Does uncertainty avoidance moderate the effect of self-congruity on revisit intention? A two-city (Auckland and Glasgow) investigation

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Abstract

Drawing upon self-congruity theory and Hofstede's notion of uncertainty avoidance, this paper empirically investigates the roles of destination personality, destination image, self-congruity, uncertainty avoidance, and revisit intention in two cities: Auckland, New Zealand and Glasgow, UK. Data were collected from a sample of 318 Chinese tourists in Auckland and 226 Chinese tourists in Glasgow. Partial least squares structural equation modeling was used to assess the measurement and structural models and to compare the relationship between these destinations. Findings showed that actual and ideal self-congruity served as mediators between destination personality, destination image, and revisit intention; uncertainty avoidance was not a significant moderator between self-congruity (i.e. actual and ideal) and revisit intention in both cities. Partial least squares–Henseler's multigroup analysis further indicated that the mediating role of actual self-congruity between destination image and revisit intention was especially strong for Auckland versus Glasgow. However, findings revealed non-significant differences between Auckland and Glasgow for all hypotheses (i.e. the mediating role of self-congruity and the moderating role of uncertainty avoidance). The present study offers theoretical and managerial implications for academics and practitioners.

Key words: Theory of self-congruity, travel behavior, Hofstede's cultural dimensions, uncertainty avoidance, Chinese tourist

1. Introduction

The literature suggests that repeat visitors support sustainable tourism development, especially by enhancing individuals' destination loyalty (i.e. visitation frequency) (López-Sanz et al., 2021; Van Dyk et al., 2019). Destination management organizations (DMOs) can contribute to local employment opportunities, local economic development, local infrastructure, and cultural diversification by promoting destinations and attracting repeat tourists. To date, aside from the topic of travel intention, numerous scholars have explored revisit intention antecedents based on several factors: destination branding (Cardona et al., 2017; Chen et al., 2020), destination attachment (Isa et al., 2019; Jian, Lin, & Zhou, 2021), destination authenticity (Chen et al., 2020), destination personality (Li et al., 2010; Yang et al., 2021), and destination image (Chew & Jahari, 2014; Rasoolimanesh et al., 2021; Yang et al., 2021). Human–place relationships in destinations have come to play increasingly crucial roles in individuals' travel behavior as well (Šegota, Chen, & Golja, 2021).

Referring to self-congruity theory in travel contexts, scholars have empirically investigated direct effects among destination image, destination personality, self-congruity, and revisit intention (Bosnjak et al., 2011; Huaman-Ramirez et al., 2021; Kumar, 2016; Liu, Lin & Wang, 2012; Sirgy & Su, 2000; Yang et al., 2021). However, the role of self-congruity in the association between destination personality and revisit intention remains mostly unclear, barring a few empirical exceptions (Huaman-Ramirez et al., 2021; Liu, Huang, & Liang, 2019; Usakli & Baloglu, 2011; Yang, Isa, Ramayah, Blanes, & Kiumarsi, 2020) and one conceptual paper (Yang, Isa, & Ramayah, 2020). Interestingly, no tourism studies have examined this ambiguity by modeling the mechanism effects of self-congruity between destination image and revisit intention. A comprehensive sense of this topic is therefore lacking. From a theoretical standpoint, self-congruity theory has been used to explain the "match process" between the images of products/brands and consumers (Sirgy, 1982, 1985). In other words, consumers prefer to select a brand/product whose image/personality is compatible with their own self-concept (Sirgy, 1982; Sirgy & Su, 2000; Usakli & Baloglu, 2011). The current study aims to provide a holistic picture of the "match process" for this theory by examining the mediating role of self-congruity in predicting revisit intention.

In today's era of internationalization, tourism spans a global marketplace where destinations strive to appeal to visitors from diverse cultural backgrounds (Huang & Crotts, 2019). Cultural differences can exacerbate gaps in the tourist–destination relationship and in turn influence travel behavior. Cultural differences exert well-documented impacts on many aspects of individuals' behavior (Hofstede, 2001). Scholarly evidence indicates that culture plays a critical role in perceived destination branding and destination choice (Aguirre-Rodriguez, 2014; Liu et al., 2018). Several studies have also theorized about the roles of cultural factors in consumer–brand relationships. However, empirical investigations of this topic are limited (Lam, Ahearne, & Schillewaer, 2012), especially cross-cultural research on travelers' intentions to revisit destinations. Hofstede's (1984) key cultural values include uncertainty avoidance, which has been widely applied in cross-cultural studies to interpret fundamental cultural orientations.

Prior cross-cultural tourism studies (Chua et al., 2020; Crotts, 2004; Litvin, Crotts, & Hefner, 2004; Money & Crotts, 2003; Qian, Law, & Wei, 2018) identified uncertainty avoidance as the most relevant predictor of travel behavior. Yet no research has proposed an integrated framework including destination personality, destination image, self-congruity, and revisit intention by incorporating the moderator of uncertainty avoidance. By neglecting this moderating effect, the theory of self-congruity might not fully capture the complexity of travel behavior in terms of cross-cultural trips. Moreover, the extant literature has only framed uncertainty avoidance as a national cultural value (Crotts, 2004; Huang & Crotts, 2019; Litvin et al., 2004; Tigre Moura et al., 2015); this concept has been largely overlooked as an individual cultural value. The present study attempts to answer an academic call in tourism to extend the theory of self-congruity in multiple countries by empirically examining Hofstede's uncertainty avoidance through a cross-cultural lens (Bosnjak et al., 2011; Yang, Isa, & Ramayah, 2021a).

To address the aforementioned research gap, this study takes Hofstede's uncertainty avoidance as a supplementary theory: it is integrated with self-congruity theory to more closely examine the factors guiding tourists' revisit intentions. The purpose of the study is twofold: (1) to examine self-congruity as a potential mediator between destination personality, destination image, and revisit intention and (2) to assess whether the degree of uncertainty avoidance moderates the impact between self-congruity and revisit intention. Data were gathered from two cities (Auckland, New Zealand and Glasgow, Scotland, UK). Multigroup analysis (MGA)

was then performed to cross-validate identified outcomes related to the mediating role of self-congruity and the moderating role of uncertainty avoidance.

