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Perceived organizational culture and engagement: the mediating role of authenticity

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Abstract

Purpose – The idea of being authentic at work is gaining traction in both academia and organizations. The purpose of this paper is to test whether four types of perceived organizational culture (hierarchical, clan, market, and adhocracy) influence employees' authenticity and whether behaving more authentically at work influences the extent to which employees are engaged with their jobs.

Design/methodology/approach – The sample includes 208 professionals working in a variety of industries in Brazil. Hypotheses are tested using structural equation modeling.

Findings – Results indicate that environments that are perceived to be more inclusive and participative, and that incentivize autonomy (i.e. clan and adhocracy cultures) neither nurture nor inhibit authenticity. On the other hand, cultures perceived to emphasize stability, order, and control (i.e. hierarchy and market cultures) are negatively related to authenticity. In addition, employees who behave more authentically at work are more engaged with their jobs. Authenticity at work also mediates the relationship between hierarchical and market cultures and work engagement.

Originality/value – The authors address the call of Roberts *et al.* (2009) for more research associated with the role that the organizational context plays in the development of authenticity. With the focus on authenticity the authors broaden the range of work engagement antecedents already discussed in the literature (Christian *et al.*, 2011).

Keywords Authenticity, Organizational culture, Engagement

Paper type Research paper

Senior executives are starting to recognize the potential implications of authentic behaviors at work as they relate to motivation and productivity. Authenticity can be defined as a consistency between one's external expressions and internal experiences (Roberts *et al.*, 2009). Behaving and interacting in authentic ways have positive consequences for psychological well-being (Ménard and Brunet, 2011). However, individuals tend to be less authentic at work than in other contexts (Robinson *et al.*, 2013). Therefore, understanding how authenticity can be fostered at work is very important. Few studies to date have looked at how organizations may nurture authentic behaviors (Roberts *et al.*, 2009) or the advantages individuals gain by behaving authentically at work (Cable *et al.*, 2013).

Organizational culture influences how an employee believes that he/she should behave in a specific context (Schein, 2004). Different types of cultures may create different environments that provide clues to employees about the extent to which they can feel safe in behaving more authentically. We also believe that authenticity

influences engagement, understood as a motivational, fulfilling, work-related state of mind (Saks, 2006). Employees who feel authentic are likely to work in activities that fit their core values or at least perform their jobs in ways that are more congruent with their core selves. This is likely to result in more intrinsic motivation and hence, engagement. Therefore, organizational culture has the potential to influence workers' engagement as it encourages/discourages employees to behave authentically at work.

The present study contributes to literature both on authenticity at work and engagement. First, and differently from earlier research focussing on the emotional or productivity costs of inauthentic behaviors (Roberts *et al.*, 2009), our work looks at positive aspects of authenticity (namely, engagement) and does so in connection with employees rather than just leaders, which is more common in the authentic leadership literature (Avolio and Gardner, 2005). Second, we also address the call made by Roberts *et al.* (2009) for more research associated with the role that the organizational context plays in the development of authenticity. Finally, with our focus on authenticity we broaden the range of work engagement antecedents already discussed in the literature (Christian *et al.*, 2011).

Organizational culture and authenticity

In the last decade growing importance has been given to the authenticity construct in the work environment. Overall, authenticity has been linked with increased well-being and self-esteem as well as decreased levels of stress and depression (Neff and Harter, 2002; Goldman and Kernis, 2002; Wood *et al.*, 2008). In addition to its positive effect on employee well-being, though, authenticity has also been linked with work role performance (Leroy *et al.*, 2015), team productivity (Hannah *et al.*, 2011), and reduced employee turnover (Goodwin *et al.*, 2011). A few empirical studies have examined authenticity in organizations, mainly focussing on authentic leadership (Avolio and Gardner, 2005), strategy making (Liedtka, 2008), and more recently, from an employees' perspective (Ménard and Brunet, 2011; Yagil and Medler-Liraz, 2013). Therefore, facilitating ways in which employees may feel that they can be consistent with their own values and beliefs, as well as feeling free to behave and stand up for what they believe in, is important.

