

Gender differences in the effects of self-congruity on tourist happiness and revisit intentions in ecotourism areas

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27

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Abstract

The study examined how self-congruity, perceived happiness, and the intention to revisit an ecotourism destination relate to gender perspectives. A total of 246 participants were analyzed using multi-group structural equation modeling (SEM). The findings revealed a strong positive correlation between self-congruity and happiness and between self-congruity and the intention to revisit. Additionally, happiness was found to influence the intention to revisit positively. The study also examined how gender differences affect the relationships among self-congruity, happiness, and the intention to revisit. This research provides insights into the connections between self-congruity, happiness, and the desire to return to ecotourism sites, especially among Gen Z travelers. Furthermore, exploring gender differences enhances our understanding of the factors that shape travel behavior and intentions in the context of ecotourism.

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Abstrak

Studi ini meneliti bagaimana keselarasan diri, kebahagiaan yang dirasakan, dan niat untuk mengunjungi kembali destinasi ekowisata berhubungan dengan perspektif gender. Sebanyak 246 partisipan dianalisis menggunakan pemodelan persamaan struktural (SEM) multi-kelompok. Temuan tersebut mengungkapkan korelasi positif yang kuat antara keselarasan diri dan kebahagiaan dan antara keselarasan diri dan niat untuk mengunjungi kembali. Selain itu, kebahagiaan ditemukan memengaruhi niat untuk mengunjungi kembali secara positif. Studi ini juga meneliti bagaimana perbedaan gender memengaruhi hubungan antara keselarasan diri, kebahagiaan, dan niat untuk mengunjungi kembali. Penelitian ini memberikan wawasan tentang hubungan antara keselarasan diri, kebahagiaan, dan keinginan untuk kembali ke lokasi ekowisata, terutama di kalangan wisatawan Gen Z. Lebih jauh lagi, mengeksplorasi perbedaan gender meningkatkan pemahaman kita tentang faktor-faktor yang membentuk perilaku dan niat perjalanan dalam konteks ekowisata.

Kata kunci: Keselarasan diri, kebahagiaan, niat mengunjungi kembali, ekowisata

Introduction

Tourism significantly contributes to the economic growth of many developing countries. Tourism significantly contributes to the economic growth of many developing countries by reducing unemployment, boosting the local economy, and increasing foreign exchange earnings. The establishment of hotels, restaurants, souvenir shops, and transportation services in response to growing tourist visits provides a primary source of income for local communities. Additionally, local businesses like souvenir shops, traditional markets, and craft companies benefit from the influx of tourists, leading to increased sales and a revitalized local economy. Developing nations actively enhance and diversify their tourism offerings to attract more international visitors, acknowledging tourism as a crucial driver of economic progress (Nguyen Viet et al., 2020). Therefore, ensuring tourist satisfaction and their intent to revisit is crucial for the success of any destination. Mai et al. (2019) pointed out that identifying the factors that influence revisit intention is vital for the sustainable development of tourist destinations. Attracting repeat customers can make destinations more cost-effective and is about five times more profitable than attracting new customers (Nguyen Viet et al., 2020; Peng et al., 2023).

The growing awareness of environmental issues, climate change, and sustainable development has sparked increased interest in ecotourism among researchers, policymakers, and travelers. Ecotourism aligns with the global trend toward responsible and ethical travel practices. Indonesia is renowned for its incredible biodiversity, including various plant and animal species, some of which are endangered, such as orangutans, Komodo dragons, and Sumatran tigers. This rich diversity makes Indonesia an ideal ecotourism destination, offering opportunities to explore its stunning natural beauty and wildlife. The country's landscapes feature tropical rainforests, beautiful beaches, volcanic mountains, and coral reefs, providing various activities, including hiking, birdwatching, diving, and wildlife spotting. Additionally, Indonesia boasts a rich cultural heritage, diverse indigenous communities, traditional crafts, and ancient temples. Ecotourism initiatives focusing on cultural immersion and community-based tourism offer visitors authentic experiences while supporting local livelihoods. The Indonesian government is committed to promoting sustainable tourism practices and protecting natural resources, creating a conducive environment for the growth and development of ecotourism.

