

# Relationships among Tourists' Needs for Uniqueness, Perceived Authenticity and Behavioral Intentions

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**Abstract**—This study tested a structural model which investigates the relationships among tourists' need for uniqueness, perceived authenticity (object-based authenticity and existential authenticity) and behavioral intentions to consume cultural and heritage destinations. The sample of the study comprised of 281 participants in a cultural heritage site, in Cappadocia, Turkey. The data were provided via face to face interviews in two months (September and October) which considered the high season. Structural equation modeling was employed to test the causal relationships among the hypotheses. Findings revealed tourists' creative choice had an influence on object-based authenticity and existential authenticity. Tourists' avoidance had an influence on object-based authenticity. The study concluded that two dimensions, namely, the object based authenticity and existential authenticity had significant impact on behavioral intentions.

**Keywords**—Needs for uniqueness, object-based authenticity, existential authenticity, behavioral intentions.

## I. INTRODUCTION

MOTIVATION remains a central concept in understanding tourist behavior. Consumer behavior literature emphasizes that needs and motivations are interrelated. The existence of the former generates the latter. People may intend to take a trip to fulfill their physiological (food, climate, and health) and psychological (adventure and relaxation) needs [1]. Tourism scholars tend to concentrate on the factors to ascertain the formation of tourists' expectations and tourists' behaviors, namely, "the pull and the push factors" [2]. The pull and push factors concept incorporates the theory that people travel because they are pushed into making travel decisions by internal forces and pulled by external forces of the destination attributes [3]. Pull factors are defined as the qualities, attractions, and the other features of a destination that leads individuals to travel. Push factors, on the other hand, are the socio-psychological motivations which stimulate travel need and lead tourists to travel [2]-[5]. When examining the literature on the push factors, a wide spectrum of different approaches is recorded.

Uysal and Jurowski define push factors as a prompt for escape, relaxation, relief, health and fitness, and adventure & social interaction [3]. Crompton and McKay assert that the push factors which direct the participants of festival events are: "seeking for novelty", "urge to socialize", "prestige", "relaxation and relief", "educational value and intellectual enhancement", "providing the family union and improving the relative relations" [6]. Kozak contextualized push factors in

four dimensions as "culture", "seeking for pleasure/phantasy", "relaxation" and "physical" on an empirical study on German and British tourists intend to visit Turkey and Mallorca [1]. Kim et al. identified four broad domains of push factors namely, family togetherness and study, appreciating natural resources and health, escaping from everyday routine, and adventure and building friendship [7]. Zhang distinguished 17 push factors in research examining the Chinese tourists selecting the UK as a touristic destination. These are; "escape from the routines", "self-rewarding", "self-indulgence", "opportunity for enhancing knowledge", "experiencing a place for the first time", "experiencing a place that friends have never been before" "relaxation", "knowing about different cultures", "away from home", "meeting people", "sensing the exotic atmosphere", "shopping", "visiting famous places", "showing one's social status", "collecting the experiences to tell", and finally, "practicing some activities which considered illegal in China". When scrutinizing the given factors, the five of them of top of priority: "knowing different culture(s)", "increase of knowledge", "experiencing a place for the first time", "relaxation", "sensing the exotic atmosphere". In addition, push factors that scholars focus on are "relaxation", "relief", "need to escape", and seeking for novelty" [8]. However, the concept of "need for uniqueness (NFU)" was overlooked as a push factor. The need for uniqueness has been examined in different consumption contexts as "customer need for uniqueness (CNFU)" but is not elaborated in tourism context as a pushing factor. Hence, this study ascribes CNFU a pivotal role on cultural heritage oriented tourist motivations to visit certain destinations.

