

**Moderators of the self-congruity effect on consumer decision-making: An updated
meta-analysis**

Master's Thesis

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Table of contents

1. Introduction	5
2. Self-congruity effect	6
2.1. Self-concept	7
2.2. Brand image	9
2.3 Moderators of the self-congruity effect	11
2.3.1. Product stimulus abstraction	12
2.3.2. Involvement in the decision-making process	13
2.3.3. Impression formation process	14
2.3.4. Impression formation process x involvement in the decision-making process interaction	15
2.3.5. Product stimulus abstraction x impression formation process interaction	16
2.3.6. Product stimulus abstraction x involvement in the decision-making process interaction	16
2.4. Research Gaps: Additional moderators of the self-congruity effect	17
2.4.1. Involvement with product class	17
2.4.2. Consumer knowledge	18
2.4.3. Direct versus indirect measure	18
2.4.4. Cultural setting x self-motive socialness interaction	20
2.4.5. Product conspicuousness x self-motive socialness interaction	21
2.4.6. Response mode x enhancement motive interaction	21
3. Research Question and Moderator Hypotheses	22
4. Methods	25

4.1. Inclusion and exclusion criteria	25
4.2. Literature search and study selection	26
4.3. Coding procedure and data extraction	26
4.4. Effect size	28
4.5. Data synthesis	28
4.6. Main effect analysis	29
4.7. Heterogeneity	29
4.8. Moderator analyses	30
5. Results	31
5.1. Study and sample characteristics	31
5.2. Main effects analysis	31
5.3. Heterogeneity	31
5.4. Hypothesis 1: Product stimulus abstraction	32
5.5. Hypothesis 2: Involvement in the decision-making process	32
5.6. Hypothesis 3: Impression formation process	32
5.7. Hypothesis 4: Impression formation process x involvement in the decision-making process interaction	32
5.8. Hypothesis 5: Product stimulus abstraction x impression formation process interaction	33
5.9. Hypothesis 6: Product stimulus abstraction x involvement in the decision-making process interaction	33
5.10. Hypothesis 7: Involvement with product class	33
5.11. Hypothesis 8: Consumer knowledge	34
5.12. Hypothesis 9: Direct versus indirect measure	34
5.13. Hypothesis 10: Cultural setting x socialness motive interaction	34
5.14. Hypothesis 11: Product conspicuousness x socialness motive interaction	34

5.15. Hypothesis 12: Response mode x enhancement motive interaction	35
6. Discussion	35
7. Limitations and future research	41
8. References	43
9. References included in meta-analysis	53
10. Appendix A: Request for access to manuscripts	71
11. Appendix B: Coding manual	72
12. Appendix C: Moderators, conceptualizations and operationalizations	78
13. Appendix D: Overview to moderator levels reflected in included self-congruity studies	82
14. Appendix E: Funnel plot for the main effect	108
15. Appendix F: Forest plot for the main effect	109
16. Appendix G: Profile likelihood plots	126
17. Appendix H: Overview to parameter estimates of meta-regressions	129

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Abstract

The self-congruity effect is of managerial importance, because it influences brand attitudes and purchase behavior, thus generating a sustainable competitive advantage for brands and their products (Aguirre-Rodriguez, Bosnjak, & Sirgy, 2012; Beerli, Meneses, & Gil, 2007; Branaghan & Hildebrand, 2011; Sirgy, 1982; Sirgy et al., 1997). In a previous meta-analysis, Aguirre-Rodriguez et al. (2012) have confirmed the self-congruity effect. In addition, they identified several moderators that influence the strength of the relation between self-congruity and consumer decision-making. The following study extends the previous meta-analysis by including recent data (i.e., those published between 2011 and 2020) and by using selected moderators based on the current state of research (Sirgy, Lee, & Yu, 2016). From the previous study, the current meta-analysis carries over the following moderators; the product stimulus abstraction, the involvement with decision making and the impression formation process, and the interactions *impression formation process x involvement with decision making*, *product stimulus abstraction x impression formation process* and *product stimulus abstraction x involvement with decision making*. However, it also expands on previous work by including these additional moderators such as, involvement with product class, product knowledge, direct vs. indirect measure, and the interactions among the moderator pairs *cultural setting x self-motive socialness*, *product conspicuousness x self-motive socialness* and *response mode x enhancement motive*.

1. Introduction

The congruity-effect is an important factor in determining consumers' brand attitudes and purchase behavior, offering a possible sustainable competitive advantage to marketing practitioners (Aguirre-Rodriguez, Bosnjak, & Sirgy, 2012; Beerli, Meneses, & Gil, 2007; Branaghan & Hildebrand 2011; Sirgy, 1982; Sirgy et al., 1997). Sirgy, Lee, and Yu (2016) define self-congruity as "the psychological process and outcome that a consumer engages in given that the consumer compares his or her perception of a brand image (more specifically, brand personality or brand-user image) with his or her own self-concept (e.g., actual self-image)". In other words, consumers compare different facets of their self-image (e.g. being athletic or trendy), to a specific brand or product (e.g. running shoe with athletic attributes or a fashionable clothing brand). The better the match between the consumers' self-concept and the brand image, the stronger the self-congruity effect and the likeliness that a consumer will have positive brand attitudes or purchase intentions. Moreover, a positive brand image can set indistinctive products (e.g. bottled water) apart, therefore enhancing brand equity (Freling & Forbes, 2005). As a consequence, an expressive brand image congruent with the consumers' self-concepts represents a decisive advantage for marketing practitioners, as it can be used to increase market shares (Aguirre-Rodriguez et al., 2012). Marketing practitioners can use the self-congruity effect to target specific consumer groups by actively fitting a brand image to the consumers' self-concept. For instance, a consumer target group with a specific self-concept (e.g. being an environmentally friendly person), can become more inclined to a brand or product by making the product or brand image more suitable (e.g. energy-efficient). In this manner, market practitioners are able to keep their current customers loyal, or target new customers and widen their target group.

Given a varying strength of the self-congruity effect, Aguirre-Rodriguez et al. (2012) have conducted a meta-analysis providing evidence for several moderating effects. As they state, a meta-analysis is the right tool for assessing construct validity and generalizability (Lipsey & Wilson, 2001). It allows to generate an overall picture of the current research findings concerning the self-congruity effect,

outlining its current limitations and shortcomings. The following study creates an updated overview by including recent studies, thus covering a larger time range. Furthermore it replicates selected moderators from the original study (Aguirre-Rodriguez et al., 2012), with additional moderators based on current research (Sirgy & Su 2000; Sirgy et al., 2016). The moderators taken from the original study are product stimulus abstraction, involvement with decision making (cognitive elaboration) and the impression formation process, and the interactions among the moderators *impression formation process x involvement with decision making*, *product stimulus abstraction x impression formation process* and *product stimulus abstraction x involvement with decision making*. The additional moderators are involvement with product class, consumer knowledge, direct vs indirect measure, and the interactions among the moderator pairs *culture x self-motive socialness*, *product conspicuousness x self-motive socialness* and *response mode x enhancement motive*. Therefore the meta-analysis not only tries to confirm the findings from Aguirre-Rodriguez et al. (2012) but also deepen the understanding of the self-congruity effect.

2. Self-congruity effect

The self-congruity effect is the interaction between a brand image and a consumer's self-concept (Sirgy, 1982; Sirgy et al. 1997) . By comparing a brand image to their self-concept, consumers engage in a psychological process that influences their pre- and post-purchase behavior (Aguirre-Rodríguez et al. 2012; Sirgy et al., 2016). The self-congruity effect can be derived from several theoretical frameworks. According to Festinger's (1957) cognitive dissonance theory, individuals strive to act consistently with regards to their beliefs, attitudes and behaviors. Not acting consistently, can lead to psychological distress, anxiety and tension. This assumption is fortified by the self-verification theory, according to which, individuals desire other individuals to perceive them the way they perceive themselves (Swann Jr, 1983, 2012). They thus engage in behaviors that support their self-concept, trying to verify not only its positive aspects, but also negative ones (Huber, Eisele, & Meyer, 2018).

As a consequence, a better match between a brand image and a consumer's self-concept will produce positive purchase behavior, enabling marketing practitioners to increase market shares for a product (Aguirre-Rodriguez et al., 2012; Beerli et al., 2007; Branaghan & Hildebrand 2011; Sirgy, 1982; Sirgy et al., 1997).

Over the last 35 years, the self-congruity theory has been integrated in consumer behavior and marketing research (Sirgy et al., 2016). However the self-congruity effect heavily relies on the constructs it is based on. Literature shows that both the self-concept and product image have undergone several stages of development (Aaker, 1997; Kim, 2015; Sirgy 1982; Sirgy et al., 1997; Reed II, Forehand, Puntoni, & Warlop, 2012). As a result different aspects of the constructs have been considered. The terms and definitions used in the meta-analysis are based on the original work from Aguirre-Rodriguez et al. (2012).

2.1. Self-concept

Rosenberg (1979) defines the self-concept as the feelings and thoughts a person has making reference to him or herself. The self-concept defines who an individual is, by containing the beliefs someone has about himself. In the context of consumer research, the self-concept can generally be distinguished by four different facets: the actual self, the ideal self, the social self, and the ideal social self. Each facet is driven by one of four distinct self-concept motives: self-consistency, self-esteem, social consistency and social approval; resulting in one of four self-congruity effects; actual self-congruity, ideal self-congruity, social self-congruity and ideal social self-congruity (Claiborne & Sirgy, 1990; Higgins 1987; Sirgy 1982; Sirgy & Su, 2000).

The socialness motive ranges from private to public. Private self-motives are self-centered in a way that they focus on the perspective of the consumer himself. Private self-motives predispose consumers towards brands congruent with his actual self-image and ideal self-image. They serve intra-personal acceptance goals (Sedikides, 1993). Public self-motives focus on a third party's perception of a consumer. Public self-motives predispose consumers towards brands congruent with their social self

and ideal social self (Sirgy, 1982; Sirgy & Su, 2000). They serve social acceptance goals (Claiborne & Sirgy, 1990; Sirgy, 1982).

The degree of self-enhancement sought ranges from consistency type motives to enhancement type motives. Consistency-type motives encourage a consumer to stay loyal to the current state of his self-concept. Consistency-type motives predispose consumers towards brands congruent with their actual self and social self (Aguirre-Rodriguez et al., 2012; Sedikides & Strube, 1995). Enhancement-type motives encourage consumers to present themselves in a positive light. As a consequence, they tend to brand images reflecting how they want to be, rather than to how they currently are. Enhancement-type motives predispose consumers to brands congruent with their ideal self and ideal social self (Aguirre-Rodríguez et al. 2012; Sedikides & Strube, 1995).

The actual self, driven by the self-consistency motive, results in the actual self-congruity effect (Sirgy, 1982). It refers to how a consumer perceives himself or herself (Hosany & Martin, 2012; Sirgy et al., 2016). The need for self-consistency reflects the consumer's desire to act consistent with their identity (Sedikides & Strube, 1995). Furthermore, according to the self-verification theory, consumers are motivated to acknowledge their self-views (Burke & Stets, 2009). Literature has proven the actual self-congruity effect to be a strong predictor of brand choice (Beerli et al., 2007; Hung & Petrick, 2011).

The ideal self, driven by the self-esteem motive, results in ideal self-congruity (Sirgy, 1982). It refers to how a consumer would like to perceive himself or herself (Hosany & Martin, 2012; Sirgy et al., 2016). Consumers pursue a self-image as positively as possible, attainment of which will boost their self-esteem (Amin, 1979; Ascher, 1985; Cast & Burke, 2002; Shang, Reed, & Croson, 2008). The ideal self-congruity effect is a strong predictor of brand choice as well (Beerli et al, 2007; Ekinici, Dawes, & Massey, 2008).

The social self, driven by the social consistency motive, results in social self-congruity effect (Sirgy, 1982). It reflects how a consumer thinks he is being perceived by others (Hosany & Martin, 2012; Sirgy et al., 2016). The social self is based on a consumer's identification with a group or social

category (Reed, Forehand, Puntoni, & Wallop, 2012). Validating the social self, by purchasing a specific brand, the consumer increases his feeling of belongingness to a group and good feelings about his identity (Burke & Stets, 2009). In contrast, doubting his social self will induce negative feelings like anxiety (Large & Marcussen, 2000). As a consequence, the social consistency motive encourages consumers to maintain the image of how they think others perceive them. The actual social self-congruity has proven to be a significant predictor of brand choice (Shu, King, & Chang, 2015; Sirgy, Johar, Samli, & Claiborne, 1991).

The ideal social self, driven by the social enhancement motive, results in ideal social self-congruity (Sirgy, 1982). It reflects how a consumer would like to be perceived by others (Hosany & Martin, 2012; Sirgy et al., 2016). As a consequence, consumers will act to leave a good impression, trying to earn approval by others (Sirgy et al., 2016). Since actions inconsistent with ideal social self-image can lead to social disapproval, consumers will experience tension (Riley, 1995). Consequently, they are motivated to act congruent with their ideal social self. Research suggests the ideal social self-congruity effect as a predictor of brand choice (Kiliç & Sop, 2012; Sirgy et al., 1991).

2.2 Brand image

The self-congruity effect consists of the relation between a consumer's self-concept and the brand image. Brand image focuses on how a brand is being displayed. Self-congruity research has mainly documented brand image as brand-user image or brand personality (Aguirre-Rodriguez et al., 2012; Sirgy et al., 2016). Brand image can be formed in a direct or indirect way (Plummer, 1985). The direct way refers to the brand-user image, it is based on the typical brand-user. In other words, a brand is being represented by its consumers, employees or CEO's. As such, the original meta-analysis from Aguirre-Rodriguez et al. (2012) refers to it as "brand-person". The brand-user image favors a strong congruity effect, since the typical brand-user as a human person allows the consumer to incorporate the same set of attributes. A potentially similar set of attributes facilitates comparing the self-concept to the brand image.

Brand personality displays brands as having human-like personality (Aaker, 1997). Perceptions of brand personality traits can be formed both the direct and the indirect way (Plummer, 1985). Consequently brand personality contains the brand-user image. However brand personality also stems from indirect associations with the brand itself, such as the logo, or price. According to Aaker (1997), a common challenge revolves around the definition of brand personality. Research has mostly resorted to two types of measurements. Researchers used ad hoc tests, developed for specific studies, thus not generalizable, or they have adapted personality traits from human personality scales, encompassing traits that may not fit brands. Since human personality scales were specifically adopted to human beings, it is uncertain if they are capable to capture brand personality in its entirety. Therefore, Aaker (1997) has developed a brand personality scale. However this brand personality scale does not apply equally to all settings. Research has shown significant variances in brand personalities due to cultural settings (Aaker, Benet-Martinez, & Garolera, 2001; Supphellen & Grønhaug, 2003). Moreover brand personality changes for the product types offered by brands, the brand image is different for brands offering services (e.g. travels) in the touristic sector, than brands selling goods (Ekinici & Hosany, 2006).

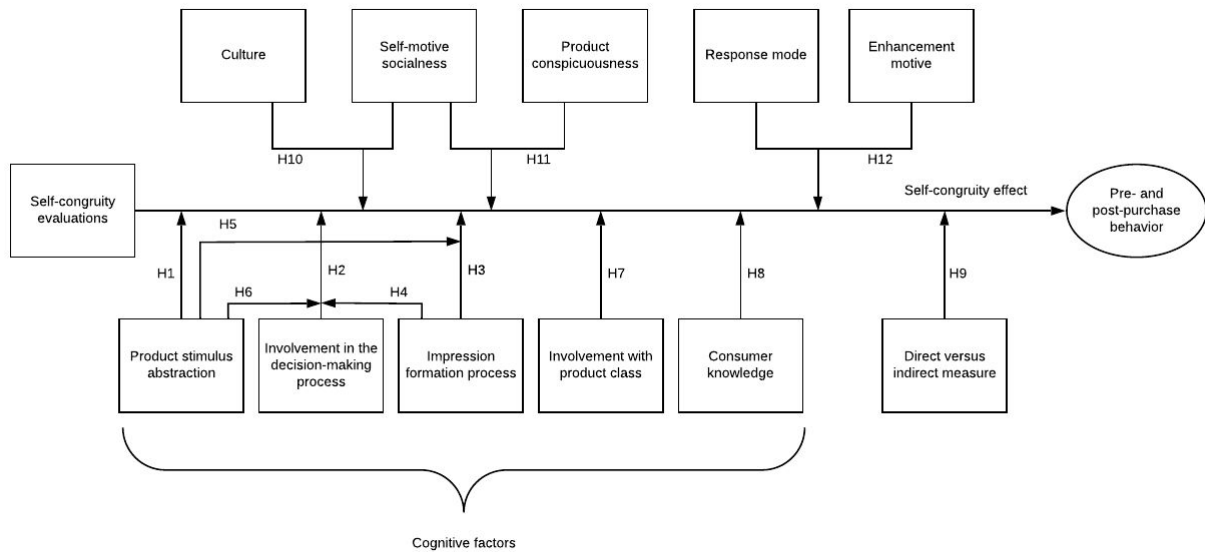


Figure 1. The theoretical model guiding the meta-analysis. Adapted from “Moderators of the self-congruity effect on consumer decision-making: A meta-analysis” by A. Aguirre-Rodriguez, M. Bosnjak, & M. Sirgy, 2012, *Journal Of Business Research*, 65, p. 1180. Copyright 2011 by Elsevier Inc.

2.3. Moderators of the self-congruity effect

Research suggests the self-congruity effect to be moderated by several variables (Aguirre-Rodriguez et al., 2012; Kim, 2015; Sirgy, et al., 2016; Sirgy & Su, 2000). Moderators influence the self-congruity effect, either weakening or strengthening it. However, some moderator variables also interact with each other, resulting in different outcomes. These moderators can either be related to the self-concept or brand personality or to the consumer himself. In the following section, a selection of moderators investigated by Aguirre-Rodriguez et al (2012) will be illustrated.

2.3.1. Product stimulus abstraction

Consumers cognitively represent brands and products as concrete or abstract attributes (Garner, 1978; Restle, 1959; Tversky, 1977; Tversky and Gati, 1978). Letting consumers judge brand stimuli results in the use of more concrete attributes. These correspond to distinct features, and allow consumers to rate a product based on its properties, e.g. its color or price (Johnson, Lehman, Fornell, & Horne, 1992). Consumers can use these concrete attributes to compare products from the same product class, e.g. the screen sizes of smartphones. However, comparing products from different product classes is difficult, since they rarely possess the same features, e.g. a consumer may rate a bathtub by its capacity, whereas a television will be rated by its screen size (Johnson, 1984; Paivio, 1971). However, consumers use more abstract attributes to judge product classes (Johnson et al., 1992). Abstract attributes resemble continuous dimensions, enabling to rate products or brands based on more abstract properties, e.g. if it symbolises wealth, or its utility. Consequently, abstract attributes allow a comparison of products from different product classes, i.e. a bathtub can be more useful than a television depending on the situation (Johnson, 1984; Paivio, 1971).

To evaluate self-congruity, consumers can compare their self-concept to brand stimuli, from brand mental categories or product class stimuli, retrieved from product class mental categories. Consumers have greater experience with product classes than with brands, hence richer and more complete knowledge about product class attributes (Howard, 1977). Product classes are formed by comparing specific products from different brands. Since there are a multitude of products consumers can use to create a product class, the generated product class mental categories ought to encompass a much more complete image of the stereotypical product. On the other hand, brand stimuli are limited to a product from a specific brand to form a brand mental category. This limits the available information consumers have. As a consequence, consumers have more complete mental categories for product class self-congruity evaluations, leading to a stronger congruity-effect (Aguirre-Rodriguez et al., 2012).

Furthermore, Johnson et al. (1992) suggest that product class stimuli are the preferred stimuli for consumers, as they find them more useful for product category-level comparisons. Product class attributes can be used both as abstract attributes and as processed features, making them more useful than brand stimuli (Johnson et al., 1992). With a preference for product class attributes, consumers should therefore tend to use product class attributes for self-congruity evaluations, leading to a stronger effect.

In addition, product class attributes facilitate the comparison process between the consumers' self-image and a product. A consumer's self-image rarely offers characteristics similar to a specific product, making trait-by-trait comparison unfeasible. Abstract product class attributes offer more easily comparable characteristics to the self-image than brand attributes. This simplifies product class self-congruity evaluations (Johnson, 1984).

In conclusion, product class stimuli allow stronger self-congruity effects than brand stimuli.

2.3.2. Involvement in the decision making process

Involvement in the decision-making describes to what extent consumers are involved in the process of selecting a specific brand (Sirgy et al., 2016). The decision-making process consists of choosing a brand within a product class by comparing different brands and picking one. When the involvement in the decision-making process is low, consumers keep their efforts to a minimum. To foster low involvement in the decision-making process, studies can require on the spot rating of brand personality traits (Aguirre-Rodriguez et al., 2012). High involvement in the decision making process requires consumers to make a conscious choice between two or more brands. Consumers are encouraged to actively seek brand information and compare them to make their choice (Sirgy et al., 2016). High involvement in the decision-making process can be fostered methodologically by letting consumers elaborate about the product or product consumption situation (Aguirre-Rodriguez et al., 2012).

For low involvement in the decision-making process, consumers do not actively seek information about a brand, but to make a choice with limited cognitive elaboration. As a consequence, consumers are likely to rely on holistic information-processing using a decision heuristic (e.g. brand user image) (Sirgy et al., 2016). The self-congruity effect is likely to be strong for low involvement in the decision-making process since it serves the consumers' purpose by assisting them in making this choice (Beerli et al., 2007). For high involvement in the decision-making process, consumers do not rely as much on decision heuristics and use a higher level of cognitive elaboration to choose a brand, hence weakening the self-congruity effect.

2.3.3. Impression formation process

Consumers can evaluate self-congruity using piecemeal or holistic processing to compare a brand personality to their self-concept (Aguirre-Rodriguez et al., 2012). Piecemeal processing uses a trait-by-trait evaluation of the brand personality. Brand personality judgement will be formed by evaluating each brand attribute separately and then comparing it to the self-concept. Holistic processing gives consumers a more overall impression of a brand personality. When consumers are confronted with a specific stimulus, they will try to categorize it, using data from memory based on prior experiences for holistic processing. The brand personality can either fit a category, fit a category with few modifications, or form a new category (Keaveney & Hunt, 1992).

The self-congruity effect is likely to be stronger for holistic processing than for piecemeal processing, because holistic processing requires less effort than piecemeal processing, while taking into account previous consumer experiences. To form an overall judgement using piecemeal processing attribute ratings have to be combined, demanding cognitive resources (Fiske, 1982; Fiske & Pavelchak, 1984). Moreover, this process has to be done for each brand personality, requiring consumers to spend cognitive resources repeatedly (Keaveney & Hunt, 1992). However, consumers automatically form holistic impressions even for initial stimuli (Fiske & Neuberg, 1990; Fiske & Pavelchak, 1986). Therefore, holistic processing directly offers an overall brand personality image, requiring consumers

to spend less cognitive resources, thus strengthening the self-congruity effect as a peripheral cue on brand evaluations (Petty, Cacioppo, & Schumann, 1983). Moreover, since holistic processed brand personalities are largely based on existing categories, they are likely to offer a more complete brand personality image, than the sum of the traits (Keaveney & Hunt, 1992; Zimmer & Golden, 1988). A more complete brand personality image should allow consumers to better compare the brand personality image to their self-concept strengthening the self-congruity effect (Aguirre-Rodriguez et al., 2012).

2.3.4. Involvement in the decision-making process interaction x Impression formation process

The impression formation process produces strong self-congruity effects with either low or high involvement in the decision-making process. Low involvement in the decision-making process requires consumers to evaluate brand personalities using minimal cognitive resources (Sirgy et al., 2016). Holistic processing produces an overall brand personality image containing the most pertinent brand information, which suits the low involvement in the decision-making process modality, resulting in a strong self-congruity effect (Keaveney & Hunt, 1992). The self-congruity effect for the interaction between piecemeal processing and the low decision-making process modality should be weaker, since piecemeal processing provides many different traits. This complicates the low cognitive elaboration approach of the low involvement in the decision-making process (Keaveney & Hunt, 1992).

High involvement in the decision-making process requires consumers to actively seek information and compare brand personality images. Consumers can thus process brand personality using piecemeal processing which provides the necessary information to justify a brand choice, leading to stronger self-congruity effect (Sirgy et al., 2016). Holistic processing providing an overall impression should result in a weaker self-congruity effect with high involvement in the decision-making process, since both modalities use different types of information.

2.3.5. Product stimulus abstraction x impression formation process interaction

To evaluate self-congruity with product class stimuli, consumers resort to abstract product attributes from product class mental categories. Abstract product stimuli are dimensional representing more holistic evaluations (Johnson et al., 1992). Consequently, product class stimuli fit holistic impressions, offering a complete holistic product or brand image, resulting in a stronger self-congruity effect (Keaveney & Hunt, 1992). Piecemeal processing results in trait-by-trait information processing, rendering self-congruity evaluations with product class stimuli more effortful, since the attributes have to be combined to form an overall judgment, hence weakening the self-congruity effect (Fiske, 1982; Fiske & Pavelchak, 1984). The evaluation of brand stimuli uses distinct product features which need to be reevaluated for every new stimulus (Johnson, 1984; Paivio, 1971). Piecemeal processing is able to provide this narrow concrete information resulting in a stronger self-congruity effect. Holistic impressions require more cognitive elaboration to be converted into smaller concrete brand stimuli, weakening the self-congruity effect.