Self-congruity refers to the alignment between a tourist's self-concept and the image of a destination, and it plays a significant role in influencing destination choice (Ahn et al., 2013; Beerli et al., 2007; Huaman-Ramirez, 2021). However, this influence tends to diminish after the tourist

has visited the destination. While self-congruity impacts satisfaction and loyalty—factors related to happiness—there is a lack of direct empirical evidence linking self-congruity to tourist happiness. Most studies focus on intermediate variables like satisfaction and loyalty rather than directly measuring happiness (Tran et al., 2022; Zhang et al., 2024).

The study investigating the relationship between self-congruity, perceived happiness, and the intention to revisit an ecotourism destination through the lens of gender perspectives offers several insights. First, self-congruity refers to the alignment between an individual's self-image and the image they perceive of a place or brand. In the context of ecotourism, understanding how self-congruity varies by gender can illuminate preferences and motivations (Moons et al., 2020). For instance, women may prioritize environmental sustainability more significantly or seek destinations that resonate with their values of community, while men might focus on adventure or exploration. A different study indicated no significant gender differences in how self-congruity affects the intention to revisit among Chinese tourists. This result suggests that both male and female tourists prioritize a destination's brand personality over self-congruity when deciding whether to return to a destination (Yang et al., 2020).

Second, the study could delve into how emotional responses to nature, community engagement, and relaxation differ between genders and impact overall satisfaction with the ecotourism experience. Women may find greater satisfaction in community engagement and less intense nature experiences, whereas men may prefer more adventurous and physically engaging activities (Moons et al., 2020). Finally, the incorporation of gender perspectives provides a nuanced understanding of how male and female travelers might have distinct motivations and outcomes from ecotourism experiences. This layer of complexity can be crucial for ecotourism stakeholders aiming to tailor marketing strategies and offerings to meet diverse needs. For business sectors, this study can help ecotourism businesses create targeted marketing strategies for different genders. For example, campaigns could highlight features of a destination that appeal to women's or men's specific values or interests, which could lead to greater engagement. Understanding how self-congruity, happiness, and the desire to revisit a place connect can help ecotourism operators improve the visitor experience. Operators can boost customer satisfaction and encourage loyalty by adjusting experiences to fit different genders' self-views and emotional needs.

Theoretical framework and hypotheses

This study uses self-congruity theory (SCT) and Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) to explain the relationship between self-congruity, perceived happiness, and revisit intention in the context of gender. SC theory has roots in self-image, which is defined as an individual's thoughts and feelings about themselves when they perceive themselves as objects. Self-congruity refers to the extent to which an individual's self-image, values, and identity align with a particular destination or travel experience (Wang & Yan, 2022). Self-image is formed from an individual's perception of their characteristics, abilities, and potential (Zhou et al., 2022). Self-congruity, as an extension of self-concept, is also known as self-concept congruity or self-image congruity. Sirgy (1986) introduced the concept of self-congruity in consumer behavior, defining it as "the degree of matching or consistency between the symbolic image of a product/brand and the self-image of customers." This concept has been applied in various fields, including marketing and tourism, to understand how individuals perceive and relate to products, brands, destinations, or experiences based on their self-image. In tourism, self-congruity specifically refers to the alignment between tourists' self-image and the typical image associated with a destination or travel experience.

In the same vein, TPB (Ajzen, 1991) posits that individuals' behavioral intentions are influenced by their attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control. In the context of self-congruity, happiness, and revisit intention, TPB can explain how individuals' positive attitudes towards a destination that reflects their self-concept and evokes happiness can lead to a stronger intention to revisit. When individuals experience a high level of self-congruity and happiness during their initial visit, it shapes their attitudes towards the destination, influences their subjective norms (such as social influences and perceived expectations), and enhances their perceived behavioral control over revisiting the destination. In short, this study incorporates TPB into the analysis of the relationship between self-congruity, happiness, and revisit intention to examine how cognitive and affective factors interact to predict individuals' intentions to revisit destinations that provide emotional fulfillment and alignment with their self-concept (Indra Sakti et al., 2023; Rao et al., 2022).

Self-congruity and perceived happiness relationship

The notion of perceived happiness is a pivotal factor in the tourism industry, encompassing the positive emotions, joy, fulfillment, and meaningful experiences travelers encounter (Filep & Deery, 2010; Peng et al., 2023; Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2014). Filep and Deery (2010) stresses that meaning is crucial in defining a tourist's experience beyond mere pleasure. This definition aligns with the authentic happiness theory, which posits that the quest for pleasure and meaning is essential for a fulfilling life. Positive psychology also suggests that tourism offers personal growth, self-reflection, and cultural immersion opportunities (Filep & Deery, 2010). Hence, this study defines *perceived happiness* in tourism as encompassing positive emotions such as joy, satisfaction, and meaning that visitors experience during their trips and at tourist locations.