The need for uniqueness is defined as a motivation. The concept of CNFU derives from Snyder and Fromkin's theory of the need for uniqueness (NFU). According to the NFU theory, individuals in certain levels feel a need for uniqueness, universally [9]. NFU has an impact on customers' need for uniqueness (CNFU) that is manifested via possessing different kinds of products and exhibiting them. Accordingly, the CNFU theory claims that the seeking of dissimilarity accompanying with consumption motivates people for developing a distinctive self and social image. Consumers establish their individual uniqueness with corresponding to the environmental inputs that either increase or decrease similarities with others [10]. For instance, the outputs or the consequences of CNFU point out that consumers may prefer to buy customized, antique, hand-made products in traditional shops rather than non-traditional stores [11]. In parallel, researches support that NFU affects the customized rare

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products, innovative consumption behavior, and unique place preferences [12]. In the light of the given facts, a proposed structural model was developed to analyze the relationships among tourists' need for uniqueness, perceived authenticity (the object-based authenticity and existential authenticity) and behavioral intentions (Fig. 1). According to the proposed structural model, the object-based authenticity and existential authenticity is explained by creative choice and avoidance similarity. In addition, existential authenticity explained by the object-based authenticity. Finally, behavioral intention is explained through object-based authenticity and existential authenticity. For the purpose of the study, the structural model was tested using responses collected from tourists who were visiting selected cultural heritage destination of Cappadocia, Turkey.

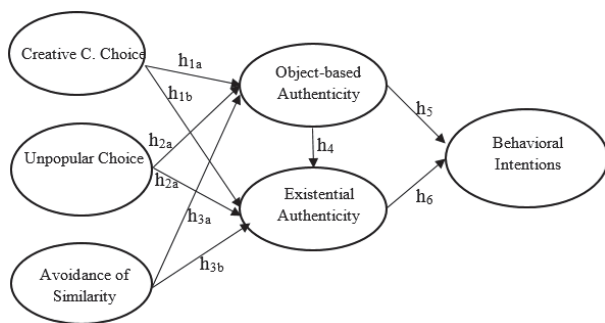


Fig. 1 Proposed conceptual model

## II. THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

Many consumers' acquisitions and consumption experiences are self-initiated attempts to differentiate themselves from other consumers, making them feel special and unique [12]. The concept of CNFU derives from Snyder and Fromkin's theory of the need for uniqueness (NFU) [9]. The theory suggests that consumers engage in consumption patterns, practices, and activities to differentiate themselves from the others. More specifically, Lynn and Harris asserted that some of them seek for uniqueness via consumption while the others follow another paths [12]. Snyder and Fromkin stated that the needs for uniqueness might have an impact on individual's attitudes, beliefs, behaviors, and consumption preferences [13]. The role context of the consumer in the domain of need for uniqueness (CNFU) is defined as "the trait of pursuing differentness relative to others through acquisition, utilization and disposition of consumer goods for the purpose of enhancing one's social image and self-image" [10]. The CNFU construct utilizes three dimensions of consumption behavior to capture how people fulfill their need for uniqueness: creative choice, unpopular choice, and avoidance of similarity [10], [14]. Creative choice reflects an individual's ability to create a personal style, which expresses self-image through material products [12]. By making creative choices, the consumer can gain a positive social evaluation as a unique individual [9], [13]. In Western culture, expressing one's differentness from others, individuality or unique identity requires creating a personal style via material goods

that represent the self. Reflecting one's personal style in material displays is accomplished through the purchase of original, novel, or unique consumer goods [15] or via the decorative collection, arrangement, and display of goods [16]. In a similar vein, destinations aim to offer their consumers unique, original features and objects. The tourist, so called a modern person, characterized with lack of self-actualization or/and dealing with alienation search for an authentic experience, attempt to find authentic experiences, out of the ordinary/ daily spaces [17]. Besides, tourists might have an opportunity to capsule and internalize authenticity by possessing original objects and interacting with other [18].

- h<sub>1a</sub>: Creative choice has an influence on object-based authenticity.
- h<sub>1b</sub>: Creative choice has an influence on existential authenticity.

Unpopular choice refers to the selection or use of products and brands that deviate from group norms and thus risk social disapproval that consumers withstand in order to establish their differentness from others [10]. This dimension is highly familiar with the avoidance similarity presented below. The dimension attempts to cover the drivers of object-based and existential authenticity. In object-based authenticity, people have a motivation to possess both the concrete and intangible assets including the original and genuine products. Accordingly, the experiences, knowledge, and the expectations of the tourists, overlaps with the concept of differentiation from the ordinary or mass tourism [19].

- h<sub>2a</sub>: Unpopular choice has an influence on object-based authenticity.
- h<sub>2b</sub>: Unpopular choice has an influence on existential authenticity.

