

1 **TO ROME WITH LOVE: A MODERATED MEDIATION MODEL IN ROMAN**
2 **HERITAGE CONSUMPTION**

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50 **TO ROME WITH LOVE: A MODERATED MEDIATION MODEL IN ROMAN**
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52

53 **Abstract**

54 This paper tests a moderated mediation model based on hypothesized relationships in heritage
55 marketing between event involvement, place attachment, experience authenticity, and revisit
56 intention, and finds that place attachment mediates the event involvement–revisit intention
57 relationship and that experience authenticity moderates the mediation. The relationships are
58 explored with a sample of people attending a Roman heritage festival in Italy (n = 350). Based
59 on suggestions from environmental psychology, the model is then split to compare neighborhood
60 and non-neighborhood tourists, and younger and older tourists. Results show that revisit
61 intention for closer and older tourists relies more on place attachment than on event involvement;
62 the reverse is true for distal and younger tourists. Finally, tourists’ freely elicited motivations are
63 analyzed by computing an original place-or-event-relatedness score, continuous and centered on
64 zero, which corroborates the findings from the moderated mediation models. Theoretical and
65 managerial implications are addressed.

66 **Keywords**

67 place attachment, event involvement, experience authenticity, revisit intention, moderated
68 mediation, motivations, age, distance

69 **1. Introduction**

70 The purpose of this research is to investigate the perspectives of consumers on heritage
71 experience authenticity to assess what drives their revisit intention. Building on Hwang, Lee, and
72 Chen (2005) and Gross and Brown (2008), we propose that revisit intention for heritage
73 marketing has two drivers: the location itself, and the event. We aim at providing a consumer-
74 based approach to investigate the role of the place not through its objective features (quality of
75 transportation, etc.; Hall, Basarin, & Lockstone-Binney, 2010) but rather through the eyes of
76 consumers, as the personal connection individuals feel with the place (Kyle, Bricker, Graefe, &
77 Wickham, 2004). Similarly, we address the event in terms of how much consumers are involved
78 with it (Gross & Brown, 2008). Based on solid, well-known constructs such as event
79 involvement, place attachment, experience authenticity, and revisit intention, and focusing on
80 heritage marketing, we also aim to provide solid, manageable results in showing which
81 combination of place attachment and event involvement best fits which consumer segment.
82 However, despite the agreement that the considered constructs are key, previous findings are
83 sometimes contradictory when it comes to their exact role. For instance, place attachment is
84 sometimes modeled as an attitude (Jorgensen & Stedman, 2001), and thus as a predictor of
85 satisfaction and revisit intention (Brown, Smith, & Assaker, 2016; Prayag & Ryan, 2012),
86 sometimes as a consequence of satisfaction (Zenker & Rütter, 2014), and sometimes as a
87 mediator between satisfaction and revisit intention (Lee, Kyle, & Scott, 2012). Similarly, event
88 involvement is sometimes treated as a mediator (Kolar & Zabkar, 2010), sometimes as a direct
89 predictor (Prayag & Ryan, 2012) of satisfaction and revisit intention, and at other times is
90 neglected. Some methodological reasons might explain these contradictions and differences in
91 perspectives: on one hand, some models proposed in the literature appear very rich and complex,
92 and might suffer from excessive complexity, as they advance numerous potential mediation

93 effects that are, however, not tested formally by isolating the dependent, mediator, and
94 independent variables in a separate sub-model. On the other hand, most studies employ SEM
95 models, which are insensitive to the direction of causality, so that if dependent and independent
96 variables are switched the overall model fit remains invariant. Furthermore, SEM models do not
97 allow testing for moderation effects, so it might be that potential moderators have been included
98 in previous models, but as direct predictors rather than as moderators.

99 In the present research, we opt for a relatively simple model, based on four constructs
100 that the literature has unambiguously identified as being key, but whose exact relationships
101 display instead some ambiguity. In explicitly testing a model of moderation and mediation,
102 rather than a SEM, we shed some light on the relationships between the considered constructs.

103 Rome's heritage tourism has been chosen as a context for this research because of the
104 maturity and distinctiveness of Rome's domestic heritage tourism market and the cultural
105 sensibilities of its neighbors, similar to what Bryce, Curran, O'Gorman, and Taheri (2015) did for
106 Japan's heritage tourism in the Asian context.

107 Through a moderated mediation model estimated using the SPSS PROCESS macro by
108 Hayes (2013; model 7), we show that the combined use of place attachment and event
109 involvement leads to revisit intention; place attachment mediates the relationship between event
110 involvement and revisit intention; and experience authenticity moderates the relationship
111 between event involvement and place attachment.

112 Furthermore, despite evidence in tourism that consumers of different ages exhibit
113 different behavioral and vacation patterns (see, e.g., Romsa & Blenman, 1989), the role of age in
114 the association between place attachment, involvement in an event, and behavioral intentions has
115 yet to be explicitly addressed. In addition, literature in psychology addressing place attachment

116 has suggested that patterns of association between behavioral intentions and place attachment
117 might differ by age (Pretty, Chipuer, & Bramston, 2003) and that age might also affect the desire
118 for involvement in events external to the self (Maurer, Weiss, & Barbeite, 2003; Roberti, 2004).
119 We show that the pattern of relationships between revisit intention, place attachment,
120 involvement in the event and experience authenticity varies by respondents' age.

121 Finally, literature in environmental psychology has found that geographic distance might
122 affect place attachment (Sarbin, 1983) and has dichotomized locations into neighborhood and
123 non-neighborhood (Ahrentzen, 1992). We translate these considerations into the domain of
124 tourism and show how the strength of the relationships related to place attachment in the
125 moderated mediation model is affected by consumers' travelled distance to reach the place.

126 Accordingly, we split the model for age (comparing younger and older consumers) and
127 for distance traveled (comparing neighborhood and non-neighborhood tourists). Finally, we
128 analyze the motivations freely elicited by respondents by computing a simple yet efficient score
129 of place-versus-event relatedness for motivations, continuous and symmetrically centered around
130 zero. Results of a MANOVA on the motivation score corroborate the findings from the split
131 models, increasing their robustness. In the final section we summarize the empirical evidence,
132 offering conclusions and managerial implications for practitioners.

133

134 **2. Literature review**

135

136 ***2.1. Place attachment***

137 Recently, tourism and hospitality research has devoted increasing attention to place attachment
138 (Brown et al., 2016; Hammitt, Backlund, & Bixler, 2006; Lewicka, 2011), suggesting the

139 relevance of developing place attachment for tourism marketers (Kaplanidou, Jordan, Funk, &
140 Ridinger, 2012). After a long debate about what place attachment means and how best to
141 measure it (for a review, see Hidalgo & Hernández, 2001), researchers now agree that place
142 attachment can be broadly referred to as the personal connection one feels with a place (Kyle et
143 al., 2004), or as the cognitive and emotional connection an individual experiences with a
144 particular place (Lalli, 1992). In summary, place attachment is determined by an interplay of
145 affect and emotions, knowledge, beliefs, and behaviors with respect to place (Low & Altman,
146 1992). Accordingly, place attachment might be more emotional (Hidalgo & Hernández, 2001) or
147 more evaluative (Moore & Graefe, 1994), as different factors can contribute to place attachment
148 formation, for instance direct experiences (Hammit, Backlund, & Bixler, 2004) or social
149 interactions (Rubinstein & Parmelee, 1992).

150 Place attachment has been found to influence tourists' behaviors and revisit intentions
151 (Loureiro, 2014; Stylos, Vassiliadis, Bellou, & Andronikidis, 2016). Specifically, for events,
152 there is empirical evidence of the impact of place attachment on future loyalty (Alexandris,
153 Kouthouris, & Meligdis, 2006).