The relationship between self-congruity and happiness can be elucidated through the lens of self-congruity theory. According to this theory, individuals experience a sense of authenticity, resonance, and personal relevance when their self-concept matches the attributes of a particular destination or experience. When tourists sense a high level of congruence between their self-concept and the characteristics of a destination, they are more inclined to experience emotional alignment and resonance with the travel experience. This emotional alignment can evoke feelings of authenticity, self-expression, and personal relevance, contributing to happiness and satisfaction. The perceived fit between tourists' self-perceptions and the destination attributes can create a meaningful and fulfilling experience that resonates with their identity, leading to positive emotional outcomes. Moreover, existing research supports the impact of self-congruity on visitor attitudes, including satisfaction and loyalty. Studies by Baydeniz & Valeri (2024), R. Chen et al. (2020), Kim & Cho (2023), and Yang et al. (2021) have documented the effects of self-congruity on tourists' perceptions and behaviors, highlighting the importance of aligning destination attributes with visitors' self-concepts to enhance their overall travel experience and emotional well-being (Baydeniz & Valeri, 2024; R. Chen et al., 2020; Kim & Cho, 2023; Yang et al., 2021).

Hypothesis 1: self-congruity is significantly related to perceived happiness

Self-congruity and revisit intention

Self-congruity plays a significant role in influencing an individual's intention to revisit a place or experience. A strong match between an individual's self-concept and a particular environment or experience can lead to a higher likelihood of revisiting that specific context. Research has shown that self-congruity positively influences the intention to revisit by fostering a sense of familiarity,

comfort, satisfaction, and belongingness (Kim & Cho, 2023; Šegota et al., 2021; Tran et al., 2022; Wang & Yan, 2022; Yang et al., 2021, 2022). When individuals feel that a particular environment or offering reflects their values, preferences, and identity, they are more inclined to develop a strong emotional bond with it, leading to a higher propensity to revisit it in the future. This emotional attachment from self-congruity can drive individuals to seek familiar and congruent experiences that align with their self-concept. Hence, the effect of self-congruity on revisit intention highlights the importance of creating experiences, products, or destinations that resonate with individuals' self-perceptions and identities.

Hypothesis 2: self-congruity is significantly related to revisit intention

Perceived happiness and revisit intention

Subjective well-being, also known as life satisfaction, is a crucial measure of happiness that represents the overall evaluation of an individual's life and emotional state (Lee et al., 2018; Pai et al., 2020). Numerous empirical studies have shown that tourism is often seen as a pursuit of hedonic experiences. Tourists' happiness levels can vary depending on their personality traits, the type of destination they visit, and the activities they engage in during their travels (Y. Chen & Li, 2018; Kwon & Lee, 2020). When individuals perceive a high level of congruence between their self-concept and their destination choice or travel experience, it is expected to lead to increased feelings of happiness and emotional fulfillment. This emotional state, in turn, is hypothesized to influence tourists' intentions to revisit the destination positively. Perceived happiness can significantly affect the likelihood of individuals revisiting a destination, product, or service based on their emotional responses and memories. Positive emotions, such as happiness, shape individuals' attitudes, behaviors, and decision-making processes. When individuals experience happiness during a particular experience, it can create positive memories and associations with that experience, leading to a desire to revisit the same context (Pai et al., 2020).

Perceived happiness can also enhance individuals' overall satisfaction and enjoyment of an experience, which, in turn, can influence their intention to revisit the same destination or engage with the same product or service again. Positive emotions, including happiness, can create a sense of fulfillment, contentment, and well-being, contributing to a favorable attitude toward the experience and a desire to prolong or repeat that positive emotional state. Studies have shown that individuals who associate a destination or brand with feelings of happiness are more likely to revisit or engage with that entity in the future (Y. Chen & Li, 2018; Lee et al., 2018; Pai et al., 2020; Peng et al., 2023). Therefore, creating experiences that evoke positive emotions and enhance individuals' overall well-being and satisfaction is essential.

