Impact of the Perceived Authenticity of Heritage Sites on Subjective Well-Being: A Study of the Mediating Role of Place Attachment and Satisfaction

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Abstract: The aim of this study is to explore how tourists' perceived authenticity influences their subjective well-being (SWB) in the context of heritage tourism via the mediating role of place attachment and satisfaction. Taking the tourists of the Palace Museum as an example, the results indicate that: (a) authenticity has a significant positive impact on place attachment and satisfaction; (b) place attachment can significantly enhance satisfaction, but different dimensions of place attachment have different effects on SWB; (c) place attachment and satisfaction play mediating roles in the relationship between authenticity and SWB. The conclusion of this study highlights the significance of authenticity in heritage tourism, and further discusses how to promote tourists' SWB through the perception of authenticity.

Keywords: heritage tourism; authenticity; place attachment; satisfaction; subjective well-being

1. Introduction

Academia has had a long-standing interest in tourism authenticity (TA), although, in the course of researching this topic, some scholars have questioned the value of the study of authenticity (especially objective authenticity) [1]. However, Mkono [2] argued that it was over-simplistic and even inaccurate to assert that tourists are no longer concerned with the authenticity of artifacts and events. After all, the failure to reach a consensus regarding the implementation issues of authenticity is not a sufficient reason to disregard it. Other studies seem to support Mkono's claim. Since the concept of authenticity was applied to tourism, scholars in the field have explored authenticity in different tourism situations from multiple perspectives and with different methods. For example, after categorizing authenticity into objective, constructive, and postmodern authenticities, Wang [3] further proposed the concept of existential authenticity and argued that it could help explain the diversity and variety of people's tourism experiences. Sims [4] approached the issue from local foods, arguing that these have both local and cultural characteristics and could be viewed as a form of "authentic" product that appeals to tourists' desire for authenticity. Using ancient towns as examples, Zhou et al. [5] believed that tourists and residents were influenced by society's mainstream values such that they would concurrently feel some forms of negative authenticity, even while experiencing true authenticity. Therefore, the perspective of concern over authenticity in tourism research is highly diverse and constantly changing. From tourists' experiences [6] to residents' perceptions [7], and from tourism supply [8] to tourists'

demands [9], authenticity has always played an important role in tourism research, as well as the development and practice of tourism, especially the field of heritage tourism.

Heritage tourism is an extensive, important, and ancient form of tourism [10]. In addition to enabling tourists to generate and strengthen a sense of identity for themselves (or others), it also has the potential to increase the economic income of the destination and improve the livelihoods of the residents by attracting domestic and inbound tourists [11–13]. The development of cultural heritage tourism can be based on non-material cultural elements (such as language, performing arts, festivals, and traditional handicrafts), historical artifacts (such as carvings, paintings, and inscriptions), as well as ancient buildings and historical sites of important value. As heritage tourism is a form of travel with rich connotations, the issue of its authenticity has naturally attracted extensive attention from scholars who have undertaken academic research on TA. Using heritage sporting events (a form of intangible cultural heritage) as examples, Zhang et al. [14] examined the relationship between authenticity, satisfaction, and loyalty. Jamal and Hill [15] pointed out that it was necessary to identify the tangible or intangible properties of objects, places, and spaces when comprehending the indicator framework for determining the authenticity of cultural heritage sites, while, at the same time, maintaining an awareness that these attributes are embedded in sociopolitical, interactive, and interconnected relationships.

Despite TA having been discussed by many scholars, inevitable contradictions have always existed between the issues of heritage protection, commercialization, and authenticity during the development and practice of tourism [16,17]. In China, the location of the present study, the main factors threatening the protection of heritage include a surging number of tourists, the transformation of regional economic development policies, and inadequate financial support [17]. On the one hand, the over-exploitation of heritage tourism sites has resulted in a series of problems, such as spatial congestion and environmental pollution [18]. These issues have posed challenges to the protection and sustainable development of heritage, which in turn made it difficult to sustain the protection and maintenance of the objects. On the other hand, the commercialization of heritage tourism has changed local cultures, which has also led to a certain degree of loss in authenticity [16]. This consequence has been especially prominent in heritage sites such as ancient buildings, historical streets and districts, and ancient towns and villages. An example is the Gucheng District (Old Town) of Lijiang City Prefecture in Yunnan. Tourists have complained of its over-commercialization during tourism development, causing it to lose its original heritage value. To this end, tourism researchers believe that a heritage site should adhere to certain norms and specifications to maintain its authenticity, even as heritage tourism is in the process of commercialization and adaptation to modern values, so as to satisfy tourists' consumption demands [16,19,20]. The presentation of authenticity should be the result of joint negotiations between the relevant departments and agencies overseeing heritage management, tourism enterprises, residents, and tourists [21,22]. Only in this way can a balance be found between the development and protection, and between the commercialization and authenticity, of cultural heritage, thereby facilitating the sustainable growth of heritage tourism.

Thus, the appropriate retention of authenticity in heritage tourism contributes towards heritage protection and maintenance and alleviates the contradictions in tourism development. In addition, tourists' needs are better met and their experiences are enhanced. Existing tourism research has mostly emphasized the importance and significance of perceived authenticity in tourism development, which is reflected through the relationship between authenticity and satisfaction, and between authenticity and loyalty [14,23]. However, the relationship between authenticity and tourists' subjective well-being (SWB) has not received widespread scholarly attention. Some scholars in the field of psychological research have found that people's SWB was enhanced by their cognition of authenticity, especially self-authenticity [24–26]. This study aims to explore the intrinsic relationship between perceived authenticity of tourism experience and tourists' subsequent SWB. Existing research has already verified the impact of authenticity on place attachment and satisfaction from the human–place perspective [27–29], as well as the effect of place attachment and satisfaction on SWB [30,31]. At the same time, an individual's emotional responses (such as place attachment and satisfaction) has

been shown to have a significantly positive influence on enhancing tourists' SBW. Taking this into consideration, the present study introduces place attachment and satisfaction into the relationship between perceived authenticity with SWB. The focus is the mediating and multiple-mediating effects of place attachment and satisfaction, leading to the construction of a relationship model between perceived authenticity and SWB under the effects of tourists' cognitions and emotions. The model is then used to explain the internal mechanism for the formation of tourists' SWB during heritage tourism.

