Organization Science

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Abstract. A growing body of research documents that audiences reward organizations perceived to be authentic with positive evaluations. In the current work, we adopt a mixed-methods approach—using data collected from Glassdoor.com and two experiments—to establish that perceptions of authenticity are elicited by perceived congruence between an organization's stated values (i.e., the values it claims to hold) and its lived values (i.e., values members perceive as embodied by the organization), which in turn lead to more positive organizational evaluations. We then explore the conditions under which audiences are less likely to respond favorably to organizational authenticity, finding that the positive effects of stated-lived value congruence on evaluations are attenuated when audiences have a lower preference for stated values. Although scholars have often explored whether and how organizations can successfully make themselves appear authentic to reap rewards, our findings suggest that the perceived authenticity that results from stated-lived value congruence may not prove fruitful unless the audience holds a higher preference for an organization's stated values.

Introduction

Authenticity—the extent to which an entity is "genuine" or "real," as opposed to "bogus" or "fake" (Trilling 1972, Kovács et al. 2014)—is an increasingly important concept in organization theory (Lehman et al. 2019a). A growing body of work has documented that audiences reward organizations they perceive to be authentic (Kovács et al. 2014, O'Connor et al. 2017). For example, scholars have found that, as perceived authenticity increases, music clubs and baseball stadiums attract more visitors (Grazian 2005, Hahl 2016), restaurants and craft beers receive more positive reviews (Kovács et al. 2014, Lehman et al. 2014, Verhaal et al. 2015, Frake 2017), and organizations that sell wine and pianos secure price premiums (Beverland 2005, Cattani et al. 2017). Authenticity is a competitive advantage for new enterprises (Radoynovska and King 2019, Schifeling and Demetry 2021), new markets (Weber et al. 2008), niche firms (Verhaal et al. 2017), and organizations that have recently diversified (Hahl and Ha 2020). In short, consensus is building that audiences reward organizations for perceived authenticity, often in the form of more positive evaluations.

Scholars have made important advancements in theorizing how organizational authenticity is derived from perceptions of congruence between the "backstage" and "frontstage," or the extent to which an organization's external expressions genuinely represent its true identity (Hahl 2016, Demetry 2019, Lehman et al. 2019a, Hahl and Ha 2020). Examining authenticity as consistency heightens the key role that values may play in these perceptions—namely, the perceived congruence between an organization's stated and lived values (Carroll and Wheaton 2009; Lehman et al.

2019a, b; Radoynovska and King 2019). Stated values are claims about what is supposedly central to the organization (Bansal 2003, Bourne et al. 2019), whereas lived values are embedded in routines, practices, and daily activities (Schein 1985). In empirical work documenting the rewards of authenticity, scholars have often focused *either* on perceived lived values (Verhaal et al. 2015, Hahl 2016, Frake 2017) or stated values (Beverland 2005, Beverland and Luxton 2005) as signals of authenticity. Although critical for providing a foundational understanding of audience perceptions of organizational authenticity, without measuring or experimentally manipulating both components, the effects of (in)congruence on outcomes cannot be accurately deduced. Theoretically speaking, it has remained unclear as to whether audiences respond more to stated values, lived values, or their (in)congruence when forming authenticity perceptions and evaluating organizations.

In addition, despite a growing literature on the benefits of organizational authenticity, we know little about the potential theoretical boundary conditions of these effects. Although organizations invest substantive efforts into making themselves seem authentic (Peterson 2005)—including carefully planned signaling and marketing (Beverland 2005, 2009; Demetry 2019)—such efforts come at a significant cost and might not lead to evaluative rewards. Under what conditions, then, are audiences less likely to reward organizations perceived as authentic? To be sure, it is possible that audiences consistently evaluate organizations they perceive as authentic more favorably. Authenticity can signal to audiences that organizations are trustworthy, honest, and moral (Carroll and Wheaton 2009, Gino et al. 2015, Hahl and Zuckerman 2015, Grauel 2016), and audiences tend to prioritize morality over other highly valued traits when forming evaluations in the context of person perception (Abele and Bruckmüller 2011, Brambilla et al. 2021). In the current work, however, we develop the argument that individual-level value preferences serve as a critical boundary condition in the authenticity-evaluations relationship. We argue that, because individuals hold personal values (Schwartz 1992, 2012) that may differ from the values of organizations (Chatman 1989, Kristof 1996), perceptions of organizational authenticity may not always produce higher evaluations. For example, if an organization claims to value innovation and indeed embodies innovation in its practices, audiences who have a high preference for innovation are likely to reward authenticity. In contrast, those who do not care as much about innovation (or are even opposed to this value) may not reward this alignment. Therefore, audience responses to stated-lived value congruence and authenticity may hinge on preferences for the stated values (Lehman et al. 2019a, b). Because existing studies

have often examined the effects of perceived authenticity on audiences that hold a strong preference for the claimed identity (e.g., audiences that opt into consuming the product or are a pre-existing fan; Kovács et al. 2014, Hahl 2016, Frake 2017), we lack understanding of how perceived authenticity affects evaluations when audience preferences are moderate or low. Enhancing our understanding of when authenticity might yield rewards will enhance organizations' ability to more effectively optimize the resources dedicated to values and authenticity work.

Thus, we seek to answer two primary research questions: Does congruence between stated and lived values elicit perceptions of authenticity and positive evaluations? Moreover, are these positive evaluations moderated by audience value preferences? After developing our theory, we report one archival study and two experimental studies in the employer-employee context. Although consumers have been the typical audience of interest for authenticity scholars, compared with consumers, employees have greater access to stated values, a stronger ability to observe lived values, and may more deeply identify with their employer's values (Press and Arnould 2011). As organizational "insiders," employees offer a strong audience in which to explore our research questions. Our first two studies use data from online reviews and an experiment to provide novel, direct evidence that supports the prediction that perceptions of organizational authenticity arise from (in)congruence between stated and lived values. Our third study documents that audiences value preferences serve as a boundary condition. Although much previous research has focused on the benefits of perceived authenticity, our work develops a more precise understanding of when perceived authenticity affects evaluations.

Stated-Lived Value Congruence, Organizational Authenticity, and Organizational Evaluations

Scholars have suggested that organizational values are highly relevant in driving authenticity perceptions (Carroll and Wheaton 2009; Cording et al. 2014; Lehman et al. 2019a, b; Radoynovska and King 2019). Values are most relevant to conceptualizations of "authenticity as consistency" (Lehman et al. 2019a), akin to the notion of authenticity as alignment with the "true self" at the individual level. From this perspective, perceptions of organizational authenticity are derived from the extent to which an organization's external expressions or identity claims are consistent with its internal values, beliefs, and identity (Carroll and Wheaton 2009; Hahl 2016; Frake 2017; Hahl et al. 2017; Demetry 2019; Lehman et al. 2019a, b).[1]

In line with an authenticity as consistency perspective, we argue that a key distinction between stated and lived values underlies authenticity attributions and subsequent organizational evaluations. *Stated values* are the values organizations claim to hold (e.g., "entrepreneurial," "profit driven," "environmentally friendly"). They are typically generated via consensus among members of an organization's top management team and are communicated through verbal or written statements (Kabanoff et al. 1995, Bansal 2003, Jonsen et al. 2015). An organization's stated values communicate intent and the central features of an organization's identity (Bansal 2003, Perkmann and Spicer 2014); these identity claims are important because they shape an audience's expectations of organizational behavior (Ravasi and Schultz 2006, Gioia et al. 2010). We define *lived values* as the values that individuals perceive an organization to embody based on its routines, practices, and daily activities (Schein 1985). Thus, we position lived values as reflecting aspects perceived as central and distinctive to an organization's true identity (Albert and Whetten 1985, Dutton and Dukerich 1991). When stated and lived values are congruent, audiences should be more likely to perceive an organization as expressing its true preferences and identity, thus increasing perceptions of authenticity.

To date, research on the rewards of organizational authenticity has yet to fully examine whether congruence between stated and lived values elicits perceptions of organizational authenticity and subsequent rewards. Much empirical work has focused on perceptions of an organization's lived values as signals of authenticity, where lived values are operationalized as external audiences perceptions of the values embodied by a brand or organization, such as product names (Verhaal et al. 2015), independent ownership (Frake 2017), connections to founders (Hahl and Ha 2020), organizational forms that signal craft production processes (Carroll and Swaminathan 2000), and traditional practices (Voronov et al. 2013, Hahl 2016). For instance, independently owned microbreweries are perceived to be less authentic after being acquired by corporate brewers because the oppositional identity of a corporate brewer leads previously independent breweries to be seen as "morally suspect" (Frake 2017). Likewise, baseball organizations that embrace traditional practices, like maintaining brick exteriors, poles that obstruct views of the game, and smaller stadiums, are argued to be perceived more authentic than are those that build modern, commercialized ballparks (Hahl 2016). Although these findings highlight organizational authenticity as an important criterion in evaluation, methodological constraints have meant prior studies have not captured congruence between stated and lived values. This leaves open the possibility that perceptions of authenticity are driven by the appeal of the perceived lived values rather than the congruence between stated and lived values. It could be, for instance, that audience members prefer organizations with independent ownership and smaller stadiums with obstructive poles rather than preferring these attributes in relation to the organization's expressions of who it is.