This study is expected to make several contributions. First, in terms of theoretical perspectives, the study advances theory development by exploring the mediating role of self-congruity in tourism marketing. Second, this research extends the model of self-congruity by incorporating Hofstede's uncertainty avoidance into the framework based on individual cultural values. Next, through cross-validated findings (two international cities), this study enhances theories' generalizability. Last, managerially, findings can help DMOs understand the mechanisms behind Chinese tourists' destination relationships as well as the cultural factors driving revisit intention. For instance, DMOs can refer to these results to guide their marketing strategies and attract more Chinese tourists.

2. Theoretical Background and Research Hypotheses

2.1 Mediating role of self-congruity

The consumer behavior and marketing literature has shown that self-congruity greatly affects individuals' behavior, including their purchase intentions and motivations (Liu et al., 2020; Sirgy, 1985; Sirgy & Su, 2000; Wallace et al., 2020). In theory, people are more likely to select/use commodities or services aligned with their self-concept (Sirgy, 1986). Scholars have conceptualized four types of congruity—actual, ideal, social, and social ideal (Aguirre-Rodriguez et al., 2012; Sirgy, 1985, 1986; Sirgy & Su, 2000)—to develop a more in-depth understanding of consumers' psychological-behavioral processes. Actual and ideal congruity are reflected in how brands reinforce consumers' demands, leading individuals to behave in ways that maintain internal consistency (i.e. "How I actually/ideally see myself"). Social congruity and ideal social congruity maintain external consistency (i.e. "How I think others see me"). Although these four types of congruity have been applied to predict behavioral intention (Kang et al., 2012; Šegota, Chen, & Golja, 2021), Liu et al. (2020) explained that actual and ideal self-congruity are common foci for two reasons. First, both dimensions have received robust empirical support and are often studied (Kumar, 2016; Usakli & Baloglu, 2011; Yang et al., 2021). Second, the social dimensions of self-congruity (e.g., social and ideal social self-congruity) are strongly correlated with actual and ideal self-congruity (i.e. personal dimensions; Ekinci & Riley, 2003). Inspired by the previous argument (Kumar, 2016; Liu et

al., 2020; Shamah et al., 2018; Yang et al., 2021), this study focuses on actual and ideal self-congruity.

A close correlation exists between self-congruity theory and leisure research. Multiple epistemological conceptualizations (e.g., behaviorist, cognitivist individual constructivist, and social constructivist) have appeared in leisure studies (Watkins, 2000). Regarding human psychological and behavioral processes, the self-congruity hypothesis is rooted in the premise that individuals try to ensure cognitive consistency in their beliefs and behavior (Sung & Choi, 2012). Several tourism scholars have concentrated on the tourist–destination relationship, namely the degree of destination congruity with oneself (Kumar, 2016; Liu, Huang, & Liang, 2019; Šegota, Chen, & Golja, 2021). Effective brand personification relies on whether a destination's personality suits tourists' self-concept (Sirgy, 1982).

Self-congruity theory explains the compatibility (or incompatibility) between consumers' brand perceptions and themselves (Sirgy, 1985). Compatibility fosters favorable consumer attitudes and intentions to repurchase from a brand (Sirgy, 1985). This pattern also applies to destination brand personality (Kumar, 2016; Usakli & Baloglu, 2011). The better the fit between perceived brand personality and a consumer's own personality, the greater the consumer's intentions to purchase from that brand (Usakli & Baloglu, 2011). Some empirical studies have identified destination personality as an antecedent of self-congruity (Chua et al., 2019; Huaman-Ramirez et al., 2021; Kumar, 2016). Others have shown that self-congruity determines behavioral intention (Cifci, 2021; Joo et al., 2020; Liu, Huang, & Liang, 2019; Šegota, Chen, & Golja, 2021; Yang et al., 2021). Building on this theoretical and empirical support, the following hypotheses are proposed:

Hypothesis 1 (H1): Destination personality has an indirect impact on revisit intention through actual self-congruity.

Hypothesis 2 (H2): Destination personality has an indirect impact on revisit intention through ideal self-congruity.

In terms of brand image, self-congruity theory reflects the compatibility between consumers' perceived brand image and self-image (Sirgy, 1982, 1985). The extent to which consumers'

self-concept fits their perceived brand image can positively affect behavior (Kressmann et al., 2006; Sirgy et al., 2008). However, current conceptualizations of destination self-congruity are primarily based on Sirgy and Su's (2000) model. Their theoretical assumption suggests that a better match between brand image and consumers' own image will lead to more favorable behavior. For instance, tourism studies have identified a correlation between destination image and self-congruity (Liu, Lin, & Wang, 2012). The association between self-congruity and revisit intention has also been verified (Chua et al., 2019; Yang et al., 2021). Given these arguments, the following hypotheses are proposed:

Hypothesis 3 (H3): Destination image has an indirect impact on revisit intention through actual self-congruity.

Hypothesis 4 (H4): Destination image has an indirect impact on revisit intention through ideal self-congruity.

2.2 Role of Hofstede's cultural framework

The concept of culture has been defined in various ways in the social sciences (Wallerstein, 1990). In this paper, we postulate that culture can explain collective ways of thinking about behavior and feelings. These ways of thinking can also label members of one group and distinguish them from others (Hofstede, Hofstede, & Minkov, 2005; Tigre Moura et al., 2015). Culture has been described as a constellation of universal features that influence groups' responses to the general environment. Culture can hence be embedded in every form of group membership, referring to a distinct set of thoughts, beliefs, and practices among individuals (Cho et al., 2013).