154 Although tourism research agrees that place attachment is key, extant contributions are
155 sometimes ambiguous about how, exactly. For instance, some studies model place attachment as
156 a *predictor* of satisfaction, loyalty, or revisit intentions (Prayag & Ryan, 2012; Ramkissoon,
157 Smith, & Weiler, 2013). Others instead conceptualize place attachment as a *consequence* of
158 satisfaction and behavioral intentions (Lee et al., 2012). The reason for these disagreements
159 might in part lie in the methodology used, as most of the studies rely on SEMs, which are
160 insensitive to the direction of causality (an $A \rightarrow B$ path and a $B \rightarrow A$ path could report the same fit,
161 though logically opposite; Chin, 1998; Hair, Hult, Ringle, Sarstedt, & Thiele, 2017; Iacobucci,

162 2009). Moreover, in many contributions no further analyses support the results of the SEMs:
163 while not detracting from the relevance of their findings, it does detract from their external
164 validity (Garver & Mentzer, 1999; Koufteros, 1999). We address place attachment as a *mediator*
165 of relationships leading to satisfaction and behavioral intentions, in line with Lee et al. (2012),
166 who suggested that treating it as a mediator could help clarify its relationship to revisit intention,
167 as it is conceptually similar to psychological commitment, which is a component of attitudinal
168 loyalty (Kyle et al., 2004; Park, 1996) and relates to behavioral intentions such as revisiting
169 (Kyle et al., 2004; Lee, Graefe, & Burns, 2007). Previous research might have failed or neglected
170 to address place attachment as a mediator in part because only full mediation was the gold
171 standard, according to Baron and Kenny (1986), leading researchers to drop promising projects
172 according to what Zhao, Lynch, and Chen (2010, p. 199) defined as a “nonsensical” approach
173 that mutilated theoretically interesting results and the potential for new theoretical contributions.
174 On the other hand, many previous analyses of place attachment develop complex path models,
175 and recent literature has shown that, especially in complex path models, the overlooking of
176 indirect effects is likely (Hair, Sarstedt, Pieper, & Ringle, 2012; Nitzl, Roldan, & Cepeda, 2016),
177 leading researchers to focus only on direct relationships and to ignore mediating effects (Nitzl et
178 al., 2016).

179

180 **2.2. *Event involvement***

181 Involvement is probably one of the most investigated constructs in marketing research, and it has
182 been examined with respect to countless objects, from brands to advertising (Lee & Beeler,
183 2009). The tourism and leisure literature is no exception, having devoted much attention to the

184 role of consumer involvement as a predictor of attitudes and behavior (Havitz & Dimanche,
185 1990; Prayag & Ryan, 2012), satisfaction (Iwasaki & Havitz, 2004), and loyalty (Kim, 2008).

186 Involvement can be defined as the perceived relevance of an object, based on the inherent
187 needs, values, and interests of an individual (Zaichkowsky, 1985), and refers to the attachment
188 one feels to a certain object.

189 Yet, two different kinds of involvement can be identified: enduring involvement and
190 situational (or event) involvement (Laurent & Kapferer, 1985). The first refers to an enduring
191 concern with respect to a good and is a stable attitude that develops through the association of a
192 good with individual personal values (Alexandris, 2016). The latter refers to a temporary
193 increase in the relevance of or interest in an object (Zaichkowsky, 1985). Specifically, event
194 involvement indicates a sense of personal relevance for and interest in a specific event (Wong &
195 Tang, 2015).

196 For the purpose of this research, we adopt event involvement as the theoretical
197 underpinning of the involvement construct in relation to the focal object of interest in this study,
198 which is the event. In doing so, we follow recent academic interest in this concept and calls for
199 future research on its role (Wong & Tang, 2015).

200 In tourism, events are usually highly engaging, and involvement is considered in all
201 stages of the tourist buying process (Seabra, Abrantes, & Kastenholz, 2014). Accordingly,
202 tourism and leisure studies usually address event involvement, as it is more managerially
203 operationalizable and can be induced through specific activities and destination attributes
204 (Kaplanidou & Havitz, 2010). Event involvement can influence consumers' intentions and
205 behaviors (e.g. Carneiro & Crompton, 2010), lead to heightened relevance to the consumer

206 (Gration, Raciti, & Arcodia, 2011) and increases the likelihood of attendance (Pope & Turco,
207 2001).

208

209 **2.3. Experience authenticity**

210 Experience authenticity refers to the extent to which tourists perceive products, events, and
211 experiences as genuine (Shen, Guo, & Wu, 2014), true (Castéran & Roederer, 2013), real
212 (Akhoondnejad, 2016), and historically accurate (Wang, 1999). Different facets of experience
213 authenticity have been identified, such as objective authenticity (reflecting the way individuals
214 see themselves in relation to external objects; Steiner & Reisinger, 2006), constructive
215 experience authenticity (comprising the socially construed perspectives of the consumer, the
216 situation, and the context; Akhoondnejad, 2016), and existential authenticity (pertaining to the
217 emotions felt during a touristic experience, detached from the objects; Bryce et al., 2015).

218 Experience authenticity is key in the tourism and hospitality literature (Kim & Jamal,
219 2007), which has examined it with regard to revisit intentions (Kolar & Zabkar, 2010),
220 satisfaction (Chhabra, Healy, & Sills, 2003), and loyalty (Brida, Disegna, & Osti, 2013).
221 Furthermore, experience authenticity is connected to the past (Lee, Fu, & Chang, 2015) and is
222 therefore particularly relevant in the experience of heritage tourism, where the quest for
223 experience authenticity is crucial (Castéran & Roederer, 2013). Nonetheless, the formal
224 conceptualization of experience authenticity is inconsistent. For instance, some studies have
225 considered it a *predictor* of satisfaction or revisit intention (Girish & Chen, 2017; Ramkissoon et
226 al., 2013), others as a *mediator* between motivation and behavioral intentions (Kolar & Zabkar,
227 2010), and still others as a *consequence* (Chhabra, 2005). As for involvement, these
228 inconsistencies might stem from the insensitivity to causal direction in SEMs and from the

229 relative difficulty of including mediation and moderation analyses in SEMs. Furthermore, the
230 heterogeneity in the conceptualization of experience authenticity might reflect the possibility that
231 its effects vary across different contexts and consumer segments, so that studies focusing on
232 different contexts or segments might have addressed it differently.

233

234 **2.4. Revisit intention**

235 Revisit intention has been referred to as the visitor's intention to return to a place (Baker &
236 Crompton, 2000) and has been suggested as the major proxy for the actual return of tourists
237 (Loureiro, 2014; Prayag & Ryan, 2012). Hence, revisit intention is key for tourism operators
238 (Shonk & Chelladurai, 2008). The centrality of revisit intention is apparent, given the wealth of
239 studies that consider it as the major dependent variable, in a wide array of settings, from festivals
240 (Baker & Crompton, 2000) to destinations (Stylos, Bellou, Andronikidis, & Vassiliadis, 2017;
241 Yoon & Uysal, 2005) to sport tourism (Shonk & Chelladurai, 2008). Revisit intention has
242 probably received even greater attention in the specific context of events, where it is key (Mason
243 & Paggiaro, 2012; Tanford & Jung, 2017). As such, revisit intention is addressed as the
244 dependent variable in the present research, also.

245 Yet, authors such as Yoon and Uysal (2005) and Stylos et al. (2017) did not clarify the
246 specific variables that can influence the intention to return to a destination (i.e., behavioral
247 loyalty). Literature in tourism has shown that the intention to return to a destination depends not
248 only on satisfaction (Kozak, 2001) but on other variables, such as the image of that destination
249 (Bigné, Sánchez, & Sánchez, 2001), that in this case would translate to the image of the event
250 itself (Baker & Crompton, 2000). Similarly, Um, Chon, and Ro (2006) related revisit intention to
251 the perceived quality and image of the attended event/performance, building on the evidence of

252 Bowen (2001) for tour itineraries, based on the “what” and “how” of the performance (Grönroos,
253 1984). In this regard, Tilaki, Marzbali, Abdullah, and Bahauddin (2016) considered image and
254 satisfaction as antecedents of the loyalty to a World Heritage Site. Similarly, Petrick and
255 Backman (2001) suggested that revisit intention stems from satisfaction and the perceived value
256 of the experience (for travelers to golf-related events), while Beerli and Leon (2012) also
257 addressed emotions as drivers of behavioral loyalty. In this vein, novelty seeking was suggested
258 as a significant antecedent of revisit intention by Jang and Feng (2007), and from that
259 perspective an event might constitute a novelty that revitalizes a location. In summary, a
260 destination can comprise both a place and events that together determine the overall
261 attractiveness and drive future behaviors (Um et al., 2006).

