



EFFECTS OF BRAND PERSONALITY DIMENSIONS AND SELF- CONGRUITY ON REVISIT INTENTION: A STRUCTURAL EQUATION MODELING APPROACH

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Article Info:

Article history:

Received date: 16.11.2020
Revised date: 09.05.2022
Accepted date: 03.06.2022
Published date: 01.09.2022

To cite this document:

Yang, S., Isa, S. M., Ramayah, T., Anuar, N. N. A., & Blanes, R. (2022). Effects Of Brand Personality Dimensions and Self-Congruity on Revisit Intention: A Structural Equation Modeling Approach. *Journal of Tourism Hospitality and Environment Management*, 7 (29), 01-07.

DOI: 10.35631/JTHEM.729001.

Abstract:

The study is aimed to test the structural relationship between brand personality dimensions, selfcongruity (i.e., actual and ideal self-congruity) and revisit intention. Brand personality was conceptualised as a five-dimensional construct including sincerity, excitement, competence, sophistication, and ruggedness. When Chinese outbound tourists perceived various personality traits of destination brand, it might influence their revisit intentions to Glasgow, UK. The current study proposed that self-congruity exerted mediating effects between five dimensions of brand personality and revisit intention. Structural equation modelling was applied to confirming the hypothesis testing. Findings of current study suggested that only two dimensions (sincerity and excitement) had an indirect impact on revisit intention through ideal self-congruity. Furthermore, this study contributed to the extant literature by partially confirming self-congruity theory in the setting of Glasgow tourism. Research findings are also beneficial to destination marketing organisations (DMOs) in their efforts to make Glasgow destination attract more repeated Chinese tourists.

This work is licensed under [CC BY 4.0](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/)**Keywords:**

Brand Personality Dimensions, Self-Congruity, Revisit Intention, Tourist Behaviour

Introduction

The increasing competition in the present market has exposed consumers to not only numerous brands, but also to a range of marketing practices that makes a brand stand out from their competitors. Strong branding of product is beneficial for marketers in developing loyalty amidst consumers. Brand scholars have highlighted the importance of brand knowledge, wherein a brand represents all tangible and intangible attributes that can affect consumers' perceptions of products that carry the name of the brand (Keller, 1993). If marketers wish to develop loyal consumers towards a brand, it is essential to understand brand personality as a component of integrated brand knowledge that can affect one's psychological attribute towards a brand (Phau, & Lau, 2000) with substantial implication for brand consumer relationship (Fournier, 1998). Studies have emphasised that brand personality should be associated with the theory of self-congruity, mainly because consumers are more likely to purchase specific brands that reflect their own self-concept (Park & Lee 2005; Yang, Isa, & Ramayah, 2019). The theory of self-congruity suggests that consumers prefer brand that they consider sharing similar personality to themselves (Landon, 1974; Malhotra, 1988; Sirgy, 1982). Self-congruity (i.e., the match between a brand's image and one's self-concept (Sirgy & Su, 2000) tends to affect brand-success variables, including consumer loyalty (Das, 2014).

Within the realm of tourism, the concept of brand personality has been explored primarily in the context of various destinations. A great extant of studies have adopted Aaker's (1997) multidimensions of brand personality to various destinations such as Australia, Greece, China (Murphy, Moscardo, & Benckendorff, 2007; Apostolopoulou, & Kaplanidou, 2015; Xie, & Lee, 2013; Yang, Isa, & Ramayah, 2019) or recreation farms and retails (Liu, Lin, & Wang, 2012; Das, 2014) or mapping the correlations with self-congruity to predict consumer loyalty (Liu, Lin, & Wang, 2012; Wang, 2012; Das, 2014; Usakli & Baloglu, 2011; Yang, Isa, Ramayah, & Blanes, 2019). For instance, Das (2014) examined the impacts of brand personality and self-congruity on consumer loyalty, while Liu, Lin and Wang (2012) evaluated the effect of brand personality on self-congruity. A study conducted by Usakli and Baloglu (2011) in the Las Vegas revealed that self-congruity had a mediating effect between brand personality and consumers' revisit intention. The findings support the great match between brand personality in destination (Las Vegas) and consumers' self-concept, in which consumers displayed favourable attitude towards Las Vegas, thus resulting in their intention to revisit. Through the lens of self-congruity in explaining consumer behaviour, most scholars merely focused on the first two dimensions (actual self-congruity and ideal self-congruity) due to the strongest empirical support garnered (Sirgy, 1992; Sirgy et al., 1997).

