

BRAND PERSONALITY AND REVISIT INTENTION: THE MEDIATING ROLE OF TOURISTS' SELF-IMAGE CONGRUITY

Abstract

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Purpose – Brand personality plays an important role in the development of tourists' self-image congruence and revisit intention. This paper attempts to shed light on the relationship between brand personality and self-image congruence and revisit intention through a quantitative analysis.

Design – Data were collected from 496 Vietnamese tourists who visited the top five tourist sites in Vietnam, including Ha Long, Phu Quoc, Sapa, Nha Trang, and Hoi An.

Methodology – By using SEM in AMOS version 24 CFA was performed to test the the overall measurement model.

Findings – Multivariate data analysis demonstrated that five dimensions of brand personality (Excitement, Sincerity, Sophistication, Competence, and Ruggedness) have a positive effect on self-image congruence and revisit intention. While excitement appears to be most helpful for developing self-image congruence, sincerity has the highest benefit for increasing revisit intention, sincerity has the highest utility for increasing revisit intention. In addition, revisit intention is most influenced by excitement and least influenced by sophistication through self-image congruence.

Originality of the research – The findings highlight the important role of attributes associated with tourist destinations. Managers in the tourism sector should be familiar with these characteristics in order to position or strengthen their destination's brand with the aim of delivering to each tourist group a customized experience that resonate with their shared values. The insights provided by this paper also have important implications for travel companies in the gradual recovery of the country's smoke-free industry under the conditions of the COVID -19 pandemic.

Keywords brand personality, revisit intention, self-image congruity, tourism management, service marketing

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INTRODUCTION

Brand personality plays an important role in building the tourism brand as well as creating differentiation and recognition of the brand (Murphy et al., 2007; Kim et al., 2013). The value of the product will be appreciated more if the brand personality has typical features and lasting traits, sustainable competitive advantage (Xie & Lee, 2013; Su & Reynolds, 2017). Drawing customers' attention only through utilitarian characteristics of travel products is not competitive enough in the market nowadays (Maghrifani et al., 2021). In the same market, when competing brands have similar attributes of products and services, the factor that differentiates one brand from the others and reinforces the brand's attractiveness is brand personality (Aaker et al., 2001), since "consumption symbols", which affirm consumers themselves, are expressed through the kinds of brands chosen (Sirgy, 1982; Li et al., 2021).

Previous works have discovered various mechanisms through which brand personality affects consumers' decision to choose a certain brand. Some researchers are of the view that consumers' opinions of brands are formed at the salient level of personality, not the conventional personality (Freling & Forbes, 2005; Jacob et al., 2020). Brand personality is a tool to help consumers find brands that match their self-concepts, therefore it is more important for consumers to recognize their own connection to the brand than the brand personality, whether consistency or synchronicity creates a positive opinion of the brand (Malär et al., 2011; Chen et al., 2022). National and international city break travelers differ greatly in their evaluation of both destination personality and emotional experience (Šagovnović & Kovačić, 2020). Brand personalities are available in many areas such as urban destinations, restaurants, hotels (Souiden et al., 2017; Su & Reynolds, 2017; Yang et al., 2022; Zhang et al., 2019). Destination personality does not only positively affect destination attitude directly but also positively influence it via brand trust and self-congruity indirectly (Huaman-Ramirez et al., 2021; Sharifsamet et al., 2020). A number of existing studies have emphasized adjusting the scale of brand personality to match different destinations or creating a diagram to illustrate the relationships between brand image and brand personality as well as the awareness, preferences, pleasure, and faithfulness of tourists (Aaker, 1997; Kim et al., 2001; Murphy et al., 2007; Lee, 2009; Nazir et al., 2021). Although much attention has been paid to relevant subjects of brand personality in current literature, there has been limited focus on brand personality for services and very little empirical work on how destination brand personality and tourists' self-image congruity are related as well as their revisit intention, particularly in one of the best destinations in Asia such as Vietnam.

In the meantime, international tourism in Vietnam have been seriously affected, to the point of paralysis due to the repercussions of the Covid-19 pandemic, thus, domestic tourism will be the key force driving the recovery of the smokeless industry in country. Statistics compiled by the Vietnam National Administration of Tourism indicated a significant rise in the figure of domestic tourists from 30 million to 85 million. The figure for 2019 is approximately three times that of 2011, equivalent to an average annual growth rate of 15%. The travel time for domestic tourists increased by 3.7 days on average, the revenue amounted to 1-1.6 million VND. While the contribution of domestic tourists' spending to the total revenue was only 158 trillion VND in 2015, this figure increased to 334 trillion VND in 2019, with an annualized average growth rate of 20.5%. These changes in the market composition from 2011 to 2019 show a significant rise in domestic travel. When the pandemic was well under the government's control virtually all companies operating in travel services launched promotions to stimulate customer's demand in booking domestic tours. Therefore, domestic routes remained open and with enhanced capacity. Especially in the run-up to national holidays, the shortage of rooms at favorite travel destinations became commonplace. These pieces of evidence show that the domestic sector has enormous growth potential and can contribute immensely to the overall development of the tourism industry, provided that good policies are in place and implemented in a timely manner.