Other studies, although fewer in number, have focused on the role of stated organizational values in driving authenticity perceptions and rewards. For example, Beverland (2005) and Beverland and Luxton (2005) demonstrated how wineries "deliberately decoupled" their stated and lived values, communicating traditional values while admittedly rarely engaging in traditional practices. Although audience perceptions of authenticity were not explicitly explored, the wineries were successful, implying that stated values may shape authenticity perceptions, even if they are incongruent with lived values. Some audiences may even prefer the "illusion of authenticity" (Lu and Fine 1995, p. 541), particularly when they cocreate it; for example, consumers of underground restaurants obfuscate financial transactions to maintain the illusion of an authentic, intimate dining experience (Demetry 2019). In this sense, it could be that audiences reward stated values rather than congruence between stated and lived values.

To our knowledge, perceptions of stated values, lived values, and (in)congruence have yet to be examined within a single study. Even research that has acknowledged the relationship between values and authenticity perceptions (Negro et al. 2011, Cording et al. 2014, Lehman et al. 2019b) has not explored the relationship between stated-lived value (in)congruence, perceptions of (in)authenticity, and organizational evaluations, nor has it tested these relationships using experimental methods. By leveraging experiment methods, we can both manipulate stated and lived values systematically and unpack the micromechanisms driving potential shifts in judgments (Bitektine et al. 2018).

Although the bulk of authenticity scholarship has focused on perceptions of authenticity by external stakeholders, employees are an important audience for authenticity that allows for an exploration of the role of both stated and lived values. Employees have an important window into both stated and lived values that is inaccessible to external audiences. Value statements are communicated frequently to employees by both upper- and lower-level managers during meetings, training sessions, and corporate documents (Carton et al. 2014). Employees can infer lived values based on daily observations of workplace life, including which behaviors are promoted and rewarded, and interactions with and feedback from peers and supervisors (Schein 1985, Bourne and Jenkins 2013). Because the bulk of organizational authenticity research has examined consumers, existing work has been somewhat constrained in capturing

assessments of (in)congruence. Consumers have less access to an organization's "backstage" and are less able to discover whether stated and lived values are aligned. The employee vantage point is also useful because employees are likely to care about stated-lived value congruence (Cha and Edmondson 2006) and may more favorably evaluate workplaces deemed to be authentic. There are several reasons why employees may reward organizations they perceive as authentic, including that authenticity is associated with truth and honesty (Hahl and Zuckerman 2015) and perceptions of an entity's morality (Sartre 1943, Heidegger 1962, Gino et al. 2015, Grauel 2016). Further, organizations that are perceived to be more moral or ethical tend to elicit more favorable attitudes and greater commitment from employees (Treviño et al. 1998, Collier and Esteban 2007). Overall, when stated and lived values are congruent, employees will be more likely to perceive organizations as authentic and, in turn, render more positive evaluations. Formally, we hypothesize the following.

Hypothesis 1. *Employees will evaluate organizations more positively when stated and lived values are congruent.*

Hypothesis 2. *The positive relationship between stated-lived value congruence and organizational evaluations is driven by perceptions of organizational authenticity.*

Audience Value Preferences Moderate the Rewards of Stated-Lived Value Congruence and Authenticity

Given arguments surrounding the centrality of values to authenticity perceptions, an important question emerges: Will audiences reward stated-lived value congruence and perceived authenticity if they have a lower preference for the organization's values? Existing research does not necessarily point to the conclusion that value preferences bound the rewards of authenticity. Indeed, some work suggests that authenticity may be a predominant lens for evaluating organizations, regardless of audiences' level of preference for an organization's values. Authenticity and morality are highly related concepts: to be authentic is to be "honest" and "genuine," which are critical dimensions of moral character judgments (Sartre 1943, Heidegger 1962, Grauel 2016). Indeed, the authenticity as consistency perspective holds that audiences trust and grant legitimacy to an entity to the extent that its identities are consistent with some true underlying traits or character morality (Lehman et al. 2019a, Radoynovska and King 2019). Importantly, morality has been found to have primacy when it comes to interpersonal evaluations (Leach et al. 2007, Goodwin et al. 2014, Landy et al. 2016). For example, people prefer interaction partners who are moral even if they are incompetent, even while stating that competence is a highly valued trait (Abele and Bruckmüller 2011, Brambilla et al. 2021). These effects are theorized to be rooted in an evolutionary

need to attend to whether entities (e.g., groups, other people) have fundamentally good or bad intentions toward the self, and moral traits are used to make these inferences (Goodwin 2015). Some evidence suggests authenticity judgments dominate at the organizational level as well. For instance, although funders prefer to invest in start-ups that appear highly competent, Radoynovska and King (2019) found that perceived moral authenticity is associated with greater financial support than is perceived competence. From this vantage point, perceived authenticity may lead to favorable evaluations, regardless of preferences for the organization's stated values, as what may matter most is that the organization behaves consistently with its own values.

This premium on authenticity also seems to have permeated the popular and business press. Indeed, a well-cited piece from the *Harvard Business Review* suggests that organizations be "aggressively authentic," arguing that there are strengths to adhering to "tough, if not downright controversial, values" that may not be widely preferred (Lencioni 2002). To test whether this sentiment permeates managers' intuitions, we conducted a pilot study (see Supplemental Study 5 in the online appendix) that asked managers to choose a public values statement for a fictional organization named City Works. To provide context, we first provided them with real data regarding prospective employees' preference for innovative over traditional organizations, as well as data indicating that City Works was a traditional company in terms of its lived values. Most participants indicated that City Works should focus its values statement on tradition, citing the importance of authenticity over audience preferences. In short, it is not obvious from the literature or managerial intuition that individual value preferences would attenuate the rewards that come from perceived authenticity.

In contrast to the idea that authenticity consistently yields positive evaluations, we argue that this relationship may be bounded by preferences for an organization's values. Our reasoning aligns with speculations in authenticity scholarship, for example, Lehman et al. (2019a) posited that "the value that is derived from authenticity depends on the appeal of the referent" (p. 22). However, existing work has been unable to draw firm conclusions on this matter because in many empirical studies of organizational authenticity, the consumer audiences under study tend to hold a strong underlying preference for referents, be they traditionalism in baseball stadiums (Hahl 2016), independence in microbrews (Verhaal et al. 2015, Frake 2017), or restaurants in specific cuisine categories (Kovács et al. 2014). Because these studies are based on data collected from specific audiences (e.g., baseball fans, beer enthusiasts, restaurant-goers), an implicit assumption is that the

rewards associated with authenticity are driven by audience preference for the stated claims. Yet, because researchers have examined the effects of authenticity among those with a high preference for the referent, we do not understand how perceived authenticity affects evaluations when audience preference is moderate or low. Emerging work on the related concept of "essence" has begun to suggest that a low preference for the creator reduces consumer willingness to purchase items (Smith et al. 2016). To date, scholars have neither fully theorized nor tested whether preferences for an organization's stated values moderate the rewards of organizational authenticity.

We develop this theoretical boundary condition by drawing on research about individual-level values and exploiting the employee context. A robust body of research in both psychology (Rokeach 1973, Schwartz 1992) and sociology (Hitlin and Piliavin 2004, Hitlin and Vaisey 2010) demonstrates that individuals differ in the relative priorities or preferences they hold for various values, and this is consequential for judgments and choice. Employees offer a unique vantage point through which to explore differing levels of preference for organizational values: Although perceived values fit may shape employee selection decisions (Sekiguchi and Huber 2011), there are reasons for gaps between employees' own and organizations' values to exist. For example, employees prioritizing financial security may not have the choice to opt into organizations where their value match is high. Moreover, employees' first impressions during recruiting may not match their ultimate perceptions of lived values (Amos and Weathington 2008). Indeed, the research on person-organization value fit demonstrates that many employees do not invariably share the values of their employing organizations (Kristof 1996). This line of research has found that person-organization values fit is consequential for how individuals, particularly employees, engage with and evaluate organizations (Chatman 1989, O'Reilly et al. 1991, Kristof 1996). A fit between employee and organizational values leads to a host of positive outcomes, such as increased job satisfaction (Kirkman

and Shapiro 2001), better communication (Meglino and Ravlin 1998), and decreased turnover (Mael and Ashforth 1995). Overall, employees assess organizations more positively when organizational values match their preferred values.

Related research in psychology has also documented how heterogeneity in value preferences shapes reactions to organization's stated values. For example, people who have antiegalitarian values tend to strongly oppose stated diversity values and initiatives (Pratto et al. 1994), leading them to render less favorable evaluations of organizations promoting these values and policies (Heilman et al. 1998). Although these scholars did not explore congruence between stated and lived diversity policies, antiegalitarians likely would not provide positive organizational evaluations, even if they recognized such organizations as authentic. Audiences who personally care about diversity, on the other hand, should reward authenticity around diversity (Wilton et al. 2020). Altogether, we predict that employee preference for an organization's stated values moderates the relationship between authenticity perceptions and evaluations, such that perceived organizational authenticity will be less likely to boost evaluations when values are less preferred. We offer an overview of the full conceptual model in Figure 1.

