Authenticity Tensions:

Exploring How Professionalization and Economic Motives Impact

Perceptions of Authenticity and Suggested Strategies for Maintaining Authenticity

by

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ABSTRACT

This dissertation examines the relationship between professionalization, economic motives, and authenticity in an Airbnb context. While perceived authenticity (defined and measured by both genuineness and consistency with category expectations) benefits organizations, it may be in tension with economic motives or professionalization which offer their own sets of benefits to an organization. This study qualitatively (using pilot interviews) and empirically (using an experimental survey design) explores the tensions surrounding authenticity, economic motives, and professionalization. This study also considers potential moderators of personalization and connection to place that could offset hypothesized negative relationships or preserve authenticity in spite of professionalization and economic motives.

The findings from this study support the negative relationship between professionalization and authenticity - but only when authenticity is measured as genuineness. Surprisingly, economic motives were not found to be negatively related to authenticity, and the explored moderators, were insignificant in affecting these relationships. The two-factor structure of authenticity (comprised of genuineness and consistency) and the implications of the professionalization finding are discussed. Theoretical reasons for non-findings, empirical limitations, and suggestions for future research to further investigate the tensions surrounding authenticity are also considered.

This study contributes to the understanding of the complex interplay between authenticity with professionalization and economic motives, offering insights for organizations wanting to navigate these tensions.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Page

LIST OF TABLES v

LIST OF FIGURES vi

CHAPTER

1 INTRODUCTION 1

2 LITERATURE REVIEW 5

What is Authenticity 5

Authenticity Across Fields 11

Authenticity and Related Constructs 12

Construction of Authenticity 15

Drivers of Authenticity 15

Other Drivers 18

Organizational Outcomes 19

Storytelling 21

Summary 22

3 THEORY AND HYPOTHESES 23

Non-economic Motives 23

Economic Motives 25

Non-economic and Economic Motives 26

Professionalization 27

Storytelling as a Moderator 29

Booking Intention 30

Intention to Recommend 31

Initial Model 31

4 QUALITATIVE PILOT STUDY AND REVISED FRAMEWORK 33

Study Context 33

CHAPTER Page

Objectives 35

Pilot Interviews and Recruitment 35

Protocol 36

Analysis 37

Results 38

Framework Adjustments 41

New Model 44

5 METHODS: QUANTITATIVE EXPERIMENTAL SURVEY 46

Experimental Survey Plan 46

Independent Variables 46

Moderators 50

Dependent Variable: Authenticity 51

Outcomes 52

Pilot Study 53

Survey Description and Instructions 53

Attention Check 55

Demographics and Controls 56

6 RESULTS 57

Pilot Study 57

Full Survey 1a 58

Full Survey 1b 60

Full Survey 2 71

Summary of Results 82

7 DISCUSSION 85

Results Implications 85

Limitations 90

CHAPTER Page

Contributions 91

Future Research 94

REFERENCES 97

APPENDIX

A INTERVIEW PROTOCOL 106

B LISTING FROM QUALTRICS SURVEY: CONTROL (INDIVIDUAL) CONDITION 109

C IRB LETTERS 112

LIST OF TABLES

Table		Page
1.	Relevant Definitions of Authenticity	8
2.	Pilot Interview Participants Summary	37
3.	Summary of Codes from Pilot Interviews	39
4.	Survey Conditions: Main Effects	54
5.	Survey Conditions: Moderators	55
6.	Mean Realism Scores	58
7.	Revised Manipulation Statements for Survey 1b	60
8.	Descriptive Statistics and Correlations for Survey 1b Variables	63
9.	Booking Intention- Survey 1b Regression Results	67
10.	Intention to Recommend- Survey 1b Regression Results	68
11.	Manipulation Statements for Survey 2	71
12.	Descriptive Statistics and Correlations for Survey 2 Variables	72
13.	Moderation Professionalization and Personalization: Authenticity as Genuineness	75
14.	Moderation Professionalization and Personalization: Authenticity as Consistency	75
15.	Moderation Economic Motives and Personalization: Authenticity as Genuineness	76
16.	Moderation Economic Motives and Personalization: Authenticity as Consistency	76
17.	Moderation Professionalization and Connection: Authenticity as Genuineness	77
18.	Moderation Professionalization and Connection: Authenticity as Consistency	77
19.	Moderation Economic Motives and Connection: Authenticity as Genuineness	78
20.	Moderation Economic Motives and Connection: Authenticity as Consistency	78
21.	Booking Intention Regression Results- Survey 2	79
22.	Intention to Recommend Regression Results- Survey 2	80
23.	Summary of Results - Hypothesis Specific	82
24.	Summary of Results - Additional Analyses	84

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure Page

1. Initial Model 32

2. Proposed Model After Incorporating Pilot Interview Results..... 45

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

In an age of increased commercialization and mass production, there is a growing demand for goods, services, and experiences that are perceived as authentic (Fritz, Schoenmueller, & Bruhn, 2017). Generally, authenticity refers to an entity being genuine (free from pretense), real, and true to itself and its values (Lehman, O'Connor, Kovács, & Newman, 2019; Lim & Young, 2021). The literature has pointed out that authenticity may have some value for organizations. For example, in their study of Canadian distilleries, Voronov, Foster, Patriotta, and Weber (2022) show that authenticity is an essential source of competitive advantage. In the luxury industry, authenticity is seen as a key way to differentiate and offer sustainable success to niche businesses (Hitzler & Müller-Stewens, 2017). Additionally, authenticity has been shown to have synergistic benefits with other intangible organizational assets, like reputation (Sisson & Bowen, 2017). While there are benefits to being perceived as authentic, research has also suggested that gaining and maintaining authenticity may not be trivial and can involve significant costs (M. B. Beverland, 2005; Hitzler & Müller-Stewens, 2017). Additionally, authenticity is not a guarantee of success. For example, Schifeling and Demetry (2021) studied gourmet food trucks and found that while many were considered authentic, almost half went out of business during the five-year study period.

While it is clear that authenticity provides some benefits for organizations (Sisson & Bowen, 2017), the fact that authenticity does not always correlate with success demonstrates that there may be tensions related to authenticity or that authenticity incurs costs for organizations that may outweigh the benefits. For example, research suggests that non-economic motives (higher-order motives, such as commitment to quality) benefit organizational authenticity because these motives help the organization be perceived as intrinsically motivated (M. B. Beverland, 2005; Demetry, 2019). However, many businesses exist due to economic motives and a desire for profitability (Friedman, 2007). When an entrepreneur has economic motives, they are more likely to be funded and more likely to repay funding as compared to entrepreneurs with non-economic motives (Staniewski, Szopiński, & Awruk, 2016). When a business lacks economic

motives, there is a risk that the business may not survive (Khelil, 2016). Economic motives, while potentially harmful to authenticity (Beverland, 2005b) because they can threaten genuineness, could be the drive the business needs to be profitable and successful long-term (Khelil, 2016; Staniewski et al., 2016). Similar to how non-economic motives benefit authenticity, scholars suggest that keeping a business small, amateur, and craft-based can also help make the business authentic (Pozner, DeSoucey, Verhaal, & Sikavica, 2022; Verhaal, Hoskins, & Lundmark, 2017). However, being smaller and amateur makes it difficult for an organization to grow and operate efficiently. A hallmark of professionalization, or the process of a business growing, is the business becoming more formalized, and having separate managers and owners. Smaller businesses might be unable to take advantage of economies of scale and scope (Wells, 2016) and have a more challenging time gaining the necessary resources or funding (Pissarides, 1999). Additionally, if the source of authenticity is a traditional or artisan process the organization uses, the organization may have to decide between innovating for faster growth or continuing to use traditional "artisan" methods of manufacturing (M. B. Beverland, 2005; Zeng, Go, & de Vries, 2012). Economic motives and professionalization may be detrimental to authenticity, and this means organizations must make tough decisions about when to grow, prioritize financial success, or remain "authentic."

There is an increasing demand for authenticity in business (Gilmore & Pine, 2007; Voronov et al., 2022). Merriam-Webster's word of the year 2023 was "authentic" (Merriam-Webster, 2023), highlighting society's emphasis on authenticity. For organizations, there are clear benefits to being perceived as authentic, including higher prices (Hitzler & Müller-Stewens, 2017), increased customer loyalty (Liang, Choi, & Joppe, 2018), and better reputations (Sisson & Bowen, 2017). However, authenticity seems to be at odds with economic motives and professionalization, which offer their own unique set of benefits to the organization. This raises important questions: Can businesses successfully manage the tensions between these factors to reap the rewards of authenticity, economic motives, and professionalization simultaneously? For example, can a business enjoy the benefits of professionalization while at the same time maintaining authenticity? Does having economic motives (often necessary and a reality for a firm)

always harm authenticity, and if so, is there a way to offset some of this harm? Exploring these questions will deepen our understanding of whether and how businesses can balance authenticity with economic motives and professionalization.

I consider the tensions of authenticity with economic motives and professionalization. This study focuses on economic motives and professionalization because they reflect the view that an organization's purpose is growth and profit generation (Friedman, 2007).

First, I address how an organization's economic goals and professionalization are related to perceptions of its authenticity, clarifying these foundational relationships. Second, I explore a potential moderator, authentic storytelling (a specific type of communication used to convey authenticity). The goal of exploring authentic storytelling is to see whether it can convey other elements of authenticity, which in turn can mitigate tensions with economic motives and professionalization. Specifically, this study tests if authentic storytelling can overcome or offset potential negative effects on perceived authenticity that arise from necessary economic motives and professionalization. By using authentic storytelling, an organization could potentially preserve its authenticity while still enjoying the benefits that come from economic motives and professionalization (such as financial success or more efficient business practices). The goal of this project is to explore and support strategies managers can take to maintain authenticity in spite of economic motives and professionalization. Summarized, these are the research questions I seek to answer:

1. How are economic motives and professionalization related to perceived authenticity?
2. Can authentic storytelling help preserve authenticity even under conditions of economic motives and professionalization?

I answer these questions by examining organizational authenticity in the short-term rental market context (Airbnbs, VRBOs, Vacation Rentals). To situate this study correctly in the context, I perform a qualitative "pilot" study of interviews with short-term rental hosts, managers, and owners. This pilot study is designed to confirm whether and how economic motives and professionalization are evident in the study context. It will also reveal manifestations of authentic storytelling or any other authenticity preservation strategies used in the short-term rental context.

Next, I will quantitatively test my hypotheses with an experimental survey design of short-term rental guests.

This study contributes to the authenticity literature in several key ways. First, this study builds a foundation for understanding how economic motives and professionalization are related to perceptions of authenticity. Then, this study explores practical strategies that can be used to maintain authenticity even when economic motives and professionalization conditions are present. By identifying these strategies, this study will reveal how an organization can preserve its authenticity (and the benefits that come with that, including a competitive advantage, a better reputation, and desirability) while allowing the organization to at the same time reap the benefits of economic motives (profitability) and professionalization (better service efficiencies, economies of scale). Additionally, this study will explore some potential outcome variables associated with authenticity, including intention to book and intention to recommend. Clarifying these tensions and testing potential strategies will expand our knowledge of what impacts perceptions of organizational authenticity.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

What is Authenticity

Authenticity has been explored in the management literature, mainly in qualitative ways but more recently in quantitative ways. There are many definitions of authenticity at the organizational level, and most are highly specific to context, as detailed in Table 1. Drawing on the diverse conceptualizations, types, and views of authenticity, this study uses the following definition of perceived authenticity: *a subjective perception by an audience member that an organization is genuine and consistent with the audience member's expectations of the field the organization operates within*. Broken down, there are three important components of this definition: subjective perceptions, genuineness, and consistency with expectations of the field the organization operates within. In this study context (Airbnb rentals), authenticity thus refers to potential guests' perceptions of genuineness and the consistency of a specific Airbnb listing with what they expect from an Airbnb. Each of the three components of the definition of authenticity is detailed below.

Subjective perceptions and social construction. The decision to focus the definition of authenticity on subjective perceptions by audience members follows Demetry's (2019) work, clarifying that authenticity is a highly subjective construct shaped by audience members' perceptions. Gundlach and Neville (2012: 485) go so far as to define authenticity as being a "phenomenon that resides in the consumer's mind, and not an inherent quality," further demonstrating how authenticity is a socially constructed and highly subjective construct. Authenticity is seen by many scholars as being socially constructed, meaning that it is based on external social evaluations or perceptions of the organization by audience members (Demetry, 2019; Gundlach & Neville, 2012; Peterson, 2005). Typically, the social construction of authenticity is seen as being built by the perceptions of individuals or groups perceiving the entity (organization). However, in the management space, Demetry (2019) went a step further beyond social construction and suggested that authenticity is socially constructed by the audience members but also through interactions between the audience members and internal actors in the

organization. Following the perspective that authenticity is socially constructed, it is key to define the social group or individuals that are making the evaluations that result in authenticity. Some scholars have tailored their definitions of authenticity to be perceived by only one group (Yue, 2021), while others are broader (Demetry, 2019). For example, in their study on perceived organizational authenticity, Yue (2021: 2) focused on the evaluations by a specific group, seeing authenticity as the "level of truthfulness, transparency, and consistency employees feel about their organization" (emphasis added). Authenticity can be seen more broadly, based on an audience or even on stakeholders internal and external to an organization, as is the case in Demetry's (2019) paper on the coproduction of authenticity from both dinner guests and the staff in underground restaurants. This study will focus on organizational authenticity as perceived by external audience members, specifically in the form of potential Airbnb guests. After defining authenticity as subjective and socially constructed, the next step is to address what the audience members are actually perceiving, which leads to authenticity being defined as genuineness.

Genuineness. Genuineness is included in the definition of authenticity following definitions in management, communications, marketing, and branding (Demetry, 2019; Kowalczyk & Pounders, 2016; Lim & Jiang, 2021; Men & Hung-Baesecke, 2015; Shams, Vrontis, Thrassou, Themistocleous, & Christofi, 2020). Genuineness is defined as an entity being sincere (Lim & Jiang, 2021), which is further defined as "being free from pretense, deceit or hypocrisy" (Oxford Languages, 2023). This definition of genuineness suggests that in order to be genuine, an entity should act in ways that are natural and free (Kernis & Goldman, 2005). Since genuineness is seen as being free from pretense, it is closely linked to intrinsic motivation, which is defined as "doing something for the inherent enjoyment or satisfaction" (Cheng, Mukhopadhyay, & Williams, 2020, p. 11). The absence of pretense suggests that, at its core, genuineness reflects similar qualities to intrinsic motivation. Genuineness can also be defined as showing care or concern with regard to the customer or service (Frazer Winsted, 2000), which further supports the definition of genuineness as sincerity. It is important to note that genuineness has also been used interchangeably with authenticity by some scholars (Kowalczyk & Pounders, 2016; Shams et al., 2020), demonstrating the strong role genuineness plays in the definition of

authenticity. In the context of Airbnb short-term rentals, genuineness could refer to a host truly caring about offering a quality stay for a guest or hosting because it comes naturally to them. It is also important to note that genuineness and consistency (as detailed next) are separate and unique components of the definition of authenticity. There is likely a balance of genuineness and consistency that is helpful for authenticity, and the empirical analysis of this study will be sensitive to that. Additionally, many definitions of authenticity in the literature include both at the same time, suggesting these components do work together to create perceptions of authenticity (Radoynovska & Ruttan, 2021).

Consistency. Authenticity is seen by many scholars as being based on consistency (Bucher, Fieseler, Fleck, & Lutz, 2018; Lehman et al., 2019). This consistency refers to a match between audience members' experiences and their "expectations of the field an organization operates within" (Lim & Young, 2021). The field or category is defined as the industry, market, group, or type the organization belongs to (Hahl & Ha, 2020). Radoynovska and Ruttan (2021) studied authenticity in the context of hybrid organizations, looking at how perceived authenticity changed based on the organization's category. In a study context similar to this project, Liang et al. (2018) based their definition of authenticity on the perceptions of a "real" experience, looking at whether the consumer experience was consistent with expectations. In this study, consistency refers to a match between what potential Airbnb guests think an Airbnb should be (based on the category of short-term rentals) and how they perceive the Airbnb listing. An important clarification from Liang et al. (2018) regarding consistency is that perceived authenticity is fluid and dynamic based on the evaluator's perceptions. This was also noted by Demetry (2019) in how different patrons at the pop-up dinners perceived the authenticity differently, tying back into why the subjectiveness of authenticity is important to note in the definition. The expectations of the audience members can change, meaning the consistency with expectations can change, changing the overall perceived authenticity of the entity. In summary, consistency is an important part of the definition of authenticity and refers to the match between how audience members view a business relative to their subjective expectations of the category that the business operates within.

Table 1

Relevant Definitions of Authenticity in Tourism, Management and Marketing Literature

Definition	Main Elements	Context	Citation
"Referring to PA (Perceived Authenticity) as the perceptions of Airbnb consumers' cognitive recognition of "real" experiences of staying in an Airbnb place, which will change due to evaluators' perceptions."	Realness, subjective	Tourism	Liang Choi Joppe 2018 p. 79
"Authenticity contains elements intrinsic to the product, production process, and/or links to place and historic style, and subjective elements created by firm members, consumers and other stakeholders." "Heritage and Pedigree, Relationship to Place, Method of Production, Commitments to Quality, Downplaying Commercial Motives and Stylistic Consistency."	Connections, non-commercial	Marketing	Beverland, 2005 p. 1008
Socially constructed.	Subjective	Management	Peterson, 2005 p. 1083
Consistency between an organization's values and actions.	Consistency	Management	Sisson and Bowen, 2017 p. 288

"Authenticity is generally agreed upon as a socially constructed concept, a co-created phenomenon that resides in the consumer's mind, and not an inherent quality."	Socially constructed, subjective	Marketing	Gundlach & Neville, 2012 p. 485
"Being authentic means being genuine, real, reliable, and trustworthy."	Genuine, Transparency	Management	Men et al., 2014 p. 451
Brand authenticity includes brand identity (the brand's "essence") along with brand image (exterior views of the brand).	Subjective, consistency	Marketing	Schallehn et al, 2014 pp. 193-194
"In summary, authenticity is fundamentally about being unique and original, by developing a differentiated self."	Unique, Original	Management	Mazutis & Slawinski, 2015 p. 142
A dimension of an organization's identity (Baron 2004), defined by reference to audience members' subjective perceptions that an organization's external expressions genuinely represent its identity.	Connection, Genuine	Management	Demetry, 2019 p. 938
"An experience is deemed authentic if it is in line with the individual expectations and beliefs about the essence of said experience."	Consistency	Management	Bucher, 2019 p. 297

"Authenticity as (1) consistency between an entity's internal values and its external expression, (2) conformity of an entity to the norms of its social category, and (3) connection between an entity and a person, place, or time as claimed."	Consistency, Conformity and Connection	Management	Lehman, O'Connor, Kovacs, & Newman, 2019 p. 1
Conformity to stakeholder's expectations of the field an organization operates within.	Conformity	Management	Radoynovska & Ruttan, 2021 p. 2
"We define perceived CSA authenticity as the genuineness and consistency of the firm's commitment to the advocated issue reflecting the organizational true identity."	Genuine	Management	Lim & Young, 2021 p. 5
Genuineness.	Genuine	Management	Shams et al, 2020 p. 29
"Genuine, real and true… considered to be socially constructed."	Real, Genuine	Marketing	Kowalczyk & Pounders, 2016 p. 349
Craft authenticity is based "on notions of craft- such as skilled hands-on techniques, sophisticated ingredients, and small-scale artistry rather than mass industrial manufacturing."	Connection	Management	Schifeling Demetry 2021 p. 133

Authenticity Across Different Fields

There are many similarities in how authenticity is defined and conceptualized across the management, marketing and hospitality literature. Management sees authenticity as detailed above as being socially constructed (Demetry, 2019) and based on three potential conceptualizations (consistency, conformity, and connection) (Lehman et al., 2019). In management articles, authenticity is seen as helpful for developing and maintaining a competitive advantage (Voronov et al., 2022). However, some scholars suggest that maintaining a competitive advantage based on authenticity is tricky (M. Beverland, 2005; Frake, 2017). For example, Frake (2017) highlights the risks of "selling out" and losing authenticity as businesses expand and become commercialized. In contrast, marketing sees authenticity as being based on quality and genuineness, with the outcomes of authenticity being tied to consumer decision-making (including purchasing decisions and loyalty) (M. Beverland, 2005). In marketing, there is an emphasis on using authenticity for brand building, and this is especially relevant in luxury markets (Hitzler & Müller-Stewens, 2017). Since this study context is based in the field of hospitality (e.g., short-term vacation rentals), a quick review of the hospitality literature on authenticity is also warranted. Authenticity is highly important to hospitality since it can drive tourist decisions, much like in marketing. Some tourists strive to be authentic, and the aspects of authenticity that they care about can be seen in their purchasing decisions while traveling. For example, Revilla and Dodd (2003) found that more "local" tourists cared deeply about purchasing Talavera pottery that was also locally produced (as compared to cheaper "knock-off" pottery that was acceptable to foreign tourists). Hospitality studies see authenticity as closely tied to location (Jones & Smith, 2005), history (Waitt, 2000), and culture (Revilla & Dodd, 2003). Following these examples, in tourism, the connection conceptualization of authenticity seems to be quite prevalent. While some scholars consider connection to place as a conceptualization or part of authenticity, I consider it as a driver or positive influence on authenticity, but do not define authenticity by the connection to place.