262

263 *2.5. Distance*

264 Studies in tourism have addressed the influence of personal characteristics in relation to
265 individuals’ reactions to a place (Kimpton, Wickes, & Corcoran, 2014). Some argue that
266 geographic distance can determine or ease, to some extent, individual attachment to a place and
267 have found that place attachment is likely to develop from personal experience with the physical
268 environment (Proshansky, Fabian, & Kaminoff, 1983; Vorkinn & Riese, 2001). Thus, locals are
269 more likely to develop a stronger attachment, as they experience more often the environment,
270 than those living in distant areas (Argan, Kaya, Argan, Akyildiz, & Korkmaz, 2015). In this vein,
271 previous tourism literature has shown that whether an individual was born in a place or comes
272 there as a visitor affects their attachment to that place (Budruk, Wilhelm Stanis, Schneider, &
273 Anderson, 2011; Lee et al., 2012; Moore & Graefe, 1994).

274 Also, environmental psychology has addressed distance, explaining individuals' behavior
275 toward and reactions to a place in terms of a dichotomization of neighborhood and non-
276 neighborhood, or closeness and distance (Ahrentzen, 1992; Brown, Perkins, & Brown, 2003;
277 Fullilove, 1996). Feelings of belongingness and identity have been found to stem from
278 geographical closeness (Brown et al., 2003; Hammitt et al., 2004) and to drive attitudes and
279 behavior (Manzo & Perkins, 2006).

280 Finally, literature in psychology has established a correlation between psychological
281 perceptions of closeness and objective measures of distance, so that objects more physically
282 distant from the evaluating self are usually also perceived as more psychologically distant
283 (Henderson, Wakslak, Fujita, & Rohrbach, 2011; Liberman, Trope, & Wakslak, 2007; Trope &
284 Liberman, 2010).

285

286 **2.6. Age**

287 Scholarly examination of place attachment has also addressed the effect of demographics on
288 tourists' behavior. In this vein, evidence shows that the degree of place attachment is likely to
289 vary for individuals of different ages (Argan et al., 2015; Hidalgo & Hernández, 2001; Kimpton
290 et al., 2014), with older individuals being more likely to develop greater emotional bonds to a
291 place than younger individuals. Furthermore, tourists' age has been found to influence the
292 cognitive and affective components of a destination image (Baloglu & McCleary, 1999; Beerli &
293 Martín, 2004), interest in relaxation (Beerli & Martín, 2004), drivers and attributes of destination
294 attractiveness (Cho, 1998), need for arousal and involvement (Walmsley & Young, 1998),
295 spending behavior (Mok & Iverson, 2000) and even the impact of tourism advertising (Kim,
296 Hwang, & Fesenmaier, 2005) and the reliance on personal experience and different information

297 sources online (Jacobsen & Munar, 2012) and offline (McGuire, Uysal, & McDonald, 1988).
298 Finally, older consumers also exhibit less interest in involvement in events external to the self
299 (Maurer et al., 2003; Roberti, 2004).

300 Consistently, literature in psychology has suggested that patterns of association between
301 objects and behaviors differ by age (Pretty et al., 2003) and has established a correlation between
302 elder age and place attachment (Anton & Lawrence, 2014; Hidalgo & Hernández, 2001;
303 Sugihara & Evans, 2000) and younger age and desire for excitement (Maurer et al., 2003;
304 Roberti, 2004).

305

306 ***2.7. Conceptual model and hypotheses***

307 This research proposes that revisit intention has two antecedents, one pertaining to the location,
308 the other to the event. As we adopt a consumer-based approach, we consider the place through
309 the eyes of consumers; that is to say, we consider the personal connection between the individual
310 and the place (Kyle et al., 2004) rather than the tangible features of the place (Hall et al., 2010).
311 Also event involvement has been suggested as a relevant predictor of revisiting (Lee & Beeler,
312 2009; Regan, Carlson, & Rosenberger, 2012), and providing events is a major task of a touristic
313 destination, one that influences visitors' re-patronage intentions (Kaplanidou et al., 2012). On
314 this basis, drawing from the arguments found in leisure and tourism marketing, we posit that
315 both place attachment and event involvement will influence the likelihood of their revisit
316 intention. Accordingly, and incorporating the suggestions by Hwang et al. (2005) and Gross and
317 Brown (2008), we posit that place attachment together with event involvement build intention to
318 revisit. More formally, we posit the following:

319 ***Hypothesis 1. Event involvement(H1a) and place attachment (H1b) both have a***
320 *direct positive impact on revisit intention.*

321 The tourism and leisure literature provide evidence of a close relationship between place
322 attachment and event involvement (Hwang et al., 2005), suggesting that event involvement
323 contributes to consumers’ evaluation of the location (Brown et al., 2016). Similarly, in the
324 domain of sport marketing, Higham and Hinch (2009) suggested that place attachment can
325 extend to the event venue in shaping the overall experience. In this vein, Hwang et al. (2005)
326 documented that tourist involvement in outdoor activities and place attachment have equal
327 impacts on participation in such outdoor activities. In summary, there is ample evidence of a
328 relationship between event involvement and place attachment (Hwang et al., 2005; Williams,
329 Patterson, Roggenbuck, & Watson, 1992); thus, we include the event involvement–place
330 attachment relationship in the theoretical model. We acknowledge that some studies have
331 advanced that the direction of the causal relationship between event involvement and place
332 attachment is from the latter to the former (Wong & Tang, 2015); however, place attachment
333 represents “an emotional or affective bond between a person and a particular place” (Kyle,
334 Graefe, Manning, & Bacon, 2003, p. 251) and results from the meaning associated with that
335 place (Budruk, 2010). To have place attachment, a sense of “my place” and/or “favorite place”
336 must arise first (Argan et al., 2015; Oh, Lyu, & Hammitt, 2012). In turn, this requires that
337 consumers establish some relationship, experience, feelings and thoughts about the place (Alam,
338 2011). Thus, place attachment is connected to the levels of relations that are established between
339 a place and an individual, in terms of memories, social relationships, meanings and experiences
340 (Budruk, 2010; Kyle et al., 2003). Event involvement represents an increase in the personal
341 relevance for and interest in a specific geographically located event (Wong & Tang, 2015), that

342 might well generate memories and social relationships, and that constitutes an experience. Thus,
343 we posit that event involvement should help generate an increase in the levels of relation with a
344 place, and therefore positively affect place attachment. Accordingly, we test the following
345 relationship in the model: Hypothesis 2. Event involvement has a direct positive impact on place
346 attachment. Accordingly, we test the following relationship in the model:

347 ***Hypothesis 2.** Event involvement has a direct positive impact on place*
348 *attachment.*

349 To the best of our knowledge, it remains unclear from the existing literature what,
350 exactly, the relationship between event involvement, place attachment and revisit intention looks
351 like. For instance, Hou, Lin, and Morais (2005) established a positive relationship between
352 involvement and place in the context of a cultural tourism destination. Prayang and Ryan (2012)
353 posed involvement and place attachment as parallel drivers of revisit intention (and satisfaction).
354 George and George (2004) established place attachment as a driver of revisit intention.

