Introduction

Destinations are considered to be “amalgams of tourism products, offering an integrated experience to consumers” (Buhalís 2000, p. 97); as a result, in a destination several products and services that are provided to tourists by different stakeholders coexist. Therefore, destinations are characterized by high fragmentation, which is one of the factors that make destinations one of the most difficult entities to manage (Fyall and Garrod 2005; Fyall and Leask 2007). In light of the fragmentation of destinations on one hand and the need to provide tourists with a seamless experience on the other, the coordination of the stakeholders working within the destination is pivotal.

This activity affects also the destination brand, which is a topic that has attracted growing interest from scholars and practitioners. Similarly to products and services, destinations also must cope with increased competition from different destinations. As a result, the brand plays a pivotal role since it is the real source of competitive advantage of destinations because it allows destinations to differentiate themselves (Beerli and Martin 2004; García, Gómez, and Molina 2012) and to influence tourists’ choices and their satisfaction (Del Chiappa and Bregoli 2012).

The academic literature has acknowledged the link between stakeholder coordination and the destination brand, recognizing that destination brand development is a matter of coordination rather than a managed activity (Prideaux and Cooper 2002; Hankinson 2004; Ooi 2004; Fyall and Leask 2007). On this point, for instance, Scott, Parfitt, and Laws (2000, p. 202, cited by Fyall and Leask 2007) stressed the relationship between coordination and effective destination branding by arguing that “the difficulties of co-ordination and control have the potential to undermine a strategic approach to marketing based on destination branding because campaigns can be undertaken by a variety of tourist businesses with no consultation or co-ordination on the prevailing message or the destination values being promoted.” Hence, the stakeholder coordination is one of the necessary factors for developing a successful destination brand, along with drawing stakeholder support (Ooi 2004; Konecnik and Go 2008) and having stakeholders who are committed to the brand because successful branding is likely when there is “unity of purpose and commitment by all stakeholders to a common branding strategy” (Hankinson 2001, p. 137).

Although the relationship between stakeholder coordination and destination branding has been acknowledged in the literature, the topic has so far received little attention. As a consequence, this article tries to fill this gap by studying both...
the coordination carried out by the DMO and the destination brand analyzed from a supply-side perspective. With regard to the latter aspect, this paper has applied the concept of internal brand strength that consists of the brand commitment and the brand citizenship behavior dimensions. In order to study these topics, the author has carried out empirical research in Edinburgh, Scotland, to address the following research questions:

Research question 1: To what extent are the stakeholders committed to the destination brand values (brand commitment)?
Research question 2: Do stakeholders adopt the destination brand values in their work (brand citizenship behavior)?
Research question 3: Does the coordination activity have an impact on brand commitment and brand citizenship behavior?

Literature Review

In light of the research questions, the literature review will address the two topics of stakeholder coordination and destination branding from a supply-side perspective. However, it must be pointed out that regarding these topics, there is a dearth of literature that is specifically related to tourism. Therefore, the research considers concepts developed for business organizations and applies them to the tourism industry. This choice is consistent with the concept of destination stakeholders that this research adopts and considers “organizations that have some role in the tourism destination” (Baggio and Cooper 2010, p. 1759). Therefore, this research regards public and private organizations (such as visitor attractions, accommodations, and transport) as stakeholders.

Coordination

According to Hankinson (2007), the coordination of stakeholders working within the destination is one element of destination governance that entails the involvement of different organizations in the decision-making process (Baggio, Scott, and Cooper 2011; Spyriadis, Buhalis, and Fyall 2011). Although a unique definition of destination governance does not exist, scholars have studied topics that fall under it, like tourism networks and their structure (Scott, Cooper, and Baggio 2008) and collaboration among destination stakeholders (Jamal and Getz 1995; Fyall, and Garrod 2005; Wang and Xiang 2007; Rodger, Moore, and Newsome 2009; Arnaboldi and Spiller 2011). However, although destination governance is attracting a growing interest from scholars, the topic of stakeholders’ coordination is an unexplored topic.

Although the coordination of organizations has been studied for a long time within the managerial literature, a unique definition of the concept does not exist. While some scholars consider it synonymous with the concept of cooperation, others view them as two distinct concepts (Payan and Svensson 2007). According to the latter perspective, which this research applies, cooperation is the act of sharing resources in order to take advantage of collective opportunities. On the contrary, coordination is a process through which the actions of different organizations are managed to achieve a common goal (Grandori 1999) and it is necessary in order to cope with the interdependencies that develop between firms (Grandori 1995).

