Living the story: a dual approach to exploring perceived authenticity and visitor motivation in heritage museums

Atanu Nath, Kokho (Jason) Sit, Parmita Saha & Duncan Light

Published online: 21 Nov 2025.

Submit your article to this journal ⬈

View related articles ⬈

View Crossmark data ⬈

Living the story: a dual approach to exploring perceived authenticity and visitor motivation in heritage museums

Atanu Nath ⬤[a], Kokho (Jason) Sit ⬤[b], Parmita Saha ⬤[a] and Duncan Light ⬤[c]

[a]The Business School at HVL, Western Norway University of Applied Sciences, Campus Sogndal, Bergen, Norway; [b]School of Strategy, Marketing, and Innovation, University of Portsmouth, Richmond Building, Portsmouth, United Kingdom; [c]Principal Academic in Tourism, Bournemouth University Business School, Poole, Dorset, United Kingdom

ABSTRACT

Museums offer rich cultural and heritage experiences, yet little research exists on why visitors are drawn to author-inspired museums – an emergent museum type in Norway. Grounded in the literature domains of cultural heritage and museum tourism, this study explores the co-utility of perceived authenticity and visitor motivation in explaining visitor behavior. It focuses on two prominent Norwegian author-inspired museums – the Ibsen Museum and Hamsun Centre – and exit surveyed 410 individuals aged 18 or older who had physically visited either museum. This study is timely and original for several reasons: (i) it addresses the challenge of attracting visitors, (ii) it emphasizes the importance of object-based and existential dimensions in measuring perceived authenticity, (iii) it reveals the role of both reflective and recreational motives in shaping perceptions of authenticity, and (iv) it introduces a combined statistical approach using structural equation modeling (SEM) and artificial neural networks (ANN) to enhance understanding of visitor behavior. Findings suggest that author-inspired museums should prioritize existential authenticity while catering to visitors' recreational motivations in their engagement strategies.

Introduction

Museums are popular tourist destinations that offer rich cultural and heritage experiences, including learning about historical artifacts and enjoying staged events (Ferguson et al., 2016; McIntyre, 2009). Particularly since the COVID-19 outbreak, museums and other tourism operators have operated in a highly challenging landscape, facing constrained resources and battling to balance curatorial integrity and commerciality (Palumbo, 2022). Under such circumstances, perceived authenticity can be a key factor in attracting visitors to museums, while also being balanced against the need for commercialism (Hughes & Carlsen, 2010). The concept is known to be instrumental in fostering tourists' favorable behaviors, such as positive word of mouth (e.g. Loureiro, 2019), 'sites of memory' and community identities (Crang & Travlou, 2001).

Perceived authenticity is extensively studied in tourism literature, offering a wealth of references (e.g. Hannam & Ryan, 2019). Considering its contextual focus, this study narrows its literature review into two domains: museum and cultural heritage tourism. The first is relevant because the study focuses on author-inspired museums. The second is important because, as stated earlier,

museums are recognized not just as buildings that collect and display artifacts, but also as places where visitors can engage in rich cultural and heritage experiences. In author-inspired museums, the founding authors often serve as icons of their communities and nations (Steriopoulos, 2025). The two literature domains are deeply interconnected.

Studies in the two literature domains agree on the theoretical interpretation of perceived authenticity. They consistently frame it as an evaluative outcome of individuals' subjective experiences at tourist sites, such as museums (Brida et al., 2014; Carreira et al., 2022). Nevertheless, they disagree with its operational interpretation in terms of the required number and nature of measuring dimensions. Some studies adopt a simple, unidimensional approach, whereas others favor a more comprehensive, multidimensional approach that involves contrasting multiple dimensions. Some dimensions relate to a tourist site's tangible objects or displays, as well as the meanings intended by the site operator, utilizing external cues (e.g. signage and brochures) (Pine & Gilmore, 2007; Wang, 1999). Other dimensions emphasize personal interpretation and the subjective or symbolic meanings that visitors attribute to the site and its objects (Khanom et al., 2019). Despite their differences, the measuring dimensions of perceived authenticity center on visitor experiences (Chhabra, 2019; Kesgin et al., 2021; Komarac et al., 2020).

The mentioned disagreement extends beyond the operational interpretation to also include the relative significance of the measuring dimensions in predicting visitor behavior. Two issues await further clarification: whether all the measuring dimensions have the same significant effect on visitor behavior when a multidimensional approach is applied (Atzeni et al., 2022; Bryce et al., 2015; Kim et al., 2020; Kolar & Zabkar, 2010; Rickly et al., 2021; See & Goh, 2019), and whether perceived authenticity alone is sufficient to explain such behavior (Cohen-Hattab & Kerber, 2004). Previous studies commonly treat perceived authenticity as a component of visit motivation rather than two related but distinct concepts (e.g. Bryce et al., 2015; Carreira et al., 2022). Visit motivation may serve as a meaningful 'interpreter' of perceived authenticity, offering insights into how visitors authenticate their experiences and which authenticity dimension most (or least) influences their subsequent behavior due to their visiting reasons. The co-utility of perceived authenticity and visit motivation in explaining visitor behavior represents a knowledge gap in the museum and cultural heritage tourism literature (Cheng et al., 2025).

Drawing on the discussion above, this study aims to delve deeper into the perceived authenticity's operational interpretation, its significance in explaining museum visitors' behaviors, and the supporting role of visit motivation. Accordingly, this study addresses three interrelated questions: *(1) What measuring dimensions should an operational interpretation of perceived authenticity consider? (2) Do these dimensions consistently explain visitor behavior? and (3) Does visit motivation influence the explanatory power of perceived authenticity?* Addressing these questions will contribute to ongoing scholarly debates concerning the dimensional structure of perceived authenticity and its associations with visitor behavior and motivation.

Scope and delimitations

Author-inspired museums serve as the contextual focus of this study. It targeted author-inspired museums in Norway for several reasons. First, author-inspired museums differ from other types (e.g. art museums, Forgas-Coll et al., 2017; wine museums, Siu et al., 2022) in that their core attractions revolve around the author's life story – both successes and failures – and notable achievements. Existing literature has largely overlooked author-inspired museums. Literacy is culturally and socially significant in Norway, much like it is in other countries (Ferguson et al., 2016; Lennon & Graham, 2001).

This study considered two legendary literati, Henrik Ibsen and Knut Hamsun, whose works have profoundly shaped Norwegian lifestyle philosophies and personal values (e.g. simplicity, wellness, and an appreciation for the natural world). If the authors were cultural or heritage sites (e.g. Stonehenge, UK), both objective attributes (e.g. standing stones) and symbolic elements (e.g. mythical

stories) would be readily accepted as part of the authenticity of judgment (Steriopoulos, 2025). However, it remains unclear whether the same judgment applies to author-inspired museums, where objective attributes tend to include personal belongings and publications, and symbolic elements tend to focus on the author's upbringing, successes, and failures. They may be considered less mythical or mysterious, and thus less authentic than, for example, a stone circle with astronomical alignments.

Another rationale for targeting author-inspired museums is that they face fierce competition for Norwegian visitors' time and money, not only from other museum types like art and war, but also from other cultural and heritage activities like cod and skrei fishing, dog sledding, and wild reindeer hunting (Høegh-Guldberg & Seeler, 2021).

Some studies (Wang, 1999) propose using both objective and constructive dimensions to measure object-based authenticity. However, due to its overlap with existential authenticity in 'sense making', this study excludes the constructive dimension of object-based authenticity to reduce visitor confusion, simplify measurement, and better assess the relationships between contrasting authenticity dimensions, visitor behavior, and motivation. A detailed explanation is given in the literature review, with the exclusion noted as a limitation.

By coupling structural equation modeling (SEM) with artificial neural networks (ANN), this study offers a deeper understanding of the measurement dimensions of perceived authenticity, particularly those that visitors value in driving their patronage and align with their visit motives. This visitor-centric knowledge can support museum curators and marketers in designing (more) authentic experiences and delivering (more) attractive promotional activities.

Literature review

This study has indicated that its literature review focuses on perceived authenticity and visit motivation within the domains of museum and cultural heritage tourism.

Perceived authenticity: operational interpretation and explanatory effect

As previously noted, there has been greater agreement on the theoretical interpretation of perceived authenticity than on its operational interpretation. It is consistently regarded as an evaluative outcome reflecting individuals' subjective experiences at tourist destinations, such as museums. For example, Cohen (1988) described authenticity as a mental concept shaped by consumers' perceptions of a place's marketing and environmental stimuli, which can be adapted to reflect themed events or market positioning, making authenticity a 'negotiable' concept. Offering a more elaborate definition, Lehman et al. (2018) presented three key attributes underpinning authenticity: '(1) consistency between an entity's internal values and its external expressions, (2) conformity of an entity to the norms of its social category, and (3) connection between an entity and a person, place, or time' (p. 5). These definitions consistently emphasize the importance of visitor experience (Brida et al., 2014; Bryce et al., 2015; Carreira et al., 2022; Kolar & Zabkar, 2010), which led us to adopt an experiential lens for this study's theoretical interpretation of perceived authenticity. Despite this, the operational interpretation of perceived authenticity remains debated, revolving around the measuring dimensions and their impact on visitor behavior. Some studies advocate a unidimensional approach, while others support a multidimensional one (see Table 1).

The debate on multidimensional measurement is heightened by questions about whether to include a constructive dimension in object-based authenticity and whether it overlaps with existential authenticity. Earlier studies (e.g. Wang, 1999) suggest two sub-dimensions of object-based authenticity: *objective authenticity*, which determines the (in)genuineness of objects based on factual or credible information, and *constructive authenticity*, which involves interpreting objects displayed at tourist sites through personal beliefs, expectations, or the influence of tourism operators via

Table 1. Past studies on perceived authenticity.