Tourism and hospitality scholars have argued that travelers from different cultures have unique expectations of destinations and hotels (Huang & Crotts, 2019). It is therefore important to determine tourists' behavior through cross-cultural research. Hofstede's (1980) theoretical framework of cultural dimensions is well accepted in the business domain (Tigre Moura et al., 2015) as well as in tourism (Huang & Crotts, 2019). Hofstede's cultural dimensions include power distance, uncertainty avoidance, individualism versus collectivism, masculinity versus femininity, long-term versus short-term orientation, and indulgence versus restraint (Hofstede, 1980, 1991, 2001). Although these dimensions have been applied internationally to

conceptualize culture (Kirkman, Lowe, & Gibson, 2006), several limitations persist, such as relatively unrepresentative samples (Steenkamp, 2001), outdated measurement methods (White & Tadess, 2008), and thin theoretical support (Soares et al., 2007). Tourism researchers have further contended that cultural differences only reflect temporal changes in perceived value heterogeneity among individuals from the same country (Liu et al., 2018). Such variation has led Hofstede's cultural dimensions to be interpreted differently across cultural backgrounds.

2.3 Moderating effect of uncertainty avoidance

Litvin and Kar (2003) claimed that it is possible to consider culture in the business landscape without referring to Hofstede's work. Moreover, Crotts and Pizam (2003) and Money and Crotts (2003) noted that not all of Hofstede's cultural dimensions are suitable for evaluating tourist behavior. Relevant literature has shown that including all dimensions can generate cultural bias, resulting in prejudice when constructing typologies of visitor behavior (Huang & Crotts, 2019). In terms of individual cultural values, uncertainty avoidance is most applicable to brand self-congruity (Lam et al., 2012; Pan & Truong, 2018; Reisinger & Crotts, 2009). Prior work involving the theory of self-congruity has revealed an inconsistent effect between self-congruity and revisit intention. For instance, several papers reported no impacts from self-congruity and revisit intention (Giraldi, 2013; Kastenholz, 2004), whereas others identified a significant link between these constructs (Chua et al., 2019; Kim & Malek, 2017). Potential moderator variables remain to be identified within this framework.

Hofstede (1984) defined uncertainty avoidance as the degree to which the members of a society feel not comfortable with uncertainty and ambiguity. In essence, people with low uncertainty avoidance are more tolerant and inclusive, can readily tackle uncertainties, and are less likely to become stressed and anxious. By contrast, people with high uncertainty avoidance prefer structured situations and can experience distress when facing the unknown. Researchers have adopted the notion of uncertainty avoidance to predict consumer behavior in marketing and tourism settings (Jung & Kellaris, 2004; Qian, Law, & Wei, 2018). Uncertainty avoidance also serves as a moderator of consumer behavior (Seo et al., 2018; Srite et al., 2006). Tourists with a high degree of uncertainty avoidance may be reluctant to revisit a destination. More

specifically, they may be more likely to revisit if the destination aligns with their self-concept (including uncertainty avoidance). Hence, the following hypotheses are proposed:

Hypothesis 5 (H5): The positive effect between actual self-congruity and revisit intention is strong for tourists exhibiting uncertainty avoidance.

Hypothesis 6 (H6): The positive effect between ideal self-congruity and revisit intention is strong for tourists exhibiting uncertainty avoidance.

Figure 1 presents the conceptual framework of the current study, integrating self-congruity theory (Sirgy, 1982) with Hofstede's (1980) cultural dimensions (i.e. uncertainty avoidance).

