

Destination Personality and Self-Congruity: A study of Domestic and International Tourists

Nishant Dahiya
Amrita School of Business
Amrita Vishwa Vidyapeetham, Amrita University
Coimbatore, India
nishantdahiya14@gmail.com

Abstract — The purpose of this study is to understand the behaviour of domestic and international tourists develop a model of destination personality. This model explains the relationship between destination personality and tourist's behaviour through self-congruity. It is hypothesized that self – congruity mediates the effect of destination personality on behavioural intentions of tourists. Data is collected using random sampling from 64 domestic tourists and data for 62 international tourists is collected by using judgement sampling. The major finding of this study is that there exists a significant relation between destination personality, self-congruity and behavioural intentions. Self- congruity is the mediating factor between destination personality and behavioural intentions of tourists.

Keywords: Destination personality, Self-congruity, Brand personality.

I. INTRODUCTION

In today's market environment, it is very challenging for organizations to attract new customers and retain the existing customers owing to heavy competition. Customers are surrounded by many brands and have been targeted through many marketing strategies by organizations to position the brand in competitive customer mind. Organizations are using numerous ways to differentiate themselves from their competitors. Branding is a concept which has been broadly used in product or general services category. Branding still has scope to be also used in all aspects of the tourism activities.

Due to their attributes, tourist destination can be perceived as a brand [1]. Destination marketers can use positioning techniques by assigning one or few attributes to differentiate one destination from the other [2]. Destination branding is when tourist interacts with the attributes of the destinations and

tourists use different personality attributes to give symbolic meaning to the destinations [3] [4].

People have personalities; similarly researchers have used these perceived human characteristics to explain brand personality [1]. Owing to a steady increase in market competition in the tourism industry, destination marketers are using destination branding, which is one of the most compelling tools, to attain and maintain competitive advantage [5]. A destination's image has an important influence on the tourist loyalty making destination branding a very different and a creative promotional strategy.

From a marketing perspective and in reference to [4] and [6], self-image influences the destination selection process. The seminal work in the area of self-congruity and tourism was by KS Chon in 1992. Since then, there have been studies in the literature that have continued to study the relationship between self-congruity and tourism [7]. Self-congruity is a basis on which individuals orient their brand preferences and hence, plays a central role in understanding the behavior of consumers. Observations pertaining to the suggested model are presented after the literature review. Conclusions drawn from the analysis are discussed at the end of the study.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

Brand Personality:

Brand personality is defined as the “set of human characteristics associated with a brand” pp-347 [8]. The destination that a tourist chooses has a correlation on the perceived personality of the individual [9]. For example one may refer characteristics like cool to brands like Coca-Cola [8]. Due to lack of sufficient literature there was no scale to measure brand personality. Aaker

developed a brand personality scale (BPS) which has 42 items under five dimensions namely, sincerity, excitement, competence, sophistication and ruggedness [8]. BPS is a widely used, reliable and valid scale to measure the brand personality [1]. In spite of widely used; BPS had faced some criticism also, like Austin et. Al found in their study that BPS does not measure for the individual brands within one product category which it was intended to measure [10]. Azoulay et al stated that BPS does not measure the brand personality, it measure the other aspects of brand identity like perceived product performance [11].

Many researchers have used BPS to give the destination personality to different tourist places or countries.

Table 1: Researchers who have used BPS in their studies.

| Reference | Destination studied | Method | Dimensions found |
|------------------------------|------------------------|-----------------------|--|
| Ekinci and hosany(2006) [4] | Number of destinations | BPS | Sincerity, Excitement, Conviviality |
| Hosany et al(2006) [12] | Number of destinations | BPS | Sincerity, Excitement, Conviviality |
| Usakli and Baloglu(2010) [1] | Las Vegas | BPS and unstructured | Sincerity, competence, Sophistication, contemporary, vibrancy |
| Ye (2012) [13] | Australia | BPS | Sincerity |
| Kilic and sop(2012) [14] | Bodrum | BPS and unstructured | Sincerity, competence, sophistication and dynamism |
| Kim and lehto (2013) [15] | South Korea | BPS and unstructured | Sincerity, competence, sophistication Excitement, ruggedness, uniqueness and family oriented |
| Prayag (2007) [16] | South Africa | Projective techniques | No dimensions |

