

Investigating the Moderating Role of Gender in the Association between Self- Construal and Regulatory Focus: A Cross Sectional Study.

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Abstract

According to earlier studies, independent self-construal is generally associated with a promotion focus, whereas interdependent self-construal is associated with a prevention focus, Conversely, it has often been overlooked how vice versa situations are interrelated in multicultural contexts. Moreover, there has been a disregard for the moderating impact of gender in these processes. Our research aims to investigate these overlooked connections, advancing a more thorough understanding of relationships among gender roles, regulatory foci, and self-construal orientations in the context of Pakistan's tourist and hospitality sector using a sample of 605 employees. The study employed a questionnaire for data collection and structural equation modeling was used to analyze the data. Results showed that people, regardless of their self-construal type, tend to employ promotion and prevention emphasis tactics. This shows that they can adjust their strategies to fit the needs of the particular situation or objective by switching between different tactics. Gender moderated the relationship b/w self-construal and regulatory foci of employees, with only men exhibiting a link between independent and interdependent self-construal with promotion focus. However, no significant relationship between gender and prevention focus was found for both genders. The study concluded that a person's self-construal is important in determining their regulatory focus and that gender (male) moderates this relationship. These findings have implications for human resource management practices in Pakistan's tourist and hospitality industry. However, the study recommends the inclusion of additional variables and methods in future research.

Keywords: Independent Self-Construal, Interdependent Self-Construal, Promotion Focus, Prevention Focus, Gender

Introduction

Self-construal (SC) is the process through which people define and interpret themselves with other people and their social environment (Markus & Kitayama, 1991). According to Markus and Kitayama (1991), individuals may construct their selves as independent or interdependent. Individual needs, intentions, values, and principles are given primacy above group goals, morals, and beliefs by those who have an independent SC. Contrarily, those who regard themselves as being interdependent, place greater value on carrying out social duties and sustaining social ties. The way a person views himself can have an impact on their motivational orientation to

accomplish their objectives (Rodríguez et al., 2014). Individuals' motivational orientation (encompasses the goals people establish for themselves as well as tactics people take to reach their personal goals) that drives them toward their objectives (Higgins, 1997) is termed as regulatory focus. In this regard, people may be either promotion or prevention-focused. Promotion-focused individuals are compelled by the need to produce favorable results and concentrate on chances for development and advancement (Higgins, 1997). People who prioritize prevention are driven to prevent negative outcomes and concentrate on potential risks or losses (Higgins, 1997).

Prior research reveals that when people prioritize independence, self-actualization, and pursuing personal objectives (Langford & MacKinnon, 2000), they are more likely to have a promotion focus that is defined by goals, advancements, and the pursuit of gains (Zhang & Mittal, 2007). In contrast, a prevention perspective is more likely to be held by individuals who place a high value on relationships, group goals, and maintaining societal peace (Langford & MacKinnon, 2000). In a marketing context, according to Aaker and Lee (2001), people who have an independent SC are more likely to be persuaded by messages that emphasize achieving positive outcomes (outcomes that are in line with promotion focus), while people who have an interdependent SC are more likely to be persuaded by messages that emphasize avoiding negative consequences (outcomes that are in line with prevention). Further, Cross, Hardin, and Gercek-Swing (2011), asserted that there is a direct correlation between regulatory foci and SC so that an independent SC is linked to a promotion emphasis, while an interdependent SC is linked to a prevention emphasis. Individuals who perceive themselves as interdependent are generally less risk-takers and more cautious than those who perceive themselves as autonomous (Snibbe & Markus, 2005). Similarly, Lowe, Nikolova, Miller, and Dommer (2019); Zhang, Cui, and Yao (2021) found that individuals with an independent SC are more inclined to take risks in sharing information than those with an interconnected SC.

Previous research has mostly examined only independent or interdependent SC with prevention and promotion foci, respectively. As per our knowledge, no study has investigated whether individuals who live in multicultural settings (in terms of culture, language, and religion) like Pakistan may have a blend of all tendencies (interdependent SC, independent SC, prevention, and promotion foci). However, when faced with specific circumstances, they exhibit regulatory foci that match their independent and interdependent self-constitution. Therefore, our study aims to fill this gap by examining the effect of independent SC on promotion and prevention foci and the effect of interdependent SC on promotion and prevention foci, while using gender as a moderator of these relationships. One significant demographic factor that profoundly impacts individuals' perception of themselves within society is gender (Burn, 1996). Several studies have indicated that gender plays a crucial role as a moderator (Mölders, Brosi, Spörrle, & Welpel, 2019). According to social role theory, societal expectations shape the distinct personalities of men and women, leading to disparities in their perceptions, behaviors (Piercy, Cravens, & Lane, 2001), attitudes, actions, and motivation. Prior studies (Inzlicht, Schmeichel, & Macrae, 2014), have also discovered differences in behavior between genders

when it comes to what motivates them to achieve their goals. It highlights the distinctive inclinations of both women and men. In particular, men can be motivated to improve themselves, gain dominance, and climb the ladder in their quests. According to Eagly and Johannesen-Schmidt (2001), women are more likely to favor cooperation above individual efforts when working toward goals.

