



The quest for authenticity and peer-to-peer tourism experiences

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ABSTRACT

This article explores the role of peer-to-peer tourism experiences in the tourism quest for authenticity. Specifically, it analyses the influence of the consumers' perception of the benefits derived from such typology of experiences, their traits, and attitudes on their perception of a superior authenticity. This research, piloted in Mallorca (Spain), shows that the perception of peer-to-peer experiences providing non-economic benefits, together with a positive attitude towards the sharing economy are the most influencing factors. Findings suggest that destinations may enhance their competitiveness by rethinking their product portfolio and deploying specific value-based segmentation and targeting approaches.

1. Introduction

This article analyses the role played by peer-to-peer tourism experiences in the tourists' quest for authenticity. These experiences include a variety of activities, for example sports, discovering cultural and natural heritage, gastronomy, leisure, etc., offered directly by locals without the intervention of traditional experience providers such as travel agencies (Kim, 2014; Pizam, 2014). Specifically, it pretends to unveil the influence of the consumers' perceptions, traits, and attitudes, on their view of a peer-to-peer tourism experience superior authenticity.

Solid literature references suggest that authenticity relates positively with the destination competitiveness and sustainability. Authenticity is frequently mentioned to bring in differentiation to the tourism destinations, to be difficult to replicate or imitate, and to increase consumer loyalty and satisfaction (Chung, Chen, & Lin, 2016; Robinson & Clifford, 2012). Additionally, it is suggested that object-based authenticity may influence the tourists' engagement and existential authenticity (Bryce, Curran, O'Gorman, & Taheri, 2015). Moreover, Kim and Bonn (2016) argue that authentic features play a significant role in the tourists' behavioral intentions. Beyond that, Taheri, Farrington, Curran, and O'Gorman (2017) conclude, "strong existential authenticity should develop relational value, which can be sustained and strengthened through a presentation that maximizes the power of brand heritage" (p.63). Cohen (2002) even goes beyond that, suggesting the potential capacity of authenticity to promote sustainability. All of these elements are therefore instrumental in building up destination competitiveness based on authenticity.

The relevance of authenticity as a topic has boosted its academic

research (e.g. Chhabra, 2010; Cole, 2007; Taylor, 2001; Wang, 1999; Zerva, 2015), and given to peer-to-peer tourism experiences an essential role in the competitiveness-authenticity puzzle (Dredge & Gyimóthy, 2015; Wang, Li, Guo, & Xu, 2016). In this respect, peer-to-peer experiences would be key to deliver performativity, a conceptualization that stresses the active involvement of tourists in the authentication of tourism experiences (Cole, 2007; Mkono, 2011; Olsen, 2003). Performativity is especially relevant as it may increase the destination attachment (Cheng, 2016), positively related to revisit and recommendation intentions (Gursoy, Chen, & Chi, 2014; Prayag & Ryan, 2012). Consequently, peer-to-peer tourism experiences would spawn, not just a more authentic perception of the experiences but also a positive impact on the authenticity associated with destinations if the social interactions are structured in a more selective (value-based and passion-fuelled) way.

As previous literature suggests, it seems that peer-to-peer tourism experiences bring more authenticity than non-peer-to-peer provided ones (e.g. Wilson & Harris, 2006; Zerva, 2015). However, empirical research on whether consumers perceive such superiority and what can influence such a perception is rare. In a broader peer-to-peer framework, there have been attempts to gauge the role played by variables, including social interaction (Shuqair, Pinto, & Mattila, 2019), or hospitality and service quality (Lalicic & Weismayer, 2017, pp. 781–794) in the authenticity of the experiences, exploring whether they may, or may not, add authenticity. Surprisingly this research has focused on the experience itself ignoring the influence of the consumers' perception, traits, and attitudes on such a view.

To fill this gap, this article explores whether consumers perceive that

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peer-to-peer tourism experiences deliver more authenticity than non-peer-to-peer provided ones, and what may influence such a perception. Specifically, the three main research questions addressed in this paper are: (i) Do tourists perceive peer-to-peer tourism experiences as being more authentic than non-peer-to-peer ones? (ii) Which factors may influence such a perception? and (iii) Do they all influence in the same intensity? To respond to these questions, we measure the consumers' perception of superiority and we propose and test an explanatory model that integrates the consumers' perception of peer-to-peer tourism experiences benefits, consumer traits, and attitudes as influencing factors. The empirical research has been conducted in Mallorca (Spain), a worldwide major tourism destination.

