147	Diffᶜ = 0.0082 df = 1 p-Value = 0.9771	Diffᶜ = 28.6801 df = 1 p-Value = 0.000000	Diffᶜ = 0.0940 df = 1 p-Value = 0.759143	Diffᶜ = 0.023146 df = 1 p-Value = 0.8791
Quality	SBª = 1045.3 Nᵇ = 1115.8 df = 432		Diffᶜ = 1.6350 df = 1 p-Value = 0.201011	Diffᶜ = 54.1294 df = 1 p-Value = 0.000000	Diffᶜ = 2.3022 df = 1 p-Value = 0.129188	Diffᶜ = 0.39868 df = 1 p-Value = 0.5278
Image	SBª = 1044.7 Nᵇ = 1114.7 df = 432	SBª = 1046.9 Nᵇ = 1116.3 df = 432		Diffᶜ = 85.9606 df = 1 p-Value = 0.000000	Diffᶜ = 0.2153 df = 1 p-Value = 0.642624	Diffᶜ = 0.02245 df = 1 p-Value = 0.8809
Revisit loyalty	SBª = 1103.7 Nᵇ = 1180.2 df = 432	SBª = 1110.2 Nᵇ = 1184.6 df = 432	SBª = 1112.9 Nᵇ = 1186.3 df = 432		Diffᶜ = 89.1459 df = 1 p-Value = 0.000000	Diffᶜ = 26.5682 df = 1 p-Value = 0.000000
Recommendation loyalty	SBª = 1045.3 Nᵇ = 1114.8 df = 432	SBª = 1047.5 Nᵇ = 1117.2 df = 432	SBª = 1045.7 Nᵇ = 1114.9 df = 432	SBª = 1117.8 Nᵇ = 1191.6 df = 432		Diffᶜ = 0,3638 df = 1 p-Value = 0,546415
Value	SBª = 1044.2 Nᵇ = 1114.7 df = 432	SBª = 1043.8 Nᵇ = 1115.5 df = 432	SBª = 1044.9 Nᵇ = 1114.7 df = 432	SBª = 1100.9 Nᵇ = 1177.4 df = 432	SBª = 1045.5 Nᵇ = 1115.1 df = 432	

Note: Model: SB $\chi^2 = 1122.64$; normal $\chi^2 = 1200.87$; df = 436.
[a]Satorra–Bentler χ^2.
[b]Normal χ^2.
[c]Satorra–Bentler scaled χ^2 difference.

Appendix 3

SB scaled differences (motivation)

Below the main diagonal, $\chi2$ for the restricted model. Above the main diagonal, SB scaled difference between the free model and the restricted model.

Free model
SB $\chi^2 = 1045.2$
Normal $\chi^2 = 1114.7$
df $= 431$

	Awareness	Quality	Image	Revisit loyalty	Recommendation loyalty	Value
Awareness		Diff[c] = 2.8987 df = 1 p-Value = 0.088652	Diff[c] = 6.7849 df = 1 p-Value = 0.009193	Diff[c] = Diff[c] = 1.7421 df = 1 p-Value = 0.186876	Diff[c] = 3.4938 df = 1 p-Value = 0.061597	Diff[c] = 5.0552 df = 1 p-Value = 0.024552
Quality	SB[a] = 1048.1 N[b] = 1117.8 df = 432		Diff[c] = 0.6799 df = 1 p-Value = 0.409631	Diff[c] = 18.6763 df = 1 p-Value = 0.000015	Diff[c] = 0.082146 df = 1 p-Value = 0.7744	Diff[c] = 0.58742 df = 1 p-Value = 0.4434
Image	SB[a] = 1050.7 N[b] = 1119.8 df = 432	SB[a] = 1045.7 N[b] = 1115.4 df = 432		Diff[c] = 45.9513 df = 1 p-Value = 0.000000	Diff[c] = 0.13645 df = 1 p-Value = 0.7118	Diff[c] = 0.035218 df = 1 p-Value = 0.8511
Revisit loyalty	SB[a] = 1047.0 N[b] = 1116.4 df = 432	SB[a] = 1053.0 N[b] = 1121.4 df = 432	SB[a] = 1055.1 N[b] = 1123.1 df = 432		Diff[c] = 28.7468 df = 1 p-Value = 0.000000	Diff[c] = 21.0052 df = 1 p-Value = 0.000005
Recommendation loyalty	SB[a] = 1048.4 N[b] = 1117.4 df = 432	SB[a] = 1044.6 N[b] = 1114.8 df = 432	SB[a] = 1044.9 N[b] = 1114.8 df = 432	SB[a] = 1052.7 N[b] = 1120.6 df = 432		Diff[c] = 0.21909 df = 1 p-Value = 0.6397
Value	SB[a] = 1050.6 N[b] = 1120.8 df = 432	SB[a] = 1044.8 N[b] = 1115.637 df = 432	SB[a] = 1045.0 N[b] = 1114.7 df = 432	SB[a] = 1055.1 N[b] = 1123.7 df = 432	SB[a] = 1045.0 N[b] = 1114.9 df = 0.000000	

Note: Model: SB $\chi^2 = 1058.02$; normal $\chi^2 = 1127.98$; df $= 436$.
[a] Satorra–Bentler χ^2.
[b] Normal χ^2.
[c] Satorra–Bentler scaled χ^2 difference.