Author(s) and Year	Conceptualization	Identified Dimensions	Study context	Findings
(Cheng et al., 2025)	Examine the perceptions of authenticity on individuals' intentions to visit.	Objective, constructive, and existential authenticity.	Heritage museum	Different dimensions of perceived authenticity and motivation significantly shape individuals' intentions to visit heritage sites.
(Wang et al., 2023)	Investigated perceived authenticity in dark tourism and its impact on visitor satisfaction.	Perceived authenticity, dark tourism, emotional engagement.	Dark tourism sites (natural disaster memorials).	Perceived authenticity enhances emotional engagement, which in turn influences visitor satisfaction and behavioral intentions.
(Atzeni et al., 2022)	Investigated how enjoyment and perception of genuineness influence authenticity.	Object-based and existential authenticity.	Heritage tourism.	Object-based authenticity influences affective response, while existential authenticity influences cognitive and affective responses.
(Canavan & McCamley, 2021)	Categorized authenticity into three eras: modern, post-modern, and post-postmodern.	Modern, postmodern, and post-postmodern authenticity.	Theorization.	Argued that staged authenticity can sometimes be perceived as 'more authentic' than the original, reinforcing subjectivity in authenticity.
(Rickly et al., 2021)	Examined existential authenticity and its ethical implications, arguing that authenticity does not always align with ethics.	Existential authenticity, ethics, freedom, ambiguity.	Philosophical perspectives on tourism.	Authenticity can exist independently of ethical considerations, challenging its role in responsible tourism.
(Kesgin et al., 2021)	Examines how authenticity, sincerity, and engagement shape memorable visitor experiences in living history sites.	Object-based authenticity, existential authenticity, sincerity, engagement, leisure involvement.	Living history sites	Engagement enhances memorability, influenced by authenticity and sincerity. Souvenir purchases impact visitor perceptions and involvement.
(Taheri et al., 2020)	Explores the role of perceived trust in shaping visitors' perceptions of authenticity, sincerity, and memorable tourism experiences (MTE) in heritage tourism.	Perceived trust, sincerity, object-based authenticity, existential authenticity, and MTE.	Cultural heritage tourism in Iran.	Perceived trust significantly influences visitors' perceptions of sincerity, existential authenticity, and object-based authenticity, which in turn stimulate memorable experiences. Suggests that trust-building is essential in heritage tourism to maintain authenticity and visitor engagement.
(Loureiro, 2019)	Studied the impact of authenticity on place attachment and pride in heritage tourism.	Object-based and existential authenticity.	Heritage tourism.	Atmospheric cues and place attachment influence perceptions of authenticity.
(Khanom et al., 2019)	Introduced host – guest authentication in intangible cultural heritage, distinguishing 'cool' and 'hot' authentication.	Mutual authentication, cultural engagement.	Heritage tourism, particularly in developing countries.	Mutual authentication enhances tourist experience and community empowerment.

Table 1. Continued.

Author(s) and Year	Conceptualization	Identified Dimensions	Study context	Findings
(Loureiro & Ferreira, 2018)	Analyzed visitor engagement in cultural experiences, linking it to authenticity.	Engagement-based authenticity.	Cultural and recreational experiences.	Visitor engagement with cultural sites enhances perceived authenticity, reinforcing emotional and behavioral loyalty.
(Lehman et al., 2018)	Examined the 'dark side' of authenticity, highlighting its potential downsides.	Consistency, conformity, and connection in authenticity.	Organizational settings, with relevance to tourism branding.	Authenticity claims can backfire when leading to excessive rigidity or inauthentic performance.
(Bryce et al., 2015)	Examined object-based and existential authenticity in tourism motivation and visitation.	Object-based and existential authenticity.	Heritage tourism.	Authenticity is both motivation and an outcome of the tourist experience.
(Castéran & Roederer, 2013)	Defined authenticity through iconic and indexical lenses, differentiating observable artificiality from original cues.	Iconic and indexical authenticity.	Festival/cultural tourism.	Originality (low artificiality) in festivals influences visitor frequency.
(Chhabra, 2012, 2019)	Investigated objective authenticity in heritage tourism, focusing on continuity, originality, and place-based production.	Objective, existentialist, and constructivist authenticity.	Heritage tourism and sustainability.	Power dynamics and expert interventions in heritage tourism shape authentication.
(Rickly-Boyd, 2012b)	Explored existential authenticity through lifestyle climbing as a form of self-discovery.	Existential authenticity, lifestyle, performance.	Adventure tourism, climbing culture.	Authenticity is experienced through personal engagement, challenge, and community.
(Rickly-Boyd, 2012a)	Applied Benjamin's concept of 'aura' to tourism, linking authenticity to ritual and tradition.	Aura, ritual, and performative authenticity.	Tourist experiences and cultural sites.	Authenticity is constructed through engagement and ritual rather than being an inherent property.
(Kolar & Zabkar, 2010)	Developed a consumer-based model where authenticity mediates cultural motivation and loyalty.	Perceived authenticity, cultural motivation, loyalty.	Cultural heritage tourism.	Tourist perceptions of authenticity influence destination loyalty.
(Reisinger & Steiner, 2006)	Critiqued object-based authenticity and proposed that existential and object-based authenticity should not be studied together.	Object and existential authenticity.	Theorization of authenticity in tourism.	Argued that authenticity is too unstable and contested to be useful in tourism research.
(Crang & Travlou, 2001)	Examined the spatialization of memory and historical layering in urban landscapes.	Memory, temporality, postmodern authenticity.	Urban heritage (Athens).	Authenticity in urban spaces is tied to historical layering, where different eras coexist rather than follow a linear historical progression.
(Wang, 1999)	Proposed a refined framework distinguishing objective, constructive, and existential authenticity.	Objective, constructive, and existential authenticity.	Tourism experiences.	Authenticity should be expanded to include existential engagement, rather than focusing solely on objects.
(Cohen, 1979, 1988)	Argued that authenticity is relative and introduced 'emergent authenticity,' suggesting that authenticity is continuously negotiated.	Emergent authenticity, commodification.	Tourism and cultural commodification.	Tourists' perceptions of authenticity evolve over time and are shaped by their experiences and expectations.

Table 1. Continued.

Author(s) and Year	Conceptualization	Identified Dimensions	Study context	Findings
(MacCannell, 1973)	Introduced 'staged authenticity,' arguing that tourists seek authentic experiences but often encounter staged versions.	Staged authenticity, front and back regions, commodification.	Tourism experiences and social spaces.	Tourists often believe they are accessing 'real' cultural experiences, but these are constructed to meet their expectations.

communication cues (e.g. signage and brochures). For example, at an author-inspired museum, an object like the author's desk can be objectively authenticated through the carpenter's history and materials used, or constructively through visitors' interest, knowledge of carpentry, and/or the information provided by the museum.

Those studies distinguish between existential and object-based authenticity by emphasizing that the former relates to an existential state of 'being' at tourist sites through experiential activities (e.g. guided tours and live demonstrations) and can exist independently of object-based authenticity (Kolar & Zabkar, 2010; Reisinger & Steiner, 2006; Wang, 1999). For example, Atzeni et al. (2022) described existential authenticity as ' … an enhanced sense of connection and self-expression' (p. 242). Wang (1999) elaborated on its importance by stating ' … [existential authenticity] gives rise to an authentic self that balances between reason and emotions, self-constraints and spontaneity' (p. 22).

Existential and constructive authenticity theoretically diverge, as outlined above. Operationally, however, the distinction may be less noticeable to visitors and more problematic to capture. Both authenticity types converge on 'making sense' of on-site experiences: existential authenticity involves self-discovery through activities staged at tourist places (Day et al., 2015), while constructive authenticity focuses on understanding or appreciating objects displayed at tourist places, with site visits also being crucial (Chhabra, 2019; Wang, 1999). Since both authenticity types depend on subjective interpretations rather than objective judgment, as with objective authenticity, they may overlap and appear less distinct to visitors, whose ability and motivation to separate them remain questionable. The heuristic reasoning behavior further supports this argument (see Liu et al., 2023).

It may be proposed to distinguish existential and constructive authenticity through research design, such as prompting visitors with specific descriptions during data collection to facilitate discernment of the distinction. While this approach appears logical, it entails several limitations, including the potential for response bias and a reduction in research objectivity (Frazer & Lawley, 2000). Because this study aims to provide an operational interpretation that is meaningful for visitors, it excludes constructive authenticity and notes this limitation in the following section. To clarify the distinction between object-based and existential authenticity and examine their relationships with visitor behavior and motivation, this study defines the former as 'visitor judgment of the objective quality of displayed objects' and the latter as 'visitor judgment of the experiential quality of their visit.' The extent to which the judgment of experiential quality arises from interactions with displayed objects or staged activities is irrelevant for the reasons previously mentioned. Numerous scholars (e.g. Bryce et al., 2015; Loureiro, 2019; Reisinger & Steiner, 2006) have endorsed the object-based/existential interpretation of perceived authenticity (see Table 1).

There are varying views on the significance of object-based and existential authenticity in explaining visitor behavior, with their effects not being comparable. Some scholars (e.g. Cheng et al., 2025; Chhabra, 2012; Kesgin et al., 2021; Richards, 2024) argue that object-based authenticity is more effective in predicting visitor behavior, while others (e.g. Atzeni et al., 2022; Fu & Lehto, 2018; Rickly et al., 2021) contend that existential authenticity plays a more significant role. A few scholars (e.g. Cheng et al., 2025) even argue that the explanatory power of other types of authenticity becomes more evident when object-based authenticity is weak. Both object-based and existential dimensions are integral to the operational interpretation of perceived authenticity; however,

their relative significance in explaining visitor behavior warrants further clarification. This knowledge can inform museum operators on how to prioritize resources and strategies (e.g. novel displays or themed events) to better align with visitors' authenticity preferences and, in turn, entice their visitation (Paris et al., 2015).

Visit motivation

Visit motivation is a meaningful concept that explains visitors' behaviors related to tourism places. Many frameworks and defining dimensions are available to decipher visit motivation (see Table 2). While push–pull motivation is a highly popular framework, we deem the reflective/recreational motivation to be equally meaningful for studying the topic in question for several reasons: dimensionality, easy application, and good explanatory power, particularly in a severe leisure context (Loureiro & Ferreira, 2018; Taheri et al., 2014).

Reflective motivation is intrinsically oriented, focusing on a visitor's internal needs and desires that trigger their behaviors, such as the desire to learn about the founding author of a museum. Other example behaviors include cultural curiosity and a desire to explore different cultures, customs, and historical narratives (Bryce et al., 2015). Conversely, recreational motivation is extrinsically oriented, focusing on the functions and/or aesthetics of a tourism object or setting that trigger a person's behavior, such as a museum's geographical location and architectural beauty (Gurel, 2023; Wu & Wall, 2017).

Earlier scholars (e.g. Loureiro & Ferreira, 2018; Taheri et al., 2014) have established the co-utility of reflective and recreational motives in explaining the behaviors of museum visitors. For example, Loureiro and Ferreira (2018) described reflective motivation as visitors cognitively making sense of the tourist place, and recreational motivation as visitors hedonically experiencing the place and its related objects or displays. Su et al. (2020) elaborated that recreational motivation is more about the emotional and nostalgic outcomes visitors seek from interacting with a museum's artifacts, artworks, or historical landmarks.

Scholars have, however, hardly considered visit motivation and perceived authenticity in a single study. A tenable explanation is that they may consider the two concepts identical, as both consistently emphasize intrinsic and extrinsic components. The measurement of both concepts in a research design may potentially confuse or burden participants, thereby weakening the validity of their responses (Matthes & Ball, 2019). Taheri et al. (2014) illustrated the utility of reflective and recreational motives in explaining the behaviors of museum visitors. However, they did not consider the two motives in tandem with perceived authenticity, nor consider whether they are (un)equal in explanatory power. A handful of other studies (Kolar & Zabkar, 2010; Reinhold et al., 2023; Rickly et al., 2021) posit that visit motivation and perceived authenticity are two distinct concepts, and the former can enrich our understanding of the latter. Specifically, the authenticity dimension visitors perceive as meaningful or not for a museum can hinge upon their visit motivation (Bryce et al., 2015; Kesgin et al., 2021; Zhou et al., 2022). These idiosyncratic results may be connected to the diverse profiles of museum visitors, as the aspirations or ideals sought for authenticity. For example, visitors who frequent a museum for self-discovery or escapism may value existential authenticity more than object-based authenticity (Thyne, 2001). Conversely, visitors who frequent the same museum to primarily view the new exhibitions or experience the new landscape may appreciate object-based authenticity more than existential authenticity (Hede et al., 2014).