Since within destinations there are interdependencies between firms because they provide tourists different products and services, it is easy to understand how coordination is important. On this topic some scholars have pointed out that the DMO acts as a coordinator of both the stakeholders who work in the destination and the marketing activities which the DMO and single businesses carry out (Jamal and Getz 1995; Getz, Anderson, and Sheehan 1998; Buhalis 2000; Prideaux and Cooper 2002; Ritchie and Crouch 2003; Fyall and Garrod 2005; Gretzel et al. 2006; Wang and Fesemarier 2007). Furthermore, scholars acknowledge how the lack of stakeholder coordination can result in ineffective tourism development (Moscardo 2011).

In this research, in order to study coordination, some theories on interorganizational relationships have been analyzed with the aim of identifying a set of coordination mechanisms that DMOs might use. Table 1 shows the considered theories and the coordination mechanisms that were identified. However, from the literature analysis, the author reduced the original list of coordination mechanisms because some were more suitable than others for DMOs. These mechanisms are the following:

- Social norms, that is, informal rules that organizations share. They are linked to trust and reciprocity that allow the establishment of relationships between the diverse parties involved and peer-based control (Pfeffer and Salancik 1978; Cannon, Achrol, and Gundlach 2000). In the case of community destinations, trust among stakeholders is necessary in order to agree on common decisions (Beritelli, Bieger, and Laessser 2007), to share with other stakeholders own core competencies like a customer database and when stakeholders share a common brand (Palmer 1998; Fyall and Garrod 2005).
- Communication is the most developed mechanism that exists in all networks. It is necessary if the network participants want to develop a long-lasting relationship (Grandori and Soda 1995). Communication is also pivotal within destinations because effective communication is necessary in order to involve stakeholders and ensure that they are satisfied with the DMO (Bornhorst, Ritchie, and Sheehan 2010). Other research has shown that communication is essential in order...
to avoid internal conflicts between stakeholders such as with the setup of a Cultural District in Italy (Arnaboldi and Spiller 2011).

- Interlocking directorates occur when “a person affiliated with one organization sits on the board of directors of another organization” (Mizruchi 1996, p. 271). Not only are they a source of legitimacy but they also allow firms to gain access to information, resources, and expertise (Hillman, Withers, and Collins 2009). Researchers found that in tourism, destinations in which there were people sitting on different boards were following a successful strategy (Beritelli, Bieger, and Laesser 2007).

- Planning and control systems are based on the control of results achieved against previously set objectives (Grandori and Soda 1995). These systems allow destination managers to understand what actions deserve retention and development over time and, in case less effective initiatives are identified, to implement corrective actions (Ritchie and Crouch 2003).

- Selection systems that regulate the access to a network (Grandori and Soda 1995). Reid, Smith, and McCloskey (2008), in their research on the Atlantic Canada Tourism Partnership, stressed the need to carefully plan stakeholder participation. For instance, the marketing committees of this partnership were made up by representatives of firms who had the necessary expertise in marketing.

- Information systems (such as reservation systems) allow the coordination of firms in a network, thus simultaneously decreasing communication costs (Grandori and Soda 1995). Within destinations, the use of information technology (IT) and of destination marketing information systems (DMISs), in particular, can facilitate the connection between stakeholders and the dissemination of information across the destination (Ritchie and Ritchie 2002; Fyall 2011).

- Formal rules represented by the statute and the rules for brand usage. Research on this topic showed that DMOs that used formalized rules aimed at regulating the relationships between members were perceived to be more effective than those that did not have formal rules (Palmer 1998).

### Branding

Destination branding has attracted attention from scholars since the end of the 1990s (Cai 2002; Blain, Levy, and Ritchie 2005; Pike 2005; Konecnik and Gartner 2007; Konecnik and Go 2008; Boo, Busser, and Baloglu 2009). The majority of studies have focused on the demand-side perspective of brands, that is, the brand image. However, scholars have recently recognized that adopting just one perspective is not sufficient; a supply-side perspective also should be taken into account and, as a result, the destination

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**Table 1. A Synthesis of the Theories Taken into Account**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theory</th>
<th>Unit of Analysis</th>
<th>Coordination Mechanisms</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Network theory</td>
<td>Network</td>
<td>• Communication, decision, and negotiation mechanisms</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Social coordination and control</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Integration and linking-pin roles and units</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Common staff</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Hierarchy and authority relations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Planning and control systems</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Incentive systems</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
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<td>• Selection systems</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Information systems</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Public support and infrastructure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transaction cost economics</td>
<td>Transactions</td>
<td>• Price</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relational exchange theory</td>
<td>Relationships</td>
<td>• Relational norms</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stakeholder theory</td>
<td>Stakeholders</td>
<td>• None</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strategic management</td>
<td>Firm with reference to its resources</td>
<td>• Horizontal strategy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Value chain framework</td>
<td>Firm with reference to its activities</td>
<td>• Horizontal systems</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Mergers</td>
</tr>
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<td></td>
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<td>• Norms</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Joint ventures</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Interlocking directorates</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Trade associations and cartels</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Resource dependence theory</td>
<td>Firm</td>
<td>• Mergers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Norms</td>
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<td>• Joint ventures</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Interlocking directorates</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Trade associations and cartels</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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Bregoli
brand identity should be studied as well (Cai 2002; Konecnik and Go 2008; Boo, Busser, and Baloglu 2009). To consider both perspectives, some scholars (Park, Cai, and Lehto 2009; Del Chiappa and Bregoli 2012) have attempted to integrate them into a comprehensive model of destination branding. In addition, García, Gómez, and Molina (2012) stressed that both perspectives should be taken into account while assessing the destination brand success and, from their analysis of the Castilla-La Mancha brand, it emerged that the greatest contribution to its success was due to local entrepreneurs.

