

Brand Authenticity: Testing the Antecedents and Outcomes of Brand Management's Passion for its Products

Julie Guidry Moulard
Louisiana Tech University

Randle D. Raggio
University of Richmond

Judith Anne Garretson Folse
Louisiana State University

ABSTRACT

While customer orientation is accepted as a core marketing principle, this research suggests that an opposing orientation—product orientation—may offer an advantage. Managers who follow a product orientation focus on products that interest and inspire them rather than on products that fulfill consumers' desires. This research suggests that a consumer's *perception* that managers follow a product orientation is consistent with prior conceptualizations of brand authenticity. That research suggests that brands perceived as authentic are evaluated more positively, yet that research does not empirically assess brand authenticity's effects nor suggest its antecedents. To fill this gap, the authors develop a conceptualization and model of brand authenticity grounded in self-determination theory, attribution theory, and extant authentic human brand research. Brand authenticity is defined as *the extent to which consumers perceive that a brand's managers are intrinsically motivated in that they are passionate about and devoted to providing their products*. The model proposes four antecedents of brand authenticity—two related to rare brand behaviors (uniqueness and scarcity), and two related to stable brand behaviors (longevity and longitudinal consistency). It also proposes two perceptual outcomes of brand authenticity—expected quality and trust. Two 2×2 experiments ($n = 136$ for Study 1; $n = 155$ for Study 2) demonstrate a positive impact of the antecedents on brand authenticity and of brand authenticity on the outcomes. Brand authenticity mediates these effects. © 2016 Wiley Periodicals, Inc.

For the past several decades, customer orientation has reigned as one of the fundamental concepts in marketing thought. Customer orientation suggests that, for firms to succeed, they should first determine customers' wants and needs and then create products to fulfill those wants and needs (Deshpandé, Farley, & Webster, 1993; Gatignon & Xuereb, 1997; Kohli, Jawarski, & Kumar, 1993; Narver & Slater, 1990). The research herein suggests that a customer orientation may not be the only appropriate strategic orientation. Indeed, an opposing orientation, a product orientation, may offer an advantage. A product orientation reflects the notion that the *producer's* interests and expertise dictate marketing decisions—not the *customers'* wants and needs (Hirschman, 1983; Voss & Voss, 2000). For instance, a music artist may prefer to perform songs in a folk art genre even though most consumers favor pop music. Research shows that in some contexts,

particularly in an artistic context, organizations with a product orientation outperform those with a customer orientation (Voss & Voss, 2000). Still, most research suggests that customer orientation is positively associated with firm performance (Kirca, Jayachandran, & Beardon, 2005).

Arguably, customer orientation has dominated marketing thought because marketers have largely ignored an important consideration—consumers' *perceptions* of these strategic orientations. Yet, the notion that consumers evaluate an organization's strategic orientation is actually addressed in the brand authenticity literature. Specifically, brand *authenticity* is analogous to the consumer perception that an organization (or brand) employs a *product* orientation. Consumers may judge a brand as authentic when the brand is perceived to be directed by individuals who are inherently interested in the products they produce and who are motivated by the

gratification they feel when producing their products (Beverland, Lingreen, & Vink, 2008; Holt, 2002). On the other hand, brand *inauthenticity* is analogous to the consumer perception that an organization (or brand) employs a *customer orientation*. Consumers may judge a brand as inauthentic when the brand is perceived to be directed by individuals who are externally or customer driven and are overly commercial and profit focused (Beverland & Luxton, 2005; Spiggle, Ngyuen, & Caravella, 2012; Thompson, Rindfleisch, & Arsel, 2006). This brand authenticity literature essentially presents a view contradictory to that found in the marketing strategy research. Specifically, it offers a new perspective by suggesting that organizations or brands perceived to be *authentic*, or those perceived to have a *product orientation*, are evaluated *positively*, whereas brands perceived as *inauthentic*, or those perceived to have a *customer orientation*, are evaluated *negatively*.

While such ideas have been proposed in the brand authenticity literature, the only research that empirically examines this type of authenticity does so in the more novel, human brand context, namely the authenticity of artists and celebrities. Moulard, Rice, Garrity, and Mangus (2014) investigate consumers' perceptions of an artist's authenticity, suggesting it is the consumer's perception that the artist engages in his/her work purely for his/her own fulfillment. An authentic artist is perceived as "true to one's artistic self" (Moulard et al., 2014, p. 578) in that the artist follows his/her innate desires—endeavors close to his/her heart—as opposed to others' ideals (Dutton, 2004; Kivy, 1995). In other words, an authentic artist is perceived to follow a product orientation in that consumers perceive that the artist's preferences dictate his or her decisions about his or her artwork, not the consumers'. Moulard et al. (2014) find that perceptions of artist authenticity positively affect attitude toward the artist, which in turn affects attitude toward the artwork and behavioral intentions. Offering a similar conceptualization, Moulard, Garrity, and Rice (2015) find support that two overarching antecedents—rarity and stability—affect celebrity authenticity. Nonetheless, the authenticity of conventional brands—rather than a human brand—has not been explored empirically. Further, neither study considered antecedents and consequences simultaneously; thus, these studies are not able to demonstrate whether brand authenticity acts as an important mediator.

This research proposes that perceptions of being authentic, or "true to self," also apply to a brand's management—that the brand's decision makers are perceived to follow a product orientation in that they focus on products about which they care and are passionate. Thus, this article's objective is to develop and test a conceptual model of brand authenticity that is theoretically grounded and linked to managerially relevant antecedents and perceptual consequences. The brand authenticity construct is first developed. Then, four antecedents and two perceptual outcomes of brand

authenticity are identified. Two experimental studies are then presented that test this model.

BRAND AUTHENTICITY: A CONCEPTUALIZATION AND MODEL

While different definitions of authenticity exist (Beverland & Farrelly, 2010), there appears to be a consensus that it includes being "true to oneself"—that for a person to be "real," one's behaviors should be motivated by one's actual thoughts and feelings. This idea has persisted for some time across numerous disciplines, including marketing (Arnould & Price, 2000), literary criticism (Trilling, 1972), and art (Fine, 2003). As noted, recent research in marketing also adopts and empirically examines this idea (Moulard et al., 2014, 2015), suggesting that human brands such as artists and celebrities are perceived as authentic if they are perceived as being true to themselves. These ideas purported in the human brand authenticity research are grounded on the tenets of self-determination theory (Ryan & Deci, 2000). The theory proposes that self-determined behavior, or intrinsically motivated behavior, stems from the self. This is opposed to extrinsically motivated behavior, which stems from external sources. Intrinsic motivation is characteristic of participating in an activity for its inherent satisfaction and, thus, involves the "active engagement with tasks that people find interesting" (Deci & Ryan, 2000, p. 233). Importantly, Ryan and Deci (2000) note that intrinsically motivated behavior is "authentic in the fullest sense of those terms" (2000, p. 74). Intrinsic motivation involves one's dedication to an activity and personal involvement in it (McReynolds, 1971). Further, such active engagement and personal involvement in an activity has been associated with one's passions, or more specifically "harmonious passion." Vallerand et al. (2003, p. 757) define harmonious passion as "a strong inclination toward an activity that people like, that they find important, and in which they invest time and energy." Extrinsic motivation, on the other hand, is characterized by participating in behaviors that result in a separate outcome (other than the inherent gratification of engaging in the behavior), often a reward or a punishment (Deci & Ryan, 2008). While self-determination theory focuses on an individual's perceptions of their own authenticity (e.g., Sheldon et al., 1997), the research on artists and celebrities extends these ideas to the perceptions of *another* individual's authenticity (Moulard et al., 2014, 2015).

As noted, authentic artists are those perceived to be true to their artistic self—that they create art for their own pleasure rather than create art that pleases others (Dutton, 2004; Kivy, 1995; Marshall & Forrest, 2011). This notion is similar to what Hirschman (1983) labels marketing to one's self—that artists produce as an end in itself, since the act is intrinsically gratifying. As such, Moulard et al. (2014) define artist authenticity as "the

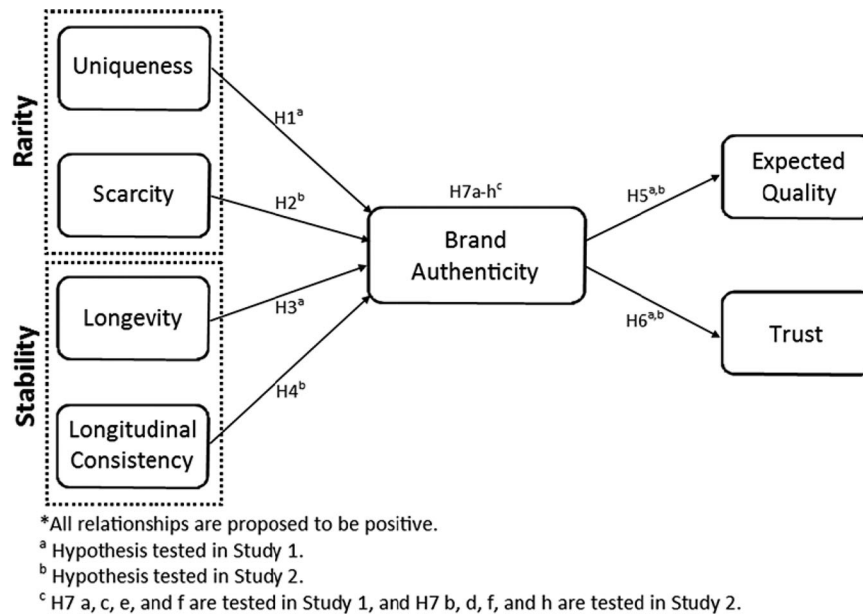


Figure 1. Conceptual model of the antecedents and consequences of brand authenticity.*

extent to which consumers perceive the artist as intrinsically motivated in that the artist is passionate about and committed to producing his/her artwork” (Moulard et al., 2014, p. 579). Alternately, inauthentic artists are perceived as being extrinsically motivated, as they are perceived to be motivated by profits; they “sell out” by caving into customer demands (Moulard et al., 2014).