355 Thanks to events, individuals attach meaning and memories to places, so that the self gets
356 reflected in the place. These aspects of one's self, reflected in the place, generate attachment to
357 (or revulsion toward) a place (Williams & Stewart, 1998), and such attachment in turn
358 contributes to revisit intention (George & George, 2004). We propose that event involvement
359 impacts place attachment (H2) and that the two—jointly—impact revisit intention (H1). Yet,
360 event involvement refers to heightened relevance to the consumer (Gration et al., 2011), can
361 influence consumers' intentions and behaviors (Carneiro & Crompton, 2010) and is a predictor
362 of loyalty (Kim, 2008). Thus, event involvement builds the base for developing experiences,
363 emotions, relevance and – eventually - place attachment (Argan et al., 2015; Hou et al., 2005;
364 Hwang et al., 2005), while place attachment is an emotional reaction to a physical and social

365 setting (Prayag & Ryan, 2012), akin to the affective component of attitude (Jorgensen &
366 Stedman, 2001). Instead, revisit intention represents a behavioral intention. Thus, it can be
367 argued that event involvement is an antecedent of place attachment, which in turn is an
368 antecedent of revisit intention. Such theorization would also answer recent calls in the literature
369 for consideration of mediation relationships (Wong & Tang, 2016) and address the consideration
370 that place attachment as a mediating variable could fill gaps in the knowledge of the
371 relationships between revisit-related constructs (George & George, 2004). Accordingly, we
372 advance the following hypothesis:

373 ***Hypothesis 3.** Place attachment partially mediates the relationship between event*
374 *involvement and revisit intention.*

375 Although full mediation was the standard according to Baron and Kenny (1986), more
376 recent developments on mediation analysis (Iacobucci, 2008, p. 12) note that “when all tests are
377 properly conducted and reported, the majority of articles conclude with partial mediation”. Based
378 on the extant literature the present research advances that both direct (H1) and mediated (H2)
379 effects could exist, and that they should point in the same direction (revisit intention) and display
380 the same (positive) sign. Thus, such partial mediation (H3) is a complementary mediation,
381 according to the terminology of Zhao et al. (2010).

382 Experience authenticity refers to the extent to which experiences are perceived by tourists
383 as genuine (Shen et al., 2014), true (Castéran & Roederer, 2013), real (Akhoondnejad, 2016),
384 and historically accurate (Wang, 1999). Experience authenticity has been extensively discussed
385 in tourism and hospitality literature (Kim & Jamal, 2007), with respect to revisit intention (Kolar
386 & Zabkar, 2010), satisfaction (Chhabra et al., 2003), and loyalty (Brida et al., 2013).

387 Scholars consider experience authenticity particularly relevant in heritage tourism (Boyd,
388 2002; Lu, Chi, & Liu, 2015), where tourists often express an “ardent desire” for experience
389 authenticity (Lu et al., 2015, p. 88). Perceptions of experience authenticity, historical accuracy,
390 realism and genuineness might therefore enhance event involvement, determining in turn the
391 consumer’s attachment to a place (e.g., Brown et al., 2016). There is also evidence for a positive
392 correlation between place attachment and experience authenticity (Ram, Björk, & Weidenfeld,
393 2016). For instance, Belhassen, Caton, and Stewart (2008) found that pilgrims developed place
394 attachment for sacred sites where they perceived experience authenticity, while Wildish, Kearns,
395 and Collins (2016) found that tourists visiting a hostel established stronger attachment especially
396 for places where they experienced authenticity through freedom and proximity to nature.

397 In this context, experience authenticity might have a potential moderating role between
398 event involvement and place attachment. A direct relationship between tourists’ involvement and
399 place attachment has been empirically documented (e.g., Xu & Zhang, 2016). Moreover, as
400 noted by Brown et al. (2016), event involvement impacts tourists’ evaluation of the event venue.
401 If tourists develop event involvement, and perceive the experience as authentic, they may
402 transmit this positive state to the hosting venue (e.g., Brown et al., 2016), reinforcing place
403 attachment. Consequently, we posit the following:

404 ***Hypothesis 4. experience authenticity positively moderates the relationship***
405 *between event involvement and place attachment (H4a), in such a way that high*
406 *levels of experience authenticity increase place attachment attributable to event*
407 *involvement (H4b).*

408 Place attachment has also been addressed in environmental psychology, where it has been
409 found to be affected by geographic distance (Sarbin, 1983), leading to a dichotomization of

410 neighborhood and non-neighborhood, or closeness and distance (Ahrentzen, 1992), as place
411 attachment develops to different degrees within different spatial distances (Hidalgo &
412 Hernandez, 2001). In this vein, the concept of familiarity (or experience) with a place has been
413 developed, for instance, in explaining the psychological consequences of displacement from
414 neighborhood to non-neighborhood (Fullilove, 1996). Accordingly, literature in environmental
415 psychology has addressed the spatial dimensions of neighborhood familiarity (or experience)
416 (Aitken, Stutz, Prosser, & Chandler, 1993) and its relationship to place attachment (Brown et al.,
417 2003). Familiarity has been found to positively relate to geographic closeness (Brown et al.,
418 2003), with which it shapes feelings of belongingness and identity (Hammit et al., 2004), and
419 has also been found to be a driver of attitudes and behavior for individuals psychologically
420 and/or geographically close to that place or environment (Lewicka, 2005; Manzo & Perkins,
421 2006).

422 Thus, a link has been established between place attachment - which refers to a
423 psychological perception - and neighborhood, which is related to a geographic measure of
424 distance. In this vein, literature in psychology further supports the connection between physical
425 and psychological distance, as many kinds of distance (e.g., social, temporal, probabilistic
426 distance), including - if not even primarily - physical geographic distance (Henderson et al.,
427 2011), have been shown to translate to (and highly correlate with) psychological distance
428 (Liberman et al., 2007; Trope & Liberman, 2010), affecting attitudes, preferences, and behaviors.

429 Previous experience with a destination is related to both spatial and temporal distance
430 (Trope & Liberman, 2010), and the farther removed an object is from direct experience, the
431 higher the psychological distance from the self. Consistently, literature in tourism has established
432 a link between experience with a destination and behavior, showing that experience can

433 influence attitudes, choice, satisfaction and revisit intention (Alegre & Cladera, 2006; Chen &
434 Lin, 2012; Huang & Hsu, 2009; Yoon, Gursoy, & Chen, 2001).

435 Building on the psychological concept of familiarity or experience with a place, we posit
436 that revisit intention will be driven more by place attachment than by event involvement for
437 consumers coming from close locations, whereas place might exert a less incisive role in
438 attracting non-neighbors. More formally, we advance the following hypothesis:

439 *Hypothesis 5. The intention to revisit is driven more (less) by place attachment*
440 *than by event involvement for consumers coming from close (distant) locations.*

441 Literature in psychology has suggested that, where patterns of association between
442 behavioral intentions and place attachment have been found to differ by age (Lewicka, 2005;
443 Pretty et al., 2003), with elder individuals driven more by place attachment than by the need for
444 excitement (Rubinstein & Parmelee, 1992). Overall, a solid link has been established in
445 psychology between elder age and place attachment (Anton & Lawrence, 2014; Hidalgo &
446 Hernández, 2001; Pretty et al., 2003; Sugihara & Evans, 2000), and between younger age and
447 desire for excitement (Maurer et al., 2003; Roberti, 2004).

448 In tourism, older consumers are an increasingly a managerially appealing segment
449 (McGuire et al., 1988; Vigolo, 2017), and often have more free time and money than younger
450 consumer segments (e.g., Moschis, 2012). Literature in tourism has suggested a link between the
451 degree of place attachment and tourists age (Argan et al., 2015; Hidalgo & Hernández, 2001;
452 Kimpton et al., 2014) finding that older individuals are more likely to develop emotional bonds
453 to place than younger individuals. Yet, despite evidence in tourism that consumers of different
454 ages exhibit different behavioral and vacation patterns (see, e.g., Romsa & Blenman, 1989), the