In response to the urgent need for a specific strategy to promote domestic tourism, with the goal of improving the resilience of Vietnamese tourism; we propose a sustainable development model which is grounded in theoretical framework and reflects the unique characteristics of Vietnam's tourism market. The main goal of the research is to build a comprehensive framework that explains the influence of brand personality on psychology as well as the behaviours of tourists toward the brand of the destination. The research also helps individuals working in the field of tourism develop a deeper understanding of the personality aspects they should focus on to reinforce destination brand and meet customers' demand according to the psychology of each tourist group. More specifically, we aim to solve four questions: (1) What are the major traits of brand personality that destinations should focus on? (2) Which aspects of brand personality possess the highest and lowest utility and in promoting the purpose return of tourists? (3) Does the variety of distinctive brand personality influence self-image congruity and revisit intention? And (4) Does tourists' perceived self-image congruity play a mediating role between brand personality and revisit intention?

In the field of tourism, companies that can survive and succeed greatly depend on the distinctiveness and positivity of the brand personality. This will be shown in this research not only through theoretical concepts but also empirical evidence. First, the investigation of brand personality's specific aspects based on domestic tourists' perceptions and their effect on revisit intention can expand our understanding of brand personality through a different perspective. Furthermore, the study explores the mediating role of tourists' perceived self-image congruity in-depth as one of the factors that enhance tourists' revisit intention. Finally, several industry implications are demonstrated upon achieving the aforementioned research objectives. Hopefully, this paper will serve as a useful reference to industry insiders in developing effective marketing campaigns and brand positioning strategies.

1. CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK AND HYPOTHESIS

1.1. Brand personality and self-image congruity

Brand personality refers to the association of the brand's concepts with several character traits such as Excitement, Sincerity, Sophistication, Competence, and Ruggedness (Aaker, 1997). The personification of a brand is a robust marketing tool which could be instrumental to its success by means of improving potential customers' positive association with the brand, their preference and ultimately their choice (Chaudhuri and Holbrook, 2001; Aaker et al., 2004; ElMassah et al., 2019). According to Louis and Lombart (2010) and Ramaseshan & Stein (2014) brand personality dimensions play a pivotal role in forming customers' favorable perception of and different aspects of the brand including personality, dimensions and traits affecting customers' mindset and behaviors at varying degrees. As far as types of brand personalities are concerned, Ramaseshan & Tsao (2007) believed that excitement and sophistication have the most profound effects on how consumers perceive brand quality. While excitement is closely associated with perceived quality of symbolic brands, experiential brands are viewed more favorable when they possess the sophistication personality. On the other hand, retail outlets are most likely to benefit from greater loyalty when they are perceived to manifest competence, sincerity, and excitement with sincerity singled out as the most consequential trait (Zentes et al., 2008). Surveying 30 different brands, Sung & Kim (2010) concluded that brands with sincerity and ruggedness are likely to achieve a higher level of brand trust while excitement and sophistication are increasingly important in influencing consumers' attitude toward the brands.

This study employs the self-congruity theory to get a deeper understanding of the relationship between brand personality and revisit intention. The underlying principle of self-congruity theory is that a product user instinctively compares his or her self-image with that of the product-user image and this process partly affects their behavior from a psychological perspective (Jacob et al., 20, p. 4). The self-congruity is perceived as a self-image congruity while also being functional in nature. Jacob et al., (2020) and Juliana (2021) view self-image congruity as a process in which consumers select products/brands believed to hold symbolic attributes similar to their conception of their selves. Our focus on self-image congruity is meant to advance current understanding of the harmony between a brand image and the image a person would like to project. Brand personality can greatly affect consumers who subconsciously associate their self-image with a certain brand or specifically choose the brand because it reflects their own identity (Plummer, 2000). It is possible to induce individual consumers' internal narrative

about certain products by associating them with sensory prompts such as images, music, alluring or intriguing scenes which resemble memories of brand personality character, which will alter one's attitude and behaviors toward the brand (Escalas, 2004; Baumeister & Newman, 1994). Authors have shown that similarity of self-image has a beneficial effect on both visible consumptions as well as social status (Su & Reynolds, 2017; Topçu, 2018; Chen et al., 2022). In the context of brand congruity, the theory suggests that the self-brand congruity indicates the harmony between a brand image and the image the consumer would like to project about himself/herself. Thus, to build up a greater self-image, users have the intention to consume clearly through stronger self-image similarity. These contributions enable us to posit hypotheses in the context of the tourism industry as below:

- H₁. Excitement has a positive effect on self-image congruity.
- H₂. Sincerity has a positive effect on self-image congruity.
- H₃. Sophistication has a positive effect on self-image congruity.
- H₄. Competence has a positive effect on self-image congruity.
- H₅. Ruggedness has a positive effect on self-image congruity.

1.2. Brand personality and revisit intention

Brand personality expresses the understanding and meaning of the brand to consumers (Schmitt, 2012). Many believe that business activities at different levels such as strategy or tactics can be made easier by brand personality (Plummer, 1985). Tactically, the profile of brand personality is a tool to guide brand managers in many aspects, such as designing, marketing, and advertising. Simultaneously, the respective business activities are also evaluated by the criteria established by the profile of the brand personality. From brand personality's implications, it can be deduced that consumers' psychology, behaviour, and emotions are greatly influenced by brand personality, and then manners relating to the brand are shaped, for example, self-image consistency, brand preference, and intention of revisiting the brand.