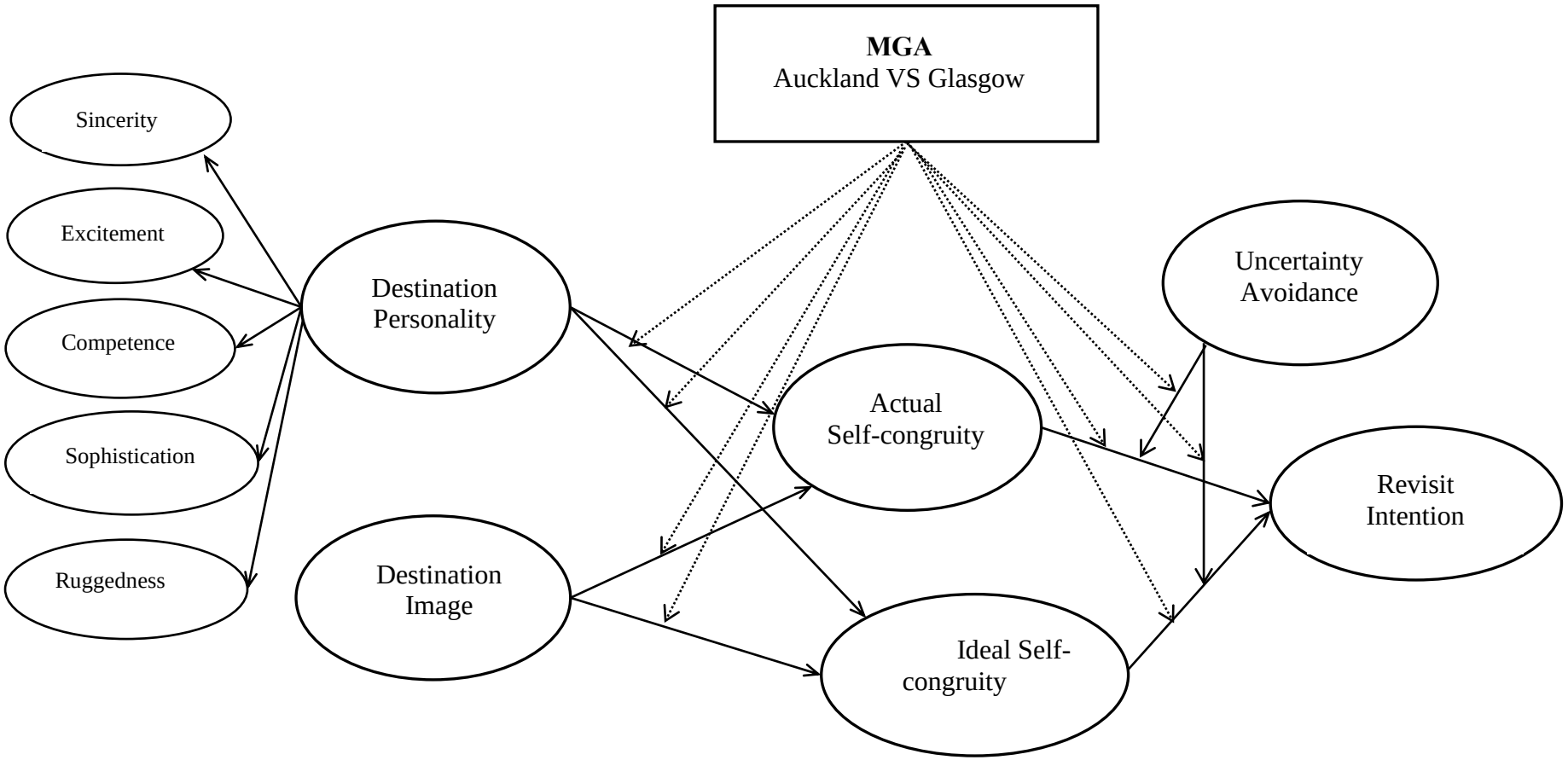

Figure 1: Conceptual framework

3. Methodology

3.1 Measurement instrument

This study employed a quantitative approach using a survey questionnaire to measure each construct. All measurement items (see Appendix 1) were taken from previous research. For instance, to assess destination personality, we adopted five dimensions (15 total items) from Salehzadeh et al. (2016) and Chua et al. (2019). However, destination personality has been conceptualized as a multidimensional construct (Huaman-Ramirez et al., 2021) and advised to be modeled as a reflective–reflective second-order construct (Yang et al., 2021). Modeling constructs as second-order factors can reduce the complexity of structural models and render a PLS structural model more parsimonious (Hair et al., 2014). Based on Ringle et al.'s (2012) guidelines on second-order constructs, we framed destination personality as a reflective–reflective second-order construct (i.e. taking first- and second-order relationships as reflective). Fifteen items covering five interrelated first-order constructs – competence, excitement, ruggedness, sincerity, and sophistication – fell under the higher-order factor of destination personality. Furthermore, five items were adapted from Jalilvand et al. (2012) to measure destination image. To evaluate self-congruity, we assessed two dimensions (i.e. actual and ideal self-congruity) using six items from Kumar (2016). We referred to Seo et al. (2018) to measure uncertainty avoidance. We adapted three items from Foroudi et al. (2018) to assess revisit intention. A pre-test was carried out prior to the main survey. In particular, three experts in tourism marketing (one scholar each from the UK, New Zealand, and China) were invited to review the questionnaire. A bilingual Chinese–English survey was designed by virtue of the study sample (Chinese tourists whose mother tongue was Chinese). The main investigator, who was proficient in both languages, translated the original survey form into Chinese. The main investigator then interviewed three tourism scholars, after which items' phrasing was modified per experts' feedback. Finally, the back-translation process was carried out to ensure accuracy (Lochrie et al., 2019).

3.2 Study sites and data collection

This study was conducted in two cities: Auckland, New Zealand and Glasgow, Scotland.

New Zealand draws thousands of international tourists thanks to its thriving natural environment (as promoted via the "100% Pure New Zealand" campaign) (Liu, 2021). Chinese visitors are a major source market. Auckland, New Zealand's largest city, is home to

approximately 1.6 million people. The city is also New Zealand's core business area and accounts for 35.3% of national GDP with many imports and exports (Statistics New Zealand, 2014). Auckland has been internationally recognized, ranked as the most livable city in the world (CNBC, 2021). This livability includes diverse experiences for tourists: a beautiful landscape, natural scenery, and attractions. Overall, Auckland draws 70% of all tourists to New Zealand (Antchak et al., 2019). Visitors perceive Auckland as an exciting, vibrant destination and hold positive perceptions of the city. Its large commercial central area is particularly appealing to Chinese tourists (Liu, 2021).

Glasgow is the largest city in Scotland with roughly 60,000 residents. The city boasts numerous venues with art performances, leisure activities, and nightclubs. Its local arts, culture, and sport scene is a major factor in its success, including in terms of cultural infrastructure (O'Neill & Rogerson, 2018). The city's slogan is "People make Glasgow." Glasgow hosts a gorgeous landscape, natural sightseeing, and a generally peaceful environment. These attributes can help DMOs promote the city as a tourist destination. Scotland has seen a 300% rise in Chinese tourists over the past decade, and approximately 87% of Chinese visitors perceive the country positively and wish to revisit (Terry, 2019). Glasgow is a popular destination for Chinese tourists after Edinburg (Terry, 2019). DMOs could seize this opportunity to encourage repeat Chinese visitation to foster sustainable tourism.

These two cities were chosen for data collection for several reasons. Both cities possess favorable characteristics such as a diverse culture, natural parks, art museums, a peaceful environment, and an esteemed international reputation. New Zealand was colonized by the UK and maintains its UK heritage and culture. Auckland and Glasgow are also both long-haul destinations from China (i.e. roughly a 10-hour flight). Chinese tourists are often eager to explore Western culture because it is rarely encountered in China. These travelers' trip expectations and preferences remain somewhat ambiguous to Western tourism marketers (Li et al., 2011). By gathering data from two cities in different countries, the guiding theoretical framework can be more widely generalized.

A cross-sectional survey was employed in both cities. The main investigator conducted the survey face-to-face with Chinese tourists in Auckland (October–December 2019) and Glasgow (March–July 2019). The main investigator had lived and studied in Auckland for four years previously. Physical surveys were distributed at Michael Joseph Savage Memorial Park, Auckland city center (Queens Street), Albert Park, and the city's arts gallery. In Glasgow, the

survey form was distributed at the Kelvingrove Art Gallery and the city center when the main investigator was a visiting scholar at XXX University, UK. In the field, non-probability sampling was used to identify possible respondents and to verify they were Chinese tourists. The main investigator interacted with potential respondents before performing the official survey (e.g., asking about their length of stay, nationality, and visa type) to recruit a suitable sample. Qualified Chinese tourists were then invited to fill out the questionnaire on site. The main investigator clarified survey items if respondents expressed confusion. Ultimately, 226 surveys were obtained in Glasgow with 318 in Auckland. The minimum sample size was determined using G*Power software (Faul et al., 2009). Because the model contained a maximum of five predictors (for revisit intention), the effect size was set to medium (0.15) with a required power of 0.80 and an alpha level of 0.05. Based on the calculation results, each group should contain 92 respondents. The sample size of 226 Chinese tourists in Glasgow and 318 Chinese tourists in Auckland was therefore adequate for data analysis.

