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Authentic Experiences Assessment Instrument: The Case of Millennial Students and Cultural Attractions in Central Florida

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Abstract

Three types of authenticity were chosen to analyze cultural attractions—they were: staged or real authenticity, sensory authenticity, and existential authenticity. A group of millennium students that visited Orlando's cultural attractions from the University of Central Florida were part of this study. Results show that the term "culture" is unclear among students. Also gender might play a role in determining what is perceived as "authenticity." In general the focus group discussion had a consensus that these three types of authenticity were the right ones to measured cultural attractions, people, and behaviors.

Authentic Experiences Assessment Instrument: The Case of Millennial Students and Cultural Attractions in Central Florida

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ABSTRACT

Three types of authenticity were chosen to analyze cultural attractions—they were: staged or real authenticity, sensory authenticity, and existential authenticity. A group of millennium students that visited Orlando's cultural attractions from the University of Central Florida were part of this study.

Results show that the term "culture" is unclear among students. Also gender might play a role in determining what is perceived as "authenticity." In general the focus group discussion had a consensus that these three types of authenticity were the right ones to measured cultural attractions, people, and behaviors.

Key Words: staged authenticity, sensory authenticity, existential authenticity, culture, focus group

INTRODUCTION

The current study examines the concept of authenticity as applied to cultural attractions or theme parks. The issue of authenticity according to Hughes (1995) is indispensable in tourism studies. According to the American Heritage Dictionary (2000) – authenticity means "the quality or condition of being authentic, trustworthy, or genuine." Another way to label authenticity is that you could prove and verify somewhere, something, somehow about the 'real', beyond the shadow of a doubt, with all sincerity. For instance, a famous work of art was authentic because who actually constructed it could be proven and verified after a meticulous historical investigation, valuation, and appreciation. The essence of authenticity is best understood to the truthfulness of origins, commitments, sincerity, provenance, and devotions in 'people part of place, place part of behavior, and behavior part of people.'

Authenticity in a place of attraction can portray a real or staged experience. A person can validate that aspect of authenticity by using his or her five senses. The authentic experiences or end results for contentment and discontentment during and after visiting cultural attractions depends on existential authenticity.

The Orlando area is full of cultural attractions that are assumed to be of equal value for all ages (e.g. Disney, Epcot, SeaWorld, Universal Studios, and others). Promoters of theme parks try to sell authentic experiences to visitors in the form of slogans, vision and mission statements, brochures, online messages, bumper stickers, and media. For example, a theme park slogan at SeaWorld is

"Believe," (www.seaworld.com) and at Universal is "Jump into the Action" or "Feel the Rush of Adventure" (www.universalorlando.com). Disney has theme parks including MGM Studios, Animal Kingdom, Epcot, and Magic Kingdom; and for them it is—"make all your dreams come true in four uniquely themed parks, each with its own special version of Disney magic! Fantasy becomes real and reality becomes fantastic as you relive childhood memories and create new ones" (www.disneyworld.com). In all this fantasy, authenticity is clearly sensed as a promotional tool.

Authenticity is seen in various forms in the academic literature. There is also debate on the type of authenticity that best fit in the literature to explore and expand (Reisinger and Steiner, 2006; Belhassen and Caton, 2006; Steiner and Reisinger, 2006). Reisinger and Steiner (2006) suggested that scholars should abandon the usage of the term 'object authenticity' and Belhassesn and Caton (2006) disagreed with that notion, scholars can not just abandon a term or concept that continues to play such a significant role in the type of authenticity. The debate continues—Steiner and Reisinger (2006) did reply to Belhassesn and Caton commentary. However, the tourist is the best person to judge the "reality experiences" of authenticity or lack of authenticity (Redfoot, 1984). One way to see this—tourists at cultural attractions will take pictures because of what they perceived as authentic experiences (Redfoot, 1984). Among others (Cohen, 1979; Miracky, 2004; Peterson, 2005), Wang (1999) rethought conceptually the notion of the type of authenticity. He described three types of authenticity (i.e., objective, constructive, and existential). The purpose of this paper is to rethink and test the meaning of authenticity of Orlando's cultural attractions.

In this paper, the main problem to be investigated is—what types of authenticity do Orlando attractions project to guests? Is the experience real or staged, what sensory components do people use, and what is the feeling of being at attractions (or existential authenticity)? The aim of this paper is to conduct a focus group to help create a survey instrument to be used to measure authenticity of cultural attractions (including theme parks) in the Orlando area. In the end, an authentic assessment instrument can be used by other academics in different settings, countries, and for different audiences to measure the perceptions of authenticity.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Past researchers relate the term "authenticity" specifically to tourism (Cohen 1979; Wang, 1999). Wang (1999) suggested three types of tourism experiences: objective authenticity, constructive authenticity, and existential authenticity. According to Wang (1999), objective authenticity refers to the authenticity of originals. In addition, constructive authenticity refers to the authenticity expected onto toured objects by tourists or tourism producers in terms of their metaphors, prospects, preferences, beliefs, powers, etc. In other words, this type of authenticity deals with objects symbolically. Existential authenticity refers to a potential existential state of Being that is to be stimulated

by tourist behaviors (Wang, 1999). This type of authenticity signifies a unique state of being in which one is true to oneself (intra-personal and inter-personal authenticity dimensions).

According to Peterson (2005) the search of authenticity is constantly socially constructed and takes a number of forms to appear authentic; namely, authenticity through ethnic / cultural identity, elasticity of group membership, authenticity through status identity, seeking authentic experience, technologically mediated authenticity, and authenticity to constructed self. Thus, the usage of the term and search for authenticity is in a constant state of flux (Bruner, 1994) and unstable condition (Steiner and Reisinger, 2006). In a way, the 'culpability and innocence' of technology has changed the authenticity of place, person, and behavior. According to Cohen-Hattab and Kerber (2004), the rise of mass tourism and sophisticated technologies in cultural site construction, restoration, promotion, and anxiety association with post-modernism had contributed concerns related to authenticity in tourism studies. As noted, the theory of authenticity is unclear and an easy target for criticism (Starn, 2002). Some researchers have expanded their investigation specifically to the concepts of objective authenticity (Bruner, 1989; 1994; Chhabra, 2005; MacCannell, 1973, 1979; Taylor, 2001), constructive authenticity (Bruner, 1994; Tasci and Knutson, 2004), staged authenticity (Chhabra, 2003; Hunt, 2004; MacCannell, 1973, 1979), and existential authenticity (Bruner, 1994, 2001; Kim and Jamal, 2007; Steiner and Reisinger, 2006; Tasci and Knutson, 2004; Taylor, 2001). Chhabra (2005) defined authenticity in her literature review section broadly with variations among definers and determinants of authenticity. The aim of her research was to broaden the understanding of supplier perceptions through empirical and conceptual examination of authenticity in heritage merchandise. Kim and Jamal (2007) examined the authentic experience of repeat visitors who participated actively in a Renaissance festival. Their in depth interviews and observation took two consecutive years; the results of their primary research contradict the general view of cultural attractions as purely spectacle or inauthentic.

