

# BEING YOUR TRUE SELF AT WORK: INTEGRATING THE FRAGMENTED RESEARCH ON AUTHENTICITY IN ORGANIZATIONS

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**In tandem with a surge of public interest in authenticity, there is a growing number of empirical studies on individual authenticity in work settings. However, these studies have been generated within separate literatures on topics such as authentic leadership, emotional labor, and identity management, among many others, making it difficult for scholars to integrate and build on the authenticity research to date. To facilitate and advance future investigations, this article reviews the extant empirical work across 10 different authenticity constructs. Following our research review, we use a power lens to help synthesize our major findings and insights. We conclude by identifying six directions for future research, including the need for scholars to embrace a multifaceted view of authenticity in organizations. Overall, our review both reinforces and tempers the enthusiasm in contemporary discussions of authenticity in the popular and business press.**

## INTRODUCTION

As we navigate organizational settings, we often receive the advice to “just be yourself,” with the promise of attaining both happiness and success. This prescription is not new by any means; the belief that individuals should strive to be authentic has been promulgated for hundreds of years by philosophers from Socrates to Sartre, and psychologists such as Rogers and Maslow (Harter, 2002; Novicevic, Harvey, Ronald, & Brown-Radford, 2006). Recent years have

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witnessed the flourishing of both public and academic interest in individual-level authenticity—the subjective experience of alignment between one’s internal sense of self and external expressions (Caza, Moss, & Vough, 2018)—especially in the workplace (e.g., Gardner, Cogliser, Davis, & Dickens, 2011; Gill & Caza, 2018; Grandey & Gabriel, 2015; Roberts & Creary, 2013). Scholars have suggested a variety of reasons for this surge of interest, such as increases in mobility, distrust of the social order, and scandals involving dishonest leadership (Erickson, 1995; Gardner et al., 2011; Lindholm, 2009). Mobility, for example, increases the extent to which people live among strangers, which enables and encourages thinking about “who one really is.” Given that authenticity has become a “widespread emerging social trend” (Carroll, 2015: 2) and a “gold standard for leadership” in organizations (Ibarra, 2015: 54), this is an opportune time to critically examine the landscape of authenticity research in work settings.

In this article, we take stock of and integrate the research to date on individual authenticity in organizations. In doing so, we address two important questions. First, our review examines whether authenticity is as beneficial as the enthusiastic zeitgeist around authenticity in the popular and business press would lead us to believe. Second, our review examines the role of contextual antecedents, shedding light on the extent to which the workplace is conducive to authenticity. We also identify and reflect on limitations in the existing literature.

Our review found that much of the scholarship on workplace authenticity has developed in siloed literatures. Research within separate literatures such as authentic leadership (cf. Gardner et al., 2011), emotional labor (cf. Grandey & Gabriel, 2015), and identity management (cf. Roberts & Creary, 2013), among many others, has made it difficult to compare and integrate learning across various sets of authenticity-related ideas. This article aims to break through such siloes, identifying prominent patterns that emerge across research on 10 different authenticity constructs. For example, we identify important commonalities and differences in terms of definitions, outcomes, and antecedents of authenticity. Insights such as these help to connect previously isolated literatures, providing authenticity scholars with a wider base of research on which to draw. After reviewing the literature, we use a power lens to synthesize our major findings and insights on authenticity in work settings. Our integrative framework illuminates pathways through which authenticity can build power for individuals and articulates how

authenticity can be constrained by other people’s power. We, thus, surface critical relationships between authenticity and control over valued resources and show that authenticity is a central force in organizations.

## DEFINING AUTHENTICITY

Reflecting the multiple literatures in which authenticity has been studied, scholars have proposed numerous definitions. Many of these definitions emphasize alignment between a person’s internal sense of self and outward behavior (Caza et al., 2018; Harter, 2002; Roberts, Cha, Hewlin, & Settles, 2009). We, therefore, use this common thread as the core definition of authenticity in this review, taking into account that a person’s internal sense of self may include his or her thoughts, feelings, values, and identities. Consistent with validated measures (e.g., Kernis & Goldman, 2006), we consider authenticity as a continuum, anchored by high authenticity on one end and low authenticity on the other.

The evaluator of a focal person’s authenticity, either the self or another person, emerged in our review as a key conceptual and methodological distinction across authenticity studies. We, therefore, differentiate between *experienced authenticity* and *externally perceived authenticity*, with “experienced” referring to self-rated and “externally perceived” referring to other-rated evaluations of authenticity. Although some scholars have made strong claims that authenticity should be self-referential (as individuals could fake their appearance of authenticity; Harter, 2002), others have argued that other-rated authenticity is a more valid perspective (individuals, lacking self-awareness, could deceive themselves into thinking they are authentic, such that other people offer a more accurate measure; Fields, 2007). We see both sets of evaluations as valid (Randolph-Seng & Gardner, 2013). Whereas we believe that the distinction between experienced and externally perceived authenticity is important, when scholars speak of “feeling authentic,” “being authentic,” “authentic behavior,” “authentic self-expressions,” “authentic displays,” and so on, they are typically referring to experienced authenticity. For simplicity and efficiency, when we use these phrases, we are referring to experienced authenticity.

## LITERATURE SEARCH AND REVIEW

To identify articles on individual authenticity in work settings, we started with a broad search on the

term “authenticity” in ISI-listed journals, as an indication of journal quality, using Web of Science and the filters of management, business, and applied psychology. This search yielded more than 550 results, revealing substantial interest in the topic. A Web of Science citation analysis suggested that academic interest in authenticity grew significantly following seminal publications on authentic functioning (Kernis, 2003) and authentic leadership (Avolio & Gardner, 2005), among others (Gardner et al., 2011). Based on this historical analysis, we initially focused our search on empirical journal articles published since 2003.

Within this timeframe, we examined empirical studies of authenticity related to individual behavior, rather than the authenticity of products, services, or organizations. These articles surfaced a wide range of constructs related to authenticity. Of these constructs, six corresponded to our core definition of authenticity and explicitly used the terms authenticity or authentic: authentic functioning, authentic leadership, authentic personality, authentic self-expression, perceived inauthenticity, and role authenticity. To include seminal articles on these six “primary” authenticity constructs, the first of which appeared in 1997, we expanded our search parameters to include empirical journal articles published since 1997. We also searched forward from seminal articles. Our search produced more than 100 articles that were published in journals such as *Academy of Management Journal*, *Journal of Applied Psychology*, *Journal of Business Ethics*, *Journal of Business Research*, *Journal of Leadership & Organizational Studies*, *Journal of Management*, *Journal of Managerial Psychology*, *Journal of Occupational and Organizational Psychology*, *Journal of Occupational Health Psychology*, *Journal of Organizational Behavior*, *Journal of Positive Psychology*, *Leadership and Organization Development Journal*, *Personnel Psychology*, and *The Leadership Quarterly*.

In addition, our initial literature search had identified empirical journal articles on four “secondary” authenticity constructs that corresponded to our core definition of authenticity, but whose label did not include the terms authenticity or authentic: emotional labor, facades of conformity, identity manifestation, and hypocrisy. These secondary constructs are embedded within their own distinctive literatures. Because some of these literatures have been subjected to their own independent qualitative and/or quantitative reviews (e.g., Kammeyer-Mueller et al., 2013; Roberts & Creary, 2013; Stone & Focella, 2011), our review of research on the secondary constructs serves

to supplement our understanding of the primary constructs, particularly regarding the role of contextual antecedents.

The six primary and four secondary authenticity constructs are defined in Table 1. Table 1 also notes whether existing research on each construct focuses on experienced or externally perceived authenticity and includes references to construct measures (with an example provided in full in the Appendix). Although there are some notable differences between constructs (e.g., framing authenticity as a trait versus behavior that can vary across situations),<sup>2</sup> there is strong overlap among these various conceptualizations and measures. This overlap coincides with Harter’s (2002) seminal definition of authenticity as alignment between what is internal or private (e.g., values, thoughts, and feelings) and what is external or public (e.g., words, facial expressions, and gestures).

The remainder of the article is organized as follows. We review the literature first with respect to primary authenticity constructs and second with respect to secondary authenticity constructs. At the end of each section, we provide our reflections on the literature. Next, we present a power framework integrating the key conclusions and insights from our review. Finally, we describe avenues for future research.

## RESEARCH ON PRIMARY AUTHENTICITY CONSTRUCTS

Studies have predominantly related the primary authenticity constructs to four major outcome

<sup>2</sup> The authentic personality construct frames authenticity as an enduring individual tendency, whereas constructs such as role authenticity frame authenticity as more variable (e.g., as behavior that can vary across social roles). In addition, whereas the primary authenticity constructs examine the expression of one’s holistic sense of self, the secondary constructs focus on specific aspects of the self, such as one’s emotions (emotional labor constructs), values (facades of conformity, hypocrisy), or devalued social identities (identity manifestation). Finally, two constructs (authentic functioning and authentic leadership) emphasize that authenticity is a dynamic process, as a person can learn more about his or her internal self over time. Both constructs propose that authenticity involves self-awareness; being genuine with other people, which encourages others to provide honest feedback; the ability to process information in an objective, rather than defensive, manner; and behaving in accordance with one’s internal sense of self. Together, these behaviors are believed to enhance one’s ability to understand and communicate one’s true self (Kernis & Goldman, 2006).

TABLE 1  
Primary and Secondary Authenticity Constructs

Construct	Definition	Additional Construct Details	Primary Research Focus	Measures
<i>Primary Authenticity Constructs</i>				
Authentic functioning	The “unobstructed operation of one’s true- or core-self in one’s daily enterprise” (Kernis & Goldman, 2006: 294).	A dynamic process involving four interrelated components: (1) <i>awareness</i> (“possessing, and being motivated to increase, knowledge of and trust in one’s motives, feelings, desires, and self-relevant cognitions”), (2) <i>unbiased processing</i> [“the relative absence of interpretive distortions (e.g., defensiveness and self-aggrandizement) in the processing of self-relevant information”], (3) <i>behavior</i> (“behaving in accord with one’s values, preferences, and needs as opposed to acting ‘falsely’ merely to please others or to attain rewards or avoid punishments”), and (4) <i>relational orientation</i> (“being genuine rather than fake in one’s relationships with close others”) (Kernis & Goldman, 2006: 294–300).	Experienced authenticity	Kernis and Goldman (2006) Authentic functioning, adapted to the workplace; Ilios, Curşeu, Dimotakis, and Spitzmuller (2013); Leroy et al. (2015); Martinez et al. (2017); Ménard and Brunet (2011)
Authentic leadership	The degree to which a leader enacts his or her true self (Leroy et al., 2015).	Authentic leaders are those who engage in four behaviors: (1) <i>self-awareness</i> (comprehending one’s strengths, weaknesses, and impact on others), (2) <i>transparency</i> (openly sharing information and expressing one’s genuine self to others), (3) <i>balanced processing</i> (objectively analyzing all relevant data before making a decision), and (4) <i>internalized moral perspective</i> (being guided by, and aligning one’s behavior with, internal morals) (Gill & Caza, 2018).	Externally perceived authenticity	Avolio, Gardner, and Walumbwa (2007), cited in Walumbwa et al. (2008); Neider and Schriesheim (2011)

TABLE 1  
(Continued)

Construct	Definition	Additional Construct Details	Primary Research Focus	Measures
Authentic personality	Knowing oneself and behaving accordingly (Harter, 2002).	<p>These dimensions draw on Kernis and Goldman's (2006) notion of authentic functioning. Authentic leadership is typically measured in terms of a subordinate's perceptions of his or her manager (cf. Avolio &amp; Gardner, 2005; Walumbwa, Avolio, Gardner, Wernsing, &amp; Peterson, 2008).</p> <p>A person-centered or dispositional view of authenticity involving three components: (1) <i>self-alienation</i> (the extent to which one subjectively experiences not knowing, or feels out of touch with, the true self), (2) <i>authentic living</i> (the extent to which one behaves in a way that is consistent with one's conscious awareness of physiological states, emotions, and deep-level cognitions), and (3) <i>accepting external influence</i> (the extent to which one accepts the influence of other people and believes that one has to conform to others' expectations) (Wood et al., 2008). Individuals who score high on authentic living, low on self-alienation, and low on accepting external influence are considered to have an authentic personality.</p>	Experienced authenticity	Wood et al. (2008) Adapted to the workplace by van den Bosch and Taris (2014a), Knoll, Meyer, Kroemer, and Schröder-Abé (2015), Reis et al. (2016)

