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# **Influence of Brand Signature, Brand Awareness, Brand Attitude, Brand Reputation on Hotel Industry's Brand Performance**

## **Abstract**

This paper develops a multi-disciplinary measure of the brand signature construct by means of literature review and primary data analysis. This study explains that brand signature involves (i) endorsement of consistent consumer attitude toward diffusion of a brand name and brand logo (consists of typeface, design, and color); (ii) the expression and pursuit of a distinct message and the quality of the organization to consumers as well as consistency in communication; and (iii) the implementation, support, and maintenance of hotel brand signature systems based on the use of online/offline media. SEM is employed in order to test the proposed model. The results indicate that brand signature includes dissemination of its dimensions; brand attitude with two components (brand association and brand belief); brand awareness consists of brand familiarity, and brand recognisability; and consistency in brand reputation and prefaced by hotel brand performance implementation. Brand signature is recommended as a tool useful for the service industry to manage their global hotel brand reputation and performance.

**Keywords:** Brand Signature; Brand Attitude; Brand Awareness; Brand Reputation; Hotel Brand Performance

**Paper type** - Research paper

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## **Introduction**

Brand signature is an original, distinctive design based on the brand personality and identity that is carried across all brand communications. It comprises the essential communication, distinctiveness, and enduring features of a brand, which can reflect a brand's image and reputation (Henderson and Cote, 1998; Melewar and Saunders, 1998) globally. A brand signature can be an efficient management tool to orchestrate the desired features that an organization wishes to convey to its stakeholders, specific in global market. A brand signature can add value for stakeholders and should clearly connect the name and logo of the organization it represents in the global marketplace (Foroudi et al., 2014; Henderson and Cote, 1998). Brand signature management requires an understanding of company identity in terms of the name and logo as a root of corporate identity and visual identity.

Brown et al. (2006) state that studies on brand identity and image has two main levels. The first is an organizational level concerning how a company develops a unique, distinct and enduring corporate identity. The second, utilised here, is an individual level investigation, which aims to understand what company stakeholders think of it. Brand logo and name lie at the root of corporate identity (Balmer, 2001) to transmit the strategic, visual dimensions of identity to various audiences (Hatch and Schultz, 1997; Van Riel et al., 2001; Van Riel and Balmer, 1997). The logo and name are the main element of corporate visual identity (Balmer, 2001; Van den Bosch et al., 2006), used to condense firm personality and its values for effective stakeholder presentation (Bernstein 1986; Van Heerden and Puth, 1995; Van Riel et al., 2001). The favourability of a brand signature appeals to the extent to which consumers positively regard it and there is a growing need for international marketing scholars not only to adapt to changing global market conditions but also to contribute to public discourse on branding practices.

For these reasons, global organizations spend substantial resources - money, time, and research on brand signature development, which reflects organizational identity and helps mold its image in a positive way (Olins, 1989; Van Riel et al., 2001). International companies make an effort to create understanding and familiarity with the product via its brand logo and name (Bernstein, 1986) to increase both existing and prospective customers' recognition (Smith, 1990). In addition, brand logo and brand name are used for communicating image, cutting through clutter to gain attention and speeding up recognition of a company or product

(Henderson and Cote, 1998; Van Riel et al., 2001). For all these reasons, a brand signature should be chosen carefully. Significant investments are required and made as management expects an organizational logo and name to add value to their reputation across cultural borders (Van Riel et al., 2001). The brand performance and reputation of a hotel therefore include the hotel's physical appearance, such as logo and name, brand attitude and awareness (Xu and Chan, 2010).

Design, marketing, and corporate identity research have paid attention to the importance of logos and names. In contrast to the theoretical assumptions and anecdotal evidence from practice, limited attention has been directed to the effect of brand signature on consumer evaluations of brand signature (Henderson and Cote, 1998; Pittard et al., 2007; Van der Lans et al., 2009) which influence on brand reputation and performance specific in global market (Foroudi et al., 2014; 2017). The result of this study aims to contribute to filling the gap of existing theory in this research field. The present study, therefore, extends past studies by examining the relationship between brand signature, brand attitude, brand awareness, brand reputation in order to increase the brand performance.

In UK, tourism is the economy's largest industry. According to Patricia Yates, VisitBritain's director, "tourism is one of the UK's most valuable export industries. It is also a fiercely competitive global industry and these results not only demonstrate Britain's continued ability to compete internationally for visitors, they are testament to tourism's importance as a driver of economic growth (Theguardian.com, 2018). Most people think of tourism as simply a leisure activity, the UK tourism industry is one of the main business sector to the country. Study shows that overseas residents made 40 million visits to the UK in October 2017; this has decreased by 6% when compared with £1.9 billion spent directly by domestic and international travelers in 2017; this is an increase of 2% when compared with October 2016 (ons.gov.uk, 2017). However, VisitBritain (2018) estimates that "overseas visits to the UK are set to pass 40m for the first time in 2018, according to VisitBritain (2018), which is predicting tourists will spend a record £27bn over the coming 12 months". In addition, hotels and restaurants expect busy 2018 with inbound tourism to increase their visits.

Brand value of hotels can act as an intangible asset which helps to attract travellers towards the particular place. Though, UK hospitality industry as a highly service-based in which the travellers will not be able to view the services before booking them. So, hotel's signature is

the first and main element to attract visitors which can assist in specifying the quality of the services provided by a specific hotel company in UK (Chang and Liu, 2009).

In addition, there is a lack of explanatory research and theory building studies in this area. This study examined consumers' perception-based attributes to the brand signature management that has received little attention - the issue of managing brand signature consistently across countries. This is attributed to the fact that the brand signature is a complex research area with various issues which need more in-depth investigation. As such, this research is a first attempt to collect empirical evidence in an effort to analyse whether brand signature favourably evaluation influences brand attitude, brand knowledge, brand reputation and trust creation in order to increase hotel brand performance from two countries.

Finally, this empirical study reveals the degree to which a signature of the brand elements, such as name and logo, succeed in expressing the values a company wishes to convey and its effects upon UK visitors and consumers. In other words, what are the factors that influence brand signature favourability globally? In addition, what are the main influences of such favourability on hotel brand performance globally?

The following section delivers a brief and overall discussion regarding the influence of nexuses between brand signature and its consequences, which express the consumer level conceptual framework. The next section describes the methodology employed by the authors to assess the proposed model. Lastly, the authors conclude with a discussion of the theoretical significance of this study, implications and limitations of the research.

## **THEORETICAL BACKGROUND**

Brand signature is important as a means for companies to distinguish themselves from competitors. A brand signature enables companies and brands to build image with stakeholders (Henderson and Cote, 1998), which adds value to their organisational reputation (Olins, 1989). A brand signature may be the first impression a consumer has of a company and can come to represent the corporate image. According to Henderson and Cote (1998) and Van Riel et al. (2001), the brand signature is significant for decision-makers. International corporate decision-makers should seek to increase favorable attitudes toward the organization by designing and adjusting communication activities (Dacin and Brown, 2002). The notion of brand signature is grounded in various subjects. For a long time, brand logo was used

interchangeably with corporate image and identity (Bernstein, 1986; Olins, 1989; Van Riel and Balmer, 1997).

The preceding is based upon attribution theory (Graham, 1991; Weiner, 1992). Social psychologists (Weiner, 1986) developed attribution theory to understand how people make sense of their world. Attribution theory refers “to the perception or inference of cause” (Kelley and Michela, 1980, p.458), how individuals may succeed or fail in dynamic interactions and what causes inferences they may make about particular behavior (Kelley and Michela, 1980). Attribution theory has been applied extensively in marketing and consumer behavior studies (Mizersky et al., 1979), and used to explain consumer decision-making (Mizersky et al., 1979). Attribution method determines the likelihood of satisfaction of consumers’ attitudinally (Weiner, 2000). Furthermore, image favorability impacts consumer attitudes and behavior (Sen and Bhattacharya, 2001). This study applies attribution theory in relation to brand signature.

Brand signature can be the major tool for transmitting consistent knowledge and reputation to an audience. It can promote long-term favorable brand awareness, attitude, reputation, and internal/external communication properties of a brand signature can influence individual understanding and interpretation (Van Riel et al., 2001). An attribute that is perceived as satisfying can be regarded as favorable and can result in positive attitudes toward a brand signature which increase hotel brand performance.

Brand signature are ubiquitous in the marketplace, and the average consumer encounters a multitude on any given day (Foroudi et al., 2014; 2016; 2017; Hagtvedt, 2011). The main elements of the brand signature are those factors that predict, strengthen or weaken perceived brand awareness, attitude, reputation, and performance. Businesses use communication to increase their significance as a product differentiator (Hatch and Schultz, 2001; Henderson and Cote, 1998; Olins, 1989; Van Riel et al., 2001) through the elements of the brand signature which are i) corporate name (Leitch and Motion, 1999) and ii) brand logo. The three main components of brand logo are i) typeface (Henderson et al., 2004), ii) design (Alessandri, 2001), and iii) color (Bottomley and Doyle, 2006).