Hypothesis 3: perceived happiness is significantly related to revisit intention

Hypothesis 4: perceived happiness mediates the relationship between self-congruity and revisit intention

The role of gender

Gender can impact how self-congruity, happiness, and revisit intention are related to each other in the context of tourism and consumer behavior. Research indicates that gender differences can affect how individuals perceive, prefer, and make decisions, shaping how self-congruity, happiness, and revisit intention are interconnected (Kim & Cho, 2023; Rather, 2021; Rather et al., 2018; Yang et al., 2020, 2021, 2022). First, gender differences in self-congruity may arise from variations in self-perceptions, values, and identity constructs between males and females. Studies suggest that men and women may have different self-concepts and preferences, which can lead to varying levels of congruence between their identities and external stimuli (Martínez-Marín et

al., 2021; Valls, 2022). These differences can affect how individuals of different genders relate to and engage with tourism experiences.

Second, gender can also influence individuals' experiences of happiness and emotional responses to travel experiences. Research indicates that men and women may have distinct emotional expressions and reactions to stimuli, which can impact their happiness levels during travel (Salavera et al., 2017). Social norms, cultural expectations, and personal values can influence how men and women perceive and experience happiness in tourism contexts. Third, gender differences in revisit intention may stem from variations in how men and women evaluate and prioritize their travel experiences. Studies suggest that males and females may have different motivations, preferences, and decision-making criteria when considering revisiting a destination or engaging in repeat travel (Carballo et al., 2021). Overall, gender can influence the complex interplay between self-congruity and happiness and revisit Intention in tourism contexts by shaping individuals' self-perceptions, emotional experiences, and behavioral intentions. Understanding these gender dynamics is crucial for designing targeted marketing strategies, personalized experiences, and tailored services that cater to male and female travelers' diverse needs and preferences.

Methods

The study employs a quantitative research approach by collecting data through questionnaires, indicating a systematic and structured method for gathering and analyzing participant data. The research model was developed based on a thorough literature review, suggesting the study is grounded in existing theoretical frameworks and prior research findings. The study utilizes structural equation modeling (SEM) to test the research model and hypothesis. This statistical technique allows for the examination of complex relationships among variables. The study employs multi-group analysis techniques within SEM, indicating a sophisticated analytical approach to compare and assess potential differences across subgroups within the sample.

Sampling and procedure.

The target population for this study comprised students from two private universities in Jakarta who had visited ecotourism tourist areas in West Java. Initially, 427 management and accounting study students expressed their willingness to volunteer for the research, indicating a high level of interest and engagement in the study. Out of the total respondents, 246 students completed the online questionnaires in full, resulting in a response rate of 57%. The sample of 245 students who fully completed the questionnaires was selected for analysis, representing a subset of the initial volunteer pool. By focusing on students from specific academic programs who had visited ecotourism destinations in West Java, the study narrows the target population to individuals with relevant experiences and interests in sustainable tourism.

The selection of participants from two private universities in Jakarta adds a specific demographic and educational dimension to the sample, potentially influencing the findings and insights derived from the research (Hendryadi et al., 2019, 2025). The response rate of 57% indicates a moderate level of participation and engagement among the initial pool of volunteers, suggesting a reasonable representation of the target population in the final sample for analysis. Table 1 data shows that of the 246 total respondents, 60.16% were female, while 39.84% were male. Based on the subject, 46.34% are accounting students, and 53.66% are management students.

Measurement

All scales used in this study were adapted from previous studies to ensure initial feasibility before use (Boksberger et al., 2011; Filep & Deery, 2010; Lee et al., 2018; Pai et al., 2020). Self-congruity was measured using ten items developed by Boksberger et al. (2011). The participants were specifically requested to provide feedback on the given statement: 'The destination can be described as/ I perceive myself as (1) reliable, (2) enthusiastic, (3) genuine, (4) passionate, (5) truthful, (6) creative, (7) practical, (8) cheerful, (9) accomplished, (10) adventurous'. Perceived happiness and revisit intention were each measured by four items used by previous studies (Filep & Deery, 2010; Lee et al., 2018; Pai et al., 2020). All questions were presented with five response choices, allowing them to express their level of agreement from 'strongly agree' to 'strongly disagree.' The intermediate response options were assigned numerical labels.

Table 1.