TABLE 1  
(Continued)

Construct	Definition	Additional Construct Details	Primary Research Focus	Measures
Authentic self-expression	“Behavior that is phenomenally experienced as being authored by the self or internally caused” (Bettencourt & Sheldon, 2001: 1131).		Experienced authenticity	Cable et al. (2013), adapted from Waterman (1993) Bettencourt and Sheldon (2001) measured authentic self-expression with respect to social roles (e.g., worker, friend). In this way, their scale assessed both authentic self-expression and role authenticity (see below). Leroy and Mor (2015), cited in Moore et al. (2017)
Perceived inauthenticity	Another person’s perception that one is not acting in accordance with one’s true self, such as one’s thoughts, feelings, traits, abilities, or experiences (Moore et al., 2017).		Externally perceived authenticity	
Role authenticity	Being true to oneself (being able to behave in ways that feel personally expressive, authentic, or self-determined) within a social role (e.g., employee, friend, romantic partner, student, child) (Sheldon et al., 1997).		Experienced authenticity	Bettencourt and Sheldon (2001), Sheldon et al. (1997)
<i>Secondary Authenticity Constructs</i>				
Identity manifestation (versus identity suppression)	Openly displaying or revealing one’s social identities that are devalued or stigmatized in the workplace. Identity manifestation is often contrasted with identity suppression, which refers to minimizing displays of or concealing one’s devalued social identities (Madera et al., 2012).	Behaving authentically by expressing and acknowledging one’s devalued social identities at work.	Experienced authenticity	Madera et al. (2012)

TABLE 1  
(Continued)

Construct	Definition	Additional Construct Details	Primary Research Focus	Measures
Emotional labor	Emotional labor research emphasizes two authenticity-related behaviors: deep acting and surface acting. Both are emotion regulation strategies that employees use to comply with their job's expectations of emotional display. As such, they comprise emotional labor, which is defined as "managing emotions and emotional expression to be consistent with... expectations about appropriate emotional expression" (Glomb & Tews, 2004: 2).	<i>Deep acting</i> : Attempting to alter how one truly feels to behave authentically in accordance with expectations of emotional display. <i>Surface acting</i> : Behaving inauthentically to outwardly conform to expectations of emotional display. Surface acting does not involve attempting to actually experience the emotions one is expected to display.	Experienced authenticity	Brotheridge and Lee (2003), Diefendorff et al. (2005)
Facades of conformity	"False representations employees create to appear as if they embrace organizational values" (Hewlin, 2009: 727).	<i>Deep acting</i> : Attempting to alter how one truly feels to behave authentically in accordance with expectations of emotional display. <i>Surface acting</i> : Behaving inauthentically to outwardly conform to expectations of emotional display. Surface acting does not involve attempting to actually experience the emotions one is expected to display.	Experienced authenticity	Hewlin (2009)
Hypocrisy	A discrepancy between an individual's genuine personal values and his or her espoused values (Cha & Edmondson, 2006).	Hypocrisy is a form of inauthenticity in which an individual's genuine personal values are not aligned with his or her espoused values.	Externally perceived authenticity is the focus of research on hypocrisy. Experienced authenticity is the focus of research on induced hypocrisy.	Effron et al. (2015) measured externally perceived hypocrisy. Stone and Fernandez (2008) described procedures to induce experienced hypocrisy.

categories: well-being, work engagement, performance outcomes, and image and career outcomes.<sup>3</sup> Figure 1 depicts how authenticity affects these outcomes and the mechanisms proposed to explain these relationships. Experienced authenticity is associated with well-being and work engagement, both of which are types of “internal states” (psychological states within the actor). Externally perceived authenticity is associated with performance outcomes (namely leader effectiveness in the form of desirable follower responses such as commitment; Kaiser, Hogan, & Craig, 2008). It is also associated with image and career outcomes (other people’s impressions of, and career-related decisions about, the actor). The latter two outcome categories are types of “external reactions” (cognitive, affective, or behavioral responses from people other than the actor). We discuss these relationships more comprehensively in the sections that follow.

### Experienced Authenticity and Well-Being

Many scholars have argued for a strong relationship between experienced authenticity and well-being, which is defined as “optimal psychological functioning and experience” (Ryan & Deci, 2001: 142). Well-being is typically measured in terms of subjective well-being: the extent to which a person experiences life satisfaction, positive affect, and the absence of negative affect (Ryan & Deci, 2001). It has also been captured using more specific measures of positive emotions, job satisfaction, and negative emotions.

Two major types of arguments—emphasizing the satisfaction of basic needs and self-esteem—have been proffered to explain why experienced authenticity may contribute to well-being. First, human beings are believed to have an innate need to self-actualize: to express and use all of their capacities, such as by living in accordance with their values and true self (Cable, Gino, & Staats, 2013; Kernis & Goldman, 2006; Rogers, 1951). Such need satisfaction results in positive emotions, whereas need frustration results in negative emotions (Baumeister, 2016; Waterman, 1990). The view that authentic behavior is fundamental to well-being dates back to classic Greek philosophy (Waterman, 1993) and is embraced by many established perspectives in

counseling psychology (Wood, Linley, Maltby, Baliousis, & Joseph, 2008). Relatedly, a number of scholars have drawn upon self-determination theory (SDT) (e.g., Deci & Ryan, 2000) to explain the relationship between authentic behavior and well-being (Emmerich & Rigotti, 2017; Leroy, Anseel, Dimitrova, & Sels, 2013; Leroy, Anseel, Gardner, & Sels, 2015; Metin, Taris, Peeters, van Beek, & van den Bosch, 2016; Reis, Trullen, & Story, 2016). SDT proposes that autonomy, competence, and relatedness are innate or fundamental psychological needs that must be satisfied for human beings to thrive and function optimally (Deci & Ryan, 2000). Authentic behavior meets needs for autonomy, competence, and relatedness, respectively, because it is self-determined by nature (as its source is the true self); demonstrates proficiency by drawing on one’s true capabilities; and fosters intimacy based on transparent self-expression (Deci & Ryan, 2000; Leroy et al., 2015).

Second, scholars have proposed that experienced authenticity promotes optimal (high and stable) self-esteem, which then facilitates well-being. When individuals use their personal values as a guide for behavior, their feelings of self-worth will be high and stable because they are rooted in the true self, rather than contingent on (and thus vulnerable to) one’s success or failure with respect to external standards (Crocker & Park, 2004; Kernis, 2003; Wood et al., 2008). As a result, individuals with optimal self-esteem do not need to protect their feelings of self-worth through ego-defensive behaviors, which can distract from and interfere with effective functioning (Kernis, 2003).

Supporting the view that being authentic contributes to well-being, Emmerich and Rigotti (2017) found a positive relationship between authentic functioning and healthy psychological functioning (i.e., lower depressivity) six months later. In an experiment, Kifer, Heller, Perunovic, and Galinsky (2013) manipulated authenticity and found that authenticity increased life satisfaction. Many other studies have found positive correlations between experienced authenticity and indicators of well-being (e.g., Bettencourt & Sheldon, 2001; Emmerich & Rigotti, 2017; Sheldon, Ryan, Rawsthorne, & Ilardi, 1997; van den Bosch & Taris, 2014a; Wood et al., 2008).

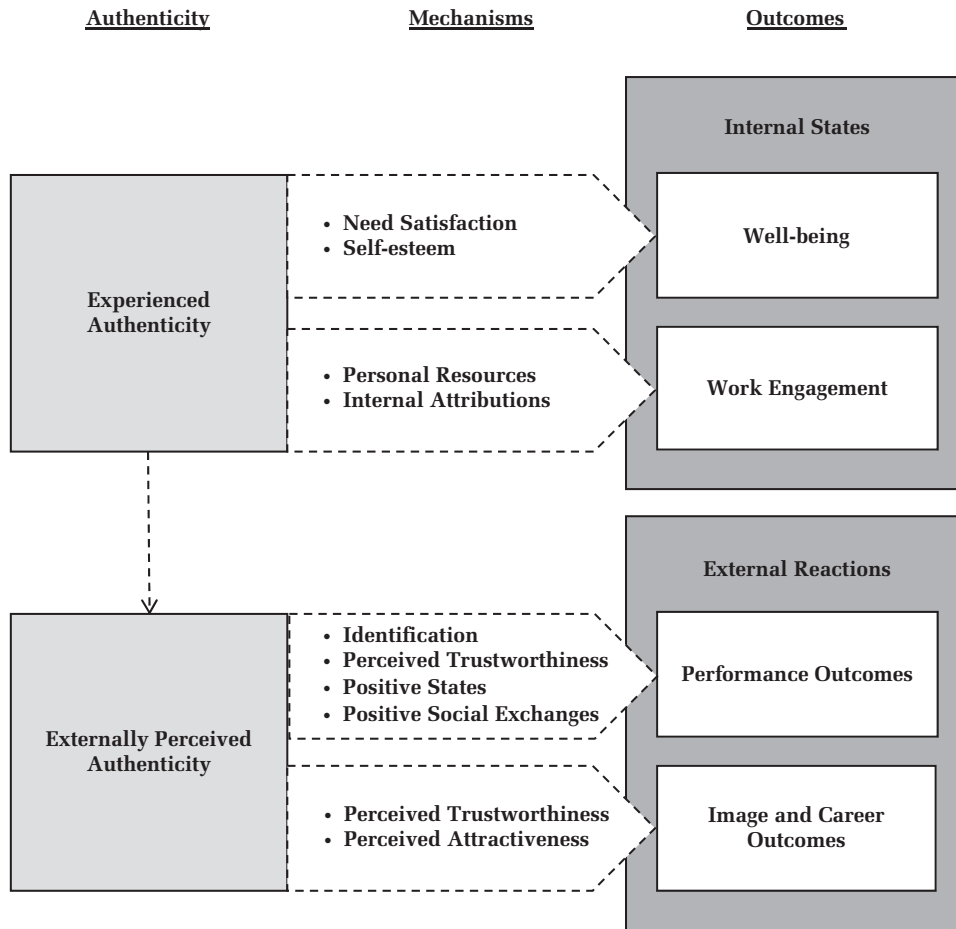
### Experienced Authenticity and Work Engagement

Work engagement is a stable and pervasive work-related state of mind that involves vigor (energy and

<sup>3</sup> A few studies, such as research linking authenticity to moral behavior (Sendjaya, Pekerti, Hartel, Hirst, & Butarbutar, 2016), represented exceptions. We did not review these in detail because of their low prevalence.



**FIGURE 1**  
**Outcomes of Primary Authenticity Constructs**



mental resilience at work), dedication, and absorption (being fully focused on and engrossed by the work) (Bakker, Schaufeli, Leiter, & Taris, 2008; Leroy et al., 2013; Reis et al., 2016). It has been conceptualized as similar to autonomous work motivation, which involves acting with a high level of volition and sense of choice (Gagné & Deci, 2005; Meyer & Gagné, 2008).

The literature suggests two primary ways in which authentic behavior may enhance work engagement. First, aligning one’s outward behavior with the true self may foster work engagement by enabling people to draw more fully on their reservoir of personal resources (e.g., energy and personal strengths) at work (Cable et al., 2013; Kahn, 1990, 1992). By contrast, inauthentic behavior substantially depletes energy resources because of the effort required to conceal the true self, resulting in reduced work engagement (Reis et al., 2016).

Second, authentic behavior may foster work engagement through people’s attributions for their own behavior. Research drawing on SDT suggests that when employees are authentic at work, they are more likely to attribute their behavior to internal drivers, and as a result, report higher levels of autonomous motivation (Leroy et al., 2013). Relatedly, Cable et al. (2013) argued that feeling authentic at work results in internal attributions for one’s behavior, which increases one’s commitment to a course of action and, thus, the likelihood that one will invest energy in one’s work.