Corporate culture encompasses shared beliefs, values, and assumptions that guide and give meaning to behaviors and relationships in organizations (Schein, 2004); it also aligns expected standards of individuals' behavior. Culture is defined as […] "the proper way to think and feel" (Schneider *et al.*, 2013, p. 362) and can regulate the level of emotional expression at work (Ashforth and Humphrey, 1995) or employee's levels of authentic expression (Robinson *et al.*, 2013).

The relationship between organizational culture and authenticity can be explained by social cognitive theory, in which the environment influences individual behavior (Bandura, 1991; Wood and Bandura, 1989). Therefore, through self-regulation (Bandura, 1991) individuals continuously assess how their personal standards fit with organizational requirements and if they feel that they can be their true selves at work.

Because organizations fit into distinct cultural profiles (Cameron and Quinn, 2006; Schneider *et al.*, 2013) it is likely that the patterns of authentic expression differ, depending on how employees perceive these different profiles. Thus, in order to distinguish among different types of corporate culture and to establish linkages with authenticity, we use the competing values framework (CVF) in a version adapted for corporate culture diagnosis (Cameron and Quinn, 2006; Schein, 2004). The CVF

organizes effectiveness along two major dimensions: one that emphasizes flexibility, discretion, and dynamism as opposed to control, order, and stability; and another that emphasizes an internal orientation, integration, and unity as opposed to external orientation, differentiation, and rivalry (Cameron and Quinn, 2006). Together these two dimensions form four quadrants and represent ideal types of organizational cultures: hierarchy, market, clan, and adhocracy.

Clan culture
The clan culture is focussed on the internal environment. It emphasizes flexibility to the detriment of stability and control (Cameron and Quinn, 2006). Organizational goals are achieved via team work, participation, loyalty, trust, open communication, and collaboration. The environment is amicable and human with employees sharing a lot of themselves. People development and positive organizational climate are valued (Cameron and Quinn, 2006). The clan culture may offer employees possibilities to act genuinely, to speak their minds, and to behave in ways that fit their own values and beliefs (Gregory *et al.*, 2009). They may express their true emotions more freely in a context that they perceive to be psychologically safe. Therefore:

H1. Authenticity at work is positively related to ratings of perceived clan culture.

Adhocracy culture
This type of culture focusses on the external environment and emphasizes flexibility. Employees seek to differentiate themselves by exploring new opportunities regarding innovative products/services (Cameron and Quinn, 2006). The main drive of adhocracy culture is to "create" (Hartnell *et al.*, 2011) and therefore, entrepreneurship, pioneering, experimentation, and creativity are highly valued. In this innovation-oriented environment, employees are encouraged to behave as intrapreneurs and experiment with new ideas (Cameron and Quinn, 2006). Authenticity is important for enhancing the sharing of new perspectives and to improve innovation (Steiner, 1995). Therefore, in this type of culture employees may behave in ways that are more consistent with their beliefs and values as well as pursue genuine career paths:

H2. Authenticity at work is positively related to ratings of perceived adhocracy culture.

Hierarchical culture
The hierarchical culture focusses on the company's internal environment and the search for stability and control (Cameron and Quinn, 2006). There is emphasis on the organizational structure and on well-defined, efficient, and standardized procedures, roles, and work processes. Relationships in a hierarchical culture tend to be formal, as bureaucratic cultures often have organizational norms that prevent emotional connections, resulting in a depersonalization of the workplace (Ashforth and Humphrey, 1995). Behaviors are often guided by formally determined roles and norms (Hartnell *et al.*, 2011). Employees in this type of culture may therefore be less eager to speak their minds or step out of their formal roles and responsibilities to behave in ways that represent their personal values, beliefs, or emotions. Therefore:

H3. Authenticity at work is negatively related to ratings of perceived hierarchical culture.

