CONSUMER AUTHENTICITY SEEKING:

CONCEPTUALIZATION, MEASUREMENT, AND CONTINGENT EFFECTS

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Abstract

The concept of authenticity is gaining interest in research and managerial practice. While the focus has been on the supply side, investigating factors that make brands authentic, the demand side, or consumers' search for authentic market offerings, has been neglected. Informed by the literature, this article develops a psychometrically sound and cross-nationally and temporally stable scale to measure consumer authenticity seeking (CAS) as a set of three dimensions: personal, true, and iconic authenticity seeking. Using a comprehensive theory-based nomological network, this research introduces CAS as an important moderator between brand authenticity and outcomes. It also examines consumers' intrinsic and extrinsic motives that drive these effects. Finally, this research reveals different consumer profiles managers can use for targeting and segmentation purposes.

With the growing homogenization of marketplaces, consumers are afraid of losing traditional sources of meaning and identity, which results in cynicism toward and avoidance of market-constructed meanings (Lehman et al. 2019; Thompson et al. 2006). Consequently, firms need to identify new and meaningful paths to reach their customers. To this end, developing authentic brands appears to be a promising marketing strategy (Cinelli and LeBoeuf 2020; Spiggle et al. 2012). Euromonitor International (2019) views authenticity as one of the top 10 trends in marketing, and Interbrand (2019) considers authenticity a key characteristic of all successful global brands.

Not surprisingly, (brand) authenticity has received considerable attention in marketing research over the past decade. The literature commonly agrees that authenticity includes three elements that affect purchase-related decisions (Morhart et al., 2015; Moulard et al. 2021): *existential*—the extent to which an entity corresponds with one's intrinsic motivation (i.e., true-to-self or personal); *indexical*—the extent to which an entity corresponds to the actual state of affairs (i.e., true-to-fact); and *iconic*—the extent to which an entity corresponds to a socially determined standard (i.e., true-to-ideal). However, extant studies differ in their scope and do not always use all three elements of authenticity, resulting in an inconclusive picture of the nature of authenticity in consumption (Beverland and Farrelly 2010; Moulard et al. 2021). Moreover, the marketing literature has primarily adopted a supply-side perspective when studying authenticity, evaluating elements that make brands authentic (see Appendix A). To date, little is known about the demand side—that is, consumers' "search" (e.g., Thompson et al. 2006) or "quest" (e.g., Beverland and Farrelly 2010; Leigh et al. 2006; Nunes et al. 2021) for authentic market offerings. Without a thorough understanding of the construct underlying authenticity seeking from the consumer side, its definition, and its measurement, questions about its drivers, consequences, and relationship to other theoretically relevant constructs, including brand authenticity, remain unanswered.

This research explores consumers' quest for authentic market offerings, a concept we refer to as "consumer authenticity seeking" (CAS), as well as its measurement and link to other theoretically and managerially relevant constructs. The purpose of this research is fourfold: (1) to develop a scale to measure CAS as a set of independent dimensions that capture the three elements of authenticity—namely, personal, true, and iconic authenticity seeking—that is psychometrically sound, cross-nationally and temporally stable, and distinct from related constructs; (2) to place CAS into a comprehensive theory-based nomological network that underscores its moderating role in brand authenticity–outcomes relationships; (3) to consider consumers' intrinsic and extrinsic motives that drive these effects; and (4) to reveal different consumer profiles, grounded in distinct combinations of the CAS dimensions, that managers can use to target market segments that vary in their authenticity-seeking behaviors.

We contribute to the body of knowledge on authenticity in several important ways. First, building on extant notions that consumers actively search for authenticity in consumption (e.g., Beverland and Farrelly 2010), this study is the first to conceptualize and operationalize CAS as a set of three conceptually related but independent dimensions, identify its underlying dimensions, and uncover its impact and role in the field of marketing (MacKenzie 2003; Moulard et al. 2021). Second, we place the three CAS dimensions in a theoretically anchored framework in which they moderate the links between brand authenticity and consumer-related (brand identification) and company-related (price premium) outcomes. We find that personal, true, and iconic authenticity seeking play different roles, which has implications for how (brand) authenticity should be approached in future research. Third, drawing on the authenticity literature (Beverland and Farrelly 2010; Moulard et al. 2021) and self-determination theory (Ryan and Deci 2000), we empirically investigate intrinsic and extrinsic antecedents of the three CAS dimensions. The findings

show that intrinsic motivations mainly drive true and personal authenticity seeking, while extrinsic motivations drive iconic authenticity seeking. These findings extend the research on and deepen our understanding of antecedents of brand authenticity (e.g., Cinelli and LeBoeuf 2020; Moulard et al. 2016), considered for the first time from the customer's viewpoint, and reveal that both intrinsic and extrinsic motivations play an important role in influencing the three CAS dimensions.

From a managerial perspective, we provide a psychometrically robust measurement instrument for CAS that both practitioners and academics can apply across product categories and markets. A latent profile analysis offers evidence that combinations of personal, true, and iconic, authenticity-seeking dimensions exist and can be described alongside distinct consumer characteristics and motivations that drive brand choices. These profiles make CAS measurable, meaningful, and useful for brand managers and companies.

Conceptual development

Consumers' quest for authenticity is a central focus in the literature. As Beverland and Farrelly (2010, p. 839) note, "consumers actively seek authenticity to find meaning in their lives, and … prefer brands and experiences that reinforce their desired identity." However, a demand-side operationalization of consumers' search for authenticity as a meaningful, pragmatic individual-difference variable is absent in the literature (for an overview, see Appendix A). We base the current research on prior conceptual work on authenticity (e.g., Leigh et al. 2006; Morhart et al. 2015; Moulard et al. 2021) that supports the notion that the study of authenticity should incorporate existential, indexical, and iconic aspects of authenticity. Likewise, the literature agrees that authenticity is not an inherent attribute per se but is better understood as an assessment a person makes in a particular context (Bruner 1994). There are no purely objective criteria to assess whether a market offering is authentic—it is more of a subjective perception than a reality (Grayson and Martinec 2004).

Defining personal, true, and iconic authenticity seeking

We approach authenticity from a demand-side perspective and conceptualize CAS as a psychological trait consisting of three independent dimensions: personal, true, and iconic authenticity seeking. Next, we discuss these dimensions in greater detail.

Personal authenticity seeking We define *personal authenticity seeking* as consumers' search for marketing offerings they perceive to be in line with their true selves and intrinsic motivations. Authenticity relates to identity (Steiner and Reisinger 2006; Wang 1999) and refers to the human need to be one's true self or true to one's existential nature (Kernis and Goldman 2004; Steiner and Reisinger 2006). Consumer behavior aimed at developing one's true self is intrinsically motivated and a cornerstone of authenticity in marketing (Arnould and Price 2000). It is also viewed as "activity-related authenticity" (Leigh et al. 2006) or "true-to-self authenticity" (Moulard et al. 2021) and formally defined as "a consumer's perception of the extent to which an entity's behavior corresponds with its intrinsic motivations as opposed to extrinsic motivations" (Moulard et al. 2021, p. 103). For example, within the old-timer community, the MG car brand is considered authentic from an existentialist perspective only if the owner drives and maintains the car personally (Leigh et al. 2006). This notion of brand authenticity is captured mainly through elements of integrity and symbolism (Morhart et al. 2015). For a brand to be authentic, it must stand for intrinsic values and morals the consumer cares about (Beverland and Farrelly 2010), capturing the identity-related aspect of brand attachment (i.e., brand–self connection; Park et al. 2010). The key focus of personal authenticity seeking is on an object's ability to uncover consumers' authentic selves (Arnould and Price 2000) and create (intrinsic) meaning for themselves (Beverland and Farrelly 2010; Moulard et al. 2021).

True authenticity seeking We define *true authenticity seeking* as consumers' search for market offerings they perceive to correspond to the actual state of affairs. Epistemologically,

authenticity refers to "reality," "genuineness," and/or "truth" (Grayson and Martinec 2004). It distinguishes the real and the fake (Wang 1999). To make such a comparison, an absolute, objective criterion must exist (e.g., a tangible origin) against which to gauge authenticity (Leigh et al. 2006). This is true-to-fact authenticity, defined as "a consumer's perception of the extent to which information communicated about an entity corresponds with the actual state of affairs" (Moulard et al. 2021, p. 100). Authenticity, in this sense, is an objective quality inherent in an object that marks it as "the original" or "the real thing" (i.e., objectivist perspective) (Grayson and Martinec 2004; Lehman et al. 2019). To determine if something is indeed authentic, the consumer must have confidence that it is true. Brands can communicate or signal authenticity through verifiable information, such as labels of origin, age, ingredients, and performance (Morhart et al. 2015; Moulard et al. 2021). However, what matters ultimately is not whether the information is right, but if the consumer believes it (Bruner 1994; Grayson and Martinec 2004).

Iconic authenticity seeking We define *iconic authenticity seeking* as consumers' search for market offerings they perceive as resembling a socially determined standard. Iconic is defined as "resembling an icon," which is something "widely recognized and well-established" (*Merriam-Webster* n.d.). This definition is in line with a constructivist perspective, suggesting that authenticity is a personally or socially constructed phenomenon (Cohen 1988; Wang 1999). Consistent with categorization theory (Sujan et al. 1986), authenticity is contextually and ideologically driven and based on consumers' comparison of an object to a socially determined standard (Leigh et al. 2006; Moulard et al. 2021). There is no single version of or available standard for authenticity; it is a socially negotiable, relative concept. Also referred to as "staged authenticity" (Chhabra et al. 2003), "commercially created authenticity" (Stern 1994), or "true-to-ideal authenticity" (Moulard et al. 2021), *iconic authenticity* is formally defined as "a consumer's perception of the extent to which an

entity's attributes correspond with a socially determined standard" (Moulard et al. 2021, p. 99). Iconic authenticity does not arise from the object as such but from an object's ability to create a schematic fit with consumers' expectations about that object (Morhart et al. 2015). Brands can use this principle, for example, by communicating their essence (vs. their objective aspects) via marketing activities (Becker et al. 2019; Brown et al. 2003).

Specifying CAS as a set of conceptually related but independent dimensions

Next, we need to determine how the three dimensions of CAS, pertaining to *personal*, *true,* and *iconic* authenticity, are interrelated. We specify CAS as a 'profile model' (Edwards 2001), or a 'set of conceptually related but independent dimensions' (Moulard et al. 2021). Here, the construct is specified at the same level as its dimensions and consists of various combinations of its dimensional characteristics with different antecedents and consequences (Law et al. 1998; Polites et al. 2012). This conceptualization is appropriate because "conceptualizing … authenticity as a higher-order construct may be problematic. Each subdimension may not be a component of the higher-order construct but rather a highly distinct type with its own set of antecedents and consequences" (Moulard et al. 2021, p. 97). A popular example of such a specification is the Big Five personality traits (Costa and McCrae 1992), which describe a person's personality along various profiles that range from high to low for each of the five dimensions. We follow this logic and specify the three CAS dimensions as a set of conceptually related but independent dimensions that profile respondents according to their authenticity-seeking patterns with different antecedents and consequences (Edwards 2001; Moulard et al. 2021).[1]

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[1] Web Appendix B discusses alternative specifications of CAS as either a second-order reflective model or a first-order reflective and second-order formative model.

Developing a scale for personal, true, and iconic CAS

Because the authenticity literature does not provide a ready-to-use scale to operationalize

CAS, we needed to develop a scale. Following established scale development techniques

(Churchill 1979; DeVellis 2016), we developed and tested the psychometric properties of our

newly derived scale across several studies (see Fig. 1). This process involved expert

screening (Study 1a), scale purification (Study 1b), and scale replication, including

discriminant validity to related constructs (Study 2), convergent validity (Studies 3), temporal

stability (Study 4), nomological validation (Study 5), and cross-national validation including

a profile analysis (Study 6).