Wang (1999) suggested additional empirical research on the subject of authenticity and why certain tourists prefer one kind of authenticity compared to others and also reflect on the limits of the conception of authenticity. Authenticity is connected to an origin in time (Wang, 1999). In Wang's (1999) words, "there is no absolute and static original or origin on which the absolute authenticity of originals relies;" and in Bruner's (1994) words, "we all enter society in the middle, and culture is always in process."

Bruner (1994) and Wang (1999) think that the dilemma is that there is no fixed point of origin, and nothing is static, rather, change is constant and thus the perceptions of what is authentic continue to change.

History of authenticity

The proposition of the term 'authenticity' meant that epistemological experience was provable and verifiable. According to Plato, an ancient Greek philosopher, episteme or knowledge (428/427 BC – 348/347 BC) is a subset of that which is both true and believed. To discover the truth and what is believed, scholars used and explored the term authenticity to describe many fields in sociology, philosophy, anthropology (e.g., Harkin, 1995), heritage (e.g., Ehrentraut, 1993), historical theme parks (e.g., Moscardo and Pearce, 1986), music (e.g., Jones, Anand, and Alvarez, 2005; Peterson, 2005), education, art (e.g., Xie and Lane, 2006), assessment (e.g., Cohen-Hattab and Kerber, 2004), writing, motivation (e.g., Allerton, 2003), and cultural attractions (e.g., Xie and Wall, 2002). The search for authenticity is even part of people legacy (Pearce and Fagence, 1996). For example, in an individualism society academics want to know about the authenticity of people lives, such as: John F. Kennedy, Dr. Martin Luther King, and others. The term authenticity exists because of the history of many fields or events. Why is the term used in so many fields? As noted, it is because of the history. So, the search for authenticity is nothing new—and the search for authenticity will never end. Another search for authenticity was by a famous philosopher, René Descartes (1596-1650) who said 'Cogito ergo sum,' or 'I think, therefore I am' – meaning also 'I am aware of my inner voice, therefore I exist.' This strong sensation of self-immediacy brings an impression of truth telling. This is how Descartes proposed the inspiration of authenticity as an honest inner voice (true feeling and being). This core voice makes individuals feel and act responsibly.

Before Descartes' notion of 'Cogito ergo sum,' authenticity was developed through the status of society and from external sources such as rich realm, tribe fashions, arts, minerals, illusionist, spiritualist, and theology. On those sources cultural attractions are imitating the past and creating the present and the future. In Peterson's (2005) words, "if tourism promoters can reimagine the historical past of a country, they have also tried to reimagine the locus of popular mythical worlds." To learn more about the cultural authenticity, Peterson (2005) suggested one must consider places from the Neolithic to the 19th century. To Erickson (1995), authenticity as a term and as a concept has existed for centuries. However, it was not impressive and expressive as it is today. According to Bruner (1994), historical events need to be fixed, solidified and simplified.

Why is it so important to 'snapshot' history of authenticity in this paper? According to Wang's (1999) own words, "historicist conception of authenticity lies in the fact that the restless and infinite retreat of now will eventually make anything that has taken place in the world authentic." In a sense, 'real' cultural attractions were and are under construction. Some cultural attractions / experiences (or the seven wonders) are still intact to the tourist (e.g.,

the Great Pyramid of Giza, Hanging Gardens of Babylon, the Temple of Artemis, the Statue of Zeus at Olympia, Mausoleum of Maussollos, Colossus of Rhodes, and the Pharos of Alexandria). A unifying identity of the gravity and sense of antiquity (Peterson, 2005) is part of the many creative thinkers or marketers in today cultural attractions. A 'make believe' reconstruction of history can be found in Orlando; e.g., Medieval Times. To marketers and spectators, other forms of learning and reconstruction of history are seen through the exploration of old manuscripts and motion pictures (e.g., Braveheart 1995 and The Passion of the Christ 2004 directed by Mel Gibson). Of course there are more historical stories and objects of why today the consumers (tourists) and producers (e.g., marketers) are in constant search for authenticity. Things of our present become the history in the future.

Real / staged Authenticity (input of the place)

Based on the scheme of MacCannell (1976) balancing concepts of staged authenticity and tourist space, Cohen (1979) was inspired to describe four types of tourist situations (see table 1). The difference between Cohen (1979) and Wang (1999) was the 'situations' versus 'approaches' of authenticity. The Orlando cultural attractions have both situations and approaches of authenticity. According to MacCannell (1976) there are two ways of describing the real and staged authenticity at cultural attractions. One is the tourist place (e.g. the place of Disney) and the other is staged (e.g., Mickey on stage or off stage). The best rubric or conceptual framework of tourist situations is depicted by Cohen (1979) in Table 1. This rubric was empirically used by Moscardo and Pearce (1986) to examine visitors' perceptions of historic theme parks in Australia. They suggested that new criteria for authenticity need to be considered to a much broader scope; and that cultural attractions must be seen (part of sensory) as authentic by those motivated to visit one; and the situation should offer visitors a chance to appreciate (existential) the culture.

Table 1
Four type of tourist situations in cultural attractions / theme parks

Nature of the scene	Real	Staged
Real	(i) Authentic (Real Real)	(iii) Disagreement of authenticity (Real Staged)
Staged	(ii) Staged authenticity (Staged Real)	(iv) Contrived, artificial, manufactured, false, or fake (Staged)

Source: Cohen 1979:26

Two dimensions of tourist situations can be seen in Table 1: the first is the nature of the scene when a tourist enters an attraction and the other is the tourist impressions [and suspense] of the scene (Cohen, 1979). With the help of Cohen (1979) four types of tourist situations are defined as follows:

(i)   *Authentic* of the real experience is a situation accepted by tourist 'in and out' of a cultural attraction. Youngsters at home or inside a theme park are likely to connect this way (authentic) about cultural attractions (e.g., especially some youngsters or first-timers believe SeaWorld is real and the act of the killer whale Shamú is real).

(ii)   *Staged authenticity* is described by MacCannell (1976), in which the tourist attraction sets the stage for the scene for spectators, but the spectators or tourists are not alerted of the 'setup' and therefore accepts the act or scene as a real event. Cohen (1979) calls this situation the covert tourist space.

(iii)   *Denial or disagreement of authenticity* is the opposite of staged authenticity. The scene is impartially real. In this area tourists had learned of the experience before dire situations that have purposely manipulated to mislead the visitors. The suspicion of stage authenticity is questioned.

(iv)   *Contrived, artificial, manufactured, false, or fake* is a situation where the tourist is aware of the 'staging.' Cohen (1979) called this situation 'overt tourist space.' This is a situation of obvious staged authenticity (e.g., workers at a theme park see the logic of real 'fake;' this can happen to repeat visitors as well).

