



Introduction

- The idea that people may buy products to 'make a statement' or create an impression has been understood for a long time
- People display goods they have purchased to symbolize their sense-of-self and to express themselves to others
- Consumers also choose services that signal their personality

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Introduction (continued)

- The tourism research literature has also recognised that 'self-concept' may influence the type of vacation or destination that is chosen
- But to date there has been limited empirical consumer research in a tourism context to test this proposition

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Introduction (continued)

- To what extent are tourism consumers' choices really affected by their sense-of-self or desire to express their personality to others through their choice of destination?
- The strong desire to share travel stories is indicative of a need to impress others with one's travel experiences and exploits

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Introduction (continued)

- Or might tourists deviate, to some extent, from their normal expressive and conformed behaviour when travelling outside their usual environment in order to 'escape'?
- This study represents some initial effort to begin to test these ideas more thoroughly

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Self-Concept Literature

- Self-concept has been shown to influence the choice of brand of car and residential area (Sirgy, Grzeskowiak and Su, 2005)
- In "The Big Sort: Why the Clustering of Like-Minded America is Tearing Us Apart", Bishop (2008) has demonstrated how self-concept has resulted in major cultural, demographic and political impacts

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Self-Concept Literature (continued)

- Self-congruity is the link between an individual's self-concept and the 'symbolic value' of the goods purchased in the marketplace (Grubb and Grathwohl, 1967; Hong and Zinkhan, 1995)
- Self-congruity is defined as the relationship between brand 'personality' and an individual self-perception (Green, Maheshwari and Rao, 1969)

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Self-Concept Literature (continued)

- Other researchers refer to self-congruity as the relationship between a product's image and the consumer self-image (Martin and Bellizi, 1982; Sirgy, 1985; Onkvisit and Shaw, 1987; Ericksen, 1996; Graeff' 1996; Quester, Karunaratna and Goh, 2000)
- Products have symbolic meanings and have the ability to express certain values of the user (Sirgy, 1982; Sirgy *et al.*, 1991; Sirgy and Su, 2000)

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Self-Concept Literature (continued)

- Exploration of consumers' self-concept facilitates the prediction of consumer behaviours and choices, aiding in the design of more effective marketing strategies (Birdwell, 1968; Dolich, 1969; Ericksen, 1996; Jamal and Goode, 2001; Mandel, 2003; Schenk and Holman, 1980).
- The role of self-concept in tourism consumer behaviour has received some attention by researchers in recent years (Sirgy and Su, 2000; Todd, 2001; Kastenholz, 2004; Carden, 2006)

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Self-Concept Literature (continued)

- Multiple selves: *actual self*, *ideal self*, *social self*, *ideal social self*, possibility of 'other' selves also
- But how strong is this effect? To what extent do tourists really travel for the purpose of expressing their personality and identity?

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Self-Concept Literature (continued)

- To the extent that sense-of-self and self-expression are important determinants of destination choice, it would therefore be interesting from a marketing and advertising perspective to know whether a desire for self-expression can be primed or activated (Snyder, 1974)

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Research Design

- A survey was designed to:
 - Measure the effect of experimentally priming self-concept
 - Gather additional information on the role of self-concept
- The purpose of the experiment was to examine whether individuals in the primed conditions would respond differently from those who were not primed with respect to their stated tourism preferences

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Research Design (continued)

- Similar consumer experiments of this nature involving priming conditions have been successfully employed to investigate the significance of a wide variety of consumer behaviour phenomena
- Example, Verplanken and Holland (2002) primed environmental values in consumer choice decisions

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Research Design (continued)

- Survey consisted of two parts:
 - Part 1 contained the priming or manipulation task
 - Part 2 was designed to measure the effect of the treatment and gather additional data

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Research Design (continued)

Part 1: Forming Impressions of Other People _{<small>secc</small>}</p>

1. Your Task

We wish to know how people form impressions of other people whom they have never met, when only limited information about the person's characteristics is available. This situation occurs when one is trying to form an image or impression of a person before they meet, for example, through a dating service or as an applicant potentially to be interviewed for a job.

On the next page, we would like you to indicate how helpful you feel different items of information would be in enabling you to form an impression of another person.

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Research Design (continued)

Part 1: Forming Impressions of Other People _{<small>secc</small>}</p>

2. Your Opinions

Using the following scales that range from 1 to 7 (1=Not Helpful to 7=Very Helpful), please indicate how helpful you believe that information on each of the following characteristics would enable you to form an impression of a person whom you have not yet met.