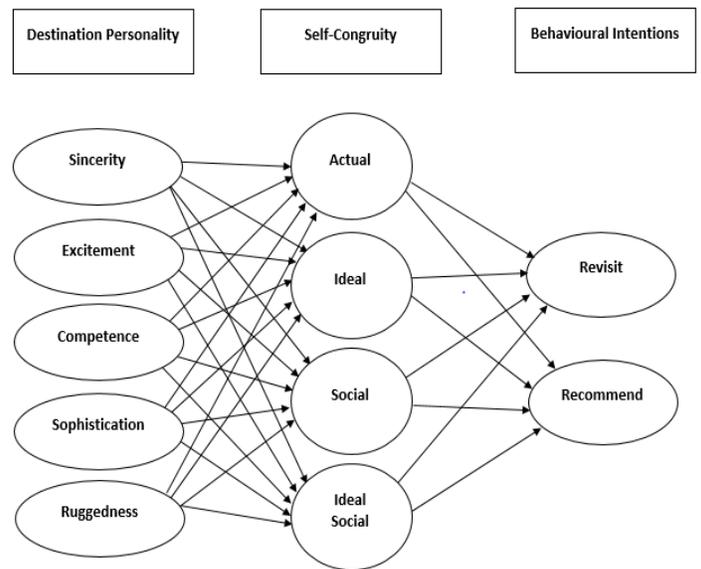
Self- congruity:

Self-concept has four major components namely, actual self, ideal self, social self and ideal social self. Actual self refers to how a person perceive himself, ideal self refers to how a person would like to perceive himself, social self refers to the image one believed other holds for him and ideal social self refers to the image which one would like others to hold for him [17]. The notion of self- congruity is that people prefer those brands whose personality characteristics congruent with their own personality characteristics [9].

Usakli and Baloglu found that there is a relationship between destination personality, self- congruity and tourist’s behaviour. They have taken only two dimensions of self -congruity namely actual and ideal self. [1] Kumar study confirms the findings of Usakli and Baloglu and also adds that destination personality influence the destination trust and destination satisfaction. He has taken two dimensions of self-congruity namely actual and ideal self. [18] Beerli et al stated that greater the agreement between actual self and ideal self-concept and destination image, the higher chances of revisit the destination. [7]

III. MODEL AND HYPOTHESES

Figure 1: Conceptual model depicting the effect of destination personality on tourist behavior, mediated by self-congruity.



HYPOTHESES:

H1: The relationship between destination personality (Sincerity, Excitement, Competence, Sophistication, Ruggedness) and intention to revisit will be moderated by self-congruity (Actual, Ideal, Social, Ideal social).

H2: The relationship between destination personality (Sincerity, Excitement, Competence, Sophistication, Ruggedness) and intention to recommend will be moderated by self-congruity (Actual, Ideal, Social, Ideal social).

Each hypothesis will be separately tested.

IV. METHODOLOGY

This study has applied a survey research design. A self-administered questionnaire was developed based on the literature review and floated it online. The questionnaire consists both close and open ended questions to measure destination personality, self-congruity, behavioral intentions, demographics and responder's country name. An open ended question was asked where responders were asked to write his/her favorite destination in India and fill BPS and self-congruity questions on the basis of that destination.

Measurements:

Aaker's BPS was used to measure the brand personality. A total 42 items were measured on 5 point likert type scale ranging from 1 (Not at all describes) to 5 (Extremely descriptive).

Sirgy's global measurement scale was used to measure the self-congruity. There were 12 statements to measure self-congruity on 7-point likert type scale ranging from 1 (Strongly disagree) to 7(Strongly agree). The demographics questions were included to measure the gender, age, occupation.

Sample:

For the purpose of this study, data was collected from a sample of 126 people, across various age groups and locations across the world. There were 64 domestic and 62 international responders. Random sampling was used to collect data for domestic tourists and judgment sampling was used to collect the data of international tourists. Questionnaire was sent to only those international tourists who have visited India at least once.

Data Analysis:

The proposed conceptual model was tested by structural equation modeling (SEM) - Partial least squares. SEM was performed three times separately, first for overall responses, second for international and third for domestic responders to check the differences. The present study used WARP 4.0 PLS to analyze the data.