In summary, across the management, marketing, and hospitality literature, authenticity generally refers to being genuine, true, and socially constructed and is beneficial for building a

competitive advantage, maintaining status as a luxury brand, or offering tourists a real experience closely tied to the place they are visiting.

Authenticity and Related Constructs

Authenticity is a socially constructed organizational evaluation that shares some qualities with other similar social evaluation constructs. The following sections describe the relationship between authenticity and related social evaluations, including reputation, legitimacy, status, identity, and image.

Reputation. Reputation is a social evaluation of an organization based on being known, known for something, and generalized favorability (Lange, Lee, & Dai, 2011). Not to be confused with reputation, authenticity and reputation share some attributes but are distinct constructs. Reputation is different in several ways from authenticity. First, authenticity has little to do with being known; an entity can be authentic without being well-known. In fact, some would argue that NOT being well known is an attribute of authenticity since authenticity is sometimes associated with rarity and uniqueness (Moulard, Raggio, & Folse, 2016). Second, authenticity can share the idea that an entity is known for something (for example, expressions of internal values (Lehman et al., 2019)). However, authenticity is not contingent on being known for something instead it is based on an audience member's subjective and individual experiences rather than a generalized, more public perception of an organization. Third, reputation is based on generalized favorability, whereas authenticity does not rely on favorability. Authenticity can rely on a match of expectations, which can generate favorability, but that is distinct from a generalized positive view of an entity. While there are these three differences, authenticity is closely linked to reputation, and literature suggests authenticity can be helpful for building a reputation. For example Sisson and Bowen (2017) found that authenticity had an insulating effect on reputation during a time of crisis. This finding demonstrates the close relationship authenticity has with reputation. In summary, authenticity differs from reputation on being known (authentic can mean rare), favorability (authenticity does not rely on favorability, but can generate favorability), and generalized knowing (authenticity is based more on an individual audience member's

experiences and expectations). While different from reputation, authenticity does seem to have benefits for organizational reputation.

Legitimacy. Legitimacy and authenticity are similar in that they refer to conformity to certain norms or expectations. However, legitimacy and authenticity differ in their meanings and elements of morality. Legitimacy is defined as an audience's social evaluation of whether an organization conforms to broadly agreed-upon social norms (Hampel & Tracey, 2017). There is a scholarly debate about whether legitimacy is simply the opposite of stigma, as in a legitimate organization is one that is not subject to stigma (a "deeply discrediting attribute that taints an actor or entity" (Ashforth, 2019, p. 22)) or whether legitimacy and stigma are separate differentiable constructs (Ashforth, 2019). This debate is important because it demonstrates the strong moral element behind legitimacy. Authenticity, in contrast, does not explicitly rely on morality but instead relies on conformity to individual or highly localized expectations of an entity or category (Hahl & Ha, 2020). Legitimacy also refers to the right or acceptableness of an organization to operate (Hampel & Tracey, 2017). However, an organization can be seen as authentic without having the right or being accepted as a legitimate organization. In fact, for some organizations, being less formal and less accepted might actually make them more authentic. An example of this would be the informal pop-up restaurants in Demetry (2017) which were more like dinner parties in someone's home than a legitimate restaurant or eatery, but that were perceived as authentic. Another example includes the Chinese restaurants that went against city health codes in G. R. Carroll and Wheaton (2009), specifically so they could honor the traditional storage and preparation techniques of a duck dish. In summary, legitimacy is different from authenticity in that it relies on conformity to social norms, has a strong moral component, and results in a judgment of whether an organization is acceptable. Authenticity does not necessarily rely on morality or the acceptableness of an organization to operate. Instead, authenticity can be present in organizations that are less formal, and perceptions of authenticity are localized and based on individual expectations rather than broad societal norms.

Status. Status is defined as "a socially constructed ranking of social actors based on the esteem that each actor claims by virtue of [its] position in a group characterized by distinction or

worth" (Graffin, Bundy, Porac, Wade, & Quinn, 2013, p. 315). While authenticity and status are both socially constructed, the biggest difference between the two constructs is that authenticity does not rely on rankings, esteem, or social worth. Authenticity instead relies on genuineness and consistency with individual expectations (not external rankings). Links between authenticity and status may exist, especially in the luxury market segments (Hitzler & Müller-Stewens, 2017), but being authentic alone does not mean an entity has status, and having status does not necessarily confer authenticity. It is important to note that authenticity can also refer to a match of an organization within a category, similar to status as being a match with a group, but this conceptualization does not include ranking or ordering of the organizations (Hahl & Ha, 2020). In summary, authenticity is different from status because authenticity is not reliant on a ranking or ordering process, which is central to the notion of status.

Identity and image. Authenticity has some similarities to organizational identity, as both of these constructs work to explain the "true" organization. Identity refers to what an organization thinks about itself and who it is, strongly tied to organizational culture (Hatch & Schultz, 2002). Identity is also a way that an entity categorizes itself into a group (Ashforth & Mael, 1989). In some ways, identity can be seen as a foundation for the consistency conceptualization of authenticity, since in order to be true to itself, the organization must know who it is. However, with authenticity defined as being based on an audience's subjective perceptions of an organization, the core identity of the organization may not matter; what matters most is the external observable expressions of that organization that exude genuineness or consistency with expectations of the organization's category. These external expressions suggest that authenticity may be more similar to image than identity, with image defined as what others think about an organization's identity (Price & Gioia, 2008). However, authenticity goes beyond just who the organization is, as it encompasses the organization's genuineness and consistency with the expectations of a field or industry. These qualities distinguish authenticity from identity and image, which focus on the trueness of the organization with who it is. When an organization's image matches its identity, it can be considered authentic, but that is only one conceptualization or part of authenticity and

misses other key elements (including the idea of genuineness and the notion of consistency with category expectations).

Construction of Authenticity

Authenticity is created by subjective audience member perceptions of an entity (Demetry, 2019). These perceptions are then used to determine if the entity is genuine (Lim & Jiang, 2021) and then to compare the entity to the category and expectations of the category it belongs to (Hahl & Ha, 2020). Several factors may contribute to these perceptions of authenticity. The first is non-economic motives that help contribute to perceptions of genuineness, and thus, authenticity. The second factor is amateur (non-professional) operations, as smaller-scale, less professional businesses may be seen as more sincere or genuine and less likely to be "selling out" (Frake, 2017). Professionalization can be seen as a threat to authenticity because, as a business professionalizes, commitments to artisan or smaller-scale techniques could be lost (M. B. Beverland, 2005). Additionally, uniqueness, transparency, and connection are other factors detailed below that help generate perceptions of authenticity. I will detail all of these next.

Drivers of Authenticity

Non-economic motives. Evidence in the literature suggests that economically-oriented motives may be at odds with perceptions of authenticity. Economic motives refer to commercially driven objectives or goals (Shuqair, Pinto, & Mattila, 2021). For example, in Demetry's (2019) paper on pop-up restaurants, many diners felt uncomfortable with the monetary transactions related to the dinner parties and preferred to pay ahead of time to avoid these interactions. In addition, gifts were often given to the staff in lieu of tips. This "tipping practice" was done in an effort to make the experience feel less like a commercial transaction and more authentic by avoiding direct monetary payments (Demetry, 2019). In the marketing literature, product manager intrinsic motivation (defined as "participating in an activity for its inherent satisfaction" (Moulard et al., 2016, p. 422)) was mentioned as an antecedent for brand authenticity, lending credibility to the idea that non-economic motives are beneficial for authenticity (Moulard et al., 2016). In the context of social media influencers, researchers noted that passionate authenticity was driven by the influencers' "inner desires and passions more so than by commercial goals" (Audrezet, de

Kerviler, & Moulard, 2020, p. 565). These researchers also noted that if an influencer became too commercialized, they risked losing followers since over-commercialization was seen as unfavorable in the influencer business (Audrezet et al., 2020, p. 565), making non-commercial motives important for maintaining authenticity. In the context of luxury winemaking, M. B. Beverland (2005) notes that winemakers would use a strategy of downplaying commercial motives in order to appear authentic. Prioritization of specific non-economic motives has also been suggested to be helpful for authenticity. For example, Gundlach and Neville (2012, p. 489) suggest that genuineness and authenticity could come from prioritizing craft motives in a craft beer context. It appears that non-commercial motives might play directly into the genuineness aspect of authenticity.

Further supporting the link between non-economic motives and authenticity, Radoynovska and Ruttan (2021) explored what happened to perceptions of authenticity when organizations' primary mission (either non-profit or commercial) changed. Radoynovska and Ruttan (2021) found that study participants judged a hypothetical company as less authentic if it was initially a non-profit and then became commercial. This study helps pinpoint the effect economic and non-economic motives can have on authenticity. Across these different contexts and industries, it is evident that being motivated intrinsically and having non-economic motives could be important drivers of authenticity. However, as businesses often have economic motives (Friedman, 2007), it is valuable to clarify the relationship between economic motives and authenticity. Economic motives are helpful for businesses because they may help drive the business during difficult times and ensure its success and survival (Khelil, 2016). When small businesses are seeking funding, for example, it is more likely that they will be funded if they have economic motives, increasing the likelihood of the business's long-term success (Staniewski et al., 2016). Since economic motives have their own benefits and are a reality for many organizations, exploring strategies to preserve authenticity under economically motivated conditions is worthwhile. Clarifying the relationship between economic motives and authenticity allows for the exploration of strategies to maintain authenticity even when economic motives are present.

Amateur operations/less professionalized. Keeping a business small, amateur, and run by the owner might have some benefits from an authenticity perspective. Professionalization, defined as the process of a business growing, becoming more formalized, and having separate managers and owners (Howorth, Wright, Westhead, & Allcock, 2016), may harm authenticity for several reasons. The first is that professionalization can lead to standardization and mass manufacturing, which can destroy authenticity based on artisan or handcrafted techniques. In a study of food trucks, Schifeling and Demetry (2021) suggest that as an organization becomes more established and starts mass production, authenticity perceptions can be damaged. Less professional in the case of handcrafted techniques can be seen as more authentic (M. B. Beverland, 2005; Revilla & Dodd, 2003). M. B. Beverland (2005) found that luxury winemakers would emphasize their use of traditional winemaking techniques and avoid mentioning the use of modern production methods to maintain authenticity. Another example of the close relationship between non-professional operations and authenticity is the case of Chinese restaurants in Lehman, Kovács, and Carroll (2014). Lehman et al. (2014) demonstrated how customers perceived restaurants as authentic in spite of or even because the restaurants did not follow modern health codes.

Another way professionalization can harm authenticity is through the erosion of the connection that comes from closer interactions and oversight by the business owner (Bucher et al., 2018). Bucher et al. (2018) suggested in an Airbnb context that the authenticity of the experience was based on the situational closeness between the guests and the Airbnb host. In this study, keeping the business small and amateur seemed to offer benefits in that consumers would overlook some operational or quality challenges in light of the “authentic experience” (Bucher et al., 2018). For example, guests would forgive cleanliness issues since they found the experience authentic (Bucher et al., 2018). Also, in the Airbnb short-term rental market context, Guttentag (2015) also notes that many “businesses/Airbnbs” are run by “ordinary people” and that the informal nature of the business is part of what might have attracted consumers (and hosts) and driven the growth of the industry (Guttentag, 2015).

As businesses grow and become more professionalized, there can be a greater focus on economic motives, which, as noted above, are also thought to be harmful to authenticity (Frake, 2017). This loss of authenticity is because audience members may see a professional organization as more extrinsically motivated (in it for the money and "selling out") rather than being motivated by passion for their craft (Frake, 2017). In the case of forming authentic partnerships, non-governmental organizations will sometimes intentionally keep the organization less professional and small in order to gain more traction as a "grass-roots movement" and have a higher chance of forming an authentic partnership later on (Fowler, 1998). In yet another context, it has been shown that adult performers feel immense pressure to keep their operations amateur in order to be perceived as authentic by their target audience (Nayar, 2017). Considering these examples, it is clear that some aspects of amateur, less professionalized, and smaller businesses might be helpful for inspiring perceptions of authenticity. However, at the same time, becoming professionalized might have some benefits for organizations. Professionalization may increase firm performance (García-Lopera, Santos-Jaén, Palacios-Manzano, & Ruiz-Palomo, 2022) and result in economies of scale (Wells, 2016) and better operational and human resources practices (Stewart & Hitt, 2012). Being professionalized also grants a firm better access to resources and funding, which may in turn influence performance (Stewart & Hitt, 2012). Given the benefits of being both being professional and amateur (and authentic), if a business wants to grow, it is important for the managers to understand the authenticity tradeoffs that come with being seen as more professional. Clarifying the relationship professionalization has with authenticity allows for exploration of ways to maintain authenticity when a business may want to professionalize.

Uniqueness. Uniqueness is defined as being "unusual or atypical" as compared to the competitors or what is typical for a group or category (Moulard et al., 2016). Uniqueness is mentioned by several scholars as being a driver of authenticity (Lehman et al., 2019; Mazutis & Slawinski, 2015). Being differentiated and unique has long been a strategy suggested by scholars to gain a competitive advantage (Hill, 1988), and it appears that uniqueness also offers significant authenticity benefits (Lehman et al., 2019; Moulard et al., 2016).

Transparency. Transparency is defined as the open and honest disclosure of information and is closely linked to authenticity (Yang & Battocchio, 2021). Transparency is mentioned consistently in authenticity literature as being beneficial for authenticity, but as noted by Demetry (2019), there is likely a fine line between how transparent a business should be. For example, diners liked an open kitchen so they could see their food being prepared but didn't necessarily want to see the dirty dishes. This theme was also noted in small business contexts, when female entrepreneurs felt they needed to be transparent with their struggles but did not want to come across as unprofessional or unworthy of investments (Thompson-Whiteside, Turnbull, & Howe-Walsh, 2018).

Connection. In marketing literature, and particularly, in luxury and higher-end markets, a connection seems to be a key way that organizations claim authenticity (M. B. Beverland, 2005; Hitzler & Müller-Stewens, 2017). For example, in luxury wines, terroir- the idea that wine embodies the land and the soul of the place- helps the wines be seen as "real" and authentic (M. B. Beverland, 2005, p. 108). In tourism, connection to a place is also important (Peterson, 2005; Revilla & Dodd, 2003). In the context of Airbnb's and short-term rentals specifically, G. Carroll and Kovacs (2018, p. 371) suggest other scholars do their best to capture connections to "a location's historical" and geographical legacy in future studies and authenticity scales. Connection to a place, person, or period in time was also noted in Lehman et al. (2019) as important to creating perceptions of authenticity, suggesting it could be a driver of authenticity or perhaps influence existing relationships between drivers of authenticity. While connection can be seen as a conceptualization of authenticity, in my context following Carroll and Kovacs (2018), connection is seen as a driver and separate construct from authenticity.

Organizational Outcomes of Authenticity

After covering potential drivers of authenticity, it is worthwhile to consider why authenticity matters and what some of the organizational outcomes of authenticity are. Literature highlights how authenticity can create a competitive advantage (Voronov et al., 2022), lead to purchase intentions (Liang et al., 2018), and increase the likelihood of recommendations for a business (Akarsu, Foroudi, & Melewar, 2020). Authenticity is also associated with loyalty (Hassan, Akhouri,

& Kodwani, 2023) and has been found to protect reputation (Sisson & Bowen, 2017). In summary, authenticity is associated with many positive outcomes and benefits for organizations.

Authenticity can create a competitive advantage by helping an organization situate itself within a category and, at the same time, use its resources or “material endowment” (facts and product features) to claim authenticity in that category (Voronov et al., 2022). Authenticity is also linked to differentiation strategies (Downing & Parrish, 2019) and is especially helpful for maintaining positive perceptions of luxury goods (Hitzler & Müller-Stewens, 2017), which helps to create a competitive advantage. It is clear that authenticity is positively linked to competitive advantage via categorical consistency, material endowments, and differentiation.

When an organization is perceived as authentic, purchase intentions are higher, as shown by Liang et al. (2018) and Xu, Song, and Prayag (2023). Xu et al. (2023) found that authenticity had a direct and positive effect on repurchase intention (whether the customer would choose to dine at the restaurant again). In an Airbnb context, Liang et al. (2018) also found a positive relationship between perceived authenticity and repurchase intention (whether the guest would choose an Airbnb again). These studies on repurchase intention imply that when an organization is perceived as authentic, customers are more likely to patronize the business on a longer-term repeat basis.

Similar to repurchase intentions, authenticity is also helpful for the likelihood that a customer will recommend a business to others. Akarsu et al. (2020) found that there are positive relationships between authenticity and both likability and intention to recommend an Airbnb. Intention to recommend means that a guest was likely to say positive things about their Airbnb and recommend others stay there. Recommending a business could be helpful for an organization since it can drive new business and is also broadly a way of building a loyal following, according to Keiningham, Cooil, Aksoy, Andreassen, and Weiner (2007).

It seems when an organization is perceived as authentic, it may be able to create an authenticity-based competitive advantage and benefit from repurchase intentions, likability, and the intention to recommend. These factors may all contribute to an organization’s long-term

success, highlighting the importance of understanding the tensions surrounding authenticity.

Storytelling as a Mechanism of Authenticity

A common theme amongst authenticity studies is the emphasis on storytelling. Many organizations use storytelling as a tool to communicate their authenticity with their customers (M. B. Beverland, 2005; Demetry, 2019; Frost, Frost, Strickland, & Maguire, 2020; Hyne, 2018; Key, Keel, Czaplewski, & Olson, 2021). Storytelling has been identified as a specific kind of communication that helps organizations demonstrate their values or alignments with values to stakeholders (Key et al., 2021). Storytelling has also been described as a way to "open valuable windows into the emotional, political, and symbolic lives of organizations" (Gabriel, 2000, p. 2). Typically, stories rely on communication that creates a link between the organization and the audience member, and emotion and comprehensive details can help to create this link (Frost et al., 2020). In the context of authenticity, this study uses a broader definition of storytelling, defining storytelling as a communication mechanism for organizations to create a link with audience members. This definition is based on the work by Frost et al. (2020) on how winemakers used storytelling along with heritage to create perceptions of authenticity.

Storytelling may be a way for organizations to overcome hurdles associated with some of the drivers of authenticity. The way the story is told may make a difference in whether a driver of authenticity results in perceived authenticity. Demetry (2019) gives the example of a chef forgetting to put berries for the dessert in the fridge, resulting in moldy, unusable berries and a frantic scramble to gather different fruit for the dessert. The chef then told a story about the replacement fruits looking better at the market and inspiring the evening's dessert. This story helped the snafu come across as a positive story about picking out the freshest fruit at the market rather than about the chaos leading up to the dining experience. Because it created a sense of connection, the storytelling worked to create an authentic experience.