### **Brand Signature, Brand Attitude, Brand Reputation**

A company's brand signature can influence viewers' attitudes towards brand and over time, the brand logo and name offer symbolic representations of a brand. The brand signature is a key aspect of identification in branding. Brand signature can be constructed to attain particular responses dependent upon the nature of the communications and desired marketing objectives. The perceptions customers have of the corporate/brand should be shared, positive and consistent. A company's signature impacts on positive and desired attributes, which can add value to the reputation of an organisation (Van Riel *et al.*, 2001). However, attitudes toward brand differ between consumers and can be impacted by aroused associations and beliefs, which create reputation towards brand.

Consumers may rely on existing attitudes towards brand name and logo when forming attitudes towards a company or brand and can be changed over the time. Attitudes towards brand can be thought of as consumers' general liking or lack thereof. Advertising helps firms develop strategic positions to differentiate themselves and provide goodwill from consumers and stakeholders. Successful logo and brand should attract positive attention. Companies need to differentiate themselves and brand is an opportunity for a company to present its brand reputation (Melewar *et al.*, 2001). A certain reputation of the corporation/brand is created and customers choose the brand with the image that best fits with their self-image. Firms deliver a promise to customers through brand, from which expectations are formed. If promises are not kept, customers have a poor experience.

Management should communicate with external audiences in various ways, often utilizing strategy involving corporate advertising (Hatch and Schultz, 1997). Gilly and Wolfinbarger (1998) analysed the impact of global advertising upon an internal audience and the significance of involving employees in the company's communications. Moreover, reputation aims to generate more favorable company-oriented information through media coverage and causes consumers to consider the company to be respectful and trustworthy (Fombrun, 1996). According to Aitken *et al.* (2008), "international customers are likely to play with symbols and messages and form mental pictures that may be quite different from those that were originally intended" (p.291). A well-chosen brand signature in advertising can contribute meaning between sender receivers.

Global brand reputation studies have focused on the effect of the logo, brand, and consumers' attitude on company reputation (Chun, 2005). As a part of corporate identity management,

managers should try to project their company's logo and name in order to create or maintain a favorable image and reputation. People may have different perceptions of a company's identity (Balmer and Soenen, 1999) on the basis of their feelings, emotions, and beliefs (Brown et al., 2006; Karaosmanoglu et al., 2011). Based on Van Riel et al.'s (2001) study, people attribute different associations to each logo which creates measurable images in the minds of consumers and serves as a mental switch or stimulus (Van Heerden and Puth, 1995).

Brand associations defines as "the meaning of the brand for consumers" (Keller, 1993, p. 3; Pappu et al., 2005, p.145) or "anything linked in memory to a brand" and brand image as "a set of [brand] associations, usually in some meaningful way" (Aaker, 1991, p. 109; Yoo and Donthu, 2001, p. 3). Initially, the international marketing literature focused on customers and the corporate reputation to represent the association, attitudes, impressions, beliefs, and associations held by customers (Van Heerden and Puth, 1995) which can develop brand reliability and benevolence. People's perceptions of a company should match its organizational identity and represent the shared beliefs of what is enduring, distinctive, and central about the organization (Dutton et al., 1994).

Foroudi et al. (2014; 2016; 2017) and Van Riel (1995) points out that a consumer evaluation of corporate reputation has been discussed as the basis of corporate identity messages transmitted by the brand logo and brand name. A well-designed brand signature may evoke an emotional response (Van Riel, 1995). Indeed, Henderson and Cote (1998) claim that the brand name and logo can transfer a positive motivational reaction and motivate customers to evaluate organizations more favourably. The literature suggests that the brand logo and name triggers association and belief of the brand in people's minds (Dowling, 2001). Consumer evaluations of the brand reputation have been discussed as a basis of corporate identity messages, which are transmitted by the brand signature (Foroudi et al., 2017; Van Riel, 1995). Expanding upon this discussion, one could posit that the attitudes of consumers towards a logo and name of an organization may show how they evaluate the firm and brand. Therefore, based on literature, brand signature has a significant effect on consumer attitude by creating association and belief to brand and reputation. Hence the following hypotheses:

*Hypothesis 1: Attributes of brand signature which depends upon brand name and logo impact on attitude of consumers towards brand.*

*Hypothesis 2: Attributes towards consumers attitude which depends upon association and belief impacts on brand's reputation.*

### ***Brand Signature, Brand Awareness, and Brand Reputation***

International marketing researchers have been interested in assessing how brand signature can be a reliable, distinctive cue for an organization to create a sense of awareness through reputation, awareness, recognisability, and influence consumers' decision-making (Henderson and Cote, 1998). Brand signature can be described as a halo that consumers use to infer an evaluation of products and services with which they are familiar. Furthermore, consumers use the logo and name as indirect evidence of a product's performance. Awareness towards a brand and product has a critical role in aiding comparisons between products and consequent purchase (Herrera and Blanco, 2011). Customers can purchase products from the logo and name of a brand when they may have little direct knowledge of the product itself.

The literature records the significance of brand signature and its awareness. As Kohli et al. (2002) confirm, a name and "logo that readily cues the product is a big advantage" (p.60). Consumers familiar with a name and logo tend to trust the company's products and services. Brand signature contributes strongly to increased awareness and appreciation of a brand/company and its products or services (Chadwick and Walters, 2009). Standardisation of one's brand signature (the foremost element of corporate visual identity) assists companies in achieving a reliable image and reputation, which help increase sales (Melewar and Saunders, 1998). Standardising corporate visual identity positively affects customer awareness via familiarity and recognisability with the company and its products, services, and the receptiveness of the local community to company operations (Melewar and Saunders, 1998). An company's identity describes what its stakeholders believe to be its character and an organisation's signature describes attributes customers believe to distinguish the company and its services/products to competitors.

A brand signature should be easily interpreted at a glance by a broad audience of viewers, breeding a high level of familiarity between intended messages and audiences (Van der Lans et al., 2009). Furthermore, in international context, logos and names that look recognisable

tend to be perceived and processed faster (Henderson et al., 2003). A well-designed brand signature can evoke positive feelings of familiarity that should augment sales. Brand awareness refers to the “strength of a brand’s presence in consumers’ minds” (Pappu et al., 2005, p.145) and defines as “the ability for a buyer to recognize or recall that a brand is a member of a certain product category” (Aaker, 1991, p. 61; Yoo and Donthu, 2001, p. 3) and conceptualised as consisting of both brand recall and recognition (Keller, 1993; Pappu et al., 2005; Rossiter and Percy, 1987; Yoo and Donthu, 2001). Brand recall refers to consumers’ ability to retrieve the brand from memory, for example, when the product category or the needs fulfilled by the category are mentioned (Keller, 1993, p. 3; Pappu et al., 2005). According to Lemmink et al. (2003), brand awareness positively influences organizational perceptions held by individuals. Therefore, familiarity has an influence on formation of the corporate reputation through reliability and benevolence. Whereas attitude toward a brand corresponds to consumers’ assessment of the brand a set of cumulative associations and beliefs impacts trust and reputation in a brand regarding the reliability and benevolence that consumers attribute to this brand. Customers identify themselves strongly if the attributes they use to define the organisation also define them (Ashforth and Mael, 1989). A brand can be trustworthy if it can achieve the performance its customers expect (Aurier and N’Goala, 2010).

Marketing researchers (Foroudi et al., 2014; 2016; 2017; Hatch and Schultz, 2001; Henderson and Cote, 1998; Van Riel et al., 2001) articulate that a global brand signature increases the recognisability of the company and its products and services to consumers, and establishes a uniform favorable corporate reputation. Today’s logos and names serve both company and consumer needs. The pressure of a competitive marketplace combined with fast technological growth has an effect on product and promotional campaigns, which changes over time. A logo is a nonverbal cue for businesses. It has the role of creating awareness; triggering recognition of an organization; and, activating a stored image and reputation of the organization (Dowling, 2001 p.167). The brand signature is used in the communication process to create positive emotions and enhance recognition of the company and brand (Melewar et al., 2011; Pittard et al., 2007; Van der Lans et al., 2009). Brand signature “should be chosen and designed with an eye toward relevant specific marketing objectives” (Kohli et al., 2002, p.61), leading us to the following hypothesis:

*Hypothesis 3: Attributes of brand signature which depends upon brand name and logo impact on awareness of consumers towards brand.*

*Hypothesis 4: Attributes towards brand awareness which depends upon familiarity, and recognisability impacts on brand's reputation.*

### ***Brand Awareness and Brand Attitude***

Within the context of marketing, companies focus on consumers' awareness building in order to produce desired responses from the audience. Brand awareness defined by Keller (2003) as a "personal meaning about a brand stored in consumer memory, that is, all descriptive and evaluative brand-related information" (p.596), which relates to the cognitive illustration of a brand. It relates to the likelihood that a brand will come to mind and the ease with which it does so. Brand awareness consists of brand familiarity and brand recognisability (Keller, 1993). Consumers' awareness towards the company or brand can be emerged as one of the stepping-stones in the customer purchasing process. The higher degree of awareness can improve consumers' possibility to purchase a product or services. It can provide the company with long-standing sustainable competitive advantage. Social marketers highlight on generating awareness between the public to affect attitudes, association, and beliefs towards a particular organisation or brand (Foroudi et al., 2014).