The correlations between brand personality, self-congruity and revisit intention have been well established across the existing literature. Nevertheless, only a handful of studies have assessed the mediating effect of self-congruity between brand personality and revisit intention in describing the multi-dimensions of brand personality (i.e. sincerity excitement, competence sophistication, and ruggedness), particularly within the context of Glasgow city. Questions related to brand personality have yet to be addressed by the literature: 'Which dimension of brand personality matches consumers' self-concept (their own personality), leading to revisit

intention to Glasgow city?’ and ‘Can all dimensions of brand personality influence revisit intention to Glasgow through self-congruity?’ Hence, the objective of this present study is to examine the mediating effect of self-congruity between five dimensions of destination brand personality and revisit intention among Chinese outbound tourists (consumers) in Glasgow. This study also responds to the call made by Das (2014) on examining the impact of brand personality with multi-dimensional constructs on consumer loyalty.

Hypothesis Development

Brand Personality Dimensions, Self-Congruity And Revisit Intention

There are several studies on linkage among the constructs such as brand personality dimensions, self-congruity and revisit intention in the tourism field. For instance, previous studies found the significant influence of brand personality dimensions on self-congruity (i.e. Kumar, 2016; Huang, Zhang & Hu, 2017). Other studies indicated linkage between self-congruity and revisit intention in various destinations (i.e. Kim, & Malek, 2017; Yang, Isa, & Ramayah, 2019). However, it is rarely to find the study on modelling among these constructs in Glasgow destination with Chinese outbound tourists as samples. To fill the gap in extant literature, the testing model among these constructs is necessary in Glasgow destination. Furthermore, although brand personality dimensions, self-congruity and revisit intention were jointly studied in the same model, the mediation role of self-congruity between brand personality dimensions and revisit intention has received less attention. Therefore, more research need to highlight the mediating effect of self-congruity.

The underlying theoretical assumptions (i.e. self-congruity theory) suggest that consumer may favour a brand whose personality traits are similar to consumer’s own personality (Aaker, 1997). Therefore, it can be assumed that the better match between the brand personality traits and visitors’ self-concept, the more likely it is that the visitor will have a positive perception of destination. This attitude could lead to their behavioural intentions to return to destination (Das, & Khatwani, 2018). Hence, hypothesis are derived below:

Hypothesis 1: Actual self-congruity mediates the relationship between sincerity and revisit intention.

Hypothesis 2: Actual self-congruity mediates the relationship between excitement and revisit intention.

Hypothesis 3: Actual self-congruity mediates the relationship between competence and revisit intention.

Hypothesis 4: Actual self-congruity mediates the relationship between sophistication and revisit intention.

Hypothesis 5: Actual self-congruity mediates the relationship between ruggedness and revisit intention.

Hypothesis 6: Ideal self-congruity mediates the relationship between sincerity and revisit intention.

Hypothesis 7: Ideal self-congruity mediates the relationship between excitement and revisit intention.

Hypothesis 8: Ideal self-congruity mediates the relationship between competence and revisit intention. Hypothesis 9: Ideal self-congruity mediates the relationship between sophistication and revisit intention.

Hypothesis 10: Ideal self-congruity mediates the relationship between ruggedness and revisit intention.

Research Methodology

Data were collected by using face-to-face questionnaire survey within the vicinity of Glasgow city. The respondents were given explanation about the survey questions upon failure to comprehend the survey questions. A total of 226 questionnaires were completed by Chinese outbound tourists within the data collection period between March and August 2019 while the main researcher was serving as a Ph.D. visiting student at the University of Glasgow. The survey was administered in bilingual version that included English and Chinese languages. Partial Least Squares (PLS) approach to structural equation modelling was applied to analyse the gathered data (Ringle, Wende, & Will, 2005). Smart PLS is superior in dealing with model complexity, when compared to covariance-based approaches in SEM (Chin, 1998, 2010; Esposito Vinzi et al., 2010; Hair et al., 2011, 2012).

Result

In hypotheses testing, Hair et al., (2017) prescribed the bootstrapping procedure with a resampling rate of 5,000 to gain Beta value, t values, p values, and bootstrapped confidence intervals. The results were determined from special indirect effects–path coefficients. The study outcomes signified that actual self-congruity did not mediate the correlations between brand personality with five dimensions (sincerity, excitement, competence, sophistication, and ruggedness) and revisit intention. Besides, ideal self-congruity also did not mediate the correlations of brand personality dimensions (competence, sophistication, and ruggedness) and revisit intention. The study findings displayed the ideal selfcongruity ($\beta = 0.057$, $t=1.675$, $p < 0.05$) mediated the relationships of brand personality with sincerity and revisit intention. The ideal self-congruity ($\beta = 0.103$, $t=2.766$, $p < 0.05$) appeared to mediate the relationships of brand personality with excitement and revisit intention. Hence, H6 and H7 are supported, while H1, H2, H3, H4, H5, H8, H9, and H10 are not supported.

