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Integrating authenticity, well-being, and memorability in heritage tourism: A two-site investigation

Abstract

Authenticity, well-being, and memorability are essential to understanding tourist experience, yet little is known about the mechanism underlying these interrelated concepts. This study explores how tourists' perceived authenticity influences memorability through their existential authenticity and well-being in the context of heritage tourism. Using data from visitors to two world heritage sites in China (West Lake and Lijiang), the effects of existential authenticity on tourists' psychological and subjective well-being are empirically tested. Findings from cross-regional surveys reveal that existential authenticity, triggered by tourists' perceived authenticity of local cultural heritage, is significantly associated with memorability and psychological and subjective well-being. Results further show that perceived authenticity of local cultural heritage contributes to memorability through existential authenticity and well-being. Elucidation of these conceptual relationships has theoretical and practical implications for heritage tourism studies and management.

Keywords: perceived authenticity; existential authenticity; psychological well-being; subjective well-being; memorability

Introduction

Authenticity, well-being, and memorability are closely tied to tourists' experiences and have each garnered extensive research attention (Fu 2019; Kirillova, Lehto, and Cai 2017a; Nawijn and Filep 2016; Rahmani, Gnoth, and Mather 2018; Steiner and Reisinger 2006; Wang 1999; Yi, Lin, Jin, and Luo 2017; Zatori, Smith, and Puczko 2018). Until now, however, little research has explored the mechanism among these concepts. This knowledge gap is especially critical given that authenticity can be divided into object- and activity-related categories, just as well-being can be divided into psychological and subjective categories. Although research has suggested that tourists respond to attraction contexts and realize object-related authenticity by encoding their experiences with personal meaning or interests (McIntosh and Prentice 1999), and that perceived object-based authenticity can spur existential authenticity (Kolar and Zabkar 2010), the academic literature lacks systematic modeling efforts. In light of this disparity, we find it imperative to examine whether visitors' desire for existential authenticity, derived from their perceptions of object-related authenticity, influences their well-being and, in turn, memorability.

The concept of authenticity was introduced by MacCannell (1973, 1976), and has been widely applied in sociology (Cohen 1979) and tourism (McIntosh and Prentice 1999; Wang 1999). Notably, Wang (1999) classified the concept into objective, constructive, and existential forms. *Objective authenticity* refers to the authenticity of original content and, coupled with object authenticity, is often used to describe the authenticity of cultural relics and events. *Constructive authenticity* varies from person to person and has rarely been taken

as a research construct in itself because all things are constructed through the human brain.

Existential authenticity has rich philosophical connotations, revealing an unrestrained state of being (Wang 1999; Yi et al. 2017). In line with Wang's (1999) conceptualization, objective and constructive authenticity belong to object-related authenticity, while existential authenticity falls under activity-related authenticity.

As a free, unrestricted state, existential authenticity can be further divided into intrapersonal and interpersonal types (Kim and Jamal 2007; Wang 1999), where intrapersonal authenticity reflects being true to oneself or a state of real self while interpersonal authenticity pertains to authentic relationships of or among selves (Wang 1999), and can be produced or pursued through tourism activities (Steiner and Reisinger 2006). In other words, tourism serves as a catalyst for existential authenticity (Brown 2013). Studies on existential authenticity have recently evolved along two distinct lines. The first research line focuses on positive factors leading to existential authenticity, such as cultural motivation or attitude (Kolar and Zabkar 2010; Zhou, Zhang, and Edelheim 2013), as well as outcomes including engagement (Bryce et al. 2015) or tourists' satisfaction and cognitive loyalty (Park, Choi, and Lee 2019). In the same vein, scholars have explored relationships among these components and the influences of existential authenticity. Furthermore, intrapersonal authenticity has been found to exert a significant impact on interpersonal authenticity (Yi et al. 2017), while intrapersonal and interpersonal authenticity each appear to affect conative loyalty via cognitive loyalty or emotional loyalty, respectively (Fu 2019). In contrast, the second line revolves around tourist alienation and anxiety. The pursuit of authenticity is an intervention for alienation, which refers to separation from the self, whereby a person is either no longer him/herself or has lost

his/her sense of self and becomes a production/consumption tool or socialized individual (Xue, Manuel-Navarrete, and Buzinde 2014). Existential anxiety can evoke meaningful life changes after travel (Kirillova, Lehto, and Cai 2017a), but whether positive outcomes consistently follow from the first line of thoughts has yet to be seen.

Existentialism is a philosophy of chasing freedom and pleasure (Heidegger 1996; Sartre 1992). The pursuit of physical/mental pleasure and self-realization in existential authenticity (Steiner and Reisinger 2006; Wang 1999) coincides with expressions of pleasure, meaningfulness, and self-actualization in well-being (Ryan and Deci 2001). To date, few studies have explored the association between existential authenticity and well-being.

Although Yu, Li, and Xiao (2020) discovered that existential authenticity positively influences hedonic and eudaimonic well-being, they only examined sub-dimensions of intrapersonal authenticity (i.e., authentic living, accepting external influence, and self-alienation) without considering interpersonal aspects of existential authenticity. Despite recent interests in destination authenticity and its downstream consequences (e.g., Lee, Jan, and Lin 2020; Mody and Hanks 2019; Stepchenkova and Belyaeva 2020), with respect to intrapersonal and interpersonal authenticity, the relationship between existential authenticity and well-being remains unexplored.

By studying the antecedents of memorable tourism experiences, Kim (2014) confirmed that tourists remember positive emotions or affective feelings (e.g., pleasure and happiness) as well as hedonism, refreshment, novelty, knowledge, involvement, social interaction, and meaningfulness. Tourists who seek refreshment, novelty, knowledge, and meaningful

experiences essentially crave intrapersonal authenticity to some extent, while tourists who participate in activities and social interaction are searching for interpersonal authenticity. Moreover, Zatori, Smith, and Puczko (2018) confirmed that tourists' involvement significantly contributes to memorability. Hedonism, meaningfulness, and positive emotions, which are essential to well-being (McCabe and Johnson 2013; Ryan and Deci 2001), also promote memorable tourism experiences. In effect, existential authenticity and well-being can each induce memorability for tourists. We accordingly argue that memorability can be a consequence of existential authenticity and well-being in a tourism context.

The extant literature has tended to explore how negative facets of existential authenticity, such as alienation or anxiety (Xue, Manuel-Navarrete, and Buzinde 2014; Kirillova, Lehto, and Cai 2017a) and adverse feelings, can promote memorable tourist experiences (Kim 2014). Nonetheless, positive connections among existential authenticity, well-being, and memorability have not yet been thoroughly discussed. Therefore, this study aims to address three research questions: (1) How does tourists' perceived authenticity of local cultural heritage contribute to their existential authenticity, both intrapersonally and interpersonally? (2) How is tourists' existential authenticity associated with their psychological and subjective well-being? (3) Is there an association between existential authenticity, well-being, and memorability? To bridge these knowledge gaps, we seek to construct a conceptual framework linking the above concepts and empirically investigate their dynamics. By testing the proposed model in two cultural heritage sites, our work contributes to a clearer understanding of tourists' experiences and well-being and thus facilitates heritage destinations' marketing and management.

