

# Examining the role of destination image, self-congruity and trip purpose in predicting post-travel intention: The case of Chinese tourists in New Zealand

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## Abstract

The present study investigated and developed an integrated theoretical relationship with the inclusion of destination image and the self-congruity to observe the moderating role of the trips' purposes based on New Zealand's tourism destination. The purposive sampling technique and face-to-face surveys were conducted in New Zealand. Subsequently, 317 outbound Chinese visitors were sampled. The analysis was performed via Partial Least Squares-structural Equation Modelling (PLS-SEM). The results of this study indicated that there is a direct and indirect relationship between destination image, self-congruity and post-travel intention. Moreover, trip purpose has no moderator effect of self-congruity on post travel intention. From a practical perspective, the results provided managerial insights into DMOs in New Zealand, which can be utilised to promote post-travel intention among the Chinese tourism market. From a theoretical point of view, this study contributed to body of knowledge on examining model among destination image, self-congruity, trip purpose and post-travel intention in New Zealand tourism destination.

**Keywords:** Chinese tourists, New Zealand, post-travel intention, destination image, trip purpose, destination marketing organisations (DMOs)

## INTRODUCTION

For the past decades, there has been a sustained interest in post-travel intentions in three primary areas of literature such as marketing, tourism, and destination marketing. Marketing literature focused on identifying and establishing loyal consumers for the repurchases (Curtis et al., 2011). Tourism literature determined that repeated travellers make up over half of the total travellers to a certain destination (Wang, 2004). Destination

marketing literature highlighted that it is important to attract and retain repeated visitors because it is cost-effective and a desirable marketing strategy for destination marketing organisations (DMOs) (Tan, 2017). Such behaviours support and exert a stabilising influence on the majority of the destinations (Lau & McKercher, 2004). Therefore, repeated tourists are considered a crucial contributor to increasing profits (Hsu et al., 2007). It is important to maintain existing and prospective tourists and encourage them to become loyal to tourism marketers to make a destination successfully (Chang, 2013).

New Zealand (NZ) is a prominent tourist destination, which attracts visitors from all over the world. tourist destination, NZ is a unique spot because of its natural environment, culture and heritage, health and wellness, and adventurous activities (Invest New Zealand Tourism, n.d). As a result, NZ has become one of the most preferred vacation spots in the tourism industry. Many DMOs take this good opportunity to invest and enhance the number of visitors. Therefore, tourism is the most important export industry in NZ, which contributes about \$16.2 billion to GDP (Tourism New Zealand [TNZ], 2019). To be specific, Chinese

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visitors are NZ's largest source of international tourism because there were 50,900 Chinese visitors in NZ (Statistic New Zealand, 2019).

Previous studies identified that environmental factors and climate change can influence tourism industry (Jermsittiparsert, & Chankoson, 2019; Jermsittiparsert, 2019). NZ has several factors that help attract Chinese visitors. For example, the natural scenery, clean and green, and unpolluted environment (Ryan & Mo, 2002). However, it is often disappointing that Chinese visitors are less interested in repeated visitations to NZ. In 2017, Chinese tourists significantly reduced their revisits in comparison to the first time (i.e. merely nine percent of Chinese tourists revisited NZ) (TNZ, 2018). Indeed, DMOs should rethink marketing strategies to increase Chinese tourists' revisits to ensure the tourism industry meets long-term market profits. Despite an upward trend on post-travel intentions to various destinations such as the US (Uşaklı & Baloglu, 2011); Iran (Jalilvand et al., 2012); Malaysia (Kani, et al., 2017) and Cuba (Chaulagain et al., 2019), Chinese tourists' revisit intentions to NZ did not capture much attention in the literature. Nonetheless, scholars had stated that travel behaviour, specifically tourist perceptions of destination image, trip purpose, and loyalty to a destination are imperative to a successful destination marketing (Chaulagain et al., 2019; Lee & Xue, 2020; Liu et al., 2019).

Though prior research had focused on psychological variables such as destination image, self-congruity as well as post-travel intention in multiple contexts of destination marketing, these studies had examined destination image (Hallmann et al., 2015; Lee & Xue, 2020; Stylos et al., 2016; Tsiotsou et al., 2010; Zhang et al., 2018) and self-congruity (Chua et al., 2019; Liu et al., 2019; Uşaklı & Baloglu, 2011; Yang et al., 2019; Yang et al., 2020) separately to predict the constructs of post-travel intentions. However, there is insufficient empirical research that studied the joint relationship between destination image, self-congruity, and post-travel intentions except for these authors (Kim & Malek 2017; Liu et al., 2012). Particularly, none of previous studies have identified the mediator of self-congruity between destination image and travel behaviour. Utilized self-congruity theory in tourism literature interprets how visitors view themselves and how their perceptions are matched with destination image (Sirgy & Su, 2000). Ignoring the combined model of self-congruity and destination image might be a failure in assessing their influences on travel behaviour. Different perceptions of destination image may result in

different predictions on post-travel intention through the tourist' self-congruence. To address the concerns mentioned above, the current work aimed to examine individuals' perceptions of destination image and post-travel intention through self-congruity in NZ tourism setting.