Market culture

In the market culture there is emphasis on control with focus on the external environment (Cameron and Quinn, 2006). It prioritizes competitiveness and results. Because there is pressure to obtain results and achieve goals, it is less likely that employees in this culture can self-determine their behaviors. It is possible that employees may forgo their own beliefs or values or even ignore their emotions if these prevent performance improvement. In this "work hard, play hard" culture there is probably little room for expressing one's own emotions or weaknesses in front of others. In fact, experiencing greater time pressure – which is often witnessed in intensively result-oriented environments – is related to lower levels of authenticity at work (Erickson and Ritter, 2001). Therefore:

> *H4.* Authenticity at work is negatively related to ratings of perceived market culture.

Authenticity and engagement

There are numerous definitions of engagement, but they all share a psychological and behavioral facet involving energy, enthusiasm, and focussed effort (Macey and Schneider, 2008). Macey *et al.* (2009) note that feelings of engagement include urgency, focus, intensity, and enthusiasm and associated behaviors involve persistence, proactivity, role expansion, and adaptability. In this study we define and measure work engagement as a persistent, pervasive, and positive affective-motivational state of fulfillment in employees (Schaufeli and Salanova, 2007).

Self-determination theory (SDT) helps us to explain the relationship between authenticity and work engagement. The theory distinguishes autonomous from controlled motivation. Autonomous motivation can arise from performing activities that have been internalized by the individual, as they are thought to be consistent with his or her personal goals and identities (Gagné and Deci, 2005). When motivated autonomously, individuals tend to feel greater freedom and volition in exerting their roles. According to SDT, autonomous motivation has several advantages over controlled motivation, such as more persistence and maintained behavior, higher performance in more creative tasks, increased job satisfaction, and increased citizenship behaviors (Gagné and Deci, 2005). In this study we argue that organizational cultures that allow employees to enact their roles in ways that are consistent with their own values and beliefs (more authentic) are more likely to trigger autonomous (rather than controlled) motivation, which in turn increases employee engagement.

The relationship between authenticity and engagement has also recently started to receive empirical support (Cable *et al.*, 2013; Leroy *et al.*, 2013). There is also evidence that inauthentic behaviors such as emotional labor have significant energy depletion effects (Goldberg and Grandey, 2007) that reduce work engagement. The "acting" to conceal true attitudes and beliefs is likely to create emotional and psychological distress (Hewlin, 2003), thereby negatively affecting work engagement. Hence:

> *H5.* Authenticity at work is positively related to work engagement.

The mediating effects of authenticity

Engagement antecedents involve mainly job and personal resources (Christian *et al.*, 2011). These resources can be more "distal" as they are related to organizational culture (Schein, 2004) such as leadership patterns and organizational climate

(Schneider *et al.*, 2013). However, "proximal" resources such as coaching, role clarity, autonomy, and career development have a stronger relationship with engagement than more distal organizational resources. We believe that one mechanism that explains how these distal organizational resources can translate into work engagement is via authenticity.

Social exchange theory (Blau, 1964) helps to explain the relationship among the variables via the reciprocity process (Cropanzano and Mitchell, 2005). Employees may perceive that organizational characteristics (culture) should be rewarded/punished if they are judged positively/negatively. Engagement may be increased if employees perceive that an organizational culture affects them directly (e.g. autonomy), which, in turn might justify why they would choose to act positively/negatively toward the organization. However, even when cultural characteristics are not directly oriented toward employees (e.g. organizational climate), they may be connected/disconnected with employees' values, beliefs, and morals. Employees therefore may positively reciprocate an organization's valued cultural characteristics via engagement. Hence, organizational culture may influence work engagement (Albrecht, 2012) directly and indirectly (via authenticity):

H6. Authenticity at work mediates the relationship between ratings of perceived clan (a), adhocracy (b), hierarchical (c), and market (d) cultures and work engagement.