Literature review and hypotheses

Perceived authenticity and existential authenticity

Cultural heritage involves tangible and intangible aspects (McKercher and du Cros 2002). Whereas tangible heritage is object-based (Kolar and Zabkar 2010), intangible heritage is community-based (Zhu 2012). Taken together, these two forms of cultural heritage provide a basis to sustain local residents' traditional lives and are thus often interdependent (McKercher and du Cros 2002; Yi et al. 2017). The transformation from toured objects to the subjective negotiation of meaning constitutes the tourist experience (Uriely 2005). In other words, emotional and subjective interpretations are pivotal when individuals encounter and experience heritage (Park 2010)—the consumption and construction of a place involves not only bodily and multisensory aspects but also cognitive and affective processes (Rakić and Chambers 2012).

Because modern society is largely bereft of authenticity, today's consumers are often seen as pilgrims questing for authenticity via travel (MacCannell 1973, 1976). Authenticity, as a socially constructed concept, contains three layers of meaning: being true in substance, being rooted in originality and self-expression rather than molded by social forces, and being real or actual against pretense or replication (Vannini and Williams 2009). Thus, "being authentic" refers to being creative or attaining originality, self-discovery, meaningfulness, and self-realization; authenticity can also be viewed from individual and collective perspectives (Olsen 2002; Vannini and Williams 2009). Since the actual context shapes one's perception of authenticity, object-based authenticity refers to original objects, sites, or artifacts (Kolar and

Zabkar 2010). Specifically, *tangible heritage* includes architecture or buildings, interior design and decoration, and building environment; *intangible heritage* involves craftsmen's skills, local lifestyles or practices, handicraft items or souvenirs, local people's arts (e.g., paintings and carvings), and local stories or legends (Trinh, Ryan, and Cave 2014; Yi et al. 2017). Existential authenticity, which is grounded in phenomenological traditions, is independent from objects or toured objects (Olsen 2002; Wang 1999) in the case of heritage tourism.

Existential authenticity emphasizes a state of being and freedom. Wang (1999) classified authenticity into two forms based on tourists' experiences: object-related authenticity (i.e., objective and constructive authenticity) and activity-related authenticity (i.e., existential authenticity). Wang (1999) also posited that existential authenticity can explain a larger array of tourist experiences and comprises intrapersonal and interpersonal authenticity.

Intrapersonal authenticity includes bodily feelings and self-making. Bodily feelings are primarily related to the corporeal (i.e., intrapersonal) source of one's authentic self, meaning that one's body shifts from its constrained routine existence to an existential state. Self-making signifies that tourists pursue self-realization that is difficult to attain in everyday life. In addition to searching for the authenticity of self, tourists also seek authentic interpersonal relationships. Interpersonal authenticity includes family ties and touristic *communitas*.

Regarding familial connection, tourism affords families an opportunity to realize or reinforce a sense of authentic togetherness and experience natural, authentic, and emotional bonds or true intimate relationships among members (Steiner and Reisinger 2006; Wang 1999). In terms of *communitas*, tourists can interact with others without concern for a broader social

hierarchy, socioeconomic/sociopolitical roles, positions, or status (Steiner and Reisinger 2006).

Scholars have confirmed that object-based authenticity contributes substantially to existential authenticity (Kolar and Zabkar 2010; Yi et al. 2017, 2018; Zhou, Zhang, and Edelheim 2013), although most studies have pertained to tangible aspects while neglecting intangible ones (Kolar and Zabkar 2010; Zhou, Zhang, and Edelheim 2013). In line with previous studies, existential authenticity is initiated by tourists' perceptions of the authenticity of heritage sites. Prior research has either focused on the impacts of motivation and object-based authenticity on existential (mostly intrapersonal) authenticity (e.g., Kolar and Zabkar 2010), or on the effects of authenticity of tangible or intangible cultural heritage on intrapersonal and interpersonal authenticity, respectively (e.g., Yi et al. 2017). Recently, Stepchenkova and Belyaeva (2020) reported that authenticity orientation affects intrapersonal authenticity, as well as revisiting and recommendation, and discovered the differences of their inner relationship based on three different attitudes: realist, constructivist, and postmodernist. In short, when tangible and intangible cultural heritage are jointly considered alongside intrapersonal and interpersonal authenticity being considered jointly, few studies have evaluated how tourists' perceived authenticity influences existential authenticity by considering the sub-dimensions of these two constructs.

Considering the tangible and intangible aspects of objects, Yi et al. (2017, 2018) tested the influences of the authenticity of architectural heritage and folk culture on intrapersonal or existential authenticity. We presume in this study that perceived authenticity is related to

tourists' perceived local tangible and intangible objects (e.g., architectural heritage and folk culture). Hence, the first hypothesis.

H₁: Tourists' perceived authenticity positively contributes to their existential authenticity.

Existential authenticity and well-being

As Steiner and Reisinger (2006) pointed out, existential authenticity has its own philosophical origins and belongs to a long philosophical tradition focusing on what it means to be human, oneself, and happy (Heidegger 1996; Sartre 1992). In essence, existentialism is a philosophy of optimism or the pursuit of happiness. However, whether and how existential authenticity influences well-being has received scarce academic attention. Within the concept of existential authenticity, intrapersonal authenticity involves searching for bodily pleasure (e.g., relaxation, entertainment, refreshment, or sensual pleasure), striving to encounter one's authentic self, and meaning making or the pursuit of self-realization (Steiner and Reisinger 2006; Wang 1999). Interpersonal authenticity refers to attaining a sense of authentic togetherness with others, such as local residents, family members, and touristic *communitas* (Wang 1999; Yi et al. 2017). Since existential authenticity is activity-related, those participating in holiday activities may feel a sense of well-being as a result of said activities (Gilbert and Abdullah 2004).

Although the concept of well-being was devised by Diener (1984), Ryan and Deci (2001) identified a hedonic approach with a focus on happiness and pleasure attainment/pain

avoidance, along with a eudaimonic approach to craving meaning and self-realization.

Subjective well-being is based on the hedonic perspective, characterized by one's overall life satisfaction and happiness, and involves global judgments of life quality. Subjective well-being includes three aspects: life satisfaction, the presence of positive affection/mood, and the absence of negative affection/mood (Keyes, Shmotkin, and Ryff 2002; Ryan and Deci 2001).

Conversely, psychological well-being is based on the eudaimonic view. This form of well-being arises from human development and existential life challenges and manifests through one's efforts to achieve individual development by pursuing meaningful goals while developing and maintaining productive interpersonal relationships (Keyes, Shmotkin, and Ryff 2002). Eudaimonia occurs when one's life activities are congruent with deeply held values; under such circumstances, one will feel authentic and exist as one truly is (Waterman 1993). Psychological well-being is distinct from subjective well-being in six facets of actualization: autonomy, self-acceptance, personal growth, environmental mastery, life purpose, and positive connections or relatedness (Keyes, Shmotkin, and Ryff 2002; Li and Chan 2017; Ryff and Keyes 1995).

Importantly, existential authenticity and well-being share some overlap in their craving for pleasure, meaning, and self-realization. In tourism studies, well-being is related to positive psychology and concerns optimal experiences (Filep and Pearce 2014; Nawijn and Filep 2016). Tourists' well-being is related to positive emotions, engagement, meaning, and self-actualization or achievement (Filep and Pearce 2014; Nawijn and Filep 2016). In fact, tourism creates a chance to connect a tourist's self and well-being (Smith and Diekmann 2017) and to experience hedonic pleasure or well-being via social meaning, interaction, or

interpersonal access (Kim and Jamal 2007). In other words, in theory and practice, existential authenticity and well-being are inherently connected.

Existential authenticity and psychological well-being

In light of existentialism, existential authenticity naturally involves a state of being or freedom (Steiner and Reisinger 2006). Through tourism activities, Wang (1999) stated that one can achieve freedom of the self and with others via intrapersonal and interpersonal authenticity. Tourism plays a catalytic role in this regard, such that existential authenticity and anxiety are critical elements underlying tourists' sense of authentic well-being (Brown 2013; Kirillova, Lehto, and Cai 2017b).