Under the aspects of the tourism intentions, the destination brand personality is an important factor to determine the customer segment, the potential development of the market and destination brand equity (Aktan et al., 2021; Huaman-Ramirez, 2021). At the same time the brand personality provides profound knowledge not only about the function but also the society. In the tourism industry, the image of destination is also clearly felt (Huertas & Gonzalo, 2020). Destination personality (sincerity and ruggedness) influences on tourist activities preferences (Kovačić et al., 2022). Destination personality does not only positively affect destination attitude directly but also positively influence it via brand trust and self-congruity indirectly (Huaman-Ramirez et al., 2021; Sharifsamet et al., 2020). Some authors contend that tourists' attitudes, actual and ideal self-congruity mediate the effects of destination personality on behavioural intentions (Souiden et al., 2017; Yang et al., 2022; Yang et al., 2021). Therefore, to encourage tourists' intention to travel, destination marketers promote the construction of distinct identity images that ensure high efficiency (Simpson et al., 2020). Of course, their aim is to make them faithful to returning guests (Camarero et al., 2010). Authors researched tourism and showed that loyalty and travel intentions have a positive correlation (Okumus et al., 2012; Maghrifani et al., 2021). The above analyses led to hypotheses:

- H₆. Excitement has a positive effect on revisit intention.
- H₇. Sincerity has a positive effect on revisit intention.
- H₈. Sophistication has a positive effect on revisit intention.
- H₉. Competence has a positive effect on revisit intention.
- H₁₀. Ruggedness has a positive effect on revisit intention.

1.3. Self-image congruity and revisit intention

Self-image congruity, in certain instances, is synonymous to the association of a consumer's self-conception with the image the product projects (Tran et al., 2021). Remarking favorably on the business (Boulding et al., 1993; Wang et al., 2004; Liu & Jang, 2009), recommending the businesses to (Parasuraman et al., 1991; Liu & Jang, 2009), demonstrating loyalty to the business through revisit behavior (Sharma et al., 2022), widening the scope of services used and showing willingness to pay a higher price (Cronin Jr et al., 2000; Jacob et al., 2020; Chen et al., 2021) are among the likely outcomes of consumers' positive behavioral intentions. Moreover, Su & Reynolds (2017) suggest that customers' decisions to stay at a hotel are impacted at varying degrees considering how strong of an influence self-image congruity have on different types of hotels. For instance, New Zealand's destination personality is highly congruous with Chinese tourists' personalities, resulting in greater return rate of the tourist group for this particular market (Yang et al., 2021). In the merely latest paper, by Yang et al., (2022), they also singled out self-congruity as the fundamental principle underlying increased revisit intention associated with destination personality. These contributions therefore enable us to pose our next hypothesis:

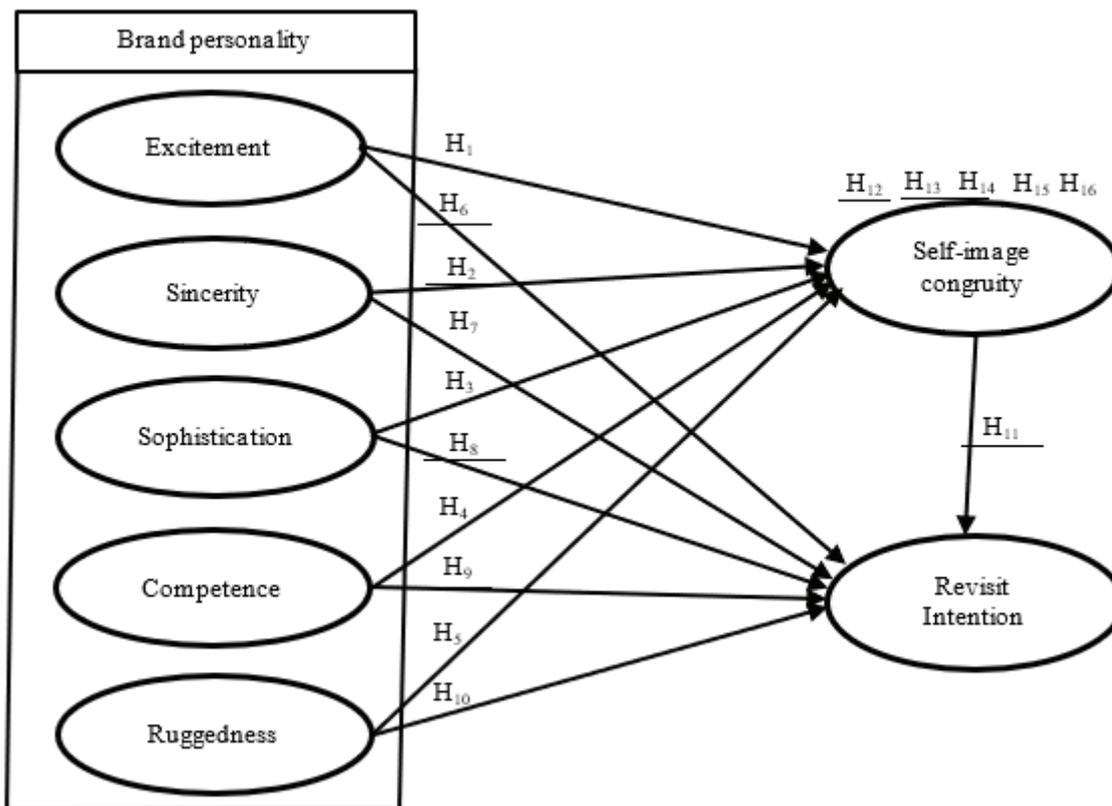
- H₁₁. Self-image congruity has a positive effect on revisit intention.