2.3.6. Product stimulus abstraction x involvement in the decision-making process interaction

Self-congruity evaluations derived from product class mental categories use abstract product class attributes. A product class attribute encompasses several concrete brand attributes, making product class stimuli more economical than brand stimuli (Johnson, 1984; Paivio, 1971). Consumers engaging in self-congruity evaluations with low involvement in the decision making process, try to keep their cognitive efforts to a minimum (Sirgy, Lee, & Yu, 2016). Product class stimuli should therefore result in a strong self-congruity effect with low involvement in the decision-making process. Brand stimuli provide more concrete narrow information about brands. They require more cognitive elaboration, thus resulting in a weaker self-congruity effect with low involvement in the decision making process (Keaveney & Hunt, 1992). Brand stimuli provide more specific information about each brand. Consumers with high involvement in the decision-making process actively seek information to compare brands to their self-concept, investing more cognitive resources (Keaveney & Hunt, 1992).

Consumers with high involvement in the decision-making process should therefore have a stronger self-congruity effect using brand stimuli to compare brands. Product class stimuli result in a weaker self-congruity effect, since they provide fewer abstract attributes for a comparison.

2.4. Research Gaps: Additional moderators of the self-congruity effect

The current literature suggests additional moderators besides the ones used by Aguirre-Rodriguez et al. (2012). The following moderator variables have been identified by several studies (Kim, 2015; Sirgy & Su, 2000; Sirgy, Lee, & Yu, 2016), however they were not included in the original meta-analysis. Even though the moderators can be supported theoretically, they need to be verified using a meta-analysis.

2.4.1. Involvement with product class

Involvement with product class describes to what extent a product category is important in defining a consumer's identity (Sirgy, Lee, & Yu, 2016). Consumers who are highly involved with a product class, have formed an emotional bond with a product class by interacting with it. Consumers can interact with product classes by consuming products, or by engaging mentally with them on a regular basis, e.g. reading or talking about it. A consumer's involvement with a specific product, e.g. automobiles, can be strengthened by reading a car magazine, or driving a car himself. Consequently, this consumer is likely to enhance his brand relationship quality (Kressmann, Sirgy, Hermann, Huber, Huber, & Lee, 2006). Likewise, high involvement with a product class can be observed in travel research. Consumers tend to associate travelling with their self-concept, either by bonding with a specific type of travel (e.g. cultural tourism, leisure travel), tourist destination, or specific culture. As a consequence, high involvement with product class results in a strong self-congruity effect (Beerli et al., 2007; Hou, Lin, & Morais, 2005; Prayag & Ryan, 2012).

2.4.2. Consumer knowledge

Consumers' brand schemas and product class schemas are based on knowledge structures. Consumers initially categorize products at basic level, as they acquire more knowledge, they extend their brand and product class schemas. With increasing knowledge, consumer's expertise improves, allowing them to better categorize new information and compare brands (Alba & Hutchinson, 1987). Product information can be divided into intrinsic and extrinsic cues. Intrinsic cues can be derived from the physical product itself, extrinsic cues contain product related information (Olson, 1973). Rao & Monroe (1988) used product cues to determine a U-shaped relation between product knowledge and brand evaluation.

Limited knowledge limits the extent to which brand or product class schemas can be applied. Consumers lack the knowledge structures to efficiently categorize new product information (Alba & Hutchinson, 1987). Consumers are therefore likely to rely on extrinsic cues, to evaluate brands. Consequently, consumers with low knowledge rely on holistic decision heuristics, bolstering self-congruity. Consumers with moderate knowledge have larger knowledge structures, with more accessible product information (intrinsic cues). As a consequence, they are likely to consider more functional product aspects during their evaluation, weakening the self-congruity effect. Consumers with high knowledge are more skilled in categorizing new information into existing brand or product class schemas (Alba & Hutchinson, 1987). They can resort on already existing schemas, resulting in a more holistic and efficient information processing. This abstraction level should lead to a stronger self-congruity effect. (Kim, 2015; Sirgy et al., 2016).

2.4.3. Direct versus indirect measure

Self-congruity studies have mainly been using two different measures of the self-congruity effect, the traditional indirect measure and the direct measure of self-congruity. The traditional method does not directly measure the self-congruity construct, but assesses self-congruity using self-concept and product user image. By mathematically computing discrepancy scores between both constructs, a

self-congruity score is generated. This procedure has to be repeated for each image dimension of a brand or product, which will then be combined into an overall self-congruity score. However, the traditional method of measuring can be criticized methodologically (Sirgy, Grewal, Mangleburg, Park, Chon, Claiborne, Johar, & Berkman, 1997). First, discrepancy scores have been challenged for being potentially unreliable and having questionable construct validity (Johns, 1981; Peter, Churchill, Brown, 1993). Another important factor is that the discrepancy score does not incorporate any reference to the psychological congruity-experience (Sirgy et al., 1997). A second factor is the use of predetermined images. To rate the consumer self-concept and product user image, studies traditionally use semantic differentials, with either taylormade or a standard set of product images. (Malhotra, 1981; Sirgy, 1982; Sirgy, 1985). While rating semantic differentials using the traditional method, consumers may personally only find few image dimensions meaningful. Since consumers will have to rate other dimensions, which may not be meaningful to them, self-congruity scores result in random measurement errors. A third factor is the use of the compensatory decision role. Consumers rate self-congruity with a variety of image dimensions, from which they draw an overall self-congruity score. Though, self-congruity may only be experienced for some of the image dimensions, consumers will approximate the score over all image dimensions, biasing self-congruity scores (Sirgy et al., 1997).

The direct measuring method instructs consumers to conjure up a product user image at the moment of response thus thinking about the product user. Consumers are hence conjuring their proper image dimensions, eliminating the problem of the predetermined factors. Next the consumers are asked to rate on a global holistic perception their match with the imagined product user. As such, they not only rate self-congruity directly, but they also eliminate the use of a compensatory decision rule, by taking a more holistic approach. As such the new measuring method solves all methodological problems raised by the traditional method. As a consequence the new self-congruity measures have a higher predictiveness over the traditional one (Sirgy et al., 1997).

2.4.4. Cultural setting x self-motive socialness interaction

Consumers from different cultures have varying self-construals. Self-construals define to what extent an individual sees himself or herself as an independent or dependent entity in relations to others (Agrawal & Maheswaran, 2005; Triandis, 1996). Consumers from individualistic cultures have independent self-construals. In individualistic cultures, the ties between individuals are loose. Consumers from individualistic cultures are self-centered, taking care only of themselves and their close family (Hofstede, 2011). They consider themselves as unique, characteristics that distinguish them from others are valued, as they are less influenced by the opinions of others (Heine, Lehman, Markus, & Kitayama, 1999; Triandis, 2001). Private self-motives dispose consumers towards brands congruent with their actual and ideal self-image, they are serving intra-personal acceptance goals (Sedikides, 1993). Consequently private self-motives should result in a stronger self-congruity effect for consumers from individualistic cultures than from collectivistic cultures (Litvin & Kar, 2003; Sung & Choi, 2012).

Individuals with interdependent self-construals define themselves in relation to others, they see themselves as part of a group (Agrawal & Maheswaran, 2005; Triandis, 1996). Group membership and social roles are important aspects of their self-concept (Markus & Kitayama, 1991; Singelis 1994). Since consumers with interdependent self-construals see themselves as strongly connected to their social network, they are influenced by the opinion of others (Heine et al., 1999; Triandis, 2001). Public self-motives predispose consumers towards brands congruent with their social self and ideal social self (Sirgy 1982; Sirgy & Su, 2000). They focus on others' perception, serving social acceptance goals (Claiborne & Sirgy, 1990; Sirgy, 1982). As a result, public self-motives should result in a stronger self-congruity effect for consumers from collectivistic than from individualistic cultures (Kim & Hyun, 2013; Sirgy et al., 1991).

2.4.5. Product conspicuousness x self-motive socialness interaction

According to research, the self-congruity effect is likely to be stronger for products that are consumed conspicuously, than for products that are consumed inconspicuously (Baja, Palacios, & Minton, 2018). Conspicuous products are consumed in public, they symbolize prestige and social status for the consumer (Eastman, Goldsmith, & Flynn, 1999; Veblen, 1934). Public self-motives dispose consumers towards products that either reflect their social self (displaying how they think they are perceived), or their ideal social self (displaying how they like to be perceived) (Hosany & Martin, 2012; Sirgy et al., 2016). As a consequence, consumers are self-conscious, motivating them to purchase products as an expression of their public self image (Berger & Heath, 2007, 2008). However, inconspicuous products do not affect consumers' public self-image, but need to fit their private self-image instead. Therefore, consumers will be driven by private self-motives, disposing consumers towards products congruent with their actual and ideal self-image (Sedikides, 1993).

2.4.6. Response mode x enhancement motive interaction

According to Sirgy (1987), the activation of actual or ideal self-image during self-congruity evaluations is dependent on the consumer's response mode. The response mode can refer to a preference judgement type or brand choice type. For instance, a study can require consumers to rate which product they prefer, or a study can evaluate brand choice, based on the products a consumer actually bought (Sirgy & Su 2000). Sirgy (1987) argues that the self-esteem motive is more likely to be activated in judgement-type decisions, than in choice-type decisions. Since the ideal self-image is driven by the self-esteem motive, ideal self-motives should produce a stronger self-congruity effect when combined with preference judgement type choice (Sirgy, 1982). Conversely, brand choice is likely to activate a consumer's consistency motives. Since consistency motives drive the actual self-image, the self-congruity effect is likely to be stronger for brand choice than for preference type choice (Hong & Zinkhan, 1995; Varvoglis, 1987).

3. Research question and moderator hypotheses

The self-congruity effect can be an important tool for marketing practitioners. By influencing consumer purchase behavior and brand attitude, the self-congruity effect can potentially offer advantages for marketing practitioners in successfully promoting their product (Aguirre-Rodriguez, Bosnjak, & Sirgy, 2012; Beerli, Meneses, & Gil, 2007; Branaghan & Hildebrand 2011; Sirgy, 1982; Sirgy et al., 1997). To make effective use of the self-congruity effect, it is of the utmost importance to gain insight into its effects and the influencing moderators. As a consequence, several studies have contributed to the self-congruity effect, revealing a multitude of moderators (Kim, 2015; Sirgy & Su, 2000; Sirgy, Lee, & Yu, 2016). These studies are however mostly limited in their external validity, because of special cultural contexts and the inclusion of only a limited number of moderators. A meta-analysis is the right tool to draw a more complete picture of the self-congruity effect, since it considers the current state of research by combining studies into an overall score. Thus a meta-analysis allows to take numerous moderators into consideration while also reuniting studies being conducted with different samples and cultural contexts. As a consequence a meta-analysis can provide evidence of construct validity and generalizability (Lipsey & Wilson, 2001). Furthermore, it should be useful explaining the high variability of the self-congruity research (Bauer, Mäder, & Wagner, 2006). A first meta-analysis was done by Aguirre-Rodriguez et al. (2012), providing evidence for the self-congruity effect. They found significant effects for the moderators product stimulus abstraction, impression formation process and the interactions *product stimulus abstraction x impression formation process* and *product stimulus abstraction x involvement in the decision making process* (cognitive elaboration). The moderator involvement in the decision making process (cognitive elaboration) and the interaction *impression formation process x involvement in the decision making process* (cognitive elaboration) could not be confirmed. Since the meta-analysis was conducted in 2012, more recent studies are not included. The present meta-analysis therefore aims at confirming the findings from the Aguirre-Rodriguez et al. 2012, but also to reinvestigate the moderators that could not be confirmed. Results could differ because studies up to 2020 are integrated. Additionally, a

three-level random effects model is employed, to consider dependencies among effect sizes (Konstantopoulos, 2011). The current study furthermore includes the moderators involvement with product class, consumer knowledge, direct versus indirect measure and the interaction effects *culture x self-motive socialness*, *product conspicuousness x self-motive socialness* and *response mode x enhancement motive*. As a consequence the study outlines a much more complete set of moderating effects (Figure 1).

The following hypotheses are based on the previous theoretical elaborations:

H₁: Product stimulus abstraction moderates the self-congruity effect, producing stronger effects from product class stimuli than brand stimuli.

H₂: Involvement in the decision-making process moderates the self-congruity effect, producing stronger effects under low than high involvement in the decision-making process.

H₃: Impression formation process moderates the self-congruity effect, producing stronger effects for holistic than piecemeal self-congruity effects.

H₄: Involvement in the decision-making process interacts with impression formation process; such that (a) low involvement in the decision-making process produces stronger self-congruity effects with holistic than piecemeal processing, and (b) high involvement in the decision-making process produces stronger self-congruity effects with piecemeal than holistic processing.

H₅: Impression formation process interacts with product stimulus abstraction, such that (a) product class self-congruity evaluations produce stronger self-congruity effects under holistic than piecemeal processing, and (b) brand self-congruity evaluations produce stronger self-congruity effects under piecemeal than holistic processing.

H₆: Involvement in the decision-making process interacts with product stimulus abstraction, such that (a) product class self-congruity evaluations produce stronger effects under low than high involvement in the decision-making process, and (b) brand self-congruity evaluations produce stronger self-congruity effects under high than low involvement in the decision-making process.

Moderators of the self-congruity effect on consumer decision-making

H₇: Involvement with product class moderates the self-congruity effect, producing stronger effects under high than low involvement with product class.

H₈: Consumer knowledge moderates the self-congruity effect, producing stronger effects under high and low knowledge conditions, much more so than under moderate knowledge conditions.

H₉: Direct and indirect measures of self-congruity moderates the self-congruity effect, producing stronger effects for direct measures than for indirect measures.

H₁₀: Self-congruity studies under conditions of low socialness motive (actual and ideal self-congruity studies) are likely to be more predictive of consumer behavior administered in countries in which the culture is more individualistic than collectivistic. Conversely, self-congruity studies under conditions of high socialness motive (social and ideal social self-congruity studies) are likely to be more predictive of consumer behavior administered in countries in which the culture is more collectivistic than individualistic.

H₁₁: Self-congruity studies under conditions of high socialness motive (social and ideal social self-congruity studies) are likely to be more predictive of consumer behavior administered for products consumed more (than less) conspicuously. Conversely, self-congruity studies under conditions of low socialness motive (actual and ideal self-congruity studies) are likely to be more predictive of consumer behavior administered for products consumed less (than more) conspicuously.

H₁₂: Self-congruity studies under conditions of high enhancement motive (ideal and ideal social self-congruity studies) are likely to be more predictive of consumer behavior in which the dependent measure is brand attitude more so than if the dependent measure is brand purchase (or purchase intention). Conversely, self-congruity studies under low enhancement conditions (actual and social self-congruity studies) are likely to be more predictive of consumer behavior in which the dependent measure is purchase intention or brand purchase than studies in which the dependent measure is purchase intention/brand choice.

4. Methods

4.1. Inclusion and exclusion criteria

A complete picture of the current state of research is outlined below, by including all studies without any limiting time frame up to 2020. The studies should provide quantitative data reporting of bivariate statistical association of self-congruity and pre-purchase or post-purchase behavior outcomes and sample sizes to allow statistical processing. Neither the self-concept, nor the purchase behavior is limited to any specific facet. The studies should be written in English or German.

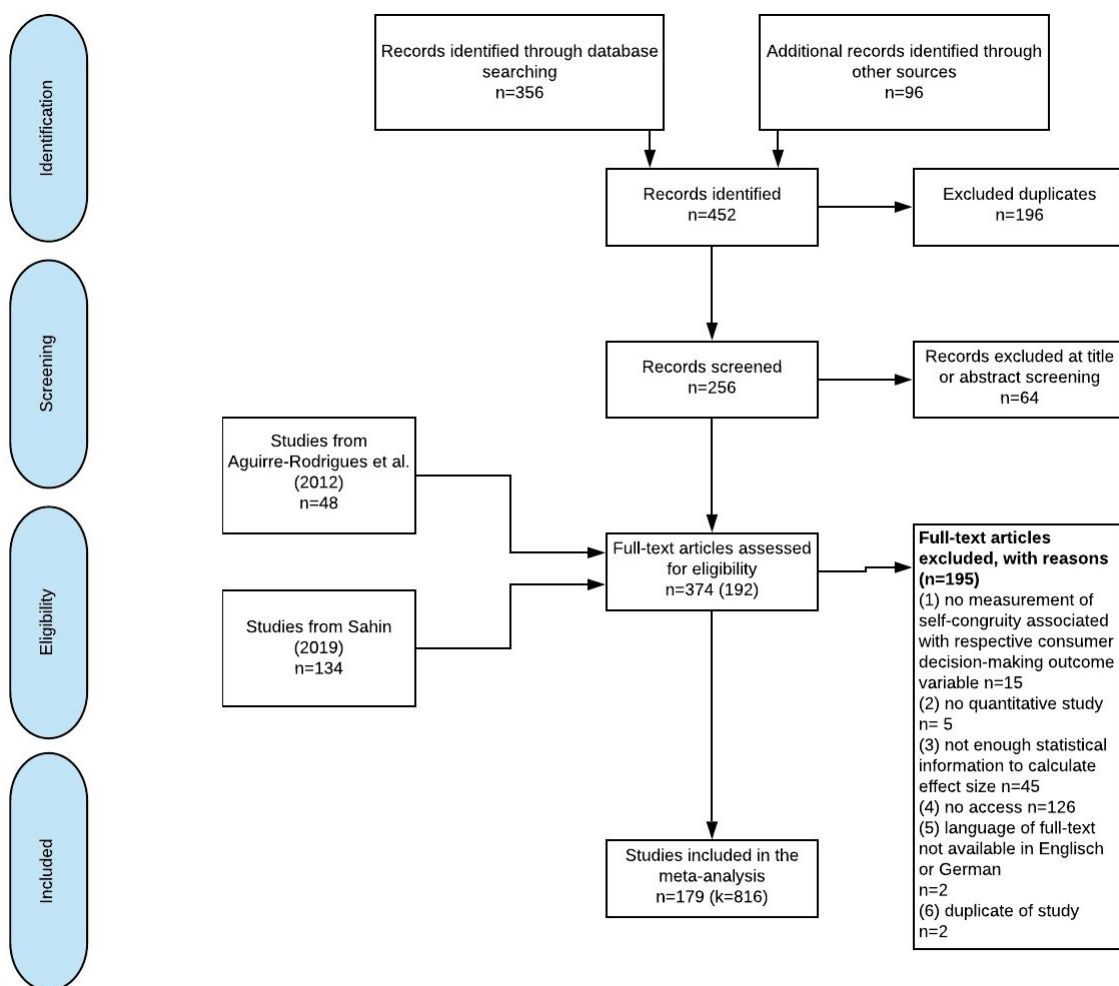


Figure 2. PRISMA flow diagram (Moher, Liberati, Tetzlaff, Altman, & The PRISMA Group, 2009), documenting the literature search and study selection process.

4.2. Literature search and study selection

During the identification of the studies, a literature research was conducted from 2018 to 2019 using electronic databases: Academic Search Ultimate, Business Source Premier, EconLit, Business Source Ultimate, Google Scholar, PsycARTICLES, PsycINFO, PsyJournals, PSYINDEX, Proquest and Web of Science. Search keywords for the abstract and the full text were “self-image congruity”, “self-image congruence”, “self-congruity”, “product image congruity”, “image congruence”, “self-congruence” combined with “product”, “consumer”, “marketing”, “tourism” or “travel”. To limit operating expense, studies from the previous meta-analyses conducted by Aguirre-Rodriguez et al. (2012) and by Sahin (2019) were used to cover the past time period up to 2020, providing a complete database. Next, the database was checked for duplicates, which were removed in the subsequent step. During the screening process, the record’s titles and abstracts were screened, excluding the reports that did not suit the topic targeted by the meta-analysis. During the eligibility assessment, studies were checked for their availability. If unavailable, authors were addressed using a standardised form, asking for access to the reports (see Appendix A). Furthermore, the full texts were screened for language, adequate effect sizes and redundancy of the data used in the studies (Figure 2). Studies not conforming to the criteria, were excluded. Finally, a complete list of the database was compiled, which was used during the data extraction process.

4.3. Coding procedure and data extraction

Coding was done using a coding sheet and coding manual established and tested beforehand. The coding sheet provided a standardised process to organize the studies and the included effect sizes, as well as a system to code the required variables (see Appendix B). The coding manual provided additional information for the coding procedure and the use of the coding sheet. It informed the coder which numerical value to assign to the specific outcomes and to code missing variables using “NA”. Both coding sheet and coding manual were subdivided into the sections “report”, “study”, “sample”, and “effect size” analog to the multilevel approach used for statistical analysis. On the report level

general information about the coding process such as the date of coding, coder id, and information about the manuscript such as a unique manuscript id, the year, the bibliographic reference, the name of the first author, title and publication type were extracted. On the study level, a unique study ID was given to each study of the manuscript, and the respective study design was extracted. On the sample level, a sample id was assigned to each sample. Information about the country and region of data collection, country and region of the sample and gender, age and standard deviation of the sample's age were extracted. On the effect size level, each effect size was given a unique effect size id. The dependent and independent variable variables and their measures were coded. Next the correlation coefficient was extracted if available, otherwise any available effect size was coded to be converted into a correlation coefficient for the analyses. The moderators were coded by assigning numerical values to categorical moderators and interaction effects. The moderator "cultural setting" was converted to a numerical value during the coding process, using Hofstede's individualism index (EDC). After each coding section, a section for notes about any peculiarities during the extraction of the data and a section for comments about peculiarities regarding the content was provided.

Reports were coded by two coders. Coders should already have had experience in coding and knowledge about statistical measures. To get acquainted with the moderator variables, both coders, were given a conceptualization and operationalization sheet of the moderators (Appendix C). This sheet included the moderators and their levels, as well as a short explanation of each modality and its measurement. During a pilot phase, both coders tested the coding manual and coding sheet to enable them to identify any possible issues. Where they encountered issues, the coding sheet and manual were adapted to their needs to ensure a correct data extraction process. During the actual data coding, coders were the database list, which indicates the order of reports that had to be coded. As mentioned beforehand, coders extracted the needed values which were then inserted into the coding sheet, using the coding manual. After completing the coding process, both coders' coding sheets were compared to note potential discrepancies. In case of discrepancies, the concerned paper had to be checked again in an effort to extract the right data.

4.4. Effect size

For initial analysis, effect sizes were coded as Pearson correlation coefficients (r), if available. Pearson correlation coefficients (r) provide a linear bivariate correlational effect between the self-congruity effect and purchase behavior (Sherry & Henson, 2005). A correlation coefficient (r) close to 0 implies no linear relationship between the independent variable and the outcome variable, however a correlation coefficient (r) tending to 1 or -1 indicates a positive or negative relationship between the two variables, respectively. For studies reporting inverse correlations due to methodological differences, the effect sizes were inverted for analysis. For the moderator analysis, the Pearson correlation coefficients (r) were converted into Fisher's Zr , using Fisher's variance-stabilizing (Goth, Halla & Rosenthal, 2016).

For studies not reporting any correlation coefficients (r), the available effects sizes were coded and used to compute and estimate a Pearson correlation coefficient (r) following Wilson's statistical recommendation guide (Wilson, 2018). Due to non-equivalence of metrics for predictors and outcomes of studies, estimation of diverse models across studies, and scareness of information in study reports in general, standardized regression type model path weights β were excluded from the analyses.

4.5. Data synthesis

Since one study can report multiple effect sizes, data is returned in the shape of a nested data structure, due to correlational dependencies among effect sizes (Borenstein, Hedges, Higgings, & Rothstein, 2009). To consider dependencies among effect sizes, a three-level meta-analysis is fitted to the data (Konstantopoulus, 2011). A three-level meta-analysis uses original information while bolstering statistical power by using different types of sampling variances (Cheung, 2014; Van den Noortgate, López-López, Marín-Martínez, & Sánchez-Meca, 2012). To determine where the variation of the effect sizes is greatest, a three-level meta-analysis provides estimates for sampling variances at level 1, for within-study variances at level 2 and between-study variances at level 3 (Borenstein et al.,

2009; Konstantopoulos, 2011). To consider disparate measurements of self-congruity and their respective outcome variables across studies, a random effects model is used (Hedges & Olkin, 1985; Hedges & Vevea, 1998).

For statistical analysis RStudio version 1.3.1056 (RStudio Team, 2020) and the R package metafor (Viechtbauer, 2010) are used. A 95% confidence interval is used for significance testing. To address the probability of unreasonable significance, the adjustment by Knapp and Hartung (2003) is used. Missing values are excluded.

