Even Better Than the Real Thing? Authenticity, Replicas and Chinese Tourists

Dr. Rebekah R. Bale[1*], Dr. Henrique F.B. Ngan[2]

[1]*Hong Kong Shue Yan University*
[2]*Institute for Tourism Studies Macau*

*Corresponding Author: *Dr. Rebekah R. Bale*, *Hong Kong Shue Yan University.*

Abstract: *Authenticity remains a key driver in tourism studies research related to visit intention and behavioural outcomes. However, the popularity of replica landmarks amongst Chinese visitors is not well-studied. This project surveys visitors to a replica of the Eiffel Tower in Macau in order to determine their attitudes to and satisfaction with such a replica. The findings show a high level of positivity towards such replicas among Chinese tourists.*

Keywords: *authenticity, replica, visitor satisfaction, re-visit intention, cultural attitudes.*

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. Context

Authenticity has become a research cornerstone in the tourism and hospitality industries (Olsen, 2015; Camus 2004, Cohen 2015). Much of the research has focused on the authenticity of specific events (for example, Castéran and Roederer (2015) concerning the Strasbourg Christmas market or Chabra *et al* (2003) on Highland Games in North Carolina). Other work has focused on tourist experiences and their perceived authenticity, such as Yang & Wall (2009) Camus (2004) looked at authenticity at sites representing French history using a scale which incorporated value, singularity and historicity. However, a neglected aspect of authenticity is its inverse – the fake or replica. Elaborate replicas of European landmarks have been built as part of hotels and integrated resorts in places such as Macao. Some examples include the Neptune Fountain that can be found in the lobby of the Venetian Macao, or the Abbey Road musical jukebox placed inside the Londoner Macao, mimicing the Beatles' "Abbey Road" album cover, as well as the M.G.M. Macau interior that replicates the Rossio Railway Station in Lisbo. The outdoors is also filled with replica landmarks, including the Eiffel Tower at the Parisian Macao and Big Ben at the Londoner Macao.

1.1.1. Cultural Meanings of the Replica

1.1.1.1. The meaning of the replica in Western culture

Authenticity can be viewed in the West as a post-Industrial Revolution concern. Industrial development meant that replicas were seen as useful educational tools for those unable to access 'the real thing'. At the same time, the replica was viewed as sub-standard because the inability to see 'the real thing' was due to a deficit of money, time or education. The replica was considered as cultural stop-gap for 'the masses' who could not experience the real thing. Despite the generally negative view of the copy in Western culture, it is not clear that this connotation transfers to other cultures. In fact, in Chinese culture, replicas may convey a different meaning that can be conceived positively.

1.1.1.2. The meaning of the replica in Chinese culture

Chinese education has traditionally valued the skills of rote-learning and memorization. the idea that the ancient world contains a repository of wisdom which needs to be passed on, or replicated, has meant Asian cultures tend to value sharing for the good of the community (Ang *et al*. 2011, cited in Tang 2014). The replica object has a positive value within Chinese culture as it can be accessed by a larger number of people.

1.2. Gap

There is little research on the visit and re-visit intentions of tourists at a replica landmark.

Prior research has provided evidence that replica landmarks and interior designs are typically perceived as aesthetically pleasing and visually arousing (Wong *et al*, 2023) yet it remains largely unclear whether the authenticity of these matter and most importantly, how it impacts visitors visit and revisit intentions. The replica may fulfill their desired visit intention and thus decrease their motivation to visit the original. Conversely, it might stimulate their interest and aspiration to visit the 'real' landmark on which the replica is modelled. In addition, these attitudes towards the replica and its effect on visitors are culturally marked.

1.3. Objectives

The objectives are to examine the motives and the consequences of tourists visiting a replica landmark of the Eiffel Tower in Macao. Why do people visit such a replica? What effect does it have on their future visit intentions towards the Eiffel Tower in Paris? Does the visit to a replica fulfill the desire to see and be photographed at the Eiffel Tower in such a way that the artificiality of the replica is not important? How these responses and intentions are differently marked for Western and Chinese tourists?