1.4. The mediating role of self-image congruity

Brand personality can greatly affect consumers who subconsciously associate their self-image with a certain brand or specifically choose the brand because it reflects their own identity (Plummer, 2000). Sweeney & Bradon (2010) advanced a model for understanding the concept of brand personality that emphasizes the interpersonal characteristics characterizing a brand (Sweeney & Brandon, 2010). Furthermore, Brakus et al., (2009) suggest that brand personality leads to favorable brand satisfaction. Valued products, sustainable competitive advantage (Freling & Forbes, 2005), intention to return, tourist loyalty (Bayih & Singh, 2020; Xie & Lee, 2013) as a result of a strong constructively brand personality possessing distinctive and enduring characteristics.

Self-image congruity is instrumental to brand loyalty (Samli & Sirgy 1981). Therefore, inconsistency with self-image on the part of a consumer may likely result in an initially unfavorable affective state toward a brand. Consequently, the consumer's appraisal of the brand's functionality may suffer (Su & Reynolds, 2017). Different products have different brand personalities, creating the explanatory power of user image similarity and similarity (Parker, 2009). Some authors suggested that suppliers can rely on the results of consumers' perceived similarity with brand image to better predict brand preference (Li et al., 2021; Usakli et al., 2022). Concerning tourism brand, destination image and destination personality are viewed as two distinctive but closely associated notions by researchers. For example, Hosany et al., (2006) suggested a direct relationship between destination personality traits (sincerity, excitement and conviviality) and the sub-scales affective and accessibility of destination image. Meanwhile, Chen & Phou (2013) confirmed a significant positive association between that destination image and destination personality. These reflections enable us to posit our fourth hypotheses:

Figure 1: Research framework



- H₁₂. Self-image congruity mediates the relationship between excitement and revisit intention.
- H₁₃. Self-image congruity mediates the relationship between sincerity and revisit intention.
- H₁₄. Self-image congruity mediates the relationship between sophistication and revisit intention.
- H₁₅. Self-image congruity mediates the relationship between competence and revisit intention.
- H₁₆. Self-image congruity mediates the relationship between ruggedness and revisit intention.

Thereby, our proposed model is illustrated as shown in Figure 1.

2. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

2.1. Measures

Aaker's (1997) developed a measurement instrument of brand personality through 42 personality traits allocated across five dimensions (Aaker, 1997). Self-image congruity (SIC) was measured using three items from Sirgy et al., (1997): (1) I truly enjoyed visiting the destination, (2) Visiting the destination has met my needs, (3) This tour has exceeded my expectations (Sirgy et al., 1997). A four-item revisit intention (RI) scale was adopted from Song et al., (2012): (1) I have an intention to revisit the destination, (2) I am willing to revisit the destination, (3) I will make an effort to revisit the destination, (4) I am willing to recommend the destination to my friends or others (Song et al., 2012). The measurement of the questionnaire items is performed through the use of five-point Likert scale (see Appendix 1).

2.2. Sample and procedure

Questionnaires consisting of the items listed above were distributed online through Email and Zalo. Participants consist of Vietnamese tourists who have travelled the top five attractions in Vietnam, including Ha long, Phu Quoc, Sapa, Nha Trang and Hoi An. Data collection was conducted in collaboration with travel agencies and hotels in those destinations. The research assistants contacted each tourist individually to increase the response rate. Five hundred and forty-eight completed questionnaires were collected with seven hundred distributed, yielding a response rate of 78 %. Due to missing data and potential outliers, the final effective sample was 496. The sample descriptions are provided in the Appendix (see Appendix 2).

2.3. Item reduction and dimensionality of the scale

In order to reduce the number of factors in play, the authors administered Guttman's (1954) factor extraction rule (Guttman, 1954). The seven factors explained 58.26% of total variance in the model (Hair et al., 2010).

Table 1: **Pattern Matrix^a**

	RI	SIC	Excite-ment	Sincerity	Sophistication	Competence	Ruggedness
RI1	.918						
RI2	.901						
RI3	.835						
RI4	.724						
SIC1		.953					
SIC2		.925					
SIC3		.863					
Daring			.889				
Exciting			.882				
Spirited			.861				
Cool			.857				
Young			.851				
Imaginative			.846				
Independent			.837				
Contemporary			.697				
Unique			.689				
Friendly				.909			
Family-Oriented				.834			
Cheerful				.834			
Sincere				.832			
Wholesome				.811			
Honest				.746			
Sentimental				.667			
Charming					.937		
Glamorous					.868		
Good-looking					.795		
Trendy					.707		

Upper class					.642		
Smooth					.638		
Reliable						.915	
Hardworking						.896	
Secure						.724	
Intelligent						.627	
Outdoorsy							.902
Masculine							.794
Tough							.605

Extraction Method: Principal Axis Factoring.
 Rotation Method: Promax with Kaiser Normalization.a
 a. Rotation converged in 7 iterations.

Eight items that loaded below 0.5 were deleted (Hair et al., 1998). These items were Down-to-earth, Small-town, Technical, Corporate, Successful, Leader, Feminine and Western. Furthermore, 5 additional items, namely: Real, Original, Up-to-date, Confident and Rugged were eliminated because they demonstrated high loadings on more than one component. Ultimately, a 36-item pattern matrix was created. Seven dimensions were revealed from the principal component analysis with 9 items loading on Excitement dimension, 7 on Sincerity, 6 on Sophistication, 4 loaded on Competence, 3 on Ruggedness, 3 on self-image congruity and 4 on revisit intention (Table 1).