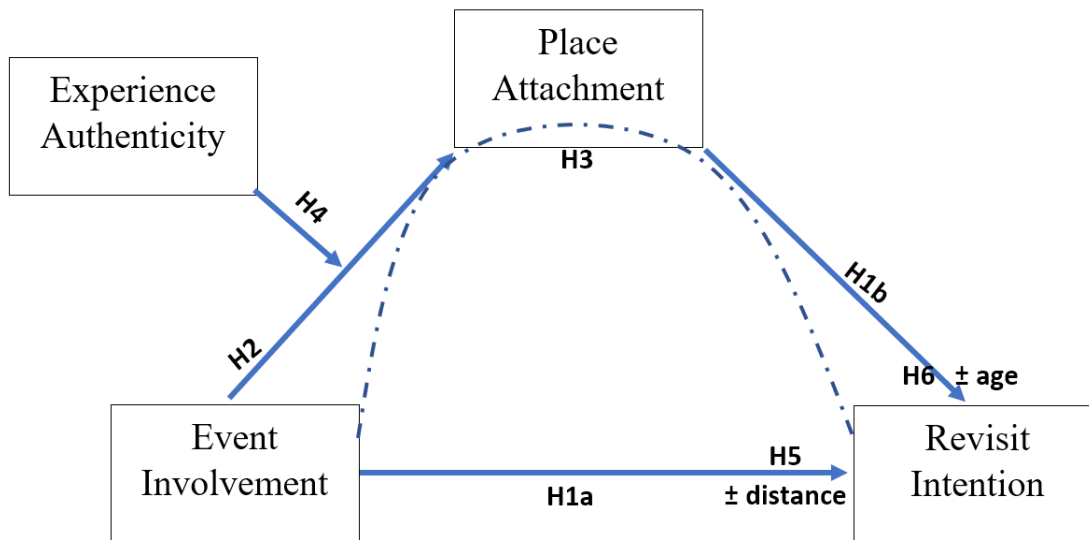
455 role of age in the association between place attachment, event involvement, and behavioral
456 intentions has yet to be explicitly or systematically addressed.

457 Therefore, we split the model estimation for younger and older consumers and posit the
458 following hypothesis:

459 **Hypothesis 6.** *Revisit intention is driven more (less) by place attachment than by*
460 *event involvement for older (younger) consumers.*

461 In summary, we develop a moderated mediation model, where place attachment mediates
462 the relationship between event involvement and revisit intention, and experience authenticity
463 moderates the mediation. Fig. 1 depicts the proposed relationships.

464



465
466 **Fig. 1.** The conceptual model.

467

468 **3. Methods**

469

470 **3.1. Setting**

471 The present research investigates heritage consumption in the context of a Roman heritage
472 event—the *Aquileia Tempora* (see Figs. 2-4). The festival is staged annually, in mid-June. First
473 held in 2009, it has become a major event for the Friuli region, which lies between northeastern
474 Italy, southern Austria, and Slovenia. It is held in Aquileia, a major archeological site in
475 northeastern Italy, often referred to as the Pompeii of the North, and based on its millennia-old
476 history (Fig. 5). Tied to the defense of the borders from the Celts, the exploitation of the nearby
477 gold mines in southern Austria, and the adoptive home of the emperor Diocletian, Aquileia was a
478 strategic port and one of the largest and wealthiest centers of the Roman empire, with over
479 100,000 inhabitants around the 2nd century AD. After the persecutions of the Christians by
480 Diocletian, it became home to the patriarchate and for many centuries was one of the most
481 important ecclesiastical jurisdiction centers, after Rome, of the Catholic Church, with temporal
482 sovereignty over the whole region. Aquileia still bears many traces of the magnificence of the
483 Roman Empire, like the ancient stone-paved *cardo* (the main street), the *forum*, the basilica, the
484 baths, and parts of the city walls. It was declared a UNESCO World Heritage site in 1998.



485

486 **Fig. 2.** A moment of the Aquileia Tempora event.

487



488

489 **Fig. 3.** A moment of the Aquileia Tempora event.

490



491

492 **Fig. 4.** A moment of the Aquileia Tempora event.

493



494

495 **Fig. 5.** Part of the Aquileia archeological site.

496

497 The festival is held throughout the whole city but is tied mostly to the archeological site
498 and to the 313 AD cathedral (still in place, though renovated in the 11th century).

499 The festival board developed a charter outlining strict guidelines for the festival re-
500 enactors, performers, volunteers, and various “merchants and artisans,” including food and
501 beverages. These guidelines are meant to convey a sense of experience authenticity underpinned
502 by historicism.

503 The festival regularly attracts around 30,000 participants, including large re-enactment
504 groups and tourists. Besides being recognized as one of the largest festivals of its kind, it is also
505 sponsored by local government and educational institutions, and a secondary aim of the festival
506 was to make a positive association between the festival and the local museum collection.

507 Note, however, that the festival represents a narrow era (200 AD), which reflects the lack
508 of historical consensus on what is “Roman.” Furthermore, the interpretation of experience
509 authenticity of certain parts (e.g., the gladiatorial games) is sacrificed to spectacularization. And
510 while all food-service stallholders are required to comply with merchandising and clothing
511 guidelines, some local canteens are exempt, and the strictness of the guidelines is limited by the
512 national laws on free trade.

513

514 ***3.2. Sampling and measurements***

515 A total of 350 randomly selected participants in the festival were interviewed during the event
516 (44% females; median age = 35; 342 usable questionnaires) by means of a paper-and-pencil
517 questionnaire. The questionnaire was pretested on a pilot sample of 100 respondents to ensure

518 that the questions were easy to understand and unambiguous. In preparing and administering the
519 questionnaire, we took particular care to avoid method biases as described in Podsakoff,
520 MacKenzie, Lee, and Podsakoff (2003). To reduce evaluation apprehension and social
521 desirability biases, we reassured respondents that there were no right or wrong answers and
522 explicitly asked them to answer questions honestly. Furthermore, the order of questions was
523 randomized, and the data were collected during the event at different times and on different days
524 (i.e., on all three days of the event, nearly equally split across days: 98, 135, and 117
525 questionnaires, respectively).

526 Experience authenticity was measured by five items: products, local staff, traditional
527 presentation, atmosphere, and event as in Akhoondnejad (2016). Revisit intention was measured
528 by four items as in Bryce et al. (2015). Event involvement was measured by eight items as in
529 Kaplanidou and Havitz (2010). Place attachment was measured by six items as in Kaplanidou et
530 al. (2012). All items were measured using 7-point Likert scales ranging from 1 (*completely*
531 *disagree*) to 7 (*completely agree*). Respondents were also asked to express their motivations for
532 their presence in Aquileia. Finally, respondents were asked about their demographics (age,
533 gender, occupation), and how far they had traveled to reach the event.

534

535 **4. Results**

536

537 ***4.1. Mean ratings and scale dimensionality***

538 The mean scores of the 24 items are displayed in Table 7 in the Appendix and range from 4.31 to
539 5.46. The items with the highest mean scores are: “For me, attending Aquileia Tempora is a
540 pleasure”(5.46), “Buying tickets to the Aquileia Tempora event is like buying a gift for myself”
541 (5.39), “Attending Aquileia Tempora as a spectator gives a glimpse of the type of person I am”

542 (5.39), “It is rather complicated to choose which heritage event to go to” (5.39), and “I attach
543 great importance to Aquileia Tempora as a leisure event” (5.37). These items indicate that the
544 respondents are involved with the event being hosted and favor buying a ticket. The items with
545 relatively lower mean scores are: “I will visit Aquileia Tempora” (4.31), “I will visit tourist
546 attractions in Aquileia” (4.45), “I will visit festivals in the Aquileia area” (4.55), and “I will visit
547 the archeological park in Aquileia” (4.56). These items measure the respondents' intention to
548 visit the event again. The fact that their mean scores are merely beyond the middle point
549 indicates that the respondents will not automatically return for the event in the future.

550 Other items whose lowest mean scores are merely beyond the middle point are among
551 those measuring place attachment. They are “Aquileia is the best place for Roman heritage
552 events” (4.68); “No other place can compare with Aquileia for this event” (4.72); “I feel like
553 Aquileia is part of me” (4.81) and “Aquileia means a lot to me” (4.82). They show that the
554 respondents did not hold a very positive or very negative perception in terms of their attachment
555 to the place. In other words, the respondents may not have felt a particularly strong personal
556 connection with the place.

557 As for the variable that captures the authenticity of the experience, scores show that
558 respondents felt that the ‘atmosphere’ was more significant for conveying experience
559 authenticity than the ‘unique products’ or physical objects used for the events (5.25). Overall,
560 these results seem to show that, although Aquileia is positioned as a destination for heritage
561 tourism, and tourists are highly involved with the Aquileia Tempora event, they do not display a
562 particularly high place attachment. Further, experience authenticity is driven more by intangible
563 features, and there is no necessary guarantee that they will revisit the event.