Brand awareness in general, are slightly far-reaching and vague term that is impulsively recognised by individuals in most companies. It can be defined as a tool which emphasises on defining and generating the familiarity and recognisability of a target audience towards a particular brand (Foroudi et al., 2014; 2016). Consumers' awareness is an instrument whereby businesses use to impact on consumer attitude to brand or company by creating association and belief of a target audience towards a particular organisation, or product. In order to identify the success of consumer attitude to brand or company, it is important to create favourable brand association and brand belief. While defining brand awareness can be defined as customer's capability to distinguish and recognize a brand in diverse contexts. Awareness can affect perceptions and attitudes. Brand awareness reflects the salience of the brand in the customers' mind (Aaker, 1996). Aaker (1996) proposes that brand knowledge is important since it is not only does it strengthen the brand and make it effective, but it also an

important factor that impacts on consumer attitude to brand by creating source of belief and association.

Macdonald and Sharp (2000) established that customers tend to purchase products they recognise as products that are familiar are regularly favoured. They concluded that awareness is critical to impacting behavior in purchase conditions. The higher levels of consumers brand awareness make the brand more central which in turn improves the likelihood that the brand is kept in mind in purchase situations (Yasin et al., 2007). Given the widely acknowledged association among brand awareness and brand attitude (Macdonald and Sharp, 2000), it can be recommended that generating awareness can have important behavioural consequences. Creating an awareness concerning a cause or an initiative may eventually lead to positive and desirable changes in brand attitude. The attribute usually perceived as satisfying which can be viewed more favourably and can be resulted in a more positive attitude toward the brand. On the other hand, an attribute that is not perceived as satisfying can be observed as unfavorable and can be resulted in a more negative attitude toward the brand. Thus,

*Hypothesis 5: Attributes towards consumers awareness which depends upon familiarity and recognisability impacts on brand's attitude.*

### ***Brand Reputation and Brand Performance***

Brand reputation is an immediate picture of a brand based on the aggregated multiple images held by both its internal and external stakeholders over the years (Fombrun, 1996). Foroudi et al. (2017) and Gotsi and Wilson (2001) state that since brand reputation is formed as an aggregation of images, accumulating in customers' minds over time into an overall evaluation of a company, it can be assumed that an individual global stakeholder's emotional association to an organization has an impact on the image he/she forms of it. According to Dowling (2001), the reputation of a brand/company is a combination of reliability, admiration, benevolence, respect, and confidence in current and plausible future actions of an organization – a combination which can easily be lost. Brand reliability is advancing the understanding of factors that dilute or enhance brand strength; provides greater understating on the limits of brand extendibility; and provides insights on the value of building a brand portfolio (DelVecchio, 2000). Brand benevolence defined by Xie and Peng (2009) as “a sincere concern for customers' interests and the motivation to do good for them” (p.574).

It is essential to understand that brand reputation is not always the catalyst for sales and profits to rise. It can be a consequence of improved current or future hotel brand performance which can improve brand loyalty, brand re-purchase, and brand recommendation (Sabate and Puente, 2003). For example, if a brand faces any small undulation in reputation alteration, for instance product/service related issue, a hotel brand performance can have a tsunami-like impact on brand loyalty and brand re-purchase as the main business outcomes which may last indefinitely (Figure 1).

Corporate reputation is “a perceptual representation of a company’s past actions and future prospects that describes the firm’s overall appeal to all of its key constituents when compared with other leading rivals” (Fombrun, 1996, p.72). Customers consider themselves to be similar to brands that demonstrate appealing actions. As Karaosmanoglu et al. (2011) put it, “individuals consciously assess the organization’s reputation when evaluating a company; however, they tend to base their final evaluations on the emotional appeal that organization holds for them. Accordingly, a company can also be considered the object of emotional evaluations” (p.1423). The two components of brand reputation are (i) brand reliability and (ii) brand benevolence. Brand reliability defines as “the ability of an existing brand name to act as a heuristic to reduce consumers' perceptions of risk when evaluating a brand extension in a particular product category” (DeIVecchio, 2000, p.463). Brand reliability advances the understanding of factors that dilute and enhance brand strength, provides greater understanding on the limits of brand extendibility and provide insights on the value of building a brand portfolio. Brand benevolence is a cognitive type of reputation which is based on the functional capability of a brand (Oh, 2002). Brand benevolence is affect-oriented and concerns the “non-profit-motivated actions” (Wang et al., 2014, p. 3) that reflects a brand's interest in customers.

As stated by Walker (2010), the relationship between reputation and brand loyalty is one of “dynamism and stability, or variation and selection image can be attained relatively quickly but a good reputation takes time to build” (p.367). Brand loyalty defined as “a deeply held commitment to rebuy or re-patronise a preferred product or service consistently in the future, despite situational influences and marketing efforts having potential to cause switching behavior” (Oliver, 1997, p. 392) often characterised by a favourable attitude towards a brand and repeated purchases of the same brand over time. Brand loyalty is also conceptualised based on an attitudinal perspective (Chaudhuri and Holbrook, 2001, p. 82; Pappu et al. (2005)

p.145; Rossiter and Percy, 1987; Yoo et al., 2000). A favorable brand reputation is a snapshot that reconciles the images of a company held by all its constituencies (Walsh et al., 2009). Walsh et al. (2009) argue that, “an important determinant of the reputation a person holds of a company is the relationship that the person has with an organization, and customers are more likely than other stakeholders to have a relationship” with a company and brand (p.191) which increase brand performance. Thus, it is likely that if consumers have positive feelings, and desired attributes evaluations towards brand reliability and benevolence, this will positively affect brand loyalty, brand re-purchase, and brand recommendation. This leads us to the following hypothesis:

*Hypothesis 6: Attributes towards brand reputation which depends upon reliability and benevolence impacts on brand's performance.*

**“Insert Figure 1 about here”**

## **MATERIALS AND METHODOLOGY**

### *Sample and Data Collection*

The formulated hypotheses were examined via sample of customers from the UK who booked a hotel room in the last year, and provide an almost ideal empirical setting to study the constructs of interest for several reasons. In the UK survey, 520 questionnaires were sent using convenience sampling (namely, a non-random sampling technique) was used in order to eliminate the potential bias in terms of the validity and generalisability of the scales (Bell and Bryman, 2007; Churchill, 1999). Convenience sampling is based on employing participants who were easily accessible consumers of the global brand hotel from which 379 usable questionnaires were returned and analysed. Convenience sampling helped us to promptly gather data and conduct analysis and has pros and cons like any other sampling approach. Though, this method of sampling might create skewed data because of respondent misrepresentation, thus leading to biased and inconclusive findings. Given that this research is to assess the framework and convenience sampling is appropriate method to employ. The sample survey was given an opportunity to gain the essential information from a relatively few respondents to explain the characteristics of the entire population (Bell and Bryman, 2007).

The UK sample was drawn from London and the sample is representative of the main population. The survey consisted of questions referring to consumers' perceptions of the brand signature of the global hotel impact on brand reputation and brand performance in the UK. The data were collected using the face-to-face method, and, to increase the sample size and to make sure that the sample included the most knowledgeable informants, non-probability 'snowballing' was used as a distribution method by asking initial informants to suggest others who could offer further insights (Helm, 2011; Kirby and Kent, 2010). Churchill (1999) declared that face-to-face questionnaire collection is the most used sampling method in large-scale surveys. It also guarantees that the respondents targeted complete the questionnaires.

Table 1 is a summary of the demographic characteristics. It shows that the majority of the respondents were female (60.7%). Most of the respondents were between the ages of 40-59 and 31-39 (33.5% and 28.5%, respectively). Majority of the respondents were visited the hotel brand for the first time (72.8%) and 16.9% are using this hotel brand twice a year. Many of the respondents were owner of a company, student, and top executive manager (16.4%, 15.6%, and 14.2%, respectively). 41.2% of the respondents were married or have domestic partnership. The results also demonstrated that a high percentage (30.1%, 27.2 and 25.6%, respectively) of the respondents had a bachelor's, master's degree, and some college and mainly from Europe (55.1%). In *order* to assess the familiarity of respondents with the companies in the study, they were queried about their hotel-visiting patterns.