Overall, this paper is divided into the following sections: First, the related literature was sorted and organized to inform the construction of a structural relationship model for authenticity, place attachment, satisfaction, and SWB. Next, tourists visiting the Palace Museum in Beijing, China were used as subjects for data collection. Partial least squares structural equation modeling (PLS–SEM) was then applied for a confirmatory analysis of the path relationships between authenticity, place attachment, satisfaction, and SWB. Specific analyses were also conducted on the mediating and multiple-mediating effects of place attachment and satisfaction. Third, the results of the analysis were used to define the study's conclusions and its theoretical and practical significance. Lastly, future research prospects were proposed to address the limitations of this study.

2. Literature Review and Model Development

2.1. Authenticity

Research on TA originated from concerns over the authenticity of museums. At that time, there were objective criteria to determine authenticity. However, when research on authenticity became more in-depth, scholars realized that TA is a flexible concept and that its pursuit and realization are related to the motivations for and fantasies about traveling [32–34]. Researchers have variously explored the concepts and types of authenticity [3,6,35], as well as the processes for its authentication and negotiation [35–37]. They have also used specific travel contexts as case studies to study the factors affecting authenticity under specific tourism situations [38], before further discussing tourists' emotional reactions and behavioral intentions after they have perceived authenticity [39].

Heritage tourism is a representative type of tourism, and hence, the issue of its authenticity has received extensive and sustained attention from scholars. Kolar and Zabkar [40] proposed a consumer-based heritage TA model that was validated using examples of 25 Romanesque ruins located in four European Union countries. Later, Bryce et al. [41] expanded that model using the consumption of Japanese cultural heritage as a context, incorporating more preconceived notions and adding the concept of visitors' engagement to the relationship between authenticity and loyalty in their revised model. Zhang et al. [14] proposed a tourist-based authenticity model for traditional sports events based on the categorization of "cold" and "hot" authenticities. In addition, scholars have found that feelings of dissonance and incongruity were generated in tourists when they came across inauthentic artifacts [21]. The experience of heritage TA involves three key dimensions: experiences of the origins, continuous experiences, and potential and realistic experiences [42]. This study did not deal with the dimensional subdivisions of authenticity but rather considered tourists' perceived authenticity in totality. To some extent, this method of measuring authenticity was more inclined towards objective authenticity.

2.2. Place Attachment

Place attachment is a concept in the field of environmental psychology that refers to the long-term and positive emotional connections between an individual and a specific environment [43,44]. This term can be used to examine residents' feelings about the space in which they live, and to study tourists' emotions towards a particular travel destination. Scholars have conducted extensive research on the emotional relationships between an individual and a specific space. Many similar concepts have also been created to define this relationship, such as sense of place [45,46], destination attachment [47], and community attachment [48]. Meanwhile, different divisions of the dimensions of place attachment

have been formed. For example, Williams and Vaske [49] measured people's levels of feeling about a place using two dimensions: place dependence and place identity. Ramkissoon et al. [50] advocated using the four dimensions of place dependence, place identity, place affect, and place social bonding to measure tourists' place attachment. Chen et al. [51] divided place attachment into the attitudinal and interactional dimensions; the former included place dependence, place identity, affective attachment, and social bonding, while the latter encompassed an individual's place memories and place expectations. In this study, the commonly used dimensions of place dependence and place identity were utilized to measure place attachment.

Existing research has often treated place dependence as a functional attachment that represents the importance of a particular space or environment to the realization of a particular goal or desired activity [52,53]. In other words, tourists' place dependence on a travel destination relies to a certain extent on that destination's ability to realize their travel expectations and satisfy their tourism needs. Place identity can be regarded as an individual's emotional attachment to a specific environment [53] and has an intimate relationship with that individual's self-identity [54]. Some scholars have considered place dependence and place identity to be parallel dimensions of place attachment [49,50,55], while others have specifically explored the relationship between those two dimensions. For example, Moore and Graefe [56] studied users of disused-railway trails and proved that their level of place identity could be predicted by their level of place dependence. Mlozi et al. [57] studied Tanzania's international tourists to find that place identity was, in fact, the antecedent of their place dependence. The present study proposes that in the context of tourism to cultural heritage sites, the realization of tourists' particular goals or expectations would affect their identity, and even their overall self-identity. Therefore, this study made the following hypotheses:

Hypothesis 1. *Place dependence has a positive impact on place identity.*

Empirical studies have previously explored the factors that promote the cultivation and enhancement of tourists' place attachment to a travel destination. These factors were grouped into two aspects: (i) the unique attraction and charm of the destination [58], and (ii) the tourists' experiences and level of participation [58,59]. Of the literature covering the exploration of the antecedent variables of place attachment, only a limited volume has focused on the relationship between authenticity and place attachment. Among these, there was no consensus on the direction of that relationship. Some scholars have argued that place attachment was the antecedent of authenticity. After Ram et al. [27] conducted a comparative study of the main tourist attractions in Jerusalem and Helsinki, they concluded that place attachment was the premise of authenticity. Budruk et al. [60] also believed that the place identity dimension of place attachment was the strongest predictor of authenticity. Conversely, other scholars have insisted that authenticity enhances tourists' level of place attachment. According to Ramkissoon's [29] conceptual framework for cultural tourism in the African island economies, authenticity has a positive impact on place attachment through satisfaction. In the context of natural tourism, Jiang et al. [61] explored the relationship between destination image, authenticity, and place attachment and proved that authenticity had a significantly positive impact on all four dimensions of place attachment. The following hypotheses were made considering that this study's treatment of authenticity was more inclined towards objective perceptions, and that place attachment emphasizes the emotional relationship between an individual and the environment.