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Authenticity

Ning Wang (1999) identifies three strands of authenticity. *Objective authenticity* refers to that which can be proven – i.e. materials or artefacts that can be directly attributed to certain cultures and accurately dated. *Constructive authenticity* is the deliberate creation of cultural objects to symbolize a place or a people, souvenirs, handicrafts, and landscapes. *Existential authenticity* is the experience that provides something the tourist learns about themselves – through participation or experience in a cultural practice. Scholars have taken three main approaches to authenticity which are summarized here: a modernist approach in which authenticity is an objective attribute, a constructivist approach where it is a social construct resulting from a process of interpretation, and a postmodernist perspective in which the authenticity of an object or experience is not relevant to the tourist's experience of it. (Castéran & Roederer, 2013)

Eco (1986) is an example of the post-modern strand, arguing that if something looks real, then it is as good as being real. In this sense, authenticity is a non-topic, as it is not a historical conceit, (the Eiffel Tower in Paris was built in 1887) but rather a visual one (the Eiffel Tower at The Parisian Macau looks like the Eiffel Tower in Paris). Furthermore, Ning (1999) differentiates between the authenticity of an object and the authenticity of an experience. He argues that the authentic object is one that the tourist perceives as having a tangible and unbreakable connection to the place in which it originates, such as champagne from a specific region in France. The authenticity of an experience is dependent on the subjectivity of the tourist themselves in that they can perceive an event as authentic regardless of its actual origin.
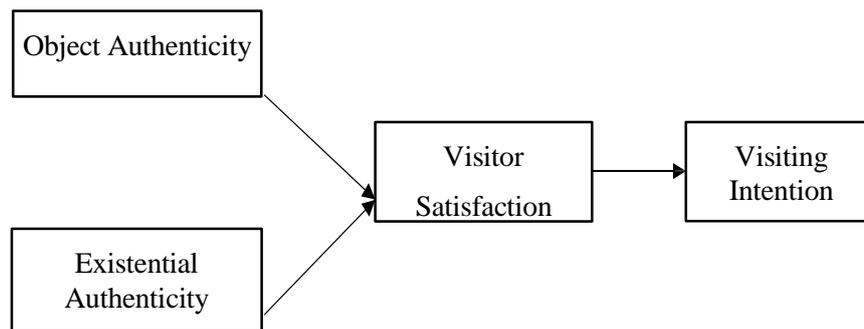
McCannell (1976) argued that 'staged authenticity' is presented to the tourist who searches for authenticity while paradoxically being unable to find it precisely because of their status as tourist. The post-modernist view is that the tourist has been subsumed by the mass-produced replica and the simulation of experience so that in effect they prefer 'hyper-reality' (Eco, 1986) Urry reinforces this idea, calling the 'post-tourist' one who understands and takes pleasure from the artificial experience (2002). Selwyn (1996) distinguishes between 'cool' and 'hot' authenticity: the former being 'real' and the latter 'fake' but pleasure-producing.

2.1.1. Authenticity in Tourism Consumption

The role of authenticity in consumption has been widely explored. As conventionally reported in the literature, greater authenticity is typically associated with a range of tourist behaviors, such as greater satisfaction (Domínguez-Quintero, González-Rodríguez, & Paddison, 2018), higher destination loyalty (Kolar & Zabkar, 2010; Lee & Phau, 2018) as well as favorable destination image (Wong, Ji, & Liu, 2018). A link has also been established between customer satisfaction and revisit intention, for example Quintal & Polczynski. (2010)

According to Kolar and Zabkar (2010), a consumer model allows both the motivation for and the

consequences of authentic experiences to be measured, illustrating a broader conjunction of attitudes surrounding object based and existential authenticity.

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┌─────────────────────┐
│ Object Authenticity │──────┐
└─────────────────────┘      │
                             ▼
                        ┌──────────┐         ┌──────────┐
                        │ Visitor  │────────▶│ Visiting │
                        │Satisfaction│        │Intention │
                        └──────────┘         └──────────┘
                             ▲
┌─────────────────────┐      │
│    Existential      │──────┘
│   Authenticity      │
└─────────────────────┘
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Heritage sites have been the subject of several studies relating authenticity to the level of customer satisfaction as well as to revisit intentions (Chhabra *et al*, 2003, Lu, Chi, & Liu, 2015) Such studies have focused on the perceived authenticity of the site by the visitors and noted that these are formed by the consumers' subjective evaluation of their experience. Given that the desire for authentic experience is one of the essential motivators for heritage tourists, perceived authenticity has an effect on destination loyalty (Yi, Fu, Yu, & Jiang, 2018). Concerning future intentions, these have been studied in terms of re-purchasing, revisiting destinations and positive recommendations (Ramkissoon & Uysal, 2011).