Additionally, another construct was identified to combine the model of destination image, self-congruity, and post-travel intention. Demographic variable such as trip purpose is likely the substantial predictors of post-travel intention. Travellers who visit for leisure or business display different travel behaviour towards a specific destination (Liu et al. 2013; Radder & Wang, 2006). Radder and Wang (2006) posited that tourists possess multiple trip purposes and therefore, they do not have a shared expectation towards hotels. This could affect the behavioural outcome such as word-of-mouth (Rajaguru, & Hassanli, 2018). Based on special interests tourism (SIT), tourists are more likely to make multiple visits to a destination because of different purposes of trip activities such as shopping tourism (Yuksel et al., 2007), suicide tourism (Yu et al., 2020), wellness tourism (Sharma & Nayak, 2018), dark tourism (Zhang et al., 2016), and gamble tourism (Wong & Li, 2015). While previous literature on self-congruity predicted post-travel intentions (Chua et al., 2019; Liu et al., 2019) included trip purpose which had been overlooked by many scholars.

With the congruence between destination image and tourists' self-concept becoming greater, the revisit intention will be higher. The implication of theory self-congruity may fail to predict post-travel intentions without proper comprehension of the trip purpose. Therefore, the moderating role of the trip purpose was incorporated into the model. Additionally, this research also responded to the suggestion from Yang et al. (2020) who reckoned to further incorporate trip purpose in the model to fully capture the influence and support post-travel intention.

The present study proposed to enrich the current literature on destination brand self-congruity of Chinese tourists' revisit intention to NZ. First, current research examined the direct and indirect relationship between destination image, self-congruity, and post-travel intention. To further delineate this relationship, the study looked into the moderating impact of trip purpose between self-congruity and post-travel intention. Moreover, current research had conceptually and empirically disentangled these concepts to help interpret the potential uniqueness between destination image, self-congruity, and post-travel intention.

Additionally, current research incorporated the construct of trip purpose in a single model to aid the comprehension of correlation between these constructs (i.e. destination image, self-congruity and trip purpose) and their impact on Chinese visitors' revisit behaviour toward NZ. This provided theoretical and managerial insights into destination marketing scholars and DMOs in NZ, which can be utilised to promote post-travel intentions among the Chinese tourism market.

## CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK AND RESEARCH HYPOTHESIS

### a. Post-travel intention

Tourism authors explained the constructs of post-travel intentions in the general tourism discipline (Leri & Theodoridis, 2019; Isa et al., 2020; Yang et al., 2020). Tourism marketing focuses on the concept of post-travel intention, a dimension, which measures tourists' destination loyalty (Hultman et al., 2015). The present study defined post-travel intention as the likelihood of tourists' revisits to a destination (Qu, 2017). The study advocated the degree to which Chinese travellers' revisit intention to a particular place in the future. Numerous studies examined the antecedents of post-travel intentions to obtain an understanding of why visitors prefer to visit the place again (Meleddu et al., 2015). Multiple studies accepted that post-travel intention is the key outcome variable to destination marketing research and had been studied in the backdrop of several other variables such as tourist satisfaction and destination image (Lee & Xue, 2020), travel experience (Huang & Hsu, 2009) and place attachment (Isa et al., 2020). These authors attempted to generalise the comprehensive interpretation of tourists' revisit intention in various destinations.

Nonetheless, recent research examined the antecedents of post-travel intentions and investigated various tourists. For instance, Kim et al. (2015) examined tourists' revisit intentions based on festivals and celebrations. Findings revealed that tourists revisit intentions depended on how they perceived several factors such as involvement, personal satisfaction, and perceived value. Li et al. (2018) asserted that the destination image influenced Chinese tourists' post-travel intentions to North Korea. On the other hand, Yang et al. (2020) investigated Chinese tourists' post-travel intentions to Glasgow in the UK because they perceived Glasgow to be a destination with a strong personality. Although the post-travel intention to multiple national destinations had been extensively examined, the research on the antecedence of

Chinese post-travel intentions to NZ still gained less attention. Nonetheless, studies on post-travel intentions are still limited. Hence, the present study extended the antecedents of post-travel intention to destination image and self-congruity to examine the importance of the Chinese tourists' behaviour and the conative phenomenon of NZ on their post-travel intention.