Following Moulard et al. (2014), this research asserts that such assessments of “true to self” extend to that of the brand’s management. That is, a brand’s managers can be perceived as intrinsically driven in that their decisions about the brand are perceived to emanate from their innate desires rather than from external sources or pressures. Authentic brand managers are perceived to be in business because doing so is innately gratifying and because they are motivated by their enthusiasm and passion for their products. In other words, such brands are perceived to adopt a product orientation (see Hirschman, 1983). As such, *brand authenticity* is defined as *the extent to which consumers perceive that a brand’s managers are intrinsically motivated in that they are passionate about and devoted to providing their products.*

Although, technically, it is the motivations of brand’s *management*—not the motivations of the *brand*—that are assessed, previous research has labeled this phenomenon brand authenticity rather than brand management authenticity. The majority of the research in this stream suggests that managers of authentic brands resist catering to customers and becoming too commercial (i.e., not extrinsically motivated). However, some research recognizes brand authenticity’s connection with brand management’s intrinsic motivation and passion. For instance, Holt (2002, p. 83) states, “To be authentic, brands must be disinterested; they must be perceived as invented and disseminated by

parties without an instrumental economic agenda, by people who are intrinsically motivated by their inherent value.” Likewise, Beverland et al. (2008) introduce the concept of moral authenticity as a type of brand authenticity, which they state “comes from the sense that a passionate creator is involved in making products, and is motivated primarily by their love of craft, rather than the possibility of financial reward” (Beverland et al., 2008, pp. 11–12). To be consistent, the term brand authenticity, rather than brand management authenticity, is adopted here. While this aforementioned research recognizes that brand authenticity can be characterized as brand managers following their inner desires, it does not empirically examine brand authenticity, offer a theoretically grounded conceptualization, nor propose antecedents and consequences.¹ Next, the antecedents and outcomes of brand authenticity are discussed, as illustrated in Figure 1.

Antecedents of Brand Authenticity

“Our Family’s Passion is *Cheese*.”
 —Sargento Cheese

Given the psychological nature of motivations, brand management’s motivations are unobservable. While

¹ While Morhart et al.’s (2015) conceptualization of integrity (proposed as a dimension brand authenticity) discusses passion and intrinsic motivation (among other ideas), their measure focuses on the degree to which the brand is moral and dedicated to its customers. The conceptualization herein, however, assumes that brand behaviors employed to please one’s customers may actually be at odds with brand management’s intrinsic motivation. That is, caving in to consumer demands may force the brand’s management to “sell out” and engage in activities that may not be intrinsically gratifying.

brand management can explicitly communicate its intrinsic motivation, as reflected in the Sargento Cheese statement, behavioral cues may be perceived as more accurate than mere statements of the brand managers' motives. Two overarching behavioral cues—rarity and stability—have been found to influence the perceived authenticity of celebrities (Moulard et al., 2015). Moulard et al. (2015) base the two antecedents on attribution theory (Kelley, 1973), which suggests that people use behavioral cues to assess whether another's behavior is internally motivated. Attribution theory proposes that individuals will more likely attribute another person's behaviors to internal motivations rather than external or situational reasons under three conditions (Kelley, 1973): (1) the behavior is perceived as unique to that person, (2) the behavior is similar over time, and (3) the behavior is similar across different stimuli or entities. For example, Laurie may attribute Barry's humble behavior to his true self (internal attribution) as opposed to situational pressures (external attribution) if Barry (1) is much more humble than other people (unique to person), (2) is humble every time he gets credit for something (over time), and (3) is humble both in her presence and in the presence of important individuals (across stimuli/entities).

Moulard et al. (2015) argue that these three conditions may be useful for determining attributions for family members and friends, in which numerous occasions of behavior are witnessed. In the case of celebrities, however, individuals likely do not distinguish between the second and third conditions: *behaviors that are similar over time* and *behaviors that are similar across stimuli/entities*. This same argument can apply to a brand's behaviors, which are controlled by management. For instance, brand management may have significantly lowered prices on two occasions (similar across time), and both instances were during economic downturns (similar across stimuli). However, many other potential factors could be attributed to the lowered prices at either or both time periods (e.g., competitive pressures, price deflation, overproduction, etc.). As such, each event is likely perceived as discrete since several other factors may be at play at each time period. Thus, behaviors across time and behaviors across stimuli are dynamically interweaved, and these two conditions can be collapsed into one condition—similar behavior across time (Moulard et al., 2015).

Based on the previous discussion and consistent with Moulard et al.'s (2015) antecedents of celebrity authenticity, this research suggests two overarching antecedents of brand authenticity—rarity (behavior unique to the brand) and stability (consistent brand behaviors). Below, these two overarching antecedents are discussed, and for each two, two specific manifestations of each are proposed to positively affect perceptions of brand authenticity. *Uniqueness* and *scarcity* are suggested to be specific manifestations of *rare* brand behavior, whereas *longevity* and *longitudinal consistency* are suggested to be specific manifestations of *stable* brand behavior. In addition to being consistent with at-

tribution theory and recent work in celebrity authenticity, these proposed antecedents are concepts that have been related to brand authenticity or the more general concept of authenticity in the previous literature. Nonetheless, *how* these concepts relate to brand authenticity (i.e., whether these concepts define authenticity or whether they influence authenticity) has not been clarified. Also, while other manifestations of rarity and stability likely exist, these four were chosen because these factors are managerially controllable and relevant and because they typically vary across brands.

Rare Brand Behavior

Rare brand behaviors are proposed to lead to perceptions of brand authenticity (i.e., the perceived passion of the brand's managers), as brands that do not conform to the norm will be perceived as having managers with strong convictions and, thus, that remain true to self. Research in attribution theory suggests that individuals who engage in divergent or uncommon behaviors will be perceived as behaving according to their internal dispositions, whereas individuals who engage in conforming behavior will likely be perceived as succumbing to external pressures. Specifically, within attribution theory, the social desirability hypothesis predicts less socially desirable behavior (i.e., nonconforming) will be attributed to the person (rather than external environment) more so than more socially desirable behavior (i.e., conforming) (Jones & Davis, 1965). Also within the attribution framework, the augmentation principle (Kelley, 1971) states that actions involving costs, risks, or sacrifices (i.e., low desirability or nonconforming behaviors) are more likely to be attributed to the person than to external causes. That is, "doing things your own way" or "going against the grain" is difficult, and people are less likely to engage in such behavior unless they truly feel motivated to do so. Consumer research supports this notion, labeled the red sneaker effect (Bellezza, Gino, & Keinan, 2014). This research finds that individuals who dress in a nonconforming manner, compared to those who dress in a conventional manner, were considered to be more autonomous; they were perceived to "behave according to their own rules" (Bellezza et al., 2014, p. 38). Thus, such individuals are perceived to behave authentically—according to their internal dispositions rather than external pressures. While this research investigated individuals' motivations, such logic is suggested to apply to perceptions of brand management's motivations. Two specific manifestations of rare brand behavior—*uniqueness* and *scarcity*—are discussed below.

Uniqueness. Uniqueness refers to *the extent to which consumers perceive that a brand is unusual or atypical compared to the competition*. Research on the authenticity of persons and brands has suggested the importance of uniqueness. With respect to self-taught artists, Fine (2003, p. 155) notes that "authenticity refers to the

recognition of difference” and suggests that the more unusual the artist, the more their work is valued. Similarly, Peterson (2005, p. 1093) argues that a country music singer must be seen as having a “creative voice” and “an interpretation that makes his/her presentation distinctive and clearly recognizable” to be considered authentic. Uniqueness is also similar to Moulard et al.’s (2014) celebrity originality, found to be a sub-dimension of rarity. Their qualitative interviews of adults suggest celebrities that were independent and creative were perceived as authentic, whereas those that followed the crowd were perceived as inauthentic. Thus, the following is proposed:

H1: *Uniqueness* will have a positive effect on brand authenticity.