V. RESULTS

Table 2: Descriptive statistics of all three SEMs

| DESCRIPTIVE | OVERALL | INTERNATIONAL | NATIONAL |
|-------------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|
| Avg. Path Coef. | 0.122 P=0.021 | 0.181 p=0.012 | 0.156 p=0.021 |
| Avg. R-Sq. | 0.146 p=0.010 | 0.264 p=0.001 | 0.189 p=0.009 |
| Avg. Adj. R- SQ. | 0.113 p=0.028 | 0.203 p=0.007 | 0.125 p=0.042 |
| Avg. block VIF | 1.938 | 2.499 | 1.644 |
| Avg. full VIF | 3.001 | 3.613 | 3.66 |
| GOF | 0.321 | 0.435 | 0.366 |
| SPR | 0.7 | 0.714 | 0.786 |
| R-Sq. cont. ratio | 0.891 | 0.856 | 0.927 |
| Stat. supp. Ratio | 1 | 1 | 0.964 |

Above table is the consolidated excel sheet of descriptive statistics of all three SEMs. Here, overall refers to the overall responders, international refers to the international (foreign) responders' data and national refers to the national (Domestic) responders' data. The p-values of average path coefficient for all overall data, international responders' data and national responders' data are less than 0.05. Similarly, for the average R-square and average adjusted R-square of all the SEM, p-values are less than 0.05. VIF is 3.001 of overall, 3.613 of international and 3.66 of national, acceptable if less than 5, ideally less than 3.3. Goodness of fit (GoF) of the model is 0.321 of overall data, 0.435 of international responders' data and 0.366 of national responders' data which is good in all the cases. Symptom's paradox ratio is greater than 0.7 in all cases, acceptable if greater than 0.7, ideally is 1.

Table 3: SEM results of all three SEMs.

| COMBINATION | OVERALL | | INTERNATIONAL | | NATIONAL | |
|--------------|-----------|---------|---------------|---------|-----------|---------|
| | PATH.Cof. | P VALUE | PATH Cof. | P VALUE | PATH Cof. | P VALUE |
| SIN-> AS | 0.226 | <0.001 | -0.248 | 0.004 | 0.339 | <0.001 |
| SIN-> IS | 0.143 | 0.021 | 0.196 | 0.017 | 0.125 | 0.082 |
| SIN-> SS | 0.19 | 0.004 | 0.051 | 0.285 | 0.263 | 0.002 |
| SIN-> ISS | 0.209 | 0.002 | 0.304 | <0.001 | 0.253 | 0.003 |
| EX-> AS | -0.059 | 0.202 | 0.045 | 0.308 | -0.123 | 0.087 |
| EX-> IS | -0.036 | 0.303 | 0.205 | 0.013 | 0.073 | 0.206 |
| EX-> SS | 0.04 | 0.285 | 0.042 | 0.321 | -0.046 | 0.303 |
| EX-> ISS | -0.095 | 0.088 | 0.273 | 0.002 | 0.064 | 0.237 |
| COM-> AS | 0.066 | 0.174 | -0.29 | <0.001 | -0.061 | 0.247 |
| COM-> IS | 0.398 | <0.001 | 0.129 | 0.079 | 0.515 | <0.001 |
| COM-> SS | 0.105 | 0.068 | -0.102 | 0.131 | 0.202 | 0.013 |
| COM-> ISS | -0.027 | 0.352 | 0.35 | <0.001 | 0.111 | 0.109 |
| SOP-> AS | 0.178 | 0.006 | 0.304 | <0.001 | 0.101 | 0.131 |
| SOP-> IS | -0.022 | 0.378 | -0.024 | 0.394 | 0.073 | 0.206 |
| SOP-> SS | 0.17 | 0.008 | 0.293 | <0.001 | 0.063 | 0.24 |
| SOP-> ISS | 0.273 | <0.001 | 0.25 | 0.004 | 0.249 | 0.003 |
| RUG-> AS | 0.081 | 0.124 | 0.237 | 0.005 | -0.007 | 0.468 |
| RUG-> IS | -0.064 | 0.18 | 0.125 | 0.085 | -0.143 | 0.057 |
| RUG-> SS | -0.112 | 0.056 | -0.113 | 0.106 | -0.228 | 0.006 |
| RUG-> ISS | 0.079 | 0.13 | 0.045 | 0.308 | -0.068 | 0.224 |
| AS-> REV | -0.024 | 0.366 | 0.206 | 0.013 | -0.22 | 0.008 |
| IS-> REV | 0.294 | <0.001 | 0.514 | <0.001 | 0.069 | 0.22 |
| SS-> REV | 0.057 | 0.207 | 0.11 | 0.112 | 0.206 | 0.012 |
| ISS-> REV | 0.033 | 0.32 | -0.018 | 0.421 | 0.017 | 0.425 |
| AS-> RECMND | -0.086 | 0.109 | 0.246 | 0.004 | -0.262 | 0.002 |
| IS-> RECMND | 0.22 | 0.001 | 0.24 | 0.005 | 0.111 | 0.108 |
| SS-> RECMND | 0.09 | 0.101 | -0.036 | 0.345 | 0.269 | 0.002 |
| ISS-> RECMND | 0.037 | 0.3 | -0.068 | 0.225 | 0.109 | 0.113 |