### b. Self-congruity in destination

Self-congruity theory is an essential foundation in a brand image building. This theory depicted that a product and its related images create a self-schema associated with the consumers' self-concept in marketing research (Sirgy, 1982; Sirgy & Su, 2000). Hence, consumers prefer products that are suitable for them (Hosany & Martin, 2012). Self-congruity comprises of actual self-congruity, ideal self-congruity, social self-congruity, and ideal social self-congruity as part of the complex and multidimensional constructs (Sirgy, 2018; Todd, 2001). These domains involve how individuals view themselves, how they consider other people view them, how they want to view themselves, and how they want other people to view them (Beerli et al., 2007). The four dimensions like self-congruity were widely used to explain the purchase behaviour of consumers toward a particular brand (Das, 2014). Consumers' purchasing intention of a certain brand would be enhanced with a brand that best matches the consumers' self-concept (Litvin & Kar 2004; Tangsupwattana et al., 2018).

The application of self-congruity in tourism research was given the key terminology known as the self-congruity (Chen et al., 2020). Self-congruity in destination is defined as the congruency between the self-concept of a traveller and the destination personality, which is derived from the construct of self-concept (Chua et al., 2019; Usakli & Baloglu, 2011). Tourism scholars considered self-congruity as a valid theory to predict the travel motivation to a certain destination (Litvin & Goh, 2002; Boksberger et al., 2011). Although the multidimensions of self-congruity was widely applied to determine the tourists' behaviour, most scholars managed to only operationalise the first two dimensions: (a) self-congruity and (b) actual self-congruity (Chua et al., 2019; Liu et al., 2019; Usakli & Baloglu, 2011; Yang, Isa, & Ramayah, 2019; Yang et al., 2020). The first dual dimensions obtained most support from the theoretical and empirical perspective (Sirgy 1982). Therefore, the present study applied the actual self-congruity and ideal self-congruity to predict Chinese visitors' behaviour toward revisiting NZ.

### c. Destination image

The tourism industry had researched the complexities of destination image expansively (Hahm et al., 2018) and its definition had been viewed from multiple different perspectives (Chaulagain et al., 2019). Destination image is an accumulation of beliefs, ideas, and impressions that an individual has developed about a certain destination (Crompton, 1979). In short, destination image is "people's perceptions of a destination" (Lee & Xue, 2020, p. 394). Images are often described everywhere and therefore, tourists perceive destination images based on their trips or visits to a specific country, region, province, state, or city (Mossberg and Kleppe, 2005).

Furthermore, extensive tourism literature provided the destination image according to the representation of the destination image model along with the cognitive and affective components to explain the travel behaviour (Chen et al., 2016; De Nisco et al., 2015). These authors researched the outcome of destination image, which indicated that the cognitive and affective evaluations of a destination significantly influenced travel intentions (De Nisco et al., 2015; Chen et al., 2016). Findings of these studies, however, were inconsistent with Li et al. (2010) because the only effective image could predict travel intentions. The cognitive image is the most appropriate tool to understand tourist behaviour. These arguments were presented by previous studies that applied cognitive components to assess tangible aspects of tourist destinations (Martínez et al., 2010). For instance, Roth and Diamantopoulos (2009) argued that the cognitive image consisted of generalised images based on the local economy and political status, historical events, local culture, technological advancement, and industrialisation. Recent tourism literature adopted the measurement of destination images with cognitive components and highlighted local attraction, hospitality, infrastructure, culture, and so on (Chaulagain et al., 2019; Souiden et al., 2017). Based on guidelines from the prior research, current research adopted the cognitive destination image as the construct in the model.

### d. Destination image and self-congruity

Sirgy and Su (2000) elucidated that a destination should be studied through the lens of self-congruity, which suggests congruency between destination image and tourist's self-concept (i.e. How tourists actually and ideally see themselves). Ahn et al. (2013) claimed that self-congruity in the field of tourism research indicated how perceived destination image fits in with tourist self-image. Liu

et al., Lin, and Wang (2012) confirmed that the destination image in Taiwan has significant influences on self-congruity. Phucharoen (2016) found that destination image was correlated to actual self-congruity and ideal self-congruity. Hence, tourists often take a positive attitude to a place, in which the destination image must match their self-image. The present study hypothesised the following:

**Hypothesis 1.** Destination image has a positive influence on actual self-congruity.

**Hypothesis 2.** Destination image has a positive influence on ideal self-congruity.

### e. Self-congruity and post-travel intention

Sirgy (1982) argued that according to self-congruity theory, individuals have an intention to choose a brand linked to their self-image. If consumers feel that perceived brand personality is closer to their self-image, they are more possibly to take a positive attitude toward the product. Consumers tried to keep their beliefs and behaviours with cognitive congruency (Sung & Choi, 2012). In addition, it had been proved that self-congruity heavily affect consumer's attitudes and behaviours (Mazodier & Merunka, 2012). Recently, scholars posited that tourists who perceived a higher degree of actual self-congruity and ideal self-congruity with destination brand, have higher intentions to revisit a particular destination (i.e. Kim, & Malek, 2017; Liu et al., 2019; Yang et al., 2020). The self-congruity significantly influence the attitude and behavioural construct of post-travel intention in the tourism industry. Hence, current study developed the proposal that Chinese tourists' self-congruity significantly enhanced their post-travel intentions to NZ. Therefore, the following hypotheses were constructed:

**Hypothesis 3.** Actual self-congruity has a positive influence on post-travel intention.

**Hypothesis 4.** Ideal self-congruity has a positive influence on post-travel intention.

### f. Destination image, self-congruity and post-travel intention

A strong brand personality forms strong emotional connection between a brand and its consumers and improves brand trust and loyalty (Fournier, 1998). Similarly, an attractive destination personality creates a positive impact between destination image and tourist loyalty (Ekinci & Hosany, 2006). Recent literature on destination brand proposed a framework to study constructs among destination personality, self-congruity (i.e. actual and ideal self-congruity) and post-travel

intention to validate self-congruity theory in tourism industry (Liu et al., 2019; Uşaklı & Baloglu, 2011; Yang et al., 2020). These studies drew the conclusion that self-congruity performed the mediating effect between destination brand personality and tourists' behavioural loyalty.

However, there are still limited studies done on destination image and self-congruity (i.e. actual and ideal self-congruity) as a joint model except for these studies (i.e. Liu et al., 2012; Kim & Malek, 2017). Particularly, the mediator of self-congruity between destination image and behavioural outcomes (i.e. post-travel intention) remained largely unknown. Based on the underlying theoretical assumptions (i.e. self-congruity theory) (Sirgy & Su, 2000), the greater the congruence between the perception of destination image and visitor image, the more likely they are to develop a positive attitude toward a destination. This would influence visitors' decisions to visit a particular place. The present research further argued that the actual and ideal self-congruity exert mediating influence on destination image and post-travel intention. Hence, current study has developed the following hypotheses:

**Hypothesis 5.** Actual self-congruity mediates the effect of destination image on post-travel intention.

**Hypothesis 6.** Ideal self-congruity mediates the effect of destination image on post-travel intention.

#### g. The role of the moderator in trip purpose

Socio-demographic characteristics such as trip intentions exert a crucial impact on the visitors' behaviour and play a substantial role in tourism marketing (Morrison, 1996). It drives and compels visitors to focus on certain activities on their travels (Lehto et al., 2004). Tourists who travel overseas might have alternative purposes. For example, travellers on business purposes had primary activities such as meetings and conferences whereas travellers on vacation focused on sightseeing, local food, and recreation (Chadwick, 1994; Rosenbaum & Spears, 2005). Several studies found that visitors who travelled for leisure or

business had different expectations of hotel attributes (Liu et al. 2013; Radder & Wang 2006). Ye et al. (2014) focused on the hospitality industry and examined the role of the moderator in trip purposes based on price and quality. Findings revealed that price did not influence visitors who travelled for leisure, but it did for business travels. Besides, visitors with leisure have indirect associations between perceived quality and price. Therefore, tourism marketers often utilise the purpose of the trip as part of the market segmentation criteria (Hsu & Kang, 2007) to attract more visitors.

Several studies examined tourists' behavioural intention and stated that visitors with alternative needs had various purposes to visit destinations, which had eventually led to multiple travel behavioural intention (Oh & Jeong, 2004). The distinction between needs and selection criteria demands multiple approaches to process a destination offering. However, Rajaguru and Hassanli (2018) found that in the hospitality industry, specifically hotels, the tourist visits, regardless of business or vocation, proved that hotels' ratings had no impact on their intentions to visit in comparison to word-of-mouth. On the other hand, Wong and Li (2015) examined how the purpose of a trip improved travel behaviour. Wong and Li (2015) depicted that Macao had multiple tourist visits as a result of gambling, which is a top priority. Lee et al., (2018) asserted that their study focused on the role of the moderator in trips' purposes based on self-image congruity and service quality, but did not examine the post-travel intentions among tourists. The distinctive purposes to travel and these intentions would have moderated the influence of the self-congruity (i.e., actual and ideal self-congruity) and the Chinese tourists' post-travel intentions to NZ. Consequently, following hypotheses were formulated:

**Hypothesis7:** Trip purpose moderates the effect of actual self-congruity on post-travel intention.

**Hypothesis 8:** Trip purpose moderates the effect of ideal self-congruity on post-travel intention.

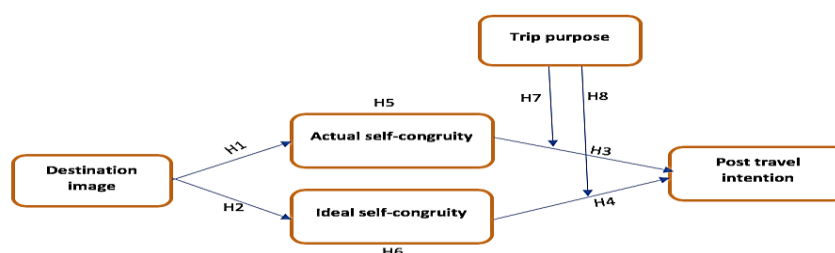


Figure 1. Conceptual Framework

**Figure 1** illustrated the conceptual framework. The current framework includes one independent construct (i.e., destination image), two mediator constructs of self-congruity (i.e., actual and ideal), one moderator construct of trip purpose and one dependent construct (i.e., post-travel intention).