Storytelling may be an approach organizations choose to use to highlight the drivers of authenticity or downplay factors that may harm authenticity. M. B. Beverland (2005) notes that downplaying commercial motives was a key driver of authenticity in the luxury wine market, and Frost et al. (2020) built on this work, detailing how storytelling was used in the same context to

create perceptions of authenticity based on heritage. Storytelling, when used correctly (which may vary depending on the context and objectives of the organization), may be able to help organizations actively manage audience member's perceptions of authenticity (Frost et al., 2020). Of course, the risk with managing authenticity is that by managing it, the organization is no longer authentic (Lehman et al., 2019). However, storytelling is a tool worthy of further investigation for how it helps organizations communicate their authenticity.

Literature Review Summary

In summary, authenticity is characterized by genuineness and consistency between an audience member's expectations of the organization and the features expected of the organization's category. Non-economic motives seem to be associated with intrinsic motivations and perceptions of sincerity and genuineness, driving perceptions of authenticity. Additionally, a smaller, less professional business can also take advantage of being perceived as based on charm (Bucher et al., 2018) and intrinsic motivation (Audrezet et al., 2020), which in turn can be seen as genuineness and authenticity (Cheng et al., 2020). Storytelling is a communication mechanism that can help businesses convey different features that may influence perceptions of authenticity. This study will explore how storytelling in the Airbnb context may offset the potentially damaging effects of economic motives and professionalization on authenticity.

CHAPTER 3

THEORY AND HYPOTHESES

The literature indicates that non-economic motives and amateur operations are helpful to authenticity. However, few quantitative studies of these factors in relation to perceptions of authenticity have been performed. To determine if negative effects from economic motives and professionalization can be overcome, the relationships must be clarified and quantified first. Evidence and existing findings suggest that commercialization (Audrezet et al., 2020) and professionalization (Frake, 2017) may be harmful for perceptions of authenticity. Based on these findings, this study predicts broadly that non-economic motives are helpful for authenticity, while economic motives and professionalization are harmful. In addition, this study will examine if authentic storytelling can act as a moderator, potentially mitigating the harmful effects of economic motives and professionalization on authenticity.

Non-Economic Motives

Non-economic motives have been shown to be an important driver of perceived authenticity (M. B. Beverland, 2005; Demetry, 2019). Non-economic motives are defined as perceptions that an organization is driven by interests, values, or beliefs based on product quality, craft, or intrinsic characteristics rather than money or commercialization (Shuqair et al., 2021). Being committed to offering the highest quality of something (e.g., the world's best coffee) would be perceived as a non-economic motive since it is driven by quality rather than by profits. Specifically, it seems that non-economic motives may be linked to authenticity through perceptions of genuineness (Gundlach & Neville, 2012). Genuineness is defined as an entity being true to itself or to something, (being) real and sincere (Lim & Jiang, 2021), and, as noted above, is an important component of authenticity and a component that may be impacted by perceptions of non-economic motives. When an organization is intrinsically and non-economically motivated, it may be perceived as more sincere and thus more genuine and authentic (Audrezet et al., 2020).

A perceived non-economic motive can signal sincerity or genuineness about another higher-level motive, like a commitment to quality (Hitzler & Müller-Stewens, 2017), sustainability

(Hassan et al., 2023), stakeholders (Cording, Harrison, Hoskisson, & Jonsen, 2014), or community (Melewar & Skinner, 2020). When a business has a higher-level motive, audience members see this motivation as being more intrinsically oriented – coming from internal values – rather than financially or externally motivated (Cinelli & LeBoeuf, 2020). This ties directly into perceiving an organization as more genuine because the organization is being sincere in who it is and what it is providing (Lim & Jiang, 2021). Being motivated by a higher-level characteristic, such as offering quality products or giving back to a community, is seen as a powerful driver of authenticity since it transcends extrinsic reasons for the organization to operate. For example, M. B. Beverland (2005) found that luxury winemakers downplayed commercial motives and highlighted higher-level motives like quality and preserving history for positive perceptions of authenticity. Another example of non-economic motives being beneficial for authenticity comes from a case study on a craft brewer in Greece that was fiercely committed to its community and prominently marketed and priced its beer as being for the people of the community (Melewar & Skinner, 2020). In this case study, the beer was priced "reasonably" and lower than market leaders even though it was bottled and craft, qualities that would typically make a beer more expensive (Melewar & Skinner, 2020, p. 116). Due to this strong commitment to the community, the beer was perceived as "authentically local" (Melewar & Skinner, 2020, p. 116). In the context of social media influencers, Audrezet et al. (2020) found that social media influencers driven by "inner desires and passions more so than commercial goals" appeared more authentic. In branding and marketing research, brand authenticity is defined as "the extent to which consumers perceive that a brand's managers are intrinsically motivated" (Moulard et al., 2016, p. 421), highlighting the important role that intrinsic and non-economic motives play in authenticity.

I hypothesize that there is a positive relationship between perceived non-economic motives and perceived authenticity because such motives generate perceptions of genuineness and sincerity when an organization has a higher-order motive.

Hypothesis 1a: Perceived non-economic motives are positively related to perceived authenticity.

Economic Motives

While an organization can have non-economic motives, they often also have economic motives, and these motives may influence perceptions of authenticity. Economic motives refer to commercial, profit-, or money-driven motivations for an organization. It is important to note that organizations can have (and most do have) both economic and non-economic motives (Shuqair et al., 2021). The benefits of having economic motives include helping the business secure funding and increasing its chances of survival and success (Khelil, 2016; Staniewski et al., 2016). As many businesses hope to survive, achieve funding, and generate profits (Friedman, 2007), economic motives are a reality for many organizations, but they are not mutually exclusive with non-economic motives.

Theoretically, perceived economic motives may be harmful to perceptions of authenticity because they threaten perceptions of genuineness and can change expectations of the organization based on how it operates within its category (Frake, 2017; Radoynovska & Ruttan, 2021). Economic motives indicate that a business is extrinsically profit-oriented, and less genuine and sincere, undermining authenticity (Frake, 2017; Radoynovska & Ruttan, 2021). An example is the case detailed by Frake (2017) of Anheuser-Busch InBev acquiring craft brewer Goose Island. Consumers in this case immediately perceived the beer as lower quality, even though InBev promised to leave the beer unchanged (Frake, 2017). Although audience members seem to know businesses exist to generate profits (Cole & Smith, 1996; Kirzner, 1983), when it comes to authenticity, audience members seem uncomfortable with commercial motives, as demonstrated by Radoynovska and Ruttan (2021) and Wry, Lounsbury, and Jennings (2014). This discomfort with economic motives may come from audience members wondering if the organization will cut corners in pursuit of profits (Frake, 2017). Perceived economic motives may be harmful to authenticity because, when a business is motivated by profits, it might not seem as genuine or sincere to audience members. Audience members may perceive the organization as being “only in it for the money” and not wanting to provide any additional value, quality, service, or benefits to stakeholders, making the organization less sincere, genuine, and therefore authentic.

There are several notable examples in the literature demonstrating how perceived economic motives and commercialization may be damaging to perceptions of authenticity. Audrezet et al. (2020) suggested that over-commercialization was unfavorable for social media influencers and was associated with a loss of authenticity and subsequently a loss of followers. In Demetry (2017), organizers of pop-up restaurants felt that asking for money was considered tacky in the intimate setting of a small pop-up diner. Diners in this study also felt uncomfortable or unsure about how to leave a gratuity. Organizers addressed these concerns by suggesting gift-giving and also leaving envelopes for tips as a way to hide the economic part of the transaction. In this context, diners felt most comfortable paying online ahead of time, so no monetary transaction had to occur at the dinner (Demetry, 2019).

Hypothesis 1b: Perceived economic motives are negatively related to perceived authenticity.

Economic Motives and Non-economic Motives

Since the case exists where an organization can have both economic motives and non-economic motivations, it is important to consider the roles these constructs play together in perceived authenticity. In the authenticity literature, it has been suggested that money or economic motives relating to an interaction could taint perceptions of authenticity (Demetry, 2019). Since many businesses have both economic and non-economic motives at the same time (Cinelli & LeBoeuf, 2020), the question arises of how both perceived motives influence authenticity. Since the literature highlights so many harmful effects on authenticity from economic motives (Audrezet et al., 2020; M. B. Beverland, 2005; Demetry, 2019; Frake, 2017), it seems that the economic motives might taint non-economic ones. For example, Audrezet et al. (2020) discusses the harm that economic motives can have on a social media influencer's authenticity, even when the influencer is passionate. Due to the hypothesized negative nature of the relationship between economic motives and perceived authenticity, I predict that economic motives will act as a moderator, weakening the relationship between non-economic motives and perceived authenticity. In this way, economic motives will taint or overshadow non-economic motives in the condition where both motives are perceived by an audience member.

Hypothesis 1c: Perceived economic motives act as a moderator, weakening the positive relationship between perceived non-economic motives and perceived authenticity.

Professionalization

Professionalization is the process of a business growing, becoming more formalized, and having separate managers and owners (Howorth, Wright, Westhead, & Allcock, 2016). Professionalization in the short-term rental context can be a property owner hiring a property manager, scaling up their business by acquiring more properties, or having formal operational practices (Dogru, Mody, Suess, Line, & Bonn, 2020; Shuqair et al., 2021). Professionalization offers a number of benefits to a business, including an opportunity to take advantage of economies of scale and scope (Wells, 2016) and better resources and capabilities (Polat, 2021). Operational efficiencies can also improve as a business grows and becomes professionalized as formal management systems are put into place (Dekker, Lybaert, Steijvers, & Depaire, 2015). For example, when family businesses bring on a non-family manager, their human resources systems become more efficient, as shown in Dekker et al. (2015).

However, perceptions of professionalization may be damaging to authenticity, especially certain types of authenticity that are based on small-scale or craft techniques (Schifeling & Demetry, 2021). In particular, professionalization poses a risk to authenticity for organizations because it might change the expectations of the organization. If an audience member perceives an organization authentically because it is small and amateur, they expect service or products that reflect that, and as an organization grows, becomes professionalized, and evolves to use more sophisticated operations, the audience member's expectations of small-scale and amateur productions are no longer met (Solomon & Mathias, 2020). Usually, with small-scale businesses, there is a certain level of personalization, where customers could interact directly with the owner, for example, or quickly receive customer service. However, as a business grows, it may become more difficult to provide that level of service. The genuineness of the organization can be lost as the organization brings on managers (a prime example of this would be a founder hiring managers for a small business, but the managers not being as intrinsically motivated or

passionate about the business as the founder (Fu, Tietz, & Delmar, 2022)). In an Airbnb context, scholars have suggested that when professionalization occurs, the genuineness of the business is lost (Dogru et al., 2020). More generally, audience members may be concerned that a business is “selling-out” or focusing too much on profit or growth as they professionalize, losing their authentic roots (Frake, 2017).

Several authenticity studies have highlighted the harm that perceptions of professionalization can have on authenticity. In Schifeling and Demetry (2021), growth and mass production were suggested to harm craft authenticity. M. B. Beverland (2005, p. 1023) found that many luxury winemakers would “publicly downplay” the use of modern production methods to maintain perceptions of authenticity. In this same study, the producers would highlight the use of more craft techniques, even if they played only a small role in the production process (M. B. Beverland, 2005). Bucher et al. (2018) suggest that the perceived authenticity of an Airbnb guest experience may decrease when professionalization is present in the operation of the Airbnb. Another example of professionalization harming authenticity is when social media influencers grow and become more professionalized, making it more difficult for them to create unique content and still appear authentic (Van Driel & Dumitrica, 2021).

I hypothesize that based on the harm perceptions of professionalization can have on expectations and genuineness, professionalization is negatively associated with perceived authenticity.

Hypothesis 2: Perceived professionalization is negatively related to perceived authenticity.

Clarifying and quantifying the relationship between professionalization and perceived authenticity will allow managers to decide when it is worth it to take advantage of the benefits of professionalization to the detriment of authenticity. Additionally, studying the relationship between professionalization and authenticity sets the foundation for testing strategies to preserve authenticity even under conditions of professionalization.

Authentic Storytelling as a Moderator

As noted, authentic storytelling may be a useful strategy for organizations wishing to be perceived authentically even while having commercial motives and becoming professionalized. When an organization has characteristics that are unfavorable from an authenticity perspective (like having an economic goal or using more professional techniques or operations), storytelling is one approach organizations might use to downplay these unfavorable aspects. Authentic storytelling is a specific method of communication (Gabriel, 2000) and acts as a mechanism for organizations to create a link with audience members by communicating specific organizational characteristics related to authenticity, including uniqueness, connection, and transparency.

Storytelling that highlights how unique a product or service is might signal quality or luxury (Hitzler & Müller-Stewens, 2017). These rare offerings might be perceived as more authentic because the organization is signaling an intrinsic motivation, including commitment to the quality or passion for the craft (Moulard et al., 2016; Moulard, Rice, Garrity, & Mangus, 2014). Storytelling that showcases the uniqueness of a product or service may help mitigate the negative effects of economic motives or professionalization on authenticity.

Storytelling to demonstrate a connection may also be beneficial for authenticity because it can help distract, downplay certain qualities, and convey other drivers thus, changing audience members' perceptions. When used correctly, storytelling creates an emotional reaction in individuals, forming a close bond between the organization telling the story and the individual (Key et al., 2021). This emotion-based link can then evoke positive feelings and perceptions from the audience member, leading to a sense of connection and, in turn, positive perceptions of authenticity (Key et al., 2021). Creating a connection is one way to generate or protect perceptions of authenticity (Lehman et al., 2019). Storytelling based on a strong emotional bond and nostalgia is one example of the bond, helping audience members feel connected to an organization through a "sentimental longing or wistful affection for the past" (Oxford Languages, 2023). Traditional, artisan, or handcrafted elements of a story might evoke nostalgia, helping to communicate connections to the past that result in more positive perceptions of authenticity, despite the organization having some characteristics that might make it seem less authentic.

Storytelling to convey transparency helps demonstrate trust and sincerity (Men & Hung-Baesecke, 2015). An example of storytelling would be an influencer disclosing their relationship with a sponsor, talking about perhaps their connection or love for the brand while at the same time disclosing a financial motive (Audrezet et al., 2020). The transparency conveyed by the story may be enough to weaken the negative relationship between their commercial motives (sponsorship) and perceptions of authenticity. Audrezet et al. (2020) found that these disclosures helped improve perceptions of authenticity. This example demonstrates how storytelling can act as a moderator to weaken the negative relationship between economic motives and perceived authenticity (Hypothesis 3a).

Hypothesis 3a. Authentic storytelling acts as a moderator, weakening the negative relationship between economic motives and perceived authenticity.

Another example of an organization using storytelling would be a luxury winemaker telling a story about the vineyard, its land, and its heritage without mentioning the modern techniques used to make the wine (professionalization). In this example, the winemaker is hoping that by conveying a strong connection to place, audience members may overlook the fact the grapes are pressed by machines rather than stomped in the traditional method (M. B. Beverland, 2005). This example demonstrates how storytelling can act as a moderator, weakening the negative relationship between professionalization and perceived authenticity (Hypothesis 3b).

Hypothesis 3b. Authentic storytelling acts as a moderator, weakening the negative relationship between professionalization and perceived authenticity.

Booking Intention as a Benefit of Perceived Authenticity

In an Airbnb study context, Liang et al. (2018) found that perceived authenticity was helpful for reducing perceived risk, increasing perceived value, and thus, boosting repurchase intention - the likelihood of someone booking an Airbnb again. Similar findings also occur in a restaurant context, where diners who perceived the restaurant as authentic were more likely to eat at the restaurant again (Xu et al., 2023). Following the work of Liang et al. (2018), when a guest perceives an Airbnb listing as authentic, they feel there is less risk and higher value, so they are more likely to book the listing. While Liang et al. (2018) studied repurchase intention,

booking intention (whether a guest will book an Airbnb) is a close construct that should behave similarly theoretically (Tiamiyu, Quoquab, & Mohammad, 2020). I hypothesize that based on the lower risk and higher values associated with perceived authenticity, perceived authenticity will be positively related to booking intention.

Hypothesis 4: Perceived authenticity is positively related to booking intention.

H5: Intention to Recommend as a Benefit of Perceived Authenticity

Another outcome variable highlighted in the literature as being relevant to perceived authenticity in an Airbnb context is intention to recommend (Akarsu et al., 2020). Intention to recommend refers to the propensity of an individual to recommend a place (person or business) to others (Prayag, Hosany, Muskat, & Del Chiappa, 2017). When audience members perceive an Airbnb to be authentic, they might have positive emotions about it (Bucher et al., 2018) and be more likely to recommend it to others (Akarsu et al., 2020). An example of the positive emotions could come from the higher value audience members are placing on an authentic experience or perception (Liang et al., 2018). This higher perceived value may come from the perception that an entity is authentic and genuine (Liang et al., 2018), and result in positive emotions and motivation to act on these in the form of recommendations (Akarsu et al., 2020). Based on this emotive link, I hypothesize that perceived authenticity is positively related to the intention to recommend.

Hypothesis 5: Perceived authenticity is positively related to intention to recommend.

Initial Model

Taking the above hypotheses together, the following model is proposed in Figure 1. While these relationships are based on theories of extrinsic and intrinsic motivation and supported by the literature, few quantitative studies have been done in the management literature specifically looking at these variables. To properly situate the model in this study's context, a qualitative pilot study will be performed prior to a quantitative study. The pilot qualitative interviews will help clarify how to best contextually manipulate the independent variables and moderator in the later quantitative study. The interviews will support the theory related to the following model and also help support definitions and conceptualizations of authenticity in the short-term rental Airbnb

context. For example, during the literature review on authenticity, connection (to either a place, person, or time period) was identified by Lehman et al. (2019) as one conceptualization of authenticity, but other scholars see connection to place as a *driver* of authenticity, especially in the case of luxury wine and the concept of terroir. In this case the wine is deeply connected to the land or place where the grapes for the wine are grown and then turned into wine that is considered authentic because of the connection to place (M. B. Beverland, 2005). The pilot interviews will help determine how connection is related to authenticity in the study context, as well as confirm other aspects of authenticity within the context.

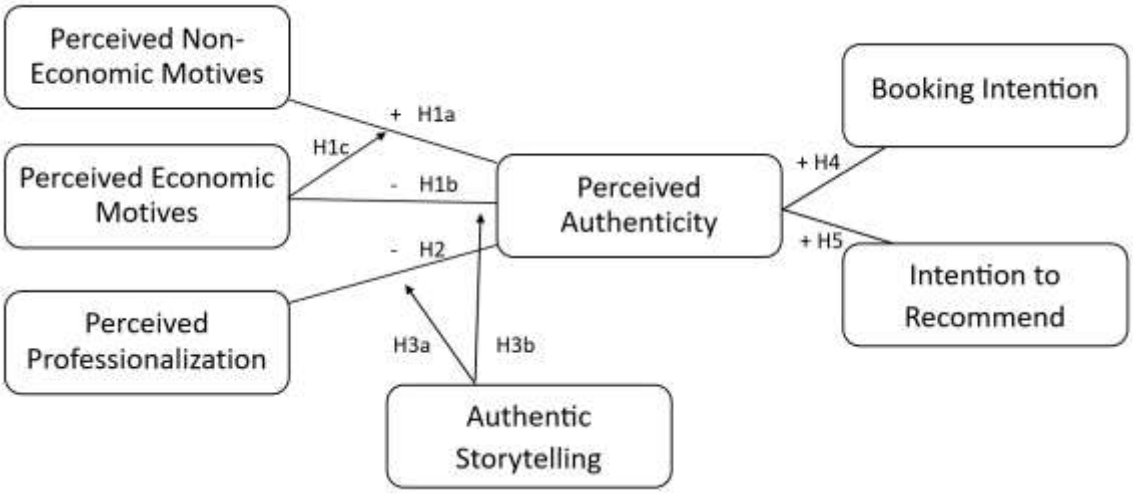

Figure 1. Initial Model

CHAPTER 4

QUALITATIVE PILOT STUDY AND REVISED FRAMEWORK

Study Context

To explore the tensions surrounding authenticity as detailed in Chapter 3, this study utilizes an Airbnb short-term rental market context. An Airbnb context has been used before to explore authenticity (Bucher et al., 2018; Liang et al., 2018). Bucher et al. (2018) explored how authenticity could alleviate some negative effects of interpersonal contamination (poor reviews or decreased intention for future Airbnb stays) that arose from sharing personal space in an Airbnb with a host. Liang et al. (2018) found that perceived authenticity in an Airbnb context was able to reduce Airbnb consumers perceived risk and was positively related to perceived value. As suspected in this study, perceived risk was negatively associated with repurchase intention (whether a guest would book an Airbnb again) and perceived value was positively associated with repurchase intention (Liang et al., 2018).