These tendencies may be a result of basic motivational differences between the genders. A study conducted in 1998 by Han et al. demonstrates how gender might be a moderator of cultural variations in self-perception. In contrast to American girls and Thai males, Rochanavibhata and Marian (in press) noted that Thai girls place a greater emphasis on family ties. Nonetheless, the results of previous studies have not shown any moderating influence of gender on cultural variations in self-perception (Sahin-Acar & Leichtman, 2015). Additionally, several studies have emphasized the significance of gender in determining a range of psychological traits and actions showing that gender influences self-evaluation, motivation, learning control, goals, self-efficacy, and self-enhancement (Beyey, 2002; Pintrich & Zusho, 2007; Velayutham, Alridge & Fraser, 2012). According to McKay-Nesbitt et al. (2013), the connection between message regulatory emphasis congruence and efficacy is moderated by gender. As per past studies gender may be a potential moderator, this study also employed gender to increase our understanding of the relationships between self-construal and regulatory focus in both men and women. The first objective of this paper was to investigate the relationship of independent self construal with promotion and prevention focus. The second objective of this paper was to investigate the relationship of interdependent self construal with promotion and prevention focus. Third objective was to examination the moderating impact of gender of these relationships.

Literature Review and Hypotheses Development

Self-construal (SC) studies how human beings define and notice themselves concerning other people. There are two main types of SC first one is interdependent SC- which emphasizes connection and club to social groupings, and the second is independent SC- which emphasizes individualism and distinctiveness. People with independent SC prioritize their goals (Lee et al., 2000). They place their autonomy, opinions, and achievements above the community as a whole (Markus & Kitayama, 1991). They are unaffected by the opinions of others and work towards their goals (such as personal growth), focusing more on future rewards and benefits rather than potential challenges or sacrifices that may accompany them (Crowe & Higgins, 1997). Gaining confidence, independence, and pride from achieving goals fuels a promotion-focused attitude, which is characterized by a strong desire for advancement and seizing opportunities along with an aggressive and determined pursuit of ambitious plans (Cesario et al., 2013).

Promotion-focused individuals, according to regulatory focus theory, set the highest standards possible and are willing to take chances (Bryant & Dunford, 2008), which reflects their deepest desire to achieve their goals (Freitas & Higgins, 2002). Further, Hardin, Leong, and Bhagwat (2004) noted that people with a promotion emphasis, have an autonomous self-perception that emphasizes goal-setting and personal growth independently. This viewpoint highlights aspirations and dreams while emphasizing individuality, achievement, and self-

promotion. Previous research suggests that achievement-oriented messages motivate more individuals with a sense of autonomy (Aaker & Lee, 2001). Additionally, these scholars (Aaker & Lee, 2001) also showed that priming independent SC for the persuasion of promotional attributes was more likely to increase energy levels.

Based on these arguments, it is expected that

H₁: Independent self-construal has positive relationship with promotion focus.

The traits of independent SC include individuality (Imada & Ellsworth, 2011) and a sense of autonomy as well as uniqueness (Markus & Kitayama, 1991). Those with independent SC hold the view that their mindsets, actions, and ambitions are self-determined (Imada, 2012) and independent of those around them (Lee et al., 2000). They concentrate on their objectives and are confident in their capacity to carry them out (Nisbett, Peng, Choi, & Norenzayan, 2001). Therefore, they deal with problems on their own and don't seek support or approval from others (Komissarouk & Nadler, 2014). Those who have a preventative focus attitude are more conscientious of their actions and driven by a feeling of duty, considering their objectives as obligations (Kark & Van Dijk, 2007). The preventive focus individuals, according to regulatory focus theory, are motivated by the desire to prevent unfavorable events, or losses. This encourages alertness and awareness of risks, which results in a cautious attitude (Pennington & Roese, 2003). These individuals approach everything with acute vigilance if they have a self-determined attitude to preventing errors, mishaps, etc. To ensure the supremacy of what they do, they diligently look for particular data related to the success of their work (Bowler et al., 2021). At the same time, exercising attentiveness in preventing faults at every level of the workflow (Miele, Molden, & Gardner, 2009). They think they can increase their chances of success independently by working hard, upholding strict standards of excellence, and deliberately avoiding mistakes (Miele et al., 2009).

Based on these arguments, it is expected that

H₂: Independent self-construal has positive relationship with prevention focus.

Markus and Kitayama (1991) examined the psychological notion of interdependent SC, which examines how people form their perspective of themselves in connection to others. According to Imada (2012), this concept places a strong emphasis on integration, interactions, and connectivity within a larger social environment. This leads people who have an interdependent SC enthusiastically work to develop socially desirable qualities (Kenny & Connors, 2017) that promote harmony with important people to get recognition and approval (Baumeister & Leary, 1995). The main motivator for those who exhibit a promotion focus is a strong desire to secure rewards and benefits from opportunities. Their goals are perceived as paving the way for success or growth, and they focus on the benefits that will follow upon reaching them. As to the regulatory focus theory, a promotion-focused person takes a forward-thinking stance that is focused on developing their talents and abilities to solve others' difficulties to better serve them. Those with a promotion emphasis take the initiative because it is important to them to be acknowledged by important people (Baumeister & Leary, 1995). Their aspiration for recognition

not only distinguishes them in the community but also displays their driven quest for development and success. Emphasizing skill development helps individuals to positively impact others by attending to their wants and concerns and at the same time, it advances their progression and success.

Based on these arguments, it is expected that

H3: Interdependent self-construal has a positive relationship with promotion focus.

Individuals with an interdependent self-concept prioritize association with others and maintain positive relationships in social activities (Heine, Lehman, Markus, & Kitayama, 1999). They understand how their actions affect the larger social system and interpersonal contacts. They actively seek to prevent actions that may weaken their bond with social groups, and lead to conflict and misunderstanding (Hayashi, Ideno, & Takemura, 2022). Prevention-focused individuals, prioritize activities that create and preserve a safe and secure atmosphere (Higgins, 1996). According to the regulatory focus theory (Higgins, 1996), individuals with a prevention focus are motivated by the need to maintain order and stop negative events from occurring (Pennington & Roese, 2003). These individuals try to avoid delinquency (Bowler et al., 2021) by focusing on their flaws. Rather than focusing on the outside state of affairs, they often reflect and confess their faults. This flexible strategy supports them in meeting their responsibilities, avoiding negative outcomes, and fostering communal integrations.