2. Literature review

Embracing the eclectic perspective of "Collaborative Consumption", proposed by Hamari, Sjöklint, and Ukkonen (2016), and defined as "the peer-to-peer-based activity of obtaining, giving, or sharing the access to goods and services, coordinated through community-based online services" (p. 2047), we have revised literature on sharing economy, tourism authenticity, and individual consumer characteristics. This revision intends to unveil a set of factors that potentially may influence the customers' authenticity perception of peer-to-peer tourism experiences.

So far, peer-to-peer tourism experiences authenticity has been partially addressed by different authors (e.g. Paulauskaite, Powell, Coca-Stefaniak, & Morrison, 2017; Wilson & Harris, 2006; Zerva, 2015), frequently they have focused on the categorization of the interactions with locals, without explicitly exploring the empirical grounding on which consumers perceive the authenticity. Nevertheless, there are disperse suggestions of influencing factors that include their perception of the very own nature of peer-to-peer experiences, as well as their traits, values, and attitudes.

Initial clues of influential factors can be found exploring a post-modernist perspective of authenticity that emphasizes the requisite of a socially constructed existential authenticity (Zerva, 2015), that combines eclectically, aesthetic, visual, popular, and commercial features (Urry, 2002). Such perspective feeds a revised anti-elitist and democratic understanding of authenticity that brings about new combinations of symbolic meaning to the people, sense, and identity (Schoorl, 2005). This is especially relevant in peer-to-peer frameworks, in which, a) the intimacy between provider and customer is usually very high (Zerva, 2015) and b) the access to local networks (friends, social events, meet-ups) after the experience is more likely to occur (Timothy & Ron, 2013). Both elements clearly impulse symbolic meaning, sense, and identity, bringing even change in the tourists (Batle & Robledo, 2018), and may facilitate the individuals' search for identity, connectedness with others, and self-empowerment and, self and identity (Wilson & Harris, 2006). Overall, it is emphasized the non-economic benefits derived from peer-to-peer activities (Bock, Zmud, Kim, & Lee, 2005; Hamari et al., 2016). Consequently, the consumer's perception of the non-economic benefits that tourism experiences can provide, including intimacy, value challenge, and learning becomes central in the authenticity-peer-to-peer binomial. Therefore, the first factor considered to influence the consumers' perception of the superior authenticity of peer-to-peer tourism experiences' authenticity will be their perception that they may bring significant non-economic benefits to the providers.

Likewise, and although there is not a unique vision, some literature would also argue that obtaining economic benefits would be crucial to impelling and preserving peer-to-peer activities (Bock et al., 2005). In this sense, it is argued that a solid, sustainable flow of income enables the economic maintenance and thriving of amateur passions among peer-to-peer providers (Bock et al., 2005), in line with a democratic, social, and a conscious perspective of authenticity (Zerva, 2015). Therefore, the second factor considered to influence the consumers' perception of the superior authenticity of peer-to-peer tourism

experiences will be their perception that they may bring personal economic benefits.

Additionally, peer-to-peer experiences are considered a clear example of a relational approach paradigm in consumption (Zelizer, 2005, 2010, 2012). This paradigm stresses the importance of sense in the exchanges and the individual/group-communal implications in the customer experience in the peer-to-peer context (Carlson, Rahman, Rosenberger, & Holzmüller, 2016). In this respect, experiential peer-to-peer relations would be one of the most intimacy-based interactions that can occur in the tourism context (Zelizer, 2010). Indirectly, some authors (e.g. Knudsen & Waade, 2010; Oskam & Boswijk, 2016; Tussyadiah & Pesonen, 2016), in their conceptualization of a networked hospitality, suggested that reputational factors may influence the perception of authenticity. Overall, it is suggested the social dimension of peer-to-peer activities and its reputational consequences as key creators and drivers of authenticity. Therefore, the third factor considered to influence the consumers' perception of a superior authenticity of peer-to-peer tourism experiences will be their perception of the reputational benefits peer-to-peer experiences providers may gain.