Airbnb short-term rentals include properties that are rented for fewer than 30 days at a time by an individual or management company (Guttentag, 2015). While there are many platforms for short-term rentals, this study focuses on Airbnb because it is ideal for studying tensions surrounding authenticity (Bucher et al., 2018; Guttentag, 2019).

The Airbnb context is ideal for exploring authenticity, motives, and professionalization for several key reasons. The market is newer and relatively easy to get into, offering a wide range of levels of professionalization (Dogru et al., 2020). There are many “micro-entrepreneurs,” individuals casually earning money by renting extra space at a small, highly individualized level (Bucher et al., 2018). In addition to these “micro-entrepreneurs,” there are professional companies renting many properties on a much larger scale (Dogru et al., 2020). The range of micro-entrepreneurs to formal established businesses makes Airbnb an excellent context for studying the effects of professionalization. In the Airbnb context, the product offering is unique, and the products (rentals) can strongly represent the motives of the hosts (Guttentag, 2019).

While being an Airbnb host is an important source of income for many, as investigated by the San Francisco Chronicle (Said, 2014), hosts may also rent their homes for social (Bremser & Wüst, 2021) or other non-economic reasons (Navarro-Mendoza, Esparza-Huamanchumo, & Hernández-Rojas, 2023). Marketing is constrained by platforms, which makes storytelling and authenticity useful for setting listings apart from one another (Yao, Qiu, Fan, Liu, & Buhalis, 2019). The range of professionalization, differing motives, and emphasis on listing differences make an Airbnb context ideal for studying authenticity in relation to non-economic motives, professionalization, and storytelling.

It is important to note that there are several kinds of short-term rental listings on Airbnb, and the type of listing can strongly influence the research (Guttentag, 2018). There are shared rooms (sleeping space and common areas are shared with others), private rooms (a private bedroom but shared common areas), and entire places (a whole apartment or guest suite, typically with their own entrance and private, not shared). Entire homes are the most common type of listing (Adamiak, 2022; Guttentag, 2019), which is what this study will be focusing on. There are several reasons to focus on entire home listings. The first reason is that there simply are not many shared rooms or private rooms available post-COVID, since many guests preferred to rent listings with more space for physical distancing (Bresciani et al., 2021). Broadly, professional hosts seem to rent entire properties rather than private rooms or shared spaces (Ke, 2017), which makes it difficult to study different levels of professionalization when studying private rooms and shared spaces. For example, the large, established short-term rental company Evolve only rents entire home listings (Evolve, 2023). In this study, focusing primarily on entire place listings ensures that there is enough variance in the levels of professionalization and motives. However, when recruiting for interviews, hosts involved with any type of listing were eligible, and the listing types were noted.

Objectives

The first part of this study consists of “pilot” interviews, performed to verify the theoretical framework and confirm the setup of the quantitative survey. The objectives for these pilot interviews included:

1. Verifying the definitions of authenticity, non-economic motives, economic motives, professionalization and authentic storytelling.
2. Determining how important authenticity is in the Airbnb research context.
3. Learning how authenticity, non-economic motives, economic motives, and professionalization, are manifested in the Airbnb context.
4. Understanding different host motives and how attuned guests are to these motives.
5. Learning about strategies and problems with growth and professionalization.
6. Discovering if hosts are currently aware of or using strategies such as storytelling to manage authenticity, either organically or strategically.
7. Confirming experimental measures. For example, if extra fees, one possible manipulation, do signal economic motivations.

Pilot Interviews and Recruitment

To complete these pilot interviews, I interviewed short-term rental hosts, managers, and owners. These individuals were recruited in several ways. Networking contacts were approached, and upon successful recruitment and interviewing, participants were asked if they knew anyone else that fit the study criteria (being a host, manager, or owner) that might be willing to complete an interview. Additionally, participants were recruited from Airbnb hosting groups on Facebook. Since in-person interviews are preferred for the richness of communication (Rahman, 2023; Thunberg & Arnell, 2022), recruitment took place in two geographically convenient areas, including Phoenix and Albuquerque.

Protocol

To carry out the pilot interviews, IRB approval was obtained, and consent was confirmed from all participants. Interviews were performed in person whenever possible; however, due to geographic and scheduling constraints, some interviews occurred via Zoom. Both in-person and Zoom interviews were recorded, and the audio files were uploaded for transcription with RevMax. NVivo was used to organize and code the interview transcripts. The interviews were semi-structured and started out with general questions and then moved onto questions based on the themes of motives, professionalization, authenticity, and storytelling. Examples were asked for whenever possible to encourage participants to give specific and detailed answers. Follow-up questions were used to gain further clarity or when interview participants mentioned something not in the protocol but that was relevant to the study, such as what aspects of their listing made it homey after the interview participant said that authenticity meant a place was homey. After the first three interviews, questions were slightly adapted for clarity and to hone in on the theme of authenticity following qualitative conventions (Corbin & Strauss, 1990). Interviews were performed in October and November of 2023, and in total, 10 interviews were completed across the two southwest metropolitan areas. The final protocol is attached in Appendix A. See Table 2 for a summary of pilot study participants.

Table 2

Pilot Interview Participants Summary

Interview #	Role	# of Listings	Years Experience	Still Hosting?
1	Owner	1	1	Yes
2	Owner	2	2	Yes
3	Owner	1	2	Yes
4	Owner	2	1	No
5	Owner	1	7	Yes
6	Host	10	1	Yes
7	Host	1	1.5	No
8	Management Co	12	5	Yes
9	Owner	2	3	Yes
10	Host	1	2	Yes

Analysis

While the interviews were across three different groups involved in running Airbnb short-term rentals (managers, owners, and hosts), all interviews were carried out in a similar fashion, with a few of the questions worded differently to account for the participant's involvements with Airbnb. For example, when interviewing owners, they would be asked about their decisions or thoughts on bringing on a manager, and when interviewing managers, they would be asked about the value they offered the owners they worked with.

The analysis of the interviews started with the goal of gaining clarity about authenticity in the short-term rental context. During the interviews, notes were taken regarding key statements or insights. After the completion of the interviews, all transcripts were read thoroughly, and several themes and similarities started to emerge. While reading transcripts, potential codes were added to NVivo and applied to the interviews (manually) via a focused coding approach (Charmaz, 2006). As the coding process took place, some codes were eliminated since they were

not evident or relevant to the objectives. For example, a few hosts talked about pricing and competition, but this was not usually in relation to authenticity or motives (or in the cases it was, it was re-coded appropriately), so pricing was dropped as a code. After coding and re-reading interviews, NVivo's code function was used to read through and compile instances of each code, and this data was used to form the following conclusions.

Results

The pilot interviews were helpful for understanding authenticity and the proposed framework in several ways. First, the definition of authenticity was supported by the interviews, in that the participants, when asked to define authenticity, used words and phrases like genuine or meeting expectations. Transparency was also mentioned by many participants as being essential to authenticity. Second, hosts were found to be motivated by either or both economic and non-economic motives. Third, the pilot interviews revealed that storytelling was not a deliberate, conscious strategy used by the interviewed Airbnb hosts. However, elements of storytelling did emerge in parts of the interviews and in ways that suggest that storytelling may be helpful for maintaining authenticity even under tensions caused by economic motives and professionalization. For example, when asked explicitly about storytelling in the interviews, a few hosts mentioned telling stories about the neighborhood or property, but very few did this consciously as a strategy. Instead, many hosts mentioned personalization (close guest interactions or customizations of the guest experience) as a strategy to maintain authenticity. Additionally, when asked about authenticity, participants also mentioned connection to place being highly important; almost all hosts mentioned location as essential to their success (or, in some cases, struggles), and several worked hard to connect their property to the area. For example, one mentioned sharing her love of the Southwest through the décor and experience her property provided guests. From the pilot interviews, it appears storytelling emerged organically as a means to enable personalization and connection to place rather than an intentional, broad strategy.

In summary, the interviews helped to define authenticity in the context, confirm motives, and accentuate personalization and connection to place as more predominant than intentional

storytelling in preserving authenticity. These findings are based on coding with the following codes that can be seen in Table 3.

Table 3

Summary of Codes from Pilot Interviews

Concept Child Code	Examples	Quotes
Authenticity		
Meeting Expectations	Disclosing relevant info about listing Making sure guests know what they are getting	"Not misrepresenting ourselves as something that we're not, obviously we like to play up our strengths… as far as the amenities, but we don't like our customers to feel like they didn't get what they thought they were getting." (Interview 6)
Genuineness	Being flexible and understanding with cancellation requests if possible Taking good care of the property Caring about the guest experience Less sterile: making the property "homey" with knickknacks, books on bookcases, plants	"Well, you have to kind of put some heart and soul in it as well" (Interview 5) "I mean, it's authentic in the sense that we or I care about guest satisfaction as well. And more than just getting a positive review, I want people to have a good time." (Interview 9)
Motives		
Economic	Being focused on paying a mortgage Making sure the numbers "work"	"Yeah, I need both units rented to cover the cost on the loan for the renovations, and then mortgage, utilities, et cetera, et cetera. So I don't get any cashflow out of it yet." (Interview 2)
Non-economic	Passion for sharing a property Wanting to provide a quality stay Joy of meeting guests Love of interior design Passion for systems	"I think my why is it gives me a creative outlet in that design aspect" (Interview 8)

Professionalization		
Legitimacy	A professional company listing can signal legitimacy in a space where most are small, individually run listings	"I wanted to scale it up and make it a business, and I thought something in that line (listing as a professional company) would attract guests, is like, okay, this is a solid business." (Interview 7)
Scalability	Ability to add listings through the same brand/company	"And then also we wouldn't be able to scale that at an explosive rate. It would be like, okay, pick up one and then put that system in place and then pick up another." (Interview 6)
Consistency	Making each unit similar through furnishings/photos Providing the same type of stay to each guest	(Interview 6)
Other Attributes		
Personalization	Customized welcome basket Providing cards, flowers, other gifts in accordance to the reason for the guest's stay Calling each guest rather than messaging Meeting each guest for check in rather than just giving a door code	"Having that personal touch and really caring about the guest experience." (Interview 1) "Yeah, we let them choose whether they want salty snacks, sweet snacks, combination of fruit and snacks, that sort of thing." (Interview 5)
Connection to Place	Offering local snacks Offering a detailed description of the neighborhood or area Matching the décor/architecture to the area	"…some Taos bars. Try to get something local. I put Pinon coffee there…. Something New Mexico…" (Interview 3) "Lot(s) of people are enamored with the Southwest. And so knowing that even young millennials and Gen Zs are enamored with the Southwest, so we try to cater to the Southwest experience, come here and see Santa Fe." (Interview 5)

Authenticity definition. Authenticity in the interviews was described in several different ways. Most interview participants described authenticity as being accurate, genuine, or meeting expectations, which is consistent with my definition of authenticity informed by the literature:

Authenticity is "***a subjective perception by an audience member that an organization is genuine and consistent with the audience member's expectations of the field the organization operates within***."

Motives. Pilot interviews revealed hosts (used here for brevity to describe Airbnb hosts, owners, and managers) are motivated both economically and non-economically, giving support for the proposed framework that different motives may impact perceptions of authenticity. Money-motivated hosts would mention needing to pay the mortgage with their Airbnb income, the profitability of their rental, and what kind of investment the property had been for them. Non-economic motivations for hosts included a love of the place, getting good feedback from guests, and feeling like they created something of value for others.

Most hosts were both economically motivated and non-economically motivated, although when pressed, most would admit the money mattered more than the other motivations since, after all, it was a business.

Anecdotally, there were two instances where Airbnb hosts shut their businesses down, and both were solely money-motivated. One owner interviewed was solely money-motivated and seemed to be struggling the most with her business. At the end of the interview, she said she was planning on shutting it down because the numbers were not working the way she wanted them to. Another host shut her business down because it was not as profitable as she wanted for the work she felt she was putting into it. These economically motivated hosts are in stark contrast to hosts that are primarily driven by non-economic motives. It seemed from my small sample that the more non-economically motivated hosts had been renting for longer on Airbnb with greater success (with one pair of hosts renting for over seven years with both stellar reviews and profitability).

Framework Adjustments

Personalization. Before the pilot interviews, I hypothesized that authentic storytelling would help offset some of the negative effects of professionalization or economic motives on authenticity. From talking to interview participants, very few consciously used storytelling to describe their properties, and a much greater number instead described using *personalization* to

help convey their authenticity. It seems that storytelling is happening through personalization, and this mechanism may be helpful for preserving authenticity. An example of personalization is an owner (from interview 1) who personally calls each guest even though he rents his condo via a management company. When questioned further about this practice, he said he calls each guest because, although he rents through a faceless management company (for many reasons), he wants the guests to know that he cares about them and wants them to have a good stay. During those conversations, the owner said he ends up giving a fair amount of restaurant and activity recommendations. Calling Airbnb guests before their stay is rare as most communication happens via the platform, and despite criticisms from other hosts for his practice, the owner continues to do personal phone calls for each guest because he said over three-quarters of his reviews mention the personalized service and care he puts into his Airbnb.

Another example of personalization is a pair of hosts that customize a welcome basket of snacks to the guest's preferences. Before the guest's stay, the hosts send them a survey link asking them for snack preferences; this team of hosts provides in-person check-ins when possible. These interviews, along with several others that mentioned personal touches and personal interactions, have shifted my hypothesis regarding what moderates the relationship between economic motives, professionalization, and authenticity. Literature in this context and on authenticity also suggests that personalization may enhance perceptions of authenticity. For example, Bucher et al. (2018, p. 306) states that: "personal contact with the host—either in person or via written message—may be increasing the perceived overall authenticity of the sharing experience."

Personalization is defined as a close interaction between the customer and provider and/or the process of using the customer's information to deliver a targeted solution based on the interaction between the customer and provider (Li, Hudson, & So, 2019; Vesanen, 2007). The examples above demonstrate both a close interaction (a phone call instead of an app message) and a targeted solution (the customized welcome basket). The close interaction and customization may tell a story and influence a guest's expectations and perceptions, and change

their perceptions of a listing's authenticity. What is worth investigating is whether the effect of personalization is great enough to offset the negative effects that economic motives and professionalization have on perceived authenticity. This leads to a revised set of Hypotheses 3a and 3b, stating that personalization moderates the relationships between professionalization, economic motives, and authenticity.

Hypothesis 3a: Personalization acts as a moderator, weakening the negative relationship between economic motives and perceived authenticity.

Hypothesis 3b: Personalization acts as a moderator, weakening the negative relationship between professionalization and perceived authenticity.

Connection to place. The pilot interviews revealed that hosts rely on storytelling to create authentic connections with guests, not only through personalization but also by communicating their connection to place. As noted in the literature review, establishing connections helps build emotional bonds and evoke feelings of nostalgia, which can enhance perceptions of authenticity (Lehman et al., 2019). Storytelling fosters these emotional ties (Hyne, 2018), and hosts seem to leverage their connection to place as a storytelling technique for bonding with guests. This type of storytelling, emphasizing the host's relationship with the location, represents one way they aim to preserve an authentic experience. More broadly, connections can relate to places, people, or periods of time, all of which research shows can augment authenticity (Lehman et al., 2019). However, the pilot interviews specifically highlighted "connection to place" storytelling as a strategy frequently used by hosts to maintain authenticity for their guests.

Connection to place can be defined as an unbroken link to a place of origin or belonging (Lehman et al., 2019). In the literature on the Airbnb context, however, connection to place is not as emphasized, although some scholars have critiqued it for this reason (G. Carroll & Kovacs, 2018). However, based on the pilot interviews, connection to place is a clear construct in the Airbnb context and may play a role in how guests perceive authenticity. An example of a

connection to place would be an Airbnb guest using southwestern tiles and colors in a southwestern location (from interview 5). Another example would be a host providing locally made shampoo in environmentally friendly refillable containers (interview 3) or offering locally made “Taos” granola bars and locally roasted Piñon coffee (from interview 2). While these seem like subtle touches, interview participants were passionate about including them, even though there were higher costs associated with them.

Based on the literature surrounding connection to place and authenticity and the emphasis hosts placed on connecting their listings to the place in the pilot interviews, it seems that connection to place could play an important role in my model of perceived authenticity. We know that connection to place is likely to influence perceptions of authenticity, and from the interviews, it seems that the role it can play in a guest experience is vital (at least from the interviewed hosts’ perspectives). I hypothesize that the role connection to place plays is strong enough to offset the negative effects of economic motives and professionalization. Thus, connection to place is included in my model through two additional hypotheses:

Hypothesis 3c: Connection to place acts as a moderator, weakening the negative relationship between economic motives and perceived authenticity.

Hypothesis 3d: Connection to place acts as a moderator, weakening the negative relationship between professionalization and perceived authenticity.

New Model

The new model accounts for authentic storytelling being used in two ways: first, to communicate personalization, and second, to communicate a connection to place. The new model (Figure 2) includes both personalization and connection to place as moderators of the proposed negative relationships that economic motives and professionalization have with perceived authenticity.

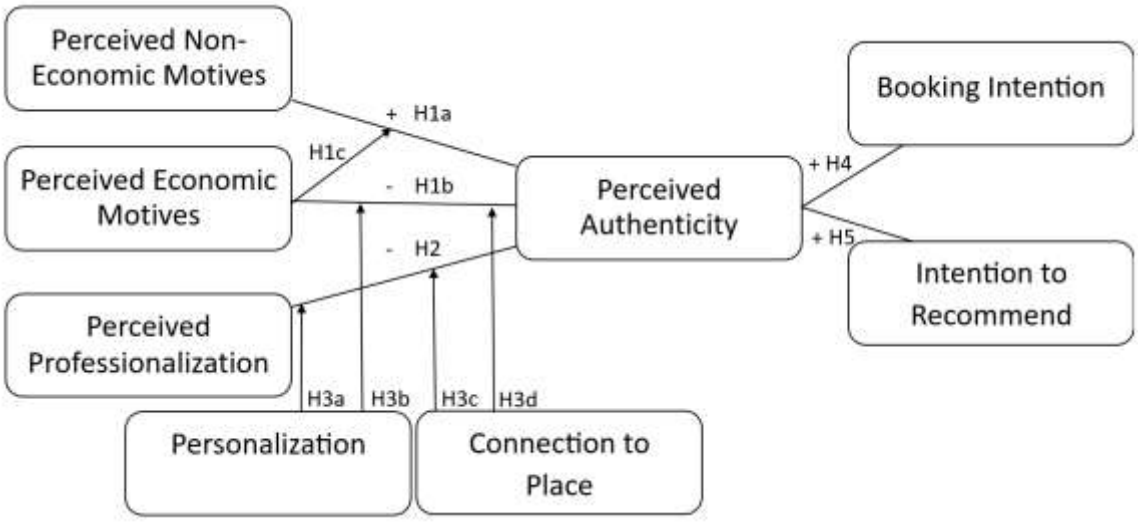

Figure 2: Proposed Model After Incorporating Pilot Interview Results

CHAPTER 5

METHODS: QUANTITATIVE EXPERIMENTAL SURVEY

Experimental Survey Plan

In order to quantitatively investigate authenticity tensions (including motives, professionalization, and connection to place), I performed a series of studies that were experimental in nature. The objective of Study 1 was to test the main effects, and the objective of Study 2 was to explore and test moderators. The studies were performed by distributing surveys via Prolific in early 2024. Study 1 consisted of eight experimental conditions, and participants were randomly assigned to each condition. Study 2 consisted of 16 experimental conditions, and again, participants were randomly assigned to each survey condition. The survey itself consisted of a generic Airbnb listing containing the information in Appendix B. The independent variables were manipulated by adding statements with additional information to the listing, as described below.