During an existentially significant trip (Rakić and Chambers 2012), individuals can reinvigorate their world and achieve personal growth (Pearce and Packer 2013). Tourism enables visitors to get rid of personal and organizational constraints, and consequently helps enhance their self-awareness (bodily or sensually) and subjectivity in their own right to seek unusual experiences through adventure in the pursuit of self-realization (Wang 1999; Yi et al. 2017). Meanwhile, tourists come into contact with locals, family members, and other travelers in a natural, authentic, friendly way, which can spark the development and maintenance of genuine relationships (Fu 2019; Yi et al. 2017).

Individually, people seek a sense of personal authority (i.e., autonomy), find meaning in their efforts (purpose in life) or self-actualization, and make the most of their capacities (i.e., personal growth). Collaboratively, people develop and maintain trusting relationships (i.e., positive relations with others). All of these tasks are central to psychological well-being

(Keyes, Shmotkin, and Ryff 2002). Thus, the following hypothesis is proposed.

H₂: Based on tourists' on-site experiences, existential authenticity positively contributes to psychological well-being.

Existential authenticity and subjective well-being

Existential authenticity is also experience-oriented. One can attain bodily pleasure or pleasant experiences through intrapersonal authenticity or pure relationships with others (Steiner and Reisinger 2006; Wang 1999). Subjective or hedonic well-being mainly revolves around one's evaluations of pleasant experiences, often based on the perceived gaps between one's experience and self-standards or self-values (Keyes, Shmotkin, and Ryff 2002; Ryan and Deci 2001). Specifically, pursuing self-fulfillment and meaning through tourism can influence life satisfaction (Coghlan 2010; Uysal, Sirgy, Woo, and Kim 2016). According to Yu, Li, and Xiao (2019), existential (intrapersonal) authenticity contributes to hedonic well-being. Meanwhile, tourists' authentic or intimate interpersonal relationships provide opportunities to reduce negative affect and enhance positive affect and life satisfaction. Those who enjoy being authentic will presumably want others to experience similar joy and satisfaction (McCabe and Johnson 2013; Steiner and Reisinger 2006), leading to the following hypothesis.

H₃: Based on tourists' on-site experiences, existential authenticity positively contributes to subjective well-being.

Existential authenticity and memorability

In tourism, memory is linked to visitors' experiences, filtered through the brain, and developed from travelers' post-trip perceptual and emotional outcomes (Oh, Fiore, and Jeoung 2007). Following the Heideggerian framework, authentic tourist experiences involve the creation and reaffirmation of identity, self-development, and self-realization. Visiting places associated with the past can also affirm one's identity through memory (Steiner and Reisinger 2006).

Likewise, recalling intimate and existential moments, as well as learning from danger, can provide tourists opportunities to create enduring travel memories (Pearce and Packer 2013).

In line with Pine and Gilmore (1999), when people are immersed in an activity, they are more inclined to have a memorable experience. Because existential authenticity is activity-related (Wang 1999), activity involvement can evoke memorable experiences (Kim 2014). For example, in dining settings, social connections with others can produce memorable experiences for tourists (Cao et al. 2019). Existential authenticity is therefore associated with memorability.

In addition, quality experiences in or through tourism can serve as memorable recollections. Meaningful experiences have the potential to trigger positive intrapersonal changes in tourists (Kirillova, Lehto, and Cai 2017b). Tung and Ritchie (2011) explored the conceptual processes

of memory formation and retention and uncovered four dimensions of memorable tourism experiences: affection, expectation, consequentiality, and recollection. Furthermore, Kim, Ritchie, and McCormick (2012) developed a 24-item scale about memorable tourism experiences across seven domains: hedonism, refreshment, local culture, meaningfulness, knowledge, involvement, and novelty.

On-site experiences (e.g., those involving active participation and interaction) can also enhance memorability. In a study on co-creating tourist experiences in a marine wildlife park, Campos, Mendes, Valle, and Scott (2017) confirmed that attention, involvement, and co-creation significantly influenced memorability. Zatori, Smith, and Puczko (2018) demonstrated that experience involvement informs memorability as well. Among the many dimensions of experience involvement, flow-like and social aspects involve intrapersonal and interpersonal factors. Williams, Yuan, and Williams (2019) studied gastro-tourists' experiences and found that participating in authentic food making and interacting with authentic/sincere hosts significantly contributed to tourists' memories. Nonetheless, existential authenticity has seldom been considered as the antecedent of memorability. The following hypothesis is therefore put forth.

H4: Based on tourists' on-site experiences, existential authenticity positively contributes to memorability.

Well-being and memorability

Tung and Ritchie (2011) underscored that subjectively important points/events—events

worthy of remembering—assume important roles in memory construction. Well-being is more than a psychologically positive and complex construct (Ryan and Deci 2001); in a travel context, it also encompasses visitors' destination experiences (Rahmani, Gnoth, and Mather 2018). Tourists' experience involvement or on-site experiences also shape memorability (Zatori, Smith, and Puczko 2018).

Psychological well-being is intertwined with the existential challenges of life, especially those involving personal growth and development (e.g., seeking self-determination, meaning, or self-actualization) (Keyes, Shmotkin, and Ryff 2002). In the case of self-determination, individuals can make their own decisions. Regarding discovery of meaning and attainment of self-actualization, one can break through daily routines or gain new knowledge, such as by participating in an activity in which one has long been interested but never had the chance to complete. Filep and Pearce (2014) drew upon positive psychology in emphasizing that tourists' experiences consist of the pursuit of happiness or meaning and self-actualization. Moreover, Kim's (2014) review of relevant research indicated that novel, unusual, or distinctive events are likely to be remembered more accurately and vividly than mundane activities. The following hypothesis is accordingly suggested.

H₅: Based on on-site experiences, tourists with higher perceived psychological well-being tend to report higher memorability.

Recent research has also explored the relationships between emotion and unforgettable experiences. By unraveling the associations among motivation, nostalgia, and memorable

experiences, Lee (2015) found personal emotion, culinary attraction, and cultural inheritance to be significantly related to nostalgia, while nostalgia appeared to exert a significant effect on memorable tourism experiences. Scholars have also noted that positive affect or pleasant emotions from travel can reinforce memorability (Kim 2014; Tung and Ritchie 2011; Williams, Yuan, and Williams 2019). Kim (2014) stated that tourists' hedonic experiences and pursuits led to their memorable experiences. For instance, travelers' affect during dining experiences, as a reflection of subjective well-being, appears positively associated with memorable dining experiences (Cao et al. 2019). The next hypothesis reflects these correlations.

H₆: Based on on-site experiences, tourists with higher perceived subjective well-being tend to report higher memorability.

Although studies have deemed local culture and activities as core destination attributes likely to facilitate memorable tourism experiences (Kim 2014), *how* tourists capture such memorable experiences remains ambiguous. To make a trip meaningful and/or unforgettable, tourists often strive to take part in activities they wish to perform but cannot in daily life. Without seizing such chances, a trip would be merely ordinary and somewhat forgettable. Existential authenticity advocates for the pursuit of freedom and a lack of inhibition, effectively affording tourists the agency to decide what they would like to do, pursue self-realization, and develop authentic interpersonal relationships (Kim and Jamal 2007; Yi et al. 2017). According to Arnould and Price (1993), factors such as interacting with nature, individual growth and renewal, and *communitas* with family members, friends, and even

strangers can collectively contribute to tourist satisfaction. Satisfactory experiences can also engender in tourists a sense of exhilaration and enjoyment that signals a memorable milestone (Csikszentmihalyi 1990). Emotional expression is similarly influential for recall (Tung and Ritchie 2011). The following is therefore hypothesized.