For this study, we deem the co-examination of visit motivation and perceived authenticity necessary to better analyze the visitor behavior linked to author-inspired museums. Our rationale lies in the atypical nature of author-inspired museums (section 1) and their increased offerings of social events (e.g. staging hands-on activities and pop-up events). Reflective motivation involves museum visitors pursuing knowledge and cognitive development, whereas recreational motivation entails visitors visiting a museum to escape and have fun. They resonate with the 'contemplative bathe' and 'entertaining show' concepts discussed by McIntyre (2009). Table 2 presents the relevant studies on visitors' motivation in cultural heritage tourism literature.

Table 2. Past studies on visit motivation.

Authors	Description of the measures	Study context	Key findings
(Cheng et al., 2025)	Heritage travel motivation was measured by emotional, recreational and cultural motivation.	Heritage museum.	Travel motivation and perceived authenticity should be considered together as key predictors of individuals' intention to visit heritage sites.
(Gurel, 2023)	Push factors: Intrinsic needs (e.g. excitement, wonder, learning). Pull factors: Extrinsic attributes (e.g. cultural preservation, tangible evidence).	Art museums	Cultural Omnivores are motivated by intrinsic experiences (e.g. amazement, enrichment), whereas Art Museum Univores emphasize extrinsic motivations (e.g. preservation, protection).
(Luo & Ye, 2020)	Motivation was measured using four dimensions: (1) enhancing personal value and fulfillment, (2) obtaining comfort and enjoyable experiences, (3) bringing interesting topics to conversations, and (4) educating the next generation	Museum	Experience expectations and motivation were significant mediators in the relationship between generativity and visit intention, emphasizing their combined importance in shaping museum visitation behavior.
(Su et al., 2020)	Motivation was measured through three dimensions: emotional experiences (e.g. sense of belonging), recreational experiences (e.g. relaxation), and educational/cultural experiences (e.g. learning about history).	Heritage destination	Visitor engagement, experience, and destination image fully mediated the relationship between motivation and satisfaction. Emotional, recreational, and educational/cultural motivations influenced visitor engagement and experiences, which in turn shaped destination image and satisfaction.
(Loureiro & Ferreira, 2018)	Three motivational dimensions were studied: (1) Serious Leisure: Reflective and recreational motivations; (2) Prior Knowledge: Familiarity, expertise, and past experiences; (3) Meaningfulness: Appropriateness and relevance to visitors' needs.	Museum	Serious leisure and prior knowledge significantly influenced visitor engagement, while meaningfulness had no direct effect. Engagement positively impacted word-of-mouth recommendations and visitors' passionate desire to return. Recreational motivations were more influential than reflective ones in shaping serious leisure.
(Wu & Wall, 2017)	Push Factors: Education and learning, relaxation, creating positive leisure habits, relationship enhancement, family obligation. Pull Factors: Value for money, excellent family-friendly environment, innovative museum displays, tranquil historical area.	Heritage museums	Education and learning are the primary push factors for parents. Relaxation and family bonding are significant motivators. Free admission, creative displays, and tranquil surroundings are strong pull factors.
(Bryce et al., 2015)	Cultural Motivation: Interest in history, visiting cultural and historical attractions, religious and aesthetic experiences.	Heritage attractions	The study found that cultural motivation, serious leisure, heritage-related behaviors, and self-connection significantly influence visitors' perceptions of authenticity, engagement, and loyalty.
(Taheri et al., 2014)	Recreational Motivation: Enjoyment, satisfaction, and enrichment. Reflective Motivation: Self-expression, self-actualization, self-image	Museums	Recreational motivation, which includes enjoyment, satisfaction, and personal enrichment, also positively influences engagement. However, reflective motivation, related to self-expression and self-identity projects, does not have a significant impact on engagement levels.
(Poria et al., 2006)	Five motivational dimensions for heritage site visits: Learning, where tourists seek education and historical knowledge; Connecting with Heritage, reflecting the personal or cultural significance of the site; Leisure Pursuit, focusing on recreation and enjoyment; Bequeathing to Children, emphasizing the desire to pass on the site's legacy to the next generation; and Emotional Involvement, driven by a deep affective connection, often influenced by prior knowledge or personal experiences.	Historic attractions	Tourists' motivations to visit heritage sites are strongly influenced by their perception of the site's connection to their own heritage, with stronger perceptions leading to higher motivation. Learning and emotional involvement emerged as significant motivators, alongside unique motives like bequeathing the site's story to children.

Hypotheses development

This section presents the research model and hypotheses developed for this study (see Figure 1).

Perceived authenticity and visitor behavior

This study examines the significance of perceived authenticity in driving visitors' visits to author-inspired museums and whether this significance is consistent across varied measurement dimensions. Our literature review suggests the utility of object-based/existential dimensions in operationally interpreting perceived authenticity and their explanatory effect on visitor behavior. These dimensions reflect the differing evaluative judgments visitors make about their experiences at author-inspired museums (Carreira et al., 2022).

As mentioned earlier, object-based authenticity refers to visitors' judgment of the *objective qualities of displayed objects* in author-inspired museums, specifically regarding their factual accuracy and legitimacy (MacCannell, 1973). Conversely, existential authenticity concerns visitors' judgment of the experiential qualities of visits to author-inspired museums, reflecting the personal meaning and/or reflection they assign to the experience (Kim & Jamal, 2007; Rickly-Boyd, 2012a). Both authenticity types are significant in studying visitor behavior because they have different and yet complementary explanatory roles.

More specifically, existential authenticity can be applied to discern visitors' evaluation of the museum as a consumption place and whether the place enables them to pursue the desired experiential or symbolic meanings (Kolar & Zabkar, 2010; Reisinger & Steiner, 2006; Wang, 1999). The meanings may be associated with expressing one's self-image or connecting with something spiritual (Atzeni et al., 2022). Object-based authenticity can identify visitors' evaluation of the objects displayed or events staged at the museum, mainly whether they convey intended meanings clearly and accurately, such as historical and/or cultural narratives.

Existing literature (Castéran & Roederer, 2013; Stepchenkova & Belyaeva, 2021) has established a significant positive relationship between perceived authenticity and visitors' intention to visit a tourist destination – the stronger the perceived authenticity, the greater the inclination to visit. This relationship is likely applicable to author-inspired museums as well. However, debate persists regarding which dimensions of perceived authenticity are more influential. Some scholars (e.g. Cheng et al., 2025; Chhabra, 2012; Kesgin et al., 2021; Richards, 2024) argue that object-based authenticity is the primary driver, while others (e.g. Atzeni et al., 2022; Fu & Lehto, 2018; Rickly et al., 2021) emphasize the greater importance of existential authenticity. Given that the two authenticity types are complementary yet distinct, we anticipate their explanatory effects on visitor behavior to differ, though the exact nature of this difference remains unclear. Drawing on both established and unresolved findings in the literature, we propose the following hypothesis:
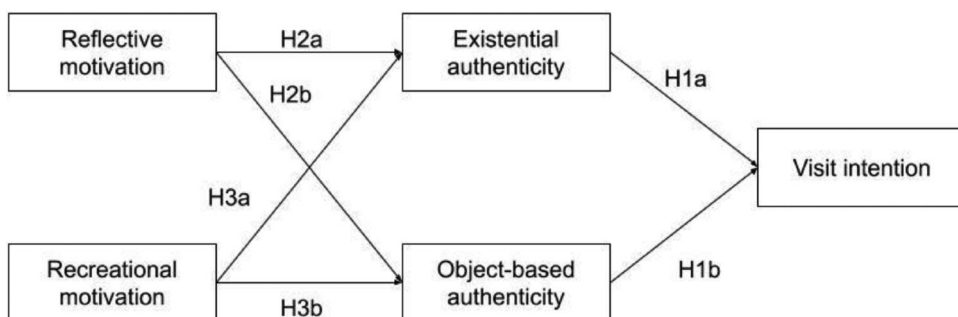

Figure 1. Proposed research model and hypotheses.

Hypothesis 1: Perceived authenticity is significant in explaining visitors' behavioral intention towards an author-inspired museum (H1a), but the explanatory effect may vary between the existential and object-based dimensions (H1b).

Visit motivation and perceived authenticity

Another question this study addresses is whether visit motivation can influence the explanatory effect of perceived authenticity on visitor behavior towards author-inspired museums. As discussed earlier, some scholars have treated visit motivation and perceived authenticity as nearly identical concepts due to their shared intrinsic and extrinsic traits. Accordingly, measuring both concepts in a single study seems redundant and inadvisable, as it may confuse participants and yield poor-quality data (e.g. weak discriminant validity) (Nunkoo & Ramkissoon, 2012).

Instead of continuing with the debate on whether to include visit motivation and perceived authenticity in research (e.g. Bryce et al., 2015; Kolar & Zabkar, 2010), this study takes a practical step to verify their intricate relationship. It aims to determine whether the two concepts are similar or distinct. When measured thoughtfully with the 'right' participants and for the 'right' context (Nunkoo & Ramkissoon, 2012), visit motivation can help decipher the perceived authenticity's effect on visitor behavior towards a tourist place.

Like perceived authenticity, we propose a dual-dimensional approach that considers two contrasting motivations: reflective and recreational motivations. Reflective motivation refers to visitors cognitively making sense of a tourist place, such as a museum (Stebbins, 1997). Tourists with reflective motivation will likely seek activities or events that facilitate personal reflection and self-discovery, resulting in a higher perception of existential authenticity. This aligns with self-congruence theory (Kumar & Kaushik, 2022). It also suggests that personal motivation can enhance object-based authenticity when tourists identify genuine value in their experiences (Kim & Jamal, 2007). Because of the unverified supporting relationship between visit motivation and perceived authenticity, this study develops the following hypothesis:

Hypothesis 2: Reflective motivation is significant in explaining visitors' perceived authenticity of a museum, but its explanatory role may vary between the existential and object-based dimensions (H2a and H2b).

Recreational motive concerns a visitor's need to search for pleasure and enjoyment at a tourist place (Iso-Ahola & Baumeister, 2023). Visitors with a recreational motive are expected to emphasize the entertainment and leisure aspects of tourism experiences more than their counterparts with reflective motivation. Recreational motivation is expected to have a more significant influence on object-based authenticity, focusing on the perceived genuineness of a museum's displayed objects, exhibits, or events (MacCannell, 1973; Zhang & Yin, 2020). We thus develop the following hypothesis:

Hypothesis 3: Recreational motivation is significant in explaining visitors' perceived authenticity of a museum, but its explanatory role may vary between object-based and existential authenticity (H3a and H3b).