Hypothesis 3. *Employee preference for an organization's stated values moderates the positive relationship between authenticity perceptions and organizational evaluations, such that the relationship is attenuated when values are less preferred.*[2]

Overview of the Empirical Studies

We designed and conducted three studies to explore different aspects of the relationships between stated-lived value congruence, authenticity, and employee evaluations of their workplaces. In Study 1, we offer an externally valid test of our first prediction, examining stated and lived values across a large sample of employees and organizations using company value

Figure 1. (Color online) Theoretical Model
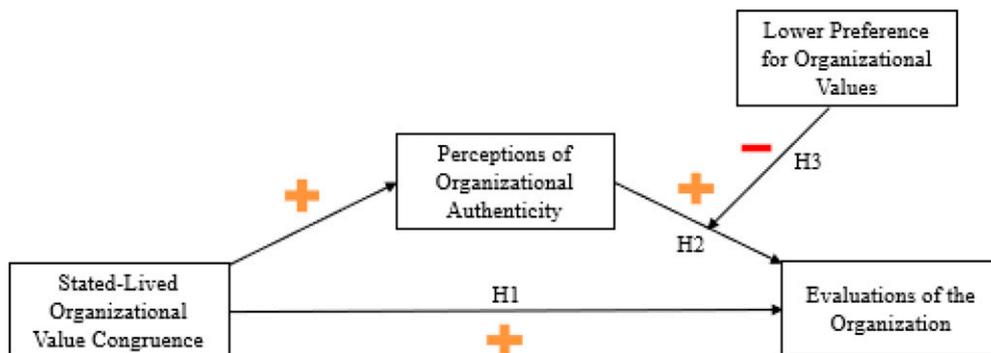
statements and employee reviews of their workplaces from Glassdoor.com. In Study 2, we use a vignette-based experiment to causally test whether stated-lived value congruence leads to positive perceptions of authenticity, and in turn, positive organizational evaluations. In Study 3, we perform an online labor market experiment to explore the theoretical boundary condition. We also examine potentially competing mediators (i.e., warmth and competence in Study 2, and personal authenticity and cognitive dissonance in Study 3) to examine whether perceived organizational authenticity is a primary mechanism driving this effect. We summarize two additional supplemental studies that are available in full in our online appendix. We provide instructions for replicating our values coding, experiments, and analyses, and report all manipulations, measures, and data exclusions in the online appendix. All available data[3] and code can be found on our Open Science Framework page (https://osf.io/bfvxk/).

Study 1: Value Congruence and Workplace Ratings in Online Company Reviews

We designed Study 1 to measure the strength of the empirical association between stated-lived value congruence and employees' ratings of their workplaces (Hypothesis 1) using data collected from company value statements and an online employer review platform (Glassdoor.com) for a random sample of 100 companies in the S&P 500 Index. First, we obtained the value statements presented on the S&P 500 companies' websites in 2015. These statements were found within a few clicks of each company's homepage, often under the headings "About Us" or "Our Company Values." Other research has validated this approach, finding that the values listed on webpages reflect the values communicated by managers (Carton et al. 2014). The same year, we obtained publicly listed reviews of organizations on Glassdoor.com, a leading website for employee reviews.[4] In exchange for full access to Glassdoor's database of reviews, roughly 30 million users voluntarily answer questions about the pros, cons, benefits, pay, and corporate cultures of their workplaces. The platform attracts both job seekers and employees in positions ranging from entry level to senior management; 65% of users have more than 10 years of work experience. Although reviews are anonymous, users are required to certify their employment status and validate their email addresses before their posts are made public. In 2013, Glassdoor rejected nearly 20% of submitted content because it did not meet its community guidelines or appeared suspicious.

The structure of Glassdoor reviews allows them to be coded for the experience of organizational values. Employees rate their firms on a five-point scale and describe positive and negative aspects in separate sections for "pros," "cons," and "advice to management." The structure encourages employees to describe *why* they like or dislike working at a firm, increasing the likelihood that reviews contain descriptions of firm-specific norms and values (Corritore et al. 2020). Each review also captures tenure (for 70% of the sample), title (for 80% of the sample), location, and current or former employee status.

To code values, we adopted a typology based on the psychological theory of basic human values (Schwartz 1992, 2012). According to this influential theory, an individual's actions are guided by 10 types of values (e.g., "universalism," "power," "achievement"). These 10 fundamental human values have been applied and validated at the organizational level (Cable and Edwards 2004). Because we used pre-existing textual data from companies and employees rather than survey data, it was necessary to make slight adaptations to the typology to enable value statements and employee reviews to be appropriately coded for the presence of values. For instance, we adapted the labels of some value categories (e.g., "hedonism" became "gratification") and updated the language of the defining goals for values to better match the organizational level (e.g., "emphasizing personal success" became "emphasizing organizational success"). We added the value category of "teamwork," which we maintained as a separate category from "benevolence," but also collapsed in supplemental analyses with no significant changes. The final set of values included universalism, benevolence, achievement, gratification, power, security, conformity, integrity, innovation, self-direction, and teamwork. For definitions, please see the online appendix.

We read and hand-coded the company statements and employee reviews along with two research assistants. We coded the data by hand because the values were embedded in text and were difficult to accurately capture through one-word or few-word phrases without reading them in context. Furthermore, the colloquial language and informal structure of the review text did not provide results with sufficient depth to differentiate between values without human interpretation.[5] Intercoder reliability was high ($\kappa = 0.798$). We coded a stratified random sample of employee reviews for each company based on the month of the review to ensure that a single salient event would not skew the results. We sampled 36 reviews per company, three per month, for a total of 3,600 reviews.

A company met the requirements for inclusion in our random sample of 100 companies if, during 2015, it (a) was a member of the S&P 500, (b) had a publicly available values statement on its website (83.2% of S&P 500 had such statements), and (c) had more than 50 reviews on Glassdoor for the year. We limited our analysis to one year, as the goal was to identify the

presence of a relationship rather than explore changes over time. We also limited our analysis to companies with more than 50 reviews because we sought to capture firms with a large employee base. Roughly 300 companies met the sample requirements. The average number of reviews in 2015 was 227. Results of *t* tests based on size (log assets) show no significant difference between S&P 500 companies that had stated values and those that had not, or between firms with more than 50 annual reviews and those with fewer.

Variables, Measurement, and Model

Dependent Variable. The dependent variable in Study 1, *workplace rating*, was operationalized using a rating scale measured by the number of stars (out of five) an employee assigned to their company. The distribution of ratings in the data shows a very slight skew toward higher scores (five stars: 16%; four stars: 30%; three stars: 26%; two stars: 15%; one star: 12%). Importantly, recent research has validated Glassdoor ratings as important measures that impact job performance, such as employee satisfaction (Landers et al. 2019), and has established a direct relationship between higher ratings and firm performance (Huang et al. 2015, Green et al. 2019).

Independent Variable. The key independent variable was stated-lived value congruence. Prior to creating the congruence measure, we measured stated and lived values separately. To measure stated values, we coded the values statements posted on the websites of the organizations in our sample. For each organization, we assigned a value of one to the value category of a stated value, and zero otherwise, in line with previous studies in which researchers have examined the presence or absence of organizational values (Kang et al. 2016). The most popular categories for stated values were "achievement" (85.3% of the value statements) and "integrity" (78.4%), followed by "benevolence" (73.5%), "universalism" (68.6%), "innovation" (66.7%), "teamwork" (59.8%), "conformity" (59.8%), "self-direction" (55.9%), "power" (32.4%), "security" (22.5%), and "gratification" (12.7%). This coding resulted in one 11-element vector per company with possible values of 0 or 1. To measure lived values, we coded the textual descriptions of Glassdoor reviews, assigning a value of 1 to value categories with positive experiences, −1 to value categories with negative experiences, and 0 otherwise. This coding resulted in one 11-element vector per employee review with possible values of −1, 0, or 1.

We then constructed a *congruence score* for each employee review by comparing each employee vector to the corresponding company vector and calculating the cosine similarity between the dimensions of the two vectors.[6] The greater the cosine similarity between two vectors, the more congruent the stated and lived values. We included lived values when a given value was stated by the company (i.e., nonstated values did not impact the measure).

Control Variables. We included a dummy variable for each firm to control for any firm-level specific features (e.g., performance, size), as well as seven additional controls. First, we controlled for how employees rated their *pay and benefits*, as we would expect that both income and benefits would impact their evaluations (Judge et al. 2010). Employees rated their satisfaction with pay and benefits on a scale from one to five stars. Second, we controlled for *headquarters proximity*, a dummy variable indicating whether an employee was in the same state as the firm headquarters. This controlled for any potential impact of geographic proximity to corporate headquarters on employee ratings and congruence. Third, we controlled for *employment status* using a dummy variable indicating whether an employee was a current or former employee. This was important, as former employees may have submitted more negative reviews, given the relationship between decreased job satisfaction and employee turnover (Mobley 1977). Fourth, we controlled for *review length* by calculating the log of the number of words in each employee review, which can often signal strength of opinion. Lastly, we distinguished the impacts of stated-lived congruence from general positive and negative experiences in the workplace. Using the text analysis software LIWC, we analyzed each review for positive and negative sentiment (Pennebaker et al. 2001) by calculating the percentage of positive and negative emotion words within the text that corresponded to how positively or negatively the author described their experience (Tausczik and Pennebaker 2010). A separate percentage score was calculated for positive and negative emotions. Controlling for *positive* and *negative sentiment* affords more certainty that the findings are the result of value congruence rather than negative/positive experiences in the workplace. Finally, we controlled for the *number of stated values*.