Hypothesis 2. *Authenticity has a positive impact on place attachment.*

Hypothesis 2a. *Authenticity has a positive impact on place dependence.*

Hypothesis 2b. *Authenticity has a positive impact on place identity.*

2.3. Tourist Satisfaction

Tourist satisfaction refers to the fulfillment of expectations and the realization of motivations, which affects the travel decision-making process. Since tourist satisfaction enhances purchase intentions, the competitiveness and profits of tourism enterprises will, as a result, increase, and therefore increasing satisfaction is extremely important for both tourists and tourism enterprises. Oliver's view referred to satisfaction as a form of response by consumers to a product/service or its characteristics having provided them with a pleasurable sense of fulfillment [62]. Tourists' overall satisfaction is not only dependent on the satisfaction they felt during the trip itself but is also affected by their satisfaction over the services used prior to travel and the transportation routes taken [63]. Scholars have found through empirical research on various types of tourism that tourists' motivations and expectations before traveling formed the basic threshold for the realization of satisfaction. The specific factors determining tourists' subsequent satisfaction included their experiences and perceptions of products/ facilities during the tourism process [64], as well as the level of their participation and interaction [65].

Existing research has indicated that tourists' demand for authenticity is related to their travel motivations. When assessing tourists' satisfaction with a travel destination (especially those related to ethnic and cultural tourism), researchers inevitably need to examine the relationship between this satisfaction and a destination's authenticity. According to Engeset and Elvekrok [66], the concept of authenticity has a significant mediating role between the attributes of visitor satisfaction and their overall satisfaction, and they showed that real experiences contribute towards the creation of a higher level of satisfaction. The research by Akhoondnejad [67] supported this view. Using festival tourism as an example, he demonstrated that tourists' experiences of authenticity during a festival had a significantly positive impact on their satisfaction with that festival. Although the findings of some scholars have not supported the proposition that authenticity had a direct and positive impact on satisfaction overall, they nevertheless found that authenticity did affect tourists' satisfaction through perceived value [68] and destination image [28]. Based on the existing research, this study proceeded with the following further hypothesis:

Hypothesis 3. *Perceived authenticity has a positive impact on tourist satisfaction.*

Although scholars have generally believed that a correlation exists between place attachment and tourist satisfaction, they had differing views over the direction of that relationship. Some scholars regarded satisfaction as the antecedent to place attachment and believed that tourists would form an emotional attachment to a particular travel destination if they were satisfied with it [69,70]. However, other scholars held the opposite view: Given the role and significance of travel destinations in meeting tourists' specific goals and activity needs, they believed that tourists' place attachment enhanced their satisfaction. Using visitors to the Dandenong Ranges National Park in Australia as subjects, Ramkissoon et al. [50] verified that place attachment had a significantly positive impact on the tourists' satisfaction with the place. Similarly, Yuksel et al. [55] proposed that consumers' emotional attachment and place identity promoted an increase in their satisfaction. This study followed the path trajectory that place attachment affects satisfaction and aimed to explore whether the fulfillment of tourists' specific needs could enhance their satisfaction. Therefore, the following hypotheses were made:

Hypothesis 4. *Place attachment has a positive impact on tourist satisfaction.*

Hypothesis 4a. *Place dependence has a positive impact on tourist satisfaction.*

Hypothesis 4b. *Place identity has a positive impact on tourist satisfaction.*

2.4. Subjective Well-Being

The concept of SWB has always been a focus in the fields of sociology and psychology. SWB, the result of psychological construction, is related to the psychological feelings and reactions that one has towards one's own possessions or experiences [71,72]. In the study of SWB, scholars have adopted various indicators of measurement, which have included cognitive well-being, affective well-being [31,73], positive affect, negative affect, satisfaction with life scale [73,74], hedonic well-being, and eudaimonic well-being [73,75]. Tourism is often referred to as a wellness industry since it plays an important role in the improvement of the SWB of residents living in, and visitors to, a travel destination. Among the various effects brought about by tourism, this improvement is considered a positive aspect of the social effect [76]. The SWB level of a tourist is naturally related to his/her personality and personal characteristics [71]; however, empirical analyses have also found that tourists' experiences (especially memorable tourism experiences) [75] and their perceptions of service quality and fairness [76] can significantly elevate their SWB.