Methodology

Constructs measurement and data collection

We employed a *deductive* research design to identify a meaningful operational interpretation of perceived authenticity and its relationships with visitor behavior and motivation. We thus sourced the measurement items for the concepts under study from the focal literature domains (Atzeni et al., 2022; Bryce et al., 2015; Taheri et al., 2014): three and four items for object-based and existential authenticity, six and four items for reflective and recreational motivation, and three items for visit intention. We also measured visitors' socio-demographic attributes for profiling purposes.

As described in Section 1.1, we targeted two Norwegian author-inspired museums – the Ibsen Museum in Oslo and the Hamsunsenteret at Hamarøy – because of the authors' significant

contributions to Norway's literary history, cultural heritage, and national identity, as well as those of neighboring countries. Thus, an investigation of the two museums was deemed a good starting point.

Located in a leafy street in the heart of Oslo and set in the apartments where Henrik Ibsen spent the latter years of his life and literary career, the Ibsen Museum is an easy-to-find and often-mentioned destination on planned trips. On TripAdvisor, it ranks #48 among 536 things to do and see in Oslo. In contrast, the Hamsunsenteret, established to commemorate the life and works of Knut Hamsun, is set in nature among the mountains and fjord of the remote, bleak but beautiful Hamarøy in northern Norway, a three-hour drive from its nearest big town. The center comprises a research and exhibition center, and the nearby cottages where the author grew up are maintained in their original form. Unsurprisingly, the Hamsunsenteret ranks as the #1 thing to do in Hamarøy. Both museums have retained original artifacts and reconstructed replicas from the authors' times.

This study employed a cross-sectional exit survey targeting visitors who had physically attended either the Ibsen Museum or the Hamsun Center. To facilitate a more meaningful operational interpretation of perceived authenticity and examine its associations with visitor behavior and motivation (Forgas-Coll et al., 2017), this study prioritized on-site experiences. Accordingly, visitors were randomly approached upon arrival and invited to participate in the survey. Those who consented received a paper questionnaire – available in Norwegian and English – which they were asked to complete and return before leaving.

The inclusion criteria were individuals aged 18 or older who had visited one of the museums, with only one participant per household being invited to complete the survey; conversely, those not meeting these criteria were excluded. They ensured participants were legally eligible to complete the survey without requiring guardian consent and that responses were collected from a diverse range of households (Frazer & Lawley, 2000).

Participants were informed about their rights regarding confidentiality, data privacy, and voluntary participation, as well as the intended use of the findings for academic publications. The survey required participants to agree or disagree with a list of questions on a 1–7 Likert-type scale (1 = strongly disagree, 3 = neither, 7 = strongly agree). We initially collected 498 questionnaires but excluded 88 due to substantial systematic missing data (> 10%) (Collier, 2020). Thus, we retained a final sample of 410 completed responses.

While the official number of visitors to the Ibsen museum are not available, both museums have an estimated 20,000 visitors a year (Besøk Oss På Hamarøy, 2025), though the nationalities represented by the visitors paint a very contrasting picture. The visitors to the Ibsen museum comprised primarily international tourists (92%), with Norwegians accounting for 8%, the USA being the most prominent (26%), followed by 14% from Asia, and the rest from Europe. In the case of Hamsun, the visitor profile is almost reversed, with Norwegians comprising 89.8% of the visitors, 2.2% from the US, and 3.1% from Europe. The locations of the two museums may explain the contrast, with one situated in the heart of a cosmopolitan city and the other in a remote location far north in the Norwegian wilderness. Most participants were aged 46 years or older and accompanied by family (see Figures 2 and 3). Compared to Norway's aging population, with a 32.8% growth in those aged 67–70 and a 27.1% increase in those aged 80–89 (Statistics Norway, 2025), our participants were relatively younger. This suggests the two museums have successfully attracted younger visitors and positioned themselves as family-oriented tourist places (see Wu & Wall, 2017).

Data analysis and results

We applied a dual-statistical approach to analyzing the independent and complementary effects of perceived authenticity and visit motivation on visitor intention. It combined SEM with neural network analysis. Conventional wisdom suggests that SEM is eminently suitable for hypothesis testing, but it relies on the assumption that linear relationships must exist between the theoretical factors
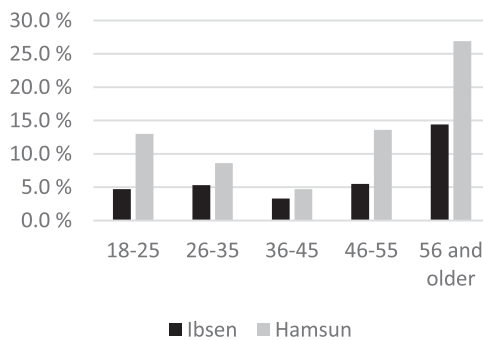
Figure 2. Visitors by age groups.

under study. However, this assumption does not always materialize, and consequently, it results in poor prediction accuracy (Karkonasasi et al., 2023; Liébana-Cabanillas et al., 2017). In contrast, ANN considers the linear and non-linear relationships between the studied theoretical factors, providing a more robust and higher prediction accuracy (Ooi & Tan, 2016; Tan et al., 2014). However, they are unsuitable for hypothesis testing (Chan & Chong, 2012; Liébana-Cabanillas et al., 2017) due to the obtuse nature of algorithms at play, a blackbox of machine learning. Given the unique strengths and weaknesses of SEM and ANN, combining the two tests provided the best statistical solution. One technique's strengths help compensate for another's weaknesses (Saha et al., 2023). In our case, SEM enabled us to test the proposed model and related hypotheses regarding their overall fit. ANN applied perceived authenticity and visitor motivation as inputs to a neural network model that assesses the importance of these two factors in explaining visitors' intentions toward museums (the outcome variable) (Bollen, 2002; Yoon & Uysal, 2005).

EFA and scale reliabilities

We performed exploratory factor analysis (EFA) on perceived authenticity and visit motivation, using varimax rotation and a factor loading of 0,40 for inclusion (see Table 3). We measured scale reliabilities for the factors using Cronbach's alpha and found that all items loaded satisfactorily and well above the recommended level of 0.7. EFA indicated weak convergent validity for two items from reflective motivation (RefM2 and RefM5), one item from recreational motivation (RecM2), and one item from existential authenticity (Exiaut1). We subsequently excluded these items from further analysis. Table 3 summarizes the EFA and reliability results of this study.

Convergent and discriminant validities

The retained items met the two conditions of convergent validity: all correlations between each indicator and the corresponding latent variable should be greater than 0.50, and all critical ratios
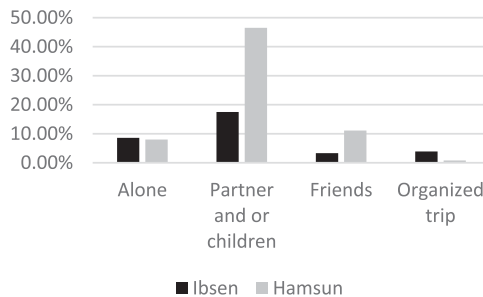

Figure 3. Visitors by family units.

Table 3. EFA, scale reliabilities, CR and item-latent variable correlations.

Exploratory factor analysis results			Scale reliability testing results			Critical ratios and item-latent variable correlations		
Factors	Loadings		Construct	Items	Alpha	C.R.	P	Standardized regression weights
Authenticity			Reflective motivation	RefM1	0,801			**0,653**
Objaut1	0,174	**0,848**		RefM3		11,383	***	**0,729**
Objaut2	0,202	**0,875**		RefM4		11,749	***	**0,782**
Objaut3	0,263	**0,788**		RefM6		10,736	***	**0,668**
Exiaut2	**0,913**	0,206	Recreational motivation	RecM3	0,838			**0,739**
Exiaut3	**0,88**	0,196		RecM4		14,751	***	**0,957**
Exiaut4	**0,791**	0,249		RecM5		14,167	***	**0,701**
Motivation			Object-based authenticity	Objaut1	0,828			**0,772**
RefM1	**0,668**	0,36		Objaut2		14,661	***	**0,881**
RefM2	**0,717**	0,217		Objaut3		13,893	***	**0,714**
RefM3	**0,762**	0,225	Existential authenticity	Exiaut2	0,866			**0,971**
RefM4	**0,784**	0,175		Exiaut3		19,622	***	**0,831**
RefM6	**0,7**	0,28		Exiaut4		15,662	***	**0,691**
RecM3	0,21	**0,839**	Intention	Int1	0,825			**0,654**
RecM4	0,357	**0,841**		int2		13,656	***	**0,944**
RecM5	0,25	**0,788**		Int3		14,072	***	**0,816**

should be over 1,96 (Collier, 2020). We also tested the retained items for discriminant validity, where the inter-construct square of correlations between composite constructs should be smaller than their corresponding AVEs (Fornell & Larcker, 1981), and this was the case. The constructs under study also achieved good construct reliability and variances extracted, exceeding the recommended benchmarks of 0.60 and 0,50, respectively (Table 4). The results showed that all discriminant validity conditions were met when checking the inter-construct square of correlations with associated AVEs and the corresponding composite factor correlations (Table 5).

Model and hypothesis testing

SEM results indicated a good model fit, with each composite construct's indicators loaded significantly; factor loadings exceeded the 0,70 recommended benchmark (except for RefM6 at 0,694) and no significant changes were recommended for modification indices. The model fit indices were $\chi2 = 289,421$, df = 94, $p < 0,001$, NFI = 0,926, CFI = 0,948, IFI = 0,949, RMSEA = 0,071 (Figure 4).

Table 4. Construct reliabilities and AVEs.

		CONSTRUCT RELIABILITY	Average VARIANCE EXTRACTED (AVE)
Reflective motivation	RefM1 RefM3 RefM4 RefM6	0,801	**0,501**
Recreational motivation	RecM3 RecM4 RecM5	0,846	**0,647**
Existential authenticity	ExiAut2 ExiAut3 ExiAut4	0,877	**0,706**
Object-based authenticity	ObjAut1 ObjAut2 ObjAut3	0,834	**0,627**
Intention	Intv1 Intv2 Intv3	0,853	**0,663**

Table 5. Inter-construct square of correlations with associated AVEs.

	RefM	RecM	ExiAut	ObjAut	Int
Inter-construct square of correlations and construct AVEs (highlighted)					
RefM	**0,501**				
RecM	0,362	**0,647**			
ExiAut	0,351	0,384	**0,706**		
ObjAut	0,235	0,294	0,226	**0,627**	
Int	0,300	0,479	0,354	0,316	**0,663**
Composite factor correlations					
	RefM	RecM	ExiAut	ObjAut	Int
RefM	1				
RecM	0,602	1			
ExiAut	0,593	0,62	1		
ObjAut	0,485	0,543	0,475	1,000	
Int	0,548	0,692	0,595	0,562	1

Consistent with the results of the measurement model, the structural model achieved a good fit overall with the evaluative criteria exceeding the recommended benchmarks. Specifically, comparative fit index (CFI) and incremental fit index (IFI) were over 0,9, and root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA) values were 0,079 (Collier, 2020). Overall, the model shows a good fit.