Respondents' characteristics

	Frequency	Percent
Gender		
Female	148	60.16
Male	98	39.84
Subject		
Accounting	114	46.34
Management	132	53.66

Source: research data (2023)

Results and discussion

The reference scales employed in the research were established by previous scales, ensuring the validity and reliability of the measurement instruments. Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) was then conducted to assess the measurement model, with factor loadings above 0.5 considered acceptable (Hair et al., 2019). The indices of the measurement model, including Standardized Root Mean Squared Residual (SRMR), Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA), Comparative Fit Index (CFI), Tucker-Lewis Index (TLI), Relative Noncentrality Index (RNI), Bollen's Relative Fit Index (RFI), Bollen's Incremental Fit Index (IFI), Goodness of Fit Index (GFI), and Adjusted Goodness of Fit Index (AGFI), all met the recommended thresholds. These values (e.g., SRMR = 0.04, RMSEA = 0.03, CFI = 0.90) indicate that the measurement model satisfactorily fits the data. Moreover, CFA analysis was performed to ensure construct validity and calculate Average Variance (AVE). The results indicated that the AVE values exceeded 0.5, demonstrating that the constructs captured significant variance within the observed variables (Hair et al., 2019).

The regression analysis reveals significant associations within the studied variables (see Table 3). Firstly, self-congruity exhibits a robust positive relationship with happiness, as indicated by a substantial coefficient of 0.66, with a 95% confidence interval ranging from 0.37 to 0.62 and a p-value less than 0.001. Similarly, self-congruity significantly influences revisit intention, with a coefficient of 0.35, a confidence interval of 0.21 to 0.62, and a p-value below 0.001. Additionally, the positive impact of happiness on revisit intention is supported by a coefficient of 0.30, a 95% confidence interval spanning from 0.19 to 0.76, and a p-value of 0.001. Hence, H1 - H3 were supported (see Figure 2).

Table 2.
Measurement model evaluation

Latent	Observed	β	Mean	SD	α	AVE
Self-congruity	SC1	0.77	3.17	1.22	0.90	0.50
	SC2	0.78	2.79	1.19		
	SC3	0.85	2.88	1.26		
	SC4	0.78	2.68	1.29		
	SC5	0.72	3.43	1.31		
	SC6	0.70	3.35	1.21		
	SC7	0.56	3.52	1.18		
	SC8	0.54	3.67	1.17		
	SC9	0.57	2.98	1.22		
Happiness	HPP1	0.61	2.85	1.15	0.83	0.57
	HPP2	0.80	3.24	1.13		
	HPP3	0.80	3.2	1.16		
	HPP4	0.78	3.48	1.26		
Revisit intention	RI1	0.87	2.49	1.27	0.86	0.63
	RI2	0.78	2.77	1.1		
	RI3	0.88	2.37	1.19		
	RI4	0.63	3.00	1.27		
Root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA)					0.04	
Standardized root mean squared residual (SRMR)					0.03	
Comparative Fit Index (CFI)					0.90	
Tucker-Lewis Index (TLI)					0.87	
Relative Noncentrality Index (RNI)					0.90	
Bollen's Relative Fit Index (RFI)					0.93	
Bollen's Incremental Fit Index (IFI)					0.91	
Goodness of Fit Index (GFI)					0.91	
Adjusted Goodness of Fit Index (AGFI)					0.93	

Source: research data (2023)

Second, the indirect effect is estimated to be 0.20 with a standard error of 0.07. The 95% confidence interval for the indirect effect ranges from 0.09 to 0.38, and the associated p-value is 0.001. This result implies self-congruity's statistically significant indirect effect on revisit intention via perceived happiness. The interval does not include zero, indicating that the indirect effect is likely present. In practical terms, this suggests a mediated influence or pathway between the variables being studied, and this indirect effect is considered significant at the conventional significance level ($p < 0.05$). Hence, H4 is also supported.

The study examined the impact of gender roles on the relationships between self-congruity, happiness, and revisit intention using a multi-group absolute difference value approach. As presented in Table 4, the results indicate significant gender-based differences in the relationships between these variables within the research model. The analysis revealed that the influence of self-congruity on happiness (H1) is more significant in women than men. This result suggests that women may place greater importance on aligning their self-concept and experiences in determining their happiness levels during travel. In contrast, the study found that the impact of happiness on revisit intention (H2) is more pronounced in men, indicating that men

may be more likely to consider their emotional states and satisfaction levels as key factors influencing their intention to revisit a destination or engage in repeat travel.

Table 3.