Scarcity. Scarcity is defined as *the extent to which consumers perceive that the brand’s goods or service outlets are not widely available or accessible*. A brand’s scarcity gives consumers the impression that the brand is not solely focused on aggressive growth, as are many brands. As such, brands that produce few goods or manage few outlets are more likely to be seen as rare. Further, brands with limited output are likely to be perceived to take pride in and are committed to their craft. In his book on authentic brands, Boyle (2003) notes that brands perceived as small are believed to have handmade goods that are not mass-produced. In Beverland’s (2006, p. 256) qualitative study on authentic wines, one participant notes, “scarcity has value and authentic wines are those that are difficult to find because they are made in small batches.” Scarcity is also similar to Moulard et al.’s (2015) notion of celebrity discretion, which their results suggest is a sub-dimension of rarity. Discretion refers to the perception that the celebrity attempts to limit his/her exposure. This supports a popular press assertion that a brand’s authenticity can be eroded by over commercialization and ubiquity (Gilmore & Pine, 2007). Thus, the following is proposed:

H2: *Scarcity* will have a positive effect on brand authenticity.

Stable Brand Behavior

In addition to rare brand behaviors, stable brand behaviors are also proposed to lead to perceptions of brand authenticity. The managers of stable brands are perceived to concentrate on what they love to do and do not waver; they are solid and steady and, thus, likely are perceived as committed to their calling. Both attribution theory and self-determination theory suggest that stability should lead to brand authenticity. Attribution theory posits that observations of another’s stable behavior should lead to perceptions that such behavior is attributed to that person rather than to external forces (Kelley, 1973). This attribution process makes

sense given that individuals judge their own authenticity based on the degree to which their behavior is stable. Specifically, Sheldon et al. (1997) find that a high variation (or the instability) of one’s personality across different roles and traits is related to lower levels of one’s self-perceived authenticity. The research herein suggests that individuals will perceive *another* entity (in this case, the brand’s management) as authentic if that entity exhibits stability. Two specific manifestations of stable brand behavior—*longevity* and *longitudinal consistency*—are discussed below.

Longevity. Longevity refers to *the extent to which consumers perceive that the brand has been in existence for a long period of time*. A brand’s persistence, or the management’s pursuit of an activity for a long period of time, may serve as an indication of brand management’s conviction and passion. Social psychology research finds that persistence is an outcome of an individual’s passion (Vallerend et al., 2003). As such, it is plausible that people consider persistence when assessing the passion of another. Research in brand authenticity notes the importance of longevity. Beverland and Luxton (2005) recognize that Australian winemakers emphasize their long history in an attempt to appear authentic. Morhart et al. (2015) identify continuity as a dimension of brand authenticity; brands with continuity are those that have a long history. Thus, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H3: Longevity will have a positive effect on brand authenticity.

Longitudinal Consistency. Longitudinal consistency is defined as *the extent to which consumers perceive that the brand has not changed*. The concepts of longevity and longitudinal consistency are similar but distinct. Longitudinal consistency refers to consistency over an unspecified period of time; whereas longevity refers to a long period of time that may or may not be characterized as consistent. Brands that exhibit longitudinal consistency project continuity and a consistent image over the years, even though specific aspects such as products, ingredients, or other attributes of the brand may have changed. For instance, while the Apple product line has changed over the years, the foundations on which the brand has been built have remained constant: its reputation for innovativeness, its logo, and its image of being pure, simple, and intuitive. Brand authenticity research supports this notion. Morhart et al.’s (2015) brand authenticity dimension of continuity proposes that authentic brands are those that do not change. In their study of authenticity in the wine industry, Beverland and Luxton (2005) describe how wine producers emphasize traditional production methods (i.e., a consistent style) to project an authentic image, despite the fact that these producers may actually adopt technologically advanced methods. Further,

Moulard et al.'s (2015) findings offer evidence that consistency is a sub-dimension of stability in the context of celebrity authenticity. They define consistency as "the perception that the celebrity's personality and characteristics have not changed" (p. 179). As such, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H4: Longitudinal consistency will have a positive effect on brand authenticity.

PERCEPTUAL CONSEQUENCES OF BRAND AUTHENTICITY: EXPECTED QUALITY AND TRUST

In order to demonstrate the effects of a strategic orientation perceived to be focused on intrinsic motivation (i.e., product orientation), the model herein also proposes that brand authenticity has positive effects on two perceptual consequences: expected quality and trust.

Arguably, a brand's high-quality products may be an indication of its authenticity—that quality is an antecedent of brand authenticity. In their qualitative study of the surfer and skateboarder subcultures, Beverland, Farrelly, and Quester (2010) uncovered the importance of brand performance, or quality, as a determinant of a brand's authenticity because it "communicated continued commitment by the brand owners to 'pushing the envelope' in the sport" (p. 707). Yet for consumers who have little familiarity with a brand and have not yet consumed a brand's goods and services, the reverse is more likely. A brand's authenticity may signal quality—that is, authenticity may be an antecedent of expected quality. Previous research has established that when a brand is unknown or new, a context in which high uncertainty exists, consumers rely on extrinsic cues more so than intrinsic cues in making quality judgments (Close, Moulard, & Monroe, 2011; see also Olson, 1973; Rao & Monroe, 1989; Zeithaml, 1988). Unlike intrinsic cues such as product ingredients that are difficult to evaluate prior to consumption, extrinsic cues such as brand and price are readily observable. As such, consumers often rely heavily on these extrinsic cues to estimate the product's quality. Brand authenticity—or the perception that the brand managers are motivated by their passion to produce their products—can be classified as an extrinsic cue since it is separate and distinct from the product itself. The research herein proposes that when faced with an unfamiliar brand, consumers are likely to rely on perceptions of a brand's authenticity in assessing the expected quality they will receive. Thus, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H5: Brand authenticity will have a positive effect on expected quality.

Additionally, brand managers who are perceived as intrinsically motivated should elicit consumers' trust in the brand. In particular, brand authenticity should pos-

itively affect benevolent trust, or the belief that brand managers are concerned about the consumers' well-being beyond their profit motivations (Mayer, Davis, & Schoorman, 1995; Schlosser, White, & Lloyd, 2006). Brand managers who are truly enthusiastic about producing their offerings will be excited to share these offerings with their customers, particularly those who are equally enthusiastic about the brand's products. The following quote from Thompson et al. (2006, p. 59), describing a consumer's authenticity perceptions of a coffee shop owner, reflects this idea:

Carie views herself as intimately involved in the proprietor's (Tina) efforts to perfect a time-honored craft and to cultivate greater consumer appreciation for skillfully roasted coffee. In keeping with the artisan ideal, Tina (the proprietor) has earned a further claim to authenticity through her apprenticeship at Kaladi Brothers Coffee . . . , which contributes to the sense that she is not catering to the masses (a la Starbucks) but only to those who can really appreciate a great cup of coffee (and are willing to make some effort to attain it).

As such, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H6: Brand authenticity will positively impact brand trust.

The Mediating Role of Brand Authenticity

Lastly, brand authenticity is also proposed to mediate the effects of the four antecedents—uniqueness, scarcity, longevity, and longitudinal consistency—on the two outcomes—expected quality and trust. Formally stated:

H7: Brand authenticity mediates the relationships between

- (a) uniqueness and expected quality
- (b) scarcity and expected quality
- (c) longevity and expected quality
- (d) longitudinal consistency and expected quality
- (e) uniqueness and brand trust
- (f) scarcity and brand trust
- (g) longevity and brand trust
- (h) longitudinal consistency and brand trust.

STUDIES 1 AND 2

Method

Two experiments were conducted to test the effects of the proposed antecedents on brand authenticity (H1–H4), the effect of brand authenticity on expected quality and trust (H5 and H6), and the mediating effects of brand authenticity (H7a–h). Because the two rarity antecedents are proposed to be related (rather than independent), as are the two stability antecedents, each study included one rarity antecedent and one stability antecedent. Specifically, Study 1 was a 2 (uniqueness)

$\times 2$ (longevity) between-subjects design, which tested H1, H3, H5, H6, and H7 (a, c, e, and g). Study 2 was a 2 (scarcity) $\times 2$ (longitudinal consistency) between-subjects design, which tested H2, H4, H5, H6, and H7 (b, d, f, and h). The two samples consisted of undergraduate business students from a large university ($n = 136$ for Study 1 and $n = 155$ for Study 2). No student participated in both experiments.

The two experiments used the same context and guise, followed similar procedures, and measured the same dependent variables (brand authenticity, expected quality, and trust). For each experiment, participants were asked to complete an online experiment, in which they were randomly assigned to one of four study conditions. Each participant was presented with a supposed *Wall Street Journal* article describing the rise of coffee consumption. One paragraph within the article described a fictitious coffee shop, Café de La Vie, and the factors were manipulated within this paragraph (as will be discussed later). As the guise, students were told that the *Wall Street Journal* was considering publishing an online edition for students and that they would be participating in a test market of this new edition. Participants were first asked about their news interests and media consumption habits. They were then asked their opinions about two filler ads and a filler news article. Next, they were presented with the stimulus article. Following that, they responded to the dependent measures and the manipulation check items (discussed subsequently). No participants were able to guess the intent of either study.