3.3 Common method variance

Because all data were collected from a single source, common method variance (CMV) could exist. Two approaches are recommended to assess CMV in partial least squares structural equation modeling (PLS-SEM): full collinearity assessment, based on variance inflation factors (VIFs) (Kock, 2015); and the correlation matrix procedure. First, following suggestions from Kock and Lynn (2012) and Kock (2015), all variables must be regressed against a common variable; if the VIF $\leq$ 3.3, then no bias exists in single-source data. Second, based on the correlation matrix procedure, the values of correlations among constructs should be less than 0.9 to indicate a lack of CMV. The VIFs for all constructs in this study were 1.222–2.542 for Auckland data and 1.055–2.185 for Glasgow data. The correlations among constructs in both groups were less than 0.9. CMV was therefore not a problem.

3.4 Sample profile

Table 1 presents the sample profile based on all valid surveys. About two-thirds (67.3%) of surveyed Chinese tourists in Auckland were women (69.5% in Glasgow). The percentage of female Chinese tourists exceeded that of men at an approximately equal degree for both cities. Regarding age, 64.2% of Chinese tourists surveyed in Auckland were younger than age 25 (72.1% in Glasgow). These cities thus seem to appeal to young Chinese travelers. About three-quarters (77%) of Chinese tourists in Auckland and approximately 93.5% in Glasgow were single; these tourists could easily decide to travel overseas without any family burden. Finally,

both cities are in developed countries. Chinese visitors must apply for a visa and present proof of strong financial standing (e.g., evidence of savings or a financial statement) to enter each destination. Less than half (41.8%) of Chinese tourists in Auckland and 31% in Glasgow earned a monthly household income greater than 20,000RMB.

Table 1 Demographic Profile

Demographic factor		**Auckland**		**Glasgow**	
	Categories	**Frequencies**	**Percentages**	**Frequencies**	**Percentages**
Gender	Male	104	32.7	69	30.5
	Female	214	67.3	157	69.5
Age	25 or below	204	64.2	163	72.1
	25–35	59	18.6	60	26.5
	36–45	32	10.1	1	.4
	46–55	23	7.2	2	.9
	55 or above	0	0	0	0
Marital status	Married	57	17.9	13	5.8
	Single	245	77.0	211	93.4
	Divorced	12	3.8	1	.4
	Widow	4	1.3	1	.4
	Widower	0	0	0	0
Monthly household income	Less than 5,000 RMB	67	21.1	40	17.7
	5,000–10,000 RMB	46	14.5	45	19.9
	10,001–20,000 RMB	72	22.6	71	31.4
	More than 20,000 RMB	133	41.8	70	31.0

3.5 Statistical analysis

Following statistical analysis guidelines (Hair et al., 2019, 2022) and prior tourism research (Gannon et al., 2021; Rasoolimanesh et al., 2021), PLS-SEM and MGA were employed to assess the measurement and structural models. PLS-SEM was carried out for theory development and prediction. PLS-SEM offers several advantages over other methods. First, data do not need to be normally distributed (Hair et al., 2019; Henseler et al., 2009); this approach is therefore highly robust. Second, PLS-SEM is appropriate when dealing with complex research models (Hair et al., 2019; Šegota, Chen, & Golja, 2021): it can maximize the variance in dependent variables along with data quality based on the measurement model's

features, and the properties of construct assessment are not highly restrictive (Hair et al., 2011). The research model in this study was complex in its incorporation of mediators, moderators, and second-order constructs.

However, this paper sought to compare the effects of antecedents on outcome variables via MGA (two cities in this case), a nonparametric approach. PLS-SEM is nonparametric (Hair et al., 2019; Rasoolimanesh et al., 2021). Therefore, after evaluating the measurement model and structural model, we checked the measurement invariance of composite models (MICOM) via PLS-SEM (Henseler et al., 2016; Rasoolimanesh et al., 2017). Two nonparametric approaches (i.e. a permutation test and Henseler's MGA) were then applied for MGA (Chin & Dibbern, 2010; Henseler et al., 2009; Rasoolimanesh et al., 2017).

4. Results and Findings

4.1 Evaluating the measurement model

The measurement model was evaluated through two steps. It was first necessary to examine reliability and convergent validity for the two groups of data (i.e. Auckland and Glasgow); the loading indicators, composite reliability (CR), and average variance extracted (AVE) should be ≥0.5, ≥0.7, and ≥0.5 (Hair et al., 2019, 2022), respectively. Table 2 shows that all loading indicators exceeded 0.5, AVE values were greater than 0.5, and CR values were more than 0.7 for the Auckland data and the Glasgow data. Reliability and convergent validity were hence adequate for both samples. Discriminant validity was assessed next. Henseler, Ringle, and Sarstedt (2015) stated that acceptable heterotrait-monotrait (HTMT) values should be less than either 0.85 or 0.9; we applied the more rigorous value of 0.85. Table 3 indicates that discriminant validity was acceptable across the data for both cities. The "destination personality" construct was then converted into a second-order factor, measured using a two-stage approach (Sarstedt et al., 2019). In particular, the five dimensions of destination personality were transformed into five items to represent this construct. All items' factor loadings and AVE, CR, and HTMT values were highly acceptable for their corresponding sub-scales (see Tables 2 and 3).