Consistent with the view that being authentic contributes to work engagement, a growing number of studies have found experienced authenticity to be positively related to work engagement (Cable et al., 2013; Leroy et al., 2013; Metin et al., 2016; Reis et al., 2016; van den Bosch & Taris, 2014a, 2014b). For example, Cable et al.’s (2013) laboratory experiment

found that when initial socialization focused on personal identity—by helping new employees to recognize and apply their authentic best selves in their work roles—rather than organizational identity or a control condition, individuals working temporarily as part of a team were more engaged with their work. This relationship was mediated by authentic self-expression.

### Externally Perceived Authenticity and Performance Outcomes

Authentic leadership, which is operationalized as a manager's *externally perceived* authenticity as rated by followers (see Table 1), is positively associated with performance outcomes—leader effectiveness as indexed by desirable follower responses (Kaiser et al., 2008). Indeed, qualitative reviews of authentic leadership research (Gardner et al., 2011; Gill & Caza, 2018) report that authentic leadership is associated with a host of desirable follower responses, including satisfaction with the leader, loyalty to the leader, in-role work performance, extra-role work performance, organizational commitment, and intention to stay in the organization.

According to Gill and Caza (2018), four major mechanisms (identification with the leader, belief in the leader's trustworthiness, positive states, and positive social exchanges) have been theorized to explain why authentic leadership elicits desirable follower responses. First, authentic leadership is theorized to elicit desirable follower responses by inducing follower identification with the leader. Specifically, authentic leadership involves expressing one's personal values in a consistent and transparent manner, which increases the likelihood that followers will realize they have values in common with the leader, or become inspired to embrace the leader's values. Followers are then likely to embrace their followership of the leader as an important part of their own identity. Second, authentic leadership is theorized to elicit desirable follower responses by fostering followers' perception that the leader is trustworthy. When leaders engage in behavior that is consistent with their espoused values, this increases followers' willingness to be vulnerable to (i.e., trust in) the leader, resulting in a positive evaluation of the leader's trustworthiness. Third, authentic leaders' transparency in their relationships with followers meets followers' innate psychological needs such as relatedness, autonomy, or competence (e.g., Leroy et al., 2015), which generates positive states in followers such as positive emotions. Fourth, authentic

leaders' transparency (e.g., being open and truthful) with followers contributes to positive social exchanges: relationships based on long-term and mutual, rather than short-term and self-serving, obligations. Numerous studies have found empirical support for the operation of these mechanisms based on mediational analyses (e.g., Agote, Aramburu, & Lines, 2016; Clapp-Smith, Vogelgesang, & Avey, 2009; Guenter, Schreurs, van Emmerik, & Sun, 2017; Hirst, Walumbwa, Aryee, Butarbutar, & Chen, 2016; Hmieleski, Cole, & Baron, 2012; Hsieh & Wang, 2015; Hsiung, 2012; Liu, Liao, & Wei, 2015; Valsania, Moriano, & Molero, 2016; Wang & Hsieh, 2013; Wang, Sui, Luthans, Wang, & Wu, 2014; Wong & Giallonardo, 2013; Wong, Spence Laschinger, & Cummings, 2010; Woolley, Caza, & Levy, 2011).

### Externally Perceived Authenticity and Image and Career Outcomes

In two studies of externally perceived authenticity, Krumhuber, Manstead, Cosker, Marshall, Rosin, and Kappas (2007) experimentally manipulated the smiles of a counterpart (with whom participants would play games with financial stakes) in brief video clips such that smile duration suggested authenticity or inauthenticity. In Study 1, counterparts displaying an authentic smile were rated as more attractive, likable, trustworthy, and likely to be cooperative than counterparts displaying an inauthentic smile or neutral expression. In Study 2, participants were most likely to cooperate with the authentically smiling counterparts, an effect that was mediated by the counterpart's perceived trustworthiness. Furthermore, participants were most willing to be paired again with authentically smiling counterparts and to meet them outside of the research context.

Krumhuber, Manstead, Cosker, Marshall, and Rosin (2009) similarly manipulated the smile authenticity of job candidates in video clips of simulated job interviews viewed by participants. Manipulation checks confirmed that the smiles were perceived as more authentic in the authentic versus inauthentic condition. Participants rated interviewees displaying authentic smiles (compared with interviewees displaying inauthentic smiles or neutral expressions) as most suitable for the job, most likely to be short listed, and most likely to be selected for the job. These effects of externally perceived authenticity were theorized to be mediated by the candidate's perceived job-related attributes (e.g., trustworthiness) and perceived personal

attributes (e.g., attractiveness). Although mediation was not tested, authentically smiling candidates did receive the highest ratings in terms of their job-related and personal attributes.

Whereas most studies have linked externally perceived authenticity to desirable external reactions, research by Moore, Lee, Kim, and Cable (2017) suggested a more complex relationship between externally perceived authenticity and hiring decisions. The authors argued that self-verification striving—the drive to present oneself accurately—manifests itself through behavior, such that individuals who are high in self-verification striving tend to be perceived by others as authentic. In a mock interview study, job candidates who were high (versus low) in self-verification striving were perceived by the recruiter (an expert rater) as more authentic. They were also more likely to receive a job offer.

However, actual placement data from two samples suggested that the impact of externally perceived authenticity may vary depending on job candidates' objective qualifications. Among high-quality candidates, those who were higher in self-verification striving (and who were, therefore, presumed to have high externally perceived authenticity, increasing their perceived attractiveness) were more likely to receive job offers. Among low-quality candidates, those who were higher in self-verification striving were *less* likely to receive job offers. Externally perceived authenticity was theorized to operate in a nonlinear manner by reinforcing recruiters' initial positive assessments of high-quality candidates and by reinforcing recruiters' initial negative assessments of low-quality candidates.

### **Reflections on Research on Primary Authenticity Constructs**

Viewed as a whole, the research on primary authenticity constructs provided valuable initial answers to our foundational question, "Is authenticity as beneficial as popular assumptions would lead us to believe?" An accumulation of empirical studies pointed to consistent positive associations between experienced authenticity and the desirable internal states of well-being and work engagement, as well as positive effects of externally perceived authenticity on performance, image, and career outcomes. However, our review also surfaced important limitations of the existing research on primary authenticity constructs.

First, the vast majority of studies used a cross-sectional survey design, collecting and correlating

data on both authenticity and its theorized outcome from the same respondents, raising concerns about the direction of causality and same-source bias (Antonakis, Bendahan, Jacquart, & Lalive, 2010; Podsakoff, MacKenzie, & Podsakoff, 2012). For instance, scholars argued that experienced authenticity affects well-being, but it is possible that well-being affects authenticity instead (i.e., that happy individuals are more likely to express themselves authentically). Another possibility is that the correlation between authenticity and well-being does not reflect a causal relationship between them but rather the existence of a third variable that affects both authenticity and well-being. As an exception, Kifer et al. (2013) experimentally manipulated experienced authenticity, enabling clear conclusions about causality.

Second, very few studies provided an empirical test of mechanisms theorized to mediate the authenticity–outcome relationship (with the exception of authentic leadership studies that conducted mediational analyses, typically using cross-sectional survey data). As a result, it is possible that mechanisms other than those theorized are actually at play.

Third, there is an imbalance in the amount of empirical attention paid to different authenticity–outcome relationships. Significantly more research was conducted on well-being, work engagement, and performance outcomes than on image and career outcomes.

Fourth, studies tended to measure either experienced or externally perceived authenticity but not both. As a result, although theoretical work (e.g., Gardner, Fischer, & Hunt, 2009) implies that observers are (at least roughly) accurate perceivers of an actor's experienced authenticity, as indicated by the dashed arrow in Figure 1, little is known about the relationship between experienced and externally perceived authenticity (e.g., the extent to which individuals who feel authentic are also perceived by others as authentic). Relatedly, given the focus of experienced authenticity studies on internal outcomes and the focus of externally perceived authenticity studies on external outcomes, the effects of experienced authenticity on external outcomes and the effects of externally perceived authenticity on internal outcomes are not yet clear.

Fifth, authenticity outcomes were the overwhelming emphasis of primary construct studies, as reflected in our review thus far. Although scholars are often interested in both the outcomes and antecedents of focal constructs, we found only a few studies of antecedents of the primary constructs,

namely individual differences (Peus, Wesche, Streicher, Braun, & Frey, 2012; Sheldon et al., 1997) and work design (van den Bosch & Taris, 2014a). In particular, there was surprisingly little discussion of contextual antecedents in the primary constructs research. Context, defined as “situational opportunities and constraints that affect the occurrence and meaning of organizational behavior as well as functional relationships between variables,” plays a critically important but often under-recognized and underappreciated role in organizational life (Johns, 2006: 386). Authentic behavior may be sensitive to contextual influences. Work organizations, as social settings, may be characterized by conformity pressures (Cialdini & Trost, 1998) that can “shut down” authentic self-expressions. Thus, features of the organizational context could be antecedents that reduce the likelihood of authenticity. In the next section, we continue our discussion of context and authenticity.

### RESEARCH ON SECONDARY AUTHENTICITY CONSTRUCTS

As mentioned earlier, four secondary authenticity constructs—identity manifestation, emotional labor, facades of conformity, and hypocrisy—were not termed as “authentic” but align with our definition. Research on these constructs helps to address some of the limitations of research on the primary constructs. In particular, whereas context is largely un-discussed and unexamined in primary construct studies, consideration of contextual antecedents was the starting point for streams of secondary constructs research built on the assumption that a contextual factor can affect the likelihood of authentic self-expressions. Consider, for example, a retail clerk whose store expects employees to provide “service with a smile” but who begins the work day feeling sad, a doctor at a health maintenance organization who disagrees with the organization’s value of “efficiency” and seeing as many patients as possible each day, and a lawyer who is gay at a firm in which homosexuality is devalued. The secondary authenticity literatures describe how such contexts may discourage employees from expressing their authentic emotions, values, and devalued social identities, respectively.

In our review of research on the secondary constructs, we discuss each construct individually for ease of comprehension. Each secondary construct captures authenticity-related behavior in light of a *contextual standard*, which we define as a source or

trigger of social expectations regarding appropriate self-expressions (i.e., social identity valuation, emotional display rules, organizational values, or public value commitments). After defining each secondary construct, we describe how the relevant contextual standard is an antecedent that reduces the likelihood of authenticity, thereby acting as a “constraint around” authenticity. We then describe how the secondary construct affects the core outcome categories examined in research on the primary constructs, namely, well-being, work engagement, performance outcomes, and image and career outcomes. We note that some secondary constructs, contextual antecedents, and outcomes have received more extensive empirical attention than others. As a result, some topics are discussed at greater length.

### Identity Manifestation

Researchers have investigated identity management—a process of interpersonal sensemaking that aims to cultivate and sustain positive identities (Ellemers, 1993)—under a host of rubrics, including identity work, identity performance, social identity-based impression management, navigating the self, identity deployment, identity negotiation, and claiming and granting (Roberts & Creary, 2013). These studies have explored antecedents and outcomes of “strategic decisions individuals make regarding how they present their social identities to others” (Lyons, Wessel, Ghumman, Ryan, & Kim, 2014: 678) across an array of social identities.

A prevalent theme in identity management research is the management of devalued social identities—those that are stigmatized or less valued in the workplace (e.g., women; racial minorities; lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender individuals; and individuals with disabilities). Some devalued social identities are considered to be a stigma or blemish upon one’s character, largely because of societal norms regarding valued or desirable identity features (Goffman, 1963). Others are social identities that are considered irrelevant within a work context or are in conflict with one’s work role (Creary, Caza, & Roberts, 2015; Ramarajan & Reid, 2013). The perceived status inferiority resulting from these forms of devaluation can trigger identity management (Kessler & Mummendey, 2002; Tajfel & Turner, 1986).

