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Measuring Legitimacy from the Perspective of Black Travelers

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Introduction

Destination marketing organizations (DMOs) are a staple within the tourism ecosystem (Gretzel et al., 2006). Their existence promotes and supports collaboration among various sectors within hospitality and tourism such as hotels, restaurants, and airlines (Zach, 2012). Traditionally, DMOs have been tasked with crafting a destination's image and brand that ultimately increases economic impact to the community (Gretzel et al., 2006). However, the need for stakeholder collaboration, the evolution of the traveler, increased focus on destination competitiveness, globalization, sustainability, and myriad of socio-political phenomena have changed the fundamental functions of DMOs to include a managerial focus (Pike & Page, 2014). One such area DMOs have found themselves addressing, particularly in the United States, is the heightened attention on diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI), especially as it relates to Black travelers.

Many U.S. DMOs have affirmed their commitment to improving race related DEI efforts at both the destination and industry levels. These actions were ignited by a pivotal moment in 2020 following the vast media coverage of the deaths of Black Americans. While communities marched for justice, numerous business organizations, including DMOs, took to social media, posting social advocacy statements in support of the Black community and/or the Black Lives Matter movement. Social advocacy statements may be defined as a visual, textual, or verbal expression in support of inclusion that encourages and initiates social change (Dodd, 2018). Such statements have been proven to alienate some consumers while garnering support from others (Yim, 2021).

DMO social advocacy statements in support for the Black Lives Matter movement were met with a myriad of responses, ranging from positive affirmation to questioning the legitimacy of these statements and the organizations from where they originated (Mzezewa, 2020). Aside from the obvious desire for DMOs to show solidarity, this type of action highlights the long-debated connection between business and society (Wertley & Baker, 2022). Given the relationship between consumer's sense of affinity with entities that agree with their values and subsequent influence on spending with those entities, reactions to the statements are economically important for DMOs as well (Dodd, 2018). The perceived legitimacy of social advocacy statements along with other DMO initiatives needs to be strong in order for current and future efforts to be successful. In other words, DMOs need to understand whether the groups they wish to support view their efforts (as well as their existence) as legitimate, then subsequently design and develop appropriate initiatives for those groups.

However, before we can measure the impact of the DMO statements, a standard measure of legitimacy must first be developed, thus the purpose of this study is to develop a reliable and valid scale to measure the legitimacy judgements of Black tourists toward DMOs. Specifically, we ask: How do Black travelers view the legitimacy of DMOs? While a small number of scales focusing on legitimacy judgments have been developed, they do not attend to the unique nature of DMOs which differ considerably from an independent firms nor do they consider the role of race in establishing such evaluations. The first step in this process is to better understand the dimensions with which Black travelers judge DMOs and their actions. Given the rise in DEI related initiatives and the central role DMOs play in the industry this study is both timely and crucial.

Literature Review

DMO's, Legitimacy, and the Black Traveler

DMOs must navigate a host of stakeholders, including local residents, politicians, the travel industry, and the various travel market segments (Pike & Page, 2014). They must do this amidst the unpredictable and seismic social and political shifts we are currently experiencing (Bogren & Sörensson, 2021). Recognizing the DMO's role as both initiators and mediators, Volgger and Pechlaner (2014) suggest DMOs approach their tasks through the use of stakeholder management which may include open dialogue that facilitates information exchange and the successful coordination of action plans. Despite the approach, each of the entities with whom DMOs interact have varying levels of influence, but each must see them as a legitimate part of the industry and of society (Pike & Page, 2014).

DMOs may be shifting more toward a management role, but they are still marketers of the destination (Abou-Shouk, 2018). For Black travelers, a destination's approach to diversity and representation in tourism marketing are key factors in their travel decision making processes. According to Ivey-Walker (2021) 54% of Black U.S. travelers surveyed stated they were more likely to visit a destination if Black travelers were represented in marketing and advertisement. Unfortunately, destination marketing targeting Black travelers has been limited, forcing this segment to create their own resources for relevant and reliable tourism information (Dillette & Benjamin, 2021; Tucker et al., 2023). DMOs are missing an opportunity to attract the Black travel market. This gap will require DMOs to learn more about this market and engage in dialogue about what this means for their destination, both internally and externally (Dillette & Benjamin, 2021) ensuring trust and transparency are central to their work (Abou-Shouk, 2018).