564

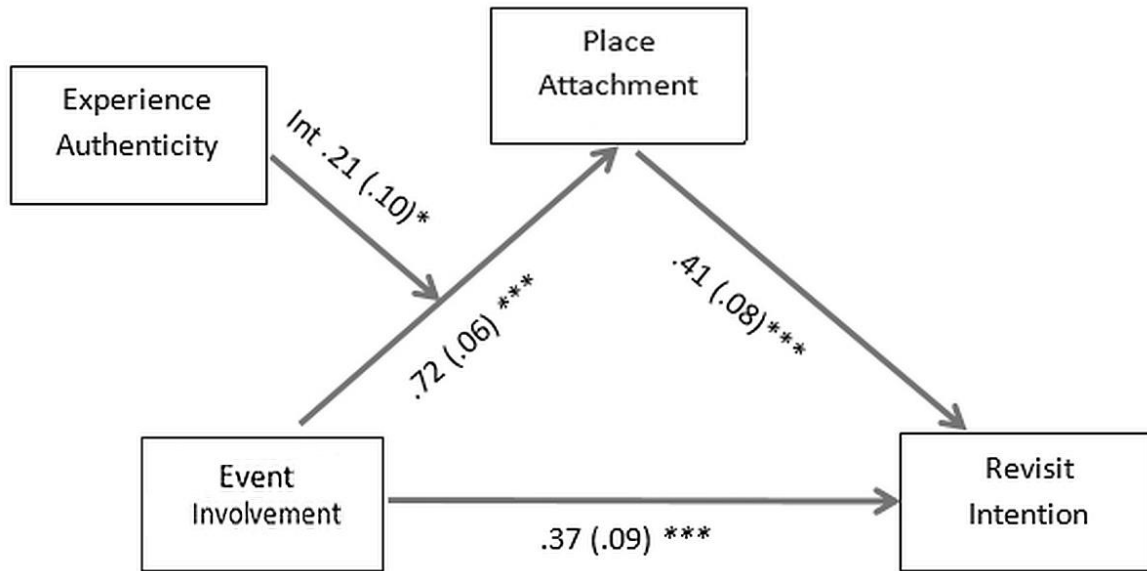
565 **4.2. Full model estimation**

566 Factor analyses on the scales were performed (extraction method Maximum Likelihood, Oblimin
567 rotation) confirming the hypothesized factorial structure, with high factor loadings on separate
568 factors (loadings $>.5$; eigenvalues ≥ 1), in line with the original studies employing the scales.
569 Cronbach's alpha was .94 for revisit intention, .94 for event involvement, .91 for experience
570 authenticity, and .93 for place attachment. Questionnaire items, means, and standard deviations
571 are reported in Table 7 in the Appendix.

572 A moderated mediation analysis was run using the PROCESS macro in SPSS (Hayes,
573 2013) to estimate the direct and indirect effects of event involvement on revisit intention through
574 place attachment as moderated by experience authenticity (Hayes, 2013; Model 7). The
575 significance of the direct and indirect effects was evaluated by means of 5,000 bootstrap samples
576 to create bias-corrected confidence intervals (CIs; 95%). Eight questionnaires of the 350 were
577 automatically deleted by the software due to missing data in estimating the full model. Evidence
578 from the estimation of the model on the remaining 342 questionnaires suggests (1) place
579 attachment as a mediator of the relationship between event involvement and revisit intention
580 (Mediator Index = .086, se = .044, LLCI = .014, ULCI = .193), (2) a significant direct effect of
581 event involvement on revisit intention ($B = .72$, $p < .001$), and (3) a significant indirect effect via
582 place attachment ($B = .41$; $p < .001$). This is to say that while event involvement leads *per se* to
583 higher revisit intention, it also helps increase a person's place attachment, which in turn leads to
584 higher revisit intention. Furthermore, place attachment is as effective as event involvement in
585 building revisit intention (.41 vs. .37). As expected, experience authenticity significantly
586 moderates the effect of event involvement on place attachment such that for low experience
587 authenticity, the relationship between event involvement and place attachment is reduced ($B =$

588 .21, $p = .032$). Given that place attachment leads to revisit intention but that low experience
 589 authenticity buffers place attachment, the highest levels of revisit intention were observed for
 590 individuals who developed place attachment by attending events with high experience
 591 authenticity.

592 Results of the full model estimation are illustrated in Fig. 6.



593
 594 **Fig. 6.** The model with estimates.

595
 596 In summary, hypotheses 1 through 6 are supported. On one hand, the findings for place
 597 attachment are consistent with previous research that explored its relationship with revisit
 598 intention without addressing event involvement. Similarly, the findings for event involvement
 599 are consistent with previous research that explored its relationship with revisit intention without
 600 exploring place attachment. On the other hand, the present analysis puts the addressed
 601 relationships into clearer context. Although new, these findings positively compare with previous
 602 studies suggesting that revisit intention for heritage marketing is built by both location-related
 603 and event-related factors (Gross & Brown, 2008; Lee & Shen, 2013).

604 Furthermore, the findings from the full model support the role of experience authenticity
 605 as moderator rather than as a direct predictor of event involvement, place attachment, or revisit
 606 intention. Results are summarized in Tables 1 and 2.

607

608 **Table 1.** Full model: moderated mediation analysis

	coeff	se	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>	LLCI	ULCI
Event involvement on place attachment	0.719	0.058	12.367	0.000	0.604	0.833
Moderation of experience authenticity	0.210	0.098	2.147	0.032	0.018	0.402
Place attachment on revisit intention	0.408	0.077	5.302	0.000	0.257	0.560
Event involvement on revisit intention	0.372	0.089	4.187	0.000	0.197	0.546
Direct effect	0.372	0.089	4.187	0.000	0.197	0.546

609 Note. LLCI = lower limit confidence interval; ULCI = upper limit confidence interval.

610

611 **Table 2.** Full model: moderator analysis, Conditional indirect effect of X on Y at values of the
 612 moderator

	Moderator: Experience authenticity	<i>Effect</i>	se	LLCI	ULCI
Place attachment	0	0.294	0.059	0.186	0.417
Place attachment	1	0.379	0.080	0.234	0.548

613 Note. Values for the moderator are the mean and plus/minus one SD from mean; LLCI = lower
 614 limit confidence interval; ULCI = upper limit confidence interval.

615

616 **4.3. Split model for distance**

617 Through a median split of the distance participants traveled to reach the event, we compare the
 618 findings for near and far visitors. Specifically, the data show that for respondents coming from
 619 nearby (< 100 km), revisit intention is driven more by place attachment ($B = .402, p < .001$) than

620 by event involvement ($B = .292, p = .011$), and experience authenticity moderates the
 621 relationship between place attachment and event involvement ($B = .256, p = .048$). This finding
 622 is consistent with the idea that the behavioral intentions of individuals who are close to and
 623 emotionally attached to the place hosting the event are driven more by their connection to the
 624 place than by a once-a-year event lasting a few days, although they appreciate it when the event
 625 respects the history and traditions of the place.

626 For visitors coming from greater distances, however, the data show that—overall—event
 627 involvement has a key role both in building place attachment ($B = .867, p < .001$) and in
 628 contributing to revisit intention ($B = .526, p < .001$), more than place attachment does ($B = .356,$
 629 $p = .002$), and that experience authenticity is no longer relevant ($p = .13$). This finding is
 630 consistent with the idea that, for those visitors who are far from the place hosting the event, the
 631 key is the event, and its historical experience authenticity is secondary to spectacularization.