Based on the above arguments, it is expected that

H4: Interdependent self-construal has a positive relationship with prevention focus.

Gender as moderator:

The socialization of males places a strong emphasis on cultivating specific traits such as independence, dominance, and self-reliance, often discouraging the development of some traits (Heilman, 2012) like empathy and emotional expressiveness (Herek, 1986). According to social cognitive theory, these perceptions of masculinity are learned through observation and interaction with others. Traditional masculine traits, including independence, competitiveness, a focus on personal success (Franzway, Sharp, Mills, & Gill, 2009), and emotional detachment (González-Jiménez & Hernández-Romera, 2014) may shape the actions of males (Baumeister & Sommer, 1997). This learned behavior often leads men to prioritize their interests and seek social dominance (Niederle & Vesterlund, 2007). In their pursuit of self-interest and personal accomplishment (Niederle & Vesterlund, 2007), men commonly exhibit less concern for societal standards and norms, displaying a tendency toward emotional detachment from others.

Based on the above arguments, it is expected that

H5: The link between independent self-construal and promotion focus is moderated by the gender of employees: that is, the relationship is weaker for females and stronger for males.

The increased emphasis of women on independence and personal aspirations (independent self-construal) can be attributed to many social and economic changes (Sekścińska, Trzcińska & Maison, 2016). But there is still social pressure on women to fulfill conventional caregiving duties (Haines, Deaux, & Lofaro, 2016; Morgenroth & Heilman, 2017). It can be difficult for

women to strike a balance between their goals and social expectations to follow gender conventions. This conflict is a reflection of social role theory, which holds that behavior and gender roles are shaped by cultural expectations (Koenig & Eagly, 2014). Thus, women usually have to decide between following their personal development and conforming to the gender's expectations. Because, women who exhibit counter-stereotypical actions often encounter rejection, and retaliation (Heilman, Barker, & Harrison, 2017; McKenzie, Bugden, Webster, & Barr, 2018) and are ostracized (Rudman et al., 2012). To manage this, women employ strategic behavior modification to reduce the possibility of negative consequences and enhance the possibility of accomplishing their objectives. They increase their chances of success by being proactive in identifying and resolving any roadblocks.

Therefore, it is expected that

H₆: The connection between independent self-construal and the prevention focus is moderated by the gender of employees: that is, the relationship is weaker for males and stronger for females.

Men with interdependent self-construal prioritize relationships and social bonds. They focus on improving behaviors that help them integrate with others which in return helps them in gaining recognition (Baumeister & Leary, 1995). In interpersonal relationships, according to the social exchange theory (Blau, 1964), reciprocal exchange takes place to gain benefits. To acquire acceptance and collaboration from others, men mostly participate in reciprocal exchanges. Men behave in this way because they want to be known as kind and helpful, and it inspires them to take on roles and traits that are good for society. These traits and roles help them in carrying out their commitments, duties, and obligations to others more skillfully. Thus, men work to make themselves better in every aspect of life, both for their benefit and to better fulfill their obligations to others (Heine et al., 1999). Therefore, it is expected that

H₇: The connection between interdependent Self Construal and the promotion focus is moderated by the gender of employees: that is, the relationship is weaker for females and stronger for males.

The theory of social roles helps in understanding why women tend to prioritize relationships and dependency, and how these factors contribute to their sense of identity within a community (Cross & Madson, 1997). It suggests that women prioritize connections over individual goals due to societal pressures. According to this theory, society's expectations and customs, especially those related to gender roles, influence people's behavior (Eagly & Wood, 2012; Hora, Lemoine, Xu, & Shalley, 2021). In women, socialization cultivates some qualities like kindness, thoughtfulness, and sensitivity to others' feelings (Eddleston & Powell, 2008). These traits emphasize creating cohesive communities and solid interpersonal bonds.

According to Yang and Girgus, (2018), positions for women are strongly ingrained with the belief that women value interpersonal interactions more than men do. As per Cikara and Girgus (2010), women are more prone to be committed to maintaining these designated roles and attach greater significance to regularity and consistency in their social interactions. There is a noticeable tendency among women to consider the possible effects of their behavior on others (Yang & Girgus, 2018) and avoid anything that can compromise the cohesiveness of social

groupings (Hardin & Greer, 2009). This proactive approach is perfectly in line with the interdependent self-concept that women display. People who have this kind of self-concept prioritize social harmony and actively work to avoid acts that could disrupt it (Hayashi et al., 2022). The prevention-focused approach helps women actively work to preserve social soundness and avoid probable instabilities in their communal interactions.

Therefore, it is expected that:

H₅: The connection between interdependent Self Construal and the prevention focus is moderated by the gender of employees: that is, the relationship is weaker for males and stronger for females.

Hypothesized model

The model, shown in Figure 01, suggests employees' self-construal is related to regulatory focus, which is moderated by the gender of employees.

