



# Expanding the Concept of Self-Congruity: A Tourism Application

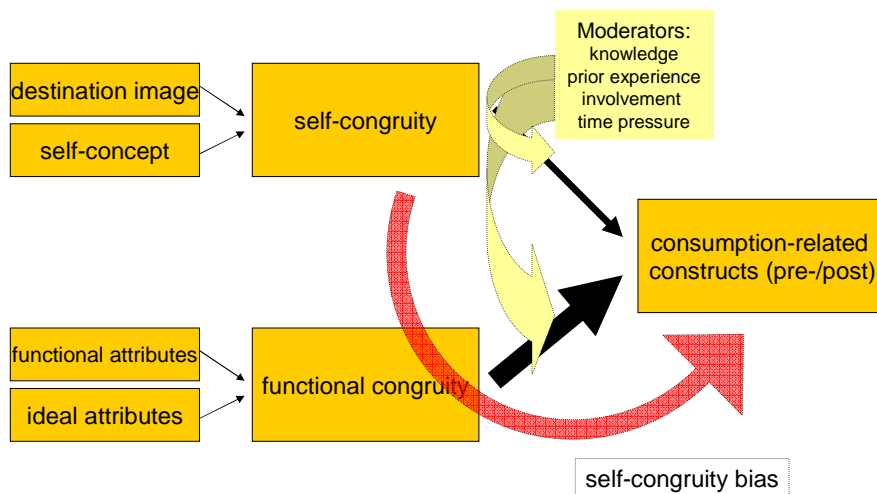
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## Background : SICT





## Background : SICT & Tourism

- In general, self-congruity is positively related to consumption related constructs (approx.  $r = .40$ ; Bauer et al., 2006)
- **Pre-visit destination choice intentions**, e.g. Beerli, Meneses, & Gil (2007): Small effects for real and ideal self-congruity on destination choice (log regression), 'statistical significant relations' for high-involvement tourists only
- **Post-visit constructs**, e.g. Chon (1992): Post visit evaluation depends on self-image congruity type (largest for positive ideal and social congruity)
- Questionable issues in past research:
  - Artificial dichotomization of continuous variables (e.g., intention), attenuating statistical power > inferior statistical approaches (log regression instead of linear approaches, median split instead of moderator analysis) > questionable statistical conclusion validity
  - Conceptual flaws (self-congruity typology employed instead of multi-factorial view of determinants)
  - Questionable attribute sets to measure destination-tourist images



## Problem Statement

Overall: Sufficiency of functional/self-congruity in understanding post-visit evaluations (satisfaction, word-of-mouth, revisiting intentions)?

Specific objectives:

- Increasing predictive validity.
- Capturing the full set of criteria tourists use to evaluate destinations (here: post-visit perspective).
- More fine-grained understanding of post-visit-related determinants.
- Deriving actionable recommendations by focusing on those factors most influential in explaining post-visit constructs.

## Proposed SICT Extensions

Additional evaluative criteria tourists are presumed to use:

- **Hedonic criteria:** Visual/auditory/olfactory/taste/kinetic aesthetics  
> *hedonic congruity*
- **Leisure criteria:** freedom from external control, freedom from work, involvement, arousal, mastery, spontaneity  
> *leisure congruity*
- **Moral criteria:** contribution to local community, fair and well treatment of employees, environmental friendliness  
> *moral congruity*
- **Safety/health criteria:** promotion of health, longevity, safety  
> *safety congruity*
- **Economic criteria:** Affordability, price-level  
> *economic congruity*

## Theoretical Roots (Selection)

- **Maslow's hierarchy of needs:** Low order needs (> safety congruity), high-order needs (> moral congruity)
- **Rokeach:** Instrumental versus terminal values: New congruity facets primarily capture terminal values
- **Inglehart values:** Materialistic (material and physical security) versus post-materialistic values (affiliation, self-presentation, aesthetic and intellectual needs, tolerance, trust, success, preservation of environment)
- **Schwartz values:** Circular value structure along the two axes (1) self-enhancement/self-transcendence and (2) openness to change/conservation
- **Five factor model of human personality:** openness, conscientiousness, extraversion, agreeableness, emotional stability