Regarding the path relationship between place attachment and SWB, research conducted from different perspectives has led to disparate results. When Vada et al. [75] studied the relationship between tourism experiences, SWB, and place attachment, they regarded SWB as the antecedent of place attachment. They believed that when tourists generated feelings of SWB after experiencing an unforgettable travel experience, their level of attachment to that travel destination would increase. However, other research led to the opposite conclusion. Through analysis of community residents, Theodori [30] confirmed that the higher their level of attachment to the community, the higher their SWB. Lee et al. [77] used college students as subjects and found that those with strong emotions towards their campus were happier. Scannell and Gifford [78] approached the topic from the perspective of meeting psychological needs and verified that place attachment could increase participants' levels of self-esteem, value, and belonging, which facilitated the enhancement of their personal SWB. In light of the above, the hypotheses below were made for the purposes of this study:

Hypothesis 5. *Place attachment has a positive impact on tourists' SWB.*

Hypothesis 5a. *Place dependence has a positive impact on tourists' SWB.*

Hypothesis 5b. *Place identity has a positive impact on tourists' SWB.*

Life satisfaction is one of the evaluation indicators of SWB. In the field of tourism, SWB research has naturally considered tourists' satisfaction as an antecedent variable in the generation of SWB. According to Neal et al. [79], since tourism and leisure are a part of life, satisfaction with such activities would determine overall life satisfaction. In addition to demonstrating the relationship between tourism and life satisfaction, some scholars have approached the topic from the perspective of the tourist experience. For example, Su et al. examined the impact of tourism on the SWB of Chinese people. After separately analyzing tourists who visited the Yuelu Mountain in Changsha [80] and those who went to the main tourist attractions in Xiamen [76], they found that the higher the tourists' satisfaction with the travel destination, the stronger their SWB. The following hypothesis was thus proposed in this study, based on existing research:

Hypothesis 6. *Tourists' satisfaction has a positive impact on SWB.*

This study's conceptual framework, which was based on the literature review and the aforementioned hypotheses, is shown in Figure 1.
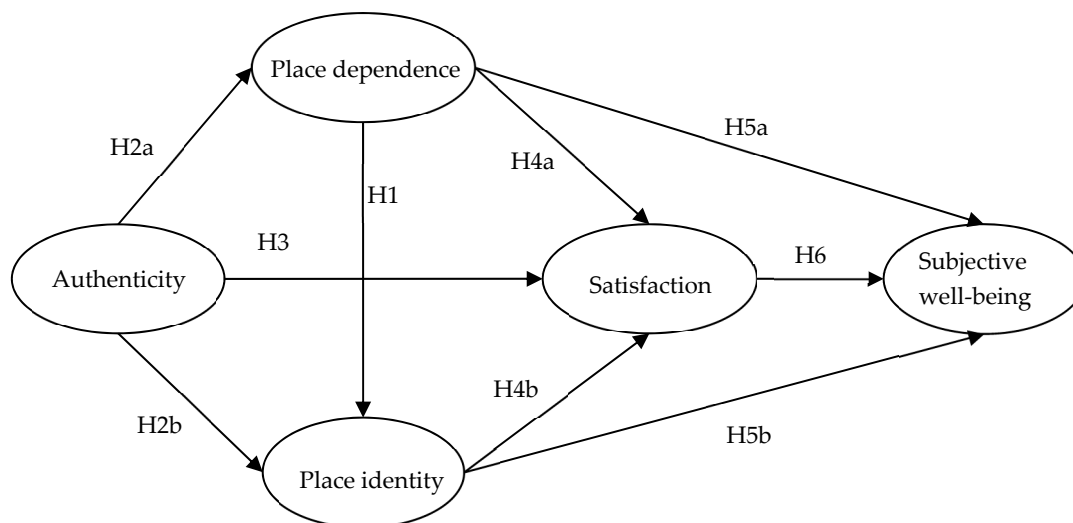
Figure 1. Conceptual model.

3. Methodology

3.1. Measurement

The measurement of the latent variables in this study was based on existing research and literature. For the measurement of authenticity, reference was made to the definition of authenticity in museums by Chhabra [81] and the scale used by Kolar and Zabkar [40]. These included the following three items: "The decoration and furnishings of the Palace Museum resemble the historical scene", "The restoration and maintenance of the Palace Museum are based on the real historical period", and "The Palace Museum reproduces the historical scenes of the Ming and Qing dynasties". The scale proposed by Williams and Vaske [49] was used to measure place dependence and place identity. The observable variables for *place dependence* were, "The Palace Museum is the best place for what I like to do", "No other place can compare to the Palace Museum", and "I get more satisfaction out of visiting the Palace Museum than any other". The observable variables for *place identity* included, "The Palace Museum means a lot to me", "The Palace Museum is full of beautiful memories for me", and "I am very attached to the Palace Museum". After combining the scale used by Io [82] when studying the relationship between tourist experiences and satisfaction, and that used by Nguyen and Cheung [32] when studying tourists' travel motivations, perceived authenticity, and satisfaction, the following three items were used to measure tourist satisfaction: "Worth the time and effort", "Choosing to visit the Palace Museum was the right decision", and "Satisfied with the visit". The scale used by Kim et al. [83] to study the relationship between travel motivations and SBW was also used in this study to measure SWB. The four items were, "I am satisfied with life in general after the visit", "Overall, I felt happy upon my return from that trip", "I felt better physically and mentally", and "Although I have my ups and downs, I feel good about my life in general". The scales for the measurement of latent variables were predominantly based on literature written in English, whereas the survey subjects of this study were domestic tourists. Therefore, the consistency of semantics had to be retained as much as possible during the English–Chinese translation process. Opinions and comments were sought from multiple parties before appropriate adjustments were made to the phrasing of some survey questions. The final questionnaire consisted of two sections. The first section measured the five latent variables of authenticity (AU), place dependence (PD), place identity (PI), satisfaction (SA), and SWB. The five-point Likert scale was used (1 = completely disagree, 5 = completely agree), and respondents were asked to select the appropriate score based on their level of concurrence with the various measurement items. The second section captured the respondents' basic information, including their gender, age, monthly income, educational level, occupation, frequency of travel, and the number of times they had visited the Palace Museum.