MacCannell (1976) built upon the work of Goffman (1959) by asserting that all tourist settings could be divided into either front or back staged regions. The social psychologist Erving Goffman (1959) explained his 'dramaturgy model' of the human character composed of internal regions of self-construction. Goffman (1959) hypothesized that all people are social actors, and each person has front stage and back stage settings. An example of front stage at a cultural attraction is the meeting place of multitude and guest or consumers and service persons to experience an "on stage" act (MacCannell, 1976) (e.g., Mickey Mouse on stage). The back stage is secretive at cultural attractions—it is the place where actors (e.g., person rehearsing in Mickey's costume) retire between performances to rest and to prepare for the next act (MacCannell, 1976). In the context of tourism, the tourist seeks out the social reality that requires some mystification; the tourists like to enter back stage regions of places (prohibited areas) because of the real intimacy and authenticity / experiences (MacCannell, 1979).

A real or staged (restricted area) tourist cultural attraction is a place of interest where tourists visit. Some examples include historical places, monuments, museums, art galleries, botanical gardens, zoos, buildings and structures, national parks and forests, theme parks, carnivals, ethnic closed-

societies (e.g., Amish), places of antique technology (e.g., antique radios) and cultural events. There should be a balance between what is real and fake (staged). Kelleher (2004) worried about how actual historical places may devalue as it becomes more difficult to distinguish between what is authentic and what is inauthentic (e.g., Disney Colonial Williamsburg). What matters is the quality of the authentic experiences.

The quality of the experience is also an important factor for the cultural attractions to take into account. Cole and Scott (2004) identified four major stages of experience, namely, performance quality, experience quality, overall satisfaction, and revisit intentions. Their results indicate that quality matters and promoters should emphasize more on this win win situation. Great experience quality of cultural attractions leads (benefits) to great experience of authenticity.

In all this, the tourist is trying to use five senses while experiencing an attraction. According to Cohen (1979), the tourists use the vision to judge the authenticity in cultural attractions; this proves as what he called the nature of the *scene* in his conceptual framework.

Sensory Authenticity (process of the person)

In Pearce and Fagence's (1996) own words "the work on the sensory qualities of places is at the heart of influencing the tourist experience and locates the subtle human reactions to settings on center stage in tourism research." After carefully analyzing the literature on the subject of authenticity, it is clear that one type of authenticity is still missing – 'sensory authenticity.' At this time there is no specific research on these combined terms 'sensory authenticity' in tourism journals.

Bonn et al. (2007) came close to this type of authenticity by exploring empirically the physical environment and atmospherics of four key heritage/cultural attractions in Tampa, Florida. They explored three key factors of cultural attractions: design factors (e.g., layout, color), social factors (e.g., persons within the attractions such as employees and visitors), and ambient factors (non-visual signs such as scent, sound, and illumination). At some Florida cultural attractions the ambience factor (e.g. color scheme, lighting, and signage) appears to have the strongest impact on visitors' perceptions, attitudes, intentions, and satisfactions; the design factors ranked second as essential and the social factor as least significant (Bonn et al, 2007). Bonn et al. (2007) saw the importance of sensory authenticity (i.e., affect of the five senses or mutisensory) to some extent; according to them visitors came to participate and interact, rather than simply looking at exhibits and reading the associated notations. However, it is important to distinguish between the five senses that set the tone or 'ambience' of the relevance in a cultural setting. Sensory authenticity is not "one size fits all phenomena."

Not all individuals use all their senses in theme parks (e.g., young and old ages, impairments or because of no interest of complete sensing); and the very same situation or location can have different meanings to different individuals associated with it (Stokowsky, 2002). Today it is believed that the authenticity of cultural attractions is not as important as long as tourists enjoy them (Cohen, 1995). The enjoyment involves participation of senses and movement. However, people are able to grant or reject the authenticity claim (Peterson, 2005) in any way possible. Complete sensing or judgment might be when tourists visit a cultural attraction by making use of the five senses: vision, hearing, touch, taste, and smell. To fulfill the sensory authenticity, tourists must ask during and after visiting a cultural attraction the following questions:

- o Did I use my eyes to see the cultural authenticity experience?

- o Did I use my ears to hear the cultural authenticity experience?

- o Did I use my nose to smell the cultural authenticity experience?

- o Did I use my mouth to taste the cultural authenticity experience?

- o Did I use my hand to touch the cultural authenticity experience?

Stoffregen and Bardy (2001) questioned the assumption that perception is divided into separate domains of vision, hearing, touch, taste, and smell. They reviewed the implications of the assumption for theories of perception and understanding of the optic and acoustic arrays (ambient energy) that are available to the perceptual systems. Also Stoffregen and Bardy (2001) analyzed the relations between ambient arrays and physical reality. Authenticity of subjects and objects at cultural attractions can be real static or dynamic. Theme parks visitors are most of the time in constant motion. People move around at cultural attractions from one theme to the other; people receive and exchange cash for souvenirs at attractions that are considered authentic.

Personal property is often called a movable or immovable property. It is possible to own a piece of authenticity from a cultural attraction (place visited) in the form of a souvenir. Thus, by using the five senses, visitors can hold (possess) a piece of authentic experience. An example of a moveable sensory authenticity object in a theme park is a specific symbolic souvenir that identifies the park; another example is experienced in three or four dimensional movies at Universal Studios—people sensed the vibration, scene, audio, smell, and taste of the special effects. Anything that stays behind leaving the experience to be authentic or inauthentic after using the human "senses" is an example of immovable sensed property. One might say—you can move an authentic building, but you can not move an authentic land. One must first understand the nature and functions of authenticity before one can successfully undertake a quest for the truth.

To search for the 'total truth' on sensory authenticity is when one experiments with all five senses. According to Steiner and Reisinger (2006) places in the world account for different behavior that tourists' react to their tourism activities. For example, there is a difference when people use their senses in museums and theme parks. It is clear (unconsciously) that only a few senses are used at a museum; and it is clearer that one sense dominate over the others (i.e., the vision). In theme parks there are the possibilities to use (consciously) all five senses in different areas.

To understand a cultural attraction, visitors have to use and satisfy their 'sensors' (or senses). According to Stokowsky (2002), constructing a new sense of the place is typically done by

> "an individual's ability to develop feelings of attachment to particular settings based on combinations of use, attentiveness, and emotion. Despite the assumed positive values of a sense of place, critics point out that places are more than simply geographic sites – they are also fluid, changeable, dynamic contexts of social interaction and memory, and they "contain" overt and covert social practices that embed in place-making behaviors notions of ideology, power, control, conflict, dominance, and distribution of social and physical resources."

The next phase is the output of a tourist attraction and the resulting tourists' behavior.

Existential Authenticity (output of the behavior)

In this paper existential authenticity means the unbiased 'feeling and being' of a person in a place of attraction. When people visit a cultural attraction, it is not only a matter of investigating the facts or rationales to come to a coherent conclusion; it is about the feeling of being there. It is popular nowadays (e.g., especially in America society with impatient behaviors and demands) for people to forget to use most of their senses—instead people stressed more on feelings; e.g., a wife will ask her husband after existing a theme park—"how did it feel?" and not worrying so much if the food tasted bad and rain was unpleasant. Thus, a better question might be: based on feelings and beings, was the experience authentic or non-authentic? If the experience feels right (euphorically) – it is assumed to be authentic. The tourists have excellent potential to cultivate existential authenticity (Steiner and Reisinger, 2006).