4.6. Main effect analysis

To assess the main effect, a three-level random effects model is fitted to the data, thus assessing the effect size of the correlation for self-congruity and consumer purchase behavior. Hence, the mean effect size is generated using an average of Fisher's Z_r coefficients, weighted by an inverse variance component entailing sampling variance and between study variance.

4.7. Heterogeneity

To assess heterogeneity for the three-level structure I^2 is used according to the Cochrane Collaboration's Guide (Higgins & Green, 2011). Heterogeneity of effect size estimates from individual studies is assessed using Cochran's Q -test for the moderator analyses (Cochran, 1954).

Since Q is assumed to follow χ^2 , it should grant inferential tests for heterogeneity. As the null hypothesis supports homogeneity of the effect size distribution, a significant Q -test supports the plausibility of investigating moderating variables for heterogeneous effect size distribution (Aguirre-Rodríguez et al. 2012; Hoaglin, 2016). To estimate the parameters that describe the variance of the estimated true scores for within studies (level 2) and between-studies (level 3), the restricted maximum likelihood estimation method (REML) is used (Viechtbauer, 2010). The total amount of heterogeneity (τ^2) in true effects consists of level 2 variance (σ_1^2) and level 3 variance (σ_2^2). Two one-sided log-likelihood ratio tests with a null hypothesis indicating zero variance test the significance

of σ^2_1 and σ^2_2 . A significant log-likelihood suggests consideration of within- and between- study variance in the model. Furthermore, the intraclass correlation coefficient (*ICC*), within a study indicates whether true effects are correlatively interlinked with each other, hence the need of a three-level structure (Assink & Wibbelink, 2016).

To assess the proportion of total variability, ascribed to heterogeneity among true effects, I^2 was used (Viechtbauer, 2010). I^2 was adapted for a random effects model with three level structure according to Cheung (2011). According to this adaptation, heterogeneity can be estimated using three levels of proportions of total variation of true effects, resulting in $I^2 \geq 25\%$ for small, $I^2 \geq 50\%$ for medium and $I^2 \geq 75\%$ for high heterogeneity (Higgins, 2003).

4.8. Moderator analyses

Moderator variables influence the relationship between the self-congruity effect and consumer behavior, leading to effect size variability. Heterogeneous effect sizes manifest themselves in significant Q -scores. As a consequence, significant Q -scores support the probability of influencing moderator variables.

To assess the significance of moderators and interaction effects, omnibus tests under random effects assumption are conducted (Aguirre-Rodriguez et al., 2012). A moderator analysis assesses the significance of a moderator and its influence. During the moderator analyses, categorical moderators are dummy coded and included into a three-level meta-regression model. The socialness motive is used to generate subgroups to evaluate the interaction for the socialness motive and cultural setting, using each one of the subgroups (Assink & Wibbelink, 2016; Viechtbauer, 2010).

5. Results

5.1. Study and sample characteristics

The meta-analysis includes 177 manuscripts, containing 199 studies, published from 1974 to 2020, with a mode of 21 manuscripts (12%) published in 2020. 91% of the manuscripts are journal articles, 5% doctoral dissertations, 3% conference papers and 2% master theses. Altogether each manuscript contains 1 to 38 effect sizes ($M = 4.17$), resulting in a total of 827 effect sizes (see Appendix D). The sample sizes for the different studies included in the manuscripts range from 41 to 6229 with a mean of 359.9 sample sizes and a total sample size of $N = 78095$. 82 (28%) of the samples were collected in the United states, while 12 (6%) samples were collected in the United Kingdom and 12 (6%) in Taiwan. 77 (35%) samples were composed of mainly subjects from the United States, 12 (6%) from China and 7 (5%) from Taiwan. Mean sample age ranges from 22.5 to 49, with an overall mean age of 30.06 ($SD = 8.45$). Gender distribution is mostly equal with slightly more female participants with 55.21% and 44.79% ($SD = 20.25$) of male participants.

From the total 827 effect sizes, 508 (61%) effect sizes assess pre-purchase behavior, while 319 (39%) assess post-purchase behavior. As specific outcomes, studies report intention most frequently with 29%, followed by attitude with 20% and loyalty (9%).

5.2. Main effects analysis

A significant bivariate main effect is found for the self-congruity effect and consumer decision making ($r = .394$ ($p < .001$, 95% CI [0.369, 0.419], $SE = .013$)), confirming a positive correlation. See Appendix E for the funnel plot and appendix F for the forest plot.

5.3. Heterogeneity

Q -test for heterogeneity indicates significant variation with $Q(282) = 28189.552$, $p < .001$. Moreover, variance components $\sigma^2_1 = 0.018$ ($\chi^2(1) = 4759.32$, $p < .001$) and $\sigma^2_2 = 0.024$ ($\chi^2(1) = 291.76$, $p < .001$) are significant (see Appendix G). Intraclass correlation $\rho = .43$ show a weak correlation of underlying

true effects within studies. Total heterogeneity is divided into $I^2 = 41.00\%$ of within study variance level 2 and $I^2 = 55.24\%$ of between study variance at level 3. Small heterogeneity of total variance is shown by sampling variance of $I^2 = 3.75\%$.

5.4. Hypothesis 1: Product stimulus abstraction

The omnibus test ($F(1, 83) = 0.00, p = 0.996$) for the moderator product stimulus abstraction does not show any significant results. Product class ($r = .39$) does not have stronger effects on the self-congruity effect than brand name ($r = .39$). As a consequence, hypothesis 1 has to be rejected. The test for residual heterogeneity shows significant results ($Q(827) = 27179.55, p < .00$).

5.5. Hypothesis 2: Involvement into the decision-making process

The omnibus test ($F(1, 82) = 9.114, p = .003$) for the moderator involvement into the decision-making process shows significant results, indicating a significant for the moderator involvement into the decision-making process. As a result, high involvement into the decision-making process ($r = .40$) shows significant stronger effects than low involvement into the decision making process ($r = .35$), confirming hypothesis 2. Moreover the test for residual heterogeneity is significant ($Q(827) = 26048.58, p < .001$).

5.6. Hypothesis 3: Impression formation process

The omnibus test ($F(1, 824) = 1.33, p = 0.249$) for the impression formation process is non-significant indicating no significant differences between piecemeal ($r = .38$) or holistic product stimuli ($r = .41$). Hypothesis 3 has to be rejected. The test for residual heterogeneity is significant ($Q(824) = 27094.70, p < .001$).

5.7. Hypothesis 4: Impression formation process x involvement in the decision-making process interaction

The omnibus test ($F(3, 825) = 2.87, p = 0.036$) shows significant results. However, low involvement in the decision making does not show significantly stronger self-congruity effects with holistic ($r = .36$) than piecemeal ($r = .34$) processing. High involvement in the decision making shows significantly stronger self-congruity effects with holistic ($r = .39$) than with piecemeal ($r = .37$) processing, rejecting hypothesis 4. The test for residual heterogeneity is significant ($Q(825) = 26775.32, p < .001$)

5.8. Hypothesis 5: Product stimulus abstraction x impression formation process interaction

The omnibus test for the interaction between product stimulus abstraction and the impression formation process is non-significant ($F(3, 825) = 1.68, p = 0.171$). Product class stimuli does not produce a significant stronger self-congruity effect under holistic ($r = .42$) than piecemeal ($r = .35$) processing. Brand self-congruity evaluations do not produce significantly stronger effects under piecemeal ($r = .38$) than holistic processing ($r = .42$). Thus, hypothesis 5 is rejected. The test for residual heterogeneity is significant ($Q(825) = 26555.03, p < .001$).

5.9. Hypothesis 6: Product stimulus abstraction x involvement in the decision-making process interaction

The interaction between product stimulus abstraction and involvement in the decision-making process does not have a significant omnibus test ($F(3, 825) = 1.78, p = 0.150$). As a consequence, product class self-congruity evaluations do not show stronger effects under low ($r = .35$) than high involvement in the decision-making process ($r = .37$). Also, brand self-congruity evaluations do not show significantly stronger effects under high ($r = .39$) than low involvement in the decision-making process ($r = .36$). Hypothesis 6 has to be rejected. Test for residual heterogeneity is significant ($Q(825) = 26845.38, p < .001$).

5.10. Hypothesis 7: Involvement with product class

Moderators of the self-congruity effect on consumer decision-making

The omnibus test ($F(1, 827) = 4.44, p = 0.035$) for the moderator involvement with product class is significant. Low involvement with product class ($r = .39$) shows a significantly stronger effect than high involvement with product class $r = .38$, confirming hypothesis 7. The test for residual heterogeneity is significant ($Q(825) = 27094.00, p < .001$).

5.11. Hypothesis 8: Consumer knowledge

The omnibus test ($F(1, 826) = 7.09, p < 0.001$) for consumer knowledge is highly significant. Low ($r = .39$) and high knowledge ($r = .39$) show significantly stronger effects than moderate knowledge ($r = .33$). There is no significant difference for high and low knowledge. Hypothesis 8 is therefore confirmed. The test for residual heterogeneity is significant ($Q(826) = 24598.35, p < .001$).

5.12. Hypothesis 9: direct versus indirect measure

The omnibus test ($F(1, 827) = 91.95, p < .01$) for the moderator direct versus indirect measure shows significant results. Direct measure ($r = .46$) shows a significantly stronger effect than indirect measure ($r = .25$), confirming hypothesis 9. The test for residual heterogeneity is significant ($Q(827) = 23977.49, p < .01$).

5.13. Hypothesis 10: Cultural setting \times socialness motive interaction

The interaction of cultural setting and the socialness motive does not show any significant results with a performed meta-analysis of $F(1, 660) = 0.244, p = .622$ for the private subset and $F(1, 49) = 1.737, p = .194$ for the public subset, hence the hypothesis 10 is rejected. The tests for heterogeneity are significant for the private ($Q(660) = 20575.54, p < .001$) and the public subset ($Q(49) = 542.669, p < .001$).

5.14. Hypothesis 11: product conspicuousness \times socialness motive interaction

The omnibus test for the interaction of product conspicuousness and the socialness motive does not show significant results ($F(3, 825) = 1.14, p = .33$). There is no significant difference under the high

socialness motive for products consumed conspicuously ($r = .38$) and inconspicuously ($r = .38$). For the low socialness motive there is no significant difference for conspicuously ($r = .38$) and inconspicuously ($r = .40$) consumed products either. Hypothesis 11 can not be confirmed. The test for heterogeneity is significant ($Q(825) = 26165.12, p < .01$).

5.15. Hypothesis 12: Response mode \times enhancement motive interaction

The omnibus test for the interaction effect between the response mode and enhancement motive is non-significant ($F(3, 825) = 0.11, p = .95$). Self-congruity evaluations under high enhancement motive do not show significant stronger effects for judgement-type decisions ($r = .40$) than for brand choice decisions ($r = .40$). Self-congruity evaluations under low enhancement motive do not show significantly stronger effects for brand choice-type decisions ($r = .40$) than for judgement-type decisions ($r = .39$). Hypothesis 12 has to be rejected. The test for heterogeneity is significant ($Q(825) = 26895.62, p < .01$).

6. Discussion

Based on prior research, the current meta-analysis investigated the relation between the self-congruity effect and consumer behavior on symbolic brand consumption and its potential moderators. Aguirre-Rodriguez et al. (2012) and Sahin (2019) provided evidence for the self-congruity effect in consumer decision-making as well as for several moderators. In this updated meta-analysis, the three-level-random-effects model proposed by Sahin (2019), was used to analyse the self-congruity study used 199 studies published from 1974 to 2020 with a total of 78095 participants, to provide a more profound understanding of the self-congruity effect.

The results confirmed a significant main effect for the self-congruity effect and consumer decision making with a correlation of $r = .394$, reproducing the moderate correlations found by Aguirre-Rodriguez et al. (2012) and Sahin (2019). Hence the self-congruity effect is explaining

approximately 15% of variance across pre- and post-purchase behavior using the self-congruity effect. Furthermore, tests for heterogeneity provide evidence for considerable amounts of unexplained within- and between-study variance, suggesting possible moderator effects.

The moderator analysis for the product stimulus abstraction did not show any differences for product class stimuli and brand stimuli (H_1). As a consequence, the significantly stronger self-congruity effect suggested by Aguirre-Rodriguez et al. (2012) could not be confirmed. As they stated, product class stimuli emerge from more abstract product attributes, hence being much more comparable to the self-image of a consumer's self-image than brand stimuli. As a result, product class stimuli should have stronger self-congruity effects than brand stimuli. However, Sahin (2019) did find marginally non-significantly stronger self-congruity effects under brand stimuli than product class stimuli. Covering studies from a large time frame, the present meta-analysis lacks the sensibility to capture any changes for the product stimulus abstraction moderator. Considering Aguirre-Rodriguez et al. (2012) found stronger self-congruity effects for product class stimuli, other factors may have strengthened the self-congruity effect for brand stimuli during a later time period. To further clarify the moderating effect of the product stimulus abstraction, a more in-depth analysis using smaller time spans could be useful.

Contrary to hypothesis 2, self-congruity effect under high involvement in the decision-making was significantly stronger than under low involvement in the decision-making process. Aguirre-Rodriguez et al. (2012) did not find any significant moderator effects for the corresponding moderator cognitive elaboration. However, Sahin (2019) found a non-significantly stronger effect for high involvement in the decision-making process than low involvement in the decision making process, indicating a similar trend to the present result. Since the expected effect was contradicted, the theoretical assumption for involvement in the decision-making process could not be confirmed. As such, the self-congruity effect does not seem to serve as a decision heuristic for on-the-spot ratings. It could be possible that the self-congruity does need more cognitive elaboration than expected, hence the stronger effect for high involvement in the decision-making process. Involvement in the

decision-making process should be further explored as a moderator the better understand the underlying process and theoretical implications.

Impression formation process did not yield any significant results. The self-congruity effect was not stronger for holistic than for piecemeal stimuli, rejecting hypothesis 3. Even though Aguirre-Rodriguez et al. (2012) did find a significantly stronger effect for holistic than for piecemeal stimuli, Sahin (2019) suggested a non-significantly stronger effect for holistic stimuli. Unlike both findings, results indicate a non-significantly stronger self-congruity effect for piecemeal than for holistic stimuli. As theory states, holistic processing is likely to produce a stronger self-congruity effect, because it not only requires less effort, but also allows consumers to better compare their brand image to a product image (Aguirre-Rodriguez et al., 2012; Fiske, 1982; Fiske & Pavelchak, 1984). However, the moderator effect for the impression formation process and involvement in the decision-making process interaction was significantly stronger for high involvement in the decision-making process under holistic than piecemeal processing, rejecting hypothesis 4. According to Sahin (2019), the processing style has to be distinguished from the processing ability. Even though there are different processing styles, not everyone is capable of performing each processing style. The processing ability is therefore crucial for performing a certain processing style. Smith and Baron (1981) specified that less intelligent individuals were more likely to use their preferred processing style in spite of the given task characteristics. High involvement in the decision making requires a high level of cognitive elaboration. It should therefore provide a stronger self-congruity effect with the processing that requires a higher level of cognitive elaboration as well. As a consequence, it can be argued that holistic processing requires more cognitive resources than assumed, explaining why hypothesis 3 could not be confirmed. The impression formation process and involvement in the decision-making process interaction did not have any other significant effects.

For hypothesis 5, no significant differences were found for the product stimulus and impression formation process interaction, not confirming the findings of the original meta-analysis by Aguirre-Rodriguez et al. (2012). Correlations for product class stimuli were non-significantly stronger

under holistic than piecemeal processing, indicating a similar trend to Aguirre-Rodriguez et al. (2012). Brand stimuli however did not show any particular differences for holistic or piecemeal processing. Since Aguirre-Rodriguez et al. (2012) found significantly stronger effects for brand self-congruity evaluations under piecemeal than holistic processing and Sahin (2019) found significantly stronger effects for brand self-congruity evaluations under holistic than piecemeal processing, both findings are contradictory. The moderator effect should therefore be further investigated to better understand the interaction.

The Product stimulus abstraction and involvement in the decision-making process interaction did not show any significant results, rejecting hypothesis 6. Product class or brand self-congruity evaluations did not show any differences under low or high involvement in the decision-making process. These results are congruent with Sahin (2019).

Involvement with product class had stronger self-congruity effects for low than high involvement with product class, contradicting hypothesis 7. Even though the differences were only marginal, they were significant. Current findings contradict theoretical assumptions that high involvement with product class should lead consumers to integrate a product into their self-concept, leading to a stronger self-congruity effect (Beerli et al., 2007; Hou, Lin, & Morais, 2005; Prayag & Ryan, 2012). To better understand involvement with product class and its underlying processes, future research should be dedicated to the moderator.

Moderator tests for consumer knowledge were highly significant, confirming hypothesis 8. The self-congruity effect was stronger for high and low knowledge than for moderate knowledge. Theoretical assumptions, that consumers with low knowledge use the self-congruity effect as a decision heuristic to evaluate brands holistically could therefore be confirmed. Furthermore, consumers with higher knowledge evaluate products on a higher abstraction level, using existing knowledge structures which results in a stronger self-congruity effect (Kim, 2015; Sirgy et al., 2016). Even though Sahin (2019) found a significant effect for low and medium knowledge, he was not able to confirm the effect for high knowledge. The present meta-analysis can confirm consumer knowledge

as a moderator for the self-congruity effect. However, to properly explain the underlying processes of the moderating effect of consumer knowledge, future research should further investigate consumer knowledge in its operationalisation and its different domains.

As expected, hypothesis 9 for the moderator direct versus indirect measure was confirmed. Direct measure of self-congruity resulted in a significantly stronger effect than indirect measure. As stated by Sirgy et al. (1997), the direct measure of self-congruity is much more precise in measuring the corresponding construct. Moreover, the semantic differentials used by the indirect measure often are composed of a standard set of product images (Malhotra, 1981; Sirgy, 1982; Sirgy, 1985). As a consequence, they do not measure a product image in its entirety resulting in an error in measurement. The direct measure is therefore much more precise as confirmed by the current meta-analysis.

For the interaction of cultural setting and socialness motive no significant differences could be found, rejecting hypothesis 10. A major limitation for the moderator interaction is the cultural setting as a moderator lies in its operationalisation. Even though Hofstede's cultural index is one of the most frequently used indexes, it lacks systematic data and conceptual clarity (Voronov & Singer, 2002). As a population can be very heterogeneous in its composition (Ratner & Hui, 2003) and as each population can follow specific developments due to changing trends (Jones, 2007), it is challenging to represent a whole population by a simple index. To fully explore the influence of the cultural context a fully in-depth analysis could therefore be useful. Future studies could therefore revisit the moderator interaction of the cultural setting and the socialness motive using a more precise measurement of cultural setting.

The interaction effect of product conspicuousness and socialness motive was non-significant. Even though the self-congruity effect should theoretically be stronger for public self-motives for conspicuous product consumption than for inconspicuous product consumption (Berger & Heath, 2007, 2008) and for private self-motives for inconspicuous product consumption than for conspicuous consumption (Sedikides, 1993), hypothesis 11 had to be rejected. One limitation of the moderator may be the operationalisation of product conspicuousness. Although product conspicuousness can be

defined clearly, it is mainly based on assumptions of where and how individuals consume a certain product. As such there may be different settings in which products can be consumed, creating heterogeneity for the moderator. Future studies could further explore this moderator interaction by systematically manipulating product conspicuousness.

The moderator effect for the response mode and enhancement motive interaction was non-significant, rejecting hypothesis 12. There were no significant differences for self-enhancement motives or consistency motives with either brand choice-type or judgement-type decisions. According to Sirgy (1978), actual or ideal self-congruity evaluations depend on either judgement or brand choice type decisions. For actual self-congruity evaluations choice type decisions should have a stronger effect than judgement type decisions. For ideal self-congruity evaluations judgement type decisions should have a stronger effect than choice type decisions. However, no specific effect could be found. Again, more research should be done at study level to further exploit those moderators and enable a more precise measurement at a meta-analytic level.

In summary, the current meta-analysis explored the self-congruity effect on consumer decision-making and its moderators, based on the original meta-analysis from Aguirre-Rodriguez et al. (2012) and an extended meta-analysis from Sahin (2019). While a significant main effect of the self-congruity effect on consumer decision-making could be confirmed, not all proposed moderators were significant. Confirmed moderators from Aguirre-Rodriguez et al. (2012) were involvement in the decision-making process. The moderators product stimulus abstraction, impression formation process and the interaction effects involvement in the decision-making process with impression formation process, impression formation process with product stimulus abstraction and involvement in the decision-making process with product stimulus abstraction could not be confirmed. For the additional moderators, involvement with product class, consumer knowledge and direct versus indirect measure had significant effects. Non-significant effects were found for the interaction effects socialness motive and cultural setting, socialness motive and product conspicuousness and

enhancement motive and dependent measure. As a consequence, some findings could be strengthened, while depicting other research gaps.

7. Limitations and future research

Even though literature search has been carried out across multiple databases, using selected keywords, there may be a risk of insufficient representativity of the available literature. In literature, consumer behavior is represented by multiple facets, using a multiplicity of different terms. Those facets not only change for different products but also evolve with time. New trends in product and brand marketing establish new facets for consumers that have to be captured during literature search. As a result, it is challenging to capture consumer behavior in its entirety by only using selected keywords for the literature search. There is a risk of missing a specific keyword and therefore omitting a particular set of manuscripts and limiting the representativity of the manuscripts.

Furthermore, the current meta-analysis did not detect any temporal patterns. Considering the differences in findings of Aguirre-Rodriguez et al. (2012) and Sahin (2019), both analysing manuscripts from different time frames, temporal patterns may be essential in fully understanding the self-congruity effect. For instance, there are not only technological advancements but also marketing trends that influence consumer attitudes. Consequently, consumer behavior is following constantly evolving brand and product trends, thus influencing the self-congruity effect over time. Hence, marketing research has to adapt and change over time, with changing temporal patterns, therefore developing new methods (Malter et al., 2020). As a result, the present meta-analysis may lack the sensitivity to represent the self-congruity effect on consumer behavior in its complexity.

Another limitation is the availability of the literature the meta-analysis is based on. Even though there is a large pool of literature in consumer research exploring the self-congruity effect, there is a potential need for studies explicitly exploring the different moderators of self-congruity evaluations. Some moderators like product conspicuousness are not often represented explicitly in studies, therefore lacking precise operationalisation and measurement and resulting in potentially inaccurate results. Furthermore, most of the studies consist of cross-sectional designs. Experimental designs would allow to draw conclusions in respect of causality and to further gain insight into inconsistencies for reported results (Aguirre-Rodriguez et al., 2012; Bauer et al., 2006).

Future research should thus focus on thoroughly exploring the different moderators of the self-congruity effect, by using precise operationalization and measurement. Furthermore, more studies with experimental designs can be conducted to better understand causal relations between each

moderator and the self-congruity effect. A larger pool of available literature will be useful for conducting future meta-analyses and discovering other moderators.

With regards to future meta-analyses, temporal patterns should be examined to increase the sensitivity of the results. Temporal effects are easy to incorporate in the analytical plan and allow to explore possible changes of the relationships of the self-congruity effect over time (Kayande & Bhargava, 1994). Regarding the differences in results by Aguirre-Rodriguez et al. (2012) and Sirgy (2019), temporal patterns could provide a possible explanation.

To conclude, the self-congruity effect on consumer behavior is far from being fully understood. There are however several confirmed moderators who lay the foundation for future research. With further insights, marketing practitioners will be able to use the self-effect more effectively, making self-congruity research even more pertinent.

8. References

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10. Appendix A: Request for access to manuscripts

Subject: Access to your manuscript [insert manuscript's name here]

Dear [insert author's name here],

I am a graduate student at the University of Trier working on my thesis. My thesis research involves a meta-analysis of self-congruity studies. Specifically, my research is an extension of a meta-analysis study conducted by Aguirre-Rodriguez, Bosnjak & Sirgy (2012).

The exact reference is:

- Aguirre-Rodriguez, A., Bosnjak, M., & Sirgy, M. J. (2012). Moderators of the self-congruity effect on consumer decision-making: A meta-analysis. *Journal of Business Research*, 65, 1179- 1188.

Unfortunately, I do not have access to your manuscript [insert manuscript's name here].