Discussion and Conclusion

In response to the call made by Das (2014) for further research, this study assessed the mediating effect of self-congruity in the relationships between the multi-dimensions of brand personality and revisit intention amongst Chinese tourists in Glasgow. The study outcomes showed that not all dimensions of brand personality had predicted the revisit intention amidst tourists to Glasgow via self-congruity. Nonetheless, it was revealed that only two dimensions of brand personality, namely sincerity and excitement, exhibited indirect impact on revisit intention through ideal self-congruity. The ideal selfcongruity seemed to mediate the correlations of brand personality dimension with sincerity and revisit intention. The findings are in agreement with those reported by Usakli and Baloglu (2011), which highlighted the influence of sincerity on revisit intention via self-congruity. The study findings unravelled that ideal self-congruity mediated the relationships of brand personality with excitement and revisit intention. It was discovered that actual self-congruity had no mediating effect in the relationships of brand personality with all five dimensions and revisit intention. Hence, upon adapting Aaker's (1997) brand personality with five dimensions to Glasgow destination, the theory of selfcongruity only partially supported in predicting revisit intention amongst Chinese tourists to Glasgow. Based on the combined findings from previous studies and this study, research questions could be answered: only sincerity and excitement match consumers' self-concept (their own personality), leading to their revisit intention to Glasgow city. The result

also shows that not all dimensions of brand personality influence revisit intention to Glasgow through self-congruity.

Research Implications

From the perspective of theoretical implications, this study reinforced the validity of the application of self-congruity theory in tourism context (Usakli and Baloglu 2011). Particularly, this study shows that a high degree of Chinese visitors' self-congruity leads to their favourable attitude toward destination brand personality dimensions (i.e. sincerity and excitement), thus contributing to their intention to return Glasgow. Therefore, the study offers extra support to several prior studies which explain the relevant phenomena of self-congruity in predicting travelling behaviour (Sirgy and Su, 2000; Yang, Isa, Ramayah, & Blanes, 2019). Moreover, the study makes contributions to the literature by analysing the relationship among five dimensions of brand personality, self-congruity and revisit intention under the same investigation. Therefore, brand personality dimensions (i.e sincerity and excitement), theory of self-congruity and revisit intention can be modelled in the context of Chinese outbound tourists in Glasgow.

Several practical implications should also be highlighted in current study. The current results provided some guidelines to DMOs, which can develop marketing strategies to increase the probability. In this sense, destination marketing managers who understand how self-congruity works might be in a position to establish effective promotion strategies that can attract more revisiting Chinese tourists. For instance, the significant relationship identified between brand personality dimensions (i.e sincerity and excitement), self-congruity and revisit intention requires destination marketing managers to preidentify personality perception of sincerity and excitement of their Glasgow destination brand among their target audience. Subsequently, this kind of information could be used to develop a strategic promotion plan, which will enable them to build a destination brand that resembles the self-congruity of each target audience. After that, destination marketing communicators should advertise Glasgow destination by highlighting these key traits such as sincerity and competence in Chinese tourism market since Chinese outbound tourists hope to perceive brand personality traits of Glasgow (i.e. sincerity and competence). In this way, their revisit intention to Glasgow might be strengthened.

Limitations and Further Study

This present study has several limitations. This study only applied two dimensions of self-congruity, namely actual self-congruity and ideal self-congruity. Consumer behavioural intention to revisit is not only influenced by personal factors, but also by social factors. Hence, future studies may explore the other two dimensions, social self-congruity and ideal social self-congruity, which could generate more robust outcomes. Additionally, the context of female sole travel behaviour, which has been drawing attention within the tourism sphere, can be investigated by implementing the theoretical framework developed in this present study to predict female sole travel intention.

Acknowledgement

We would like to extend our gratitude to Erasmus and University of Glasgow for the approval of research grant, hence enabling us to complete the research project. This research was funded by University of Glasgow as part of the Erasmus + ICM programme 2017-1-UK01-KA107-036056, Sponsor Licence Number: TRAW6PAA8.

Ethical Approval

This project has been approved by College of Social Sciences at University of Glasgow's Ethics Committee (Reference number: 400180196). If you have any ethics queries, you can contact to Dr. Muir Houston, College of Social Sciences Ethics Officer, University of Glasgow (E-mail: Muir.Houston@glasgow.ac.uk) who will be pleased to discuss any concerns you may have about participation in this project.

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