Following MacCannell, in any type of cultural interaction which appeals to tourists, there is an element of artificiality. The packaging of the cultural event, along with its tangible aspects such as souvenirs are 'staged' in order to appeal to the tourists, increase revenue and promote re- visits. Cohen (1988) argued that there is a spectrum of authenticity rather than a Manichean set of attributes. Cohen's term is "emergent authenticity" which describes the processes by which cultural practices and products change over time along spectrum.

Studies have shown that tourist perceptions of authentic experiences, even when staged, contribute to a positive experience. (Chhabra, Healy, & Sills, 2003) In many cases, the tourist does not have an expectation of a truly authentic event but perceives the event as 'authentic enough' to satisfy them. Chhabra *et al* argue that the higher the perceived authenticity of the event, the more satisfied the tourists are, and therefore more likely to revisit and / or recommend the cultural event to others.

In addition to nostalgia and social distinction (Poria, Butler, & Airey, 2001; Zeppel & Hall, 1991), several studies have also shown that higher perceived value leads to higher levels of tourist satisfaction with a destination (Lee, Phau, Hughes, Li, & Quintal, 2016). Lee *et al* describe satisfaction as a result of overall perceived value which consists of perceived monetary value, object-based and existential authenticity. Despite differences between the two constructs, it is important to note that they are nevertheless closely related (Bryce, Curran, O'Gorman, & Taheri, 2015). Many studies have confirmed a link between tangible assets such as historical buildings and intangible ones like traditional cultural practices, see for example Yi, Lin, Jin, & Luo, (2017) Both of these aspects have been shown to affect visitor satisfaction and loyalty to the tourism site itself (Castéran & Roederer, 2013) therefore both can be considered in assessing the success of replica landmarks.

2.1.1.1. Object Authenticity

Ning (1999, 2017) described object authenticity as the most tangible form of authenticity which occurs when the object is perceived as the 'real' or 'original'. Stemming from museum studies, *object authenticity* refers to a contract between the tourist and the heritage object. The visitor comprehends that the Elgin Marbles in the British Museum, for example, are the same objects taken from Greece by Lord Elgin and views them as 'unique'. Doubts about the provenance of such objects directly undermine their authenticity as the visitor is not prepared to accept an 'experience' of Greek artefacts in general, but the specific artefact held in that location.

2.1.1.2. O.A. and Visitor Satisfaction

Several studies (for example, Alraouf, 2010; Camus, 2010) have asserted that object- based authenticity has a positive influence on visitor engagement. Furthermore, there is a positive relationship between

object-based authenticity and commitment or loyalty to the destination. Object-based authenticity has a positive influence on visitor loyalty. Studies have shown that the closer the objects on sale are to being authentic, the more likely the visitor is to return and / or recommend the place to others. (Culler, 1981; Alraouf, 2010).

H1 Objective authenticity positively influences visitor satisfaction.

2.1.1.3. O.A. and Visiting Intention

While object authenticity refers to the genuine nature of a landmark or tourist attraction, replicas used for commercialization can also yield a high degree of authenticity if they successfully preserve its cultural and historical value. There is an increasing demand for travel experiences that offer a sense of authenticity, with the intent to seek genuine experiences that are free from commercialization (Chhabra, Healy, & Sills, 2003). In fact, recent evidence suggests that the relationship between objective authenticity and visit intention is generally positive (for example Yi *et. al.* 2017, 2018).

2.1.2. Existential authenticity

As Ning (1999) has pointed out, the authenticity of an object is one of several factors in the tourism experience which also includes the preferences, perceptions and expectations of the experience itself, thus leading to the theory of existential authenticity. In addition, studies have shown that satisfaction is created through the tourists' relationship to the experience rather than with one specific and tangible object. (Castéran & Roederer, 2013; Chung, Han, & Joun, 2015) Cultural events tend to be accepted as artificial due to spatial and temporal constraints. A cultural experience can be consumed only in a specific place and time, bound by the event's own parameters, it is transactional in nature so there is no way to fully experience the traditional heritage or actual event. Given that, tourists are more willing to accept the reproduction of a cultural event or experience than a fixed replicated object. This is due to an object containing an aura of its own uniqueness, its attractiveness is a function of it being the 'real thing' (Benjamin, 1936; Rickly-Boyd, 2012), therefore its position as a non-transactional object contributes to the tourist's satisfaction.

Studies such as Prentice (2001) have focused on Western attitudes towards heritage tourism and authenticity. Using the term "extended authenticity" he discusses the intangible factors which contribute to place branding such as "Shakespeare Country" for the area around Stratford in Warwickshire. Similar results were reported by Munoz *et al,* (2006) in their discussions of (Western) customer perception of the authenticity of Irish pubs. Concluding that both tangible and intangible factors contributed to the perceived authenticity of the pub, they further noted that the authenticity of each experience produced a more detailed template for the next visit.

