## Personality fit, self-identity congruity, and the willingness to pay more for ecotourism

## 1. Introduction

Within the growing tourism industry, ecotourism is gaining international recognition as a means to enhance sustainability. It is defined as responsible travel to natural areas that conserves the environment and improves the well-being of local people (TIES, 2018). It also incorporates environmental conservation, education, economic development of local communities, social inclusion, cultural preservation, human rights and ethical issues (Cobbinah, 2015). Ecotourism represents 5-10% of the global travel market (Castellanos-Verdugo, 2016). The market is expected to expand further to account for almost a quarter of the global travel market, representing US\$470.6 billion (Futuremarketinginsights, 2018; Ties, 2018; Transparencymarketresearch, 2018).

In order to develop more persuasive promotion methods for ecotourism, it is important to gain insights into which arguments could convince a tourist to choose for an ecotourism destination (Font and McCabe, 2017). Building self-identity has been identified as one of the major drivers of consumption behavior (Villarino and Font, 2015). Also for tourism, identity-related motivations are fundamental (Bond and Falk, 2013). However, studies that have investigated the influence of self-identity considerations on travel decisions are relatively scarce (e.g., Gazley and Watling, 2015; Hwang and Lee, 2018), especially those that investigate the role of the congruity between self-identity and (anticipated) tourism experience. Sirgy (1986) refers to self-brand congruity as to the match between a consumer's self-concept (identity) and the perception of a given brand. In this context a brand can be anything that an individual considers for consumption, from goods and services to product types such as (eco)tourism. Consumers often value consumption items for self-expression and appreciate or use items that are congruent with their actual self (self- consistency motive), desired self (self-esteem motive) or social self (social approval and social consistency motive).

Important antecedents of self-identity are personality traits (Cini et al., 2012). Individuals have a certain personality, but, in the minds of consumers, so have consumption items (e.g., goods, service, places). A few studies have explored how tourism destination personality is related to perceived congruity between a person and a travel destination, and how the latter influences attitudes and behavior towards a tourist destination (e.g., Huang et al., 2017; Su and Reynolds, 2017). However, to our knowledge, there is only one study that has explored the role of self-tourism destination personality similarity and self-tourism destination congruity on travel decisions (Bekk et. al, 2016). This study investigated how the fit between a hotel personality and the personality of a visitor on three personality dimensions determines the perceived congruity between the hotel identity and the actual self-identity which, in turn, determine satisfaction and recommendation intention.

In the current study we extend Bekk et al.'s (2016) work in several ways. First, the context of our study is not one specific destination or venue, but a travel category, namely ecotourism. Second, Bekk et al. (2016) used Aaker's (1997) brand personality scale. However, some of its dimensions are not stable across cultures and product categories, and cannot be applied to human personality. Therefore we use the brand personality scale developed by Geuens et al. (2009) that is consistent with Costa and McCrae's (1999) Big Five human personality framework, and can thus be used to measure both human and brand personality. Third, Bekk et al. (2016) used a measure of absolute similarity between an individual's and a tourist destination's personality. Previous research in the context of the adoption of electric vehicles (Moons and De Pelsmacker, 2015) has shown that, rather than absolute personality fit, the direction of the difference between perceived personality of a product and one's own

personality, is more relevant to predict behavior. In the current study, we investigate the role of this non-absolute difference between self and ecotourism personality. Fourth, Bekk et al. (2016) only study the effect of self-destination personality similarity on the perception of actual self-destination congruity. In the current study we simultaneously investigate the effects of self-ecotourism personality differences on actual, ideal and social self-identity-ecotourism congruity. Fifth, we simultaneously study the relative impact of these three self-identity congruity variables on the attitude towards and, ultimately, the willingness to pay more for ecotourism. Ecotourism is more expensive than traditional mass tourism. Therefore, investigating what motivates people to pay more for ecotourism is very relevant (Latestmarketreports, 2017). We thus set out to answer the following research questions:

- 1. Which self-ecotourism personality difference dimensions predict perceptions of actual, ideal and social self-identity-ecotourism congruity?
- 2. Which perceptions of actual, desired and social self-identity-ecotourism congruity predict the attitude towards and the willingness to pay more for ecotourism?

The conceptual model is presented in Figure 1.