Avoidance of similarity suggests that consumers may avoid those products that make them feel similar to others. That is, once the branded products that make them unique become commonplace, they lose interest in or discontinue use of the same products [10]. Zhang asserted an item to explicate tourist motivations: experiencing a place that friends have never been before [8]. People may travel because they want to experience something new and different [20].

- h<sub>3a</sub>: Avoidance of similarity has an influence on object-based authenticity.
- h<sub>3b</sub>: Avoidance of similarity has an influence on existential authenticity.

Wang indicated that regardless of any perspectives the uniqueness concept is one of the pivotal factors in tourism and travel context [21]. The main feature of tourism separated from the daily life is gaining an institutional role. This role is associated with modern life's problems like alienation, lack of meaning, and personality- social role contradiction. Handler argues that the problems alike generate pressure and lead people to act insincere and inauthentic ways [22]. Tourism provides an opportunity for the people of modern ages to search for authenticity [23]. The places or/and destinations offer a way to interact with a different time, space, and eventually an authentic atmosphere [24] which modern places are not capable of.

In the context of tourism, authenticity concept is separated into two constructs: authenticity of tourism experience (existential authenticity) and that of toured objects (object-based authenticity). Existential authenticity refers to “a potential existential state of being that is to be activated by tourist activities” [21]. Object-based authenticity consists of objective authenticity and constructive authenticity. Consequently, the authenticity of tourist experience depends on the toured object being perceived as authentic. Thus:

- $h_4$ : Object-based authenticity has an influence on existential authenticity.

The conceptual model of the study points that the behavioral intention is the output of both two authenticity concepts. Behavioral intention placed as one of the most important concepts to comprehend the product selection, future motivations, and behaviors of tourists [25]. However, the literature overlooked behavioral intention as an output of authenticity.

- $h_5$ : Object-based authenticity has an influence on tourists' behavioral intentions.
- $h_6$ : Existential authenticity has an influence on tourists' behavioral intentions.

### III. EMPIRICAL STUDY

#### A. Measurement Development

Tian et al. conceptualized CNFU as a three-dimensional consumption tendency through which individuals express their NFU, operationalized with a 31-item scale [10]. Unfortunately, with questionnaire lengths at a premium, the existing scale might be too long in many research contexts and there could be some redundancy across closely related items. Additionally, no evidence of the scale's cross-cultural reliability and validity is available [26]. Therefore, Ruvio et al. used the short version of the scale- comprised of three dimensions and twelve items- and stated that the scale is valid and reliable [26]. The following research on students' buying behaviors in shopping malls Israel, Palestine, and Slovenia confirmed the cross-cultural validity. Thus, this study employed the scale of Ruvio et al. [26]. The scale adopted to tourism context in three phases. In the first phase, the CNFU was explained to six experts on marketing and destination marketing. Then the draft items were presented and asked them to evaluate. In the second phase, the modifications on the items collected and sent to experts to review. Four experts gave feedbacks that three items were not precise to identify the concepts. In the light of these feedbacks, Tian et. al. scale was reconsidered and the items on “avoidance of similarity” elaborated [10]. In the third phase, the item list distributed to 40 tourism management students for clarity of expression and the scale put into the final form. The final scale consisted of 14 items.

This study suggests an operationalization for object based authenticity comprised of unique and original destination attributes and features. The existential component of authenticity relates to the perceptions and feelings of destination visitors, such as the uniqueness of the religious and

spiritual experience and a feeling of witnessing to all phases of the history of humanity. The object-based and existential-based authenticity measurement scale was a slightly modified version of items adopted from [19]. Items are adapted to the specific context for a specific heritage site, Cappadocia, Turkey.

Finally, behavioral intention is operationalized in line with the prevailing operationalization of (re)visit intentions. The behavioral intentions measurement scale was a slightly modified version of items adopted from [25].

Except the demographic questions, all variables were constructed with a 7-point Likert scale structured. Furthermore, an additional column as “No idea” was added to the questionnaire for the participants who do not have an idea about the expressions, and data received as “No idea” were considered as missing data while analyzing the data.

#### B. Pretest of Measurement Instrument

Since most of the measurement scales have been adopted and slightly modified from literature, a pretest of the measurement instrument was deemed necessary to validate the items in the scale. The pretest was conducted with 106 tourists who visit Cappadocia. Exploratory factor analysis (EFA) was conducted to detect scale dimensionality. This reduced the tourists' needs for uniqueness scale from 14 to 12, authenticity scale from 11 to 9 items, behavioral intentions from three to two items. The final version of the questionnaire survey design was developed and administered in English.