The literature provides clues about a fourth, and a fifth, potentially relevant factors: the attitude the consumers may display relating to tourism in general (Garau-Vadell, Díaz-Armas, & Gutiérrez-Taño, 2014; Gursoy, Chen J, & Chi C, 2014) and, connected to this, their attitudes towards the peer-to-peer economy (Hamari et al., 2016). The values associated with these two attitudes, quite related to a passion for tourism and a drive for social connection without non-mercantile incentives would be very likely to generate affiliation and to be positive drivers of authenticity perception (Zelizer, 2012). Such a connection may drive us to expect a positive relationship between those attitudes and the perception of a superior authenticity of peer-to-peer tourism experiences.

Moreover, environmental values also seem to relate to how peer-to-peer activities may be perceived. In this respect, it is suggested that ecocentricity is higher among those aiming to be involved in peer-to-peer contexts since they frequently bring about selective interaction and outdoor activities (Awuor, Hayombe, & Ayieko, 2015; Giddy & Webb, 2016). Additionally, peer-to-peer tourism experiences, usually outside of the beaten tourist track, are commonly connected to inside local knowledge (routes, scenarios, culture, shared passion, history, and so on), that creates deeper and more authentic knowledge (Giddy & Webb, 2016). Therefore, we may expect that individuals' ecocentricity could positively relate to the perception of a superior authenticity of peer-to-peer tourism experiences.

Sharing traits with peer-to-peer tourism experiences providers may also relate to authenticity perception. Batle and Robledo (2018), Brown (2013), and Picard and Di Giovine (2014) claim that the existential achievement a tourist experience can breed comes from learning new perspectives from others. In peer-to-peer experiences, the entrepreneurial nature, orientation to action, passion, involvement, and capacity of providers to engage, are commonly accepted as major traits providing authenticity to the experiences (Batle & Robledo, 2018). Sharing those traits with providers may prompt the individuals' perception that peer-to-peer tourism experiences make up authentic inspirational models. Therefore, the seventh and eighth factors considered to influence the individuals' perception of a superior authenticity of peer-to-peer tourism experiences would be their self-perception of abilities to organize things and entrepreneurship.

Finally, literature seems to put forward a link between personal idle capacity (and available time) and authenticity. Idle capacity enables more passionate, knowledge-based, and intimate relationships among peers, and it is somehow advocated that it may contribute to making the experience more authentic in the relational sense (Dredge & Gyimóthy, 2015; Frenken & Schor, 2017; Tussyadiah, 2016). Again, sharing traits with providers (i.e. individuals having themselves idle capacity) may prompt that individuals perceive such authenticity. Therefore, the ninth

factor to consider as an influence on the individuals' perception of a superior peer-to-peer tourism experiences authenticity will be their idle capacity, including time availability.

In summary, after the literature revision, nine factors are identified as potentially influencing the consumers' perception of the superior authenticity of peer-to-peer tourism experiences. These factors include: (i) the consumers' perception that peer to peer tourism experiences deliver non-economic benefits; (ii) their perception that delivers economic benefits; (iii) their perception that conveys reputational and social benefits; (iv) the consumers' attitude concerning tourism in general; (v) the consumers' attitude concerning peer-to-peer economy; (vi) the consumers' ecocentricity; (vii) the consumers' management skills; (viii) the consumers' entrepreneurship; and finally (ix) the consumers' idle capacity.

3. Methodology

3.1. Sample

This study was conducted among 880 individuals from Mallorca (Spain), one of the foremost and dense tourist destinations in the world, displaying a ratio of more than 10 tourists per resident (Comunitat Autònoma de les Illes Balears [CAIB], 2018). Such a high tourism concentration gives its consumers a qualified view from which to explore the authenticity perception of the peer-to-peer tourism experiences.

Data was collected, throughout the months of October to December 2017, using a "snowball" sampling technique to boost a high penetration into the population of reference (Babbie, 2001; Kim, 2014). The questionnaires were run under Lime Survey software, and made accessible from computers, tablets, and smartphones.

The final sample is compounded by 55.2% of women and 44.8% of men. Its average age was 40.5 years, ranging from 17 to 84 years. The university level of education is achieved by the 64.78% of the sample.

3.2. Variables, measurement scales, and procedures

Based on previous literature scales, we developed a specific questionnaire. It was compounded by one statement assessing the individuals' perception of the superior authenticity delivered by peer-to-peer tourism experiences, and thirty statements approaching the nine influential factors (see Table 1). Interviewees scored their degree of agreement with each statement, on a five-point Likert scale ranging from one (strongly disagree) to five (strongly agree). To confirm construct validity and reliability, exploratory and confirmatory approaches were employed. Calculations were conducted with Jamovi (version 1.2) statistical package. Finally, an ordered probit model was estimated to ascertain the influence of the factors on the consumer's perception of the superior authenticity delivered by peer-to-peer tourism experiences. The ordered probit and its average marginal effects were calculated with the Stata (version 13.1) econometric software package.