As far as the supply-side perspective is concerned, the brand identity element must be taken into account. It represents the core values that a business wants to communicate and, on the basis of which, all the other elements of the offer are established (Aaker and Joachimsthaler 2002; de Chernatony 2006; Kapferer 2008). Brand identity is particularly useful for staff members because if they have a clear understanding of the brand values, they can behave in a way that reinforces those values (Burmann and Zeplin 2005). Similarly to organizations, also within destinations, the brand identity can guide stakeholders’ behavior, but only if they believe in those brand values. It is important that the brand identity is consistent with the values of the destination and of the local community, thus accounting for the sense of place (Wheeler, Frost, and Weiler 2011). Otherwise, the end result is that an incongruent brand identity might develop and the stakeholders do not support the overall brand (Park, Cai, and Lehto 2009).

Another aspect that the tourism literature has highlighted is stakeholders’ roles in destination brand development. For instance, Hankinson (2004), in his relational network brands model, pointed out that if a destination brand wants to succeed, it needs to build relationships with key stakeholders. Allan (2011) also stressed this aspect and argued that by developing the brand in partnership, stakeholders can, on one hand, set a shared strategy, thus broadening their focus, which will not only encompass their own objectives, and on the other hand, coordinate all the messages about the destination. However, since all destination stakeholders might not be supportive of the brand, some scholars suggest that it might help in connecting stakeholders through forums, e-mails, websites, and discussion boards (Tasci 2011).

The need to gain support from different stakeholders so that the brand is accepted and adopted by them has been also highlighted by Konecnik and Go (2008) and Ooi (2004), who defined the “politics of destination branding,” that is, the process through which a DMO gains support from stakeholders so that they accept the brand and communicate it through their communication activities and products. Not only is it important to gain support from stakeholders, but it is also fundamental for stakeholders to be committed to the brand. On this point, from a study on 12 English cities, it emerged that the commitment of stakeholders is fundamental to the development of a destination brand; in particular, it was argued that successful branding is likely when there is “unity of purpose and commitment by all stakeholders to a common branding strategy” (Hankinson 2001, p. 137).

Brand commitment is one dimension that make up the internal brand strength. Although scholars have developed this latter concept for product and service brands, the author believes that it could be applied to destination brands considering the features that distinguish them from the former brands. García, Gómez, and Molina (2012) also suggested this approach and stressed the usefulness of understanding business organizations’ branding practices in order to apply them to destination brands. As a result, the internal brand strength for destinations will refer to destination stakeholders rather than to organizations’ employees. The internal brand strength consists of the following two dimensions:

1. **Brand commitment** is “the extent of psychological attachment of employees to the brand, which influences their willingness to exert extra effort towards reaching the brand goals” (Burmann and Zeplin 2005, p. 284) and comprises three elements: brand compliance, brand identification and brand internalization (Table 2);
2. **Brand citizenship behavior** describes “a number of generic employee behaviors that enhance brand identity” (Burmann, Zeplin, and Riley 2009, p. 266) and comprises seven dimensions (Table 3).

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### Table 2. Dimensions of Brand Commitment

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dimensions</th>
<th>Definitions</th>
<th>Definitions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Brand compliance</td>
<td>“Employee’s willingness to adjust his or her views and behaviours in accordance with the requirements of the brand and/or company”</td>
<td>“The adoption of certain behaviours that are consistent with the aspired brand identity in order to gain extrinsic rewards or to avoid penalties”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brand identification</td>
<td>“The extent to which the employee believes to be a constituent of the brand and the firm”</td>
<td>“Acceptance of social influence due to a sense of belonging to the group determining the brand experience, and a perception of being intertwined with the group’s fate”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brand internalization</td>
<td>“The degree to which the employee has incorporated the brand into his or her thinking and behaviour”</td>
<td>It “delineates the appropriation of core brand values into one’s self-concept as guiding principles for one’s actions”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

a. Source: Author’s elaboration based on definitions by Burmann, Zeplin, and Riley (2009), p. 266.
b. Source: Author’s elaboration based on definitions by Burmann and Zeplin (2005), p. 285.