I would be grateful if you could provide access to the manuscript to me to be included in the analyses. Thank you very much for your kind support. If you have any questions about this, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Kind regards,

Luc Ulmerich

11. Appendix B: Coding manual

Variable	Coding system
1. Report	
General information	
Date form completed [date]	Register the date of completing the form (dd.mm.yyyy)
Coder ID [coderID]	Assigned name of the person extracting the data
Study characteristics	
Manuscript [manuscrID]	Assign unique identification number to manuscript (1, 2, 3, etc.)
Bibliographic reference [citat]	Complete citation in APA form
Author [author]	Name the first author of the manuscript
Year [year]	Year of publication of the manuscript
Title [title]	Title of the manuscript
Type of publication [pub.type]	Specify what type of publication the study is 1 = journal article 2 = doctoral dissertation 3 = thesis 4 = book or book chapter 5 = conference paper 6 = technical report 7 = pre-print 8 = other
Notes	
Notes [notes1]	If any peculiarities or ambiguities in the extraction of the data have occurred, please specify.
Comments [comments1]	If any peculiarities or other interesting aspects have been explored or described in the study, especially regarding the content, please specify.
2. Study	
Manuscript ID [manuscrID]	Report identification number of the manuscript (see report section)
Study ID [studyID]	Assign a unique identification number to each study (1, 2, 3, etc.)
Study design [design]	Specify the research design of the study, in terms of the data that make up the effect size 1 = descriptive (e.g. mean and standard deviation, including case study)

Moderators of the self-congruity effect on consumer decision-making

2 = correlational (relationship between variables, e.g. correlation coefficient r ; including case-control study, observational study)
 3 = semi-experimental (e.g. field experiment, quasi-experiment)
 4 = experimental (experiment with random assignment)
 5 = review (literature review, systematic review)
 6 = meta-analytic (meta-analysis)
 7 = other (e.g. combination of longitudinal and experiment, etc.)

Notes

Notes [notes2]

If any peculiarities or ambiguities in the extraction of the data have occurred, please specify.

Comments [comments2]

If any peculiarities or other interesting aspects have been explored or described in the study, especially regarding the content, please specify.

3. Sample

Study ID [studyID]

Report identification number of the study (see study section)

Sample ID [sampleID]

Assign a unique identification number to each (sub-)sample. Of one study examines multiple (sub-)samples, each gets its own identification number and its own line in the the coding scheme with its own sample ID

Sample size [n]

Number of subjects

Country of data collection [countryD]

Name the country in which the data collection took place. Code the best information available.

Country of sample [countryS]

Name the country most of the sample is coming from. Code the best information available.

Region of data collection [regionD]

Name the region in which data collection took place. Code the best information available. Based on the “standard country or area codes for statistical use (M49)” by the United Nations (1 = North America; 2 = Central America; 3 = Caribbean; 4 = South America; 5 = Western Europe; 6 = Northern Europe; 7 = Southern

Moderators of the self-congruity effect on consumer decision-making

	Europe; 8 = Eastern Europe; 9 = Northern Africa; 10 = Western Africa; 11 = Middle Africa; 12 = Eastern Africa; 13 = Southern Africa; 14 = Western Asia; 15 = Central Asia; 16 = Southern Asia; 17 = Southeastern Asia; 18 = Eastern Asia; 19 = Micronesia; 20 = Polynesia; 21 = Melanesia; 22 = Australia and New Zealand)
Region of sample [regionS]	Name the region most of the sample is coming From place. Code the best information Available. Based on the “standard country or area codes for statistical use (M49)” by the United Nations (1 = North America; 2 = Central America; 3 = Caribbean; 4 = South America; 5 = Western Europe; 6 = Northern Europe; 7 = Southern Europe; 8 = Eastern Europe; 9 = Northern Africa; 10 = Western Africa; 11 = Middle Africa; 12 = Eastern Africa; 13 = Southern Africa; 14 = Western Asia; 15 = Central Asia; 16 = Southern Asia; 17 = Southeastern Asia; 18 = Eastern Asia; 19 = Micronesia; 20 = Polynesia; 21 = Melanesia; 22 = Australia and New Zealand)
Sex of sample [sex.male]	Write the % of the proportion the male subjects in the sample.
Age of sample [age]	Write the average age of subjects in the sample. Code the best information available; estimate mean age from grad levels if necessary.
Standard deviation of age sample [ageSD]	Write the standard deviation of average age of subjects in the sample. Code the best information available.
Notes	
Notes [notes3]	If any peculiarities or ambiguities in the extraction of the data have occurred, please specify.
Comments [comments3]	If any peculiarities or other interesting aspects have been explored or described in the study, especially regarding the content, please specify.

4. Effect size

Sample ID [sampleID]	Report identification number of the (sub-)sample (see sample section).
Sample size [n]	Number of subjects
Effect size ID [esID]	Assign each effect size within a study a unique number. Number multiple effects sizes within a

Moderators of the self-congruity effect on consumer decision-making

	study sequentially, e.g. 1, 2, 3, 4, etc., each gets its own line in the coding scheme with its own es.id.
Page of effect size [es.page]	Page number where the data for this effect size can be found.
Independent variable [ind.var.]	Name the specific independent variable
Outcome variable [out.var]	Name the specific outcome variable
Numeric outcome variable [out.num]	Name the outcome variable using a numeric Value.
	1 = attachment
	2 = attitude
	3 = behavior
	4 = brand involvement
	5 = brand passion
	6 = brand response
	7 = commitment
	8 = familiarity
	9 = intention
	10 = intimacy
	11 = loyalty
	12 = motivation
	13 = passion
	14 = perception
	15 = preference
	16 = recommendation
	17 = satisfaction
	18 = trust
	19 = value
	20 = word-of-mouth
	21 = other
Outcome category [out.cat]	1 = pre-purchase
	2 = post-purchase
Correlation coefficient [r]	Correlation coefficient r of self-congruity and the respective consumer decision-making outcomes. If there is no correlation coefficient reported, specify the information in the next items and type NA in this item.
Other effect size type [es.type]	If there is a correlation coefficient reported in the last item, type NA, if the bivariate relationship between the variables is not specified with the correlation coefficient in the previous item, specify which information can

Moderators of the self-congruity effect on consumer decision-making

	<p>be used to calculate r. Try to use the following list for your description:</p> <p>1 = mean and standard deviation</p> <p>2 = F-value</p> <p>3 = t-test value</p> <p>4 = beta regression coefficient</p> <p>5 = other</p> <p>If there is a correlation coefficient reported in the last item, type NA, if the bivariate relationship between the variables is not specified with the correlation coefficient in the previous item, report the effect size.</p>
Other effect size [other.es]	
Moderators	
Product stimulus abstraction [m1.stim.abs]	<p>1 = brand name</p> <p>2 = product class name</p> <p>3 = other</p>
Involvement in the decision making process [m2.involv.dec]	<p>1 = low involvement in the decision-making process</p> <p>2 = high involvement in the decision-making process</p> <p>3 = other</p>
Impression formation process [m3.impr.for]	<p>1 = piecemeal</p> <p>2 = holistic</p> <p>3 = other</p>
Involvement with product class [m4.involv.pr]	<p>1 = low involvement with product class</p> <p>2 = high involvement with product class</p>
Consumer knowledge [m5.knowledge]	<p>1 = low knowledge</p> <p>2 = high knowledge</p> <p>3 = moderate knowledge</p> <p>4 = other</p>
Direct versus indirect measure [m6.measure]	<p>1 = direct measure</p> <p>2 = indirect measure</p> <p>3 = other</p>
Cultural setting [m7.culture]	0-100 IDV score (Hofstede insights)
Self-motive socialness [m8.msocial]	<p>1 = private-type facets</p> <p>2 = public-type facets</p> <p>3 = misc (both)</p>
Degree of self-enhancement sought [m9.msselfenh]	<p>1 = actual-type facets</p> <p>2 = ideal-type facets</p> <p>3 = misc (both)</p>
Interactions	
Impression formation process x involvement in the	1 = holistic & low involvement in the decision

Moderators of the self-congruity effect on consumer decision-making

decision-making process interaction [m10.interac1]	making-process 2 = holistic & high involvement in the decision-making-process 3 = piecemeal & low involvement in the decision-making process 4 = piecemeal & high involvement in the decision-making process 5 = other groups
Product stimulus abstraction x impression formation process interaction [m11.interac2]	1 = product class & piecemeal 2 = product class & holistic 3 = brand name & piecemeal 4 = brand name & holistic 5 = other groups
Product stimulus abstraction x involvement in the decision-making process interaction [m12.interac3]	1 = product class & low involvement in the decision-making process 2 = product class & high involvement in the decision-making process 3 = brand name & low involvement in the decision-making process 4 = brand name & high involvement in the decision-making process 5 = other groups
Product conspicuousness x self-motive socialness interaction [m13.interac4]	1 = conspicuous & private-type facets 2 = conspicuous & public-type facets 3 = inconspicuous & private-type facets 4 = inconspicuous & public-type facets 5 = other groups
Response mode x enhancement motive interaction [m14.interac5]	1 = judgement-type decisions & actual-type facets 2 = judgement - type decisions & ideal-type facets 3 = choice-type decisions & actual-type facets 4 = choice-type decisions & ideal-type facets 5 = other groups

Notes

Notes [notes4]

If any peculiarities or ambiguities in the extraction of the data have occurred, please specify.

Comments [comments4]

If any peculiarities or other interesting aspects have been explored or described in the study, especially regarding the content, please specify.

12. Appendix C: Moderators, conceptualizations and operationalizations

Moderator variable name	Moderator Levels	Conceptualization	Operationalization
Self-motive socialness	Private self-motives	The motivation to seek brands congruent with private self-concept facets (actual and ideal facets) to maintain or enhance the private facets for intra-personal acceptance purposes	Measuring self-congruity as correspondence between brand personality and actual/ideal self- concept.
	Public self-motives	The motivation to seek brands congruent with public self-concept facets (social and ideal social facets) to maintain or enhance the public facets for social acknowledgement/acceptance purposes	Measuring self-congruity as correspondence between brand personality and social/ideal social self-concept.
Degree of self-enhancement sought	Consistency type self-motives	The motivation to seek brands congruent with actual self-concept facets (actual and social facets) to maintain consistency with one's actual or social self-view.	Measuring self-congruity as correspondence between brand personality and actual/social self-concept
	Enhancement type self-motives	The motivation to seek brands congruent with ideal self-concept facets (ideal and ideal social facets) to enhance one's self-view by aspiring to achieve one's ideal or ideal social self-view.	Measuring self-congruity as correspondence between brand personality and ideal/ideal social self-concept.
Brand personality facet	Brand-as-person personality	Personality traits associated with the anthropomorphic perception of the brand as a person with human personality traits.	Measuring self-congruity as correspondence between self-concept and brand-as-person personality.

Moderators of the self-congruity effect on consumer decision-making

	Brand-user image	Personal traits associated with the stereotypical brand user perceived to represent the brand personality.	Measuring self-congruity as correspondence between self-concept and stereotypical brand-user personality.
Product stimulus abstraction level	Product-class stimuli	A more abstract stimulus because of the abstract mental category (product class schema) the consumer must retrieve from memory to evaluate product class stimuli	Measuring self-congruity as correspondence between participant self-concept and a named product class's personality.
	Brand stimuli	A less abstract stimulus because of the more concrete mental category (brand schema) the consumer must retrieve from memory to evaluate brand stimuli.	Measuring self-congruity as correspondence between self-concept and a named brand's personality.
Involvement in the decision-making process	Low cognitive elaboration	The consumer expends less cognitive effort while evaluating stimulus personality.	The measure asks participants to rate self-congruity without asking them to elaborate about any product usage context. (e.g., "Do you consider Brand XYZ: cool? sophisticated?")
	High cognitive elaboration	The consumer expends greater cognitive effort while evaluating stimulus personality.	The measure asks participants to rate self-congruity by first asking them to elaborate about the product usage context by instructing participants to visualize the product usage situation prior to evaluating the brand/product (e.g., "Imagine yourself driving a Brand XYZ sports car. Is Brand XYZ: cool? sophisticated?")
Involvement with product class	Low involvement	The consumer does not consider a product as belonging to his self-concept.	A relative lack of active information seeking about brands, little comparison among product attributes, no special preference among different brands

Moderators of the self-congruity effect on consumer decision-making

Impression formation process type	High involvement	The consumer considers a product as belonging to his self-concept.	Active information seeking about brand, comparison among product attributes and preference among different brands
	Holistic processing	The consumer forms a self-congruity evaluation based on the perception of brand personality as a composite rather than as the sum of individual personality traits.	Measuring self-congruity with global measurement items (e.g., “To what extent do you see that most people who use Brand XYZ are very much like you?”)
	Piecemeal processing	The consumer forms a self-congruity evaluation based on the perception of brand personality as the sum of individual personality traits.	Measuring self-congruity with pre-established personality trait lists. (e.g., Is Brand XYZ/Are you: cool? sophisticated?)
Consumer knowledge	Low knowledge	The consumer uses a holistic decision heuristic to rate a brand or product, since he has no other information at disposal.	The consumer has never heard about a product or brand before
	Moderate knowledge	The consumer considers functional aspects for product evaluation using the product information he has.	The consumer knows a product or brand.
Cultural setting	High knowledge	The consumer has formed an abstract image, to rate a product, based on a vast amount of product information.	The product is very well known to the consumer.
	Individualistic Culture	The consumer has an independent self-construal and maintains a consistent self-concept.	Hofstede’s individualism index (IDV) on sample level with a score from 0 – 100

Moderators of the self-congruity effect on consumer decision-making

	Collectivistic culture	The consumer shapes the self-concept in terms of group membership or important relationships.	Hofstede's individualism index (IDV) on sample level with a score from 0 – 100
Product conspicuousness	Low product conspicuousness	Products congruent with the actual and ideal self-congruity, by having a low public profile.	The product is being consumed in a more private context.
	High product conspicuousness	Products congruent with the social and ideal social self-congruity, by having a high public profile.	The product is being consumed in a public context.
Direct vs indirect measure	Direct measure	Self-congruity is being measured in its entirety.	Self-congruity is being measured as a construct.
	Indirect measure	Self-congruity is being measured convergently.	Self-congruity is being derived from other constructs.
Response mode	Judgement-type decision	The consumer's liking towards a brand is expressed by preference judgement type ratings.	The measure is being taken by an explicit rating (e.g. questionnaires).
	Choice-type decision	The consumer's liking towards a brand is expressed by brand choice type ratings.	The measure is being taken by observing purchasing behaviors.

13. Appendix D: Overview to moderator levels reflected in included self-congruity studies

Author & Publication Year	Journal title	Study ID	Product stimulus abstraction	Involvement in the decision making	Impression formation process	Involvement with product class	Consumer knowledge	Direct vs indirect measure	Cultural setting	Self-motive socialness	Degree of self-enhancement sought
Aaker, J. (1999)	Journal of Marketing Research	1	Brand name (7)	High involvement (7)	Piecemeal (7)	High involvement (7)	High knowledge (7)	Indirect measure (7)	91 (7)	Private (7)	Actual (7)
Abdallat, M. A. (2012)	Journal of Tourism and Hospitality	2	Brand name (4)	Low involvement (4)	Holistic (4)	High involvement (4)	High knowledge (4)	Direct measure (4)	89 (4)	Private (4)	Actual (2) Ideal (2)
Abel, J. I., Buff, C. L., & O'Neill, J. C. (2013)	Sport, Business and Management : An International Journal	3	Brand name (2)	Low involvement (2)	Piecemeal (2)	High involvement (2)	Moderate knowledge (2)	Indirect measure (2)	91 (2)	Private (2)	Actual (1) Ideal (1)
Adis, A.A., Kim, H., Majid, M.R., Osman, Z., Razli, I.A., & Ing, G.P. (2015)	Asian Social Science	4	Product class (2)	Low involvement (2)	Piecemeal (2)	High involvement (2)	High knowledge (2)	Indirect measure (2)	91 (2)	Private (2)	Actual (1) Ideal (1)
Ahn, J. (2019)	International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality	5	Product class (4)	High involvement (4)	Piecemeal (4)	High involvement (4)	High knowledge (4)	Direct measure (4)	91 (4)	Private (1)	Actual (2) Ideal (2)
Ajanovic, E., & Çizel,	Mediterranean Journal of	6	Brand name (2)	Low involvement	Piecemeal (2)	Low involvement	Low knowledge	Direct measure (2)	37 (2)	Private (2)	Actual (1) Ideal (1)

Moderators of the self-congruity effect on consumer decision-making

B. (2016)	Humanities	(2)	(2)	(2)	(2)	(2)	(2)	(2)	(2)
Aktan, M., & Chao, P. W. (2016)	Atlantic Marketing Journal	7	Brand name (1)	Low involvement (1)	Piecemeal (1)	High involvement (1)	Moderate knowledge (1)	Direct measure (1)	Private (1) Actual (1)
Albert, N., Ambroise, L., & Valette-Flurence, P. (2017)	Journal of Business Research	8	Brand name (4)	High involvement (4)	Piecemeal (4)	High involvement (4)	High knowledge (4)	Direct measure (4)	NA NA
Albertz, T. (2014)	Master's thesis, University of Amsterdam, Netherlands	9	Brand name (12)	High involvement (12)	Piecemeal (12)	Low involvement (12)	High knowledge (12)	Indirect measure (12)	Private (4) Public (4) Actual (12)
Alex, N. J., & Joseph, A. (2012)	Journal of Management	10	Brand name (8)	Low involvement (8)	Holistic (8)	Low involvement (8)	High knowledge (8)	Direct measure (8)	Private (8) Actual (4) Ideal (4)
Alguacil, M., Sánchez-García, J., & Valantine, I. (2020)	Sport in Society	11	Product class (4)	High involvement (4)	Holistic (4)	High involvement (4)	High knowledge (4)	Direct measure (4)	Private (4) Actual (4)
Ali, F., & Muqadas, S. (2015)	Pakistan Journal of Commerce and Social Sciences	12	Brand name (4)	NA	NA	High involvement (3)	High knowledge (3)	Direct measure (3)	NA Ideal (3)
Amiri Aghdaie, S. F., & Khatami, F.	International Journal of Marketing Studies	13	Brand name (2)	Low involvement (2)	NA	NA	NA	Direct measure (2)	Private (2) Actual (2)

Moderators of the self-congruity effect on consumer decision-making

(No. 1708)										
Branaghan, R. J., Hildebrand, E. A. (2011)	Journal of Consumer Behavior	25	Brand name (4)	High involvement (4)	Piecemeal (4)	High involvement (4)	Moderate knowledge (4)	Indirect measure (4)	NA	Private (4) Actual (1) Ideal (1)
Brannen, J., & Frisby, C. M. (2017)	Theoretical Economics Letters	26	Brand name (4)	High involvement (4)	Holistic (4)	NA	NA	Direct measure (4)	91 (4)	Actual (2) Ideal (2) Public (4)
Byun, K.-A., Dass, M., Kumar, P., & Kim, J. (2017)	Journal of Consumer Marketing	27	Brand name (1)	Low involvement (1)	Holistic (1)	High involvement (1)	High involvement (1)	Direct measure (1)	91 (1)	Actual (1) Private (1)
Carlson, B. D., & Donavan, D. T. (2013)	Journal of Sport Management	28	Brand name (2)	High involvement (2)	Piecemeal (2)	High involvement (2)	High knowledge (2)	Direct measure (2)	91 (1)	Actual (1) Private (1)
Casidy, R., Nuryana, A. N., Hati, S. R. H. (2015)	Asia Pacific Journal of Marketing	29	Brand name (1)	Low involvement (1)	Holistic (1)	High involvement (1)	Moderate knowledge (19)	NA	14 (1)	Actual (1) Public (1)
Cevallos, D. M., Alguacil, M., & Moreno, F. C. (2020)	Sustainability	30	Brand name (3)	Low involvement (3)	Holistic (3)	High involvement (3)	High knowledge (3)	Direct measure (3)	16 (3)	Actual (3) Private (3)
Chang, C. (2002)	Communication Research	31	Product class (2)	Low involvement (2)	Piecemeal (2)	High involvement (2)	Low knowledge (2)	Indirect measure (2)	17 (2)	Actual (2) Private (2)
Chang, C. (2012)	International Journal of Advertising	32	Brand name (4)	Low involvement (4)	Piecemeal (4)	Low involvement (2)	Low knowledge (4)	Indirect measure (4)	17 (4)	Actual (4) Private (4)

Moderators of the self-congruity effect on consumer decision-making

Chang, C.-H., King, B. E. M., 6 Shu, S.-T. (2020)	33	Journal of Vacation Marketing	Brand name (4)	Low involvement (4)	Piecemeal (4)	High involvement (4)	High knowledge (4)	Direct measure (4)	20 (4)	Private (4)	Actual (4)
Chebat, J.-C., Hedhli, K. E., & Sirgy, M. J. (2009)	34	Journal of Retailing and Consumer Services	Brand name (6)	High involvement (6)	Piecemeal (6)	High involvement (6)	High knowledge (6)	Direct measure (6)	91 (6)	Private (6)	Actual (6)
Chen, A., Peng, N., & Hung, K. (2015)	35	Annals Of Tourism Research	Brand name (3)	NA	NA	High involvement (3)	Moderate knowledge (3)	Direct measure (3)	17 (3)	Public (3)	NA
Chen, R., Zhou, Z., Zhan, G., & Zhou, N. (2020)	36	Journal of Destination Marketing & Management	Brand name (6)	High involvement (6)	Piecemeal (6)	High involvement (6)	High knowledge (6)	Direct measure (6)	20 (6)	Private (6)	Actual (6)
Chi, C., Pan, L., & Del Chiappa, G. (2018)	37	Journal Of Destination Marketing & Management	Brand name (3)	Low involvement (3)	Holistic (3)	High involvement (3)	NA	Direct measure (3)	71 (3)	NA	NA
Choi, H. (2013)	38	Doctoral dissertation, University of Georgia	Brand name (4)	High involvement (4)	Holistic (4)	High involvement (4)	Moderate knowledge (4)	Direct measure (4)	91 (4)	Private (4)	NA
Choi, S., & Rifon, N. (2012)	39	Psychology & Marketing	Brand name (6)	High involvement (6)	Piecemeal (6)	Low involvement (6)	Low knowledge (6)	Indirect measure (6)	91 (6)	Private (6)	Actual (3) Ideal (3)

Moderators of the self-congruity effect on consumer decision-making

Chon, K.-S., & Olsen, M. D. (1991)	Journal of the International Academy of Hospitality Research	40	Brand name (1)	High involvement (1)	Piecemeal (1)	High involvement (1)	High knowledge (1)	Direct measure (1)	91 (1)	Private (1)	NA
Chouk, I., & Mani, Z. (2019)	Journal of Services Marketing	41	Product class (1)	High involvement (1)	Piecemeal (1)	High involvement (1)	Low knowledge (1)	Direct measure (1)	71 (1)	Private (1)	Actual (1)
Cowart, K. O., Fox, G. L., & Wilson, A. E. (2008)	Psychology & Marketing	42	Product class (6)	Low involvement (6)	Holistic (6)	High involvement (6)	Moderate knowledge (6)	Direct measure (6)	91 (6)	Private (6)	Actual (6)
Daneshian, M., Dehnavi, H. D., & Moeinadin, M. (2014)	Walia Journal	43	Brand name (3)	Low involvement (3)	Piecemeal (3)	High involvement (3)	High knowledge (3)	Direct measure (3)	41 (3)	NA	Actual (3)
Ebrahim, R., Ghoneim, A., Irani, Z., & Fan, Y. (2016)	Journal of Marketing Management	44	Brand name (2)	Low involvement (2)	Piecemeal (1) Holistic (1)	High involvement (2)	Moderate knowledge (2)	Direct measure (2)	25 (2)	Private (2)	Actual (2)
Ekinci, Y., & Riley, M. (2003)	Journal of Retailing and Consumer Services	45	Brand name (16)	High involvement (16)	Piecemeal (16)	High involvement (16)	High knowledge (16)	Direct measure (16)	89 (16)	Private (16)	Actual (8) Ideal (8)
Ekinci, Y., Sirakaya-Turk, E., & Preciado, S. (2013)	Journal of Business Research	46	Brand name (3)	High involvement (3)	Holistic (3)	High involvement (3)	High knowledge (3)	Direct measure (3)	67 (3)	Private (3)	Actual (3)

Moderators of the self-congruity effect on consumer decision-making

El Hedhli, K., Zourrig, H., & Park, J. (2017)	Journal of Retailing and Consumer Services	47	Brand name (10)	Low involvement (10)	Piecemeal (10)	Low involvement (10)	High knowledge (10)	Direct measure (10)	91 (10)	Private (10)	Actual (10)
Fastoso, F., Bartikowski, B., & Wang, S. (2018)	Psychology & Marketing	48	Brand name (2)	Low involvement (2)	Holistic (2)	Low involvement (2)	High knowledge (2)	Direct measure (2)	20 (2)	Private (2)	Actual (1) Ideal (1)
Fettahioğlu, S., Eren, S., Fettahioğlu, Ö., & Bilginer, M. (2016)		49	Brand name (2)	Low involvement (2)	Holistic (2)	High involvement (2)	High knowledge (2)	Indirect measure (2)	37 (2)	Private (2)	Actual (2)
Fritz, K., Schoenmueller, V., & Bruhn, M. (2017)	European journal of marketing	50	Brand name (20)	Low involvement (20)	Holistic (20)	Low involvement (20)	Low knowledge (20)	Direct measure (20)	68 (20)	Private (20)	Actual (10) Ideal (10)
Fu, X., Kang, J., Hahn, J. J., & Witalla, J. (2020)	International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management	51	Brand name (7)	High involvement (7)	Holistic (7)	Low involvement (7)	High knowledge (7)	Direct measure (7)	NA	NA	NA
Gabisch, J. (2011)	Journal of Brand Management	52	Brand name (4)	High involvement (4)	Holistic (4)	High involvement (4)	High knowledge (4)	Direct measure (4)	NA	Private (4)	Actual (4)
Gammoh, B. S., Mallin, M. L., & Bolman-Pullins, E. (2014)	Journal of Product & Brand Management	53	Brand name (2)	Low involvement (2)	Piecemeal (2)	High involvement 82)	High knowledge (2)	Indirect measure (2)	91 (2)	Private (2)	Actual (2)