**“Insert Table 1 about here”**

### ***Measurement***

The measurement for the constructs of interest was based on established scales from previous research, proven to be psychometrically sound (Churchill, 1979; Hair et al., 2006). The questionnaire contains two sections: in the first section, respondents were asked to indicate on a seven-point Likert-type scale ranging from (1) strongly disagree, to (7) strongly agree, used to provide satisfactory properties, which related to the underlying distribution of responses toward global brand signature. Based on previous studies the two key components of brand signature are brand name and brand logo. Brand name was measured based on previous literature (Chan and Huang, 1997; Collins, 1977; Foroudi et al., 2014; Klink, 2003; Kotler and Armstrong, 1997; McCarthy and Perreault, 1987). Typeface (Childers and Jass, 2002;

Foroudi et al., 2014; Henderson et al., 2004), design (Henderson and Cote, 1998; Foroudi et al., 2014; Van den Bosch et al., 2006), and color (Aslam, 2006; Foroudi et al., 2014; Tavassoli, 2001) used to measure brand logo.

This study measured consumer brand attitude based on two constructs (brand association and brand belief). Brand association scales were adopted from Aaker (1991, 1996), Pappu et al. (2005), Washburn and Plank (2002), and Yoo and Donthu (2002). The concept of brand belief was measured based on the items which were adopted from previous studies (Batra and Ahtola, 1991; Keller and Aaker, 1992; Kim et al., 2015; Kwon and Lennon, 2005; 2006; 2009). Additionally, to measure brand familiarity (Ha and Perks, 2005) and brand recognisability (Baker and Balmer, 1997; Dowling, 1994; Hatch and Schultz, 2001; Kotler, 2000; Omar and Williams, 2006; Van Riel et al., 2001) were measured from existing scales. Brand reputation was examined via brand reliability (Delgado-Ballester et al., 2001) and benevolence (Kim et al., 2004; Lombart and Louis, 2016; Low and Ang, 2013; Sirdeshmukh et al., 2002; Spears and Singh, 2004; Zhao and Roper, 2011). Brand loyalty (Boo et al., 2009; Keller, 2003; Odin et al., 2001; Yoo and Donthu, 2001; 2002; Yoo et al., 2000), brand re-purchase (Mattila, 2001; Maxham and Netemeyer, 2002), and brand recommendation (Lee et al., 2012, Byon and Zjhang, 2010; Mattila, 2001; Wong and Sohal, 2002) scales were adopted to measure brand performance according to the context (Table 2).

The initial measures were subjected to a series of factor and reliability analyses as preliminary tests of their performance within the entire sample. The construct-level reliability, also called ‘composite reliability’, ensures that items assigned to the same constructs reveal a higher relationship with each other. The appropriateness of the measurement model involves examining the statistical significance of each factor loading and calculation of the composite reliability. The scales are well above the commonly accepted requirements for psychometric reliability tests (.853 through .962 > .70) for both samples (Hair et al., 2006; Nunnally, 1978).

**“Insert Table 2 about here”**

## **RESULTS AND ANALYSIS**

Exploratory factor analysis (EFA), as a statistical procedure, is used to analyse interrelationships among large numbers of variables, and to describe such variables in terms

of their common underlying factors (Hair et al., 2006). Initially, 78 items relating to the brand logo were examined using EFA to contribute to ten theoretically established constructs. The use of Cronbach's alpha for each factor confirmed that the items in each factor were internally consistent (Nunnally, 1978). Tabachnick and Fidell (2007) recommend that the researchers use EFA to determine the factor structure of measures, examine internal reliability and discover underlying structures in relatively large sets of variables. Table 3 reveals the rotated component matrix of the scale for which the results show that the items loaded on eleven factors ranging from .686 to .927 and satisfied the minimum criteria for factor loadings (Churchill, 1979; Hair et al., 2006). The results of EFA illustrate that the items fit within the theoretical factor structures. KMO's measure of sampling adequacy (0.879>.6) recommends that the relationship between items is statistically significant and is appropriate for EFA to deliver a parsimonious set of factors (Tabachnick and Fidell, 2007).

**“Insert Table 3 about here”**

Confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) is a sophisticated technique that is used in the advanced stages of the research process to test a theory about the relationship between a set of measurement items and their respective factors as well as to assess discriminant validity (Tabachnick and Fidell, 2007). In a series of analyses, the correlation between each pair of latent variables was constrained to 1. In every case, the constraint significantly worsened the model fit ( $\Delta\chi^2 = 10$ ;  $df = 1$ ;  $p = 0.01$ ) (Anderson and Gerbing, 1988). In addition, the variance extracted for each construct was compared to the square of each off-diagonal value within the Phi-matrix for that construct (Fornell and Larcker, 1981). In all cases, the variance extracted exceeded the Phi estimates, suggesting that each set of items represents a distinct underlying concept.

The current study uses a positivist paradigm (i.e. a quantitative method) as it is more appropriate for theory testing rather than theory generation to test the proposed hypotheses and their causal relationships and the scale validation (Carmines and Zeller, 1979; De Vaus, 2002). Analysis of moment structure (AMOS) 24 for Windows software was used to run the model to test the hypotheses, using all available observations in group analysis. The model fit was evaluated for overall fitness by referring to the fit indices as suggested by authors (Byrne, 2001; Hair et al., 2006; Tabachnick and Fidell, 2007). The researchers used incremental fit indices as well as absolute fit indices. The CFI and RMSEA provide sufficient

unique information to evaluate a model (Hair et al., 2006). Based on the criteria, Garver and Mentzer (1999) recommend the comparative fit index (CFI), and the root mean squared approximation of error (RMSEA) .061; (<.08 indicates acceptable fit).

CFI .912 (>.90 indicates good fit) is an incremental index that evaluates the fit of a model with the null baseline model (Hair et al., 2006). CFI is considered as an improved version of the NFI index (Hair et al., 2006; Tabachnick and Fidell, 2007). The normed fit index (NFI) measures the proportion by which a model is improved in terms of fit compared to the base model (Hair et al., 2006). However, the NFI index does not control for degrees of freedom and it underestimates fit in small samples (Byrne 2001), (.860>.08 indicates acceptable fit) (Hair et al., 2006). The goodness-of-fit index (GFI) measures the fitness of a model compared with another model (Hair et al., 2006). GFI.785<.90) indicates below the acceptable cut-off level. The adjusted goodness-of-fit index (AGFI) corrects model complexity (.708<.90). Both the GFI and AGFI are below the acceptable cut-off level. Hair et al. (2006) state that no specific value on any index can separate models into acceptable and unacceptable fits. Following Hair et al.'s (2006) suggestion, the researcher should report at least one incremental index and one absolute index, in addition to the value and associated degrees of freedom. The model specifications can influence model fit and the researcher should be sure that all model specifications should be done to best approximate the theory to be tested rather than increase model fit (Hair et al., 2006). Since these measures make it difficult to provide a favorable fit for the model, these results can only be additional information.

According to Hair et al. (2006), the Tucker-Lewis index (TLI), also known as the non-normed fit index (NNFI), compares the  $\chi^2$  value of the model to that of the independence model and takes degrees of freedom for the model into consideration (Byrne, 2001; Hair et al., 2006; Tabachnick and Fidell, 2007). Therefore, the measurement model of these three factors was nomologically valid (Steenkamp and Trijp, 1991). Additionally, the incremental fit index (IFI), and Tucker-Lewis index (TLI) were .913 and .907 respectively. All were greater than the suggested threshold of .90 (Hair et al., 2006), and each criteria of fit thus indicated that the proposed measurement model's fit was acceptable.

Based on the standardized parameter estimates for the hypothesized relationships among the constructs, the results provide that consumer found a relationship between brand signature and consumer attitude towards the brand (brand signature > brand attitude), so, hypothesis 1

was fully supported ( $\beta = .518, t = 2.195$ ). In addition to the hypothesized effects, guided by the consumers' perception, the relationships between brand attitude and brand reputation (H2) were statistically fully accepted ( $\beta = .793, t = 2.643$ ) (Figure 2). Hypothesis 3 investigates the relationship between brand signature and brand knowledge and the results illustrates the significant relationships (brand signature > brand awareness). Hypothesis 3 was supported fully ( $\beta = 1.064, t = 5.698$ ).