3.2. Data Collection

The site used for this study was the Palace Museum in Beijing, China, which was listed as a UNESCO World Heritage Site in 1987 and is a famous destination for heritage tourism in the country. A comprehensive museum built on the foundations of the palaces from the Ming and Qing Dynasties, the Palace Museum holds imperial collections from both dynasties and is the largest museum of ancient arts and culture in China. In addition to its large collection of cultural artifacts, it also hosts the Forbidden City, which is the world's largest and best-preserved wooden-structured palace complex. Many of its palaces and halls, such as the Taihe Dian (Hall of Supreme Harmony), Zhonghe Dian (Hall of Central Harmony), Baohe Dian (Hall of Preserving Harmony), Kunning Gong (Palace of Earthly Tranquility), and Qianqing Gong (Palace of Heavenly Purity), are displayed in their original forms thanks to a restoration process that strived to be in accordance with historical records. With the aim of presenting real depictions of imperial court culture to domestic and international tourists, the Palace Museum has a strong sense of objective authenticity. Therefore, it was a suitable site for this study, which used perceived authenticity as the antecedent variable of the structural equation model.

In view of the fact that the tourism of the Palace Museum entered the peak season in April, questionnaires were randomly distributed on a one-to-one basis at the Palace Museum on April 10–27, 2018. Since 1st January 2014, except for official holidays and summer holidays (from July 1 to August 31 each year), the Palace Museum has been officially closed all day on Mondays to better protect ancient buildings and serve tourists. Hence, the questionnaire was distributed over a total of 16 days. Since the Palace Museum is a one-way tour, that is, tourists can only enter through the Wu Men (Meridian Gate) in the south and exit through the Shenwu Men (Gate of Divine Prowess) in the north, the specific locations chosen to distribute questionnaires were all close to the Shenwu Men, including the Imperial Garden, Hall of Treasures, and other areas, to ensure that respondents had already visited most of the areas within the museum prior to completing the questionnaire. Overall, the time and locations we chose to send out questionnaires could ensure that we could encounter as many tourists as possible who had fully visited the Palace Museum. We told the respondents in advance that this was an anonymous questionnaire and that the information obtained would be used for academic purposes without personal privacy, and asked them if they would like to fill out the questionnaire. If rejected, we continued to look for the next respondent. At the same time, it should be pointed out that, due to the short stay of some tourists, not every tourist passing the particular location was invited to fill in the questionnaire. Of a total of 600 questionnaires issued, 594 were returned. After eliminating questionnaires that were incomplete, there were 441 valid questionnaires, representing an effective return rate of 74.2%. The demographic information of these 441 respondents is shown in Table 1. There were more female than male respondents, and the majority of the respondents were aged 19–40 years old and were relatively well-educated. For more than half of the respondents, it was their first visit to the Palace Museum. The data from the 441 questionnaires were then used for structural equation analysis.

Table 1. Social demographic information.

Variable	Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	183	41.5
	Female	258	58.5
Age	18 and under	15	3.4
	19–25	207	46.9
	26–30	101	22.9
	31–40	71	16.1
	41–50	30	6.8
	51–60	13	2.9
	Over 60	4	0.9
Monthly Income (RMB)	Under 1500	129	29.3
	1501–3000	58	13.2
	3001–5000	74	16.8
	5001–7000	68	15.4
	7001–10,000	45	10.2
	10,001–20,000	48	10.9
	Above 20,000	19	4.3
Education Level	Middle school or below	18	4.1
	Senior high school	48	10.9
	Junior college	71	16.1
	Undergraduate	244	55.3
	Graduates and above	60	13.6
Occupation	Government staff	7	1.6
	Institution personnel	39	8.8
	Employee	146	33.1
	Businessman	12	2.7
	Teacher	12	2.7
	Freelance	44	10.0
	Retiree	5	1.1
	Students	142	32.2
	Others	34	7.7
Travel Frequency	Once a year	99	22.4
	2–3 times each year	225	51.0
	4–5 times each year	64	14.5
	More than 5 times a year	53	12.0
Times of visiting a similar Museum	Never	118	26.8
	First time	104	23.6
	Second time	112	25.4
	Third time	35	7.9
	More than three	72	16.3
Times of visiting Palace Museum	First time	250	56.7
	Second time	104	23.6
	Third time	112	9.5
	Forth to fifth times	35	5.7
	Above fifth times	72	4.5

4. Results

The partial least squares method was used in this study to analyze the path relationships between the latent variables.

4.1. Measurement Model

The indicators for evaluating the measurement model were reliability, convergent validity, and discriminant validity, and the evaluation results are shown in Table 2. The factor loadings of the

observable variables were 0.795–0.905, which were all higher than the critical value of 0.70. PLS–SEM prioritizes indicators according to their individual reliability, whereas Cronbach's alpha assumes that all indicators are equally reliable. Furthermore, PLS–SEM advocates the use of composite reliability as the criterion for measuring internal consistency. The results in Table 2 show that the composite reliability of the latent variables was 0.860–0.916, which was higher than Hair's recommended value of 0.7. Convergent validity was measured using the average variance extracted (AVE) value. Table 2 shows that the latent variables' AVE values were 0.670–0.784, which were higher than the threshold of 0.50. The approach for assessing discriminant validity was the Fornell–Larcker criterion, which states that the square root of each construct's AVE should be greater than its highest correlation with any other construct. It can be seen from Table 3 that all the variables used in the model complied with that requirement.

Table 2. Assessment of the measurement model.