4. Results

4.1. Reliability and validity of measurement

The reliability and validity of measurement were checked through an exploratory (EFA) (see Table 2) and a confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) (see Table 3). The sample size was deemed adequate given that the value of the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin measure is above 0.80 (Bartlett's test of Sphericity ($p < 0.001$), Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin measure = 0.885), and that the participant-per-item ration is above 4:1 (Worthington & Whittaker, 2006). When conducting the EFA, the principal axis factoring with varimax rotation was applied. A total of nine factors were extracted, accounting for 76.1% of the total variance (Table 2): (1) *Persreput* "Consumers perception of reputational benefits linked to participating in peer-to-peer tourism experiences" ($\alpha = 0.95$), (2) *Ecocen*

Table 1
Measurement constructs and sources.

Constructs	Adapted from
<i>Noneconben</i> . "Consumers perception of non-economic benefits that peer-to-peer tourism experience provision may offer"	Bock et al. (2005); Hamari et al. (2016);
"Providers can also be users in other destinations"	
"Providers can learn a lot from other people"	
"Providers can meet interesting people"	
"It is a good opportunity for self-realization"	
<i>Econben</i> . "Consumers perception of personal economic benefits that peer-to-peer tourism experience provision may offer"	Bock et al. (2005); Hamari et al. (2016);
"Providers can make benefit from their abilities (language skills, destination knowledge, skills, etc.)"	
"Providers can make benefit from their assets (car, building, boat, etc.)"	
"Providers can increase earnings in general"	
<i>Persreput</i> . "Consumers perception of reputational benefits linked to participating in peer-to-peer tourism experiences"	Kankanhalli, Tan, and Wei (2005); Wasko and Faraj (2005)
"It can help to improve image in social environment"	
"It can help recognition by social environment"	
"It can help increase prestige in social environment"	
<i>Attitou</i> . "Attitude towards tourism"	Garau-Vadell, Díaz-Armas, and Gutierrez-Taño (2014)
"Tourism contributes to the progress of the destination and its habitants"	
"Tourism should be encouraged because it is one of the main economic pillars of destination"	
"In general, tourism is very beneficial for the destination"	
<i>Attip2peco</i> . "Attitude toward sharing economy"	Hamari et al. (2016)
"Peer-to-peer economy is a smart consumption way"	
"Peer-to-peer economy is good for society"	
"Peer-to-peer economy makes sense"	
<i>Ecocen</i> . "Ecocentricity"	Garau-Vadell et al. (2014)
"I am very concerned with the speed at which the environment is deteriorating"	
"Governments should emphasize more environmental protection policies"	
"Citizens should be more respectful with the environment"	
"In general, we should consume more organic products"	
<i>Manskills</i> . "Management skills"	Schyns (2010)
"I can easily teach others"	
"I am experienced in organizing group activities"	
"I consider myself a good manager"	
"I consider myself an emphatic person"	
<i>Entrepren</i> . "Entrepreneurship"	Sirico (2011);
"I prefer to be self-employed"	
"It is easy to set up companies"	
"I have a close network of people running their businesses"	
<i>Idlecap</i> . "Idle capacity of the consumer related to the potential offering of peer-to-peer tourism experiences"	Batle, Garau-Vadell, and Orfila-Sintes (2020)
"I have abilities (language skills, knowledge of the destination, etc.) to share"	
"I have assets (car, boat, etc.) I may share"	
"I have spare time to devote to hobbies, etc."	

"Ecocentricity" ($\alpha = 0.85$), (3) *Manskills* "Management skills" ($\alpha = 0.85$), (4) *Attitou* "Attitude towards tourism" ($\alpha = 0.87$), (5) *Attip2peco* "Attitude toward sharing economy" ($\alpha = 0.97$), (6) *Econben* "Consumers perception of personal economic benefits that peer-to-peer tourism experience provision may offer" ($\alpha = 0.88$), (7) *Entrepren* "Entrepreneurship" ($\alpha = 0.70$), (8) *Idlecap* "Idle capacity of the consumer related to the potential offering of peer-to-peer tourism experiences" ($\alpha = 0.67$), (9) *Noneconben* "Consumers perception of non-economic benefits that peer-to-peer tourism experience provision may offer" ($\alpha = 0.88$). Cronbach's alpha values for these nine factors were all very close or above 0.70 (Nunnally, 1978).