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...
According to Burmann and Zeplin (2005), brand commitment, which is an antecedent of brand citizenship behavior, is created through brand-centered HR activities, brand communication of the identity, and brand leadership. The first two factors lead to the development of brand commitment based on brand internalization, which represents the highest level of brand commitment.

**Methodology**

The phenomena under investigation were studied by adopting a mixed-method design for the capital city of Scotland, Edinburgh. This choice was made because mixed methods are suitable when the collection of just one type of data is insufficient in order to understand the phenomena under investigation (Creswell and Plano Clark 2010). A convergent parallel design was adopted in which the qualitative and quantitative data were collected and analyzed independently during the same phase of the research project. Results were merged by comparing them and were interpreted and discussed by stating the degree to which they converged, diverged, or related. In order to mix both qualitative and quantitative data, a pragmatist worldview was adopted. Pragmatism is a practical research philosophy that is oriented toward the solution of real problems and in which attention is paid to the consequences of the research (Green and Caracelli 2003; Teddlie and Tashakkori 2003; Creswell and Plano Clark 2010; Feilzer 2010).

With regard to the qualitative strand of this research, secondary as well as primary data were collected. The former were represented by documents and reports on the Destination Edinburgh Marketing Alliance (DEMA). These documents were either downloaded from the partnership’s website or were received from some of the interviewees. Primary data were collected through 12 face-to-face semi-structured interviews (in total 19 people were contacted) with individuals representing diverse subsectors of the tourism industry. These included, but were not limited to, visitor attractions, the accommodation sector, a tour operator, the National Tourism Organization (NTO), and tourism promotion. The interviewees were selected by adopting a purposive sampling strategy as it allows the researcher to select “individuals and sites for study because they can purposefully inform an understanding of the research problem and central phenomenon in the study” (Creswell 2007, p. 125). In particular, a snowball sampling procedure was applied whereby the first participants were asked to suggest other people who might be worth contacting to plan an interview (Flick 2006). All the interviews were tape-recorded and then transcribed; the transcripts were analyzed by coding them. The coding procedure involved two steps: first, a structural coding was applied to the interview transcripts in order to analyze those parts that allowed to answer the research questions (Saldaña 2009); second, a holistic coding followed by an initial coding that allowed to critically analyze data were applied to the overall transcripts (Gibbs 2007; Saldaña 2009). The second step aimed to identify relevant themes that were not directly linked to the research questions but that allowed more in-depth understanding of the investigated topics. During the overall process, a coding book was developed and analytic memos were written. The author, as principal researcher, developed the coding book in both rounds of coding. An independent researcher then analyzed the transcripts and developed his own code book. At the end of this process, both researchers met and discussed the developed codes. When disagreements arose, the two researchers discussed them until reaching an agreement. At the end of this process, the author undertook the final coding.

The quantitative strand of the research was carried out through an online questionnaire that was administered to a sample of stakeholders working within the destination, particularly business owners and managers of tourism organizations (either small or big businesses). The questionnaire consisted of four parts: (1) general questions about the respondent and his perceptions about the “Edinburgh Inspiring Capital” brand; (2) a section regarding coordination...
in which the respondents had to indicate, on a list of coordination mechanisms, whether they were used by DEMA and, in a subsequent question, they had to indicate on a 5-point Likert scale (1 = not useful at all; 5 = extremely useful) whether the same coordination mechanisms had been useful to them in adopting the “Edinburgh Inspiring Capital” brand values; (3) a section on brand commitment; (4) a final section on brand citizenship behavior. Items included in the latter two sections were developed on the basis of the definitions provided by Burmann and Zeplin (2005) and by taking into account the specific characteristics of the destination. All the items were measured on a 5-point Likert-type scale on which the respondents were asked to rate their degree of agreement or disagreement with them (1 = strongly disagree; 5 = strongly agree). An e-mail containing the link to the questionnaire was sent to a sample of 348 stakeholders (Table 4). A total of 65 completed questionnaires were received with a response rate of 18.68%. The data were checked and questionnaires that were not usable were deleted, resulting in 55 usable questionnaires being retained. An analysis was carried out on the items that had a Cronbach α higher than 0.7; as a result one dimension of brand commitment (i.e., brand compliance) and one dimension of brand citizenship behavior (i.e., brand advancement) were deleted.

All the data were collected between June and October 2010.