To try to understand existential authenticity Steiner and Reisinger (2006) explored this type of authenticity. They examined how existential authenticity is understood by philosophers, psychologists, and scholars.

According to Wang (1999) existential authenticity refers to the dealing of existential state of being that is to be stimulated by tourist activities. Authentic experiences by the tourists are realized through the state of being

enlightened. Two concepts are derived form existential authenticity: intrapersonal authenticity (e.g., bodily feelings and self-making) and interpersonal authenticity (e.g., tourist communitas) (Kim and Jamal 2007; Wang, 1999).

Today, if a human being says something is authentic, it is typically not about being sincere or real; it is more on what feels right - apart from the truth of the condition. Taylor (2001) introduced the term 'sincerity' by way of comparing it to the notion of authenticity. According to him, sincerity is the cousin of authenticity and suggests the basis for a shift in truthful perspective.

The tourist at any cultural attraction has to be aware of the hyperreality that typified the inability of perception to distinguish authenticity from fantasy; especially in technologically advanced postmodern cultures or developed countries. The media nowadays (Internet, Television, Radio among others) can radically shape and filter the original event or experience being depicted – this fits the notion of hyperreality. Modern writers say that in hyperreality the reproduction is better than the original (Bruner, 1994). The emotions (of supply and demands) are "high" at Orlando cultural attractions. In today's world of fake sensations – this reflects and proofed to the millions of theme parks visitors. The successes of Orlando's cultural attractions are the constant simulacra. White (2005) asks the question of "Who needs nature when you can manufacture a superior, ersatz substitute?" Again, all these changes come to place because "we have become bored [and] we demand new experiences" (White, 2005). According to Bruner (1994) and White (2005), Eco Umberto an Italian medievalist, philosopher, semiotician, and novelist that coined the term hyperreality explained that

> "those instances [in which] the American imagination demands the real thing, and to attain it must fabricate the absolute fake'. It's a land where the demands and imagination of the consumer are always satisfied. It's a land where the fake can be better than the real thing. 'A real crocodile can be found in the zoo,' [Eco wrote,] 'and as a rule it is dozing or hiding, but Disneyland tells us that faked nature corresponds much more to our daydream demands… Disneyland tells us that technology can give us more reality than nature can" (White, 2005).

Martin Heidegger made a contribution to existential with his 1927 publication of Being and Time (it is from the German translation of "Sein and Zeit"). His beliefs from the past to recent times led him to rethink the most fundamental concepts underlying our thinking about ourselves. Accentuating the 'sense of being' (or dasein) over other understandings of the conscious existence. He disputed that explicit and concrete ideas form the bases of our perceptions, and that thinking about concepts leads to mystification at best. In other words, 'time' is only significant as it is experienced. An example is: the time it takes to drive to a cultural attraction, pay for entrance, and explore the authenticity of the

attractions can be real; but the concept of time by itself is not. So, existential authenticity exists from time to time (feelings and beings are 'ups' or 'downs'). Steiner and Reisinger (2006) think that the authenticity being discussed in the tourism literature may not be existential at all if compare to Heidegger logic. To Heidegger it is simply the being, doing, experiencing, and seizing or neglecting possibilities (Steiner and Reisinger, 2006). Existential is difficult to follow on itself. For that reason the authors will keep it simple to be understood by all people. In this sense it is the feeling and being at a cultural attraction. The question to ask is—Being in time at a cultural attraction did / does it feel authentic or not? Or one might say "it gave me the Goosebumps."

Why Orlando Tourist Attractions?

According to the Rosen College of Hospitality Management, a branch of the University of Central Florida located in the heart of the Orlando tourist attractions—Orlando has "the largest learning laboratory in the world for hospitality and tourism," (http://www.hospitality.ucf.edu/). According to the University one can benefit from studying in a city that boast 42 million visitors each year, that has 120,000 hotel rooms, 4,000 restaurants, and 75 theme parks and attractions. Thus, in Orlando one can learn and investigate about the authenticity (ersatz substitute) of theme parks and tourist attractions. The type of authentic experiences must be in existence (in place, in person, and in behavior), since the 'attraction attendance' runs into the millions. Something somehow (i.e., authenticity) must be the motive to attract so many visitors to so many tourist attractions in Orlando. The numbers speak for themselves; according to the Orlando/Orange County Convention & Visitors Bureau, Inc. the leaders in theme parks attractions brought an estimated 70 millions visitors (domestic and international) in 2005 (http://www.orlandoinfo.com). Table 2 depicts the numbers of Orlando's top 12 tourist attractions.

Table 2
Top 12 Orlando tourist attractions in 2005

Rank	Orlando tourist attractions	Attendance
1	Magic Kingdom	16,160,000
2	Epcot Center	9,917,000
3	Disney-MGM Studios	8,670,000
4	Disney's Animal Kingdom	8,210,000
5	Universal Studios at Universal Orlando	6,130,000
6	Islands of Adventure at Universal Orlando	5,760,000
7	SeaWorld Orlando	5,600,000
8	Busch Gardens Tampa Bay	4,300,000
9	Typhoon Lagoon	1,914,000
10	Blizzard Beach	1,778,000
11	Wet 'n Wild	1,340,000
12	Gatorland, Inc.	387,500
	Estimated Total	70,166,500

Source: http://www.orlandoinfo.com (Amusement Business Magazines)

It must be that the three types of authenticity play an important role to so many people visiting Orlando tourist attractions. Between the twelve tourist attractions, Magic Kingdom alone brings 23% of visitors to Orlando, followed by Epcot Center 14%, Disney-MGM Studios and Disney's Animal Kingdom 12%, and the rest about 40%. The research questions are: what is authenticity and cultural attractions? Also it is important to address how important the three types of authenticity are for participants in a focus group discussion.

Methodology

Model Development

After analyzing the literature on the subject of authenticity, the authors have chosen to analyze three types of authenticity for cultural attractions. The types of authenticity were chosen due to their ease of understanding as well as their broad perspective on the topic of authenticity. For that reason, three simple types of authenticity are being analyzed by a focus group of millennium students. The three types of authenticity are: staged or real authenticity, sensory authenticity, and existential authenticity (in simple terms, meaning—feeling and being).

In Orlando's cultural attractions it is possible that one type of (cultural) authenticity could dominate over the others. For example, a tourist felt that a particular theme park attraction was categorized as staged authenticity without even using all five senses. Sometimes, without even visiting cultural attractions potential visitors looking at theme parks promotions (e.g., Disney billboards, TV commercials, on the Internet, or Brochures) might 'connect' with the 'day dream' of authenticity. In other words, the tourist might have a "déjà vécu" or already lived feeling and being without even experiencing a place of attraction. Authenticity can be found in a place, person, and behavior. These three components are interrelated. To find and discover the authenticity or total truth in Orlando tourist attractions, a person must be part of a place, place must be part of behavior, and behavior must be part of people or vice versa. A place of attraction creates or input curious phenomenons in the form of staged versus real authenticity for visitors to sense and feel the existential authenticity. A simplified figure of cultural authenticity for Orlando's cultural attraction is depicted below in Figure 1.