[*Insert Fig. 1 about here*]

Study 1a: Item generation and screening

In Study 1a, we generated an initial pool of 38 items to tap the three dimensions of CAS based

on prior research on brand authenticity (e.g., Beverland and Farrelly 2010; Grayson and

Martinec 2004) and other forms of authenticity (e.g., Audrezet et al., 2020; Wang 1999). We

subjected these items to expert screening to rate their content validity, clarity, and

comprehensiveness. Specifically, we asked 15 marketing academics to assess the relevance of

the initial item pool and offer qualitative feedback about them. We provided each expert with

a definition of the corresponding authenticity dimension and asked them to assess each item

on its relevance for tapping the construct domain (1 = "does not fit," 4 = "good fit"). Based

on their ratings and feedback, we reworded several items whose meaning was unclear and

removed items that were too close to each other or did not fit into the construct's conceptual

domain. We dropped 17 items, reducing the pool to 21 items (i.e., 7 per CAS dimension).

Study 1b: Scale purification

In Study 1b, we incorporated the reduced 21-item pool into a questionnaire, which we then

administered to a U.S. consumer panel from Amazon Mechanical Turk (MTurk) (N = 272;

Age$_{mean}$ = 37.61 years, SD = 11.20; 47.8% female). We collected data over a period of two days; only citizens or permanent residents of the U.S. with a minimum MTurk approval rating of 95% participated. Further, respondents were informed about the approximate time for completion, that there are no right or wrong answers, that they should respond according to their consumption preferences and that their data would be treated anonymously and not passed on to third parties. In return for their participation, respondents were compensated with $0.80 for a completed survey. We then subjected the initial item pool to exploratory factor analysis (DeVellis 2016) using a principal axis factor analysis with oblimin rotation. Following an iterative procedure, we examined the structure matrix to identify items for removal that exhibited low factor loadings or cross-loaded on multiple factors. This process resulted in a three-factor solution (eigenvalues > 1), with a final set of 12 items reflecting (1) personal authenticity seeking, (2) true authenticity seeking, and (3) iconic authenticity seeking (see Table 1 and Web Appendix A). With factor loadings greater than .60, no significant cross-loadings, and Cronbach's alpha values greater than .75, all three dimensions demonstrated satisfactory psychometric properties (Nunnally and Bernstein 1994).

[Insert Table 1 about here]

The intercorrelations among the three newly established dimensions were moderate to low: the correlation between true and iconic authenticity seeking was negative (r = −.52, *p* < .001), while personal authenticity seeking was correlated positively and significantly with true authenticity seeking (r$_{true}$ = .44, *p* < .001) and not significantly with iconic authenticity seeking (r$_{iconic}$ = −.01, *p* > .05). These correlations support our conceptualization that the three CAS dimensions do not reflect an overall higher-order construct (Jarvis et al. 2003).

Study 2: Scale replication and discriminant validity

To examine the empirical stability of the CAS scale, in Study 2, we incorporated the remaining 12 items into a consumer survey administered to a different U.S. respondent pool

from Amazon MTurk, applying the same instructions and quality constraints as in Study 1b ($N = 329$; Age$_{mean}$ = 37.84 years, SD = 12.15; 52% female; compensation = \$0.80). In addition, we screened relevant literature for consumer characteristics representing consumption-seeking tendencies and/or alternative reasons for the consumption of authentic products. One relevant consumer characteristic is consumer cosmopolitanism. Cosmopolitan consumers have an interest in immersing themselves into foreign cultures by consuming and experiencing authentic products and services from foreign markets (Cannon and Yaprak 2002, Riefler et al. 2012) and should therefore also show a general interest in the consumption of authentic goods. We incorporated a multidimensional measure of consumer cosmopolitanism, comprising diversity seeking, foreign consumption-seeking tendencies, and open-mindedness (Riefler et al. 2012), to test its discriminant validity against the three CAS dimensions (see Appendix B for items).

Following scale development guidelines (DeVellis 2016), we examined individual item properties (i.e., interitem correlations, means, and item variance) that showed desirable qualities for all items (see Table 1 and Web Appendix A). Next, we ran a confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) based on the specified conceptual model validated in Study 1 and purified the measure in a stepwise manner by considering loadings greater than .50, correlated error terms, and expected parameter changes using Mplus (Anderson and Gerbing 1988; Muthén and Muthén 2011). We dropped one item from the iconic authenticity-seeking dimension because it overlapped with another item. A CFA with this validation sample indicated satisfactory fit ($\chi^2_{(41)}$ = 79.433, root mean square error of approximation [RMSEA] =.053, standardized root mean-square residual [SRMR] = .047, comparative fit index [CFI] = .970, Tucker–Lewis fit index [TLI] = .959; see Table 1) for the three-factor solution (Hu and Bentler 1999). The final three-dimensional 11-item solution proved reliable, with alphas ranging from .87 to .91 (Nunnally and Bernstein 1994) and construct reliabilities above the threshold

of .60 (Bagozzi and Yi 1988) for the three CAS dimensions. Further, all average variance

extracted (AVE) values exceeded .60, demonstrating convergent validity (Netemeyer et al.

2003), with item-to-total correlations ranging from .81 to .93 (see Table 2). The correlation

between true and iconic authenticity seeking was negative (r = –.46, p < .001), while their

correlation with personal authenticity seeking was positive and significant for true (r_{true} = .40,

p < .001) and not significant for iconic (r_{iconic} = –.01, p > .05) authenticity seeking. In support

of discriminant validity, AVE values are greater than the squared correlation between the

three dimensions (Fornell and Larcker 1981). Further, we tested our multidimensional

operationalization of CAS as a set of conceptually related but independent dimensions against

several alternative model specifications (see Web Appendix B for additional details).

Conceptualizing CAS as a set of conceptually related but independent dimensions was

superior to all other possible combinations. We also found discriminant validity between

consumer cosmopolitanism and each CAS dimension (r^2 < .20, AVE > .50; see Table 2).

[Insert Table 2 about here]

Study 3: Convergent validity

Because consumers scoring high on the CAS dimensions are likely to own authentic brands,

in Study 3a we relate personal, true, and iconic authenticity seeking to the authenticity of

brands purchased by consumers. We collected data using a respondent pool from a major

western EU university (N = 170; Age_{mean} = 32.03 years, SD = 14.07; 68% female). We

randomly asked respondents to indicate, for two of four product categories, the brand they

usually buy or bought last. As in previous studies (see Batra et al. 2000; Mandler et al. 2020),

to enhance generalizability, we included four product categories that differed in durability,

price, and product usage (i.e., soft drinks, dental products, smartphones, and household

appliances). To account for respondents' interest in the product category, we measured

product category involvement (Beatty and Talpade 1994). Next, respondents rated the

indicated brands in terms of their authenticity (Morhart et al. 2015). We then pooled the summated scores of the purchased brands' authenticity ratings and used them as dependent variables in a regression with personal, true, and iconic authenticity seeking; category involvement; and demographics (i.e., age, education, and gender) as independent variables.

Results of regression analysis indicate significant, positive relationships of true (β_{true} = .24, p < .001) and iconic (β_{iconic} = .16, p < .05) authenticity seeking with consumers' authenticity ratings of purchased brands (adj. R^2 = .18), supporting their convergent validity with respect to brand ownership. However, personal authenticity seeking ($\beta_{personal}$ = −.04, p = .64) did not relate to the brand authenticity scale. This lack of relationship might be due to the product categories selected.

Study 4: Test–retest reliability

In Study 4, we assess CAS's temporal stability using a test–retest procedure (Netemeyer et al. 2003). We administered the scale to a sample of 54 university students on two occasions, two weeks apart, in exchange for course credit. We randomized item sequences to control for systematic bias. On average, correlation between the two samples was high (r_{mean} = .71, p < .001; r_{true} = .80, p < .001; r_{iconic} = .68, p < .001; $r_{personal}$ = .66, p < .001). Paired sample t-test comparisons of the average scores between the time intervals indicated no significant differences ($\Delta mean_{true}$ = .04, SD = .72, p >.05; $\Delta mean_{iconic}$ = −.01, SD = .69, p > .05; $\Delta mean_{personal}$ = −.28, SD = 1.08, p > .05), lending further support to the temporal stability of the three CAS dimensions. Thus far, the studies have provided evidence for a conceptually and psychometrically sound CAS scale. Its three dimensions demonstrate satisfactory internal consistency, convergent and discriminant validity, and temporal stability.

Study 5: Nomological validation

Extant research has established links between brand authenticity and consumers' attitudes and behavior toward brands (Cinelli and LeBoeuf 2020; Morhart et al. 2015). Yet they are

not likely to be uniform across consumer segments and should vary depending on the type of authenticity a consumer is seeking (Beverland and Farrelly 2010; Moulard et al. 2021). In Study 5, we propose and test a comprehensive nomological network (Fig. 1) that embeds the three CAS dimensions in a theoretical model of antecedents and outcomes. We posit that these CAS dimensions moderate the relationships of brand authenticity with brand-related outcomes—namely, brand identification and price premium. We also identify antecedents that are likely to drive consumers' authenticity seeking. We discuss these next.

Antecedents of personal, true, and iconic authenticity seeking

Self-determination theory (Ryan and Deci 2000) distinguishes between intrinsic motives, activities launched because they are interesting and satisfying in themselves, and extrinsic motives, activities performed to obtain an external goal, such as a reward or the avoidance of a punishment (Deci and Ryan 2008). Prior work has examined how intrinsic and extrinsic motives relate to brand authenticity (Cinelli and LeBoeuf 2020; Holt 2002). Findings from this work suggest that authentic brands need to focus on intrinsic motives and promote a shared identity among the firm, the customer, and the brand, as opposed to extrinsic motives, which tend to be counterproductive for building authentic brands (Moulard et al. 2021). However, it is still unclear how consumers' intrinsic and extrinsic motives lead to preferences for authentic consumption. In line with the brand authenticity literature, we consider intrinsic and extrinsic motivations potential drivers of CAS behavior, but, in contrast to this literature, we expect that both types of motives are positively related to CAS because products and brands are often bought for self- and other-related reasons (Batra et al. 2000).

Further, we conducted interviews with a purposive sample of ten authenticity-seeking consumers to know more about the motives that drive their authenticity-seeking behavior. The results of these interviews, along with insights from the literature, were then presented to and discussed with experts in marketing and branding. This led to the identification of two

intrinsic motives, self-authenticity (Morhart et al. 2015; Wood et al. 2008) and consumers' need for uniqueness (Lynn and Harris 1997a), and one extrinsic motive, consumers' susceptibility to normative influences (Batra et al. 2000; Bearden et al. 1989). Conceptually, the three CAS dimensions operate independently and thus are not likely driven by the same motivations. Therefore, we posit that different motives (intrinsic vs. extrinsic) are likely to exert distinct influences on the three CAS dimensions.

Self-authenticity Wood et al. (2008, p. 386) define self-authenticity as "being true to oneself in most situations and living in accordance with one's values and beliefs"; self-authenticity is an intrinsic motivation of consumers who seek authenticity in consumption (Morhart et al. 2015). Among other things, consumption serves as an expression of identity and lifestyle choice (Belk 1988; Kirmani 2009). Consumers who affirm authenticity in their lives by seeking out and purchasing authentic products and brands have high goal relevance (Beverland and Farrelly 2010). Thus, we expect positive relationships of self-authenticity with true and personal authenticity seeking. However, intrinsic motives such as self-authenticity are unlikely to lead to iconic authenticity-seeking behavior. People who have an authentic personality are likely to search for and experience "the real thing" (Holt 1998) and will not be satisfied with copies or imitations, which would conflict with their self-perception. Thus, we propose the following:

H1 Self-authenticity positively influences (a) personal and (b) true authenticity seeking.