Results

Description of the Case

Edinburgh is the capital city of Scotland. In 2010, the total numbers of UK and overseas visitors were 1.9 million and 1.3 million, respectively. It is considered the gateway to Scotland; indeed, within all of Scotland it accounted for 56% of overnight international visitors in 2010 (VisitScotland 2011). In terms of destination marketing and management, the City of Edinburgh is characterized by high complexity because of the several organizations that are involved at various levels in its management and marketing. These include, but are not limited to, VisitScotland, which is the National Tourism Organization; the Edinburgh Convention Bureau; the Edinburgh Tourism Action Group (ETAG), which was the first public–private partnership working in the destination set-up in 2001; the City of Edinburgh Council; the Scottish Enterprise Edinburgh & Lothian; and from 2009, the Destination Edinburgh Marketing Alliance. As Fyall and Leask (2007) noted, the complexity that characterizes tourism management within the city implies that within the destination there are different objectives that coexist and that must be taken into account. Therefore, the role of coordination is fundamental. This study will focus on the Destination Edinburgh Marketing Alliance (DEMA), a public–private partnership that is the city’s destination marketing organization. Its remit is to promote the city as a place to visit, live, work, invest, and study.

DEMA is a public–private partnership that was established as a company limited by guarantee with a remit of promoting Edinburgh as a place to visit and in which to invest, live, work, and study. DEMA was set up to deal with fragmentation and a lack of coordination because there were too many organizations that were promoting the city differently and sending divergent messages to the marketplace. Along with promoting the city, DEMA is also responsible for coordinating the city promotion carried out by the diverse organizations and managing the “Edinburgh Inspiring Capital” brand, which is the destination brand used to promote the city across the five themes. DEMA has a board of directors, on which the majority of seats is given to the private sector, which usually chairs the board itself; furthermore, the board is structured so that all the macro-sectors of DEMA’s promotion are represented.

With regard to the coordination of the city’s stakeholders, DEMA uses all the coordination mechanisms that the literature review described. Communication is carried out through meetings, events, and communication activity carried out by representatives of sectors who report back to their sectors. However, the latter activity is not formalized. In addition, DEMA uses promotional campaigns (such as the “This Is My Edinburgh” summer campaign or the “Edinburgh Sparkles” winter campaign) as a mechanism to coordinate participants. Information systems, which are related to general communication, are in place, although DEMA does not have reservation systems. Nevertheless, the website allows information sharing with stakeholders. DEMA also uses newsletters, e-zines, and a customer relationship management (CRM) system established in 2010 to share information among DEMA’s partners. Planning and control systems through which the results achieved are controlled against the set objectives and this kind of check is an ongoing process carried out throughout the year. The objectives to be met are clearly stated in the partner’s strategy, business plan, or resilience plan and the results are measured through, for instance, ad hoc surveys or metrics that, in the case of DEMA, allow it to monitor the number of unique viewers of the website, Twitter account, etc. As far as interlocking directorates are concerned, DEMA’s board of directors is made up of people who are affiliated to different organizations and there is a group of people who are involved in more than one organization, such as DEMA; the Edinburgh Tourism Action Group, which is responsible for the city’s tourism development; and the Edinburgh Convention Bureau. DEMA is also relying on formal rules, such as a partnership statute and rules for brand

Table 4. Sample Size and Composition

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Database</th>
<th>Sample Size</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>DEMA</td>
<td>220</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Edinburgh Principal Hotel Association</td>
<td>54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Edinburgh Hotel and Guest House Associa</td>
<td>74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total sample size</td>
<td>348</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Downloaded from jtr.sagepub.com at SAGE Publications on August 25, 2015
usage. The latter, in particular, are rules with which all the brand adopters must conform and are set out by DEMA. Finally, with regard to social norms, trust and reciprocity between the organizations develop, but because DEMA was established in 2009, they are not as developed as in other city partnerships working in tourism.

**Qualitative Results**

From the qualitative strand of research, it emerged that stakeholder commitment in relation to the “Edinburgh Inspiring Capital” brand was important to them because they felt they have a collective responsibility toward other stakeholders (mean = 3.53; SD = 0.900) believed in the brand values and 49.1% (mean = 3.42; SD = 0.917) agreed that there was a similarity between the brand values and their personal values.

Brand citizenship behavior was measured by developing items on the basis of the seven dimensions identified by Burmann and Zeplin (2005), but the analysis was focused on six of them because “brand advancement” had a low Cronbach α. With regard to “helping behavior,” the respondents showed a higher degree of helpfulness toward visitors (90.9% of agreement; mean = 4.35; SD = 0.865) than toward other businesses working within the destination (69.1%; mean = 3.84; SD = 0.834). From “brand consideration,” it emerged that a high percentage of the respondents (63.6%; mean = 3.64; SD = 0.890) were aware that through their behavior they communicated the destination brand, but just a small percentage of them (23.7%; mean = 2.80; SD = 1.043) took into account, for instance, the impact that their own agenda, so one body . . . promoting the city will be effective.