Methodology
Sample and procedure
In total, 890 professionals from a database of current attendees or former attendees of graduate and postgraduate programs of a business school in Brazil were invited to participate. They were contacted via e-mail containing a link to an online questionnaire, which was translated into Portuguese and back-translated into English (Brislin, 1970). In total, 208 people responded, for a response rate of 24.2 percent (80.6 percent worked in large companies (i.e. more than 250 employees); 49 percent were female; mean age was 32.1 years old (SD = 9.3); 51.4 percent were professionals and technicians (e.g. engineers, HR analysts, marketing specialists, etc.) and 48.6 percent occupied managerial positions; 40.5 percent of respondents worked in services-related activities (e.g. consultancy, education, health, banking, engineering, real estate, accounting, transportation, etc.), 25.9 percent worked in industries (e.g. natural resources based, energy, chemical, capital goods, food, automobile, pharmaceutical, textile, etc.), and 10.3 percent in IT. This sample distribution is consistent with the overall industry configuration of the Brazilian economy (Instituto Brasileiro de Geografia e Estatística, 2012).

Measures
Authenticity at work. Given our focus on authentic behaviors, we employed an adapted version of Wood *et al.*'s (2008) four-item seven-point Likert type "authentic living" scale, which assesses the extent to which individuals behave and express emotions in ways that are consistent with their values and beliefs. In our adapted version, we added "at work" to emphasize the work context. A sample item included "at the company where I work, I always feel free to stand by what I really believe in."

Organizational culture. The cultural profiles were assessed by means of the 24-item organizational culture diagnosis instrument (Cameron and Quinn, 2006) that refers to six

organizational culture domains (dominant characteristics, organizational leadership, management of employees, organizational glue, strategic emphasis, and criteria for judging success). For each domain four statements reflect each of the four cultural types or profiles. Respondents ranked each statement from 1 to 4, attributing a score of 1 to the statement that he or she believes best represents his or her organization. This meant that the culture measure was ipsative (Eijnatten *et al.*, 2015), which was taken into account when carrying out our analysis, as detailed in the results section.

Work engagement. Work engagement was measured by the nine item seven-point Likert type Utrecht work engagement scale-9 (Schaufeli *et al.*, 2006), which includes three dimensions of work engagement: vigor (e.g. "At my job, I feel strong and vigorous"), dedication (e.g. "I am enthusiastic about my job"), and absorption (e.g. "I am immersed in my work").

Control variables. Gender can be related to feelings of engagement (Schaufeli and Salanova, 2007) and managers tend to feel more confident in expressing themselves (Kraus *et al.*, 2011) than non-managers. We therefore controlled for gender (0 = female; 1 = male) and managerial position (0 = do not have a managerial role; 1 = have a managerial role at all levels).

Partial least squares (PLS) estimators were adopted in order to test the research model as it is well suited for smaller samples (Henseler *et al.*, 2014) and does not make assumptions regarding data distribution to estimate model parameters, observation independence, or variable metrics (Hair *et al.*, 2011). PLS is also less influenced by measurement errors (Wilcox, 1998). It generates β regression coefficients for the model paths in order to measure the relationships between latent variables. We used the SmartPLS software to test the structural equation model (Ringle *et al.*, 2005).

We checked for common method variance (CMV) by including a common latent variable in the model (Podsakoff *et al.*, 2003). To apply the common latent variable method in PLS, we followed the approach proposed by Liang *et al.* (2007). Results show that the average substantive variance explained by the main constructs (0.60) is much higher than the average variance explained by the common method factor (0.01), suggesting that CMV was not likely to be an issue in our analysis.

Measurement models
To assess convergent validity, we first analyzed the average variance extracted (AVE) of each latent factor. For this, it is advisable that the AVE is above 0.50 (Hair *et al.*, 2011). While authenticity and engagement presented values that surpassed this threshold, a few indicators of the cultural constructs had to be discarded in order to ensure better convergent validity. Four indicators out of six were eventually retained for perceived clan, market, and hierarchical cultures, and three for adhocracy. Final values are shown in Table I.