## METHODOLOGY

### a. Development of survey instrument

Previous works of literature in destination marketing considered destination image, the self-congruity of destination brand, and post-travel intentions as successful multi-items that were applicable to measure models (Kumar, 2016; Souiden et al., 2017; Yang et al., 2020). Therefore, all constructs in the present study were assessed with multi-item scales. First, items on destination image were adopted from Souiden et al., (2017). Eight items from the destination image were assessed via a 5-point Likert scale. Second, items

related to the self-congruity was adapted from Kumar (2016). Six items from the destination image were assessed via a 5-point Likert scale. Third, the items on post-travel intentions were adapted by Yang et al., (2020). Three items in the destination image were assessed via a 7-point Likert scale. Furthermore, a pre-test was performed to determine the clarity, accuracy, and comprehensiveness of the questionnaires. Three experts in the discipline of marketing and tourism in international universities such as the University of Otago, NZ, University of Glasgow, UK, and the University of Peking, China were invited to review the questionnaires. Subsequently, several alterations were made to the wording of the items. Next, the questionnaires in the present study were translated into Chinese characters by professional bilingual translators (Chinese to English). The bilingual version of the questionnaire was prepared.

**Table 1 Demographic profile**

Demographic variables	Categories	Frequencies	Percentages
Gender	Male	127	40.1
	Female	190	59.9
Age	Below 25 years old	50	15.8
	25 - 35 years old	116	36.6
	36 - 45 years old	81	25.6
	46 - 55 years old	52	16.4
	Older than 55 years old	18	5.7
Marital status	Married	180	56.8
	Single	112	35.3
	Divorced	18	5.7
	Widow	6	1.9
	Widower	1	.3
Household income in monthly	Less than 5000 RMB	31	9.8
	5000 - 10000 RMB	50	15.8
	10001 - 20000 RMB	82	25.9
	More than 20000 RMB	154	48.6
Times of stay	First time	190	59.9
	Second time	58	18.3
	Third time	19	6.0
	More than three times	50	15.8
Purpose of visit	Vacation	205	64.7
	Visit friends/relatives	36	11.4
	WHV programme	38	12.0
	Business	7	2.2
	Others	31	9.8

### b. Survey on Chinese tourists in NZ

The researcher flew to NZ in October 2019 to

conduct a physical survey. The researcher studied and worked in NZ between 2011 and 2017 and

worked for the tourism industry in Rotorua City. Hence, the principal researcher is familiar with the local tourist destinations. A cross-sectional survey was utilised whereas the stratified random sampling method was employed to distribute the questionnaires randomly to Chinese tourists in three prominent tourist destinations located in the North Island of NZ: Auckland, Hamilton, and Rotorua. All Chinese tourists who did not hold permanent residency in NZ were targeted and invited to fill-up the questionnaires via face-to-face meetings. Particularly, Chinese tourists must only hold visitor visa or WHV (working holiday visa). The main researcher explained the questionnaire when the respondents had queries. A total of 320 was collected, and 317 valid response were utilised for further analysis. Hair et al. (2009) suggested that a sample size ranging from 200 to 500 is appropriate for multivariate data analysis. The overall effective response rate 99.06 %. Since this fieldwork was assisted by several tour leaders, and also managing direct from Deer Museum Rotorua, NZ. Therefore, the effective response rate is high. The demographic profile is illustrated in table 1.

### c. Statistical analysis

The present study employed the SmartPLS, statistical software to generate the analysis. Ringle et al., (2005) developed the SmartPLS, one of the most adroit applications to analyse PLS-SEM. Hair et al. (2011) suggested that PLS is a good method for the study because it is exploratory. This is a complex model as a result of the diverse mediators and moderators that were involved in the study. The PLS can deal with the drawbacks of both the regression and factor-based SEM analyses based on the estimation of a highly complex model (Hair et al. 2019). Additionally, PLS calculated the *p*-value via the bootstrapping technique when samples were different and the data did not require normal distribution (Kline, 2005). Based on the above advantages of PLS, current research applied SmartPLS to the analyse data. A two-step approach was adopted to test the conceptual model in this study. First, the authors measured the validity and reliability of the measurement model. Second, the structural model was used via the non-parametric bootstrapping technique (Wetzels et al., 2009).