Consumers' need for uniqueness Tian et al. (2001, p. 50) define consumers' need for uniqueness as an intrinsic motivation that refers to "an individual's pursuit of differentness relative to others that is achieved through the acquisition, utilization, and disposition of consumer goods to develop and enhance one's personal and social identity." Based on Snyder and Fromkin's (1977) theory of uniqueness, consumers have an intrinsic need to be moderately dissimilar to others as a way to match and support their self-concept. Importantly,

consumers' self-attributed need for uniqueness is related to their desire for scarce, innovative, and customized products as well as preferences for unusual shopping venues (Lynn and Harris 1997a). Consumers tend to diverge from majorities or other social groups in product domains they view as authentic (Berger and Heath 2007). Therefore, we expect that consumers high on need for uniqueness seek both true authenticity and personal authenticity consumption opportunities. However, there is no conceptual logic to support a link between consumers' need for uniqueness and iconic authenticity seeking; iconically authentic consumption is based on a socially determined standard and, thus, by definition, cannot be unique (Moulard et al. 2021). Thus, we advance the following:

H2 Consumers' need for uniqueness positively influences (a) personal and (b) true authenticity seeking.

Susceptibility to normative influences Wooten and Reed (2004, p. 551) position consumers' susceptibility to normative influences as an extrinsic motivation, or "the need to identify with others or enhance one's image with products and brands or the willingness to conform to others' expectations regarding purchase decisions." Consumers' susceptibility to normative influences can predict their concerns about public appearances and efforts to gain social acceptance (Wooten and Reed 2004). Brands help consumers enhance their self-image and gain social acceptance and approbation (Batra et al. 2000). The symbolic, credible, and persistent nature of authentic brands makes them ideal candidates for promoting one's self-image to others (Morhart et al. 2015).

Consequently, we posit that consumers who search for authenticity in consumption potentially do this for extrinsic signaling properties. Especially products that convey true or iconic authenticity may represent suitable objects that conform to others' expectations—either through factual evidence (Morhart et al. 2015) or socially constructed beliefs (Moulard et al. 2021). We thus expect that consumers who score high on susceptibility to normative influences will also exhibit higher levels of true and iconic authenticity seeking. At the same

time, research shows that the influence of consumers' susceptibility to normative influences is particularly strong when consumption outcomes are conspicuous (Wooten and Reed 2004). In other words, for consumers who are high on susceptibility to normative influences, it is more important that a product looks authentic than its authenticity from a true or personal standpoint. We therefore expect the impact of consumers' susceptibility to normative influences to be strongest for iconic authenticity seeking (Moulard et al. 2021).

H3 Consumers' susceptibility to normative influences positively influences (a) true and (b) iconic authenticity seeking.

Consequences and relationship to brand authenticity

Despite conceptual differences among personal, true, and iconic personal authenticity seekers, rooted in their different consumption motives (i.e., self-authenticity, consumers' need for uniqueness, consumers' susceptibility to normative influences), these CAS segments share a focal object of attraction (i.e., object relevance; Reed et al. 2012)—namely, the consumption of authentic brands and products. The literature suggests that brand authenticity affects various attitudinal and behavioral outcomes, including emotional brand attachment and positive word of mouth (Morhart et al. 2015), brand purchase intentions, evaluation (Napoli et al. 2014; Newman and Dhar 2014), trust, and quality (Cinelli and LeBouef 2020; Moulard et al. 2021). This study extends these findings by examining how brand authenticity adds value to both consumers and companies.

We contend that authentic brands, as carriers of symbolic meanings (Elliott 1994), can help consumers achieve their fundamental identity goals (Fournier 1998). The positive aspects associated with authentic brands make them ideal candidates for developing close consumer–brand relationships (Morhart et al. 2015). We thus select brand identification—"a consumer's perceived state of oneness with a brand" (Stokburger-Sauer et al. 2012, p. 407)—as an identity-related outcome of brand authenticity. For consumers scoring high on CAS, authentic brands are particularly suitable objects for identification purposes. Even though

authentic brands are attractive to consumers in general, this attraction likely increases as consumers score high on any of the three CAS dimensions. Brands aiming to position themselves as authentic may draw from all three aspects of authenticity (i.e., existential, indexical, and iconic aspects) discussed in the literature (Morhart et al. 2015). As a result, they are similarly attractive to consumers scoring high on different dimensions of CAS. We thus expect that the three CAS dimensions will all moderate the brand authenticity–brand identification link.

H4 (a) Personal, (b) true, and (c) iconic authenticity seeking positively moderate the link between brand authenticity and brand identification.

Drawing on previous literature, both the positive brand attribute reflected in authenticity and its ability to forge consumer–brand relationships (Beverland and Farrelly 2010) should increase consumers' willingness to pay a price premium (Newman and Dhar 2014). Brand authenticity is frequently viewed as a desirable brand aspect that increases consumers' overall evaluation of the brand (Napoli et al. 2014), which is positively related to higher levels of willingness to pay (Moulard et al. 2015). As authenticity-seeking consumers place greater emphasis on the search for and consumption of authentic objects in their daily lives (Morhart et al. 2015; Thompson et al. 2006), they should also be willing to pay a higher price for authentic brands. Hence, the positive relationship between brand authenticity and consumers' willingness to pay a price premium is likely to be enforced for authenticity seeking consumers. Since authentic brands may incorporate all aspects of authenticity in their positioning (Moulard et al. 2015), all three dimensions of CAS should moderate the brand authenticity–price premium link.

H5 (a) Personal, (b) true, and (c) iconic authenticity seeking positively moderate the link between brand authenticity and willingness to pay a price premium.

Research design

Measurements To test the hypotheses, we administered a questionnaire to another different U.S. respondent pool from Amazon MTurk, applying the similar instruction and quality constraints as in previous studies (N = 766; Age_{mean} = 33.99 years, SD = 10.41; 44% female; compensation = $1.20). In addition to the CAS scale, we used established measures (see Appendix B) for self-authenticity (Morhart et al. 2015), consumers' need for uniqueness (Lynn and Harris 1997b), consumers' susceptibility to normative influences (Batra et al. 2000), brand identification (Stokburger-Sauer et al. 2012), and brand authenticity (Morhart et al. 2015), as well as a measure of consumers' willingness to pay a price premium (Mandler et al. 2020). To control for potential brand-specific effects, we used brand familiarity, respondents' indication of prior brand ownership, and demographics (i.e., age, gender, and education).

Brand stimuli We randomly assigned each respondent to rate one of eight consumer brands (i.e., Coca-Cola, Red Bull, Chevrolet, Toyota, Tide, Persil, Apple, and Samsung) from four product categories (i.e., soft drinks, automobiles, laundry detergents, and smartphones). We selected brands based on their availability in the target market, respondents' familiarity with them, and their use in past brand authenticity studies (e.g., Morhart et al. 2015) and to ensure variation in responses along the nondurable, durable, and price continuums.

Common method bias We employed various ex ante and ex post measures to reduce common method bias (Podsakoff et al. 2003). Ex ante, we allocated independent and dependent variables to separate sections in the questionnaire, we assured respondents' anonymity, and we varied all scale formats. Ex post, we used Lindell and Whitney's (2001) marker variable approach to determine whether common method bias was a problem (i.e., "I often go to the gym to exercise"). After adjustment, correlations between manifest variables remained significant, suggesting that common method bias is not a concern in our data.

Results

Measurement model To further investigate CAS's underlying structure and stability, we

first ran a CFA only on its dimensions using Mplus. The results (see Table 1) confirmed

previous studies with high item to construct loadings and satisfactory psychometric properties

($\chi^2_{(41)}$ = 110.877, RMSEA = .047, SRMR = .033, CFI = .978, TLI = .970). Correlations

between the three dimensions of CAS were also in line with Study 2. We observed a positive

correlation (r = .44) between true and personal authenticity seeking but a negative correlation

(r = –.23) between true and iconic authenticity seeking. In support of discriminant validity,

AVE values are once again greater than the squared correlation between the three dimensions

of CAS. Second, we incorporated the proposed antecedents and outcome variables into a

CFA to validate the measurement model presented in Fig. 1 (see Study 5). The initial

assessment of each construct's factor loading led to the exclusion of one cross-loaded item

from consumers' need for uniqueness, which improved the overall reliability of the measure

(see Appendix B).[2] The psychometric properties of all measures (see Table 3) proved

reliable, with Cronbach's alphas, AVEs, and composite reliabilities above the recommended

thresholds. We ran a CFA on all employed multi-item measures, which indicated satisfactory

fit ($\chi^2_{(847)}$ = 1453.519, RMSEA = .031, SRMR = .043, CFI = .969, TLI = .965). All AVEs

were higher than the squared correlations between pairs of constructs, suggesting

discriminant validity among the constructs.

[Insert Table 3 about here]

Structural model We estimated the proposed model in Fig. 1 (Study 5) using Mplus,

controlling for brand familiarity, prior brand ownership, brand-level factors, and

demographics (i.e., age, gender, and education). We mean-centered the average composites

of the CAS dimensions and brand authenticity prior to estimating the moderating

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[2] A robustness test including the dropped item indicates no substantial change in path estimates.

relationships. This was done to address possible concerns of 'micro' collinearity (Echambadi and Hess, 2007; Iacobucci et al. 2016). All remaining latent constructs were fully specified. We calculated composite indicator error variances in accordance with Anderson and Gerbing (1988) by using composite variances and composite reliabilities (i.e., $[1 - CR] \times \sigma^2$) to provide accurate structural parameter estimates (Bandalos 2002).

The estimated model in Fig. 1 exhibits a satisfactory model fit (see Table 4). Regarding the hypothesized links, the estimations reveal that different antecedents are related to each of the three dimensions of CAS. Self-authenticity is positively related to personal authenticity ($\beta = .353$, $p < .001$) and true authenticity ($\beta = .283$, $p < .001$) seeking, supporting H_1. In support of H_2, consumers' need for uniqueness positively influenced personal authenticity ($\beta = .465$, $p < .001$) and true authenticity ($\beta = .339$, $p < .001$) seeking. Consumers' susceptibility to normative influences was also positively related to true ($\beta = .159$, $p < .001$) and iconic authenticity ($\beta = .406$, $p < .001$) seeking, in support of H_3.

[Insert Table 4 about here]

To shed light on the relative strength of the antecedents of CAS dimensions, we ran Wald tests to compare the path estimates of the effects of consumers' need for uniqueness, self-authenticity, and susceptibility to normative influences on the three CAS dimensions. In line with our expectations, consumers' susceptibility to normative influences exerted a greater impact on iconic authenticity seeking than on true and personal authenticity seeking (Wald $\chi^2_{(1)} = 10.958$, $p < .01$). In contrast, consumers' need for uniqueness (Wald $\chi^2_{(1)} = 0.051$, $p = .821$) and self-authenticity (Wald $\chi^2_{(1)} = .119$, $p = .730$) did not differ in terms of their effect on true and personal authenticity seeking.

As we expected, brand authenticity was positively related to brand identification ($\beta = .667$, $p < .001$) and price premium ($\beta = .309$, $p < .001$), while brand identification also related to price premium ($\beta = .400$, $p < .001$). Regarding the role of the three CAS dimensions in

moderating the relationships of brand authenticity with brand identification (H4) and price premium (H5), we found partial support for these effects. All three dimensions positively moderated the link between brand authenticity and brand identification ($\beta_{personal} = .111$, $p = .004$; $\beta_{true} = .093$, $p = .014$; $\beta_{iconic} = .065$, $p = .059$), while only true and iconic authenticity seeking ($\beta_{true} = .078$, $p = .077$; $\beta_{iconic} = .122$, $p = .002$; $\beta_{personal} = .020$, $p = .608$) conditioned the relationship between brand authenticity and price premium. The estimated model explained 70% and 49% of the variance in brand identification and price premium, respectively. In addition, the link between brand authenticity and price premium was partially mediated by brand identification ($\beta = .267$, $p < .001$). Accounting for the hypothesized moderating effects, the mediated link between brand authenticity and price premium was moderated by true (moderated mediation index: .494; 95% confidence interval [CI] = [.048; 1.110]) and personal (moderated mediation index: .981; 95% CI = [.403; 1.645]) authenticity seeking but not by iconic authenticity seeking (moderated mediation index: .244; 95% CI = [–.180; .667]).[3] This lends further support to the different roles of the three CAS dimensions in identifying value-added consumer segments for brand authenticity–outcome relationships.