2.1.2.1. E.A. and Visitor Satisfaction

Visitors who feel that they have had an authentic experience are most satisfied with that experience and therefore are more likely to recommend it and / or revisit the site of their experience. Thus, existential authenticity has a strong positive influence upon visitor loyalty. (Bryce *et al*., 2015) However, taking the cultural aspects into consideration, these relationships may not operate in the same way. Studies such as Yang and Wall (2009) have described different attitudes towards authenticity; for instance, the majority of Chinese visitors to Xi Shuang Ban Na (Yunnan) enjoyed staged events whereas the international tourists were concerned with the authenticity of the cultural experiences presented to them. In addition, studies such as Yi *et al*. (2018) have noted the relative nature of authenticity and its dependence on individual tourists and their social environment while Nyiri (2006) found that ideas of authenticity were largely non-transferable between Chinese and Western tourists when visiting three 'scenic spots' in China. In contrast, Ramkissoon and Uysal's 2011 article on the effects of perceived authenticity on tourists in Mauritius, largely a European sample, found that "reproduction of the original" was a positive factor in tourist satisfaction, thus concurring with Hall (2007) that replication is not intrinsically negative for Western tourists.

H2 Existential Authenticity positively influences visitor satisfaction.

2.1.2.2. E.A. and Visiting Intention

There are few cross- cultural studies of authenticity and those that have been done are far from conclusive: Nyiri (2006) which looked at tourist attitudes towards cultural events in Southwest China and Mkono (2013) who compared Western and African tourists' attitudes towards 'authentic' food and

shows in Zimbabwe. In both these cases, authenticity was studied as a factor that contributed to tourist satisfaction. Experiential tourism has built upon a singular purpose – offering a 'personal' and 'authentic' experience to the Western consumer (for examples using the Scottish Highlands and New Zealand see Prentice, 2001) Furthermore, tourism represents a set of learned and culturally specific styles; for the Western tourist one such style is a search for the authentic experience which contributes to the accumulation of cultural capital (Bourdieu). Given these conflicting results, further research on the cultural aspects of authenticity is needed.

2.1.3. Visitor Satisfaction positively influences visit intention

Visitor satisfaction is closely related to visit intention. Specifically in the tourism and hospitality industry, research has shown that a positive experience as expressed in the form of satisfaction, is a strong indicator of his/her behavioral intentions, such as future visit and revisit intentions (Yoon & Uysal, 2005; Chi & Qu, 2008). For example, Yoon and Uysal (2005) found that satisfaction with a destination has a significant positive effect on behavioral intentions.

Similarly, Chi and Qu (2008) demonstrated that tourist satisfaction positively influenced revisit intentions. Other studies have also found a positive relationship between satisfaction and loyalty intentions in hospitality and tourism (Han & Ryu, 2009; Kim *et al*., 2013). Thus, visitor satisfaction has been a central variable in tourism and hospitality research and has been prioritized by both private and public organizations. Satisfied visitors are more likely to revisit a destination and recommend it to others (Oppermann, 2000). As such, understanding and enhancing visitor satisfaction can lead to destination loyalty and repeat visits.

2.2. Cultural Attitudes to Authenticity

Studies focusing on cultural attitudes towards authenticity have generally fallen into two categories. One is to compare Western visitors with domestic tourists (for example, Lee et al, (2016); Alarouf (2010), Bryce et al. (2015)) where the sites are examined through the lens of local and overseas visitors. These studies show the differences in intention and outcome between residents and overseas (Western) tourists; they mostly focus on the 'level' of authenticity required to satisfy the tourist's experience. For example, cultural experiences such as music or food will be mediated from the 'true' local experience to satisfy the tourist, it should be 'authentic enough' but very rarely does it replicate the exact experience of the local daily habits.

The second type is to analyzse visit intentions and behavioural outcomes of Chinese and non-Chinese tourists when visiting a heritage site (for example, Yi et al (2017, 2018). These studies compare the desirable aspects of the cultural experiences Chinese and non-Chinese visitors. Thus, a heritage site may consider offering a selection of experiences, which vary in their degrees of authenticity to different groups of visitors. In general, studies have found that Chinese tourists valued intrapersonal authenticity more than the authenticity of the heritage site. This contrasted with non-Chinese visitors, whose loyalty and satisfaction metrics were more dependent on the authentic nature of the site, including its buildings, historical age, and architectural tradition.