Whereas a considerable amount of research has focused on cognitive strategies for coping with and/or repairing devaluation (Blanz, Mummendey, Mielke, & Klink, 1998), more recent studies emphasize

behavioral strategies. Specifically, individuals are often portrayed as having to make a strategic choice between identity manifestation or identity suppression. Identity manifestation refers to openly displaying or revealing one's devalued social identities (Madera, King, & Hebl, 2012), such as by disclosing a concealable or "invisible" stigma (e.g., sexuality, pregnancy, and illness), comporting oneself and dressing in ways that draw attention to a devalued social identity, engaging in discussions about the identity, or affirming and enhancing the positive distinctiveness of the identity at work. Although identity management scholars do not often use the term authenticity explicitly, identity manifestation is a form of experienced authenticity in which a person's outward behavior is aligned with his or her devalued social identities. By contrast, identity suppression refers to minimizing displays of or concealing one's devalued social identities (Madera et al., 2012) and can be viewed as a form of inauthenticity with respect to one's devalued social identities. Identity suppression can involve tactics such as choosing not to disclose an invisible identity, concealing possessions that draw attention to a devalued social identity, refraining from discussion of the identity, and avoiding engagement in negatively stereotypical behavior (Madera et al., 2012; Ramarajan & Reid, 2013; Shih, Young, & Bucher, 2013).

***Social identity valuation as a contextual antecedent of authenticity.*** Research suggests that members of devalued social identity groups deliberate about the situations in which they will engage in identity manifestation versus suppression. Individuals may feel pressured to suppress, rather than manifest, their devalued social identities in the workplace, to be perceived as fitting in with the mainstream culture and reduce the likelihood that they will personally experience negative stereotyping, prejudice, and discrimination (Clair, Beatty, & MacLean, 2005; Roberts, Settles, & Jellison, 2008). For example, to avoid employment discrimination (Ng, Schweitzer, & Lyons, 2012) or obtain more equitable treatment (Button, 2001), members of devalued social identity groups may attempt to "pass" as a member of a higher status group. Research on a national sample of 534 gay, lesbian, and bisexual employees revealed that past experience with sexual orientation discrimination related to increased fear of disclosing one's sexual orientation at work (Ragins, Singh, & Cornwell, 2007). Relatedly, some pregnant women described downplaying their pregnancy to reduce the likelihood of negative

stereotyping (Little, Major, Hinojosa, & Nelson, 2015). Experimental studies also found that when individuals anticipated facing prejudice in simulated job interviews, performance evaluations, or social encounters, they were more likely to suppress their devalued (e.g., female) social identity (Miller & Kaiser, 2001; Steckler & Rosenthal, 1985; von Baeyer, Sherk, & Zanna, 1981).

***Outcomes of identity manifestation.*** Several authenticity outcomes have been examined with regard to identity manifestation. Specifically, identity manifestation studies have investigated its effects on well-being as well as image and career outcomes, as described in the following paragraphs.

*Well-being.*

Identity manifestation is associated with favorable well-being outcomes. For example, disclosures of sexual orientation were linked to higher job satisfaction and lower job anxiety among gay and lesbian employees (Griffith & Hebl, 2002). The extent to which transgender employees had physically transitioned (thus outwardly manifesting their inner gender identity) was associated with greater experienced authenticity, which was related, in turn, to higher job satisfaction (Martinez, Sawyer, Thoroughgood, Ruggs, & Smith, 2017). Pregnancy disclosure strategies were also linked to well-being (Jones, 2013; Little, Hinojosa, & Lynch, 2017). With respect to race, African-American medical school students who engaged in identity manifestation in the form of "positive distinctiveness" strategies reported lower levels of depression (Roberts et al., 2008). Madera et al. (2012) reported a similar pattern among working adults whose behavioral manifestations of their group identity (race/ethnicity, gender, age, religion, sexual orientation, or disability) related to higher levels of job satisfaction. Conversely, Asian American journalists who avoided making references to (i.e., suppressed) their racial/ethnic identity at work reported lower life satisfaction (Roberts, Cha, & Kim, 2014).

To explain the relationship between identity manifestation and well-being, scholars have argued that identity manifestation helps to meet the basic need for psychological coherence, which is important for well-being, whereas identity suppression may generate feelings of identity conflict (Jones & King, 2014; King & Botsford, 2009; Martinez et al., 2017; Ragins et al., 2007; Roberts et al., 2008). Relatedly, scholars have argued that suppressing invisible devalued social identities (e.g., sexual orientation or HIV status) can create enormous psychological strain (Ragins et al., 2007). According to Jones and King (2014), "concealing triggers

tremendous anxiety and fear as a result of ‘living a life that can be collapsed at any moment’ (Goffman, 1963: 87)” (pp. 1475–1478).

*Image and career outcomes.*

Certain forms of identity manifestation are associated with negative image and career outcomes. For example, a field experiment found that when women wore the hijab (Muslim headscarf), they received fewer job call backs and greater negativity from potential employers and experienced lower expectations to receive job offers (Ghumman & Ryan, 2013). Relatedly, expressing stronger ethnic identification is associated with more negative evaluations of ethnic minorities (Kaiser & Pratt-Hyatt, 2009). For instance, black women with Afrocentric hair styles were rated less favorably in terms of dominance and professionalism (Opie & Phillips, 2015). Even an innocuous, subtle manifestation such as introducing oneself using one’s “real” name on a resume or in an email can lead to negative professional consequences, if the name signals nonwhite ethnic categorization (Bertrand & Mullainathan, 2004; King, Mendoza, Madera, Hebl, & Knight, 2006; Milkman, Akinola, & Chugh, 2012, 2015). Furthermore, nonwork role referencing (e.g., mentioning family roles, personal interests, and nationality) is often considered unprofessional in American hiring practices, and, therefore, related to negative evaluations of job candidates (Uhlmann, Heaphy, Ashford, Zhu, & Sanchez-Burks, 2013). As an exception, claiming a visible disability has been shown to result in higher evaluations in hiring situations (Lyons et al., 2018).

What explains these negative effects of identity manifestation on image and career outcomes? First, identity manifestation can invoke stereotypes that elicit bias and, ultimately, discriminatory behaviors with negative consequences for the actor (Eagly & Karau, 2002; Heilman, 2001, 2012). Second, a relational demography perspective (Tsui & O’Reilly, 1989) can also help explain the effect of identity manifestation on hiring decisions (Ghumman & Ryan, 2013). Recruiter–applicant demographic similarity promotes interpersonal attraction and the formation of social bonds, which then foster favorable job assessments and job offers (Goldberg, 2005; Heilman, Martell, & Simon, 1988; Rand & Wexley, 1975). When the recruiter is a dominant group member, the applicant’s manifestation of a devalued social identity reduces perceived recruiter–applicant demographic similarity, reducing the likelihood that the applicant will be evaluated positively and receive a job offer.

## Emotional Labor

Emotional labor research typically examines two authenticity-related behaviors: deep acting and surface acting (Kammeyer-Mueller et al., 2013). Deep and surface acting are distinctive emotion regulation strategies that employees use to comply with their job’s expectations of emotional display. As such, they comprise emotional labor, which is defined as “managing emotions and emotional expression to be consistent with... expectations about appropriate emotional expression” (Glomb & Tews, 2004: 2).

Deep acting involves consciously attempting to alter how one truly feels, such as by remembering past experiences of being happy or engaging in visualization to change one’s current mood (Allen, Diefendorff, & Ma, 2014; Grandey, 2000; Gross, 1998; Kammeyer-Mueller et al., 2013), to convey the expected emotions. For example, a hospital may require doctors to express empathy toward patients. A doctor who initially feels irritation rather than empathy toward a patient may engage in deep acting by recalling her own experiences as a patient, thereby eliciting, and enabling her to express, genuine feelings of empathy. In contrast to deep acting, which is considered to be a more authentic behavior, surface acting is a type of inauthentic behavior in which a person fakes emotions and/or suppresses felt emotions.

***Emotional display rules as a contextual antecedent of authenticity.*** It is common for organizations to have emotional display rules—requirements for appropriate emotional expressions within one’s work role (Rafaeli & Sutton, 1987; Wang, Seibert, & Boles, 2011) that seek to align employee behavior with norms of adequate customer service. Display rules may be communicated to employees in a variety of ways, such as organizational mission statements, explicit policies, repeated reminders from managers, signs posted in employee break rooms, or more tacit norms (Gabriel, Cheshin, Moran, & van Kleef, 2016; Kammeyer-Mueller et al., 2013). Across many, and especially service, occupations, display rules often emphasize the expression of positive emotions such as friendliness and enthusiasm, which are associated with customer satisfaction and ratings of service quality (Barger & Grandey, 2006; Pugh, 2001; Tsai & Huang, 2002). Consistent with the widespread emphasis in organizations on displaying only positive emotions, emotional labor research mainly focuses on deep and surface acting aimed at displaying positive emotions (Wang, Singh, Li, Mishra, Ambrose, & Biernat, 2017).

Display rules appear to pressure employees to engage in deep or surface acting, rather than expressing their genuine, unmodified emotions. Supporting this view, research has found an overall relationship between an individual's perception of the strength of display rules and the extent to which he or she engages in emotional labor. Survey research found that perceived display rule strength differentiated between individuals who engage in high emotion regulation (high levels of deep and/or surface acting) and individuals who engage in low levels of deep and surface acting (Gabriel, Daniels, Diefendorff, & Greguras, 2015). Similarly, a call center simulation in which participants interacted with three "customers" found that participants in the display rule condition engaged in more deep and surface acting than participants in the display autonomy condition, in which there were no explicit requirements for managing expressions (Goldberg & Grandey, 2007).

In addition, the *content* of display rules predicts emotional labor. Field studies found perceived display rules, and laboratory studies found manipulated display rules, to be associated with the desired emotional displays (Butler, Egloff, Wilhelm, Smith, Erickson, & Gross, 2003; Diefendorff & Richard, 2003; Gross & Levenson, 1997). Furthermore, positive and negative display rules differentially predict deep versus surface acting.

To elaborate, display rules typically involve two dimensions: positive display rules (the expectation that employees express positive emotions such as cheerfulness) and negative display rules (the expectation that employees suppress negative emotions such as anger) (Diefendorff & Richard, 2003; Glomb & Tews, 2004; Schaubroeck & Jones, 2000). Positive display rules are associated with deep acting. To explain this finding, scholars have theorized that "telling individuals what to express... clarifies expectations and results in more 'good faith'" or sincere attempts at managing their emotional displays (Diefendorff, Croyle, & Gosserand, 2005: 353) in which employees' primary aim is to "reach an emotional state where they are actually happy" (Kammeyer-Mueller et al., 2013: 57). Deep acting strategies meet this aim by generating genuinely felt positive emotions. Negative display rules are associated with surface acting. To explain this finding, scholars have theorized that "telling employees what not to express... results in individuals [merely] going through the motions" (Diefendorff et al., 2005: 353). When individuals are faced with negative display rules, their primary aim is to eliminate negative

emotional displays that they are already manifesting; surface acting attempts to meet this aim by suppressing one's felt negative emotions and concealing them with fake outward expressions (Kammeyer-Mueller et al., 2013).

**Outcomes of emotional labor.** Several authenticity outcomes have been examined with regard to emotional labor. Specifically, emotional labor studies have investigated the effects of surface and deep acting on well-being, work engagement, and performance outcomes. Scholars have also theorized how genuine emotional displays affect image and career outcomes.

*Well-being.*

Research has found conclusive evidence that surface acting has a strong negative relationship with well-being (Bono & Vey, 2005; Hülshager & Schewe, 2011; Kammeyer-Mueller et al., 2013; Mesmer-Magnus, DeChurch, & Wax, 2012; Wang et al., 2011). Resource depletion, social interactions, and felt emotions are mechanisms that have been proposed to explain this relationship (Hülshager & Schewe, 2011; Kammeyer-Mueller et al., 2013). First, surface acting is effortful and depletes the actor's personal (e.g., emotional, psychological, and physical) resources available for undertakings. In fact, surface acting is viewed as highly draining because it requires employees to "ceaselessly... monitor and control potential revelation of their true emotions" (Kammeyer-Mueller et al., 2013: 55). Employees may blame their work demands for this resource drain, leading to reduced job satisfaction (Grandey, Fisk, & Steiner, 2005). Second, customers are believed to perceive surface acting as inauthentic, causing them to react with anger or disappointment; these reactions comprise stressors that undermine the employee's well-being. Third, surface acting serves only to mask negative emotions that continue to be experienced by the employee beneath the surface.