In addition, we estimated a full antecedent model in which self-authenticity, need for uniqueness, and susceptibility to normative influence all relate to all three dimensions of CAS. The corresponding model exhibited satisfactory fit but did not substantially outperform the main model (Model fit$_{alternative}$: $\chi^2_{(534)} = 1325.354$, RMSEA = .045, SRMR = .057, CFI = .927, TLI = .910). All estimated paths remained stable, and the additional effects of consumers' need for uniqueness and self-authenticity on iconic authenticity seeking were not significant ($\beta_{NFU} = .067$, $p = .282$; $\beta_{selfAut} = .005$, $p = .913$). Surprisingly, the path from susceptibility to normative influence on personal authenticity seeking was positive and significant ($\beta_{SNI} = .224$, $p < .001$).

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[3] We used a moderated mediation index based on 5000 bootstrapped samples using Hayes's (2017) PROCESS macro on a reduced model. We included antecedents of CAS as covariates to allow the model's estimation in this additional analysis.

Predictive validity

To substantiate the impact of the three dimensions of CAS on these two outcomes, we also estimated hierarchical linear regressions of the direct effect model using composites of CAS to predict both brand identification and price premium as dependent variables. Hierarchical regression results (see Web Appendix C) provide evidence of a relevant change in explained variance when adding personal, true, and iconic authenticity seeking as predictors and moderators of the brand authenticity–outcome link and controlling for the hypothesized antecedents (i.e., self-authenticity, need for uniqueness, and susceptibility to normative influence), brand related controls (i.e., brand familiarity and brand ownership), and sociodemographics (brand identification: $\Delta F(\Delta 6) = 17.00$, $\Delta r^2 = .02$; price premium: $\Delta F(\Delta 6) = 17.64$, $\Delta r^2 = .04$). These r^2 changes are in line with the expected effect sizes for consumer characteristics (Sarason et al. 1975; Verlegh 2007) and highlight the added value of CAS over other variables in the proposed nomological network.

Study 6: Profiling authenticity-seeking consumers

Our conceptualization of CAS as a set of related but independent dimensions suggests different authenticity seekers' profiles. In Study 6, we (1) replicate CAS in a different country, (2) provide an assessment of known group validity, and (3) show (via latent profile analysis) how combinations of consumers scoring low/high on true, personal, and iconic authenticity seeking reveal different profiles that also differ in their consumption motives.

Research design

Measurements We collected additional data from U.K. respondents for two pretests ($N_{pretest\ 1} = 48$; $Age_{mean} = 34.84$ years, SD = 12.25; 38.4% male, compensation = £1.00 | $N_{pretest\ 2} = 75$; $Age_{mean} = 36.39$ years, SD = 11.73; 30.9% male, compensation = £1.00) and one main study (N = 484; $Age_{mean} = 36.76$ years, SD = 12.55; 31% male; compensation = £1.10) via the crowdworker platform Prolific. We used quality constraints similar to the MTurk samples

(i.e., participants could only take part in one study and had to be U.K. residents). The U.K. represents a suitable Western country that is comparable with the U.S. In addition, its advocacy to leave the E.U. has been viewed as a reaction to the fear of losing a unique sense identity to increasing multiculturalism (Leith et al. 2019). This makes the U.K. an attractive market in which consumers actively seek authenticity in their consumption choices.

To assess known group validity, we included a comprehensive measure of authenticity as a personality trait (Wood et al. 2008). It captures consumers' preference to *live authentically*, in accordance with their own values and beliefs (cf. self-authenticity of Morhart et al. 2015), which is inversely related to their willingness to *accept external influences*—the extent that behavior and decisions are shaped by others—and *self-alienation*—the feeling of being disconnected with oneself. Authentic living and willingness to accept external influence are particularly suitable dimensions for describing different profiles of consumers scoring low/high on the three CAS dimensions (see Appendix B).

We further profiled the derived classes based on (1) a set of consumer characteristics and (2) consumption choices to offer additional insights into the uncovered segments. Regarding the former, we included variety seeking (Olsen et al. 2016) and risk aversion (Donthu and Garcia 1999) as two constructs shown to shape consumption decisions for brand-related response across various settings (e.g., authenticity of Airbnb experiences, important life events and brand preferences, and trust in mobile phone brands; e.g., Koschate-Fischer et al. 2018; Liang et al. 2018; Matzler et al. 2008). They also represent fundamental dispositions that have been related to many types of nonconsumption behavior (e.g., decision-making styles, political ideology; Bao et al. 2003; Fernandes and Mandel 2014). Variety seeking captures consumers' need for stimulation in daily routines (Olsen et al. 2016), which authentic brands, with their more elaborate positioning, can satisfy. Consumers seeking

authentic brands require some form of external verification, which makes them more likely to be risk averse as they need to reduce uncertainty in their shopping decision.

Regarding the latter, we asked consumers about their brand preferences and their motivations for such choices. We determined a final set of 10 brand pairs in 10 product categories based on two independent pretests conducted via Prolific. In the first pretest, we asked U.K. consumers to name a brand they considered a "true original brand" in a specific product category versus "a brand that is a copy of other brands in that category." In the second pretest, respondents rated the most frequently mentioned brands from the first pretest on a seven-point bipolar scale anchored with the same two prompts as in the first pretest. We kept 10 brand pairs for the main study that significantly differed along the originality–copy continuum. Furthermore, the brands differed in terms of their hedonic versus utilitarian nature (e.g., streaming services vs. banking services), price (e.g., soft drinks vs. airlines), and technical complexity (e.g., televisions vs. fast-food restaurants).

In the main study, participants indicated their choices for five randomly selected brand pairs out of the 10 (including the option not to choose either of the two options), followed by a set of seven potential consumption motives in relation to the consumption of authentic brands (i.e., a brand's history, its perception of being timeless, honesty, morality, values, and commitment to quality, a no response option) drawn from prior literature (e.g., Becker et al. 2019; Morhart et al. 2015).

Replication, discriminant validity, and measurement invariance

First, we validated the measurement of CAS using the same procedures as in the prior studies (see Table 1). Second, we established further discriminant validity with measures of authenticity as a personality trait, risk aversion, and variety seeking with a CFA (see Table 2 and 5). Next, we adopted Steenkamp and Baumgartner's (1998) multigroup analysis for establishing measurement invariance across cultures. A comparison of the U.S. sample from

Study 2 with the U.K. sample in Study 6 supported the full scalar invariance of the CAS scale (see Web Appendix D).

[Insert Table 5 about here]

Latent profile analysis

Methodology We used composites of the three dimensions as continuous indicators in the latent profile analysis using Mplus to determine a suitable number of latent classes. We ran several possible class solutions ranging from a one-class to a five-class solution (Web Appendix E). The lowest value of the Bayesian information criterion and the Vuong-Lo-Mendell-Rubin likelihood test (Vuong 1989) suggest that the four-class solution with an entropy value of .83 was the most suitable classification of the data. The profiles revealed four distinct market segments with different levels of personal, true, and iconic authenticity seeking: Generalists, Pragmatists, Purists, and Unengaged. Table 6 presents these profiles along with descriptors based on their ratings on the CAS dimensions. Levels of personal, true, and iconic authenticity seeking significantly differ across the classes ($p < .01$).

[Insert Table 6 about here]

Generalists (57.6%) Generalists can best be described as average authenticity seekers who show a slight preference for products that allow them to be true to themselves over products that either are original or resemble the original. Compared to the other profiles, they exhibit moderate levels of all three types of authenticity seeking, but within-group comparisons reveal higher personal authenticity seeking than iconic and true authenticity seeking ($p < .01$). Generalists are the largest group ($Age_{mean} = 36.32$ years, SD = 13.12).

Pragmatists (28.7%) These consumers exhibit high true and personal authenticity seeking but only moderate levels of iconic authenticity seeking. Situational trade-offs may explain the moderate level of iconic authenticity seeking for this class. Consumers in this group may be unable to obtain certain original products (e.g., original paintings) and thus resort to second-

best choices (e.g., prints of paintings or even painted copies). In contrast, when indexically and/or existentially authentic options are available, their high score on true and personal authenticity seeking suggests a clear preference for such products and brands. Within this profile, Pragmatist rate highest on true authenticity seeking, followed by personal authenticity seeking and then iconic authenticity seeking ($p < .01$). Pragmatists are the second-largest group ($Age_{mean} = 35.95$ years, SD = 13.09).

Purists (8.9%) Unlike Pragmatists, Purists are not likely to engage in trade-offs when it comes to authenticity seeking and prefer products that are true and original. As with the previous two classes, this segment scores high on personal authenticity seeking, indicating a preference for products that allow them to express themselves according to their self-concept. Like Pragmatists, Purists exhibit high true and personal authenticity seeking but the lowest iconic authenticity seeking across classes—substantially lower than Pragmatists ($p < .05$) and the lowest in all identified classes. Within this profile, Purist rate highest on true authenticity-seeking, followed by personal authenticity seeking and then iconic authenticity seeking ($p < .01$). With a mean age of 42.56 years (SD = 17.05), they are older than Pragmatists ($p < .05$).

Unengaged (4.8%) This profile comprises consumers for whom authentic consumption is of little importance. Across classes, this segment combines low personal authenticity seeking with moderate true and iconic authenticity seeking. The Unengaged are the smallest group ($Age_{mean} = 40.57$ years, SD = 13.36). Very few respondents fall into this category, which makes further elaboration less meaningful. This finding, however, supports the significance of CAS in capturing a fundamental consumption preference for a dominant share of the market. Given the marginal share of Unengaged consumers, we focus on the other three authenticity-seeking profiles in our subsequent analysis.

Within-class correlations The correlation patterns within classes differ from the overall pattern of correlations across studies (see Table 2). For example, Generalists show a negative

correlation between true and personal authenticity seeking, a positive correlation between iconic and personal authenticity seeking, and a nonsignificant correlation between true and iconic authenticity seeking authenticity seeking. The three CAS dimensions do not substantially correlate for Purists. This greatly differs from the overall pattern, which is positive between true and personal authenticity seeking, negative between true and iconic authenticity seeking, and low to nonsignificant between personal and iconic authenticity seeking. These results further support CAS's conceptualization as a set of related but independent dimensions (Moulard et al. 2021).

Known group validity We used Wood et al.'s (2008) conceptualization of authenticity as a personality trait to assess known group validity of the three dimensions of CAS. Among the three relevant authenticity-seeking profiles, Purists—consumers who show a clear preference for true authenticity seeking—exhibit the highest authentic living and the lowest willingness to accept external influence in their life ($p <. 01$); self-alienation did not differ across profiles.[4] These differences in classes are in line with the work of Wood et al. (2008), who conceptualize authentic living as an important facilitating process between consumers' conscious awareness and their behavior. Consumers like the Purists discriminate more strongly between personal, true, and iconic authenticity seeking. They are motivated by a stronger need to live an authentic live and have thus formed concrete and conscious consumption preferences. They are less likely to follow advice from their peers, but rather seek verifiable evidence prior to making a purchase.

Linking CAS profiles to consumer characteristics and consumption Using risk aversion and variety seeking along with respondents' self-reported consumption behavior allowed us to further investigate the identified CAS profiles. We observed class differences for consumers' levels of risk aversion. Both Pragmatists and Purists exhibit higher levels of risk

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[4] Self-alienation is a subjective feeling related to psychopathology. We include self-alienation for completeness purposes; it is part of Wood et al.'s (2008) conceptualization of authenticity as a personality trait.

aversion than Generalists ($F(3, 480) = 7.700$, $p < .01$), which underlines their need to be reassured about the genuineness of their product and brand choices. All profiles exhibit equally high levels of variety seeking, suggesting a general tendency to seek new consumption opportunities in purchasing decisions ($F (3, 480) = 2.006$, $p = .11$). Across CAS profiles, consumers showed a general preference for the dominant brand in a product category over its competitors (e.g., consumers prefer Levi's over Lee, Sony over LG, etc.). However, Pragmatists and Purists exhibited more distinct purchase motives than Generalists—they valued brands with a historical component, timeless brands, and brands committed to quality. Together, these differences highlight how the three dimensions of CAS can help to segment consumers according to their preferences for different types of authenticity.