Latent factors	AVE	Composite reliability	Cronbach's α
Authenticity	0.77	0.93	0.90
Engagement	0.63	0.94	0.93
Adhocracy	0.50	0.75	0.64
Market	0.52	0.81	0.70
Hierarchy	0.52	0.81	0.71
Clan	0.51	0.80	0.67

Table I.
AVE, composite reliability, and Cronbach's α

We analyzed the composite reliability index of each latent factor as suggested by Hair *et al.* (2011) to assess the reliability of the measurement models. Composite reliabilities ranged from 0.75 to 0.94, which was considered satisfactory. We also assessed Cronbach α reliability estimates, ranging from 0.64 to 0.93 (see Table I). Concerning the indicators' reliability, while loadings of 0.70 or more are considered the most desirable, loadings between 0.50 and 0.70 are still acceptable and can be retained (Hair *et al.*, 2011; Hulland, 1999). Since only a small portion of the remaining indicators reached loadings between 0.56 and 0.69 and most of them were above 0.70, indicators' reliability was considered satisfactory. For assessing discriminant validity, cross-loadings were checked and all items loaded more highly on their respective construct than on any other. Finally, we also assessed discriminant validity through the square roots of the AVEs (Fornell and Larcker, 1981), which were – as desirable – greater than the inter-factor correlations for all constructs (see Table II).
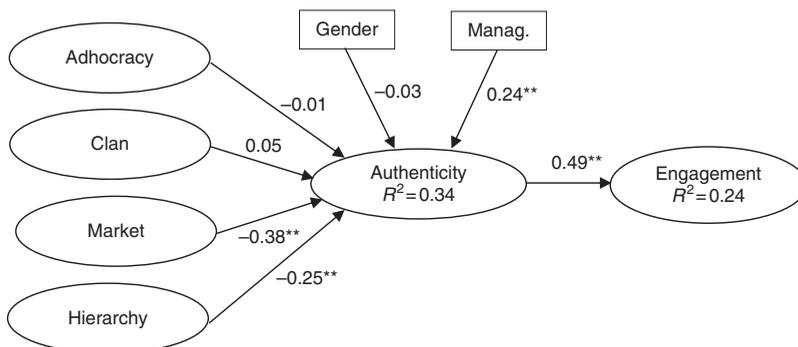
Results
Figure 1 depicts the results for the structural model tested. It includes the antecedents tested (perceived cultural types) and consequences (engagement at work) for authenticity and the control variables.

Authenticity was negatively related to market culture (−0.38) and hierarchical culture (−0.25); however, authenticity was not related to adhocracy and clan cultures.

Variables	M	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
1. Authenticity	5.06	1.37	0.88							
2. Engagement	5.06	1.04	0.48**	0.79						
3. Adhocracy	2.51	0.69	0.29**	0.21**	0.71					
4. Market	2.67	0.81	−0.45**	−0.22**	−0.31**	0.72				
5. Hierarchy	2.00	0.82	−0.34**	−0.29**	−0.59**	0.19*	0.72			
6. Clan	2.60	0.78	0.44**	0.24**	0.35**	−0.68**	−0.55**	0.71		
7. Gender	0.51	0.50	−0.03	0.05	−0.02	0.08	−0.03	−0.09	–	
8. Manag. posit.	0.49	0.50	0.20*	0.34	0.13	0.10	−0.02	−0.10	0.09	–

Notes: $n = 208$. Values on the diagonal represent the square root of the average variance extracted (AVE). *$p < 0.05$; **$p < 0.01$ (two-tailed)

Table II.
Means, standard deviations, and intercorrelations

Notes: **$p < 0.01$. Bootstrapping with 5,000 samples was used to assess the path coefficients' significance

Figure 1.
Structural model results

Thus, *H1* and *H2* were not supported and *H3* and *H4* were supported. Authenticity also showed a positive and significant relationship with work engagement (0.49). Thus, *H5* was also supported. The effects of gender on authenticity were not significant, while there was a positive relationship between job position, with managers reporting higher authenticity at work (path coefficient: 0.24).

To assess the mediation effect of authenticity (*H6*) on perceived organizational culture and work engagement, two additional models were tested (see Table III): Model 2 with no mediation; and Model 3 the mediation relationship (via authenticity).