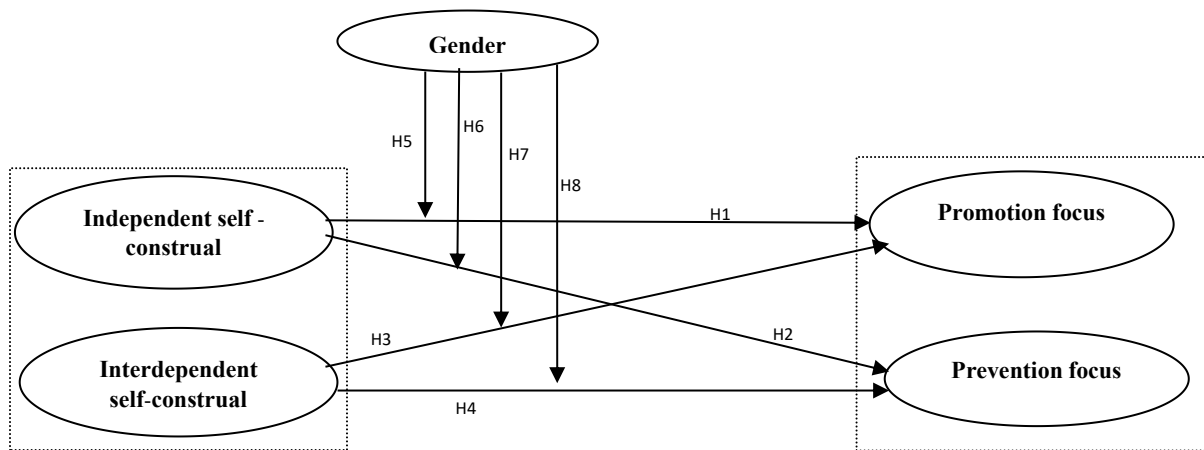


Figure. 01: Hypothesized model.

Methodology

The 605 workers from Pakistan's tourism and hospitality industry, worked in a variety of positions (such as tour guides, travel agents, hotel managers, staff, guest service, etc.), made up the unit of analysis for this study. Using a cross-sectional study design, the researcher collected data all at once through the questionnaire. Convenience sampling strategy was adopted to collect data. The study was voluntary, with informed consent obtained from participants. Confidentiality was maintained, and it was ensured that the study did not cause any physical, emotional, or psychological harm to participants. The study did not discriminate based on gender, age, or any other personal characteristics, etc, and adhered to ethical principles, respecting participants' rights and dignity.

Measures

In a study, we employed a shortened version of Singelis's Self-Construal Scale (SCS), developed by D'Amico and Scrima (2015) to examine the self-construal of employees. The SCS has two subscales. One example item that was used to gauge independent and interdependent SC was:

“I do my things, regardless of what others think”, and” I will sacrifice my self-interest for the benefit of the group, I am in” respectively. Respondents rated their agreement with each statement on a Likert scale from strongly disagree (01) to strongly agree (05). The Composite Regulatory Focus Scale- modified by Haws, Dholakia, and Bearden (2010)- was used to measure regulatory focus. The scale has two subscales. One example item that was used to gauge promotion and prevention focus was: “I feel, like, I have made progress toward being successful in my life”and “I frequently think about how I can prevent failures in my life”, respectively. Respondents rated their agreement with each statement on a Likert scale from strongly disagree (01) to strongly agree (05).

Data analysis and results

Data obtained from the questionnaires were checked for completeness and accuracy before analysis. The preliminary analysis was performed by SPSS 23.0, and structural equation modeling (SEM) was conducted by smartPLS version 3.0. Table 01 presents the descriptive statistics of the main variables, which exhibit approximately normal distribution with skewness values ranging from -0.24 to -0.61 and kurtosis values ranging from -0.64 to -1.3. The variables display significant positive correlations with each other, including independent self-construal and promotion focus ($r = 0.77, p < .01$), independent self-construal and prevention focus ($r = 0.73, p < .01$), interdependent self-construal and promotion focus ($r = 0.744, p < .01$), and interdependent self-construal and prevention focus ($r = 0.66, p < .01$). The strength of these relationships was evaluated using the categorization suggested by Evans (1996). Moreover, the correlation matrix in Table 01 indicates the absence of multicollinearity among the predictors, as the correlation coefficients between the predictors do not exceed 0.80, and the predictors are not overly interrelated. This supports the assumption of independence among the predictors.

Table 01.

Descriptive statistics and correlation

	Min	Max	M	Std.	Sk	Ku	1	2	3	4	5
1 Independent_self	1.20	5.00	3.34	1.09	-0.24	-1.26	1				
2 Interdependent_self	1.00	5.00	3.54	0.94	-0.48	-0.64	0.74**	1			
3 Promotion_focus	1.00	5.00	3.56	0.99	-0.61	-0.75	0.77**	0.74**	1		
4 Prevention_focus	1.00	5.00	3.38	0.96	-0.48	-0.82	0.73**	0.66**	0.76**	1	

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

* . Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

N=605

Partial Least Squares (PLS) analysis utilizing the SmartPLS 3.0 software was used to analyze the suggested model (Ringle, Wende, & Becker, 2015). PLS-SEM was used due to its flexibility in

handling complex models. Two-stage analytical approach suggested by Anderson and Gerbing (1988) was employed to assure the validity and reliability of the measures. In the first stage individual measures were evaluated and in the second stage predicted linkages of the structural model were confirmed. A bootstrapping method with 5000 resamples was used to assess the relevance of the path coefficients and loadings (Hair, Hult, Ringle, & Sarstedt, 2014).

Measurement model

In the current study, the approach suggested by Roldán and Sánchez-Franco (2012) is used to evaluate the measurement model for reflective constructs. The evaluation is based on convergent validity, discriminant validity, construct validity, and individual item reliability. High internal consistency dependability is shown in Table 02, as all indicators have factor loadings more than 0.7 and the composite reliability is more than 0.8.