**Quantitative Results**

The quantitative survey revealed mixed commitment from respondents regarding the “Edinburgh Inspiring Capital” brand. Indeed, 32.8% of the respondents were not committed or not committed at all to the brand; 38.2% of them were committed or strongly committed; and 29.1% of them declared they were fairly committed. The questionnaire allowed us to investigate the various types of brand commitment and, similar to the results achieved by Burmann, Zeplin, and Riley (2009), brand compliance was not statistically significant (Cronbach α < .7); thus, it was not retained for analysis. With reference to brand identification, 78.2% of the respondents agreed that they have a collective responsibility for the reputation of the brand because they conduct business within the city (mean = 3.93; SD = 0.836), whereas 50.9% of the respondents agreed that the “Edinburgh Inspiring Capital” brand was important to them because they felt they have a collective responsibility toward other stakeholders (mean = 3.51; SD = 0.940). Brand internalization was measured by two items and it emerged that 56.4% (mean = 3.53; SD = 0.900) believed in the brand values and 49.1% (mean = 3.42; SD = 0.917) agreed that there was a similarity between the brand values and their personal values.
Table 5. Merged Results

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Themes</th>
<th>Qualitative Results</th>
<th>Quantitative Results</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Brand commitment</td>
<td>10 of 12 interviewees believed that there was mixed commitment to the “Edinburgh Inspiring Capital” brand.</td>
<td>Respondents’ commitment to the brand:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• 38.2% were strongly committed or committed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• 29.1% were fairly committed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• 32.8% were not committed or not committed at all</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brand citizenship behavior</td>
<td>More work needs to be carried out so that the brand values are adopted by stakeholders in their job</td>
<td>• High helping behavior toward visitors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• 63.6% of respondents were aware that, through their behavior, they communicate the destination brand, but just 23.7% of them take into account the effects that their advertising activity has on it</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Half of the respondents have discussions with other people on the brand</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Few respondents are willing to sacrifice their interests to adopt the destination brand (3.6%)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Not all newcomers to the businesses receive information on the “Edinburgh Inspiring Capital” brand (18.2%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Half of the respondents are keeping abreast on the destination brand</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Effects of coordination on</td>
<td>Increased awareness of the “Edinburgh Inspiring Capital” brand and the city’s promotion strategy</td>
<td>Most useful mechanisms:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>the brand</td>
<td></td>
<td>• Communication (51.1%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Formal rules (49.1%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Interlocking directorates (43.7%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Social norms (43.6%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

SD = 1.218) declared that they had discussions with colleagues or other business people on the destination brand. “Sportsmanship” had low positive percentages of agreement; indeed, just 32.7% (mean = 2.91; SD = 1.059) of the respondents declared that they had accepted the brand guidelines without questioning them, but more than half of the respondents (60%) did not agree that they had adopted the brand guidelines even if that implied changing their business’s decisions (mean = 2.36; SD = 0.778). “Brand endorsement” was measured by asking whether newcomers to businesses received information on the “Edinburgh Inspiring Capital” brand values; the results showed that just 18.2% of the respondents (mean = 2.45; SD = 0.959) agreed. Finally, with reference to “self-development,” almost half of the respondents (54.5%; mean = 3.36; SD = 1.060) declared that they were keeping abreast of the development of the destination brand through meetings, newsletters, etc.

As far as the impact that the coordination activity had on brand commitment and brand citizenship behavior is concerned, the respondents were asked whether each coordination mechanism identified was useful for understanding and adopting the “Edinburgh Inspiring Capital” brand values. Among all the mechanisms, communication (51.1%; mean = 3.40; SD = 0.873), formal rules (49.1%; mean = 3.45; SD = 1.033), interlocking directorates (43.7%; mean = 3.24; SD = 1.018), and social norms (43.6%; mean = 3.33; SD = 1.019) were reported to be the most useful.

Discussion

In this research, the qualitative and quantitative data were merged during interpretation by comparing them side by side through a summary table (Creswell and Plano Clark 2010). The comparison of data is shown in Table 5.