News Article Manipulations. The stimulus article included a paragraph describing a coffee shop. In Study 1 (uniqueness and longevity), the low uniqueness condition stated that the coffee shop provided sofas and chairs, free internet access, and was like most other coffee shops. The high uniqueness condition stated that the coffee shop had distinct features, including being the first coffee shop to offer laptop rentals and one of the few coffee shops that encourages customers to bring their dogs. Longevity was manipulated by stating that the coffee shop had opened the previous week and would be celebrating its grand opening (low longevity) or would soon be celebrating its 100-year anniversary (high longevity).

In Study 2 (scarcity and longitudinal consistency), scarcity was manipulated by stating the coffee shop had either 500 stores (low scarcity) or three stores (high scarcity). Concerning the longitudinal consistency manipulation, the low condition stated that the establishment was a restaurant prior to being a coffee shop and that there was a possibility it may change back to a restaurant. It also stated that ownership had changed several times. The high longitudinal consistency condition stated that the establishment is still owned by the founder, that the first three employees hired still work at the company, and that the coffee shop has maintained its original mission of friendly service in a comfortable environment.

Measures. Given that the brand authenticity construct (as conceptualized here) and the four antecedent constructs (i.e., manipulation checks) have not been previously identified or measured, measures were developed for these constructs. The scales were created based on six group interviews with 26 undergraduate business students from a large university. To elicit notions of true-to-self brand authenticity rather than other meanings of brand authenticity, the participants were first asked to consider individuals whom they personally knew that they believed to be authentic and inauthentic. They were then told that marketers consider that brands could also be perceived as authentic/inauthentic in the same way as humans. With this in mind, the participants were then asked to choose the most authentic and the most inauthentic brand of four brands presented and then asked to explain the rationale for their choice. The participants were also asked to state any other brands (beyond those four listed) that they believed were authentic and inauthentic and the reasons for their beliefs. In addition to these focus groups, the qualitative work on brand authenticity and dictionary and thesaurus searches were also used to develop the item pool for the brand authenticity items, as well as for the four antecedent constructs (i.e., manipulation checks) (Netemeyer, Bear-den, & Sharma, 2003).² The focus group results also suggested that consumers do not use the term “managers” or “management” when discussing intrinsic motivation. Rather, they simply state the brand name when they are, in fact, referring to the brand’s managers. For instance, consumers would not state that BP’s managers are profit driven; rather, they would simply state that BP is profit driven. As such, the brand authenticity items include the brand name and do not include the word “manager” or “management.” Such an approach is consistent with other brand research. For instance, one of Morhart et al.’s (2015) measures of brand integrity is “A brand that cares about its customers.”

These preliminary items were pretested using 248 undergraduate business majors from a large university. Each of the 19 items was measured with a 7-point, Likert-type scale anchored with “strongly disagree” and “strongly agree.” Students were first presented with one of eight existing brands from two product categories (beer and coffee shops) and then asked to respond to the items with that brand in mind. The data were analyzed with principal factors analysis using a promax rotation. As expected, five factors emerged with eigenvalues greater than 1, which explained 70.87% of the variance. Based on this analysis, three items were dropped due to loading on a factor with a score lower than 0.50. The remaining measures were validated on a separate sample of 123 undergraduate business majors. These data were also

² Because Moulard et al.’s (2014) study on artist authenticity was published after this study was conducted, the adaptation of Moulard et al.’s (2014) scale to a brand context was not possible.

Table 1. Measurement Items.

Construct	Measure ^a	Loading ^{b,c}		CR ^d		AVE ^e	
		S1	S2	S1	S2	S1	S2
Brand authenticity	Café de la Vie has a true passion for its business.	0.81	0.87	0.93	0.93	0.81	0.81
	Café de la Vie wants to do its best at providing its product/service.	0.95	0.88				
Uniqueness	Café de la Vie is devoted to what it does.	0.93	0.95				
	Café de la Vie has distinctive characteristics.	0.96		0.96		0.87	
	There is something about Café de la Vie that makes it stand out.	0.97					
	There is something special about Café de la Vie.	0.88					
Longevity ^g	There's something that separates Café de la Vie from other coffee houses.	0.93					
	Café de la Vie has been around for a while.	0.99		0.99		0.99	
Scarcity	Café de la Vie has a long history.	0.99					
	Café de La Vie is not a coffee house most people run across very often.		0.73		0.79		0.56
	Café de La Vie is not one that is available everywhere.		0.77				
Longitudinal consistency	I think people might sometimes have trouble finding a Café de La Vie.		0.74				
	Not much has changed about Café de la Vie.		0.90		0.96		0.89
	Café de la Vie has pretty much stayed the same.		0.99				
Expected quality ^f	Café de la Vie has maintained a consistent image.		0.94				
	Extremely poor/extremely good.	0.96	0.98	0.96	0.97	0.88	0.91
Brand trust	Awful/excellent.	0.95	0.97				
	Very low/very high.	0.91	0.92				
	I trust Café de La Vie.	0.87	0.85	0.88	0.89	0.70	0.72
	I could rely on Café de La Vie.	0.83	0.89				
	Café de La Vie is an honest company.	0.81	0.81				

^aMeasures are based on a 7-point point scale. With the exception of *expected quality*, all items were Likert scales anchored at strongly disagree (1) and strongly agree (7).

^bStandardized regression weights based on SEM analysis are reported.

^cRegression weights for all measures were significant at $p < 0.001$.

^dComposite reliabilities (Bagozzi & Yi, 1988) are reported.

^eAverage variance extracted (Fornell & Larcker, 1981) is reported.

^fThe item stem was "overall, what is the level of service quality you would expect to receive from Café de La Vie?"

^gThe two error variances for the *longevity* items were constrained to be equal due to one of the error variances being negative in an initial run (-0.002).

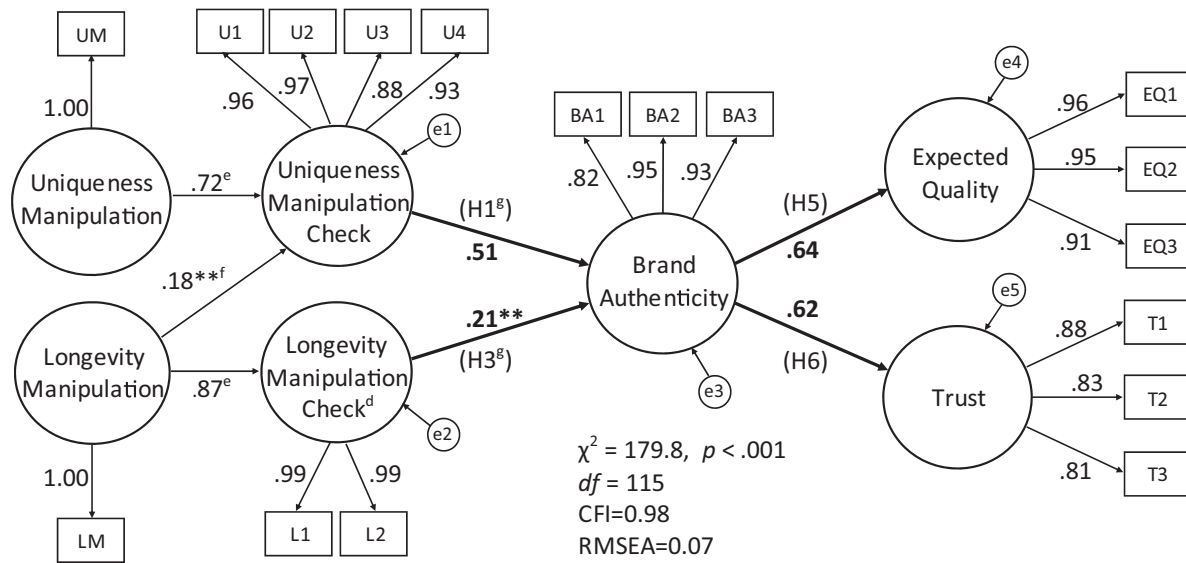
analyzed using principal factors analysis with a pro-max rotation. Five factors emerged explaining 81.52% of the variance. Further, all of the items loaded on their appropriate factors and, with the exception of one item, the loadings ranged from 0.70 to 0.99. One item was dropped due to its loading being less than 0.60 and it cross-loading over 0.50 on another factor. The final items used in the experiments are presented in Table 1.

The other two dependent measures, expected quality and trust, were drawn from prior research and were each measured with three-item, 7-point scales (also presented in Table 1). Consistent with Spreng and Mackroy (1996), to measure expected quality, participants responded to the question, "What is the level of service quality you expect to receive from Café de La Vie?" by answering the three bipolar items. Consistent with Chaudhuri and Holbrook (2001), brand trust was measured with three Likert scale items anchored with "strongly disagree" and "strongly agree."