Neither type of study addressed the concept of replica landmarks and whether they can perform a type of 'quasi-authenticity' which satisfies the visitor enough to ensure their satisfaction and loyalty to the destination. This quasi-authenticity has a clear cultural demarcation in that the prevailing view of Chinese and Western attitudes towards a replica landmark suggests that it will only produce high visit intention, satisfaction and loyalty rates amongst Chinese visitors.

2.2.1. Chinese attitudes

Despite the generally negative view of the copy in Western culture, it is not clear that this connotation transfers to other cultures. The idea that the ancient world contains a repository of wisdom which needs to be passed on, or replicated has led to conflict with Western ideas of plagiarism and copying. In Asian calligraphy, copying a masterpiece is historically considered an art form in its own right. Because of that, the act of copying is widely accepted in Asian cultures, as is reflected by the greater number of counterfeit purchases made by Chinese consumers (Kwong, Yu, Leung, & Wang, 2009). Even at the expense of quality, Chinese consumers are willing to purchase counterfeit products as long as they can exhibit a higher social status (Phau & Teah, 2009). Similarly, when it comes to patronizing F&B and retail outlets, Chinese consumers demonstrate similar attitudes.

Specific to the tourism context, extensive research has shown that perceived authenticity is closely related to satisfaction and loyalty. Based on this rationale, it is reasonable to assert that it may also affect tourists visiting intentions. According to Dominguez-Quintero *et al* (2018) there is a positive and significant influence exerted by objective and existential authenticity on satisfaction and experience quality.

2.2.2. Western Attitudes

Western attitudes tend to privilege the original over the replica or counterfeit. In terms of replicas, the attraction of the original remains high for the Western tourist. To see the Eiffel Tower is at the same time to experience being in Paris. The landmark also represents Paris (and France) on any number of souvenirs, maps, textbooks and so on. The bond between the landmark and the land which it occupies is already determined in every image. Visiting the Eiffel Tower without being in Paris would therefore represent a sundering of this bond and thus be less attractive to the Western tourist.

2.3. Behavioral outcomes for visiting the replica.

Most of the quantitative research studies have used scales of authenticity which are designed to measure the degree to which the site or activity matches the tourist's expectation. In the case of the replica there is still an expectation of faithfulness to the original but not an expectation of iconic or indexical authenticity. Therefore, the measurement scale can be adapted to measure tourist visit intentions and satisfaction.

3. METHODOLOGY

3.1. Sample

In order to achieve the stated objectives, the present study employed a quantitative approach. Thus, a purposive sampling was adopted to reach the target sample, which consisted of both Chinese and non-Chinese tourists that had visited the Eiffel Tower at the Parisian Macao. Additionally, participants must be above the legal age of 18.

3.2. Sampling procedures

To assist with the process of data collection, fifteen student helpers were recruited, briefed and trained. Data was collected in the vicinity of the Parisian Eiffel Tower, Macau in three different time slots over different days of the week in order to reach as many potential respondents as possible. Once a potential respondent was identified, the student surveyors approached them and briefed them about the present study. Upon agreeing to participate in the study, respondents were asked to fill out a self-administered questionnaire which was collected on the spot.

3.3. Instrument

The questionnaire consisted of three parts, where the first part identified the travel motivation and behaviors of participants. The second section contained the scale items referring to Object Authenticity, Existential Authenticity, Visitor Satisfaction, Visiting Intention, Destination Loyalty, and Aesthetics. Finally, the last section asked respondents about their demographic characteristics. The total sample size collected was 603 surveys of which all were Chinese tourists visiting either from Mainland China or Hong Kong.

4. RESULTS

4.1. Measurement Model

The reliability and validity of all constructs were examined to ensure the quality of the measurement model. In the present study, the measures' composite reliability (CR) and Cronbach's Alpha were all beyond the cutoff value of 0.70, reflecting desirable levels of construct reliability. As for constructs validity**,** all items' loadings were greater than the recommended criterion of .70 (Table 1). The constructs also exhibited high **convergent validity** as the average variance extracted (AVE) of all items were above the recommended value of 0.50 (Table 2). Furthermore, discriminant validity was assessed based on the Fornell-Larcker Criterion analysis. The results show that the square root of AVE for each construct was higher than the corresponding inter-scale correlation, suggesting high discriminant validity (Table 2). Another measure that was taken into account in evaluating the discriminant validity was based on the Heterotrait-Monotrait (HTMT) Ratio. While most HTMT ratios were below the threshold of 0.85, the pair of OA and VS exhibited rather high values (0.853). Thus, further analysis

using bootstrapping was performed to ensure that there were no violations of the assumptions of discriminant validity. The confidence interval of 97.5% for the OA / VS pair 0.898 (<1) wais within the recommended levels, posing no threats to discriminant validity. Finally, multicollinearity between the constructs was not an issue, as none of the variance inflation factor (VIF) values were above 5.0.