The first two research questions referred to the extent to which the stakeholders are committed to and adopt the destination brand values in their work. The concepts of brand commitment and brand citizenship behavior were investigated. With regard to the former, both sets of results show that there is mixed commitment of stakeholders to the “Edinburgh Inspiring Capital” brand because both positive and negative answers coexisted. Indeed, the great majority of interviewees highlighted that there are stakeholders within the destination who are really committed to the brand, while others are less committed, and there are also people who know nothing about the brand. This view of mixed commitment is supported by the results achieved from the quantitative strand of the research because the percentages for those
who are committed, fairly committed, and not committed are similar. Brand commitment is a construct that consists of three dimensions—brand compliance, brand identification, and brand internalization—which were investigated through the online survey. Similarly to the results achieved by Burmann, Zeplin, and Riley (2009), also in the case of the “Edinburgh Inspiring Capital” brand, brand compliance was not found to be a significant dimension. Thus, brand commitment is composed of two dimensions: brand identification and brand internalization; the former seems to be more developed than the latter. As far as brand identification is concerned, more than two-thirds of the respondents felt they were part of the overall destination rather than part of the group of stakeholders working within the city. Meanwhile, with reference to brand internalization, the results gained from the questionnaire were lower than those referring to brand identification; for instance, just half of the respondents declared belief in the “Edinburgh Inspiring Capital” brand values.

As far as the brand citizenship behavior is concerned, the interviewees felt that more work needed to be undertaken for the “Edinburgh Inspiring Capital” brand values to be adopted by the destination stakeholders. Majority (63.6%) of the respondents were aware that they communicate the destination brand through their behavior; nevertheless, few of them took into account how their advertising activity might affect the destination brand itself. In addition, the respondents showed a low level of agreement with a couple of dimensions. For example, 3.6% of the respondents were willing to sacrifice their own interests for the sake of the brand and 18.2% of the respondents agreed that newcomers received information on the “Edinburgh Inspiring Capital” brand.

Thanks to the interviews it was possible to identify some of the possible reasons of both the mixed commitment and the low level of brand citizenship behavior. First, it seems that brand awareness is an antecedent of brand commitment that, in turn, influences brand citizenship behavior. Some of the interviewees explained that the awareness is still low, although thanks to the establishment of DEMA, things have improved. One interviewee argued:

I don’t think it’s [the Edinburgh Inspiring Capital brand] widely known as it should be and I think there is more work to be done to raise the awareness of it. And I think [when the] new DEMA comes into existence there will be further work done to encourage all stakeholders in the city to use the city of Edinburgh’s branding.

Furthermore, stakeholders did not perceive the brand as the city brand, but as the Council brand. This was because although DEMA was established as an independent organization, its offices were located within the City Council. For instance, one interviewee stated:

Where I think the City Council made an error was that instead of seeing this brand as the city’s brand, and it should be managed externally by a DEMA or another external body or collections of bodies, they kept the brand team in-house. . . . The difficulty then is that most external private sector perceptions are that the brand is a Council brand, is a brand of the local authority and not of the city and, for that reason along with others, lack of investment being one of them, I don’t think the brand is mature in a way that it could or should be quickly enough.

Similar to this view, another interviewee argued:

I think that . . . the stakeholders, some of them still regard it [the “Edinburgh Inspiring Capital” brand] as a local authority brand rather than a destination brand, so there is certainly much more work to be done in that.

Another issue that emerged was the difficult integration between the destination brand and single corporate brands because, in order to integrate them, it is necessary that the values of both brands are congruent. For instance, one interviewee stated:

The “Edinburgh Inspiring brand” is . . . used in the public sector a great deal, not used as extensively in the private sector because of a conflict sometimes between the brand of Inspiring Edinburgh and the brand of the private sector’s owner organizations. Sometimes, they don’t fit well together, so it’s left entirely up to the private sector to decide if they wish to use the “Edinburgh Inspiring Capital” brand.

Furthermore, high staff turnover in the tourism industry makes it difficult for business newcomers to become knowledgeable about the destination brand and its values. The high turnover is a big challenge for the destination as the following interview excerpt validates:

Because of constant changes of individuals . . ., with new people coming into organizations it is difficult to reaffirm and educate them as to what the brand is actually about and how it came about and trying to get them to become champions and owners of the brand. So it’s not easy; it’s a challenge.

Finally, it seems that there is a relationship between the degree of engagement toward the brand and the level of involvement with DEMA and other partnerships that are working in the tourism industry, such as the Edinburgh Tourism Action Group. The more involved stakeholders are toward the partnerships, the more engaged they are toward the brand. In this regard, one interviewee stated:

It has not been adopted [the “Edinburgh Inspiring Capital” brand] to the extent that really one would
have wished and those who are adopting it, like ourselves, for example, tend to be those who are working closest and are involved most within DEMA and ETAG. So, if you were to go out onto the street and ask a number of businesses along this area if they know what the brand is and, two, are they using it, then the answer to both of those questions would be “I have no idea” and “No, I’m not.”