Constructs/Items	Mean	SD	Loading	Cronbach's Alpha	CR	AVE
Authenticity						
The decoration and furnishings of the Palace Museum resemble the historical scene	3.94	0.92	0.832			
The restoration and maintenance of the Palace Museum are based on the real historical period	4.02	0.78	0.812	0.755	0.859	0.670
The Palace Museum reproduces the historical scenes of the Ming and Qing dynasties	4.00	0.81	0.811			
Place Dependence						
The Palace Museum is the best place for what I like to do	3.29	1.02	0.869			
No other place can compare to the Palace Museum	3.25	1.04	0.905	0.862	0.916	0.784
I get more satisfaction out of visiting the Palace Museum than any other	3.24	1.03	0.881			
Place Identity						
The Palace Museum means a lot to me	4.05	0.90	0.814			
The Palace Museum is full of beautiful memories for me	3.96	0.99	0.809	0.755	0.860	0.671
I am very attached to the Palace Museum	3.68	0.97	0.835			
Satisfaction						
Worth the time and effort	4.07	0.81	0.879			
Choosing to visit the Palace Museum was the right decision	4.14	0.78	0.878	0.850	0.909	0.769
Satisfied with the visit	4.23	0.83	0.873			
Subjective Well-being						
I am satisfied with life in general after the visit	3.76	0.92	0.795			
Overall, I felt happy upon my return from that trip	4.07	0.81	0.802	0.827	0.885	0.659
I felt better physically and mentally	3.80	0.93	0.829			
Although I have my ups and downs, I feel good about my life in general	3.98	0.88	0.820			

Note: SD = Standard deviation, CR = Composite reliability, AVE = Average variance extracted.

Table 3. Testing Discriminant Validity.

	PD	PI	AU	SWB	SA
PD	**0.885**				
PI	0.500	**0.819**			
AU	0.312	0.331	**0.819**		
SWB	0.403	0.596	0.398	**0.812**	
SA	0.539	0.522	0.392	0.542	**0.877**

Note: Square root of AVE > Inter-construct correlation. AU = Authenticity, PD = Place dependence, PI = Place identity, SA = Satisfaction, SWB = Subjective well-being. The values in bold are square root of average variance extracted.

The above-stated analysis of the measurement model showed that the reliability and validity of every latent variable in the model were in compliance with the corresponding standards, and, thus, the measurement model had good reliability and validity. The next step was the estimation of the structural model to verify the hypotheses presented earlier.

4.2. Structural Model

The bootstrapping procedure in PLS was used to test the significance of the path coefficients (with 5000 bootstrapped and the remaining being the default values). Table 4 and Figure 2 show the results of hypotheses testing.

Table 4. Testing results.

| Structural Relations	Path Coefficients	T-Value	Results
Authenticity → Place Dependence	0.312 ***	7.247	Supported
Authenticity → Place Identity	0.194 ***	4.071	Supported
Authenticity → Satisfaction	0.192 ***	4.130	Supported
Place Dependence → Place Identity	0.439 ***	9.954	Supported
Place Dependence → Satisfaction	0.333 ***	7.866	Supported
Place Dependence → Subjective Well-being	0.027	0.618	Not Supported
Place Identity → Satisfaction	0.292 ***	5.781	Supported
Place Identity → Subjective Well-being	0.423 ***	8.488	Supported
Satisfaction → Subjective Well-being	0.306 ***	5.734	Supported

Note: *** $p < 0.001$.
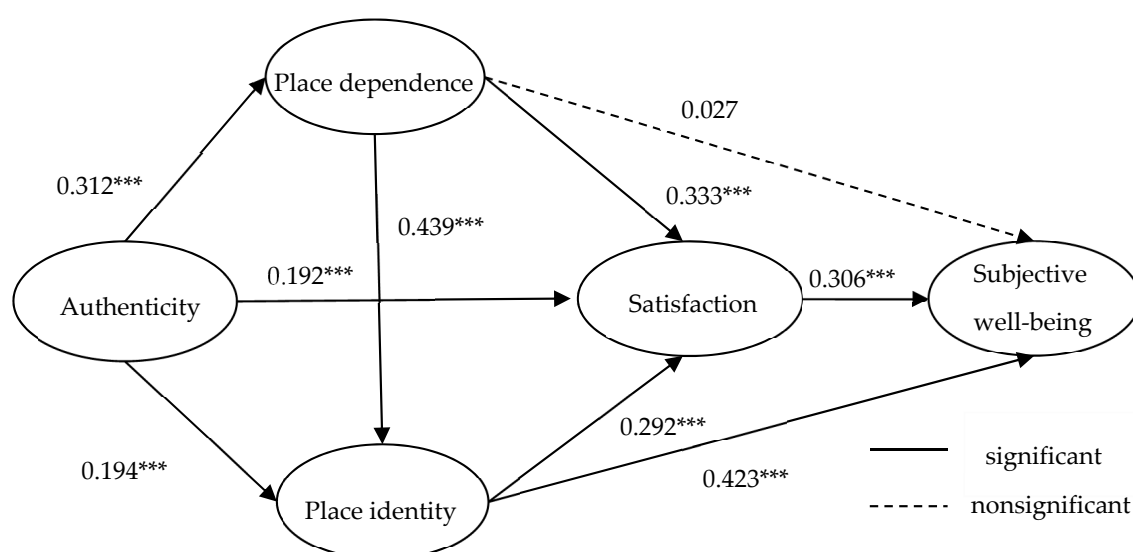
Figure 2. Structural model results. Note: *** $p < 0.001$. Significant means the value of p is less than 0.05.