Above table is the consolidated results in excel sheet of all the three SEMs. The bold font has been used to highlight the p-value of the relations which are significant. P-value less than 0.05 have been considered as a significant.

Overall

In brand personality dimensions, Sincerity is positively significant to all the four dimensions of self-congruity namely Actual ($\beta=0.226$, $p=0.001$), Ideal ($\beta=0.14$, $p=0.021$), Social ($\beta=0.19$, $p=0.004$) and Ideal social ($\beta=0.209$, $p=0.002$). Competence is positively significant to ideal self ($\beta=0.398$, $p=0.001$). Sophistication is positively significant to three self-congruity dimensions namely, Actual ($\beta=0.178$, $P=0.006$), Social ($\beta=0.17$, $p=0.008$) and Ideal social ($\beta=0.273$, $p=0.001$). Self-congruity, only ideal self is positively significant with intention

to revisit ($\beta=0.294$, $p=0.001$) and intention to recommend ($\beta=0.22$, $p=0.001$).

International

In brand personality dimensions, Sincerity is significant to three of the four dimensions of self-congruity namely negatively to Actual ($\beta=-0.226$, $p=0.001$), positively to Ideal ($\beta=0.14$, $p=0.021$) and Ideal social ($\beta=0.209$, $p=0.002$). Excitement is positively significant with two self-congruity dimensions namely, ideal ($\beta=0.205$, $p=0.013$) and ideal social self ($\beta=0.273$, $p=0.002$). Competence is negatively significant to actual self ($\beta=-0.29$, $p=0.001$) and positively with ideal social self ($\beta=0.35$, $p=0.001$). Sophistication is positively significant to three self-congruity dimensions namely, Actual ($\beta=0.304$, $p=0.001$), Social ($\beta=0.293$, $p=0.001$) and Ideal social ($\beta=0.25$, $p=0.004$). Ruggedness is positively significant to one dimension of self-congruity; actual ($\beta=0.237$, $p=0.005$). Self-congruity, actual ($\beta=0.206$, $p=0.013$) and ideal ($\beta=0.514$, $p=0.001$) is positively significant to intention to revisit and same dimensions actual ($\beta=0.24$, $p=0.004$) and ideal ($\beta=0.24$, $p=0.005$) to intention to recommend.

National

In brand personality dimensions, Sincerity is positively significant to three of the four dimensions of self-congruity namely Actual ($\beta=0.339$, $p=0.001$), Ideal ($\beta=0.263$, $p=0.002$) and Ideal social ($\beta=0.253$, $p=0.003$). Competence is positively significant to ideal self ($\beta=-0.515$, $p=0.001$) and social ($\beta=0.202$, $p=0.013$). Sophistication is positively significant to only one self-congruity dimension namely, Ideal social ($\beta=0.249$, $p=0.003$). Ruggedness is negatively significant to one dimension of self-congruity; social self ($\beta=-0.228$, $p=0.006$). Self-congruity, actual ($\beta=-0.22$, $p=0.008$) and social ($\beta=0.206$, $p=0.012$) are negatively and positively significant to intention to revisit and same dimensions actual ($\beta=0.262$, $p=0.002$) and social ($\beta=0.269$, $p=0.002$) positively significant to intention to recommend.