Legitimacy as Theoretical Paradigm

Legitimacy is a fundamental part organizational studies. First introduced by Max Weber (1968), legitimacy is considered paramount to understanding an organization's performance and survival. Given its long history in organizational research, it is not surprising that legitimacy has withstood a number of definitional changes (see Deephouse et al., 2017 for a full review of legitimacy). Nevertheless, Suchman's (1995) definition is generally the most accepted and has stood the test of time. He states that legitimacy is "a generalized perception or assumption that the actions of an entity are desirable, proper, or appropriate within some socially constructed system of norms, values, beliefs, and definitions" (p. 574). This definition has been well received because it is broad enough to be generalizable, it emphasizes the importance of actors as an evaluator of legitimacy (Suddaby, et al., 2017), and it acknowledges the role of the social construction of social judgments. Suchman (1995) emphasizes that "legitimacy is dependent on a collective audience, yet independent of particular observers" (p. 574). Thus, the judgement of one person is not likely to influence an organization's legitimacy, but collective judgements of like-minded groups could in fact impact an organization's perceived legitimacy, thereby influencing the subsequent actions of an organization (Bitektine et al., 2020; Tost, 2011). From a theoretical perspective, legitimacy can be further understood through institutional and resource-dependence theories.

An institutional theory approach to legitimacy considers how society "looks in" on organizations whereas a resource-dependence perspective considers how organizations "look out" in an effort to acquire vital resources (Suchman, 1995). The institutional approach rests on

the connection between an organization and its environment. In order to survive, an organization will conform to certain pressures and acceptable norms; this process is known as isomorphism wherein organizations seek to resemble others who are facing the same environmental pressures (DiMaggio & Powell, 1983). Conversely, resource-dependence theory emphasizes heterogeneity as a key function of performance. Instead of organizations conforming to their environment, resource-dependence theory considers the strategic choices of an organizations and how they can be used to uniquely maximize their current strengths in order to meet their goals and obtain resources (Pfeffer & Salancik, 1978; Chung et al., 2016).

Despite specific differences separating the perspectives, common elements exist. Both perspectives agree that organizations are constrained by external pressures that must be assessed in order to explore its relationship with its environment. Both perspectives also emphasize the ways in which organizations gain legitimacy from stakeholders (Hessels & Terjesen, 2010). Although valuable individually, there is growing support for incorporating both theories in the exploration of legitimacy. Suchman (1995) noted that an integrated approach would allow for “a larger picture that highlights both the ways in which legitimacy acts like a resource as well as a taken-for-granted belief system” (p. 577). The present-day context that spurred this study is indicative of the real-life quandaries’ organizations like DMOs face that require both an inward and outward examination of legitimacy. Organizations must consider the fluctuating environment while also managing and meeting the consistent needs of its constituents (Suchman, 1995). The establishment of legitimacy among Black travelers suggests that they will be more likely to allocate funds towards destinations they deem as desirable and appropriate (Suchman, 1995; Chung et al., 2016). In this way, legitimacy is considered to be critical to the travel decision making process.

Typologizing and Measuring Legitimacy

Within the legitimation process, there are certain dimensions used to evaluate legitimacy. This study examines the legitimacy judgments of Black travelers through four dimensions: sociopolitical, cognitive, pragmatic, and relational. The definitions used for this study can be found in Table 1.

Table 1.
Dimensions and definitions of legitimacy

Dimensions of Legitimacy	Definitions
Sociopolitical Legitimacy	Establishes if “the organization is beneficial or hazardous to (a) the evaluator, (b) the social group(s) to which the evaluator belongs, and (c) the society at large, and, therefore whether the evaluator is willing to support the organization or at least tolerate its existence” (Bitektine et al., 2020, p. 136).
Cognitive Legitimacy	Establishes whether the organization belongs to the “category that is already familiar to the evaluator and is taken for granted” (Bitektine et al., 2020, p. 136).
Pragmatic Legitimacy	Establishes how well an organization meets the self-interests of the evaluator; focuses on the favorability of direct/indirect exchanges (Foreman & Whetten, 2002; Suchman, 1995).
Relational Legitimacy	Establishes legitimacy “when it affirms individuals’ social identities and bolters their self-worth” (Tost, 2011, p. 690).