Hypothesis 4 (brand awareness > brand reputation) was not supported for the hypothesised relationships between brand knowledge and brand reputation. The result illustrates significantly different from 0 at the .05 significance level and that it may not be particularly effective regarding a consumer's perception ( $\beta = .399, t = 1.840, p .066$ ). The regression path unexpectedly shows a significant negative relationship between these two variables, which is a rather surprising result, particularly in light of previous studies (Han et al., 2014). In line with previous studies, familiarity and recognisability with global company and its product affects evaluations, but does not necessarily influence the perception of the product and services and create reliability and benevolence. Therefore, brand awareness regarding company and product are hard to influence on global consumers' perception. As a result, it can be a challenge for international companies to increase their consumers' benevolence with the company and its services as well as its reliability (Table 3). The hypothesized model shows that the effect of brand awareness on brand attitude (H5) was statistically significant ( $\beta = .363, t = 2.429$ ), and, therefore accepted. The relationships between brand reputation and brand performance (H6) were found significant ( $\beta = .167, t = 2.874$ ).

**“Insert Figure 2 about here”**

## **DISCUSSION**

This study contributes to the tourism literature by investigating the degree to which a signature of the brand elements, such as name and logo, succeed in expressing the values a hotel's brand wishes to convey and its effects upon UK visitors and consumers. In other words, what are the factors that influence brand signature favourability globally? In addition, what are the main influences of such favourability on brand performance globally?. The findings here support the preceding literature (Foroudi et al., 2014; Van den Bosch et al., 2005; Van der Lans et al., 2009) that logos are associated with reputation of brands. The management of an organization's brand signature is of strategic importance and requires a

multi-disciplinary approach. A brand signature stands in complex relation to brand practices because it is used as a tangible cue to link the internal and external organization together, particularly in international context. Furthermore, it is a main carrier whereby the identity of an organization can be visualised and its image and reputation supported via in the country of origin or globally. In general, the more favorable the brand signature of an organization is perceived by consumers, the more favorable the reputation consumers have towards the brand.

This research contributes to the current belief among scholars (Foroudi et al., 2014; Van den Bosch et al., 2005) that 'anything a company or brand does, express its characteristics'. This study examines consumers' perception-based attributes in respect of the brand signature and its elements, as well as its outcomes. The results of the research show that there is a relationship between a brand signature and the characteristics of its parent company. Consumers pick out the hotels brand's services among competing firms by its signature. The brand signature is thus the brand name and brand logo which formed of a certain typeface, color, and design.

Brand signature represents a distinct message and the quality of the brand to consumers. Indeed, it has been asserted that the brand signature should emphasize the importance of the name (Kohli et al., 2002), as the most identifiable element of the corporate identity tends to be specific for each brand (Hatch and Schultz, 1997). The brand signature concerns the unique, recognizable, memorable corporate features (Clow and Baack, 2010; Henderson and Cote, 1998; Klink, 2003). The brand signature its components represent the articulation of the corporate uniqueness of the brand in the mind frame of stakeholders and create a distinctive identity from international competitors (Henderson et al., 2003).

Nonetheless, this paper complements earlier research (Bhattacharya and Sen, 2003; Van Riel and Balmer, 1997) those consumers' attributions regarding the brand signature as the root of corporate identity may lead to such attitudinal and judgmental outcomes. By taking a holistic approach, the findings here enhance the related tourism theory. The contribution of this study is to grasp a broader view of hotel brand identity, as well as tourism, by investigating whether the incorporation of a particular hotel brand signature influences the reputation of a hotel in the eyes of visitors and consumers which influence on hotel's performance. This is one of the first studies to empirically validate the assumptions made by researchers in tourism (Foroudi

et al., 2014; Henderson and Cote, 1998; Pittard et al., 2007; Van der Lans et al., 2009; Van Riel et al., 2001) that the brand signature impacts corporate reputation in the contexts of the tourism, at least in the global context of major hotel branding.

Accordingly, brand signature can be capitalized through managing corporate identity. According to Chajet and Shachtman (1991, p.28), brand signature is the “heart and soul of a company”. The notion of brand signature is linked to the concept of brand identity. In this respect, tourism a corporation as a whole can be considered as leveraging in order to position the hotel’s brand signature in the minds of stakeholders. Furthermore, a favorable hotel’s brand signature increases a brand’s significance as a brand and company differentiator; the signature selection or modification is a significant part of the process of global corporate reputation formation (LeBlanc and Nguyen, 1996). In general, it can be argued that the findings present an indication for the following premise: brand signature of a company with an essential communication, distinctiveness, which can reflect a brand and company’s reputation (Henderson and Cote, 1998) and increase the brand’s performance in this highly competitive environment.

This study extends knowledge in the relatively understudied area of brand signature influence on brand reputation relationships and tests a framework that represents an initial attempt to examine visitors/customers’ perceptions of a global hotel and influence upon brand perceptions of a global hotel and its elements, brand attitude, brand awareness, brand reputation, and brand performance. The findings highlight the importance of assessing whether corporate reputation (how consumers respond to a company’s identity) is significant, since a brand signature is used to influence people’s perceptions of a brand (Balmer 2001; Henderson and Cote, 1998; Van Riel and Balmer, 1997; Van Riel et al., 2001).

Despite the verifiable importance of brand signature (Henderson and Cote, 1998; Pittard et al., 2007; Van der Lans et al., 2009), inadequate empirical research has yet been carried out on the brand signature and the influence of signature and their elements on consumer evaluations of signature from tourism settings. The findings corroborate the literature on global brand signature and global consumers’ attitude toward global hotel brand.

In addition, the results show that international signature design represents a ‘hard’ aspect of identity and companies employ the brand signature that was used in the corporate identity and

formed into a design as the logo process; the human mind can interpret it faster than it can words (Henderson et al., 2003). Therefore, it is likely to be the most practical dimension of corporate identity. For example, the item 'the design of the logo communicates the company's identity' (Van den Bosch et al., 2006), and the item 'the design is distinct' (Henderson and Cote, 1998) supports the idea that the design of a brand logo communicates the overall brand reputation as intended by the organization through its brand identity. Organizations must recognise the design implications for all responses because multiple responses may be elicited (Clow and Baack, 2010; Henderson et al., 2004) and its implementation is thus essential.

Global marketing managers must recognize how their brand's signature is perceived across global markets. In addition, global managers require understanding the different meanings associated with specific signature may facilitate multi segment marketing opportunities (Madden et al., 2000). Furthermore, the findings illustrate that consumers attitude towards brand has positive impact on consumers' perception towards brand reputation. There is also a fit with the perspective advocated by Henderson et al. (2004), in that a company's logo helps communicate the company's goals, the message of which should be consistency (Bottomley and Doyle, 2006; Klink, 2003). This may involve pragmatic actions.

This study has also considered the consequences of the brand signature in respect of brand reputation with mediated effect through consumers' awareness towards the brand and services. The findings indicate that perceptions about hotel's brand signature significantly influence customers' perceptions' about a hotel. Consistent with the attribution theory (Graham, 1991; Kelley and Michela, 1980; Weiner, 1992), which suggests that when individuals succeed or fail in dynamic interactions, it affects the inferences they make about the particular behaviors; this study's findings demonstrate that when individuals perceive a favorable brand signature, there is an immediate mental picture that they hold of the organization and a greater sense of association with the organization, which is likely to impact behavior (Karaosmanoglu et al., 2011).

Furthermore, the results show that while the impact of consumers' perceptions of favorable brand signature affect their awareness towards the brand, and increase the product and services recognisability and familiarity. However, the relationship between customers' attitude toward, recognisability and familiarity towards corporate reputation can vary in

different settings or contexts. The irony of the above statement is considerable, since, to create a favorable corporate reputation, hotel industry should not rely solely on the attitude towards the consumers' awareness and its main elements (recognisability and familiarity). However, this finding should still be examined in future studies, since only one hotel as reference entities was chosen to be tested for the current research.

In order to have a full representation of the service sector, this research should be replicated in different global tourism contexts as well as other modes of service. Furthermore, it will be productive to examine whether this research outcome will be the same for different levels of the tangibility-intangibility continuum. The results also show that the consumers' attitude towards a company's corporate reputation impact on consumers' attitude towards the company and increase the performance of the brand. This result can indicate that global brand reputation is endowed with a judgment and is the overall evaluation of a hotel over time (Gotsi and Wilson, 2001). This result can indicate that it is important for companies to create a brand signature that aims to enhance consistency across all possible forms of an organization's physical identification in order to develop a favorable nationally and global corporate reputation (Balmer, 2001; Van Riel and Balmer, 1997), as well as serve as a competitive advantage to enhance a brand loyalty, brand repurchase and brand recommendation (Olins, 1989). Moreover, the model pinpointed that when individuals like a global hotel's brand logo, they tend to have a good feeling about the brand, and admire and respect the brand (Chun, 2005; Helm, 2011).