632 Results are summarized in Tables 3 and 4.

633

634 **Table 3.** Split model for distance: moderated mediation analysis

	Group	coeff	Se	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>	LLCI	ULCI
Event involvement on place attachment	<i>close</i>	0.635	0.072	8.777	0.000	0.492	0.778
	<i>distant</i>	0.867	0.097	8.968	0.000	0.675	1.058
Moderation of experience authenticity	<i>close</i>	0.256	0.129	1.989	0.048	0.002	0.509
	<i>distant</i>	0.083	0.151	0.551	0.582	-0.216	0.382
Place attachment on revisit intention	<i>close</i>	0.402	0.104	3.856	0.000	0.197	0.608
	<i>distant</i>	0.356	0.115	3.089	0.002	0.128	0.583
Event involvement on revisit intention	<i>close</i>	0.292	0.114	2.551	0.011	0.066	0.518
	<i>distant</i>	0.526	0.140	3.759	0.000	0.249	0.802
Direct effect	<i>close</i>	0.292	0.114	2.551	0.011	0.066	0.518
	<i>distant</i>	0.526	0.140	3.759	0.000	0.249	0.802

635 Note. LLCI = lower limit confidence interval; ULCI = upper limit confidence interval.

636

637 **Table 4.** Split model for distance: moderator analysis, Conditional indirect effect of X on Y at

638 values of the moderator

	Moderator: Experience authenticity	Group	Effect	se	LLCI	ULCI
Place attachment	0	<i>close</i>	0.256	0.073	0.127	0.416
		<i>distant</i>	0.308	0.105	0.113	0.525
Place attachment	1	<i>close</i>	0.358	0.105	0.167	0.582
		<i>distant</i>	0.338	0.118	0.123	0.592

639 Note. Values for the moderator are the mean and plus/minus one SD from mean; LLCI = lower

640 limit confidence interval; ULCI = upper limit confidence interval.

641

642 4.4. Split model for age

643 Visitors of different ages differ in their approaches to the event. Specifically, for younger

644 consumers (based on the median split), event involvement drives revisit intention ($B = .411, p =$

645 $.002$) more than place attachment ($B = .296, p = .010$), and experience authenticity no longer

646 matters (Moderation $B = .127, p = .341$). In other words, younger tourists care more about the

647 event than about its location, want to get involved in the event, and do not care about the

648 historical experience authenticity of the experience being re-enacted.

649 For older visitors, however, place rather than event is key. Specifically, place attachment

650 leads to revisit intention ($B = .600, p < .001$) more than event involvement does ($B = .362, p =$

651 $.003$); experience authenticity is nonetheless helpful in further increasing place attachment

652 (Moderation $B = .340, p = .032$).

653 Results are summarized in Tables 5 and 6.

654

655 **Table 5.** Split model for age: moderated mediation analysis

	Group	Coeff	se	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>	LLCI	ULCI
Event involvement on place attachment	<i>younger</i>	0.784	0.089	8.831	0.000	0.609	0.96
	<i>older</i>	0.533	0.078	6.850	0.000	0.380	0.687
Moderation of experience authenticity	<i>younger</i>	0.127	0.133	0.956	0.341	-0.136	0.391
	<i>older</i>	0.340	0.157	2.165	0.032	0.030	0.650
Place attachment on revisit intention	<i>younger</i>	0.296	0.113	2.615	0.010	0.072	0.519
	<i>older</i>	0.600	0.111	5.396	0.000	0.381	0.819
Event involvement on revisit intention	<i>younger</i>	0.411	0.133	3.102	0.002	0.149	0.673
	<i>older</i>	0.362	0.119	3.038	0.003	0.127	0.597
Direct effect	<i>younger</i>	0.411	0.133	3.102	0.002	0.149	0.673
	<i>older</i>	0.362	0.119	3.038	0.003	0.127	0.597

656 Note. LLCI = lower limit confidence interval; ULCI = upper limit confidence interval.

657

658 **Table 6.** Split model on age: moderator analysis, conditional indirect effect of X on Y at values

659 of the moderator

	Moderator: Experience authenticity	Group	<i>Effect</i>	se	LLCI	ULCI
Place attachment	0	<i>younger</i>	0.232	0.095	0.055	0.426
		<i>older</i>	0.320	0.080	0.190	0.511
Place attachment	1	<i>younger</i>	0.269	0.117	0.060	0.524
		<i>older</i>	0.524	0.130	0.310	0.828

660 Note. Values for the moderator are the mean and plus/minus one SD from mean; LLCI = lower

661 limit confidence interval; ULCI = upper limit confidence interval.

662

663 **4.5. Motivation analysis**

664 Finally, the motivations that respondents provided were classified by two independent

665 judges as event-related, place-related, or mixed/others. Ratings between the two judges show

666 substantial agreement (Pearson $r^2 = .90$).

667 Motivations were later recoded as -1 , $+1$, and 0 , respectively, based on the judges'
668 classification. Of 350 respondents, 52 did not answer the question about motivations and were
669 therefore excluded from this analysis (40% females, 48% coming from far, 46% younger
670 consumers). Next, we computed a score for each respondent, taking into account (a) the total
671 number of motivations provided by each respondent, (b) the number of motivations that were
672 place-related, and (c) the number of labels that were event-related, where (b) + (c) does not
673 necessarily equal (a) due to mixed motivations. Specifically, the score is expressed as the
674 average between the two judges of the sum of the proportion of place-related (b/a) and event-
675 related motivation (c/a) out of the total number of motivations. This procedure yields a
676 continuous score ranging from -1 (all event-related motivations) to $+1$ (all place-related
677 motivations).

678 Consistent with the results from the model, we find a multivariate effect of age (Wilks
679 $\lambda = .937$, $F = 9.753$, $df = 2$; 288, $p < .001$) and distance (Wilks $\lambda = .968$, $F = 4.720$, $df = 2$; 288,
680 $p = .010$) on motivation type and number, but no effect of gender (Wilks $\lambda = .983$, $F = 2.454$,
681 $df = 2$; 288, $p = .090$). Follow-up univariate analyses of variance yield significant differences
682 between the motivation scores of older ($M_{\text{older}} = .136$) and younger ($M_{\text{younger}} = -.070$) consumers,
683 and between close ($M_{\text{close}} = .109$) and distant ($M_{\text{distant}} = -.043$) consumers. In other words,
684 younger consumers and consumers from distal locations tend to be driven more by event-related
685 than by place-related motivations, whereas older and closer consumers tend to be driven more by
686 place-related than by event-related motivations. A significant interaction emerges between age
687 and distance (Wilks $\lambda = .976$, $F = 3.758$, $df = 2$; 288, $p = .029$). Specifically, older consumers
688 provide more place-related motivations when they come from closer locations ($M_{\text{older_close}} = .157$
689 vs. $M_{\text{older_distant}} = .114$), and younger consumers provide more event-related motivations when

690 they come from more distant locations ($M_{\text{younger_close}} = .060$ vs. $M_{\text{younger_distant}} = -.200$). No
691 differences emerge, however, in the average number of motivations respondents provided
692 ($M_{\text{younger}} = 3.17$, $M_{\text{older}} = 3.01$, $F = .904$, $p = .343$; $df = 1;289$; $M_{\text{close}} = 3.12$, $M_{\text{far}} = 3.07$, $F = .177$,
693 $p = .762$; $df = 1;289$; $M_{\text{male}} = 3.07$, $M_{\text{female}} = 3.11$, $F = .008$, $p = .930$; $df = 1;289$).

694 Overall, the findings from the motivation analysis corroborate those from the moderated
695 mediation split models and suggest that while the place hosting the event is important, so is place
696 attachment itself, and the relative weight of place- and event-related issues varies across different
697 consumer segments.

698

699 **5. Discussion**

700 The present research tested a model focused on a few constructs that the tourism literature
701 considers key but about whose exact relationships there is some ambiguity (and sometimes even
702 some contradictions). We used a consumer-based approach to examine event involvement and
703 place attachment as drivers of revisit intention. Specifically, we investigated place attachment as
704 a mediator of the relationship between event involvement and revisit intention, and we posited
705 experience authenticity as a moderator of the mediation. Accordingly, we ran a moderated
706 mediation model. Furthermore, we analyzed the motivation freely elicited by those attending the
707 event, strengthening the ecological validity of the findings from the moderated mediation model.