Table 2 Measurement Model

		Auckland vs. Glasgow	Auckland (*N* = 318)			Glasgow (*N* = 226)		
Construct	**Type**	**Items**	**Loadings**	**CR**	**AVE**	**Loadings**	**CR**	**AVE**
Sincerity	Reflective	DP1	0.81	0.87	0.63	0.67	0.82	0.54
		DP2	0.87			0.76		
		DP3	0.71			0.78		
		DP4	0.78			0.72		
Excitement	Reflective	DP5	0.77	0.86	0.61	0.62	0.82	0.53
		DP6	0.83			0.67		
		DP7	0.83			0.81		
		DP8	0.68			0.79		
Competence	Reflective	DP9	0.81	0.91	0.77	0.80	0.86	0.68
		DP10	0.92			0.86		
		DP11	0.90			0.80		
Sophistication	Reflective	DP12	0.83	0.82	0.70	0.80	0.82	0.69
		DP13	0.83			0.86		
Ruggedness	Reflective	DP14	0.40	0.70	0.58	0.70	0.79	0.66
		DP15	0.99			0.91		
Destination Personality (Second-order construct)	Reflective	*Sincerity*	0.73	0.87	0.57	0.69	0.88	0.59
		Excitement	0.81			0.84		
		Competence	0.81			0.83		
		Sophistication	0.78			0.79		
		Ruggedness	0.63			0.67		
Actual Self-congruity	Reflective	ASC1	0.91	0.95	0.87	0.84	0.90	0.74
		ASC2	0.94			0.90		
		ASC3	0.94			0.85		
Ideal Self-congruity	Reflective	ISC1	0.88	0.93	0.81	0.82	0.89	0.73
		ISC2	0.93			0.88		
		ISC3	0.90			0.86		
Uncertainty Avoidance	Reflective	UA4	0.75	0.86	0.61	0.68	0.82	0.54
		UA5	0.56			0.49		
		UA6	0.90			0.94		
		UA7	0.87			0.74		
Revisit Intention	Reflective	RI1	0.90	0.95	0.85	0.87	0.93	0.81
		RI2	0.94			0.92		
		RI3	0.93			0.90		

Note: DI1 and UA1, UA2, and UA3 were deleted (AVE<0.5); DI4 was deleted (for MICOM); CR: composite reliability; AVE: average variance extracted.

Table 3 Discriminant Validity (HTMT Ratios)

	ASC	DI	DP	ISC	RI	UA
Auckland						
ASC						
DI	0.580					
DP	0.399	0.554				
ISC	0.789	0.594	0.569			
RI	0.463	0.427	0.426	0.553		
UA	0.370	0.218	0.194	0.343	0.253	
Glasgow						
	ASC	DI	DP	ISC	RI	UA
ASC						
DI	0.340					
DP	0.488	0.640				
ISC	0.780	0.415	0.611			
RI	0.401	0.340	0.513	0.534		
UA	0.146	0.242	0.083	0.161	0.073	

Note: ASC: actual self-congruity; DI: destination image; DP: destination personality; ISC: ideal self-congruity; RI: revisit intention; UA: uncertainty avoidance.

4.2 Evaluating the structural model and multigroup analysis

Table 5 presents the assessed mediator model for Auckland and Glasgow. Product coefficients (conveying indirect relationships) were considered when evaluating the presence of a significant mediating effect based on bias-corrected bootstrap confidence intervals (CIs) (Gannon et al., 2021; Hayer & Scharkow, 2013). Table 5 indicates a highly significant full mediator of self-congruity (i.e. actual/ideal) between destination personality and revisit intention for both cities, supporting H1 and H2. Further, a close relationship was observed between destination image and revisit intention through self-congruity (actual/ideal) for Auckland and Glasgow (H3 and H4 supported). The theory of self-congruity is thus appropriate for predicting revisit intention in these two cities. In terms of potential moderator interaction, two interaction items (uncertainty avoidance × actual/ideal self-congruity → revisit intention) were insignificant for both cities. Table 5 shows positive and negative CI values; as such, H5 and H6 were not supported. Uncertainty avoidance therefore did not moderate the association between self-congruity (actual/ideal) and revisit intention.

Furthermore, MGA was performed to compare data gathered in Auckland and Glasgow to cross-validate findings (Gannon et al., 2021; Taheri, Olya, et al., 2019). Measurement

invariance was first verified using three steps in MICOM prior to running MGA (Henseler, Ringle, & Sarstedt, 2016; Rasoolimanesh et al., 2021; Yang et al., 2021). Table 4 lists the MICOM results, highlighting full measurement invariance based on configural invariance assessment, compositional invariance assessment, and the assessment of equal means and variance (Gannon et al., 2021). Having evaluated measurement invariance, MGA was run to compare the results from Auckland and Glasgow using a nonparametric permutation test as suggested by Chin and Dibbern (2010). Table 5 shows non-significant differences between Auckland and Glasgow for all hypotheses (i.e. mediating effect and moderator interaction). Interestingly, however, the results of Henseler's MGA varied slightly from those of the permutation test – the mediator of actual self-congruity between destination image and revisit intention differed for both cities (H3; Table 5).

Table 4 Results of Invariance Measurement Testing Using Permutation

	Compositional invariance				**Equal mean assessment**			**Equal variance assessment**			**Full measurement invariance established**
Constructs	Configurational Invariance (Same algorithmic for Both groups)	C=1	CI	Partial Measurement Invariance established	Differences	CI	Equal	Differences	CI	Equal	
ASC	Yes	1.00	[1.00, 1.00]	Yes	0.21	[-0.17, 0.17]	No	0.33	[-0.23, 0.26]	No	No
DI	Yes	0.97	[0.97, 1.00]	Yes	-0.22	[-0.18, 0.17]	No	0.17	[-0.26, 0.26]	Yes	No
DP	Yes	1.00	[0.99, 1.00]	Yes	-0.24	[-0.18, 0.16]	No	0.14	[-0.30, 0.32]	Yes	No
ISC	Yes	1.00	[1.00, 1.00]	Yes	0.08	[-0.17, 0.17]	Yes	0.15	[-0.24, 0.24]	Yes	Yes
RI	Yes	1.00	[1.00, 1.00]	Yes	0.36	[-0.17, 0.17]	No	-0.10	[-0.21, 0.21]	Yes	No
UA	Yes	0.98	[0.91, 1.00]	Yes	0.47	[-0.18, 0.16]	No	0.23	[-0.20, 0.20]	No	No

Note: CI: confidence interval.