H₇: Existential authenticity and/or well-being mediate the positive relationship between perceived authenticity and memorability.

Method

Conceptual framework

Modern society can leave tourists feeling constrained or depressed, driving them to be unrestrained through travel and then cultivate well-being; that is, when tourists experience a sense of freedom, they become motivated to pursue what they wish to achieve on their journey and then revel in well-being upon accomplishing their goals. When tourists obtain what they seek, their sense of freedom and well-being triggers memorability to ensure that an experience becomes engraved in their mind. That is, tourists' perceived authenticity from cultural heritage sites initiates their existential authenticity (a sense of freedom), whereupon tourists will experience psychological and subjective well-being, enhancing the memorability of the trip. Based on the preceding hypotheses, we have constructed a conceptual framework of authenticity, well-being, and memorability vis-à-vis perceived and existential authenticity (Figure 1). All hypotheses assume a positive direction.

[Insert Figure 1 about here]

Instrumentation

Yi et al.'s (2017) scale of authenticity including six items (local architecture, a site's overall layout or environment, stories and legends, souvenirs, garden/landscape, and paintings/inscriptions) was adapted to measure perceived authenticity relative to local sites (e.g., "During my visit to West Lake, I perceived the overall layout or environment to be original"). Our measure of existential authenticity consisted of intrapersonal authenticity (3 items) and interpersonal authenticity (3 items), drawn from Wang (1999), Steiner and Reisinger (2006), and Yi et al. (2017). A sample item stated, "On the rest of my tour, I will be free from daily routines and become more of myself." A newly added intrapersonal authenticity item included, "On the rest of my tour, I will give myself the opportunities to know or discover the people, objects and things I want to know" (Fu 2019; Steiner and Reisinger 2006). Based on a national sample of 3,032 Americans aged 25–74, Keyes, Shmotkin, and Ryff (2002) found that the "well-being" construct encompasses psychological well-being (6 items) and subjective well-being (3 items). A couple of experts working with the authors suggested that two indicators (i.e., environmental mastery and self-acceptance) should be deleted, and that only indicators with clear attribution should be considered. Therefore, our revised psychological well-being scale included four items (i.e., autonomy, purpose in life, personal growth, and positive relations) while subjective well-being contained three items (i.e., life satisfaction, positive affection, and negative affection). For instance, the

autonomy item stated, “West Lake gives me more autonomy,” and the life satisfaction item read, “West Lake makes me more satisfied with my life.” Memorability (3 items) was assessed using items adapted from Zatori, Smith, and Puczko (2018), such as “After my visit to West Lake, I have wonderful memories about this tour.” All items were scored on a 7-point Likert scale (see Table A1 in Appendix).

Background and sampling

Two of the most popular heritage destinations in China, West Lake and Lijiang, served as our study context (Figures 2). A quintessential heritage landscape, West Lake is located in the city of Hangzhou, where many famous poets, artists, and writers have left classic works since the 9th century. The area is home to numerous temples, pavilions, pagodas, and causeways as well as gardens and ornamental trees. It creates a dual sense of “nature as/in painting” and has deeply influenced the landscape design of many cities and countries in East Asia. In line with UNESCO’s statements about the West Lake region, all landscape elements (e.g., hills, trees, lakeshore settings, and West Lake itself) reflect the site’s original status as described in historical documents since the 10th century (<https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/1334>). In short, West Lake is an exemplar of the beauty of traditional Chinese culture.

Retaining a historic townscape, the Old Town of Lijiang is situated in Lijiang City, Yunnan Province. It contains numerous two-story, tile-roofed, timber-framed houses that integrate elements of Han and Tibetan architectural styles. The houses’ arched gateways, courtyards, screen walls, and carved roof beams are decorated with Naxi culture. Moreover, the town possesses an ancient and complex water-supply system that is still in use today. According to

UNESCO (<https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/811>), although the Old Town of Lijiang has suffered numerous earthquakes—including a particularly devastating one on February 3, 1996—clusters of houses in Dayan, Baisha, and Shuhe have retained their overall layout in the streets and architectural styles of the Ming and Qing Dynasties. Meanwhile, the town’s intangible heritage (e.g., Dongba culture and Naxi character) have been inherited and sustained.

[Insert Figure 2 about here]

We collected quantitative data on site from August 2018 in the West Lake to July 2019 in Lijiang via purposive sampling. The survey, conducted in Chinese, was distributed in August 2018, during West Lake’s peak tourist season. The on-site survey was completed on weekdays and weekends at places or attractions where visitors often stopped to rest, such as the Broken Bridge, Sudi Embankment, and Leifeng Tower. In total, 450 questionnaires were distributed, 415 of which were deemed usable. A similar survey was conducted in July 2019 in the Old Town of Lijiang; there, data were collected in three main places: Four Square Street, Mu Palace, and Three-hole Well. Again, 450 questionnaires were distributed, and 410 were usable.

Findings

Profile of survey respondents

Table 1 lists respondents' demographic characteristics. In West Lake, roughly 52.5% of respondents were men, and 87.4% were between 16 and 35 years old; 11.3% were 36–45. In terms of education, most respondents (67.2%) held a university degree and 10.8% had postgraduate degrees. About three-quarters (75.4%) lived outside Zhejiang. In Lijiang, slightly more than half (56.6%) of respondents were women, and 73.2% were between the ages of 16 and 35. Slightly less than one-quarter (19.5%) were 36–45. Many (71.2%) had a university degree, and 8.8% had a postgraduate degree. Similar to West Lake respondents, about three-quarters (75.4%) of respondents in the Old Town of Lijiang were visiting from outside Yunnan. Table 2 presents the descriptive statistics and exploratory factor analysis results. As indicated, in Lijiang, interpersonal authenticity was not considered given its unsatisfactory average variance extracted (AVE) value.

[Insert Tables 1 and 2 about here]

The measurement model

Using Smart-PLS 3.0, algorithm settings for partial least squares structural equation modeling (PLS-SEM) consisted of a composite-based algorithm, path-weighting scheme, and 300 iterations at most. Table 3 shows that, except for the “Souvenirs or handicrafts” item in West Lake, all outer loadings surpassed 0.70. In the Old Town of Lijiang, aside from the “Stories or legends” item, all outer loadings were higher than 0.70. The AVE values of all constructs ranged from 0.556 to 0.815 (in West Lake) and from 0.525 to 0.838 (in Lijiang), exceeding

the minimum threshold of 0.5. The composite reliability of all constructs ranged from 0.883 to 0.930 (in West Lake) and from 0.841 to 0.940 (in Lijiang), well beyond the 0.7 minimum threshold (Table 3). Because all values for the AVE (> 0.5) and composite reliability (> 0.7) were above the threshold as recommended by Hair et al. (2017), our scale demonstrated sound convergent validity. Based on the Fornell-Larcker and heterotrait-monotrait criteria (Henseler, Ringle and Sarstedt 2016), constructs' discriminant validity indicated that each construct was distinct (Table 4).