## RESULTS

### a. Measurement model

Three steps were adopted to assess the measurement model. We followed Hair et al.'s (2017) and Ali et al.'s (2018) suggested guidelines to assess the reliability and convergent and

discriminant validity of our main constructs. Table 2 shows that the factor loading score of each underlying item is above the acceptable level of 0.5. Table 2 also lists our results before evaluating the structural model. Composite reliability (CR) values for all scales were higher than the recommended threshold of 0.7 (range: 0.807–1), indicating that the chosen measures were reliable (Fornell & Larcker, 1981). Convergent validity was also confirmed; all average variance extracted (AVE) values exceeded the cut-off of 0.5 (Hair et al., 2017). Moreover, the heterotrait-monotrait ratio (HTMT) criteria, proposed by Henseler et al. (2015) and Wells et al. (2016), include a threshold of 0.85. The discriminant validity of our measures was thus affirmed: HTMT ratios ranged from 0.037 to 0.821 (see Table 3).

### b. Structural model and hypothesis testing

To assess the quality of our structural model, we identified the coefficient of determination ( $R^2$ ), effect size ( $f^2$ ), and predictive relevance ( $Q^2$ ). All  $R^2$  values of the variables surpassed the desired 0.1 threshold (Hair et al., 2017); Table 2 indicates destination image accounted for 21.2% of the variance in actual self-congruity and 22.2% of the variance in ideal self-congruity. Actual self-congruity and ideal self-congruity each explained 12.1% of the variance in post-travel intention. We verified the effect size ( $f^2$ ) for significant direct paths based on Cohen's (1992) guideline (0.02 represents a small effect, 0.15 a medium effect, and 0.35 a large effect; see Table 4). Hair et al. (2017) suggested that authors should run a blindfolding procedure (i.e., Stone-Geisser's  $Q^2$  value) to evaluate a model's predictive relevance. All  $Q^2$  values in our model were larger than zero ( $Q^2_{ASC} = 0.18$ ;  $Q^2_{ISC} = 0.18$ ;  $Q^2_{PTI} = 0.10$ ), indicating an acceptable fit and satisfactory predictive relevance (see table 2). Last, all constructs were tested for collinearity issues. Table 4 shows that no variance inflation factor was higher than 3.3 (range: 1–2.28) as recommended by Hair et al., (2011). Accordingly, the dimensions were distinct and collinearity among constructs did not seem to be a problem in current research. However, there are limitations of SmartPLS because this software does not provide the functions of calculating the goodness of fit (GoF). GoF assessment ( $GoF = \sqrt{AVE \times R^2}$ ) were used to determine overall model fit (Tenenhaus et al., 2005). The GoF values in this study were calculated based on Wetzels et al. (2009), whereby the cut-off values for GoF are as follows: GoF = 0.10 (small), GoF = 0.25 (medium), and GoF = 0.36 (large). The overall GoF value for actual self-

congruity and ideal self-congruity is 0.40, and for post travel intention is 0.38, therefore, the model fit of this study is very qualified.

For hypothesis testing, we evaluated our structural model by running a bootstrapping procedure with 5,000 subsamples. The results in Table 4 demonstrate that the relationship between destination image, self-congruity, and post-travel intention was supported. Specifically, destination image was found to have a significant effect on actual self-congruity ( $\beta = 0.46, p < 0.01$ ) and ideal self-congruity ( $\beta = 0.47, p < 0.01$ ). Additionally, actual self-congruity ( $\beta = 0.18, p < 0.05$ ) and ideal self-congruity ( $\beta = 0.20, p < 0.05$ ) each influenced

post-travel intention. Indirect relations analysis based on Preacher and Hayes' (2008) approach indicated that actual self-congruity ( $\beta = 0.08, p < 0.05$ ) and ideal self-congruity ( $\beta = 0.09, p < 0.05$ ) each significantly mediated the relationship between destination image and post-travel intention (Table 4); H1–H6 were thus supported. Our assessment of moderators revealed two insignificant interaction terms: trip purpose\*actual self-congruity  $\rightarrow$  post-travel intention ( $\beta = 0.08, p > 0.05$ ) and trip purpose\*ideal self-congruity  $\rightarrow$  post-travel intention ( $\beta = 0.06, p > 0.05$ ). As such, H7 and H8 were not supported. The overall model of path coefficient is illustrated in figure 2

Table 2 Assessment of measurement model

Constructs	Items	Loading	AVE	CR	R <sup>2</sup>	Q <sup>2</sup>
Destination image	DI3	0.719	0.527	0.817	0.212	0.176
	DI5	0.730				
	DI6	0.756				
	DI7	0.697				
Actual self-congruity	ASC1	0.898	0.843	0.941	0.222	0.183
	ASC2	0.929				
	ASC3	0.927				
Ideal self-congruity	ISC1	0.914	0.843	0.942	0.121	0.095
	ISC2	0.908				
	ISC3	0.932				
Post-travel intention	PTI1	0.906	0.848	0.944	0.121	0.095
	PTI2	0.940				
	PTI3	0.917				

Note. DI = destination image; ASC = actual self-congruity; ISC = ideal self-congruity; PTI = post-travel intention.