3. EMPIRICAL RESULTS

3.1. Measurement model results

Firstly, we assessed the reliability for all constructs in this study by checking Cronbach’s alpha, which exceeds 0.7 (Table 2). Thus, these constructs achieve valid reliability (Cronbach, 1951). Then by using SEM in AMOS version 24 CFA was performed to test the the overall measurement model. The results suggested that the seven factor measurement model was well supported by our data, with acceptable modelfits of CFI = 0.952, GFI = 0.894, TLI = 0.926, CMIN/df = 1.658, RMSEA = 0.041. Besides, the factor loadings ranged from 0.551 to 0.898 at $p < 0.001$, and CR ranged from 0.781 to 0.932. AVE ranged from 0.531 to 0.682. These results indicate that all observation items significantly present latent variables (Fornell & Larcker, 1981).

Table 2: Convergent validity and reliability

Latent variable	Mean	SD	λ	C_{α}	AVE	CR
Excitement	3.505	0.517		0.930	0.606	0.932
Daring			0.863***			
Exciting			0.856***			
Spirited			0.847***			
Cool			0.835***			
Young			0.812***			
Imaginative			0.717***			
Independent			0.708***			
Contemporary			0.669***			
Unique			0.664***			
Sincerity	3.526	0.508		0.910	0.603	0.912
Friendly			0.856***			
Family-Oriented			0.885***			
Cheerful			0.862***			
Sincere			0.840***			
Wholesome			0.734***			
Honest			0.646***			
Sentimental			0.551***			

Sophistication						
Charming	3.578	0.562	0.898***	0.889	0.582	0.891
Glamorous			0.864***			
Good-looking			0.825***			
Trendy			0.721***			
Upper class			0.647***			
Smooth			0.565***			
Competence						
Reliable	3.789	0.594	0.850***	0.817	0.531	0.816
Hardworking			0.782***			
Secure			0.658***			
Intelligent			0.596***			
Ruggedness						
Outdoorsy	3.802	0.578	0.802***	0.779	0.545	0.781
Masculine			0.769***			
Tough			0.633***			
Self-image congruity						
SIC1	3.664	0.605	0.766***	0.845	0.648	0.847
SIC2			0.858***			
SIC3			0.789***			
Revisit intention						
RI1	3.538	0.556	0.791***	0.902	0.682	0.900
RI2			0.835***			
RI3			0.816***			
RI4			0.882***			

Note: M: Mean; S.D.: Standard deviation; λ – Factor loading; α - Cronbach's; *** $p < 0.001$

Finally, Table 3 shows that the square root of AVE for each construct (diagonal elements in italics) was higher than the correlations among constructs in the model, confirming discriminant validity.

Table 3: Correlations of the constructs

Constructs	E	SC	SP	C	R	SIC	RI
Excitement (E)	<i>0.779</i>						
Sincerity (SC)	0.482	<i>0.777</i>					
Sophistication (SP)	0.625	0.458	<i>0.763</i>				
Competence (C)	0.419	0.416	0.472	<i>0.728</i>			
Ruggedness (R)	0.536	0.405	0.576	0.602	<i>0.738</i>		
Self-image congruity (SIC)	0.604	0.513	0.558	0.601	0.585	<i>0.805</i>	
Revisit intention (RI)	0.591	0.484	0.549	0.596	0.588	0.564	<i>0.832</i>

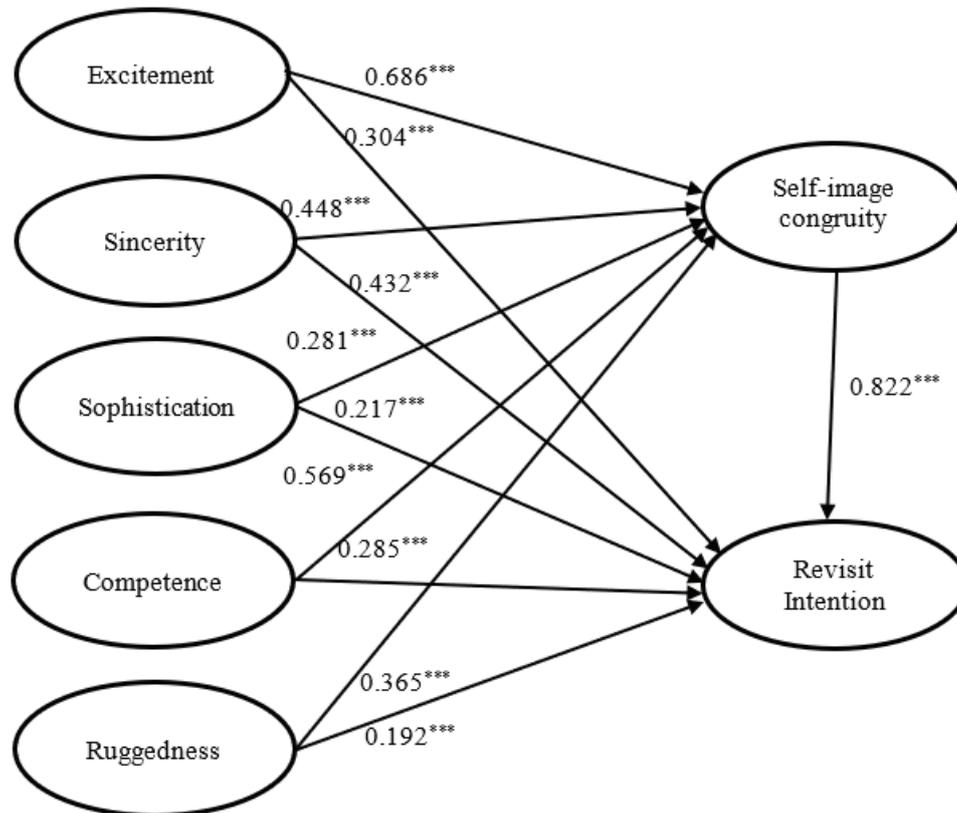
Note: The diagonal values mentioned in bold and italics represent the square root of AVE.