## Research question(s): An Overall Congruity Model



Incremental predictive validity (i.e., over and above functional/symbolic congruity) of the following five additional congruity facets:

1. hedonic congruity
2. leisure congruity
3. moral congruity
4. safety congruity
5. economic congruity

... ON:

1. overall satisfaction with stay
2. intention to revisit
3. positive word-of-mouth: willingness to recommend

## Method



- Subjects
  - $N = 1124$  German Web-based consumer panel members
  - 48% female
  - Mean age = 38.8 ( $SD = 14.7$ )
  - Top 5 destinations among respondents:  
Germany (26.9%), Spain (16.6%), Italy (10.5%), Turkey (5.5%), Austria (4.5%)
- Procedure and Materials
  - Field period: November 3-10, 2008
  - Web-based survey on evaluating the most recent vacation in 2008
  - Pre-tested, multi-item questionnaire assessing the exogenous (seven congruity facets) and the endogenous variables (overall satisfaction with stay, intention to revisit, positive word-of-mouth: willingness to recommend)  
<http://www.unipark.de/uc/urlaub/r/>
- Analysis strategy (first analysis phase)
  - Quantifying the incremental contribution: Hierarchical regression analyses (step 1: function/symbolic congruity; step 2: hedonic/leisure/moral/safety/economic congruity)
  - Big picture: Path model

## Results : Satisfaction with Stay

Step	Predictor Variable(s)	<i>r</i>	<i>beta</i>	<i>R</i> <sup>2</sup>
1	Functional congruity	.49**	.33**	.34
	Self congruity	.50**	.34**	
2	Functional congruity	.49**	.18**	.41
	Self congruity	.50**	.23**	
	Hedonic congruity	.48**	.18**	
	Leisure congruity	.31**	.19**	
	Moral congruity	.28**	-.05	
	Safety congruity	.44**	.09**	
	Economic congruity	.47**	.03	

Hierarchical multiple regression analysis relating function/self-congruity (step 1) and hedonic/leisure/moral/safety/economic congruity (step 2) to overall satisfaction with stay. (N= 1124; \*\**p*< .01, \**p*< .05)

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## Results : Intention to Revisit

Step	Predictor Variable(s)	<i>r</i>	<i>beta</i>	<i>R</i> <sup>2</sup>
1	Functional congruity	.49**	.33**	.33
	Self congruity	.50**	.33**	
2	Functional congruity	.49**	.22**	.37
	Self congruity	.50**	.25**	
	Hedonic congruity	.46**	.19**	
	Leisure congruity	.32**	.07*	
	Moral congruity	.29**	-.06	
	Safety congruity	.40**	.05	
	Economic congruity	.37**	.05	

Hierarchical multiple regression analysis relating function/self-congruity (step 1) and hedonic/leisure/moral/safety/economic congruity (step 2) to the intention to revisit the destination. (N= 1124; \*\**p*< .01, \**p*< .05)

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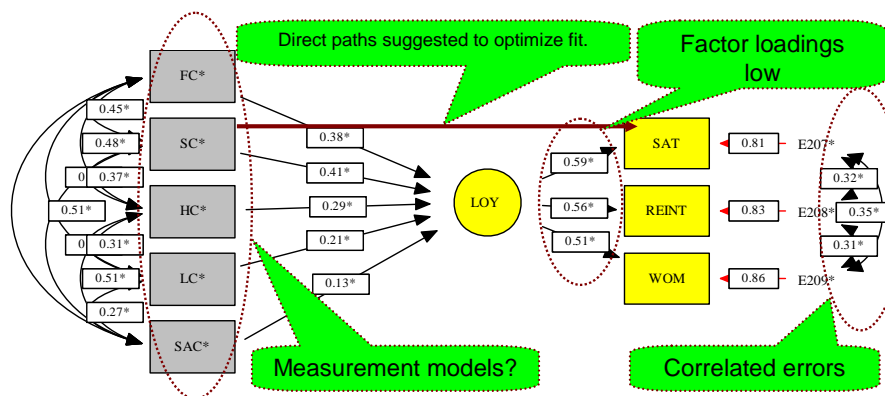
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## Results : Word-of-Mouth