Results

The data were analyzed using structural equation modeling (SEM) with AMOS 22.0.0. Although using SEM to analyze experimental data is not a common practice among marketing researchers (Michon & Chebat, 2008), SEM nonetheless offers several advantages over analysis of variance methods, which are typically used to analyze experimental data. SEM (1) corrects for measurement error, (2) handles more complex relations among the dependent variables, and (3) controls for any unintended effects (i.e., nonhypothesized effects) on manipulation check measures and on the dependent variable(s) (Bagozzi & Yi, 1989; MacKenzie, 2001; Michon & Chebat, 2008).

The data were modeled similarly for both experiments, consistent with the method suggested by MacKenzie (2001). These structural models and results are illustrated in Figures 2 and 3. (The measurement models are discussed subsequently.) For each data set,



- ^a The standardized parameters are presented in the above model.
- ^b All path coefficients are significant at $p < .001$ except those marked with an asterisk(s) (** $p < .01$; * $p < .05$).
- ^c The error variances of the indicators are not depicted.
- ^d The error variances of the longevity indicators were constrained to be equal due to a negative error variance on the initial run (see Hair et al. 2006).
- ^e These paths indicate the effect of the manipulations on their respective manipulation check measures, or what MacKenzie (2001) refers to as *conceptual independent variables (CIVs)*. He notes the CIV should mediate the effect of the manipulation on the dependent variable (in this case, brand authenticity).
- ^f This path was included when testing the proposed model to control for the unintended effect of the longevity manipulation on the uniqueness manipulation check (MacKenzie 2001).
- ^g All of the indirect effects of the manipulations on brand authenticity (mediated by the respective manipulation checks) are statistically significant as reported in the text.

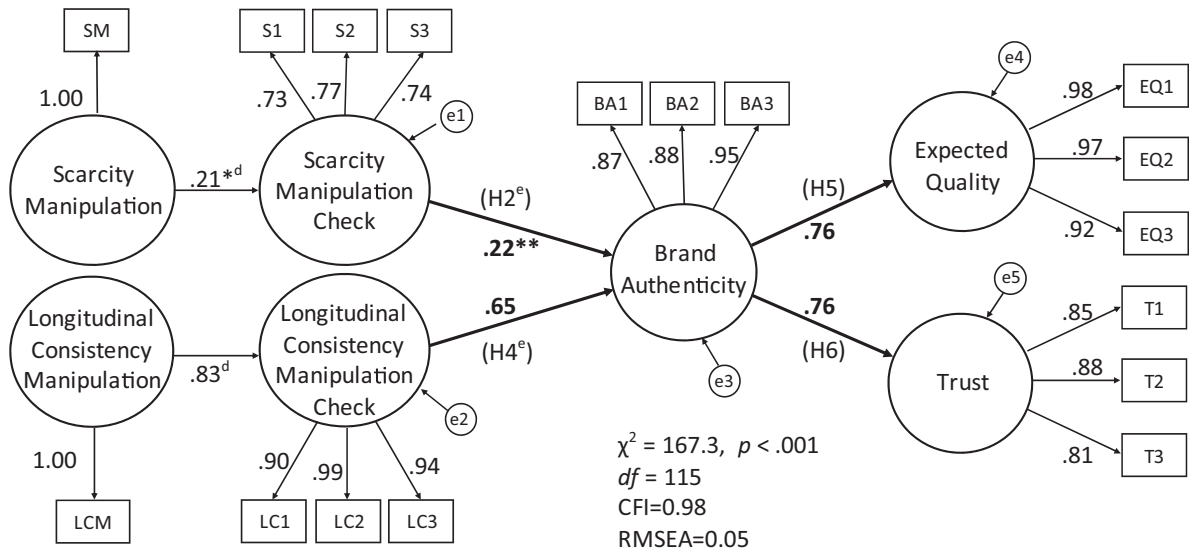
Figure 2. SEM results of Study 1: Uniqueness \times Longevity.^{a,b,c}

the models included the two manipulations, which are modeled as exogenous dummy variables, as well as the manipulation checks, which are modeled as endogenous multi-item latent factors. Consistent with the third advantage of SEM, modeling the data in this way allows testing whether the manipulations have their intended effect on their respective manipulation checks, as well as testing whether the manipulations have unintended effects on constructs other than their respective manipulation checks (MacKenzie, 2001). This modeling also enables testing whether the manipulation check mediates the effect of the manipulation on the outcome variable (i.e., brand authenticity). Thus, the paths on the left side of the models that flow from the manipulation factors to the manipulation check factors assess the effectiveness of the manipulations; the other paths within the model test the proposed hypotheses.

Measurement Models—Studies 1 and 2. As per the previous discussion, the two measurement models (i.e., Study 1 and Study 2) included brand authenticity, expected quality, and trust, the two manipulation check factors (uniqueness and longevity for Study 1; scarcity and longitudinal consistency for Study 2), and the manipulations. The results of the measurement models for both experiments suggest good-fitting models (Study 1: $\chi^2 = 147.4, p < 0.001, df = 101, CFI = 0.98,$

$RMSEA = 0.06$; Study 2: $\chi^2 = 145.8, p < 0.001, df = 100, CFI = 0.98, RMSEA = 0.06$). (One of the longevity items had a negative error variance [$-0.03, p > 0.10$] in Study 1. Thus, for both the measurement and structural models, the error variances for the longevity indicators were constrained to be equal [Hair et al., 2006].) The results also provided evidence of convergent validity, shown in Table 1. All standardized loadings were significant, ranging from 0.81 to 0.99 for Study 1 and from 0.73 to 0.99 for Study 2. Additionally, all multi-item constructs satisfied Bagozzi and Yi's (1988) recommendation that composite reliabilities exceed 0.60, ranging from 0.88 to 0.99 for Study 1 and from 0.79 to 0.97 for Study 2. Similarly, all constructs satisfied Fornell and Larcker's (1981) criterion that the average variance extracted should exceed 0.50, ranging from 0.70 to 0.99 for Study 1 and from 0.56 to 0.91 for Study 2. Discriminant validity was assessed using Fornell and Larcker's (1981) approach: for each construct pair, the average variance extracted for both constructs was greater than their squared correlation. The correlation, means, and standard deviations for the constructs are provided in Table 2.

Structural Model: Study 1—Uniqueness \times Longevity. The proposed model was tested using AMOS 22.0.0, and the results suggest a good-fitting



^a The standardized parameters are presented in the above model.

^b All path coefficients are significant at $p < .001$ except those marked with an asterisk(s) (** $p < .01$; * $p < .05$).

^c The error variances of the indicators are not depicted.

^d These paths indicate the effect of the manipulations on their respective manipulation check measures, or what MacKenzie (2001) refers to as *conceptual independent variables (CIVs)*. He notes the CIV should mediate the effect of the manipulation on the dependent variable (in this case, brand authenticity).

^e All of the indirect effects of the manipulations on brand authenticity (mediated by the respective manipulation checks) are statistically significant as reported in the text.

Figure 3. SEM results of Study 2: Scarcity \times Longitudinal consistency.^{a,b,c}

Table 2. Means,^a Standard Deviations,^a and Correlations^b of Measured Constructs.

Study 1 ^c							
Construct	Mean	Standard Deviation	AU	U	L	Q	T
Authenticity (AU)	5.13	1.00	1.00				
Uniqueness (U)	4.67	1.68	0.53***	1.00			
Longevity (L)	3.86	2.39	0.27**	0.14	1.00		
Quality (Q)	5.42	0.98	0.62***	0.42***	0.32***	1.00	
Trust (T)	4.56	0.89	0.60***	0.42***	0.28**	0.56***	1.00
Study 2 ^d							
Construct	Mean	Standard Deviation	AU	S	LC	Q	T
Authenticity (AU)	4.83	1.32	1.00				
Scarcity (S)	5.21	1.15	0.21*	1.00			
Long. const. (LC)	4.03	2.06	0.65***	0.03	1.00		
Quality (Q)	5.14	1.19	0.74***	0.27**	0.49***	1.00	
Trust (T)	4.22	1.08	0.75***	0.30**	0.50***	0.69***	1.00

* $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$.

^aBased on the average of measurement items comprising the scale for each construct.

^bCorrelations between latent constructs (from the standardized PHI matrix; Jöreskog & Sörbom, 2001).

^c $n = 136$.

^d $n = 155$.

model ($\chi^2 = 179.8$, $p < 0.001$, $df = 115$, CFI = 0.98, RMSEA = 0.07). Before testing the proposed hypotheses, the intended and unintended effects of the manipulations were assessed. As shown in Figure 2, the manipulations for uniqueness and longevity had the expected effects on their respective manipulation checks; both paths were positive and statistically significant (0.72 and 0.87, respectively; $p < 0.001$ for

both paths). Unintended effects of the manipulations on all other factors were then assessed. One significant unintended effect was uncovered: the longevity manipulation had a positive effect on the uniqueness check ($\gamma = 0.18$; $p < 0.01$). However, the magnitude of this coefficient was relatively small compared to the intended effect of the uniqueness manipulation on the uniqueness check, suggesting the validity of the

manipulation (Perdue & Summers, 1986). Nonetheless, the unintended path was included when testing the proposed model to control for this unintended effect (MacKenzie, 2001).