Discussion

Although consumers' quest for authentic market offerings is undisputed (e.g., Beverland and Farrelly 2010; Leigh et al. 2006; Moulard et al. 2021), the conceptualization and operationalization of the CAS construct and its role in marketing had not been explored. In a series of studies, we conceptualize, develop, and test a multidimensional CAS scale that is psychometrically sound, cross-nationally invariant, temporally stable, and distinct from related constructs (see Table 7). Placing the three CAS dimensions into a broad theory-based nomological network underlines its moderating role in brand authenticity–outcomes links. Results confirm the incremental value of the three CAS dimensions beyond consumers' intrinsic and extrinsic motives and relevant brand-related factors that predict brand identification and price premium. Overall, this research sheds light on CAS's conceptualization, measurement, drivers, consequences, and role in moderating the relationships of brand authenticity with managerially relevant outcomes. Finally, grounded in combinations of personal, true, and iconic authenticity seeking, we identify different

consumer profiles managers can use to target segments that vary in their authenticity-seeking behaviors.

[Insert Table 7 about here]

Theoretical implications

This research enhances current knowledge in a number of ways. First, we contribute to the authenticity literature by extending the study of this phenomenon and its role in influencing consumer attitudes and behavior from a demand-side perspective. Existing research in marketing has predominantly taken a supply-side perspective, focusing on the development and benefits of authentic products or brands (Grayson and Martinec 2004; Morhart et al. 2015; Moulard et al. 2021). Our demand-driven perspective, which has commonly been raised in the literature without further consideration, adds a novel and complementary view to the current literature. Studying authenticity from a consumer standpoint enables the investigation of fundamental aspects that underpin actual consumers' authentic product-seeking behavior and may stimulate further research across various domains in consumer behavior and marketing strategy, in addition to the brand authenticity literature.

This work is the first to provide researchers with a comprehensive conceptualization and valid measurement of the quest for authenticity in consumption. Building on Moulard et al. (2021), we provide further theoretical and empirical evidence for the conceptualization of CAS as a set of conceptually related but independent dimensions comprising different aspects of authenticity across disciplines, namely, personal, true, and iconic authenticity seeking. Building on and integrating qualitative notions of authenticity from the consumer side (e.g., Beverland and Farrelly 2010; Leigh et al. 2006; Moulard et al. 2021), the current research makes the construct amenable to quantitative efforts for the first time.

We proposed and tested a new mechanism through which brand authenticity affects different outcomes—both consumer-related (i.e., brand identification) and company-related

(i.e., price premium). Although numerous studies have shown that the effect of brand authenticity on brand-related outcomes is positive and significant (Cinelli and LeBoeuf 2020; Morhart et al. 2015; Newman and Dhar 2014), conditioning effects have received scant attention. The present research demonstrates that the three CAS dimensions moderate the brand authenticity–price premium relationship either directly or indirectly through brand identification. Specifically, despite their considerable conceptual and empirical differences, true and iconic authenticity seeking moderate the direct link between brand authenticity and price premium to a similar extent, while personal authenticity seeking has no discernible effect. In contrast, both true and personal authenticity seeking moderate the indirect relationship via brand identification. These findings advance the literature by showing that the three dimensions of CAS do not affect outcomes in the same way but rather through different mechanisms. True and iconic authenticity seeking have a more imminent impact on bottom-line measures, while personal authenticity seeking acts as a means to forge consumer–brand relationships. Altogether, this study is the first to theoretically and empirically connect authenticity from supply and demand-side perspectives and provide evidence of their complementary nature.

To highlight the conceptual differences between the three dimensions of CAS, we identify and test several antecedents for each. To date, the limited research on antecedents of brand authenticity predominantly classifies them into intrinsic and extrinsic motives (e.g., Cinelli and LeBoeuf 2020; Holt 2002; Moulard et al. 2021). However, prior studies have investigated such motives solely from a branding standpoint, while studies applying them to consumers' motivations for seeking authenticity in consumption are lacking. Drawing on self-determination theory (Ryan and Deci 2000), we consider intrinsic (i.e., self-authenticity, consumers' need for uniqueness) and extrinsic (i.e., susceptibility to normative influences) motives underlying the three CAS dimensions. We provide new evidence that intrinsic

motivation mainly drives true and personal authenticity seeking, while extrinsic motivation is more important for iconic authenticity seeking. Consumers who buy authentic brands for intrinsic reasons do so to serve an underlying need for uniqueness by buying original objects (Thompson et al. 2006), which in turn confirms their self-image related to their need for an authentic lifestyle (Morhart et al., 2015). Conversely, consumers who purchase authentic brands for extrinsic reasons rely on such brands' social signaling function and are driven by a need to conform to perceived group norms (Batra et al. 2000). Therefore, the iconically authentic nature of brands is of vital importance to such consumers.

Finally, latent profile analysis lends strong support to the theoretical expectation (e.g., Grayson and Martinec 2004; Leigh et al. 2006) that the three CAS dimensions do not form a unidimensional construct measuring consumers' general authenticity-seeking tendencies but are also not mutually exclusive. We provide new evidence that combinations of personal, true, and iconic authenticity seeking exist, thereby facilitating the identification of consumer segments that differ in their extent of authenticity seeking. These segments underline the applicability and usefulness of CAS for marketing practice (Deighton et al. 2021). They also show different correlational patterns across the three CAS dimensions compared with the general pattern, which supports the notion that CAS is best conceptualized as a set of related but independent dimensions rather than a higher-order construct.

Practical implications

This work provides a new segmentation variable that allows marketers to distinguish different consumer segments driven by varying motivations to search for distinct types of authenticity. Overall, our consumer profile study confirms the importance of authenticity for companies. We find that three distinct authenticity profiles, representing 95% of the consumers surveyed, exhibit different combinations of true, personal, and iconic authenticity seeking.

Personal authenticity seekers are primarily concerned with products and brands that help them reveal their true selves. It was pronounced in all three types of authenticity-seeking profiles, particularly among Pragmatists and Purists. Personal authenticity seeking is primarily driven by consumers' intrinsic motives, pointing to the need for unique consumption and the need to live an authentic lifestyle (Moulard et al. 2021). Marketers targeting this segment should pronounce the importance of their brands by stressing self-referential brand aspects (e.g., Moulard et al. 2021; Reed et al. 2012), such as "an honest brand," "a brand with moral principles," and "a brand that reflects important values I care about." Because brand anthropomorphism makes it easier for consumers to interpret brand characteristics in line with the self (e.g., Golossenko et al. 2020), marketing managers should consider communicating brand values that are easy to understand in a human context (e.g., Apple using people as proxies for its products).

True authenticity seekers value market offerings they perceive to correspond to the actual state of affairs. This type of authenticity seeking is especially pronounced in two of the three segments: Pragmatists and Purists. They are intrinsically driven by an underlying need for uniqueness and a preference for an authentic lifestyle in accordance with their values and beliefs. The literature (e.g., Becker et al. 2019; Moulard et al. 2021) recommends using *evidence-based cues* to highlight the indexical nature of the product or brand (i.e., what is genuine and true) by stressing aspects of its history, such as heritage and/or long-term market commitment (e.g., Coca-Cola referring to its original taste, Levi's referring to its original patent from 1873). Our profile analysis confirms this argument, as brand history was mentioned among the top two brand selection criteria in these two segments (right after quality). Marketing managers should focus on the self-signaling and self-relevance capabilities of their products/brands to effectively target this segment. For example, brands could appeal to the product's cultural uniqueness by emphasizing an authentic foreign origin

(e.g., Barilla's slogan "The Taste of Italy") or the difficulties of obtaining the product (e.g., Absolut Vodka's use of limited editions).

Iconic authenticity seekers prefer products and brands that convey authenticity corresponding to a socially determined standard. This characteristic is especially pronounced for Generalists and, to a lesser extent, for Pragmatists. We assume that the latter are potentially willing to engage in trade-offs, as a function of social acceptance, when indexically authentic products are not available—in contrast to Purists, who are unlikely to do so. In contrast to true and personal authenticity seekers, iconic authenticity seekers are extrinsically driven by the need to conform to socially constructed norms in their purchase decisions. Brand managers can use *impression-based* cues to convey iconic authenticity (e.g., Morhart et al. 2015; Moulard et al. 2021), focusing on a brand's tradition (e.g., "established in," "family-owned"), a timeless design (e.g., vintage design, traditional font), and quality standards suggestive of authenticity, such as expertise in craftsmanship (e.g., "San Miguel 1516" [a Spanish beer], referencing German purity laws from 1516). In targeting these consumers, marketing managers should emphasize social aspects of products (e.g., the Italian family experience) or the external signaling value via, for example, prestige and status concerns (e.g., highlighting the premium nature of a brand).

LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH

The findings should be interpreted in light of limitations due to research design choices we had to make. This research was conducted in two developed markets (i.e., the U.S. and the U.K.) in which consumers have experienced a loss of meaning and compensate for this by increasingly demanding authentic market offerings (Thompson et al. 2006). Nonetheless, emerging markets might likewise exhibit a growing demand for authenticity, but the extent and type of authentic products they are searching for require further exploration. Compared with developed markets, emerging market cultures (e.g., Asia) use consumption more to

signal prestige and status among peers (Batra et al. 2000; Schmitt and Pan 1994). These markets also show a greater preference for imitations of "original" products (Eisend et al. 2017), which allows consumers to experience the allure of foreign cultures (e.g., German Octoberfests, Brazilian Carnival, Irish St. Patrick's Day). Future research should extend our findings to these contexts and explore whether and to what extent CAS is prominent in such markets.

Our research embeds the three CAS dimensions in a nomological network as moderators between brand authenticity and outcomes. The findings point to a fundamental difference in the processing of personal versus true and iconic authenticity seeking, with important implications for brand managers. It could be that personally authentic brands are perceived and evaluated differently by consumers than true and iconically authentic brands. Previous conceptualizations and operationalizations of brand authenticity have combined true, iconic, and personal attributes without isolating them (e.g., Morhart et al. 2015; Napoli et al. 2014). Drawing on Moulard et al. (2021), future research should further explore the role of different types of brand authenticity in the context of CAS.

In contrast to brand authenticity research that points to the role of intrinsic motives for the formation of authenticity (e.g., Cinelli and LeBoeuf 2020), our work reveals that, from a consumer's perspective, both intrinsic and extrinsic motives play a significant role in influencing the three types of CAS. Interestingly, we also observe an unexpected (a) positive correlation of susceptibility to normative influence with consumers' need for uniqueness, and (b) a positive link between susceptibility to normative influence and personal authenticity seeking, which could point to a conceptual connection between consumers' intrinsic and extrinsic motives for authenticity seeking in consumption. Thus, future research should explore this surprising link and consider additional factors that drive the three CAS dimensions, focusing especially on extrinsic motivations and their relationships with intrinsic

ones.[5] For example, research shows that consumers increasingly buy counterfeit products, even when they can afford to buy the original brand. This is particularly the case when consumers purchase the brand for social motives, such as expressing themselves or fitting in (Wilcox et al. 2009), but may also be motivated by seeking intrinsic rewards. This phenomenon is worth further exploration in connection with the three CAS dimensions, especially for iconic authenticity seeking.

Across studies we have identified a general pattern of correlations among the three CAS dimensions—namely, positive correlations between true and personal authenticity seeking, negative correlations between true and iconic authenticity seeking, and a lack of (or low) correlation between iconic and personal authenticity seeking. However, considering CAS's conceptual specification as a set of related but independent dimensions (Moulard et al. 2021) and evidence of the four identified latent profiles in Study 6, research should not a priori theorize correlations between personal, true, and iconic authenticity seeking. Nonetheless, future research may identify more generalizable patterns by investigating additional boundary conditions and settings in which consumer profiles emerge that would further advance the conceptual underpinnings of CAS.

Future studies might also explore CAS in the context of other marketing domains, such as relationship marketing, social media, and tourism. For example, authenticity has traditionally been an important aspect of travel experiences and destination marketing (Steiner and Reisinger 2005). The three CAS dimensions may offer insights into important consumer segments and their destination choices. Likewise, growing interest in personal branding on social media has motivated research on the role of authenticity in digital marketing environments (Audrezet et al. 2020). Undoubtedly, the CAS construct can enhance our understanding of authentic personal brands preferred by various types of consumers.