The current study also has practical managerial relevance. By exploring the role of self-identityecotourism congruity on the attitude towards and the willingness to pay more for ecotourism, and its relation with personality dimensions, it can inform ecotourism marketers to better tailor their efforts to specific target groups with appropriate and effective arguments and incentives.

#### 2. Literature review and hypotheses

# 2.1. Self-identity – ecotourism congruity and the attitude towards and willingness to pay more for ecotourism

Congruity Theory states that consumers often value consumption items for self-expression and appreciate and use items that are congruent with their actual (self- consistency motive), their desired (self-esteem motive) or their social self (social approval and social consistency motive). Bond and Falk (2013) argue that self-identity-related motivations are also fundamental to tourist decisions and experiences. People can simultaneously take several types of selfcongruity into account when forming attitudes. Each of these types of self-congruity can influence the attitude towards ecotourism. Gazley and Watling (2015) show that tourists form symbolic perceptions based on the likelihood that the product or experience will be congruent with their *actual self*. Additionally, people may also develop attitudes towards a certain type of tourism for aspirational reasons, and thus have a preference for a tourist destination that is congruent with their *ideal self* (Barber, 2014). Huang et al. (2017) find that congruity between the actual self and the travel destination is more relevant than ideal self-congruity. Wang et al. (2018) integrated self-identity in the Theory of Planned behavior and conclude that the personal aspect of self-identity impacts attitude and subjective norm, and that the social aspect of selfidentity impacts attitude, subjective norm and perceived behavioral control. People may indeed also behave in a more environmentally responsible way if they perceive the act to be a social norm (Sirgy and Su, 2000; Wu and Lee (2018). For some people, sustainable consumer behavior has been linked to the importance they attach to status and reputation and for such individuals it is important to be seen to be doing the right thing such as buying products with sustainability attributes (Wehrli et al., 2017). Based on these lines of reasoning and the conclusions of previous studies, we expect:

Hypothesis 1. A high perceived overall congruity between the actual, ideal and social self and ecotourism has a positive effect on the attitude towards ecotourism.

From a business point of view, the result of promoting ecotourism should not only be developing a positive attitude towards it, but also a willingness to pay more for it (Castellanos-Verdugo et al., 2016). Price is considered the most significant barrier between attitudes and actual behavior (Moser, 2015). The attitude towards ecotourism is expected to have a positive effect on the willingness to pay a price premium for it (Lu et al., 2014; Hwang and Lee, 2018):

Hypothesis 2. The attitude towards ecotourism has a positive effect on the willingness to pay more for ecotourism.

# 2.2. Self-ecotourism personality differences and self-identity-ecotourism congruity

Researchers increasingly address 'destination meaning' as the cornerstone for understanding human-destination relations. A destination meaning is a mental representation of the destination in the individual's mind (Kock et al., 2016). In establishing this destination meaning, destination personality plays a leading role (Bekk et al., 2016). *Personality* is a set of stable psychological characteristics that tends to remain consistent across time, geographical locations, political contexts, and so on (Nowaczek and Smale, 2010). An individual has a certain personality, but, in the minds of consumers, so have products, services and brands (Aaker, 1997; Geuens et al., 2009). Personality as one of the core elements of a destination brand encompasses consumers' views of a destination brand's human traits (Apostolopoulou and Papadimitriou, 2015). Strategically, a brand personality can serve as a tool for positioning a tourist or destination brand image in the marketplace, helping to differentiate it from its competitors at the symbolic level. Brand personality profiles can provide brand managers with insights for more focused marketing and advertising (Su and Reynolds, 2017). It can influence tourist consumers' attitudes toward a brand, ultimately shaping brand-related behaviors, such as purchase decisions, brand loyalty, and brand love.

Aaker (1997) states that consumers would show more attachment to those brands which are more congruent with their personalities. Brand personality is an important antecedent of perceived self-identity congruity (Cini et al., 2012; Gazley and Watling, 2015). Brand personality helps consumers match a brand with their self-concepts. Humanlike features can provide consumers with clues they use to evaluate a brand (Su and Reynolds, 2017). One way of expressing such consistency is to like or purchase a brand with personality traits that are congruent with the actual, ideal or social self (Huang et al., 2017). Both in Su and Reynolds' (2017) and Huang et al.'s (2017) study, aspects of self-congruity mediate the relationship between destination personality dimensions and destination brand outcomes (attitude or brand attachment towards the destination).