Independent Variables

The independent variables – noneconomic motives, economic motives, and professionalization – were manipulated via information provided in a hypothetical Airbnb listing and assessed via a survey as detailed below.

Non-economic and economic motives. To manipulate economic and non-economic motives, this study included a motivation statement in the listing. This type of manipulation has been done before to study intrinsic vs. extrinsic motivation (Cinelli & LeBoeuf, 2020). This study's survey included a statement in the listing that explains the host's motives, and there were several conditions as follows:

1. Control: Generic listing information written out in sentences to match length reading: "This home features two bedrooms. Additionally, the home has one bathroom. There is also a full kitchen for guest use. There is a hammock chair in the living room. The home

also has a large backyard that guests can access and use." (Note that this control statement will be used throughout the experiments).

2. Non-economic Motives: A statement that says the following: "My goal is to share this beautiful property with others. I am passionate about designing beautiful spaces and providing high-quality stays in them. Ultimately, I am motivated to make sure guests enjoy their time here at this beautiful property."

3. Economic Motives: A statement that says: "My goal is to run a thriving business. I am passionate about entrepreneurship and offering properties that fulfill a need for guests. Ultimately, I am motivated to continue to grow and build my business and appreciate guests' support of my profitable business."

These manipulations closely follow the manipulations used in Cinelli and LeBoeuf (2020), where additional information is provided about the business in order to manipulate the motives. However, in the Airbnb study context, economic motivations do not naturally appear in listings, which raises a concern about the realism of the manipulation. Using data and listings from the pilot study, listings were examined for clues regarding the host's motivations. While elements of professionalization were apparent in the textual listing descriptions, hosts were not transparent about their economic motivations with the information they provided in their listings, further suggesting that manipulating economic motivations in the study might not pass realism checks. To combat this issue, an additional pilot study was performed to determine the most realistic way to present information on a host's economic motivations.

Note that other manipulations were considered for economic motives, including the manipulation of prices and the inclusion of extra fees. However, the price was kept constant across all survey versions. While it might seem that higher-priced properties might reflect economic motives, Chung, Johar, Li, Netzer, and Pearson (2022) found that hosts motivated intrinsically (with a goal of sharing beauty) tended to overprice their properties, meaning that price manipulation does not accurately reflect economic motives. Additionally, from one of the pilot interviews, a manager suggested that extra fees on listings might reflect economic motivations.

However, researchers find that extra fees actually signal quality to guests (Dogru, Majid, Laroche, Mody, & Suess, 2021), making extra fees a poor manipulation for economic motives. Since Chung et al. (2022) found differences in listing description lengths, photos, and content between intrinsically (non-economically motivated hosts) and economically motivated hosts, these factors were kept constant throughout the manipulations and conditions.

To check the manipulation, participants indicated whether they believe the host's motives were economic with the following items rated on a scale of 1-5 (1 = strongly disagree, 5 = strongly agree). To check that the participants understood the non-economic and economically motivated conditions, secondary manipulation checks using slightly reworded questions were included. These reworded manipulations used wording on money motivation as a proxy for economic motivation and are also measured on the same 5-point scale. All manipulation checks were as follows:

1. Manipulation check for non-economic motives: "This host is non-economically motivated."
2. Secondary manipulation check for non-economic motives: "This host is not motivated by money."
3. Manipulation check for economic motives: "This host is economically motivated."
4. Secondary manipulation check for economic motives: "This host is motivated to make money."
5. Manipulation check for both motives: "This host is motivated both by economic and non-economic factors."

Professionalization. There is a distinct difference between hosts that are individuals renting out one unit and professional management companies renting out multiple units (Dogru et al., 2020; Shuqair et al., 2021). I used a similar manipulation to Shuqair et al. (2021), giving participants a scenario about the host. The listing was followed by a statement about the host. Since it was not possible to have a listing with no information about the host, the manipulations included an individual host condition or a professional (corporate) host condition. The manipulations were as follows:

1. Individual: “John owns a home in the region that he rents on Airbnb; this is his only Airbnb listing. He has owned this home for five years and lives next door.”
2. Professional: “5 Star Homes is a local management company. They rent out 30 Airbnb properties across the region and have a committed team of employees to provide an enjoyable stay.”

To check this manipulation, participants indicated whether they felt the host was business-oriented, following a manipulation check from Shuqair et al. (2021) and their work on commercial versus non-commercial service providers. The manipulation check asked the participants to rate their agreement with the following statement on a scale of 1-5, where 1 = strongly disagree and 5 = strongly agree. To check that the participants understand professionalization, a secondary manipulation check with slightly different wording was included, following Shuqair et al. (2021). This item is also measured on the same 5-point scale. The manipulation checks were as follows:

1. Manipulation check for professionalization: “This host is professional.”
2. Secondary manipulation check for professional: “This host is business-oriented.”

Moderators

Personalization. The manipulations for personalization were based on both close interaction and customization, following the framework from Vesanen (2007). The manipulations were a statement about host communication and welcome basket customization (both examples of personalization that came up in the pilot interviews). The manipulations were as follows:

1. Control: Generic listing information written out in sentences to match length.

2. Personalization: “We pride ourselves on good communication and are available not only through app messaging but are also available via phone and in person. We also offer a customized welcome basket with snacks. When booking, please let us know your preference of salty, sweet, or a mix of both types of snacks in the basket.”

As a manipulation check, there was a single item asking the participant about their agreement with a statement on the personalized service offered by the host. The manipulation check will ask the participants to rate agreement with the following statement on a scale of 1-5, where 1 = strongly disagree and 5 = strongly agree.

1. Manipulation check for personalization: “The host for this listing provides personalized service.”

Connection to place. To manipulate connection to place, there was a statement about the property and its connection to the location. G. Carroll and Kovacs (2018) suggest capturing connection to place via geographic mentions, which is further supported by literature on authenticity in the context of luxury wines and terroir (M. B. Beverland, 2005). The manipulations were as follows:

1. Control: Generic listing information written out in sentences to match length.

2. Connection to Place: “This property is built in the traditional architectural style from locally made adobe bricks and clay tiles. The property represents the area with its timeless décor and is located in a quiet and safe area on the edge of the forest.”

As a manipulation check, the survey had a question asking participants their agreement with a statement on the listing’s connection to the local place and geography. The manipulation

check asked the participants to rate agreement with the following statement on a scale of 1-5, where 1 = strongly disagree and 5 = strongly agree.

1. Manipulation check for Connection to Place: “This listing reflects and is well connected to the local geography and place.”

Dependent Variable: Perceived Authenticity

To measure perceived authenticity as genuineness, I used an adapted form of an authenticity measure from Ong, Kim, and Koopman (2023). The author’s definition of authenticity is similar to the one used in this study; they define authenticity as an organization’s actions being genuine and sincere and also whether the organization’s actions are “consistent with a moral standard” (Ong et al., 2023, p. 31). The only change made to the original measure from Ong et al. (2023) was the addition of “This Airbnb listing” to contextualize the measure. I included the following 5 items, measured on a 5-point scale (1 = strongly disagree, 5 = strongly agree) to measure perceived authenticity.

1. This Airbnb listing is genuine.
2. This Airbnb listing is real.
3. This Airbnb listing is sincere.
4. This Airbnb listing is honest.
5. This Airbnb listing is authentic.

This measure of authenticity is preferred due to its match with this study’s definition and conceptualization of authenticity. Another published authenticity measure is from Bucher et al. (2018), but that measure includes items focused on connections with culture and community, which is different from the genuineness definition of authenticity that this study is focusing on. Another perceived authenticity measure is from Moulard, Garrity, and Rice (2015) and measures celebrity authenticity, but all the items are also included in the Ong et al. (2023) measure, demonstrating support for the more comprehensive Ong et al. (2023) measure.

I also collected authenticity as being consistent with the field the organization is operating within. This additional measure is from Radoynovska and Ruttan (2021), with the first two items being original to their measure and one additional item added. The following items were measured on a 5-point scale (5 = not at all, 5 = very much so):

1. This listing meets my expectations for an Airbnb.
2. This listing is what I would expect from Airbnb.
3. This listing is consistent with my expectations for an Airbnb.

Since the survey included measures for authenticity as genuineness and authenticity as consistency with expectations, I considered the factor structure of authenticity in the analysis. Additionally, if authenticity measured as genuineness differs from authenticity as consistency, that will be taken into account during the analysis.

Outcome Variables

To help demonstrate the importance of authenticity in the short-term rental context, I collected data regarding outcomes of authenticity as well. Perceived authenticity has been shown to be positively related to booking intention (Liang et al., 2018), intention to recommend (Akarsu et al., 2020), and likability (Akarsu et al., 2020). Near the end of the survey, I asked participants about booking intention and intention to recommend using the following scales.

For booking intention, this study used a purchase/booking intention measure from Lu, Zhao, and Wang (2010) and followed Ye, Alahmad, Pierce, and Robert (2017) and Liang et al. (2018) to adapt the multi-item measure to the Airbnb context. The measure used a 5-point Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree and 5 = strongly agree).

1. I would consider this listing for a trip.
2. It is likely that I would book this listing.
3. I would book this listing.

For intention to recommend, this study used a 3-item measure from Prayag et al. (2017). This measure is preferred since it included an additional item as compared to a similar 2-item

measure from Akarsu et al. (2020). This measure is based on measured on a 5-point Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree and 5 = strongly agree). The items are as follows:

1. I would recommend this listing to other people.
2. I would say positive things about this listing to other people.
3. I would encourage friends or family to book this listing.

These outcome variables provided useful data for demonstrating the importance of authenticity for organizational outcomes.

Pilot Study

To address the concern of how realistic the economic motivation statements are, a pilot study was performed. This pilot study included a generic listing and some additional information in the form of the following 4 conditions:

1. A control with generic information about the listing
2. A control with generic information in the form of a guest review
3. A host description including economic motives
4. A guest review including economic motives

After the participants read about the listing and information, they were asked to rate the realism using realism manipulation checks from Shuqair et al. (2021). Participants were also given all the manipulation checks for economic and non-economic motives in addition to both authenticity measures. Participants were randomly assigned to one of the 4 above survey conditions. I recruited 20 participants per condition via prolific. This sample served as an initial validation sample for the authenticity measures with the generic listing information. The goals of the pilot survey were to identify the most realistic way to present economic motives and also to validate the authenticity measures.

Survey Design and Instructions

The survey followed an experimental design, where participants were randomly assigned a set of conditions. One of the benefits of this experimental design is that it allowed for a tightly

controlled experiment (Aguinis & Bradley, 2014), focusing on the specific relationships between the independent variables and authenticity. To start the survey, participants were asked: “Please read through the following Airbnb listing, assuming it meets your needs for an upcoming trip,” and then given each measure and appropriate scale to rate the listing.

Due to the different conditions and manipulations, a total of 24 different versions of the survey were given, with participants randomly assigned to each version. The versions are detailed in Table 4. Since the effect sizes of the main effects were unknown, I followed convention for the number of surveys to distribute. According to VanVoorhis and Morgan (2007, pp. Table 3, pg 48), for analysis related to relationships and correlations, a sample size of 50 responses per condition is recommended. The goal was to recruit approximately 60 participants for each survey version to eventually have at least 50 usable survey responses (after eliminating surveys for failing attention checks or incompleteness) for each survey version (set of conditions). I planned on compensating each survey participant $1.50 through Prolific, and in total, hoped to recruit 1440 participants across the two studies (480 for Study 1 and 960 for Study 2, with a total incentive budget of $2160). The following survey conditions followed a full factorial design, intended to capture all possible combinations to allow for comparisons of the conditions, including a few conditions that are supplemental to the core hypotheses.

Table 4

Survey Conditions: Main Effects (0=not present, 1=present)

Condition	Economic	Non-economic	Professionalization
1	0	0	Individual
2	0	0	Professional
3	1	0	Individual
4	1	0	Professional
5	0	1	Individual
6	0	1	Professional

7	1	1	Individual
8	1	1	Professional

Table 5

Survey Conditions: Moderators (0=not present, 1=present)

Condition	IV: Economic	IV: Professionalization	MV: Personalization	MV: Connection
1	0	Individual	0	0
2	1	Individual	0	0
3	0	Professional	0	0
4	1	Professional	0	0
5	0	Individual	1	0
6	1	Individual	1	0
7	0	Professional	1	0
8	1	Professional	1	0
9	0	Individual	0	1
10	1	Individual	0	1
11	0	Professional	0	1
12	1	Professional	0	1
13	0	Individual	1	1
14	1	Individual	1	1
15	0	Professional	1	1
16	1	Professional	1	1

Attention Check

During the Authenticity Scale, a final item was added with the instructions to “select strongly agree for this item” to verify the participant’s attention. Survey responses that did not pass the attention check were not used for analysis.

Demographics and Controls

Following Bucher et al. (2018), since they found significance for some of these controls in their study on authenticity in an Airbnb context, I collected the following data on each participant as controls: Age, Gender, Income, Education, and Children. I also collected these additional variables as controls: Experience Renting Airbnbs, Approximate Number of Airbnb Stays in the Past Year. There is a potential concern that survey participants past experiences on Airbnb could shape their perceptions, so capturing their experience renting Airbnbs and their approximate number of stays was one way to help control this. Each control was measured as follows:

1. Age: “How old are you?”, with the following multiple-choice options: 18-20, 21-25, 26-30, 31-35, 36-40, 41-45, 46-50, 51-55, 56-60, 61-65, 65+.

2. Gender: “How would you describe your gender,” with the following multiple-choice options: Female, Male, Prefer to self-describe as: _____, Prefer not to say.

3. Income: “Please select the range that best describes your annual household income,” with the following options: $0-$9,999; $10,000-$24,999; $25,000-$49,999; $50,000-$74,999; $75,000-$99,999; $100,000-$149,999; $150,000+.

4. Children: “Do you have children?”, with the options: Yes or No. If the participant selects Yes, it prompts a question of how many children, with options: 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7+.

5. Experience Renting Airbnbs: “Have you ever rented an Airbnb before?”, with the following options: Yes or No.

6. Approximate Number of Airbnb Stays in the Past Year: “How many times in the past 12 months have you stayed at an Airbnb or other short-term rental property?”, with options: 0, 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10+.

CHAPTER 6

RESULTS

Pilot Survey Results

The goal of the pilot study was to determine how realistic the Airbnb listing and information were in the survey, particularly in relation to displaying economic motives. Two different methods of displaying economic motives were tested in the pilot study, each with respective controls. One method disclosed economic motives via a host bio statement and was tested against a generic control. The additional method disclosed economic motives through a guest review, which was tested against a generic control review. No difference was present in realism scores measured by two different realism scales. The means for each condition are listed below in Table 6. Although the table reveals slight differences in the means, a one-way ANOVA demonstrated that these differences are not statistically significant. Averaged across all groups, the mean realism scores were high, with both realism items above 7 on a 9-point agreement scale. On average participants rated agreement with the statement “I believe this listing is realistic” as 7.14 (*SD* = 1.65) and with the statement “I believe I could find a listing like this in real life” as 7.05 (*SD* = 1.82).

Table 6

Mean Realism Scores

Group	Mean Realism 1 (R1)	Std. Deviation Realism 1 (R1)	Mean Realism 2 (R2)	Std. Deviation Realism 2 (R2)
Control	7.43	1.62	7.39	1.80
Host Motives	6.83	1.90	6.71	2.14
Review Motives	7.04	1.55	7.09	1.60
Review Control	7.17	1.56	7.03	1.77
All Groups	7.12	1.65	7.05	1.82

Three manipulation checks were performed to determine whether participants were accurately perceiving the economic motives displayed. Two of the three manipulation checks supported the idea that using guest reviews (as compared to host-described motives) would create more variance. A one-way ANOVA revealed that there were significant differences in the groups for the economic manipulation check 2 ("This host is motivated to make money," 1 = strongly disagree, 5 = strongly agree), F (3,96) = 4.73, p = .004. Post hoc comparisons using a Tukey HSD test indicated that the mean score for the manipulation check of the review control group (M = 3.87, SD = 1.04) was significantly different than the mean score for the review motives group (M = 4.57, SD = 0.59), demonstrating that the manipulation was successful. Additionally, a one-way ANOVA of another manipulation check ("This host is motivated by BOTH economic and non-economic factors," 1 = strongly disagree, 5 = strongly agree) also indicated some significant differences amongst the conditions, F (3,96) = 2.36, p = .076. Post hoc comparisons using the Tukey HSD test indicated that the mean score for the review control group (M = 3.30, SD = .99) was significantly different than the review motives group (M = 2.61, SD = .99), also lending support to the idea that displaying motives in customer reviews works as a manipulation. Based on these findings, reviews were used to display motives in the full study.

Authenticity was also measured in the pilot survey. However, the authenticity results were not statistically different among the various groups, showing no initial support for Hypothesis 1b. Due to these findings, a slight wording change in the measures was made, changing "this listing is…" to "the Airbnb described above" to hopefully clue participants into paying attention to additional details provided about the Airbnb rather than just the initial listing.

Full Survey 1a

A full survey of all eight conditions (as detailed in Table 4) was performed and informed by the pilot study using customer reviews for the manipulations and with the wording change on the measures as mentioned above. The survey on average took participants 179 seconds with a 124 second standard deviation. There was a total of 440 useable responses, and the mean age of participants was 37.33 years old (SD = 12.0).

Manipulation checks. The manipulation checks revealed that some of the manipulations were not working correctly.

For non-economic motives, a one-way ANOVA comparing the non-economic motives condition shows that there is no significant difference in ratings of the statements “This host is non-economically motivated” and “This host is NOT motivated by money.” This finding demonstrates that the non-economic motives manipulations were not successful in this survey.

A one-way ANOVA of the manipulation check “This host is economically motivated” showed a significant difference between economic (M = 4.31, SD = .91) and control (M = 4.03, SD = .91) conditions at the 0.05 level (F (1,438) = 10.69, p = .001). A one-way ANOVA of the manipulation check “This host is motivated to make money” showed a significant difference between economic (M = 4.55, SD = .74) and control (M = 4.14, SD = .89) conditions at the 0.05 level (F (1,438) = 27.07, p < .001). These findings suggest the economic motives manipulation was working.

For professionalization, only one (out of two) of the manipulation checks showed support of the manipulation. There was a significant difference in ratings of the statement “This host is business oriented” between the professional (M = 4.41, SD = 0.79) and individual (M = 4.11, SD = .77) conditions, F (1,439) = 16.00, p < .001). There was no significant difference in ratings of the statement “this host is professional” which does not support the manipulation.

Authenticity. Authenticity results were considered for professionalization and economic motives (since there was some evidence that the manipulations for professionalization and economic motives functioned correctly). Non-economic motives were not considered during this study since the manipulations did not seem to function as desired, so this study was not used to evaluate Hypothesis 1a. No significant differences were found between economic motives and control conditions in terms of authenticity scores, as examined by a one-way ANOVA, thus Hypothesis 1b is not supported. From Survey 1a data, there is evidence that perceived professionalization is negatively related to authenticity. A one-way ANOVA of professionalization and authenticity demonstrated significant differences in the authenticity as genuineness measure. The professional condition (M = 3.922, SD = 0.70) was different from the individual condition (M =

4.09, *SD* = 0.64; *F* (1,439) = 6.59, *p* = 0.01). This finding supports Hypothesis 2, which stated professionalization would be negatively related to authenticity. However, there was no significant difference in authenticity when measured as consistency with category between the professional and individual conditions.