H1 (place dependence has a positive impact on place identity) was supported ($\beta = 0.439$, $p < 0.001$). This meant that place dependence had a significantly positive impact on place identity. The purpose of H2 (H2a and H2b) was to verify the impact of authenticity on place attachment. Authenticity was shown to have a positive impact on both place dependence and place identity ($\beta = 0.312$, $p < 0.001$ and $\beta = 0.194$, $p < 0.001$, respectively). Thus, the hypothesis that authenticity has a positive impact on place attachment was fully supported. H3 was designed to verify the path relationship between authenticity and tourist satisfaction. The path coefficient and test results indicate that authenticity indeed had a positive impact on satisfaction ($\beta = 0.192$, $p < 0.001$).

H4 proposed that place attachment affects tourist satisfaction positively. Table 4 and Figure 2 show that both place dependence and place identity ($\beta = 0.333$, $p < 0.001$ and $\beta = 0.292$, $p < 0.001$, respectively) had positive impacts on tourist satisfaction, and, therefore, the hypothesis that place attachment positively affects tourists' satisfaction was fully supported. The hypothesis that place dependence has a positive impact on tourists' SWB (H5a) did not pass the significance test for the path coefficient ($\beta = 0.027$, $p > 0.05$). However, place identity (H5b) did have a positive effect ($\beta = 0.423$, $p < 0.001$). Therefore, H5 was only partially supported. Given that tourists' satisfaction had a positive impact on their SWB ($\beta = 0.306$, $p < 0.001$), H6 was also supported.

The predictive power of the entire structural equation model was estimated by PLS–SEM. The explanatory power that this study's model had for tourists' SWB was 42.9%, which was far higher than the standard proposed by Hair et al. [84], who believed that a consumer behavioral study could be considered as having a high explanatory power if the value of R^2 in the study was 20% or over. The overall goodness-of-fit index of PLS–SEM was obtained by calculating the square root of the product of the variable's mean AVE value and the mean of the endogenous variable R^2. The goodness-of-fit index of the entire model was calculated to be 0.465, which was higher than the critical value of 0.36 and indicated that the model had a good fit.

4.3. Analysis of Mediating Effects

This study used the bootstrapping approach to analyze the mediating and multiple-mediating effects of place attachment and satisfaction, so as to further determine the relationship between authenticity and SWB. According to the data in Table 5, the lower bound 95% bias-corrected (BC) to the upper bound 95% BC for the mediating path AU → PI → SWB, AU → SA → SWB did not contain the value 0. This indicated that the place identity dimension of place attachment and satisfaction had a mediating effect on the relationship between authenticity and SWB. Similarly, the lower bound 95% BC to the upper bound 95% BC of the multiple-mediating path AU → PD → PI → SWB, AU → PD → SA → SWB, AU → PD → PI → SA → SWB, AU → PI → SA → SWB did not contain the value 0, indicating that place attachment and satisfaction had multiple-mediating effects on the relationship between authenticity and SWB. The place dependence dimension of place attachment did not have a significant mediating effect on the relationship between authenticity and SWB and could only affect that relationship through the multiple-mediating effects of place identity and satisfaction.

Table 5. The test of indirect and total effects.

Path	β	SD	Bootstrapping (95% CI)	
			Lower 2.5%	Upper 2.5%
Indirect effects				
AU → PD → SWB	0.008	0.014	−0.018	0.039
AU → PD → PI → SWB	0.058 ***	0.012	0.038	0.083
AU → PI → SWB	0.082 ***	0.023	0.040	0.132
AU → PD → SA → SWB	0.032 ***	0.008	0.018	0.050
AU → PD → PI → SA → SWB	0.012 ***	0.003	0.006	0.020
AU → PI → SA → SWB	0.017 **	0.006	0.008	0.031
AU → SA → SWB	0.059 **	0.020	0.026	0.103
Total effects				
AU → SWB	0.269 ***	0.034	0.203	0.339

Note: AU = Authenticity, PD = Place dependence, PI = Place identity, SA = Satisfaction, SWB = Subjective well-being.
*** $p < 0.001$, ** $p < 0.01$.

5. Discussion

This study constructed a structural equation model for tourists' perceived authenticity of a destination, place attachment, satisfaction, and SWB. For tourists who visited a specific cultural heritage site, the relationship between their perceived authenticity and SWB was discussed, taking into consideration the mediating and multiple-mediating effects of place attachment and satisfaction. The results show that for this type of travel destination, tourists' perceived authenticity could significantly increase their level of place attachment (including both dimensions of place dependence and place identity). In addition, their perceived authenticity also had a positive impact on their satisfaction. The two internal dimensions of place attachment (place dependence and place identity) had a significantly positive impact on tourists' satisfaction, but such place attachment did not result in a significant impact on tourists' SWB. However, this study verified that increasing tourists' satisfaction did help enhance their SWB.

In terms of the mediating effect of place attachment and tourists' satisfaction on the relationship between perceived authenticity and SWB, place attachment and satisfaction had significant mediating and multiple-mediating effects. The test for mediating effects verified that there were six effective mediating and multiple-mediating paths: (i) AU → PD → PI → SWB; (ii) AU → PI → SWB; (iii) AU → PD → SA → SWB; (iv) AU → PD → PI → SA → SWB; (v) AU → PI → SA → SWB; and (vi) AU → SA → SWB.

5.1. Theoretical Significance and Implications

A significant aspect of measuring the social benefits of tourism development is whether the tourism process promotes tourists' SWB. Although existing research on tourists' SWB has explored the positive impacts that tourists' perceptions and experiences of services have on their SWB [76], there is a lack of research using perceived authenticity as the antecedent and examining its impact mechanism on SWB. Using a heritage tourism destination as its case, this study specifically analyzed the conditions and relationships that promote the generation of tourists' SWB. The results verified that perceived authenticity was an important condition for tourists' SWB, which could be greatly enhanced through the mediating and multiple-mediating effects of place attachment and satisfaction during travel. This conclusion is of great importance and contributes to research on tourists' SWB.