In addition to evolving various dimensions, researchers have determined that context is an important consideration for understanding legitimacy judgments. Elsbach (1994) is commonly listed as the earliest study of legitimacy judgments for her work on perceptions of normative legitimacy of the cattle industry. Foreman and Whetten (2002) applied an identity-based model to examine perceptions of members of rural cooperatives on pragmatic and cognitive legitimacy. Humphreys and Latour (2013) built on Elsbach's (1994) work to determine how media framing impacted the perceptions of the public on the online gambling industry. Recognizing the importance of connecting issue management to legitimacy, Chung et al. (2016) created a unidimensional scale for organizational legitimacy and issue legitimacy. Alexiou and Wiggins (2019) developed a reliable and valid psychometric measure of perceptions of all three dimensions of legitimacy including pragmatic, moral, and cognitive legitimacy. Most recently, Bitektine et al. (2020) produced a series of four studies designed to distinguish between legitimacy, reputation, and status.

While the aforementioned studies offer promising steps forward in understanding how individuals grant legitimacy, leading researchers in this area continue to encourage exploration from a variety of contexts and evaluators (Deephouse et al., 2017). The examination of legitimacy of DMOs as granted by Black travelers is an ideal fit for this line of research. First, it is common for legitimacy studies to explore the cognitive and normative dimensions, but less is known about the influence of emotions, feelings, and social identity on legitimacy judgments (Deephouse et al., 2020; Tost, 2011). The exploration of legitimacy using cognitive, sociopolitical, pragmatic, and relational dimensions will not only examine how Black travelers conceptualize DMOs as an appropriate entity within the tourism industry (cognitive), but how they view the actions of DMOs as appropriate and meeting individual and societal needs (sociopolitical and pragmatic), and how they see themselves reflected in the organization and its actions (relational). Second, the Black travel market has been an historically underrepresented segment within the tourism industry. Having an understanding of the dimensions this market segment uses to evaluate legitimacy will provide baseline knowledge about this growing group thereby allowing for opportunities to engage deeper with Black travelers.

Methodology

Measurement scales are useful tools that enable researchers to evaluate abstract constructs (Morgado et al., 2018). This study uses the step-by-step process for scale development as described by DeVellis (2016) similar to many tourism researchers such as Soulard et al. (2021): “1) determine clearly what it is you want to measure, 2) generate an item pool, 3) determine the format for measurement, 4) have the initial item pool reviewed by experts, 5) consider inclusion of validation items, 6) administer items to a development sample, 7) evaluate the items, and 8) optimize the scale length” (DeVellis, 2016, pp. 105-150). This method is especially beneficial for this study because of the emphasis placed on theory during measure development.

Guidelines for the Scale Development Process:

Step 1: Determine Clearly What it is You Want to Measure

The first step in the measurement process is to construct a clear definition of the construct of interest. Soulard et al (2021) note the importance of this step as it assists the researcher in writing relevant items. This is especially important because failure to properly define a construct can lead to the inclusion or exclusion of items that may alter our understanding of a construct

(Worthington & Whittaker, 2006). Using the four-stage process presented by Podsakoff et al. (2016) the researcher was able to select the best definition and dimensions of legitimacy. The following approaches aided in clarification process: 1) use definitions to identify attributes 2) organize the potential attributes by theme 3) develop an initial definition of the concept 4) refine the definition (Podsakoff et al., 2016).

Step 2: Generate an Item Pool

The purpose of this step is to create a set of items that effectively represent the construct (DeVellis, 2016). Given the existing research on legitimacy, a deductive approach was used to generate items for the existing study (see Appendix A). The review of extant literature is noted as a valuable step in the process of item generation because it provides information on how dimensions and/or constructs have previously been defined (Churchill, 1979). Following best practices, consideration was given to the number of initial items developed in anticipation of item reduction (Hinkin, 1998). As a result, nine items for sociopolitical legitimacy (Bitektine et al., 2020), five items were generated for cognitive legitimacy (from Bitektine, et al., 2020; Foreman & Whetten, 2002), 11 items for pragmatic legitimacy (Alexiou & Wiggins, 2019; Chung et al., 2019) and eight items for relational legitimacy were created based on the description of the dimension provided by Tost (2011). The initial item pool resulted in a total of 33 items.