VI. DISCUSSIONS AND LIMITATIONS

The above study shows that there is relation between destination personality and self-congruity. For overall, three destination personality dimensions namely sincerity, competence and ruggedness are related to self-congruity. Ideal self is the only self-congruity dimension which is related to behavioral

intentions. For international, all five dimensions of destination personality namely sincerity, excitement, competence, sophistication and ruggedness are related to self-congruity. Actual and ideal self are the two self-congruity dimensions which are related to behavioral intention. For national, four dimensions of DP namely sincerity, competence, sophistication and ruggedness are related to self-congruity. Actual and social self are the two self-congruity dimensions which are related to behavioral intentions. In international, ideal Social self is not significant to both intention to visit and intention to recommend whereas in national ideal social self is significant to both intention to visit and intention to recommend, so we can assume that there could be factor of cultural difference between international and domestic responders. The sample size was small in this study. The same study can be done further by collecting more responses of international and national tourists and cultural factor can be tested as a moderating factor to get more insights.

VII. CONCLUSION

There is relation between destination personality and self-congruity. If destination personality is highly related with self-congruity then greater the chances are to revisit and recommend the destination. There are differences in international and national tourists' behavioral intentions.

VIII. REFERENCES

- [1] Usakli, A., & Baloglu, S. (2011). Brand personality of tourist destinations: An application of self-congruity theory. *Tourism Management*, 32(1), 114-127.
- [2] Pike, S., & Ryan, C. (2004). Destination positioning analysis through a comparison of cognitive, affective, and conative perceptions. *Journal of Travel Research*, 42, 333-342.
- [3] Ekinci, Y., Sirakaya-Turk, E., & Baloglu, S. (2007). Host image and destination personality. *Tourism Analysis*, 12, 433-446.
- [4] Ekinci, Y., & Hosany, S. (2006). Destination personality: an application of brand personality to tourism destinations. *Journal of Travel Research*, 45, 127-139.
- [5] Murphy, L., Benckendorff, P., & Moscardo, G. (2007). Linking travel motivation, tourist self-image and destination brand personality. *Journal of travel & tourism marketing*, 22(2), 45-59.
- [6] Gómez Aguilar, A., Yagüe Guillén, M. J., & Villaseñor Roman, N. (2014). Destination brand personality: An application to Spanish tourism. *Int. J. Tourism Research*, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1002/jtr.1997>.
- [7] Asuncio'n Beerli, Gonzalo Di'az Meneses, Sergio Moreno Gil (2007). SELF-CONGRUITY AND DESTINATION CHOICE, *Annals of Tourism Research*, Vol. 34, No. 3, pp. 571–587
- [8] Aaker, J. L. (1997). Dimensions of brand personality. *Journal of Marketing Research*, 34, 347-356.
- [9] Aaker, J. L. (1999). The malleable self: the role of self-expression in persuasion. *Journal of Marketing Research*, 36, 45-57.
- [10] Austin, J. R., Siguaw, J. A., & Mattila, A. S. (2003). A re-examination of the generalizability of the Aaker brand personality measurement framework. *Journal of Strategic Marketing*, 11, 77-92.
- [11] Azoulay, A., & Kapferer, J. (2003). Do brand personality scales really measure brand personality? *Journal of Brand Management*, 11(2), 143-155.
- [12] Hosany, S., Ekinci, Y., & Uysal, M. (2006). Destination image and destination personality: an application of branding theories to tourism places. *Journal of Business Research*, 59, 638-642.
- [13] Ye, S. (2012). The impact of destination personality dimensions on destination brand awareness and attractiveness: Australia as a case study. *Tourism*, 60, 397–409.
- [14] Kilic, B., & Sop, S. A. (2012). Destination personality, self-congruity and loyalty. *Journal of Hospitality Management and Tourism*, 3(5), 95-105.
- [15] Kim, S., & Lehto, X. Y. (2013). Projected and perceived destination brand personalities: The case of South Korea. *Journal of Travel Research*, 52, 117–130.

[16]Prayag, G. (2007). Exploring the relationship between destination image and brand personality of a tourist destination: an application of projective techniques. *Journal of Travel and Tourism Research*, Fall, 111-130.

[17]Sirgy, M. J. (1982). Self-concept in consumer behavior: a critical review. *Journal of Consumer Research*, 9, 287-300.

[18] Kumar, V., (2016), Examining the role of destination personality and self-congruity in predicting tourist behaviour, *Tourism Management Perspectives* 20 (2016) 217–227