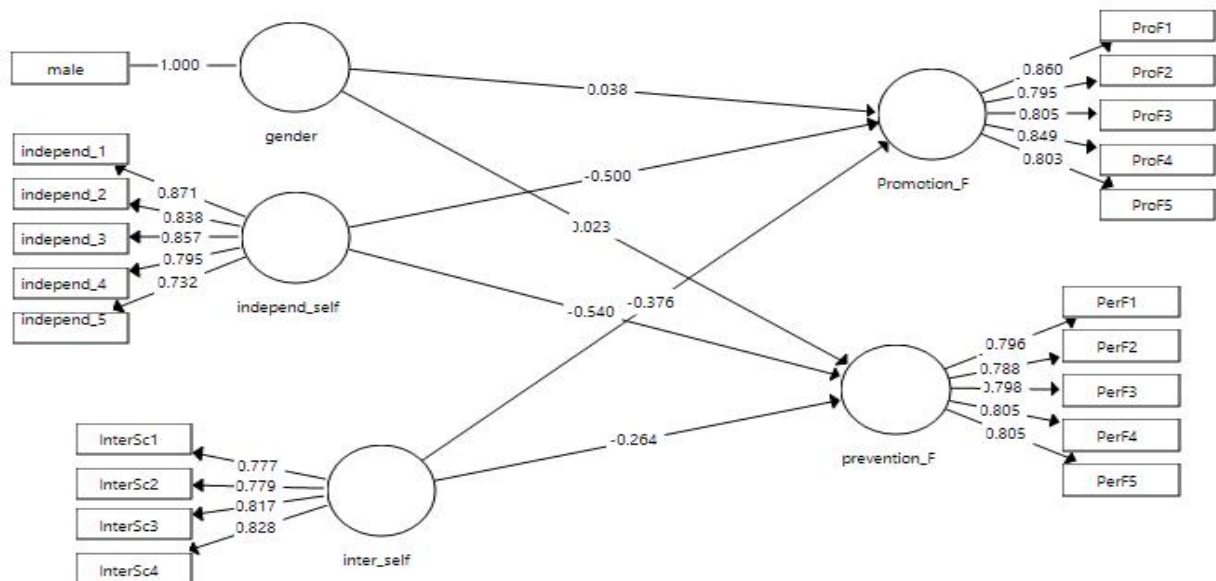


Figure 02: Item loadings

The average variance extracted (AVE) values were over 0.50 further supporting the existence of convergent validity. Cross-loading and the Heterotrait–Monotrait ratio of correlations (HTMT) are methods used to verify discriminant validity. Table 03 illustrates that each construct has a larger cross-loading than its loading on any other construct (Henseler, Ringle, & Sarstedt, 2015). Table 04 further illustrates that the HTMT values fall below the 0.90 criterion (Gold, Malhotra, & Segars, 2001; Henseler et al., 2015). Thus, the measurement model demonstrates satisfactory construct validity.

Table 02.

Measurement Model (Construct Reliability, Convergent Validity)

Constructs and items	Items loadings	Cronbach's Alpha	Composite Reliability	Average Variance Extracted (AVE)
Independent SC	indepSC	0.87	0.91	0.67
IndSc1	0.87			
IndSc2	0.83			
IndSc3	0.85			
IndSc4	0.79			
IndSc5	0.73			
Interdependent SC	interdeSC	0.81	0.87	0.64
InterSc1	0.77			
InterSc2	0.77			
InterSc3	0.81			
InterSc4	0.82			
Prevention foci	Prefoc	0.85	0.89	0.63
PerF1	0.79			
PerF2	0.78			
PerF3	0.79			
PerF4	0.80			
PerF5	0.80			
Promotion foci	Profoc	0.88	0.91	0.67
ProF1	0.86			
ProF2	0.79			
ProF3	0.80			
ProF4	0.84			
ProF5	0.80			

Table 03.
Cross loading

	Independent self	Interdependent self	Prevention	Promotion	Gender
IndSc1	0.87	0.61	0.66	0.74	-0.02
IndSc2	0.83	0.60	0.64	0.66	0.01
IndSc3	0.85	0.65	0.66	0.67	0.02
IndSc4	0.79	0.61	0.53	0.59	0.03
IndSc5	0.73	0.59	0.48	0.50	-0.02
InterSc1	0.59	0.77	0.49	0.52	0.01
InterSc2	0.55	0.77	0.48	0.53	-0.02
InterSc3	0.61	0.81	0.58	0.66	0.01
InterSc4	0.63	0.82	0.56	0.66	-0.02
PerF1	0.58	0.49	0.79	0.56	0.00

PerF2	0.56	0.49	0.78	0.56	0.03
PerF3	0.54	0.55	0.79	0.55	0.02
PerF4	0.63	0.55	0.80	0.68	-0.00
PerF5	0.61	0.57	0.80	0.65	0.03
ProF1	0.71	0.64	0.67	0.86	0.02
ProF2	0.60	0.56	0.62	0.79	0.05
ProF3	0.60	0.61	0.60	0.80	0.02
ProF4	0.66	0.64	0.63	0.84	0.04
ProF5	0.62	0.61	0.58	0.80	0.00

Table 04.

Discriminant Validity Using Heterotrait-Monotrait (HTMT) Ratio of Correlations (HTMT)

	Gender	Independent self	Interdependent self	Prevention	Promotion
Gender					
Independent self	0.03				
Interdependent self	0.02	0.88			
Prevention	0.02	0.84	0.79		
Promotion	0.04	0.87	0.87	0.87	

Structural model assessment

A 5,000-resample bootstrapping approach was used to evaluate the structural model and R², beta, and corresponding t-values were examined. Additionally, effect sizes (f²) and predictive relevance (Q²) were reported. We initially checked for collinearity between the constructs to determine the validity of the inner structural model; all (inner) Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) values were below the cutoff of three (Hair, Ringle & Sarstedt, 2011). The maximum VIF for inner structural model of this study was 2.80, showing that collinearity is not a problem. After that blindfolding process was executed to assess the predictive relevance of the Partial Least Squares (PLS) route model, all cross-validated redundancy values Q² were above zero, confirming the model's satisfactory predictive accuracy.