[Insert Tables 3-4 about here]

The structural model

Next, we estimated the structural model using bootstrapping methods (10,000 bootstrap samples at a 95% confidence interval [CI]). Table 5, Figure 3-1 (West Lake), and Figure 3-2 (Lijiang) present our hypothesis-testing results. Perceived authenticity significantly and positively influenced existential authenticity, as the corresponding p -values of path coefficients for West Lake (0.406) and Lijiang (0.332) were each significantly below 1%. H_1 was thus confirmed. According to Table 5, the path coefficients for West Lake and Lijiang were each statistically significant at the 0.1% level, suggesting that existential authenticity made a significant positive contribution to tourists' psychological well-being and subjective well-being; this trend lent support to H_2 and H_3 . Likewise, the other three hypotheses (H_4 , H_5 , and H_6) were supported, given the significant influence of existential authenticity, psychological well-being, and subjective well-being on memorability: path coefficients for

the West Lake models were 0.323, 0.195, and 0.200, respectively; those for Lijiang were 0.209, 0.157, and 0.422, respectively. Furthermore, standard root mean square residual values for the two saturated models were 0.057 and 0.070 for West Lake and Lijiang, respectively, which were below 0.10 and thus acceptable for PLS-SEM.

[Insert Table 5 about here]

[Insert Figures 3a and 3b about here]

Mediation effects

To test the potential mediating roles of existential authenticity and well-being between perceived authenticity and memorability, bootstrapping was again employed. Using bias-corrected CIs, the number of bootstrap subsamples was set to 10,000 with a 95% CI.

Although direct, indirect, and total effects were identified, only the indirect effects appear in Table 6 due to space limitations; other test statistics are available upon request.

[Insert Table 6 about here]

Table 6 reveals significant indirect effects in the following test pairs: perceived authenticity on memorability through existential authenticity ($\beta_{\text{West Lake}} = 0.131, p < 0.001; \beta_{\text{Lijiang}} = 0.069, p < 0.01$); perceived authenticity on memorability through existential authenticity and psychological well-being ($\beta_{\text{West Lake}} = 0.039, p < 0.01; \beta_{\text{Lijiang}} = 0.025, p < 0.05$); and perceived authenticity on memorability through existential authenticity and subjective well-being ($\beta_{\text{West Lake}} = 0.039, p < 0.01; \beta_{\text{Lijiang}} = 0.025, p < 0.05$).

$\beta_{\text{Lake}} = 0.039, p < 0.01; \beta_{\text{Lijiang}} = 0.071, p < 0.001$). The indirect effect of perceived authenticity on memorability via existential authenticity exhibited a relatively stronger mediation effect among all three tested pairs.

Discussion and conclusion

Although research has shown that local culture can lead to unforgettable experiences and that existential authenticity is positively associated with hedonic and eudaimonic well-being (Kim 2014; Yu, Li, and Xiao 2019), when considering existential authenticity in terms of intrapersonal and interpersonal factors (Wang 1999; Yi et al. 2017), little attention has been paid to how perceived authenticity affects memorability through existential authenticity and psychological and subjective well-being. Our work enriches the current literature of authenticity and well-being by directly addressing this void in empirical investigations.

The primary objective of this study was to test a conceptual model elucidating the relationships between/among perceived authenticity, existential authenticity, well-being, and memorability. Based on existentialist theory (Heidegger 1996; Steiner and Reisinger 2006; Wang 1999), we proposed perceived authenticity as an antecedent of existential authenticity and assessed the effects of existential authenticity on tourists' psychological and subjective well-being as well as on memorability. Through in-depth investigations of tourists' well-being in cultural heritage contexts, we also expanded our understanding of tourists' well-being by evaluating how tourists' existential authenticity contributes to their well-being.

Furthermore, although Yu, Li, and Xiao (2019) confirmed that existential authenticity is positively associated with hedonic and eudaimonic well-being, they exclusively considered intrapersonal aspects of existential authenticity. By incorporating interpersonal aspects, we found that perceived authenticity positively influences memorability through existential authenticity and psychological and subjective well-being.

Interestingly, the extent to which existential authenticity contributed to psychological or subjective well-being varied across the two heritage sites in this study. Our findings also highlighted a positive association between existential authenticity and memorability. Last but not least, while somewhat unexpected, slightly distinct effects were identified between the respective contributions of psychological well-being and subjective well-being to memorability. Notably, the latter was stronger than the former. As all hypotheses were supported and limited differences emerged across the two world heritage sites, we can argue that existential authenticity plays a central role in the formation of tourists' well-being. Our findings have valuable theoretical and practical implications.

Theoretical implications

Following Yi et al.'s (2017) work on perceived and existential authenticity, our proposed scale expanded the construct of intrapersonal authenticity with the item, "On the rest of my tour, I will give myself the opportunities to know or discover the people, objects and things I want to know" (Fu 2019; Steiner and Reisinger 2006). We further confirmed the stability of intrapersonal authenticity as a construct by examining its reliability and validity. Upon considering the authenticity of tangible and intangible cultural heritage, we found that

perceived authenticity positively contributed to existential authenticity (H_1) (whether considering intrapersonal and interpersonal authenticity together or taking intrapersonal authenticity as a single construct). This pattern is consistent with that identified by Kolar and Zabkar (2010) and Yi et al. (2017, 2018).

In addition, our work contributes to the literature on existential authenticity and well-being (Yu, Li, and Xiao 2019) by delineating the mechanism behind existential authenticity's effect on well-being. Existential authenticity, whether framed as an integrated (i.e., intra- and interpersonal) concept or alone, was found to be significantly associated with psychological well-being (H_2). This result corroborates prior assertions that existential travel can help tourists gain autonomy and personal growth (Pearce and Packer 2013; Rakić and Chambers 2012). This relationship also substantiates other findings: Keyes, Shmotkin, and Ryff (2002) noted that people can attain psychological well-being through meaningful actions or behavior (e.g., personal growth), while Yu, Li, and Xiao (2019) observed that existential authenticity was positively associated with eudaimonic well-being. We also discovered that existential authenticity was significantly associated with subjective well-being (H_3), supporting the fact that tourists can obtain pleasant experiences through intrapersonal authenticity (Yu, Li, and Xiao 2019) or pure interpersonal relationships (McCabe and Johnson 2013; Steiner and Reisinger 2006).

Furthermore, this study contributes to the existing literature by identifying whether existential authenticity positively influences memorability and whether psychological and subjective well-being positively influence memorability, respectively. We found that existential

authenticity positively contributed to memorability (H_4), which aligns with Pearce and Packer's (2013) statement that existential moments and experience involvement can induce long-term travel memories. This pattern may arise because tourism can help travelers achieve intrapersonal authenticity (Brown 2013) and realize that a state of being or freedom elicits memorability.

Meanwhile, as Williams, Yuan, and Williams (2019) emphasized, tourists' experiences can be memorable when travelers engage with others through activity participation. Our findings demonstrated that psychological well-being positively contributed to memorability (H_5).

When pursuing happiness or meaning and self-actualization (Filep and Pearce 2014), a unique, novel, or distinctive event can offer tourists a memorable experience (Kim 2014).

Finally, subjective well-being was shown to positively contribute to memorability (H_6), echoing findings that the positive affect or pleasant emotions evoked during an experience can reinforce memorability (Cao et al. 2019; Kim 2014; Tung and Ritchie 2011; Williams et al. 2019) and that hedonic experiences promote memorable tourist experiences (Kim 2014).

Psychological well-being representing eudaimonia occurs when peoples' activities are congruent with deeply held values, while subjective well-being representing a hedonic view allows people to express what makes their life good (Ryan and Deci 2001). Although both psychological well-being and subjective well-being can positively contribute to memorability, as pointed out by Kim (2014), tourists on a tour mainly seek hedonism, enjoyment, and pleasure. Thus, subjective well-being is shown to have a stronger association with memorability than psychological well-being.