Although Su and Reynolds' (2017) and Huang et al.'s (2017) study conceptualize the link between destination brand personality and self-destination congruity and between the latter and attitudes towards the destination, the flaw in their line of reasoning is that it is not so much the destination personality itself that matters for self-congruity perceptions, but the match between destination personality dimensions and one's own personality. Tourists might evaluate a place more positively when they perceive a fit between themselves and the destination, in terms of their own and the destination personality similarity determines perceived overall congruity between the self and a tourist destination which, in turn, leads to satisfaction with and recommendation intention of a holiday resort. Bekk et al. (2016) used three dimensions of Aaker's (1997) brand personality scale: sincerity, excitement and sophistication, and found that the similarity (fit) between the own personality and a hotel personality explained perceived actual self-identity - hotel congruity which in turn significantly explained satisfaction and recommendation intention.

In the current study, we build upon Bekk et al.'s (2016) work. Consistent with Bekk et al. (2016), we argue that self-ecotourism personality considerations are important antecedents of perceived self-identity-ecotourism congruity. However, Bekk et al. (2016) start from the absolute difference between a person's assessment of his/her own personality and the tourist destination personality, regardless of the direction of the difference. For instance, a person can perceive a tourist destination as more or less exciting than his or her own personality, but in Bekk et al's (2016) analysis, the direction of the difference does not play a role in how this difference determines self-congruity perceptions. However, in a study in the context of the adoption of electric cars, Moons and De Pelsmacker (2015) found that the direction of the difference has much more explanatory power than its absolute size. One might indeed imagine that, for instance, in case a person wants to be or be seen as 'exciting', perceiving a tourist destination as more exciting than oneself, may positively affect perceived actual, ideal and social self-congruity, while perceiving a tourist destination as less exciting than oneself may trigger lower perceptions of self-congruity. Therefore, we posit that the directional difference between ecotourism personality and the personality of the tourist him/herself will determine self-ecotourism congruity.

The current study is set in an ecotourism context, which may trigger some personality dimensions more than others. For instance, it is generally assumed that eco-values are key concerns in the ecotourism context (e.g., Yung-Chuan and Liu, 2017). However, previous research concluded that the majority of potential ecotourists are not particularly 'green' (Hwang and Lee, 2018; Nowaczek and Smale, 2010). On the other hand, Gao et al. (2017) found that tourists' perceptions of the negative impacts of tourism positively affect their perceptions of responsibility, and also Nowazcek and Smale (2010) conclude that tourists place a high importance on the 'ethics' dimension ('do the right thing'). One might thus expect that, in the context of the current study, considerations about the 'responsibility' personality dimension may play an important role. In general, the meaning of tourism is such that other considerations than 'responsibility' are likely to be also, or even more, important (Ballantyne et al., 2018). 'Emotionality' is a factor that appears to be important in how appealing a tourist product is (Wehrly et al., 2017; Villarino and Font, 2015) Finally, given the nature of ecotourism and the focus on nature, learning, culture, and actively contributing to community building, one might also expect that personality dimensions such as 'activity' and 'sophistication' (as opposed to 'simplicity') may play a role in building self-congruity (Müller, 2000). We expect:

Hypothesis 3. Self-ecotourism personality differences, based on the personality dimensions responsible, bold, simple, active and emotional, have an effect on perceived actual, ideal and social self-ecotourism congruity.

Combining H1 and H3, we thus expect perceived actual, ideal and social selfcongruity to mediate the relationship between self-ecotourism personality differences and the attitude towards ecotourism. Combining H2 and H3, we also expect that the attitude towards ecotourism mediates the relationship between actual, ideal and social self-congruity and the willingness to pay more for ecotourism.

# 3. Method

In May 2017, we conducted an online survey in Flanders, the Dutch-speaking part of Belgium, by sending emails to a random sample of the members of an online panel of the department of marketing of the university. The email contained a link to the online survey. 1041 fully completed questionnaires were received. The sample consists of 31% males. The age composition was: 52% between 18-29 years old, 21% between 30-45, 18% between 46-55 and 9% 56 or older; 71% were educated beyond high school; 44% considers their income 'average', 36% above average, and 20% below average; 16% does leisure travel once a year or less, 29% twice a year, 30% three times a year, 12% 4 times a year, and 13% 5 times or more a year.