In additional analyses, we controlled for *employee tenure* at the firm, as tenure is generally associated with greater satisfaction (Bedeian et al. 1992). However, tenure neither had a significant effect on ratings, nor changed the model results. Employees were not required to include tenure, and this variable covers 70% of the sample. Thus, we report the results without tenure.

Model. The estimation was conducted at the employee level of analysis. This level is appropriate, as employees submitted workplace ratings which were based on their individual experiences of organizational values (among other factors). For ease of interpretation, we present the results of fixed-effects linear regression analyses with clustered standard errors here; ordered logit regressions

Table 1. Descriptive Statistics and Correlations for Study 1

	Variable	Mean	Standard deviation	Observations	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
1	*Workplace rating*	3.308	1.238	3,600	1							
2	*Stated-lived value congruence*	0.021	0.335	3,600	0.39	1						
3	*Pay and benefits*	3.435	1.186	3,600	0.57	0.25	1					
4	*Headquarters dummy*	0.407	0.491	3,600	0.03	0.04	0.08	1				
5	*Current employee dummy*	0.556	0.497	3,600	0.15	0.07	0.08	0.02	1			
6	*Review length (log)*	3.894	0.818	3,600	−0.29	−0.17	−0.13	0.04	−0.05	1		
7	*Positive emotion*	8.258	5.788	3,600	0.27	0.20	0.20	0.02	0.05	−0.45	1	
8	*Negative emotion*	1.652	2.407	3,600	−0.19	−0.11	−0.17	−0.04	−0.02	−0.02	−0.05	1
9	*Stated values (no.)*	6.130	2.217	3,600	0.06	0.04	0.12	0.02	0.03	−0.01	0.04	−0.05

yielded similar results. Summary statistics and correlations for all variables can be found in Table 1.

Study 1 Results

The results of Study 1 can be found in Table 2. Model 1, the baseline model, shows that the greater the congruence between stated and lived values (i.e., greater cosine similarity), the higher the ratings a company receives from employees. Model 2 shows that being currently employed and having more positive feelings about one's pay are associated with higher ratings, whereas longer reviews are associated with lower ratings. Being in closer proximity to headquarters has no significant effect. Positive emotion is associated with higher ratings, while negative emotion is associated with lower ratings. Model 2 also shows that the greater stated-lived value congruence, the higher the rating: a review that is one standard deviation above the mean in stated-lived value congruence corresponds to a rating that is 0.229 stars higher on average than a review that is one standard deviation below the mean. The

Table 2. OLS Regressions for the Relationship Between Stated-Lived Value Congruence and Ratings in Study 1

Variable	Model 1	Model 2
Stated-lived value congruence	1.466***	0.847***
	(0.067)	(0.057)
Pay and benefits		0.496***
		(0.017)
Headquarters dummy		−0.003
		(0.045)
Current employee dummy		0.222***
		(0.031)
Review length (log)		−0.252***
		(0.023)
Positive emotion		0.008**
		(0.003)
Negative emotion		−0.044***
		(0.008)
Stated values (no.)		−0.036***
		(0.007)
Observations	3,600	3,600
Firm fixed-effects	Yes	Yes

Note. Company-clustered robust standard errors in parentheses.
  * $p < 0.05$; ** $p < 0.01$; *** $p < 0.001$.

effect of stated-lived values congruence is over twice as large as the effect of negative emotion present in the review text. Overall, the results for Study 1 provide strong support for Hypothesis 1 in a real-world setting.

Study 2: Value Congruence, Authenticity, and Workplace Ratings in an Experimental Setting

We designed Study 2 as an experiment with random assignment to test the hypothesized causal relationships among variables and rule out alternative explanations (Levine and Parkinson 2014) while ensuring the independence of observed effects from employee characteristics that might correlate with ratings and organizational selection in Study 1 (i.e., possible selection effects). The aim of this experimental study was to more directly test whether stated-lived value congruence shapes employees' perceptions and ratings of their workplaces by affecting perceptions of organizational authenticity. To address the possible alternative explanation that authenticity perceptions merely capture global differences in positive perceptions of the organization, we included measures of the two fundamental dimensions of positive evaluations: warmth and competence (Judd et al. 2005, Fiske et al. 2007, Aaker et al. 2010). To test our predictions, we randomly assigned participants to one of four conditions in a 2 (stated value: yes versus no) × 2 (lived value: yes versus no) between-subjects design.

Method

Sample. We recruited participants from a third-party online panel service, Amazon's Mechanical Turk (MTurk). We used a filter to access full-time employees to ensure that participants had experience interacting with values statements (Carton et al. 2014). Based on a power analysis in G*Power assuming a medium-effect size, we sought to collect data from 200 participants; 196 gave complete data (93 females, $M_{age} = 34.87$, $SD = 10.82$), leaving us with 90% power to detect an effect (see the online appendix for these analyses and supplemental power analyses completed in Superpower; Lakens and Caldwell 2021).

Procedure. All participants imagined that they had just become employed at a large organization called Altera Corp. They were provided with information about the organization (a book publisher) and their role in the organization (copy editor). Participants were given text to edit, a task which was representative of their role. Participants then completed the key measures and control and demographic measures and were debriefed.

Stated Value Manipulation. In the *stated value* condition, participants were exposed to Altera's values statement, which listed three core values: excellence, teamwork, and caring. In the *no stated value* control condition, participants were not exposed to a value statement.

Lived Value Manipulation. We next manipulated whether one of these values was lived, using feedback from a manager. Communication and feedback from managers are critical means by which stated values are perceived to be lived (Cha and Edmondson 2006). The manipulation centered on one value (*teamwork*) in particular to enhance internal validity. Specifically, participants were asked to vividly imagine being provided with feedback from a manager. In the *value-lived* condition, the manager informed participants that they were doing a good job thus far in the role but could enhance their commitment to teamwork and team-level performance even further, consistent with the organization's commitment to teamwork. In the *value-not-lived* condition, participants were informed that they were doing a good job thus far in the role but should make sure to focus on their individual-level performance, emphasizing individualism over teamwork.

Measures. Following the manipulations, participants completed the key measures. To ensure that measuring authenticity did not affect the rating measure and vice versa, we counterbalanced them, and because there were no order effects, collapsed them across conditions.

We administered a measure of *perceived organizational authenticity* adapted from existing research (Radoynovska and King 2019).[7] Participants responded to eight items that aligned with the conceptualization of authenticity as being true to whom or what an entity claims to be (e.g., "This organization seems mostly concerned with gaining social approval;" "This organization would be itself, regardless of what others say;" "This organization is not what it claims to be" [reverse coded]; 1 = *strongly disagree*, 7 = *strongly agree*). A confirmatory factor analysis revealed that the scale captured one factor (eigenvalue = 5.31) and demonstrates high interitem reliability ($\alpha = 0.91$).

Participants provided public *workplace ratings* (to be potentially viewed by others) using a format directly adapted from Glassdoor to enable direct comparison with our archival data. Participants rated Altera on a

five-star scale ranging from one star (*A bad place to be—I would definitely not recommend this organization*) to five stars (*As good as it gets—I would definitely recommend this organization*).

To rule out the alternative explanation that authenticity merely captures variance in perceptions of organizations' warmth and competence, participants directly rated the trustworthiness, sincerity, and good-willed nature of the organization (*warmth*; $\alpha = 0.94$) and its competence, skills, and capabilities (*competence*; $\alpha = 0.93$) using seven-point Likert scales. Importantly, these measures have been validated for use in assessing individuals, groups, and organizations (Aaker et al. 2010).

We also included manipulation checks, asking participants to indicate the degree to which the organization claimed to value excellence, teamwork, and caring, and the degree to which it lived these values using seven-point scales (1 = *not at all*, 7 = *very much so*).

Study 2 Results
Manipulation Checks for Perceptions of Stated and Lived Values. Supporting the effectiveness of our manipulations, participants who viewed the values statement were significantly more likely to report that the organization valued teamwork ($M = 5.63$, $SD = 1.52$) than those who did not view the values statement ($M = 4.76$, $SD = 2.03$, $t(194) = 3.37$, $p = 0.0001$, $d = 0.48$). Similarly, those who received teamwork-oriented feedback reported that the organization was significantly more likely to live the value of teamwork ($M = 5.49$, $SD = 1.0$) than did those who did not receive teamwork-oriented feedback ($M = 2.94$, $SD = 1.57$, $t(194) = 14.63$, $p < 0.001$, $d = 1.22$).