CFA was then conducted (see Table 3). The results indicated a good model fit ($\chi^2 = 1156$, $df = 369$, $NFI = 0.860$, $CFI = 0.953$, $TLI = 0.944$, $RMSEA = 0.0492$). The composite reliability (CR) value ranges from 0.747 to 0.953, all of which are greater than the acceptance level of 0.60 (Worthington & Whittaker, 2006). The values of the average variance extracted (AVE) also exceeded the suggested cut-off value of 0.5 (Worthington & Whittaker, 2006). Lastly, the square roots of all AVE (see Table 4) results on values higher than the corresponding factors'

Table 2
EFA results.

	Persreput	Ecocen	Manskills	Attitou	Attip2peco	Econben	Entrepren	Idlecap	Noneconben
Econben									
“Providers can make benefit from their abilities”						0.74			
“Providers can make benefit from their assets”						0.84			
“Providers can increase earnings in general”						0.77			
Noneconben									
“Providers can also be users in other destinations”									0.53
“Providers can learn a lot from other people”									0.69
“Providers can meet interesting people”									0.74
“It is a good opportunity for self-realization”									0.71
Persreput									
“It can help to improve image in social environment”	0.88								
“It can help recognition by social environment”	0.92								
“It can help increase prestige in social environment”	0.90								
Idlecap									
“I have abilities to share”									0.65
“I have assets (car, boat, etc.) I may share”									0.65
“I have spare time to devote to hobbies, etc.”									0.55
Idlecap									
“I can easily teach others”			0.79						
“I am experienced in organizing group activities”			0.83						
“I consider myself a good manager”			0.84						
“I consider myself an emphatic person”			0.72						
Entrepren									
“I prefer to be self-employed”							0.60		
“It is easy to set up companies”							0.76		
“I have a close network of people running their businesses”							0.76		
Attip2peco									
“Peer-to-peer economy is a smart consumption way”					0.87				
“Peer-to-peer economy is good for society”					0.87				
“Peer-to-peer economy makes sense”					0.89				
Attitou									
“Tourism contributes to the progress of the destination”				0.85					
“Tourism should be encouraged”				0.90					
“In general, tourism is very beneficial”				0.89					
Ecocen									
“I am very concerned with environment deteriorating”		0.84							
“Governments should emphasize environmental protection”		0.86							
“We should be more respectful with the environment”		0.80							
“In general, we should consume more organic products”		0.73							
Eigenvalue	8.627	2.895	2.695	2.265	1.775	1.533	1.213	1.011	0.810
% of Variance Explained	28.76	9.64	8.98	7.55	5.9	5.11	4.04	3.37	2.72
% of Cumulative Variance explained	28.76	38.40	47.39	54.94	60.85	65.97	70.01	73.38	76.10
Cronbach’s Alpha	0.951	0.851	0.854	0.873	0.972	0.878	0.690	0.673	0.882

KMO = 0.885; Bartlett’s Test of Sphericity = 0.000 (p < 0.001).

correlations values with other factors, suggesting a good discriminant validity (Worthington & Whittaker, 2006).

4.2. Consumer’s perception of the superior authenticity delivered by peer-to-peer tourism experiences

The nine factors obtained through the factor analysis constitute the set of independent variables to be included in our model. The use of these nine factors, instead of the 30 primary variables, avoids the negative effects of the high multicollinearity, and yields a model of a reduced dimension with a decreased variance of the prediction error, together with an easier identification of the parameters of the model (James, Witten, Hastie, & Tibshirani, 2013).

The dependent variable, “Consumers’ perception of the superior authenticity delivered by peer-to-peer tourism experiences” (*P2Pexpauth*), is a discrete, bounded, and ordinal variable that indicates the respondents’ degree of agreement with the superior authenticity of the peer-to-peer tourism experiences provision. For this type of variable, the fitting econometric model is an ordered probit model where the estimated beta coefficients only show the independent variables that may raise (or reduce) the probability of a category of the dependent variable (Long, 1997). That is the direction, positive or negative, of the effect of the independent variables on the dependent variable. Therefore, to ascertain which variables are more influencing, the marginal effects

need to be calculated (Williams, 2012).