Figure 1
Simplified model of authenticity for Orlando's cultural attractions
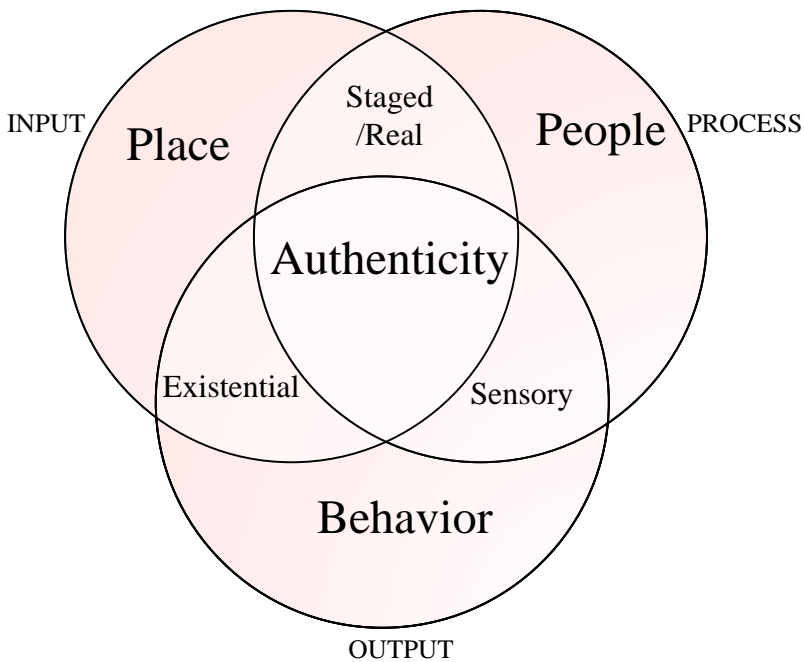
Participants

The purpose of the study was explained to two different focus groups. The first group was 17 (5 females and 12 males) students and the second group had 19 (13 females and 6 males) students. Participants were asked to sign a consent form. It was important to ensure compliance with regulations regarding research involving human participants. The authors were part of the focus group discussions. The location for the meeting took place on a university campus in Central Florida. An introduction was necessary to clarify that all (participants) information will be kept confidential (the tape cassette will be destroyed). The authors functioned as the moderators during the focus group conversations (ground rules were established to make the discussion more effective). The duration was planned to last 1 ¼ hour per focus group. The three types of authenticity were explained and discussed—staged / real authenticity, sensory authenticity, and existential authenticity. The aim of conducting the focus group discussion was to discover what people comprehend and perceive by the term authenticity in tourism, and to see whether they thought it was a significant concept. It was important to evaluate the components of the three types of authenticity.

Materials

For the focus group discussion a whiteboard, tape recorder, computer, projector, chart-board, and a note taker were used as a means to stimulate and record the information accurately. The first part of the focus group meeting (after explaining and discussing authenticity) was to distribute a pilot survey (questionnaire) with 44 places or cultural attractions to choose from in terms of the three types of authenticity (the latter) (e.g., table 3). The participants were asked to comment and clarify the wording on the format and any ambiguities that were not understood. Participants were asked to checkmark (√) which cultural attractions they thought were authentic, staged, staged-real, or fake based on their experiences. In addition to that, they were asked to rank sensory authenticity on a scale of 1 to 5; for existential authenticity, they judged the behavior (i.e., authenticity felt good or bad).

It was important to understand participants' perceptions and interpretations of authenticity in Orlando's cultural attractions; also, the moderators asked them about the source of information for clarification of authenticity (i.e., online, offline, or experiences). There were eight questions (with follow-up questions) in the interview: (1) "what is a cultural attraction? What made you decide to you to visit a cultural attraction or theme park?" (2) Does the media help you decide to go to a cultural attraction? Do the media make the experience more authentic? And why do you think so?" (3) "Was it a pleasant or unpleasant experience? What factors were most important in making the experience positive or negative?" (4) "If you could change the authentic experience in any way, what would you change? Why would this change make a difference?" (5) From the three types of authenticity (staged versus real, sensory, and existential) which one do you think is most important (based on table 3)?

Why do you think so? (6) "Do you use all five senses in a cultural attraction? Which one dominates the most and why? Does it help the experience to feel more authentic?" (7) "As you all know it cost money to enter theme parks. Is the "staged versus real" an authentic experience worth the money? Why? For what do you pay for?" and (8) "How did you feel the very first time you went to a cultural attraction? How you feel today going to the same cultural attraction? Do you feel happy or unhappy (authentic behavior) at what the park has to offer? Why? What is your reason for going to a cultural attraction? Why?"

Table 3
Pilot survey format to the judge the authenticity of attractions

Cultural Attractions / Y/N	Authenticity / ᵃ Orlando's Cultural Attractions	Staged / Real √				Sensory was Ranked 1 - 5					Feeling √		Sources √		
		Authentic	Staged	Disagreement	Fake	Vision	Hearing	Touch	Taste	Smell	Good	Bad	Online	Offline	Experienced

ᵃ Not all attractions were check marked (√), because not all places were visited by focus group members; This pilot survey was dropped due to the small numbers of participants; however it was significant to see the tendency that only a handful of Orlando's attractions were consider a cultural attractions (i.e., from 44 attractions in Orlando, Epcot Theme Park ranked first on the list).

The ATLAS.ti tool—computer software used mostly in qualitative research was part of this research. ATLAS.ti consolidates volumes of documents and keeps track of all notes, annotations, codes and memos in all fields that require close study and analysis. It also provides analytical and visualization tools designed to open new interpretative views on the research.

As facilitators of the questions and main interpreters of the research outcomes, a strong effort was made of leaving it up to the participants to let the answers flow as much as possible, and at times asked follow-up questions to make the answers become clearer and at other times to receive further input from other participants. This was done to prevent any misinterpretations due to the simple fact that both of the authors are foreigners and words and meanings may be interpreted differently. The authors were open-minded to feedback throughout both the sessions as to ensure that all areas and factors of the questions were covered.

*D*uring each focus group discussion a note-taker was assigned amongst the participants to take notes. The first focus group was video taped and recorded with a tape recorder in a special focus group room. The second focus group was recorded with a tape recorder in a classroom.

During the whole process of the qualitative research, the authors did not have any predicaments with race, gender, class, relationships with

participants, motive for conducting research, the experience with issues being research, and level of participation. The authors avoided asking "loaded" questions; participants were doing the talking. This research study were focused on the participants perception of the authenticity of Orlando theme parks and the participants were never asked any personal questions since that would not be of interest of the study's outcome.