Perceived Organizational Authenticity. To examine how the experimental condition affected ratings of organizational authenticity, we conducted a two-way analysis of variance (ANOVA). The results reveal a significant main effect of the value-lived condition ($F(1, 192) = 42.82$, $p < 0.001$, $\eta^2 = 0.182$), indicating that participants who received feedback that they should be less teamwork-oriented provided lower ratings for organizational authenticity, and a similar main effect of the stated values condition ($F(1, 192) = 5.57$, $p = 0.019$, $\eta^2 = 0.028$). The main effects are qualified, however, by the predicted interaction between stated and lived values ($F(1, 192) = 15.84$, $p < 0.001$, $\eta^2 = 0.076$). Among participants in the value-not-lived condition, those who viewed the stated values rated the organization as significantly less authentic than those who did not view the stated values (see Table 3 for dependent measures, test statistics, and effect sizes).[8]

Workplace Ratings. To test Hypothesis 1, we conducted a two-way ANOVA examining the effect of the experimental conditions on workplace ratings. The results reveal a significant main effect of the value-lived

Table 3. The Effects of the Stated and Lived Value Conditions on the Measures in Study 2

| | Condition | | | | | | | |
| | Stated value | | | | No stated value (control) | | | |
Outcome	Value lived M (SD)	Value-not-lived M (SD)	t	d	Value lived M (SD)	Value-not-lived M (SD)	t	d
Organizational authenticity	5.08 (0.75)$_a$	3.78 (1.21)$_b$	6.50**	1.34	4.88 (0.78)$_a$	4.56 (0.70)$_c$	2.14*	0.43
Workplace rating	3.89 (0.60)$_a$	3.12 (0.80)$_b$	5.36**	1.10	3.83 (0.60)$_a$	3.46 (0.73)$_b$	2.78**	0.56
Warmth	5.11 (1.08)$_a$	3.80 (1.15)$_b$	5.71**	1.17	5.06 (0.99)$_a$	4.26 (1.00)$_b$	4.03**	1.00
Competence	5.36 (0.97)$_{ab}$	4.94 (0.96)$_b$	2.15*	0.44	5.52 (0.90)$_a$	4.95 (1.07)$_b$	2.89**	0.99

Note. Means with different subscripts differ at the $p < 0.05$ level.

  *$p < 0.05$; **$p < 0.01$

condition on workplace ratings ($F(1, 192) = 334.00$, $p < 0.001$, $\eta^2 = 0.150$), indicating that participants who received feedback to be less teamwork-oriented provided lower ratings of the organization, and no effect of the stated value condition ($F(1, 192) = 2.15$, $p = 0.144$, $\eta^2 = 0.011$). The main effect is qualified, however, by the predicted interaction between stated and lived values ($F(1, 192) = 4.13$, $p = 0.043$, $\eta^2 = 0.021$). Thus, the results support Hypothesis 1: among participants in the valued-lived condition, those who viewed the organization's stated values gave their workplace higher ratings than those who did not.

Mediation. To test Hypothesis 2, we sought to examine whether perceptions of authenticity drove the effects of the stated and lived value conditions on ratings. To do so, we used the PROCESS Model 7 of Preacher and Hayes (2008) for mediated moderation. Supporting Hypothesis 2, the results reveal a significant indirect effect of authenticity ($b = 0.48$, 95% confidence interval (CI) [0.23, 0.75]), indicating significant mediated moderation. Furthermore, including authenticity in the model rendered the direct effect nonsignificant, suggesting full mediation. Importantly, the results for reverse mediation (stated × lived value condition → ratings → authenticity) are not significant (95% CI [−0.26, 0.15]), further supporting our causal model.

Testing Alternate Explanations. In exploring the unique role of authenticity in driving the effect, we also examined the effect of stated and lived conditions on ratings of the organization's *warmth* and *competence*. The interaction between the stated and lived value conditions does not significantly predict perceptions of warmth or competence ($p > 0.099$). Moreover, results for the mediated moderation model reveal no mediation effects for warmth (95% CI [−0.04, 0.48]) or competence (95% CI [−0.26, 0.16]).

Study 2 Discussion
Taken together, the results of Study 2 support Hypothesis 1 and Hypothesis 2. Stated-lived value congruence is associated with more positive workplace ratings, and this relationship is driven by perceptions of authenticity rather than by global perceptions of warmth and competence. Critically, the presence of the significant interaction suggests that it is not the presence (or absence) of teamwork that drives this effect, but rather the presence of teamwork combined with the stated value of teamwork that increases perceptions of authenticity, and in turn, ratings of the organization.

Study 3: Value Congruence, Workplace Ratings, and Authenticity in an Online Labor Market
We designed Study 3 to achieve several goals. First, we sought to implement a more immersive paradigm than hypothetical vignettes by using employees in a labor market who were temporarily employed to work at a real organization. Second, we aimed to test Hypothesis 3, that an employee's preference for organizational values moderates the relationship between organizational authenticity and evaluations. In Study 2, the value-not-lived manipulation (i.e., telling participants to actively not engage in teamwork) may have been heavy-handed; thus, in Study 3 we used a subtler manipulation of lived values.

We also designed the experiment in Study 3 to rule out additional alternative mechanisms potentially driving the effect of stated-lived value congruence on evaluations: cognitive dissonance and personal (i.e., state) authenticity. Regarding dissonance, it is possible that, rather than organizational authenticity perceptions primarily driving this relationship, mere exposure to inconsistency between stated and lived values creates psychological discomfort (i.e., cognitive dissonance; Festinger 1957, Elliot and Devine 1994) and that this negative affective response leads employees to more negatively evaluate their organizations. Another reason that stated-lived value congruence may drive more favorable evaluations is feelings of personal authenticity. People's self-views are constructed by and reflected in the groups to which they belong (Swann et al. 2012). Workplaces are a salient type of group membership (Ashforth and Mael 1989), and thus views of one's employer (as well as

the views believed to be inferred by others about the organization) can impact views of the self (Cialdini et al. 1976, Dutton et al. 1994). Just as consuming authentic goods and products can make consumers feel more authentic (Sirgy 1982, Frake 2017), so may being a part of an authentic organization. The state of personal authenticity is overwhelmingly positive (for a review, see Sedikides et al. 2017); thus, employees who feel more authentic may provide more favorable organizational evaluations. This may be especially true when they prefer the values at hand, as indicated in Hypothesis 3, given that feelings of fit between one's own values and organizational values enhance feelings of state authenticity (Schmader and Sedikides 2018). Measuring feelings of dissonance, state authenticity, and organizational authenticity perceptions enabled us to test whether perceived organizational authenticity primarily mediates the effect.

To test our predictions, we leveraged an online labor marketplace to enable participants to become real, temporary employees of an organization, thereby enhancing both internal validity by controlling information exposure, and external validity by examining a context that is amenable to studying employee-employer interactions (Burbano 2016). Upon being hired by a medical devices company, all participants were randomly assigned to one of six conditions in a 2 (stated value: innovation versus tradition) × 2 (lived value: innovation versus tradition) × 2 (order: rating variable first versus authenticity variable first) preregistered, between-subjects design (https://aspredicted.org/97wx3.pdf).

Pretest
We conducted a pretest to identify participants' value preferences at the group level to enable us to test our predictions around value preferences while also maintaining experimental control. We recruited 100 American adults via Turk Prime (turkprime.com; Litman et al. 2017), the same population we planned to sample in Study 3. Participants indicated their preferences for the 11 values from Study 1 on a scale ranging from zero (*opposed to the principles that organizations should have*) to eight (*of supreme importance*). Based on these results (online appendix), we selected the values of innovation and tradition (i.e., conformity). Participants significantly preferred innovation ($M = 6.62$, $SD = 1.75$) over tradition ($M = 4.13$, $SD = 1.93$, paired $t(99) = 9.61$, $p < 0.001$). Moreover, because innovation and tradition are viewed as oppositional values (Schwartz 1992, 2012), using them enabled us to operationalize the lived value within a single task in Study 3, thereby enhancing internal validity.

Method
Sample.
We recruited a panel of 400 full-time employees via Turk Prime. After removing participants who did not complete the study or failed an attention check, we were left with 347 participants (53.1% female, $M_{age} = 37.91$, $SD_{age} = 11.55$). A power analysis using G*Power revealed that we had 90% power to detect the small-to-medium sized interaction effects observed in Study 2 (see the online appendix for these analyses and supplemental power analyses completed using Superpower; Lakens and Caldwell 2021).

Procedure.
Participants were recruited as temporary employees to work for a real medical device company called Northmedic. After being provided with basic information about the organization, participants were informed that they were hired to help with a product-naming task, choosing the name for a new medical device among a list of possible names. Participants were then exposed to a formal values statement by Northmedic, which either stated the value of innovation (*innovation-stated* condition) or tradition (*tradition-stated* condition), modeled after the statements of companies in the S&P 500. Then, they were exposed to employee reviews emphasizing either innovation (*innovation-lived* condition) or tradition (*tradition-lived* condition) in the organization's real practices in accordance with their assigned experimental condition. Participants then completed the measures to indicate their ratings of the organization, perceptions of organizational authenticity, personal feelings of state authenticity and dissonance, and responses to the manipulation checks. Finally, participants responded to control and demographic measures and were debriefed.

Stated Value Manipulation.
Participants in the *innovation-stated* condition read a statement emphasizing *innovation* and *creativity*, whereas those in the *tradition-stated* condition read a value statement emphasizing *discipline* and *tradition* (online appendix).

Lived Value Manipulation.
Adapting a design from Ruttan and Nordgren (2016), we manipulated whether the stated value was lived by exposing participants to general feedback about the organization from three peer employees before they completed the product-naming task. Feedback from peers is a key way that employees become socialized into organizational norms (Comer 1991, Morrison 1993). To construct the peer feedback, we used actual quotes from the Glassdoor sample of employee reviews so that employees would be exposed to real-world language. In the *innovation-lived* condition, two of three peer reviews mentioned "innovation," whereas in the *tradition-lived* condition, two of three peer reviews mentioned "tradition."

Measures.
Following the manipulations, participants completed the key measures from Study 2. Similar to

Study 2, we counterbalanced the measures, but observed no order effects; thus, order is not discussed further. We administered a measure of *perceived organizational authenticity* using the same scale as Study 2, which again demonstrated high interitem reliability ($\alpha = 0.90$). Likewise, our central outcome measure was participants' public *workplace ratings*, on a scale from one to five stars.