Structural results

	β	SE	95% Confidence Intervals		p
			Lower	Upper	
Self-congruity on Happiness	0.66	0.07	0.37	0.62	<.001
Self-congruity on Revisit Intention	0.35	0.10	0.21	0.62	<.001
Happiness on revisit intention	0.30	0.15	0.19	0.76	0.001
Indirect effect	0.20	0.07	0.09	0.38	0.001

Source: research data (2023)

The analysis revealed that happiness more substantially affects the intention to revisit a destination among women than men. This suggests that women's levels of happiness during travel experiences significantly influence their likelihood of returning to a destination. The coefficients of determination for the models examining happiness and revisit intention showed notable differences between male and female groups. For males, the coefficients were 0.33 for happiness and 0.25 for revisit intention, indicating moderate explanatory power. In contrast, females had higher coefficients, with 0.53 for happiness and 0.61 for revisit intention, suggesting that the models were more predictive for women. Overall, the study's findings highlight gender-based differences in how self-congruity, happiness, and the intention to revisit are interconnected within the context of tourism.

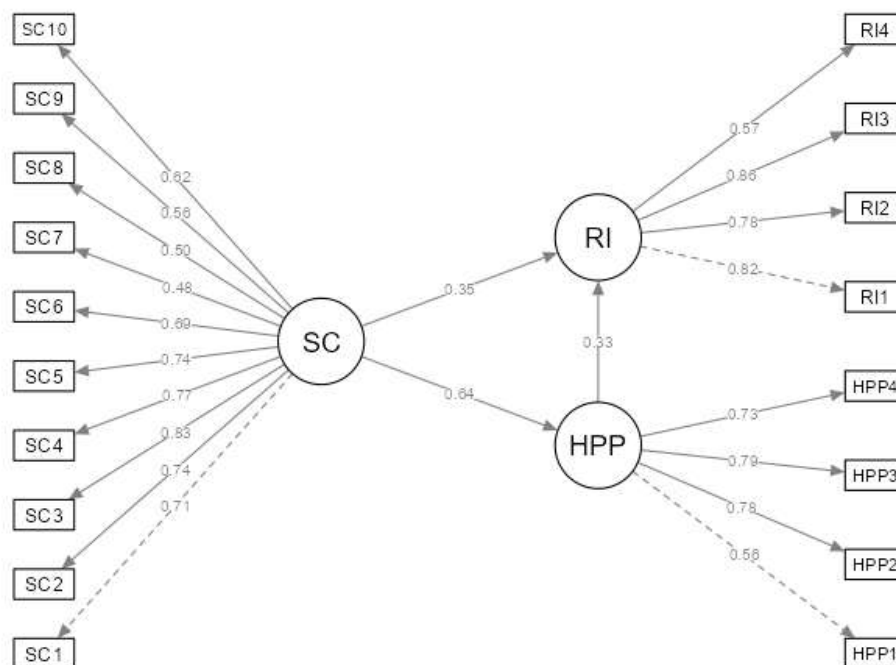


Figure 2.

Results of full data

Table 4.
Multi-group analysis results

Gender				95% Confidence Intervals		p	R ²
		β	SE	Lower	Upper		
Male	H1	0.58	0.08	0.20	0.51	<.001	0.33
	H2	0.35	0.19	0.09	0.84	0.015	0.25
	H3	0.29	0.11	0.03	0.45	0.027	
Female	H1	0.71	0.10	0.38	0.76	<.001	0.53
	H2	0.22	0.22	-0.03	0.82	0.071	0.61
	H3	0.38	0.17	0.20	0.87	0.002	

Discussion

The study's findings indicate that there are notable relationships between the variables investigated. Firstly, the research revealed a robust positive link between self-congruity and happiness, suggesting that when individuals perceive a congruence between their self-image and a particular situation or context, it leads to increased levels of happiness. The study has established a connection between self-congruity and happiness, supporting the self-congruity theory. This theory suggests that people feel a sense of authenticity, resonance, and personal relevance when their self-concept aligns with the attributes of a destination. Such alignment can lead to positive emotional responses, as tourists feel that the destination reflects their values, preferences, and identity, which enhances their happiness during the travel experience. Tourists who perceive high congruence between their self-concept and the attributes of a destination are more likely to experience emotional alignment and resonance with the travel experience. This emotional alignment can result in feelings of authenticity, self-expression, and personal relevance, contributing to an overall sense of happiness. Furthermore, these study results also support previous research that used similar concepts, such as satisfaction and loyalty (Baydeniz & Valeri, 2024; R. Chen et al., 2020; Kim & Cho, 2023; Yang et al., 2021).