Concerning the proposed relationships, all were positive and significant. The uniqueness check had a positive effect on brand authenticity ($\beta = 0.51$; $p < 0.001$), and the longevity check also had a positive effect on brand authenticity ($\beta = 0.21$; $p < 0.01$). Further, the indirect effects of the manipulations on brand authenticity were also significant. The indirect standardized effect of the uniqueness manipulation on brand authenticity (mediated by the uniqueness check) was 0.36 ($p < 0.001$), and the indirect standardized effect of the longevity manipulation on brand authenticity (mediated by the longevity check) was 0.28 ($p < 0.01$). (These indirect values are not presented in Figure 2.) Thus, H1 and H3 are supported. Brand authenticity also has a positive effect on expected quality ($\beta = 0.64$; $p < 0.001$) and trust ($\beta = 0.62$; $p < 0.001$), supporting H5 and H6.

Next, the proposed mediating effects of brand authenticity were assessed, in particular, whether it mediates the effects of the two manipulation check factors on the two outcome factors. These four proposed mediated effects were tested using four separate nested models. For each of these four models, one additional direct path was added to the initial model: (1) uniqueness check to expected quality; (2) uniqueness check to trust; (3) longevity check to expected quality; and (4) longevity check to trust. Following the guidelines for testing mediation in SEM suggested by Iacobucci, Saldanha, and Deng (2007), for each of these four mediation tests, the additional direct path in each model was compared to its corresponding indirect (mediated) path. The standardized estimates of the direct and corresponding indirect paths (see Sobel, 1982) are reported in the upper portion of Table 3. In three of the four comparisons, the indirect path was significant, whereas the direct path was not significant, suggesting full mediation (Iacobucci et al., 2007). The three fully mediated paths include (1) uniqueness check \rightarrow authenticity \rightarrow expected quality, (2) uniqueness check \rightarrow authenticity \rightarrow trust, and (3) longevity check \rightarrow authenticity \rightarrow trust. As such, H7a, H7e, and H7g are supported. However, both the direct and indirect paths were significant between the longevity manipulation check and expected quality, suggesting that brand authenticity partially mediates this relationship. Thus, H7c was partially supported.

Structural Model: Study 2—Scarcity \times Longitudinal Consistency. Again, the proposed model was tested using AMOS 22.0.0. The results suggest a good-fitting model ($\chi^2 = 167.3$, $p < 0.001$, $df = 115$, CFI = 0.98, RMSEA = 0.05). As with Study 1, the intended and unintended effects of the manipulations were assessed before considering the hypothesized relationships. As shown in Figure 3, the manipulations for scarcity and longitudinal consistency have the expected effects on their respective manipulation checks;

both paths were positive and statistically significant ($\gamma = 0.21$, $p < 0.05$; $\gamma = 0.83$, $p < 0.001$, respectively). Neither of the manipulations had a significant effect on any other factor in the model.

Concerning the proposed relationships, all were positive and statistically significant. Focusing on the antecedents of brand authenticity, the scarcity check had a positive effect on brand authenticity ($\beta = 0.22$; $p < 0.01$), and the longitudinal consistency check also had a positive effect on brand authenticity ($\beta = 0.65$; $p < 0.001$). Further, the indirect effects of the manipulations on brand authenticity were also significant. The indirect standardized effect of the scarcity manipulation on brand authenticity (mediated by the scarcity check) was 0.05 ($p < 0.05$), and the indirect standardized effect of the longitudinal consistency manipulation on brand authenticity (mediated by the longitudinal consistency check) was 0.55 ($p < 0.001$). (These indirect values are not presented in Figure 3.) Thus, H2 and H4 are supported. Brand authenticity also had a positive effect on expected quality ($\beta = 0.76$; $p < 0.001$) and trust ($\beta = 0.76$; $p < 0.001$), again supporting H5 and H6.

As was done in Study 1, the proposed mediating effects of brand authenticity were assessed, specifically whether brand authenticity mediated the effects of the scarcity and longitudinal consistency manipulation checks on the two outcome factors. The standardized estimates of the direct and corresponding indirect paths (see Sobel, 1982) are reported in the lower portion of Table 3. In three of the four comparisons, the indirect path was significant, whereas the direct path was not significant, suggesting full mediation (Iacobucci et al., 2007). The three fully mediated paths include (1) scarcity check \rightarrow authenticity \rightarrow trust, (2) longitudinal consistency check \rightarrow authenticity \rightarrow expected quality, and (3) longitudinal consistency check \rightarrow authenticity \rightarrow trust. As such, H7f, H7d, and H7h are supported. However, both the direct and indirect paths were significant between the scarcity manipulation check and expected quality, indicating that brand authenticity partially mediates the relationship (Iacobucci et al., 2007). Thus, H7b was partially supported.

Discussion

For decades, research and practice have recognized customer orientation as a fundamental marketing strategy. Indeed, this perspective of first determining customer wants and needs and then creating products to fulfill those wants and needs is advocated and adopted, consistently offering desired firm outcomes (Deshpandé, Farley, & Webster, 1993; Gatignon & Xuereb, 1997; Kohli, Jawarski, & Kumar, 1993; Narver & Slater, 1990). However, the argument can be made that marketers should take a divergent approach and choose an opposing orientation—or at least be *perceived* to do so. This research establishes the benefits of brand authenticity—the idea that consumers perceive that a brand follows an opposing product orientation, in that

Table 3. Tests of Mediation in Studies 1 and 2.

Model Paths	Effect	Stand Estimate	Hypothesis	Mediation
Study 1				
Uniqueness check → auth. → exp. quality	Indirect	0.29***	H7a	Full
Uniqueness check → exp. quality	Direct	0.11	Supported	
Uniqueness check → auth. → trust	Indirect	0.28***	H7e	Full
Uniqueness check → trust	Direct	0.12	Supported	
Longevity check → auth. → exp. quality	Indirect	0.12**	H7c	Partial
Longevity check → exp. quality	Direct	0.16*	Partially supported	
Longevity check → auth. → trust	Indirect	0.12**	H7g	Full
Longevity check → trust	Direct	0.11	Supported	
Study 2				
Scarcity check → auth. → exp. quality	Indirect	0.15**	H7b	Partial
Scarcity check → exp. quality	Direct	0.14*	Partially supported	
Scarcity check → auth. → trust	Indirect	0.15**	H7f	Full
Scarcity check → trust	Direct	0.11	Supported	
Lg. const. check → auth. → exp. quality	Indirect	0.50***	H7d	Full
Lg. const. check → exp. quality	Direct	-0.01	Supported	
Lg. const. check → auth. → trust	Indirect	0.50***	H7h	Full
Lg. const. check → trust	Direct	-0.01	Supported	

* $p < 0.05$; ** $p < 0.01$; *** $p < 0.001$.

brand managers are perceived to produce products that fulfill their own desires rather than their customers'. Specifically, findings from two experiments show consumers' perceptions that brand managers are passionate about their products positively influence expected quality and trust. The results also demonstrate that brand behaviors that are rare (uniqueness and scarcity) and stable (longevity and longitudinal consistency) influence perceptions that brand management follows a product orientation.

This notion of brands ascribing to a product orientation is not new. In fact, it has been argued as more suitable in artistic industries, such as the hedonic contexts of art, theatre, design, and food, contexts in which producers find inspiration from within themselves during the creative process (Hirschman, 1983; Holbrook & Zirlin, 1985; Fillis, 2004). Further, producers in artistic and high-culture industries who embrace this perspective are perceived as experts in their area, giving consumers what they *should* want (Hirschman & Wallendorf, 1982). For example, at Michelin-starred restaurants in France, salt and pepper are not set on the table, as the expert chef (and not the customer) knows how to properly season the meal. Thus, consumers may follow the lead of the producer, as the producer educates and challenges them (Voss & Voss, 2000; see also Hirschman, 1983). Empirical research demonstrates that this product orientation yields financial benefits. In their study of the professional theatre industry, Voss and Voss (2000) find that adopting this perspective leads to increased financial performance for season ticket holders, whereas customer orientation leads to decreased financial performance. The authors attribute this finding to the increased product quality that a product orientation may offer: Consumers of product-oriented theatres likely experienced higher

quality performances. However, the positive outcomes in the studies herein cannot be explained by actual product quality via a product orientation, as study participants did not sample coffee. Rather, these positive outcomes can be attributed solely to the *perception* that the brand follows a product orientation. As such, this research contributes to the marketing strategy literature by suggesting that consumer's *perceptions* of a brand's strategic orientation—in addition to its *actual* strategic orientation—need to be taken into account.

In addition to linking brand authenticity to the marketing strategy literature, this research contributes to the brand authenticity literature. First, this research expands the true-to-self notion of authenticity, which has been applied to human brands, to the consumer's perception of a brand's management team. Previous research in marketing has established that consumers perceive artists as authentic if they are perceived to be "true to themselves"—that they are perceived to be intrinsically motivated in that they follow their inner desires rather than cater to the demands of their customers (Moulard et al., 2014). By drawing on self-determination theory (Ryan & Deci, 2000) and the work on artist authenticity (Moulard et al., 2014), this research suggests that a brand may also be perceived as authentic if those managing the brand are perceived as intrinsically motivated. While previous research has proposed that a brand's authenticity is characterized by the management's intrinsic motivation (Holt, 2002) and passion (Beverland et al., 2008), this previous research does not ground the concept in a theoretical framework, empirically examine the concept, nor suggest its antecedents or perceptual outcomes.