The questionnaire started with a welcome screen in which the purpose of the study was explained and anonymity was guaranteed. Participants could terminate their cooperation whenever they wanted. They were promised an incentive, provided they left their email address. Next, a question about travel frequency was asked. Then the concept of 'ecotourism' was defined as follows (TIES, 2013; Cobbinah, 2015): "Ecotourism is responsible and ethical travel to natural areas that conserves culture and the environment and improves the economic development, human rights and well-being of local people". Additionally, examples of ecotourism practices were given. Subsequently, the willingness to pay more for ecotourism was measured by means of a 5-item 7-point Likert scale, based on Lu et al. (2014). The attitude towards ecotourism was measured with a 5-item 7-point semantic differential, adapted from Lam et al. (2006) and Kazeminia et al. (2016). Next, personality dimensions of ecotourism were measured by means of a 5-point 12-item Likert scale (Geuens et al., 2009). Subsequently, actual, desired and social self-ecotourism congruity was measured by means of three 5-item 7point Likert scales, based on Sirgy and Johar (1999). Then, the personality of the respondent was measured with the same scale as ecotourism personality. The constructs and their items are given in Appendix. Finally, demographics were measured: gender, age (four categories: 18-29 years old, 30-45 years old, 46-55 years old, and 56 years old or older), level of education (two categories: up to high school, beyond high school), income (three categories: lower than average, about average, higher than average), and residence (3 categories: city center, suburbs, and countryside).

## 4. Data analysis and results

# 4.1. Exploratory and Confirmatory Factor Analysis

First, we evaluated the internal consistency of the measurement scales used in the study. To this end, we conducted an Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) using Principal Component Analysis and Promax rotation. Results show that salient loadings for the measurement variables are all

higher than .53, while no cross-loadings > .30 are found. Only the items "aggressive" and "bold" of eco-tourism personality, the item 'aggressive' of self-personality, and the item "I would not have a high opinion of myself if I participated in ecotourism" of the ideal self-ecotourism congruity construct are showing factor loadings lower than .50 and cross loading higher than .30. These items were therefore removed and not considered for future analyses. Results for the remaining items revealed that Cronbach's alphas ( $\alpha$ ) for all constructs are greater than .60 (George and Mallery, 2013), and that the correlations among the components range from .01 to .65 (Table 1).

Second, following Moons and De Pelsmacker's (2015) approach, for the four remaining personality dimensions (the dimension 'bold' was removed from the analysis in the first stage – see above), we calculated the non-absolute difference between each item of the ecotourism personality trait and the corresponding individual personality trait. That is, we subtracted the consumer personality score from the ecotourism personality score for each item. Then, we calculated the mean of these non-absolute difference for each personality trait. This resulted in four non-absolute self-ecotourism personality difference (SEPD) scores. A positive score means that, in the perception of an individual, eco-tourism is associated with a specific personality characteristic more than the person him/herself. Conversely, a negative score means that an individual possesses more of this personality trait than the eco-tourism does.

Third, we tested the measurement model for the remaining five multi-item measurement constructs – actual, ideal and social self-identity-ecotourism congruity (SIEC), the attitude towards eco-tourism and the willingness to pay more for ecotourism – by means of confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) using LISREL 8.80 (Jöreskog and Sörbom, 2006). Results indicate that global fit indices are adequate: RMSEA=.08, SRMR=.06, NFI=.96, NNFI=.95 and CFI=.96. Local fit criteria are acceptable, too. All standardized item loadings ( $\lambda$ CFA) significantly load on their factors (p<.01), and factor loadings are greater than .60 (Bagozzi and Yi, 1988). The composite reliability (CR) threshold of .60 is observed for every construct (actual SIEC =.84; ideal SIEC =.81; social SIEC =.86; attitude =.89; willingness-to-pay extra =.92). The average variance extracted (AVE) meets the recommended threshold of .50 (actual SIEC=.51; ideal SIEC =.51; social SIEC =.56; attitude =.63; willingness-to-pay more =.78). Discriminant validity is also observed, because the shared variance between pairs of factors is always less than the corresponding AVE (Fornell and Larcker, 1981). Table 1 provides an overview of all these tests.