By contrast, deep acting is not significantly associated with well-being. Scholars have drawn on the same mechanisms as aforementioned to explain this null result (Hülshager & Schewe, 2011; Kammeyer-Mueller et al., 2013). First, like surface acting, deep acting is believed to reduce the actor's personal resources. Second, customers are believed to perceive deep acting as authentic, resulting in pleasant customer interactions; such interactions foster rewarding social relationships that build the employee's personal resources (Côté, 2005). Third, deep acting truly transforms a negative emotion into a positive emotion, which can buffer the employee

from the stress associated with emotional job demands and contribute to “a positive mind-set, broaden attention and cognition, and thereby build up personal resources and coping mechanisms” (Hülshager & Schewe, 2011: 366). Taken all together, these three mechanisms suggest that although deep acting consumes personal resources, this depletion is offset or “canceled” by the resources it creates. As a result, deep acting has no net effect on well-being.

#### *Work engagement.*

Work engagement is also affected by the availability of personal resources, particularly emotional and energy resources (Kahn, 1992; Sonnentag, Mojza, Demerouti, & Bakker, 2012), which are depleted by emotional labor (Hülshager & Schewe, 2011). Initial research supports the view that emotional labor affects work engagement. Schreurs, Guenter, Hülshager, and van Emmerik (2014) conducted a diary study with service workers over 10 working days that examined the within-person associations between daily emotional labor and work engagement. Surface acting was negatively associated with end-of-day work engagement, consistent with the authors’ argument that “work engagement is nurtured by a variety of job resources [but] demanding aspects of the job, such as engaging in surface acting, thwart the development of work engagement” (Schreurs et al., 2014: 110). In addition, although the authors did not predict a main effect for deep acting, deep acting was positively related to end-of-day work engagement. Yagil (2012) also found deep acting to be positively related to work engagement, based on data collected from employee–customer dyads following service interactions, consistent with the argument that deep acting “contributes to [an] employee’s work engagement by fostering employees’ growth, positive emotions, sense of self-efficacy, and motivation” (p. 154).

#### *Performance outcomes (customer service performance).*

As described in the following paragraphs, many studies have investigated how employees’ deep and surface acting affect their performance outcomes, focusing on customer service performance as assessed through customer responses (e.g., customer satisfaction, service evaluations, and tipping). Nascent research has also begun to examine how employees’ externally perceived deep and surface acting (as perceived by customers) affect customer service performance.

Following their conscious efforts to modify their true feelings, employees who deep act often express authentic positive emotions, which are then

believed to “spread” automatically to customers, causing customers to feel positive emotions that are reflected in their positive assessments of employees’ customer service. Furthermore, an employee’s deep acting is believed to signal favorable information about the employee and the organization, contributing to positive customer responses (Grandey & Gabriel, 2015; van Kleef, 2009). Consistent with this theorizing, deep acting is strongly associated with customer satisfaction (Hülshager & Schewe, 2011). It is also positively related to customer service evaluations, customers’ behavioral intentions, and customer tips (Chi, Grandey, Diamond, & Krimmel, 2011; Grandey, Fisk, Mattila, Jansen, & Sideman, 2005; Hülshager, Lang, Schewe, & Zijlstra, 2015; Pugh, 2001).

Although scholars predicted that surface acting would negatively impact customer service performance, based on the presumption that customers perceive surface acting as inauthentic, causing customers to feel negative emotions reflected in negative service evaluations, meta-analyses did not find a significant association between surface acting and customer service performance (Hülshager & Schewe, 2011; Kammeyer-Mueller et al., 2013; Mesmer-Magnus et al., 2012). To explain this null result, Kammeyer-Mueller et al. (2013) suggested that customers may “not distinguish between a surface-acted display of emotions and a display of true emotions when evaluating performance... Surface acting may not be so hollow as to actually reduce performance” (p. 74).

Next, little research has directly examined how *externally perceived* deep and surface acting affect customer service performance. This lack of attention may be due to the common assumption that customers can accurately detect employee deep and surface acting (Hülshager & Schewe, 2011; Kammeyer-Mueller et al., 2013; Wang et al., 2017). As an exception, Groth, Henning-Thurau, and Walsh (2009) found that the positive impact of deep acting on customer service performance was enhanced when customers accurately perceived that the employee was deep acting, consistent with the argument that “if employees strive to display authentic emotions, but their efforts go unnoticed by the customers, the positive effects of deep acting should be weaker” (p. 962). Surface acting did not have a significant main effect on customer service performance, but surface acting was negatively associated with customer service performance when customers accurately perceived that the employee was surface acting, suggesting that “surface acting is not a problem as long as customers do not recognize it” (Groth et al., 2009: 969).



#### *Performance outcomes (negotiation performance).*

Emotional labor research has begun to examine how externally perceived authenticity affects negotiation performance. Two studies by Côté, Hideg, and van Kleef (2013) suggested that externally perceived inauthenticity leads to worse outcomes for the actor (i.e., more demands from the counterpart). In a face-to-face negotiation, a confederate who faked anger by surface acting increased the counterpart's demands, as compared with a neutral condition in which the confederate did not show any emotion. This effect was mediated by reduced trust in the confederate. The confederate was also perceived as significantly less authentic in the surface acting versus neutral condition. These findings were replicated in a video-mediated negotiation. In addition, the video-mediated negotiation found that deep acting anger decreased the counterpart's demands, relative to showing no emotion. This effect was mediated by increased perceptions of toughness. The confederate was also perceived as significantly less authentic in the surface acting versus deep acting and neutral conditions. Similarly, Tng and Au (2014) found that counterparts who perceived a negotiator's expressed anger as authentic (versus inauthentic) made larger concessions.

#### *Image and career outcomes.*

Expressing genuine, unmodified emotions that are inconsistent with display rules (emotional deviance) is theorized to undermine career outcomes. For example, flight attendants who express their true feelings by being rude rather than friendly are believed to face negative career outcomes such as being fired (Rafaeli & Sutton, 1987). However, the consequences of emotional deviance have received little empirical attention (Tschan, Rochat, & Zapf, 2005).

### **Facades of Conformity**

Employees whose personal values—beliefs about desirable end-states or modes of behavior (Rokeach, 1980)—conflict with those of their organization may choose to create facades of conformity, defined as “false representations created by employees to appear as if they embrace organizational values” (Hewlin, 2003: 634). Creating facades of conformity is a type of inauthentic behavior that involves suppressing one's personal values and feigning commitment to organizational values in one's daily work interactions. Individuals may create facades through a variety of displays that signal agreement with organizational values, such as head-nodding, attire, and verbal or written statements (Hewlin, 2003, 2009).

***Organizational values as a contextual antecedent of authenticity.*** Many organizations communicate their values to employees through means that range from explicit value statements to informal practices. Organizational values tend to have a powerful impact on employees' perceptions of appropriate behavior at work (Hewlin, 2009; Kunda, 1992; Ray, 1986; Willmott, 1993), and employees may commonly believe that conforming to organizational values is critical to their “survival and success” (Hewlin, 2003: 633). To gain acceptance from and fit in with colleagues, on whom employees depend for work opportunities and promotions, individuals whose personal values conflict with those of the organization may feel pressured to create facades of conformity (Hewlin, 2003, 2009; Hewlin, Dumas, & Burnett, 2017; Hewlin, Kim, & Song, 2016). Consistent with this view, research has found person–organization value incongruence to be positively related to facade creation (Hewlin et al., 2017).

***Outcomes of facades of conformity.*** Two authenticity outcomes have been investigated with regard to facades of conformity. Specifically, studies have investigated the effects of creating facades of conformity on well-being and work engagement. Scholars have also theorized that facade creation affects image and career outcomes.

#### *Well-being.*

Survey studies have found creating facades of conformity to be associated with indicators of low well-being such as stress and emotional exhaustion (Hewlin, 2009; Phillips, Williams, & Kirkman, 2016). These findings have been attributed to facade creation frustrating the need for psychological coherence. According to Hewlin (2003), “people experience psychological and emotional distress when their public behaviors are inconsistent with their attitudes or views of self... When people experience a discrepancy between who they are and who they perceive they ought to be, they experience heated emotions, such as fear, anxiety, and threat” (p. 638).

#### *Work engagement.*

As a type of inauthentic self-presentation, creating facades of conformity is believed to require considerable personal (e.g., cognitive and self-regulatory) resources, such that employees are left with fewer personal resources needed to approach their work with focus, energy, and resilience. Consistent with this argument, a two-wave study of employed adults found that creating facades of conformity was negatively associated with work engagement (Hewlin et al., 2017).

### *Image and career outcomes.*

Writings on facades of conformity describe employees' concerns that if they openly express authentic personal values that deviate from organizational values, they will experience negative image and career outcomes such as being perceived as "radical or deviant" (Hewlin, 2003: 633) and being passed over for promotions (Hewlin et al., 2016). However, scholars have not yet systematically investigated these theorized effects.

### **Hypocrisy**

Individuals may elect to explicitly communicate their personal values (e.g., achievement, adventure, beauty, community, creativity, justice, pleasure, quality, respect, and teamwork) to other people. To illustrate, a person who cares about protecting the natural environment may reveal this value through various media (e.g., a face-to-face encounter, document, or speech). After this revelation, if the person behaves in a way that is perceived as inconsistent with the espoused value, the value-inconsistent behavior may be attributed to hypocrisy—the actor's lack of genuine commitment to his or her espoused values (Cha & Edmondson, 2006). Hypocrisy is a form of inauthenticity in which an individual's genuine personal values are not aligned with his or her espoused values.

**Public value commitments as a contextual antecedent of authenticity.** By verbalizing their personal values to others, people create constraints around their subsequent ability to behave authentically. Specifically, when people publicly express commitment to a value, this creates the expectation that their future behavior will be aligned with that value. Society has long placed a strong value on demonstrating consistency, and people tend to dislike inconsistency between words and deeds (Aronson, 2004; Cialdini, 2001; Suh, 2002; Tedeschi, Schlenker, & Bonoma, 1971). Hypocrisy is considered to be especially abhorrent because espousing higher values transmits the "false signal" that the actor is a moral person (Jordan, Sommers, Bloom, & Rand, 2017). Given the widespread disgust around hypocrisy, people may hesitate to take actions that connote that they are hypocritical. Instead, they may feel pressured to take actions that will be perceived as embodying their public value commitments, but that are not authentic in the sense of being aligned with their genuine preferences *in the current situation*. For example, changes in the competitive or regulatory environment may make it suboptimal for managers to implement their values in the ways they

genuinely intended at an earlier time (Brunsson, 1989; Simons, 2002). Furthermore, managers often face the challenge of juggling multiple competing values (Cha & Edmondson, 2006; Quinn & Rohrbaugh, 1981).

At the same time, public value commitments can also be viewed as *enabling* authenticity in situations where individuals are torn between their authentic immediate impulses (e.g., to take a long shower) and their enduring prosocial values (e.g., their belief in water conservation). In such situations, scholars have argued that public value commitments can help individuals to override their immediate impulses in favor of their more lasting values (Stone & Focella, 2011). As such, public value commitments may be seen as having paradoxical (simultaneously constraining and enabling) effects on authenticity.

**Outcomes of hypocrisy.** Several authenticity outcomes have been examined with regard to hypocrisy. Specifically, studies have explored the effect of experienced hypocrisy on well-being and the effects of externally perceived hypocrisy on performance outcomes as well as image and career outcomes.

#### *Well-being.*

Experimental research on induced hypocrisy suggests that when individuals publicly communicate their personal values (e.g., their belief in the importance of safe sex or treating people equally regardless of their race), and then recall past instances in which they have transgressed against those values, their awareness of their own hypocrisy causes them to experience cognitive dissonance, an aversive psychological state involving feelings of discomfort. To reduce these negative emotions caused by experienced hypocrisy, individuals often alter their subsequent behavior to align more closely with their public value commitments (e.g., Aronson, Fried, & Stone, 1991; Dickerson, Thibodeau, Aronson, & Miller, 1992; Son Hing, Li, & Zanna, 2002; Stone, Aronson, Crain, Winslow, & Fried, 1994).