#### C. Data Collection and Research Sample

The research was conducted in 2015 as field research at cultural heritage site at Cappadocia in Turkey. The data of research was gathered in the autumn as high season (September and October) during the week and weekends with the aim to include both heritage and culture tourists. It was applied to the convenience sampling method in research. The data were collected with face to face interview technique. Totally 328 questionnaires were collected. Out of the 328 collected questionnaires, 47 were eliminated as the data were being coded since they were incomplete. This resulted in 281 usable survey questionnaires which were coded and used for the data analysis.

#### D. Data Analysis

Several research approaches were used for this study. Firstly, EFA was used to identify the underlying dimensions of CNFU. Secondly, confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) and structural equation modeling (SEM) used to test the conceptual model. The factors were subjected to the orthogonal (varimax) rotation to maximize the dispersion of the loadings within factors so that loading a smaller number of variables highly onto each factor results in more interpretable clusters of factors [27]. Kaiser's Meyer Olkin measure of sampling adequacy was .85, showing that the patterns of correlation are relatively compact and so factor analysis should yield distinct and reliable factors [27]. Bartlett's test of sphericity was significant ( $p < .001$ ), showing that there were some relationships between the variables. Items were retained

if they loaded at 0.40 or more on a factor and did not load at more than 0.30 on any other factor. This procedure may help to decrease the multicollinearity or error variance correlations among indicators in the confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) of the measurement model [28].

CFA was further employed to produce empirical evidence of construct validity. After determining the best-fitted final measurement models for each construct, the overall measurement model was estimated and the structural model was further tested. In CFA, a significant chi-square statistic represents a nonsignificant result and that the model does not have an acceptable fit to the data. However, because a nonsignificant chi-square is hard to achieve, the fit of the model should be interpreted on the basis of a range of goodness of fit indices. Goodness-of-fit indices adopted for this study were the root mean square of approximation (RMSEA), standardized root mean square residual (SRMR), goodness-of-fit index (GFI), adjusted goodness of fit index (AGFI), normed fit index (NFI), comparative fit index (CFI).

#### IV. RESULTS

##### *A. Exploratory and Confirmatory Factor Analyses*

###### *Tourists' Needs for Uniqueness*

Prior to SEM procedures, an exploratory factor analysis (EFA) was performed for purposes to identify the underlying dimensions of tourists' need for uniqueness and reducing the number of variables in the constructs. The results of EFA analyzes showed that three distinct factors emerged (representing 76.144%) from twelve variables which are labeled as "creative choice", "unpopular choice" and "avoidance of similarity". All 12 items exhibited principal factor loadings above 0.60 and did not display cross-loadings with other factors. The reliability coefficients calculated were 0.87 for creative choice, 0.93 for avoidance similarity and 0.74 for unpopular choice. These reliability coefficients are indicating satisfactory reliabilities. Three-factor model was further re-tested using CFA. The result of the initial estimation of the CFA reflected a RMSEA value of 0.13. The other goodness of fit indices did not provide satisfactory results. The standardized loadings of Unpopular Choice were low (0.18-0.34). In addition, AVE (0.26) and CR (0.35) value for Unpopular choice is extremely low. Overall, constructs of tourists' need for uniqueness retained only two observed indicators "Creative Choice" and "Avoidance of Similarity" for further analysis. For the final measurement model  $X^2/df$  was 1.58 (p-value=0.02938), which is below the desired threshold of 2.0. The goodness-of-fit indices reflected acceptable fit with the root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA) of 0.05 which is satisfactory. The other goodness-of-fit indices were all above their cut-off values with the CFI (0.98), the GFI (GFI=0.94), the AGFI (0.91), the SRMR (0.05) and the NFI (0.97). These results suggested that the measurement model adequately fit the data.