Overall, this study has drawn attention to brand signature formation from a multi-disciplinary approach, which is a major contribution of the present research. The main challenge is to develop multi-disciplinary insights into relationships, which can be translated into findings with operational relevance to the study (Palmer and Bejou, 2006). This study is one of the first empirical examinations of this area via a synthesis of the brand signature, consumer attitude to brand, awareness of consumers, brand reputation, brand performance, brand identity, design and the literature on tourism to describe the brand signature in a more holistic manner. At the same time, the study contributes to the literature on tourism, and design by developing and testing the research model. The efficient management of global brand signature leads to a consumer attitude to brand, awareness of consumers, and favorable corporate reputation. An enduring, favorable brand reputation ensures a favorable brand performance and develops a positive attitude in stakeholders towards the organization (Van

Riel, 1995; Van Riel and Balmer, 1997). International tourism industry and corporate branding academics focus on the brand signature as a concept that is formed on the basis of the corporate brand promise of an organization, and used to differentiate characteristics of a brand, product, and services (Van Heerden, 1999).

In other words, in this study I stress that the repeated interactions of consumers with a company's brand signature, creates a first impression (Van Heerden and Puth, 1995) that evokes positive and negative reactions (Henderson and Cote, 1998; Van Riel, 1995; Van Riel et al., 2001). The results show that it is complicated in tourism global settings, in which organizations must wrestle with possible cross-cultural meaning differences and diverse competitive landscapes and business infrastructures (Madden et al., 2000). A brand logo and name can remind the beholder of her/his perceptions towards the corporation behind the signature (Henderson and Cote, 1998; Van Heerden and Puth, 1995). Moreover, the brand signature as a symbol can help the global brand to create a position or brand differentiation in the market from its competitors and environment (Hatch and Schultz, 2001; Van den Bosch et al., 2005) and provide reassurance for the customer.

## **MANAGERIAL IMPLICATIONS**

The results of this study may provide actionable guidelines for international tourism practitioners and decision-makers in better managing brand signature, and, hence, have implications for tourism studies. The findings recommend that global brand signature can be a significant, controllable marketing factor for managing image standardization. First and foremost, this study shows the customers' evaluations of hotel brand logo and the results of this study can be employed by global hotel managers to understand the whole situation of the relationship between a favorable brand signature and the factors in its antecedents (brand logo with three components: name, typeface, and design) from the consumer's perspective and its effect on a favorable brand reputation and brand performance, specific in the international context. In other words, a clear understating of the dimensions of the relevant concepts can assist international tourism managers and designers to devise a favorable brand signature, which will create a favorable brand loyalty, repurchase and recommendation globally.

Even though the management of international hotels may think that interactions among corporate visual identity and customers are beyond their control, managers can focus on a

couple of areas. By understanding the market needs, as well as the brand's strengths and weaknesses, international hotel managers will be able to make the right decision in selecting a brand signature favorable for targeting and responding to market needs. In practice, different managers set out to create a sense of shared vision by reducing dysfunctional conflict and promoting a sense of shared values and communication. Furthermore, international tourism managers should be more responsive to the hotel's brand logo by taking into account that responsiveness was found to have the greatest influence on the hotel's outcomes across national and international markets. Importantly, this study helps consultants and managers to understand whether the hotel's brand logo communicates a reliable message and the personality of the brand to the target audience globally.

While the creation of a favorable brand signature is costly and challenging for an organization (Henderson and Cote, 1998) and managers make every effort to create one which is favorable, reliably communicating the consistent corporate identity to the market (Hatch and Schultz, 2001; Van den Bosch et al., 2005; Van Riel et al., 2001), the findings of this study are of importance to international decision-makers. Taking a leap forward, the brand signature, as an element of corporate visual identity (Balmer, 2001; Hatch and Schultz, 1997; Van Riel et al., 2001), should offer such consistent meanings cross-culturally, which can evoke emotional response in the minds of consumers (Henderson and Cote 1998; Van den Bosch et al., 2005; Van Riel, 1995). Thus, it is fruitful for a brand's designers and managers to note the importance of the emotional aspect of the brand signature as a key element of corporate identity rather than simply focusing on what is fashionable and modern. By demonstrating the critical constituents of a favorable brand signature, this research may assist international hotel and tourism managers to understand the significant role of the brand signature.

## **CONCLUSION**

When this study bridges the gap between academics and practitioners, managing a favorable brand signature can be seen as an integrated approach for expressing a company's communication skills, internally and externally. By establishing that the brand signature is a major tangible asset in the expression of the company and is used as the 'glue' in communication (Van den Bosch et al., 2006), which influences a favorable global brand reputation, this research aims to be helpful to international managers and communication professionals alike. The results of this study will support further develop insight into brand

logo, awareness of consumers, consumer attitude to brand, brand reputation, and brand performance standardization and customization opportunities.

This study's findings suggest that to achieve a competitive advantage, corporations should have a clear understanding of favorable global brand signatures, which is influenced by two main factors, namely, brand name and brand logo (typeface, design, and color). The empirical results of this study indicate the relative weighting of the antecedent constructs affecting the brand signature. The construct of the brand name had the greatest influence. Design had upmost impacts on consumers' perception followed by typeface and color. A company's brand name is an intangible asset. In this study, a company's brand name is established as one of the critical factors, which influences the favourability of the brand signature. As mentioned in the literature, in providing a favorable brand signature, managers play a significant role in the development of the organization, with physical artefacts increasingly becoming part of the vocabulary of management thinking at a visible level of the organization. International tourism communication managers revealed that in their brand, they highlight the name of their brand behind the logo to assure readers of the quality of the company and its services. The outcome of the present study suggests that tourism managers should actively orchestrate a favorable brand name and logo to evoke attention and the desired responses, as well as increasing awareness speed.

The resulting significant relationship between a favorable brand signature and consumer's awareness suggests that international tourism management should emphasize the value of the signature expressed through its brand. Using a typeface, design, color, and name are highly significant to signature design because the chosen signature lends qualities of representation to the abstract shapes that form words and letters. International managers should select name and logo that support strategically valued impressions to improve brand attitude and awareness.

Two variables were investigated in this research, namely, awareness of consumers and consumer attitude to brand. This study has shown that there is a direct relationship between the constructs. However, they are less useful in relation to global corporate reputation. It can be argued that there is in fact a mismatch between the company's corporate identity and corporate reputation. In this respect, international advertising and tourism marketing managers should concentrate on consistency in corporate communications. Furthermore,

managers should place more emphasis on the brand signature and less on the content to be placed in adverts. These two variables are likely to play an important role in encouraging consumers' perception.

The findings of this study indicate that the familiarity and recognisability of the services to consumers refers to their understanding of the services and to its characteristics and also to their ability to evaluate its quality (Herrera and Blanco, 2011). Brand signature contributes strongly to an increase in the familiarity and recognisability and appreciation of a company and its products or services (Chadwick and Walters, 2009).

In addition, there is a direct relationship between the brand signature and awareness of consumers, suggesting that global tourism, communication and managers are responsible for managing and projecting a favorable signature in order to achieve a favorable reputation in the minds of consumers across globally. A further conclusion can be drawn from this research with regard to the association between a brand association and brand belief (awareness of consumers) and company's brand reputation and brand performance.

Finally, this study presents a comprehensive understanding of the concept of the 'favorable brand signature' and its consequences (brand attitude, brand awareness, brand reputation, and brand performance). Although any given organization cannot fully represent all sectors, according to scholars (Churchill, 1999), survey research with high external validity is generalizable to the population and across sectors internationally. Thus, the findings of this research may be potentially generalised to other industries.

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**Table 1: Demographic profile of the hotel consumers compared with the main population figures (N=379)**

<b>Frequency</b>				<b>Percent</b>			
<b>Gender</b>				<b>Status</b>			
	Female	230	60.7		Single, never married	107	28.2
	Male	149	39.3		Married or domestic partnership	156	41.2
<b>Age</b>				<b>Education</b>			
	18-23	12	3.2		High school or equivalent	36	9.5
	24-30	46	12.1		Bachelor's degree	114	30.1
	31-39	108	28.5		Some college	97	25.6
	40-59	127	33.5		Master's degree	103	27.2
	60-above	86	22.7		Doctoral degree or Higher	29	7.7
<b>Using the hotel brand</b>				<b>Ethnicity origin</b>			
	First time	276	72.8		Europe	209	55.1
	Twice a year	64	16.9		Asia	62	16.4
	More than Twice a year	39	10.3		Africa	46	12.1
<b>Job</b>					North and South America	41	10.8
	Top executive or manager	54	14.2		Australia	21	5.5
	Owner of a company	62	16.4				
	Lawyer, dentist or architect etc.	46	12.1				
	Office/clerical staffs	41	10.8				
	Worker	21	5.5				
	Civil servant	3	.8				
	Craftsman	33	8.7				
	Student	59	15.6				
	Housewife	26	6.9				
	Retired	34	9.0				