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[5] We acknowledge an anonymous reviewer for making this suggestion.

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Fig. 1. Overview of studies
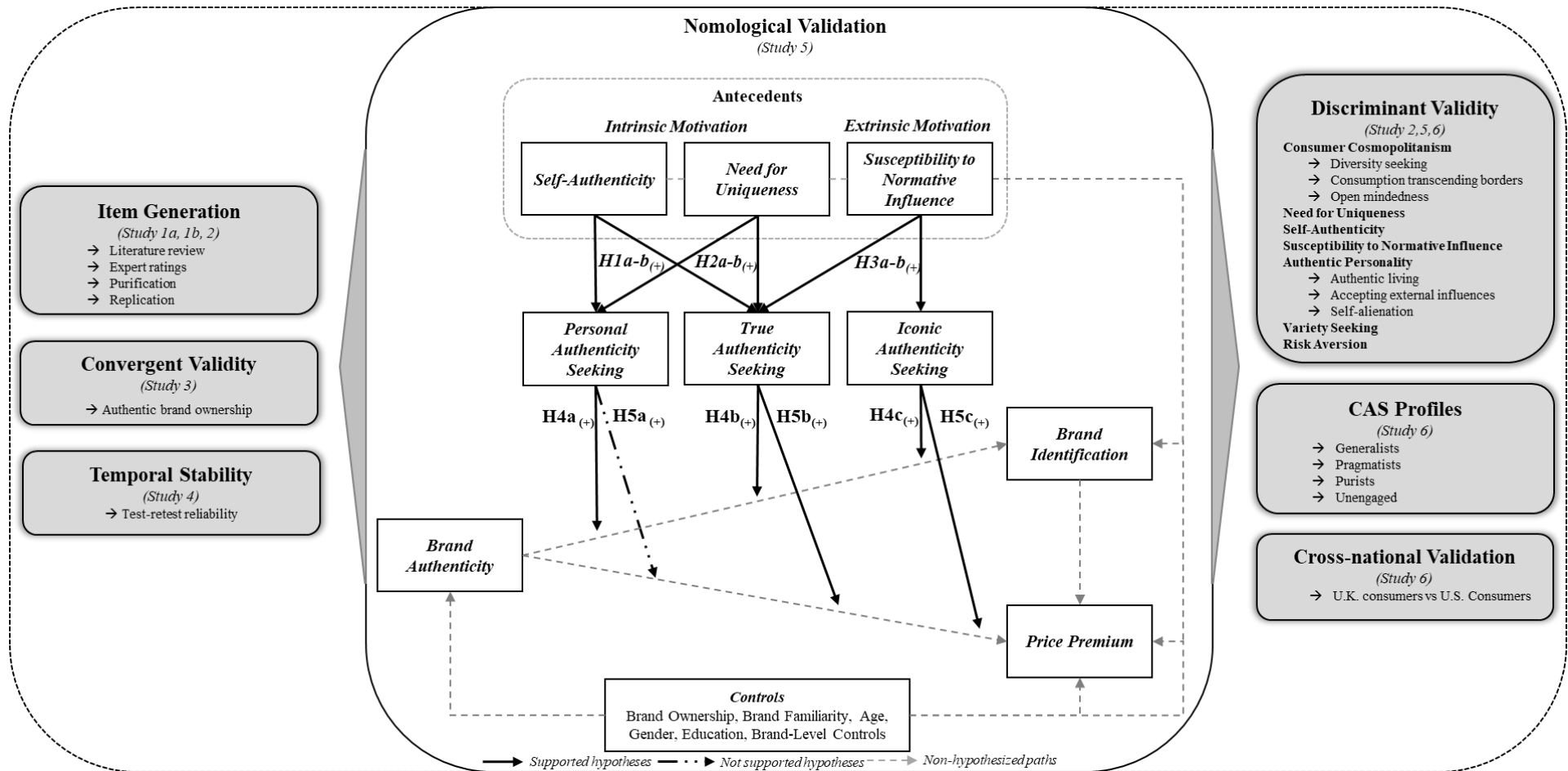
Table 1. Measurement properties of consumer authenticity seeking (CAS)

Constructs and Measurement Items	Study 1b: EFA (United States; n = 272)			Study 2: CFA (United States; n = 329)					Study 5: CFA (United States; n = 766)					Study 6: CFA (United Kingdom; n = 484)				
	λ	Item–Total Correlation	CA	λ	Item–Total Correlation	CR	AVE	CA	λ	Item–Total Correlation	CR	AVE	CA	λ	Item–Total Correlation	CR	AVE	CA
Personal authenticity seeking																		
I like products that reflect important values I care about.	.84	.86		.81	.86				.79	.84				.74	.81			
I prefer products and experiences that are in line with my real self.	.79	.83		.85	.88				.82	.86				.85	.86			
I appreciate products and experiences that show me what is really important in life.	.75	.83	.84	.80	.86	.88	.64	.87	.81	.86	.86	.61	.86	.77	.84	.92	.73	.92
Being true to oneself is important when making purchases.	.67	.78		.73	.81				.70	.80				.73	.82			
True authenticity seeking																		
I prefer original products to copies or imitations.	.80	.84		.82	.87				.85	.89				.85	.89			
I make an effort to use original and genuine products whenever possible.	.79	.84	.85	.83	.87	.90	.69	.90	.89	.91	.91	.73	.92	.82	.87	.92	.73	.92
I do not like to purchase imitations.	.70	.79		.76	.84				.79	.86				.85	.89			
If I buy a product, it is important that I buy the original version.	.79	.86		.90	.91				.90	.92				.90	.92			
Iconic authenticity seeking																		
I prefer products that resemble the original.[a]	.75	.84		-	-				-	-				-	-			
I prefer products which are close to the original product.	.70	.81	.78	.82	.90	.91	.76	.91	.90	.86	.89	.74	.89	.63	.81	.82	.61	.82
As long as the product resembles the original product, I am satisfied.	.70	.79		.91	.93				.74	.92				.85	.87			
For me, experiences are authentic as long as they resemble the original one.	.63	.55		.89	.92				.91	.92				.83	.89			
CFA model fit:	Not applicable			$\chi^2(41) = 79.443$, RMSEA = .053, SRMR = .047, CFI = .970, TLI = .959					$\chi^2(41) = 110.877$, RMSEA = .047, SRMR = .033, CFI = .978, TLI = .970					$\chi^2(41) = 141.446$, RMSEA = .071, SRMR = .056, CFI = .949, TLI = .932				

Notes: [a]*Dropped item in CFA Study 2.*

Answers were given on a seven-point Likert scale, where 1 = "strongly disagree" and 7 = "strongly agree"; λ= standardized loadings: CA = Cronbach's alpha: CR = composite reliability; AVE = average variance extracted; EFA = exploratory factor analysis; CFA = confirmatory factor analysis; χ^2 = chi-square; d.f.= degrees of freedom; RMSEA = root mean square error of approximation; SRMR = standardized root mean-square residual; CFI = comparative fit index; TLI = Tucker–Lewis index.

Table 2. Discriminant validity overview

| | Measurement Properties Study 2/5/6 | | | Correlations with True, Iconic, and Personal Authenticity Seeking | | | | | | | | |
| | | | | Study 2 | | | Study 5 | | | Study 6 | | |
	CR	AVE	CA	(1)	(2)	(3)	(1)	(2)	(3)	(1)	(2)	(3)
Consumer authenticity seeking (CAS)												
(1) Personal authenticity seeking	.88/.86/.85	.64/.61/.60	.87/.86/.85									
(2) True authenticity seeking	.90 /.91/.92	.69/.73/.73	.90/.92/.92	**.40** (.16)			**.42** (.18			**.32** (.10)		
(3) Iconic authenticity seeking	.91/.90/.82	.77/.74/.61	.91/.89/.82	−.01 (.00)	**−.46** (.21)		**.16** (.03)	-**.22** (.05)		.02 (.00)	**−.42** (.18)	
Consumer cosmopolitanism[a] (Riefler et al. 2012)	.85 to .92	.58 to .93	.84 to .92	**.40** (.16)	**.21** (.05)	.05 (.00)	—	—	—	—	—	—
Self-authenticity (Morhart et al. 2015)	.77	.53	.76	—	—	—	**.46** (.22)	**.30** (.09)	-.02 (.00)	—	—	—
Need for uniqueness (Lynn and Harris 1997b)	.90	.56	.90	—	—	—	**.52** (.27)	**.46** (.21)	**.23** (.05)	—	—	—
Susceptibility to normative influences (Bearden et al. 1989)	.92	.80	.92	—	—	—	**.37** (.14)	**.34** (.12)	**.37** (.14)	—	—	—
Authentic personality (Wood et al. 2008)												
Authentic living	*.79*	*.50*	*.78*	—	—	—	—	—	—	**.30** (.09)	**.14** (.02)	−.10 (.01)
Accepting external influence	*.89*	*.68*	*.90*	—	—	—	—	—	—	.08 (.01)	.01 (.00)	**.16** (.03)
Self-alienation	*.91*	*.73*	*.85*	—	—	—	—	—	—	.02 (.00)	−.02 (.00)	.10 (.01)
Variety seeking (Olsen et al. 2016)	*.88*	*.71*	*.88*	—	—	—	—	—	—	**.25** (.06)	**.13** (.02)	.02 (.00)
Risk aversion (Donthu and Garcia 1999)	*.71*	*.46*	*.96*				—	—	—	**.19** (.04)	**.31** (.10)	.01 (.00)

Notes: [a]Higher-order reflective model; measurement properties refer to the first-order dimensions.

CA = Cronbach's alpha: CR = composite reliability; AVE = average variance extracted; squared correlations in parentheses; significant correlations in bold for p-value < .05.

Table 3. Descriptives, correlations, and discriminant validity (Study 5)

		Mean	SD	CA	CR	AVE	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)	(10)	(11)	(12)
(1)	Personal authenticity seeking	5.28	1.05	.86	.86	.61		.19	.02	.28	.21	.13	.12	.21	.27	.26	.18	.05
(2)	True authenticity seeking	5.06	1.45	.92	.91	.73	**.44**		.05	.22	.10	.12	.06	.10	.12	.13	.12	.03
(3)	Iconic authenticity seeking	4.31	1.52	.89	.90	.74	**.14**	**-.23**		.05	.00	.14	.01	.02	.05	.06	.10	.08
(4)	Need for uniqueness	4.30	1.3	.90	.90	.56	**.52**	**.47**	**.23**		.02	.38	.06	.18	.27	.27	.38	.18
(5)	Self-authenticity	5.96	.82	.76	.77	.53	**.46**	**.30**	-.02	**.15**		.02	.05	.06	.04	.04	.00	.00
(6)	Susceptibility to normative influence	3.48	1.75	.92	.92	.80	**.36**	**.34**	**.37**	**.62**	**-.14**		.05	.16	.04	.62	.50	.23
	Brand authenticity																	
(7)	*Continuity*	5.39	1.25	.92	.91	.72	**.35**	**.24**	.07	**.25**	**.23**	**.22**		.49	.34	.28	.14	.14
(8)	*Credibility*	4.98	1.33	.88	.87	.70	**.46**	**.31**	**.15**	**.43**	**.24**	**.40**	**.70**		.81	.62	.41	.29
(9)	*Integrity*	4.64	1.37	.93	.93	.77	**.52**	**.34**	**.23**	**.52**	**.21**	**.21**	**.58**	**.90**		.81	.53	.30
(10)	*Symbolism*	4.45	1.52	.94	.93	.78	**.51**	**.36**	**.24**	**.52**	**.19**	**.76**	**.53**	**.79**	**.90**		.58	.30
(11)	Brand identification	3.40	1.87	.97	.97	.85	**.43**	**.34**	**.32**	**.62**	.01	**.71**	**.38**	**.64**	**.73**	**.76**		.45
(12)	Price premium*	13.58	40.45	-	-	-	**.23**	**.18**	**.27**	**.43**	-.04	**.48**	**.37**	**.54**	**.55**	**.55**	**.67**	