When considering the mediating roles of existential authenticity and/or well-being, four specific mediation effects emerged for our West Lake and Lijiang samples. As anticipated, our results supported the mediating effects of existential authenticity and/or well-being on the relationship between perceived authenticity and memorability (H_7). Thus, after an authentic experience, tourists who attain a state of being and freedom tend to experience psychological and/or subjective well-being and, by extension, memorability. These trends are similar to Arnould and Price's (1993) observations that tourists' existential authenticity can significantly explain or create positive satisfaction. Relatedly, a tourist's exhilaration, enjoyment, and emotional expression throughout a satisfactory experience play key roles in reinforcing associated memories (Csikszentmihalyi 1990; Tung and Ritchie 2011).

In short, these significant mediation effects are essential to understanding how perceived authenticity influences memorability through existential authenticity and/or well-being. Our study makes another theoretical contribution by testing the proposed model's validity in two cultural heritage sites. Especially in the Old Town of Lijiang, without interpersonal authenticity, intrapersonal authenticity continued to play a substantial role in tourists' well-being. This outcome is somewhat similar to that of Yu, Li, and Xiao (2019) and provides useful insight into the inner mechanism of existential authenticity; that is, the construct's underlying mechanism appears similar irrespective of whether existential authenticity is assessed via the intrapersonal dimension alone or the intrapersonal and interpersonal dimensions together.

Practical implications

Our findings offer important managerial implications as well. First, local authorities in West Lake and Lijiang should focus on maintaining the authenticity of their areas' tangible (e.g., gardens or interior design) and intangible heritage (e.g., local legends and stories) to effectively trigger visitors' existential authenticity. Given that paintings/inscriptions and stories/legends seemed particularly appealing to tourists at both sites (Table 3), destination marketers and managers should strive to understand and protect such attributes to create authentic tourist experiences. Specific dimensions of traditional cultural heritage, such as architecture and local legends (Yi et al. 2017), should therefore be considered when devising existential authenticity-driven experiences. Local authorities could also provide traditional activities (e.g., folk dances) in which tourists can participate. Through these opportunities, visitors can explore objects and events unique to the two heritage sites. Tourists will then learn about the local people and their lifestyles and discover themselves existentially. Cultural activities such as arranged conversations with local elders could be equally helpful in introducing visitors to the local culture and enhancing their communication with the locals in a natural, authentic, and friendly manner.

Additionally, local authorities or managers should aim to cultivate tourists' psychological well-being by offering products or activities conducive to existential authenticity. Soliciting visitors' feedback regarding personal growth, meaningfulness, or self-realization on site could facilitate product development or activity options. Moreover, because existential authenticity contributes to subjective well-being, local authorities should determine how tourists pursue

enjoyment, happiness, or meaningfulness during visits to more effectively fulfill their desire for existential authenticity via meaningful activities (e.g., campfire parties).

Our finding that existential authenticity significantly influences memorability suggests that tourists' uninhibited state can inspire positive memories. To encourage memorable experiences, local authorities should recognize the importance of existential authenticity and design tourist experiences or activities accordingly. For instance, visitors could have an opportunity to play as the protagonists in *Legend of White Snake* to create memorability.

In particular, West Lake's natural and cultural landscapes reflect the notion of "nature as painting"; visitors in this and other contexts can naturally acquire existential authenticity and well-being, which may influence the memorability of their trips. Local authorities should therefore keep in mind that maintaining a picturesque environment can help tourists relax, improve their well-being, and ensure memorability. In Lijiang, local authorities should be aware that tourists' perceived authenticity influences memorability through existential authenticity and/or well-being. A pleasant environment is therefore essential to promoting memorable experiences and satisfying tourists' psychological and subjective well-being.

Limitations and future research

This study has several limitations that illuminate avenues for future research. First, as Nawijn and Filep (2016) recommended, tourism-related well-being assessment calls for continuous refinement. Second, dimensions of perceived authenticity should be further developed based on different destination attributes. Third, comparative studies of first-time and repeat visitors and between men and women could yield meaningful insight. Subsequent studies should

include heterogeneous samples (e.g., tourists with lower education, older people, and foreigners) to provide a more holistic view. Fourth, our interpretation of visitors' responses may be subject to bias due to factors including respondents' inaccurate recall. To address this and other limitations of our cross-sectional design, research methods such as on-site interviews or (preferably longitudinal) observations are recommended to clarify the proposed model and relationships. Last but not least, we only considered mediating effects between constructs. Other potential moderators, such as tourists' level of immersion (Zatori, Smith, and Puczko 2018) or emotional, social, and flow-like experience involvement should be considered in future work.

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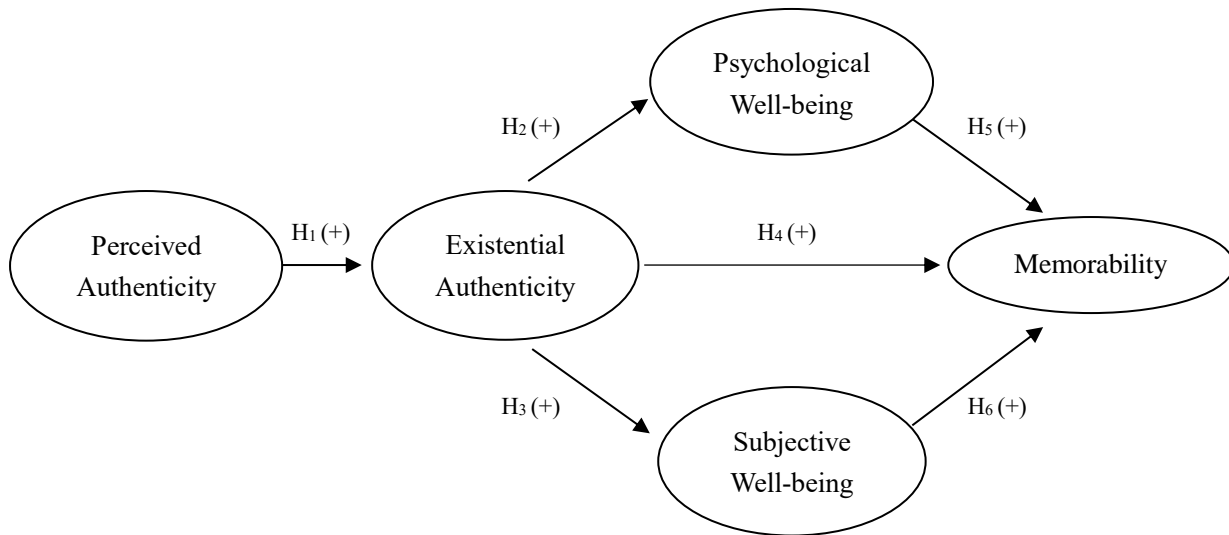


Figure 1. Conceptual framework of authenticity, well-being, and memorability

Note: Perceived authenticity includes two components: tangible heritage and intangible heritage. Existential authenticity is composed of intrapersonal authenticity and interpersonal authenticity.



Figure 2. Ambience of cultural heritage sites

Source: The authors.