###### *Perceived Authenticity*

To assess the dimensionalities of object-based authenticity

and existential authenticity constructs, EFA was conducted. According to the EFA, three items excluded from further analysis for object-based authenticity. The EFA results revealed two-factor explaining 64.15% of total variance. The reliability coefficients calculated were 0.94 for existential authenticity and 0.81 for object-based authenticity, respectively, indicating satisfactory reliabilities. CFA was then conducted on the two-factor authenticity constructs with covariance matrix and maximum likelihood estimation.  $X^2/df$  was 1.8 (p-value=0.02845), which is below the desired threshold of 2.0. The RMSEA was 0.06, which is below the 0.08 cut-off. The CFI (0.97), the GFI (0.96), the AGFI (.91), the SRMR (0.03) and the NFI (0.92) were above their corresponding cut-off value of 0.90. These results suggested that the measurement model adequately fit the data.

###### *Behavioral Intentions*

The EFA results revealed one factor for the behavioral intentions construct explaining 59.62% of total variance. The reliability coefficient was 0.81 showing that the scale is robust and that it can be retained for further analysis. CFA was further employed. The results of the estimation of the CFA reflected a well-fitting model with a  $X^2/df$  was 1.6 (p=0.04597). The RMSEA was 0.05, which is below the 0.08 cut-off. The CFI (0.96), the GFI (0.94), the AGFI (.91), the SRMR (0.04) and the NFI (0.95) were above their corresponding cut-off value of 0.90. These results suggested that the measurement model adequately fit the data.

##### *B. Overall Measurement Model Testing*

Each measurement model has been separately analyzed to investigate whether the data fitted to the model. After determining the best-fitted final measurement models for each construct, the overall model was further estimated with a total of seventeen indicators representing the five constructs of creative choice, avoidance of similarity, object-based authenticity, the existential authenticity and behavioral intentions (Table I). All of the indicators of the t-value associated with each of the completely standardized loadings exceed the critical value at p less than a 0.05 significance level. The goodness-of-fit indices for the measurement model are within an acceptable range.

$X^2/df$  was 1.6 (p-value=0.00016), which is below the desired threshold of 2.0. The RMSEA was 0.077, which is below the 0.08 cut-off. The CFI (0.97), the GFI (0.90), the AGFI (.83), the SRMR (0.04) and the NFI (0.93) were above their corresponding cut-off value of 0.90. The construct reliability estimates ranged from 0.86 to 0.90 and exceeded the critical value of 0.70 [28], indicating a satisfactory estimation. Convergent and discriminant validity were assessed based on the AVE [29], [28]. In this study, the AVE for all the latent variables exceeded 0.50. These results show that the measurement model has a convergent validity. Therefore, the hypothesized measurement model is reliable with regard to testing the structural relationships among the constructs.



TABLE I  
OVERALL CFA FOR THE MEASUREMENT MODEL (N = 281)

		Completely Standardize d Loading	t-value	Explained Variance and Error Variance	Construct Reliability
<b>Creative Choice</b>				.57	.87
CC1	Since I think I am different from the general average, I travel to unordinary destinations	.65	6.57	.58	
CC2	My goal in selecting a holiday destination is selecting a destination which is coherent with my uniqueness	.76	8.23	.42	
CC3	Since I like being authentic, I usually follow different routes in ordinary (known) destinations	.74	8.01	.45	
CC4	My most favorite holiday destinations are the unique destinations which reflect my authenticity	.84	9.33	.29	
CC5	In general, I travel to new destinations which I think would contribute to my personal uniqueness	.74	7.73	.45	
<b>Avoidance of Similarity</b>				.74	.89
AS3	In general, I do not like destinations where everyone travels to	.81	9.40	.34	
AS6	Destinations which are visited by everyone do not have much value for me	.99	12.82	.03	
AS7	When the destinations I travel to become ordinary, I give up traveling to these destinations	.77	8.77	.41	
<b>Existential Authenticity</b>				.67	.89
EA1	I felt myself connected to history and civilization of humanity	.70	7.65	.50	
EA2	I felt myself related to the descriptions and legends during my visit	.79	9.13	.35	
EA3	I was influenced by the unique religious and spiritual experience	.85	10.21	.28	
EA4	I felt like witnessing all phases of the history of humanity	.91	11.44	.18	
<b>Object-based Authenticity</b>				.79	.92
OA1	I liked the cave houses and churches	.90	11.10	.19	
OA2	Traditional handcraft souvenirs were impressive	.88	10.94	.22	
OA3	The scenery of the valleys impressed me	.88	10.71	.22	
<b>Behavioral Intentions</b>				.67	.80
BI1	If I can, I have the intention of coming back to this cultural destination	.74	6.50	.45	
BI2	I want to visit this cultural destination	.89	7.44	.21	