As shown in Model 2, the direct effects of perceived hierarchy and market cultures on engagement were negative and significant, but they ceased to be in Model 3 once we introduced authenticity as a mediator, indicating a full mediation. Furthermore, mediation analyses were also tested using the bootstrapping method with bias-corrected confidence estimates (Preacher and Hayes, 2004). The 95 percent confidence interval of the indirect effects was obtained with 5,000 bootstrap resamples (Preacher and Hayes, 2008). Results of the mediation analyses confirmed the mediating role of authenticity in the relationship between hierarchical culture and employee engagement ($b = -0.18$, BCa CI (-0.29, -0.10)), as well as in the relationship between market culture and employee engagement ($b = -0.31$, BCa CI (-0.44, -0.20)). Thus, our results support *H6c* and *H6d*.

In addition, the structural model predictive relevance (Q^2) was also assessed and it was found that the exogenous constructs (independent variables) had predictive power for the endogenous constructs (dependent variables), as Q^2 values were greater than 0 (0.25 for authenticity and 0.15 for engagement) (Hair *et al.*, 2011).

Finally, given the ipsative nature of our organizational culture instrument and its associated constraints (Eijnatten *et al.*, 2015), we carried out an additional analysis to increase the robustness of our findings. Following Wang *et al.* (2010), we conducted centered log ratio transformations of our culture scores and then used the resulting transformed variables in the PLS-SEM path modeling. The results were confirmed: market and hierarchy had a significant negative effect on authenticity, while clan and adhocracy had no effect. Mediation was also supported.

| | Path coefficients | | |
	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3
Adhocracy→authenticity	−0.01	–	−0.01
Clan→authenticity	0.05	–	0.05
Hierarchical→authenticity	−0.25**	–	−0.26**
Market→authenticity	−0.38**	–	−0.39**
Adhocracy→engagement	–	0.04	0.02
Clan→engagement	–	−0.03	−0.08
Hierarchical→engagement	–	−0.28**	−0.19
Market→engagement	–	−0.20*	−0.02
Authenticity→engagement	0.49**	–	0.44**
Gender→authenticity	−0.03	–	−0.02
Manag.→authenticity	0.24**	–	0.24**
R^2 authenticity	0.34		0.34
R^2 engagement	0.24		0.27

Table III.
Mediation test

Notes: *$p < 0.05$; **$p < 0.01$

Discussion

The results indicate that individual ratings of perceived control-oriented organizational cultures (i.e. hierarchy and market) are negatively associated with authenticity at work. We also found that authenticity was positively associated with work engagement, and that it mediated the relationship between individual ratings of perceived market and hierarchy cultures and work engagement. We did not find support, though, for the positive influence of individual ratings of perceived organizational cultures emphasizing flexibility such as clan and adhocracy on authenticity. These results suggest that while perceptions of organizational culture profiles *per se* may not increase the presence of authenticity at work, it can nonetheless negatively influence work authenticity, and consequently, work engagement.

The results for the perceived control-oriented cultures are especially important if we bear in mind that hierarchical and market cultures are the most commonly encountered organizational culture types (Cameron and Quinn, 2006; Cardador and Rupp, 2011). These findings are consistent with the idea that despite their prevalence, these cultures are the ones less likely to provide employees with opportunities for personal meaningful work, which may explain the lower levels of work engagement encountered in these settings (Cardador and Rupp, 2011).

This study demonstrates that the relationship of individual ratings of perceived organizational culture (at least of market and hierarchical cultures) on authenticity may be to inhibit it. Therefore, culture-related social learning and self-regulation processes (Bandura, 1991) seem to be linked to authenticity control more than to the opposite. In fact, scholars have argued that it is common for individuals to put on masks that deny their own internal experiences "in order to increase their stature, protect their image, or avoid conflict in relationships" (Roberts *et al.*, 2009, p. 159). Consequently, authentic behaviors are less common in the workplace (Robinson *et al.*, 2013) than in other non-working contexts and behaving more authentically demands a proactive attitude at peeling off the masks that we normally wear. Such "peeling off masks" can be challenging and it is therefore easily discouraged by environments that require rigid conformity to established roles (e.g. hierarchical cultures), or that do not provide the necessary psychological safety or time to do so (e.g. market cultures).