Finally, we assessed common method variance statistically (Podsakoff et al., 2003). We applied the marker variable technique ("Listening to music promotes learning"; 7-point Likert scale item). Results show that significant correlations do not vary after we controlled for the marker variable<sup>1</sup>, indicating that common method variance does not represent a threat in our data.

## 4.2. Structural Analysis

Once the validity of the measurement model was verified, causal links among the variables were established according to the hypothesized paths and the structural model was tested using LISREL. The model fit is acceptable: RMSEA=.09, NFI=.93, NNFI=.93, and CFI=94. The model explained 58% of the total variance explained. All standardised item loadings significantly load on their constructs (p<.01), and the factor loadings range from .59 to .93. Results of the structural paths for this model are reported in Table 2. Actual and ideal (but not social) SIEC significantly influence the attitude toward eco-tourism, partly confirming H1. The attitude toward ecotourism significantly drives consumers' willingness-to-pay extra for it,

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> Correlations tables can be provided by the authors on request.

supporting H2. Responsible and emotional SEPD significantly positively influence perceptions of actual, ideal, and social SIEC. Conversely, active and simple SEPD do not have any impact on SIEC, with the exception of the significant effect of active SEPD on ideal SIEC. H3 is supported. Results also indicate that both responsible and emotional SEPD have significant indirect effects on both the attitude toward eco-tourism and the willingness-to-pay extra for it. Conversely, active and simple SEPD do not have significant indirect effects on these variables. The effect of responsible and emotional SEPD on the attitude towards ecotourism and the willingness to pay extra for it is thus partially mediated by perceptions of SIEC. Finally, actual and ideal (but not social) SIEC have significantly positive indirect effects on consumers' willingness-to-pay for eco-tourism, as mediated by the attitude towards ecotourism.

#### 5. Conclusions, discussion, implications and further research

The difference between an individual's own personality and perceived ecotourism personality has a significant impact on perceived self-identity-ecotourism congruity. The more ecotourism is perceived to have a more responsible and emotional personality than one's own, the more it is considered congruent with the actual, ideal and social self. Overall, the responsible personality difference exerts the strongest influence on self-identity congruity, followed by the emotional personality difference. Additionally, the perception that ecotourism has a more active personality than one's own increases the perception of ideal self-identity-ecotourism fit. This confirms the propositions and findings of previous studies that humanlike features of a tourism destination are used by tourists to evaluate the congruity of the destination with their own self-identity (Bekk et al., 2016; Gazley and Watling, 2015; Huang et al., 2017; Su and Reynolds, 2017).

Actual and ideal, but not social, self-identity-ecotourism congruity improve the attitude towards ecotourism. Actual self-identity congruity is more important than ideal self-congruity. This confirms Huang et. al's (2017) proposition that people simultaneously take several types of self-congruity into account when forming attitudes, and that actual self-congruity exerts a stronger influence than ideal self-congruity. However, the fact that social self-congruity does not affect the attitude towards ecotourism does neither support Wang et al.'s (2018) finding that also social components of self-identity have an impact on travel intentions, nor Sirgy and Su's (2000) and Dolnicar et al.'s (2017) proposition that for conspicuous products such as travel social self-images are more likely to be related to attitudes than actual and ideal self-images Consistent with the findings of Su and Reynolds (2017), Huang et al. (2017) and Bekk et al. (2016), components of self-congruity mediate the relationship between self-ecotourism personality dimensions and the attitude towards ecotourism. As expected, and confirming previous research by Lu et al. (2014) and Hwang and Lee (2018), the attitude towards ecotourism strongly determines the willingness to pay more for it.

The results of the current study have important implications for ecotourism marketers in that they provide insights in what triggers potential ecotourists to develop a positive attitude toward ecotourism and the willingness-to-pay more for it. When promoting ecotourism, practitioners should emphasize that ecotourism reflect what these potential tourists are and want to be (actual and ideal self-identity congruity with ecotourism). They should further point out that ecotourism will boost the responsible and emotional, and partly also the active side of their personality, since perceiving ecotourism as more responsible, emotional and active than oneself triggers feelings of self-identity-ecotourism congruity and, indirectly, a more positive attitude toward ecotourism and a higher willingness to pay a price premium for it. Further research should corroborate our findings in other countries and for different types of ecotourism or ecotourist destinations or venues. Some previous studies have developed tailormade destination personality scales (e.g., Kumar and Nayak, 2018). The standard personality framework used in the current study could be extended with custom-made personality dimensions provided these are also suitable to measure dimensions of the personality of individuals. These extensions could also be adapted to the specific characteristics of different types of ecotourist destinations or venues, to arrive at an even more fine-grained insight into what could trigger potential ecotourists to visit a specific venue or participate in a specific ecotourism offer. Experimental studies could also be set up to test promotional messages that incorporate the findings of the current study. Finally, the boundary conditions of the process of how personality differences lead to perceptions of self-identity congruity, ecotourism attitude and willingness to pay more for it, should be explored by investigating the moderating role of demographic variables, i.e. how the conceptual model developed in the current study differs across different demographic segments.