Table 5 Results of Hypothesis Testing and MGA

		Path coefficient		**Confidence interval**		**Path coefficient difference**	***p*-value difference**		**Supported**
Hypothesis	**Relationship**	**Auckland**	**Glasgow**	**Auckland**	**Glasgow**		**Permutation**	**Henseler's MGA**	
H1	DP -> ASC->RI	0.03^{NS}	0.03^{NS}	[0.00,0.07]	[0.00,0.08]	0.03	0.28	0.13	No/No
H2	DP ->ISC->RI	0.14**	0.19**	[0.09,0.20]	[0.13,0.27]	-0.01	0.88	0.45	No/No
H3	DI-> ASC->RI	0.05*	0.01^{NS}	[0.00,0.09]	[0.00,0.03]	0.07	0.07	0.04	**No/Yes**
H4	DI->ISC -> RI	0.10**	0.04^{NS}	[0.06,0.16]	[0.00,0.08]	-0.03	0.53	0.28	No/No
H5	UA*ASC* -> RI	0.08^{NS}	-0.11^{NS}	[-0.10,0.21]	[-0.23, 0.20]	0.19	0.25	0.15	No/No
H6	UA*ISC* -> RI	-0.11^{NS}	0.09^{NS}	[-0.23,0.19]	[-0.15, 0.28]	-0.20	0.37	0.14	No/No

Note: In Henseler's MGA method, a *p*-value lower than 0.05 or higher than 0.95 indicates significant differences (at the 5% level) between specific path coefficients across two groups. *$p < 0.005$; **$p < 0.001$; NS: not significant.

5. Discussion

Antecedents of revisit intention constitute an emerging issue in tourism research, especially as they relate to psychological mechanisms and moderator interactions. A clearer understanding of this topic can advance knowledge of the tourist–destination relationship and revisit behavior. To achieve this study's aims, data were collected and compared from Chinese tourists in Auckland and Glasgow to investigate an overarching framework. The current findings correspond with those of previous studies. A few scholars have explored the mediating effect of self-congruity in contexts including Las Vegas (Usakli & Baloglu, 2011); sky lounge users' behavior (Chua et al., 2019); real estate tourism (Liu, Huang, & Liang, 2019); ecotourism in Belgium (Moons et al., 2020); and visitor loyalty in hotels (Sop & Kozak, 2019). Two conceptual papers (Yang, Isa, & Ramayah, 2020, 2021a) have explored the topic as well. Similar to earlier work, the findings of this study pinpointed self-congruity as a principal mechanism transmitting the effect of destination personality to revisit intention in both target cities. Results thus shed new light on the explanatory and predictive power of self-congruity theory in a travel behavioral model. This outcome reflects the central role of self-congruity in Chinese tourists' consumption journeys in Auckland and Glasgow. Self-congruity theory is applicable to Chinese travelers' overseas behavior. However, results from the permutation test and Henseler's MGA revealed no significant differences in the indirect hypotheses for Auckland and Glasgow (see H1 and H2), further validating this study's results.

Despite empirical evidence of the direct effects between destination image, self-congruity, and revisit intention (Chua et al., 2019; Kumar, 2016; Liu, Lin & Wang, 2012; Sirgy & Su, 2000; Usakli & Baloglu, 2011; Yang et al., 2021), the mechanisms underlying self-congruity remain under-researched. Examining the mediator of self-congruity is essential to understanding revisit intention to both cities. This study revealed that destination image indirectly affected revisit intention through self-congruity in Auckland and Glasgow. Therefore, destination image could boost the effect of Chinese tourists' self-concept, which may enhance their intentions to revisit both cities. In other words, Chinese tourists' perceived destination image of Auckland and Glasgow appeared quite congruent with their personal image. Regarding destination image, self-congruity theory applies to both locations and possesses the power to predict Chinese tourists' revisit intentions. Surprisingly, however, the MGA results suggested slight differences between these cities in terms of indirect effects (see H3). The more compatible Chinese tourists' destination image and self-congruity were, the stronger their

intentions to return to Auckland versus Glasgow: Chinese tourists perceived their self-concept more strongly in relation to Auckland's destination image.

This study's core aim was to assess uncertainty avoidance as a moderator in the relationship between self-congruity and revisit intention. Uncertainty avoidance was not identified as a significant moderator on the impact of self-congruity (actual/ideal) on revisit intention (see H5 and H6) for Auckland and Glasgow. These unexpected results are inconsistent with previous empirical work regarding uncertainty avoidance as a moderator in the dining sector (Seo, Kim, & Jang, 2018) and the medical tourism sector (de la Hoz-Correa & Muñoz-Leiva, 2019). Compared to other products or services, the nuances of travel experiences could explain these incongruent outcomes: the tourism experience is generally unique from one's daily routine, offering an escape from boredom and everyday obligations (Quan & Wang, 2004). Chinese tourists may be more interested in taking part in experiences distinct from their daily lives. These travelers may later be more experienced and familiar with their environment during repeat visits; as such, anxiety, perceived risk, and uncertainty could be less common in both cities. A strong relationship between self-congruity and revisit intention is hence not dependent on Chinese tourists' perceived uncertainty avoidance. Arguably, when destination personality and image are closely aligned with Chinese travelers' self-concept, no cultural gap manifests in terms of international travel. This study's MGA results did not reveal different effects regarding uncertainty avoidance as a moderator in the relationship between self-congruity and revisit intention. Chinese tourists' visits to Auckland and Glasgow therefore each exemplify the role of uncertainty avoidance due to these cities' similar cultures.

6. Conclusion

6.1 Theoretical contributions

This study offers several theoretical contributions. First, although scholars have predicted revisit intention by employing multiple models linking destination personality, destination image, and self-congruity (i.e. Bosnjak et al., 2011; Huaman-Ramirez et al., 2021; Kumar, 2016; Liu, Lin & Wang, 2012; Liu, Huang, & Liang, 2019; Sirgy & Su, 2000; Yang, Isa, & Ramayah, 2020), self-congruity remains underexplored as a mediator. Therefore, this work advances theory development by uncovering the mechanisms underlying self-congruity to explain the association between tourists' revisit intentions and chosen destinations. Findings offer support for the theory of self-congruity in tourism by surveying respondents from two cities. This theoretical generalization expands relevant knowledge by emphasizing the

importance of indirect effects on revisit intention. Moreover, this study's results echo other research to reinforce the propositions of self-congruity theory (Aguirre-Rodriguez et al., 2012; Sirgy, 1985; Sirgy & Su, 2000). By uncovering cognitive consistency between consumers' beliefs and behavior, our work promotes a deep understanding of the "matching process" in self-congruity theory.