The R² values, which indicate that the model has adequate in-sample predictive power, agreed with this finding. Precisely, the independent and interdependent self-construal collectively explained 67.4% of the variance in promotion focus, with R² value of 0.674, indicating a robust prediction according to Cohen's (1988) recommendations. The independent and interdependent self-construal, on the other hand, jointly explained 57.5% of the variance in the prevention focus, with R² value higher than 0.33 but lower than 0.67, indicating a moderate prediction by Cohen's (1988) recommendations.

The path coefficient was analyzed and found that the independent self-construal had a significant but weak effect size on promotion focus ($\beta = 0.34, t = 7.89, p < 0.05, 95\% \text{ CI: } (0.25) - (0.42), f^2 = 0.15$). Similarly, the relationship between independent self-construal and prevention focus exhibited a significant connection with a low effect size ($\beta = 0.37, t = 7.91, p < 0.05, 95\% \text{ CI: } (0.28) - (0.46), f^2 = 0.13$). Additionally, the interdependent self-construal demonstrated a

significant but weak effect size on promotion focus ($\beta = 0.27, t = 6.67, p < 0.05, 95\% \text{ CI: } (0.19) - (0.34), f^2 = 0.10$). Finally, the relationship between interdependent self-construal and prevention focus exhibited a significant but weak effect size ($\beta = 0.15, t = 3.75, p < 0.05, 95\% \text{ CI: } (0.07) - (0.23), f^2 = 0.02$). These findings support the hypotheses H₁, H₂, H₃, and H₄ of this study.

Table 05.

Structural model analysis (Hypothesis testing) or path coefficient

Hypothesis	Path coefficient	Std beta		Std error		LC		UC		Inference	F2
		B	S.E	T Values	P Values	5 %	95 %				
H1	Independent self -> Promotion	0.34	0.04	7.89	0.00	0.25	0.42			Supported	0.15
H2	Independent self -> Prevention	0.37	0.04	7.91	0.00	0.28	0.46			Supported	0.13
H3	Interdependent self -> Promotion	0.27	0.04	6.67	0.00	0.19	0.34			Supported	0.10
H4	Interdependent self -> Prevention	0.15	0.04	3.75	0.00	0.07	0.23			Supported	0.02
H5	Independent*Gender_Promotion -> Promotion	0.28	0.11	2.42	0.00	0.08	0.47			Supported	
H6	Independent*Gender_Prevention -> Prevention	0.17	0.11	1.57	0.05	-0.01	0.37			Not Supported	
H7	Interdependent*Gender_Promotion -> Promotion	-0.38	0.15	2.48	0.00	-0.64	-0.13			Supported	
H8	Interdependent*Gender_Prevention -> Prevention	-0.18	0.13	1.35	0.08	-0.42	0.03			Not Supported	

Further, moderation analysis was conducted using the product-indicator approach to examine the influence of gender. The findings (as shown in table 05) indicate that there is support for H₅ ($\beta = 0.28, t = 2.42, p = 0.00, 95\% \text{ CI: } (0.08) - (0.47)$) and H₇ ($\beta = -0.38, t = 2.48, p = 0.00, 95\% \text{ CI: } (-0.64) - (-0.13)$), but not for H₆ ($\beta = 0.17, t = 1.57, p = 0.05, 95\% \text{ CI: } (-0.00) - (0.37)$) and H₈ ($\beta = -0.18, t = 1.35, p = 0.08, 95\% \text{ CI: } (-0.42) - (0.03)$). Specifically, the results suggest that gender moderates the relationship between certain variables, but not others, in line with the hypotheses proposed in the study.

The study also used an interaction plot (Figure 03) to examine the moderating effect of gender. The findings demonstrated a strong moderating influence of gender, with men exhibiting a more favorable and steeper slope than women. This shows that men are more likely than women to benefit from autonomous self-construal in terms of enhancing promotion focus, which supports hypothesis 5. According to Figure 04, the plot, females had a steeper and more favorable gradient than men, suggesting that females are more affected than males by interdependent self-construal in terms of fostering promotion emphasis. As a result, hypothesis 7 was validated by research data.