	1 Not Helpful	2	3	4	5	6	7 Very Helpful
Type of car they prefer to own	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Type of suburb they prefer to live in	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Type of clothes they prefer to wear	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Type of holiday they prefer to take	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Type of house they live in	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Type of restaurants or food outlets they prefer to dine at	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Type of friends they prefer to spend time with	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Type of career or work they do for a living	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Type of social and recreational activities they engage in	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Type of conversation they like to engage in when dining out with friends	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Their level of interest in being fit and healthy	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Their level of interest in spirituality	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Their level of interest in financial investment	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Their level of interest in gardening	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Their level of interest in technology	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Their level of interest in news and current affairs	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Their level of interest in the environment	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Their level of interest in their family	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Their level of interest in politics	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Their level of interest in finding the right balance between work and leisure	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

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Research Design (continued)

Part 2: Choosing a Holiday Destination

1. Introduction

Imagine that you are about to enter a competition offered by an airline which offers free airfare tickets, for yourself only, to fly to any one of 16 possible holiday destinations accessible by that airline. The identity of the 16 destinations is a mystery. But the competition provides you with some information about each destination to help you decide what type of destination characteristics you would find most desirable. To enter the hypothetical competition, all you need to do is indicate which of the 16 destinations you would most prefer to visit. In order to maximize the value of the holiday and the enjoyment you receive from it, you decide to carefully study the information provided by the airline about each destination before you make your choice. Each of the 16 mystery destinations are described based on the degree of 'favourability' of 8 characteristics. These 8 characteristics are explained in the table on the next page.

Page 1

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Research Design (continued)

Part 2: Choosing a Holiday Destination

2. Destination Characteristics

Please take a few moments to read and understand each of the following 8 characteristics.

It is very important that you clearly understand the meaning of each characteristic before proceeding further.

DESTINATION CHARACTERISTICS	
Characteristic	Meaning
Destination Type/Self Fit	The degree to which the type of destination comfortably fits your sense of self. A more beneficial climate, that is, specialisation, is a better fit with you personally, i.e. where you, image, and persona.
Culture	The quality and range of the destination's richness in cultural features and assets, and the extent of prominent, representative and engaging cultural activities, events and attractions. A general indication of how attractive the destination would be to visit in terms of the presence of hotels, restaurants, sightseeing, entertainment, shopping, etc.
Affordability	The general friendliness of people living and working in the destination and the quality of customer service provided to visitors by the various tourism and hospitality businesses.
Attractions and Facilities	The destination and the destination lies on opposing ranges of various attributes, sites, features and facilities serving the needs of visitors in general.
Climate	The outdoor climate, the weather at the destination in terms of its suitability for the type of holiday experience that you would like.
Accommodation	The variety, number, quality and value of the various forms of accommodation available at the destination.
Safety and Security	The degree to which the destination is a very safe and secure place to visit.

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Research Design (continued)

Part 2: Choosing a Holiday Destination
4. Description of Destinations and Your Preferences

The table below indicates the favourability rating for each of the 8 destination characteristics at each of the 16 mystery destinations (labelled as destinations A to P). For example, the table indicates that Destination A is in the 'most favourable' category with regard to costs (Affordability), 'favourable' with regard to the opportunity to experience culture (Culture), and 'least favourable' with regard to how well that type of destination fits your sense of self (Destination Type/Self Fit).

The next 2 questions in this survey are critically important to the success of this research study. Therefore we would be most grateful if you could please take your time to carefully complete this page. Familiarise yourself with the information in the table and while doing so, please take 5 or 6 minutes to assess how some destinations overall are more appealing to you than others. Use question 1 below as a workspace to gradually refine your evaluations of each of the 16 destinations, A to P, so that you end up with 4 destinations for each rating category (that is, 4 in the +++ most attractive category, 4 in the - least attractive category, and 4 each in the 2 intermediate categories of + and -). Then, when you are happy with your overall evaluations, answer question 2 by selecting your top preference from the 4 in the +++ group. While you evaluate the merits of each destination, if you need to refer back to the table which explained each of the 8 destination characteristics, just scroll down to find that table below.