#### *Performance outcomes (follower responses).*

When a leader's behavior is perceived as inconsistent with his or her espoused values and attributed by followers to underlying hypocrisy, this can result in negative follower responses. Cha and Edmondson's (2006) longitudinal qualitative study of an advertising agency found that employees who were initially inspired by the CEO's public value commitments later became disenchanted. When the CEO took actions that he or she experienced as authentic but that employees perceived as inconsistent with his public value commitments and attributed to

hypocrisy, employees experienced disappointment, anger, and loss of trust in the CEO.

#### *Image and career outcomes.*

Recent experimental studies suggest that when people become employees of an organization that promotes ethical (e.g., anti-drug or anti-harassment) values, they are implicitly perceived as promoting those values, such that people may “receive greater condemnation for the same transgression when it contradicts an ethical value that their organization promotes” (Effron, Lucas, & O’Connor, 2015: 148). Supporting this “hypocrisy-by-association” effect, Effron et al. (2015) found that employees who transgressed a value promoted by their organization were rated as “less moral, less competent, deserving of harsher punishment, meriting lower starting salaries, and they were less likely to be recommended for a job” (p. 156).

### **Reflections Comparing Research on Primary and Secondary Authenticity Constructs**

We now turn to discussing five general themes or patterns that emerged from our comparison of research across primary and secondary authenticity constructs.

**Points of view on authenticity.** Our review found that the research on primary versus secondary constructs provided distinct yet complementary points of view on authenticity, with primary constructs research showing the value of authenticity and secondary constructs research showing that the context can pressure people to behave inauthentically. Primary constructs research generally found authenticity to be associated with desirable internal states and external reactions. As a result, many of these studies painted a glowing portrait of authenticity. Their enthusiastic tone may also reflect the roots of many primary constructs (e.g., authentic functioning, authentic personality, and authentic leadership) in counseling psychology, a field in which influential scholars such as Rogers (1963) promoted the idea that authenticity is an integral part of health and reaching one’s full potential (Gardner et al., 2011; Kernis & Goldman, 2006; Wood et al., 2008). By contrast, secondary constructs research focused on the significant pressures that people face to be inauthentic, implying skepticism regarding the likelihood of, and others’ receptivity toward, individual authenticity in work settings and conveying a more apprehensive or pessimistic tone. In sum, these two sets of literatures differed in their empirical angle and tenor with respect to authenticity, in the same

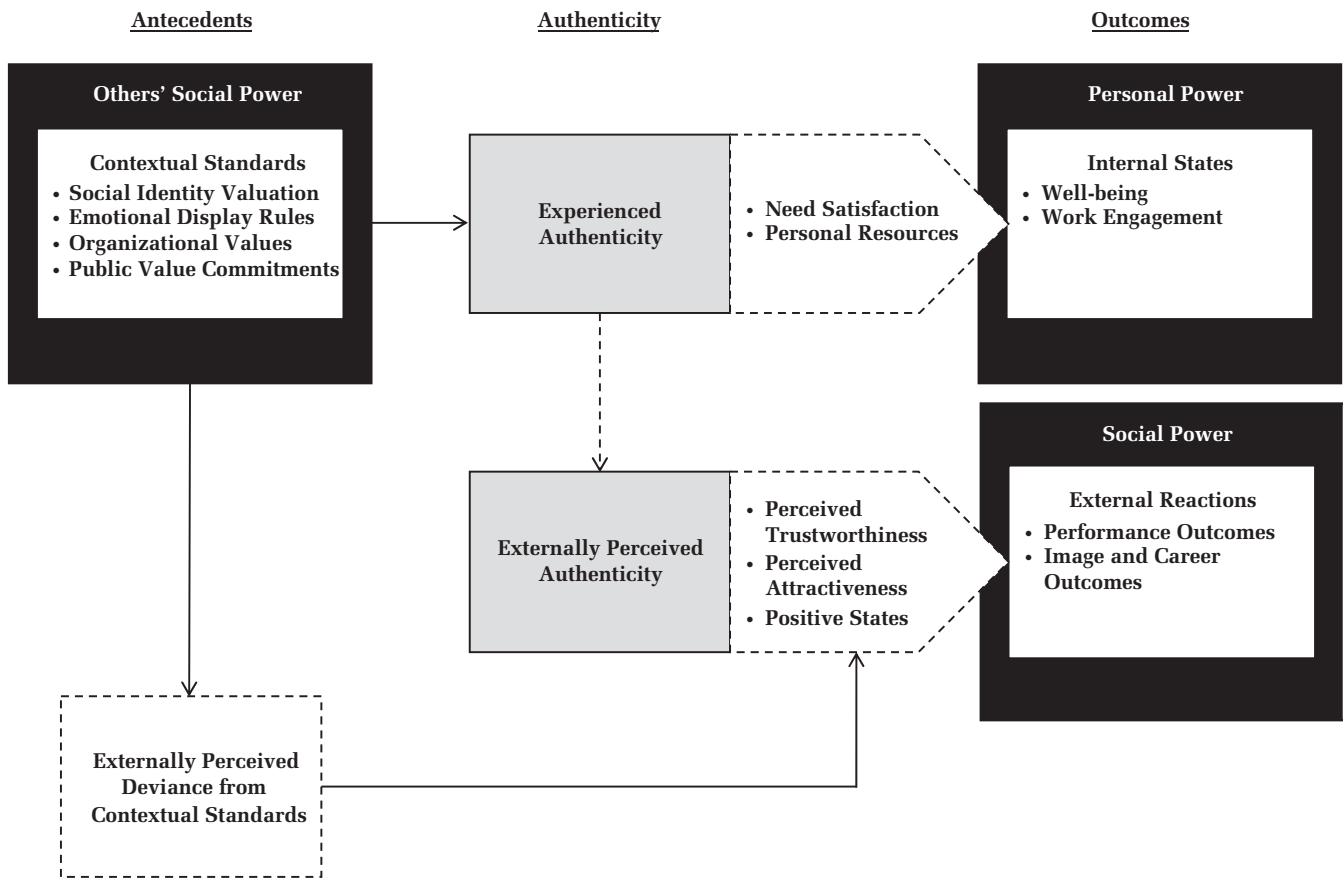
way that films about climbing a mountain could emphasize the glorious view from its summit or the arduous journey to the top. Our consideration of both points of view—one emphasizing the promise of authenticity to make individuals happy, energized, and influential, and the other emphasizing the difficulty of authenticity in organizations—contributed to further insights, which we detail next, regarding contingencies and tensions related to authenticity.

**Contextual standards as an authenticity–outcome contingency.** Our review surfaced another important contrast: whereas authenticity in primary constructs research was generally associated with positive external reactions, authenticity in secondary constructs research was associated with negative external reactions<sup>4</sup> under certain conditions. As depicted in Figure 2, an integration of these findings suggests an important moderator or contingency effect: that contextual standards moderate the effect of externally perceived authenticity on external reactions.

We suggest that this moderation effect is mediated by externally perceived deviance. When a contextual standard is more salient, employee self-expressions are more vulnerable to being perceived as deviant by others. For instance, at restaurants that strongly emphasize the display rule “service with a smile,” waiters who express anger are more likely to be perceived as deviant by customers. Such externally perceived deviance then moderates the effect of externally perceived authenticity on observer reactions, such that an actor’s (externally perceived) authentic self-expressions elicit positive reactions when they comply with contextual standards but elicit negative reactions when they deviate from the standards. To illustrate, job candidates with objectively high qualifications who are perceived as more authentic during job interviews may be more likely to receive job offers, but only if their self-expressions are perceived as complying with organizational standards. Candidates who authentically express a devalued social identity (e.g., being gay when interviewing for a company in which homosexuality is devalued) are more likely to be

<sup>4</sup> For the sake of summarizing the research precisely, we note that the primary construct studies typically measured external reactions to *externally perceived* authenticity. The secondary construct studies typically measured external reactions to *experienced* authenticity, but these relationships were presumably mediated by externally perceived authenticity, given that other people cannot directly perceive an actor’s experienced authenticity (Wang et al., 2017).

**FIGURE 2**  
**Organizing Framework of Research on Individual Authenticity in Work Settings**



perceived as deviant by recruiters and less likely to receive a job offer than their counterparts who express only valued social identities.

**Tensions between authenticity outcomes.** Whereas our review suggested that contextual standards moderate the effect of authenticity on external outcomes, no research suggested that contextual standards moderate the relationship between authenticity and internal outcomes. Instead, studies across primary and secondary constructs reliably found experienced authenticity to be positively associated with the internal states of well-being and work engagement. As a result, individuals whose authentic selves (e.g., emotions, values, or social identities) are deviant or devalued with respect to contextual standards face tensions or tradeoffs between internal and external outcomes, in that expressing themselves authentically is likely to lead to positive internal states but negative reactions from others. Conversely, suppressing a deviant self may lead to positive reactions from others

but negative internal states. Given these tensions, salient contextual standards can force individuals to make difficult strategic choices around authenticity. For example, employees may choose not to disclose or discuss their devalued social identity to project a positive professional image while sacrificing the well-being that is associated with bringing one's "whole self" to work.

**Methods and mechanisms.** Relative to primary construct studies, which tended to rely on cross-sectional, single-source survey data, secondary construct studies evidenced greater use of research designs that reduced concerns about direction of causality and same-source bias. For instance, numerous studies on identity manifestation, emotional labor, and hypocrisy used experimental methods. Furthermore, emotional labor field studies routinely collected data from multiple sources (e.g., employees and customers). Finally, some secondary construct field studies (e.g., Hewlin et al., 2017; Schreurs et al., 2014) collected questionnaire data at

multiple times, although longitudinal designs remained rare overall.

Primary and secondary construct studies alike paid only limited attention to testing mechanisms theorized to explain authenticity–outcome relationships (e.g., Grandey & Gabriel, 2015). Among these mechanisms, we found that five were invoked in research on both primary and secondary constructs, implying that they play a central role in driving the effects of authenticity. Need satisfaction and personal resources were proposed to explain the impact of experienced authenticity on internal outcomes; perceived trustworthiness or trust, perceived attractiveness or attraction, and positive states were proposed to explain the impact of externally perceived authenticity on external outcomes. Other mechanisms (e.g., perceived toughness, which mediated the effect of externally perceived authenticity on reactions from negotiation counterparts in emotional labor research) were less commonly invoked across authenticity constructs. Authenticity-related literatures that did not invoke these less prominent mechanisms might benefit from considering their potential applicability. For example, the authentic leadership literature might consider whether perceived toughness could help explain the effect of externally perceived leader authenticity on outcomes.

**Limited research on relationship between experienced and externally perceived authenticity.** As with primary construct studies, few secondary construct studies examined the relationship between experienced and externally perceived authenticity. As exceptions, two emotional labor studies found that experienced and externally perceived authenticity were only weakly to moderately correlated (Drach-Zahavy, Yagil, & Cohen, 2017; Groth et al., 2009), indicating that observers do not always accurately perceive an actor's experienced authenticity.

## ORGANIZING FRAMEWORK

As we reviewed the vast body of authenticity-related research across 10 different authenticity constructs and broke through siloes that have long separated different research streams, we realized that the notion of power provides a generative way to tie together and integrate what researchers have learned about workplace authenticity. We, therefore, incorporate power concepts in our organizing framework (shown in Figure 2 and described next) to help synthesize our most significant findings and insights.

Power, defined as control over valued resources (Anderson, John, & Keltner, 2012), is critically important in organizations, playing a central role in enabling or inhibiting the achievement of goals (Bunderson & Reagans, 2011). Although scholars do not typically use the term power in their discussions of authenticity, power was implied in research on the secondary constructs, in which contextual standards appeared to stem from powerholders. For example, managers typically create and convey emotional display rules in organizations (Pugh, Diefendorff, & Moran, 2013). Furthermore, the notion of building power provided a way to bridge research on outcomes of experienced authenticity with research on outcomes of externally perceived authenticity.

### Authenticity as a Power Source

We argue that the outcomes of authenticity can be thought of as forms of power. Thus, one principal insight from the power lens is that authenticity can serve as a power source for individuals, increasing their personal and social power.