Table 1. *Scale items' factor loadings, mean and standard deviation.*

	α	CR	AVE	EA	OA	VI	VS	EA	OA	VI
				Fornell-Larcker Criterion				**Heterotrait-Monotrait Ratio**		
Existential Authenticity (EA)	0.885	0.915	0.684	*0.827*						
Objective Authenticity (OA)	0.875	0.914	0.728	0.706	*0.853*			0.791		
Visit Intention (VI)	0.914	0.959	0.921	0.561	0.65	*0.96*		0.613	0.725	
Visitor Satisfaction (VS)	0.876	0.916	0.734	0.734	0.748	0.712	*0.857*	0.834	0.853	0.792

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Table 2. *Reliability, validity measures, and inter-correlations of study variables*

	Loadings	M	SD
	Existential Authenticity		
EA_1	I liked special arrangements, events, concerts, celebrations connected to the site	0.799	5.07	1.379
EA_2	This visit provided a thorough insight into France's cultural heritage and historical era	0.86	4.49	1.632
EA_3	During the visit I felt connected with French related history, legends and historical personalities	0.852	4.33	1.709
EA_4	I enjoyed the unique religious and spiritual experience	0.83	4.42	1.644
EA_5	I liked the calm and peaceful atmosphere during the visit	0.792	5.22	1.458
	Objective Authenticity		
OA_1	The overall architecture and impression of the building inspired me	0.852	4.96	1.467
OA_2	I liked the peculiarities of the interior design/furnishings	0.851	5.16	1.474
OA_3	I liked the way the site blends with the attractive landscape/scenery/historical ensemble/town, which offers many other interesting places for sightseeing	0.863	5.4	1.341
OA_4	I liked the information about the site and found it interesting	0.846	5.02	1.414
	Visitor Satisfaction		
VS_1	Do you feel happy about your visit to The Parisian's Eiffel Tower (Cotai, Macau)?	0.905	5.43	1.297
VS_2	Do you feel satisfied about your visit to The Parisian's Eiffel Tower (Cotai, Macau)?	0.903	5.46	1.301
VS_3	Do you feel that you have a better understanding of French history and culture after your visit to The Parisian's Eiffel Tower (Cotai, Macau)?	0.716	4.39	1.614
VS_4	After the visit, do you feel that your expectations before the trip have been met?	0.888	5.23	1.349
	Destination Loyalty		
DL_1	I would like to visit the Eiffel Tower in Paris	0.958	5.27	1.47
DL_2	I would like to recommend the Eiffel Tower in Paris to friends and relatives	0.962	5.44	1.456

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The bootstrapping technique, using 603 cases and 5,000 resamples was, is applied to examine the statistical significance of the hypothesized model (Hair et al., 2017). Table 3 and Figure 1 show the results of PLS-SEM analysis. The values of R-squared values for the two endogenous latent variables are 0.526 and 0.616, respectively. These values are much higher than the suggested R- squared value (0.26) for a good model (Cohen, 1988) and indicate that EA and OA explain both the high percentages of visitor satisfaction and the intention to visit.

The path coefficients from the two dimensions of authenticity (object and existential) to the visitors' satisfaction are 0.262 (t-statistics = 3.835) and 0.348 (t-statistics = 4.471), supporting hypotheses H1a and, H2a. Additionally, the path coefficients from the two dimensions of aAuthenticity (object and existential) to the visitors' intention are 0.262 (t-statistics = 3.835) and 0.348 (t- statistics = 4.471), supporting hypotheses H1 and H2.

To evaluate whether the omitted construct has a substantive impact on the endogenous construct, the effect size f 2 values weare calculated (Hair et al., 2017). The cut-off values for measuring effect size f 2 provided by Cohen (1988) are 0.02 (for a small effect), 0.15 (for a medium effect) and 0.35 (for a large effect). The effect size f 2 values for the significant paths ranged from 0.064 to– 0.298.