Table 3 Heterotrait-monotrait ratios (HTMT)

	ASC	DI	ISC	PTI	TP
ASC					
DI	0.566				
ISC	0.821	0.572			
PTI	0.353	0.175	0.354		
TP	0.055	0.107	0.044	0.037	

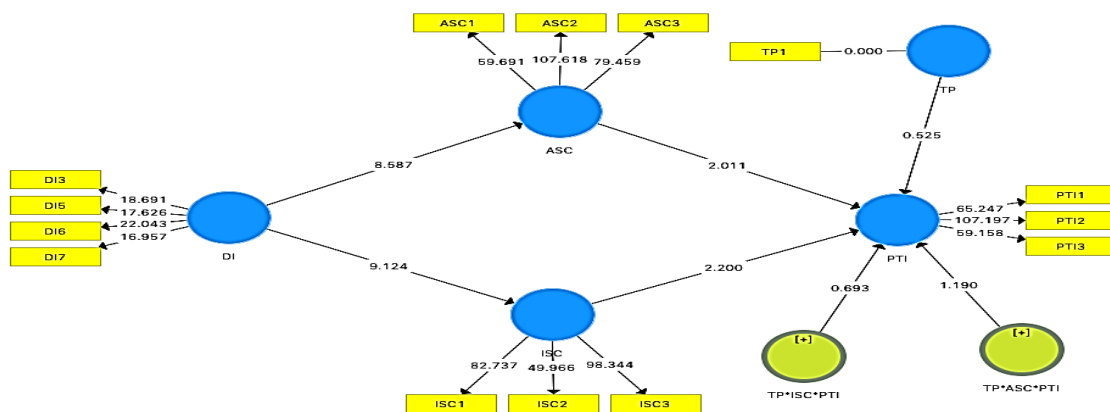


Figure 2. Path coefficient model



Table 4 Assessment of structural model

Path	Beta value	SE	t-value	p-value	f <sup>2</sup>	VIF	Result
DI -> ASC	0.461	0.054	8.587	0.000***	0.270	1.000	Yes
DI -> ISC	0.471	0.052	9.124	0.000***	0.285	1.000	Yes
ASC -> PTI	0.177	0.088	2.011	0.022*	0.016	2.275	Yes
ISC-> PTI	0.196	0.089	2.200	0.014*	0.019	2.268	Yes
TP*ASC->PTI	0.084	0.071	1.190	0.117			No
TP*ISC->PTI	0.057	0.083	0.693	0.244			No
DI- > ASC->PTI	0.082	0.041	2.013	0.044*			Yes
DI- > ISC->PTI	0.092	0.043	2.135	0.033*			Yes

Note. \*\*\* $p < 0.001$ ,  $t > 3.092$ ; \* $p < 0.05$ ,  $t > 1.645$ ; SE: Standard error

## DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

This study sought to empirically evaluate a model including destination image, self-congruity, trip purpose, and post-travel intention in a NZ tourism destination. We also examined the mediator of self-congruity and the moderator of trip purpose. The observed strong link between destination image and self-congruity aligns with research in other destinations such as Taiwan (Liu et al., 2012) and Thailand (Phucharoen, 2016). Compared to other settings, the impact of self-congruity on post-travel intention was significant in the NZ destination. Our findings are also similar to prior work involving destinations in Las Vegas and South Korea along with tourism real estate products (Kim & Malek, 2017; Liu et al., 2019; ). Generally, tourists express stronger revisiting motivation to a certain destination if they experience greater self-congruity (i.e., actual and ideal) with destination image. However, our findings diverge from those in a recent study of Glasgow (Yang et al., 2020), in which ideal self-congruity did not predict post-travel intention. Our study thus confirms that destination image is crucial to enhancing self-congruity, which happened to affect post-travel intention in our chosen NZ tourism destination.

Destination image was also found to influence post-travel intention through self-congruity, extending theorizations of self-congruity (Sirgy, 1982; Sigy & Su, 2000) by incorporating destination image. Scholars have noted that destination image is tied to self-congruity (Liu et al., 2012) and that self-congruity is related to post-travel intention (Kim & Malek, 2017; Chua et al., 2019; Liu et al., 2019); however, relevant models did not consider the mediating effect of self-congruity. Our study reveals that self-congruity fully mediates the association between destination image and post-travel intention. To illustrate, the better the fit between destination image and Chinese tourists' self-concept, the more inclined they are to possess

favourable attitudes toward a given destination, leading to stronger intentions to revisit NZ in our case. Destination image and self-congruity are primary factors driving tourism destination visitation. However, the roles of destination image and travellers' self-congruity in shaping intentions to revisit destinations in island countries such as NZ remain unclear. Therefore, the current findings offer meaningful insight for policymakers in that crafting a favourable image that matches tourists' self-concept should be prioritised when devising promotional strategies to enhance Chinese visitors' intentions to revisit NZ.