Step	Predictor Variable(s)	<i>r</i>	<i>beta</i>	<i>R</i> <sup>2</sup>
1	Functional congruity	.49**	.38**	.29
	Self congruity	.43**	.24**	
2	Functional congruity	.49**	.27**	.32
	Self congruity	.43**	.18**	
	Hedonic congruity	.43**	.14**	
	Leisure congruity	.30**	.03	
	Moral congruity	.30**	.00	
	Safety congruity	.40**	.10**	
	Economic congruity	.31**	-.01	

Hierarchical multiple regression analysis relating function/self-congruity (step 1) and hedonic/leisure/moral/safety/economic congruity (step 2) to positive word-of-mouth: willingness to recommend (*N*= 1124; \*\**p*< .01, \**p*< .05)

## Results : Big Picture (Work in Progress)



Work in progress: Preliminary SEM/path-model relating SICT predictors to loyalty in tourism constructs (CFI= .93; RMSA= .17 [90%CI: .15, .19])



## Summary of Results

- Incremental predictive power by the five new congruity facets: 3%-7% of explained variance (base level: 29%-34%)
- Influential new congruity facets explaining ...
  - ... *overall satisfaction*: hedonic, leisure, safety
  - ... *revisiting intentions*: hedonic, leisure
  - ... *positive word-of-mouth*: hedonic, safety
- Differences in (estimated) influence of predictors!



## Implications

- Universal importance of symbolic/functional/hedonic congruity
  - Angle for strategic optimization
  - Systematic pre-visit assessment of functional, symbolic and hedonic needs will most likely help to design tourists' overall experience aimed at optimizing a broad set of post-visit evaluative criteria.
- Differential importance of predictors:
  - Safety congruity as an additional aspect to manage word-of-mouth effects.
- Consequences of non-relevant aspects:
  - Economic and moral aspects do not play a significant role in post-visit evaluations!
  - Underweight in designating products/services consumed during tourists' stay.

## Next Steps



- Overall mechanism or segment-specific sub-models? Identifying tourist segments within the data set.
- Self-reported versus estimated importance of congruity facets? Comparing subjective predictor weights with estimated predictor weights (e.g., subjective versus estimated role of moral congruity).
- Modeling non-compensatory decision rules by including interaction effects.

## Thank you for your attention!



Slides:

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## Descriptives, Correlations, Reliabilities

Scale		M	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
1	Sat	4.8	0.8	<b>.80</b>									
2	ReInt	4.5	1.1	.57**	<b>.87</b>								
3	WoM	5.0	1.1	.59**	.54**	<b>.63</b>							
4	FC	4.6	0.8	.49**	.49**	.49**	<b>.84</b>						
5	SC	4.4	0.7	.50**	.50**	.43**	.54**	<b>.66</b>					
6	HC	4.4	0.7	.48**	.46**	.43**	.53**	.47**	<b>.79</b>				
7	LC	4.3	0.8	.47**	.37**	.31**	.41**	.43**	.45**	<b>.88</b>			
8	MC	4.3	1.0	.28**	.29**	.30**	.42**	.33**	.53**	.24**	<b>.60</b>		
9	SaC	5.1	0.8	.44**	.40**	.40**	.55**	.41**	.55**	.39**	.47**	<b>.83</b>	
10	EC	4.5	0.8	.31**	.32**	.26**	.37**	.29**	.43**	.35**	.33**	.34**	<b>.83</b>

Note. Sat = Satisfaction, ReInt = Revisiting Intentions, WoM = Word of Mouth, SC = Self-Congruity, FC = Functional Congruity, HC = Hedonic Congruity, LC = Leisure Congruity, SaC = Safety Congruity, MC = Moral Congruity, EC = Economic Congruity; Coefficient alphas are presented in boldface along the diagonal; \*\*  $p < .01$ .

## Related Literature

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