To test the competing mechanisms, we measured the state of *personal authenticity* using four items from Gino et al. (2010) (e.g., "Right now, I feel out of touch with the 'real me'"; $1 = strongly\ disagree$, $7 = strongly\ agree$; $\alpha = 0.91$). We also measured the state of *cognitive dissonance* using three items from Elliot and Devine (1994) to assess the degree to which participants felt uncomfortable, uneasy, and bothered ($\alpha = 0.94$).

We used one supplementary item to measure *organizational hypocrisy* (i.e., "This organization is hypocritical"; Gino et al. 2010) on a seven-point scale. Please see the online appendix for additional exploratory outcome measures, including organizational identification and reservation wage. We also included several manipulation checks. To identify whether participants perceived differences in stated-lived value congruence across conditions, we asked participants to indicate the degree to which the organization claimed to value *excellence*, *teamwork*, and *caring* and the degree to which it lived these values on seven-point scales ($1 = not\ at\ all$, $7 = very\ much\ so$). This enabled us to identify whether participants perceived differences in stated-lived value congruence across conditions. Moreover, we measured person-organization congruence using three items (e.g., "My personal values match Northmedic's values and culture;" $1 = strongly\ disagree$, $7 = strongly\ agree$; Cable and DeRue 2002) with high interitem reliability ($\alpha = 0.90$). Although our pretest data provided initial support for the notion that participants preferred innovation over tradition, this measure provides a stronger and more direct test of whether participants felt more person-organization value congruence when the value of innovation was stated.

Study 3 Results
Manipulation Checks for Perceptions of Stated and Lived Values.
Supporting the validity of our stated value manipulation, participants in the innovation-stated condition were significantly more likely to report that the organization stated the value of innovation ($M = 6.41$, $SD = 1.06$) than those in the tradition-stated condition ($M = 3.13$, $SD = 1.91$, $t(345) = 20.03$, $p < 0.001$, $d = 1.52$). Likewise, those in the innovation-stated condition were significantly less likely to report that the organization stated the value of tradition ($M = 3.05$, $SD = 1.67$) than those in the tradition-stated condition ($M = 6.50$, $SD = 1.03$, two-tailed $t(345) = -22.85$, $p < 0.001$, $d = 1.40$). Supporting the validity of our lived

value manipulation, participants in the innovation-lived condition were significantly more likely to report that the organization lived the value of innovation ($M = 5.46$, $SD = 1.28$) than those in the tradition-lived condition ($M = 3.32$, $SD = 1.68$, $t(345) = 13.37$, $p < 0.001$, $d = 1.49$). Likewise, those in the innovation-lived condition were significantly less likely to report that the organization lived the value of tradition ($M = 3.70$, $SD = 1.70$) than those in the tradition-lived condition ($M = 5.79$, $SD = 1.27$; $t(345) = -12.92$, $p < 0.001$, $d = 1.51$).

Manipulation Check for Feelings of Personal Congruence. We conducted a two-way ANOVA examining the effects of the stated and lived value conditions on feelings of personal congruence. Critically, we found a main effect of the stated value condition on ratings ($F(1, 343) = 6.29$, $p = 0.013$, partial-$\eta^2 = 0.018$), no main effect of the lived value condition ($F(1, 343) = 1.94$, $p = 0.164$, partial-$\eta^2 = 0.006$), and the predicted interaction between stated and lived values ($F(1, 343) = 9.91$, $p = 0.002$, partial-$\eta^2 = 0.028$). Breaking down the significant interaction, when innovation was a stated value, participants felt more personal fit with the organization's values when innovation (rather than tradition) was lived. However, no significant differences emerged between the two lived value conditions when tradition was a stated value. The results thus reveal that participants felt the most personal congruence with the organization's values when innovation was both stated and lived, further supporting that innovation is more aligned with participants' personal values than tradition.

Perceived Organizational Authenticity. To test Hypothesis 2, we first wanted to examine whether stated-lived value congruence would shape perceived organizational authenticity. We ran an ANOVA to examine the effect of the stated and lived value conditions on perceptions of organizational authenticity. The results revealed no main effect of the stated value condition ($F(1, 343) = 0.52$, $p = 0.473$, partial-$\eta^2 = 0.002$) and no main effect of the lived value condition ($F(1, 343) = 1.01$, $p = 0.315$, partial-$\eta^2 = 0.003$). The results did reveal the predicted stated × lived value interaction ($F(1, 343) = 89.54$, $p < 0.001$, partial-$\eta^2 = 0.21$), such that perceptions of organizational authenticity were higher when stated and lived values are congruent (Figure 2).[9] Among participants in the innovation-lived condition, those in the innovation-stated group rated the organization as significantly more authentic than those in the tradition-stated value group. Among participants in the tradition-lived condition, those in the tradition-stated group rated the organization as significantly more authentic than those in the innovation-stated group (see Table 4 for dependent measures, test statistics, and effect sizes). In short, participants rated the organization as more authentic when the stated value was also lived.

Figure 2. Effect of Stated and Lived Value Conditions on Organizational Authenticity (+SE) in Study 3
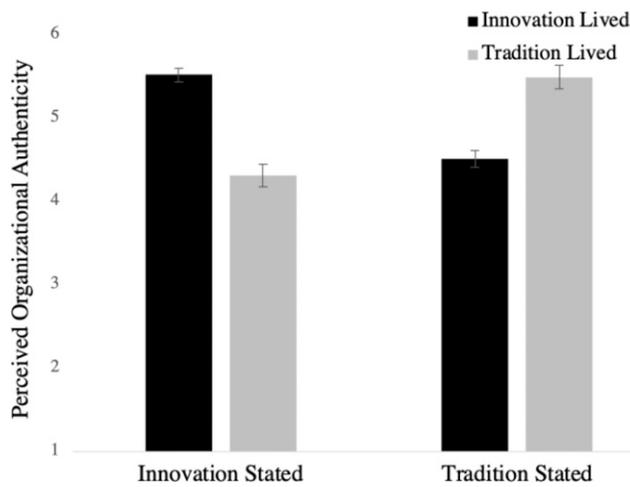
Moderating Role of Value Preferences. A key aim of Study 3 was to test Hypothesis 3. If Hypothesis 3 is supported, stated-lived value congruence should predict ratings when the more preferred value (innovation) is stated, but not when the less preferred value (tradition) is stated. Supporting Hypothesis 3, results of a two-way ANOVA show no main effect of the stated value condition on ratings ($F(1, 343) = 1.20$, $p = 0.274$, partial-$\eta^2 = 0.003$), a main effect of the lived value condition ($F(1, 343) = 6.08$, $p = 0.014$, partial-$\eta^2 = 0.017$), and the predicted stated × lived value interaction ($F(1, 343) = 11.48$, $p = 0.001$, partial-$\eta^2 = 0.032$; Figure 3). Breaking down the significant interaction, when innovation was a stated value, employees provided significantly higher workplace ratings when innovation (rather than tradition) was lived. However, no significant differences emerged between the lived value conditions when tradition was a stated value. In other

words, ratings were significantly higher when innovation (the more preferred value) was stated and lived, but ratings were not significantly different when tradition (the less preferred value) was stated and lived (versus not lived), supporting Hypothesis 3.

Mediation by Organizational Authenticity. We tested the proposed moderated mediation model using the PROCESS Model 7 of Preacher and Hayes (2008). Specifically, we predicted that value preferences would moderate this effect, such that stated-lived value congruence would yield higher ratings when the more preferred value (i.e., innovation) was stated, but not when the less preferred value (i.e., tradition) was stated. The results support a significant moderated mediation model (95% CI [0.55, 0.92]).

Testing Alternate Explanations. To test the effects of the experimental conditions on *personal authenticity*, we examined how the stated and lived value conditions affected participants' feelings of state authenticity. Results of a two-way ANOVA show a marginal main effect of the stated value condition on ratings ($F(1, 343) = 3.23$, $p = 0.073$, partial-$\eta^2 = 0.009$), no main effect of the lived value condition ($F(1, 343) = 1.82$, $p = 0.178$, partial-$\eta^2 = 0.005$), and no stated × lived value interaction ($F(1, 343) = 1.59$, $p = 0.209$, partial-$\eta^2 = 0.005$). Those in the innovation-stated condition marginally felt higher levels of personal authenticity ($M = 5.97$, $SD = 1.24$) than did those in the tradition-stated condition ($M = 5.71$, $SD = 1.34$, $t(345) = 1.85$, $p = 0.065$, $d = 0.20$). Thus, participants felt somewhat more personal authenticity when the organization stated a more preferred value than when the organization stated a less preferred value. For *cognitive dissonance*, the results of a two-way ANOVA show no main effect of the stated value condition ($F(1, 343) = 2.35$, $p = 0.126$, partial-$\eta^2 = 0.007$), no main effect of the lived

**Table 4.** Effects of the Stated and Lived Value Conditions on the Measures in Study 3

| | Condition | | | | | | | |
| | Innovation stated | | | | Tradition stated | | | |
Outcome	Innovation lived ($n = 95$) (mean (SD))	Tradition lived ($n = 87$) (mean (SD))	t	d	Innovation lived ($n = 83$) (mean (SD))	Tradition lived ($n = 82$) (mean (SD))	t	d
Organizational authenticity	5.52 (0.84)[a]	4.31 (1.26)[b]	7.67**	1.14	4.51 (1.27)[b]	5.49 (0.88)[a]	−5.76**	−0.90
Workplace rating	4.13 (0.69)[a]	3.68 (0.62)[b]	4.59**	0.68	3.78 (0.77)[b]	3.85 (0.77)[b]	−0.59	−0.09
Personal authenticity	6.19 (1.00)[a]	5.78 (1.35)[a,b]	2.33*	0.35	5.72 (1.35)[b]	5.71 (1.34)[b]	0.06	0.01
Cognitive dissonance	1.52 (1.17)[a]	2.25 (1.53)[b]	−3.56**	−0.53	2.24 (1.46)[b]	1.99 (1.38)[a]	1.13	0.18

Note. Means with different superscripts differ at the $p < 0.05$ level.
*$p < 0.05$; **$p < 0.01$.