Step 3: Determine the Format for Measurement

After the initial item pool is generated, the format for the scale must be determined (DeVellis, 2016). Due to its prevalence in tourism studies (Dolnicar et al., 2011) and in previous legitimacy measurement studies (Chung et al., 2016; Alexiou & Wiggins, 2019; Bitektine et al., 2020), this study uses a 7-point Likert-scale. Respondents will select their agreement to declarative statement stems (e.g., Tourism offices contribute positively to society) using options that range from strongly disagree to strongly agree.

Step 4: Initial Item Pool Review by Experts

Next, DeVellis (2016) suggests a team of tourism experts review the list of items and definitions. In this case, the experts consisted of tourism professors (n=5). Experts received a copy of legitimacy dimension definitions and corresponding items to review. The experts reviewed the information for clarity and fit of the items using the provided definitions as a guide. Specifically, this process required attention to the wording of each item and assurance that the items aligned with the identified dimension (DeVellis, 2016). Verbal feedback was obtained from the experts which resulted in robust conversations about the scale. For example, one expert suggested that “DMO” be changed to “tourism office” to offer terminology with which respondents may be more familiar. To examine clarity from the perspective of future respondents, Black travelers (n=3) were asked to review the scale as well. The final item pool can be found in Appendix B.

Step 5: Consideration of the Inclusion of Validation Items

The inclusion of validation items helps to determine if there are flaws or concerns with social desirability (DeVellis, 2016). An instructed response item, “*Please select the color purple*” was used at the survey halfway point. Individuals who selected the wrong color were excluded from the study. Additionally, as recommended by Podsakoff et al (2012), efforts were taken to eliminate ambiguous language (see step 4).

Step 6: Administer Items to a Development Sample

Once the items are generated and evaluated, they are administered to a sample. Extant literature on sample size is varied, but suggests the sample should be large enough to avoid subject variance (DeVellis, 2016). For example, samples between 10-30 have been suggested for simplicity and ease of calculation (Isaac & Michael, 1995). Conversely Nunnally (1978) recommended 300 participants would be adequate. Continued exploration in this area notes that successful scales have been developed with much smaller samples (DeVellis, 2016), but consideration for the pilot study sample size depends on the purpose of the study (Hertzog, 2008). In cases where a single scale will be extracted from the item pool, less than 300 subjects is sufficient (DeVellis, 2016). In this study, the purpose is to address initial scale development where by the items are gauged for comprehensiveness. In cases such as this, Johnson and Brooks (2010) recommend a sample between 100-200.

The scale was developed using Qualtrics and conducted on Amazon Mechanical Turk (MTurk). Screening questions were used to verify the respondents' eligibility for participation. For example, "Are you a U.S. citizen?" was used to gauge citizenship whereas, "What is your year of birth?" was included to ensure participants were at least 18 years old. Individuals outside of the USA and under the age of 18 were not permitted to participate. Participants received \$.50 for completing the survey. Following the screening questions, participants reviewed a description of tourism offices and were asked if they'd ever used one in their trip planning process.

Data analysis was conducted using R, an open-source software program (Luo et al., 2019). Data were extracted and entered into R for data cleaning. A total of 223 responses were received. Based on the screening questions two participants were excluded, one due to citizenship and the other due to age. Next careless respondents were identified based on their response to a direct screening method and duration. For the direct screening method, an instructed item was placed in the survey which provided specific instructions for respondents to follow. Instructed responses are used to determine a respondent's level of attention during the survey (DeSimone et al., 2015). Specifically, participants were instructed to select the color "purple" from a list of colors. Four responded incorrectly and were excluded from the survey. The second method used to screen for careless responses was based on the amount of time it took to complete the survey. One additional respondent was excluded for taking the survey in less than one minute. After data cleaning, a total of 216 useable responses were available.

The sample is comprised of 129 male and 87 female respondents. Descriptive statistics indicate respondents represent Baby Boomer, Gen X, Millennial, and Gen Z generational cohorts, with slightly more than half, n=115 identified as Millennials, born between 1981-1996. The largest number of respondents identify as White (n=178) followed by Asian (n=26), and Black (n=8). One respondent identifies as American Indian/Alaska Native and one additional respondent identifies as Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander. The top three states represented by participants were California (n=26), Indiana (n=25), and Virginia (n=24). The majority of respondents (n=146) reported having a bachelor's degree, followed by 45 who indicated having a post graduate degree. The vast majority of participants (n=154) indicate working in the tourism industry. Fifty-eight (n=58) work outside the industry and 4 were unsure.