The work herein also contributes to the findings in the authenticity research on human brands. First, Moulard et al.'s (2014) work finds that artist

authenticity has positive effects on attitude toward the artist and, subsequently, attitude toward the artist's artwork and behavioral intentions. The research herein extends these findings, suggesting that a conventional brand's authenticity also has positive effects on other perceptual consequences, namely that it increases the brand's expected quality and trust. Second, other human brand research exploring celebrities' authenticity shows that two overarching antecedents—rarity and stability—positively affect celebrity authenticity (Moulard et al., 2015). The measures used in that study, however, tap *general* notions of authenticity (e.g., real, genuine) as opposed to more specific notions of intrinsic motivation (e.g., passion, devotion). As such, this research builds on that prior work by showing that manifestations of rarity and stability affect perceptions of a conventional brand's authenticity (i.e., brand management's passion). Further, this article's studies test the effects of the antecedents in an experimental setting, providing evidence of internal validity, something Moulard et al.'s (2015) survey method is unable to demonstrate. Finally, while antecedents and consequences are empirically examined in both of these human brand studies, neither explore them simultaneously and, as such, cannot demonstrate whether authenticity serves as a mediator. The findings herein show that brand authenticity fully mediates six of the eight antecedent–consequence relationships and that it partially mediates the other two.

This research also suggests that different dimensions or types of brand authenticity may affect one another, a notion not considered by previous brand authenticity work. Morhart et al.'s (2015) brand authenticity dimension of continuity is highly consistent with the notion of stability herein. The manifestations of stability—longevity and longitudinal consistency—are akin to their concept of continuity, described as “a brand's timelessness, historicity, and its ability to transcend trends” (Morhart et al.'s 2015, p. 202). Thus, the experimental findings in this research provide evidence that one dimension/type of brand authenticity—continuity (i.e., stability)—*causes* another type/dimension of brand authenticity—true-to-self brand authenticity.

LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH

One limitation of this research is its hedonic context of a coffee house. Future research, then, should consider whether consumers' appreciation of a brand's authenticity extends to utilitarian products. Additionally, this research, as with Moulard et al.'s (2014) research on artist authenticity, focuses on authentic brands and their intrinsic motivation—perceptions of a product orientation. Nonetheless, most brands are also extrinsically motivated in some sense; to ensure profitability, they must follow a customer orientation and be attuned to market demands. Thus, the extrinsically motivated behavior of most brands puts them at risk for being per-

ceived as inauthentic (e.g., selling out, too commercial). Future research could examine perceptions of these two motivations—intrinsic (i.e., product orientation) and extrinsic (i.e., customer orientation)—simultaneously. Research could consider at what point consumers' perceptions of extrinsic motivation may cause negative effects and whether perceptions of intrinsic motivation mitigate any negative effects.

An additional limitation is the use of a student sample in both studies. While the coffee shop context used in these studies is one with which most students likely have experienced, future research should aim to generalize these findings to other populations. Further, the manipulation of uniqueness in Study 1 could be problematic. Perceptions of uniqueness were increased by suggesting that the coffee shop welcomed dogs. While such a strategy may increase brand authenticity (via uniqueness), it may simultaneously decrease patronage intentions for individuals who do not like dogs.

The present research explores the consequences of expected quality and brand trust. It is also important to link brand authenticity to additional outcomes. Future research could consider additional perceptual consequences of authenticity, which may include perceived value, customer satisfaction, and brand attitude.

Additionally, manifestations of rarity and stability beyond the four investigated here may also be important. These results suggest that, for new or unknown brands, brand authenticity affects expected quality. Yet, as noted previously, the opposite may be the case for established brands—that quality affects brand authenticity. This quality-authenticity relationship is suggested by Moulard et al.'s (2015) work on celebrity authenticity. They find that one dimension of rarity is a celebrity's talent, which they define as “the perception that the celebrity demonstrates skill in his/her chosen field” (p. 178). As such, talent is conceptually similar to brand quality. Moulard et al.'s (2015) research also suggests an antecedent related to the stability dimension, morality, which they define as “the perception that the celebrity demonstrates strong values and principles” (p. 179). The concept is similar to Morhart et al.'s (2015) brand authenticity dimension of integrity, which signifies the “moral purity and responsibility of the brand” (p. 203). Many others antecedents are possible, depending on the type of brand and context in which it operates. Yet, new dimensions should be related to rarity and stability.

Lastly, future studies should consider potential moderators. Research suggests that some consumers may value a brand's authenticity more so than others. As noted, brand authenticity can be conceptualized as an extrinsic cue, as it is not directly tied to the product (as compared to intrinsic cues, such as a product's ingredients). Hirschman and Wallendorf (1982) propose that consumers of high-culture products (e.g., luxury and aesthetic products) are more sensitive and more appreciative of these subtle, abstract brand meanings. As such, consumers of high-culture products, often those of higher socioeconomic status, are more likely to

value a brand's authenticity. Consumers of low-context products (i.e., mass-marketed products) instead focus on the product's/brand's utilitarian benefits and, thus, are less likely to value the abstract notion of brand management's intrinsic motivation. Additionally, some constructs may moderate the influence of rarity and stability on brand authenticity. Moulard et al. (2015) find age moderates the effects of both stability and rarity in a celebrity brand context. The effect of rarity was stronger for younger versus older consumers, whereas the effect of stability was stronger for older versus younger consumers. Whether these findings hold for conventional brands could be explored in future studies.

Managerial Implications

Brand managers can influence perceptions of brand authenticity by strengthening perceptions of rarity and stability through the manifestations identified in this research. Brands that demonstrate aspects of both rarity and stability will likely have the most success at creating perceptions of brand authenticity. However, brands do not need to exhibit both to be considered authentic. Some brands may be perceived as authentic due to perceptions of rarity, while others may be perceived as authentic due to perceptions of stability. As one example, a new brand may be perceived as authentic because of rarity perceptions even though it has not been around long enough to develop perceptions of stability. While strengthening specific manifestations of rarity and stability can increase brand authenticity, perhaps a more straightforward approach is simply to emphasize that the brand management loves what it does. For example, Whole Foods lists its "passion for food" as one of its core values, and Raising Cane's restaurant emphasizes that its "One Love" is chicken fingers.

Given the economic, societal, and technological trends of the twenty-first century, it is relatively easy to forecast that the concept of authenticity will become more and more important to consumers. However, brands should avoid fabricating cues that lead consumers to believe they are authentic when they in fact are not. Consumers demand transparency based on the perceived motives of firms (see Campbell & Kirmani, 2000), and information about brands is readily available on the Internet. Thus, brand managers should carefully consider whether their brand actually possesses any elements presented in this research and then emphasize those elements.

REFERENCES

Arnould, E. J., & Price, L. L. (2000). Authenticating acts and authoritative performances: Questing for self and community. In S. Ratneshwar, D. G. Mick, & C. Huffman (Eds.), *The why of consumption: Contemporary perspectives on consumer motives, goals and desires* (pp. 140–163). London and New York: Routledge Press.