Summary. In summary, for Survey 1a, there were some challenges with the manipulations and only one significant finding: that professionalization is negatively related to authenticity as genuineness. Based on these findings, another version of the full survey (Survey 1b) was performed using different manipulations. For Survey 1a, participants spent on average 179 seconds taking the survey (*SD* = 124 seconds), and there was a slight concern that the participants on Prolific were not reading the manipulations, so time minimums were established for the next version of the survey.

Full Survey 1b

Full Survey 1b used manipulations that were more heavy-handed than displaying information in the form of customer reviews. The manipulations are based on those in Cinelli and LeBoeuf (2020) and are the original ones presented in this dissertation. The manipulations used are as described in Table 7.

Table 7

Revised Manipulation Statements for Survey 1b

Condition	Manipulation Statement
Individual and Economic Motives	“John has a statement on his profile stating: "My goal is to run a thriving business. I am passionate about entrepreneurship and offering properties that fulfill a need for guests. Ultimately, I am motivated to continue to grow and build my business and appreciate guests’ support of my profitable business."

Professional and Economic Motives	“5 Star Homes has a statement on their profile stating: "Our goal is to run a thriving business. We are passionate about entrepreneurship and offering properties that fulfill a need for guests. Ultimately, we are motivated to continue to grow and build our business and appreciate guests’ support of our profitable business."
Individual and Non-economic Motives	“John has a statement on his profile stating: "My goal is to share this beautiful property with others. I am passionate about designing beautiful spaces and providing high-quality stays in them. Ultimately, I am motivated to make sure guests enjoy their time here at this beautiful property."
Professional and Non-economic Motives	“5 Star Homes has a statement on their profile stating: "Our goal is to share this beautiful property with others. We are passionate about designing beautiful spaces and providing high-quality stays in them. Ultimately, we are motivated to make sure guests enjoy their time here at this beautiful property."
Both Economic and Non-economic Motive Conditions	A combination of the above statements

To help further make the manipulations stand out, the manipulation statements were bolded, and participants were required to spend at least 45 seconds on the page showing the manipulations. The average duration participants spent on Survey 1b was 215 seconds, (*SD* =

141). There was a total of 401 usable survey responses for survey 1b (8 responses had failed attention checks). The sample was 49.9% female, 47.1% male, 1.7% preferred not to disclose and 0.7% self-described as another gender. The mean age was 40.3 years old (SD = 12.56, range 20, 78). Realism was a concern given the more heavy-handed manipulations, but on average, the realism composite for the responses was 7.54 (*SD* = 1.28) on a 9-point scale (1 = strongly disagree, 9 = strongly agree).

Manipulation checks. Manipulation checks for Survey 1b showed the manipulations were functioning better than in the prior version of the survey. For non-economic motives, a one-way ANOVA comparing the non-economic motives condition (*M* = 1.92, *SD* = 1.05) to control conditions (*M* = 1.68, *SD* = .95) shows that there is a significant difference in ratings of the statement "This host is NOT motivated by money" (F (1,399) = 5.58, p = .02). This finding demonstrates that the non-economic motives manipulations were successful. A one-way ANOVA of the manipulation check "This host is economically motivated" showed no significant difference between economic (*M* = 4.36, *SD* = .86) and control (*M* = 4.18, *SD* = .97) conditions at the 0.05 level (F (1,399) = 3.68, p = .056). A one-way ANOVA did demonstrate a difference between the economic motives (*M* = 2.03, *SD* = .99) and control groups (*M* = 1.82, *SD* = 1.03) when rated on non-economic motives ("This host is non-economically motivated," F (1,399) = 4.32, p = .038). This finding gives weak support to the economic motives manipulation. For perceived professionalism, there was a significant difference between the professional and individual conditions. A one-way ANOVA revealed that there was a significant difference in ratings on the statement "The host is professional," with the professional condition having a mean of 4.38 (*SD* = 0.73) and the individual condition having a mean of 4.15 (*SD* = 0.754), F (1,399) = 9.31, p = .002. A one-way ANOVA also revealed a significant difference in ratings for the statement "the host is business-oriented" (1 = strongly disagree, 5 = strongly agree), with the professional condition having an average rating of 4.69 (*SD* = 0.56) and the individual condition having an average rating of 4.04 (*SD* = 0.95), F (1,399) = 67.6, p < .001. These results indicate that the manipulation

of perceived professionalism was working correctly. In summary, the manipulations worked better in Survey 1b than in Survey 1a.

Descriptives and initial findings. Descriptive statistics for the relevant variables for Survey 1b are shown in Table 8. The correlations for these variables are also shown in Table 8. The most notable finding is that authenticity as consistency and authenticity as genuineness are correlated at 0.43 ($p < .01$), indicating these variables might be separate constructs from each other, which is examined further with a confirmatory factor analysis. There are also significant and positive correlations between the outcome variables in this study: booking intention and intention to recommend with both measures of authenticity lending initial support for Hypotheses 4 and 5. Economic Motives, Non-economic Motives and Professionalization variables were generated from the survey group conditions for later analysis. An initial one-way ANOVA comparison of mean authenticity scores across the full factorial designed 8 survey conditions revealed no significant differences in authenticity scores, except for the individual control condition and the professional non-economic motives condition when authenticity was measured as genuineness. Post-hoc Tukey analysis showed the mean for the individual control condition was 4.30 (SD = .51) and was significantly different from the mean for the professional non-economic motives (M = 3.83, SD = .91; F (7,393) = 2.41, p = 0.02) with a small effect size ($\eta^2 = .04$). This result may indicate that authenticity perceptions (when measured as genuineness) are negatively related to conditions of professionalization when there are non-economic motives at play.

Table 8

Descriptive Statistics (Means and Standard Deviations) and Correlations for Survey 1b Variables

Variable	M	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1. Authenticity-Genuineness	4.11	.71	(.93)						
2. Authenticity-Consistency	3.93	.86	.43**	(.92)					

3. Booking Intention	3.71	1.09	.46**	.56**	(.95)				
4. Intention to Recommend	3.53	1.04	.50**	.46**	.81**	(.95)			
5. Economic Motives	.50	.50	-.02	.00	.04	0	-		
6. Professional	.48	.50	-.13**	.05	-.04	-.07	.00	-	
7. Non-Economic Motives	.49	.50	-.12*	.07	-.01	-.02	-.01	.00	-

***p < .001, **p< .01, *p < .05. The coefficient alphas for relevant measures are provided on the diagonal. Professional (1 = Professional, 0= individual). Economic Motives (1 = Economic Motives, 0 = Control). Non-Economic Motives (1 = Non-economic Motives, 0 = Control).

Factor structure of authenticity. A confirmatory factor analysis was performed of both the authenticity as genuineness measure and the authenticity as consistency measure. The two authenticity measures were correlated (r = .43); however, the CFA suggested that these measures are capturing two separate dimensions of authenticity: genuineness and consistency. The two-factor model with genuineness being separate from consistency demonstrated a better fit than a one-factor model where all items from the authenticity measure were loaded onto authenticity. The CFA of the one-factor model revealed the fit was relatively poor, X^2 (20) = 860.56, p < .001; *CFI* = 0.69; *RMSEA* = 0.32; *SRMR* = .17. The two-factor model had a good fit compared to the one-factor model, X^2 (19) = 91.18, p < .001; *CFI* = 0.97; *RMSEA* = 0.09; SRMR = .032. The CFA results for both models showed that all of the estimate coefficients were statistically significant. Based on these CFA results and the better fit of the 2-factor model, authenticity results for the following analysis are reported separately as authenticity as genuineness and authenticity as consistency.

Hypotheses. Hypothesis 1a stated that perceived non-economic motives would be positively related to perceived authenticity. A one-way ANOVA of non-economic motives was performed to test this hypothesis. No significant difference was found in authenticity as consistency between the control groups and the non-economic motives group. However, a one-way ANOVA looking at authenticity as genuineness revealed a significant difference between the

control group (M = 4.19, SD = 0.65) and the non-economic motives group (M = 4.03, SD = .75), F (1, 399) = 5.39, p = 0.02). The effect size for this difference was small, η^2 = .004. It is important to note that, overall, the correlation between non-economic motives and authenticity as consistency was not significant. The correlation between non-economic motives and authenticity as genuineness was significant and negative (-.12, p < 0.05). Since the correlation is negative, and the authenticity as genuineness mean for the control group is higher than the mean for the non-economic motives group, there is evidence that non-economic motives is negatively related to authenticity as genuineness, which is actually in the opposite direction of the hypothesized relationship. Taking these correlations and the ANOVA results into consideration Hypothesis 1a is not supported. It seems that non-economic motives may be negatively related to authenticity as genuineness but have no relationship with authenticity as consistency.

Hypothesis 1b stated that perceived economic motives would be negatively related to perceived authenticity. A one-way ANOVA revealed that there were no significant differences in the authenticity as genuineness between the economic motives condition (*M* = 4.10, *SD* = .72) and the control condition (*M* = 4.23, *SD* = .70; F (1, 399) = .12, p = .73). A one-way ANOVA revealed that there were no significant differences in the authenticity as consistency between the economic motives condition (*M* = 3.93, *SD* = .85) and the control condition (*M* = 3.93, *SD* = .86; F (1, 399) = .00, p = .96). There were also no significant correlations between economic motives and the authenticity measures. Hypothesis 1b is not supported.

The condition where a host had both economic motives and non-economic motives was also considered. The manipulation for this scenario was successful based on a one-way ANOVA of a manipulation check rating agreement with the statement “This host is motivated by BOTH economic and non-economic factors,” on a 5-point scale (1 = strongly disagree, 5 = strongly agree). The control condition (*M* = 3.21, *SD* = 1.22) was significantly different than the both motives group (M = 3.61, SD = 1.15; *F* (1, 399) = 8.40, p = .004), with a small effect size (η2 = .02). The condition that included both motives was not statistically different when it came to authenticity scores. The combination of motives is further considered in the next hypothesis.

Hypothesis 1c stated that perceived economic motives would act as a moderator weakening the positive relationship between non-economic motives and authenticity. When testing this moderation, the interaction between non-economic motives and economic motives was insignificant (F (1,399) = .001, p = 0.97, R^2 = .004). Based on this moderation result, Hypothesis 1c is not supported.

Hypothesis 2 stated that perceived professionalization would be negatively related to perceived authenticity. A one-way ANOVA showed there was a significant difference of authenticity as genuineness between the individual and professional conditions (F(1,399) = 6.84, p = .009). The individual condition was rated higher on authenticity as genuineness (M = 4.20, SD = .62) than the professional condition (M = 4.01, SD = .77). The effect size for this relationship was however small (η^2 = .002). There was no significant difference in authenticity as consistency between the individual and professional conditions. Additionally, authenticity as genuineness was slightly negatively correlated with professionalism (r = -.13, p < .001), while authenticity as consistency had no significant correlation with professionalism, further confirming the ANOVA findings. In summary, Hypothesis 2 is supported for authenticity as genuineness.

Hypotheses 3a through 3d examined potential moderators and are assessed in Survey 2, while the remaining portions of Survey 1b tested Hypotheses 4 and 5. Hypothesis 4 stated that perceived authenticity would be positively related to booking intention. Simple linear regression was conducted to evaluate the relationship authenticity and booking intention. A significant regression was found for Model 1 (F (2, 398) = 120.0, p <.001. The R^2 value was .38 indicating that authenticity explained approximately 38% of the variance in booking intention. The regression equation was:

Booking Intention = -.24 + .42 (Authenticity as Genuineness) + 0.57 (Authenticity as Consistency)

That is, for each 0.42-point increase in authenticity as genuineness score, and for each 0.57-point increase in authenticity as consistency score, booking intention was also predicted to

increase by a point. Table 9 shows these results for Model 1 as well as Model 2 which includes controls.

Table 9

Booking Intention- Survey 1b Regression Results

	Model 1	*Model 2*
Constant	-.235	-.111
	(.273)	(.333)
Authenticity- Genuineness	.415***	.417**
	(.068)	(.067)
Authenticity- Consistency	.569***	.557***
	(.056)	(.056)
Income		-.025
		(.028)
Gender		-.110
		(.075)
Children		.065*
		(.029)
Past Airbnb Stays		.040
		(.031)
R- Squared	.38	.39
Adjusted R-Squared	.37	.38
N	398	394

Standard errors in parentheses. *p < .05, **p < .01, ***p < .001

The regression result is further supported by the correlations between booking intention and authenticity as genuineness (r = 0.46, p < .001) and consistency (r = 0.56, p < .001). In summary, Hypothesis 4 is supported.

Hypothesis 5 stated that perceived authenticity would be positively related to intention to recommend. Simple linear regression was conducted to evaluate the relationship authenticity and intention to recommend. A significant regression was found for Model 1 (F (2, 398) = 92.75, p

<.001. The R^2 value was .32 indicating that authenticity explained approximately 32% of the variance in intention to recommend. The regression equation for Model 1 was:

Intention to Recommend = -.13 + .55 (Authenticity as Genuineness) + .36 (Authenticity as Consistency)

That is, for each 0.55-point increase in authenticity as genuineness score, and for each 0.36-point increase in authenticity as consistency score, booking intention was also predicted to increase by a point. Model 1 along with Model 2 showing controls included are shown in Table 10.

Table 10

Intention to Recommend- Survey 1b Regression Results

	Model 1	*Model 2*
Constant	-.134	-.123
	(.274)	(.335)
Authenticity- Genuineness	.545***	.544***
	(.068)	(.068)
Authenticity- Consistency	.362***	.353***
	(.056)	(.056)
Income		-.004
		(.028)
Gender		-.102
		(.075)
Children		.058*
		(.029)
Past Airbnb Stays		.041
		(.031)
R- Squared	.32	.33
Adjusted R-Squared	.31	.32
N	398	394

Standard errors in parentheses. *p < .05, **p < .01, ***p < .001

The regression result is further supported by the correlations between booking intention and authenticity as genuineness (r = 0.50, p < .001) and consistency (r = 0.46 p < .001). In summary, Hypothesis 5 is supported.

Supplemental analysis: mediation. For the significant relationships found in Study 1 mediation analyses were performed to examine how authenticity as genuineness mediates the 4 significant relationships that were found.

Professionalization and Booking Intention. A mediation analysis was performed to determine whether authenticity as genuineness mediated the relationship between professionalism and booking intention. Following Haye's Macro Process Bootstrapping method with SPSS, a significant indirect effect was found for professionalization on booking intention through the mediator authenticity as genuineness (indirect effect = -.13, 95% CI [-.23, -.03]). Specifically, professionalization was negatively associated with authenticity as genuineness (b = -.18, p = .009) and authenticity was positively associated with booking intention (b = .72, p < .001). The direct effect of professionalization on booking intention was not significant (b = .05, p = .64) after accounting for the mediator authenticity as genuineness. These findings suggest the relationship between professionalization and booking intention is fully mediated by authenticity as genuineness.

Professionalization and Intention to Recommend. Using the same Haye's Macro Process bootstrapping method with SPSS, mediation analysis was performed to determine whether authenticity as genuineness mediated the relationship between professionalism and intention to recommend. There was a significant indirect effect of professionalism on intention to recommend through the mediator authenticity as genuineness (indirect effect = -.13, 95% CI [-.24,-.03]). Professionalism was negatively associated with authenticity as genuineness (b = -.18, p = .009), and authenticity was positively associated with intention to recommend (b = .73, p < .001). The direct effect of professionalization on intention to recommend was not significant (b = -.01, p = .889) after accounting for the mediator authenticity as genuineness. These findings suggest the relationship between professionalization and intention to recommend is fully

mediated by authenticity as genuineness. These results indicate that professionalism is negatively associated with intention to recommend indirectly via authenticity as genuineness.

Non-economic Motives and Booking Intention. A mediation analysis was performed to determine whether authenticity as genuineness mediated the relationship between non-economic motives and booking intention. Following Haye's Macro Process Bootstrapping method with SPSS, a significant indirect effect was found for non-economic motives on booking intention through the mediator authenticity as genuineness (indirect effect = -.12, 95% CI [-.22, -.02]). Specifically, non-economic motives were negatively associated with authenticity as genuineness ($b = -.16$, $p = .021$) and authenticity was positively associated with booking intention ($b = .72$, $p < .001$). The direct effect of non-economic motives on booking intention was not significant ($b = .10$, $p = .307$) after accounting for the mediator authenticity as genuineness. These findings suggest the relationship between non-economic motives and booking intention is fully mediated by authenticity as genuineness.

Non-economic Motives and Intention to Recommend. Using the same Haye's Macro Process bootstrapping method with SPSS, mediation analysis was performed to determine whether authenticity as genuineness mediated the relationship between non-economic motives and intention to recommend. There was a significant indirect effect of non-economic motives on intention to recommend through the mediator authenticity as genuineness (indirect effect = -.12, 95% CI [-.22,-.02]). Non-economic motives were negatively associated with authenticity as genuineness ($b = -.16$, $p = .021$), and authenticity was positively associated with intention to recommend ($b = .74$, $p < .001$). The direct effect of non-economic motives on intention to recommend was not significant ($b = .07$, $p = .421$) after accounting for the mediator authenticity as genuineness. These findings suggest the relationship between non-economic motives and intention to recommend is fully mediated by authenticity as genuineness. These results indicate that non-economic motives are negatively associated with intention to recommend indirectly via authenticity as genuineness.

Survey 2

To examine the relationships between personalization, connection to place, and authenticity, an additional survey was performed. This survey had a total of 870 usable responses, after removing 10 responses that failed the attention check. The average duration of the time participants spent taking the survey was 277 seconds (*SD* = 190 seconds). The average age of survey participants was 42.38 (*SD* = 13.83, range 18, 80). The participant sample was 53.1% female, 44.4% male, 2% preferred not to disclose and .6% self- described as another gender. This survey used the same manipulation checks as Survey 1b and added the conditions of personalization and connection to place. These conditions are as detailed in Table 11.

Table 11

Manipulation Statements for Survey 2

Condition	Manipulation Statement
Personalization	We pride ourselves on good communication and are available via phone and in person in addition to on the app. We also offer a customized welcome basket with snacks. When booking, please let us know your preference of salty, sweet, or a mix of both types of snacks in the basket.
Connection To Place	This property is built in the traditional architectural style from locally made adobe bricks and clay tiles. The property represents the area with its timeless décor and is located in a quiet and safe area on the edge of the forest.

Descriptives and manipulation checks. The descriptive statistics and correlations for Survey 2 are listed in Table 12. Similar to the Survey 1b results, authenticity as genuineness and authenticity as consistency are correlated at 0.50 ($p < .001$).

Table 12

Descriptive Statistics (Means and Standard Deviations) and Correlations for Survey 2 Variables

Variable	M	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
1. Authenticity-Genuineness	4.15	.67	(.92)							
2. Authenticity-Consistency	3.92	.85	.50**	(.93)						
3. Booking Intention	3.80	1.00	.44**	.63**	(.95)					
4. Intention to Recommend	3.65	.99	.45**	.57**	.76**	(.95)				
5. Economic Motives	.50	.50	-.06	-.05	-.03	-.03	-			
6. Professional	.50	.50	-.11**	-.06	-.09**	-.13**	.00	-		
7. Personal	.50	.50	.10**	.12**	.08*	-.11**	-.01	.00	-	
8. Connection	.50	.50	.07**	.07	.09*	.06	.00	-.01	.00	-

**p < .01, *p < .05. The coefficient alphas for relevant measures are provided on the diagonal. Economic Motives (1 = Economic Motives, 0 = Control). Professional (1 = Professional, 0= individual). Personal (1 = Personalized, 0 = Control). Connection (1 = Connection to Place, 0 = Control).