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# Figure 1. Conceptual model



	ECOT RESP M=3.89 SD=.59	ECOT ACTIV M= 3.91 SD=.66	ECOT SIMPL M= 2.48 SD= .84	ECOT EMOT M= 2.82 SD= .87	IND RESP M= 3.89 SD= .56	IND ACTIV M= 3.60 SD=.69	IND SIMPL M= 2.73 SD=.86	IND EMOT M= 3.35 SD=085	ACTUAL SELF FIT M= 4.15 SD= .74	IDEAL SELF FIT M= 4.41 SD=1.00	SOCIAL SELF FIT M= 4.09 SD= 1.06	ATT M= 5.66 SD= .92	WTP M= 4.53 SD=1.12
	α=.61	α=.71	α= .65	α=.67	α= .65	α= .71	α=.70	α= .68	α=.82	α=.80	α=.86	α= .89	α= .91
ECOT RESP	1												
ECOT ACTIV	.40**	1											
ECOT SIMPL	.09**	04(ns)	1										
ECOT EMOT	.13**	.20**	.12**	1									
IND RESP	.20**	.13**	.01(ns)	.09**	1								
IND ACTIV	.13**	.18**	02(ns)	.12**	.25**	1							
IND SIMPL	.03(ns)	01(ns)	.18**	.05(ns)	02(ns)	26**	1						
IND EMOT	.06(ns)	.04(ns)	.03(ns)	.15**	05(ns)	01(ns)	.01(ns)	1					
ACTUAL SELF FIT	.28**	.25**	.01(ns)	.20**	.11**	.18**	.04(ns)	01(ns)	1				
IDEAL SELF FIT	.31**	.33**	06*	.19**	.01(ns)	.10**	01(ns)	.10**	.51**	1			
SOCIAL SELF FIT	.24**	.25**	.01(ns)	.16**	.03(ns)	.18**	.01(ns)	01(ns)	.65**	.53**	1		
ATT	.37**	.40**	08**	.15**	.17**	.20**	02(ns)	.02(ns)	.51**	.45**	.46**	1	
WTP	.23**	.27**	02(ns)	.19**	.14**	.14**	01(ns)	02(ns)	.47**	.42**	.46**	.46**	1

Table 1. Mean scores, standard deviations per construct and correlations between constructs

Notes: ECOT RESP= Ecotourism responsible; ECOT ACTIV= Ecotourism active; ECOT SIMPL= Ecotourism simple; ECOT EMOT= Ecotourism emotional; IND RESP= Individual responsible; IND ACTIV= Individual active; IND SIMPL= Individual simple; IND EMOT= Individual emotional.

M= Mean, SD= Standard deviation, \*\* = Correlation is significant at p=.01, \* = Correlation is significant at p=.05, (ns)= Correlation is not significant. This matrix is diagonal.