To smooth the interpretation of the result, the dependent variable was recorded from a five-point Likert scale into a three-point Likert scale -i.e. three outcomes or categories. Consequently, the value of one corresponds to the lowest degree of agreement with the consumers’ perception that peer-to-peer tourism experiences are more authentic than the non-peer-to-peer ones; the value of two corresponds to a medium degree of agreement, and the value of three corresponds to the highest degree of agreement.

Table 5 displays the consumers’ perception of the superior authenticity of peer-to-peer tourism experiences. Results indicate that a large majority of the sample, 66.14%, display very high levels of agreement with the statement that peer-to-peer tourism experiences deliver higher authenticity than non-peer-to-peer provided.

Table 6 displays the estimated ordered probit model indicating the influence of each variable and its marginal effects that indicate their magnitude. The model shows an overall statistical significance. Besides, the considered independent variables, except for idle capacity, exhibit a significant positive influence on the consumers’ perception of the peer-to-peer tourism experiences as more authentic than the non-peer-to-peer tourism experiences. That is to say, the dependent variable, “Consumers’ perception of the superior authenticity provided by peer-to-peer tourism experiences” (*P2Pexpauth*), is increasing with all the proposed factors except with idle capacity.

Table 3
CFA results.

Latent constructs and measures	CR	AVE	Factor loadings	Mean	SD	Skewness	Kurtosis
Econben	0.905	0.761					
“Providers can make benefit from their abilities”			0.874	3.63	1.03	−0.85	0.43
“Providers can make benefit from their assets”			0.882	3.50	1.06	−0.81	0.18
“Providers can increase earnings in general”			0.860	3.59	1.03	−0.80	0.27
Noneconben	0.892	0.675					
“Providers can also be users in other destinations”			0.796	3.75	0.99	−0.88	0.62
“Providers can learn a lot from other people”			0.811	3.70	1.02	−0.79	0.36
“Providers can meet interesting people”			0.899	3.79	0.95	−0.86	0.75
“It is a good opportunity for self-realization”			0.773	3.21	1.07	−0.21	−0.29
Persreput	0.953	0.870					
“It can help to improve image in social environment”			0.893	2.95	1.05	−0.19	−0.42
“It can help recognition by social environment”			0.957	2.84	1.02	−0.08	−0.25
“It can help increase prestige in social environment”			0.947	2.83	1.06	−0.05	−0.39
Idlecap	0.800	0.585					
“I have abilities to share”			0.915	3.41	1.14	−0.52	−0.52
“I have assets I may share”			0.817	3.00	1.16	−0.09	−0.69
“I have spare time to devote to hobbies, etc.”			0.502	2.81	1.13	0.13	−0.60
Manskills	0.849	0.591					
“I can easily teach others”			0.740	3.76	0.96	−0.88	0.70
“I am experienced in organizing group activities”			0.904	3.49	1.11	−0.51	−0.47
“I consider myself a good manager”			0.821	3.70	0.97	−0.76	0.44
“I consider myself an emphatic person”			0.571	3.86	0.86	−0.88	1.13
Entrepren	0.798	0.568					
“I prefer to be self-employed”			0.743	3.81	0.99	−0.77	0.29
“It is easy to set up companies”			0.727	2.32	1.01	0.63	−0.07
“I have a close network of people running their businesses”			0.790	2.97	1.09	−0.07	−0.47
AttP2PEco	0.837	0.631					
“Peer-to-peer economy is a smart consumption way”			0.758	3.89	0.87	−0.92	1.39
“Peer-to-peer economy is good for society”			0.779	3.81	0.88	−0.75	0.88
“Peer-to-peer economy makes sense”			0.843	3.82	0.89	−0.75	0.71
Attitou	0.747	0.500					
“Tourism contributes to the progress of the destination”			0.646	4.09	0.82	−1.00	1.35
“Tourism should be encouraged”			0.716	4.14	0.83	−1.07	1.47
“In general, tourism is very beneficial”			0.750	4.04	0.88	−0.93	0.89
Ecocen	0.866	0.623					
“I am very concerned with environment deteriorating”			0.824	4.39	0.87	−1.45	1.71
“Governments should emphasize environmental protection”			0.920	4.50	0.80	−1.75	3.01
“We should be more respectful with the environment”			0.769	4.70	0.64	−2.50	6.77
“In general we should consume more organic products”			0.614	4.13	0.91	−1.16	1.47

(NFI = 0.860, CFI = 0.953, TLI = 0.944, RMSEA = 0.0492)

CR=Composite Reliability, AVE = Average Variance Extracted.