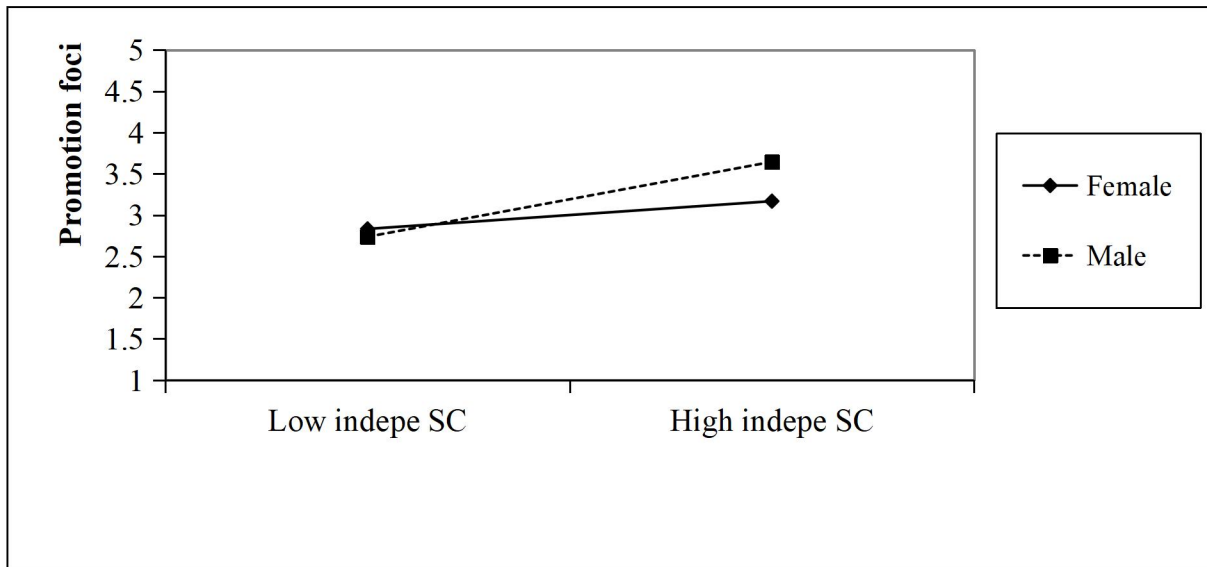


Figure 03: Independent*Gender->Promotion

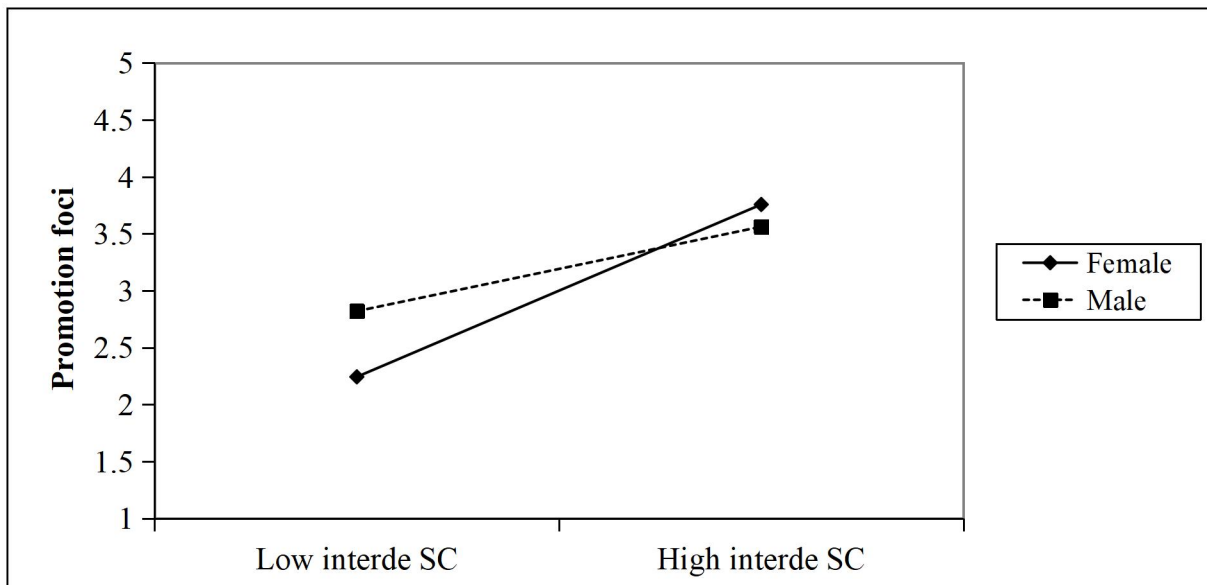


Figure 04: Interdependent*Gender->Promotion

Discussion

In this study, the relationship between gender, regulatory focus, and self-construal was investigated in Pakistan's tourist and hospitality industry. The results strongly supported the suggested theories and demonstrated the association between self-construal and regulatory focus. Furthermore, it was found that gender moderated this association only for males and promotion focus. The study's result showed a strong and favorable association between employees' independent SC and promotions' focus, which confirmed the first hypothesis. People who have an independent self-concept are driven to take part in activities that increase their self-assurance, independence, and self-sufficiency.

They also work to establish their individuality positively and constructively (Heine et al., 1999). Their desire for self-improvement and self-achievement makes the employment of a promotion-focused strategy more appealing to them since they place a higher value on successful results and do not want to miss opportunities to succeed (Crowe & Higgins, 1997). The results of earlier studies (Cross et al., 2011; Lee et al., 2000) are in agreement with our findings.

The results also supported the second hypothesis, showing a substantial association between employees' independent SC and prevention focus. The results suggested that people with a strong sense of self adopt a prevention-focused attitude, where they are driven by averting risks and unfavorable consequences rather than by obtaining favorable ones. They are more inclined to act in ways that ensure their wellbeing and safety, for as by taking precautions to avoid losing competence or self-esteem. These results agree with past studies (Kareklas, Carlson, & Muehling, 2012). The third hypothesis was also supported by the results, which indicated a significant relationship between interdependent SC and promotion focus. People who have interdependent self-concepts are driven to take actions that keep others' perceptions of them as agreeable, helpful, caring, and supportive. They frequently develop traits and behaviors that are advantageous to society. As a result, individuals make an effort to invest in their development by learning more, raising their position, developing their abilities, etc. Their self-improvement is not just for their benefit but also for a better performance of their tasks, responsibilities, and promises to others. These results are in line with earlier studies (Kurman, 2001; Lee & Aaker, 2004).