A further power analysis supported our results from the full structural model. The probability of not rejecting the null (H_0) in favor of the alternative hypothesis when H_0 is false leads to a type II error, denoted by β. A power analysis ($1-\beta$) indicates the probability of rejecting a null hypothesis if it is false (Jak et al., 2021). For power calculation using RMSEA obtained, we used Preacher and Coffman's (2006) provided codebase for R. The power of the model is found to be 1, providing strong support for it.

The theoretical framework focuses on the relationship between reflective and recreational motivation, existential and object-based authenticity, and behavioral intentions of museum visitors and 59% of the variance of behavioral intention was explained by reflective and recreational motivation, existential and object-based authenticity. Support for H1 and H2 was confirmed as a positive influence of both existential and object-based authenticity on behavioral intention, which is consistent with earlier studies (Bryce et al., 2015; Kolar & Zabkar, 2010). Positive effects were found between reflective motivation and existential authenticity (H3) at (γ_1 = .382, t value = 5.065) and significance level of $p < 0.001$. The result aligns with previous empirical studies (Bryce et al., 2015; Kim & Jamal, 2007). However, the hypothesized relation between reflective motivation and object-based authenticity (H4) was not supported ($\gamma 2$ = 0.196, t value = 2.345, $p <$). The absence of a relationship tallies with a previous study conducted by Bryce et al. (2015), where they confirmed that motivation positively influences visitors' existential authenticity, but not object-based authenticity. Support for the hypotheses H5 & H6 was confirmed as a positive influence of recreational motivation was found on both object-based authenticity (γ_3 = .513, t value = 6.002) and existential authenticity (γ_3 = .429, t value = 5.910). It was hypothesized in earlier studies that recreational motivation mainly affects object-based authenticity, which concerns a destination's tangible aspects, such as the artifacts and exhibits in a museum (Zhang & Yin, 2020). Table 6 provides a summary of the structural model results.

Artificial neural network (ANN)

ANN acquires knowledge about the predictors incrementally through its learning process and stores them as synaptic weights signifying inter-neuron connection strengths. Liébana-Cabanillas et al. (2017) depicts a neural network consisting of multiple hierarchical layers, the first being the input, followed by one or more hidden layer(s), and the output layer. The number of neurons in the input and output layers equals the number of predictors and dependent variables. The feed-forward networks send signals forward through the hidden layers to the output layer, iteratively
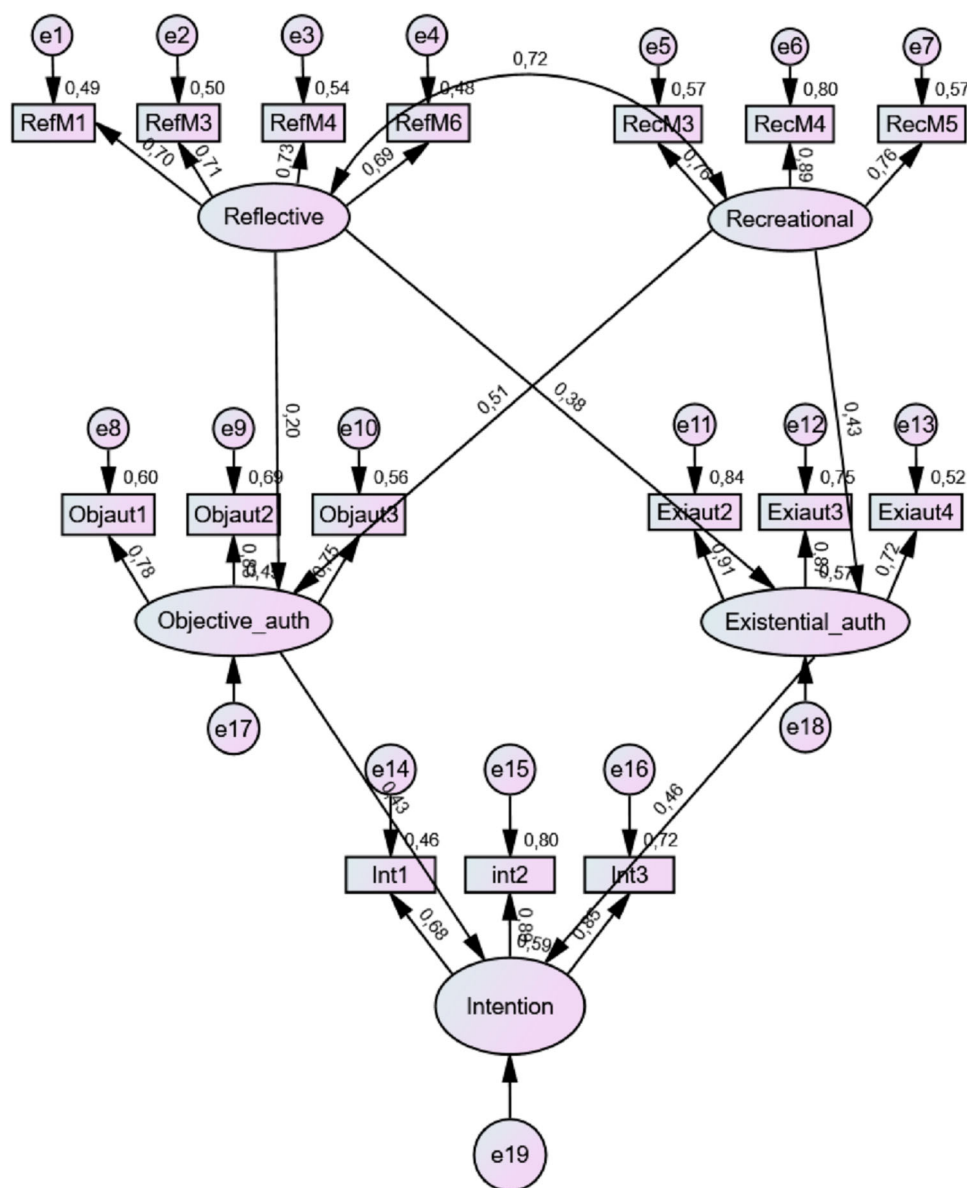
Figure 4. Full structural model.

exposing it to known input-output patterns. The difference between the desired or known output and the actual or predicted output is defined as the error, which is then propagated backward to adjust the synaptic weights and minimize the estimation error (Liébana-Cabanillas et al., 2017).

A feed-forward backpropagation multi-layer perceptron (MLP) was chosen for neural modeling. A split in data between training and testing is recommended to avoid the problem of overfitting, meaning while the higher number of hidden neurons as a result of more training data can lead to higher accuracy, if the number of hidden neurons is too large, it can be overly dependent on training data only and not be generalizable, and the model may not fit the data not used in training. Accordingly, the models were run with four composite variables: existential and object-based authenticity, reflective and recreational motivation as the input layer, and the visitors' intention as the

Table 6. Full structural model results.

Hypothesized relationships	Standardized estimates (*t*-value)	Significant at *p*-value < .050	Overall decision
H1a: Existential authenticity → Intention	0.457 (8.201)	Yes	Accepted
H1b: Object-based authenticity → Intention	0.430 (7.371)	Yes	
H2a: Reflective motivation → Existential authenticity	0.382 (5.065)	Yes	Partially accepted
H2b: Reflective motivation → Object-based authenticity	0.196 (2.345)	No	
H3b: Recreational motivation → Object-based authenticity	0.513 (6.002)	Yes	Accepted
H3a: Recreational motivation → Existential authenticity	0.429 (5.910)	Yes	
Squared multiple correlations (R^2)			
Existential authenticity	0.566		
Object-based authenticity	0.447		
Intention	0.589		

Model fit statistics: χ^2 = 346.839, df = 97, p < .001, NFI = .911, CFI = .934, IFI = .934, RMSEA = .079.

output layer. A ten-fold cross-validation was conducted with a 70–30 split between training and testing of the gathered data in the simulations. The root mean square of error (RMSE) was calculated as a measure of predictive accuracy for the ten neural networks, and averages and standard deviations were calculated as part of the sensitivity analysis. The average RMSE value calculated is small, indicating good predictive accuracy of 0.096 for training and 0.094 for testing (Ooi & Tan, 2016; Tan et al., 2014). Figures 5, 6, and Table 7 present the graphical and statistical results.

The sensitivity analysis (Table 8) shows each independent variable's importance as a measure of changes in the expected values of the ANNs; as a result, different values of the independent variable (Karkonasasi et al., 2023). Normalized importance was computed based on the percentage of the relative importance over the largest relative importance among the predictors for each ANN model. Specifically, recreational motivation emerged as the most significant predictor of visitors' intention, followed by object-based authenticity, existential authenticity, and reflective motivation. While reflective motivation appears low at 24%, it exceeded the 10% threshold (Ooi & Tan, 2016). It was thus considered to affect visitors' intentions.

Discussion

This study aims to develop an operational interpretation of perceived authenticity that resonates with visitors to author-inspired museums. We focus on an operational interpretation due to ongoing debates about its dimensions; specifically, the number, nature, and relationship with visitor behavior and motivation. This task proves more challenging than anticipated, particularly given the unresolved questions surrounding the choice between a uni – or multi-dimensional approach (Atzeni et al., 2022; Bryce et al., 2015) and the inclusion of a constructive dimension in object-based authenticity (Cheng et al., 2025; Wang, 1999).

This study excludes the constructive dimension from the operational definition of authenticity for two main reasons. First, this dimension significantly overlaps with existential authenticity, and
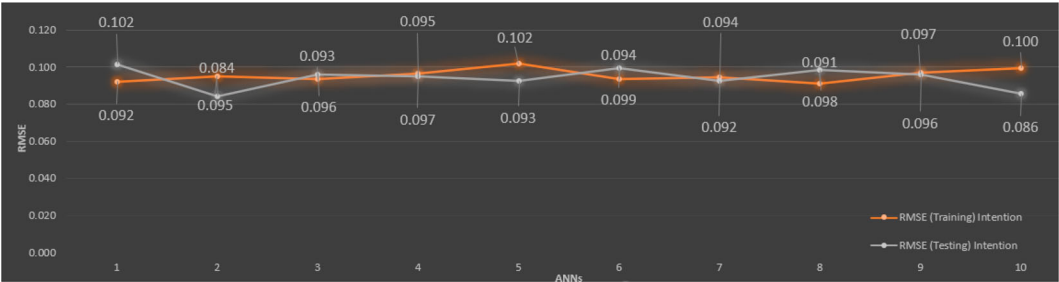