Moderators of the self-congruity effect on consumer decision-making

Goh, S. K., Jiang, N., & Tee, P. L. (2016)	54	International Review of Management and Marketing	Brand name (3)	NA	Holistic (3)	NA	High knowledge (3)	Direct measure (3)	26 (3)	Private (3)	Actual (3)
Goldsmith, R. E., & Yimin, Z. (2014)	55	Journal of Applied Marketing Theory	Brand name (2)	High involvement (2)	Holistic (2)	High involvement (2)	High knowledge (2)	Direct measure (2)	91 (2)	Private (2)	Actual (2)
Gonzalez Jimenez, H. (2014)	56	Doctoral dissertation, University of Bradford	Brand name (8)	High involvement (8)	Holistic (8)	High involvement (8)	High knowledge (8)	Direct measure (8)	91 (8)	Private (4) Public (4)	Actual (4) Ideal (4)
Grace Ing, P., & Yee Shien, G. (2019)	57	Asian Journal of Business and Accounting	Brand name (3)	NA	Holistic (3)	High involvement (3)	High knowledge (3)	Direct measure (3)	26 (3)	Private (3)	Actual (3)
Graeff, T. R. (1996a)	58	Psychology & Marketing	Brand name (8)	High involvement (8)	Holistic (8)	High involvement (8)	High knowledge (8)	Indirect measure (8)	91 (8)	Private (8)	Actual (4) Ideal (4)
Graeff, T. R. (1996b)	59	Journal of Consumer Marketing	Brand name (4)	High involvement (4)	Piecemeal (4)	High involvement (4)	High knowledge (4)	Indirect measure (4)	91 (4)	Private (4)	Actual (2) Ideal (2)
Graeff, T. R. (1997)	60	Psychology & Marketing	Brand name (20)	High involvement (20)	Piecemeal (20)	High involvement (20)	High knowledge (20)	Indirect measure (20)	91 (20)	Private (20)	Actual (8) Ideal (12)
Gunden, N., Morosan, C., & DeFranco, A. (2020)	61	International Journal of Contempora ry Hospitality Management	Product class (2)	High involvement (2)	Holistic (2)	High involvement (2)	High knowledge (2)	Direct measure (2)	91 (2)	Private (2)	Actual (2)
Ha, S., &	62	Clothing and	Brand name	High	Holistic (4)	High	High	Direct	91 (4)	Private (4)	Actual (4)

Moderators of the self-congruity effect on consumer decision-making

Im, H. (2012)	Textiles Research Journal	63	(4)	involvement (4)	involvement (7)	Piecemeal (7)	Low involvement (7)	involvement (4)	knowledge (4)	measure (4)	Private (7)	Actual (7)
Haj-Salem, N., Chebat, J., Michon, R., & Oliveira, S. (2016)	Journal Of Business Research	64	Brand name (7)	Low involvement (7)	High involvement (2)	Holistic (2)	Low involvement (7)	Direct measure (7)	High knowledge (7)	Direct measure (2)	Public (2)	Actual (1) Ideal (1)
Han, H., & Back, K.-J. (2008)	Journal of Hospitality & Tourism Research	65	Brand name (2)	Low involvement (2)	High involvement (2)	Holistic (2)	High involvement (2)	Direct measure (2)	High knowledge (2)	Direct measure (2)	Private (2)	Actual (1) Ideal (1)
Han, T. I., & Dooyoung, C. (2019)	Social Sciences	66	Brand name (4)	Low involvement (4)	High involvement (4)	Piecemeal (4)	High involvement (4)	Indirect measure (4)	High knowledge (4)	Direct measure (4)	Private (4)	Actual (4)
Hogg, M. K., Cox, A. J., & Keeling, K. (2000)	European Journal of Marketing	67	Brand name (4)	Low involvement (4)	High involvement (4)	Holistic (4)	High involvement (4)	Indirect measure (4)	NA	Indirect measure (4)	Private (4)	Actual (2) Ideal (2)
Hosany, S. (2016)	Travel and Tourism Research Association: Advancing Tourism Research Globally	68	Brand name (2)	Low involvement (2)	Low involvement (2)	Holistic (2)	Low involvement (2)	Direct measure (2)	High knowledge (2)	Direct measure (2)	NA	NA
Hsu, L.-C. (2019)	Online Information Review	69	Brand name (2)	High involvement	High involvement	Holistic (2)	High involvement	Direct measure (2)	NA	Direct measure (2)	Private (2)	Actual (1) Ideal (1)

Moderators of the self-congruity effect on consumer decision-making

L. D. (2018)									
Janssen, C., Vanhamme, J., & Leblanc, S. (2017)	Journal of Business Research	78	Brand name (1)	Low involvement (1)	Holistic (1)	Low involvement (1)	Low knowledge (1)	Direct measure (1)	71 (1) NA NA
Japutra, A., Ekinci, Y., & Simkin, L. (2018)	Journal of Strategic Marketing	79	Brand name (3)	High involvement (3)	Holistic (3)	High involvement (3)	NA	Direct measure (3)	89 (3) Private (3) Ideal (3)
Japutra, A., Ekinci, Y., Simkin, L., & Nguyen, B. (2018)	European Journal of Marketing	80	Brand name (2)	High involvement (2)	Piecemeal (2)	High involvement (2)	High knowledge (2)	Indirect measure (2)	89 (2) Private (2) Ideal (2)
Jie, Y., Chou, T., & Chou, N. (2012)	Journal of Brand Management	81	Brand name (18)	High involvement (18)	Holistic (18)	Low involvement (18)	Moderate knowledge (18)	Direct measure (9) Indirect measure (9)	20 (18) Private (18) NA
Kalihatu, T., & Spence, M. (2016)	Australasian Marketing Journal	82	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	14 NA NA
Kang, J., Bagozzi, R., & Oh, J. (2011)	Journal of Sport Management	83	Brand name (8)	Low involvement (8)	Piecemeal (8)	Low involvement (8)	Low knowledge (8)	Direct measure (8)	18 (8) Private (8) Actual (4) Ideal (4)
Kang, J., Tang, L., & Bosselman, R. (2011)	Apparel, Events and Hospitality Management Conference Proceedings and	84	Product class (1)	Low involvement (1)	Holistic (1)	Low involvement (1)	Low knowledge (1)	Direct measure (1)	91 (1) NA NA

Moderators of the self-congruity effect on consumer decision-making

Kumar, V., & Nayak, J. K. (2014)	Advances in Hospitality and Tourism Research	100	Brand name (3)	Low involvement (3)	Holistic (3)	High involvement (3)	NA	Direct measure (3)	NA	Private (3)	NA
Kwak, D. H., & Kang, J.-H. (2008)	International Journal of Sport and Health Science	101	Brand name (12)	High involvement (12)	Holistic (12)	Low involvement (12)	High knowledge (12)	Direct measure (12)	18 (12)	Private (12)	Actual (6) Ideal (6)
Labrecque, L., Krishen, A., & Grzeskowiak, S. (2011)	Journal of Brand Management	102	Brand name (1)	High involvement (1)	Holistic (1)	High involvement (1)	High knowledge (1)	Direct measure (1)	91 (1)	Private (1)	NA
Landon Jr, E. L. (1974)	Journal of Consumer Research	103	Product class (38)	Low involvement (38)	Holistic (38)	Low involvement (38)	NA	Direct measure (38)	91 (38)	Private (38)	Actual (9) Ideal (9)
Lee, J., Hansen, S., & Lee, S. (2018)	Current Psychology	104	Product class (2)	High involvement (2)	Piecemeal (2)	High involvement (2)	High knowledge (2)	Direct measure (2)	91 (2)	Private (2)	Actual (2)
Lee, S., Chua, B., Kim, H., & Han, H. (2017)	International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management	105	Brand name (2)	Low involvement (2)	Holistic (2)	High involvement (2)	Low knowledge (2)	Direct measure (2)	91 (2)	NA	NA
Li, Y., Wang, X., & Yang, Z. (2011)	Journal of Global Marketing	106	Brand name (1)	Low involvement (1)	Piecemeal (1)	Low involvement (1)	High knowledge (1)	Direct measure (1)	20 (1)	Private (1)	Actual (1)
Lim, X.-J., Cheah, J.H., Cham, T. H.,	Asia Pacific Journal of Marketing	107	Product class (6)	High involvement (6)	Holistic (6)	High involvement (6)	High knowledge (6)	Direct measure (6)	26 (6)	Private (6)	Actual (3) Ideal (3)

Moderators of the self-congruity effect on consumer decision-making

Mahjoub, H., Kordnaeij, A., & Moayad, F. M. (2015)	114	International Journal of Marketing Studies	Brand name (2)	NA	Holistic (2)	NA	NA	Direct measure (2)	41 (2)	Private (2)	Actual (1) Ideal (1)
Malär, L., Krohmer, H., Hoyer, W. D., & Nyffenegger, B. (2011)	115	Journal of Marketing	Brand name (6)	High involvement (6)	Holistic (6)	Low involvement (6)	Low knowledge (6)	Direct measure (6)	68 (6)	Private (6)	Actual (2) Ideal (4)
Malhotra, N. K. (1988)	116	Journal of Economic Psychology	Product class (3)	Low involvement (3)	Piecemeal (3)	High involvement (3)	Moderate knowledge (3)	Indirect measure (3)	91 (3)	Private (3)	Actual (2) Ideal (1)
Manan, E. A. & Mokhtar, S. S. M. (2013)	117	Infrastructure University Kuala Lumpur Research Journal	Brand name (2)	High involvement (2)	Holistic (2)	NA	NA	Direct measure (2)	26 (2)	Private (2)	Actual (2)
Manokhina, A., & Melpignano, L. (2018)	118	Master's Thesis, NHH Brage, Bergen	Brand name (1)	High involvement (1)	Holistic (1)	Low involvement (1)	High knowledge (1)	Direct measure (1)	69 (1)	Private (1)	NA
Manyiwa, S. (2019)	119	Journal of Promotion Management	Brand name (2)	High involvement (2)	Piecemeal (2)	Low involvement (2)	NA	Direct measure (2)	NA	Private (2)	Actual (1) Ideal (1)
Mason, M. C., Moretti, A., Raggiotto, F., & Paggiaro, A. (2019)	120	Tourismos: An International Multidisciplinary Journal of Tourism	Brand name (3)	Low involvement (2) High involvement (1)	Piecemeal (3)	Low involvement (2) High involvement (1)	High knowledge (3)	Direct measure (3)	NA	Private (3)	NA

Moderators of the self-congruity effect on consumer decision-making

Massicotte, M.-C., Michon, R., Chebat, J.-C., Sirgy, M. J., & Borges, A. (2011)	Journal of Retailing and Consumer Services	121	Brand name (1)	Low involvement (1)	Piecemeal (1)	Low involvement (1)	NA	Direct measure (1)	80 (1)	Private (1)	Actual (1)
Matzler, K., Strobl, A., Stokburger-Sauer, N., Bobovnick, A., & Bauer, F. (2016)	Tourism Management	122	Brand name (1)	High involvement (1)	Piecemeal (1)	Low involvement (1)	High knowledge (1)	Direct measure (1)	NA	Private (1)	Actual (1)
Mazodier, M. & Merunka, D. (2014)	Journal Business Research	123	Brand name (2)	High involvement (2)	Piecemeal (2)	Low involvement (2)	High knowledge (2)	Direct measure (2)	71 (2)	Private (2)	Actual (2)
Mehra, D. (2019)	International Journal of Research in Commerce & Management	124	Brand name (3)	NA	NA	NA	NA	Direct measure (3)	NA	NA	NA
Merle, A., Senecal, S., & St-Onge, A. (2012)	International Journal of Electronic Commerce	125	Product class (1)	High involvement (1)	Holistic (1)	High involvement (1)	High knowledge (1)	Direct measure (1)	71 (1)	Private (1)	Actual (1)
Nam, J., Yuksel, E., & Whyatt, G. (2011)	Annals of Tourism Research	126	Brand name (2)	High involvement (2)	Holistic (2)	High involvement (2)	Moderate knowledge (2)	Direct measure (2)	89 (2)	Private (2)	Ideal (2)
Nguyen, Y. T. H. &	Asia Pacific Journal of	127	Product class (2)	High involvement	Holistic (2)	High involvement	Moderate knowledge	Direct measure (2)	20 (2)	NA	Actual (2)

Moderators of the self-congruity effect on consumer decision-making

Salameh, A. A. (2020)	Uncertain supply chain management	140	Brand name (1)	Low involvement (1)	Piecemeal (1)	High involvement (1)	High knowledge (1)	Direct measure (1)	NA	Private (1)	Actual (1)
Sandhu, M. A., Usman, M., Ahmad, Z., & Rizwan, M. (2018)	Pakistan Journal of Commerce and Social Sciences (PJCSS)	141	Brand name (2)	High involvement (2)	Holistic (2)	High involvement (2)	NA	Direct measure (2)	14 (2)	NA	NA
Sheeraz, M., Qadeer, F., Khan, K. I., & Mahmood, S. (2020)	Journal of Business & Economics	142	Brand name (2)	NA	NA	NA	High knowledge (2)	Direct measure (2)	14 (2)	Private (2)	Actual (1) Ideal (1)
Shin, H., Lee, H., & Perdue, R. (2018)	Tourism Management	143	Brand name (6)	High involvement (6)	Holistic (6)	High involvement (6)	High knowledge (6)	Direct measure (6)	18 (6)	Private (6)	Actual (6)
Shin, J. K., Park, M. S., & Kim, M. R. (2011)	Journal of Business and Educational Leadership	144	Product class (4)	NA	Holistic (4)	NA	NA	Direct measure (4)	18 (4)	Private (4)	Actual (4)
Shin, Y. H. (2014)	Doctoral dissertation, Oklahoma State University	145	Brand name (3)	High involvement (3)	Piecemeal (3)	Low involvement (3)	Moderate knowledge (3)	Direct measure (3)	91 (3)	NA	NA
Shu, S., & Strombeck, S. (2017)	Asia Pacific Journal Of Marketing And Logistics	146	Brand name (12)	High involvement (12)	Holistic (12)	Low involvement (6) High involvement (6)	Low knowledge (6) High knowledge (6)	Direct measure (12)	17 (4) 18 (4) 46 (4)	Private (12)	Actual (12)

Moderators of the self-congruity effect on consumer decision-making

Shu, S., King, B., & Chang, C. (2015)	Journal Of Travel & Tourism Marketing	147	Brand name (6)	Low involvement (6)	Holistic (6)	High involvement (6)	Moderate knowledge (6)	Direct measure (6)	17 (6)	Public (6)	Actual (6)
Sirgy, M. J., Grewal, J., Mangleburg, T. F., Park, J.-o., Chon, K.-S., Claiborne, C. B., Johar, J. S., & Berkman, H. (1997)	Academy of Marketing Science	148	Brand name (8) Product class (8)	NA	Piecemeal (16)	NA	NA	Direct measure (8) Indirect measure (8)	91 (16)	Private (16)	Actual (16)
Sirgy, M. J., Johar, J. S., Samli, A. C., & Claiborne, C. B. (1991)	Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science	149	Brand name (6) Product class (2)	NA	Piecemeal (8)	NA	High knowledge (8)	Indirect measure (8)	91 (8)	Public (4)	NA
Sohail, M., & Awal, F. (2017)	Middle East J. Of Management	150	Brand name (2)	High involvement (2)	Holistic (2)	High involvement (2)	High knowledge (2)	Direct measure (2)	25 (2)	Private (2)	Actual (2)
Sparks, P. & Guthrie, C. A. (1998)	Journal of Applied Social Psychology	151	Product class (6)	High involvement (6)	Holistic (6)	High involvement (6)	NA	Direct measure (6)	89 (6)	Private (6)	Actual (6)
Sparks, P. & Shepherd, R. (1992)	Social Psychology Quarterly	152	Product class (2)	High involvement (2)	Holistic (2)	High involvement (2)	NA	Indirect measure (2)	89 (2)	Private (2)	Actual (2)
Sreejesh, S., Mitra, A., & Sahoo, D. (2015)	Journal of Hospitality and Tourism Technology	153	Brand name (3)	High involvement (3)	Piecemeal (3)	High involvement (3)	High knowledge (3)	Direct measure (3)	48 (3)	Private (3)	Actual (3)

Moderators of the self-congruity effect on consumer decision-making

Strandberg, C. & Styvén, W. E. (2019)	154	Internet Research	Brand name (3)	High involvement (3)	Piecemeal involvement (3)	High involvement (3)	High knowledge (3)	Direct measure (3)	71 (3)	Private (3)	Actual (3)
Sun, X., Wang, P., Lepp, A., & Robertson, L. (2014)	155	Journal Of China Tourism Research	Brand name (2)	Low involvement (2)	Piecemeal involvement (2)	Low involvement (2)	Low knowledge (2)	Indirect measure (2)	17 (2)	Private (2)	NA
Sung, E. & Choi, S. M. (2012)	156	Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology	Brand name (10)	NA	Piecemeal involvement (10)	NA	Low knowledge (10)	Indirect measure (10)	18 (5) 91 (5)	Private (10)	Actual (10)
Tezer, A., Bodur, H. O., & Grohmann, B. (2020)	157	Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science	Brand name (12)	NA	Holistic involvement (12)	NA	NA	Direct measure (12)	91 (12)	Private (12)	Actual (12)
Tsai, Y., Chang, H., & Ho, K. (2015)	158	Contemporary Management Research	Brand name (2)	Low involvement (2)	Piecemeal involvement (2)	Low involvement (2)	Low knowledge (2)	Indirect measure (2)	17 (2)	Private (2)	NA
Van Quaquebeke, N., Becker, J. U., Goretzki, N., & Barrot, C. (2019)	159	Journal of Business Ethics	Product class (1)	High involvement (1)	Holistic involvement (1)	High involvement (1)	Low knowledge (1)	Direct measure (1)	NA	Private (1)	Actual (1)
Vigolo, V., & Ugolini, M. (2016)	160	Journal Of Fashion Marketing And Management : An International	Brand name (30)	Low involvement (30)	Holistic involvement (30)	High involvement (30)	Moderate knowledge (30)	Indirect measure (30)	76 (30)	Private (30)	Actual (15) Ideal (15)

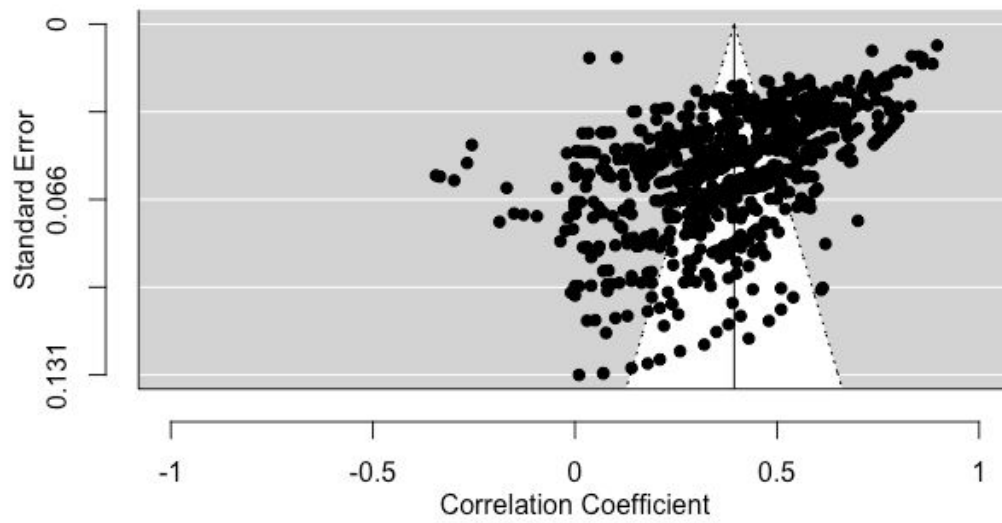
Moderators of the self-congruity effect on consumer decision-making

Wijaya, A. (2017)	Entrepreneurial Business And Economics Review	168	NA	NA	Holistic (1)	NA	NA	Direct measure (1)	14 (1)	Private (1)	NA
Wilkins, H., Merrilees, B., & Herington, C. (2006)	Tourism Analysis	169	Brand name (1)	High involvement (1)	Piecemeal (1)	Low involvement (1)	High knowledge (1)	Indirect measure (1)	90 (1)	Private (1)	Actual (1)
Wille, L., Van Hoya, G., Weijters, B., Rangarajan, D., & Carpentier, M. (2018)	Journal Of Personnel Psychology	170	Brand name (12)	High involvement (12)	Piecemeal (12)	Low involvement (12)	Low knowledge (12)	Direct measure (12)	75 (12)	Private (12)	Actual (6) Ideal (6)
Wu, J. (2020)	Doctoral dissertation, University of Minnesota	171	Brand name (1)	High involvement (1)	Piecemeal (1)	High involvement (1)	High knowledge (1)	Direct measure (1)	20 (1)	Private (1)	Actual (1)
Wu, J., Hwang, J., Sharkhuu, O., & Tsogt-Ochir, B. (2018)	Asia Pacific Management Review	172	Product class (2)	Low involvement (2)	Holistic (2)	Low involvement (2)	Low knowledge (2)	Indirect measure (2)	NA	Private (2)	Actual (2)
Yang, B. (2016)	Indian Journal Of Science And Technology	173	Product class (2)	Low involvement (2)	Holistic (2)	High involvement (2)	Moderate knowledge (2)	Indirect measure (2)	18 (2)	Private (2)	Ideal (2)
Yang, R. (2018)	Doctoral dissertation,	174	Brand name (6)	High involvement	Holistic (6)	Low involvement	Low knowledge	Direct measure (6)	91 (6)	NA	NA

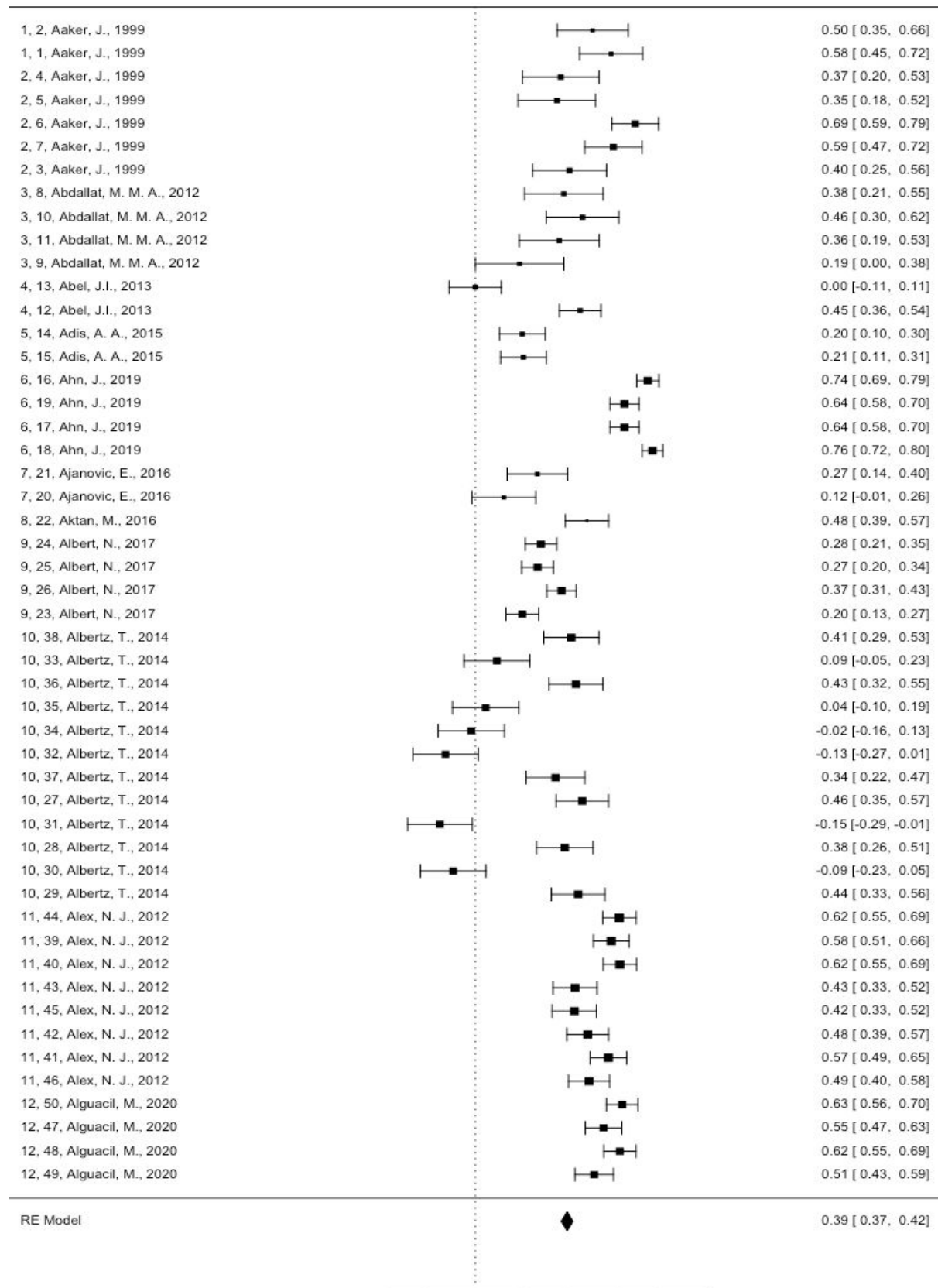
Moderators of the self-congruity effect on consumer decision-making