Figure 3. Effect of Stated and Lived Value Conditions on Organizational Evaluations (+SE) in Study 3
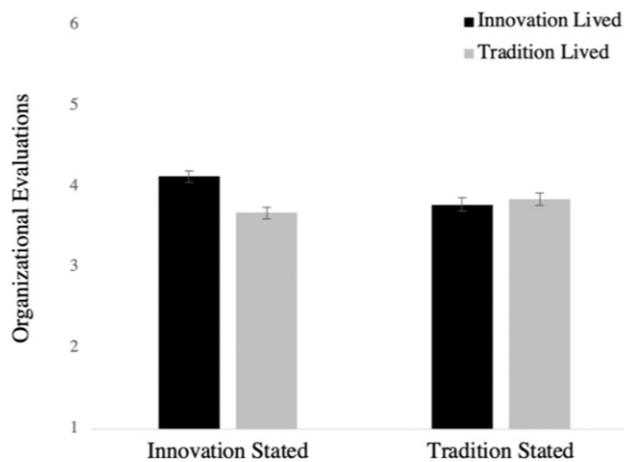
value condition ($F(1,343) = 2.53$, $p = 0.113$, partial-$\eta^2 = 0.007$), and the predicted stated × lived value interaction ($F(1,343) = 10.66$, $p = 0.001$, partial-$\eta^2 = 0.030$). Breaking down this significant interaction, participants in the innovation-stated condition felt significantly more cognitive dissonance when tradition (versus innovation) was lived, but no significant differences emerged for participants in the tradition-stated condition.

To examine perceived organizational authenticity versus personal authenticity and cognitive dissonance as mediators, we used Model 85 in PROCESS to test for multiple mediators in a moderation model. Whereas organizational authenticity perceptions remain a significant mediator (95% CI [0.52, 0.96]), personal authenticity (95% CI [−0.04, 0.03]) and cognitive dissonance (95% CI [−0.06, 0.01]) did not demonstrate significant indirect effects. Taken together, these results suggest that the relationship between stated-lived value congruence and evaluations can be explained by perceived organizational authenticity.

Study 3 Discussion

The results of Study 3 provide causal support for the relationship between stated-lived value congruence and evaluations (Hypothesis 1) and support the prediction that perceived organizational authenticity drives this effect (Hypothesis 2). Moreover, supporting Hypothesis 3, the results show that stated-lived value congruence affects organizational evaluations only when the audience prefers the stated value. Collectively, these results suggest that although audiences reward stated-lived value congruence and associated authenticity perceptions with higher evaluations, this may only be the case when the values in question are highly preferred. Interestingly, the mean preference for the value of tradition in our study was close to the scale midpoint ($M = 4.12$ of 9), suggesting that tradition was moderately preferred. Thus, our results suggest that audiences reward

perceived organizational authenticity with positive evaluations only when they hold a strong preference for the stated value. Finally, we rule out personal authenticity and cognitive dissonance as potential drivers of our results, thereby providing a more compelling case for the critical role of perceived organizational authenticity in shaping evaluations.

General Discussion

Our research was driven by a desire to better understand (1) how stated *and* lived organizational values contribute to authenticity perceptions and evaluations and (2) the conditions under which audiences are less likely to reward organizations, even when they deem them authentic. We first needed to clarify and demonstrate the role of organizational values in eliciting perceptions of authenticity. The analysis of archival data in Study 1 provides initial external validity to the argument that congruence between stated and lived values is associated with favorable employee ratings of their workplaces. The experimental findings of Study 2 provide additional causal evidence for this finding and support our argument that stated-lived value congruence affects evaluations by shaping perceptions of organizational authenticity. Findings from Study 3 offer evidence in support of the proposed boundary condition: the positive relationships between stated-lived value congruence, organizational authenticity, and workplace ratings is attenuated for less preferred values. That is, even when employees perceived an organization with stated-lived value congruence as authentic, these perceptions did not necessarily yield evaluative rewards. Studies 2 and 3 also rule out competing explanations for our authenticity account.

Our findings offer several contributions to the growing body of research on organizational authenticity. A key contribution of our research is to account for both stated and lived values simultaneously, validating that stated-lived value congruence elicits perceptions of organizational authenticity and drives evaluations. Despite the field's conceptual emphasis on congruence in driving perceptions of authenticity as consistency (Lehman et al. 2019a), methodological constraints of existing studies have resulted in a lack evidence for the role of congruence between stated and lived values in relation to authenticity. Existing studies have often explored either lived values or stated values as signals of authenticity in isolation from congruence (Beverland 2005, Voronov et al. 2013, Verhaal et al. 2015, Hahl 2016, Frake 2017). In contrast, we have theoretically and empirically disentangled organizational values into stated and lived values and directly considered their congruence alongside perceptions of organizational authenticity and evaluations. Our results thus help build theoretical consensus about the nature of the relationship between values,

authenticity, and evaluations and a better understanding of how these important components of authenticity function to generate rewards.

A second contribution of our findings is that we have ruled out potentially competing explanations as to why stated-lived value congruence results in positive organizational evaluations. Existing research suggests that perceptions of warmth and competence, feelings of cognitive dissonance, and feelings of personal authenticity could explain the positive relationship between stated-lived value congruence and organizational evaluations. The mediation results of Studies 2 and 3 show that perceived organizational authenticity mediates the relationship between stated-lived value congruence and positive evaluations, whereas perceptions of warmth and competence, cognitive dissonance, and feelings of personal authenticity do not. By using experimental methods to rule out compelling alternatives, our work further demonstrates the relationship between organizational values and authenticity (Carroll and Wheaton 2009; Lehman et al. 2019a, b; Radoynovska and King 2019).

A third key contribution of our study is to develop a more nuanced understanding of the conditions under which audiences provide evaluative rewards for perceived authenticity. Much literature on organizational authenticity has focused on the positive main effects of authenticity for brands and organizations. Indeed, some perspectives suggest perceived authenticity may always lead to rewards, as authenticity signals morality (Carroll and Wheaton 2009), which is a trait that leads to evaluative rewards (Brambilla et al. 2021). In the current work, we instead take a contingency-based approach, leveraging insights from research on individual-level values (Kristof 1996, Hitlin and Vaisey 2010, Schwartz 2012) to predict that audiences are less likely to reward organizations for perceived authenticity when they hold a lower preference for the organization's stated values. In suggesting that the rewards of authenticity may be contingent upon audience preference for the external claims an organization makes around its identity, our empirical results add to the field's emerging understanding of the limits of the appeal of authenticity (Verhaal and Dobrev 2022). Our results suggest that it is wise not to conflate the perceptions of authenticity with any inherent positive value without also understanding audience value preferences. In doing so, our work implies that authenticity perceptions do not necessarily predominate evaluations in the same manner as morality (Brambilla et al. 2021).

In developing the theoretical boundary conditions for authenticity, our research also extends existing theorizing (Lehman et al. 2019a, b) and unpacks the theoretical contingencies implicit in prior work (Frake 2017, Hahl and Ha 2020). Although some scholars have speculated that the appeal of organizational authenticity is

contingent on preference for the referent (Lehman et al. 2019a), many existing studies have examined the effects of perceived authenticity on audiences that hold a strong underlying preference for the referent (e.g., baseball fans, beer enthusiasts, restaurant-goers) (Kovács et al. 2014, Verhaal et al. 2015, Hahl 2016, Frake 2017), rendering it difficult to draw conclusions. Our employee sample allowed us to explore moderately preferred organizational values, as employees moderately preferred the value of traditionalism. We document that perceived authenticity has a reduced effect on evaluations when employee preference for the stated value is lower, thus further developing our understanding of potential boundary conditions for the rewards of authenticity. Our results imply that audiences may need to hold a strong preference for an organization's identity claims for perceived authenticity to translate into rewards.

Our results imply that audiences may need to hold a strong preference for an organization's identity claims for perceived authenticity to translate into rewards. Thus, although scholars have often explored whether and how organizations can successfully make themselves appear authentic (Beverland 2005, 2009; Kovács et al. 2017; Demetry 2019), we suggest that attempts to generate authenticity may provide little value if audience members have different personal values. Indeed, to optimize investments in authenticity, organizations may be best served by first learning more about the personal values of their stakeholders, including employees and consumers.