3.2. Structural model results

SEM was developed to test the hypotheses. The value of GFI, TLI, and CFI are 0.890, 0.922, and 0.934, respectively, besides CMIN/df = 1.848 and RMSEA is 0.052. Thus, the study achieves a good model fitness (Figure 2). The results demonstrate that five dimensions of brand personality have a positive effect on self-image congruity and revisit intention. While excitement has the highest helpfulness of developing self-image congruity ($\beta = 0.686$, $p < 0.001$), sincerity has the highest utility for increasing revisit intention ($\beta = 0.432$, $p < 0.001$). Moreover, sophistication has the lowest helpfulness in developing self-image congruity ($\beta = 0.281$, $p < 0.001$), ruggedness has the lowest utility for increasing revisit intention ($\beta = 0.192$, $p < 0.001$). These results confirm that competence, sincerity and sophistication have significant positive effects on self-image congruity, with values of 0.569 ($p < 0.001$), 0.448 ($p < 0.001$), and 0.281 ($p < 0.001$), respectively. The results also confirm the positive effects of excitement, competence and sophistication on revisit intention, with values of 0.304 ($p < 0.001$), 0.285 ($p < 0.001$), and 0.217 ($p < 0.001$), respectively. Furthermore, the results of SEM show that self-image congruity has great significance for revisit intention (with an estimated value of 0.822; $p < 0.001$). Hence, all hypotheses are supported.

In addition to the direct effects of each dimension of brand personality on the revisit intention processes, we explored effect mechanisms through self-image congruity. The results verify the mediating roles of self-image congruity in the relationship between excitement, sincerity, sophistication, competence, and ruggedness and the revisit intention (Table 4). All these hypotheses are supported. The results indicate that revisit intention is most influenced by excitement through self-image congruity (estimate value of 0.591), and is least influenced by sophistication through self-image congruity (estimate value of 0.282). The results also confirmed the positive effects of sincerity, competence, and ruggedness on self-image congruity with values of 0.436, 0.373, and 0.298, respectively.

Figure 2: Path coefficients of the structural model



Note: GFI = 0.890, TLI=0.922, CFI =0.934, CMIN/df = 1.848, RMSEA = 0.052, ***p < 0.001

Finally, the total effects of excitement were greater than sincerity on revisit intention (0.895 > 0.868). This is contrary to the results for H₆ and H₇ on the direct effects of excitement and sincerity on revisit intention (0.304 < 0.432). This discrepancy is owing to the higher indirect effects of excitement and sincerity on revisit intention (0.591 > 0.436), hence the mediating role of self-image congruity is more essential.

Table 4: Direct, indirect and total effects analysis

Predictor	Self-image congruity	Revisit intention
Direct effects		
Excitement	0.686	0.304
Sincerity	0.448	0.432
Sophistication	0.281	0.217
Competence	0.569	0.285
Ruggedness	0.365	0.192
Self-image congruity		0.822
Indirect effects		
Excitement		0.591
Sincerity		0.436
Sophistication		0.282
Competence		0.373
Ruggedness		0.298

Total effects		
Excitement		0.895
Sincerity		0.868
Sophistication		0.499
Competence		0.658
Ruggedness		0.490

DISCUSSION

This study has implication for the rejuvenation of the country's smoke-free industry under the COVID-19 pandemic circumstances. Our research suggested that brand personality plays a key role in tourism destination preference. According to the current literature on brand personality, self-image congruity and revisit intention, this empirical research revealed the varying roles that brand personality plays in tourists' perceived self-image congruity and their revisit intention. The study makes theoretical contributions to both brand personality and revisit intention researches. This research extends the previous body of knowledge in brand personality literature in terms of positioning self-image congruity and tour as outcomes of revisit intention. Past researches focused on a range of outcomes of brand attitude (Su & Reynolds, 2017), satisfaction, trust and brand loyalty (Japutra & Molinillo, 2019), awareness, preferences and pleasure of tourists (Aaker, 1997; Kim et al., 2001; Murphy et al., 2007; Lee, 2009; Nazir et al., 2021). In addition, to the best of our knowledge, there has been no past research has established the mediating effects of brand personality on revisit intention, the study indicates how this mechanism is activated through self-image congruity. Some new initiatives to restore domestic tourism activities are proposed in the following paragraphs.