Still concerning the possible antecedents of authenticity, we also found that regardless of perceived organizational culture profiles, employees in managerial positions (directors, managers, supervisors, etc.) rated themselves as behaving more authentically than others. This result is consistent with Kraus *et al.*'s (2011) recent work on the influence of power on self-concept and authenticity showing that individuals with greater social power also tend to feel more confident in expressing themselves. Furthermore, professionals in managerial assignments are often legitimate members (already accepted) in their organizations (Schein, 2004) and thus may be more likely to express their opinions and feelings and to behave in accordance with their beliefs than newer members.

Authenticity at work was also related to work engagement. This means that those individuals who can behave according to their own self-concept at work also feel more motivated or engaged at work. The positive effect of authenticity on engagement is consistent with recent work by Cable *et al.* (2013) showing in a lab experiment as well as in a field study that socialization practices that promoted authenticity were positively associated with engagement. These authors argue that employees "want to feel that they can behave authentically in the environment in which they spend the majority of their waking hours to be recognized for who they are" (Cable *et al.*, 2013, p. 23). In fact,

authentic expression may be followed by personal experiences such as an "intense involvement" in professional tasks, "a feeling of being complete or fulfilled while engaged in an activity," "a feeling of intensely being alive," among others (Waterman, 1993, p. 679). Thus, with this study we support the relevance that authenticity can hold for engagement. This is indeed an important finding, given that work engagement has been associated with multiple organizational outcomes affecting the bottom line, such as productivity and customer service.

For both perceived hierarchical and market cultures, we also found that authenticity mediated the relationship between organizational culture and work engagement. This means that perceived organizational culture is related to work engagement through authenticity. Paradoxically, perceived market culture, which focusses on results and success, appears to enhance work disengagement, which could lead in turn to lower performance (Rich *et al.*, 2010).

Our study makes several contributions. For example, earlier literature on authenticity has focussed mostly on the negative consequences of inauthentic behaviors (Roberts *et al.*, 2009) at work rather than on studying authenticity on its own terms. In addition, existing research on authenticity in organizations has for the most part focussed on the concept of authentic leadership (Avolio and Gardner, 2005). We expand the field by looking at positive aspects of authenticity as well as by focussing on employees rather than leaders.

Second, while the connection between culture and authenticity is seeing some early exploration (Cable *et al.*, 2013), we accelerate this research by examining culture more broadly through the CVF framework. With this focus on corporate culture we answer the call of Roberts *et al.* (2009) "to consider how the organizational context [...] can create conditions that facilitate the process of becoming more authentic" (p. 162). We see our focus on corporate culture as timely and necessary. It is important to highlight that we did not measure organizational culture, but individual ratings of perceived organizational culture.

Third, earlier work on the consequences of authenticity at work has focussed on individual outcomes such as positive self-regard (Roberts *et al.*, 2009), satisfaction at work, positive affect at work, and meaning of work (Ménard and Brunet, 2011). We expand this range of individual outcomes by focussing on work engagement. The results of this study also contribute to the extensive literature on work engagement, since more research broadening the range of antecedents to engagement has been described as still necessary (Saks, 2006; Christian *et al.*, 2011). We add to this area by revealing the positive association that exists between employees' perceptions of authenticity in the workplace and their work engagement.

Finally, and although earlier research has focussed on more proximal predictors of work engagement such as job features (Christian *et al.*, 2011), we show that more distal organizational aspects such as culture (e.g. market) has the potential to influence work engagement through authenticity.

Implications for practice
According to our results, when individuals perceive that they have more opportunities to behave authentically at work, they tend to feel more engaged with their jobs. Based on this finding, if a given organization seeks to enhance engagement, a possible approach is to identify ways to increase such opportunities. This is even more advisable for employees in non-managerial positions, since we observed that these employees tend to report lower levels of work authenticity in comparison to managers.