**Experienced Authenticity as a Source of Personal Power.** Experienced authenticity was positively associated with well-being and work engagement in research on both primary and secondary constructs. Personal power, also known as “power to,” is defined as the ability to take effective action for oneself (Mondillon, Niedenthal, Brauer, Rohmann, Dalle, & Uchida, 2005; Overbeck & Park, 2001). Both well-being and work engagement can be considered to be sources of personal power. Well-being can aid people greatly in navigating their lives and careers effectively. It is strongly related to mental and physical health, social connectedness, productivity, and other indicators of effective functioning (Centers for Disease Control, 2017). Work engagement enhances a person's ability to take effective action in terms of job performance. As a form of motivation (Gagné & Deci, 2005; Meyer & Gagné, 2008), work engagement contributes significantly to job performance (Bakker & Bal, 2010; Kim, Kolb, & Kim, 2013). As shown in Figure 2, both need satisfaction and personal resources may play a key role in mediating the positive effect of experienced authenticity on personal power.

**Externally Perceived Authenticity as a Source of Social Power.** Primary constructs research generally found externally perceived authenticity to be positively associated with desirable external

reactions such as job offers from recruiters. These findings indicate that when an actor is perceived as authentic by an observer, this increases the actor's influence—defined as the ability to produce desired thoughts, feelings, or behavior in others (French & Raven, 1959; Rashotte, 2007)—over the observer. This ability to influence other people is also known as social power or “power over” (Lammers, Stoker, & Stapel, 2009; Van Dijke & Poppe, 2006). As shown in Figure 2, the actor's perceived trustworthiness, the actor's perceived attractiveness, and positive observer states (such as positive emotions felt by the observer) may play a key role in mediating the positive effect of externally perceived authenticity on social power.

The power lens thus reveals that experienced and externally perceived authenticity are related in that both forms of authenticity build power for individuals. However, each builds a distinct type of power (i.e., personal versus social) through distinct mechanisms, allowing for the possibility that individuals can feel authentic (resulting in personal power gains) while simultaneously being perceived as inauthentic by others (resulting in social power losses) or vice versa.

### Others' Power as Constraints Around Authenticity

A second principal insight is that the relationship between authenticity and power goes both ways, with power affecting an actor's ability or willingness to be authentic at work. Contextual standards (e.g., social identity valuation, emotional display rules, organizational values, and public value commitments) exert strong conformity pressures on individuals whose authentic selves differ from those standards. As such, other people's social power—the force of social expectations regarding appropriate self-expressions, as embodied in contextual standards—can significantly reduce an actor's personal power to express him or herself authentically. This view is consistent with scholarship on power, which notes that an individual's personal power can be constrained by other people's social power (Brehm, 1993; Dépret & Fiske, 1993; Fiske, Morling, & Stevens, 1996; Van Dijke & Poppe, 2006).

Conversely, individuals whose authentic selves *do* conform to contextual standards may have greater personal power to express themselves authentically at work. For example, white men are members of the dominant and most socially valued group in the United States and many other societies (Spanierman, Todd, & Anderson, 2009; Wittenberg-Cox, 2016).

Although little research has explicitly compared the latitude for authenticity granted to white men relative to other identity groups, being white and being male are perceived as prototypical of leaders in the business world (Eagly, Beall, & Sternberg, 2005; Rosette, Leonardelli, & Phillips, 2008). Relative to nonprototypical individuals, prototypical individuals are granted greater influence and the ability to engage, without losing other people's trust and endorsement, in a broader range of behaviors (Giessner, van Knippenberg, & Sleebos, 2009; Platow & van Knippenberg, 2001). As a result, white men may have greater latitude to express themselves authentically in organizations. Consistent with this perspective, our review found that individuals with devalued social identities have little latitude to express those identities authentically, in that they must pay a high cost (e.g., experience greater discrimination) as a result of doing so. Thus, authenticity in the workplace may be a privilege that some enjoy more than others. When individuals with greater pre-existing power (e.g., dominant group members) exercise the privilege of authenticity, they are likely to accrue benefits—from well-being to job offers to committed followers—such that authenticity can reinforce the existing power structure. In other words, power may beget authenticity, which begets further power in turn.

### Others' Power as a Source of Tensions between Authenticity Outcomes

A third principal insight from the power lens is that contextual standards, embodying other people's social power, can alter some of the outcomes of authenticity. Namely, individuals who choose to be authentic in opposition to contextual standards face the risk of negative social repercussions (i.e., reduced social power). As a result, when contextual standards are salient, individuals whose authentic selves deviate from the standards face tough power tradeoffs around authenticity (e.g., experienced authenticity increasing personal power at the cost of social power, or experienced inauthenticity increasing social power at the cost of personal power). This moderating effect of contextual standards on authenticity–outcome relationships reveals that although authenticity can produce an array of benefits for individuals, it is not equally beneficial for all individuals.

The above dual (“constraining” or antecedent and moderator) effects of contextual standards are likely to be connected; precisely *because* contextual

standards can cause authenticity to result in an undesirable outcome (reduced social power), they lower the likelihood of authenticity. We believe that when individuals are or become aware, based on their own or others' experience, that authenticity is likely to reduce their social power, they are less likely to engage in authentic behavior. This pattern would reflect rational decision-making consistent with expectancy theory. According to expectancy theory, individuals who expect a given behavior to lead to negative outcomes are less likely to engage in that behavior; ample evidence supports this view (Donovan, 2001; Porter & Lawler, 1968; Vroom, 1964).

Overall, by linking research findings about authenticity to the building of personal and social power, our framework illuminates the impact of authenticity on our control over vital internal and external resources and thus our ability to achieve goals. In doing so, the power lens on authenticity unveils intimate connections between "being your true self" at work and being able to "get things done." Given that organizations exist to enable the coordinated achievement of goals, our framework shows how authentic individual behavior is a fundamental issue, rather than merely a philosophical concern, for work organizations.

### FUTURE RESEARCH DIRECTIONS

Building on our integrated review, we identified six fertile arenas for the "next generation" of studies on authenticity in organizations.

#### A Multifaceted View of Authenticity in Organizations

Our review found that many studies have focused on a single facet of authenticity (experienced authenticity outcomes, externally perceived authenticity outcomes, or the impact of context on authenticity) without addressing others, which could lead to a somewhat myopic or even dangerously incomplete understanding of authenticity. For instance, many publications celebrate the benefits of experienced authenticity, implying that people should prioritize "just being themselves," without acknowledging that the positive impact of experienced authenticity can be undermined by externally perceived deviance or low externally perceived authenticity. Conversely, authentic leadership studies have demonstrated the importance of externally perceived authenticity, but little research

has considered the leader's own well-being when displaying authentic leadership (Gardner, Avolio, Luthans, May, & Walumbwa, 2005). Leaders may feel pressured to divulge personal details in an effort to appear authentic to others, even when such disclosures feel personally unnatural and inauthentic (Fleming & Sturdy, 2011; Ibarra, 2015). Many individuals may face such tensions (e.g., between experienced authenticity and contextual standards, experienced and externally perceived authenticity, and/or experienced authenticity in the short versus long term). We, therefore, urge scholars to explore these tensions and to be mindful of all three authenticity facets, embracing a more comprehensive view.

#### Authenticity and Power

Rich opportunities exist to test and further develop the power framework of authenticity. For example, few studies have considered how multiple contextual standards, embodying others' social power, affect authenticity in organizations. As an exception, newly emerging research has begun to investigate how devalued social identities interact with emotional display rules to affect emotional labor (Grandey, Houston, & Avery, 2019). Another question is whether and/or how authenticity can be harnessed as a power source to loosen existing constraints around authenticity. It may be possible for individuals to leverage, or multiple individuals to pool, their authenticity-based power to blaze pathways for new modes of self-expression. For example, by expressing personal values that run counter to organizational norms in "tempered" ways, some individuals have influenced their organizations to be more supportive of such self-expressions (Meyerson, 2001). It is also theoretically and practically important to understand how authenticity-based power can be amassed or lost over time. If repeated instances of experienced or externally perceived authentic behavior contribute to the building of personal and social power, does a single instance of inauthenticity compromise one's power base? Alternatively, is an accumulation of inauthentic behaviors required, such that a tipping point can be identified?

#### The Dark Side of Authenticity

Another promising research direction is the dark side of authenticity—ways in which the positive effects of authenticity may be moderated by actor

characteristics or expressive content that could be viewed negatively, such as “dark” personality traits, offensive beliefs, or negative emotions. To illustrate, individuals who are perceived as authentic, but who are highly narcissistic, may be less influential than their less narcissistic counterparts (Buckman, 2014). Similarly, self-expressions may be experienced and perceived as authentic, and yet reduce one’s influence if they irritate, anger, or overwhelm others. In recent years, individuals have been fired or suspended from their work roles after expressing themselves authentically, through social media, in ways that offended their organizations (Hauser, 2017; Ronson, 2015). These types of moderating relationships, however, have yet to be explored extensively by authenticity scholars.

### **Creative Individual Approaches to Authenticity**

Researchers have often measured authenticity using Likert-type survey measures capturing a person’s overall approach to authenticity (the extent to which one generally expresses one’s true self or an aspect of the true self). Given that a person’s overall approach can result in negative or mixed outcomes, we need a deeper understanding of more nuanced or creative approaches that may enable individuals to be authentic, even in the face of contextual constraints. For example, positive distinctiveness (Roberts et al., 2008) and social identity-based humor (Roberts et al., 2014) are nuanced forms of identity manifestation that attempt to make other people think more positively about one’s identity group. As another example, foreign employees can respond creatively to their new culture’s behavioral demands, which can feel unnatural and inauthentic, by personalizing—incorporating authentic behaviors from their native culture into the new behavior (Molinsky, 2013). Molinsky described a Russian woman who struggled with “having to proactively ask her boss for assignments, behavior that conflicted with culturally ingrained values about politeness and deference when communicating with someone of greater authority and experience” (p. 691). To reduce her discomfort, she personalized by prefacing discussions about potential assignments with small talk consistent with her native culture, and thus experienced the new behavior as significantly more natural and authentic.

### **Authenticity Over Time**

Authenticity dynamics over time also represent an exciting research opportunity. Our understanding has

been limited by methodological choices; most authenticity studies to date have used cross-sectional, rather than longitudinal or process-focused, research designs. However, several studies provide strong hints that time matters. For example, a person’s level of authenticity can change over time and even fluctuate over very short periods. Emotional labor studies have found that surface and deep acting can vary substantially over the course of a day or even a 90-minute period (Gabriel & Diefendorff, 2015; Judge, Woolf, & Hurst, 2009; Scott & Barnes, 2011; Totterdell & Holman, 2003). Much remains to be learned about the causes and consequences of fluctuations in a person’s authenticity over time. Furthermore, the outcomes of authenticity can also vary as a function of time. Identity management research suggests that beneficial outcomes may be more likely when individuals disclose certain devalued social identities, such as pregnancy or a concealable disability, sooner rather than later (Hebl & Skorinko, 2005; King & Botsford, 2009; Morgan, Walker, Hebl, & King, 2013). Finally, time may be at the heart of certain authenticity struggles. Individuals may often feel conflicted between being authentic in the short term (expressing their immediate impulses) versus the long term (staying true to their more enduring values) (Bazerman, Tenbrunsel, & Wade-Benzoni, 1998; Stone & Focella, 2011). It is, thus, imperative that we learn more about changes, outcomes, and tensions associated with authenticity over time.

### **Authenticity in Different Cultures**

More research is needed on authenticity-related dynamics across societal cultures. Most studies have been conducted in North American settings, raising questions of generalizability (Grandey & Gabriel, 2015; Hewlin, 2009). As an exception, Suh (2002) found that individuals who are perceived as behaviorally consistent across different situations, implying authenticity, received more positive social evaluations from American than Korean participants, suggesting that authenticity may be valued more highly in individualistic versus collectivistic cultures. Relatedly, Hewlin (2009) found that collectivism attenuated the relationship between facades of conformity and emotional exhaustion among individuals working in the United States. Hewlin argued that because creating facades accommodates the collective, it may impose less hardship on (e.g., cause less emotional exhaustion in) collectivists than individualists.