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Research Design (continued)

Destination	Destination Type/Self Fit	Culture	Affordability	Hospitality	Attractions and Facilities	Climate	Accommodation	Safety and Security
A	--	+	++	-	--	-	+	++
B	++	+	--	-	+	++	--	-
C	-	++	+	++	--	+	-	--
D	-	+	++	+	++	-	--	--
E	++	-	-	--	+	++	+	--
F	+	+	-	--	-	++	--	++
G	--	++	+	-	--	+	-	++
H	+	--	++	++	+	-	--	-
I	--	--	+	++	-	+	++	-
J	+	-	-	--	++	--	++	+
K	--	-	-	+	++	++	+	--
L	+	++	--	+	-	--	-	++
M	++	++	--	-	+	--	-	+
N	-	--	++	++	--	-	+	+
O	++	--	+	--	-	+	++	-
P	-	-	--	+	++	--	++	+

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Results

Destination Choice Destination/Self Fit Ratings by Experimental Treatment

Self-Expression Condition	
No-Prime	Prime
2.49 ^a	2.50
(103) ^b	(106)
[0.106] ^c	[0.111]

Notes: a – mean destination/self fit rating in preferred destination
 b – number of cases
 c – standard error
 F-statistic = 1.061, Significance of F = 0.366
 Most significant Scheffe test result = 0.470 between means of 2.49 and 2.73

Results (continued)

Part 2: Choosing a Holiday Destination

5. Which Destination Characteristics Matter Most to You?

3. Using the following scales that range from 1 to 7 (1=Not Important to 7=Extremely Important), please indicate the degree to which you felt that each of the destination characteristics influenced your choices.

	1 Not Important	2	3	4	5	6	7 Extremely Important
Destination Type/Self Fit	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Culture	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Affordability	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Hospitality	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Attractions and Facilities	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Climate	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Accommodation	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Safety and Security	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

4. Using the following scales that range from 1 to 7 (1=Strongly Disagree to 7=Strongly Agree), please indicate how much you agree with each of the statements shown below.

	1 Strongly Disagree	2	3	4	5	6	7 Strongly Agree
When I plan a holiday, I always take great care to assess a variety of options before choosing the ideal destination.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
When I go away on a holiday, I have sometimes been disappointed with my choice of destination.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I don't put very much thought into where I want to go on holiday. I prefer to take my chances.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Results (continued)

- A one-way ANOVA on this information again indicated no significant differences between the separate 'destination/self fit' ratings by experimental condition (F-statistic = 0.289, sig. = 0.833)

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Results (continued)

- A multi-item question in the survey concerned respondents' views regarding the role of self-concept in its influence on consumer behaviour. From this data an unweighted, composite measure of self-concept sensitivity was calculated and correlated with:
 - a) the preferred destination rating on the 'destination/self fit' characteristic,
 - b) the 'destination/self fit' rating from the separate, individual scale, and
 - c) the weighted rating of destination/self fit from all 16 destinations in the choice set.

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Results (continued)

- All three correlations were very low and none of them were statistically significant.
- A strong result was produced, however, when the overall measure of self-concept sensitivity was correlated with the average importance ratings from the ten relevant self-expression priming items in part 1 of the survey. The result was a strong and highly significant positive correlation (+0.322, significance = 0.000)

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Results (continued)

- Thus, respondents who have a high self-concept sensitivity also tend strongly to regard self-expression on the part of others as being strong indicators of their personality when forming impressions of others.

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Results (continued)

- The effort to prime sense-of-self did not prove to have a discernable impact on destination choice as measured in this study. This may be a weakness of the experimental manipulations employed. Alternative manipulations might produce different effects. It is difficult, however, to think of more effective treatments that could reveal underlying effects, if indeed such effects are present. Hence, an alternative conclusion is that individuals show little propensity to increase their innate motivation for self-expression, and that this is largely fixed. The findings may suggest, as a result, that it is difficult, through promotional efforts, to prime or activate sense-of-self when seeking to attract tourists to destinations that can offer the visitor strong opportunities to engage in self-expression.

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Results (continued)

- Although the experimental manipulation had no discernable effect, the results did show that when a person regards self-expression on the part of others to be a strong measure of that person, they are significantly much more likely to pay greater attention to those features of a tourist destination which can enable the expression of one's self. Therefore, rather than trying to activate or invigorate these motives, a more successful approach could be to identify market segments which already regard this characteristic to be important to them personally, and to target such segments in the destination marketing strategy.

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Results (continued)

- The strongest associations involving 'self-concept' were found when the overall measures of a respondent's self-concept sensitivity was correlated with the average importance rating for each of this set of items used in the manipulation task of part 1 of the survey. This suggests that people who are more self-concept sensitive (i.e. are more inclined to believe that consumption behaviour conveys information about a person) tend to form an impression of other people to a greater degree by the way in which they express their identity and personality. On this basis, therefore, it would seem that, if effective methods of priming or activating these two aspects can be found, they may after all provide significant means of tourist destination choice persuasion.

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Thank You