*Notes: Shared variances above diagonal; CA= Cronbach's alpha: CR= Composite reliability; AVE= Average variance extracted; CFA Model fit: χ2(880) = 1546.298.519, RMSEA = .031, SRMR = .039, CFI = .969, TLI = .965; * single item; ; significant correlations in bold for p-value < .05.*

Table 4. Results structural equation model (Study 5)

Antecedents		β	p-value
H1a	Self-authenticity → Personal Authenticity Seeking	.353	< .001
H1b	Self-authenticity → True Authenticity Seeking	.283	< .001
H2a	Need for Uniqueness → Personal Authenticity Seeking	.465	< .001
H2b	Need for Uniqueness → True Authenticity Seeking	.339	< .001
H3a	Susceptibility to Normative Influence → True Authenticity Seeking	.159	.002
H3b	Susceptibility to Normative Influence → Iconic Authenticity Seeking	.406	< .001
Outcomes			
	Brand Authenticity → Brand Identification	.667	< .001
	Brand Authenticity → Price Premium	.309	< .001
	Brand Identification → Price Premium	.400	< .001
	Personal Authenticity Seeking → Brand Identification	-.011	.850
	True Authenticity Seeking → Brand Identification	.178	< .001
	Iconic Authenticity Seeking → Brand Identification	.223	< .001
	Personal Authenticity Seeking → Price Premium	-.073	.132
	True Authenticity Seeking → Price Premium	.018	.735
	Iconic Authenticity Seeking → Price Premium	.059	.230
Moderators			
H4a	Personal x Brand Authenticity → Brand Identification	.111	.004
H4b	True x Brand Authenticity → Brand Identification	.093	.014
H4c	Iconic x Brand Authenticity → Brand Identification	.065	. 059
H5a	Personal x Brand Authenticity → Price Premium	.020	.608
H5b	True x Brand Authenticity → Price Premium	.078	.077
H5c	Iconic x Brand Authenticity → Price Premium	.122	.002
	Adjusted R^2 Brand Identification	.70	
	Adjusted R^2 Price Premium	.49	
Measurement Model Fit			
	χ^2 (d.f.)	1453.519 (847)	
	RMSEA/CFI/TLI/SMR	.031/.969/.965/.043	
Structural Model Fit			
	χ^2 (d.f.)	1345.0396 (537)	
	RMSEA/CFI/TLI/SMR	.046/.926/.908/.058	
N		766	

Notes. Control relationships not shown (see Figure 1)

Table 5. Descriptives, correlations, and discriminant validity (Study 6)

	Mean	SD	CA*	CR	AVE	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)
(1) Personal authenticity seeking	5.10	1.01	.85	.59	.85		.10	.00	.09	.01	.00	.06	.04
(2) True authenticity seeking	4.92	1.40	.92	.92	.73	**.32**		.18	.02	.00	.00	.09	.10
(3) Iconic authenticity seeking	4.02	1.25	.82	.82	.61	.02	-**.42**		.01	.03	.01	.00	.00
Authentic Personality													
(4) *Authentic living/self-authenticity*	5.62	.86	.78	.79	.50	**.30**	**.14**	-.10		.18	.19	.01	.03
(5) *Accepting External influences*	3.27	1.36	.89	.89	.68	.08	.01	**.16**	-**.42**		.38	.00	.01
(6) *Self-alienation*	3.10	1.47	.65	.91	.73	.02	-.02	.09	-**.44**			.01	.01
(7) Variety Seeking	4.51	1.32	.88	.88	.71	**.25**	**.13**	.02	-**.10**	.01	-.10		.04
(8) Risk Aversion	5.37	.97	.69	.71	.46	**.19**	**.31**	.01	**.16**	.09	.08	-**.20**	

Notes: Shared variances above diagonal; CA= Cronbach's alpha/*correlations for two items scales: CR= Composite reliability; AVE= Average variance extracted; CFA Model fit: $\chi^2(349)=619.114$. RMSEA= .040. SRMR=.045; CFI=.955. TLI=0.948; significant correlations in bold for p-value < .05.

Table 6. Consumer authenticity-seeking (CAS) profiles

	Class 1 (Generalists)	Class 2 (Pragmatists)	Class 3 (Purists)	Class 4 (Unengaged)	Statistics
N	279	139	43	23	
Classification probability	94.00%	82.00%	90.00%	89.00%	
CAS					
Personal authenticity seeking	4.96 (.77) [b, c, d]	5.70 (.60) [a, d]	5.60 (.65) [a, d]	2.28 (.74) [a, b, c]	$F_{(3, 480)} = 161.833$, $p < .01$
True authenticity seeking	4.17 (1.03) [b, c, d]	6.02 (.49) [a, c, d]	6.94 (.11) [a, b, d]	3.50 (1.87) [a, b, c]	$F_{(3, 480)} = 217.403$, $p < .01$
Iconic authenticity seeking	4.38 (.80) [b, c]	3.95 (1.36) [a, c]	1.81 (.72) [a, b, d]	4.17 (1.46) [c]	$F_{(3, 480)} = 79.697$, $p < .01$
Authentic personality					
Authentic living/self-authenticity	5.48 (.86) [b, c]	5.77 (.78) [c, a]	6.08 (.74) [a, b, d]	5.51 (1.03) [c]	$F_{(3, 480)} = 8.398$, $p < .01$
Accepting external influences	3.30 (1.36) [c]	3.50 (1.53) [c, d]	2.62 (1.36) [a, b]	2.82 (1.42) [b]	$F_{(3, 480)} = 5.783$, $p < .01$
Self-alienation	3.15 (1.42)	3.13 (1.50)	2.95 (1.68)	2.72 (1.44)	$F_{(3, 480)} = .781$, $p = .505$
Correlations within classes	(1)	(2)	(1)	(2)	(1)	(2)	(1)	(2)	
(1) True authenticity seeking					
(2) Personal authenticity seeking	**-.23**		-.16		.06		-.11		
(3) Iconic authenticity seeking	-.02	**.25**	.06	**.45**	.11	-.10	.00	.13	
Demographics					
Age	36.32 (13.12)	35.95 (13.09) [c]	40.23 (12.04) [b]	40.57 (13.36)	$F_{(3, 480)} = 2.124$, $p = .09$
Gender (%across classes) Female	61.30%	27.90%	7.50%	3.30%	
Male	49.30%	30.70%	12.00%	8.00%	
Location (%across classes) Urban	57.00%	28.90%	9.40%	4.70%	
Suburban	56.60%	31.10%	7.50%	4.80%	
Rural	60.70%	23.40%	11.20%	4.70%	
Foreign travel frequency (weeks per year)	1.84 (2.71)	1.83 (1.70)	2.49 (4.07)	2.09 (2.11)	$F_{(3, 480)} = .870$, $p = .456$
Consumer characteristics					
Risk aversion	5.23 (.91) [c, d]	5.60 (.97) [a, d]	5.72 (.91) [a, d]	5.04 (1.29) [b, c]	$F_{(3, 480)} = 7.700$, $p < .01$
Variety seeking	4.42 (1.30)	4.69 (1.36)	4.71 (1.23)	4.20 (1.43)	$F_{(3, 480)} = 2.006$, $p = .11$
*Reasons for relative brand preferences**					
A brand with a history	21% [b, c, d]	31% [a, d]	32% [a, d]	10% [a, b, c]	$F_{(3, 480)} = 10.574$, $p < .01$
A timeless brand	18% [b, c, d]	25% [a, d]	23% [a, d]	3% [a, b, c]	$F_{(3, 480)} = 7.973$, $p < .01$
An honest brand	9% [b, c]	17% [a, d]	16% [a, d]	2% [b, c]	$F_{(3, 480)} = 9.439$, $p < .01$
A brand with moral principles	4%	7% [d]	6%	1% [b]	$F_{(3, 480)} = 2.134$, $p = .09$
A brand that reflects important values I care about	7% [b, c]	12% [a, d]	13% [a, d]	2% [b, c]	$F_{(3, 480)} = 6.497$, $p < .01$
Quality is central to the brand	25% [b, c, d]	40% [a, d]	44% [a, d]	12% [a, b, c]	$F_{(3, 480)} = 17.210$, $p < .01$

Notes: *Respondents could select multiple options, and they could also indicate that they did not want to provide a reason for relative brand preferences.

Five-point Likert scale: 1= "disagree strongly," 5 = "agree strongly." Pairwise comparison based on least significant difference (LSD) class comparison: superscripts indicate between class differences Class 1 = a; Class 2 = b; Class = c; Class 4 = d; p-value < .05; significant correlations in bold for p-value < .05.

Table 7. Related constructs and their relationships with true, personal, and iconic authenticity seeking

Construct	Definition	Expected Links	Scale Source	Scale Characteristics	Bivariate Correlations
Discriminant validity					
Consumer cosmopolitanism	"The extent to which a consumer (1) exhibits an open-mindedness towards foreign countries and cultures, (2) appreciates the diversity brough about by the availability of products from different national and cultural origins, and (3) is positively disposed towards consumer products from foreign countries" (Riefler et al. 2012, p. 287).	We expect positive correlations with true and personal authenticity seeking and no relation to iconic authenticity seeking. Cosmopolitans are more likely to search for genuine products that are in line with their real selves than iconic products that resemble an external standard.	Riefler et al. 2012	Mean = 5.15 SD = 1.08 α = .84 to .92	Study 2 $r_{Personal}$ = .40** r_{True} = .21** r_{Iconic} = .05
Variety seeking	"The tendency to seek variety in order to meet an internal need for stimulation in daily routines and purchasing activities" (Olsen et al. 2016, p. 37).	We expect positive correlations with all three dimensions of consumer authenticity seeking (CAS) because authentic brands can provide more variety and are likely to be more stimulating for such consumers.	Olsen et al. 2016	Mean = 4.51 SD = 1.32 α = .88	Study 6 $r_{Personal}$ = .25** r_{True} = .13* r_{Iconic} = .02
Risk aversion	"A preference for a guaranteed outcome over a probabilistic one having an equal expected value" (Qualls and Puto 1989, p. 180).	We expect positive correlations with true and personal authenticity seeking, but no correlation with iconic authenticity seeking. Consumers who are risk averse are likely to prefer brands certified by an external standard or that fit with personal goals, but there is no clear standard available for iconic brands that are socially determined.	Donthu and Garcia 1999	Mean = 5.37 SD = .97 α = .69	Study 6 $r_{Personal}$ = .19** r_{True} = .31** r_{Iconic} = .01
Authentic personality					
Authentic living/ self-authenticity	"Being true to oneself in most situations and living in accordance with one's values and beliefs" (Wood et al. 2008, p. 386).	We expect positive correlations with true and personal authenticity seeking, but no correlation with iconic authenticity seeking because consumers high on self-authenticity will not be satisfied with copies or imitations.	Wood et al. 2008	Mean = 5.62 SD = .86 α = .78	Study 6 $r_{Personal}$ = .30** r_{True} = .14** r_{Iconic} = -.10
Accepting external influences	"The extent to which one accepts the influence of other people and the belief that one has to conform to the expectations of others" (Wood et al. 2008, p. 180).	We expect a positive correlation with iconic authenticity seeking because consumers who are likely to accept external influences are most likely to look for products that follow a socially determined standard.		Mean = 3.27 SD = 1.36 α = .89	Study 6 $r_{Personal}$ = .08 r_{True} = .01 r_{Iconic} = .16**
Self-alienation	"The subjective experience of not knowing oneself, or feeling out of touch with the true self" (Wood et al. 2008, p. 180).	We do not expect this dimension to correlate with all three dimensions of CAS, because there is no clear conceptual link.		Mean = 3.10 SD = 1.47 α = .65	Study 6 $r_{Personal}$ = .02 r_{True} = -.02 r_{Iconic} = .09
Nomological validity/relationship to antecedents					
Self-authenticity	Intrinsic motivation that involves "being true to oneself in most situations and living in accordance with one's values and beliefs" (Wood et al. 2008, p. 386).	We expect a positive relationship with true and personal authenticity seeking and no relationship with iconic authenticity seeking because consumers high on self-authenticity will not be satisfied with copies or imitations.	Wood et al. 2008	Mean = 5.96 SD = .82 α = .76	Study 5 $r_{Personal}$ = .46** r_{True} = .31** r_{Iconic} = -.02
Need for uniqueness	Intrinsic motivation that is defined as "an individual's pursuit of differentness relative to others that is achieved through the acquisition, utilization, and disposition of consumer goods to develop and enhance one's personal and social identity" (Tian et al. 2001, p. 50).	We expect positive relationships with true and personal authenticity seeking and no relationship with iconic authenticity seeking because, by definition, iconically authentic products follow a socially determined standard and are not unique.	Tian et al. 2001	Mean = 4.30 SD = 1.30 α = .90	Study 5 $r_{Personal}$ = .53** r_{True} = .47** r_{Iconic} = .23**
Susceptibility to normative influence	Extrinsic motivation that captures "the need to identify with others or enhance one's image with products and brands or the willingness to conform to others' expectations regarding purchase decisions" (Wooten and Reed 2004, p. 551).	We expect extrinsic motivations to be positively related to all three dimensions, but especially iconic authenticity seeking, which is based on the search for products that follow a socially determined standard.	Bearden et al. 1989	Mean = 3.48 SD = 1.75 α = .92	Study 5 $r_{Personal}$ = .36** r_{True} = .34** r_{Iconic} = .37**