Paths and indicators	Standardized effects
Direct effects	
Responsible $\rightarrow$ Actual self fit	.28**
Active $\rightarrow$ Actual self fit	.02(ns)
Simple $\rightarrow$ Actual self fit	05(ns)
Emotional $\rightarrow$ Actual self fit	.23**
Responsible $\rightarrow$ Ideal self fit	.34**
Active→ Ideal self fit	.11*
Simple $\rightarrow$ Ideal self fit	03(ns)
Emotional→ Ideal self fit	.11**
Responsible $\rightarrow$ Social self fit	.32**
Active→ Social self fit	03(ns)
Simple $\rightarrow$ Social self fit	02(ns)
Emotional→ Social self fit	.21**
Actual self fit $\rightarrow$ Attitude	.54**
Ideal self fit → Attitude	.27**
Social self fit $\rightarrow$ Attitude	.04(ns)
Attitude $\rightarrow$ willingness to pay extra	.52**
Indirect effects	
Responsible→ Attitude	.26**
Active $\rightarrow$ Attitude	.04(ns)
Simple $\rightarrow$ Attitude	04(ns)
Emotional $\rightarrow$ Attitude	.16**
Responsible $\rightarrow$ Willingness to pay extra	.13**
Active $\rightarrow$ Willingness to pay extra	.02(ns)
Simplicity $\rightarrow$ Willingness to pay extra	02(ns)
Emotiveness $\rightarrow$ Willingness to pay extra	.08**
Actual self fit $\rightarrow$ Willingness to pay extra	.28**
Ideal self fit $\rightarrow$ Willingness to pay extra	.14**
Social self fit $\rightarrow$ Willingness to pay extra	.02(ns)

# Table 2. Structural Equation Model: Standardized direct and indirect effects

**Notes**: Stand. b=Standardized beta coefficient; \*\* = significant at p=.01, \*= significant at p=.05, (ns)= not significant because p>.10. Bolded results indicate that structural paths are significantly different between the two groups ( $\Delta \chi^2(I) \rightarrow p < .05$ )

# Appendix. Constructs and items

Constructs	Items	Categories
Attitude towards ecotourism	<ul> <li>What is your attitude towards ecotourism:</li> <li>Very unpleasant – very pleasant</li> <li>Very unfavorable – very favorable</li> <li>Very boring – very enjoyable</li> <li>Very negative – very positive</li> <li>Very unpleasurable – very pleasurable</li> </ul>	7 categories: -3 - +3
Willingness to pay more for ecotourism	<ul> <li>To what extent are you willing to</li> <li>Make a more expensive trip to reduce pollution</li> <li>Pay more for your vacation if the extra money goes to the preservation of nature and improving the well-being of the local population</li> <li>Pay more for ecotourism than for an ordinary vacation</li> </ul>	7 categories: 1: very unwilling – 7: very willing
Ecotourism brand personality	To what extent do the following characteristics apply to ecotourism: Down to earth Stable Responsible Active Dynamic Innovative Aggressive Bold Ordinary Simple Romantic Sentimental	5 categories: 1:does not at all apply – 5: applies very well
Actual self- ecotourism congruity	<ul> <li>To what extent do you agree with the following statements:</li> <li>The image of people who participate in ecotourism is very consistent with how I see myself</li> <li>I cannot associate myself with people who prefer ecotourism above ordinary tourism</li> <li>People who are very different from me prefer ecotourism above ordinary tourism</li> <li>I am a typical person who prefers ecotourism above ordinary tourism</li> <li>Participating in ecotourism is very much like me</li> </ul>	<ul> <li>7 categories:</li> <li>1: completely disagree –</li> <li>7: completely agree</li> </ul>

Ideal self-ecotourism	To what extent do you agree with the following	7 categories:
congruity	statements:	4 4 . 1
	• I would find myself a better person if I would opt for an ecotourism trip	1: completely disagree –
	• I would feel myself special if I would participate in ecotourism	7: completely
	• I like the image of people who participate in ecotourism	uBree
	<ul> <li>I would not feel great about myself when I would participate in ecotourism</li> </ul>	
	• I really like people who participate in ecotourism	
Social self- ecotourism congruity	To what extent do you agree with the following statements:	7 categories:
	<ul> <li>People who know me well would find it difficult to see me as a person who participates in</li> </ul>	1: completely disagree –
	<ul> <li>ecotourism</li> <li>People who know me well think that I am totally different from people who participate in</li> </ul>	7: completely agree
	ecotourism	
	• My family and friends see me as the typical person who prefers ecotourism above ordinary tourism	
	• The image of people who participate in ecotourism is very consistent with how I am perceived by	
	people who know me well	
	• People who know me well, think of me as a person that would like to participate in ecotourism	
Respondent's	To what extent do the following characteristics apply	5 categories:
personality	• Down to earth	1:does not at
	• Stable	all apply –
	Responsible	5. applies verv
	• Active	well
	• Dynamic	
	Innovative     Aggrossive	
	Bold	
	Ordinary	
	• Simple	
	• Romantic	
	• Sentimental	