Manipulation checks. The manipulation statement for economic motives in Survey 2 was the same as in Survey 1b. However, there was statistical evidence that the manipulations in Survey 2 worked better than in Survey 1b, possibly due to the larger sample size in Survey 2 (n = 870). Similar to in Survey 1b, realism scores were acceptable across conditions, with a realism score mean of 7.55 (SD = 1.26) on a 9-point scale (1 = strongly disagree, 9 = strongly agree). A one-way ANOVA showed the manipulation check scores for “This host is economically motivated” (1 = strongly disagree, 5 = strongly agree) were significantly different between the economic

motives group (M = 4.37, SD = .83) and the control group (M = 4.08, SD = .98; F (1,869) = 21.5, p < .001). The effect size for this relationship is small (η^2 = .024). A one-way ANOVA showed the manipulation check scores for “This host is motivated by money” (1 = strongly disagree, 5 = strongly agree) were significantly different between the economic motives group (M = 4.48, SD = .76) and the control group (M = 4.28, SD = .84; F (1,869) = 21.54, p < .001). It is important to note that the effect size for this difference is small (η^2 = .016).

The manipulation for professionalization in Survey 2, similar to that in Survey 1b, seemed to function correctly. A one-way ANOVA showed the manipulation check scores for “The host is professional” (1 = strongly disagree, 5 = strongly agree) were significantly different between the professional group (M = 4.41, SD = .65) and the individual (control) group (M = 4.16, SD = .77; F (1,869) = 26.22, p < .001). The effect size for this difference was small (η^2 = .029). A one-way ANOVA showed the manipulation check scores for “The host is business oriented” (1 = strongly disagree, 5 = strongly agree) were significantly different between the professional group (M = 4.62, SD = .57) and the individual (control) group (M = 4.06, SD = .92; F (1,869) = 119.59, p < .001). The effect size for this difference was small (η^2 = .12). In summary, there is evidence that the manipulations for economic motives and professionalization worked in Survey 2.

The new manipulations in Survey 2 for personalization and connection to place functioned well. A one-way ANOVA showed the manipulation check scores for “The host for this listing provides personalized service” (1 = strongly disagree, 5 = strongly agree) were significantly different between the personalized group (M = 3.86, SD = 1.09) and the control group (M = 2.94, SD = 1.15; F (1,869) = 148.56, p < .001). A one-way ANOVA showed the manipulation check scores for “This listing reflects and is well connected to the local geography and place” (1 = strongly disagree, 5 = strongly agree) were significantly different between the connection to place group (M = 4.02, SD = .81) and the control group (M = 3.66, SD = .98; F (1,869) = 34.93, p < .001). In summary, there is evidence that the manipulations for personalization and connection to place functioned correctly.

Factor structure of authenticity. To provide support and robustness for the findings for the factor structure of authenticity from Survey 1b, a confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) was performed with Survey 2 data. This analysis included both the authenticity as genuineness measure and the authenticity as consistency measure. In this survey (similar to in Survey 1b) the two authenticity measures were correlated (r = .53). The CFA suggested that these measures capture two separate dimensions of authenticity: genuineness and consistency. The result from the CFA was the same in Survey 2 as in Survey 1b: the two-factor model with genuineness being separate from consistency demonstrated a better fit than a one-factor model where all items from the authenticity measure were loaded onto authenticity. The CFA of the one-factor model revealed the fit was relatively poor, X^2 (20) = 1907.02, p < .001; *CFI* = 0.67; *RMSEA* = 0.33; *SRMR* = .15. The two-factor model had a good fit compared to the one-factor model, X^2 (19) = 248.70, p < .001; *CFI* = 0.96; *RMSEA* = 0.12; SRMR = .035. In this CFA the results for both models showed that all of the estimate coefficients were statistically significant. This CFA confirms the one performed for Survey 1b data and is further support for the decision to report authenticity as genuineness and authenticity as consistency results separately for this study.

Economic motives. Before exploring the moderating relationships that Survey 2 was designed to test, the main effect relationships were examined. A one-way ANOVA of authenticity as genuineness and perceived economic motives was performed. There was no difference in authenticity as genuineness scores between the economic motives' groups (M = 4.10, SD = .70) and the control groups (M = 4.19, SD = .65; F (1,869) = 2.92, p = .088). Additionally, a one-way ANOVA of authenticity as consistency and economic motives was performed and revealed no significant difference in authenticity as consistency scores between economic motives' groups (M = 3.88, SD = .88) and the control groups (M = 3.95, SD = .83; F (1,869) = 1.10, p = .158). These results mimic those in Survey 1b and are further evidence that Hypothesis 1b is not supported.

Professionalization. A one-way ANOVA revealed there is a significant difference in the authenticity as genuineness scores between the professional (M = 4.07, SD = .68) and individual (control) conditions (M = 4.22, SD = .65; F (1,869) = 11.36, p < .001). The effect size for this difference is small (η^2 = .013). There was no significant difference in authenticity as consistency

scores between professional and individual control conditions. This finding matches Survey 1b and is further partial support for Hypothesis 2. There is evidence that professionalism is negatively related to authenticity as genuineness (but not for authenticity as consistency).

Personalization. Hypothesis 3a stated that personalization would act as a moderator, weakening the negative relationship between professionalization and perceived authenticity. This moderation was tested using the general linear model univariate option in SPSS since it automatically considers the interaction terms in the regression. When testing this moderation, the interaction between professionalization and personalization was insignificant for both authenticity as genuineness as seen in Table 13 (F (1,867) = .09, p = .76, R^2 = .023) and authenticity as consistency as seen in Table 14 (F (1,867) = .78, p = .38, R^2 = .016). Based on this moderation result, Hypothesis 3a is not supported, there is no evidence that personalization is acting as a moderator on the relationship between professionalization and perceived authenticity.

Table 13

Moderation Analysis Professionalization and Personalization: Authenticity as Genuineness

Source	*SS*	*df*	*MS*	*F*	*p*
Professional	5.10	1	5.10	11.53	<.001
Personal	3.91	1	3.91	8.83	.010
Professional* Personal	.04	1	.04	.09	.763
Residual	383.59	867	.44		
Total	392.61	870			

Table 14

Moderation Analysis Professionalization and Personalization: Authenticity as Consistency

Source	*SS*	*df*	*MS*	*F*	*p*
Professional	2.68	1	2.68	.055	.004
Personal	7.33	1	7.33	10.09	.002

Professional* Personal	.47	1	.57	.78	.377
Residual	629.86	867	.73		
Total	640.38	870			

Hypothesis 3b stated that personalization would act as a moderator, weakening the negative relationship between economic motives and perceived authenticity. When testing this moderation, the interaction between economic motives and personalization was insignificant for both authenticity as genuineness as seen in Table 15 (F (1,867) = .11, p = .74, R^2 = .013) and authenticity as consistency as seen in Table 16 (F (1,867) = 1.05, p = .31, R^2 = .015). Thus, Hypothesis 3b is not supported, there is no evidence that personalization acts as a moderator on the relationship between economic motives and perceived authenticity.

Table 15

Moderation Analysis Economic Motives and Personalization: Authenticity as Genuineness

Source	*SS*	*df*	*MS*	*F*	*p*
Economic	1.29	1	1.29	2.89	.089
Personal	3.86	1	3.86	8.65	.003
Economic* Personal	.005	1	.005	.11	.739
Residual	387.39	867	.45		
Total	392.61	870			

Table 16

Moderation Analysis Economic Motives and Personalization: Authenticity as Consistency

Source	*SS*	*df*	*MS*	*F*	*p*
Economic	1.42	1	1.42	1.96	.162
Personal	7.21	1	7.21	9.90	.002
Economic* Personal	.77	1	1.05	1.05	.305

Residual	630.91	867	.73
Total	640.38	870	

Connection to place. Hypothesis 3c stated that connection to place would act as a moderator, weakening the negative relationship between professionalization and perceived authenticity. When testing this moderation, the interaction between professionalization and connection to place was insignificant for both authenticity as genuineness (F (1,867) = .89, p = .35, R^2 = .018) and authenticity as consistency (F (1,867) = 3.21, p = .074, R^2 = .012). Based on this moderation result, Hypothesis 3c is not supported, there is no evidence that connection to place is acting as a moderator on the relationship between professionalization and perceived authenticity.

Table 17

Moderation Analysis Professionalization and Connection to Place: Authenticity as Genuineness

Source	*SS*	*df*	*MS*	*F*	*p*
Professional	5.03	1	5.03	11.32	<.001
Connection	1.71	1	1.71	3.85	.050
Professional* Connection	.40	1	.40	.89	.346
Residual	385.43	867	.44		
Total	392.61	870			

Table 18

Moderation Analysis Professionalization and Connection to Place: Authenticity as Consistency

Source	*SS*	*df*	*MS*	*F*	*p*
Professional	2.62	1	2.62	3.59	.058
Connection	2.64	1	2.64	3.62	.058
Professional* Connection	2.34	1	2.34	3.21	.074

Residual	632.7	867
Total	640.38	870

Hypothesis 3d stated that connection to place would act as a moderator, weakening the negative relationship between economic motives and perceived authenticity. When testing this moderation, the interaction between economic motives and connection to place was insignificant for both authenticity as genuineness (F (1,867) = .06, p = .810, R^2 = .003) and authenticity as consistency (F (1,867) = .62, p = .43, R^2 = .009). Thus, Hypothesis 3d is not supported, there is no evidence that connection to place acts as a moderator on the relationship between economic motives and perceived authenticity.

Table 19

Moderation Analysis Economic Motives and Connection to Place: Authenticity as Genuineness

Source	*SS*	*df*	*MS*	*F*	*p*
Economic	1.33	1	1.33	2.95	.086
Connection	1.77	1	1.77	3.95	.047
Economic* Connection	.03	1	.03	.06	.810
Residual	389.50	867	.45		
Total	392.61	870			

Table 20

Moderation Analysis Economic Motives and Connection to Place: Authenticity as Consistency

Source	*SS*	*df*	*MS*	*F*	*p*
Economic	1.48	1	1.48	2.02	.156
Connection	2.74	1	2.74	3.73	.054
Economic* Connection	.451	1	.451	.615	.433
Residual	632.7	867	.73		

Total	640.38	870

Outcome variables. Data from Survey 2 confirmed the earlier findings for the hypothesized relationships between authenticity, booking intention, and intention to recommend. For booking intention, a significant regression was found (F (2, 870) = 310.68, p <.001). The R^2 value was .42, indicating that authenticity explained approximately 42% of the variance in intention to recommend. The regression equation for Model 1 was:

Booking Intention = .29 + .24 (Authenticity as Genuineness) + .64 (Authenticity as Consistency)

In addition to the simple model (Model 1), a more comprehensive regression (Model 2) was performed, including control variables.

Table 21

Booking Intention Regression Results- Survey 2

	Model 1	*Model 2*
Constant	.292*	.440*
	(.168)	(.203)
Authenticity- Genuineness	.241***	.244***
	(.044)	(.045)
Authenticity- Consistency	.641***	.632***
	(.035)	(.035)
Income		-.041**
		(.016)
Gender		.024
		(.046)
Children		.009
		(.020)
Past Airbnb Stays		.026
		(.021)

R- Squared	.42	.42
Adjusted R-Squared	.42	.42
N	868	866

Standard errors in parentheses. *p < .05, **p < .01, ***p < .001

For intention to recommend, a significant regression was found (F (2, 870) = 244.54, p < .001. The R^2 value was .36, indicating that authenticity explained approximately 36% of the variance in intention to recommend. The regression equation for Model 1 was:

Intention to Recommend = .21 + .33 (Authenticity as Genuineness) + .53 (Authenticity as Consistency)

Table 22

Intention to Recommend Regression Results- Survey 2

	Model 1	*Model 2*
Constant	.214	.415
	(.175)	(.212)
Authenticity- Genuineness	.332***	.319***
	(.046)	(.047)
Authenticity- Consistency	.527**	.525***
	(.036)	(.036)
Income		-.044**
		(.016)
Gender		-.022
		(.048)
Children		.043*
		(.021)
Past Airbnb Stays		.025
		(.022)
R- Squared	.36	.36
Adjusted R-Squared	.36	.36
N	868	866

Standard errors in parentheses. *p < .05, **p < .01, ***p < .001

In summary, both booking intention and intention to recommend were found to have significant positive relationships with both authenticity as genuineness and authenticity as consistency, lending additional support to Hypotheses 4 and 5.

Supplemental analysis: mediation. For the significant relationships between professionalization, authenticity as genuineness, booking intention and intention to recommend found in survey 1b and confirmed in survey 2B, mediation analyses were performed.

Professionalization and booking intention. First a mediation analysis was performed to determine whether authenticity as genuineness mediated the relationship between professionalism and booking intention. Following Haye's Macro Process Bootstrapping method with SPSS, a significant indirect effect was found for professionalization on booking intention through the mediator authenticity as genuineness (indirect effect = -.098, 95% CI [-.16, -.04]). Specifically, professionalization was negatively associated with authenticity as genuineness ($b = -.15$, $p < .001$) and authenticity was positively associated with booking intention ($b = .64$, $p < .001$). The direct effect of professionalization on booking intention was not significant ($b = -.008$, $p = .19$) after accounting for the mediator authenticity as genuineness. These findings suggest the relationship between professionalization and booking intention is fully mediated by authenticity as genuineness.

Professionalization and intention to recommend. Using the same Haye's Macro Process bootstrapping method with SPSS, mediation analysis was performed to determine whether authenticity as genuineness mediated the relationship between professionalism and intention to recommend. There was a significant indirect effect of professionalism on intention to recommend through the mediator authenticity as genuineness (indirect effect = -.098, 95% CI [-.16,-.04]). Professionalism was negatively associated with authenticity as genuineness ($b = -.15$, $p < .001$), and authenticity was positively associated with intention to recommend ($b = .65$, $p < .001$). The direct effect of professionalization on intention to recommend was significant ($b = -.15$, $p = .011$) after accounting for the mediator authenticity as genuineness. These findings suggest the relationship between professionalization and intention to recommend is partially mediated by

authenticity as genuineness. These results indicate that professionalism is negatively associated with intention to recommend both directly and indirectly via authenticity as genuineness.

Summary of Results

High-level summaries of results are presented in Tables 23 and 24. In summary, across Surveys 1 and 2, there is support for Hypotheses 2, 4 and 5. The data supported the opposite of Hypothesis 1a, while the other hypotheses were simply not supported. A 2-factor model structure for authenticity fit the survey data best, with genuineness being separate from consistency. There is some evidence that authenticity may mediate the pathway between professionalism and booking intention, as well as the pathway between professionalism and intention to recommend.

Table 23

Summary of Results- Hypothesis Specific

Hypothesis		Supported?
1a	Non-economic motives are positively related to authenticity	Unsupported (found support for opposite direction of the relationship)
1b	Economic motives are negatively related to authenticity	Unsupported
1c	Economic motives act as a moderator, weakening the positive relationship between non-economic motives and authenticity	Unsupported
2	Professionalization is negatively related to perceived authenticity	Supported only for authenticity as genuineness
3a	Personalization acts as a moderator, weakening the negative relationship between economic motives and authenticity	Unsupported
3b	Personalization acts as a moderator, weakening the negative relationship between professionalization and authenticity	Unsupported
3c	Connection to place acts as a moderator, weakening the negative relationship between economic motives and authenticity	Unsupported
3d	Connection to place acts as a moderator, weakening the negative relationship between professionalization and authenticity	Unsupported
4	Authenticity is positively related to booking intention	Supported for both authenticity as genuineness and as authenticity as consistency

5	Authenticity is positively related to intention to recommend	Supported for both authenticity as genuineness and as authenticity as consistency

Table 24

Summary of Results- Additional Analyses

Analysis	Findings
Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) of Authenticity	A 2-factor model structure with genuineness separate from consistency fit the data best
Realism	All conditions used in the final studies were rated as realistic (rated 7 or above on a 9-point scale).
Mediation: Professionalism, Authenticity, and Booking Intention	Fully Mediated
Mediation: Professionalism, Authenticity, and Intention to Recommend	Partially Mediated
ANOVA of individual conditions	Professionalism with noneconomic motives was rated lower on average for authenticity as genuineness compared to a control condition (individual with no stated motives)

CHAPTER 7

DISCUSSION

Results Implications

This study set out to examine the relationships between economic motives, professionalization, and perceived authenticity. Literature suggests that authenticity can be beneficial to a business (Sisson & Bowen, 2017; Voronov et al., 2022), but that professionalization which offers its own benefits to a business, may be harmful to authenticity. Since there is a demand for authenticity (Fritz et al., 2017), it is worthwhile to explore strategies for managing the tensions surrounding professionalization and authenticity. The goal of this study was to first clarify the relationships between economic motives, professionalization, and perceived authenticity, and then to test different moderators to develop strategies for maintaining authenticity even when an organization has economic motives and is professional. At first, storytelling was broadly hypothesized to be a strategy used to maintain authenticity. However, the pilot interviews suggested that there were two specific ways storytelling was happening: through personalization and by conveying a connection to place. The definition of authenticity used for this project was informed by the literature, and the pilot qualitative study, and contained two key parts, authenticity as being genuine and authenticity as being consistent with the expectations of the category. Measures for both elements of authenticity were included in this study, which was helpful for understanding what parts of authenticity are impacted by economic motives and professionalization. Empirical evaluations of the relationships were performed using a series of surveys and a sample of participants on Prolific.

Specifically, this study found no support for the idea that perceived non-economic motives are positively related to authenticity (Hypothesis 1a). There was evidence that non-economic motives were actually negatively related to authenticity as genuineness (In the opposite direction as was hypothesized), but not to authenticity as consistency. Literature suggests that non-economic motives should be positively related to authenticity (M. B. Beverland, 2005; Demetry, 2019), and it is surprising that I did not find stronger support for this hypothesis. One

potential reason for this finding is the study context and the manipulations. Participants may not have believed an Airbnb host (as displayed in the survey and the manipulations) was non-economically motivated, and this was shown in the failed manipulation checks for non-economic motives in survey 1a. While participants did see the scenarios and listings as realistic, they might have been skeptical of non-economic motives specifically on a large commercial platform like Airbnb. A potential solution to this problem would be to use a different type of manipulation. An interactive vignette that forced the participants to engage with the material they were reading might have helped, such as taking participants through a fake booking interaction where they message the host and have a chatbot respond based on the different manipulations. The manipulations used in this study followed Cinelli and LeBoeuf (2020), but they used the study contexts of a granola company and a café, not an Airbnb. Additionally, backlash to the idea of non-economic motives could have been present, meaning that participant's actually perceived the listing as less authentic because of non-economic motives, perhaps indicating disbelief of the motives.

This study also found no support for one of the key main effect relationships - the idea that economic motives are negatively related to perceived authenticity. Across both surveys 1b and 2, there was no support for this hypothesis. The manipulation checks for economic motives showed mixed results regarding whether the manipulations were effective. In Survey 1b, where the sample size was smaller, there was no significant difference in the economic motives' manipulation checks between the economic motives and the control groups. In Survey 2, where the sample size was larger, there was a small but significant difference in the manipulation check, but this difference could have been due to the great statistical power from the larger sample size. Overall, it seems that the manipulations for economic motives could be improved upon. Using a comparative choice design where participants rated hosts side by side might have helped the economic motives stand out more. An interactive vignette could also be used for economic motives, perhaps prompting participants to "message" a host and ask why they host and then

having an economic motives condition where the host discusses the financial benefits of hosting as compared to a control condition.

The idea that economic motives might taint the relationship between non-economic motives and perceived authenticity (Hypothesis 1c) was also not supported by the survey data. Since the manipulations for non-economic and economic motives were not working as well as prior literature would have suggested they should have, this could be one reason for the non-findings. It could also be that theoretically people are forgiving of the idea that businesses have both economic and non-economic motives and that economic motives do not taint authenticity in the way I hypothesized because they are a reality for the context of Airbnb used in this study. When a listing is on Airbnb there is a nightly price associated with it (along with taxes and fees) and this may override any stated host motives in the listing or in the manipulations I used in my study. In this way economic motives could be so strong that non-economic motives are drowned out or not taken seriously or that there was even maybe backlash in response to them.