Step 7: Evaluate the Items

Once the items have been administered to a sample, the next step is evaluation. This process will ultimately determine which items are appropriate and constitute the scale (DeVellis,

2016). The top quality to look for during item evaluation is its “high correlation with the true score of the latent variable” (DeVellis, 2016, p. 140). High correlations among items will indicate a higher reliability of individual items; this is particularly important because the “more reliable the items are, the more reliable the scale that they compose will be” (DeVellis, 2016, p. 140). Next variance levels are considered. Like correlations, high item variance scores are desirable (DeVellis, 2016). Item means are also considered during this process (see Table 2). Items responses on this scale range from 1-7, with 1 corresponding to “strongly disagree” and 7 corresponding to “strongly agree”, thus a mean score near 4 is considered ideal (DeVellis, 2016). During this phase items of concern are noted, but not removed. Each of the evaluative features are considered as the researcher moves into the next phase.

Table 2.

Descriptive Statistics

	Mean	SD
CL1. Tourism offices are a common organization that operates in the tourism industry	5.31	1.37
CL2. It makes sense for tourism offices to be part of the tourism industry.	5.47	1.32
CL3. Tourism offices are complementary to other organizations in the tourism industry.	5.40	1.27
CL4. It makes sense to have organizations like this in communities.	5.39	1.33
CL5. I believe that tourism offices are necessary.	5.41	1.37
SPL1	5.26	1.34
SPL2. Tourism offices contribute positively to society.	5.47	1.36
SPL3. Support the community.	5.37	1.35
SPL 4	5.34	1.44
SPL5. Are a benefit to society.	5.40	1.37
SPL6. Focus on doing the right thing.	5.35	1.38
SPL7. Use the best business practices.	5.30	1.38
SPL8. Tourism offices are innovative in developing new products and services.	5.19	1.43
SPL9. Tourism offices are well managed.	5.33	1.37
PL1. Have employees with excellent professional skills.	5.29	1.31
PL2. Create value for tourists.	5.50	1.31
PL3. Products/services provide value to tourists.	5.57	1.24
PL4. Activities of tourism offices benefit tourists.	5.46	1.30
PL5. Tourism offices understand the needs and concerns of tourists.	5.46	1.32
PL6. Give tourist the opportunity to provide feedback.	5.40	1.42
PL7. Value feedback from tourists.	5.36	1.33
PL8. Are innovative in developing new products and services.	5.19	1.41
PL9. Are credible.	5.34	1.36
PL10. Tourism offices are trustworthy.	5.46	1.32
PL11. Influence my decision to travel.	5.25	1.46
RL1. I feel recognized/valued by tourism offices.	5.23	1.39
RL2. I feel appreciated by tourism offices.	4.58	1.95
RL3. I feel seen by tourism offices	5.38	1.32
RL4. People like me are important to tourism offices.	5.50	1.31
RL5. People like me are represented in tourism offices	5.28	1.38
RL6. People like me are represented in the tourism offices' products/services.	5.24	1.34
RL7. Tourism offices make me feel as though I belong	5.33	1.37
RL8. Tourism offices make me feel as though I am welcome in their destination.	5.37	1.31

Results

Participants

Descriptive statistics indicate that 100% of respondents identified as Black/African American. Of those, 175 identify as male while 125 identify as women. Five individuals identify as non-binary/third gender. The majority of participants identify as millennials (n=186) born between 1981-1996. The next largest age group belong to Gen Z (n=69), followed by Gen X (n=37). The smallest number of participants represent the Boomer generation (n=11). Most participants have a 4-year degree (n=203). Thirty-eight (n=38) participants have a post graduate degree, followed by 34 participants who hold a high school diploma. Twenty-four have some college experience and one participant has a doctorate degree.

Exploratory Factor Analysis

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) was used to determine if the data set is fit for use in an exploratory factor analysis (EFA). KMO verified the sampling adequacy for the analysis, KMO = 0.97, which is considered marvelous according to the categories outlined by Kaiser and Rice (1974). All individual values for KMO were greater than 0.77, well above the acceptable limit of 0.5 (Kaiser & Rice, 1974). A corresponding Bartlett's test was used which suggests, $X^2(1, 32) = 123.68, p < 0.001$

When selecting the appropriate approach for factor analysis, consideration was given to the scale guidelines which support the use of both statistical outputs and theory for factor reduction (DeVellis, 2016). For these reasons, a common factor analysis approach was selected because it identifies "a latent structure that is directly tied to theory" (Finch & French, 2015, p. 33). Based on this approach, a principal axis factor analysis was conducted on the 33 items with an oblique rotation (promax).