Findings

A positive sign was that all participants have visited many of Orlando's cultural attractions. There was overwhelming group discussions on the subject of authenticity and cultural attractions. Participants discussed the subject with some guidance and without interruptions and preconception. The discussion lasted about 1 ¼ hour (just as planned) and was taped recorded and one session was video taped. The data gathered from the first part of the research (survey) were analyzed after the (second part) interview recorded (and written notes taken). All participants agreed upon that the survey was difficult to address— this in part on the amount of attractions available to judge authenticity. In addition, the definition of authenticity was unclear. Time was another factor. In addition, authenticity and culture are perceived and interpreted different among people. The results of the pilot survey were dropped due to timing, amount of questions, and a small amount of participants. The results would be statistically insignificant.

Answer on question # 1

At the start of the interview process, the focus groups discussions showed that the main defining feature of authenticity was though to be difficult to understand. There was debate about which attractions was meant to be 'cultural' as well. One participant expressed the following: "*I think you have to relate to some culture for it be an attraction*". The concept of cultural by itself varies among participants; so do authenticity. Participants said that museums are cultural attraction and a few said Disney is part of cultural attraction; they prefer Epcot theme park as a cultural attraction. In addition, the focus group expressed that cultural attractions has to be a place where you find a 'learning experience' or like as one participants expressed, "*Epcot is the only place you can go and drink around the world and walk around and have a beer from every single country [and] to see what they are all about*." One participant expressed that international tourists think of Disney to be a cultural attraction and locals does think more symbolically of e.g., Mickey Mouse or Disney). According to the focus group it is all about branding to the citizens of the U.S.A.

Participants described why they go to a cultural attraction—they go to a cultural attraction to be a kid again or to take others, or immerse themselves (they have to see the attraction). Another motivation why they go to Disney is because of their children and at least once in their lifetime they considered to go to a cultural attraction like Disney (in other words, it is a 'must' see experience!).

Answer on question # 2

Media is definitely a source of information that sparks interests to visit an attraction. The focus groups agreed that media plays a great role in portraying good and bad advertising. It is only good if the place of attraction is safe (and bad means an unsafe environment). For example, if people die or get into an accident at a theme park it might hurt tourists' perceptions to visit the place of attraction—and media like the sensational news and this type of event definitely is part of "special news break." According to the focus group meetings, overall the media is doing a good job in showing or advertising authentic experiences of Orlando's attractions. Participants show a general consensus on question number two that media can effect perceptions of authenticity; however, according to them it is most important to find out about authenticity via "*word of mouth experience*" (i.e., people that have gone to parks before is more believable or credible than the media). Media helps people feel connected and "*you sort of get juiced up to go.*" However, sometimes media creates expectations through commercials that cannot be fulfilled and people get disappointed. According to one participant "*that is not being authentic and with that the media can let you down.*"

In addition, billboards are other options that help foreigners visit a theme park more than locals. Participants argued that it is more interesting to find Orlando's theme parks billboards publicity in other destinations (other than Orlando). Media opens more doors as one participant expressed: "*just not necessarily that you would like to go but it open up the options just the possibility that it is an option that I could go there or it is out there that I could visit these places… just not make me want to go gives me the knowledge of the places that are there and places like restaurant something like that—so, media helps…*" Another participant contradicts with "*… media don't say whether you wanna go or not just motivate you to go… I see attractions on TV and no way would I want to go there. So, I do not necessary say it motivates me but it kind of influences the decision.*" The authenticity that media portrayed sometimes does not tell the whole story; the media sounds just commercial as one participant disputed "*I would say it looks kind of more commercialized because you see it [-promotion of theme parks] on TV and now you go there it seems more … less realistic than what you see in the commercial before you go but it is the only way of advertising and seeing pictures of a pirates of the Caribbean or the Arabian nights that makes it seem a little bit more like it was created on TV before you go there.*" The media is very much staged and portray sometimes good and bad messages to the public, with new technology of today, the media can manipulate the three types of authenticity very easy.

Answer on question # 3

Participants expressed that visiting a theme park attraction for the first time was everything they wanted it to be—it made them cry even as an adult (they got the chills or goose bumps). Even children dreamed of their last wish. For example, Give Kids the World, a non-profit organization located in the heart of Central Florida (Kissimmee area) exists only to fulfill the wishes of all children with life-threatening illness and their families from around the world which

clearly helps with memorable-authentic and cost-free-experiences by visiting Central Florida attractions (http://www.gktw.org/).

One participant in the focus group meetings discussed that the customers' value system was important since "*the theme of the theme park if it is not interesting to you then it is negative but if it is interesting, then it is positive [and] the level of how good it feels is closely tied to how much I pay to get into the attraction.*"

Based on existential authenticity the experience at Orlando's attraction was / is mostly pleasant (at least more pleasant than going to a museum). The unpleasant parts was paying too much for an attraction, the money was not worth seeing the attraction, waiting in lines with nothing to do. Also, participants suggested that theme park managers should "*entertain*" people in lines somehow—they did not like to be bored by just waiting in line. Participants expressed that pleasant experience is all about if the people that work in attractions cared to meet the expectations; one participant said—"*you better make me feel good about paying the money and when a theme park did not, according to the perception of the customer provide good service!; I just paid $70 bucks to get in here and you better smile at least at me!*" Age and service did also matter as two participant stated "*at one point running around in a canoe in there [the attraction] is a small world after all and flying around in Peter Pan may do it for you but then eventually you want something else with a different theme that makes your heart raise.*" Service matters because it is "really good about putting stuff in the line so at least you are keep [yourself] busy [and] not have to wait unnecessarily but entertainment throughout the wait [time].*" Wait-time according to one participant is about 45 minutes for someone to experience an attraction in theme park; it is difficult to wait so long in line especially when you have small children. In conclusion participants sounded impatiently if they have to wait too long in line for a three minutes experience; they wanted more for the money and wanted to feel amused most of the time.

Answer on question # 4

Participants were given the opportunity to suggest changes that they would do if they were in charge of a theme park. Factors such as keeping technology constantly updated were important in keeping business running. The communications of 'theme park message' to the customers should be sincere. One participant though that theme park is insincere and expressed "*if I knew that the ride is down before I got back in the car….*" Employees in cultural attractions should be informed ahead of time about issues that affect a customer experience. Participant stressed that "*employees should know what is going on everywhere in the park.*" Further concern was the cost of food and participant argued that sometimes the aspect of food is not what it tastes and it is not so cheap. Participants suggested that the vision is the most important sense; people perceive inauthentic experiences if the food tasted and or smelled bad.