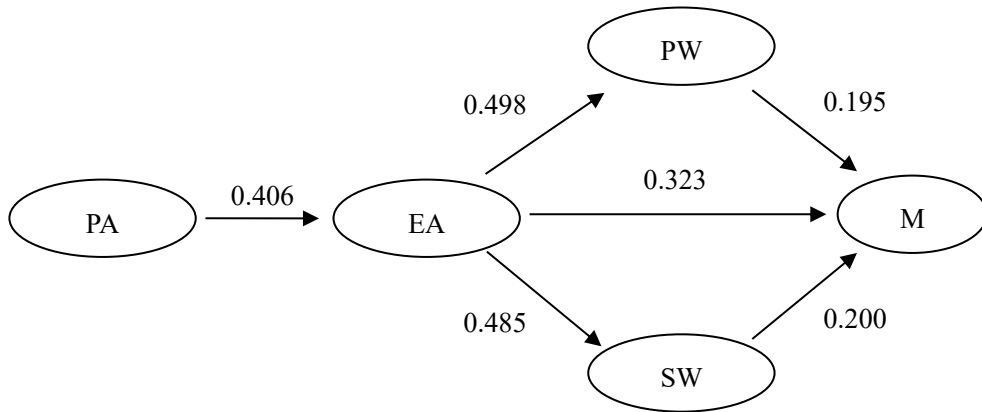


Figure 3a. Path coefficients of structural models (West Lake)

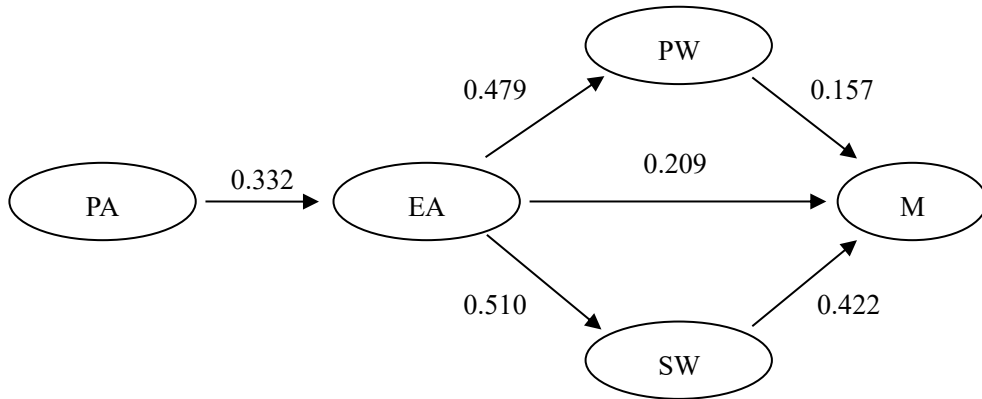


Figure 3b. Path coefficients of structural models (Lijiang)

Table 1. Demographic profiles of the respondents

Variable	Category	West Lake (<i>n</i> = 415)		Lijiang (<i>n</i> = 410)	
		<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%
Gender	Male	218	52.5	176	42.9
	Female	196	47.2	232	56.6
Age	16–25	262	63.1	191	46.6
	26–35	101	24.3	109	26.6
	36–45	47	11.3	80	19.5
	Above 46	5	1.2	29	7.1
Education	No formal education	3	0.7	/	/
	Primary school	2	0.5	3	0.7
	High school	85	20.5	79	19.3
	University/College	279	67.2	292	71.2
	Postgraduate	45	10.8	36	8.8
City of residence	Local city	52	12.5	32	7.8
	Other cities within Zhejiang/Yunnan	43	10.4	61	14.9
	Outside Zhejiang/Yunnan	313	75.4	309	75.4
	Overseas	6	1.4	8	2.0

Note: Only valid samples are reported.

Table 2. Descriptive statistics and EFA

Constructs	Items	West Lake				Lijiang			
		Mean	SD	FL	EV (VE%)	Mean	SD	FL	EV (VE%)
Perceived authenticity	Overall layout	4.91	1.312	0.730	3.623 (17.252)	5.05	1.595	0.762	2.668 (15.694)
	Local architecture	4.84	1.326	0.825		5.05	1.500	0.760	
	Garden & landscape / interior design	5.15	1.326	0.801		4.61	1.541	0.801	
	Paintings & inscriptions	5.23	1.353	0.777		5.14	1.457	0.696	
	Stories or legends	5.27	1.359	0.630		5.20	1.649	0.467	
	Souvenirs	4.33	1.438	0.580		/	/	/	
Existential authenticity	Self & subjective	5.01	1.320	0.649	3.379 (16.090)	5.27	1.417	0.680	2.063 (12.136)
	Know things I want	5.23	1.271	0.635		5.54	1.278	0.800	
	Pursue self-satisfaction	4.83	1.413	0.633		4.95	1.301	0.652	
	Local people	4.91	1.398	0.798		5.19	1.489	/	
	Family members	5.42	1.299	0.696		5.84	1.289	/	
	Other travelers	4.83	1.403	0.720		4.59	1.525	/	
Psychological well-being	Autonomy	4.72	1.309	0.765	2.398 (11.420)	4.64	1.312	0.742	2.118 (12.460)
	Personal growth	4.67	1.362	0.798		4.75	1.333	0.808	
	Purposes in life	4.27	1.610	0.779		4.46	1.516	0.697	
Subjective well-being	Life satisfaction	5.03	1.336	0.696	2.139 (10.185)	5.31	1.261	0.524	1.654 (9.731)
	Positive affection	5.31	1.303	0.821		5.43	1.357	0.658	
	Negative affection	5.02	1.458	0.783		5.06	1.444	0.782	
Memorability	Wonderful memories	5.45	1.339	0.825	2.568 (12.228)	5.80	1.233	0.856	2.834 (16.670)
	Not forget	5.62	1.318	0.839		5.90	1.138	0.851	
	Positive things	5.58	1.260	0.764		5.86	1.201	0.811	

Notes: (1) SD: standard deviation, FL: factor loading, EV: eigenvalue, VE: variation explained in rotation sums of squared

loadings; (2) Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) of total model (West Lake) = 0.903, $p < 0.001$, total variation explained of EFA

(West Lake) = 67.175%; KMO (Lijiang) = 0.871, $p < 0.001$, total variation explained of EFA (Lijiang) = 66.691%.

Table 3. Results of the measurement model

Constructs (reliability)	West Lake			α / AVE/ CR	Lijiang		
	Items	Outer Weights	Outer Loadings		Outer Weights	Outer Loadings	α / AVE/ CR
Perceived authenticity	Overall layout	0.229	0.780	0.855/ 0.583/ 0.893	0.279	0.765	0.771/ 0.525/ 0.846
	Local architecture	0.224	0.835		0.293	0.761	
	Garden & landscape / interior design	0.215	0.804		0.237	0.744	
	Paintings & calligraphy	0.219	0.790		0.306	0.747	
	Stories or legends	0.247	0.717		0.268	0.593	
	Souvenirs or handicrafts	0.174	0.639		/	/	
Existential authenticity/ intrapersonal authenticity	Self & subjective	0.207	0.715	0.840/ 0.556/ 0.883	0.439	0.811	0.717/ 0.639/ 0.841
	Know things I want	0.245	0.765		0.411	0.820	
	Pursue self-satisfaction	0.235	0.726		0.401	0.765	
	Local people	0.211	0.783		/	/	
	Family members	0.223	0.747		/	/	
	Other travelers	0.221	0.737		/	/	
Psychological Well-being	Autonomy	0.402	0.894	0.855/ 0.775/ 0.912	0.475	0.864	0.736/ 0.655/ 0.850
	Personal growth	0.387	0.908	0.390	0.826		
	Purpose in life	0.344	0.838	0.364	0.733		
Subjective Well-being	Life satisfaction	0.388	0.871	0.834/ 0.752/ 0.901	0.440	0.823	0.748/ 0.664/ 0.855
	Positive affection	0.414	0.915	0.444	0.851		
	Negative affection	0.349	0.811	0.338	0.768		
Memorability	Wonderful memories	0.366	0.897	0.887/ 0.815/ 0.930	0.360	0.921	0.903/ 0.838/ 0.940
	Not forget	0.367	0.923	0.364	0.933		
	Positive things	0.375	0.889	0.368	0.892		

Note: α : Cronbach's alpha, AVE: average variance extracted, CR: composite reliability.