**Table 2: The domain and items of construct in extant literature**

Construct	Scale Items	Major references	Code
<b>Brand Signature</b>			
	<b>Brand Name</b>		
	The hotel's name is easy to remember	Chan and Huang (1997); Collins (1977); Foroudi et al. (2014); Klink (2003); Kotler and Armstrong (1997); McCarthy and Perreault (1987)	BN1
	The hotel's name is always timely (does not get out of date)	Chan and Huang (1997); Collins (1977); Foroudi et al. (2014); Kotler and Armstrong (1997); McCarthy and Perreault (1987)	BN2
	The hotel's name is unique versus the competition	Chan and Huang (1997); Collins (1977); Foroudi et al. (2014); Klink (2003); Kotler and Armstrong (1997); McCarthy and Perreault (1987)	BN3
	The hotel's name communicates about the company and the product's benefits and qualities	Collins (1977); Foroudi et al. (2014); Klink (2003); Kotler and Armstrong (1997)	BN4
	The hotel's name is short and simple	Chan and Huang (1997); Collins (1977); Foroudi et al. (2014); Klink (2003); Kotler and Armstrong (1997)	BN5
	The hotel's name is pleasing when read or heard and easy to pronounce	Chan and Huang (1997); Collins (1977); Foroudi et al. (2014); Klink (2003); Kotler and Armstrong (1997); McCarthy and Perreault (1987)	BN6
	The hotel's name is promotable and advertizable	Chan and Huang (1997); Collins (1977); Foroudi et al. (2014); Kotler and Armstrong (1997)	BN7
	The hotel's name is recognizable	McCarthy and Perreault (1987); Foroudi et al. (2014); Kohli et al. (2002)	BN8
	The hotel's name is easy to recall	Foroudi et al. (2014); Klink (2003)	BN9
	I like the hotel name	Foroudi et al. (2014)	BN10
	<b>Brand Logo</b>		
	<b>Typeface</b>		
	The hotel's typeface is attractive	Henderson et al. (2004); Foroudi et al. (2014)	LBT1
	The hotel's typeface is artistic	Foroudi et al. (2014)	LBT2
	The hotel's typeface makes me have positive feelings towards the brand	Foroudi et al. (2014)	LBT3
	The hotel's typeface is immediately readable	Childers and Jass (2002); Foroudi et al. (2014)	LBT4

The hotel's typeface communicates with me when the logo is simply not feasible	Henderson et al. (2004); Foroudi et al. (2014)	LBT5
The hotel's typeface is interesting	Foroudi et al. (2014)	LBT6
The hotel's typeface is honest	Foroudi et al. (2014)	LBT7
The hotel's typeface is potent	Foroudi et al. (2014)	LBT8

**Design**

The design of the logo is familiar	Cohen (1991); Henderson and Cote (1998); Robertson (1989)	LBD1
The design of the logo communicates the brand's identity	Henderson and Cote (1998)	LBD2
The design of the logo communicates clear meanings	Huppatz (2005); Melewar and Akel (2005); Van den Bosch et al. (2006)	LBD3
The design of the logo reflects the personality of the company	Bernstein (1986); Van Heerden and Puth (1995); Van Riel et al. (2001)	LBD4
The design of the logo is distinct	Henderson and Cote (1998); Fombrun and Van Riel (2004)	LBD5
The design of the logo helps memorability	Henderson and Cote (1998); Van den Bosch et al. (2005)	LBD6
The design of the logo is meaningful	Cohen (1991); Robertson (1989); Henderson et al. (2003)	LBD7
The design of the logo communicates the brand message	Brachel (1999); Durgee and Stuart (1987); Keller (1993); Schmitt (1995); Van Riel (1995)	LBD8
I like the design of the logo	Henderson et al. (2003)	LBD9

**Color**

The color of the logo affects my judgments and behavior	Aslam (2006); Tavassoli (2001)	LBC1
The color of the logo is recognizable	Balmer and Gray (2000); Van Riel et al. (2001)	LBC2
The color of the logo is unique	Madden et al. (2000)	LBC3
The color of the logo affects my mood	Aslam (2006); Tavassoli (2001)	LBC4
The color of the logo is pleasant	Madden et al. (2000)	LBC5
The color of the logo is meaningful	Madden et al. (2000); Osgood et al. (1957)	LBC6

**Brand Attitude**

**Brand Association**

The brand is up-market	Pappu et al. (2005)	ABA1
I am proud to stay in this hotel		ABA2
I can easily imagining the brand in my mind	Aaker (1991, 1996), Pappu et al. (2005), Washburn and Plank (2002), Yoo and Donthu (2002)	ABA3
Some characteristics of the brand come to my brand		ABA4

		quickly.			
	<b>Brand Belief</b>				
		I believe, the hotel has good serviceability.	Batra and Ahtola (1991); Keller and Aaker (1992); Kim et al., 2015); Kwon and Lennon (2005; 2006; 2009)	ABB1	
		I enjoy staying in this hotel		ABB2	
		I like the way this hotel looks		ABB3	
		I believe, this hotel's brand appeals to people like me.		ABB4	
<b>Brand Awareness</b>					
	<b>Brand Familiarity</b>				
		The hotel and the services are familiar to me	Ha and Perks (2005)	AWF1	
		The hotel and the services give me a feeling of goodwill		AWF2	
		The hotel and the services has services for today's consumer		AWF3	
		The hotel and its services offers the kind of services, I would use		AWF4	
		I think I have enough information to make an informed judgment about the hotel's services'		AWF5	
		The hotel and the services are well-known in detail		AWF6	
	<b>Brand Recognisability</b>				
		The hotel's brand is recognizable	Baker and Balmer (1997); Dowling (1994); Hatch and Schultz (2001); Kotler (2000); Omar and Williams (2006); Van Riel et al. (2001)	AWR1	
		The hotel and its services recognizability have influence on my decision.		Foroudi et al. (2014)	AWR2
		The brand and its services are recalled easily			AWR3
		The hotel and the services are distinct from other hotels			AWR4
		The hotel and its services are memorable			AWR5
		The hotel's services are recognizable	Baker and Balmer (1997); Dowling (1994); Hatch and Schultz (2001); Henderson and Cote (1998); Kotler (2000); Omar and Williams (2006); Van Riel et al. (2001)	AWR6	
<b>Brand Reputation</b>					
	<b>Brand Reliability</b>				
		I think, the hotel has reliable promises for future performance	Delgado-Ballester et al. (2001)	RR1	

Based on my experience, I trust this hotel	DelVecchio (2000)	RR2
The services and products provided from this hotel are reliable		RR3
Staying in this hotel would help avoid the problems I may have if I purchased some other hotel		RR4

<b>Brand Benevolence</b>		
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This hotel constantly tries to improve its services and products to better satisfy its consumers	Lombart and Louis (2016); Spears and Singh (2004)	RB1
This hotel renews its services and products to meet the expectations of its customers		RB2
Judging from the hotel response, I am confident that when customers have problems, the hotel will respond constructively and with care	Sirdeshmukh et al. (2002); Xie and Peng (2009); Zhao and Roper (2011)	RB3
Judging from the hotel response, I believe the brand has a great deal of benevolence	Kim et al. (2004); Low and Ang (2013); Sirdeshmukh et al., 2002; Xie and Peng (2009); Zhao and Roper (2011)	RB4
This hotel treats customers with respect in responding to negative publicity	Kim et al. (2004); Low and Ang (2013)	RB5
Judging from the hotel response, I rely on the hotel to favor the customer's best interest	Kim et al. (2004); Sirdeshmukh et al. (2002); Xie and Peng (2009)	RB6
This hotel is concerned about consumers.		RB7

<b>Brand Performance</b>		
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<b>Brand Loyalty</b>		
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I consider myself to be loyal to this hotel	Pappu et al. (2005); Washburn & Plank (2002); Yasin et al. (2007)	PL1
I will not buy other hotels if this hotel has room.	Washburn and Plank (2002); Yoo and Donthu (2001)	PL2
Compared to other hotels that have similar features, I am willing to pay a higher price for this hotel	Back and Parks (2003); Boo et al. (2009)	PL3
I believe, this hotel has credibility	Kim et al. (2008); Sweeney and Swait (2008)	PL4
I enjoy staying in this hotel	Melewar et al. (2017); Ponsonby-McCabe and Boyle (2006)	PL5
This hotel would be my first choice of hotel	Boo et al. (2009); Keller (2003); Odin et al. (2001); Pappu Pappu et al. (2005); Washburn and Plank (2002); Yoo and Donthu (2001; 2002); Yoo et al. (2000)	PL6
I believe, this hotel is contemporary	Melewar et al. (2017)	PL7
I believe, this hotel is innovative	Stock et al. (2013)	PL8