Foreigners do have another perspective since they come from abroad with other expectations—they expect authenticity solo. Therefore, foreigners will be more demanding than locals of what they will like to change in terms of

authenticity. There were discussion on Kennedy Space Center; a few participants expressed that the experience is not authentic. In a sense, what is authentic is when someone (Being) is being in real space—the orbit. Thus, changes is important but according to one participant "*a lot of people come to Disney and you can not change that much there—there is no way you can get that many people through rides and stuff like you know the newer ones…*"

Answer on question # 5

      Participants did consider the three types of authenticity important. The first person (male) expressed that staged authenticity was most important, the second sensory, and the third existential authenticity. Most females expressed that sensory and existential authenticity was most important (so gender matters in a sense). In addition, it all depends where someone goes; for example, if someone goes to a restaurant the type of authenticity that dominates the most is sensory authenticity or as one participant expressed—"*some places you know they are fake and you know they are staged but it sounds great and it meets your expectations were it feels authentic.*" The proposition of having these types of authenticity in the focus group meeting was a good idea, because participants contrasted and had variety responses. Sometimes the responses were similar. The three type of authenticity was important to all participants. It was so important that according to one participant "*in sensory authenticity such as smell it is the biggest part bringing memories…like a year ago I or maybe 10 years ago it brings back that smell that brings you back those memories that being right there can makes it more authentic.*" Another participant expressed "*I am part of Disney and I think sensory is the most important; I think it is very important just having that ambience if you really want authentic if you really want to do something that make you a part of it you have to feel the crowds where are you going.*"

      Going to Disney or a cultural attraction is all about the experience and it might even help put 'stress' and 'sickness' away. One participant agreed with this notion when she expressed

      "*my stepmother…decided to come to Disney and like the whole week she was here she forgot about what she was going through and she kind of like you know it was all about her and she was happy and everyone around her were happy you know everyone was smiling everyone was having a good time and made her feel like a kid again; and not so much of being home schooled and you know with no hair. I think that is one of the best things they do … I guess a big corporation like Disney or any theme park does; I have got a few years back and we went to [the theme park] and we saw were they let them stay and things like that and it is just amazing what they [e.g., Disney] do and what people pretty much everyone there is a volunteer brings them food and everything and gifts. I forgot how many hundreds of thousands of kids and their families and they bring them in and their families I think it is awesome.*"

      Sometimes people take for granted what a park has to offer because they do not use all there sensors (sensory). It is not always what you see, that smell, taste, touch, and hear in a scene of attraction.

Answer on question # 6

  The more the discussion progressed, the easier participants found it to generate clear examples of authenticity. Participants expressed that it all dependent where you go to judge or find authenticity. One participant expressed "*it all depends of what attraction you go to.*" For example, if someone is experiencing the safari in Africa he or she might use his or her senses different from Animal Kingdom. Another expression from another participant was "*if it is the 3-Dimensional movie vision it is far more important, but if you are going to a restaurant smell and the taste would probably be the more important than what you can hear.*" Consensus amongst the participants were that vision was the most dominant factor among the five senses, follow by hearing, touch, smell, and taste. To one participant all components of sensory authenticity were equally important and expressed "*all are really important because when it comes to it, it has so many aspects to it like you wanna see food, smell food … have different kind of accents and languages you are not able to hear that like a physical attraction of a cultural attraction….*" Thus, the smell factor is also an important component of sensory authenticity, for example one participant expressed "*like when you walk into Starbucks the first time the first what hits you is the smell; it depends on theme parks and if you are a person that don't like 'cushy' things like I know a person that don't like to eat bananas because of the texture.*"

  Another participant found that hearing is most important and in his own words said—"*I think hearing [is important] because if you close your eyes and hear a silent theme park would be pretty much useless you wanna hear the roller coasters in the background kids laughing and you can hear a million different noises within a certain radius of where you are that just lets you know that you are where someone is having fun or a crying baby in the background.*"

  Sensory authenticity came up good in the focus group and should be part of the universal language. A problem is that not all five senses works for all people; for example one participant said—"*because some don't have all five senses I guess in the case of a blind person, hearing would be important and a deaf person being able to see. Disney is doing a great job at so if you are somewhat handicapped they make up for it because if you go to like bugs life [an attraction in theme park] and a bugs life is a 3-Dimension show and lets say you bad hearing problem you still get to visualize what is going on and you still get to smell the stinky bug.*" As noted, overall the three types of authenticity were important and should be consider by academics, marketers, managers, and consumers.

Answer on question # 7

  In a way participants expressed that it is worth the money to spend at a cultural attraction in Orlando. One participant said: "*I think authenticity is huge with Bush Gardens and Sea World and you have these animals and you know they are real authentic—in the fact of value is when you are paying 60, 70, 80 dollars to go in.*"

  Price or spend money in a cultural attraction depends greatly on age as one participant expressed in the focus group meeting; "*someone that does not have the money to travel to México can just visit Epcot Center and experience [in a sense some]*"

Mexican flavor / culture." Some Orlando's cultural attractions portray history and culture from around the world, and if someone is too far, Orlando is the right place to go. There was some disagreement on for example Gatorland; one participant from South America expected more for the money. Therefore, for her the experience was not worth it. Another person from North America wanted to see gators and expressed that Gatorland felt authentic and it was worth the money. Thus, the age and culture factors of people can make a difference in perceptions and preferences when visiting a cultural attraction. Some participants worried about branding, they think attractions probably are worth going to at least once just to see what it is about, but they need to keep up with new 'products.'

Answer on question # 8

The very first time a participant went into an attraction in Orlando was much excited – it was like "*I can't wait to get there or the first time you see Mickey Mouse it the best thing since birth. Now, it is not the same—it feels not as excited as it was before; you go and see Mickey Mouse and you think of this creepy old guy in a suite trying to take a picture with you.*" In addition, participants felt that experiencing the real thing is more important than imitation. There was an example of Venice in Las Vegas versus Venice in Europe. When people go to the real thing, they do not feel the same anymore about the fake or staged. For someone that lives in Orlando expectations are different from someone that comes from abroad.

Over the years visiting a cultural attraction can be educated and answering pending questions. One participant expressed

"*I remember waiting there with my mom and I asked mom where do they put their fifth finger in a four finger glove [meaning Mickey House hand] and I was trying to figure that out and I still cannot figure out where they put it I know they have fiver fingers inside but where do they put unless the one inside only have four fingers. Now it is always good to know that there is someone miserable inside the costume [laughers]. You see them smiling and from everyone you know that is working there they are all just counting down minutes until they can go home. I was just wondering if they actually smile when you take a picture of them.*" This is a typical example of real staged or disagreement. According to participants, theme park should not loose the magic touch.

One last discussion was that the majority of participants work in a theme parks and the word cultural or culture was different (hard to understand) to most participants—because it has some connotation to it.

Proposed Survey Instrument

The proposed survey instrument that serves tourists' interpretation and perception of authenticity in cultural attractions is depicted in Table 4.