The results of the current study also supported the fourth hypothesis. The findings showed that people who have an interdependent self-view typically concentrate on playing out their social responsibilities and keeping up relationships with others, which motivates them to take actions that avert undesirable outcomes (Sung & Choi, 2011). So, when deciding or performing a task, they tend to concentrate more on the reasons why they should or shouldn't do it (Crowe & Higgins, 1997). These results agree with former studies in the literature (Cross et al., 2011). The fifth hypothesis looked at the moderating role of gender in the effect of independent SC on promotion focus, was supported. The results revealed that the intensity of the relationship between independent SC and promotion focus differs for men and women. This finding implies that gender roles created by societal expectations, conventions, norms, and typecasts have a significant impact on influencing how people pursue their goals and evaluate themselves. Men may be more motivated by goals that focus on getting promoted because research has shown that they tend to be more achievement-oriented (Kenny-Benson, Pomerantz, Ryan, & Patrick, 2006), competitive (Musa, Dauda, & Umar, 2016), confident, and less risk-averse (Niederle & Vesterlund, 2007) than women. Previous studies also supported these findings that indicated independent SC is aligned with the societal norms of accomplishment and competition, which are more prevalent among men than women (Oyserman, Coon, & Kimmelmeier, 2002).

Furthermore, hypothesis six, which tested for the moderating role of gender in the effect of independent SC on prevention focus, was not supported by the results. It may be concluded that the relationship between independent SC and prevention emphasis is generally gender-neutral within the particular sample or cultural setting under study. These findings contrast with those of some

published research in corporate environments, which discussed the growing trend of portraying women as more analytical, assertive, confident, and ambitious (Vasconcelos, 2018) and looked at how women in leadership roles were more meticulous and thorough monitors than their male counterparts, actively demanding increased audit efforts (Gul, Ferdinand, Srinidhi, Judy, & Tsui, 2012). Furthermore, prior studies indicated that female CEOs might be more circumspect when making business decisions than their male colleagues (Huang & Kisgen, 2013). Consistent with our seventh hypothesis, we found that gender moderated the relationship between interdependent self-construal and promotion focus among employees. The results revealed that the men are driven by a desire to uphold their duties and obligations to others to win respect and approval. Due to this, men are more likely to work on the development of themselves to contribute to the group and the greater community. They realize self-improvement is a means to better carry out their responsibilities, help and support others, contribute to their happiness and well-being, as well as meet their own needs. This creates constructive interpersonal dynamics, and their feeling of community within their social networks is strengthened. These findings contradict earlier research that suggested that men are still appreciated for complying with predefined typical 'masculine' roles, and non-compliance causes stigmatization, shame, and disrespect in societies (Ericsson, 2015). The result investigating gender as a moderator on the relationship between employees' interdependent SC and preventative focus (8th hypothesis) did not yield significant findings to support this hypothesis. These findings contradict earlier research that suggested that in comparison to men, women have been reported to have higher degrees of prevention focus (Llewellyn, & Rudolph, 2014) and interdependent self-construal (Foels & Tomch, 2009).

Conclusion

In conclusion, the current study highlights the importance of a person's self-perception in determining their regulatory focus and goal-pursuit tactics within the tourist and hospitality sector of a multicultural country. The results showed that people generally tend to obtain favorable results, avoid missing opportunities, fulfill social roles, and keep connections with others, apart from the type of SC they have. Two of the four hypotheses relating to moderation were accepted, while two were rejected. This suggests that the moderating effect of gender in the interaction between SC and regulatory focus is complex and not always applicable. The acceptance of two moderation hypotheses suggested that gender plays a role in certain aspects of this relationship, whereas the rejection of the other two hypotheses underscores the need for additional research to shed light on the specific circumstances under which gender may or may not affect the relationship between SC and regulatory focus.

Implications

The results of this study would help in increasing the worth of training programs by tailoring these programs to the needs of employees. Tailored training programs would better prepare employees to recognize and understand their, as well as, the psychological perspectives of clients, promoting a more individualized and moral approach to customer service. Further, this study provides valuable insight for management in creating teams with a diverse mix of self-construals, regulatory foci, and gender. By bringing together individuals with different self-perspectives and motivational

orientations, teams can develop comprehensive approaches that take into account the numerous aspects of guest/tourists' pleasure. This diversity also fosters a collaborative environment where team members contribute unique strengths, enhancing the team's ability to address a wide range of guest needs and preferences effectively. Additionally, this study would assist employees in identifying their regulatory focus and self-construal, enabling them to set goals for their careers that are in line with their natural tendencies in a variety of tourism and hospitality industry positions, such as management, sales, event organizing, marketing, quality assurance, and risk management, etc. This self-awareness leads to overall professional success and effectiveness, in addition to improving personal fulfillment and pleasure in their professions.

Limitations and recommendations

When analyzing the study's results, the limitations that should be kept in mind are as follows. First off, the study's cross-sectional design makes it difficult to understand long-term impacts. The subsequent studies should employ a longitudinal approach to consider confounding variables and identify the precise reasons causing changes over time. Secondly, the study's quantitative design presents a limitation, future research should consider the employment of qualitative or mixed-methods designs, along with experimental or longitudinal investigations. To acquire a more comprehensive understanding of the research question and improve the generalizability and validity of the findings, it is suggested that forthcoming research should slot in triangulation by using various methodologies or designs. Thirdly, the moderating role of just one variable—gender—was evaluated in the study; other variables may have an impact on how self-construal and regulatory focus are related. Additional elements that could aid in comprehending these connections should be investigated in future research. Not least of all, the study relied on self-reported measures, which could be influenced by response biases including social desirability bias. Future studies should consider applying additional or alternative techniques to support self-report data, like behavioral observations or physiological measurements.

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