<b>Brand Re-Purchase</b>			
	I consider this hotel as my first choice compared to other brands.	Mattila (2001); Maxham and Netemeyer (2002)	PP1
	I have a strong intention to visit this hotel in my next trip		PP2
	I have a strong intention to visit this hotel in my distant future		PP3
<b>Brand Recommendation</b>			
	I would say positive things about this hotel to other people.	Lee et al. (2012), Byon and Zjhang (2010), Mattila (2001), Wong and Sohal (2002)	PR1
	I would recommend that someone visit this hotel		PR2
	I would encourage friends and relatives to visit this hotel	Boo et al. (2009); Lee, Kyle, Scott (2012), Byon and Zjhang (2010), Mattila (2001), Wong and Sohal (2002)	PR3

**Table 3: Factor loadings, descriptive statistics, correlation, and reliabilities**

Construct	Factor		Std. Deviation	AVE	SD									
	Loading	Mean				Signal.	Attitude	Awaren.	Rep.	Perform.	Gender	Age	Status	Educat.
<b>Brand Signature</b>														
	1													
	<b>Brand Name @ .962</b>			63.24	.82									
		BN1	.906	5.6253	1.23099	Item deleted (BN2, BN7, BN8, BN9, BN10) Cross-loaded and low reliability								
		BN3	.899	5.6517	1.26828									
		BN4	.833	5.6544	1.24480									
		BN5	.916	5.6649	1.18013									
		BN6	.904	5.6596	1.23345									
	<b>Brand Logo @ .826</b>													
	<b>Typeface @ .927</b>			77.35	0.81									
		LBT1	.871	5.0554	1.32521	Item deleted (LBT2, LBT7, LBT8) Cross-loaded and low reliability								
		LBT3	.878	5.0237	1.41868									
		LBT4	.894	5.0765	1.39612									
		LBT5	.842	5.1055	1.33113									
		LBT6	.911	5.1003	1.35321									
	<b>Design @ .949</b>			80.66	.78									
		LBD2	.885	5.6755	1.21834	Item deleted (LBD1, LBD6, LBD7, LBD8, LBD9) Cross-loaded and low reliability								
		LBD3	.902	5.7414	1.23299									
		LBD4	.887	5.7282	1.19413									
		LBD5	.918	5.7018	1.22075									
	<b>Color @ .926</b>			73.88	.77									
		LBC2	.821	5.5541	1.27620	Item deleted (LBC1, LBC4) Cross-loaded and low reliability								
		LBC3	.864	5.5541	1.29267									
		LBC5	.873	5.3351	1.50874									
		LBC6	.879	5.3298	1.46726									

<b>Brand Attitude</b>					
		0.396	1		
<b>Brand Association @ .866</b>		56.60			.69
	ABA1	.693	5.7704	1.18302	Item deleted (ABA2) low reliability
	ABA3	.802	5.9657	1.16673	
	ABA4	.758	5.7916	1.21557	
<b>Brand Belief @ .945</b>		83.86			.73
	ABB1	.899	5.5752	1.35558	Item deleted (ABB3) Cross-loaded
	ABB2	.921	5.5383	1.40689	
	ABB4	.927	5.5620	1.39661	
<b>Brand Awareness</b>					
		0.411	0.462	1	
<b>Brand Familiarity @ .946</b>		71.95			.77
	AWF2	.850	5.8232	1.25899	Item deleted (AWF1, AWF3) Cross-loaded
	AWF4	.847	5.9420	1.22228	
	AWF5	.850	5.8865	1.20418	
	AWF6	.846	5.7995	1.27321	
<b>Brand Recognisability @ .858</b>		62.12			.76
	AWR1	.855	5.8681	1.27802	Item deleted (AWR2, AWR6) low reliability
	AWR3	.686	5.6781	1.29379	
	AWR4	.807	5.7414	1.26267	
	AWR5	.795	5.4274	1.41492	
<b>Brand Reputation</b>					
		0.432	0.492	0.643	1
<b>Brand Reliability @ .931</b>		68.91			.77
	RR1	.793	5.3430	1.32278	
	RR2	.802	5.2955	1.37716	
	RR3	.858	5.2058	1.39912	
	RR4	.865	5.3562	1.36171	
<b>Brand Benevolence @ .962</b>		57.92			.81
	RB1	.854	5.6280	1.37489	Item deleted (RB6, RB7) Cross-loaded and low reliability



**Table 4: Results of hypothesis testing**

HYPOTHESES RELATIONSHIPS								
				Estimate	S.E	C.R	<i>p</i>	
H1	Brand Signature	--->	Brand Attitude	.518	.236	2.195	.028	Accepted
H2	Brand Attitude	--->	Brand Reputation	.793	.300	2.643	.008	Accepted
H3	Brand Signature	--->	Brand Awareness	1.064	.187	5.698	***	Accepted
H4	Brand Awareness	--->	Brand Reputation	.399	.217	1.840	.066	Not Accepted
H5	Brand Awareness	--->	Brand Attitude	.363	.149	2.429	.015	Accepted
H6	Brand Reputation	--->	Brand Performance	.167	.058	2.874	.004	Accepted

Figure 1: The research conceptual model

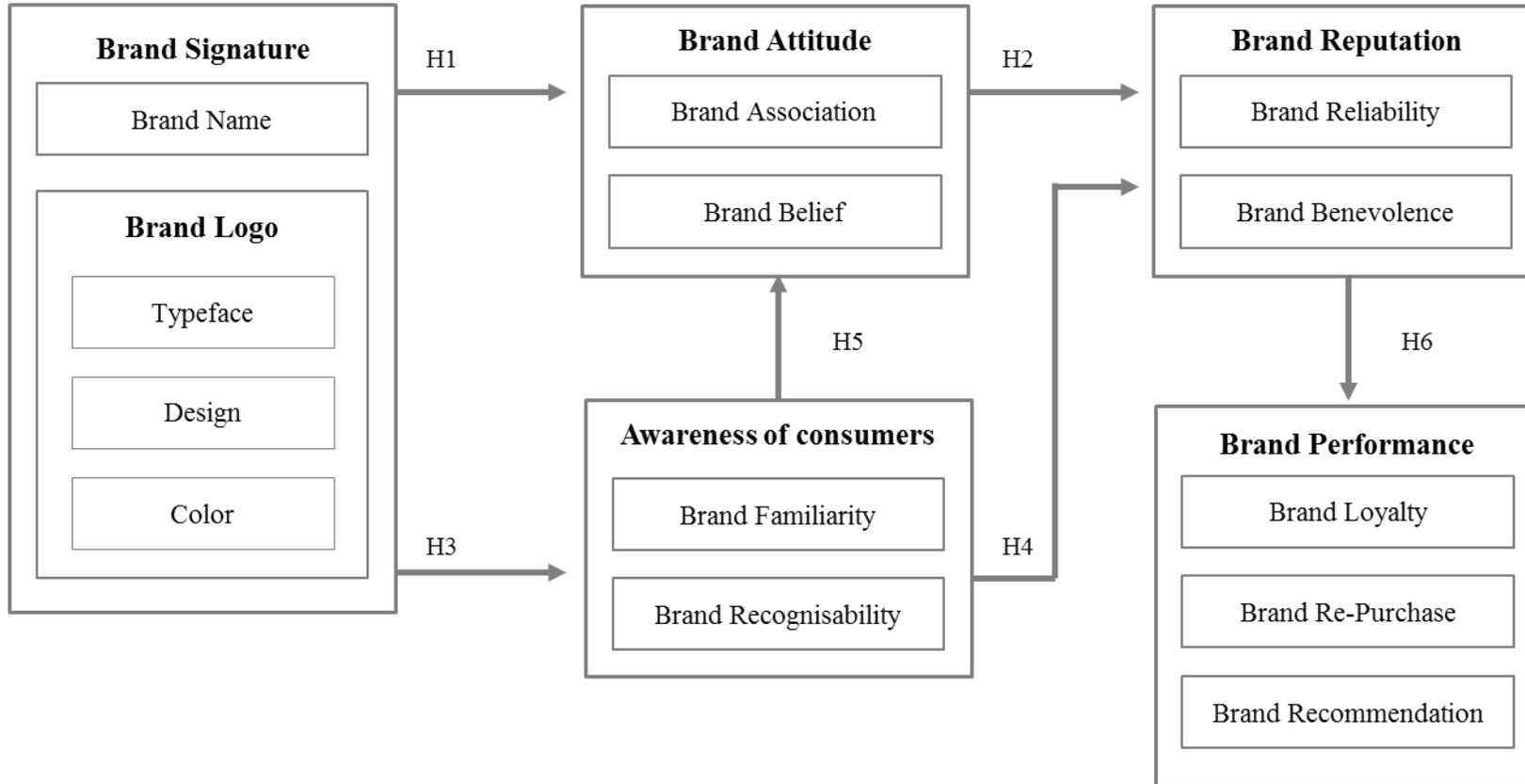


Figure 2: Validated structural model