Table 3.
Results from Exploratory Factor Analysis

Construct/Items	Factor Loadings
Factor 1. Relational Legitimacy	
I feel recognized/valued by tourism offices	.63
People like me are important to tourism offices	.63
Tourism offices make me feel as though I belong	.59
Tourism offices influence my decision to travel	.56
I feel seen by tourism offices	.55
Have employees with excellent professional skills	.53
Factor 2. Sociopolitical Legitimacy	
Focus on doing the right thing	.65
Use the best business practices	.58
Are a benefit to society	.57
People like me are represented in the tourism offices' products/services	.54
Factor 3. Cognitive Legitimacy	
It makes sense for tourism offices to be part of the tourism industry	.90
Tourism offices are a common organization that operates in the tourism industry	.70
It makes sense to have organizations like this in communities	.66
Tourism offices are complementary to other organizations in the tourism industry	.58
Factor 4. Pragmatic Legitimacy	
Support good causes	.93
Tourism offices contribute positively to society	.59
Tourism offices are innovative in developing new products/services	.53
Value feedback from tourists	.52

Consistent with the common factor analysis approach, a scree plot was used to identify inflection points within the data which would indicate the number of factors needed to be extracted (Finch & French, 2015). Parallel analysis suggests the number of factors 2 whereas the scree plot indicates there may be three. To further explore the factors, PA-PAF is run using promax rotation. Results indicate a four-factor solution is optimal for the Black Travel DMO Legitimacy Scale. Using Cronbach's α , each dimension demonstrated high reliability: relational legitimacy ($\alpha=0.88$), sociopolitical legitimacy ($\alpha=0.82$), cognitive legitimacy ($\alpha=0.84$), and pragmatic legitimacy ($\alpha=0.80$).

Factor 1 is characterized by one's sense of recognition and importance by the tourism industry. Interestingly, two of the six items represented pragmatic legitimacy noting that tourism offices influence their decision to travel and that they have employees with excellent professional skills. Both items indicate a certain level of self-interest associated with pragmatic legitimacy judgments. Whereas, individuals will likely evaluate an organization affirmatively if they are "seen as being responsive to the individual or constituency's larger interests" (Tost, 2011, p. 692). The second factor is representative of sociopolitical legitimacy. It contained four sociopolitical items and one relational item (e.g., *People like me are represented in tourism offices*). Sociopolitical judgments are often feature based and take into account an individual's evaluation of an organization's "performance, practices, and outcomes" (Bitektine et al., 2020, p. 109). For Black travelers, employees are likely seen as a reflection of themselves. The more a tourism office meets these normative expectations, a higher sociopolitical evaluation is to be confirmed (Bitektine et al., 2020). The third factor included four items representing cognitive legitimacy which is primarily associated with an evaluator's familiarity of an organization; it is quite clear that Black travelers consider tourism offices to be a designated part of the tourism industry. The final factor is associated with pragmatic legitimacy which combined items reflecting pragmatic and sociopolitical legitimacy. offers a connection between the individual as represented by the statement "tourism offices value feedback from tourists" while at also meeting the needs of society.

Discussion and Future Research

This paper sought to answer the question: How do Black travelers view the legitimacy of DMOs? To do so, this study explored the dimensions used to evaluate DMOs. Results of the EFA indicate four dimensions including relational, sociopolitical, cognitive, and pragmatic legitimacy. The ultimate goal is to develop a reliable and valid measure of legitimacy; thus, the researchers will conduct a confirmatory factor analysis as a next step. However, the existing results offer theoretical and practical implications.

Theoretically, this work further supports the notion that legitimacy should not be viewed as a set of competing ideals, but rather as a multi-dimensional construct which influences the way individuals perceive an organization and their actions (Tost, 2011). The underlying factors that influence such perceptions extends existing studies by bringing together the foundational aspects of institutional and resource-dependence theories demonstrating how legitimacy can

work as a resource while also being taken for granted (Suchman, 1995). Taken from the individual's point of view (i.e., Black travelers), this study offers an important theoretical contribution in that it is the first to address issues of racial identity in the evaluation of legitimacy judgments. The relational dimension suggests that evaluators make judgments based on the organization's ability to affirm their identity. For Black travelers this was encapsulated in their desire to feel recognized, valued, important, and seen. This dimension also suggests there is a connection between an organization's ability to affirm their social identity and intended use of DMOs as a resource for trip planning. Future studies may benefit from the use of qualitative methods to understand specific activities or strategies DMOs have used (or should use) to elucidate these feelings from Black travelers.