Secondly, this study has enriched and added to the related research on authenticity. Extant literature on authenticity and place attachment had not reached any consensus in terms of the path relationship between those two factors [27,61]; however, this study found that perceived authenticity by domestic tourists had a positive effect on promoting the two different dimensions of place attachment. From the functional perspective, the perceived authenticity of cultural heritage tourism destinations could satisfy the specific goals and needs of tourists, while in terms of the emotional aspect, perceived

authenticity could enhance the emotional connection between tourists and the tourism environment, causing them to develop an emotional attachment to specific destinations. Furthermore, relevant research has shown that the direct effect of authenticity on satisfaction was not significant, and instead, that authenticity affects tourists' satisfaction through the mediating effects of other factors [28,68]. However, this study verified the direct effect of authenticity on satisfaction, demonstrating that in the specific context of heritage tourism sites, it is extremely important to emphasize the perceptions and experiences of authenticity for visitors.

This study further demonstrated the role and significance of the various dimensions of place attachment. The results from the analysis of the structural equation model show that the different dimensions of place attachment had varying effects on tourists' SWB. It was found that the dimension of place dependence could not directly promote increases in tourists' SWB, which confirmed the views of Williams and Vaske [49] to a certain extent. To them, the various internal dimensions of place attachment might have dissimilar origins and significance. The implication is that it is not sufficient to materially satisfy tourists' goals and needs alone. Instead, the satisfaction of their goals and needs should be the starting point, so as to awaken deeper levels of internal emotions and feelings, and, in doing so, further enhance the emotional connection between tourists and an environment or place.

Additionally, there is still a lack of research on the mechanism by which place attachment and satisfaction act on the relationship between authenticity and tourists' SWB. This study identified that place attachment and satisfaction play mediating and multiple-mediating roles on that relationship and made a detailed analysis of those roles. The findings serve to supplement and improve research on place attachment, satisfaction, and the relationship between the two.

5.2. Practical Significance and Implications

The conclusions of this study provide guidance for the management of cultural heritage sites, such as Beijing's Palace Museum.

On the one hand, this study emphasized the importance of perceived authenticity in the practice of heritage tourism. Perceived authenticity has a positive impact on place attachment and satisfaction, and the effects manifest in terms of tourists' SWB. In view of the different types of authenticities that exist in heritage tourism destinations (such as iconic authenticity and indexical authenticity), such sites should adopt different strategies according to the nature of the various types of authenticities [85]. There are three specific aspects to consider. First, opportunities should be provided for tourists to have personal and first-hand experiences on the basis of the protection of cultural relics and artifacts. For example, tourists should be granted a certain amount of opportunities to freely experience and have close contacts with the relics, so that a sense of belonging to a specific tourism space is cultivated. Second, ways should be provided for tourists to participate in and co-produce authentic experiences. That is to say, those who work in and manage cultural heritage sites should pay attention to guiding and encouraging tourists to actively participate in the process of authentic experience creation when providing services for tourists. At the same time, attention should be paid to the influence of changing environmental scenes on tourists' perception and behavior [86,87]. Third, scene settings, interpretation, and modern information technologies (such as virtual reality) should be fully utilized to awaken tourists' perceived authenticity. For example, scene settings should abide by the relevant specific historical period. For the information interpretation process, attention should be paid to means of inducing and stimulating tourists' imaginations. Virtual reality technologies should also be used to increase tourists' sensory stimulation.

On the other hand, in light of the mediating role of place attachment and satisfaction in the relationship between authenticity and SWB, heritage tourism sites should adopt corresponding strategies to enhance tourists' place attachment and satisfaction. There are two main areas in cultural heritage sites that provide tourists with their experiences: (i) leisure and recreational activities related to the site, and (ii) the significance endowed by the background of the site [88]. This means that the various products and services of heritage tourism destinations have different abilities to satisfy tourists'

searches and needs for significance. Each heritage tourism destination should tap into its inherent tangible and intangible qualities as a basis to satisfy tourists' higher-level emotional needs and increase their satisfaction, thereby generating improved SWB more effectively. For tangible qualities, each site should rely on its inherent heritage resources to develop tourism activities with local characteristics, so as to enhance its perceived authenticity and thereby tourists' functional attachment to, and satisfaction with, the site. With regard to intangible qualities, explanations of the background and significance of the site's cultural heritage should be consistent with contemporary mainstream values. This will stimulate tourists' self and place identities to some extent, thus strengthening their emotional attachment to and satisfaction with the heritage site.

5.3. Research Limitations

This study faced several research limitations. First was the measurement of tourists' perceived authenticity, which was more inclined towards objective authenticity. This meant that more emphasis was placed on their perceptions of the real historical periods and actual objects in this research while ignoring other aspects by which they experience authenticity (such as constructive and existential authenticities). Future research should make more detailed classifications of the dimensions of perceived authenticity to discuss the relationships between tourists' multiple perceived authenticities and their place attachment, satisfaction, and SWB. Next, it can be seen through the literature review that certain variables of this study's structural equation model (such as authenticity and satisfaction) were closely related to travel motivations. It seems that tourists with varying travel motives may have different perceptions and experiences, although the design of this study did not include the impact of travel motivations. Future research should incorporate this variable into the structural equation model to better analyze the ways by which tourists with different needs are being satisfied by the perception of authenticity so that their SWB can be further enhanced.

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