Based on my findings from survey 1b that professionalization with non-economic motives had the lowest authenticity as genuineness score demonstrates this idea of backlash. That people are reacting poorly to non-economic motives (a construct that based on the literature is supposed to help authenticity). This backlash may be due to audience members distrust of the organization when it states non-economic motives. This disbelief of non-economic motives could be because in this study context, the platform of Airbnb creates distrust due to its large corporate nature. Another reason for this finding is that there is an ideal amount of non-economic motives to display and that the manipulations I used in my study (especially in conjunction with the professionalization). If an organization is professionalized, being more subtle about their motives could actually be helpful for authenticity. Or having a more moderate level of non-economic motives as opposed to the strong non-economic motives used in this study's manipulations.

Professionalization was hypothesized to be negatively related to perceived authenticity (hypothesis 2). There was support for this hypothesis from both Survey 1b and Survey 2. Perceived professionalism was negatively related to perceived authenticity when authenticity was

measured as genuineness. However, there was no support for perceived professionalism being related to authenticity as consistency. This finding in particular is interesting because it seems that only one aspect of authenticity- the genuineness is damaged when an organization is professional. In this study's case, being professional, meaning run by a management company rather than an individual had lower authenticity as genuineness ratings. Being run by a management company could threaten the sincerity of the business and places more of an emphasis on business and economic motives as opposed to individual intrinsic motivators. The consistency conceptualization of authenticity may not be damaged by authenticity because in the Airbnb context there may be some expectations that an Airbnb would be "professionally" run, and thus consistency is not damaged. However, authenticity as genuineness is damaged by professionalization because the Airbnb may not feel as sincere when it is run by a professional.

Hypotheses 3a and 3b examined how personalization would act as a moderator on the relationships between professionalization (a), economic motives (b), and authenticity. No support was found for these relationships. Personalization was heavily informed by the pilot interviews, and while it was also supported by the literature (Vesanen, 2007), and while the manipulation was new, there was evidence it was working correctly. The lack of support for Hypotheses 3a and 3b suggests that personalization could have a different role in relation to authenticity and not act as a moderator on the hypothesized relationships. Based on the positive correlation coefficients personalization has with authenticity, personalization could be a driver of authenticity or a positive predictor of authenticity which could be explored in future studies. From this study, it is clear that personalization is not attenuating the negative relationship between professionalization and authenticity as was hypothesized.

Hypotheses 3c and 3d examined how connection to place would act as a moderator on the relationships between professionalization (c), economic motives (d), and authenticity. Similar to the personalization results, no support was found for these relationships. Connection to place has been hypothesized by other scholars to be relevant to studying authenticity in an Airbnb context (G. Carroll & Kovacs, 2018), so this result is surprising. Connection to place was also

highlighted in the pilot interviews by hosts as being important to convey in their listings to guests. Since there was evidence that the manipulation of connection to place was functioning correctly, an explanation for this result is that connection to place could simply not be acting as hypothesized in this framework. Similar to personalization, connection to place while not acting as a moderator may still have a relationship with authenticity, just a different one. The correlation coefficient between connection to place and authenticity as genuineness was positive and significant, so there may be some relationship between connection to place and authenticity as genuineness. Connection to place could be acting as a driver of authenticity but not attenuating the relationships between professionalization, economic motives and authenticity.

One potential reason for the non-findings for the moderators of personalization and connection to place is that there could be ideal levels of these constructs for building perceptions of authenticity or that these moderators may work better in a different context. Personalization could have come across as being “too-much” or an invasion of privacy for some of the study participants and thus it was not helpful for preserving authenticity. Similarly, connection to place could matter more to some participants than others depending on their trip needs within the Airbnb context. There could be some trips where participants are focused on budget and cleanliness and aren’t necessarily looking for an Airbnb that matches the geographic location. Support for the moderators in this study could be lacking due to the issues described above regarding ideal levels and participant preferences in the Airbnb study context.

Booking intention is one important outcome of authenticity (Hypothesis 4) and was found to be positively related to authenticity (both as genuineness and as consistency). This result matches the literature expectations (Tiamiyu et al., 2020) and helps confirm the measures for authenticity and booking intention. This result also offers a practical implication for why authenticity matters. When an Airbnb listing is perceived as more authentic, it seems there is a higher chance of it getting booked, which has performance implications for hosts and managers in this context. Additionally, this result could be generalized more broadly and offer preliminary

support for the idea that when an organization or their products are seen as authentic, consumers are more likely to purchase from that organization.

In addition to booking intention, another important outcome variable - intention to recommend - was found to be positively related to authenticity (again with both authenticity as genuineness and authenticity as consistency - Hypothesis 5). This result is important because, like booking intention, intention to recommend can have performance implications for businesses. If someone is more likely to recommend an Airbnb, that Airbnb may be more likely to get bookings, which could result in more revenue and profit.

Limitations

As mentioned above, this study encountered several limitations, including survey manipulations, limited variance on some measures, and the study design.

The manipulations in this study were a limitation. Despite several different attempts with varying manipulations, the variance between the conditions was relatively small, as was especially true of the economic motives' manipulation. A different type of manipulation (such as the interactive vignette mentioned earlier) or a different study design (perhaps comparing two hosts or listings rather than rating just one) might have been better. The interactive vignette would ensure that participants are reading the information especially if they are given choices along the way and prompted by a chatbot in the survey. This type of vignette has been used before in this context the form of a fake conversation between the participant as a prospective guest and a host (Shuqair et al., 2021). A different study design that does not rely so heavily on participants reading blocks of text and instead has more pictures and asks them to compare conditions side by side as in a comparative choice design might have worked better.

There was rather limited variance on measures, with many measures scoring similarly even across the different conditions. This limited variance occurred despite attempts to create meaningful variance across the conditions via manipulations. Future research should consider different types of manipulations or wider scales (using 7- or 9-point scales instead of the 5-point

scales used in this study) to better generate variance across conditions. The manipulations used in this study could be rewritten to be even stronger or heavier handed in their communication of the motives and the control rather than being generic could be the opposite of the manipulation to generate more variance.

The study design and participants used were also limitations. This study consisted of a series of surveys informed by initial pilot qualitative interviews. The study design included an Airbnb listing with manipulated aspects and then a series of questions and measures following it. Instead of this design, one where participants compared listings or hosts might have been a better option, and participants might have picked up on the manipulations better (Rokkan, Verba, Viet, & Almasy, 2018). Time controls were implemented in Survey 1b and in Survey 2 since Prolific incentives participants to take studies as quickly as possible since they were paid a flat rate for the survey. The time controls likely helped, but adding additional attention and comprehension checks and perhaps offering bonuses for passing them might have improved the quality of the survey responses and encouraged participants to slow down and read the manipulations carefully.

Contributions

There are several contributions this project makes. The confirmation and support of the definition of authenticity is one key contribution. Clarifying the link between professionalization and authenticity is another important contribution. Additionally, confirming the relationships between booking intention, intention to recommend, and authenticity highlights the importance of authenticity in the management literature and the potential outcomes associated with it.

The definition of authenticity used in this study was “a subjective perception by an audience member that an organization is genuine and consistent with the audience member’s expectations of the field the organization operates within.” This study used two measures for authenticity: authenticity as genuineness and authenticity as consistency. The confirmatory factor analysis showed that the data had a better fit for a two-factor model, indicating the distinctiveness

between genuineness and consistency. This finding contributes to the authenticity literature by suggesting that there are two important factors to consider when defining and measuring authenticity. Given the two factor-model fit for the data in this study, the question of are there other conceptualizations of authenticity is raised.

It is clear that authenticity can be conceptualized as genuineness or consistency, but it is entirely possible there are additional conceptualizations of authenticity, building on the variety of definitions across the literature. Lehman et al. (2019) consider three distinct conceptualizations of authenticity in their annals article and the conceptualizations of genuineness and consistency build on these by adding the genuineness conceptualization and by framing the consistency conceptualization more specifically around a match of expectations. Transparency is a construct closely related to authenticity (Audrezet et al., 2020), and may be another conceptualization in addition to the ones presented by this study and from Lehman et al.

Since the definitions and conceptualizations in the literature surrounding what authenticity is have been so contextualized, further exploration of these conceptualizations is warranted. Eventually, scholars could perhaps agree on a multi-dimensional definition of authenticity with strong and valid measure associated with it. This study provides strong evidence for the inclusion of genuineness and consistency in a multi-dimensional definition of authenticity. While genuineness seemed to be most impacted by professionalization and non-economic motives, consistency was still an important conceptualization of this study since it was demonstrated that it also predicted the performance outcome variables of booking intention and intention to recommend. I would suggest that future studies include both genuineness and consistency conceptualizations with their associated measures of authenticity. These future studies should perhaps consider inclusion of other conceptualizations such as transparency (Audrezet et al., 2020) and identity or values-based authenticity (whether the internal values of the organization align with external expressions of those values, which Lehman et al. (2019) actually referred to as consistency. These conceptualizations of authenticity were considered but did not seem present in this study's context during the pilot interview portion, but still may be worthwhile

conceptualizations for future exploration as scholars work together to create a more comprehensive definition of authenticity.

By exploring additional conceptualizations of authenticity, scholars can see what conceptualizations of authenticity specifically are impacted by different constructs similar to what I did in this study by exploring the role of motives and professionalization on authenticity, finding that genuineness but not consistency was negatively related by professionalization and non-economic motives. However, it is important to note that the multi-dimensional approach to defining and measuring authenticity can have problems associated with it. The literature could remain fragmented if there is not agreement among scholars on what conceptualizations of authenticity are valid or in how they are labeled. Eventually there may be many conceptualizations of authenticity and then there would be an opportunity for scholars to refine these and collectively decide which conceptualizations are truly authenticity.

By exploring motives and their relationship with authenticity, I found that non-economic motives were actually negatively related to perceived authenticity.

This study's exploration of the link between professionalization and perceived authenticity empirically supports theory on authenticity related to how smaller, amateur businesses are perceived as authentic (Demetry, 2019). By measuring authenticity in two ways (as genuineness and as consistency), it was revealed that professionalization is negatively related to authenticity as genuineness but not as consistency. This shows that only one aspect of authenticity - the genuineness might be damaged by professionalism. By understanding how perceptions of authenticity change with professionalization, managers and business owners can make informed decisions regarding becoming professional while maintaining some aspects of perceived authenticity.

Confirming the relationships with booking intention and intention to recommend with authenticity supports the idea that authenticity is important and highly relevant for businesses to create a competitive advantage (Voronov et al., 2022). This research opens the door for

additional studies on how authenticity can specifically result in competitive advantages and performance outcomes for businesses.

Future Research

There are several areas of opportunity for future research directions related to the tensions surrounding authenticity. Other types of data and research methodologies should be considered for exploring authenticity, motives, and professionalization. The different methodologies I suggest are qualitative and archival data approaches. For quantitative surveys better measures for the constructs in this project could be developed, specifically economic motives, personalization, and connection to place. The identification of the two-factor structure of the authenticity measure opens doors for measuring what part of authenticity is impacted specifically by different conditions. Lastly, there is an opportunity for further study of how authenticity matters for creating a competitive advantage for a business.

This study highlights an opportunity to develop better measures for economic motives, personalization, and connection to place. Using customer reviews was one type of manipulation explored in this study, but it seemed too nuanced. Exploring ways to manipulate these variables and maintain a realistic scenario in a survey would be ideal for future studies.

Future research on authenticity tensions could be performed with a deeper qualitative approach. Based on the failure of the motives manipulations in this study, future studies could use a qualitative approach to tease out what motives are communicated in the Airbnb context. There is also an opportunity to qualitatively explore how motives are perceived and if certain cues are evident in listings or in communication between the host and guest. Additional qualitative work could be performed too to further explore strategies for maintaining authenticity and how important perceptions of non-economic motives are to authenticity since the surveys in this project did not find strong support for the relationship between non-economic motives and authenticity. This study also highlights an opportunity to qualitatively explore different conceptualizations of authenticity. This study supported two conceptualizations - genuineness

and consistency but as mentioned above there are likely other conceptualizations of authenticity (perhaps transparency and values alignment). Qualitative research would be one technique to identify these conceptualizations and determine potential overlaps or a proposed multi-dimensional definition of authenticity.

Future research should consider additional data sources to clarify and test relevant constructs, including personalization, connection to place, and economic motives. For example, content analysis of actual Airbnb listings could be performed to examine the prevalence of personalization, connection to place, and economic motives in real listings. Using an archival data approach to explore the tensions of authenticity would be helpful for getting around some of the manipulation and variance limitations I encountered. There are two big archival data sets available for the Airbnb context, these include AirDNA and InsideAirbnb. These databases have scraped data for all listings on Airbnb along with booking information and financial performance data. Using this archival data to explore authenticity tensions in the Airbnb could be fruitful. An LIWC dictionary exists for authenticity (Boyd et al., 2022), so authenticity could be measured via context analysis of listing information or even reviews. Motives could be measured through similar methods. Additionally booking and financial performance data would be helpful for answering the questions of how authenticity contributes to performance and helps create a competitive advantage.

Since this study found that a two-factor model best fit the data for the authenticity measures, there is an opportunity for future research to explore and formalize different dimensions of authenticity and to determine what aspects of authenticity are impacted by variables. For example, transparency (a construct frequently associated with authenticity (Audrezet et al., 2020) but not explored in this study) could be studied in conjunction with authenticity as genuineness and authenticity as consistency.

Booking intention and intention to recommend were explored in this study as outcomes of perceptions of authenticity. The relationship between authenticity and other variables, including likeability, loyalty, and even revenue or profitability, could be studied to expand our understanding

of why authenticity matters for business performance. Ultimately the goal of this line of future research would be to clarify how exactly authenticity contributes to competitive advantage for an organization (Voronov et al., 2022). There are a variety of fascinating avenues to continue the study of the tensions surrounding authenticity.

Conclusion

In conclusion this study explored motives, professionalization and authenticity in the context of Airbnb. While the hypothesized relationships between non-economic motives, economic motives and authenticity were not supported, this study found evidence to support the hypothesis that professionalization is negatively related to authenticity (but only for authenticity as genuineness, not authenticity as consistency). This study found that a 2-factor model keeping authenticity as genuineness separate from authenticity as consistency fit the data best, highlighting the importance of considering different conceptualizations of authenticity for future research.

The moderators in this study - personalization and connection to place did not act as hypothesized. However, the data suggested that these moderators may in fact be drivers of authenticity. This study was able to support the relationship between perceived authenticity and performance outcomes - booking intention and intention to recommend, which demonstrates the practical significance of authenticity for business.

Some limitations of this study include the manipulations (specifically for motives), limited variance on authenticity, and the study design. To address these limitations future studies should consider different types of manipulations (interactive vignettes), a comparative choice study design and perhaps archival data and deeper qualitative research. These suggestions will help further study motives, professionalization and authenticity along with its various conceptualizations. In summary, this study was able to shed light on the tensions surrounding authenticity, while laying groundwork for future exploration of authenticity in the field of management.

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APPENDIX A

INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

Interview Protocol Questions for Authenticity Study
*Ask for examples whenever possible

1. General/Intro Questions
   1.1. How long have you been a host/manager/owner?
   1.2. Why did you begin hosting? How many listings/properties do you have?
   1.3. What is your favorite thing about hosting?
   1.4. Least favorite? Or most challenging aspect of hosting?

2. Motives
   2.1. Why do you host/manage?
   2.2. How important is the money to you?
   2.3. Is there anything else that motivates you?
   2.4. How attuned to these motives do you think your guests are?
   2.5. How much are you charging per night?
   2.6. How do you feel about charging extra fees (people, linens, cleaning, pets)?

3. Professionalization/Growth
   3.1. How have you grown as a business? What struggles have you encountered with growing?
   3.2. If an owner: Have you thought about hiring a manager to help with the growth? Or are there other strategies you've used?
   3.3. If a manager: How do you think guests interpret your company and listings? Do you try to come across as being a professional company or do you prefer to be seen as a competent individual? What about personalization of service?

4. Authenticity
   4.1. What does authenticity mean to you in the context of your property/listing/business?
   4.2. Do you think that your listing is authentic?
   4.3. What amenities or extras do you offer guests? How helpful do you think these are for guests to have a positive stay?
   4.4. Is there anything you try to do to help your listings seem more local? Or represent the area well?
   4.5. Connection: Do you try to connect your listing to anything in particular (a place, person, theme, time period)?
   4.6. Transparency: How important is transparency to you? What does this look like?
   4.7. Uniqueness: What sets your listing(s) apart? Did this happen organically or was it planned from the onset?

5. Storytelling
   5.1. Who wrote your listing?
   5.2. What goals did you have when writing it?
   5.3. Was there anything specific you tried to convey in it?
   5.4. Do you feel that your listing tells a good story? How so?

5.5. Do you think explaining something negative (like extra fees, house rules) in the listing can help offset guest concerns (like explaining that part of the pet fee goes to an animal shelter)?

APPENDIX B

LISTING FROM QUALTRICS SURVEY: CONTROL (INDIVIDUAL) CONDITION

Please carefully read the following information about an Airbnb (note that you must spend a minimum of 45 seconds on this page).

Comfortable Southwestern Home

Share Save

Entire home

4 guests · 2 bedrooms · 2 beds · 1 bath

Hosted by John
Superhost · 5 years hosting

Self check-in
Check yourself in with the keypad.

John is a Superhost
Superhosts are experienced, highly rated Hosts.

This home features:
- 2 Bedrooms
- 1 Bathroom
- Full Kitchen
- Hammock Chair
- Large Backyard

$150 night

CHECK-IN Add date | CHECKOUT Add date

GUESTS 1 guest

Check availability

Report this listing

The space

This home features two bedrooms. Additionally, the home has one bathroom. There is also a full kitchen for guest use. There is a hammock chair in the living room. The home also has a large backyard that guests can access and use

The host of this Airbnb is John. John owns a home in the area that he rents on Airbnb, this is his only Airbnb listing. He has owned this home for five years and lives in the neighborhood.

APPENDIX C

IRB APPROVAL AND EXEMPTION LETTERS

ASU Knowledge Enterprise Development

NOT HUMAN SUBJECTS RESEARCH DETERMINATION

Jonathan Bundy

480/965-6445
Jonathan.Bundy@asu.edu

Dear Jonathan Bundy:

On 3/8/2024 the ASU IRB reviewed the following protocol:

Type of Review:	Initial Study
Title:	Airbnb Authenticity Full Study 2
Investigator:	Jonathan Bundy
IRB ID:	STUDY00019773
Funding:	Name: Arizona State University (ASU)
Grant Title:	
Grant ID:	
Documents Reviewed:	• IRB Exempt Wizard Airbnb 2, Category: IRB Protocol;

The IRB determined that the proposed activity is not research involving human subjects as defined by DHHS and FDA regulations.

IRB review and approval by Arizona State University is not required. This determination applies only to the activities described in the IRB submission and does not apply should any changes be made. If changes are made and there are questions about whether the activities would change the determination, contact the IRB at research.integrity@asu.edu to determine the next steps.

Sincerely,

IRB Administrator

ASU Knowledge Enterprise Development

NOT HUMAN SUBJECTS RESEARCH DETERMINATION

Jonathan Bundy

480/965-6445
Jonathan.Bundy@asu.edu

Dear Jonathan Bundy:

On 3/4/2024 the ASU IRB reviewed the following protocol:

Type of Review:	Initial Study
Title:	Airbnb 1.2 Authenticity
Investigator:	Jonathan Bundy
IRB ID:	STUDY00019748
Funding:	Name: Arizona State University (ASU)
Grant Title:	
Grant ID:	
Documents Reviewed:	• IRB Exempt Wizard , Category: IRB Protocol;

The IRB determined that the proposed activity is not research involving human subjects as defined by DHHS and FDA regulations.

IRB review and approval by Arizona State University is not required. This determination applies only to the activities described in the IRB submission and does not apply should any changes be made. If changes are made and there are questions about whether the activities would change the determination, contact the IRB at research.integrity@asu.edu to determine the next steps.

Sincerely,

IRB Administrator