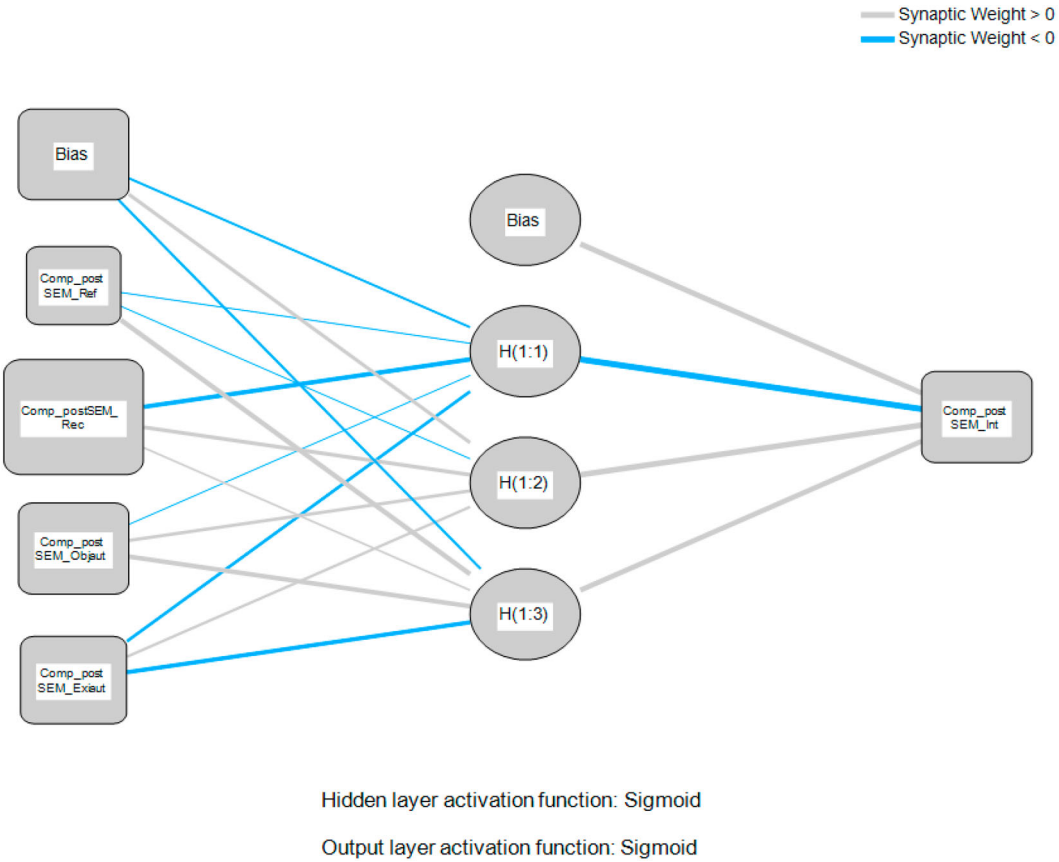**Figure 5.** The training and testing RMSEs for the ten ANN models.

Figure 6. ANN 10th hidden layer structure for visitors' intention.

second, consumers may not clearly distinguish between the two in real-world experiential settings. Both constructive and existential authenticity emphasize interpreting on-site experiences and forming personal meaning (Chhabra, 2019; Day et al., 2015; Wang, 1999), making it difficult to isolate their connection. To establish a more precise and meaningful distinction, this study instead focuses on objective and existential authenticity. Objective authenticity refers to 'visitor judgment of the objective quality of displayed objects,' whereas existential authenticity relates to 'visitor judgment of the experiential quality of their visit.' Our empirical findings support the dual-dimensional definition of authenticity, aligning with prior research (e.g. Atzeni et al., 2022; Kesgin et al., 2021).

Table 7. Neural networks RMSE values.

Neural networks	RMSE (Training) Intention	RMSE (Testing) Intention
1	0,092	0,102
2	0,095	0,084
3	0,093	0,096
4	0,097	0,095
5	0,102	0,093
6	0,094	0,099
7	0,094	0,092
8	0,091	0,098
9	0,097	0,096
10	0,100	0,086
Means	0,096	0,094
Standard deviations	0,003	0,005

Table 8. Sensitivity analysis.

Network	Output neuron = Intention (Int)			
	Importance			
	Reflective_Mot	Recreational_Mot	Object-based Auth	Existential Auth
1	0,101	0,453	0,231	0,215
2	0,147	0,531	0,167	0,155
3	0,104	0,47	0,227	0,199
4	0,117	0,515	0,222	0,147
5	0,162	0,415	0,294	0,129
6	0,129	0,476	0,257	0,137
7	0,096	0,505	0,183	0,216
8	0,111	0,503	0,164	0,222
9	0,102	0,504	0,254	0,14
10	0,105	0,466	0,232	0,197
Average relative importance	0,1174	0,4838	0,2231	0,1757
Normalized relative importance (%)	24,48%	100,00%	46,77%	36,44%

The next issue to address is the explanatory impact of perceived authenticity on visitor behavior. The debate in museum and cultural heritage tourism literature continues over which dimension, object-based or existential authenticity, has stronger explanatory power. As discussed in Section 2.1, some scholars (e.g. Chhabra, 2012; Kesgin et al., 2021; Richards, 2024) argue that object-based authenticity better predicts visitor behavior, while others (e.g. Atzeni et al., 2022; Fu & Lehto, 2018; Rickly et al., 2021) contend that existential authenticity plays a more significant role. A few scholars (e.g. Cheng et al., 2025) even suggest that the explanatory power of other authenticity types becomes more apparent when object-based authenticity is weak.

The greater emphasis on object-based or objective authenticity is expected, given its focus on tangible objects and certifiable properties that visitors can easily judge and museum operators can directly manage (Chhabra, 2012; Wang, 1999). However, this study supports the greater significance of existential authenticity in explaining visitor behavior, particularly in the context of author-inspired museums, for several reasons. First, our findings show that the existential dimension accounts for more variance in perceived authenticity than the object-based dimension. This may be because author-inspired museums, which rely heavily on the author's fame and visitors' personal interest in the author's life, differ from more mainstream museums, such as those focused on art (Forgas-Coll et al., 2017) or wine (Siu et al., 2022). In this type of museum, visitors seek a deeper understanding of the author's work and life, rather than simply observing objects (Penrose, 2020). Thus, the existential dimension plays a more significant role, fostering a sense of connection and contemplation rather than aesthetics or education (McIntyre, 2009).

Second, previous studies often treat perceived authenticity and visitor motivation as alternate drivers of visitor behavior, with only a few making a clear distinction between the two in a tourism context (Bryce et al., 2015; Loureiro & Ferreira, 2018; Taheri et al., 2014). These studies have rarely empirically explored their complex relationship. Like perceived authenticity, we adopt a dual-dimensional approach to measure visitor motivation. Reflective motivation is driven by personal reflection and self-discovery (Kim & Jamal, 2007), while recreational motivation is fueled by emotions such as fun and enjoyment (Iso-Ahola & Baumeister, 2023). By treating visitor motivation as a distinct yet complementary concept, this study provides a deeper understanding of how perceived authenticity influences visitor behavior. Recreational motivation has a positive effect on both object-based and existential authenticity, with a stronger effect on object-based authenticity, despite its theoretical alignment with existential authenticity. In contrast, reflective motivation positively affects existential authenticity but does not influence object-based authenticity, thereby challenging the assumption that visitors seeking intellectual engagement focus primarily on the objects themselves.

Third, the use of both SEM and ANN enables us to better understand the complementary and yet distinct relationships between visitor motivation and perceived authenticity. SEM validated the linear relationships, while ANN revealed the hierarchical importance of factors and identified key predictors. Sensitivity analysis confirmed that recreational motivation is the most important predictor of visitors' perceived authenticity and their intention to visit the museums under study.

Conclusion

This study highlights the benefits of adopting duality thinking to measure perceived authenticity and visitor motivation, while also testing their correlations and co-effects on visitor behavior. The value of this thinking lies in challenging the assumption of opposing roles, replacing it with an appreciation for complementary yet distinct roles (Sutherland & Smith, 2011). This is evident in the relationships between object-based and existential authenticity, recreational and reflective motivation, perceived authenticity and visitor motivation, and between SEM and ANN. When applied to research design, duality offers a straightforward method for engaging participants, without sacrificing the complexity of the concepts or contexts under investigation (Frazer & Lawley, 2000).

Implications

Theoretically, this study offers three implications. It reinforces the co-utility of the object-based and existential dimensions in measuring the perceived authenticity of author-inspired museums. It also reveals the greater role of existential authenticity in explaining visitor behavior. Our work demonstrates that visitor motivation is complementary to, yet distinct from, perceived authenticity. The simultaneous measurement of the two concepts can provide a more nuanced understanding of museum visitor behavior. Specifically, it suggests that recreational motivation is more significant than reflective in explaining visitors' perceived authenticity and subsequent intentions toward an author-inspired museum. This finding echoes the entertainment-seeking tendency of museum visitors (e.g. escape and relaxation) (Mangwane et al., 2019). This also applies to author-inspired museums, even though they are supposedly more about education and admiration.

Managerially, this study also presents three implications. It informs museum operators that object-based and existential elements are essential to establish an author-inspired museum's perceived authenticity. It further suggests that existential authenticity plays a more significant role in enticing visitors, even though it is more challenging to deliver than object-based authenticity. Existential authenticity is more about contemplation and connection (Atzeni et al., 2022; McIntyre, 2009). Museum operators can deliver this authenticity dimension through mentally and emotionally engaging activities, such as immersive storytelling using AR or VR, and/or interactive stage plays that involve both visitors and professional actors. These activities can enhance visitors' interest in and appreciation for the featured author. Investments in digital technology, event marketing, and staff training are crucial for the successful implementation of the mentioned activities (see Torabi Farsani et al., 2023).

This study encourages museum operators to give greater attention to visitors' recreational motivation, particularly if it has been overlooked. It exerts a more significant influence on perceived authenticity and repeat visits to author-inspired museums compared to reflective motivation. While the importance of reflective motivation is acknowledged, prioritization should favor recreational motivation (see Ferguson et al., 2016). Effective starting points include providing facilities for socialization and recuperation (e.g. cafés, children's play areas) and designing events that involve gamification or digital immersion (e.g. treasure hunts, VR pop-ups). Prioritization can also involve an author-inspired museum targeting visitors based on their motivational intensity, inviting those with strong recreational motives to subscribe to event newsletters and offering priority booking or VIP access for a fee, thereby generating additional revenue.

This study offers one key methodological implication. It demonstrates the co-utility of SEM and ANN in deciphering the complex relationships between complex concepts and their opposite-measuring dimensions. ANN helps discern the complementary role of one theoretical concept in relation to another, such as visitor motivation and perceived authenticity in our study. Considering both perceived authenticity and visit motivation, along with their contrasting yet complementary dimensions, provides a deeper understanding of why some visitors are more inclined to visit author-inspired sites while others are less so. This insight can only be achieved through using multiple statistical techniques, such as SEM and ANN, and in turn enables greater theoretical depth.

Limitations and future research

This study's findings are insightful but are not without limitations. They are based mainly on two author-inspired heritage museums located in Norway. Thus, the extent to which the findings apply to similar museum types in other countries and to other museum types (e.g. an apartheid museum) warrants further investigation. The findings are derived from two drivers, supported by contrasting yet complementary dimensions, and tested by two statistical approaches. While duality is meaningful and easy to apply, the extent to which it is equally meaningful as a trio – or tetrad-factor approach in measuring and testing a concept remains to be verified. Building on this idea, future research should explore the competing versus complementary relationship between constructive and existential authenticity. This area has been the subject of theoretical debate but lacks empirical validation. A valuable direction is to develop a framework that effectively differentiates and measures both types of authenticity, without overwhelming visitors' cognitive load and ensuring the quality of the data (Frazer & Lawley, 2000). This study primarily focuses on local visitors from older age groups, accompanied by family. Therefore, investigating how these findings apply to international visitors or younger local visitors accompanied by others presents a fruitful research direction. Such research would provide insights into whether socio-demographics influence visitors' perceived authenticity, motivation, and resultant behavior.