First, the study focuses on the influence of brand personality to self-image congruity and revisit intention. Almost all authors agree that capitalizing on brand personality is highly advantageous to firm to develop a successful brand with regards to consumer-brand relationships (Huaman-Ramirez, 2021; Maghrifani et al., 2021). The results demonstrate that excitement, sincerity, sophistication, competence, and ruggedness have a positive effect on self-image congruity and revisit intention. While excitement is most helpful in developing self-image congruity, sincerity has the highest utility for increasing revisit intention. Moreover, sophistication has the lowest helpfulness in developing self-image congruity, ruggedness has the lowest utility for increasing revisit intention. In addition, the finding show that self-image congruity has great significance for revisit intention. The results were in line with the research of Apostolopoulou & Papadimitriou (2015) who all stressed the considerable effect of destination personality (i.e., excitement and sincerity) on the destination's overall image and tourists' revisiting intention.

Second, with regards to the mechanism activated through self-image congruity; the findings show that revisit intention is most influenced by excitement and least influenced by sophistication through self-image congruity. Several studies reveal key difference in their findings. Kovačić et al., (2022), confirmed the influence of destination personality (sincerity and ruggedness) on tourist activity preferences. Hosany et al., (2006); discovered a direct correlation between destination personality traits, i.e., sincerity, excitement and conviviality, and the accessibility of destination image. Furthermore, the total effects of excitement were greater than sincerity on revisit intention. This revelation, while at odds with the analysis on the direct effects of excitement and sincerity on revisit intention, is tremendously impactful. One possible explanation for the contradiction lies in the higher indirect effects of excitement and sincerity on revisit intention, hence the mediating role of self-image congruity is more essential. New findings of this study provide interesting and potentially significant thought for body of knowledge in brand personality literature.

This study suggests that managers should focus on multiple brand personality dimensions to create a basis for tourist destinations differentiation. Managers should increase the excitement of tourist destinations and improve tourist services and destinations image with traits including friendliness, cheerfulness, honesty, sentiment, etc. Besides, companies should provide programs to increase ruggedness and sophistication of tourist destinations. Hence, these initiatives will develop tourists' self-image congruity and enhance their revisit intention. The results also highlight the important role of characteristic such as adventurousness, excitement, youthfulness, contemporality and uniqueness for tourist destinations, which provides valuable new insights for managers in the tourism industry.

CONCLUSIONS

The study has made some contributions into brand personality's theoretical framework. First, despite previous research into determinants of revisit intention through the theory of self congruity (Li et al., 2021; Usakli et al., 2022), little effort has been made to integrate destination image into self-congruity models in tourism, especially regarding domestic tourists in Vietnam. Second, this is likely the first study which employs an integrated theoretical model including five dimensions of brand personality, self-image congruity and revisit intention. Our primary contribution into existing literature is pinpointing the mediating role of tourists' perceived self-image congruity in-depth as one of the factors that enhance their revisit intention. The findings indicate that revisit intention is most influenced by excitement through self-image congruity and is least influenced by sophistication through self-image congruity. The results also confirmed the positive effects of sincerity, competence, and ruggedness on self-image congruity.

Therefore, in order to survive and succeed, a tourism company needs specialized departments to create and manage a positive and distinct brand personality. Concerning this topic, until now Vietnam's tourism industry has not created a brand, the majority of Vietnam's tourism businesses are relatively lacking in their ability to attract tourists due to weak brand name recognition in the regional and world markets (Tien et al., 2019). The findings indicated that apart from present promotion programs to stimulate demand, company should position or strengthen their destination' brand based on the psychology of each tourist group. In particular, tourists perceive consistency between a destination brand and self-image with regards to excitement and sincerity aspects. Thus, policymakers and marketers should find ways to reinforce these personality traits such as excitement, passion, coolness, youthfulness, imagination, independence, contemporality, uniqueness, friendliness, family-friendliness, wholesomeness, sentiment, and honesty, etc. More importantly, a national strategy on building a tourism brand in Vietnam is very necessary.

As any other study, our paper is limited in research scope as it focuses on destination brand personality with relation to the top five attractions in Vietnam, namely: Ha long, Phi Quoc, Sapa, Nha Trang and Hoi An. Thus, future study could widen the spectrum of destinations in consideration. More importantly, to further our understanding of self-congruity theory, it is highly recommended that similar comparative studies be conducted for different tourism destinations. Furthermore, the research stems from the small number of travel agencies and hotels from which the participants were selected. Future works may include a sample from a wider range of demographic groups to help generalize findings to a larger extent. In addition, the study used a convenience sampling method based on domestic tourists in Vietnam, so it would be good to replicate the research on a wider international sample, for a greater generalizability. Finally, we only examined the underlying mechanisms by analysing the mediating role of self-image congruity. To advance our model, mediators and moderators effects should be investigated in future research to develop a more comprehensive picture of revisit intention.

In conclusion, brand personality may serve as the foundation for brand differentiation and help improve the appeal of the destination to tourists, which in turn affects revisit intention. Travelers with different purposes may have different needs which in turn affect their self-image congruity. Therefore, to attract consumers, marketing strategies need to be adjusted to reflect both the brand personality and the focus of the customer's travel purposes. Besides, to successfully position the destination brand personality, it is necessary to have the orientation and support of the tourism state agencies and as well as develop a workforce knowledgeable in tourism brand destination development, which is still limited in Vietnam. We hope that the results provide fresh insights into an emerging tourism market and potentially important information for both academicians and specialists in the field of tourist behavioural intention.