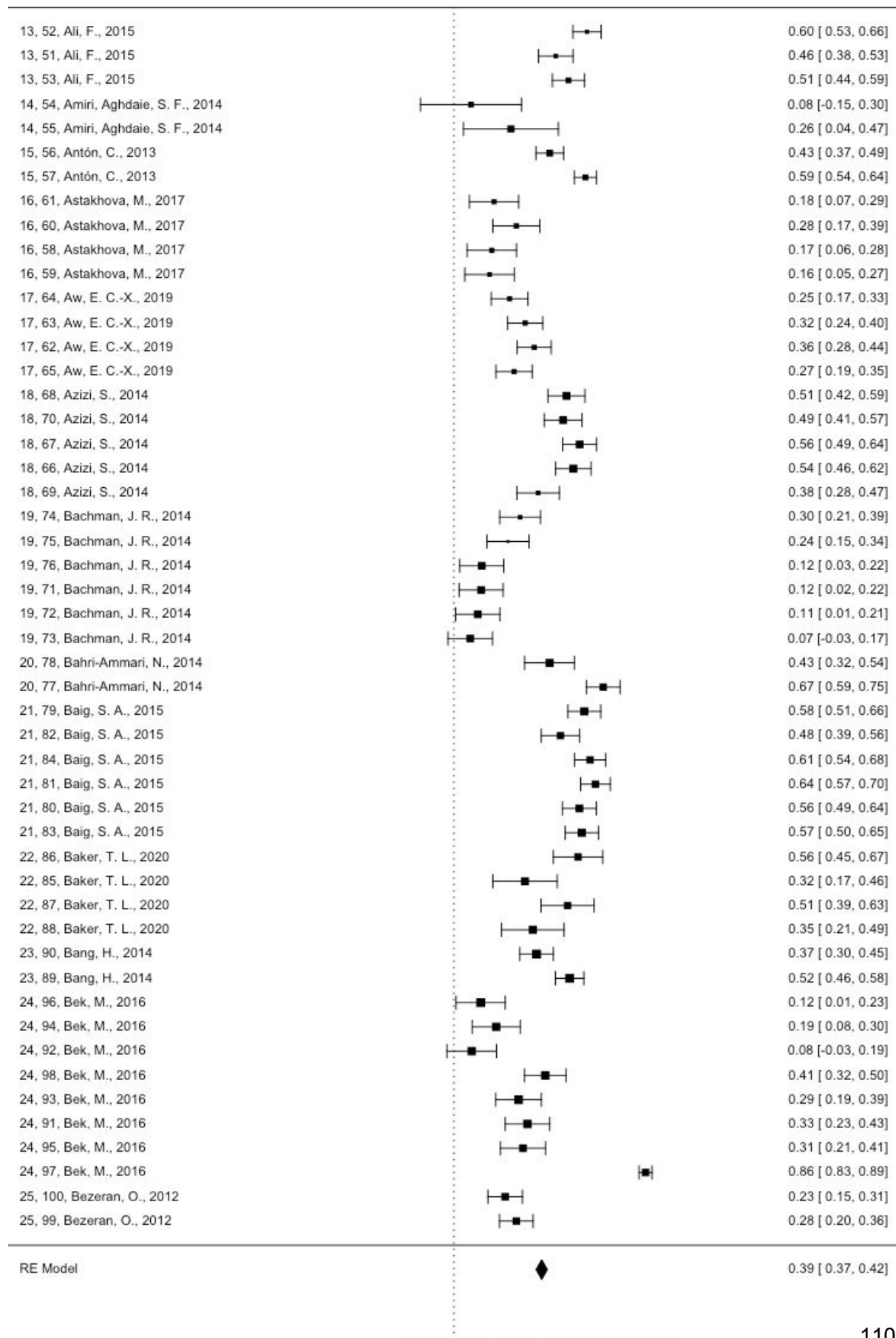
Yusuf, J., & Ariffin, S. (2016)	University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, Illinois	175	Brand name (2)	Low involvement (2)	Holistic (2)	High involvement (2)	Low knowledge (2)	Indirect measure (2)	26 (2)	Private (2)	NA
Zhou, M., Yan, L., Wang, F., & Lin, M. (2020)	Journal of China Tourism Research	176	Brand name (2)	High involvement (2)	Piecemeal (2)	Low involvement (2)	High knowledge (2)	Direct measure (2)	20 (2)	private (2)	NA
Zogaj, A., Tscheulin, D. K., Lindenmeier, J., & Olk, S. (2020)	Journal of Business Economics	177	Brand name (2)	High involvement (2)	Holistic (2)	High involvement (2)	High knowledge (2)	Direct measure (2)	67 (2)	Private (2)	Actual (1) Ideal (2)

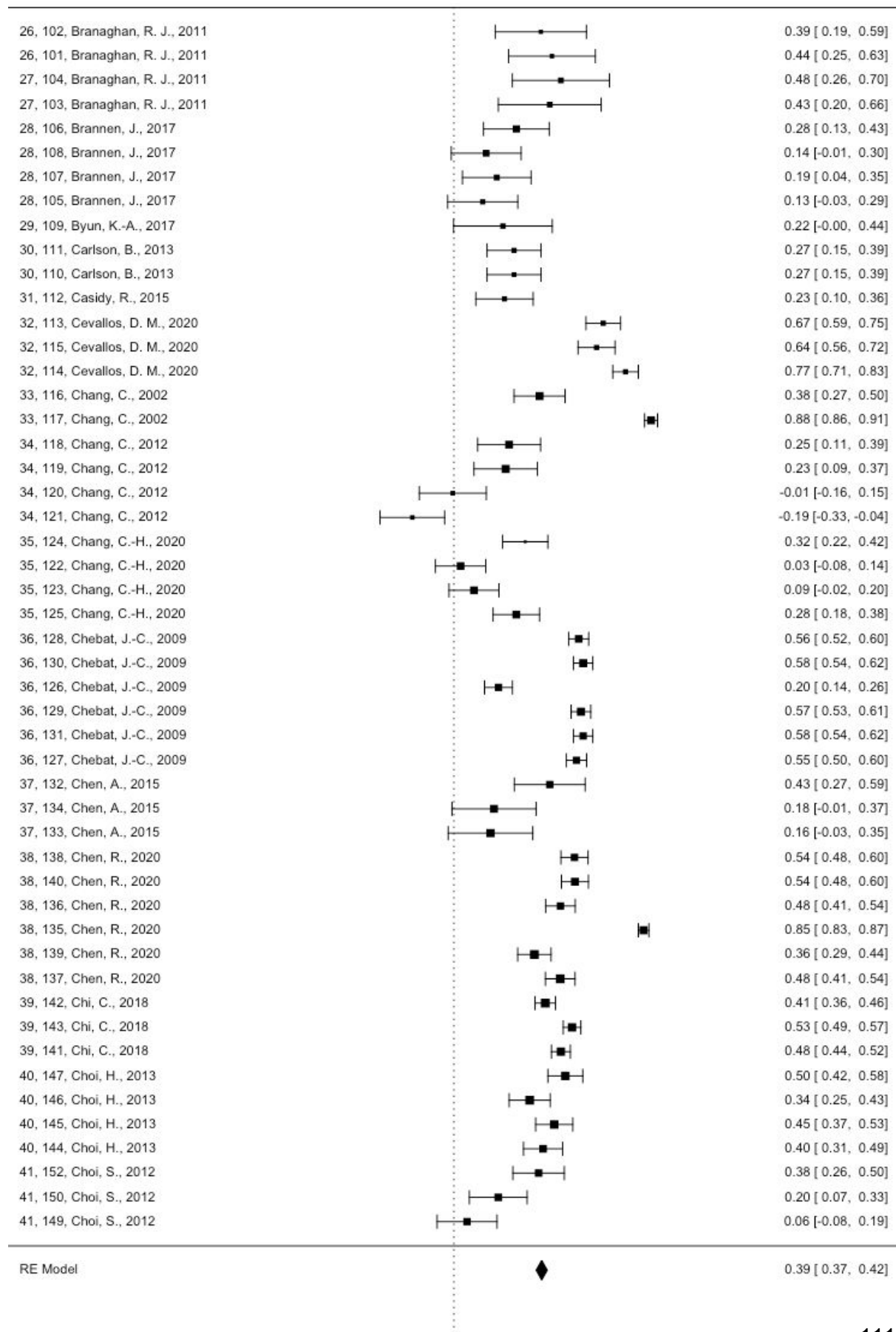
14. Appendix E: Funnel plot for the main effect

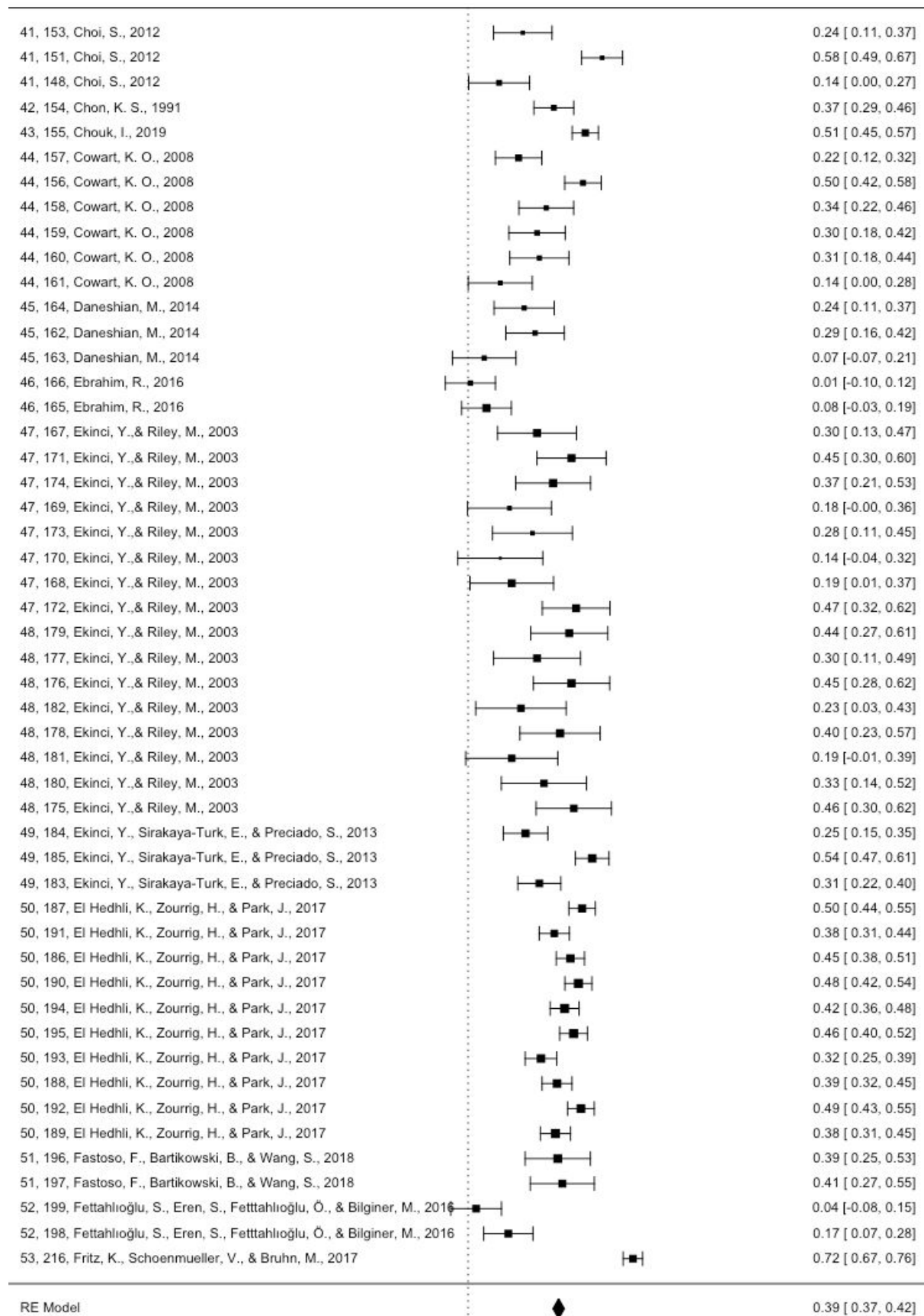


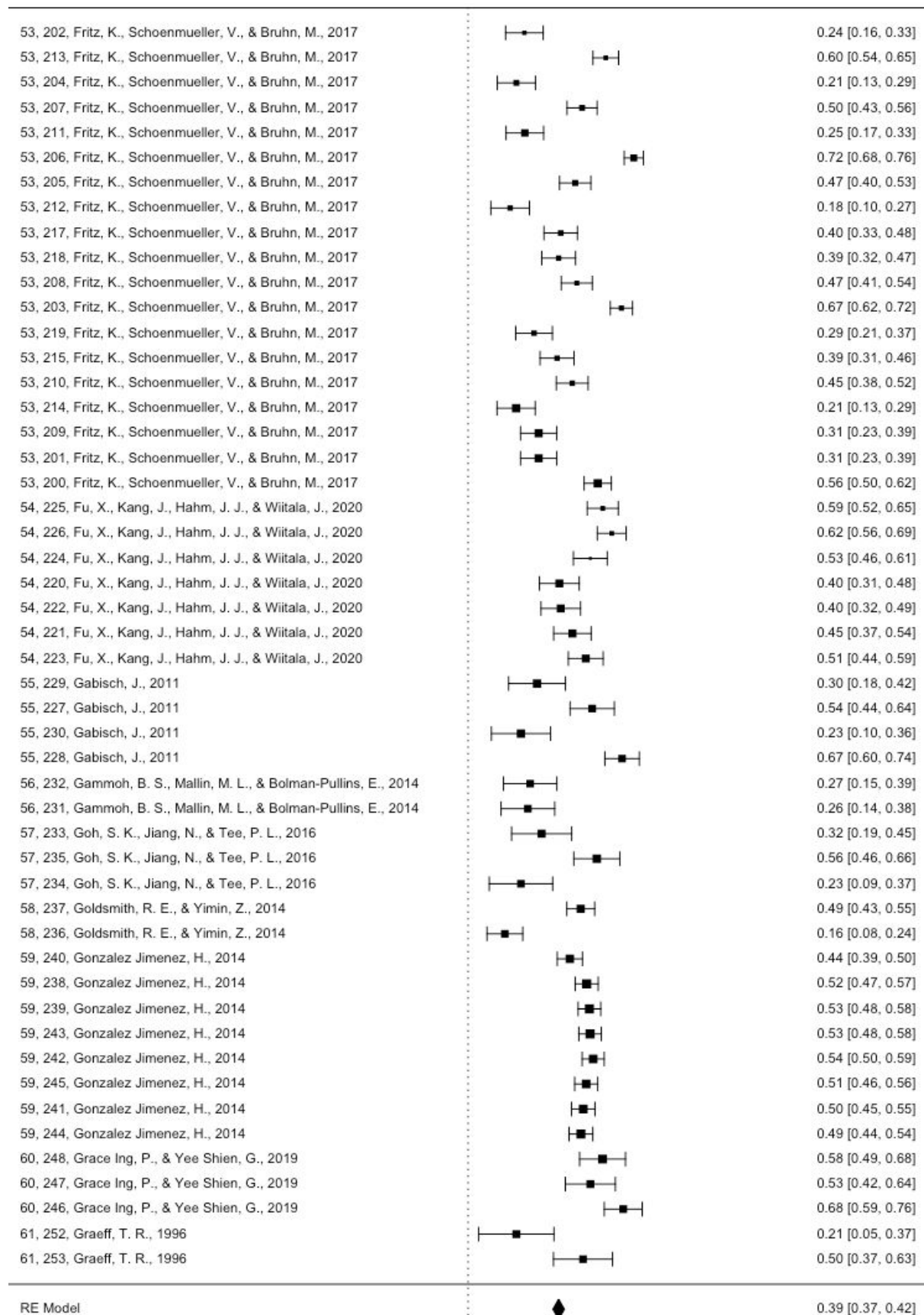
15. Appendix F: Forest plot for the main effect