Although a number of companies have invested in developing authentic leaders, addressing followers' authenticity is also relevant if engagement enhancement is to be pursued. Our findings also indicate that there are ways in which firms may decrease work authenticity. In environments in which less authenticity is allowed, forms of controlled regulation tend to be prioritized (Meyer and Gagné, 2008); hence, mechanisms such as rewards, pressure for targets and deadlines, among others, tend to grow in importance in order to promote people motivation (Gagné and Deci, 2005). While the focus of market cultures on higher productivity seems desirable, our results show that an excessive fixation on results can also have unintended consequences in terms of authenticity and engagement.

This can have other sorts of more serious negative consequences in the mid and long term such as increased turnover and reduced performance (Goodwin *et al.*, 2011; Hannah *et al.*, 2011; Leroy *et al.*, 2015). A similar argument can be made for cultures that overemphasize control and regulation. In sum, and given that management has little control over people's individual tendencies to be authentic in the workplace, culture may be a "lever" that management can manipulate to promote (or at least not inhibit) authenticity and, in turn, work engagement.

Limitations and directions for future research
This study has some limitations that should be addressed in future research. First, the composition of the sample (which was exclusively Brazilian) limits generalizations. Second, the cross-sectional approach does not capture how the influence of culture on authenticity takes place. This approach also does not allow an understanding of how authenticity and engagement change over time (e.g. in organizational changes and throughout career stages). Third, self-report questionnaires are limited to the views of single respondents of each organization; furthermore, correlations among constructs might be overestimated. Therefore, triangulations with qualitative methods and longitudinal approaches would probably bring new insights to the fore. Another limitation is the potential for CMV, which precludes causal inferences and mediation. Future studies should collect data from different sources at different times to address this issue. Finally, we acknowledge that any kind of cultural typology such as the one used in this study is an abstraction of particular cultures, which are always unique and systemic, and therefore difficult to be parsed into discrete elements (Ehrhart *et al.*, 2014). Future studies should test organizational culture (organizational level of analysis) as opposed to perceptions of organizational culture as tested in this paper.

Different intervening variables should also be used to test our model. For instance, the joint effects of authenticity and other engagement's antecedents, such as challenge, autonomy, leadership style (Macey and Schneider, 2008), socialization practices (Cable *et al.*, 2013), and HR initiatives aimed at increasing employees' voices and diversity (Downey *et al.* 2015) could be addressed. The explained variance (R^2) in authenticity was 0.34. Since authentic behaviors are also influenced by personal characteristics – e.g., self-awareness and the propensity to be influenced by others (Wood *et al.*, 2008) – we suggest that such dimensions also be addressed in future studies in order to test whether they could increase the amount of explained variance of authentic behavior in the proposed model. Future research could also explore if these factors moderate the relationship between culture and authenticity.

Finally, future research could also explore the reasons why cultures that emphasize flexibility, discretion, and dynamism do not necessarily increase authenticity at work. The results from our study seem to indicate that it is easier to destroy authenticity than

to build it within the organization. This may be due to the fact that behaving more authentically is a learning process that takes time, as individuals need to develop skills in self-awareness, self-disclosure, and social interaction (Roberts *et al.*, 2009). This argument could be tested in future research by, for instance, including measures of skill learning, as well as using longitudinal designs that trace the effect of flexibility-oriented cultures on authenticity through time.

Conclusion

This study tested whether ratings of perceived organizational culture (e.g. adhocracy, market, clan, and hierarchical) are related to employee authenticity at work and whether employees who behave more authentically are also more engaged in their jobs. Our findings suggest that while some ratings of cultures (i.e. adhocracy and clan) neither nurture nor inhibit authentic behaviors, others (i.e. market and hierarchical) may constrain them. Authenticity in turn is related to the level of employees' work engagement. Authenticity also mediated the relationship between ratings of perceived hierarchy and market cultures and work engagement. Given that hierarchical and market cultures are the most commonly encountered organizational culture types (Cardador and Rupp, 2011), our findings have important practical implications and alert us to some of the negative consequences (i.e. reduced authenticity and engagement) that control-oriented cultures may have for both individuals and organizations.

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