Table 3. *Results of the hypothesized model using PLS-SEM*

	Path Coefficients	**t-statistics**	**f-square**	**P Values**
EA_ -> VI	-0.009	0.178	0.002	0.858
EA_ -> VS	0.412	11.401	0.243	0
OA_ -> VI	0.27	4.897	0.064	0
OA_ -> VS	0.456	12.102	0.298	0
VS -> VI	0.517	8.296	0.213	0
R2 value for VS = 0.644				
R2 value for VI = 0.539				
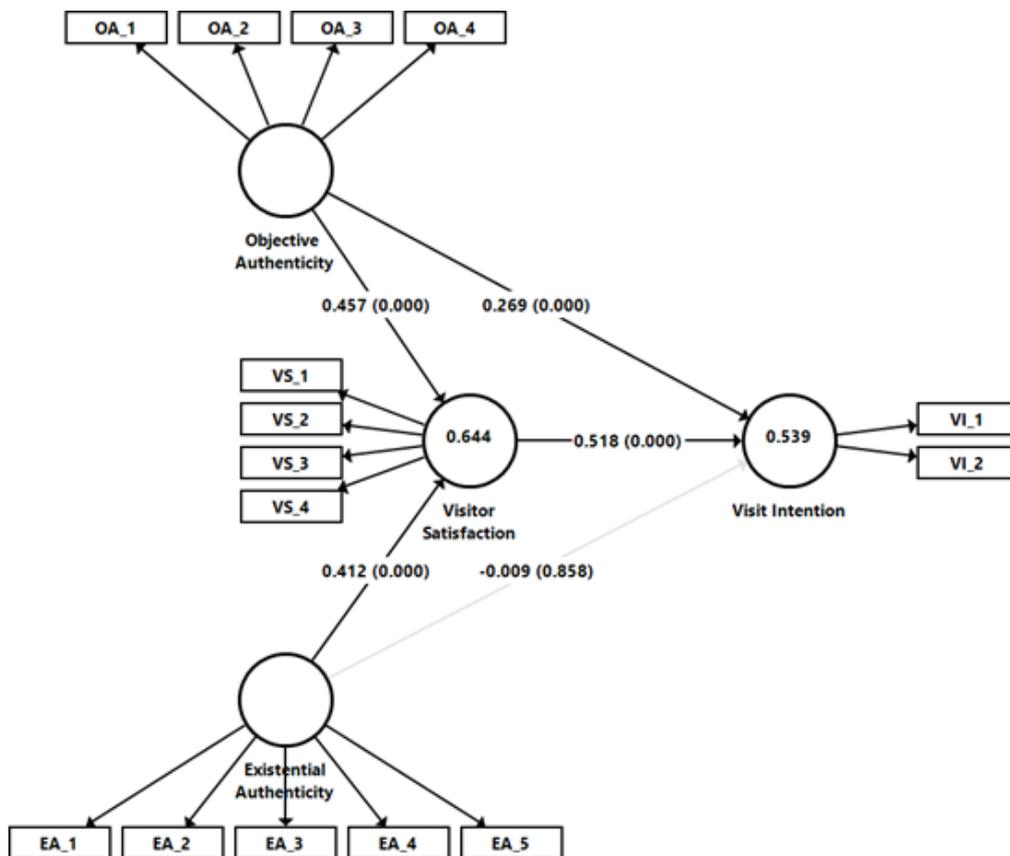
Figure 1. *Results of PLS-SEM analysis*

Further mediation analyses were conducted to examine the mediating role of visitors' satisfaction on the effect of both authenticityies (objective and existential) on visit intention (Table 4). The results indicated that visitor's satisfaction partially mediateds the link between object authenticity and visit intention, as both direct and indirect effects were statistically significant. significant. However, Whereas

for existential authenticity, its direct effect was not statistically significant;, only the indirect effect, as a result, visitor satisfaction fully mediates the relationship between existential authenticity and visit intention.

Table 4. *Mediation analyses*

Path	Sig		Confidence Intervals		
	Direct	Indirect Via VS	2.50%	97.50%	
OA on Visit Intention	p=0.00	p=0.00	0.18	0.30	Partial Mediation
EA on Visit Intention	p=0.86	p=0.00	0.15	0.28	Full Mediation

5. DISCUSSION

5.1. General Discussion

The current study was set to examine the effects of visiting a replica landmark and the underlying psychological mechanisms of such visits. Using the case of a replica landmark of the Eiffel Tower in Macau, it was found that tourists visiting this landmark indicated that they would also be likely to visit the Eiffel Tower in Paris. This appears to be due to the authenticity of the replica, which increases visitor satisfaction. Specifically, the object's authenticity seems to influence both the visitor satisfaction as well as the intention to visit. Additionally, existential authenticity influences the visitor satisfaction, which in turn leads to higher visit intentions.