Author contributions

CRediT: **Atanu Nath:** Conceptualization, Data curation, Formal analysis, Funding acquisition, Investigation, Methodology, Supervision, Validation, Writing – original draft, Writing – review & editing; **Kokho (Jason) Sit:** Conceptualization, Resources, Writing – original draft, Writing – review & editing; **Parmita Saha:** Conceptualization, Data curation, Formal analysis, Funding acquisition, Investigation, Methodology, Resources, Supervision, Validation, Writing – original draft, Writing – review & editing; **Duncan Light:** Writing – review & editing.

Disclosure statement

Funding

Data availability statement

Data can be provided upon request.

Notes on contributors

Atanu Nath is an Associate Professor of Marketing at the Western Norway University of Applied Sciences. He obtained a PhD in marketing. His research spans consumer and business identities, cultural and experiential consumption, tourism marketing and research methods. He has published in journals such as the International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management, the Journal of Small Business & Entrepreneurship, Consumer Behavior in Tourism and Hospitality and the Journal of Business & Industrial Marketing, and has contributed to book chapters and international conference proceedings.

Kokho (Jason) Sit is an Associate Head (Global) and Senior Lecturer in Marketing at the University of Portsmouth. He obtained a PhD in marketing. His research focuses on retail branding, shopper behaviour and experiential marketing. His work has been published in leading journals, including the Journal of Business Research, Psychology & Marketing, Tourism Management, the Journal of Travel Research, the Journal of Retailing and Consumer Services and Qualitative Market Research, as well as in online outlets such as The Conversation, where he writes about retail therapy, high-street shopping and rebranding. Before academia, Jason worked as a Marketing Assistant at a community shopping centre in Australia.

Parmita Saha is an Associate Professor of Marketing and Tourism at the Business School, Western Norway University of Applied Sciences. She obtained a PhD in marketing. Her research explores themes related to experiential consumption, the intersection of technology and human behavior and sustainability. She has published in reputed academic journals, including the International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management, Journal of Business & Industrial Marketing, Consumer Behavior in Tourism and Hospitality, Sustainable Futures and Renewable and Sustainable Energy Reviews, in addition to publishing in various conference proceedings and book chapters.

Duncan Light joined Bournemouth University in 2014. He obtained a PhD in heritage interpretation. He is a Principal Academic in Tourism Management at Bournemouth University Business School. A human geographer by background, his teaching and research explore the relationships between tourism, places and spaces, with a particular focus on Romania, which he has visited regularly since 1995. His research spans four key areas: the cultural politics of tourism—especially 'Dracula tourism' and its role in shaping Romania's identity; tourism's role in transitional justice through memorial museums of communist repression; the heritage of the British seaside holiday as a form of unofficial heritage and the intersections of public memory, urban landscapes and national identity—including a personal fascination with street names.

ORCID

Atanu Nath http://orcid.org/0000-0001-7732-0043
Kokho (Jason) Sit http://orcid.org/0000-0003-3839-1046
Parmita Saha http://orcid.org/0000-0001-7238-8516
Duncan Light http://orcid.org/0000-0002-8069-8597

References

Atzeni, M., Del Chiappa, G., & Mei Pung, J. (2022). Enhancing visit intention in heritage tourism: The role of object-based and existential authenticity in non-immersive virtual reality heritage experiences. *International Journal of Tourism Research*, *24*(2), 240–255. https://doi.org/10.1002/jtr.2497

Besøk oss på Hamarøy. (2025). *Hamsunsenteret*. https://hamsunsenteret.no/no/besok-oss/?Article=39

Bollen, K. A. (2002). Latent variables in psychology and the social sciences. *Annual Review of Psychology*, *53*(1), 605–634. https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev.psych.53.100901.135239

Brida, J. G., Disegna, M., & Scuderi, R. (2014). Segmenting visitors of cultural events: The case of Christmas market. *Expert Systems with Applications*, *41*(10), 4542–4553. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.eswa.2014.01.019

Bryce, D., Curran, R., O'Gorman, K., & Taheri, B. (2015). Visitors' engagement and authenticity: Japanese heritage consumption. *Tourism Management*, *46*, 571–581. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tourman.2014.08.012

Canavan, B., & McCamley, C. (2021). Negotiating authenticity: Three modernities. *Annals of Tourism Research*, *88*, 103185. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.annals.2021.103185

Carreira, V., González-Rodríguez, M. R., & Díaz-Fernández, M. C. (2022). The relevance of motivation, authenticity and destination image to explain future behavioural intention in a UNESCO world heritage site. *Current Issues in Tourism*, *25*(4), 650–673. https://doi.org/10.1080/13683500.2021.1905617

Castéran, H., & Roederer, C. (2013). Does authenticity really affect behavior? The case of the Strasbourg Christmas market. *Tourism Management*, *36*, 153–163. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tourman.2012.11.012

Chan, F. T. S., & Chong, A. Y. L. (2012). A SEM–neural network approach for understanding determinants of inter-organizational system standard adoption and performances. *Decision Support Systems*, *54*(1), 621–630. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.dss.2012.08.009

Cheng, B., Han, W., Xue, J., & Chen, T. (2025). "Double authenticity" in digital heritage communication: Examining the interaction effects of virtual cultural ambassadors on tourist behavioral intentions. *Asia Pacific Journal of Tourism Research*, Ahead-of-print, 1–21. https://doi.org/10.1080/10941665.2025.2523350

Chhabra, D. (2012). Authenticity of the objectively authentic. *Annals of Tourism Research*, *39*(1), 499–502. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.annals.2011.09.005

Chhabra, D. (2019). Authenticity and the authentication of heritage: Dialogical perceptiveness. *Journal of Heritage Tourism*, *14*(5–6), 389–395. https://doi.org/10.1080/1743873X.2019.1644340

Cohen, E. (1979). A phenomenology of tourist experiences. *Sociology*, *13*(2), 179–201. https://doi.org/10.1177/003803857901300203

Cohen, E. (1988). Authenticity and commoditization in tourism. *Annals of Tourism Research*, *15*(3), 371–386. https://doi.org/10.1016/0160-7383(88)90028-X

Cohen-Hattab, K., & Kerber, J. (2004). Literature, cultural identity and the limits of authenticity: A composite approach. *International Journal of Tourism Research*, *6*(2), 57–73. https://doi.org/10.1002/jtr.470

Collier, J. E. (2020). *Applied structural equation modeling using AMOS: Basic to advanced techniques* (1st ed.). Routledge. https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003018414

Crang, M., & Travlou, P. S. (2001). The city and topologies of memory. *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space*, *19*(2), 161–177. https://doi.org/10.1068/d201t

Day, J., Shi, X. (Crystal), Cai, L., & Adler, H. (2015). Perceptions of authenticity at a heritage destination: An examination of visitor perceptions of authenticity at South Luogu Alley, Beijing. *Tourism Analysis*, *20*(1), 53–67. https://doi.org/10.3727/108354215X14205687167581

Ferguson, M., Walby, K., & Piché, J. (2016). Tour guide styles and penal history museums in Canada: Tour guide styles and penal history museums. *International Journal of Tourism Research*, *18*(5), 477–485. https://doi.org/10.1002/jtr.2065

Forgas-Coll, S., Palau-Saumell, R., Matute, J., & Tárrega, S. (2017). How do service quality, experiences and enduring involvement influence tourists' behavior? An empirical study in the Picasso and Miró museums in Barcelona. *International Journal of Tourism Research*, *19*(2), 246–256. https://doi.org/10.1002/jtr.2107

Fornell, C., & Larcker, D. F. (1981). Evaluating structural equation models with unobservable variables and measurement error. *Journal of Marketing Research*, *18*(1), 39–50. https://doi.org/10.1177/002224378101800104

Frazer, L., & Lawley, M. (2000). *Questionnaire design and administration: A practical guide*. John Wiley & Sons.

Fu, X., & Lehto, X. (2018). Vacation co-creation: The case of Chinese family travelers. *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management*, *30*(2), 980–1000. https://doi.org/10.1108/IJCHM-09-2016-0533

Gurel, E. (2023). Exploring omnivores and univores in art museums. *Journal of Hospitality and Tourism Management*, *55*, 101–107. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jhtm.2023.03.010

Hannam, K., & Ryan, E. (2019). Time, authenticity and photographic storytelling in *The Museum of Innocence*. *Journal of Heritage Tourism*, *14*(5–6), 436–447. https://doi.org/10.1080/1743873X.2019.1622707

Hede, A.-M., Garma, R., Josiassen, A., & Thyne, M. (2014). Perceived authenticity of the visitor experience in museums: Conceptualization and initial empirical findings. *European Journal of Marketing*, *48*(7/8), 1395–1412. https://doi.org/10.1108/EJM-12-2011-0771

Høegh-Guldberg, O., & Seeler, S. (2021). National identity as driver of tourism development – the study of Norway. *Arctic and North*, *42*(42), 32–59. https://doi.org/10.37482/issn2221-2698.2021.42.32

Hughes, M., & Carlsen, J. (2010). The business of cultural heritage tourism: Critical success factors. *Journal of Heritage Tourism*, *5*(1), 17–32. https://doi.org/10.1080/17438730903469805

Iso-Ahola, S. E., & Baumeister, R. F. (2023). Leisure and meaning in life. *Frontiers in Psychology*, *14*, 1074649. https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2023.1074649

Jak, S., Jorgensen, T. D., Verdam, M. G. E., Oort, F. J., & Elffers, L. (2021). Analytical power calculations for structural equation modeling: A tutorial and Shiny app. *Behavior Research Methods*, *53*(4), 1385–1406. https://doi.org/10.3758/s13428-020-01479-0

Karkonasasi, K., Cheah, Y.-N., Vadiveloo, M., & Mousavi, S. A. (2023). Acceptance of a text messaging vaccination reminder and recall system in Malaysia's healthcare sector: Extending the technology acceptance model. *Vaccines*, *11*(8), 1331. https://doi.org/10.3390/vaccines11081331

Kesgin, M., Taheri, B., Murthy, R. S., Decker, J., & Gannon, M. J. (2021). Making memories: A consumer-based model of authenticity applied to living history sites. *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management*, *33*(10), 3610–3635. https://doi.org/10.1108/IJCHM-12-2020-1467

Khanom, S., Moyle, B., Scott, N., & Kennelly, M. (2019). Host – guest authentication of intangible cultural heritage: A literature review and conceptual model. *Journal of Heritage Tourism*, *14*(5–6), 396–408. https://doi.org/10.1080/1743873X.2019.1574804