The third research question referred to the impact that the coordination activity had on brand commitment and brand citizenship behavior. The interviewees felt the coordination activity was useful for increasing the overall level of brand commitment but, at the same time, they believed it was too early to make a judgment about it because DEMA was set up too recently. Some more pieces of information were gained through the quantitative survey in which respondents were asked whether the coordination mechanisms were useful for becoming committed to the brand values and for adopting them. In this case, it emerged that communication, formal rules, interlocking directorates, and social norms were considered to be the most beneficial by the respondents.

Conclusion

To conclude, although the results from this research cannot be generalized because of the limited sample size, they allow us to point out some features to which destination managers should pay attention. First, not only is it essential to assess the destination brand’s external effectiveness, but it is also crucial that the destination managers assess the internal brand strength. This construct allows to measure stakeholder commitment to the destination brand and the extent to which their behavior reinforces the brand. Since DMOs should ensure that stakeholders are committed and involved in the destination brand strategy (Hankinson 2001; Ooi 2004; Konecnik and Go 2008; Park, Cai, and Lehto 2009; Allan 2011), it is easy to understand the importance of measuring the internal brand strength. Second, it is essential that the DMO put in place activities that allow stakeholders to be knowledgeable about the brand and its values so that they can behave consistently regarding the brand.

From the results, it seems that activities such as internal communication and HR activities are essential and the city of Edinburgh must strengthen them. They are necessary in order to develop brand identification that is the highest level of brand commitment, which, in turn, leads to a high level of brand citizenship behavior (Burmann, Zeplin, and Riley 2009). However, in the Edinburgh case, both brand identification and brand citizenship behavior are low, which suggests that the city needs to improve communication and HR activities. With regard to the internal communication, it is carried out through websites, e-mails, forums, and meetings. Thus, all communication activities that the destination branding literature suggests (Park, Cai, and Lehto 2009; Tasci 2011) in order to have stakeholders knowledgeable and committed to the destination brand are in place. The city of Edinburgh could benefit from improved communication between DEMA board members and the sectors or associations that they are representing. Indeed, the case revealed that this communication activity is not formalized and it is left to individual initiative. As a result, different people report back in different ways. For instance, some of them send e-mails in which they provide basic information such as when a meeting took place and the main discussion points. Others officially report within the partnership board that they are representing. This apparently leads to information exchange imbalances because some stakeholders have more information compared to others and this might affect the overall knowledge about the brand and the brand commitment. Consequently, DMOs should pay attention to the way that stakeholder representatives communicate to the sectors that they are representing.

As far as HR activities are concerned, they consist of a wide range of activities such as staff training and socialization, through events aimed at creating brand awareness, and through absorbing the brand values once staff start working within the organization (e.g., by learning and understanding the brand from colleagues) (de Chernatony and Segal-Horn 2001; Burmann and Zeplin 2005; Vallaster and de Chernatony 2005; de Chernatony, Cottam, and Segal-Horn 2006). Although these activities are difficult for a DMO to carry out because people who work in the tourism industry are not DMO employees, it should be taken into account that among the DMO’s roles there is human resources development (Ritchie and Crouch 2003). For this reason, it cannot be excluded a priori that a DMO cannot organize training programs or socialization activities that refer to the destination brand. For instance, the DMO might organize events aimed at newcomers to the businesses for making them knowledgeable about the brand. Moreover, the DMO might organize brand training sessions for tourism employees. The aim would be to let them know and understand the brand values and adopt the brand values in their work, for instance by providing them with examples of best practices and behaviors coherent with the destination brand.

Limitations and Future Research

Like much research, this study is not free from limitations. In particular, because of the limited quantitative sample size, the results cannot be generalized although they allow to shed some light on a topic that deserves further research. In addition, it was not possible to apply any sophisticated statistical analyses that would have allowed the author to highlight the relationship between coordination mechanisms, brand commitment, and brand citizenship behavior. Furthermore, in light of the sample composition, the quantitative results might have been overestimated. Indeed, the majority of the sample came from the DEMA database, which consists of
people who know the partnership and the “Edinburgh Inspiring Capital” brand.

Since the topic investigated in this research has not been investigated in previous research, further research is needed. For instance, the concepts of brand commitment and brand citizenship behavior should be adapted to the context of destination brands since scholars originally developed them for product and service brands. In addition, the study should be repeated on a bigger sample in order to gain an adequate sample size for applying the structural equation modeling and, in this way, studying the relationship between the various dimensions and their antecedents. Furthermore, attention should be devoted to the study of the role that stakeholder coordination has on the internal brand strength in order to assess whether this activity has a direct impact on it.

Despite this study’s limitations, its contribution is valuable in that this is the first attempt at studying a destination brand’s internal strength. This represents a relevant topic not only for increasing scientific knowledge but also for the industry. Indeed, by developing a tool that allows to assess the internal brand strength, destination managers can put in place actions aimed at improving it and, as a result, the overall destination brand.

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