In the last few years, attention has been placed on better understanding how and in what ways destinations can reach the Black travel market. Results from this study offer important practical implications for DMOs. First, Black travelers want and need to feel recognized and valued. DMOs would benefit from surveying their communities to identify existing Black owned businesses or initiatives with whom they could partner to elevate visibility. Second, Black travelers want to feel seen. Perhaps the most commonly discussed topic related to Black travel is representation (or lack thereof) in tourism marketing (Tucker et al., 2023). The continued exclusion of minorities in marketing perpetuates normative standards of power and privilege (Davis, 2018). DMOs may benefit from partnering with content creators which offers an intersectional approach to Black travel that is often missed. As Benjamin et al. (2022) note, Black travel is not monolithic and the inclusion of various content creators can aid in the production of diverse approaches of Black travel.

Despite these contributions, the current study does have limitations. The existing study is based solely on a U.S. based population. Given the existence of DMOs beyond the U.S., in future studies, there would be value in including Black travelers from international destinations. When the scale was tested on a sample containing multiple races, there was difficulty in identifying dimensions that did not compound with others. Additional work in this area would also be beneficial for building a consensus among a diverse set of tourists so that tourism offices can reach large segments of travelers. Lastly, although MTurk is a popular method for collecting data, there is some concern that respondent's racial identification is based on their self-identification rather than a sorting feature built into the system just as they do for age or geographic location. Future studies may seek to use other online data collection sites that allow for such identification at the onset of the study.

This study is the first of its kind aimed at expanding work on the Black travel market. Much of the existing research on Black travelers focuses on how they experience the tourism industry. Instead, this study asks Black travelers to evaluate their perceptions of the industry based on four dimensions. By including the relational dimension in conjunction with a focus on race, this study contributes a unique scale meant to measure individual legitimacy judgments. Future research should continue this important line of inquiry and may benefit from the use of this scale to gauge legitimacy judgments on other tourism entities (e.g., hotel brands). Finally, following Chung et al. (2016), future studies should investigate manifestations of issue legitimacy, such as social advocacy statements, in conjunction with organizational legitimacy. Given the industry's heightened interest in DEI initiatives, a promising next step would be to elucidate the differences that exist between a stakeholder's expectations of an organization, the actions of an organization, and the stakeholder's perception of those actions (Lawrence et al., 1007) as it relates to DEI initiatives. A likely next step, would be to use this scale in an

experimental study meant to understand the legitimacy judgements of tourists, particular Black tourists on these actions. There is abundant room for growth and exploration in the area of the relationship between Black travelers and the tourism industry.

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Appendix A.

Existing Studies on Legitimacy Judgements

Author(s)	Description of Legitimacy Judgement	Cognitive Legitimacy	Normative (moral) Legitimacy	Pragmatic	Socio-political
Elsbach (1994)	Examined judgements of the cattle industry		X		
Ruef & Scott	Hospitals		X		
Foreman & Whetten (2002)	Examined perceptions of members of rural co-ops	X		X	
Humphreys & Latour (2013)	Impact of media framing on perceptions of online gambling industry	X	X		
Chung, Berger, & DeCoster (2016)	Examined overall legitimacy of pharmaceutical industry	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A

Alexiou & Wiggins (2019)	General	X	X	X	
Bitektine, Hill, Song, & Vandenberghe (2020)	Organizational legitimacy, reputation, and status	X			X

Appendix B.

Black Traveler DMO Legitimacy Scale

-----Block 1: INTRODUCTION-----

Title: Legitimacy and Tourism

Thank you for agreeing to participate in this academic survey. The purpose of this study is to investigate your perception of the tourism industry. To participate you must be a U.S. citizen and reside in the United States and be at least 18 years old.

The survey should take about 10 minutes to complete. Your honest feedback will help us better understand your perceptions of the tourism industry. Your answers will remain anonymous. Thank you again for your participation.

Please click “next” to begin.