Furthermore, in this study, the non-significant moderator of trip purpose relative to tourists' self-congruity and their post-travel intentions suggests strong consistency between destination image and personal image can lead to strong intentions to revisit NZ, irrespective of tourists' purposes for visiting. In our case, trip purpose was not an essential factor in predicting Chinese travellers' intentions to revisit NZ. Trip purpose may therefore not be an important consideration in this context. These results also expand upon work by Uşaklı and Baloglu (2011) and Yang et al. (2020), showing that demographic factors such as trip purpose might affect post-travel intention differently. Although trip purpose has been explored as a potential moderator in different service models (Liu et al., 2013; Ye et al., 2014) and behavioural models (Wong & Li, 2015), our findings did not substantiate the above studies.

### a. Implications of the study

This study enriches the literature theoretically in three aspects. First, we strengthened the foundation of the self-congruity model by enhancing understanding of the determinants, antecedents, and consequences of self-congruity in a NZ tourism context. By elucidating how destination image influences self-congruity and post-travel intention, our study fills the gap in

existing literature on destination marketing.

Second, this study presented a unique perspective on destination image and self-congruity on visitors' post-travel intentions regarding NZ. Earlier research examined the influence of destination image on post-travel intention (e.g., Tsiotsou et al., 2010; Lee & Xue, 2020; Hallmann et al., 2015; Stylos et al., 2016; Zhang et al., 2018) as well as that of self-congruity on post-travel intention (Uşaklı & Baloglu, 2011; Liu et al., 2019; Chua et al., 2019; Yang et al., 2020); however, none considered these concepts in tandem. By bridging destination image, self-congruity, and post-travel intention, our work demonstrates how self-congruity works as a crucial mechanism between destination image and post-travel intention in terms of NZ. This study therefore underscores the utility of self-congruity theory in the destination marketing literature.

Last, despite identifying a non-significant moderator of trip purpose, our findings offer a cogent framework for interpreting this moderator (i.e., trip purpose neither contributes to nor strengthens the influences of self-congruity and post-travel intention to NZ). Our results thus move beyond self-congruity theory to suggest that certain demographic factors, such as visitors' expressed post-travel intentions, may be irrelevant in NZ tourism settings.

Tourism destinations are currently facing challenges due to intensified competition, both locally and internationally, to capture market share (Sangpikul, 2018). Practically, this study provides additional guidance for tourism policymakers and destination management organizations in NZ tourism destinations and similar settings in other countries. Our findings demonstrate that destination image and self-congruity each need to be marketed carefully, as these two attributes are of paramount importance in marketing campaigns. First, destination marketers should strive to differentiate NZ based on its image, which could be used to position the country for potential visitors. Second, the reality program *Where are we going, Dad?* (爸爸去哪儿) was set in NZ in 2013 and cast the destination in a positive light for the Chinese tourism market. Therefore, destination marketers can continue promoting this destination to Chinese visitors based on prominent images in the show.

Moreover, the model's confirmed self-congruity as a mediator, which implies Chinese tourists intend to revisit destinations whose image coincides with their self-image. Therefore, destination marketers are supposed to focus on developing connections between destination image and Chinese visitors'

self-concept, which will help marketers develop effective market segmentation. Last, the identified non-significant moderator of trip purpose suggests that destination marketers should reconsider their market segmentation. For example, destination marketers could place less emphasis on tourists' demographic profiles (e.g., trip purpose) when targeting potential visitors.

#### **b. Limitations and future research recommendations**

We tested our model with Chinese tourists in NZ. Other visitors' post-travel intentions may differ (e.g., Chinese tourists visiting other destinations) under the same theoretical framework. Subsequent studies could survey Chinese tourists in other countries; applying multi-group analysis to the proposed model in SmartPLS might unveil meaningful implications for tourism marketers. Moreover, the limited number of items used to evaluate destination image may have influenced the representation of these constructs in our model. Thus, future research should incorporate more items related to cognitive, affective, and conative image to assess destination image in alternative cultural contexts. Last, the 2019 novel coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak is a timely consideration. As the virus is projected to bring adverse consequences to the international tourism industry, Chinese tourists' travel behaviour could change after COVID-19 (Wen et al., 2020). We would therefore like to call for papers re-examining Chinese tourists' post-travel intentions to NZ in the post-COVID-19 era. In so doing, scholars could also integrate the construct of natural disease into the proposed model.

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