Another novel aspect of our research for authenticity scholarship is our focus on employees. We are among the first to document how perceptions of organizational authenticity shape evaluations among this audience. Niche consumer audiences for cultural products, often the focus of organizational authenticity scholars (Beverland 2005, Frake 2017), are more likely to have more uniform and stronger preferences for the stated values than might a general employee audience; thus, explorations into how broader audiences respond to values is critical to building consensus regarding the weight that authenticity carries in shaping organizational evaluations. Overall, echoing calls to acknowledge the perspective of audience members (Pontikes 2012, Demetry 2019, Lehman et al. 2019a, Radoynovska and King 2019, Schifeling and Demetry 2021), we encourage additional focus on audience preferences and potential heterogeneity. Important insights could be generated by comparing consumers and employees. Employees may be more willing to overlook incongruence between stated and lived values because they are involved in their enactment, at least to some degree. Conversely, employees may react more negatively to inauthenticity, especially if it violates newcomer expectations or their own feelings of personal authenticity. Additional research can shed light on these differences

and test how emerging authenticity theory generalizes across domains and audiences. We believe this line of research will have important implications for how organizations engage in authenticity work. Organizations that attend to employee concerns for authenticity may see rewards in increased commitment and retention, as well as potentially increasing the consumer experience of authenticity (Sirianni et al. 2013).

Our findings also have important implications for ongoing research on values in organization theory and organizational behavior. For research on values at the organizational level, our work reflects the centrality of values to assessments of organizational character (Selznick 1957, King 2015, Kraatz and Flores 2015). Our findings provide additional reasons why it is important for organizational leaders to take "values work" seriously (Gehman et al. 2013), namely because communicating values that are not also lived raises audience concerns about authenticity. Our results thus echo prior work on the importance of organizational actors engaging in work to live out desired values (Bansal 2003, Besharov 2014). For research in organizational behavior, our theorizing on the (in)congruence between stated and lived values opens an important line of related questions about different kinds of person-organization fit. Of relevance to the current work, scholars have yet to examine the multidimensional nature of organizational values in the literature on person-organization fit (for a review, see Piasentin and Chapman 2006). Many researchers have assessed perceptions of subjective fit, often using just one item to assess the extent to which employees perceive alignment with their organizations (e.g., "The things I value in life are very similar to the things that my organization values"; Chatman 1989, Cable and Judge 1996). This approach has resulted in a lack of attention to the multidimensional nature of values. Thus, it remains unclear which dimensions of organizational values employees attend to when making subjective fit assessments. For example, if the values that an organization states are at odds with the lived values in the organization's internal culture, it is unclear which element of these organizational values would attract employees' attention. We have demonstrated that fit with both stated and lived values influences how employees rate their workplaces. That is, employees prefer alignment across stated, lived, and personal values, suggesting a fairly high bar for organizations to benefit from stating values. We encourage scholars to consider the multiple dimensions of organizational values when studying person-organization fit.

Limitations and Future Research

Despite the strengths of these studies, they are not without limitations. A concern with Study 1 is that voluntary Glassdoor ratings may not represent the ratings of average employees. Such sample selection bias is present in all voluntary online review data (Kovács et al. 2014, Goldberg et al. 2016). We believe this concern is partly alleviated by our experimental findings as well as our decision to run models only at the employee level and not at the organization level. A related concern is that only highly positive or highly negative reviews may be posted to Glassdooor, resulting in a bimodal distribution. In addition to examining the ratings distribution for our sample, we explored the distribution for all reviews from 2012 to 2015. The estimated density function for overall ratings within this timeframe does not exhibit bimodality; rather, the density estimates are approximately normally distributed with a slight righthand skew. There is no evidence of different groups of reviewers with different distributions over ratings. To lend further credibility to our results, we ran additional robustness checks and achieved similar results by winsorizing the data at the 10% and 90% levels.

It is also important to consider how our theorized moderation and the findings from Study 3 impact how the results of Study 1 are interpreted. According to the proposed moderation, we might not expect to see a relationship between stated-lived values congruence and higher ratings unless audiences strongly prefer a given organizational value. Viewing the results of Study 1 through this lens, we believe that employees are most likely to notice (in)congruence for values they personally prefer and to focus on those values when given opportunities to provide unstructured feedback (via open text boxes, in our case). In additional analyses, we also tested whether the positive effect of stated-lived value congruence on ratings is driven by preferred values, using the set of values identified in Study 3. Using cosine similarity, we created two separate congruence scores for the set of preferred (universal, benevolence, achievement, security, integrity, innovation, and teamwork) and less-preferred (power, conformity, gratification) values. The results suggest that congruence in both preferred and less-preferred values is associated with significantly higher employee ratings on Glassdoor than incongruence. However, consistent with the moderation results in Study 3, the effect of congruence for preferred values (0.298) is twice as large as the effect of congruence for less preferred values (0.132). Notably, although the effect of stated-lived congruence on ratings does not disappear completely for less preferred values, all the organizations in our sample stated more than one value, making it difficult to pinpoint the unique effects of any given value. Although these analyses are exploratory in nature, they offer convergent evidence for the attenuating role of value preference nonetheless.

Moreover, although we focused on stated-lived value congruence, it would be fruitful to examine distinctions among different types of stated values (i.e., claims about

currently lived versus aspirational values). Ruttan et al. (2021) found that, although stated values represent real aspirations for organizational members, stating aspirational values creates the perception of a discrepancy between stated values and lived actions, decreasing external observers' trust in the organization. Future research could link these ideas to perceptions of authenticity more directly to explore whether and how perceptions of organizational authenticity evolve over time, and to what effect.

Future research could also seek to integrate the different antecedents of organizational authenticity perceptions (Kovács 2019, Lehman et al. 2019a, Radoynovska and King 2019). We found that stated-lived value congruence is clearly a part of the nomological net of organizational authenticity as consistency but does not comprise the entire construct (see Supplemental Study 4 in the online appendix). Other antecedents are possible, such as mission drift, and an excessive focus on extrinsic rewards. Scholars can explore the conditions under which these differing antecedents become more or less predictive of authenticity judgments or how they might interact. For example, it could be that factors like perceived extrinsic motivation or impression management could dampen the positive effects of stated-lived value congruence on attributions of authenticity. That is, even if an organization demonstrates consistency, if that consistency appears driven by extrinsic rewards (e.g., profit motivation), it may undermine the benefits yielded from consistency. We believe this will be a fruitful future area of research.

Conclusion

Overall, our work strengthens the conceptualization of authenticity as consistency as being elicited by congruence between an entity's internal values and external expressions of them. At the same time, our findings provide a more nuanced understanding of how audiences reward organizations they perceive as authentic by showing that evaluative rewards do not necessarily follow from perceived authenticity when audiences hold a lower preference for the organization's values. As the search for authenticity continues to dominate modern life (Trilling 1972, Cha et al. 2019, Lehman et al. 2019a), we hope that our research encourages additional cross-level scholarship on values and authenticity to better understand how penalties and rewards follow from perceptions of organizational (in)authenticity across multiple domains.

Acknowledgments

Endnotes

[1] The conceptualization of authenticity as consistency is related to the conceptualization of moral authenticity given the shared focus on whether an entity is true to self, the latter being an "interpretation of authenticity as signifying that the choices behind something reflect the morally sincere beliefs of those involved" (Carroll and Wheaton 2009, p. 257). For additional conceptualizations of authenticity, including category and type authenticity, see Carroll and Wheaton (2009), Lehman et al. (2019a), or Radoynovska and King (2019).

[2] In our preregistration document, this hypothesis is documented as a competing hypothesis (indicating the potential for no moderation and instead predicting a main effect of stated-lived value congruence and no moderation by value preferences). As helpfully pointed out by a reviewer, this competing hypothesis is subsumed by Hypothesis 3 (and captured by the null result for the moderation). Thus, we present only one hypothesis here (while remaining consistent with our preregistration document).

[3] Glassdoor.com data are proprietary and thus cannot be shared online. We also note that Study 2 was conducted before preregistration was a common practice in the social sciences. Please contact the corresponding author for more information.

[4] Glassdoor.com is ranked in the top 200 of U.S. websites (as of May 2016) based on average daily visitors and page views by Amazon subsidiary, Alexa.com. Glassdoor has also been mentioned in prominent news publications, including the *Wall Street Journal, Bloomberg,* and *BusinessWeek,* among others.

[5] We tested both topic modeling and keyword analysis as potential automated coding methods, but ultimately found that they did not provide the level of specificity we were seeking; thus, we proceeded with hand coding.

[6] Similar results were achieved with Euclidean distance and when specifying congruence only in cases in which employees noted the value as lived and not lived (i.e., 1 and −1, but not 0). The structure of the data, in 0s and 1s, did not allow us to adopt popular polynomial regression techniques (Edwards 1994) as polynomial models require squared terms.

[7] We conducted an additional construct validation study that examines the phenomenology of perceived organizational authenticity and how it compares to related constructs (e.g., hypocrisy). Please see the online appendix for details on Supplemental Study 4.

[8] In response to a helpful reviewer comment, we also analyzed whether the results on the organizational authenticity variable held while excluding the items that came closer to capturing stated-lived value congruence (namely, "This organization seems to express the true values of its leaders," "This organization presents itself sincerely," "This organization tries to be something it's not," and "This organization is not what it claims to be") while retaining the other items (e.g., "This organization seems mostly concerned with gaining social approval," "This organization would be itself regardless of what others say," "The motivations of this organization seem sincere"). The results are robust to the exclusion of these items (see online appendix for full write-up).

[9] These results were again robust to the exclusion of the organizational authenticity items closer to stated-lived value congruence (see online appendix for full write-up).

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