-----Block 2: SCREENING QUESTIONS-----

Are you a U.S. Citizen?

- Yes
- No

In what state do you reside? (Please enter the state in which you reside)

What is your year of birth? (YYYY)

-----Block 3: DEMOGRAPHICS-----

What is your gender?

- Male
- Female
- Non-binary/third gender
- Prefer not to say

What is your race?

- White
- Black or African- American
- American Indian or Alaska Native
- Asian
- Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander
- Other

What is your highest educational level?

- Less than high school graduate
- High school graduate
- Some college
- 2 year degree
- 4 year degree
- Post graduate degree
- Doctorate

Do you work in the tourism industry?

- Yes
- No
- Unsure

-----Block 4: MAIN SURVEY-----

****The following statement will be provided to participants****

Destination Marketing Organizations

This section is interested in your opinions of a specific type of organization within the tourism industry known as destination marketing organizations (DMOs). The following section provides an overview of DMOs and their common tasks.

What are destination marketing organizations?

Destination marketing organizations are often defined as the governmental organization in charge of marketing a destination and providing visitor services locally. While less common, they may also be member based or private.

These organizations may also be known as convention and visitor bureaus (CVBs) or simply a tourism office. To keep it simple, from now on we'll use the term tourism office.

These types of organizations can be found at in a single town, a city, metropolitan area, or state.

What do tourism offices do?

- Promote a destination's image through print (e.g., magazines) and digital (e.g., website, social media) mediums
 - For example, tourism office websites are often developed to assist with trip planning (e.g., identifying hotels, restaurants, and activities in a specific destination)

- Promote economic development of a destination by attracting and increasing visitors to a destination
- Manage visitor centers
- Enhance community relations by promoting the betterment of the community through tourism (e.g., job creation)

Based on this description, have you ever used a tourism office to assist with travel planning by exploring their website, requesting a tourism brochure, and/or visiting a visitor or welcome center?

- Yes
- No
- I'm not sure.

Item List

Legitimacy Typology	Survey Questions
We're interested in how you think tourism offices fit into the greater tourism industry and society as a whole.	
Cognitive Legitimacy [CL1-5]	In general... <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Tourism offices are a common organization that operates in the tourism industry. 2. It makes sense for tourism offices to be part of the tourism industry. 3. Tourism offices are complementary to other organizations in the tourism industry. 4. It makes sense to have organizations like this in communities. 5. I believe that tourism offices are necessary.
We're interested in how you feel tourism offices benefit people like you.	
Sociopolitical Legitimacy [SPL1-9]	In general tourism offices... <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Give importance to its social responsibility. 2. Contribute positively to society. 3. Support the community. 4. Support good causes. 5. Are a benefit to society. 6. Focus on doing the right thing. 7. Use the best business practices. 8. Follow the best management practices. 9. Are well managed.
Where the previous section was interested in larger social groups, now we're interested in your perception of how tourism offices impact you as an individual.	

Pragmatic Legitimacy [PL1-11]	<p>In general tourism offices...</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Have employees with excellent professional skills. 2. Create value for tourists. 3. Products/services provide value to tourists. 4. Activities of tourism offices benefit tourists. 5. Tourism offices understand the needs and concerns of tourists. 6. Give tourists the opportunity to provide feedback. 7. Value feedback from tourists. 8. Are innovative in developing new products and services. 9. Are credible. 10. Are trustworthy. 11. Influence my decision to travel.
We are interested in understanding how you feel tourism offices support your identity.	
Relational Legitimacy [RL1-8]	<p>In general...</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. I feel recognized/valued by tourism offices. 2. I feel appreciated by tourism offices. 3. I feel seen by tourism offices. 4. People like me are important to tourism offices. 5. People like me are represented in tourism offices. 6. People like me are represented in the tourism offices' products/services. 7. Tourism offices make me feel as though I belong. 8. Tourism offices make me feel as though I am welcome in their destination.

Lastly, we are interested in your thoughts about the role of tourism offices and their support for various social issues.	
[SI1-4]	
<p>In general, tourism offices should support social issues that</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Make tourists feel more welcome. 2. Promote racial equity. 3. Promote environmental justice. 4. Promote gender equity. 	

-----SUCCESSFUL END OF SURVEY MESSAGE-----

Thank you so much for your participation in this survey. Your response has been recorded. Here is your MTurk Code. You must copy this code and paste it into MTurk in order to get paid.