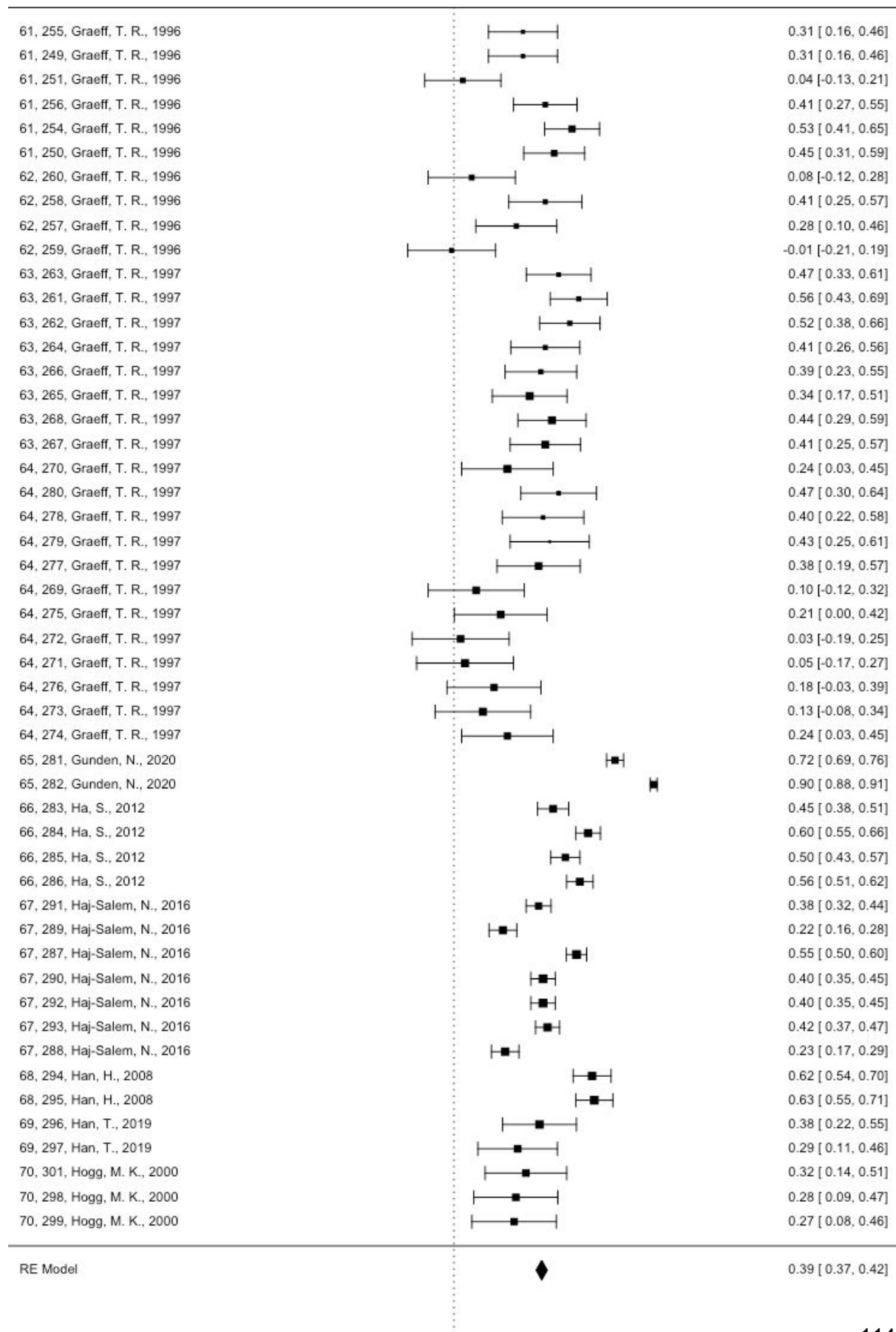


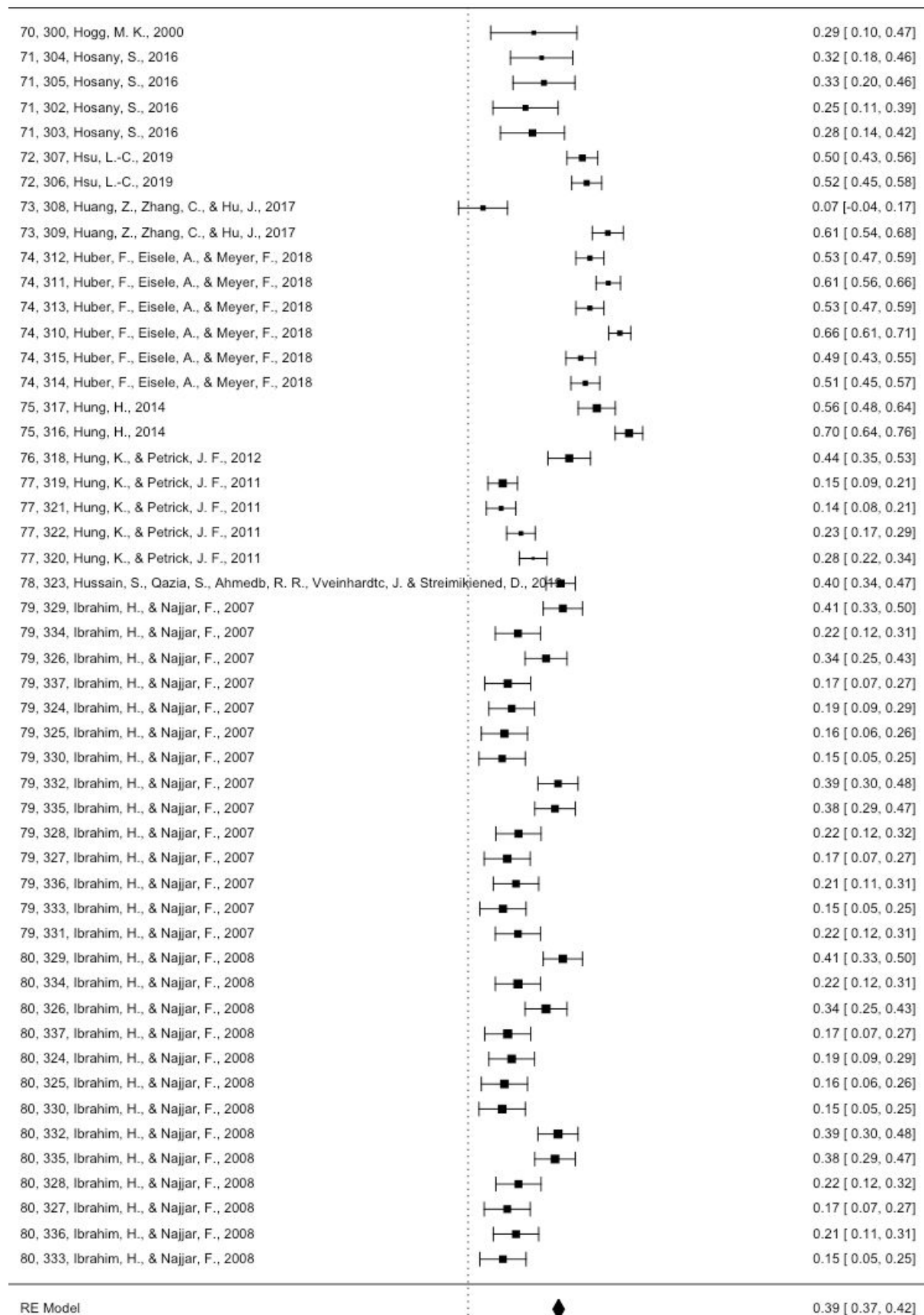


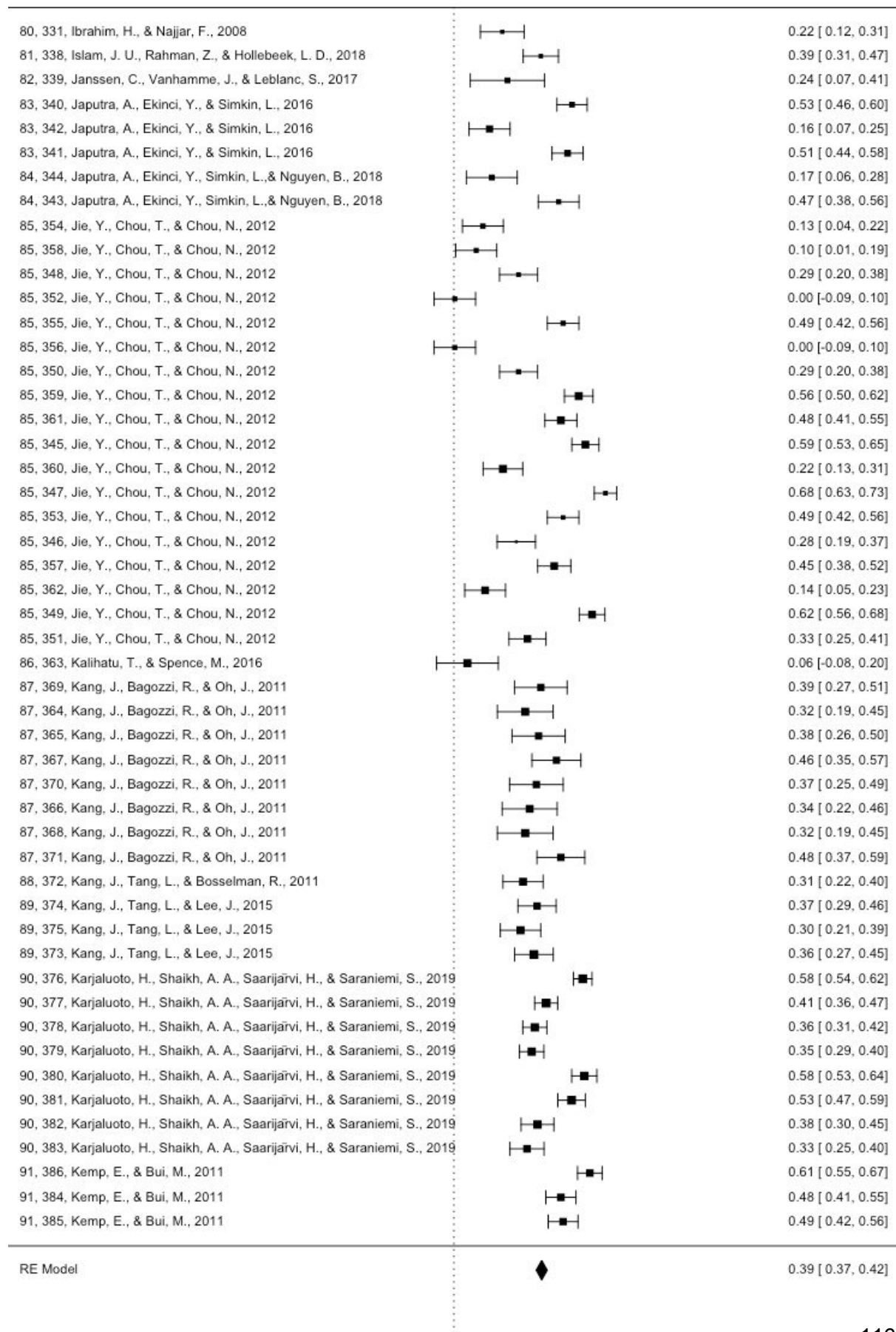


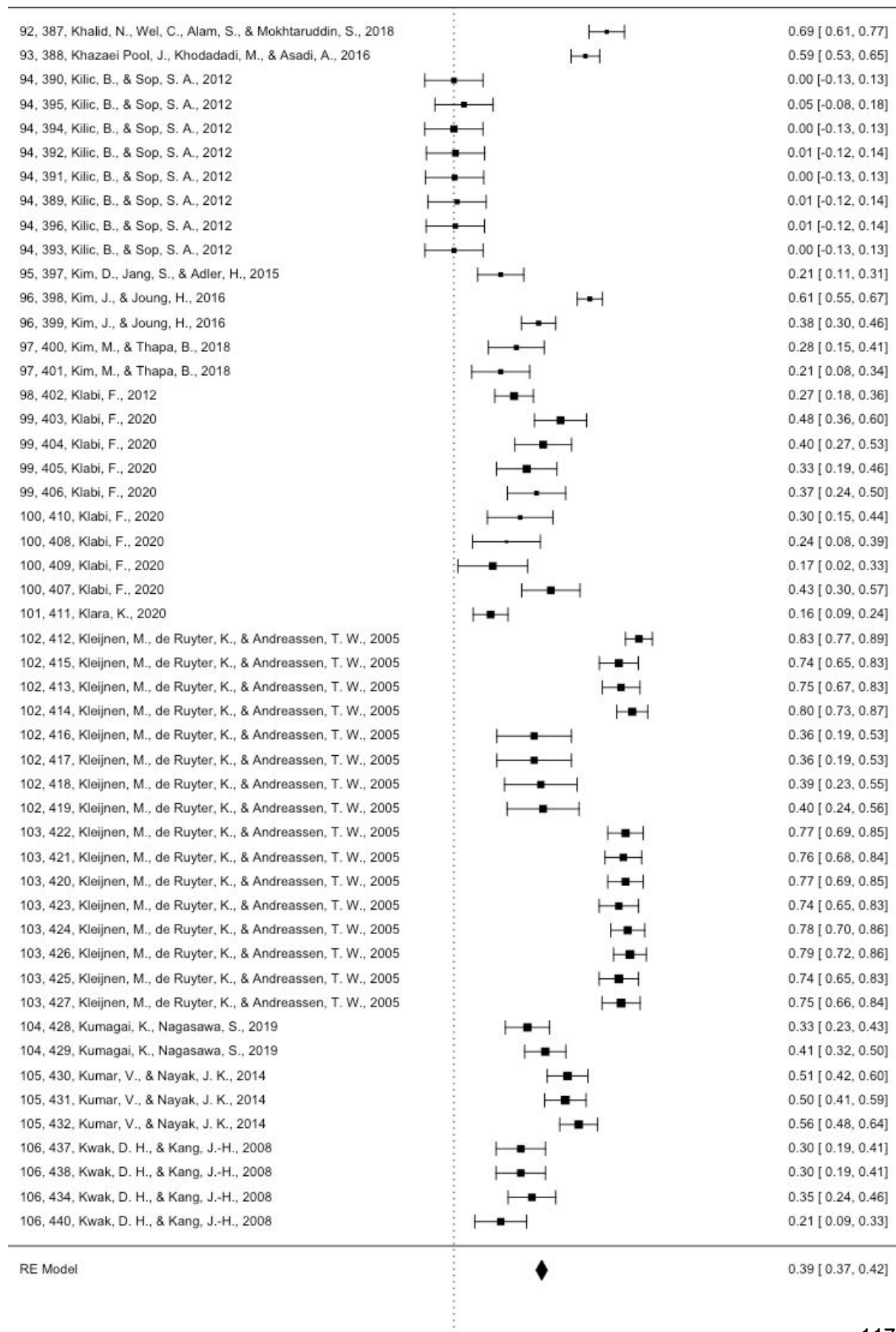


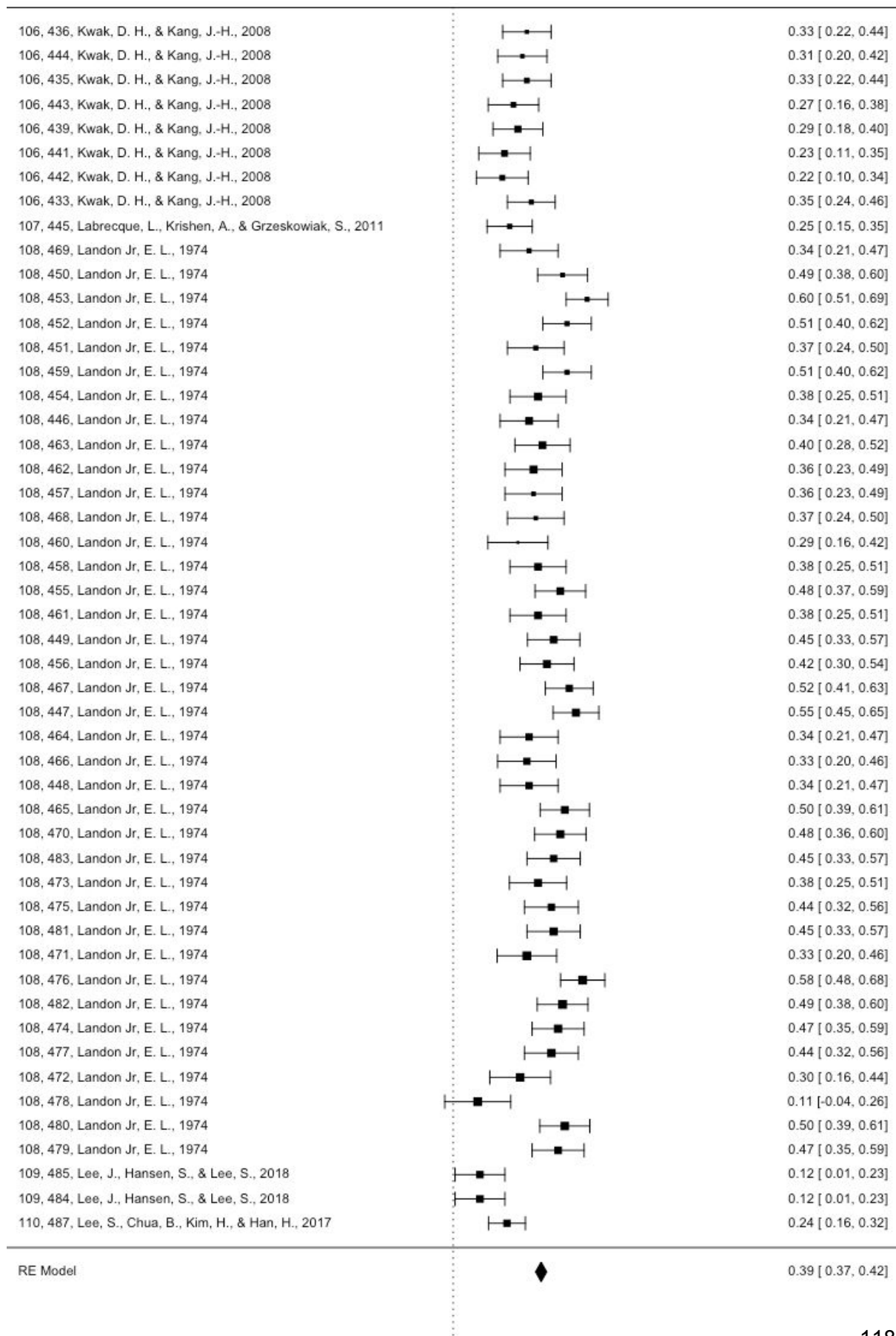


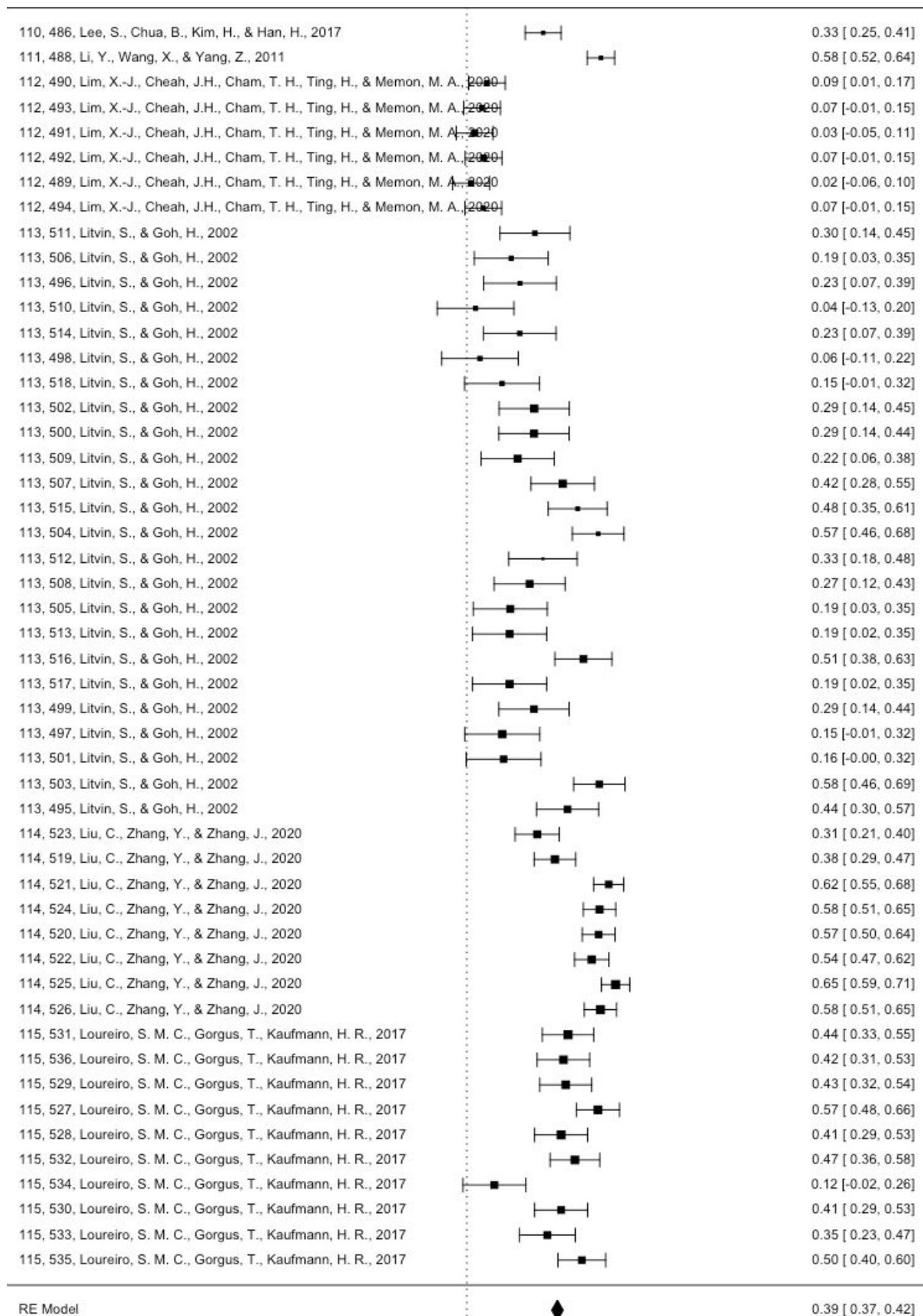


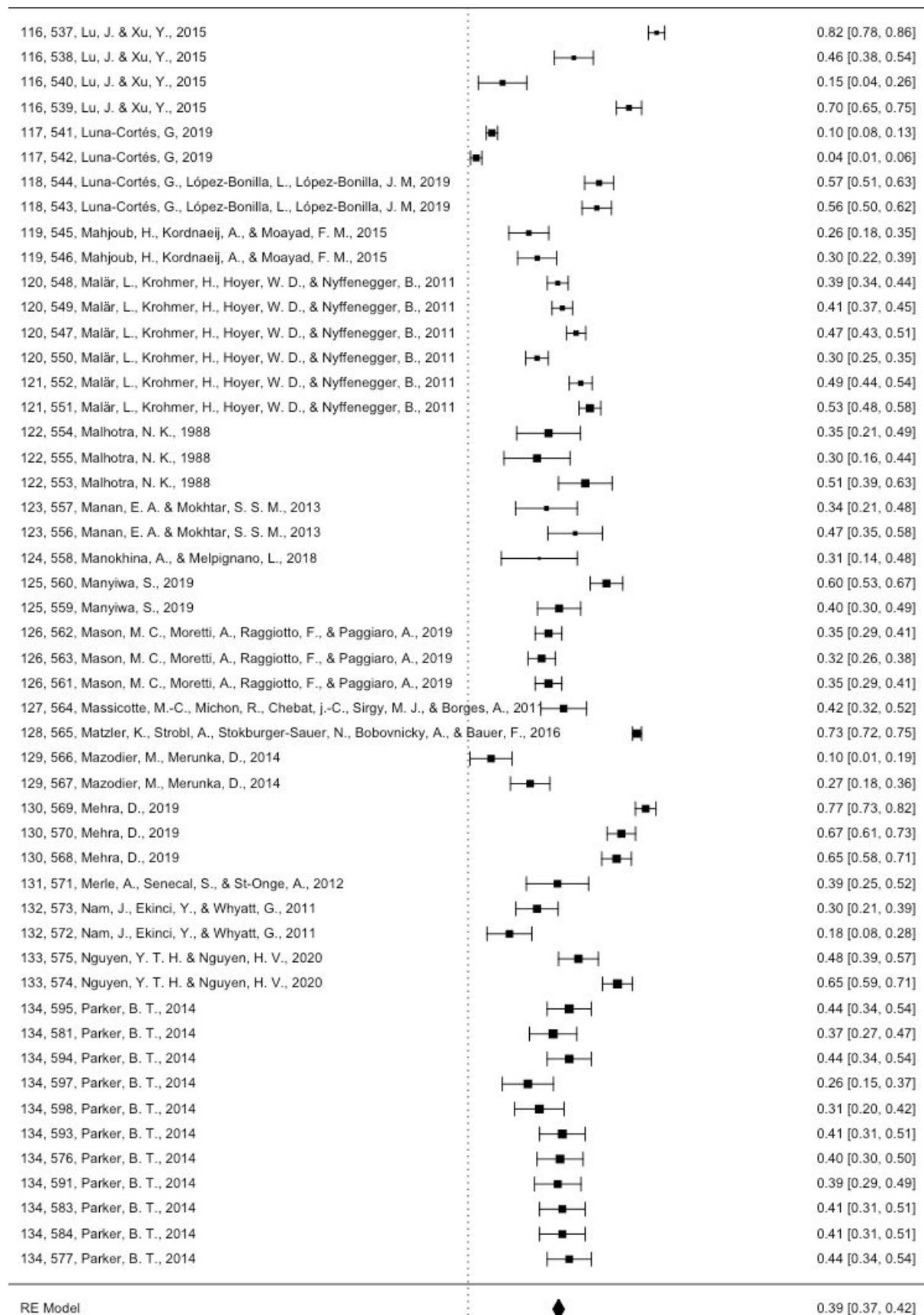


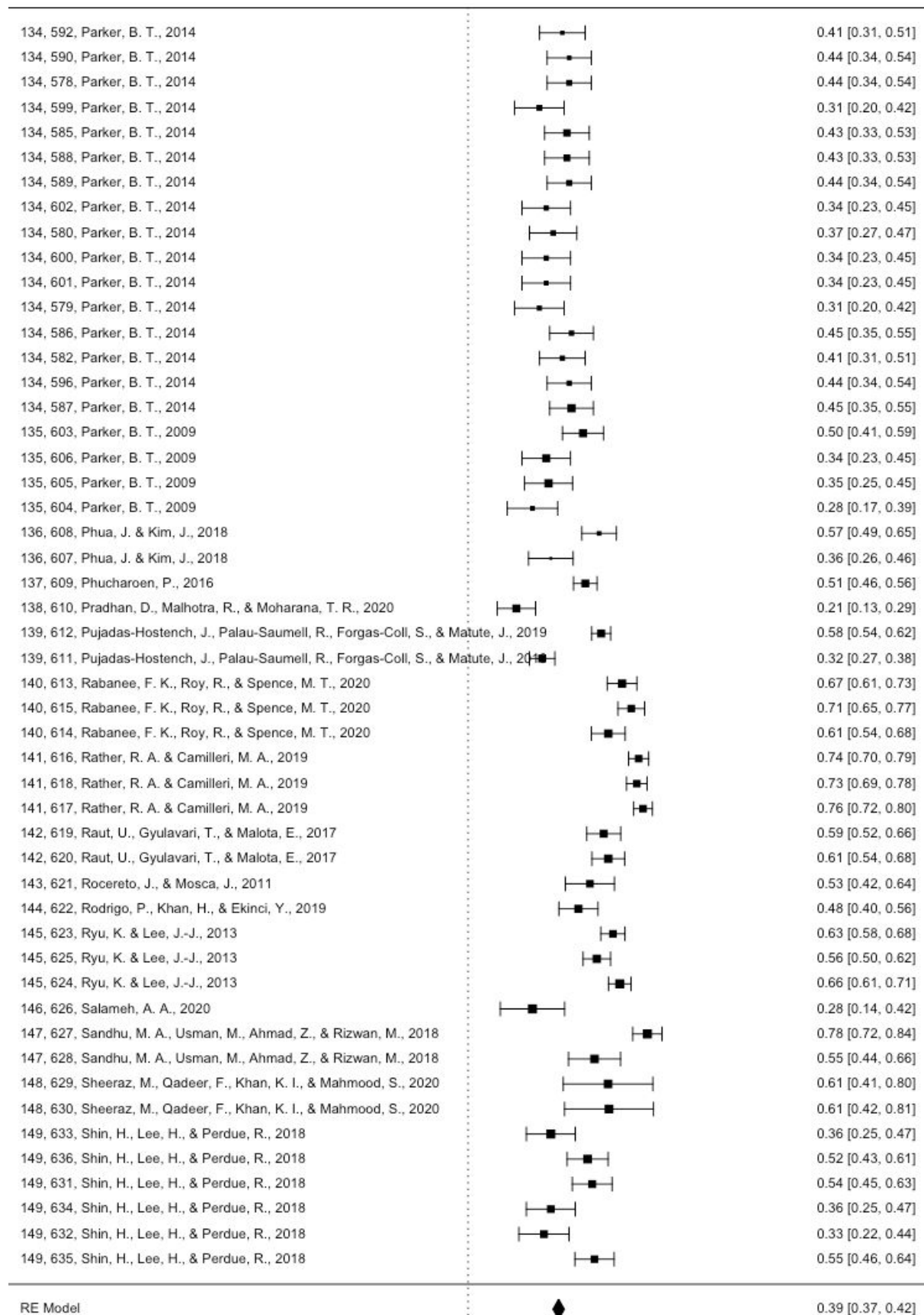


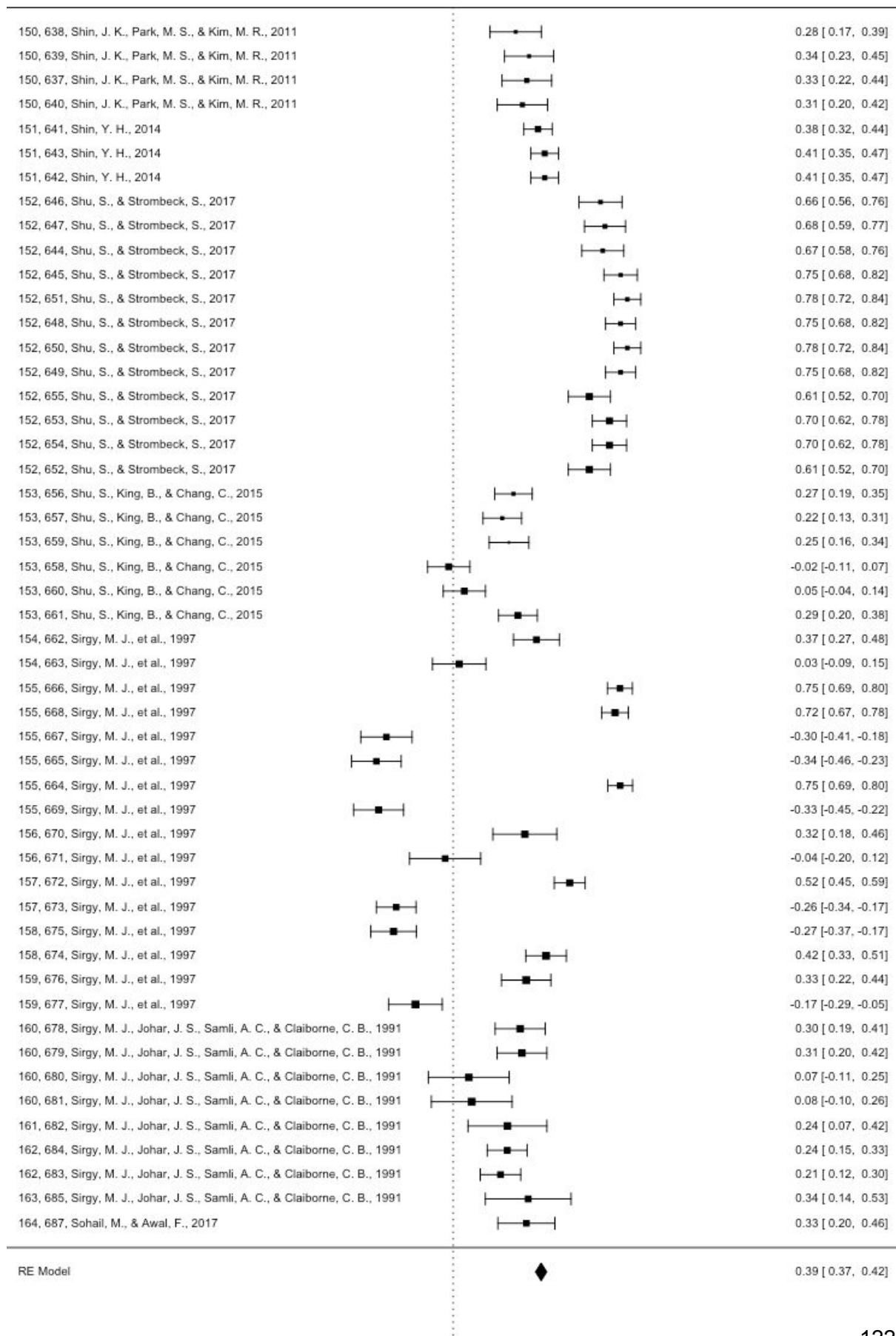


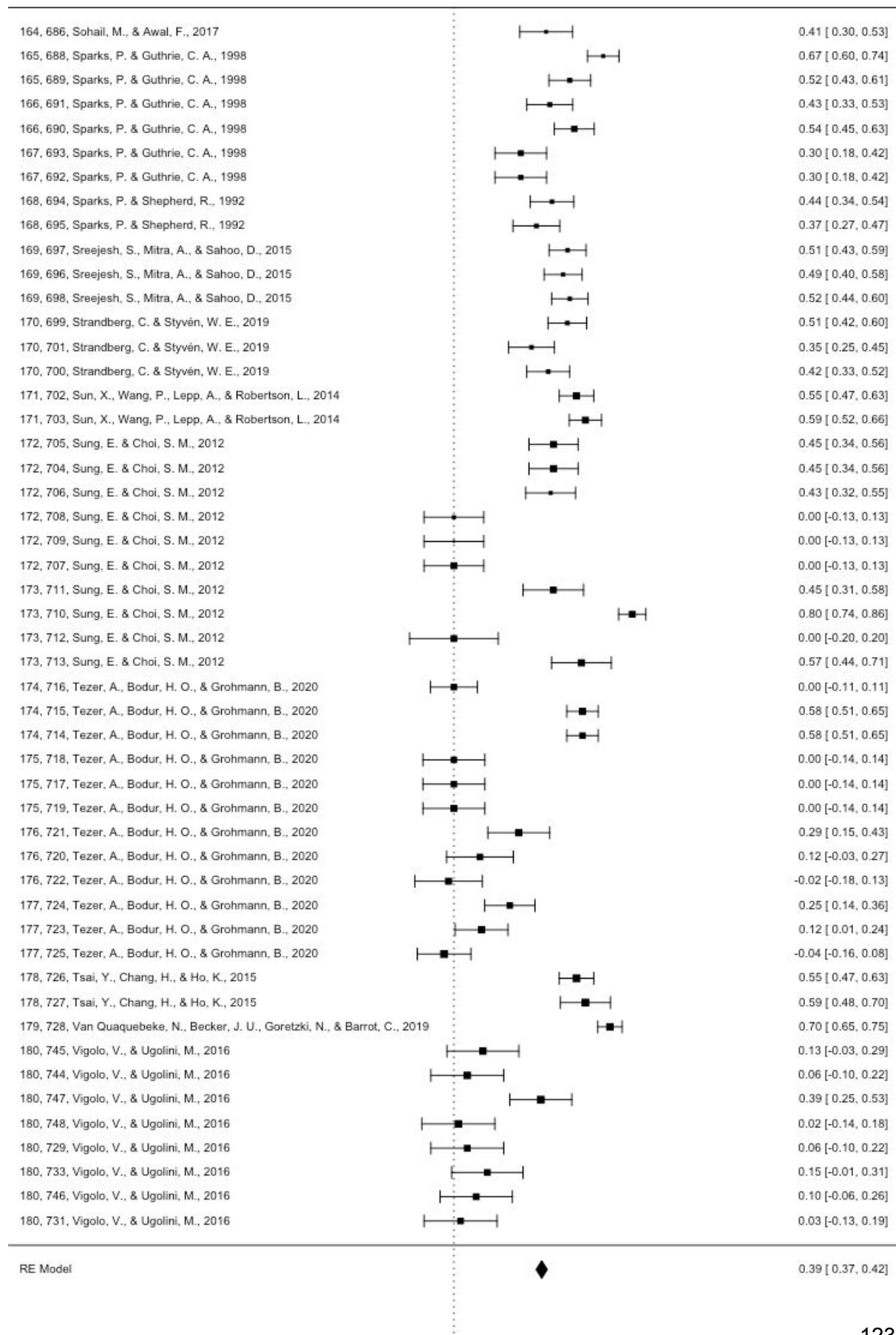


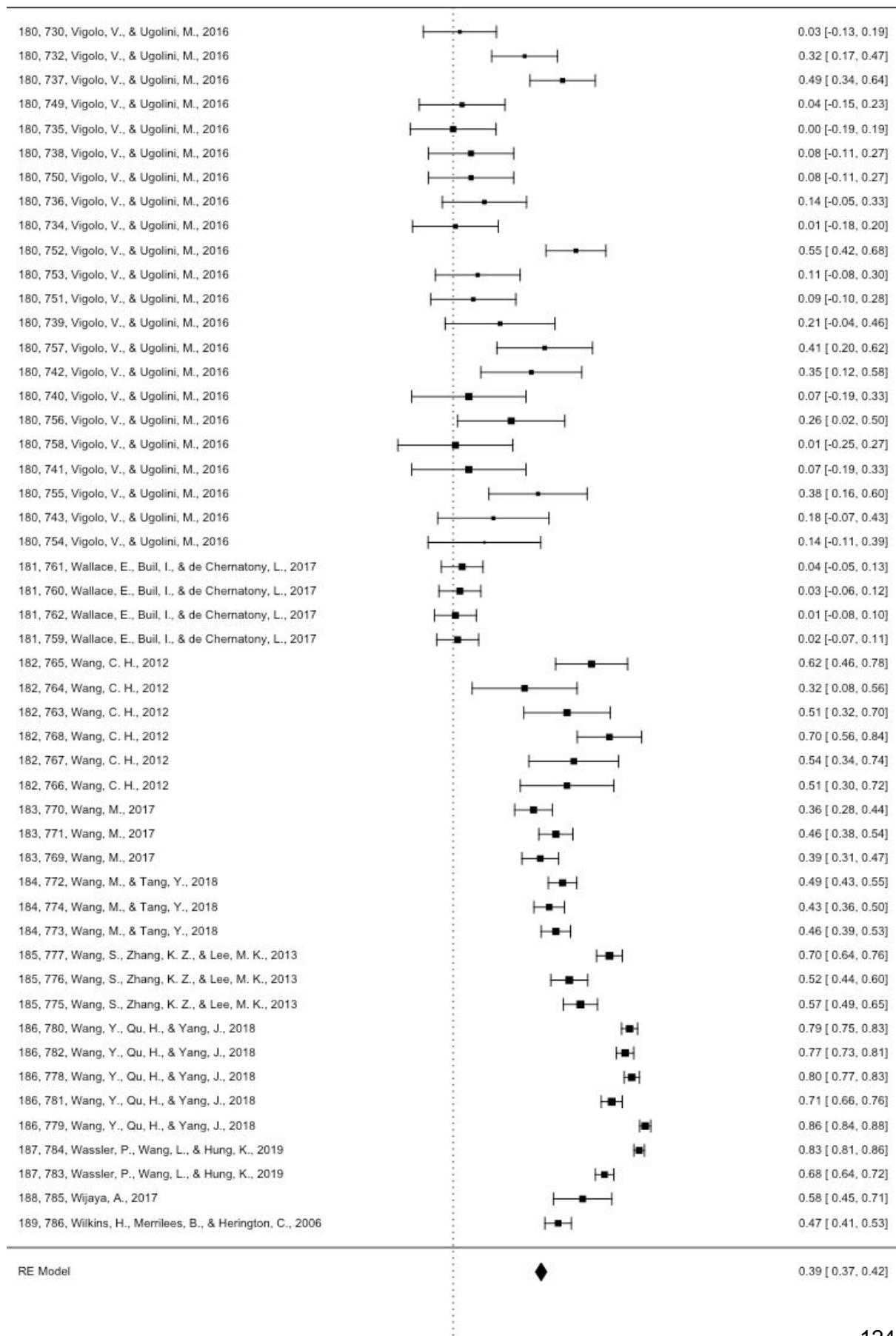




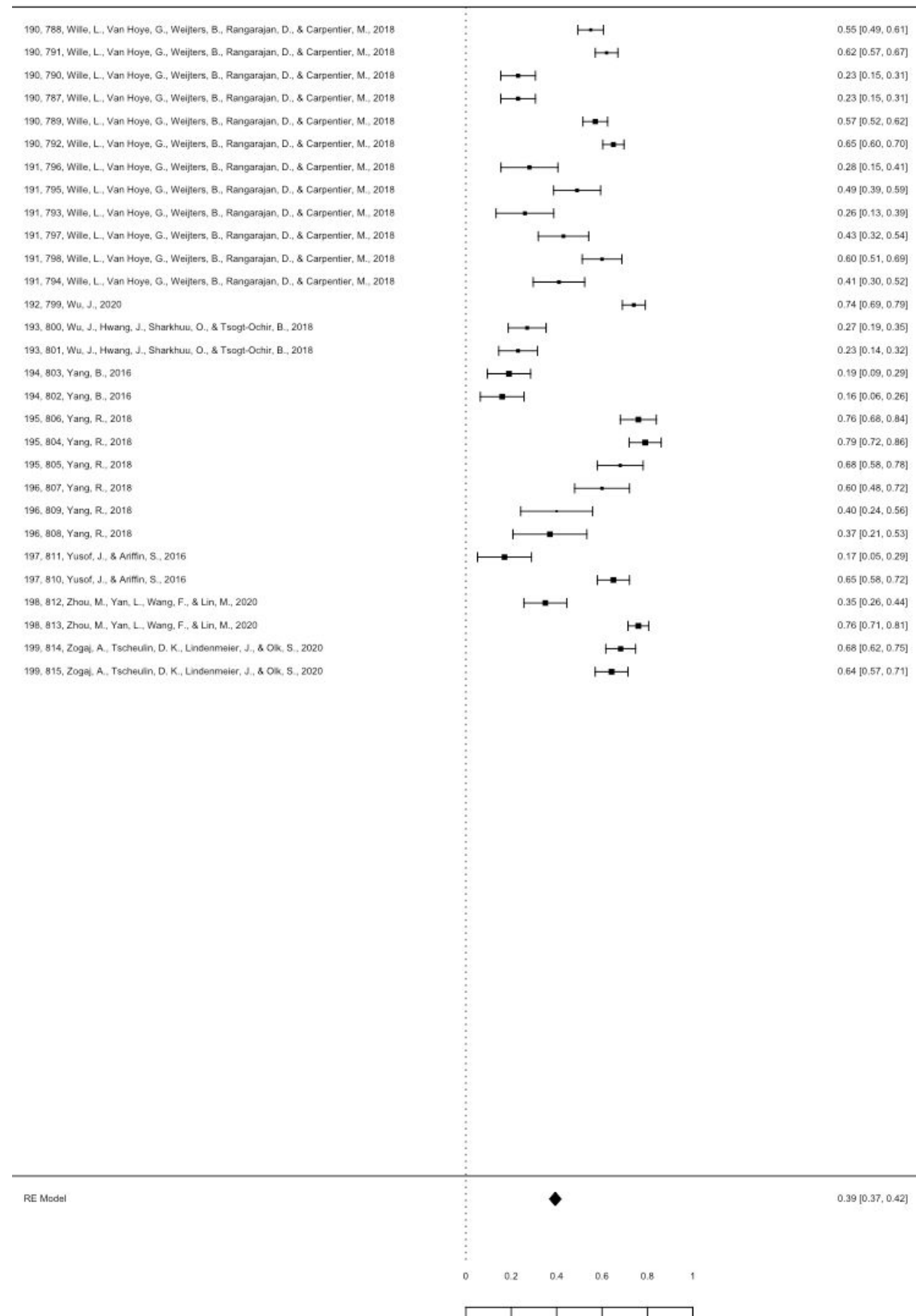






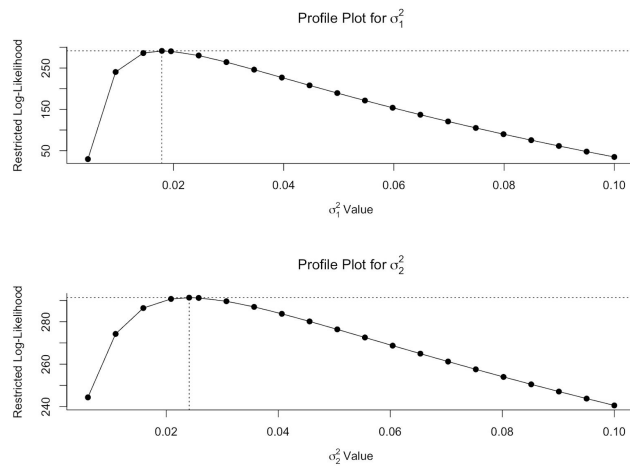


Moderators of the self-congruity effect on consumer decision-making

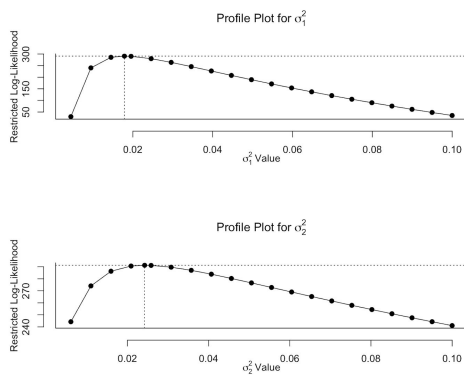


16. Appendix G: Profile likelihood plots

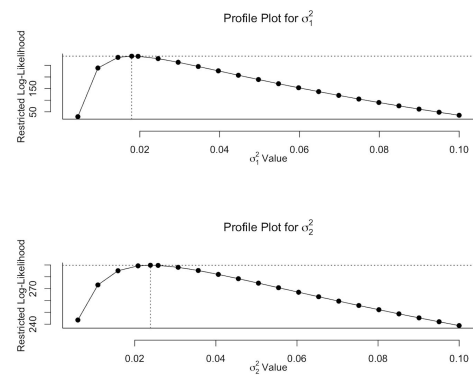
Main effect



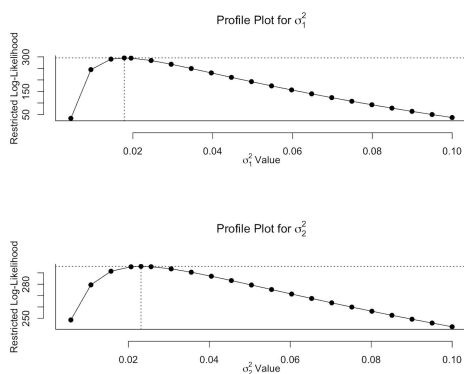
1) Product stimulus abstraction



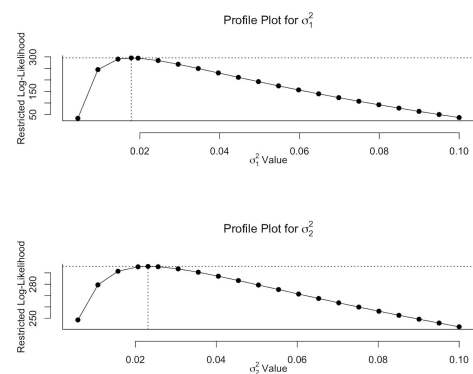
3) Impression formation process



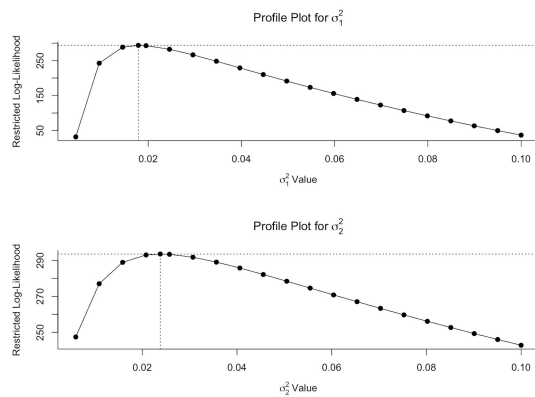
2) Involvement in the decision-making process



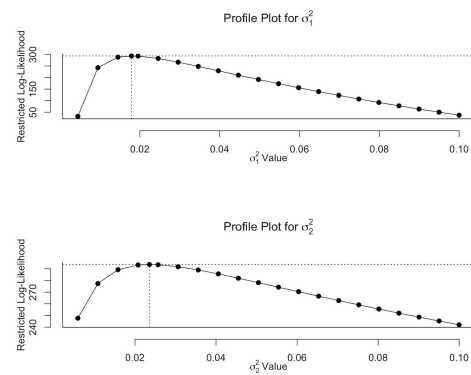
4) Involvement in the decision-making process



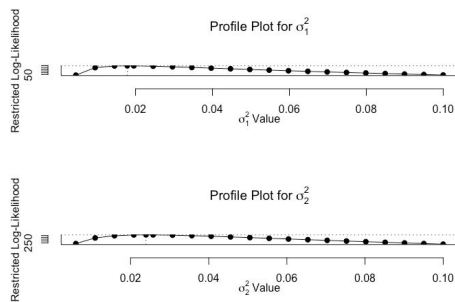
5) Impression formation and product stimulus abstraction interaction



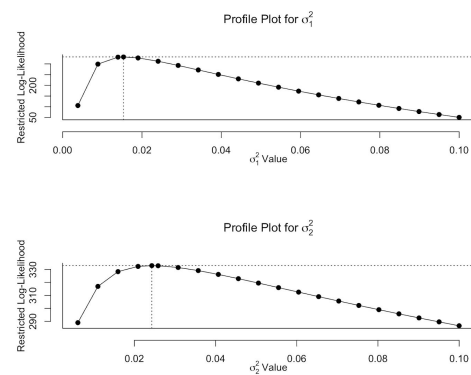
8) Consumer knowledge



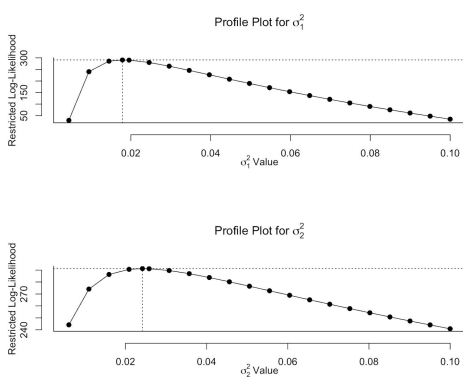
6) Involvement in the decision-making process and product stimulus abstraction



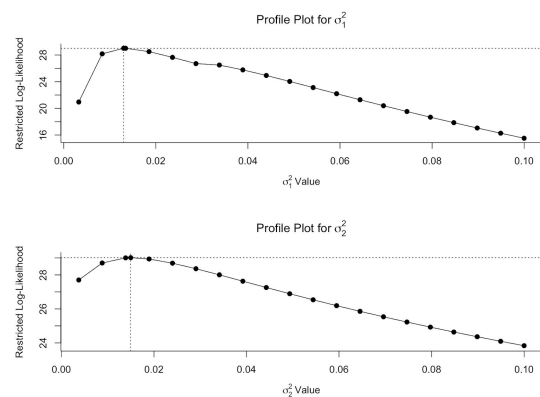
9) Direct and indirect measure



7) Involvement with product class

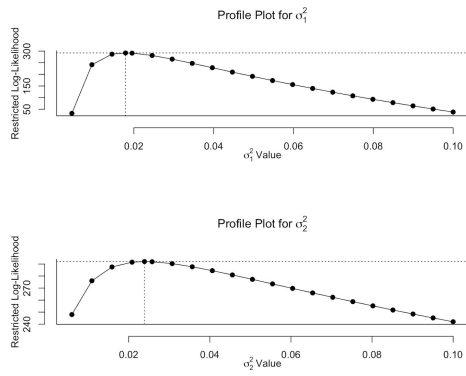


10) Cultural setting and socialness motive interaction

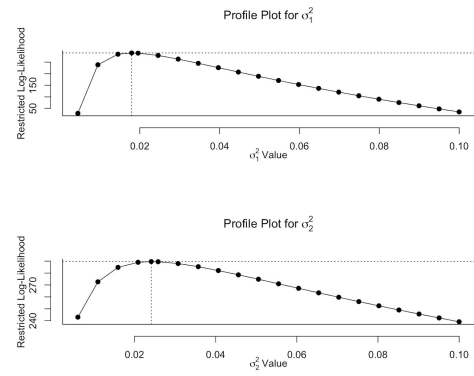


Moderators of the self-congruity effect on consumer decision-making

11) Product conspicuousness and socialness motive interaction



12) Response mode and enhancement motive interaction



17. Appendix H: Overview to parameter estimates of meta-regressions

Moderator variable	Categories (number of effect sizes k)	Mean Z_r -score	95% CI of Z_r -score	Test of moderators
Product stimulus abstraction (H_1)	Brand name (629)	.39	(.37/.42)	$F(1, 83) = 0.00, p = 0.996$
	Product class name (185)	.39	(.34/.45)	
	Other (2)			
Involvement in the decision-making process (H_2)	Low involvement in the decision-making process (262)	.35	(.32/.39)	$F(1, 82) = 9.114, p = .003$
	High involvement in the decision-making process (470)	.40	(.38/.43)	
	Other (84)			
Impression formation process (H_3)	Piecemeal (375)	.38	(.34/.41)	$F(1, 824) = 1.33, p = 0.249$
	Holistic (418)	.41	(.37/.44)	
	Other (23)			
Interaction of involvement in the decision-making process and impression formation process (H_4)	Low involvement & holistic (199)	.36	(.32/.40)	$F(3, 825) = 2.87, p = 0.036$
	High involvement & holistic (214)	.39	(.35/.43)	
	Low involvement & piecemeal (67)	.34	(.29/.39)	
	High involvement & piecemeal (254)	.37	(.33/.40)	
	Other (86)			