Notes: ** p-value < .01 * p-value < .05

Appendix A Research on the conceptualization of authenticity in marketing

Study Perspective	Source	Study Setting	Study Design	Authenticity Aspects	Key Findings
Supply Side Perspective — What makes brands and products authentic?	Wang (1999)	Tourism	Conceptual	Personal True Iconic	Beyond the true (i.e., objectivist) and iconic authenticity (i.e., constructivist), personal authenticity (i.e., existentialist) is an alternative source of authenticity in tourism experiences.
	Grayson and Martinec (2004)	Tourism sights	Quantitative	True Iconic	Both true and iconic cues contribute to an overall assessment of authenticity.
	Beverland (2005)	Luxury wine brands	Qualitative	Personal True Iconic	Authenticity in the marketing of luxury wine brands is created by combining true (i.e., industrial) with iconic (i.e., rhetorical) and personal (i.e., commercial motivations) elements.
	Beverland (2006)	Luxury wine brands	Qualitative	True Iconic	Brand authenticity consists of true (i.e., real) and iconic (i.e., stylized) elements.
	Leigh et al. (2006)	MG brand	Qualitative	Personal True Iconic	Brand authenticity has true (i.e., originality), iconic (i.e., broaching an ideal standard), and personal (i.e., driving and self-work activities) meanings to consumers.
	Beverland et al. (2008)	Advertisements	Qualitative	Personal True Iconic	Authenticity in advertisements is projected through the combination of true (e.g., genuine article), iconic (e.g., stylized links), and personal (e.g., craft production methods and process) elements.
	Rose and Wood (2005)	Reality TV	Qualitative	Personal True Iconic	Perceptions of authenticity are jointly formed by true (i.e., lived experience), iconic (i.e., imagined), and personal (i.e., self-referential) elements.
	Steiner and Reisinger (2005)	Tourists	Conceptual	Personal	Personal authenticity is a crucial component in experiencing authenticity in tourism
	Spiggle et al. (2012)	Brand extension	Quantitative	True Iconic Personal	The authenticity of a brand extension (i.e., brand standard, heritage, essence, avoidance of exploitation) positively shapes consumer responses to brand extensions (i.e., attitude, purchase intention, willingness to recommend).
	Eggers et al. (2013)	Brands	Quantitative	True	Brand authenticity is shaped by a brand's consistency, its customer orientation, and its congruence with its value promise.
	Sirianni et al. (2013)	Customer service	Quantitative	Personal	Employee authenticity enhances the effectiveness of employee–brand alignment.
	Newman and Dhar (2014)	Brands	Quantitative	True Iconic	Brand authenticity is shaped by consumers' perceptions of quality, evidence, and essence.
	Napoli et al. (2014)	Brands	Quantitative	True Iconic	Brand authenticity reflects a brand's quality, heritage, and sincerity with respect to its values. Brand authenticity relates positively to brand purchase intentions
	Moulard et al. (2014)	Artists	Quantitative	Personal	The personal authenticity of an artist as a brand is positively related to consumers' responses toward the artist's work and their behavioral intentions.
	Morhart et al. (2015)	Brands	Quantitative	True Iconic Personal	Brand authenticity jointly comprises true, iconic, and personal aspects and reflects a brand's continuity, its credibility, its integrity, and its symbolism. It positively affects emotional brand attachment and word-of-mouth intentions.

Appendix A Research on the conceptualization of authenticity in marketing (cont.)

Study Perspective	Source	Study Setting	Study Design	Authenticity Aspects	Key Findings
Supply Side Perspective — What makes brands and products authentic?	Moulard, Garrity, et al. (2015)	Celebrities	Quantitative	True	A celebrity's uniqueness and his/her stability over time positively affect perceptions of celebrity authenticity.
	Moulard, Babin, et al. (2015)	Wine	Quantitative	True Iconic	Iconic authentic elements mediate the effect of country of origin on willingness to pay.
	Moulard et al. (2016)	Brands	Quantitative	True	Brand uniqueness and longevity drive brand authenticity. Brand authenticity relates positively to brand quality and brand trust.
	Akbar and Wymer (2017)	Brands	Quantitative	True Personal	Brand authenticity is shaped by a brand's originality and its genuineness and affects brand identification.
	Becker et al. (2019)	Advertisements	Quantitative	True Iconic	While an iconic (i.e., congruent with the brand's essence) ad has a positive effect on sales, a true (i.e., overly honest) ad can hurt performance.
	Joo et al. (2019)	CSR	Quantitative	Personal True Iconic	CSR authenticity jointly comprises true, iconic, and personal aspects and reflects a program's community link, its reliability, its commitment, its congruence, its benevolence, its transparency, and its broad impact. Dimensions affect outcomes differently.
	Audrezet et al. (2020)	Social media influencers	Qualitative	Personal True Iconic	Social media influences can project authenticity through their *passion* for the job and their *transparency* about business relationships.
	Cinelli and LeBoeuf (2020)	Brand behavior	Quantitative	Personal True Iconic	A firm's intrinsic (vs. extrinsic) motivation increases authenticity perceptions, which in turn increase perceived product quality, even for negatively regarded products.
	Moulard et al. (2021)	Brands	Conceptual	Personal True Iconic	Brand authenticity consists of three distinct types of authenticity: true-to-fact, true-to-ideal, and true to self. Each type of authenticity may have different antecedents and consequences.
	Nunes et al. (2021)	Brands	Quantitative	Personal True Iconic	Brand authenticity is a holistic consumer assessment determined by six component judgements (accuracy, connectedness, integrity, legitimacy, originality, and proficiency), and the role of each component can change based on the consumption context.
Demand Side Perspective — Who is searching for authentic brands and products and for what reasons?	Beverland and Farrelly (2010)	Consumers searching for authenticity	Qualitative	Personal True Iconic	Consumers' quest for authentic objects, brands, and experiences is driven by underlying goals for control, connection, and virtue. Iconic authenticity can help create true authenticity through personal involvement over time.
	Vredeveld and Coulter (2019)	Sojourn abroad	Qualitative	Personal True Iconic	Sojourners seek cultural experiences by focusing on imagined (i.e., iconic), unique (i.e., personal), and life like the locals (i.e., personal) experiences.
	This Study	Consumer authenticity seeking (CAS)	Quantitative	Personal True Iconic	Consumers' intrinsic and extrinsic motives lead to consumers searching for different types of authenticity, which affect consumer–brand relationships and consumers' willingness to pay a price premium for authentic brands. Consumers can be profiled along their degree of personal, true, and iconic authenticity seeking for market segmentation purposes.

Appendix B Measurements

SCALE	Cronbach's alpha
Cosmopolitanism [a] Riefler et al. 2012	
Open-mindedness	.92
When travelling, I make a conscious effort to get in touch with the local culture and traditions.	
I like having the opportunity to meet people from many different countries.	
I like to have contact with people from different cultures.	
I have got a real interest in other countries	
Diversity appreciation	.84
Having access to products coming from many different countries is valuable to me.	
The availability of foreign products in the domestic market provides valuable diversity.	
I enjoy being offered a wide range of products coming from various countries.	
Always buying the same local products becomes boring over time.	
Consumption transcending borders	.84
I like watching movies from different countries.	
I like listening to music of other cultures.	
I like trying original dishes from other countries.	
I like trying out things that are consumed elsewhere in the world.	
Consumers' Need for Uniqueness [a] Lynn and Harris 1997b	.90
I am very attracted to rare objects.	
I tend to be a fashion leader rather than a fashion follower.	
I am more likely to buy a product if it is scarce.	
I would prefer to have things custom-made than to have them ready-made.	
I enjoy having things that others do not.	
I rarely pass up the opportunity to order custom features on the products I buy.	
I like to try new goods and services before others do.	
I enjoy shopping at stores that carry merchandise which is different and unusual*	
Brand Identification [a] Stokburger-Sauer, Ratneshwar, and Sen 2012	.970
I feel a strong sense of belonging to brand X.	
I identify strongly with brand X.	
Brand × embodies what I believe in.	
Brand × is like a part of me.	
Brand × has a great deal of personal meaning for me.	
Brand Familiarity [b] Mandler et al. 2020	-
This brand is very familiar to me/This brand is very unfamiliar to me.	-
Price Premium Mandler et al. 2020	
Compared to an average brand within the same product category … how much more or less are you willing to pay for this brand?	-
Brand Ownership self-developed	
I have previously bought a product from Brand X	-
Brand Authenticity [a] Morhart et al. 2015	
Continuity	
A brand with a history.	
A timeless brand.	.92
A brand that survives times.	
A brand that survives trends.	
Credibility	
A brand that will not betray you.	
A brand that accomplishes its value promise.	.88
An honest brand.	
Integrity	
A brand that gives back to its consumers.	
A brand with moral principles.	.93
A brand true to a set of moral values.	
A brand that cares about its consumers.	
Symbolism	
A brand that adds meaning to people's lives.	
A brand that reflects important values people care about.	.94
A brand that connects people with their real selves.	
A brand that connects people with what is really important.	

Appendix B Measurements

SCALE	Cronbach's alpha
Susceptibility to Normative Influences[a] Batra et al. 2000; Bearden et al. 1989	.87
If I want to be like someone, I often try to buy the same brands they buy.	
When buying products, I generally purchase those brands that I think my friends and family will approve.	
I achieve a sense of belonging by purchasing the same product and brands that friends or family purchase.	
Variety Seeking[a] Olsen et al. 2016	.88
I am constantly seeking new ideas and experiences	
I dislike change and variety in daily routine (r)	
I like continually changing activities	
I prefer a routine way of life compared to one full of change (r)	
I like to experience novelty and change in daily routine	
Risk Aversion[a] Donthu and Garcia 1999	.69
I would rather be safe than sorry.	
I want to be sure before I purchase anything.	
I avoid risky things.	
Authentic Personality; Wood et al. 2008	
Authentic living/Self-authenticity	
I think it is better to be yourself, than to be popular	.78
I always stand by what I believe in	
I am true to myself in most situations	
I live in accordance with my values and beliefs	
Accepting external influences	
I am strongly influenced by the opinions of others	.89
I usually do what other people tell me to do	
I always feel I need to do what others expect me to do	
Other people influence me greatly	
Self-alienation	
I don't know how I really feel inside	.91
I feel as if I don't know myself very well	
I feel out of touch with the 'real me	
I feel alienated from myself	

[a] 1 = strongly disagree, 7 = strongly agree; [b] 7-point differential; [c] 1= strongly disagree, 5= strongly agree; *excluded from the analysis in Study 5.