Table 4
Discriminant validity.

	Attitou	AttP2PEco	Ecocen	Econben	Entrepren	Manskills	Persreput	Idlecap	Noneconben
Attitou	0.708								
AttP2PEco	0.256	0.794							
Ecocen	0.317	0.357	0.789						
Econben	0.328	0.363	0.438	0.872					
Entrepren	0.209	0.147	0.497	0.167	0.754				
Manskills	0.413	0.262	0.539	0.350	0.311	0.769			
Persreput	0.098	0.093	0.231	0.175	0.167	0.119	0.933		
Idlecap	0.417	0.046	0.211	0.167	0.203	0.277	0.087	0.765	
Noneconben	0.264	0.045	0.321	0.129	0.258	0.206	−0.019	0.229	0.822

Table 5
Customers’ perception that peer-to-peer tourism experiences deliver higher authenticity than non-peer-to-peer provided.

P2Pexpauth	Low ^a	Medium ^a	High ^a	Total
Frequency	92	206	582	880
Percentage	10.45	23.41	66.14	100.00

^a Level of agreement with the statement that peer-to-peer tourism experiences are more authentic than non-peer-to-peer tourism experiences.

Table 7 displays the marginal effects, ranked according to their magnitude. They indicate that the factors with the highest influence on the perception of a superior authenticity of peer-to-peer tourism

experiences are their perception that they may yield non-economic benefits and their attitude concerning the sharing economy. Whereas the consumers’ entrepreneurship and their attitude towards tourism have the lowermost. This is because when a model’s coefficient is positive, then an increase in the correspondent regressor or independent variable necessarily decreases the probability of being in the lowest dependent variable category and increases the probability of being in the highest dependent variable category.

5. Conclusions and discussion

This article expands the knowledge on tourism authenticity perception, and it does so by investigating the consumers’ perception of a peer-

Table 6
The ordered probit model. Coefficients, marginal effects, and standard errors.

Ordered probit Variable	Coefficient St. Err.	Marginal effects by outcome St. Err.		
		Low	Medium	High
Noneconben	0.365***	−0.048***	−0.082***	0.130***
	0.044	0.007	0.011	0.016
Econben	0.265***	−0.035***	−0.060***	0.095***
	0.043	0.006	0.011	0.015
Persreput	0.111**	−0.014**	−0.025**	0.040**
	0.045	0.006	0.010	0.016
Attitou	0.087**	−0.011**	−0.020**	0.031**
	0.042	0.006	0.010	0.015
Attip2peco	0.314***	−0.041***	−0.071***	0.112***
	0.043	0.006	0.011	0.016
Ecocen	0.231***	−0.030***	−0.052***	0.082***
	0.042	0.006	0.010	0.015
Manskills	0.187***	−0.024***	−0.042***	0.067***
	0.043	0.006	0.010	0.015
Entrepren	0.100**	−0.013**	−0.023**	0.036**
	0.044	0.006	0.010	0.016
Idlecap	0.023	−0.003	−0.005	0.008
	0.043	0.006	0.010	0.015
“N”	880			
“Prob > chi2”	0.00			
“Pseudo-R2”	0.14			
“LR chi2(9)”	211.43			
“Log-likelihood”	−641.78			

*** Statistically significant at 1% level.

** Statistically significant at 5% level.

Table 7
Ranking of variables influence.

Marginal effects Variable	P2Pexpath		
	Low	Medium	High
Nonecoben	−0.048	−0.082	0.130
Attip2peco	−0.041	−0.071	0.112
Econben	−0.035	−0.060	0.095
Ecocen	−0.030	−0.052	0.082
Manskills	−0.024	−0.042	0.067
Persreput	−0.014	−0.025	0.040
Entrepren	−0.013	−0.023	0.036
Attitou	−0.011	−0.020	0.031

to-peer tourism experience superior authenticity and the variables that may influence it. It unveils and quantifies such a perception and proposes and tests, an explanatory model that integrates, as influencing factors, the consumers’ perception of peer-to-peer tourism experiences benefits together with consumer traits and attitudes.