Second, uncertainty avoidance was taken as a continuous variable in this study. Although the results did not show a strong impact of self-congruity on revisit intention to both cities, no prior work extended the model of self-congruity by incorporating uncertainty avoidance. This unique contribution also responds to prior calls for model extension (Bosnjak et al., 2011; Yang, Isa, & Ramayah, 2021) using cultural factors. Most previous studies omitted the possible impacts of individual cultural traits on travel behavior. By contrast, our study bridges a gap by taking individual cultures (rather than nations) as the unit of analysis to investigate cultural features. Market globalization and fewer travel barriers have led the concept of "culture" to carry different meanings in different places. Uncertainty avoidance can predict revisit intention at an individual level. Overall, this study replicates and extends Hofstede's dimension of uncertainty avoidance through tourism research. Third, this work was conducted in two international tourism cities – Auckland, New Zealand and Glasgow, UK – to produce cross-validated findings. However, few related tourism studies have gathered data in two countries (Gannon et al., 2020; Rasoolimanesh et al., 2017; Šegota et al., 2021). This cross-cultural research inherently enhances theories' generalizability.

6.2 Practical contributions

These findings also provide several benefits for tourism practitioners such as DMOs. Our results highlight self-congruity as a mediator among destination personality, destination image, and revisit intention for Auckland and Glasgow. This outcome is particularly relevant for international destination marketing managers; those in the UK and New Zealand should showcase their respective destinations' personality traits and unique images that align with Chinese tourists' self-concept. DMOs can enhance potential self-congruity among destination personality characteristics and destination image. DMOs can also target Chinese tourists' own personality and image via promotions, city infrastructure, attractions, and an overall welcoming environment. Doing so could boost travelers' actual and ideal self-concepts. Destination marketing managers in New Zealand and the UK can then attract potential Chinese tourists as well as repeat visitors, thereby fostering sustainable tourism development.

Moreover, this study identified two insignificant moderator interactions in both cities. Uncertainty avoidance seems less important when Chinese tourists decide to revisit Auckland or Glasgow. DMOs in both countries may thus wish to re-think their segmentation strategies to focus less on Chinese tourists' perceived uncertainty, risk, and anxiety. During subsequent visits, tourists are more familiar with the destination and possess higher cultural competence. DMOs can also promote local cultural destination factors to the Chinese market. Our findings are useful for tourism authorities (i.e. immigration departments/ministries of tourism) from both countries as well: these professionals could collaborate with local DMOs to encourage tourists' revisit intentions and implement multi-entry visitor visas.

6.3 Limitations and future research directions

Several limitations of this study illuminate avenues for further work. First, due to time and budget constraints, cross-sectional surveys were only distributed in two cities. These results may not be representative of the full population in each country. Researchers can gather data from more cities/regions in New Zealand and the UK in the future. Results might then be more useful for international DMOs. Second, we only considered Hofstede's dimension of uncertainty avoidance as a moderator; the findings of this study may not reflect the true complexity of cultural distance. Subsequent work should explore alternative dimensions of Hofstede's cultural framework, especially individualism and collectivism. Relatedly, uncertainty avoidance was taken as a continuous variable in the current model. Future studies could apply uncertainty avoidance as a categorical variable in MGA to reveal more generalizable outcomes. Third, only SEM was employed for quantitative analysis and may preclude a full picture of revisit intention. Mixed methods would be preferable in future research. Scholars could also carry out interviews to clarify why the moderator relationship was not supported in this study's model. Last, the main investigator collected data before the COVID-19 outbreak. However, Chinese tourists' travel behavior could change after the pandemic (Wen et al., 2021). COVID-19 could indirectly affect tourism destination image in general (Yang, Isa, & Ramayah, 2021b). The elements of self-congruity theory will likely differ compared to pre-pandemic times as well. Subsequent studies should thus apply the current model to predict travel behavior by exploring the moderating role of COVID-19 (vs. in non-COVID-19 times).

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Appendix 1. List of measurement items

Destination personality	
DP1	Down to earth
DP2	Honest
DP3	Wholesome
DP4	Cheerful
DP5	Daring
DP6	Spirited
DP7	Imaginative
DP8	Up to date
DP9	Reliable
DP10	Intelligent
DP11	Successful
DP12	Upper class
DP13	Charming
DP14	Outdoorsy
DP15	Tough
Destination Image	
DI1	**XXX** is safe and secure.
DI2	**XXX** offers exciting and interesting places to visit.
DI3	**XXX** has beautiful scenery and natural attractions.
DI4	**XXX** has a pleasant climate.
DI5	As a tourism destination, **XXX** offers good value for the money.
Actual self-congruity	
ASC1	The image of **XXX** is consistent with how I see myself.
ASC2	I am quite similar to the personality of **XXX**.
ASC3	The personality of **XXX** is congruent with how I see myself.
Ideal self-congruity	
ISC1	The image of **XXX** is consistent with how I would like to see myself.
ISC2	I would like to be perceived as similar to the personality of **XXX**.
ISC3	The personality of **XXX** is congruent with how I would like to see myself.
Uncertainty Avoidance	
UA1	I prefer structured situations to unstructured situations in a new environment.
UA2	I prefer specific instructions to broad guidelines in a new environment.
UA3	I feel stressed when I cannot predict consequences in a new environment.
UA4	I will not try if I cannot predict results in a new environment.
UA5	I do not like ambiguous situations in a new environment.
UA6	I do not visit a destination if I am not sure about it.
UA7	I tend to become anxious easily when I do not know an outcome in a new environment.
Revisit Intention	
RI1	I consider **XXX** as my first choice compared to other countries to revisit/visit again.
RI2	I have a strong intention to visit **XXX** on my next trip.
RI3	I have a strong intention to visit **XXX** in my distant future.

Note: XXX = Auckland or Glasgow.

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