Kim, H., & Jamal, T. (2007). Touristic quest for existential authenticity. *Annals of Tourism Research*, *34*(1), 181–201. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.annals.2006.07.009

Kim, M. J., Lee, C.-K., & Jung, T. (2020). Exploring consumer behavior in virtual reality tourism using an extended stimulus-organism-response model. *Journal of Travel Research*, *59*(1), 69–89. https://doi.org/10.1177/0047287518818915

Kolar, T., & Zabkar, V. (2010). A consumer-based model of authenticity: An oxymoron or the foundation of cultural heritage marketing? *Tourism Management*, *31*(5), 652–664. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tourman.2009.07.010

Komarac, T., Ozretic-Dosen, D., & Skare, V. (2020). Managing edutainment and perceived authenticity of museum visitor experience: Insights from qualitative study. *Museum Management and Curatorship*, *35*(2), 160–181. https://doi.org/10.1080/09647775.2019.1630850

Kumar, V., & Kaushik, A. K. (2022). Engaging customers through brand authenticity perceptions: The moderating role of self-congruence. *Journal of Business Research*, *138*, 26–37. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jbusres.2021.08.065

Lehman, D., Lockwood, C., O'Connor, K., Carroll, G. R., Kovacs, B., Negro, G., Schultz, M., & Suddaby, R. R. (2018). The dark side of authenticity in organizational life. *Academy of Management Proceedings*, *2018*(1), 12113. https://doi.org/10.5465/AMBPP.2018.12113symposium

Lennon, J. J., & Graham, M. (2001). Commercial development and competitive environments: The museum sector in Scotland. *International Journal of Tourism Research*, *3*(4), 265–281. https://doi.org/10.1002/jtr.314

Liébana-Cabanillas, F., Marinković, V., & Kalinić, Z. (2017). A SEM-neural network approach for predicting antecedents of m-commerce acceptance. *International Journal of Information Management*, *37*(2), 14–24. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijinfomgt.2016.10.008

Liu, S., Benckendorff, P., & Mair, J. (2023). How do tourists use metaheuristics for decision-making mediated by smartphones in a destination? *Journal of Travel Research*, *62*(8), 1848–1863. https://doi.org/10.1177/00472875221140905

Loureiro, S. M. C. (2019). Exploring the role of atmospheric cues and authentic pride on perceived authenticity assessment of museum visitors. *International Journal of Tourism Research*, *21*(4), 413–426. https://doi.org/10.1002/jtr.2265

Loureiro, S. M. C., & Ferreira, E. S. (2018). Engaging visitors in cultural and recreational experience at museums. *Anatolia*, *29*(4), 581–592. https://doi.org/10.1080/13032917.2018.1484378

Luo, J. M., & Ye, B. H. (2020). Role of generativity on tourists' experience expectation, motivation and visit intention in museums. *Journal of Hospitality and Tourism Management*, *43*, 120–126. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jhtm.2020.03.002

MacCannell, D. (1973). Staged authenticity: Arrangements of social space in tourist settings. *American Journal of Sociology*, *79*(3), 589–603. https://doi.org/10.1086/225585

Mangwane, J., Hermann, U. P., & Lenhard, A. I. (2019). Who visits the apartheid museum and why? An exploratory study of the motivations to visit a dark tourism site in South Africa. *International Journal of Culture, Tourism and Hospitality Research*, *13*(3), 273–287. https://doi.org/10.1108/IJCTHR-03-2018-0037

Matthes, J. M., & Ball, A. D. (2019). Discriminant validity assessment in marketing research. *International Journal of Market Research*, *61*(2), 210–222. https://doi.org/10.1177/1470785318793263

McIntyre, C. (2009). Museum and art gallery experience space characteristics: An entertaining show or a contemplative bathe? *International Journal of Tourism Research*, *11*(2), 155–170. https://doi.org/10.1002/jtr.717

Nunkoo, R., & Ramkissoon, H. (2012). Structural equation modelling and regression analysis in tourism research. *Current Issues in Tourism*, *15*(8), 777–802. https://doi.org/10.1080/13683500.2011.641947

Ooi, K.-B., & Tan, G. W.-H. (2016). Mobile technology acceptance model: An investigation using mobile users to explore smartphone credit card. *Expert Systems with Applications*, *59*, 33–46. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.eswa.2016.04.015

Palumbo, R. (2022). Enhancing museums' attractiveness through digitization: An investigation of Italian medium and large-sized museums and cultural institutions. *International Journal of Tourism Research*, *24*(2), 202–215. https://doi.org/10.1002/jtr.2494

Paris, T., Georgia, D., & Efthimia, S. (2015). New trends for tourism products: The issue of tourism resources. *Review of Tourism Sciences*, *10*(1), 191–200.

Penrose, J. (2020). Authenticity, authentication and experiential authenticity: Telling stories in museums. *Social & Cultural Geography*, *21*(9), 1245–1267. https://doi.org/10.1080/14649365.2018.1550581

Pine, B. J., & Gilmore, J. H. (2007). Museums & authenticity. *Museum News-Washington*, *86*(3), 76.

Poria, Y., Reichel, A., & Biran, A. (2006). Heritage site perceptions and motivations to visit. *Journal of Travel Research*, *44*(3), 318–326. https://doi.org/10.1177/0047287505279004

Preacher, K. J., & Coffman, D. L. (2006, May). Computing power and minimum sample size for RMSEA [Computer software]. http://quantpsy.org/

Reinhold, S., Beritelli, P., & Laesser, C. (2023). The 2022 consensus on advances in destination management. *Journal of Destination Marketing & Management*, *29*, 100797. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jdmm.2023.100797

Reisinger, Y., & Steiner, C. J. (2006). Reconceptualizing object authenticity. *Annals of Tourism Research*, *33*(1), 65–86. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.annals.2005.04.003

Richards, G. (2024). The curatorial turn in tourism and hospitality. *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management*, *36*(13), 19–37. https://doi.org/10.1108/IJCHM-06-2023-0905

Rickly, J. M., Vidon, E. S., & Knudsen, D. C. (2021). Irreconcilable differences: Divorcing ethics from existential authenticity. *Annals of Tourism Research*, *88*, 103174. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.annals.2021.103174

Rickly-Boyd, J. M. (2012a). Authenticity & aura. *Annals of Tourism Research*, *39*(1), 269–289. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.annals.2011.05.003

Rickly-Boyd, J. M. (2012b). Lifestyle climbing: Toward existential authenticity. *Journal of Sport & Tourism*, *17*(2), 85–104. https://doi.org/10.1080/14775085.2012.729898

Saha, P., Nath, A., & Sit, K. (Jason). (2023). Re-examining the roles of experience quality at festivals: A comparative analysis using SEM and fsQCA. *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management*, *35*(5), 1802–1823. https://doi.org/10.1108/IJCHM-03-2022-0408

See, G.-T., & Goh, Y.-N. (2019). Tourists' intention to visit heritage hotels at George town world heritage site. *Journal of Heritage Tourism*, *14*(1), 33–48. https://doi.org/10.1080/1743873X.2018.1458853

Siu, N. Y. M., Zhang, T. J., & Kwan, H. Y. (2022). Reference effects and customer engagement in a museum visit. *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management*, *34*(2), 482–508. https://doi.org/10.1108/IJCHM-02-2021-0208

Statistics Norway. (2025). *Population by age: Table 4.* Retrieved September 2, 2025, from https://www.ssb.no/en/befolkning/folketall/statistikk/befolkning.

Stebbins, R. A. (1997). Identity and cultural tourism. *Annals of Tourism Research*, *24*(2), 450–452. https://doi.org/10.1016/S0160-7383(97)80014-X

Stepchenkova, S., & Belyaeva, V. (2021). The effect of authenticity orientation on existential authenticity and post-visitation intended behavior. *Journal of Travel Research*, *60*(2), 401–416. https://doi.org/10.1177/0047287519899989

Steriopoulos, E. (2025). Tourists' personal identity connections: How myths shape iconic brands at key heritage sites. *Journal of Hospitality & Tourism Research*, *49*(5), 920–931. https://doi.org/10.1177/10963480251335924

Su, D. N., Nguyen, N. A. N., Nguyen, Q. N. T., & Tran, T. P. (2020). The link between travel motivation and satisfaction towards a heritage destination: The role of visitor engagement, visitor experience and heritage destination image. *Tourism Management Perspectives*, *34*, 100634. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tmp.2020.100634

Sutherland, F., & Smith, A. C. (2011). Duality theory and the management of the change–stability paradox. *Journal of Management & Organization*, *17*(4), 534–547. https://doi.org/10.5172/jmo.2011.17.4.534

Taheri, B., Gannon, M. J., & Kesgin, M. (2020). Visitors' perceived trust in sincere, authentic, and memorable heritage experiences. *The Service Industries Journal*, *40*(9–10), 705–725. https://doi.org/10.1080/02642069.2019.1642877

Taheri, B., Jafari, A., & O'Gorman, K. (2014). Keeping your audience: Presenting a visitor engagement scale. *Tourism Management*, *42*, 321–329. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tourman.2013.12.011

Tan, G. W.-H., Ooi, K.-B., Leong, L.-Y., & Lin, B. (2014). Predicting the drivers of behavioral intention to use mobile learning: A hybrid SEM-neural networks approach. *Computers in Human Behavior*, *36*, 198–213. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.chb.2014.03.052

Thyne, M. (2001). The importance of values research for nonprofit organisations: The motivation-based values of museum visitors. *International Journal of Nonprofit and Voluntary Sector Marketing*, *6*(2), 116–130. https://doi.org/10.1002/nvsm.140

Torabi Farsani, N., Moazzen Jamshidi, H., & Hekmat, M. (2023). Mine museums: A creative economics approach towards sustainable tourism. *Museum Management and Curatorship*, *40*(2), 134–151. https://doi.org/10.1080/09647775.2023.2209852

Wang, J., Chang, M., Luo, X., Qiu, R., & Zou, T. (2023). How perceived authenticity affects tourist satisfaction and behavioral intention towards natural disaster memorials: A mediation analysis. *Tourism Management Perspectives*, *46*, 101085. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tmp.2023.101085

Wang, N. (1999). Rethinking authenticity in tourism experience. *Annals of Tourism Research*, *26*(2), 349–370. https://doi.org/10.1016/S0160-7383(98)00103-0

Wu, M.-Y., & Wall, G. (2017). Visiting heritage museums with children: Chinese parents' motivations. *Journal of Heritage Tourism*, *12*(1), 36–51. https://doi.org/10.1080/1743873X.2016.1201085

Yoon, Y., & Uysal, M. (2005). An examination of the effects of motivation and satisfaction on destination loyalty: A structural model. *Tourism Management*, *26*(1), 45–56. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tourman.2003.08.016

Zhang, T., & Yin, P. (2020). Testing the structural relationships of tourism authenticities. *Journal of Destination Marketing & Management*, *18*, 100485. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jdmm.2020.100485

Zhou, G., Chen, W., & Wu, Y. (2022). Research on the effect of authenticity on revisit intention in heritage tourism. *Frontiers in Psychology*, *13*, 883380. https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2022.883380