Interaction of impression formation process and product stimulus abstraction (H_5)	Product class name & piecemeal (56)	.35	(.28/.43)	$F(3, 825) = 1.68, p = 0.171$
	Product class name & holistic (133)	.42	(.36/.48)	
	Brand name & piecemeal (355)	.38	(.34/.41)	
	Brand name & holistic (291)	.42	(.39/.46)	
	Other (25)			
Interaction of involvement in the decision-making process and product stimulus abstraction (H_6)	Low involvement & product class name (93)	.35	(.30/.40)	$F(3, 825) = 1.78, p = 0.150$
	High involvement & product class name (80)	.37	(.32/.42)	
	Low involvement & brand name (179)	.36	(.32/.40)	
	High involvement & brand name (386)	.39	(.36/.42)	
	Other (82)			

Moderators of the self-congruity effect on consumer decision-making

Involvement with product class (H_7)	Low involvement with product class (314) High involvement with product class (425) Other (79)	.39 .38	(.35/.42) (.35/.41)	$F(1, 827) = 4.44, p = 0.035$
Consumer knowledge (H_8)	Low knowledge (131) Moderate knowledge (132) High knowledge (390) Other (166)	.39 .33 .39	(.35/.43) (.29/.37) (.37/.42)	$F(1, 826) = 7.09, p < 0.001$
Direct and indirect measure (H_9)	Direct measure (521) Indirect measure (27) Other (20)	.46 .25	(.43/.49) (.21/.28)	$F(1, 827) = 91.95, p < .01$
Interaction of cultural setting and socialness motive (H_{10})	Cultural setting & low socialness motive (660) Cultural setting & high socialness motive (49)	.40 .22	(.34/.47) (.06/.38)	$F(1, 660) = 0.244, p = .622$ $F(1, 49) = 1.737, p = .194$
Interaction of socialness motive and product consciousness (H_{11})	Low socialness motive & conspicuous (176) High socialness motive & conspicuous (30) Low socialness motive & inconspicuous (313) High socialness motive & inconspicuous (26) Other (275)	.38 .38 .40 .38	(.35/.41) (.34/.42) (.38/.43) (.34/.42)	$F(3, 825) = 1.14, p = .33$
Interaction of enhancement motive and response mode	Low enhancement motive & brand attitude (425) High enhancement motive & brand attitude (191) Low enhancement motive & brand purchase (59) High enhancement & brand purchase (33) Other (122)	.39 .40 .40 .40	(.37/.42) (.37/.43) (.36/.45) (.36/.45)	$F(3, 825) = 0.11, p = .95$

Statutory Declaration

I hereby declare that the paper presented is my own work and that I have not called upon the help of a third party. In addition, I affirm that neither I nor anybody else has submitted this paper or parts of it to obtain credits elsewhere before. I have marked and acknowledged all quotations or references that have been taken from the works of others. All secondary literature and other sources are marked and listed in the bibliography. The same applies to all charts, diagrams, and illustrations as well as to all Internet sources. Moreover, I consent to my paper being electronically stored and sent anonymously to be checked for plagiarism. I am aware that the paper cannot be evaluated and may be graded “failed” (“nicht ausreichend”) if the declaration is not made.

Luxembourg, February 10, 2021

Luc Christian Ulmerich