Types of authenticity ►	Staged / real authenticity ►	Sensory Authenticity ►	Existential ►authenticity	Sources
▼	Selection	Ranking	Selection	
Cultural attractions	Authentic, Staged, ►Denial, Contrived	Vision, Hearing, ► Touch, Smell, Taste	Feel and ► being	▼
Places (Input)		People (Process)	Behavior (Output)	On-line Off-line Experienced
Authors	Cohen, 1979 (Situations)	Current study	Wang, 1999 (Approaches)	

The instrument to measure authenticity (in cultural attractions) deals with places, people, and behaviors. Experiences in theme park attractions can be authentic, staged, denial, or artificial. People or tourists are part of the attractions and they use (most of the time) their senses to perceive authenticity; the output for such an experience is called existential authenticity. Previous studies had identified staged versus real authenticity and existential authenticity in the tourism perspective (Cohen, 1979; Wang, 1999), however, sensory authenticity was not part of any study in the tourism context (with the focus of experiences in authenticity). It is important to note that sensory (i.e., five senses) plays a great role in perceiving the 'real' authenticity. People find out about cultural attractions and authenticity either online, offline, or in person. This instrument can rate and rank authenticity in all cultural attractions.

CONCLUSIONS

Based on the two focus groups discussions three types of authenticity were identified as likely to be relevant to tourist experience. There was discussion on cultural attractions as well. However, it seems that the term "cultural or culture" is not well understood. Specifically, they did not understand how cultural attraction and theme parks were discussed together. To avoid any misconceptions scholars should teach the aspect of 'culture' more broadly and diverse. In other words, people should be open-minded and have some synergy in expressing and perceiving authenticity in cultural attractions (and for that people should know the definitions of culture). Defining cultural / culture identity is an onerous task. There has been a great deal written about culture. There are various definitions of the term culture, which derives from the Latin *colera* which means to inhabit, cultivate, or honor. The diversity of definitions lies in the different purposes and uses depending on the discipline seeking to employ. In this study, it applied to attractions in Orlando. According to Groeschl and Doherty (2000), the term culture is used in a wide range of social sciences (e.g.

anthropology, sociology, and psychology); culture has consequently different meanings in the different fields. To mention a few authors that focused on the definitions of culture—Kroeber and Kluckholm (1952) identified 164 different definitions of culture; and Rendall and Whitehead (2001) identified 15 different definitions of culture. On the critic, side, according to Haring (1949) defining culture, "usually suffers from neglect of the canon of parsimony and from failure to consider carefully the nature of a scientific definition." According to him references and observations to culture is not clear and attempts to define such a term invite puzzlement no matter how impressive the logic invoked. Groeschl and Doherty (2000) on the contrary conclude that there are clearly connections in the different approaches and terms used to identify and define culture. According to them, continuing discovery and interdisciplinary efforts in investigating culture are creditable areas of focus for both academics and practitioners. Probably the most useable definition of culture is that provided by Kroeber and Kluckholm, (1952, p. 181) which describe:

> "Culture consists of patterns, explicit and implicit, of and for behavior acquired and transmitted by symbols, constituting the distinctive achievement of human groups, including their embodiment in artifacts; the essential core of culture consists of traditional (i.e., historically derived and selected) ideas and especially their attached values; culture systems may, on the one hand, be considered as products of actions, on the other, as conditioning elements of future actions." (Kroeber and Kluckholm, 1952, p. 181).

The approach of culture and authenticity permits the scholar of society to search for the enlightenment and common sense of the subject in itself. Authenticity is the 'son or daughter' of culture. The only way to distinguish and describe the types of authenticity is if people separate and describe themselves from places and behavior. As noted, there are three types of authenticity, namely staged / real authenticity, sensory authenticity, and existential authenticity. The present study shows that the demand for authenticity is homogeneously distributed.

The question is whether tourists seek authenticity in terms on the three types of authenticity (independently). Also, suppliers or marketers tend to focus more on staged versus real authenticity. Marketing is about place, promotion, people, and product / service (4 P's)—so if marketing is so important to attract customers, marketers should consider the three types of authenticity for the tourism industry. If people in the tourism sectors do have tendency to seek authentic experiences, then it seems foreseeable that the industry should try to accommodate to this type of requirement, making it easier for people to have what they sensed and feel as authentic experiences. There are three type of niche market for authenticity: a market for people that like real versus staged authenticity, a market for people that judge authenticity based on sensory and a market for people that are more emotionally oriented and based their authentic experiences on feelings. Gender might play a role as well in determining

authenticity. People can have a combination of all three, but one type of authenticity dominates over the others.

In conclusion, the authors prepared a proposition to discover if the three types of authenticity were the right ones to involve conceptually / empirically a focus group discussion. – it was the right choice since participants in the focus group discussion elaborated unbiased on the subject of authenticity and a general consensus was agreed upon that these types of authenticity are the right variables to measured cultural attractions, people, and behaviors.

Study Limitations

The size of the focus group may have an impact of the research findings; however, in larger focus groups there may be an issue with participants not feeling comfortable to speak their mind.

In addition, participants did visit only a few cultural attractions and participants were not aware of the words 'cultural and culture.' They perceived cultural attraction very different from theme park. According to MacCannell (1976, p. 23) words, "all tourists attractions are cultural experiences [and] when we talk in terms of a culture, we automatically suggest the possibility of a consensus." This might be the reason why people had a hard time to understand and link culture to authenticity.   The diversity of definitions of culture lies in the different purposes and uses depending on the discipline seeking to employ. In this study it applied to attractions in Orlando. According to Groeschl and Doherty (2000), the term culture is used in a wide range of social sciences (e.g. anthropology, sociology, and psychology); culture has consequently different meanings in the different fields. Probably the most useable definition of culture is that provided by Kroeber and Kluckholm, (1952, p. 181) which describe:

> "Culture consists of patterns, explicit and implicit, of and for behavior acquired and transmitted by symbols, constituting the distinctive achievement of human groups, including their embodiment in artifacts; the essential core of culture consists of traditional (i.e., historically derived and selected) ideas and especially their attached values; culture systems may, on the one hand, be considered as products of actions, on the other, as conditioning elements of future actions." (Kroeber and Kluckholm, 1952, p. 181).

The approach of culture and authenticity permits the scholar of society to search for the enlightenment and common sense of the subject in itself. Authenticity is the 'son or daughter' of culture. The only way to distinguish and describe the types of authenticity is if people separate and describe themselves from places and behavior. As noted, there are three types of authenticity, namely staged / real authenticity, sensory authenticity, and existential authenticity.

 The present study did shows that the demand for authenticity is unpredictably distributed. Every single person is unique; people are not a machine and it is all right to be different, however, in other studies using these

types of authenticity you might have variability in statistics (-this might be no limitation in an empirical research). Thus, authenticity is perceived different no matter what.

Future Research

In future research an alternative approach might be to do a pre and post test (interviews) research of potential visitors to cultural attractions. It will be interesting to know about this type of research in bigger sample size (more people) and in other destinations. Analyses on advertisements could use the three type of authenticity since people find sources in places and portray different type of behaviors. The instrument has potential to be expanded in terms of different experiences such as visiting a museum. The three type of authenticity also work for other type of industry (besides tourism). This instrument works well in structural equation modeling, path analysis, and factor analysis.

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