The findings of this research indicate that peer-to-peer experiences have a preminent role in the consumer’s overall perception of authenticity. In this respect, it is remarkable that the majority of the population perceives peer-to-peer tourism experiences as delivering higher authenticity than non-peer-to-peer ones. Such a perception is mostly influenced by the individuals’ view that such experiences breed non-economic benefits and a positive attitude towards the sharing economy.

These results would be in line with the view that non-traditional, non-mercantile experiences are more likely to provide authenticity (Wilson & Harris, 2006; Zerva, 2015), and suggest a value-based perception of authenticity. The subjective perception of authenticity would be fuelled, largely, by elements associated with the presence of attractive values in the peer-to-peer experiences. Therefore, values such as belongingness or value-transfer become central in this discussion, putting forward that social influences are regarded as being one of the most relevant factors in the perception of authenticity. Understandably linked to the transfer of positive, attractive values, as well as to other

factors such as access to local networks of persons sharing the same activities with similar interests, values, and positive emotions. Intimacy with local passionate experience providers, and the subsequent transfer of values and vital perspectives, stand out to construct perceived authenticity.

On the contrary, factors that initially were thought to have a strong influence, such as the customers’ attitude towards tourism or their entrepreneurial skills, display the lowermost influence on conveying authenticity to peer-to-peer experiences. Again, these findings reinforce the previous conclusion that calls attention to the transformational dimension of experiential tourism and links the perception of authenticity with the search of transformation in terms of values, and values re-configuration, throughout the interactions with peers. In this respect, findings may also indicate that the academic authenticity discussion should put more emphasis on the suggested transformational process that experiential peer-to-peer tourism brings (Reisinger & Steiner, 2006), in line with Kolar and Zabkar (2010) that pinpoint the importance of existential authenticity and the key role displayed by emotions and connectedness.

In addition to contributing to the development of the authenticity theory in tourism, the results display relevant implications related to the management of the tourism destinations, both from the side of its product portfolio and from the side of its promotion.

From the tourism destination product portfolio, findings indicate that peer-to-peer tourism experiences are perceived as delivering more authenticity than non-peer-to-peer ones. Consequently, it seems reasonable to recommend that tourism destinations, seeking an authenticity-related positioning, focus on fostering and articulating peer-to-peer experiences on its product portfolio. In this respect, it could be suggested the development of initiatives breeding networked passions and value-based experiential tourism. Such a tourism development model should valorize, and hold as its core, the process of value generation and transfer. To do so, a wide range of co-creation, synergy, and societal tools could help articulating a vision of tourism destinations bringing together a critical mass of value-prompted peer-to-peer providers, and local social networks, with receptive tourists aligned with such a view. Inherently, destination managers, sector representatives, and experience providers would have an important role to make it possible, as such a development demands for specific and coordinated policies signalling and incentivizing peer-to-peer provision. Undoubtedly, a vision of regional competitiveness focused on existential authenticity poses a formidable challenge for destinations, as it will be necessary to mobilize and articulate a large amount of tourism experience providers willing to transfer their values and lifestyle.

From the promotion side, destinations aiming to build authenticity should definitively put special care to target consumers who appreciate it. The findings, indicating that consumer traits and attitudes influence their perception of authenticity, would ground the implementation of value-based tourism segmentation procedures upon which to build specific targeting and communication strategies.

As in the majority of researches, we should acknowledge certain limitations. In this respect, a first limitation arises from the fact that the research is based on a cross-sectional survey conducted only in Mallorca, providing a picture of a specific moment and non-contemplating individuals’ cultural differences. Consequently, findings would undoubtedly benefit from validation coming from cross-cultural research and longitudinal measurements.

Finally, another limitation arises from the fact that the questionnaire was not designed to allow a deep exploration on how transformation takes place in the peer-to-peer experiences, an issue that is likely to become an important research tourism topic in the near future. In this sense, further research could ascertain the extent to which peer-to-peer interaction brings transformation, and the process that follows. Specifically, it could be explored the potential transformative power of, and the authenticity associated with, specific elements such as role-modelling, value challenges, and access to local themed networks in

the construction of subjective authentic experiences.

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Declaration of competing interest

There are no potential conflicts of interest with respect to the research, authorship, and/or publication of this research paper.

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