708 First, we found support for a partial mediation of place attachment, showing that both
709 place-related and event-related factors are key in building revisit intention, and that they exert
710 roughly the same impact on revisit intention. Based on these results, we can say that event
711 involvement leads to revisit intention but also contributes to the development of place
712 attachment, which in turn leads to higher revisit intention. Second, in line with our predictions,

713 we found that experience authenticity moderates the mediation, as the impact of event
714 involvement on place attachment is higher (lower) when experience authenticity is high (low).
715 Our research contributes to the literature by explicitly addressing mediation and moderation
716 effects, overcoming limitations of previous studies that were not methodologically able to
717 address mediators, or that addressed mediation and moderation in isolation rather than in a
718 single, consistent model of moderated mediation. By means of the adopted procedure, we
719 disentangled the effects of event involvement, place attachment, and experience authenticity, to
720 assess the relative relationships between these constructs and to compare their impact on revisit
721 intention.

722 Second, by splitting the model for the comparison of younger and older consumers, and
723 for the comparison of close and distant tourists, we tested in different consumer segments the
724 strength of the relationships we found in the full model. We found a reversal of the relative
725 strength of place attachment and event involvement on revisit intention due to distance and to
726 age. Specifically, for neighbor tourists, revisit intention is driven more by place attachment than
727 by event involvement, and experience authenticity moderates the relationship. For non-neighbor
728 tourists, however, event involvement contributes more than place attachment, and experience
729 authenticity no longer matters. Furthermore, we found that the relationship between the
730 considered constructs varies with age: younger consumers are more interested in the ability of
731 the event to involve them, and older consumers are driven more by their attachment to the place.
732 Overall, the findings for the split models positively relate to findings and suggestions in
733 environmental psychology, but they translate its underlying assumptions to the domain of
734 tourism.

735 Finally, we analyzed the motivations that respondents provided for participating in the
736 event. We found significant differences between the motivations of younger and older
737 consumers, and between close and distant consumers. Consistent with the evidence from the split
738 moderated mediation models, younger consumers and distant consumers were driven more by
739 event-related than by place-related motivations, whereas the opposite pattern emerged for older
740 and close consumers. A significant interaction between age and distance further showed that
741 younger consumers are even more event-driven when they come from distant locations, whereas
742 older consumers are even more place-driven when they come from nearby. Methodologically, we
743 also provide a simple yet efficient way to compute a continuous score of place-versus-event
744 relatedness for motivations that is intuitive because it is symmetrically centered on zero and
745 could be easily employed in further analyses to provide a more colorful picture and increase the
746 external validity of SEM-based results.

747 From a theoretical perspective, our research provides a consistent and robust model that
748 disambiguates the relationship between event involvement, place attachment, experience
749 authenticity, and revisit intention, showing a partial mediation of place attachment, moderated by
750 experience authenticity. Furthermore, translating to the domain of tourism management
751 considerations from environmental psychology on the relationship between place attachment and
752 event involvement, we address and find relevant differences in the model patterns due to
753 consumers' age and their geographical distance.

754 From a methodological perspective, we implemented a moderated mediation model that
755 is a novelty (at least relatively) compared with prior studies in the extant literature in tourism
756 management. Furthermore, we provided an efficient and relatively easy way to compute a

757 motivational score, which allows for the inclusion of more qualitative data in the analyses, thus
758 increasing their robustness and ecological validity.

759 Our study is not meant to be conclusive; nevertheless, we believe our results can be
760 relevant for practitioners and can stimulate future research that could include a broader set of
761 constructs, address further mediators and moderators, and use our computation score to include
762 qualitative data next to the quantitative analyses. Furthermore, place attachment is associated
763 with emotional connections of place (Smith, Siderelis, & Moore, 2010), and recent studies set in
764 the context of archeological sites have shown that emotional responses are reliable predictors of
765 attitude and behavior (Prayag, Hosany, Muskat, & Del Chiappa, 2017). Future research should
766 measure tourists' emotions and link them to tourists' perceptions of and reactions to a
767 destination, for instance building on the work by Prayag, Hosany, and Odeh (2013) to
768 simultaneously examine the relationship between emotional responses, destination image,
769 satisfaction and behavioral outcomes. Finally, future research could investigate the role of
770 consumers' motivations to (re)visit a location or an event, deepening the understanding of the
771 link between motivations, destination image and behavioral loyalty, for instance building on the
772 motivation classification by Beerli and León-Ledesma (2012), Crompton (1979), and Gil,
773 Palacio, and Ledesma (2017).

774

775 **6. Managerial implications**

776 Our study offers implications for the tourism industry in that it addresses both place- and event-
777 related issues and, furthermore, investigates specific groups of tourists for a deeper
778 understanding of what drives revisit intention. Several managerial implications emerged from
779 our research findings:

- 780 (1) Generating interest in the touristic event is key, but so is place attachment.
781 Event managers need to be aware that merely relying on the physical
782 nature of location may fail to engage tourist involvement in an event.
- 783 (2) Increasing experience authenticity of the experience positively contributes
784 to building place attachment. Accordingly, managers need to foster
785 increasing levels of experience authenticity by selecting products, staff,
786 presentation, atmosphere, and events consistently. Care has to be put into
787 conveying a sense of experience authenticity in order to enhance
788 consumers' attachment to the place.
- 789 (3) Managers need to be aware of the different drivers of revisit intention for
790 close and far consumers and use them in accordance with their target
791 population: for consumers traveling longer distances to see the event,
792 event involvement contributes to revisit intention more than place
793 attachment does, and experience authenticity no longer plays a role. For
794 consumers coming from nearby, however, place attachment is more
795 relevant than the event being hosted, though they appreciate that the event
796 does not betray the history of the place. Thus, efforts to create place
797 attachment and to respect the authenticity pay off more for close than for
798 distant consumers, and the opposite holds for distant consumers.
- 799 (4) Younger and older visitors base their revisit intention on different
800 elements: younger consumers are less sensitive to place attachment, want
801 an involving event, and are not interested in experience authenticity. Older
802 consumers, by contrast, are driven more by place attachment than by the

803 event being hosted, yet they appreciate experience authenticity. Again, this
804 information is useful for practitioners who seek to better address their
805 target population.

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- 1130
- 1131

1132 **Appendix: Questionnaire items, means, and standard deviations**

1133

1134 **Table 7.** Questionnaire items, means, and standard deviations

	Mean	S.D.
INVOLVEMENT		
1. I attach great importance to Aquileia Tempora as a leisure event	5.37	1.17
2. Aquileia Tempora is an event that leaves me totally indifferent (reverse coded)	5.27	1.26
3. Buying tickets to the Aquileia Tempora event is like buying a gift for myself	5.39	1.20
4. For me, attending Aquileia Tempora is a pleasure	5.46	1.05
5. I can tell a lot about a person by whether they are Aquileia Tempora spectators or not	5.19	1.33
6. Attending Aquileia Tempora as a spectator gives a glimpse of the type of person I am	5.39	1.12
7. When I choose which heritage event to attend it is not a big deal if I make a mistake (reverse coded)	5.13	1.26
8. It is rather complicated to choose which heritage event to go to	5.39	1.12
PLACE ATTACHMENT		
1. I enjoy participating in Aquileia more than any other place	5.07	1.63
2. No other place can compare with Aquileia for this event	4.72	1.59
3. Aquileia is the best place for Roman heritage events	4.68	1.66
4. I am very attached to Aquileia	4.92	1.71
5. Aquileia means a lot to me	4.82	1.45
6. I feel like Aquileia is part of me	4.81	1.43
EXPERIENCE AUTHENTICITY		
1. Please rate the significance of the following items about the festival:		
2. Unique Roman products	4.63	1.82
3. Local staff	5.00	1.50
4. Historical presentation	4.93	1.48
5. Unique Roman atmosphere	5.25	1.45

	Mean	S.D.
6. Unique Roman heritage festival	4.99	1.46
REVISIT INTENTION		
1. I will visit Aquileia Tempora	4.31	1.80
2. I will visit the archeological park in Aquileia	4.56	1.70
3. I will visit festivals in the Aquileia area	4.55	1.66
4. I will visit tourist attractions in Aquileia	4.45	1.52

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