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APPENDIX

Appendix 1. Survey Questionnaire

SECTION 1. GENERAL INFORMATION

Please provide some basic information about yourself:

1.1. Have you been to any of the following places?

1. Ha Long
2. Phu Quoc
3. Sapa
4. Nha Trang
5. Hoi An
6. Other

1.2. Please give your personal information

1. Gender (S)	<input type="checkbox"/> 1) Male	<input type="checkbox"/> 2) Female
2. Age(A)	<input type="checkbox"/> 1) Under 30 years old <input type="checkbox"/> 2) 31 - 45 years old	<input type="checkbox"/> 3) 46 - 60 years old <input type="checkbox"/> 4) Over 60 years old
3. Highest education (HE)	<input type="checkbox"/> 1) Graduate High school/ College degree	<input type="checkbox"/> 2) Graduate Bachelor degree/ Master/ Doctor
4. Occupation (O)	<input type="checkbox"/> 1) Business owner/ Man- agers <input type="checkbox"/> 2) Teacher	<input type="checkbox"/> 3) Civil servant <input type="checkbox"/> 4) Other
5. Personal average monthly income (PAMI)	<input type="checkbox"/> 1) Under 5 million VND <input type="checkbox"/> 2) 5 – 10 million VND <input type="checkbox"/> 3) 10 – 15 million VND	<input type="checkbox"/> 4) 15 – 20 million VND <input type="checkbox"/> 5) Over 20 million VND

PART 2. MAIN CONTENT

Please indicate your opinions on the following issues:

Section 1. How do you feel about that tourism destination?

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree
Excitement					
Daring	<input type="checkbox"/> 5	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 1
Exciting	<input type="checkbox"/> 5	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 1

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree
Spirited	<input type="checkbox"/> 5	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 1
Cool	<input type="checkbox"/> 5	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 1
Young	<input type="checkbox"/> 5	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 1
Imaginative	<input type="checkbox"/> 5	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 1
Independent	<input type="checkbox"/> 5	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 1
Original	<input type="checkbox"/> 5	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 1
Small-town	<input type="checkbox"/> 5	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 1
Contemporary	<input type="checkbox"/> 5	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 1
Unique	<input type="checkbox"/> 5	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 1
<i>Sincerity</i>					
Friendly	<input type="checkbox"/> 5	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 1
Family-Oriented	<input type="checkbox"/> 5	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 1
Cheerful	<input type="checkbox"/> 5	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 1
Sincere	<input type="checkbox"/> 5	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 1
Wholesome	<input type="checkbox"/> 5	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 1
Honest	<input type="checkbox"/> 5	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 1
Down-to-earth	<input type="checkbox"/> 5	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 1
Sentimental	<input type="checkbox"/> 5	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 1
Real	<input type="checkbox"/> 5	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 1
<i>Sophistication</i>					
Charming	<input type="checkbox"/> 5	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 1
Glamorous	<input type="checkbox"/> 5	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 1
Good-looking	<input type="checkbox"/> 5	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 1
Trendy	<input type="checkbox"/> 5	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 1
Western	<input type="checkbox"/> 5	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 1
Technical	<input type="checkbox"/> 5	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 1
Upper class	<input type="checkbox"/> 5	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 1
Smooth	<input type="checkbox"/> 5	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 1
Feminine	<input type="checkbox"/> 5	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 1
<i>Competence</i>					
Reliable	<input type="checkbox"/> 5	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 1
Hardworking Confident	<input type="checkbox"/> 5	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 1
Corporate	<input type="checkbox"/> 5	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 1
Leader	<input type="checkbox"/> 5	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 1
Successful	<input type="checkbox"/> 5	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 1
Secure	<input type="checkbox"/> 5	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 1
Intelligent Up-to-date	<input type="checkbox"/> 5	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 1
<i>Ruggedness</i>					
Outdoorsy	<input type="checkbox"/> 5	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 1
Masculine Tough	<input type="checkbox"/> 5	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 1
Rugged	<input type="checkbox"/> 5	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 1

Section 2. Self-image congruity

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree
Destination brand personality is consistent with my self-image	<input type="checkbox"/> 5	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 1
Destinations brand personality reflects who I am	<input type="checkbox"/> 5	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 1
I visit this destination that fit the image that I want to portray to others	<input type="checkbox"/> 5	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 1

Section 3. Revisit intention

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree
I have an intention to revisit that destination	<input type="checkbox"/> 5	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 1
I am willing to revisit that destination	<input type="checkbox"/> 5	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 1
I will make an effort to revisit that destination	<input type="checkbox"/> 5	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 1
I am willing to recommend that destination to my friends or others	<input type="checkbox"/> 5	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 1

Thank you very much for your cooperation and help!

Appendix 2. Sample profile

Variable	Categories	Frequency (N=496)	Percentage*
Gender (S)	Male	194	39
	Female	302	61
Age (A)	Under 30 years old	168	34
	31 - 45 years old	152	31
	46 - 60 years old	124	25
	Over 60 years old	52	10
Highest education (HE)	Graduate high school/ College degree	178	36
	Graduate Bachelor degree/ Master/ Doctor	318	44
Occupation (O)	Business owner/ Managers	232	47
	Teacher	116	23
	Civil servant	94	19
	Other	54	11
Personal average monthly income (PAMI)	Under 5 million VND	36	7
	5 – 10 million VND	75	15
	10 – 15 million VND	251	51
	15 – 20 million VND	106	21
	Over 20 million VND	28	6

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