Table 4. Discriminant validity

		Fornell-Larcker Criterion					Heterotrait-Monotrait Ratio (HTMT)				
		<i>PA</i>	<i>EA</i>	<i>PW</i>	<i>SW</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>PA</i>	<i>EA</i>	<i>PW</i>	<i>SW</i>	<i>M</i>
West Lake	<i>PA</i>	0.763									
	<i>EA</i>	0.406	0.746				0.474				
	<i>PW</i>	0.455	0.498	0.881			0.533	0.586			
	<i>SW</i>	0.404	0.485	0.587	0.867		0.481	0.578	0.695		
	<i>M</i>	0.425	0.517	0.473	0.471	0.903	0.487	0.595	0.541	0.546	
Lijiang	<i>PA</i>	0.725									
	<i>EA</i>	0.332	0.799				0.446				
	<i>PW</i>	0.294	0.479	0.810			0.383	0.650			
	<i>SW</i>	0.254	0.510	0.473	0.815		0.328	0.694	0.638		
	<i>M</i>	0.299	0.500	0.457	0.603	0.916	0.356	0.619	0.559	0.721	

Note: *PA*: perceived authenticity, *EA*: existential authenticity, *PW*: psychological well-being, *SW*: subjective well-being, *M*:

memorability.

Table 5. The results of hypotheses testing

	Hypothesis test	<i>PC</i>	<i>f</i> ²	<i>VIF</i>	<i>t</i> -statistics	Bias-corrected CIS
West Lake	H ₁ : Perceived authenticity → Existential authenticity	0.406***	0.197	1.000	8.700	[0.301,0.487]
	H ₂ : Existential authenticity → Psychological well-being	0.498***	0.330	1.000	13.192	[0.416,0.565]
	H ₃ : Existential authenticity → Subjective well-being	0.485***	0.307	1.000	10.739	[0.389,0.567]
	H ₄ : Existential authenticity → Memorability	0.323***	0.112	1.438	6.101	[0.214,0.422]
	H ₅ : Psychological well-being → Memorability	0.195**	0.035	1.679	3.309	[0.084,0.314]
	H ₆ : Subjective well-being → Memorability	0.200***	0.038	1.651	3.829	[0.096,0.301]
Lijiang	H ₁ : Perceived authenticity → Existential authenticity	0.332***	0.124	1.000	5.652	[0.208,0.437]
	H ₂ : Existential authenticity → Psychological well-being	0.479***	0.299	1.000	11.633	[0.391,0.555]
	H ₃ : Existential authenticity → Subjective well-being	0.510***	0.352	1.000	11.778	[0.415,0.588]
	H ₄ : Existential authenticity → Memorability	0.209***	0.051	1.501	3.675	[0.100,0.321]
	H ₅ : Psychological well-being → Memorability	0.157**	0.030	1.429	2.869	[0.053,0.268]
	H ₆ : Subjective well-being → Memorability	0.422***	0.211	1.488	7.596	[0.305,0.523]

Notes: (1) *PC*: path coefficients, *f*²: *f*² effect size, *VIF*: inner variance inflation factor values; (2) In the West Lake model:

$R^2_{EA} = 0.164$, $R^2_{PW} = 0.248$, $R^2_{SW} = 0.235$, $R^2_{Memorability} = 0.353$; *SRMR* (saturated model) = 0.057, *NFI* = 0.841; in the Lijiang

model: $R^2_{EA} = 0.110$, $R^2_{PW} = 0.230$, $R^2_{SW} = 0.260$, $R^2_{Memorability} = 0.431$; *SRMR* (saturated model) = 0.070, *NFI* = 0.780. (3) * *p*

< 0.05, ** *p* < 0.01, *** *p* < 0.001.

Table 6. Specific indirect effects

	West Lake		Lijiang	
	Indirect effects	Bias-corrected CIS	Indirect effects	Bias-corrected CIS
Perceived authenticity → Existential authenticity → Memorability	0.131***	[0.080,0.187]	0.069**	[0.029,0.126]
Perceived authenticity → Existential authenticity → Psychological well-being → Memorability	0.039**	[0.017,0.068]	0.025*	[0.008,0.050]
Perceived authenticity → Existential authenticity → Subjective well-being → Memorability	0.039**	[0.017,0.068]	0.071***	[0.040,0.111]

Notes: (1) Bootstrapping 95% confidence intervals based on 10,000 subsamples (two-tailed test, significance level = 0.05);

(2) * $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$.

Appendix

Table A1 Main questionnaire

Constructs	Items	Indicators	Sources
Perceived authenticity	Overall layout	During my visit to West Lake/Lijiang, I perceived the overall layout or environment to be original.	Kolar and Zabkar 2010; Yi et al. 2017
	Local architecture	During my visit to West Lake/Lijiang, I perceived the local architecture to be original.	
	Garden & landscape	During my visit to West Lake/Lijiang, I perceived the garden & landscape to be original.	whc.unesco.org/en/list/1334
	Paintings & inscriptions	During my visit to West Lake/Lijiang, I perceived the paintings & inscriptions to be original.	Trinh, Ryan, and Cave 2014; Yi et al. 2017
	Stories or legends	During my visit to West Lake/Lijiang, I perceived the local stories or legends to be traditional.	
	Souvenirs	During my visit to West Lake/Lijiang, I perceived the local souvenirs to be original.	
Existential authenticity	Self & subjective	On the rest of my tour, I will be free from daily routines and become more of myself.	
	Know things I want	On the rest of my tour, I will give myself the opportunities to know or discover the people, objects and things I want to know.	Steiner and Reisinger 2006
	Pursue self-satisfaction	On the rest of my tour, I will try to seek extra-mundane or unusual experiences in order to pursue self-realization or self-satisfaction.	Wang 1999; Yi et al. 2017
	Local people	On the rest of my tour, I will seek to have contact with local people in a natural, authentic, and friendly way.	Wang 1999; Yi et al. 2017
	Family members	On the rest of my tour, I will seek to have contact with family members in a natural, authentic, and friendly way.	
	Other travelers	On the rest of my tour, I will seek to have contact with other travelers in a natural, authentic, and friendly way.	
Psychological well-being	Autonomy	West Lake/Lijiang gives me more autonomy.	Ryan and Deci 2001; Keyes, Shomtkin, and Ryff 2002
	Personal growth	West Lake/Lijiang promotes my personal growth.	
	Purpose in life	West Lake/Lijiang helps me achieve my goal or purpose in life.	
Subjective well-being	Life satisfaction	West Lake/Lijiang makes me more satisfied with my life.	Ryan and Deci 2001; Keyes, Shomtkin, and Ryff 2002
	Positive affection	West Lake/Lijiang promotes my positive emotions.	
	Negative affection	West Lake/Lijiang promotes the disappearance of my negative emotions.	
Memorability	Wonderful memories	After my visit to West Lake/Lijiang, I have wonderful memories about this tour.	Zatori, Smith, and Puczko 2018
	Not forget	After my visit to West Lake/Lijiang, I will not forget my experience on this tour.	
	Positive things	After my visit to West Lake/Lijiang, I will remember many positive things about this tour.	