The findings suggest that when individuals feel that their values, beliefs, and identity match the situation they are in, they experience a sense of harmony and fulfillment, which contributes to increased levels of happiness. This alignment between self-concept and external factors can create a sense of authenticity and personal relevance, enhancing individuals' emotional well-being. Moreover, the study's results highlight the role of self-congruity in shaping individuals' emotional responses and subjective well-being. When individuals perceive a strong fit between their self-image and a particular context, they are more likely to experience positive emotions, such as happiness, satisfaction, and contentment. This emotional response can have a cascading effect on various aspects of individuals' lives, influencing their attitudes, behaviors, and decision-making processes.

Second, the study demonstrated that self-congruity plays a significant role in influencing revisit intention, implying that when individuals feel a sense of harmony between their self-perception and a specific environment or experience, they are more likely to consider revisiting that particular context. This underscores the importance of self-congruity in shaping individuals' intentions to engage or interact with a particular entity or setting repeatedly; the results of this study support previous studies (Kim & Cho, 2023; Šegota et al., 2021; Tran et al., 2022; Wang & Yan, 2022; Yang et al., 2021, 2022). When individuals feel that an environment or offering reflects

their values, preferences, and identity, they are more likely to form a strong emotional bond with it, increasing the likelihood of revisiting it. This emotional attachment from self-congruity motivates individuals to seek familiar and congruent experiences that align with their self-concept. Therefore, the influence of self-congruity on revisit intention underscores the importance of creating experiences, products, or destinations that resonate with individuals' self-perceptions and identities.

Additionally, the analysis confirmed that happiness has a positive impact on revisit intention (Y. Chen & Li, 2018; Lee et al., 2018; Pai et al., 2020; Peng et al., 2023). The findings in this study show that happiness positively influences revisit intention, indicating that happier individuals are more likely to revisit a specific place, product, or service. When individuals experience higher levels of happiness, they are inclined to engage in repeat behaviors, such as revisiting a favorite location or reusing a preferred product. Happiness is a motivating factor that encourages individuals to seek out and revisit experiences that bring them joy and satisfaction. This emotional state of happiness can enhance the overall appeal and attachment to a particular offering, increasing revisit intentions.

The implication of the findings highlighting the positive impact of happiness on revisit intention suggests that businesses and destinations should prioritize creating experiences that evoke feelings of happiness and well-being among their customers or visitors. Moreover, the study's findings on gender-based differences in the interconnection of self-congruity, happiness, and revisit intention within the tourism context provide insights into how individuals of different genders perceive and engage with experiences. The implications of gender-based differences in the context of self-congruity, happiness, and revisit intention include (1) recognizing unique preferences and self-perceptions of different genders to inform targeted marketing campaigns, (2) designing experiences that consider gender-specific preferences and values to enhance self-congruity and happiness, and (3) adapting communication styles and messaging to align with the communication preferences of different genders to foster a stronger emotional connection with the target audience.

Conclusion

The study investigates the relationship between self-congruity, perceived happiness, and revisit intention among undergraduate students of different genders. The findings reveal a strong positive correlation between self-congruity and happiness. These results support the self-congruity theory's premise that alignment between one's self-concept and a destination's attributes leads to increased happiness during travel. Moreover, the study confirms that self-congruity significantly influences revisit intention, emphasizing its crucial role in shaping individuals' intentions to revisit specific places or experiences. The positive impact of happiness on revisit intention is also highlighted, indicating that emotional well-being plays a key role in encouraging individuals to revisit enjoyable experiences. Practical implications include customizing experiences to match customers' values and emotions, prioritizing customer happiness to boost satisfaction and loyalty, and monitoring customer happiness for informed decision-making. Overall, the study's insights on the interconnected relationships among self-congruity, happiness, and revisit intention offer valuable guidance for businesses, marketers, and policymakers aiming to enhance customer experiences and loyalty.

Despite providing valuable insights into the relationship between self-congruity, happiness, and revisit intention, several limitations in this study must be considered. Firstly, the study is based on cross-sectional data, which limits the ability to establish causality and observe changes over time. Secondly, the findings are context-specific and may not be generalizable to different

industries or cultural contexts. Thirdly, relying on self-report measures may introduce social desirability bias, as participants may provide responses they perceive as socially acceptable. Fourthly, the study focuses primarily on the positive aspects of the examined variables, and future research could benefit from exploring potential negative associations or moderating factors that influence the observed relationships.

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