- Bagozzi, R. P., & Yi, Y. (1988). On the evaluation of structural equation models. *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science*, 16, 74–94.
- Bagozzi, R. P., & Yi, Y. (1989). On the use of structural equation models in experimental designs. *Journal of Marketing Research*, 26, 271–284.
- Bellezza, S., Gina, F., & Keinan, A. (2014). The red sneakers effect: Inferring status and competence from signals of nonconformity. *Journal of Consumer Research*, 41, 35–54.
- Beverland, M. (2006). The "real thing": Branding authenticity in the luxury wine trade. *Journal of Business Research*, 59, 251–258.
- Beverland, M., & Farrelly, F. J. (2010). The quest of authenticity in consumption: Consumers' purposive choice of authentic cues to shape experienced outcomes. *Journal of Consumer Research*, 36, 838–856.
- Beverland, M., & Luxton, S. (2005). Managing integrated marketing communication (IMC) through strategic decoupling: How luxury wine firms retain brand leadership while appearing to be wedded to the past. *Journal of Advertising*, 34, 103–116.
- Beverland, M., Lindgreen, A., & Vink, M. W. (2008). Projecting authenticity through advertising. *Journal of Advertising*, 37, 5–15.
- Beverland, M.B., Farrelly, F., & Quester, P. G. (2010). Authentic subcultural membership: Antecedents and consequences of authenticating acts and authoritative performances. *Psychology & Marketing*, 27, 698–716.
- Boyle, D. (2003). *Authenticity: Brands, fakes, spin and the lust for real life*. London: Flamingo.
- Campbell, M. C., & Kirmani, A. (2000). I know what you're doing and why you're doing it: The use of the persuasion knowledge model in consumer research. In H. Curt, H. Paul, & K. Frank (Eds.), *Handbook of consumer psychology* (pp. 549–574). New York: Psychology Press.
- Chaudhuri, A., & Holbrook, M. B. (2001). The chain of effects from brand trust and brand affect to brand performance: The role of brand loyalty. *Journal of Marketing*, 65, 81–93.
- Close, A.G., Moulard, J.G., & Monroe, K.B. (2011). Establishing human brands: Determinants of placement success for first faculty positions in marketing. *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science*, 29, 922–941.
- Deci, E. L., & Ryan, R. M. (2000). The "what" and "why" of goal pursuits: Human needs and the self-determination of behavior. *Psychological Inquiry*, 11, 227–268.
- Deci, E. L., & Ryan, R. M. (2008). Facilitating optimal motivation and psychological well being across life's domains. *Canadian Psychology*, 49, 14–23.
- Deshpandé, R., Farley, J. U., & Webster, F. E. Jr. (1993). Corporate culture, customer orientation, and innovativeness in Japanese firms: A quadrad analysis. *Journal of Marketing*, 57, 23–27.
- Dutton, D. (2004). *Authenticity in art*. The Oxford handbook of aesthetics (pp.258–274). New York: Oxford University Press.
- Fillis, I. (2004). The theory and practice of visual arts marketing. In F. Kerrigan, P. Fraser, & M. Özbilgin (Eds.), *Arts marketing* (pp. 119–138). Oxford: Elsevier.
- Fine, G. A. (2003). Crafting authenticity: The validation of identity in self-taught art. *Theory and Society*, 32, 153–180.
- Fornell, C., & Larcker, D. F. (1981). Evaluating structural equation models with unobservable variables and measurement error. *Journal of Marketing Research*, 18, 39–50.

- Gatignon, H., & Xuereb, J.-M. (1997). Strategic orientation of the firm and new product performance. *Journal of Marketing Research*, 34, 77–90.
- Gilmore, J. H., & Pine, B. J. II. (2007). *Authenticity: What customers really want*. Boston: Harvard Business School Press.
- Hair, J. F. Jr., Black, W. C., Babin, B. J., Anderson, R. E., & Tathan, R. L. (2006). *Multivariate data analysis*. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson Prentice Hall.
- Hirschman, E. C. (1983). Aesthetics, ideologies and the limits of the marketing concept. *Journal of Marketing*, 47, 45–55.
- Hirschman, E. C., & Wallendorf, M. R. (1982). Characteristics of the cultural continuum: Implications for retailing. *Journal of Retailing*, 58, 5–21.
- Holbrook, M. B., & Zirlin, R. B. (1985). Artistic creation, artworks, and aesthetic appreciation: Some philosophical contributions to nonprofit marketing. *Advances in Non-Profit Marketing*, 1, 1–54.
- Holt, D. B. (2002). Why do brands cause trouble? A dialectical theory of consumer culture and branding. *Journal of Consumer Research*, 29, 70–90.
- Iacobucci, D., Saldanha, N., & Deng, X. (2007). A meditation on mediation: Evidence that structural equation models perform better than regressions. *Journal of Consumer Psychology*, 17, 139–153.
- Jones, E. E., & Davis, K. E. (1965). From acts to dispositions. In L. Berkowitz (Ed.), *Advances in experimental social psychology* (Vol. 2, pp. 219–266). New York: Academic Press.
- Jöreskog, K., & Sörbom, D. (2001). *LISREL 8: User's reference guide*. Lincolnwood, IL: Scientific Software International, Inc.
- Kelley, H. H. (1971). *Attribution in social interaction*. New York: General Learning Press.
- Kelley, H. H. (1973). The process of causal attribution. *American Psychologist*, 28, 107–128.
- Kirca, A. H., Jayachandran, S., & Beardon, W. O. (2005). Market orientation: A meta-analytic review and assessment of its antecedents and impact on performance. *Journal of Marketing*, 69, 24–41.
- Kivy, P. (1995). The "sense" of beauty and the sense of "art": Hutcheson's place in the history and practice of aesthetics. *Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism*, 53, 349–357.
- Kohli, A. K., Jaworski, B. J., & Kumar, J. (1993). MARKOR: A measure of market orientation. *Journal of Marketing Research*, 30, 467–477.
- MacKenzie, S. B. (2001). Opportunities for improving consumer research through latent variable structural equation modeling. *Journal of Consumer Research*, 28, 159–166.
- Marshall, K. P. & Forrest, P. J. (2011). A framework for identifying factors that influence fine art valuations from artists to consumers. *Marketing Management Journal*, 21, 111–123.
- Mayer, R., Davis, J., & Schoorman F. D. (1995). An integrative model of organizational trust. *Academy of Management Review*, 20, 709–734.
- McReynolds, P. (1971). The nature and assessment of intrinsic motivation. In P. McReynolds (Ed.), *Advances in psychological assessment* (Vol. 11, pp. 157–177), Palo Alto, CA: Science and Behavior Books.
- Michon, R., & Chebat, J. C. (2008). Breaking open the consumer behavior black box: SEM and retail atmospheric manipulations. *Journal of Marketing Theory and Practice*, 16, 299–307.
- Morhart, F., Malär, L., Guèvremont, A., Girardin, F., & Grohmann, B. (2015). Brand authenticity: An integrative framework and measurement scale. *Journal of Consumer Psychology*, 25, 200–218.
- Moulard, J. G., Rice, D. H., Garrity, C. P., & Mangus, S. M. (2014). Artist authenticity: How artists' passion and commitment shape consumers' perceptions and behavioral intentions across genders. *Psychology & Marketing*, 31, 576–590.
- Moulard, J. G., Garrity, C. P., & Rice, D. H. (2015). What makes a human brand authentic? Identifying the antecedents of celebrity authenticity. *Psychology & Marketing*, 32, 173–186.
- Narver, J. C., & Slater, S. F. (1990). The effect of market orientation on business profitability. *Journal of Marketing*, 54, 20–35.
- Netemeyer, R. G., Bearden, W. O., & Sharma, S. (2003). *Scale development in the social sciences: Issues and applications*. Palo Alto, CA: Sage Publications, Inc.
- Olson, J. C. (1973). Cue properties of price: Literature review and theoretical considerations. Presented at 83rd Annual Convention of the American Psychological Association, Montreal, Canada.
- Perdue, B. C., & Summers, J. O. (1986). Checking the success of manipulations in marketing experiments. *Journal of Marketing Research*, 23, 317–326.
- Peterson, R. A. (2005). In search of authenticity. *Journal of Management Studies*, 42, 1083–1098.
- Rao, A. R., & Monroe, K. B. (1989). The effect of price, brand name, and store name on buyers' perceptions of product quality: An integrative review. *Journal of Marketing Research*, 26, 351–357.
- Ryan, R. M., & Deci, E. L. (2000). Self-determination theory and the facilitation of intrinsic motivation, social development, and well-being. *American Psychologist*, 55, 68–78.
- Schlosser, A. E., White, T. B., & Lloyd, S. M. (2006). Converting web site visitors into buyers: How web site investment increases consumer trusting beliefs and online purchase intentions. *Journal of Marketing*, 70, 133–148.
- Sheldon, K. M., Ryan, R. M., Rawsthorne, L. J., & Ilardi, B. (1997). Trait self and true self: Cross-role variation in the big-five personality traits and its relations with psychological authenticity and subjective well-being. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 73, 1380–1393.
- Sobel, M. E. (1982). Asymptotic confidence intervals for indirect effects in structural equation models. In S. Leinhardt (Ed.), *Sociological methodology* (pp. 290–312). San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Spiggle S., Nguyen, H. T., & Caravella, M. (2012). More than fit: Brand extension authenticity. *Journal of Marketing Research*, 49, 967–983.
- Spreng, R. A., & Mackoy, R. D. (1996). An empirical examination of a model of perceived service quality and satisfaction. *Journal of Retailing*, 72, 201–214.
- Thompson, C. J., Rindfleisch, A., & Arsel, Z. (2006). Emotional branding and the strategic value of the doppelgänger brand image. *Journal of Marketing*, 70, 50–64.
- Trilling, L. (1972). *Sincerity and authenticity*. London: Oxford University Press.
- Vallerand, R. J., Blanchard, C., Mageau, G. A., Koestner, R., Ratelle, C., Léonard, M., Gagné, M., & Marsolais, J. (2003). Les passions de l'âme: On obsessive and harmonious passion. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 85, 756–767.

- Voss, G. B., & Voss, Z. G. (2000). Strategic orientation and firm performance in an artistic environment. *Journal of Marketing*, 64, 67–83.
- Zeithaml, V. (1988). Consumer perceptions of price, quality, and value: A means-end model and synthesis of evidence. *Journal of Marketing*, 52, 2–22.

Correspondence regarding this article should be sent to: Julie Guidry Moulard, Balsley-Whitmore Endowed Professor in Business, Department of Marketing & Analysis, Louisiana Tech University, Ruston, LA 71272 (jmoulard@latech.edu).