Our first hypothesis was that Chinese tourists would generally have a comparatively positive view of replica landmarks in general. This was upheld by the positive experiences reported in the categories of objective and existential authenticity, in particularly relating to their opinions of special events and the general atmosphere of the site. The lower scores were related to the connection between their visit to the site and French history and culture. This suggests that the visitors were aware of replica limitations in terms of creating an inclusive French atmosphere, whilst they appreciated the visual similarities. Overall, visitor satisfaction numbers were high although the tourists did not appear to have acquired much additional knowledge of French history and culture. This represents one of the limitations of a replica over other varieties of staged authenticity such as food festivals or museum installations. A replica is primarily a visual and photographic attraction rather than an immersive experience, which is reflected in the results.

Our second hypothesis was that Chinese tourists, having visited a replica, were less likely to visit the original; in effect that the replica had created enough satisfaction in the visitor for that particular landmark and experience.

5.2. Implications

Given the current research on cultural attitudes to the replica in general, we view the results as significant for several stakeholders. First, it justifies the continuing popularity of replicas in China; some of these have been designed by wealthy business owners for private use or for residential property developments. However, many are in public areas and designed for tourists, see for example the Three Masters Park in Fuzhou. The expansion of such replicas in the special administrative region of Macau suggests that the desire for replica experiences is not yet sated.

Next, it supports the idea that positive visitor experiences increase the likelihood of re-visits. (Quintal and Polczynski, 2010; Lee and Phau, 2018; Yi *et al*, 2018) Furthermore, the general satisfaction with the replica visit supports the hypothesis that Chinese tourists are sufficiently positive towards the replica landmark for their visit to increase their desire to visit the original landmark despite possible financial and logistic hurdles. Given that satisfied tourists are more likely to recommend destinations to others, the owners of the integrated resorts that feature replicas would be advised to promote and maintain this part of their business. It is also interesting to note that consumers of such an experience showed clear preferences towards the replica landmark whilst being fully aware of its replica status. This implies that the Chinese tourist values other types of authenticity than the existential – objective one applied to the landmark such as that described by Yi *et al* (2018) as intrapersonal.

5.3. Limitations and Further Research

The limitations of the study are manifold. Firstly, the data was collected at one replica landmark of several in Macau. Secondly, the group of respondents were largely from Mainland China and Hong Kong, Chinese tourists from other diasporic groups were not included. Finally, the data was collected in 2018 prior to both pandemic border controls and the opening of several newer replica landmarks in

Macau (such as Big Ben at The Londoner).

The main thrust for future research would be to perform a comparative study on Chinese and non-Chinese tourists visiting the same replica in order to compare their levels of satisfaction. This would produce a basic working knowledge of how attitudes to authenticity differ between cultures in terms of tourist satisfaction and visit / re-visit intentions. Such a large -scale study would need to ensure that both groups were surveyed in significant numbers. Given the location of replica landmarks, largely in the United States and China, this would be a challenging research project. Only by comparing tourist attitudes from different cultural backgrounds at the same replica landmark, could studies of authenticity really begin to develop a cross-cultural framework.

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AUTHORS' BIOGRAPHY

Dr. Rebekah Bale is Assistant Professor in the Department of English Language and Literature at Hong Kong Shue Yan University. Her research interests include Shakespeare in contemporary fiction as well as Shakespearean adaptations in Francophone Africa and Southeast Asia. Her most recent publications include '"The world to me is but a ceaseless storm": Pericles, The Porpoise, and the Resistance of Exile' (2023) in Comparative Drama, Vol 57 (1), 'Asian Shakespearean Tourism" with Henrique Ngan in Ormsby and Pye (Eds.) Shakespeare and Tourism (Routledge, 2022) and "Stirring up the ashes": Sony Labou Tansi's adaptation of Romeo and Juliet' (2020) in *Sinestesie*.

Dr. Henrique F. B. Ngan currently serves as Director of the Centre for Education Quality Management at the University of Tourism Macau, where he oversees quality assurance at the university level. His responsibilities include ensuring program framework alignment and liaising with external accreditation bodies. Additionally, Dr. Ngan coordinates the launch of new programs, revises existing ones, and oversees faculty training and development to support continuous improvement and excellence in teaching.

Beyond his administrative duties, Dr. Ngan is actively engaged in research. His areas of interest include psychological pricing, immersive technologies (VR and AR), and eye-tracking methods.