TABLE II  
RESULTS OF HYPOTHESES TESTING

Hypothesis	Standardized path coefficients (t-value)	Supported/not supported
<b>h<sub>1a</sub></b> : Creative choice has influence on object-based authenticity	$\beta = 0.35$ ( $t = 3.14$ )	Supported
<b>h<sub>1b</sub></b> : Creative choice has influence on existential authenticity	$\beta = 0.21$ ( $t = 2.58$ )	Supported
<b>h<sub>3a</sub></b> : Avoidance of similarity has influence on object-based authenticity	$\beta = 0.38$ ( $t = 3.59$ )	Supported
<b>h<sub>3b</sub></b> : Avoidance of similarity has influence on existential authenticity	$\beta = 0.03$ ( $t = -0.45$ )	Not supported
<b>h<sub>4</sub></b> : Object-based authenticity has influence on existential authenticity	$\beta = 0.80$ ( $t = 6.53$ )	Supported
<b>h<sub>5</sub></b> : Object-based authenticity has influence on tourists' behavioral intentions	$\beta = -0.49$ ( $t = -2.13$ )	Supported
<b>h<sub>6</sub></b> : Existential authenticity has influence on tourists' behavioral intentions	$\beta = 0.74$ ( $t = 2.99$ )	Supported

#### A. Structural Model Testing

After confirming the measurement models, the structural model was examined. The model includes the exogenous latent variables creative choice, avoidance similarity and the endogenous latent variables of object-based authenticity, existential authenticity, and behavioral intentions. The results of the standardized parameter estimates and t-values are reported in Table II. The proposed model is acceptable according to the fit indices. The overall model has a statistically significant value of the chi-square statistic ( $X^2 = 170.33$ ,  $df = 107$ ,  $p = .00010$ ), the other fit statistics are within an acceptable range (RMSEA = 0.078, CFI = 0.96, NFI = 0.92, SRMR = 0.06, GFI = 0.89). The results of the hypotheses testing model in Table II. In conclusion, it was noted that the results of the model supported most hypotheses and  $h_{3b}$  was insignificant in the model.

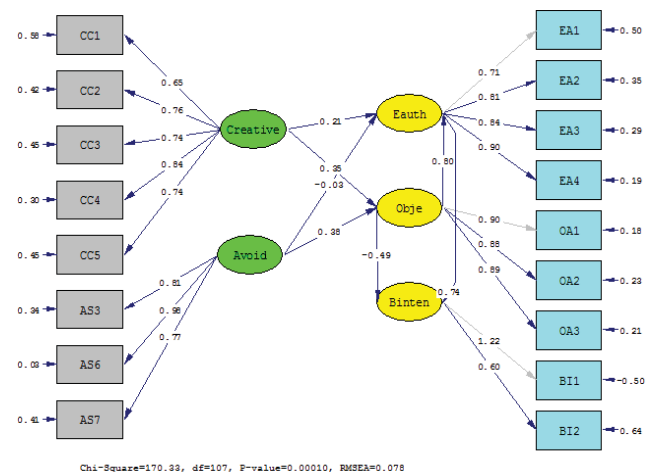


Fig. 2 Standardized loadings of structural model

## V.CONCLUSION

Consumers need for uniqueness concept has been taken into consideration in fashion which examined in the fashion consumption and shopping mall preferences. This study employed the concept in the tourism context. The given tourism literature deals with seeking for novelty, escapism, relief, cultural exploration, and learning but not the need for uniqueness. Thus, the study explored the relationships among tourists' need for uniqueness, object-based authenticity, existential authenticity and behavioral intentions. The study determines CNFU consist of two dimensions, namely, creative preferences and avoidance of similarity. The unpopular choices, on the other hand, couldn't be identified. This finding is similar with the results of [26] which also found low correlation between the CNFU and unpopular choices. According to findings, tourists' creative choice had an influence on object-based authenticity and existential authenticity. Tourists' avoidance had influence on object-based authenticity. The object-based authenticity and existential authenticity had an influence on behavioral intentions.

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