## CLOSING THOUGHTS

Our review of research on individual authenticity in work settings both reinforces and tempers the enthusiasm in contemporary discussions of authenticity in the popular and business press. Authenticity has the potential to generate impressive benefits for individuals in terms of their personal and social power. As such, authenticity is more than just a virtue that individuals should strive to embody for its own sake. However, although authenticity can build power for individuals, it is also highly constrained by others' social power in an organizational context. Furthermore, authenticity is not equally beneficial for all individuals. Scholars and leaders need to recognize the contextual constraints around authenticity that some organization members face on a daily basis—as well as the serious power tradeoffs these individuals confront when they are encouraged to “just be themselves.” We hope future researchers and practitioners will draw on this power lens to develop more nuanced insights about authenticity in organizations. Each of us would be wise to consider the significant power implications of our own and others' authenticity in the workplace.

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## APPENDIX

TABLE A1  
Measures of Primary and Secondary Authenticity Constructs

Construct and Source	Instructions and Scale Items
<i>Primary Authenticity Constructs</i>	
Authentic functioning: Kernis and Goldman (2006)	<p><i>Respondents are asked to indicate their agreement with the below statements and instructed, "The following measure has a series of statements that involve people's perceptions about themselves. There are not right or wrong responses, so please answer honestly."</i></p> <p>I am often confused about my feelings. (A)*</p> <p>I frequently pretend to enjoy something when in actuality I really don't. (B)</p> <p>For better or for worse I am aware of who I truly am. (A)</p> <p>I understand why I believe the things I do about myself. (A)</p> <p>I want people with whom I am close to understand my strengths. (RO)</p> <p>I actively try to understand which of my self-aspects fit together to form my core- or true-self. (A)</p> <p>I am very uncomfortable objectively considering my limitations and shortcomings. (UP)*</p> <p>I've often used my silence or head-nodding to convey agreement with someone else's statement or position even though I really disagree. (B)*</p> <p>I have a very good understanding of why I do the things I do. (A)</p> <p>I am willing to change myself for others if the reward is desirable enough. (B)*</p> <p>I find it easy to pretend to be something other than my true-self. (B)*</p> <p>I want people with whom I am close to understand my weaknesses. (RO)</p> <p>I find it very difficult to critically assess myself. (UP)*</p> <p>I am not in touch with my deepest thoughts and feelings. (A)*</p> <p>I make it a point to express to those close others how much I truly care for them. (RO)</p> <p>I tend to have difficulty accepting my personal faults, so I try to cast them in a more positive way. (UP)*</p> <p>I tend to idealize close others rather than objectively see them as they truly are. (RO)*</p> <p>If I asked, people I am close to can accurately describe what kind of person I am. (RO)</p> <p>I prefer to ignore my darkest thoughts and feelings. (UP)*</p> <p>I am aware of when I am not being my true-self. (A)</p> <p>I am able to distinguish those self-aspects that are important to my core- or true-self from those that are unimportant. (A)</p> <p>People close to me would be shocked or surprised if they discovered what I keep inside me. (RO)*</p> <p>It is important for me to understand my close others' needs and desires. (RO)</p> <p>I want close others to understand the real me rather than just my public persona or "image." (RO)</p>

**TABLE A1**  
**(Continued)**

Construct and Source	Instructions and Scale Items
Authentic leadership: Neider and Schriesheim's (2011) Authentic Leadership Inventory	I try to act in a manner that is consistent with my personally held values, even if others criticize or reject me for doing so. (B)
	If a close other and I are in disagreement I would rather ignore the issue than constructively work it out. (RO)*
	I've often done things that I don't want to do merely not to disappoint people. (B)*
	I find that my behavior typically expresses my values. (B)
	I actively attempt to understand myself as best as possible. (A)
	I'd rather feel good about myself than objectively assess my personal limitations and shortcomings. (UP)*
	I find that my behavior typically expresses my personal needs and desires. (B)
	I rarely if ever, put on a "false face" for others to see. (B)
	I spend a lot of energy pursuing goals that are very important to other people even though they are unimportant to me. (B)*
	I frequently am not in touch with what's important to me. (A)*
	I try to block out any unpleasant feelings I might have about myself. (UP)*
	I often question whether I really know what I want to accomplish in my lifetime. (A)*
	I often find that I am overly critical about myself. (UP)*
	I am in touch with my motives and desires. (A)
	I often deny the validity of any compliments that I receive. (UP)*
	In general, I place a good deal of importance on people I am close to understanding who I truly am. (RO)
	I find it difficult to embrace and feel good about the things I have accomplished. (UP)*
	If someone points out or focuses on one of my shortcomings I quickly try to block it out of my mind and forget it. (UP)*
	The people I am close to can count on me being who I am regardless of what setting we are in. (RO)
	My openness and honesty in close relationships are extremely important to me. (RO)
I am willing to endure negative consequences by expressing my true beliefs about things. (B)	
(A) = Awareness, (UP) = unbiased processing, (B) = behavior, (RO) = relational orientation.	
* = Reverse-coded	
<i>Respondents are asked to indicate their agreement with the below statements and are instructed to use the term "leader" to think about their immediate or direct supervisor.</i>	

**TABLE A1**  
**(Continued)**

Construct and Source	Instructions and Scale Items
<p>Note: Another commonly used measure is the Authentic Leadership Questionnaire by Avolio et al. (2007). For copyright reasons, the full scale is not available for reproduction but can be requested at mindgarden.com.</p>	<p>My leader clearly states what he/she means. (R)  My leader shows consistency between his/her beliefs and actions. (M)  My leader asks for ideas that challenge his/her core beliefs. (B)  My leader describes accurately the way that others view his/her abilities. (S)  My leader uses his/her core beliefs to make decisions. (M)  My leader carefully listens to alternative perspectives before reaching a conclusion. (B)  My leader shows he/she understands his/her strengths and weaknesses. (S)  My leader openly shares information with others. (R)  My leader resists pressures on him/her to do things contrary to his/her beliefs. (M)  My leader objectively analyzes relevant data before making a decision. (B)  My leader is clearly aware of the impact he/she has on others. (S)  My leader expresses his/her ideas and thoughts clearly to others. (R)  My leader is guided in his/her actions by internal moral standards. (M)  My leader encourages others to voice opposing points of view. (B)  (S) = Self-awareness, (R) = relational transparency, (B) = balanced processing, (M) = internalized moral perspective.</p>
<p>Authentic personality: Wood et al. (2008)</p>	<p><i>Respondents are instructed to indicate how well the below statements describe themselves.*</i></p> <p><i>Self-alienation</i>  I feel as if I don't know myself very well.  I feel out of touch with the "real me."  I feel alienated from myself.  I don't know how I really feel inside.</p> <p><i>Authentic living</i>  I always stand by what I believe in.  I am true to myself in most situations.  I think it is better to be yourself, than to be popular.  I live in accordance with my values and beliefs.</p> <p><i>Accepting external influence</i>  I usually do what other people tell me to do.  Other people influence me greatly.  I am strongly influenced by the opinions of others.  I always feel I need to do what others expect me to do.</p> <p>* Individuals who score high on authentic living, low on self-alienation, and low on accepting external influence are considered to have an authentic personality.</p>

**TABLE A1**  
**(Continued)**

Construct and Source	Instructions and Scale Items
Authentic self-expression: Bettencourt and Sheldon (2001)	<p>Participants indicate two traits/characteristics that they believe are important for fulfilling three different roles (including work), selecting from a list of 20 traits/characteristics. They are asked to think about the role itself and what traits/characteristics it requires (not about themselves). Next, participants are asked to rate the extent to which each selected trait/characteristic feels like an authentic part of them (1 = not at all, 4 = somewhat, 7 = extremely).</p>
Perceived inauthenticity: Moore et al. (2017), using Leroy and Mor's (2015) scale from a working paper	<p><i>Respondents are instructed to indicate their agreement with the below statements.</i></p> <p>This person proclaims A but seems to really think B. This person does not seem to reveal what he or she really thinks.</p> <p>There seems to be a misalignment between this person's verbal and non-verbal behaviors.</p> <p>There seems to be an incongruence between what this person said and how he or she acted.</p> <p>This person's story doesn't seem to add up.</p> <p>There seem to be missing pieces to this person's story.</p> <p>This person seems fake.</p>
Role authenticity: Sheldon et al. (1997)	<p>This person seems not genuine.</p> <p><i>Before answering the below statements, participants are asked to envision a role and reflect on the thoughts, emotions, and behaviors they most commonly experience in that role. They are then instructed to indicate their agreement with the below statements for that role.</i></p> <p>I experience this aspect of myself as an authentic part of who I am.</p> <p>This aspect of myself is meaningful and valuable to me.</p> <p>I have freely chosen this way of being.</p> <p>I am only this way because I have to be.*</p> <p>I feel tense and pressured in this part of my life.*</p> <p>* = Reverse-coded</p>
<i>Secondary Authenticity Constructs</i>	
Identity manifestation (versus identity suppression): Madera et al. (2012)	<p><i>Participants indicate the group with which they most strongly identify according to the following response options: "my racial or ethnic group," "my gender," "my age group," "my religious group," "my sexual orientation," "my disability," "I do not identify with any group," or "other." Respondents then indicate their agreement with the below statements regarding that group identity.</i></p> <p><i>Manifest group identity</i></p> <p>I discuss this part of my identity with my coworkers.</p> <p>I display signs of this identity in my workspace (e.g., pictures, objects).</p> <p>I wear clothes or emblems (e.g., jewelry, pins) that reflect this identity at work.</p>

**TABLE A1**  
**(Continued)**

Construct and Source	Instructions and Scale Items
Emotional labor: Brotheridge and Lee (2003)	<p>I celebrate meaningful dates or holidays related to this identity at work.</p> <p>I talk about this identity with my supervisor.</p> <p>Everyone I work with knows how important this identity is to me.</p> <p>I express this identity at work.</p> <p>I use the language, vernacular, or speech style of this identity at work.</p> <p>I listen to music associated with this identity at work.</p> <p>I consume food or drinks associated with this identity at work.</p> <p><i>Suppressed group identity</i></p> <p>I refrain from talking about my identity with my coworkers.</p> <p>I conceal or camouflage signs of this identity in my workspace (e.g., pictures, objects).</p> <p>I hide emblems that would reflect this identity at work.</p> <p>I try to keep meaningful dates or holidays related to this identity secret.</p> <p>I try not to talk about this identity with my supervisor.</p> <p>No one I work with knows how important this identity is to me.</p> <p>I suppress this identity at work.</p> <p>I try not to use the language, vernacular, or speech style of this identity at work.</p> <p>I make a point of not listening to music associated with this identity at work.</p> <p>I refrain from consuming food or drinks associated with this identity at work.</p> <p><i>Respondents are asked to rate how frequently they perform the following interpersonal behaviors on an average day at work.</i></p> <p><i>Surface acting</i></p> <p>Resist expressing my true feelings.</p> <p>Pretend to have emotions that I don't really have.</p> <p>Hide my true feelings about a situation.</p> <p><i>Deep acting</i></p> <p>Make an effort to actually feel the emotions that I need to display to others.</p> <p>Try to actually experience the emotions that I must show.</p> <p>Really try to feel the emotions I have to show as part of my job.</p>
Facades of conformity: Hewlin (2009)	<p><i>Respondents are given the following directions: Can you be yourself at work? The following statements reflect how people in organizations feel about sharing their personal beliefs and values at work. Please answer as honestly as possible the degree to which you agree or disagree with each statement.</i></p>

**TABLE A1**  
**(Continued)**

Construct and Source	Instructions and Scale Items
Hypocrisy: Effron et al. (2015)	<p>I don't share certain things about myself in order to fit in at work.</p> <p>I suppress personal values that are different from those of the organization.</p> <p>I withhold personal values that conflict with organizational values.</p> <p>I don't "play politics" by pretending to embrace organizational values.</p> <p>I behave in a manner that reflects the organization's value system even though it is inconsistent with my personal values.</p> <p>I say things that I don't really believe at work.</p> <p>Participants are asked how much they agree or disagree that the employee is "a hypocrite," "two-faced," "phony," "genuine" (reverse-coded), and "insincere" (7-point scales from strongly disagree to strongly agree, with unsure/neutral as the midpoint).</p>